



Southampton Sight

supporting people living with sight loss

July 2021

We are here to help

Dear All

Following Prime Minister Boris Johnson's announcement on Monday 14th June, the final stage of the government's roadmap out of lockdown and the lifting of all COVID-19 restrictions are now delayed until 19th July which means that we are still unable to open our centre. We will keep you informed as to when we will be able to re-open in line with government guidance but in the meantime we are open for business on the telephone and are still delivering weekly meals and our befriending telephone calls.

There have been quite a few changes at Southampton Sight in the last year. Lorna Whittingham, our Operations Manager, left last year in October to take up a position with Southampton University. Gail Loynes, our administrator, retired in October as well. Maria Bowler, our social activity co-ordinator, left to look after her grandchild and Kate Healey, our assistive technology Co Ordinator, has left to explore a career in the

Southampton Sight

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sailing industry. This means that we are now regrouping and reorganising and we will shortly be recruiting some new staff for the charity. We are also looking to develop an apprenticeship pathway at the charity for visually impaired candidates.

Finding What Feels Good

A lot of people talk about me-time and self-love; and maybe for you that conjures images of bath salts and chocolate cake. They're both pretty good things, but after the year we've all just been through, we need to show ourselves a truly special kind of appreciation and focus on the things that make us feel our best. So recently we have been phoning our members who are regular attendees at our social activity sessions to find out what they would like us to put on at the centre going forward.

Exercise classes? Getting out into nature? Learning something new? Working out what makes you feel good can be harder than we think, especially after our long shutdown. So, if you have any ideas as to what you would like us to do for you, please contact us.

Memorial Garden

Our memorial garden is now established – special thanks to Sonia, Angela and Christine Thomas for all your hard work. Also, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the plants for the garden. We now have a lovely quiet spot where people can sit and remember their friends and loved ones.

Jackie Powers

Chief Executive

Kate's Blog: Thank you and see you soon (It's the end of an era)

Dear reader, this blog is a hard one to compose because although what I'm about to tell you was my decision it is still sad to say.

I have decided to leave Southampton Sight to focus on gaining employment in the sailing industry; I'm being honest, I don't know in what capacity this will be in, but this is my goal.

I want to say a heartfelt thank you to all members, volunteers, and staff at Sight who over the last six years have helped me in your own way to become the person who I am today. Working at the organisation has given me many opportunities to develop as a person. Some of them to note are working on the pilot project teaching sight loss awareness to fourth year medic students; in the past I would have never had the courage to stand at the front of a large lecture theatre and tell them my own sight loss journey. Staff and volunteers at the charity taught me how to adapt my teaching skills to work with people of all ages, I have worked with children delivering fun filled sight loss awareness sessions but have also been able to work with medical staff on developing their own knowledge in order to be able to help patients with sight loss better. I have met many members over the years and delivered one-to-one training sessions and have run workshops with the help of Angela my support worker. Together we've supported people with learning how to use an adapted mobile phone, taught people how to touch type and anything in-between.

It's hard to condense what I've learnt from working for the charity in six years in to one blog, but I must mention my passion for sailing. If I hadn't worked here, I wouldn't have realised my absolute love for sailing and how it has pushed me to realise my abilities, that I am more resilient than I ever thought I would be and above all I have learnt that I am the one who puts most of the barriers in my own way. If you'd have asked me when I was younger would I want to be part of a mixed ability crew on a tall ship whose collective aim was to cross the Atlantic Ocean I would have ran more miles than I care to think about in the opposite direction but this passage just like working at Southampton Sight taught me so much about myself and for that I am forever grateful.

You will notice that I didn't put goodbye at the top of this blog because to me, goodbye is too final. Although I am leaving Southampton Sight as an employee, I still want to keep in touch with the organisation and you may see me around but as a volunteer. I'm sure Jackie wouldn't say no to me helping to deliver some of the sight loss awareness sessions that may come up in the future.

I want to end by wishing everyone the best for the future and I'll say see you soon. Let's be honest here – you're more likely to see me first so, do say hello 😊

Kate

Having My Say by Kathy McCoy

I like to have my say, it don't always work.

Even though I have wobbly legs, it does not mean I am a berk!

I like to have my say, as I have a voice.

I also don't like people talking for me, as I like to use my own voice.

I like to have my say, sometimes it will backfire.

As by the time I get to have my say, It will be time for me to retire!

And a final word from Kate:

What is that squishy thing under my foot?

A while ago now I was innocently putting the rubbish out when I kicked something soft on the ground. I instantly thought that we had dropped a jumper on the floor outside the front door. I bent to retrieve the item, but I got a bit of a shock; It was not a jumper because I felt something cool and soft to the touch. I thought it was a cat's nose so started stroking what I assumed was its side. At the same time, I thought it was odd that a cat would not have jumped to its feet and ran far away from me. I continued my way to the bin and returned to my house. A little later I asked a member of my household to investigate whether I had indeed found an injured cat and wow was I wrong. The cat turned out to be a dead pigeon that had flown into the upstairs window! I was fortunate to have not found its brains and was told that I had probably felt its foot (definitely not a cat's nose then)!