

# Wilberforce Matters

## Autumn 2008



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

### General Manager's Comment

One of the advantages of not producing this newsletter as frequently as we usually do is that we then end up with more to say each time, and on this occasion we're certainly not short of developments to report on. You will find reports on the Low Vision service, which is now well established, the new Bridge to Vision (York) service, the new Tadcaster supported accommodation service, our computer skills training project and our visual awareness training programme. All of these developments are indicative of the growing range of services, which the Trust is becoming involved in, and the importance of working in partnership with other organisations within the visual impairment sector.

We're keen to continue this expansion and development of our services, and of services for people with visual impairments generally and would welcome any further ideas for services, which would benefit people with sight loss.

Over the next few months we will be exploring some ideas we already have for improving access to learning and leisure opportunities, and forming these into plans for new services. We look forward to reporting on these developments further next time.

*Keith McKee*

### Visual Impairment Awareness Training

Together with colleagues in other agencies we have now developed an accredited training course in visual impairment awareness. One group of learners has already completed the 10-hour Open College Network accredited level 1 course and, thankfully, all were successful. It is hoped that the course will soon be running at regular intervals, with a level 2 course planned for the New Year. The courses will be available to anyone whose work brings them into contact with people with visual impairments. This will include staff working for the Trust and other agencies, though the majority of our own staff have already completed basic visual impairment awareness training offered by the rehabilitation team throughout the summer months.

For further information on training opportunities contact Margaret Daley on 01904 760037  
email [m.daley@wilberforcetrust.org.uk](mailto:m.daley@wilberforcetrust.org.uk)

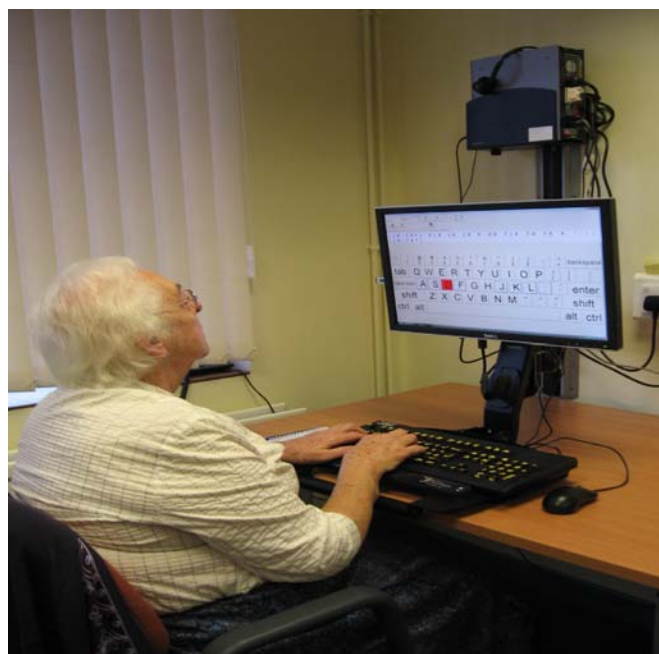
### Computer Skills Training

The Trust's rehabilitation section has been working with colleagues from City of York Council's Adult and Community Education Service and Guide Dogs, to develop accredited computer training courses for people with visual impairments here at Wilberforce House in Huntington.

The computers are fully equipped with assistive software to enable the learners to access the world of computing and the communication opportunities it offers, using speech and magnification software. The classes are run in small informal groups. Learners are given the opportunity to learn to touch type before going on to word processing or Internet qualifications.

This is a really exciting development for the Trust, which we hope will fill a gap in the York area, identified by visually impaired people themselves. Until we set this up the nearest suitable learning centre to York was in Goole.

If you want to know more about these courses please contact Angela Whitehall on 07986 842199 or [angela.whitehall@york.gov.uk](mailto:angela.whitehall@york.gov.uk)



**Sylvia Kam practising touch typing during a training session in the new Computer Skills Centre**

## Low Vision Services

The low vision clinic is now running at full capacity and we are seeing 4 patients per session. Following a thorough clinical vision test with an optometrist, patients spend up to an hour with a rehabilitation officer discussing vision enhancement techniques, and exploring practical solutions to everyday difficulties. Information is also available on other national and local organisations who provide help to those living with impaired sight. A home visit from the rehabilitation worker is made a few weeks after the clinic appointment to ensure that any advice or equipment that has been issued is being used effectively to increase independence. A recent survey of our patients showed extremely positive results with many compliments on the excellence of the service. As this article is being written we are hosting “open sessions” for professionals to visit and learn more about the success of our “one stop shop” service. The pilot phase of the scheme is due to come to an end in February 09 and moves are now being made to try to identify sources of mainstream funding which will ensure its future.



**The Low Vision Service in operation. Stanley Tomlinson undergoing an eye examination by Optometrist Kim Read.**



## Accommodation and Support Services

In our York services we are now providing day service support to three tenants following the closure of Yearsley Bridge and Huntington Road day centres. In order to achieve this, the Trust has begun to recruit additional day service support workers whose role it is to support the tenants on a one to one basis and ensure that they continue to attend activities of their choice.

In Tadcaster we appointed a locality manager in July to provide additional day-to-day management support for the services. This replicates the management structure, which has been operating successfully in York for some years. The Trust felt that now was the appropriate time to introduce a similar management position in the Tadcaster locality. James McAughtrie was therefore appointed in July and I am sure that those of you have not met him yet will do so over the forthcoming months.

The Trust is also opening a third service in January 2009. Two tenants have been identified to move into this service and contractors are busy completing the necessary refurbishment works as we speak. The Trust is very confident that this service will provide appropriate support to meet the needs of the clients who will be moving into the house. We wish the service users and the staff team every success.

## Bridge to Vision (York)

The Trust and the RNIB National Visual Impairment and Learning Disability Team, are jointly funding a new pilot service to improve access to eye health services and support for people with learning disabilities. As part of this pilot service, Karen McGregor, an RNIB employee, will be based with the Trust's rehabilitation department. Her role is to help people with learning disabilities to access eye health checks and then ensure that individuals and their carers are made aware of how best to accommodate any defective vision.

Previously Karen has done similar work in Scotland, with the RNIB National Visual Impairment and Learning Disability Team, but this is the first RNIB service of this kind in England. The RNIB have already provided training at Wilberforce House for local optometrists, to introduce them to the specialist testing strategies involved in this work and they are hoping this may result in a specialist eye clinic using our existing facilities. This project is set to run for a 12-month period.

For further information contact Karen on 01904 760037 or email [Karen.mcgregor@rnib.org.uk](mailto:Karen.mcgregor@rnib.org.uk)

## News from 4 Wighill Garth

What a wonderful day two staff and tenants had out on our trip to Eden Camp. As we made our way around the 28 huts many sights, sounds and smells were to be had. After doing the 'blitz' and the 'blackout' then onto the simulated submarine hut, we stopped for lunch at 'Churchill's', pie and chips, true to its word was just what the Officers' Mess would have ordered!

After leaving the Mess Hall we took a nice walk around the remaining huts, stopping to call into the shop. John Cotterill bought a new wallet in camouflage colours and some hand made biscuits while David Kendall chose a warden's helmet and in true Brit style wore it all day for the rest of the trip. All in all a great success and we will certainly be going back for another visit.



### New Tadcaster Service nears completion

### Shipton Road

Well unfortunately the summer is well and truly over and the nights are getting longer and colder.

Carole and Sheila enjoyed a week in the sunshine of Benidorm with Claire and Steph. Carole enjoyed lying by the pool and enjoyed her birthday there. She went to an Abba Tribute Band, which was fantastic. She also got a photograph with a dolphin. Sheila found it really funny when Steph fell in the pool fully clothed! She enjoyed relaxing in a rubber ring in the pool and sitting in the Jacuzzi chatting up the men! They both enjoyed trips to the Zoo and Water park, where Sheila was kissed by a sea lion. They are now thinking about where they want to go next!

Pauline really enjoyed a trip to Blackpool with Theresa. Tina and Lynne went from Hawthorn Spinney as well. They 'hit' the shops and enjoyed having meals out and sight seeing.

We would like to welcome two new team members Sarah and Anna. We all hope they enjoy working at Shipton Road.

### Thanks

**to all those who have generously given their support in recent months:**

R.M. Burton Charitable Trust  
Patricia and Donald Shepherd Charitable Trust  
Good Neighbour Trust  
Micklegate York Charitable Trust  
W.L.Pratt Charitable Trust  
St Peter's School, York,  
Wilkinson – A Helping Hand  
Mr Bob Skilbeck  
Mr and Mrs T. Jones  
York Ainsty Rotary Club members

### Volunteer News

We are delighted to welcome three new volunteers who support within our York services. Congratulations go to three volunteers who have completed ten years with the Trust – a very sincere thank you to each and every one of them for their long-term friendship and commitment.

We have had to say goodbye to two long-standing volunteers and to those student volunteers who have 'moved on' - we thank them all for their friendship and commitment.

Recently we held a Volunteers evening and will be joining with the Music Night Group at their pre Christmas session for an evening of fun and friendship.

### Fundraising Events

**Christmas Coffee Morning - Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December at Wilberforce House 10am to 12-00**  
Coffee, mince pies and shortbread will be served. There will be stalls including gifts, cakes and tombola together with fun and fellowship. So why not come along and join in our Christmas Coffee Morning.

If you would like more details of our fundraising events please contact 01904 760037

### **Hawthorn Spinney News**

We have had our hallway decorated and as we are writing this we have just had our carpet lifted ready to get the new flooring put down.

Well it looks like winter is finally here. Wendy has been on her summer holidays in Sunderland. Veronica has been to Primrose Valley. David has been to Pickering on a few occasions to a respite centre. June has been to St Anne's for a week. So now the weather has changed at least we can look back on our summer holiday memories. We have got two new members of Staff, both are enjoying the job and everyone likes them.

### **Hello from Newlands**

Well we have had a busy summer here at Newlands successfully growing our own vegetables despite the weather.

Pat has been abroad for the first time to Majorca and loved it. She is already planning her next holiday. Sally also went abroad for the first time this year with an external company called Finca Holidays and had a fabulous time. She wants to go with them again next year. John has been away to Majorca and particularly enjoyed the Sangria. Caroline has planned to go to Donna Clare in December to enjoy all the Christmas markets and shows on offer.

### **News from 2 Wighill Garth**

Here at No 2 it is all happening! Lots of exciting refurbishments with the lounge, bathroom and bedrooms all transformed creating a lighter, brighter home. It has been very hectic with various tradesmen coming and going but we know the end results will be worth it. As most of you know Zena left in June to live a 'quieter life' in her native land and I was given the opportunity to take on the House Manager's position for 6 months, a role and challenge I am very much enjoying. James joined us as Locality Manager and we have worked him very hard! - thanks James for all your support.

Sue has enjoyed a long weekend in Blackpool and believe it or not the weather was fab!  
David and Kevin enjoyed a holiday at Ambleside in a beautiful cottage. They have both been on boat trips around the lakes and of course Kevin is loving the food.

Rachel has a lovely newly painted bedroom and is hoping to go on holiday in the New Year

### **Hi from Aldwark**

Summer has flown and once more it is time to think about winter woollies and what to buy people for Christmas.

Since our last Newsletter Gordon has enjoyed a holiday in Kent and is looking forward to a winter break in the Lake District in November. Colin has enjoyed re-decorating his bedroom and has visited his dad in Whitby on a regular basis. He also wants to thank the House Managers for their support in finding jobs at various houses for him to do.

Both Gordon and Colin are looking forward to spending Christmas at home with their families.

### **West View**

Well where do we start? We have all been really busy. Lesley has just got back from Blackpool, Marie is going to Donna Claire and the rest of us have gone pickling mad!!!! Whilst trying to grow pumpkins!!!

Our pickles are now on sale at Wilberforce House, don't be shy to buy!! They will also be on sale at St Crux and our Christmas Coffee Morning.



### **The Wilberforce Trust**

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