

Suffolk Sight News



**Spring
Summer
2026**



Suffolk Sight

Suffolk Sight is your local, community-based sight loss charity supporting children and adults of all ages.

We work hard to provide services that are friendly and practical, and to raise awareness of the different aspects of living with sight loss. These can include daily living aids, emotional support, benefits advice and the latest tech solutions. You're welcome to book a visit to one of our resource hubs or we can arrange to visit you at home. Find out about our social opportunities; connect to our befriending scheme, and be put in touch with other services based on your personal interests.

Our dedicated team are here to offer support, advice and guidance based on your individual sight loss needs. We work closely with you for as long as you need, offering ideas and solutions to help with confidence and independence.

Suffolk Sight is an independent charity which relies on our amazing supporters to continue our work through donations, legacies and non-statutory grants, supplemented by minimal local government funding. We rely on our amazing supporters to continue our work through donations, legacies and non-statutory grants.

Supporting You - Services

As a beneficiary of **Suffolk Sight** you will be able to access a wealth of support and information. It's free and you can choose your level of engagement and involvement.

Our dedicated and highly skilled team of community workers and technical advisers understand the issues that people face as they live their life with a visual impairment.

Volunteering for *Suffolk Sight*

You can make a difference. We welcome the opportunity to involve volunteers in all aspects of our work.

We have lots of different roles, from social clubs to social media, fundraising, administration, transport and befriending. There are plenty of ways throughout the organisation that you can help.

Contact us and we can tell you about our opportunities and discuss how best we can support each other.

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Joan Bettney-Brown, a longstanding and much-loved member of the Haverhill club, used to give Meg and I an amaryllis every Christmas. Sadly she passed away in November. In her memory, I bought one for Meg for Christmas 2025.

For this edition, we have decided to hand over the introduction to Oliver, our Junior Suffolk Sight Ambassador.

Geoff Staff *Chair of Trustees*

Hello everyone!

Since my report in the last newsletter, a lot of things have happened.

I was invited to help at the Stowmarket Christmas Fayre as Suffolk Sight had a stand in Red Gables car park. It was a crisp winter's morning, we had a tombola and we raised a lot of money. Wow!

Over at Suffolk Sight Juniors, we had the opportunity to go bowling at Tenpin in Martlesham Heath. It was a lovely day, rolling the balls to the pins, and a nice way to end 2025 with the Juniors.

To start off 2026, we went to see the Rock and Roll Panto at The New Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich – lots of singing and dancing. A group of us also went on the touch tour prior to the show and met some of the cast members. We were able to touch and feel the costumes and props.

Some of us went to Foxburrow Nature Reserve and a good time was had by all, making insect homes, some willow rings to act as bird feeders, and collecting twigs, bark and foliage from the nearby woodland.

We had a lovely talk from Lauren and Melissa about their journeys through Kenya and Nepal. It made me realise how much easier it is to have VI equipment in the UK.

We had some bellringers in the March session and it was great listening to them.

As I write this report I am looking forward to going to Clip and Climb in Ipswich and in my next report, I will tell you how I got on.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and finding out about everything that has happened or is going to happen with Suffolk Sight and our great supporters, as well as some interesting and useful information.

Oliver, aged 15 Ambassador

Our Juniors group have had a very busy few months



A trip to the pantomime at the New Wolsey Theatre is always a firm favourite each year as the pictures above show.

A huge thanks once again to Ellis Northrope and the team at the theatre for arranging the touch tour.

Everyone enjoyed chatting to the cast as they described their characters and costumes. It really helped to bring the performance alive.

Headsets were available, giving a full audio description of the actions on stage during the show.

We are very fortunate to have a local theatre that is so inclusive and we can't wait to go back again.

A mascot for the day

Jack was very excited to have the opportunity to be a mascot for Ipswich Town Football Club.

"I was a mascot at the Ipswich v Swansea game. I loved it and really



Image shows Jack with Ipswich Town striker, George Hirst.

enjoyed coming out of the tunnel because I got to carry the match ball as well as coming out first. I love coming to Suffolk Sight Juniors with my PA, Maddie, because I like the activities and seeing people who don't see clearly like me."

Beyond Labels: An exhibition celebrating disability in Suffolk

Beyond Labels shines a light on the lives, achievements and challenges of people with disabilities in Suffolk, past and present.

It showcases the resilience and contributions of Suffolk people with lived experience of disability, explores the barriers faced and promotes awareness and understanding.

More than 30 local community groups and schools decorated 150 giant labels to represent their lived experience of disability. The image shows the colourful label created by the Juniors.

The exhibition will be at The Hold, in Ipswich, until 30 May.

To find out more about the Suffolk Sight Juniors please contact Amanda Eaves via the office on 01473 611011 or email a.eaves@suffolksight.org.uk



Fundraising round up

Tom's Half Marathon Challenge

A huge thank you to Tom Frost, who ran a half marathon in support of Suffolk Sight!

The race took place in Victoria Park, London, on 8 March 2026. Tom set out with a goal of finishing in 2 hours 10 minutes, but absolutely smashed it with an incredible 2 hours 2 minutes and 35 seconds! Safe to say, the hard work and training certainly paid off.

Tom has raised an incredible £1150 for Suffolk Sight so far and it's not too late to donate. You can visit his JustGiving fundraising page at: <https://shorturl.at/5Jjv9>



The image shows Tom and his personal trainer after the race.



The funds raised will help us to provide daily living aids that make everyday tasks easier and safer for people living with sight loss.

Trefoil Guild Suffolk

A big thank you to the Trefoil Guild Suffolk branches who have raised an incredible £3136.47 for Suffolk Sight.

The groups held various events including an afternoon tea and a ploughman's lunch, as well as musical entertainment.

Image shows Amanda, our Services Manager, receiving the giant cheque.

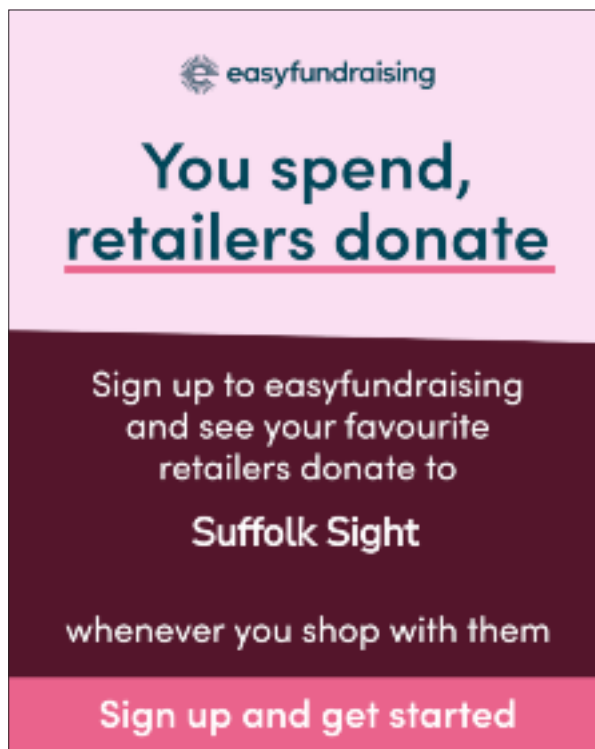
Classic Car Show

Our team will be at the Classic Car Show, held in the grounds of Culford School, near Bury St Edmunds, on Sunday 12 July.

The event is organised by the Bury Abbey Rotary Club, with over 500 classic cars on display, as well as stalls, food, and family attractions.

Come along and find us under our yellow and black gazebo!

Raise money for Suffolk Sight when you shop online – at no extra cost to yourself!



The graphic is a vertical rectangle with a light pink top half and a dark maroon bottom half. At the top left is the 'easyfundraising' logo. The main text in the top half reads 'You spend, retailers donate'. The bottom half contains the text: 'Sign up to easyfundraising and see your favourite retailers donate to Suffolk Sight whenever you shop with them'. At the very bottom, a pink button says 'Sign up and get started'.

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online, from your weekly shop to your annual holiday, you could be raising free donations for Suffolk Sight with easyfundraising?

There are over 8,000 retailers on board, ready to make a donation – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis & Partners, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.

All you need to do is:

Go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/suffolk-sight/> and join for free.

Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.

After you've checked out, the retailer will make a donation to Suffolk Sight at no extra cost to you whatsoever! There are no catches or hidden charges and we will be really grateful for your donations.

If you prefer to shop from your phone, you can download the free easyfundraising app, enable the donation reminder and, each time you visit a participating retailer's site, you will get the opportunity for them to donate a percentage of any purchase you make.

*Please note that you need to make a purchase through a website rather than an app for the donation to qualify.

Thank you for your support.

For more information about the scheme, please contact our office on 01473 611011 or email info@suffolksight.org.uk

Appeal for funding

Recently, one of our service users told us how transformational they have found the support from Suffolk Sight:

“My Suffolk Sight Community Worker has been a lifesaver, she is my anchor and I honestly don’t know where I would be without her. She really understands the difficulties of living with sight loss and has got me through some very tough times.

Your world shrinks when you start to lose your sight, and without the support I have had, my world would be so much smaller than it is.”

Every month, visually-impaired people in Suffolk rely on our support, and it costs £38,000 to ensure that no one faces sight loss alone. Could you support us with a monthly donation? With your help, we can continue offering our services free of charge for many years to come.

How a monthly gift could make a difference:

£5 helps provide simple but essential living aids – like tactile markers (‘bump-ons’) – that make everyday life easier at home.

£10 provides accessible newsletters, welcome packs and advice materials for five people so they can stay informed and supported.

£25 covers the cost of training one new volunteer befriender, who offers companionship and confidence.

£30 pays for a full hour of personalised digital support for someone who needs help staying independent and connected.

£56 provides a home visit from a trained Community Sight Loss Advisor, providing specialist guidance and practical support after a new diagnosis.

Any amount you can give, large or small, helps ensure no one in Suffolk faces sight loss alone. Please consider becoming a monthly supporter today.

Love fundraising? We'd love to support you!

If you enjoy organising events or taking on challenges, we'd be delighted to help you fundraise. We can provide posters, Suffolk Sight literature, banners and t-shirts, and we'll even promote your event on our social media platforms.

Every pound raised helps us continue offering essential services in and around Suffolk, from daily-living support to digital training, benefits advice and volunteer-led activities that reduce loneliness and build confidence.

Do get in touch

For more information on donating or fundraising, call us on 01473 611011 or email info@suffolksight.org.uk.

You can also find out more at www.suffolksight.org.uk.

Thank you for helping make sure no one in Suffolk faces sight loss alone.

A record breaking donation from The East Anglian Beer and Cider Festival 2025.

The picture shows Kevin Ramsey (with his new guide dog Phoebe) receiving a cheque for £1200 from Paul Cooper, the festival organiser. We have been fortunate to be one of the nominated charities for the past 5 years and have been nominated for this year's festival too. A big thank you to all those who volunteered on behalf of Suffolk Sight in 2025.



It's time to volunteer for 2026!

Visit: <https://burystedmundsbeerfestival.com> or phone Suffolk Sight on 01473 611011 to see how you can sign up.

Thank you!

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the District Councillors in the Stowmarket area, all of whom donated a sum of money to Suffolk Sight from their locality budget recently, totalling £2,742.90.

The money has been used to purchase 11 new laptops for the team at Suffolk Sight. The devices currently being used are all very old and had started to develop age-related issues, they are also not capable of running the latest version of Microsoft Windows 11.

We are so heavily reliant on using laptops in this day and age. They enable us to communicate via email, to take and make referrals, record data, liaise with other agencies and research information. This investment in new technology will ensure the continued smooth running of our services and enable us to reach out and offer support to people living with sight loss for many years to come.

Special thanks also to Suffolk County Councillor, Keith Scarff, who contributed £250 from his locality budget towards this purchase.



The image shows Amanda with her new laptop.

Enter One Lottery and help Suffolk Sight

Being part of One Lottery means that with your support Suffolk Sight can help to generate regular sustainable funding.

This will enable us to continue to help adults and children with a visual impairment to live full and independent lives – but we couldn't do it without you.

Buying a ticket through One Lottery means that we can continue to grow and provide our services.

So, whether you buy 1 ticket or 10 tickets, thank you.

To buy your tickets go to:

<https://www.onelottery.co.uk/support/suffolk-sight>

Social Club round-up

Time flies when you're having fun!

It only seems like yesterday we were enjoying our Christmas parties, with festive music, laughter and good company.

Now, as the warmer weather approaches, plans are being made for summer trips and outings. It's something our beneficiaries look forward to each year and a wonderful way to spend time together.

Pakenham Club - fond farewell and a bright new beginning.

This year marks a very special moment in the life of our social club, as we say thank you and farewell to two truly remarkable people, and warmly welcome new leadership into their roles.

After an incredible 20 years of dedication and service, Mary Jane Toulson and Jan



Image shows Agnieszka and Jim dressed up as Mr and Mrs Santa Claus at the Mildenhall Club.



Image shows members of the Pakenham Club enjoying a talk.

Sellick are stepping down from their roles as Leader and Treasurer. For two decades, they have given their time, energy, and hearts to making our social club what it is today.

As we say goodbye to one chapter, we are excited to welcome the next.

We are delighted to introduce Colin Presland and Helen Ayers as they step into these roles. We know they will bring fresh ideas, and the same enthusiasm and dedication that has made this club so special.

With the strong example set by Mary Jane and Jan, and the support of our wonderful members, we are confident the club is in very good hands.

Please join us in extending our deepest thanks to Mary Jane and Jan for their extraordinary service, and in offering a warm welcome to Colin and Helen as they begin their new journey.

Capability Singing Group, Sudbury

With the help of our Sudbury Club, we're delighted to be able to offer a new singing group. The sessions take place on the second Wednesday of the month, 10.30am to 12.00 midday at the Sudbury Quaker Meeting House, 22 Friars Street, Sudbury, CO10 2AA.

Beccles Club

We had to include this lovely photo of Angela and Joan which was taken at our Beccles Club. It captures the joy that our social clubs bring to our beneficiaries.

With a combined age of 196, this shows that age is just a number!

For more information about any of our clubs, please contact the office on 01473 611011 or email info@suffolksight.org.uk



Photos from around the clubs

This is just a small selection of photos from a few of the 16 Suffolk Sight Clubs, showing the range of activities offered and the fun that our club members have.



A sing-along at the Hadleigh Club

Clay modelling at the Haverhill Club



Clay modelling at the Halesworth Club



Boccia at the Bury St Edmunds Club

For more information about any of our clubs, please contact the office on 01473 611011 or email info@suffolksight.org.uk

Colin, The Boccia Man

We are delighted to congratulate Colin, one of our Ambassadors, on his fantastic achievement in becoming a certified Boccia Leader.

Colin recently completed the Boccia Leaders Course with Boccia England. Delivered locally by ActivLives and Special Olympics Suffolk, with the generous support of Special Olympics GB, these courses play an important role in growing inclusive sporting opportunities within our community.

This 3-hour workshop introduced Colin to the fundamentals of boccia, including the rules of the game, officiating, and key coaching principles. He also developed skills in adapting activities to suit a wide range of participants, with a strong focus on inclusion and disability awareness.

Colin's achievement highlights his commitment to making sport accessible and enjoyable for all. We look forward to seeing the positive impact he will have as he continues to support and inspire others through boccia.

Congratulations once again, Colin – well done!



Image shows Colin officiating at a boccia session.



***Looking Ahead* emotional support service**

Suffolk Sight *Looking Ahead* emotional support offers free 1-2-1 short-term, confidential telephone counselling to beneficiaries who are struggling with the impact of living with sight loss.

We continue to work hard to provide this service free of charge and are very grateful to our professional counsellors who offer their services at a reduced rate.

We shall be fundraising throughout the year in order to continue providing this much needed support to our beneficiaries and we have some exciting events coming, so please keep an eye on our social media channels.

Our first fundraising event will be a Quiz Night which will be held on Sunday 17 May 2026 at 7pm at The Tollgate Pub, Bury St Edmunds. Depending on timings, this edition of the newsletter may not reach you in time for you to join us but don't worry, there will be many more opportunities.



We would like to thank everyone who has helped support the service over the past few years. Most recently, St Edmundsbury Oddfellows made a very generous donation of £1500, which will enable us to provide much-needed counselling places. If you would like to know more about how you can support us or to make a donation, please contact the Suffolk Sight office.

Image shows Meg Staff with two of the members of St Edmundsbury Oddfellows holding a card displaying the generous gift of £1,500.

Mel on the Move! A Journey Through Time

We're delighted to continue our new feature with Mel, Access Technology Advisor for Suffolk Sight, sharing his travelling experiences.

Mel recently returned from an unforgettable holiday to Egypt with his wife, Alex — a journey that brought ancient history to life in an incredibly immersive way.

Their travels took them to the world-famous Pyramids of Giza and the Grand Egyptian Museum, where Mel was particularly impressed by the strong commitment to accessibility. The museum provided a range of tactile 3D models, including detailed replicas of the pyramids in Giza themselves. Visitors could explore these models by touch, gaining a real sense of the structures' design and scale.



Main image shows Mel touching a model of the Pyramids in Giza, Cairo. Inset image shows Mel touching a scale replica of Tutankhamun's coffin.

Inside the museum, tactile replicas of Tutankhamun's mask, throne and coffin were available, each supported by high-quality audio description. These features allowed Mel, who is blind, to experience the craftsmanship and historical significance of these treasures in a meaningful and engaging way.

But the highlight of the trip was stepping inside the pyramid of Khafre. Mel navigated steep, narrow stairs and crawled through cramped tunnels.

Through touch, smell, sound, and atmosphere alone, Mel gained a powerful sense of the immense size and age of the pyramids and surrounding tombs. The cool stone walls, the texture of the carved surfaces, and the unique scent of the ancient chambers created a sensory experience he described as truly unforgettable.

This thoughtful approach to accessibility gave Mel a deeper connection to Egypt's rich history — an experience that demonstrates how inclusive design can open up the world in extraordinary ways.

Mel wanted a special mention for "Cairo Carl", who was a fantastic tour guide.

There are a number of companies offering accessible holidays for disabled people, including TravelEyes and Seable, both of which have been used by Suffolk Sight members in the past. However, we need to stress that this is not a recommendation and that anyone thinking of using an accessible holiday provider needs to research the companies thoroughly themselves.

The best form of recommendation is from you. Should you have had a wonderful holiday. We would love to hear your travel experiences, near or far! It may just give someone else the confidence to book their dream trip.

Don't forget, you can keep up to date on social media. Just search for @SuffolkSight on Facebook, LinkedIn and Bluesky.



Suffolk Sight Walking Group

Our Suffolk Sight Walking Group launched last year and was a great success. We are delighted to announce that we will now be meeting up every month until October.

The group is led by experienced walker and Suffolk Sight trustee, Steve Giddings. It is aimed at people who like to walk longer distances and enjoy the outdoors, whilst being in the safety of an organised group.

Dates and locations for this year will be as follows:

6 May – Ickworth Estate

5 Aug – Nowton Park,
Bury St Edmunds

3 June – Felixstowe

2 Sept – Claydon

1 July – Woodbridge

7 Oct – Dunwich

Walks all start at 10.30am and are approximately 2–5 miles in length. Transport is available from the nearest bus or train station.

For more information, please contact our office on 01473 611011

Lowestoft and Newmarket outreach sessions

Our Community Sight Loss Advisors, formerly known as Community Workers, will continue to offer monthly drop-in sessions.

Our team will be available to give personalised advice and support including:

Daily living and independence – aids and adaptations

Low vision – magnification and assistive reading (with referrals to our low-vision specialist where appropriate)

Financial matters – benefits, grants and concessions

Tech solutions – gadget advice and demonstrations

Social opportunities and befriending service

Advice about services that can help you get out and about safely

Lowestoft

Venue: Disability Advice North East Suffolk,
161 Rotterdam Road, Lowestoft, NR32 2EZ

Time: 10am–12pm on the second Tuesday of the month, on the following dates:

12 May

No drop-in session in June

14 July

11 August

8 September

13 October

10 November

Newmarket – Coffee and Chat

Venue: Newmarket Day Centre,
Fred Archer Way, Newmarket, CB8 8NT

Parking available at The Guineas Car Park opposite

Time: 10–11.30am on the first Wednesday of the month, on the following dates:

6th May

3rd June

1st July

5th August

2nd Sept

Hot drinks will be available from £1.65 and lunch can be ordered for £8.75

For more information about any of the drop-in sessions please call 01473 611011 or email info@suffolksight.org.uk

Hand in Hand Club, Lowestoft

The Hand in Hand Club is a group for people with dual sensory loss. They enjoy many different activities including music, talks, outings, lunch together and, of course, time to chat.

Please contact Christine on 07939 388743 for further information They look forward to welcoming you to the group.



Introducing the newest members of the Suffolk Sight family

We have been very fortunate to welcome, and work with, some incredible Guide Dogs over the years. Their skills allow our visually-impaired colleagues to live independent, safe, and confident lives.

From left to right in the photo below:

Carla, who supports Clare in her role as one of our Access Technology Advisors.

Phoebe, supporting Kevin, one of our Volunteer Ambassadors.

Trish supporting Lesley, a member of our Haverhill BAPS social club.



Celebrating our local author

You may remember Mark Rigby from one of our previous newsletters, where he wrote about the trauma of losing his sight, almost overnight.

We're very happy to report that Mark has since regained some of his sight and kept true to his word by volunteering for Suffolk Sight.

Mark has been a dedicated member of our volunteer team for a number of years, helping the tech team and our befriending service.

Recently, Mark has told us about another tremendous achievement

in his life. He has just published his first book, a psychological thriller, 'Mindsong'.

The main character, Jamie Jamieson, wakes from a six-year coma in a future transformed by AI. Advanced technology gives him a second chance at life: an artificial eye, an AI brain implant, and a synthetic larynx that can perfectly mimic any voice. When he discovers he can flawlessly reproduce any song ever sung, the public becomes captivated, and he rises to fame under the name 'Mindsong.'



Mark is looking forward to talking about his book, with some of our beneficiaries over the coming months.

Image shows Mark Rigby proudly holding his book 'Mindsong'.

Volunteering for Suffolk Sight

Could you give a little time and make a big difference?

We're looking for friendly volunteers to support people with sight loss in our community.

No special skills needed – just kindness and reliability.

Volunteer roles available:

- Drivers – helping people to get to the social activities
- Befrienders – to offer companionship and regular friendly chats
- Social Club helpers – to help on the day of the club, and also to provide admin support 'behind the scenes' with phone calls and general organisation.
- Fundraising - supporting our events or holding your own, to raise vital funds

Volunteering is rewarding, flexible, and a great way to meet people and give something back.

Full support and training provided, with hours to suit your availability.

Contact us to get involved. Please call 01473 611011 or email info@suffolksight.org.uk

Autonomous Shuttle Trials: A Glimpse of the Future

By Melissa Cox

Driverless shuttle buses controlled by joysticks might sound like science fiction, but that's exactly what I saw during a visit to Adastral Park in Martlesham Heath in late January. The joystick itself is used to programme the shuttle route.

The trial is part of a project exploring how autonomous minibuses could help connect rural communities. The idea is that small shuttles would pick up passengers from locations with limited or no public transport and take them to larger bus stops or stations, where they can continue to their next destination.

The shuttles are being trialled at the NEC in Birmingham and on the road in Milton Keynes. A follow-on deployment project is hoping to start in Suffolk later in the year, subject to Government funding.

The shuttle uses LiDAR and advanced sensors, similar to parking sensors, to detect pedestrians, vehicles and obstacles such as lampposts. Route mapping is currently underway, along with the development of a mobile app.



Image shows the Ohmio Lift autonomous shuttle

During the visit, we watched a demonstration of the shuttle, had a short ride, and took part in feedback sessions.

The shuttle was driverless, but it had an operator on board, as current law requires, who was there in case any human intervention was required. The shuttle drove itself along the pre-programmed route.

Plans are being explored for a talkback system so passengers could contact a control centre if help is needed.

While the technology is still being developed, the potential benefits

are clear. Improvements such as more intuitive wheelchair access are already being considered.

I think it's a very promising start towards making it much easier for people with disabilities, and older people, to travel more independently.

The ADASTRA (Autonomous Delivery and Sustainable Transport for Rural Areas) project is a £325,000 feasibility study led by Suffolk County Council with partners Smart City Consultancy and Ohmio UK. The prototype shuttle, the Ohmio Lift, is currently based at BT's Adastral Park.

For more information, visit www.suffolk.gov.uk.

Healthwatch Suffolk

Healthwatch Suffolk would like to thank Suffolk Sight for their valued support in promoting our visual impairment survey. We are also incredibly grateful to all the groups who welcomed us so warmly to their meetings. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to speak with people about their experiences of sight loss and the impact this can have when accessing health and care services.

This project has formed part of Healthwatch Suffolk's Your Care Your Way campaign, which aims to raise awareness of people's rights to receive clear, accessible and understandable information when making decisions about their health and care.



Image shows members of the Haverhill Club who took part in the Healthwatch Suffolk survey.

You can find out more about the project and your rights by visiting our website <https://healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk/your-care-your-way/>

Although the survey has now closed, we always welcome feedback. You can continue to share your experiences of health and care services through our website

(<https://healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk/services/>) or by calling us on 0800 44 88 234.

Big improvements to recycling in Suffolk

For more than 20 years, Suffolk councils have been collecting recycling from your home. From June 2026, new and improved services will begin. These changes are part of nationwide improvements to help you recycle even more.

Every household will receive full information in the coming weeks and months.

What's changing?

There are three main changes:

1. A new weekly food waste collection

You will be able to recycle more of the food you currently throw away.

2. Better recycling collections

Your recycling service will start to accept glass bottles and jars, drink cartons and more types of plastic, including bags and films.

3. A separate paper and card collection

Paper and card will go in a different bin, so they can be recycled more effectively.

Your new food waste caddies

Every home will receive two caddies:

A 23-litre outdoor food waste caddy, with a lockable lid and a 5-litre kitchen caddy for daily food scraps.



You will be able to recycle items such as fruit and vegetable peelings, leftovers, tea bags and coffee grounds, meat and bones, bread, eggshells, cheese and out-of-date food.

Your food waste will be taken to a special facility where it is turned into Biogas, a renewable energy source, or Biofertiliser to be used on local farms.

Your new recycling bin

Every home will receive an extra recycling bin. For homes where space is limited, you may get a smaller box or sack instead.

This is so you can separate fibre recyclables, such as paper and cardboard, from other recyclables, such as plastics, metals, glass and cartons.

Your recycling services from June 2026

You will have:

- A weekly food waste collection
- A refuse (general rubbish) collection
- A recycling collection for glass, plastics, metal and cartons
- A recycling collection for paper and card

Deliveries of the new recycling bin and food waste caddies started in February 2026 and will take a few months to complete, so don't worry if you haven't received yours yet. When your bins arrive, please keep them somewhere safe and we recommend putting your house number or name on them. We will tell you when to begin using them.

For flats and shared bin areas, we are reviewing bin storage and working with landlords to ensure everything is ready for June.

Helping Suffolk recycle more

Almost 60% of the waste currently placed in refuse bins could actually be recycled. These improvements will help ensure much more of that material is recycled, better for you and better for the planet.

For more information, or if you need extra support

Please visit:

www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/recycling-composting/better-recycling

Or call your local Council:

Babergh and Mid Suffolk – 0300 1234000 (option 4)

East Suffolk - 0333 016 2000

West Suffolk – 01284 757320

Ipswich Borough Council - 01473 432000

We can also share information about the new service in an audio format, along with bespoke bin stickers to help you identify the correct bin.

Both will be available before the launch in June and can be requested through your local council's waste team or directly from Suffolk Sight.

Sharon Bayliss *Service Improvement Advisor – Operations, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils*

Moving landline phones to digital technology

We covered this topic in a previous newsletter, but as the deadline is drawing near, we thought that a quick reminder would be helpful.

The old phone system that's run on analogue copper wires, known as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), is being permanently shut down by 31 January 2027. This is a nationwide telecoms change affecting every UK home and business with a traditional landline.

Instead of copper wires carrying your voice, most landlines will use the internet (via your broadband) to make and receive calls. This technology is called VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) or Digital Voice. Your phone will typically plug into your broadband router instead of the old phone socket, or you might use DECT/cordless phones connected through that router.

Your phone number usually stays the same and your provider will transfer it to the new digital service.

It is important to contact your provider to notify them of any alarm systems that you have in place such as a pendant alarm, fall detector or burglar/fire alarm.

If you have any concerns about the switchover, please call whoever supplies the landline for example BT, Virgin Media, Sky, etc.

What is the Valeda® Light Delivery System?

For this issue Raj Hanspal, Consultant Ophthalmologist, Clinical Partner Newmedica Suffolk, and Suffolk Sight trustee, has written about an exciting new treatment for dry age-related macular degeneration called Valeda.



Valeda® is a non-invasive light-based treatment designed to support vision in people with dry age-related macular degeneration (dry AMD). It is the first and only FDA-authorized therapy shown to improve visual acuity in this condition.

Although FDA approval is a U.S. designation, Valeda is available in some UK clinics offering advanced retinal treatment.

How does Valeda work?

Valeda uses a type of light therapy called photobiomodulation (PBM). This involves using specific red and near-infrared wavelengths of light to help retinal cells function better. It works by:

- Stimulating mitochondrial energy production within retinal cells
- Improving cell metabolism
- Reducing oxidative stress and inflammation
- Supporting the health of the macula, the area responsible for central vision

The treatment is:

- Painless
- Non-invasive
- Performed in clinic while you sit comfortably

Who is Valeda for?

Valeda is intended for people with intermediate dry AMD, particularly those who have:

- Medium or large drusen (retinal deposits) or non-central geographic atrophy
- No wet AMD
- No centre involving geographic atrophy

Your optometrist or ophthalmologist will carry out an assessment, usually involving OCT scanning, to confirm whether Valeda is suitable for you.

What does treatment involve?

A standard course consists of:

- 9 treatment sessions per eye
- Completed over 3–5 weeks
- Each session lasts only a few minutes.

During treatment you will sit at the Valeda device. Gentle light is delivered in short phases. You may be asked to open and close the eye at intervals.

Most patients experience no discomfort and can continue normal activities straight afterwards.

Some clinics may offer top-up treatments every 4 months depending on your response.

What are the benefits?

Clinical trials have shown that Valeda can deliver meaningful improvements:

- Vision improvement
- Patients gained about one line on the standard eye chart over 1–2 years.
- Up to 63.7% of treated eyes achieved significant vision improvement at 24 months.
- Slowing AMD progression
- Reduced drusen volume
- Fewer cases developed geographic atrophy compared with untreated eyes
- Improved Retinal Cell Function and quality of life

Patients reported better clarity and day-to-day vision when compared with standard monitoring alone.

Is Valeda safe?

Yes. Valeda has been shown to be:

- Very safe

- Non-invasive
- Free from injections or surgery
- There are no significant reported side effects in the major clinical trials.

Why is early treatment important?

Dry AMD is a progressive condition. Once retinal cells die, the resulting geographic atrophy leads to permanent vision loss.

Early use of Valeda may:

- Support retinal cell health
- Slow deterioration
- Help maintain useful vision for longer

In the UK, early detection usually occurs via:

- High-street optometrists
- Hospital eye clinics
- OCT surveillance for at-risk patients

Frequently Asked Questions

Does Valeda cure dry AMD?

No. There is no cure for dry AMD, but Valeda can help improve and preserve vision.

Is it available on the NHS?

No, but some providers currently offer Valeda privately.

Will I still need routine AMD monitoring?

Yes. Regular OCT scans and eye health reviews remain essential.

Where can I get Valeda treatment in the UK?

Some ophthalmology practices offer Valeda privately. Ask your optometrist for local availability. Clinics offering PBM therapy often accept self referrals.

Further information

If you have dry AMD and want to know whether Valeda is right for you, speak to your eye care professional or book a retinal assessment at a local private clinic that can provide the treatment.

Sharing our fond memories of Pam Rivers, Marie-Madeleine Kenning, Danny Baker, Joan Bettney-Brown and Bob Cornwall.

Pam Rivers

My dear mum, Pam, passed away on 15 December 2025.

Pam was involved in many activities for the blind. She loved the drama performances with Unscene Suffolk, which I had the pleasure of attending. She enjoyed being a member of the ESAB rifle club and won many trophies which I still have today.

She also loved going to Brighton with the Blind Veterans and enjoyed many arts and crafts including making garden ornaments and pots, which now sit proudly in my garden.

Pam made many friends through the various activities and enjoyed inviting people over for tea and cake in her garden. I know she was a big part of everything and will be sadly missed by all.

I wanted to say a huge thank you to Suffolk Sight and all the clubs, for their kind support for my mum over the years.

Pam was a very generous supporter of Suffolk Sight and, in addition, the fantastic sum of £380 was raised from a collection at her funeral.

Kevin Rivers *Pam's son.*

Marie-Madeleine Kenning,

From the moment we met, I quickly came to learn about her remarkable leadership skills and her kindness toward everyone around her.

Marie-Madeleine believed deeply in people and in the power of community.

She loved the club with all her heart. Together, we worked on many projects and shared countless activities. She was especially passionate about walking groups, these were definitely among her favourites.



Image shows Pam winning a trophy while she was living at Maynell Care Home, Felixstowe.



Image shows Marie Madeleine at the Cohere Arts drama workshop

Marie-Madeleine was a wonderful storyteller, always ready with captivating stories that brought smiles and laughter. She cared deeply about her family and her community, and her compassion touched everyone who knew her.

There is a saying:

“It is not about the destination nor the journey, but the company we keep along the way that makes this life special.”

Marie-Madeleine has left us so many beautiful memories and touched so many hearts.

Thank you for the company. I will be forever honoured and grateful for having known you. You were nothing short of an extraordinary woman and will be truly missed.

Forever in our hearts.

Goodbye, my friend — till we meet again.

Au revoir, mon amie — jusqu'à ce que nous nous rencontrions à nouveau.

Agnieszka Jeffery *Social Club and Volunteer Co-ordinator*

Danny Baker

Danny Baker was a long-standing and prominent member of the Ipswich Men's Club and the Ipswich Blind Society. An engineer during his working life, he was a very active man until his 70s and was often seen running and cycling around Kesgrave, and had been a member of the Constable Bowlers.

Although quite a quiet man he was very well-liked and will be missed by the friends he leaves behind.

Malcolm Ford *leader of the former Ipswich Men's Visually Impaired Club*

Joan Bettney-Brown

Joan was a much-loved member of our Haverhill BAPS (Blind and Partially Sighted) social group.

Meeting Joan for the first time, several years ago, we fell into easy conversation and discovered that we had lots in common.

I became Joan's befriender and Joan became a true friend. I feel she has enriched my life by allowing me to see things through the eyes of someone living with sight loss.

One of my most abiding memories of her is of our day at Felixstowe – she had wanted to feel the close proximity of the sea, and to hear and smell it.

She loved her day, we walked all along the front, ate fish & chips, and she said she slept well that night!

Sadly, Joan passed away before Christmas and I feel that I have lost a true friend, and companion, and hope that in a small way I was able to enrich her life a little, as she has enriched mine.

Penny *Joan's befriender and close friend*

Bob Cornwall

I was very fortunate to attend Bob's funeral along with Meg. We were truly fortunate to know such a character who led such an incredibly rich life, which was evident from the tributes paid. What was also plain to see was that he was a man who loved his family and his family adored him. He will be sadly missed. However, along with memories held in their hearts by everybody who knew him, his legacy lives on in his art, which was one of numerous interests that Bob pursued alongside a list of others which would fill a whole page of this newsletter. He will be especially missed at the Haverhill Club, of which he was a long-standing member.

Geoff Staff *Volunteer Lead at the Haverhill Club.*





Suffolk Sight Equipment and Information Day



**Tuesday 9 June 2026,
10am–2pm**

**The Key Café,
15 St Margaret's Street
Ipswich IP4 2BB**

Come along and try out the latest equipment and technology specifically designed for people with visual impairment.

We will be joined by some of the UK's leading suppliers:

Humanware™

VisionAid
Restoring Independence Since 1996

**Magnifiers
Lamps &
Low Vision Aids**
by Edward Marcus Ltd

Advice and support will be available from local organisations including:

Newmedica, Sensing Change, Blind Veterans UK, Sound On – Ipswich & District Talking Newspaper, Suffolk Guide Dog and VI Forum and the East Anglian Sailing Trust

This is a FREE event and the venue is fully accessible.

There will be a performance by Unscene Suffolk during the day



Suffolk Sight

**For more information please call 01473 611011
or email info@suffolksight.org.uk
www.suffolksight.org.uk**

Suffolk Sight is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation Charity Number 1183608

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Continued from inside front cover

They have extensive experience and knowledge of the opportunities and choices available to you. The list below highlights some of the areas we can support you with:

- Daily living and independence – aids and adaptations
- Low vision – magnification and assistive reading (with referrals to our low vision specialist where appropriate)
- Financial matters – benefits, grants and concessions
- Safety and security – in and around the home
- Tech solutions – gadget advice and demonstrations
- Social opportunities and befriending service
- Advice about services that can help you get out and about safely
- Children and Families Support Group

Supporting Us – Legacies

As an independent charity, we rely solely on donations, legacies and non-statutory grants to continue our work helping people in Suffolk with sight loss maintain independence and live fulfilling lives.

If you would like to leave a gift to **Suffolk Sight** in your will then you can be sure that you will be contributing to the work of the charity, helping us to reach and support even more people.



Suffolk Sight

**Red Gables Wellbeing Hub, Ipswich Road,
Stowmarket, IP14 1BE**

Tel: 01473 611011

email: info@suffolksight.org.uk



Visit us on facebook

**Suffolk Sight is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Charity Number 1183608**

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Suffolk Sight is the sight loss charity for the county. Its purpose is to improve the lives of people who are affected by sight loss, throughout Suffolk.

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