



Newsletter

Winter 2025

A note from our Chief Executive, Claire Winfield.

After twelve years in post, I am letting you all know that I will be retiring at the end of this year. I have loved my time at Sight Support Derbyshire working with our staff team, our dedicated volunteers and of course you, the people who use our services.

Things that stand out over the years include that we have moved office (twice!) now happy in our home at Vernon Gate. The charity survived Covid, quickly adapting our services to comply with all of the safety requirements. Probably, and most importantly, we have found a level of financial stability and a lot of that is from kind donations and legacy gifts that we receive.

I have learned a lot about the challenges people face in life when they live with sight loss. Everyone at SSD hopes that the services and support we provide can help, even if only in a small way.

Our charity Trustees have appointed my successor, Kathy Kozlowski and I am sure that she will introduce herself in the next newsletter. She comes with extensive experience of working in the voluntary sector, and I am confident that she will take the organisation forward.

In the last newsletter we advertised the summer activities on offer. As we move into the winter months there are still things you can get involved with. Christmas crafting, trips out, coffee mornings and social gatherings. This time of year, can be difficult for some people, but getting out and connecting with others can really help improve your well-being, so why not give one of our activities a go? As one of our service-users said: *"It's been like a breath of fresh air meeting new people who understand what losing your sight can mean. But that's not the main focus; enjoying ourselves is!"*

Sight Support Derbyshire Befriending Service

Over the last two and half years the service has gone from strength to strength, linking visually impaired people who are very isolated at home to a volunteer.

We have recently secured further funding to take the service forward and so are looking for more people who would like to use the service, and for more volunteers to help. We always try to match people based on preferences, location, and on interests and hobbies.

Feedback from both parties has been really positive and mutually beneficial. As Lucy said *"We will never run out of things to talk about. Time just slips away and before we know it, the hours have gone by."*

So if you are over 55 years, live alone and have limited social contact, please get in touch to see if we can help.

Winter Activities Programme

Our new winter activity programme is now available here:

<https://sightsupportderbyshire.org.uk/social-and-leisure-activity-programme-autumn-winter-2025/> With activities including Christmas Crafts, café meet ups, and trips to the pantomime in Derby and Chesterfield there is something for everyone. Contact Victoria for more information about how to get involved.

Magical Christmas Fun for Our Children and Families

This festive season we have two special Christmas events planned for children and young people with sight loss, and their families.

First up is Santa's Winter Wonderland at the SnowDome in Tamworth on Friday 28th November. Families will step into a magical world of real snow, sparkling lights, and festive fun! The evening offers the chance to play in real snow, meet Santa's real-life animal companions, and enjoy a mini pantomime performance.

Then, on Saturday 13th December, we'll be heading to Derby Theatre for a live performance of Oliver Twist. We're extra proud this year because one of our own young people, Claudia, will be performing in the lead role of Oliver! It's an incredible achievement, and we can't wait to cheer her on from the audience.

Preparing for the Future

Making a will is something many of us put off until another day, yet it is so important to ensure our wishes will be carried out. We are very pleased that, in conjunction with the RNIB and sight loss charities across the country, we are able to offer a free online will writing service via Octopus Legacy. Part of the respected Octopus group,

Octopus Legacy are offering a FREE basic will – saving you £100. Find out more here: <https://sightsupportderbyshire.org.uk/octopus/> or head straight to Octopus Legacy to get started today: <https://will.octopuslegacy.com/SSDFREE>

Fundraising Update

Winter Raffle

Roll up, roll up! It's time for the Sight Support Derbyshire winter raffle! Still just £1 a ticket, you could win £250, kindly donated by local company Nine Dots Development, a set of beautiful bowls donated by long-time supporters Denby Pottery, or many other great prizes. Closing date 2nd Feb 2026. Tickets enclosed or buy online: <https://sightsupportderbyshire.org.uk/winter-raffle-2025-26/>

Send Christmas Greetings with no need for a stamp!

With the cost of stamps going up every year, many people are choosing to send electronic festive greetings. For a donation of your choice to Sight Support Derbyshire, you can send up to 100 e-cards to friends and family. There are a range of designs, including some by our children's group. Send your e-cards today here:

<https://www.dontsendmeacard.com/ecards/charities/sight-support-derbyshire>

Sight Support Derbyshire is here for you

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