Hello London members,

Welcome to your London Life edition 34, full of articles from you and other sight loss organisations. This edition includes:

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Next Sunday Social - Sunday 10 April

The Social team from London branch continue to host unique monthly Zoom Sunday Socials.  Next Month our vice Chair Berin will be testing our wits in a new game along with other surprises. Use the usual zoom link at 4pm to join the fun.

<https://zoom.us/j/9876541948?pwd=SDlKOHRLMmtWbVlCaGNIbnNHYjQ5dz09>

Join by phone: 0203 481 5240

Meeting ID: 987 654 1948

Passcode: 010203

Activities for London members in 2022

Your social team (Rashid, Valerie, Pritti and Pardy) are working on a plan of activities for London members to meet socially.   Theatre trips including outdoor theatre, lunches, a Buckingham Palace tour, Blind Bingo and park walks were among activities discussed at a recent meeting.  However, we want ideas from our members on what else they would like to do in 2022. Please email us with your ideas – London@nfbuk.org

Next London branch meeting – still on zoom

It was decided by members at our London branch meeting on Wednesday 30th March to keep the April meeting on a zoom only with members taking a cautious approach to rising covid cases. So please put Wednesday 27th April at 5pm on zoom in your diaries. We are still awaiting official confirmation, but we hope to be joined by David Clark from RNIB. Once confirmed we will ask for your questions in advance to ensure a smooth running of the meeting. More details to follow shortly.

New step free access to Harrow-on-the-Hill station by Valerie Clark

I was invited to a special viewing of the newly opened step-free access to Harrow-on-the-Hill station.

On arrival I was welcomed and introduced to representatives from other local Charities. My invitation was for the Harrow Talking Newspaper, but I also mentioned my involvement with the NFB. The Mayor of Harrow arrived and so did Cllr Navin Shar. After photos had been taken the tour began.

Harrow-on-the-Hill is the 91st step-free station to be upgraded, now one third of the 272 stations on the Tube Network are now step-free.

Now to describe how to find these wonderful four lifts, the first lift is to the left in the College Road entrance, just past the fruit and vegetable stall, and before you reach the steps. This first lift takes you up to the Ticket Hall. To then get down to whichever platform you require are the other lifts. You go through the ticket barrier using your Freedom Pass, each lift is then reached by what I would describe as an outdoor bridge. I was very impressed with the smooth finish of the flooring and clean cut safety features, new and clear signage, and importantly, the ease of getting up from street level and down again onto the platforms without the numerous concrete steps to use.

These four lifts, cover all six platforms – 1 & 2; 3 & 4, and 5 & 6, including the lift from the main entrance from College Road.  Each lift takes up to 17 passengers and has Braille markings on the buttons and speech to notify passengers which floor the lift is stopping at.

This has been an ongoing campaign for Harrow-on-the-Hill station to become step-free for many years and I was delighted to be invited to this special viewing. Way back in the early 2000’s David and I were campaigning along with other local groups for this step-free access.

**My World of Visually Impaired Photography on an iPhone by Vicky Blencowe**

Vicky, who has Stargardt's Macular Degeneration, rediscovered her love of photography during the pandemic restrictions using an iPhone 7 plus, she went out and about taking pictures around her local area in south London, discovering the full potential of its camera, including using Voiceover and Voice Control.   She regularly posts on Instagram with full Alt Text @VI\_VickyPhoto.

In this video, Vicky will demonstrate the basic iPhone camera functions with quick access tips and tricks.

<https://youtu.be/rlgIWgzeTfU>

This is part of the "FutureVision & LiveWell” Zoom sessions presented during Lockdown and beyond by a group of Independent Sight Loss Charities around the UK, which won the Rainbow Collaboration award at the Visionary awards in 2021 sponsored by RNIB.

Here’s one of Vicky’s photos - a Head shot photograph of Stanley the bearded dragon lizard with his tongue out just about to eat a blueberry on a floor, taken with burst mode!



Transcendental Meditation ™ from Mark Pampel

I submitted an article about the benefits of Transcendental Meditation (TM) and how this wonderful stress busting technique can help us with getting a good night's sleep! The article was read out on NFB Fed News.

I have been TM for 26 years and it is indeed a very profound, natural, effortless relaxation technique and we don't need to use our eyes or ears to do this, we just need to sit comfortably in a chair. The benefits of TM can be felt even when you first start to do the practice.

You can find out more in this just released article/interview with Dr Tony Nader. He speaks very clearly, very simply, easy to understand and has a wonderfully kind voice.  Please see  [Starworldwidenetworks - PatMcMahon and Tony Nader](https://starworldwidenetworks.com/episodes/got-20-minutes-if-you-use-transcendental-meditation-you-just-might-change-your-world?fbclid=IwAR0Z95GKMI1OXyv15bIGwKSSd4qmnAUxEst4vZG9peEpGGZposbpN2AkZNs" \o "https://starworldwidenetworks.com/episodes/got-20-minutes-if-you-use-transcendental-meditation-you-just-might-change-your-world?fbclid=IwAR0Z95GKMI1OXyv15bIGwKSSd4qmnAUxEst4vZG9peEpGGZposbpN2AkZNs" \t "_blank)

Next Royal Collection Trust descriptive Zoom meeting – Tuesday 5th April 2pm



Above is an image of the painting to be described

I am pleased to tell you that for the April Descriptive Zoom from Royal Collection Trust we will be examining a female Old Master, describing Self-portrait as an Allegory of Painting by Artemisia Gentileschi – image attached.

Artemisia was invited in 1638 by Charles I to come to London to join her father, Orazio Gentilieschi, who had been working in England since 1626. This self-portrait will shortly be on display with 29 other Old Masters at The Queen’s Gallery in Edinburgh.

If you have not already registered to join the Zoom please email me, we’d love you to join us.

With very best wishes,

Amy

Amy.stocker@rct.uk

E-scooter safety event for the capital

London Sight Loss Council (SLC) invites blind and partially sighted people and the wider public to an event on Wednesday 6 April (12–2pm) to discuss key issues and concerns regarding London’s e-scooter trials.

The UK’s largest e-scooter trial has grown significantly over eight months with six times the number of e-scooters now operating compared to launch.

With representatives from e-scooter providers - Dott, Lime and Tier, TfL and the Met police, the event will allow attendees to learn more about different e-scooter safety features, how to report an issue and the progress of the London trials.  It will also discuss the impact on blind and partially sighted pedestrians in the capital.

The event will take place:

Date: Wednesday 6 April 2022 (12pm – 2pm)

Venue: Pocklington Hub, 3 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AR

Register to attend

[https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/events/london-sight-loss-council-vi-forum-e-scooter-safety/](https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/events/london-sight-loss-council-vi-forum-e-scooter-safety/%20)

Urgent E-action: Please email a member of the House of Lords regarding the Elections Bill

The Elections Bill is being scrutinised in the House of Lords and we need the support of as many Lords as possible to protect a secret and independent vote for people with sight loss.

Emailing a Lord about the Elections Bill is quick and simple with our online tool at this link here:

<https://e-activist.com/page/100578/action/1?ea.tracking.id=IC>

1. Fill in your name, postcode and email address.

2. You'll be taken to a template email which you can edit if you would like to.

3. Your email will be sent to a random member of the House of Lords.

Take action for blind voters now: #BlindVotersCount

**Audio Description tour: Yayoi Kusama Infinity Mirror Rooms at Tate Modern**

**Dear friends**

This is a message from Marcus at Tate, with an invitation to you to book on to an audio described tour of Yayoi Kusama The Infinity Mirror Rooms at Tate Modern.

This tour, Kusama in America, focusses on this aspect of her life and work

Date: Monday 16th May at 18.00

Location & taxi drop off point: Tate Modern, Holland Street, Bankside, SE1 9JF

**What to expect**

Yayoi Kusama is a Japanese artist who has created an exhibition including two walk-through pavilions. Each is a magical space of lights and infinite mirror reflections. The exhibition also shows photographs, projections, film and a specially commissioned mirrored sculpture.

Your audio describer, Lisa, will tell the story of Kusama’s life, explain her artworks and invite you to pass through and experience these exciting spaces

You can expect to be met at Tate Modern on arrival, to be able to relax in our studio with a drink while we wait until 6.00pm when the gallery closes and the public have left, and then to enjoy an out of hours visit

I will be there to host the event and I will make sure you know who else is in the room so you won’t miss the chance perhaps to say hello to friends you might not have met since lockdown

We have earphone headsets available so that you can clearly hear Lisa’s descriptions, and gallery stools so that you can sit down to listen

Guide dogs are of course always welcome, and I can advise you if you think that reflections and water might be disorientating for your dog, we can help with this

I hope you will feel confident about visiting Tate Modern, especially if it has been a while since you last visited a museum or art gallery

**Booking onto this tour**

Here is the link to the Tate website with booking details

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/yayoi-kusama-infinity-mirror-rooms/kusama-america-audio-description>

This event is free, but we need to manage numbers by issuing free places

You are welcome to bring an access companion

With my very best wishes

Marcus

Marcus Dickey Horley

Curator of Access Programmes

Tate Modern & Tate Britain

Marcus.DickeyHorley@tate.org.uk

Dates for NFB AGM

The EC have set this year’s AGM for Friday 23-Saturday 24 September 2022 at Loughborough.    Please see the email attachment from Head Office with more exciting news on the celebration of our 75 years.

Any questions please email admin@nfbuk.org

Membership renewal reminder

A huge thanks to everyone who has paid their 2022 subscription.   Just a reminder if you haven’t already done so that your membership subs are now due. The price is still £16 for members and £8 for associate members.  Members will get priority access to Eastbourne and future events.

We are asking all renewing members to complete our new on-line application form to ensure we have your correct details.  If you would like support with this, please contact us

If you have any questions about your membership, please contact our Membership Secretary Fiona on London@nfbuk.org

Proposed changes to routes 1, 168 and 188 - consultation report published from Transport Officer Martin Wilson

After carefully considering all responses and feedback received, we have decided to proceed with the following:

Merging routes 1 and 168, creating a new route for the local network operating between Hampstead Heath and Canada Water

Renumbering the new route as ‘route 1’

Rerouting the 188 so that it terminates at Tottenham Court Road

These changes are expected to come into effect in September 2023.

For further details and to view our consultation report, please visit: <https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/routes-1-168-188>

Yours faithfully

Chloe Baker

Local Communities and Partnerships

Changes to bus routes 21, 143, 263 and 271 from Transport Officer Martin Wilson

Between 22 November 2021 and 9 January 2022, we consulted on proposed changes to bus routes 21, 143, 263 and 271.

A total of 1,520 people responded to the consultation.

Following careful consideration of consultation responses, we have revised the proposals to reduce the impact on passengers.

Route 143 will remain on its current routing, helping to retain direct links to Highgate Village and Whittington Hospital. This also means a common bus stop for two routes (143 and 263) will be retained at Archway for trips via Highgate Hill. Route 234 will be extended from Highgate Wood to Archway via Archway Road instead of route 143, retaining links currently provided by route 263.

We intend to proceed with the revised proposals, which are set out below:

Withdraw route 271 between Highgate Village and Moorgate, Finsbury Square

Introduce a new night service, N271, between North Finchley Bus Station and Moorgate, Finsbury Square

Restructure route 21 so that it runs between Holloway, Nags Head and Lewisham

Restructure route 263 so that it runs via Highgate Village instead of Archway Road

Extend route 234 from Highgate Wood to Archway via Archway Road

We will also introduce additional southbound buses on routes 76 and 141 during peak morning hours to help ensure there is sufficient capacity provided at Newington Green and on Southgate Road and Baring Street.

We have decided not to proceed with the introduction of new school route, 620, as route 143 will continue to operate on its existing route, continuing to provide service to schools along the route.

We anticipate these changes will be introduced in early 2023, but this may be subject to change.

For further details and to view our consultation report, please visit: <https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/routes-21-143-263-271>

Yours faithfully

Chloe Baker

Local Communities and Partnerships

Consultation on proposals for walking and cycling improvements on Battersea Park Road.

I am writing again to let you know that we have updated our consultation materials, as our proposals include the removal of two parking bays in Battersea Park Road - one close to Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and one close to Newton Preparatory School - which may not have been made clear enough on our original plans.

Our updated maps and proposals can now be found on our website at <https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/battersea-park-road>.

Our Easy Read and British Sign Language (BSL) materials have also been updated on our website.

In order to allow you the time and opportunity to review the updated plans and submit comments we are extending the consultation deadline by three weeks until 17 April 2022.

Responses can be made via our online survey at the link above, by email to haveyoursay@tfl.gov.uk or by post to FREEPOST TFL HAVE YOUR SAY. If you have previously submitted a survey response but would like to make further comments on the updated proposals, you will need to send us an email with your further comments. If you have not previously responded, please submit a survey response.

We had planned to hold an online ‘Q&A’ session in which we would present our proposals and respond to questions. We have received very few requests to attend the event, however. If you would like to take part in the event, please send an email to haveyoursay@tfl.gov.uk. If we receive too few expressions of interest to attend we will not proceed with the event.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Miles

changes to bus routes 21, 143, 263 and 271.

Consultation Specialist

A new activity pack from Thrive

We have something exciting to share with you!

With over 40 years of experience in social and therapeutic horticulture, we know just how effective gardening and nature activities are for bringing people together.

With this in mind, we have put together an activity pack called 'Connecting with nature, connecting with people', which provides a number of gardening and nature activities that are ideal for two or more people to take part in together.

You can find out more and sign up for your free activity pack at:

<https://www.thrive.org.uk/how-we-help/what-we-do/why-gardening-is-good-for-our-health/connect-with-others>

Wishing Jazz performer Katrina good luck from London member Alan Fitzjohn

Blind Katrina releases an album of tracks from other blind singers such as Ray Charles and Stevie wonder.  She is up for an award in March and will be promoting her work in 2022.

[Save the date - Katriona performs with her band at the famous Ronnie Scotts Jazz Club on 26th June, afternoon show 1pm]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7zbWm7xm80>

[www.katrionataylor.com](http://www.katrionataylor.com)

[www.youtube.com/c/katrionataylor](http://www.youtube.com/c/katrionataylor)

[www.instagram.com/katrionataylor](http://www.instagram.com/katrionataylor)

New Album Blind Passion - out now

Well that’s all for this edition – well nearly! For those of you who don’t know that I work for VocalEyes – we were over the moon to be awarded Team of the Year at the RNIB See Differently Awards on Tuesday. Read all about it here:

<https://vocaleyes.co.uk/vocaleyes-wins-rnib-team-of-the-year/>

Here’s a photo of the trophy – a heavy black cube with Braille and writing about the award.

The text on the trophy says "This award recognises a team that has made a significant contribution to improving the lives of people who are blind or partially sighted. The winning team has demonstrated excellent teamwork, direction, leadership, collaboration and achievement."



Have a lovely fortnight and we look forward to receiving more articles and information from you, our members.

Best wishes,

Jess

London NFB Chair