**Macular Society Newsletter for South Wales**

Macular Society Regional Newsletter Update from Adele Francis (Senior Regional Manager South Wales) March 2022.

It is wonderful to be able to give you some exciting news, finally, many of our groups are returning face to face in March and April; please see below for latest update.

**Macular Society Groups Update**

* **Royal Glamorgan** – Telephone support group call and quarterly café meetings for more information contact Group Leader Julie Parker 07531 498 967
* **Milford Haven** – Telephone support group call for more information contact Group Leader Maddy Roberts 07584 836 524
* **Monmouthshire** (affiliated) – Telephone support group and coffee group on third Thursday of the month at the Estero Lounge call for more information contact Group Leader David Hoyle 01600 716 402
* **Swansea** – Bi-Monthly café meetings contact Group Leader Kate Healings 01792 401 450
* **Llanelli** – Face- to- Face Group meeting, third Wednesday of the month 10am at The Lantern Centre Hall Street Church Llanelli SA15 3BB, call Adele 07494 468007
* **Carmarthen** – Face-to-Face Group meeting, fourth Thursday of the month 10.30am at Carmarthen Bowling Club, The Green, St. Peter's Car Park SA31 1QP call Adele 07494 468007
* **Bridgend** – Face-to-Face Group meeting, third Friday of the month 10.30am at The Zone 46-48 Dunraven Place Bridgend, CF31 1JB call Group Leader Joy Trinder 01656 744192
* **Neath** – Face-to-Face Group meeting, fourth Tuesday of the month 1pm at Neath Library 35 Victoria Gardens, Neath SA11 1HE call Adele 0749 468 007
* **Ystradgynlais** – Face-to-Face Group meeting, fourth Monday of the month 10.30am at Welfare Hall, Lesser hall Brecon Road Ystradgynlais SA9 1JJ call Adele 07494 468 007
* **Brecon** – Face-to-Face Group meeting, second Tuesday of the month 1pm at first Brecon Scout Hut, Scout Lane, Brecon, Powys, LD37DX call Group Leader Nick Lancaster 01874 610 513
* **Llandrindod Wells** – Face-to-Face Group meeting, third Thursday of the month 1pm at Wooden Blue Gate Middleton Street (in between Snap Cymru shop and Cefn Llys shop) Llandrindod Wells Powys call Group Leader Mary Sim 0974 580 083
* **Caerphilly** – Telephone support group call March, back Face-to-Face in April call Group Leader Denise Duffy 07812 052 836
* **Newport** – Telephone support group call Group Leader Mary Kennett 01633 400 464
* **Tenby** – Telephone support group call Group Leader Val Robinson 07452 888 287
* **Lampeter** – Face-to-Face Group meeting, second Wednesday of the month 2pm at St Thomas Methodist Church, 7 St Thomas St, Lampeter SA48 7DQ call Group Leader Diana Williams 07933 778 725
* **Cardigan** – Face-to-Face Group meeting, third Tuesday of the month 1pm at St Marys Old school Hall, Cardigan SA43 1DR call Adele on 07494 468 007
* **Cardiff Sightlife** (affiliated) – Supporting on a one to one basis as and when needed call 029 2039 8900
* **Bridgeviz** (affiliated) – Face-to-Face group meeting, first Friday of every month, 11:30am at St John's Ambulance Training Centre, Minerva Street, Bridgend, CF31 1TD
* **Working Age and Young People and Connect by Tech Groups** – Zoom meeting on the fourth Friday of the month 10.30am call Adele 07494 468 007

**All Wales Macular Telephone Support Group Calls**

As the majority of groups in Wales are resuming face-to-face meetings, we have set up four weekly All Wales telephone calls to help those who are unable to make it to meetings in person.

These will take place on:

First Wednesday of the month 11am – 12pm - English Speaking

Second Wednesday of the month 2pm – 3pm - Welsh speaking

Third Wednesday of the month 2pm – 3pm – English speaking

Fourth Wednesday of the month 11am – 12pm – English Speaking

These will be hosted by, Adele Francis (South Wales) and Marian Williams (North Wales). Please contact Adele on 07494 468 007 for further information.

**Connect by Tech**

Do you have some technology that you are finding frustrating and are you struggling to see, or it could just be driving you bananas. Phones, tablets, computers and smart speakers are all great and reasonably accessible there might be something you need advice about so you can make better use of the device. If this is the case, why not give the Macular Society Connect by Tech Service a call. One of our fabulous volunteers will give you a call and talk you through the problem over the telephone. You can contact the Connect by Tech service through the Advice & Information Service on 0300 3030 111 or by emailing Techtalk@macularsociety.org

**Research Update**

Research to understand how we reach more people. We need to understand more about those people who we are not yet reaching and who we can help. To find out who they are, where they are and what they want, we have commissioned a company called Yellow Insights to carry out some research with patients and caregivers. Although we are looking for people who don’t know us, you might hear about the research through your networks so if this does create any questions, please get in touch with Karen Searle on 01264 326 626 or Emma Malcolm on 01264 321 970. This is such an important piece of work, and we are looking forward to seeing the results later in the year.

Revolutionary bionic chip inserted in first UK patient with AMD

A patient with dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD) has been able to detect signals in her blind left eye thanks to a revolutionary new implant.

An 88-year-old has become the first UK patient to receive a new device, which gives hope of partially restoring vision to people with dry AMD. You can read the full article on the Macular Society website at www.macularsociety.org.

**VI Talk**

VI Talk is a charity supporting blind and partially sighted people, their families and friends. We have nine Facebook groups including our main group for sharing ideas, information and support. Resources for sale items and events relevant to people who are visually impaired.

Other groups include book club, arts and crafts, in the kitchen, gardening and nature, music, travel and sport. We hold Zoom chats on Monday and Wednesday evenings for friendship and peer support. We have crochet classes over Zoom as well. Our accessible web site has a directory of services relevant to blind and partially sighted people. You can sign up to our monthly newsletter and our Zoom chat mailing list by emailing info@vitalk.co.uk.

We interview blind and partially sighted people and professionals who have a story to share. You can listen through Audio Boom, Spotify, Amazon smart speakers and British Wireless for the Blind radios. We are also on other social media platforms and can be contacted by phone on 07512 772 770.

If you would like further information about any of the topics raised in the newsletter, please contact me on 07494 468 007 or you can ring the Advice and Information number on 0300 3030 111.