

BUILDING THE NEXT 100 YEARS TOGETHER



ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

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A STRONG PAST. A FOCUSED PRESENT. AND AN AMBITIOUS FUTURE.



A WARM WELCOME

We are celebrating a century of transforming lives and building on our existing foundations for the next 100 years. This year, we are honouring past visionaries, celebrating the present and building on a strong legacy, towards a great Croydon.

100 YEARS OF STRONG COMMUNITY

In July 1923, the Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind (Croydon Vision) was formed, laying a strong foundation for which we are extremely grateful. Today we continue to build on this foundation, developing cross-sector collaboration and organisational development alongside Moorfields Eye Hospital, local businesses, the sight loss sector and voluntary services in Croydon. We are now laser-focused on creating a community that protects sight and reduces the impact of mild to severe sight loss over the next 100 years.

FRESH FOCUS

Whilst developing our 2023-26 Strategy, we questioned our focus; historically we've heavily supported the severe sight-loss community, whilst avoidable sight loss continues to rise. Now we want to widen our scope, and we have bold ambitions for the future. Every day, we see the prevalence of mild as well as severe sight loss increasing. In Croydon today, there are **10,500 people with sight loss**, this makes up **1 in 37 people** living with some form of visual impairment. By 2032, this is projected to **increase by 21%**. We need to act now, to increase awareness, understanding and prevention of sight loss within our society.

HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE THIS TOGETHER?

Pivotal to our strategy is building a new bespoke multi-functional centre for our community, driven by our model; 'Heart of a Charity, Mindset of a Business'. To make this happen we need to fundraise, and our target is to reach £7.5 million by March 2025. We can get there together by asking, 'what can I do for my community?', here are a few ways to give back:

- You can become a Friend of Croydon Vision to help make our plans a reality.
- You can fundraise for us, by donating, or holding individual or joint events.
- You can leave a legacy gift to us and always be a part of Croydon Vision.

Do for one, what you wish you could do for many - come join our movement and be part of the change that transforms more lives!

A huge thank you to everyone for being part of our journey.



Susanette Mansour
CEO

Nigel Gooding CBE
Chair of Trustees



CROYDON VISION THROUGH TIME

1923

The start of something special

The association was formed, to work in co-operation with the Statutory Blind Persons Committee of the Town Council, its remit was to carry out the provisions of the Blind Persons Act, 1920.

1931

A permanent home

Funds were raised to buy land on which the Bedford Hall trust was built; this was named Bedford Park.

1979

Bigger and better

Bedford Hall was sold to developers, while new, larger premises were bought at 72-74 Wellesley Road, to provide a bigger and better service. The houses were built in 1885 and were known as Linlithgow Villas.

1982

A royal visitor

Queen Elizabeth paid a special visit to Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind and was greeted by staff, volunteers and members.

2015

Stronger together

Members voted on a proposal, to merge Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind (CVAB) and Bedford Hall Trust into one entity, with a view to strengthening the charity practically and financially. The new organisation was named Croydon Vision, to promote inclusion.

2018

An evolutionary step-change

A renewed focus began in earnest, focussed on organisational development and evolving Croydon Vision. This meant maximising the value of our resources, including employees, volunteers, finances, technology and physical assets.

2021

Joining the dots on care

A partnership with Moorfields Eye Hospital was initiated, promoting a community-led, holistic approach to members' care.

2023 and beyond... Our Strategy 2023-26

We're now developing and executing robust plans for a new multi-functioning hub that will embody the heart of a charity, mindset of a business ethos. In doing so, we'll be making the best use of the land we have available and expanding the possibilities for diversifying our income streams. These new buildings will replace existing structures, which in a few years will be deemed unfit for purpose for a sight loss community.



PROGRESSING WITH PURPOSE

Our 2022-23 strategic plan was created to tackle issues within our community. We crafted it after an extensive, 12-month consultation process with our members, volunteers, staff, and external stakeholders. Since that time, we've worked to cement our values and steer organisational change towards maximum impact. Here's a summary of how community needs and desires resulted in action;

CO-PRODUCTION: Making members integral to products and services

Our community wanted...

1. To be led by a vibrant, engaging committee group (All Ages)
2. To be engaged on social media; reaching more people to improve awareness.
3. To invest in team development (Volunteers, Trustees & Staff)

So this is what we did...

- We focussed on listening, creating an active dialogue with members, staff and volunteers.
- We put members at the heart of project development.
- We captured and shared our members' voices through social media and communications.
- We've been intentional about the personal development of our people focused on compliance and soft skills such as: Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Time Prioritisation and Empathy.

COMMUNITY: improving our reach and engagement across Croydon

Our community wanted...

1. To be more included in social / community life.
2. An improved transport provision with new vehicles and more drivers.
3. To cover more of the borough, by taking the number of Outreach Officers from 2 to 4.

So this is what we did...

- Member numbers have increased by 57% over the past 3 years, thanks to investment in community engagement (our Lost 500 project has been pivotal to this).
- We've upgraded our fleet of vehicles and increased the number of drivers at CV, to serve our community and also support other local organisations.
- We've made outreach an integral part of all front-line officer roles.

PROGRESSING WITH PURPOSE (CONT.)

ACCESSIBILITY: Transforming premises and improving tech usage

Our community wanted...

1. Improved accessibility of our building, installing a lift.
2. A mobile technology hub; to reach the community and boost awareness.
3. An active tech committee, incorporating mentor opportunities.

So this is what we did...

- We've made our building more accessible thanks to the lift installation, an improved Resource Centre, Talking Toilet, IT suite and training for everyone.
- The mobile tech hub is a work in progress!
- We run Visual Awareness workshops throughout the year.
- We're pulling together a tech committee, which is a focus for 2023 and beyond.

HOLISTIC HEALTH: Members at the centre of their care pathways

Our community wanted...

1. More awareness and a reduction of avoidable sight loss.
2. Support for people with sight loss, taking them from despair to independent living.
3. Improved inclusion and empowerment, building confidence to self-advocate.

So this is what we did...

- We now host a weekly Moorfields Eye Clinic.
- Induction now includes Living with Sight Loss workshops for members, friends and family.
- We've activated a culture shift; empowering members to ask, not only what Croydon Vision can do for them but what can they do for CV.
- We've established independent living pathways to employment and entrepreneurship.
- We've helped more than 18 people into work.

SUSTAINABLE REACH: Improving our brand, comms and income stream.

Our community wanted...












1. A working communication strategy, with a staff lead.
2. More networking events with businesses, schools, health professionals, family and friends of Croydon Vision.
3. An increased knowledge of tech.

So this is what we did...

- We've laid the foundations of a strong brand and fundraising strategy.
- We've developed and embedded the ethos of Heart of a Charity, Mindset of a Business.
- We've undertaken intentional networking with schools, health services, families and businesses, through open days and events.

CROYDON VISION IN FOCUS

Our focus is on improving lives of the people in our vibrant community. The numbers - especially when compared with last year's - demonstrate the way we put our dynamic ambitions into practice.

857	Membership growth this year, up from 705 members last year.	
177	The number of members who went on excursions this year, compared with 98 last year.	
938	Community Outreach connected with 938 people in our borough, up from 516.	
1,400+	The number of pairs of glasses we collected for our Eyes Wide Open campaign for Uganda.	
220	Home visits we've conducted this year, up from 132 last year.	
2,795	The number of freshly-prepared hot lunches we've served, up from 2,527 last year.	
980	Wellbeing Matters participants, compared with 725 last year.	
341	We Can Create participants, up from 140 participants last year.	
92	One-to-one accessible tech training sessions (down from 129 due to recruitment challenges).	
442	Personal development and cookery sessions up from 326 last year.	
£201,021	Was generated for 37 members through Advice & Advocacy, giving them more money or control over their finances. Compared to last year; £100,804 for 16 individuals.	

MEMBER VOICES

"We feel very blessed by Croydon Vision, we **can't find this kind of support anywhere else in Croydon**. We really do value and appreciate your services" Annie H (Parent)

"The staff are good - every problem I have Sarah solves, or Daniel solves. They're a marvel. I love the hall, **the atmosphere is a happy one**; people enjoying each other's company." Christopher B

"Observing the enthusiasm and the willingness and always empathetic attitudes of Croydon Vision staff and volunteers. **I am moved to reciprocate** "What can I do for Croydon Vision?", is what I find myself asking." Mr Yehudi

"I always **feel really happy** after a CV excursion; I would recommend them to anyone, especially those who can't get out on their own, they will be very looked after."
Anna Cle



VOLUNTEER VOICES

MARIA: “The common misconception is that if you’re blind you can’t do very much.”

One hundred years of helping people is a huge milestone, it really means a lot! Things have certainly changed since I first knew this place, Susanette has taken it into the 21st Century. And it’s good! There have been lots of improvements over the years and long may it go on.

If you go to Croydon Vision you realise – and it’s very humbling – how even with severe or no sight, life goes on. All our members have found a different way to live, their sight is missing but they make use of their other senses, and their lives can still be full. And useful too; there are so many people here who’ve joined as members and gone on to find a job or to volunteer. It’s very inspiring.

“Croydon Vision is a place for me to go to make friends. After volunteering, it feels like I am helping out the sight loss community and making a difference.”

Theodore



“This organisation has not only provided me with a sense of belonging but has also allowed me to make a meaningful impact on the lives of others.”

Hager



46 The size of our volunteer team at Croydon Vision.

19 Members who became Volunteers / Volunteers with sight loss.

5 Volunteers who have entered paid employment after working with us.

STAFF VOICES

Over the last few years, there's been a step-change in the make-up of our dynamic and motivated team (volunteers and staff). Our strength has come through building a freshly defined culture, growing with purpose and practising a test, fail and learn model. So, when we asked the team how they see Croydon Vision the responses were both unified and galvanising:

THE STAFF TEAM SAID:

We're proud Croydon Vision is...

+ A friendly face in the community + Vibrant + Transformative + Inclusive + Welcoming



"Every day I come to work knowing we help people living with sight loss, to see that there is still a life worth living, by taking them from surviving to thriving." Isha Koroma, Chef

"We support positive development and togetherness at Croydon Vision. That makes me feel so good about working here." Abbie Sanda, Office Manager

"We go above and beyond for ourselves, our team and our members." Abiodun Obileye, Transport Manager

"We are a team of different characters working to improve the lives of our local sight loss community. There is real strength in our diversity." Bekele Woyecha, Business Development Lead

As a team, we value:

+ Teamwork + Awareness + Integrity + Diversity + Compassion

OUR FIVE STEP MODEL

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT TRANSFORMATION IS A JOURNEY



FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

We empower members as agents of change; mentors and ambassadors for sight loss. Generating income and changing attitudes across Croydon and beyond.



APPLYING KNOWLEDGE

We encourage those with the skills, to volunteer at Croydon Vision and other community organisations. Working with businesses to promote inclusion, running mock interviews and arranging apprenticeships.



UPSKILLING

We're here to improve social mobility through tech and living aid training, higher education, coaching and mentorship.



REDIRECTING

We encourage soul-searching using the tried and tested Golden Circle approach Why > How > What. We then walk alongside each person on their journey to work out current and future aspirations.



REBUILDING

We provide advice and advocacy, talking therapy, peer buddying, and active wellbeing sessions. Becoming part of our vibrant community is part of each personalised action plan.

A TAILORED APPROACH:

YOUNG PEOPLE (3-18 years old): We're building confidence and laying the foundations for a rich, full life, by offering activities that focus on developing future leaders, peer support as well as skill up in cookery workshops, tech training.



WORKING AGE (19+ years): We're facilitating routes into employment and entrepreneurship; encouraging innovation, tech training and introducing members to new assistive technology.



OVER 65s: We're embedding a 'live well, age well' attitude, by offering wellbeing classes, dance and creative activities and excursions.



ALL AGES: We're connecting generations to enjoy activities together, volunteering, sharing knowledge, experiences and perspectives.



CROYDON VISION IN ACTION

OUR MEMBERS



OUR MISSION



OUR PROVISION



Amplify our connection

- 5-Step Plan: From Surviving to Thriving.
- Better transport for more outreach.
- Accessible active well-being sessions.
- Trickle-down mentoring opportunities.
- Varied technology solutions.
- An environment geared towards sharing.
- A maintained focus on the 'Lost 500'.



Empower our community

- Quarterly members meeting.
- Collaborative away days.
- Gauging the needs of new members.
- Engaging with sight loss leaders.



Strengthen our Bricks & Clicks model

- Lunch services.
- Transport solutions.
- Children & Young People groups.
- Creative and social activities.
- Varied and supported excursions.
- A wealth of volunteering opportunities.
- Routes to Employment support.
- Online services for remote connection.



Safeguard our future together

- Plans for a multi-functioning hub that embodies the Heart of a Charity, Mindset of a Business ethos.
- Safeguarding and developing our suite of diverse income streams.
- Deep-rooted connections with other businesses and organisations within the community of Croydon.



A CLEAR STRATEGY FOR 2023-2026

Our strategy for 2023-2026 focuses on preventative work (avoidable sight loss), whilst providing practical support to transform lives and develop a culture of giving back to the community.

Embracing Aspirations

We envision reaching as many people as possible experiencing mild to severe sight loss in Croydon, developing stronger networking links, educating people about eye health, transforming lives and giving back to the community.

Igniting a Culture Shift

Our model will focus on preventing sight loss, smashing taboos and retaining a laser-focus on transformational work; to deliver hope that there is life after sight loss.

Unlocking the Circle of Giving

Practical support will lead to transforming the lives of people living with sight loss, who will in turn be empowered to embrace giving back to their community, utilising their skills and experiences, promoting a more intergenerational model.

Building Resilience

Our target of £7.5 million by March 2025 represents a bold declaration of intent for the next 100 years. We want to deliver financial sustainability by building a multi-functional centre of excellence that leverages the power of Bricks (physical) & Clicks (virtual) to serve our community.

Driven by our Purpose

We put people first. We empower our people, on their journey to independence. We take great pride in our Vibrant Community. These crystal-clear statements underpin everything we hope to achieve.

FINANCE UPDATE

The overall performance (income) of the organisation was favourable, with a 21% increase compared to our original budget 2022-23. The completion of the lift and building project has enhanced efficiency, enabling better utilisation of the premises.

Income: In the 12 months of 2022-23 income was £733,646, (2022: £512,409), generated through grants, donations, and legacies £602,274, fundraising events £6,909, activity income £81,672 - **this was 39% above original budget** due to increased demand for lunch service, hall hire, and other income £42,791, mainly from our asset based model approach (rentals).

Expenses: For the period expenses amounted to £734,791, (2022: £852,852) of which staff costs (salaries, national insurance, and pension costs) amounted to £402,204 (full cost) inclusive of direct contractors, compared to budget of £412,512 which equate to £11,308, **a 3% savings**. In addition to the staff cost, a total of £53,488 was expensed as aftermath of the building and lift project.

Balance Sheet: The above led to an overall deficit of £1,145 (2022: -£340,443), which has resulted in a combined fund balance of £1,543,406 (2022: £1,544,551) at the year-end.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Trading Income	43,789	67,811	95,203
Investment	15	22	692
Charitable activities	422,173	374,589	570,896
Fundraising, Donation & Legacy	66,081	69,987	58,204
Other Income	-	-	8,651
Total Income	£532,058	£512,409	£733,646
Membership	611	709	857

A bold declaration

As part of our 2023-26 strategy, we want to build a new bespoke site, to reach many more people living with mild to severe sight loss. This multi-functional centre for our community will be driven by our model; Heart of a Charity, Mindset of a Business. To make this happen we need to fundraise, and our target is £7.5 million by March 2025.

For a copy of our full annual account 2022-23, please contact our office or visit our website;
croydonvision.org.uk/downloads/

Richard Wragg



THANK YOU

Huge thanks to our volunteers and trustees; you are truly the heart of the charity. Here's some of what your incredible generosity has equated to this year:



This total reflects all volunteering roles not just those shown above.

FUNDERS & PARTNERS

Anton Jurgen	Moorfields Eye Hospital
Awards for All	Morrisons Foundation
Big Lottery	Motability Foundation
CAF Resilience Fund	Percy Bilton
Citybridge Trust	Ros Harding Trust
Co-Op Foundation	Selsdon Baptist Church
Croydon College	Span Trust
Edward Gostling Foundation	Vision Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation	Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers
Hobson Foundation	Will Charitable Trust
Hospital Saturday Fund	

Thank you to all members, volunteers, trustees and staff who have been so generous with donations and fundraising. We are so grateful for your continued support.

**A strong past. A focused present.
And an ambitious future.**



**Join our vibrant community to be
part of this journey of growth.**



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