

NEWS UPDATE

December 2022



Talking News Federation



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

As the year is rapidly drawing to a close, with the Festive Season upon us, I wanted to take the opportunity to pass on our thanks to you all for the tremendous work you do around the country. We have gone through an exceedingly difficult few years and whilst the COVID Pandemic is hopefully now behind us, 2022 has been another challenging year in many other ways.

One thing we can all be sure of is the value of the work you all do to produce your community Talking Newspaper. Listeners around the country get so much pleasure from listening to news relating to their local area and having a lifeline link with the outside world.

As we look towards the New Year, many of our groups will be making plans for 2023, as we will be at the Talking News Federation. We will be sharing news of events we are planning, and we look forward to strengthening the partnership we have with you all, wherever your Talking News may be located.

On behalf of the Trustees at the TNF, I would like to wish you all a peaceful, happy and joyous Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Amanda Reed
Chair



DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

If you have something of interest to share with fellow TNF Members, please get in touch as we are always looking for informative content for our newsletters.

-  enquiries
@tnf.org.uk
-  01793 497555
@Talking News
Federation
-  @TNF Soundings
- 
-  www.tnf.org.uk

BRINGING CHRISTMAS FESTIVITY TO YOU FROM TNF SOUNDINGS

In case you have yet to take advantage of TNF Soundings which provides free, high quality audio content for your Talking Newspapers and Magazines as well as Hospital and Community Radios to broadcast, you may like to tune in in the days leading up to Christmas, all suitable for people living with sight loss or other disabilities which make reading difficult.

Our Festive Seasonal content provides a range of interesting Christmas-themed articles which went live on the 28th November. Over three weeks in the 'Time Out' section www.tnfsoundings.org.uk/category/publications/time-out/ you will be able to access nine Festive articles as well as the regular TV and Radio highlights and at least one newsy 'Info' item each week.

For the week of 5th December, three articles have been scheduled which includes a short story entitled 'Herod's Spy', an item on the history of the Christmas pudding, and a pair of Christmas poems from the Ver Poets' Group. In the week of the 12th December, you will find a further two pieces. The first item, aimed mainly at children, regales a short story about gnomes called 'Nodrog helps Santa Claus'. You will also be able to listen to a further pair of Christmas poems from the Ver Group.

TAKE PART IN OUR WINTER WORKSHOP SEASON

The TNF is always looking for ways to provide our members with information to help them enhance the service they provide with their local Talking Newspapers and Magazines. As we approach the year end, why not take a look at our Winter Workshop season, accessible through our website.

You will find two topics: **'What makes a good Talking Newspaper'** and **'BWBF/TNF Working Together.'**

The aim of our workshops is to provide an open forum in which participants can discuss topics and share their views with the TNF Committee and other TNs. If you have ideas for future workshops, we would love to hear from you. **Simply contact workshops@tnf.org.uk.**

Our next workshop will be about improving two-way communications between the TNF Committee and the member TNs.

Previous sessions remain available for viewing on the TNF members' website at www.tnf.org.uk/category/events/events-workshops/

DON'T LEAVE IT TOO LATE TO ASK US FOR HELP!

Sadly, over the past few years, a number of local TNs have had to close. This may have been due to a lack of volunteers, audio engineers, committee members, ageing volunteers or falling listener numbers. Closure may also be due to the local TN keeping the same format for the last 40 years without moving with the times and varying the content of the recordings, adding interesting articles, features and interviews; or simply down to poor marketing with listeners not knowing about the service you offer.

If you are struggling to maintain your local TN, rather than waiting to ask for assistance once you have notified the Charity Commission that you are folding, contact the Talking News Federation at an early stage. Discussing the problem with our organisation at an early stage, we may be able to provide a valuable lifeline. Whilst our Development Team is not some 'superhuman' person, we do have access to a vast knowledge group of people. Collectively, we should be able to help and guide you.

Our new 'TalkInfo' service can also help fill in the 'empty' areas around the UK, although it is not there to help prop up failing TNs.

Fortunately, the good news is that the vast majority of local TN's continue to go from strength to strength due to good, hardworking volunteers within local communities.

Should you require any assistance, please do not leave it too late. Simply contact Alan Dunderdale on enquiries@tnf.org.uk or call **01793 497555**.



New Macular Society 2023 Calendar Brand new for 2023!

Help Beat Macular Disease with this brand new, and exclusive, calendar for £10 each.

Each month features a bright image and inspiration quote together with a box for each date.

Calendar size is 11.7 x 16.5 inches (297 x 420mm); boxes for each date measures 1 1/4 x 1 3/4 inches (31 x 44mm).

To purchase visit www.macularsociety.org/shop/everyday-essentials/new-macular-society-2023-calendar/

NEW TALKINFO SERVICE IS LAUNCHED

A fortnightly audio publication entitled **TalkInfo** has recently been launched, offering a free service combining an interesting mix of content from national and local information, features, light entertainment and news. The service is devised for listeners who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled. **TalkInfo's** aim is to provide a service that everyone is able to enjoy, enabling them to participate positively in their local community.

Our **TalkInfo** Team value independent local Talking Newspapers as the preferred way of providing local news and information to our listeners. They also appreciate the difficulties experienced in some areas in sustaining existing provision or effectively creating new traditional arrangements. The **TalkInfo** service offers a contemporary, practical means of establishing an audio service where targeted audio provision, for example through Talking Newspapers, is not currently available.

Local volunteers record **TalkInfo** at home, using their own familiar devices with recorded items loaded to a central hub. Their coverage is compiled into the current release together with the fortnightly provision of national news, features and information. This is then published online with all post-production engineering or sound editing completed automatically after uploading. This reduces the local burden of formatting recordings and results in a straightforward method of producing quality, inclusive online audio content for your listeners.

Naturally, technical support is provided via the national **TalkInfo** Team. They also offer editorial oversight and support, marketing and recruitment advice, governance and financial management. At a local level, contributors, whether they are researchers, content collators or feature readers/recorders are further supported by a co-ordinator within the streamlined neighbourhood team.

The **TalkInfo** services appreciates the value of feedback and interaction from listeners and the people who are creating the online audio offering. Listener feedback is encouraged, and information provided is considered and acted upon. Listeners can contact the **TalkInfo** team via telephone or email with comments, both positive and constructively critical.

Email enquiries@talkinfo.org.uk or telephone **03000 400298**.

Information regarding content provision and the quality thereof, together with what listeners would like included helps shape future content.

TalkInfo publications are accessible online via the TalkInfo website, the BWBF app, Bumblebee, Google and Alexa. Should a different format be required, it may be possible for the local team to do this.

REPORTING BACK ON THE TALKING NEWS AGM AND CONFERENCE

For those members of the TNF who were unable to attend the Talking News AGM and Conference held on the 16th/17th September in London, we thought you may like to know what happened. Fifty delegates attended with twenty online.

This year's event was held at the Musical Museum in Brentford. Our conference opened with a Gala Dinner on the Friday evening with Dr Amit Patel as the after-dinner guest speaker. Dr Patel, a qualified doctor specialising in emergency medicine and major incidents, lost his sight to keratoconus in 2013, when a usually successful corneal transplant treatment rejected. However, his experience has led him to author best-selling books, he is a motivational speaker, a disability rights campaigner and charity Trustee. (Dr Patel— image right).



The Conference, held the following day, saw our Chair of Trustees welcoming delegates before the AGM began. Our Chair Amanda Reed, together with Paul Ramsden, Tim Baty and Richard Black were re-elected as Trustees, and June Little was newly elected.

Our first speaker was broadcaster Peter White and he spoke to the conference on the topic of 'Knowing your Listeners' and how important it is to know what they like listening to. Peter was followed by Cathy Yelf, Chief Executive for the Macular Society who gave us more information about the Society. (Cathy Yelf—image left).



The day also included two workshops. The first, presented by Tim Baty, Paul Ramsden and Mike Wood gave information on 'TNs and the Internet.' In the afternoon, the second workshop on 'Leading Through Change' was presented by June Little. Her presentation gave information on the things which need to be in place and the data you need to run your TNs, which was well received.

Our Conference concluded with Tom McInulty giving the final talk about his journey from traveling around the world and losing his sight overnight with the dogs who have been such an important part of his life.

The Conference closed at 3.30pm with the option of a tour round the Museum.

ARE YOU 'IN TOUCH' WITH OUR PRESIDENT?



Just a reminder that the President of the Talking News Federation, Peter White, has some very interesting transcripts, recipes and interviews from his **BBC Radio 4** programme 'In Touch' available to listen to and share with your listeners.

Peter has been President of the TNF since 2004 and knows only too well the challenges faced by visually impaired people in this country. He has been involved with both television and radio broadcasting for many years and is currently presenting, with others, 'You and Yours' and 'In Touch' on BBC Radio 4.

As 'In Touch' is a programme specifically produced for blind and partially sighted people, it is a mine of useful information, worth sharing with your listeners. Peter also regularly contributes to other science, news and educational programme to talk about disabilities. He has previously presented Channel 4's 'Same Difference' (1987-1989) and Central Television's 'Link' (1989-1991). In 1995, he was appointed as the BBC's Disability Affairs Correspondent, and he was part of the reporting team for BBC News at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Peter has also written two books: 'See It My Way' (ISBN 978-0316646420) and 'Being Blind' (ISBN 978 1887068840).

Peter's autobiography 'See It My Way' tells the story of his life in such a way that one minute he will have his reader choking with laughter, the next you will be squirming at the injustice of dealing with his disability, not allowing it to interfere with his ambition of progressing his career.

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ARE YOU 'IN TOUCH' WITH OUR PRESIDENT? continued

Growing up in the 1950's, the second blind child of sighted parents, Peter faced the horror of special schools which at that time was the only real option. However, thanks to his stubborn, independent streak he grew into a determined adult who has gone on to have a remarkable career in broadcasting. Peter's rise to the hallowed corridors of the BBC was never straightforward as you will see as you delve into the story contained in his book.

From his early days with his family in the sheltered, love-filled home which instilled a confidence and security that has stayed with him throughout his life, through to the depression that dogged him at university and forced him to drop out, and his stoic recognition that he had to somehow make a living in the world of the sighted, Peter White's determination, stubbornness and wry sense of humour shines through almost as brightly as his love for his family.

To listen in visit www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qxww

BRINGING A VIRTUAL VILLAGE HALL TO YOU ON LINE

Whilst people may not be able to venture outdoors, especially as the weather closes in, thanks to the Royal Voluntary Service with support from the People's Postcode Lottery, a Virtual Village Hall can come to you online.

This online activity hub (www.virtualvillagehall.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) has been created to help people stay physically and mentally active, connected and having fun. With sessions led by expert tutors as well as some well-known faces, you require very little space or equipment to get involved.

There are over 700 sessions available to participate in, including creative arts and crafts, music and singing, cooking and baking, dance and exercise, and technology skills. You can join in live sessions or catch up on demand at a time which suits you.

Before getting involved, you will need to read the important information and frequently asked questions. They also have a [Facebook page @VirtualVillageHall](#).

You will also find valuable information on their website about how to 'Stay Safe, Warm & Well this Winter'. The RVS has joined forces with Yakult to produce a short, animated information guide with practical tips on staying safe, warm and well over the coming winter months. Throughout the winter months, you will find a series of events on the website including information on home security, a gut health recipe, energy saving tips and an at home winter workout class, delivered by expert tutors.

TNF'S TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Our Technology Trustee Tim Baty has been working hard during 2022 to make significant changes to the TNF's internal IT tools. The work has been undertaken to help us to operate more efficiently and we would like to share with you what we have been doing so far

Website

We have re-structured the TNF website to provide a refreshed look and feel, providing visitors with clearer routes from the homepage to information they are seeking. We have focused on addressing the needs of our Listeners, local TNs and their members, other organisations with a mutual interest in the Visually Impaired community.

By moving our site to the popular WordPress web content management system, and changing some of the back-end technology, we can now deliver TNF Soundings and TalkInfo's audio content more effectively.

Members' Database

Our Members' Database has been migrated to a single database which integrates fully with our website. By doing this, we can now offer significant benefits for the reliability of information we hold, making many routine administration tasks much easier than before.

What we do need however is for you, our TNF Member, to keep up updated if your details have changed. This will ensure we can keep our Members' Database fully up to date.

TNF Enquiries Desk

By introducing a simple helpdesk management system, we are now able to record and monitor enquiries. This will enable TNF to deal with requests for assistance more efficiently. When you send an email to enquiries@tnf.org.uk, a ticket is raised automatically; you will be able to then view your ticket's progress online by connecting to www.help.tnf.org.uk.

Microsoft 365

TNF has brought Microsoft 365 onto our system. This will help the Committee and our team of dedicated volunteers to work together more effectively. Volunteers can now have access to a dedicated Volunteer Portal which provides easy access to the policies, procedures and support material that they need.

As ever IT technology constantly moves on, so no doubt 2023 will see further enhancements to our website and system.