



# Annual Funding Report

2021-2022

## Organisation Details

Organisation name	Rugby & District Talking Newspaper for the Blind
Studio Address	Rugby Thornfield Indoor Bowls Club, Bruce Williams Way Rugby
Postal Address	Rugby Talking Newspaper Royal Mail DO, PO Box 1000, Mill Road, Rugby CV21 1AA
Email	<a href="mailto:enquiries@rugbytalkingnewspaper.org">enquiries@rugbytalkingnewspaper.org</a>
Telephone	07793 072889
Charity Number	506989
Chair	Phil Arkell

## **Introduction**

Rugby Talking Newspaper (RTN) has been supporting people living with sight loss for the last 45 years. During this time, we have enabled thousands of visually impaired people to access their local news firstly through audio cassettes, and more recently using USB sticks and digital streaming, so that they can be entertained and informed and empowered to participate in local community discourse.

The charity is run entirely by volunteers who provide the governance and operational capacity of the organisation as well as functions such as social media awareness, fundraising and liaising with external partners.

RTN expenditure is approximately £5,000 per annum. This represents extremely good value for money at just £100 per edition or £1.50 per person per week.

## **Our Response to the Pandemic**

Like many small charities, the sudden introduction of the first lockdown and the ensuing restrictions over the last 2 years created considerable challenges for us.

However, thanks to the commitment and dedication of our team, we were able to relocate the studio equipment to our editor's home who, with remote support, continued to produce the talking newspaper throughout the pandemic.

By maintaining the service, we ensured that those living with sight loss in Rugby still had access to essential news and information

at a time of national crisis. We provided our listeners with telephone numbers for local community groups, shopping services and other community facilities essential to those living in isolation.

As we gradually moved out of lockdown we returned to our studio where we could involve more of our volunteer readers, producers and technicians.

## Service Development

Unfortunately, Talking Newspapers face an existential threat from the paucity of local news in today's media. The days of local newspapers carrying quality, in-depth news are increasingly rare. In Rugby we have seen our local newspaper offices close and their functions relocated to remote towns. Journalism is outsourced and increasingly reliant upon contributions from the general public.

To counter this challenge we have diversified our news sources - using social media sites and other channels of information to supplement our content. At the same time, we have expanded the service to include a magazine element. We have created a separate team of readers, editors and technicians who create entertainment/local interest content for inclusion in the weekly publication.



To this end, we have expanded our network of partners to drive content development. We now receive regular articles and entertainment from pupils from Rugby School, articles developed by experts from Rugby Museum whilst our own team have developed a series of articles on Rugby's Blue Plaques and other areas of local historical interest.

## **Technological Developments**

Although our core demographic tends to be elderly people who have limited knowledge of the latest technology, we consider it important to ensure our service is accessible to as many people as possible. We now upload RTN onto the British Wireless of the Blind Talking Newspaper App so that it can be streamed either through a computer/tablet/phone or by using a smart speaker such as Amazon's Alexa devices.

These devices are increasingly popular across the visual impairment community because of their ease of use and reliance upon voice control. What is more, streaming allows us to provide a service to the non-visually impaired community who do not qualify for Articles for the Blind (Freepost service) but have difficulty reading newspapers. This means that those living with Parkinson's, stroke or other conditions can access the talking news

We can now boast of listeners across the country who, as former Rugby residents, want to keep abreast of changes in the town.

It is our expectation that over the coming decade, the vast majority of our service will be accessed through streaming rather than USB memory sticks



One of our more popular sections is the Obituaries. This may sound a little morbid but for our listeners, this is often the only way they can find out that someone they know has passed away. Thereby giving them an opportunity to pay their respects.



Similarly, information about road works, changes to bus timetables and routes as well as the late chemist rota are essential pieces of information that are often difficult to access unless you are computer literate.

Perhaps most recently, this has been demonstrated by the local refuse collection workers strike in the town. Many of our listeners would not have known that their bins were not being emptied or that the strike has been extended still further. Now, they are kept informed and can plan accordingly.

These things may appear to be relatively insignificant in the scheme of things but to a person living with sight loss who may also be socially isolated, our service bridges the divide and ensures they have access to the information they need to make day to day decisions.

# Financial Statements

Below is our draft financial statement for the year May 2021 to April 2022.

The accounts are yet to be submitted to the independent account examiner

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Debit</b>	<b>Balance</b>
01/05/2021	Balance brought forward			£6,883.41
17/06/2021	Donation	£10.00		£6,893.41
22/06/2021	Rugby Rotary Club	£1,200.00		£8,093.41
22/06/2021	Riviera Multimedia USB Copier		£1,182.00	£6,911.41
22/06/2021	Stationery		£2.49	£6,908.92
12/08/2021	Donation	£10.00		£6,918.92
12/08/2021	Insurance		£137.28	£6,781.64
26/08/2021	Recorders, screens etc		£423.37	£6,358.27
26/08/2021	Kings Access Technology		£838.80	£5,519.47
03/09/2021	Amazon grant	£1,000.00		£6,519.47
14/09/2021	Donation	£10.00		£6,529.47
14/09/2021	Air purifier		£379.00	£6,150.47
02/12/2021	Oxygen graphics website		£852.00	£5,298.47
20/04/2022	Rent		£100.00	£5,198.47
22/04/2022	Kings Access Technology		£1,254.00	£3,944.47
<b>30/04/2022</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>£2,230.00</b>	<b>£5,168.94</b>	<b>£3,944.47</b>



## **We would like to thank:**

- Rotary Club (Rugby)
- Amazon
- Rugby Group Benevolent Fund Ltd
- 29th May 1961 Charity
- Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust
- Baron Davenport's Charity
- The Rugby Advertiser
- Rugby Observer

We would like to thank Rugby Thornfield Indoor Bowls Club for kindly accommodating our studio at a peppercorn rent.

Of course, our activities are only possible thanks to our 40 plus volunteers who edit, produce, read, research and manage the charity. Without their dedication and commitment we would be unable to sustain this valuable service.



# Supporting people living with sight loss in Rugby

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