

Vision for people with sight loss

The Torch Trust in focus



torchtrust.org

TORCH 

Christian resources and activities for blind and partially sighted people worldwide



Introducing Torch

It's the people that matter – those who are blind or those who just don't see well. Torch exists for them. The Torch Trust seeks to meet the needs that are not otherwise met, especially the spiritual needs of those who are Christians and those who are simply interested in Christian things.

For many who live alone, isolated through their sight loss, Torch means a friendly face, someone to be trusted, and a local Group to join. For others it means an adventurous holiday in a Christian family environment. For many it means listening to a daily Bible reading, or a Christian magazine or book to enjoy. For some it means a theological book in braille to help prepare Sunday's sermon.

Torch work organises naturally into “four dimensions” – literature, fellowship, holidays and international.



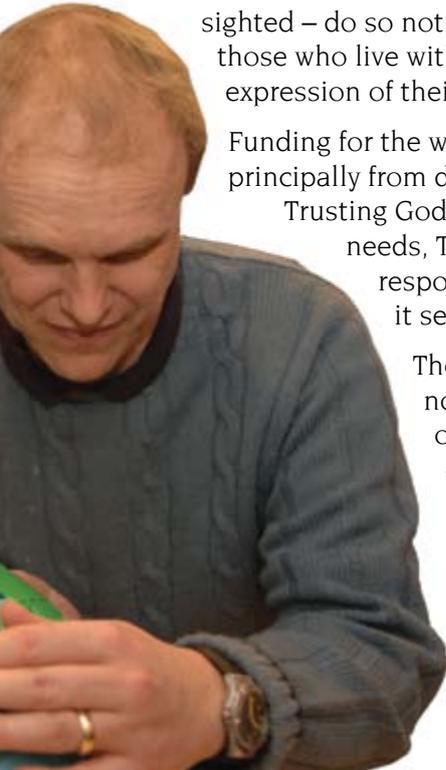
The Facts

Torch Trust has a staff of around 40 and relies on the efforts and commitment of over 1,000 volunteers who freely contribute their skills and time. Those that work for Torch – whether staff or volunteers, blind or sighted – do so not just from a desire to help those who live with sight loss, but also as an expression of their Christian faith.

Funding for the work of Torch comes principally from donations and legacies.

Trusting God to provide for its financial needs, Torch has grown through responding to the needs of those it serves.

The Torch Trust is a nondenominational Christian organisation, a registered charity governed by a board of trustees half of whom are blind people. It enjoys the support and encouragement of a Council of Reference formed of reputable Christian leaders.



Roots

The story starts in the 1950s with co-founders Ron and Stella Heath, when a young blind girl called Wendy came to the church youth group they led. She became a Christian and the Heaths tried in vain to find Christian resources in braille for her. They learned braille and started to transcribe booklets. Soon there were a number of blind young people coming regularly to their home sharing fellowship, food and fun and exploring the Christian faith together.

They came across a little Christian magazine called “The Torch” that had been produced in braille since 1931 by the three sisters of the devout Trench family. In 1959 just weeks before the death of the last surviving sister, the Heaths agreed to take on the magazine and the Trust they had started. The Torch Trust of today was born.



Ron and Stella Heath

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It's wonderful to be able to borrow a part of the Bible (in braille) relevant to our housegroup study, enabling me fully to participate

Richard, Crowborough

Your books do help me on difficult days

Mrs M., Norfolk

Torch produces Christian literature in audio, braille and large/giant print; books of all types, Bibles, Bible reading notes, magazines, hymn/song books, scripture text calendars and booklets – all to help people on their personal walk with Christ and to participate in church life. Torch employs the very latest technology to give increasingly responsive access to Christian resources of all types.

Few books are available in formats those with sight loss can read and then they can be too bulky to keep. Torch operates a large, free postal library of Christian books in accessible media. Borrowers range from children to ministers with many enjoying biographies, devotional books and Christian fiction. With over 3,500 titles in the library there is plenty to choose from.

Torch's seven magazine titles have a combined readership of over 10,000 people in 100 countries. Torch provides accessible editions of popular daily Bible reading notes and produces a weekly radio programme.



LITERATURE

Over 100 Torch Fellowship Groups meet informally on a monthly basis across the UK. Run with a friendly Christian ethos by local volunteers, they provide an opportunity for meeting up with others who are living with the challenges of sight loss. They are open to all – Christian and un-churched, blind and sighted alike.



There was laughter and love... people shared and cared in a relaxed way

Anne from the Bedford Group

The meetings of course... marvellous

George from the Tonbridge Group

Torch Fellowship Groups complement church and serve the local community, providing essential companionship to often lonely people. There is the opportunity for everyone to become fully involved in the Group with accessible resources available and multi-sensory activities featured, and always food to share. Typically blind and partially sighted people are actively involved in the Group's leadership.

Find your nearest Group using the directory on the Torch website **torchtrust.org**. Maybe you or your church could offer some help.

FELLOWSHIP

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There's just something about this place that's so lovely... you get fellowship... you get fun... you make new friends

Torch HRC guest

It was an absolute dream. Everything that could be done to help us was done

Clare from Kettering

Set in a peaceful Sussex village with views of the South Downs, Torch's Holiday & Retreat Centre (Torch HRC) is the ideal place in which to refresh mind, body and spirit. Designed especially for blind and partially sighted people, our holidays are about being together in a caring atmosphere with



plenty of fellowship and fun. Torch offers a varied programme of holidays to suit young and old and also runs holidays at other centres across the UK. What better for a relaxing holiday? – sharing God's love in a Christian family environment.



HOLIDAYS



The challenge of reaching the world's blind and partially sighted people is huge. In the two-thirds world they are often the poorest among the poor.

Torch routinely mails accessible Christian literature to readers in 100 countries. Torch maintains links with many other Christian

organisations working with blind and partially sighted people and works in partnership with a growing number, reaching both children and adults.

The Torch Fellowship Group model has been taken up across a number of countries in Africa. Supported by local Christian leaders, the Groups bring Christian love and fellowship to blind and partially sighted people.

Malawi is the world's tenth poorest country and blindness is common. Many Torch Fellowship Groups meet in rural villages. Here also a team of African staff operate a braille unit producing Bibles and other literature in African languages. Through Torch's Aid Africa programme much is done to help in practical ways.



Thank you for helping us to learn and grow in God's Word

Grace, India

I am totally dependent on Torch, I am like a sheep and you are my shepherd

Peter, Malaysia

Worldwide, 285 million people are visually impaired: 39 million are blind and 246 million have low vision.

INTERNATIONAL

Torch Trust Aims

Enabling people with sight loss to discover Christian faith and lead fulfilling Christian lives.

This brochure is also available from the Torch Trust in large print, braille, audio and electronic formats.

Chair: Marilyn Baker

Chief Executive: Dr Gordon Temple

Council of Reference:

The Rt Rev'd Richard Atkinson OBE

Rev'd Dr Steve Brady

Rev'd Dr David Coffey OBE

Rev'd Malcom Duncan

Jonathan Lamb

Rev'd Roy Searle

Dr Elaine Storkey

Rev'd Dr Derek Tidball

Torch Trust is a partner in Churches for All
churchesforall.org



The Torch Trust for the Blind
A company limited by Guarantee
Registered in England number: 4616526
Registered Charity number: 1095904

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