

## Chairman's Report 2021

When I wrote my report last year the world was a different place. We were excited and looking forward to our conference on the propitious date of 6-6 2020. We had an excellent array of speakers lined up as well as Bitu to talk to us in person at the AGM which never happened.

We were concerned about finance, for although we intended to apply for a lottery grant, there was no guarantee the money would be forthcoming, as happened in 2016. Consequently, we decided not to enter a small grant partnership with Fight for Sight that year where our contribution would have been £7,500.

As things turned out we ended the year with an unexpected healthy balance which has enabled us to once again fund a small but hopefully rewarding piece of research. The project is led by Dr Samantha Wilson of Loughborough University. This makes three projects that we have funded with Fight for Sight as follows:

2018	Nottingham University	To study the involvement of corneal nerves in the pathogenesis and progression of keratoconus
2019	Liverpool University	To develop a new type of spectacle lens that can correct irregular astigmatism for keratoconus patients
2021	Loughborough University	To develop a lab-based laser tool to detect/monitor subtle biomechanical structural deficits that occur during early-stage corneal disease progression; specifically, localised thinning of the cornea.

Whenever we can we shall sponsor NHS Optometrists to attend Ken Pullum's Scleral Lens Symposium which does a great job in training them to deal with our condition. It is where I heard Bitu speak and I'm sure you will be as impressed as I was.

It is due to the generosity of our members that we are able to make these financial commitments. We are lucky in that we are run entirely by volunteers so our administration expenses are insignificant. A large number of members commit to a monthly standing order, in most cases just £1. That small sum keeps us afloat and goes a long way to finance the printing and postage of our newsletter. The larger projects are facilitated by one off donations.

The big and unexpected success this year has been our Zoom Coffee Mornings. They have enabled us to be a truly national Charity. It no longer matters where you live, everyone has equal access. It is a great place to learn from others and pass on your experiences.

Please remember that we are purely a self-help group and your involvement is appreciated.

David Gable  
18th February 2021