

NEW VOLUNTEER READERS' INFORMATION SHEET

What we do and why

Thank you for offering to join our team as a volunteer reader. We exist to give our blind and partially sighted listeners the best quality recordings that we are able to produce. Our service depends on a considerable team effort but, however proficiently we sound engineer, edit and duplicate our recordings, their quality ultimately depends upon the quality of our readers. That is why we are determined to select readers carefully and fairly by asking each new volunteer reader to read the same material which will be recorded in our studio. The recording will then be passed to our Reading Panel who will appraise the reading solely on the reader's vocal performance.

Ungrateful?

At first sight, this may seem to be a process which doesn't fully appreciate the generosity of spirit which motivates, sometimes very busy, people to offer their valuable time to our Charity. In fact, we are very well aware of the sacrifice involved and are very grateful to all who work with us but Five Valley Sounds exists for our listeners and their needs are paramount. Moreover, should a potential reader not join the readers' team, there are plenty of other jobs to which that altruistic spirit can be put to use in our work.

Standards

Having said the above, our standards are not impossibly high. We are not the BBC and 'posh' accents are not preferred. On the contrary, regional accents, especially local ones, add colour and interest to our recordings. We are an equal opportunities organisation and have no gender bias, and certainly no age bias, in our selection of readers.

What we're looking for

What we seek in a reader are clarity, fluency and lively expression. We know, from feedback from listeners and their families and friends, that our service means considerably more to them than merely translating the news. Our weekly recordings are a small but important break in the isolation, and often difficult lives, in which blind people can find themselves confined. Inescapably, much of the news we read is far from up-beat but the last thing our listeners should detect in a reader's voice is that they would prefer to be at home by the fire rather than out on a cold, dark and wet night reading dull news. Our listeners deserve better and voluntary work should not mean second-rate commitment.

What next?

Contact our Secretary, Mrs Lesley Partington, on **01453 832034** and we'll arrange a mutually convenient time for you to come to the studio and read. You'll be sent half of the reading material beforehand to give you time to prepare it. The other half (which is easier to read than the first half!) will be given to you in the studio but you will still have ample time to read it through before it is recorded. The recording will be passed to the Reading Panel. You may have a copy of the recording if you would like it. The technician (aka the 'twiddler') will advise you about the use of the microphone and generally be as helpful as possible. This is not intended to be an intimidating procedure. You may also wish to take the opportunity to ask any questions about our workings. The recording session should last about half an hour.

The Reading Panel

The Reading Panel comprises members of the Committee who have had considerable experience of reading and/or twiddling. Their function is to listen to the reading and appraise it against such criteria as mentioned above; clarity, fluency and liveliness of expression. The Panel will inform you of its decision as quickly as possible.

Jonathan Bowen-Davies

Chairman - August 2018