The Morpeth Talking Newspaper had its beginnings in a local service project undertaken by Katey Resigno as part of her Duke of Edinburgh Award while she was a student at King Edward VI School in Morpeth in December 1990. The first edition of eight tapes was distributed to members of the Morpeth Area Partially Sighted group who greatly appreciated the initiative. The Editor and the Publishers of the Morpeth Herald were approached for their support and the Morpeth Talking Newspaper has been providing a recording of the Morpeth Herald on a fortnightly basis ever since.

When Katey left school in 1992 there was a need for the talking newspaper to seek a different way of producing its recordings. Katey had been nominated for a youth community award by the Morpeth Lions Club and one of the judges was Mrs Joan Appleby of the Business and Professional Women’s organisation. She formed a committee, raised funds and with the support of the Northumberland Hospital Radio established a recording facility at the Morpeth Cottage Hospital.

The concept of establishing reading groups was an early initiative and seven groups continue their involvement. This variety gives a number of different voices to our recordings and widens the circle of people who are involved and give the talking newspaper their support.

The closure of the Morpeth Cottage Hospital created a need to find another home for our recordings and we have been so fortunate in obtaining the support of the Contact Mental Health Group in Grey’s Yard, Morpeth who have provided us with a base.

Initially the fortnightly editions were recorded and circulated on tape cassettes but technology has moved on. The Morpeth Talking Newspaper applied for and obtained a generous grant from The Big Lottery that enabled us to record each edition digitally and to circulate the recordings to our listeners on memory sticks. This has greatly improved the sound quality. The development of the talking newspaper’s own website has enabled us to provide a means of accessing each recording using the internet.