

Sight for Wight

Sight
for
Wight



(Isle of Wight Society
for the Blind)

February 2018

Newsletter

Sight for Wight
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Message from the Chairman

A New Year is now dawning, and the Christmas period is well and truly over. People are struggling with their New Year resolutions; why do we bother?!

We are certainly moving forward with our ambitious plans for 2018 which will enable our Society to achieve many advantages for the benefit of our members.

The Trustees, with Miriam's input, are pushing forward in our aim in raising the Society's profile island wide.

New staff members are settling in well including our new Finance Officer, Lisa Holyhead, who started with us recently. The format of job descriptions for our staff have been rewritten to enable much more flexibility in meeting members' requirements.

The new premises for Dress for Less has proved to have been a really positive move. Business has increased and our profile has been raised by the use of our website and Facebook, and also word of mouth. Due to this increase we do require more volunteers in the shop to take advantage of this opportunity. If possible, please spread the word to anyone you know who may be interested in volunteering for the Society.

I will be presenting the Chairman's address at the Annual General Meeting on 13th March where more detailed information will be covered.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2018.

Paul Rutherford, Chairman

Happy New Year from the CEO

New Year and a New Logo & Working Name

One of the many things worked on in the run-up to Christmas was the re-design of our logo and change in working name to *Sight for Wight*.

After much consideration and consultation, including the majority of respondents who supported a name change when asked this question in the 2017 User Survey, the decision to update the name and logo was made to broaden the appeal of the charity and to reflect the 21st rather than the 19th century, when the charity was first established.

Whilst we are proud of the origins and heritage of the charity, founded in 1895, it is important to ensure that the widest group of Islanders who might benefit from the charity know that we are here for them. There are thousands of people on the Island who are sight impaired and might benefit from the support and services we offer, but who are not registered blind and might therefore imagine they cannot turn to us for information, help or support. Especially for those more recently diagnosed with a sight loss condition, we had become increasingly aware that the charity name *Isle of Wight Society for the Blind* might have been off-putting.

We were extremely fortunate that Mat Rutherford, a professional graphic designer based in Australia, (yes, there's a family connection with our Chairman) volunteered his time and talent, without charge, to make the changes based on our brief.

Whilst Sight for Wight will be adopted as our new working name, we will still retain the Isle of Wight Society for the Blind as the original legal name for the purposes of registration with the Charities Commission and Companies House. This means that our respective registration numbers will be unchanged and supporters, followers and funders, old and new, should have no difficulty in

tracing our history and records.

Re-organisation and 2018 Structure

Planning for the year ahead is now well underway, following the complete review of our organisational structure and job descriptions undertaken during the past several months.

The Trustees have approved some significant changes to ensure that we are more focused on our core objectives of delivering support and services for those affected by sight loss across the Island.

Marketing, Communications and Fundraising Manager

From 1st November 2017, Chris Cane was promoted to the role of Marketing, Communications and Fundraising Manager. The significant change to the Job Description will more effectively utilise Chris's many strengths and skills and we hope will bring increasing professionalism to these vitally important aspects of the work of Sight for Wight, especially at a time when we hope to deliver a growing range of support and services and need to generate additional revenue to support these and existing activities. Chris now has a very demanding workload, but I am confident that he will continue to work closely with colleagues to deliver it successfully. In the near future he will be working closely with Michelle to see if we can recruit some new events stewards, ambassadors and fundraisers to support us.

Member Services Manager

The most significant change for service users is the replacement of the role of Centre Administrator with that of Member Services Manager. Laura Jasper, with her professional background as a dispensing optician, is perfectly placed to deliver improved services for Members, including exploring a number of new activities at venues across the Island to reflect the range of suggestions made by respondents to the 2017 User Survey. Laura took up her revised role with effect from 1st January 2018. Laura is currently exploring a range of possibilities and, working closely with Chris, will ensure that information about any new opportunities are sent out to you in

good time. To enable the delivery of support, services and activities at a variety of locations across the Island, Laura will usually spend two days each week at locations other than Millbrooke House.

Administrative Assistant

This newly created part-time role will ensure that, whilst Laura Jasper is at other locations developing, supporting and delivering Member Services, we still have someone in the office who can deal with telephone enquiries and messages, provide some admin support and generally facilitate the smooth running of whatever may be happening at Millbrooke House. We are delighted that Susan Earley, who has proved herself an excellent and versatile team member, will undertake this role. Susan has been the Interim Finance Officer for the past several months pending the review of that role. Susan will take up the Admin post following an induction of and handover to a new part-time Finance Officer.

Finance Officer

Following a review of this role, which included taking some independent expert advice, the Finance Officer role has been reduced from 21 hours per week to 16, typically to be worked over four mornings. Following a thorough recruitment and selection process, I am pleased to announce that Lisa Hollyhead joined Sight for Wight in mid-January. Lisa brings a wealth of experience as a qualified Chartered Accountant and successful business person. One of the particular reasons that motivated Lisa to apply to join us is that she has, herself, been registered blind since birth, so feels particular empathy with the aims and role of Sight for Wight.

Volunteer Manager

While the demand for new volunteers is ever increasing, the role remains pretty much as it has in recent years. However, the new job title, Volunteer Manager, will replace that of Community Development Officer, which was somewhat ambiguous and misleading. Michelle Taylor will continue to bring her professionalism and great wealth of experience to this vital role, with a need to

recruit, vet and induct additional volunteers to support proposed new services and activities as well as maintaining sufficient volunteers to deliver our traditional volunteer roles and tasks. Currently the Volunteer Manager role is 21 hours per week.

Chief Executive

To fund the introduction of an additional part-time team member, the Trustees approved a proposed reduction in my hours as Chief Executive, from 28 to 21 hours a week, with effect from 1st January 2018. Of course, working on behalf of a charity where so many people volunteer their respective time and talents, I too will continue to volunteer many additional hours. So, whilst no less committed to Sight for Wight, and with a very clear vision for steering the way forward, this is an important personal decision, enabling me to enjoy moving gently towards semi-retirement. However, there are many plans afoot to deliver first! So a significant proportion of my time in the coming year will be devoted to researching and applying for funding from trusts, funds and major grant givers to enable us to develop and deliver our plans into the future.

Sight for Wight Duty Manager

Finally, with all of the above developments taking place, several team members will, increasingly, be spending more time away from Millbrooke House and out and about on the Island, developing and delivering new plans and services. For this reason, we will ensure that a 'Duty Manager' is identified each working day, drawn from the above team, to ensure that messages and communications are dealt with appropriately and that the individual with daily responsibility for supporting the smooth running of operations is identified.

With all these developments and plans, together, we have an exciting year ahead, as I'm sure you will agree!

Miriam Tong, Chief Executive

2017 Christmas Afternoon

We held our Members' Christmas Celebration on Tuesday 12th December 2017.

Mince pies and mulled wine were served, with entertainment provided by Ricky J, followed by the Wight Ukers who finished with a group singalong!



Members enjoying the Christmas afternoon.

The afternoon was a great success and members left with a Christmas gift.

We look forward to seeing you all again, and some new faces, at our members' summer gathering on Thursday 14th June.

Donation from the Interact Club of Cowes

On the 3rd November 2017, the Interact Club of Cowes (the junior wing of the Rotary Club) held a quiz in aid of the IWSB.

They all worked hard to put on a successful quiz night with such a great total raised. On 3rd December, Laura Jasper attended their meeting at Lord Louis Library where they presented a cheque to the Society for £250.

The club runs alongside the Rotary Club and they hold fundraising events for different charities and good causes, both on the Island and Internationally.

It is remarkable that a group of teenagers who are also busy with studying, part time jobs and other organisations are able to give so much of their time to the Interact Club.



Laura Jasper accepting the cheque from Interact members

Being a Trustee

One of my favourite jobs as a trustee and volunteer at the Society is going out into the community and talking to children and young people about living with sight loss.

Earlier this year I was invited to Arreton Primary School as part of their disability awareness week. I did three 20 minute slots in the main hall with varying age groups and managed to talk to the whole school. I talked about equipment, getting about and things I use in my home to help me. The children were lovely and had some really interesting questions including how new technology is helping me, and how do I get dressed in the morning.

To be honest my guide dog, Flora, was the main attraction and really stole the show as she munched a carrot and then snored through my talk.

I received some really positive feedback from the head teacher and a lovely thank you letter from the children. I think it is a really important thing to do, and hope that raising awareness with young people makes all of our lives a bit easier.

Ruth Hollingshead
Trustee and Volunteer



Member Services

Since my role has changed I have been looking into the different activities that are available across the Island that our Members may be interested in. Updates on new groups will be announced on Talking News, our website, and our Facebook page.

I will be visiting community groups and drop in sessions across the Island to make Sight for Wight easier to access for Members who do not live within the Newport postcode.

The first of these groups was the 'My Place' community drop-in session at the West Wight Sports Centre in Moa Place in Freshwater which I attended in January. This group runs every Tuesday from 10.00am—12.30pm. It is a friendly social event where different organisations meet to offer support and advice to the public. Refreshments are available, along with pool and table tennis.

I will be attending on a monthly basis, taking along low vision aids and equipment, and offering information on the services we provide. All Members are welcome to come along, even if it's just to say hello and have a cup of tea.

I will be there on the following dates:

- ♦ Tuesday 20th February
- ♦ Tuesday 20th March
- ♦ Tuesday 17th April
- ♦ Tuesday 15th May

January also saw the first meeting of the Newport Audio Book Club which is being held at Lord Louis Library on the second Wednesday of each month at 2.00pm. We will read and then discuss a different book each month, whilst enjoying a cup of tea or coffee. If you would like to join us, just come along. The monthly book is available in CD or USB stick format.

Laura Jasper
Member Services Manager

New Events for Sight for Wight

In my new role as Marketing, Communications & Fundraising Manager, I am delighted to share with you some of the many new events we are planning to attend on the Island in order to help promote our new Sight for Wight working name and also to raise awareness of what we can offer in terms of help and support and reach out to people Island wide.

Some of the new events we will be attending include UK Pride. The Island beat off competition from Exeter Pride, Folkestone Pride, Liverpool Pride, Preston Pride and Pride Cymru. Last year's Ryde Pride attracted five thousand people and it is estimated that this year could see three times that which is great for the Society as it means we will be able to promote ourselves and our charity objectives.

Also this year we are delighted to be a part of Island Comic-Con or Island Con as they are now known. We are privileged to be attending this year as I was informed that they don't always allow charity stalls. Comic-Con is where fans who enjoy science fiction/fantasy/horror, initially comics but now it's anything science fiction/fantasy whether it be comic, television or film, get together, dress up as their favourite superhero or character and just have a fun time.

We are hoping to recruit Volunteer Event Stewards/Ambassadors to help. Any new volunteer recruited in 2018 will be required to attend a three hour training session to ensure they are confident about representing Sight for Wight and can talk about our aims and services and demonstrate simple low vision equipment, in addition to selling any merchandise on offer.

Chris Cane

Marketing, Communications & Fundraising Manager

2017 Short Story Writing Competition

This year's short story writing competition attracted some quality talent from the 121 entrants.

The three celebrity readers this year were Edana Minghella, Katy Manning and newcomer and Island resident, Melvyn Hayes.



Chris Cane meets Melvyn Hayes and Edana Minghella

I met Melvyn to record his story last December and he was an absolute delight to spend time with as we chatted about his varied film and television career from working with Cliff Richard in Summer Holiday to the hugely popular TV sitcom, 'It Ain't Half Hot Mum'. I'd also forgotten that he was in the children's television show, Double Deckers, back in the 70s so it was lovely to discuss some of my favourite childhood television.

Edana Minghella lives in Brighton and, if you haven't heard her singing voice then you really must go and buy her latest CD, 'All or Nothing'. The year before last, when I went to record her story reading, we had some 'help' from her cat, Perry, but last year he wasn't interested! Edana very kindly attended the Award Ceremony and closed the show with a beautiful jazz number.

I didn't get to see Katy Manning this year but was lucky enough to have a friend, Paul Ballard, who works for Fantom Films, where Katy does a lot of audio stories and they very kindly agreed to record Katy for me at their studio.



**Top to bottom:
Miriam Tong and Paul
Rutherford,
Volunteers at the event,
Emily Scotcher, Chris Cane
and Edana Minghella**



The Award Ceremony was well attended but, due to the boiler breaking down at Newport Minster, it was extremely cold so the evening finished a lot sooner than intended; however, £650 was raised and I would like to thank everyone who sponsored, attended and supported the event.

There will be some exciting news about this year's competition later in the year.

Chris Cane



Consultation Survey Results

With many thanks to the 134 members who contributed to the survey, we are pleased to have gathered so much valuable data to enable us to review our current and inform our future plans and activities.

We have lost no time in starting to act on the information provided. For example, the majority of respondents were in favour of a name change to promote a more inclusive organisation that supported those with visual impairment – so I hope you like our revised logo and working name.

The survey also identified that 87% of you would prefer to participate in activities that are open to both sighted and visually impaired people, rather than activities targeted and arranged specifically for those with visual impairment. This will certainly inform our plans and we are currently pursuing enquiries with a variety of potential partners and providers to see if Sight for Wight Members can be encouraged to join existing groups and activities run at locations across the Island if we can offer them sighted guide training and support.

Whilst a fuller presentation of the survey will be made at the AGM in March, I thought you would be interested in the results of the key questions asked about how positive an impact various of our traditional services and activities have and also in learning the top 12 suggestions of services and activities that you felt could make the greatest positive impact to you.

To arrive at a single numerical score to rate and rank all of the activities, scores for each respondent were weighted as follows:

Slightly Positive – score 1

Moderately Positive – score 2

Very Positive – score 3

Extremely Positive – score 4

IWSB Current Services	Score
Newsletter	170
Talking News	159
Millbrooke House Information	103
Audio Library	95
Millbrooke House Low Vision Drop-Ins	54
Ten Pin Bowling	42
Strollers Walking Group	42
Owls Thursday Social Group at Millbrooke House	33
Ryde Swimming Group	33
Striders Walking Group	30
MH Coffee Morning	29
Opportunities to volunteer for IWSB	20
IWSB volunteer home visit service	18
Golf at Ryde	18
Millbrooke House braille production	10
Niton Coffee Morning	6
Bembridge Coffee Morning	6
Freshwater Coffee Morning	4

Top 12 scoring suggestions for services or activities that would have a positive impact:

Quarterly day trips to loW heritage sites or tourist attractions	191
Social activities closer to your home	188
Monthly food & drink tasting group sessions at other venues	180
Introduction to technology course over several weeks	177
Quarterly day trips to mainland heritage sites or tourist attractions	174
Quarterly technology group - keep abreast of apps, iPads, computers etc.	153
Monthly food & drink tasting group sessions at Millbrooke House	147
Organised holidays & short breaks supported with sighted guide volunteers	138
Age appropriate exercise classes, such as Yoga	132
Monthly technology group - keep abreast of apps, iPads, computers etc.	131
Other sport or activity taster days	116
Monthly music group - singing, listening & occasional live performances	114

Laura Jasper, in her new role as Member Services Manager will be working closely with team members to explore new opportunities. Volunteers Manager, Michelle Taylor, will be closely involved to secure appropriate volunteer support required and Chris Cane as Marketing, Communications & Fundraising Manager will be supporting the promotion of these.

Our plan for 2018 is that, in addition to our Newsletter, we will aim to send out information of any new planned activities and opportunities on a quarterly basis. So thank you again for your help in shaping these exciting plans.

Miriam Tong
Chief Executive, Sight for Wight (IWSB)

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New Wallets for Talking News

For those of you who are subscribed to our free Talking News service, you may have noticed a change in the wallets that you receive the USB stick in.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Wight Strollers we have been able to replace the old style Velcro wallets with new, easier to use, zipper wallets.

These new style wallets are being rolled out across the board so you should all be receiving them through your letter boxes soon.

If you are not already signed up to Talking News but would like more information then please contact the Society on 522205 or email enquiries@iwsb.org.uk



Laura Jasper displays the new wallet

Project Swan - making sailing accessible for all

You may have recently read or heard about Project Swan being organised by Brading Haven Yacht Club. It involves designing and building a specially modified Bembridge Swan dingy for visually impaired people, making sailing more accessible for all.



The club are delighted to have Lucy Hodges MBE from GBR Blind Sailing as one of their advisors.

They have received amazing support since launching their fundraising campaign including a very generous donation from Cheetah Marine, who have kindly offered to donate the materials for the hull production, and a £350 donation from Co-op. The first phase production is due to start in May, and fundraising efforts will continue to enable the project to progress.



Brading Haven Yacht Club is looking forward to giving Members the opportunity of sailing her once she is completed and in the water.

If you would like to donate towards the project, or for more information, please visit their Facebook page or Justgiving page on the links below.

<https://www.facebook.com/BradingHavenYC/>

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/projectswanbhyc>

Audio Books

Having lived with sight loss since childhood I am a great advocate for audio books and am amazed at the services that are now available to visually impaired people. Gone are the days when the stories were recorded in someone's kitchen with the budgie tweeting in the background, and you had to wait months for new releases. Now the recordings are done by professionally trained actors, and often the audio version is launched at the same time as the printed book. I also love the versatility of audio books; you can peel the potatoes while Stephen Fry reads you Harry Potter, or lay in the bath while Dame Maggie Smith narrates Alan Bennet's The Lady in the Van.

As many of you are aware, Sight for Wight has an excellent Talking Library which is run by one of our amazing volunteers, Kate Stone. We have a wide selection of audio books which can be borrowed completely free of charge, simply ring the society to sign up and request a catalogue.

However, if you would like to borrow books in other formats, there is another alternative. The RNIB library is the largest of its kind in Europe, and it's also now completely free with over 60,000 items in the collection.

Their library not only has audio books available on CD or memory stick, but they also have a wide selection of titles in both giant print and braille. If you would like to join the RNIB library, or request a catalogue, please ring their helpline on 0303 123 9999.



Ruth Hollingshead



Volunteer Newsround

Welcome

We are pleased to welcome six new volunteers to our team. The majority of the new members have joined Dress for Less. We also welcome our new mini bus driver, Paul, who has many years specialist driving.

Au Revoir

Sadly, we have said goodbye to two volunteers from Dress for less and wish them well for the future.

Volunteer Vacancies

We have volunteer vacancies in various roles; e.g. minibus escort, home visitors, coffee morning support with refreshments, walking buddy escorts, Dress for Less, and fundraising throughout the summer months.

Should you know anyone who may be interested please let me know and I will be happy to send an application pack or discuss the various volunteer roles available.

Volunteer Fair – Botanic Gardens, Ventnor, 13th January 2018



Chris Cane and Michelle Taylor at the Volunteers Fair

Chris and I attended this recruitment event again this year and were extremely pleased with the interest expressed by potential volunteers. We had a busy day with lots of visitors to the stand and have already received applications from potential volunteers. I have found this to be a good networking and promotional event which generates a lot of interest in the society.

Our core objectives for 2018 include attending additional fund raising events particularly in the summer months. Further details will be printed in our next Newsletter. This has highlighted the need for additional volunteer support and we have created a new volunteer role, Events Stewards and Ambassadors, primarily to raise the profile of Sight for Wight. We welcome applications from all prospective volunteers and particularly from young people who may be interested in attending high profile music events throughout the summer months.

Please contact me for further information and if you have a family member or friend who may be interested please spread the word.

2018 Dates for your Diary:

- ◆ Vectis Radio Interview
Tuesday 6th March 1.30pm – Volunteer recruitment

- ◆ Volunteer Team Updates:
 - Tuesday 6th March 4.30pm - 6.30pm
Wine & nibbles
 - Wednesday 12th September 4.30pm - 6.30pm
Wine & nibbles
 - Tuesday 11th December 2.00pm - 4.00pm
Mulled wine and mince pies

- ◆ Volunteer Party Thursday 7th June 2.30pm - 5.00pm

Thank you again for your ongoing support and the time and dedication you give to the society.

Michelle Taylor
Volunteer Manager

Financial Results

Year Ended 31st March 2017

The Report of the Trustees and Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2017 has been lodged with the Charity Commission and is available from their website and our website.

A presentation of the Report and Accounts will be made at the AGM to be held on Tuesday 13 March. In summary, key figures for the year ended March 2017 are given with comparative figures for the previous year, ended March 2016, given in brackets:

Total Income:	2017	£309,448	(2016	£227,964)
Total Expenditure:	2017	£175,153	(2016	£214,029)
Net Income:	2017	£138,892	(2016	£13,663)

Overall these figures are very positive. We again enjoyed a very good year with regard to support from donations and legacies:

Donations:	2017	£17,236	(2016	£6,723)
Legacies:	2017	£206,759	(2016	£137,647)

However, it is with dismay that the Trustees report an ex-gratia payment identified in Note 11 to the accounts as follows:

‘During the year it came to the trustees’ attention that a member of staff had been overpaid in comparison to originally agreed salary. As the overpayment has been occurring for approximately two years, the overpayment has amounted to £10,500. The trustees have come to the decision that to seek repayment of these funds would create financial hardship for the employee in question, and have therefore agreed that the charity has a moral obligation not to seek repayment in the circumstances. The trustees have put in place procedures to ensure payroll is more closely monitored and avoid any similar situations in the future.’

To expand on that statement and identify the range of controls that are now in place to strengthen financial governance, the following are new measures adhered to:

- ♦ The trustees deeply regret the accidental overpayment that was identified in January 2017 and reported in the financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017.
- ♦ Following professional advice, the decision not to seek repayment was agreed by trustees in February 2017, for the avoidance of financial hardship by the employee in question.
- ♦ The establishment of a finance sub-committee was approved at a meeting of trustees held in May 2017, to strengthen and continuously review financial activities and procedures of the charity. The terms of reference for the finance sub-committee are clearly defined and include an internal audit function. The finance sub-committee comprises a minimum of two trustees, including the Treasurer, together with the CEO and Finance Officer. The finance sub-committee has, to date met on three occasions. Formal minutes are recorded and circulated with reports made to the full board of trustees.
- ♦ The IWSB payroll function has, in recent years, been outsourced. The overpayment originated when a part-time employee was erroneously paid the full-time equivalent rate, contrary to information supplied the former payroll office.
- ♦ When IWSB appointed a different firm of accountants the payroll details were passed directly from the previous company to the present company and the error was perpetuated.
- ♦ A meeting of the finance sub-committee trustees and the Chief Executive was held with the charity's firm of accountants in July 2017 to discuss the overpayment. At this meeting controls were discussed and agreed, and have subsequently been implemented, to enable the CEO and Treasurer and/or other trustee member of the finance sub-committee to monitor and check salary payments each month. Further, all correspondence

between the Finance Officer and the payroll team at the accountants is copied to the CEO for information, monitoring and checking.

- ◆ The CEO and finance sub-committee will introduce and implement any other controls deemed appropriate to prevent the possibility of accidental over-payment.
- ◆ The CEO and Trustees are implementing a budget for the new financial year to enable the quarterly monitoring of all actual expenditure, against budgeted expenditure. This will enable more immediate recognition of any deviations from budgeted expenditure.
- ◆ The charity is moving towards the implementation of on-line banking that will require on-line payments set up by the Finance Officer to be formally released by one or two authorised signatories (in accordance with agreed financial limits). The Finance Officer will not be an authorised signatory of the charity.
- ◆ The employee concerned is no longer with the charity.
- ◆ All salaries are now being paid at the correct rates agreed.
- ◆ Some specific examples of where financial practice has been reviewed and systems strengthened include with regard to static box collections, bucket collections, petty cash management, other cash received, ordering procedures and the adoption of and adherence to good fundraising practice.
- ◆ An application has been made to the Charity Commission in respect of the (moral) Ex Gratia Payment.
- ◆ The CEO and trustees are committed to ensuring good financial governance. They have been and will continue to work together to strengthen financial governance and promote best practice across all of the charities' financial activities.

Miriam Tong
Chief Executive, IWSB

Coming up... in the Wednesday Social Group

The Wednesday social group is open to all, not just Members.

Wednesday 28th February will feature music from local band, SLAINTE VA.



Slainte Va sing traditional Irish and Scottish songs, play dances, reels and jigs, as well as an unusual blend of modern songs that take their fancy, including Lindisfarne, Bob Dylan, Nanci Griffiths and the Pogues!

Wednesday 11th April sees the return of zoo keeper GARY HARBOR. Gary is a zoo keeper at the Isle of Wight Zoo and gave a fascinating talk last year. By popular demand he is returning; but not alone! This time he is planning to bring along a snake, gecko, tenrec, guinea pig and possibly a chicken! Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to interact with some of these beautiful animals.



Ryde Swimming Group

Our swimming group meets every Tuesday evening from 8pm till 8.45pm at the Waterside Pool in Ryde. They have exclusive use of the pool during this session. The group is open to any visually impaired person who is a keen swimmer or who just enjoys being in the water. The pool's lifeguards are in attendance during the session. **Pre-registering with the Society is essential, otherwise you may be refused admittance.**

Wednesday Social Group

Our Wednesday Social Group meets every fortnight from 2.00pm at Millbrooke House. The Owls have different speakers who come to give talks on a variety of subjects. These have ranged from singers to ghost talks. After the talk, the group chat over a cup of tea or coffee before going home. **This group is open to non-members but please register your interest in advance.**

Thursday Social Group

The Thursday Social Group meets every week from 10.30am till 2.00pm at Millbrooke House, where they engage with other visually impaired people. They socialise and enjoy lunch together. In the afternoon, the group welcome volunteers who come in to read from various books about local history, general fiction or, a more popular choice, comedy. **This group is open to non-members but please register your interest in advance.**

Strollers

Strollers meet on the second Tuesday of the month. They go for gentle strolls, enjoying the Island's countryside or coastal views. This is followed by lunch at a nearby pub or restaurant. The group is open to all visually impaired people who like a leisurely walk of about a mile.

Striders

Striders meet on the last Friday of every month. They walk on different routes around the Island and then finish off with lunch at a local pub or restaurant. This group is open to all visually impaired people who like longer walks in the countryside.

Golf

The Golfers meet once a month at Westridge Golf Club, Ryde. The golf group go onto the driving ranges and out onto the course. An instructor is available to help out beginners.

Bowling

The bowling group meets once a month at LA Bowl in Ryde. The cost is £3.95 for 2 games. This group is open to all visually impaired people. Please note there is no transport for this group.

If you are interested in joining any of the activities please contact the Society for more information. Transport may be available to some of the groups.



Dress for Less

All retailers dread January as a trading month; not only is the weather usually dreary but people's purse strings are still coping with the Christmas spending. However, we have managed to buck the trend and, at the end of the first month, we are showing a healthy increase, but with this increase we will undoubtedly see an increase in our pay out. Whilst we don't have to pay for our stock, with the exception of our bought in hats and fascinators, we do in the main have to give back 50% of our sales. This is why we welcome donated stock and are eternally grateful to the clients who give us their unsold 50/50 stock. It certainly helps to pay our rent.

Our new shop continues to be a hit with our volunteers and customers. It is a joy to work in. Sadly we have lost some volunteers and therefore have had to return to a five day working week. We are currently not open on a Monday. Tuesday to Saturday we take in garments for resale from 10.30am to 3.30pm. Currently we are still taking in winter clothes, with a mix of early spring. By mid February that will change to spring wear only. Our jewellery cabinets continue to tick over and we are indebted to Vivienne, one of our volunteers, for all her support logging in and displaying the jewellery. Our Facebook page continues to raise our profile. This is through the expertise of Chris for his professional videos and Anthea for her clever photography.

This will be my last write up for the Newsletter as I am retiring from my fifty years in fashion at the end of April. It has been a great journey; not everyone can say they loved their jobs, but I can. From my highflying days in London and Paris, to my years working for charities on the Island, I have enjoyed myself. Yes, I will miss changing the windows and displays, advising our customers on

what suits them, the buying of the hats and fascinators, looking at the glorious affordable clothes brought into us and of course my fellow volunteers. However, in the Autumn of my years, I want to spend more time with my family and friends in London and Somerset. My base will continue to be on the Island.

I wish every success to the Society and Dress for Less in the years to come.

Julie Clifton

**Julie Clifton (centre)
and volunteers
outside Dress for Less**



**Julie Clifton -
a proud Grandma**



Dates for your diary...

Sight for Wight Members' Forum 2018 dates

The forums will be held at Millbrooke House between 12.00 and 1.30pm on the following dates. All Members are welcome to attend. Agendas and minutes are available on our website.

- ♦ Wednesday 18th April 2018
- ♦ Wednesday 18th July 2018
- ♦ Wednesday 17th October 2018

Annual General Meeting 2018

The AGM will be held on Tuesday 13th March 2018 at Millbrooke House.

RSVP invitations to be sent to all Members and Volunteers in due course.

There will be a chance to enjoy refreshments and view our new logo and literature from 10.00am. The AGM will follow at 11.00am.



Low Vision Day

We will be holding a low vision open day here at Millbrooke House on Thursday 3rd May 2018, 2.30pm—6.30pm.

Confirmed exhibitors at the time of printing are Enhanced Vision and OrCam. Our resource room will also be open with our low vision equipment on display.

Members Summer Gathering

We will be holding a summer gathering for Members on Thursday 14th June 2018, 2.00pm—7.00pm.

RSVP invitations to be sent out nearer the time.



Quiz Night at the Waverley Pub

A quiz night in aid of Sight for Wight (IWSB) will be held at the Waverley pub in July 2018.

Final date and times to be confirmed. This will be advertised on our website, Facebook page and Talking News.

Resource Round-up

Did you know that 76% of UK adults now own a smartphone and over 32 million phones are purchased annually in the UK?

(source: deloitte.co.uk/mobileuk)

If you are looking to taking the first step into smartphones then there are a few options available to you.

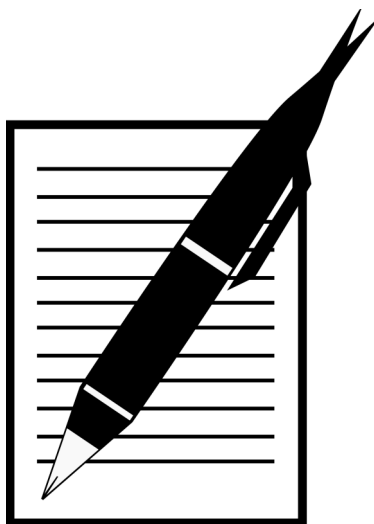
Synapptic have a range of Samsung phones all loaded with their speech and magnification software, ranging from the basic bronze design all the way to a gold design phone with extra features. You can also purchase the software only which you can then load on to an existing smartphone. We have a demo version of the software at the Society which Members can book in to come and trial.

Synapptic have a partnership with Blind Veterans UK so this is something to consider if you are a veteran and are looking for a new phone or tablet.

www.synapptic.com

The **Kapsys Smartvision 2 premium** phone is available from www.sightandsound.co.uk. This also has built in speech and magnification software but has the added feature of both a touchscreen and physical keyboard. This is useful if you are used to a phone with keys and are not ready to go to a full touchscreen.

www.sightandsound.co.uk



Articles wanted

We are interested in articles from Members or volunteers for our quarterly newsletters. If you would like to submit an article, with or without photos, please email to enquiries@iwsb.org.uk Please ensure you have permission of people featured in any photos to use their image.