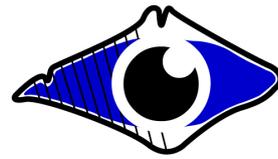


Isle of Wight Society for the Blind

ISLE OF WIGHT



SOCIETY FOR THE
BLIND

Volume 5, Issue 1

January 2017

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HAPPY NEW YEAR !

Welcome to the January edition
of the Society's Newsletter

Inside :-

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GOODBYE FROM THE CEO

Last year was very successful in terms of fundraising and legacies and this year the Society will be looking to continue some successful events and introduce new ones. The future is very exciting now with lots of new opportunities appearing on the horizon. In February I will be talking to Blind Veterans UK about collaborative working here on the Island; the Society is in discussions with parents' groups; the exciting news that the Society is to make start-up funding available to anyone wanting to set up new activities for sight impaired people; and, following advice from Environmental Health and the Rates office, the new kitchen will be installed to allow the Society to hire out the Activities Room for parties, meetings etc. to provide income. The kitchen will also be an extension of the Resource Room.

At the beginning of November last year, I tendered my resignation to the Chairman as I realised that these new opportunities needed someone with lots of energy to initiate and carry them out. I also want to spend more time with my family who all live either on the mainland or abroad.

It has been a privilege and pleasure to have been CEO of such a worthy organisation. I started in January 2013 and have overseen a number of major events including the change of contract, the short story writing competition, opening of Dress for Less and, of course,

the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. I will remain until a new CEO is in post.

My thanks to everyone who has supported and challenged me during my service at the Society, especially the Trustees and staff.

Estelle Thomas

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

When you all read this message, Christmas will be over. On behalf of the Board and myself we hope that you all had a very peaceful and restful festive break. Let's hope for a successful New Year and we would like to wish you all good health and happiness in 2017.

It is with great regret that we will have to deal with Estelle's retirement. She will be a hard act to follow, but she is not leaving the Island and will provide advice and guidance if required.

We are actively pursuing a replacement for the post of CEO and will ensure that the right candidate is chosen for this position.

In my report at the AGM, I will detail more relevant information about policies and state of various activities etc. involving the Isle of Wight Society for the Blind. We all want to ensure that we go from strength to strength.

Paul Rutherford

TRUSTEE'S CORNER

Looking back, 2016 was certainly a busy year for me as a trustee; as well as manning the Reception desk at Millbrooke House every Wednesday, I have travelled all over the Island and met a wide variety of people. I have given advice about accessibility for blind and visually impaired people at Brading Roman Villa, Ventnor Botanical Gardens, and Red Funnel. I have delivered talks, giving a personal account of living with sight loss, and raising the profile of the Society at Christ the King College, the Carisbrooke Society, the Mormons Church, and a local Brownies group. I have represented the Society at the quarterly 'Finding Your Feet' workshops held at the Riverside Centre, giving information about the various social groups, the Talking News, and the other services that we offer. I was excited to work alongside our Patrons, Bob and Carol Bridgestock, as part of the Admin Team organising the Christmas story writing competition. I have also been part of the bucket collection team that helped to raise money at the Co-op, Morrison's, and Sainsbury's, as well as manning stalls at the summer and autumn fetes. Most recently, I travelled across to Portsmouth to receive a cheque on behalf of the Society at a reception held at Portsmouth Cathedral.

I have been a client of the Isle of Wight Society for the Blind for over 25 years and it is very rewarding to be able to give something back. Being a trustee gives me the opportunity to try and make a difference to other people on the Island who are living with sight loss. If you would like to become a trustee, or know someone else who may be interested, then please contact the Society on 522205 and we can send an information pack with more details out to you.

Ruth Hollingshead

DOLPHINS

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

OWLS

Our Owls group meet every fortnight at Millbrooke House, usually on Wednesday afternoons from 2.00pm till 4.00pm. 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.

KNITTING AND NATTERING CLUB

The Knitters and Natterers meet every week on Thursday from 11.00am till 2.00pm at Millbrooke House, where they come and meet with other visually impaired people - knitting is not compulsory. 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.

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. This group is open to all sight 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 available to all visually impaired people who like longer walks in the countryside.

TENNIS

A visually impaired Tennis Group is available in Ryde, run by Neil and Dawn Fradgley. They have managed to secure funding for their equipment and are lucky to have Neil, who is a Level 2 qualified coach. This is another fantastic opportunity to get involved in sport.

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.

If you are interested in joining any of the activities mentioned in this newsletter, please contact the Society for more information.

Transport may be available to some of the groups.

STOP PRESS!!!

The Trustees have agreed that, individuals wanting to try out new activities either by attending existing groups in the community or setting up a new group themselves, can apply for a grant from the Society to cover some initial costs. There is an application process and not all applications can be guaranteed. To find out more, contact us on 522205 or email enquiries@iwsb.org.uk

INTRODUCING MILLBROOKE HOUSE

Introducing Millbrooke House, is a 'drop in' information event that is held on the second Tuesday in each month. It is held from 10.30am – 12.30pm and free to visually impaired people, their family, friends, carers and professionals; in fact anyone who has an interest in visual impairment.

You can browse through the equipment that we have onsite which is designed to help visually impaired people, or have specific equipment demonstrated. You can speak to staff about any questions you have with your own or other people's sight loss. No appointment is necessary, just drop in.

VOLUNTEER NEWSROUND



Happy New Year to you all!

Welcome:

We are pleased to welcome three new volunteers; the new members will be joining Dress for Less, admin\reception and coffee mornings.

Au Revoir

Sadly, we said goodbye to two members of our Dress for Less team and wish them well in their retirement. Thanks have been extended for the valuable support given by these volunteers over the years. Goodbye also to a reader with the Talking News team whom we wish well in his future pursuits.

Recruiting Volunteers:

I attended another Volunteer Fayre on 14th January 2017 at Ventnor Botanical Gardens, facilitated by Community Action with the aim of recruiting volunteers across the Island. We are looking for mini bus and car drivers, escorts, home visitors, retail team, admin and reception, Talking News, plus help with fundraising events for 2017. If you have friends or family members who may be interested in volunteering with the Society please do not hesitate to contact me on 522205 or visit our website: www.iwsb.org.uk

Fundraising 2017:

The fundraising committee will be planning events throughout 2017 which will be advertised via future editions of the Talking News and on our website.

I would like to extend a special thank you to one of our longest serving volunteer members who has given up so much time to support and 'man' our fundraising events over the years. Although this volunteer is going to continue to support 'in house' events and manage the stock for all events, she will no longer be manning the

stalls at outside events.

Please let me know if you are able to help out some weekends during the summer months by setting up and manning the stalls. Any help would be much appreciated to enable IWSB to continue to exhibit at these events.

Christmas Celebration Lunches:

Both the Owls and Handicraft groups celebrated their pre Christmas lunches at the Eight Bells and The Cedars respectively. A good time was enjoyed by all. Thank you to the volunteers who supported the outings.

Training:

Please let me know if you are interested in any training linked to your volunteer role. We hope to run further training events again this year and your identified needs will help me to plan for 2017.

The First Aid training and Stress Management were two successful events that IWSB facilitated in 2016.

Sighted Guide training is a half day event that we run at Millbrooke House. Please let me know if you are interested in undertaking this training. With all good wishes for 2017.

Michelle Taylor – Community Development Officer

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

My name is Sue; I first came into contact with the Society some years ago when my daughter, Ruth, was still at school. She is still a client, but now also a volunteer and trustee at Millbrooke House. I had wanted to be a volunteer when I retired, and began by working in the office every Tuesday morning, counting the pennies from the Humpty collecting boxes. I also travelled round the Island, picking up and replacing collecting boxes, as well as trying to find new sites for them. Other duties were shredding, filing and letter writing to let businesses know how much they had collected.

Every now and then I spend time in the Attic at Millbrooke House; this is where all the out of season clothes for 'Dress for Less' are stored. I find this very enjoyable and a haven of peace and tranquillity, doing something completely different, sorting the stock, and maybe a secret try on of one or two garments! I've also helped at Sainsbury's, Morrison's and the Co-op in Newport, with the collecting buckets. I helped out at Chale and Havenstreet summer shows on the tombola, as well as the summer and autumn fetes. I also helped out at the Wednesday coffee morning, and Ruth and I went to the Botanical Gardens so Ruth, as a client, could report back. I have been involved with the story writing competition, de-personalising all the entries, and then preparing a spreadsheet of entrants. More recently, I went on a walk with the Striders group. I really enjoyed the walk from Blackwater to Arreton; it was a lovely crisp, sunny day, and I saw and went places I've not been before.

After working in the office I have seen how incredibly hard the staff work, it's all deadlines to be met and there is such a wide diversity of things going on and not like anywhere I have worked before; all the legal hoops you have to jump through these days to satisfy the many rules and regulations to safeguard both clients and volunteers. So much goes on behind the scenes.

Being a volunteer is very rewarding, even if you have just made a small difference to one person, it's a good feeling, and very interesting; you also meet a wide variety of likeminded people. There are a lot of behind-the-scenes chores to be done; you don't have to be front line to make a difference. So go on, give Michelle Taylor a ring and get a volunteering information pack as there is something for everyone.

Sue Rutherford—Volunteer

DRESS FOR LESS



May we start by wishing all our donors, 50/50 clients and buying customers a very Happy New Year. We ended 2016 saying goodbye to some of our volunteer team; this means, until we recruit more help, we will close on a Monday throughout January so please give some thought to helping out in our shop which is raising valuable funds for the Society. Full training will be given. Please pop in and have a chat to one of the volunteer managers if you are interested.

We will begin the New Year with a massive sale of our designer and top High Street brands; if you are lucky, you may be in the shop when we are having a 'Happy Hour' which means the item you choose will be half the marked price! Once January is over, we will start to receive your Spring clothes and we look forward to seeing all the Mother of the Bride outfits; beautiful clothes at a fraction of their original price. We aren't called Dress For Less for nothing! Our much loved wedding hats and fascinators, bought in by Julie Clifton, have been ordered and will add a glow of colour after the sea of black which dominates the Winter season..

Dress For Less

St James Street

Newport

Telephone: 01983 523197

The shop opening times are 10.00am – 4.00pm Tuesday to Saturday.

Stock for 50/50 resale is accepted from 10.30am—3.30pm every day except Wednesday.

100 CLUB

The 100 Club is a monthly cash draw where participants pay £2 per month and are allocated a number between 1 and 100. The numbers that have been allocated each month are placed in the draw and the winner receives 40% of the total funds for that month, with the remainder going to the Society.

There are some numbers remaining so if you want to be a part of the 100 Club, contact the Society now. Remember, the more people who take part, the bigger the prize!

Here are the winning numbers of the 100 club draws since September:-

- October Number 46 Miss V Booth
- November Number 24 Mrs C L
- December Number 20 Miss E T
- January Number 1 Mr J L

Congratulations to those winners !

LEGACY

The Society has been fortunate to receive the following legacies since the last newsletter:

- ♦ Mr S A Crawford: £3,261.51
- ♦ Mrs Bonney Harris: £139,826.20
- ♦ F J Wright: £43,010.32
- ♦ Mrs J Downer: £588.98
- ♦ Mrs M Oliver: £1,000.00

At the AGM on 18th January 2016, the Board announced that it had put in place a legacies policy and was looking at investments as a means of ensuring income for the Society in the future.

The legacies policy was set at 40% of legacies received to be

allocated to General Funds, 40% to Millbrooke House, 10% to investments, 5% to Activities and 5% to Staff Costs. Legacies are looked at on a six monthly basis and more frequently when extraordinary amounts are received. With its legacy policy, the Society has created designated funds to allow for extraordinary expenditure in key areas. Having agreed an investment strategy and transferred funds to investment in June, the investments were increased in December as a result of the large legacies received. If you would like to leave a gift to the Isle of Wight Society for the Blind, please contact us for more information.

LENT APPEAL DONATION

At the end of November, Tim and I travelled across to Portsmouth, on behalf of the Society, to receive a cheque for £2,000.00 from the Bishop's Lent Appeal. People from churches across the Portsmouth Diocese donate money to support the Appeal which the Bishop then donates to charities from within the Portsmouth Diocese. We attended Choral Evensong, where the Bishop praised the work of the charities in his sermon; Tim gave a reading, and I enjoyed listening to the Cathedral choir. After Evensong finished there was a reception where the cheques were presented. This was a fantastic occasion and I was very proud to be able to represent the Society.

The money from the Lent Appeal has been used to replace a faulty copying machine which is used in the production of the weekly talking news. We have also purchased some new boom boxes to enable more of our clients to be able to receive the audio version of the County Press. On behalf of the Society I would like to say a huge thank you to the people of Portsmouth as their kind generosity will enable Island residents, living with sight loss, to stay in touch with their local community.

Ruth Hollingshead—Trustee & Volunteer

RESIDENTIAL EDUCATIONAL COURSES FROM ADD VENTURE IN LEARNING

Add Venture In Learning is a registered charity run by a volunteer committee which provides residential courses for visually impaired adults. The charity was formed in 2008. For 25 years Bristol University held educational summer schools for visually impaired people covering in-depth topics. Unfortunately the funding ceased and in 2006 the regular 'students' (VIs) and guides started their own charity and continue with courses which are aimed at being educational and not a holiday. The courses are self-funded. To attend the course, participants must become a member at £12 per year which includes three or four newsletters a year and covers administration.

The courses are often led by a professional tutor and held in different parts of the country. Each visually impaired person is assisted by a sighted guide and guide dogs are always welcome. Past courses have included, studying the works of Brahms, authors Arnold Bennett and J. B. Priestley and various historic topics. There have been field trips to Suffolk, Swanage and Pembrokeshire for the more physically active.

Accommodation varies from hotels to outdoor centres, holiday chalets and university halls of residence. They must make their own way to the venue but these are not usually far from a railway station. If you are interested in joining any courses as a visually impaired person or a sighted guide, please look at the website www.add-ventureinlearning.org.uk for more details. Alternatively you can contact Isobell on 07731 867931 or Barbara on 01460 281226. We would love to hear from you but please be aware that all committee members are volunteers and are not always readily available.

SHORT STORY WRITING COMPETITION

On Wednesday 7th December 2016, I travelled to London to meet Robert Glenister and Katy Manning to record three of the winning stories for the very successful Short Story Writing Competition. This was an exciting opportunity to be an integral part of the event and a thrill for me to meet actress, Katy Manning, from a television programme I grew up with as a kid; that being 'Doctor Who' and also a unique opportunity to meet actor Robert Glenister, who had also appeared in Doctor Who, Spooks and Hustle to name but a few.

Robert arrived first at the recording venue in Leicester Square and was absolutely charming. Katy arrived shortly afterwards and, since the seventies, really hadn't changed much and was delightful. Robert was first to record his story and was set up in a separate room; we did a sound check and off he went. A photograph was taken for our website of myself, Robert and Katy before Robert left for another appointment.

Katy was next to record and she had very kindly agreed to read two of the winning stories which she did with ease and professionalism. Katy and I chatted briefly about Doctor Who and she reminded me that she had filmed a Doctor Who story with Jon Pertwee back in the seventies entitled, 'The Sea Devils' where beach scenes were recorded at Whitecliff Bay on the Isle of Wight.

On Friday 9th December, I travelled to Brighton to meet Edana Minghella, who is very familiar with the Isle of Wight and the sister of film director Anthony Minghella. Edana had the longest story to read and, with Perry's help (Edana's cat), I left them to it. After a couple of breaks to either remove Perry from the room or let him into the room, the recording was completed. All celebrities were amazing and the Society was most grateful for their support.

Chris Cane—Senior Administrator

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Society AGM

Please check the website for further information.

Pub Quiz at the Waverley Inn

There will be a Quiz Night at the Waverley Inn, Carisbrooke, on Thursday 2nd March which starts at 7.30pm. Tickets are £3 per person; food is not included but may be ordered before the quiz. Please pre-book tables by calling the Waverley Inn on 01983 522338. Don't forget to tell family and friends.

Millbrooke House Coffee Morning: 10.30am till 12.00pm, every Wednesday. The Macular Degeneration Society also meets on the first Wednesday of the month at the Millbrooke House Coffee morning.

Coffee Mornings Across The Island:

- Niton (the Post Office) 10.00am till 11.30am on the first Tuesday of the month.
- Bembridge (the Cloisters) 10.15am till 12.00pm on the last Tuesday of the month.
- Freshwater (End of the Line café) 10.30am till 12.00pm on the

VOLUNTEER DROP IN & TRAINING SESSION

I would like to offer all IWSB volunteers the opportunity to come along to Millbrooke House for an Open Morning/Afternoon linked to the volunteer role and run on two dates for ease of access for all members. This will be an opportunity to talk about your volunteer role and share ideas as your input is invaluable to future services. There will be a short training session and refreshments will be provided. I will contact all volunteers in February with a view to planning these events in March.

Michelle Taylor—Community Development Officer