



Newsletter

August 2020

Free

Isle of Wight Society for the Blind

Your local sight loss charity
since 1895

SPOTLIGHT ON: Rene

Chair's Report

CEO Update

Competition!

Out & About Card

Face Mask Information

Dress for Less News

Plus much more

Registered charity number 1149415
Company limited by guarantee 6240404





Chair Report



Welcome to our new style Newsletter! I do hope you enjoy the new topics we intend to cover in each publication. In order to keep it more current, it will now be produced every two months.

Lockdown

Since the start of the lockdown there have been many changes that we have had to get used to. Now with the easing of some of the restrictions, we accept that we wear masks for travelling on public transport and in shops. Social distancing is required and we have to get used to the fact that, sometimes, we have to queue to get into certain shops.

Lisa Hollyhead and Ruth Hollingshead have been very active on these local changes and gaining representation on policy making groups. They have been campaigning on our behalf to communicate to the Island that some people may find these changes a little more challenging.

Newsletter

The newsletter is for members and volunteers and we would very much like to hear from you. There will be regular features each time including:

- Focus on member and volunteer stories and experiences
- Tips and practical help
- Technology update and recommended Apps

These features are all designed for your input, **so please do get in touch, we would love to hear from you.** With your help we will be able to make the Newsletter a really useful source of practical help, information and support.



Volunteers

We are really looking forward to the time we can welcome you all back, we recognise your loyalty and generosity of time commitment. Risk assessments will be carried out before we reopen Millbrooke House to our usual activities.

The shop volunteers are already in our newly reopened shop, Dress for Less, managed by Debbie Durbridge. Please call in, the shop is well equipped with hand sanitizers and organised in such a way that social distancing can be maintained.

Staff

The staff are now working on a part time basis; my thanks as always to them, they are such a loyal, dedicated team. During lockdown two members of staff have left. Laura Jasper, Member Services and Sue Young, Office Administrator.



Both will be greatly missed and we wish them every success and happiness in the future.

We have also been delighted to welcome Lisa Hollyhead as our new CEO, she is already very active in raising the profile

of Sight for Wight and campaigning on our behalf.

I'm looking forward to the time we can all meet again.

Sue

Sue Bungey



CEO Update



As lockdown eases, there are so many changes in our environment and in this newsletter, we will cover these key changes, together with work we have been doing with other Island organisations to ensure individual people understand the needs of us all .

Millbrooke House is still closed to all group activities but we are hopeful that, after our usual August break from activities, this may change in September. That said, we will, of course, follow all government guidelines and cannot, at this stage, predict how these will change, so we may not be able to resume anything .

Many of our volunteers are getting in touch and are keen to return; we miss them all and hope to welcome all of them back when the time is safe for everyone.

Our Dress Agency, Dress for Less, however, has now been open for a nearly a month. As the layout of the shop has changed, we have produced a video tour with audio description so that members can understand the new layout before visiting.

We hope you like the new style of newsletter and varied content we have created but we very much look forward to hearing from members and volunteers with their articles, tips, hints and stories.

Finally, a huge thank you and farewell to Laura and Sue, who are already missed but we know they will be back to visit staff and members soon.

Lisa

Lisa Hollyhead



Eye Clinic Liaison Officer



Hello, I am Laura, the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, more commonly known as an ECLO, for the Isle of Wight. I am a trained professional based in an Eye Clinic to provide support and advice to anyone affected by any eye condition or sight loss. As ECLO I am here for you from the point of diagnosis and at any time you need advice.

You can contact me directly or be referred to the service by another professional. I can help you find information, solutions or support. That might include making a referral to another organisation such as the Low Vision Clinic, the Sensory Team, or to charities which have specialist teams to advise on issues like benefits, employment, IT or groups of volunteers offering practical help and social activities.

If you need someone to just talk to, an outlet for how you are feeling or have any worries about your treatment or appointments please do not hesitate to contact me. I can give you information about your eye condition, support with registering your sight loss, if appropriate, or advocate for you in clinic.

As the Isle of Wight ECLO I can help face-to-face, over the telephone or by email. I am here to support you, your family and your friends.

You can contact me by telephone on 07885 210891 or by email: laura.gooljar@rnib.org.uk

Laura

Laura Gooljar



Fundraising: How You Can Help

When lockdown was suddenly enforced in March, it put an immediate stop to all of our planned summer fundraising events and campaigns.

As with most charities, this has hit us hard but, determined not to be another charity asking for cash donations, we have found several ways to fundraise; none of which involve giving cash!!!!

Inkjet cartridge recycling

Do you have any used Brother, Cannon, Epson or HP inkjet cartridges!

We can recycle them and earn cash rewards!



Stamps and coins

We are lucky enough to have volunteers on hand who can sort and sell new / used stamps and any old or foreign coins. All donations very welcome.

Have you heard of Amazon Smile?

It is very simple, you link your normal Amazon account to Sight for Wight through Amazon Smile; then every time you spend any money on Amazon, at no cost to you, Amazon donate a percentage directly to us.

Why not sign up today?



Tips & Advice

Direct from Other Members!

We have gone out and asked members what little tricks they use to get round some of the day-to-day tasks that may be a little challenging for people living with sight loss and here's what we found:

TOOTHPASTE

"I kept missing the toothbrush with the toothpaste so I realised it was much easier to put the toothpaste directly into my mouth!"

Kate, Arreton



"My Mum and Mum-in-law suffered with AMD and often put clothes on back to front or inside out. They could both see the colour yellow best so we sewed bright yellow ribbon into the back of things to help"

Sue, East Cowes

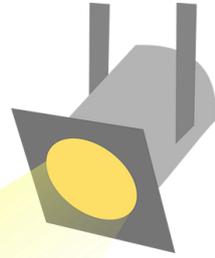
Chopping vegetables. You can use an afro comb (stainless steel) to hold vegetables and fruit, then use a knife to cut between each spike. You can then turn it round and use the knife to dice the vegetables. These can be purchased for less than £1.00!

Lisa, Freshwater





Spotlight On: Rene!



Rene was born on 14th February 1930 at 9:25am; she grew up during the war and married in 1948 to Norman Wagstaff. They had five children; three girls and two boys. In the late sixties they bought a general store and Rene would work in the shop from 6am to 8pm!

In 1969 her marriage broke down and she later married John Badger; they moved to the Isle of Wight in 1971 for a fresh start. They bought a house in Cowes. John started a window cleaning round and Rene would work with him and, even with a broken foot, she was up the ladder cleaning windows!! Rene's sight started to fail and she was later registered as blind but this has never stopped her doing anything and she still lives independently at home.

Rene has been a member at Sight for Wight for over twenty years and says the charity has been part of her family and she thoroughly enjoys coming to some of the groups and activities and particularly enjoyed it when zookeeper Gary from Isle of Wight Zoo came along with a selection of animals that he would talk about and members were able to touch.



Rene says, 'the current staff are wonderful, it's a fun environment. It's so nice to come and meet other members as it takes you away from sitting at home and being blind.'



Apps Available On Android & Apple

Have you ever tried to explain to other people how your vision affects your sight? Do you find it is very difficult to explain what it looks like to see through your eyes?

I remember when I was growing up, my mum saying many times, she wished she could, just for one day, have our vision so she could really understand how we saw. There were three of us, all with the same eye condition.

Well, some 45 years later, she can now do this with a free app available on Android and Apple devices.

The app is called:

ViaOptaSim for Android
VisionSim for Apple

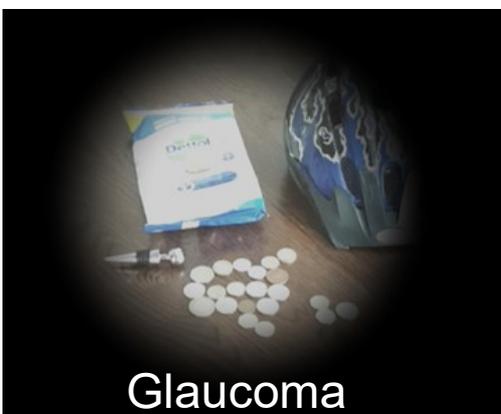


Google Play

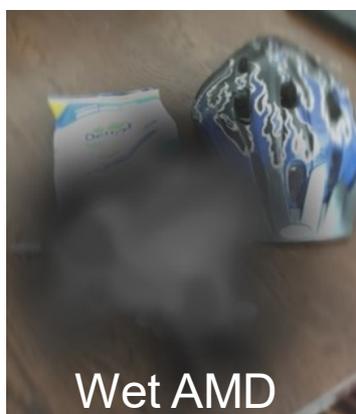


It uses the camera on your phone to show real images through the phone screen.

Here are a few examples:



Glaucoma



Wet AMD



Diabetic Retinopathy

Lisa



Our Island; Your Voice



We have been working hard over the last four months to become involved in many local and national issues affecting people living with sight loss. These include:

Police Identification

We have been approached by the Police to advise on how police officer identification procedures can be changed to allow severely sight impaired people to recognise a genuine police officer. We made several very key suggestions, all of which have been carried forward and we are looking forward to receiving final proposals.



Age Friendly Island Initiative

Sight for Wight has been accepted to sit on the steering committee of the Age Friendly Island Initiative. This committee, hosted by Age UK and part funded by the National Lottery and the Isle of Wight Council, aims to make life on the Island, friendly and accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

We further sit on the AFI Technology group, working to provide accessible IT support and loan equipment and the AFI Environment Group, looking at any infrastructure changes that may be made to help accessibility. We look forward to working with the group on many key issues over the coming months.

Hidden Disabilities

Not all disabilities are visible, some are hidden and not immediately obvious, such as visual impairment and therefore it can be difficult for others to recognise, acknowledge or understand the challenges you face.



Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around you, including staff, colleagues and health professionals, that you may need additional support, help or a little more time.



Paul, the CEO of Hidden Disabilities, asked us to consult on the size and shape of their face screens to ensure they would fit and work with over-glasses. We produced video trials of the product range for them and he has used these to move this project forward.

Ramble Tag

With human contact being reduced to a minimum, Ramble Tag has come to market a simple and very effective solution. Pilot tested by one of our Trustees, Ruth Hollingshead, “this device just fits round your guide’s arm using the Velcro straps and means I don’t have to actually hold people’s skin during these summer months and especially with COVID it feels much safer.”



The inventor of the Ramble Tag is Tom, who is himself blind,. When walking out with his neighbour and their dogs, he said “even though we were great friends when we linked arms we tried to walk as one person but using the Ramble Tag I found an immediate and very real sense of freedom whilst still be relaxed knowing my friend was guiding me.”



Now shortlisted for the 2020 National Diversity Awards, we are able to order these on behalf of members in a choice of colours and fastenings. Please contact the office on 522205 for more information or chat to Ruth who is happy to share her experience.



Out & About Cards



We have found that, with the lockdown restrictions easing, some people were finding the fast-changing new situation more challenging.

So, we have partnered with the Age Friendly Island Initiative to create a set of 'Out & About' Cards to help people to feel more confident to navigate social distancing and other COVID-secure measures that are now in place.

The scheme allows for people to wear a badge, with a lanyard if they wish, which asks other people to be a little patient and allow them time to adjust, explaining the reason why.

It is important that the badges and lanyards are recognised across the Island and that there is just one recognisable sign to look for so posters have been created and are being launched across all businesses to achieve this.

There are two badges and each of them is double sided.

BADGE 1

Please be patient; I am exempt from wearing a face covering

Please be patient; Social distancing is challenging for me





BADGE 2

Please be patient, your use of face covering is challenging for me

Please be patient, I need time and space



If you, or someone you know, would benefit from using either of these cards, please contact Sight for Wight on (01983) 522205 for more information and to be issued with a card.

A message from Susan

Now that I have returned to work, be it part time, I am counting down until we can start to resume at least some of activities. In the meantime, I would like to ask if you could send in a photo of yourself carrying out either a hobby, walking in the countryside, gardening; just a snapshot of your time spent during the lockdown. If you can email them to me then I will collate and make a collage of all of you to recognise how outstanding you all are.



Obviously if you don't want to be a part of it please don't worry as I fully understand; there is no pressure. Once I have collated everything, I will send a copy out to you all and then I will create an everlasting moment of this time.

Susan

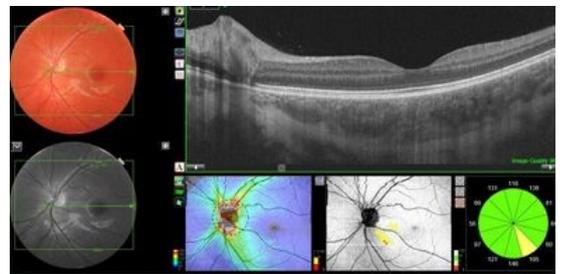


Celebrating 50 years of Eye Care

Rutherford Eyecare recently celebrated 50 years of providing eye care on the Isle of Wight. We are an Island family owned partnership of Opticians and our focus has always been to provide a thorough eye examination and quality products to enable our clients to achieve the best possible vision that they can, to enhance their lives, no matter what their circumstances.

We make this possible by paying particular attention to the individual needs and circumstances of everyone we see, and prescribing for them accordingly. To help achieve this goal, we have invested in the latest technology for examining and photographing the eye and for the investigation of visual difficulties, like Glaucoma and Macular degeneration, and most importantly in this modern world, we take our time to make sure we get the best outcome.

We also own our own workshop for the manufacturing of the spectacles we provide, and this helps us to control the quality of the product.



It also allows us to make “special prescriptions “ when needed.



We presently provide care in four practices located in Newport, Freshwater, Lake and Ventnor, and if your eyes are as special to you as they are to us, then we would be pleased to make you an appointment.

01983 524629



Dress for Less



Debbie, manager of our dress agency, Dress for Less, based at 114 St James Street, Newport has been delighted to welcome back not only our valued team of volunteers but also many familiar faces of our loyal customers.

When lockdown forced the shop closure in March, we didn't want this to stop our retail fundraising activities so we pulled together as a team, and launched our online eBay shop. This is now fully up and running and can be found at:

www.ebay.co.uk/usr/sightforwight

But we soon realised we needed further items to put into our shop so we launched an appeal through the County Press asking for smart casual and formal clothes to be donated to the Charity. We also contacted all of our previous customers to see if they also had any items to donate.

We could not quite believe the response from both existing customers and new donors; we now have a **fully stocked shop** with a full range of summer clothes in all shapes, colours and styles for enjoying time, both at home or out and about.



We are now open Tuesday, Thursday Friday and Saturday from 10am to 4pm.

With social distancing precautions in place, the shop layout has a new layout so we produced a video of the shop with audio description so that anyone who wants to understand its layout, including where each type of clothes are, before they come in, can watch and listen to it. **Happy shopping!**



Meet Loretta; One of our Volunteers

Hello, my name is Loretta and I am lucky enough to have been a volunteer in Dress For Less for the past four years or so. I live near Ventnor with my husband and Labradoodle called Morgan.

I retired six years ago thinking it would be nice to have time to myself, but quickly found that I missed the camaraderie of working with other people.

I always knew that I would like to volunteer in some capacity once I had retired, but where?

Having worn glasses since my teens, I know how precious your sight is and having sponsored a puppy in the past for Guide Dogs for the Blind I was very pleased when I found out that Dress For Less worked to provide money for Sight For Wight here on the island.

I have found the best of both worlds; I am working in a beautiful shop with a great bunch of like-minded girls led by Debbie, our Manager. Our customers are so supportive of us and I find there is nothing better than having a chat and helping to find 'that special something' that they are looking for amongst the exquisite clothes that are all recycled so also helping to become 'greener' knowing that we are assisting Sight For Wight to help their members.

I look forward to meeting lots of new customers soon as well as the familiar faces we always look forward to welcoming.

Loretta





Wearing Face Masks



Facemasks must now be worn in all shops, restaurants and all public transport. It is also strongly recommended that they are worn in any enclosed public space.

We 100% back the government policy so have taken the time to explain, as far as is available, the legislation behind wearing masks.

FACEMASK OR FACE SCREEN

There is no certain guidance as to whether face shields count as face masks. The Scottish government has, however, confirmed that a face shield does count but the English government has not confirmed either way.



What they have confirmed is the face mask **MUST COMPLETELY COVER** the whole nose and mouth and be securely fastened around the head or ears. Further, the mask must be washable or disposable and preferable have two layers of thickness. There is no requirement for any minimum fabric thickness or content.

There are exemptions, however, as these guidelines, which are stated on page 19, are deliberately not an exact list because people are all individuals and therefore the guidelines need to be flexible enough to cover all eventualities.



The Exemptions are as follows:

- Young children under the age of 11.
- Not being able to put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment or disability.
- If putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress.
- If you are travelling with or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading to communicate.
- To avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others.
- To avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm and you do not have a face covering with you.
- To eat or drink, but only if you need to.
- To take medication.
- If a police officer or other official requests you remove your face covering.
- If asked to do so by shop staff for the purpose of age identification.
- If speaking with people who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound. Some may ask you, either verbally or in writing, to remove a covering to help with communication.



I thought a couple of examples may help.

I myself am exempt because I have an eye condition whereby any sunlight instantly blinds me. I wear glasses which fit exactly to my face to stop all light entering; if I wear a face mask over my nose, this disturbs the lower seal on my glasses causing light to enter which stops me seeing anything at all.

This causes me immediate severe stress because it is a sudden change to my level of sight and potentially causes harm or injury to myself or others.



This said I **always** wear a mask to protect people and I lower it below my nose when outside in daylight; indoors the light pollution is tolerable, so I leave it on.

Other people I have spoken to are also exempt as their only useable vision is from the lowest part of the eye and the face mask obscures this and causes complete loss of vision, which again causes severe distress and potential harm to themselves or others.

If you are in doubt, talk to us and if we cannot help we will find someone who can.

Finally, a tip I read about somewhere, but admit I haven't tried, using standard surgical tape; tape the face mask to your cheeks to prevent your glasses steaming up. **Why not try it and let us know if it works!**



Lisa Hollyhead
Severely Sight Impaired
Diagnosed with complete Achromatopsia age 2



A Day In The Life Of Janet Parker (Volunteer)

Pre Lockdown: My days were ruled by time, household chores and meal times. A well-oiled ship so to speak.

Lockdown: Did I mention I suffer with OCD? Husband, grown up son and myself 24/7; overnight my world turned upside down.

My husband hated the sound of a washing machine and the Hoover and my constant up and down doing the chores; he seemed to always be under my feet and I told him that too!!! Go fishing I pleaded day after day; the tapping of my foot increased as did my stress levels. HELP! But do you know what, slowly after a few weeks I began thinking differently about life. Did it matter the bed was left unmade until 10am instead of the normal 8am? Hoover not used for a couple of days, washing left to build up, meals served dead on 5pm – NO!!

Everything was cleaned and washed up by the end of the week and now I had 'ME' time, which I never had before. I took up my love of books again, reading four to five books a week in the garden, weather permitting.

Because of Covid-19 I think I am an easier, lighter person to live with and I want to say Thank you Lockdown.



*Just a Footnote from Hubby - Thank God for Fishing!!!!!!

Janet



Events 2020



This year has been difficult for everyone because of the Covid-19 pandemic with events locally, nationally and internationally, all being cancelled or postponed.

This, of course, was the same for us with all summer plans postponed, including the return of our very popular Murder Mystery Evening and even more frustratingly, we still do not have a new date, but will as soon as Government guidelines allow us to.

Our fifth Annual Short Story Writing Competition will still take place and, once celebrities are confirmed in early September, we will announce full details so watch this space but, for now, **save the date** in your diaries for our Short Story Writing Competition Award Ceremony on Monday 7th December. We are planning to hold it at the Riverside Centre, Newport; however, this might end up being a virtual evening, depending on Government advice nearer the time.

We will have regular updates on our website and social media with full contact details on the back cover of this newsletter.



Murder Mystery Evening



Under 12s winner, Ben,
with Melynn Hayes

**Short Story Writing
Award Ceremony 2019**



Competition!



This year, Sight for Wight (Isle of Wight Society for the Blind) will be celebrating a special birthday. For your chance to win a set of sunglasses, keyring pen and torch we would like you to answer the following question: How old are we this year?

Please email: enquiries@iwsb.org.uk or telephone: 522205 with your answer along with your name and contact details.

The closing date for entries is Friday 11th September.

Good Luck!



100 Club

Did you know we run our own monthly lottery draw? It's just £2.00 per month, per number and raises vital funds for the charity whilst giving a monthly cash prize to one lucky winner. Could either 22 or 33, which are both available, be your lucky number? If you wish to join to have a chance of winning then please call 522205 or email: fundraising@iwsb.org.uk. The more people who join, the bigger the monthly prize.



Congratulations to our June and July winners; Viv Booth and Sylvia Mould and a warm welcome to Anna and Cath our newest members.



Talking News



If you'd like to listen to our Talking News, you can access it using this QR code.

Any smartphone will scan this QR code - press play to listen to the Talking News for Friday 31st July.



Contact Us

SIGHT FOR WIGHT

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Website: www.iwsb.org.uk



Facebook: www.facebook.com/sight4wight/



Twitter: <https://twitter.com/iwsftb>



Instagram: www.instagram.com/sight_for_wight

 YouTube: Sight for Wight

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/543851172417123/



Instagram: www.instagram.com/dressforless_iow

 Ebay: www.ebay.co.uk/usr/sightforwight