



Newsletter

Winter 2025

Your Local
Sight Loss Charity

SPOTLIGHT ON: Betty

Meet Volunteer Sam

Eccentric Viewing

Short Story Writing Competition Award Ceremony

Dress for Less Fashion Event

Laura Gooljar - Eye Clinic Liaison Officer

Save the Dates for 2025

Plus much more

**SCAN &
LISTEN**



Millbrooke House, 137 Carisbrooke Road,
Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1DD

Charity number 1149415
Company Number 06240404



Chair Report



Welcome to our Spring Newsletter, as usual, it is packed full of entertaining, informative and supportive articles. The Newsletter is such an asset and demonstrates all we can offer.



The information on which health service to use, will get the right help quicker and hints on how to try to guard against falls, is very useful. Plus the tips from the staff on eye care and the latest aids.

The VE Street Party in May looks great fun and also the theatre trip to the Apollo Theatre to see My Fair Lady.

For an enjoyable afternoon, why not attend the Dress for Less Fashion Show on the 29th March. It's a chance to see our clothing range being modelled and an opportunity to purchase afterwards.

Included is information about the DWP, who are changing the format for PIP Assessments, lets hope for a simplified version.

The Short Story Writing Competition Awards Evening was very entertaining. I am always amazed by the high standard of the stories, the kindness and expertise of our judges and readers and all those who volunteer to make it such an enjoyable evening.

We are so fortunate to have Laura Gooljar as a Trustee and as the ECLO (Eye Clinic Liaison Officer) in the Eye Department at St Mary's, because she is always there for support and advice. I know how much her visits to the coffee mornings are appreciated by our members.

As always, my thanks to our wonderful staff, trustees and volunteers, we cannot provide such support without you!

Sue Chair of Trustees



CEO Update



Every time we start the newsletter, we start at 36 pages and every time we end up with at least 44; again, this time we have reached the maximum of 48. Thank you so much to everyone who contributes, without member and volunteer input it would not be worth producing it.



Members' questions this time include:

- the no jab cane and the 360 pathfinder ball
- information on where to use your bus pass
- the revised PIP rules
- the mobile aid called Glide

We also have articles on Glaucoma and how to learn Eccentric Vision for those living with Macular and Stargardt conditions.

Listed are dates for our May VE Day celebration, Eye On Social events, Sight for Wight and Wight Sense Feedback and Chat sessions, together with Ruth's Living Well with Sight Loss group.

Susan, and her team of volunteers, have had a look at our Striders and Walk and Talk groups and written an article on what we are planning for 2025. She has also included an article on our Swimming Group which meets on a Monday. There is all the usual information in the Members' Activities section including; Tandem biking, which we are ready to now launch once the weather allows, and two articles on water sports including surfing and sailing.

Thank you from me to Betty and Sam who are our member and volunteer features this issue and, again, thank you to everyone who contributes.

Lisa CEO



Member Activities



Weekly

By Appointment: We have Sam on hand to give one-to-one help with accessibility features on your computer, laptop, tablet or phone. **It is essential you pre-book, so please call ahead.**



Monday: Swimming at Medina Leisure Centre, Newport (term time only) between 1.15pm and 2.00pm. Please see separate feature in this Newsletter.



Tuesday: Yoga at Millbrooke House between 1.45pm and 2.45pm; come along and try gentle yoga. Just £4.00 which includes refreshments. **Call the office to book a space.**



Wednesday: Coffee and Chat at Millbrooke House between 10.00am and 11.30am. All are welcome to join us for Coffee and Cake. The cost is £2.00 and the group is open to everyone. We have regular visitors to this group; for example, the ECLO, the Macular Society and many others. We now have the use of both rooms for members wishing for a quiet space.



Thursday: Mix and Mingle at Millbrooke House between 10.30am and 2.00pm. Planned activities include crafts, quizzes and entertainment. The cost is £4.00 plus £3.50 for transport if required. Places are available but transport will depend on where you live. **Pre-booking is essential!**



Fortnightly Tennis is held at Ryde Mead Tennis Club on a Monday between 9.30am and 10.30am. Volunteers of the Club are on hand to assist. This is weather dependant.



Monthly Groups

1st Tuesday of the Month: Godshill Coffee Morning 10.30am - 12.00pm held at The Old Smithy Coffee Shop, Godshill. Volunteers, Yvonne and Linda, will be on hand to chat every month.



1st Thursday of the Month: Audio Book Group held at Lord Louis Library, Newport, between 2.00pm and 3.00pm; this group is free to attend. You will receive a digital copy, USB stick, or CD and the group will discuss the book at the following meeting.

Monthly on a Friday: Walk and Talk group, as an alternative to Striders, involves a walk of around two miles. For more details, please call Susan. As with all walks, we offer one-to-one help.



Last Friday of the Month: Striders is for members who enjoy walking.

The walk is normally between four and six miles, depending on the route and location. The cost is £4.00 plus £3.50 for transport.

Please see separate feature in this Newsletter for both walking groups.



Member Activities

Last Sunday of the Month: Golf at Westridge Golf Centre, Ryde. Members enjoy 45 minutes with a professional instructor available to help the complete novice, to those playing regularly. It is usually the last Sunday of the month but always call the office to confirm.



The sessions are run by Mark; our members really enjoy them. Mark said, “Everyone enjoys this outside activity and find the Golf Club and professional help to be really engaging. It's a very light-hearted atmosphere with friendly chat and banter. Clubs are provided, and no special clothing is required.”

Tandem Bikes are now ready to go and hopefully, with better weather coming, we can officially launch in March. Our pilots are all ready and willing to take members for rides, therefore if you would like to have a go and you haven't let the office know, please call and put your name on the list. This is a fantastic opportunity for anyone who enjoys riding a bike and enjoying fresh air.



Susan Volunteers & Members



Swimming

Our swimming group started back in 1998 and was given a three-month trial and now, 27 years on, it is still going strong meeting on a Monday, 1:15pm - 2:00pm at Medina Leisure Centre.

Originally called Dolphins, it was held at the Ryde Pool and we were lucky to have volunteers who would drive the minibus to the venue and back; numbers flourished until sadly covid shut the pool down. Now at Medina Leisure Centre, although only during term time, the session is open to everyone.



We have exclusive use of the large pool and have lanes marked for the stronger swimmers leaving the rest of the pool for others to enjoy gentle exercise and relaxation.

The group is recruiting new members so why don't you come along and try it; we can arrange transport from Newport to the pool in our minibus. The cost is £6.00 plus a small fee for transport. Please call us on 522205 with any questions or if you wish to join.

Eye on Social Group

Eye on Social is our afternoon group held on the second Wednesday of the month. This group is open to everyone; members, volunteers and friends and is a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon always finishing with tea and cake. The following talks have been booked at Millbrooke House starting at 2:00pm. The cost is £3.00 to include refreshments:

- February 12th – The Blue Lamp Trust
- March 12th – Bembridge Fort
- April 16th – The Isle of Wight Glass Museum



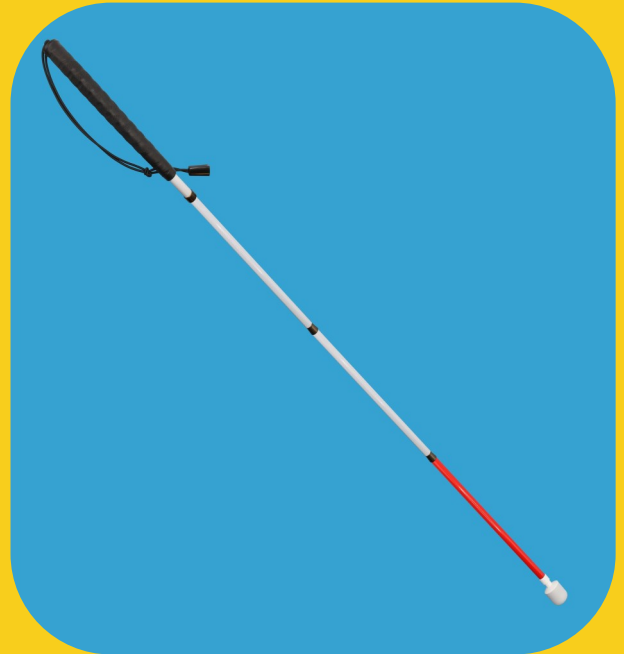
Please call Susan to reserve your place 522205

Review of Two New Mobility Products from Ambutech

Our members, Ruth and Eric, tested the No Jab Cane and the 360 pathfinder tips and here are there findings.

The **No Jab** long cane is a revolutionary shock absorbing cane designed to eliminate the sharp jabs that can occur when the tip gets stuck in a drain for example.

When the cane strikes a solid object, the handle gently recoils approximately five inches before returning to it's original position, thus avoiding the sharp jab to the abdomen.



The sheepskin red leather handle has a ten inch grip and gives a high level of traction and control in hot, humid or wet conditions while affording an amazing soft touch.

The cane is available in 11 sizes and is also available with a standard long cane rubber handle if you prefer.

We really liked the No Jab cane, especially as it weighs less than the conventional cane and we would thoroughly recommend it despite the fact that it is considerably more expensive than the standard long cane.

The Pathfinder 360 cane tip from Ambutech can roll in any direction and works well on a variety of surfaces including grass, sand, gravel and concrete and is even self-cleaning.

Review of Two New Mobility Products from Ambutech

The Pathfinder ball has a unique roller system that rolls effortlessly from side to side and front to back and the innovative self-cleaning system keeps it clean and rolling in any direction.

Made from ultra high molecular weight material for longer wear and with steel bearings rather than plastic inside, this tip is designed to last much longer than conventional cane tips to provide a smoother experience with better feedback too.

This tip will fit any Ambutech standard hook style long cane but is not suitable for slimline guide or symbol canes.

Eric has been using the Pathfinder for a couple of months now on both the conventional long cane and the amazing no jab cane; he completely agrees with the claims of the manufacture but would point out that it is a bit noisy compared to other types of roller balls. However, he said this is not a problem to him as he found that the loudness helps with echo location enabling him to detect large objects more easily.

Overall they were really impressed at how smoothly and easily the roller moves when sweeping the cane reducing wrist ache on long walks.



Spotlight on Betty

Betty was born in Dagenham, Essex in 1935. Her mum and dad had 13 children so it was always a very busy household!

She was very fond of her dad and would often follow him to the bus stop and on one occasion actually got on the bus with him!

Betty doesn't recall anything exciting about her school days but on leaving school she worked in a costume making factory.

She also worked for BHC (now Venture Quays) where her job was to mark components for planes.



She moved to the Island and enjoyed dancing; she went to a dance school in Newport and learnt how to ballroom dance. She met her first husband who shared her passion for dancing. He was a dancer and entertainer and used to impersonate Al Jolson when he wasn't building hovercrafts. They married when Betty was 18 years old. Betty made her husband an Al Jolson wig which everyone thought was his real hair! They were married for 50 years!

Betty has two children; a son and daughter. Her daughter is a midwife.

Betty's husband sadly died and years later she remarried. She became friendly with her second husband's mother before she started courting and marrying her second husband, who was a gardener so Betty's garden always looked lovely!

Spotlight on Betty

She was married to her second husband for 20 years where they lived in a large house. When he sadly died, Betty moved into her own flat in East Cowes.

Betty used to enjoy painting, flowers in particular. She also painted animals and, in particular, a beautiful photo of a tiger which you can see pictured right. She gave 40 paintings to the Hospice which they sold to raise money.



Betty's last job was working in a nursing home in East Cowes where she ended up being in charge of the Day Care Unit which grew from 20 to 50 residents.

Betty's eyesight deteriorated over the years and when she lost her second husband she felt the loss had exacerbated her macular degeneration.

In 2022 Betty's cleaner told her about Sight for Wight and that's when she became a member. She said that Sight for Wight brought her to life. She thoroughly enjoys coming to Mix and Mingle on a Thursday and feels this is a lifeline for her as she gets to see her friends and engage in activities organised by Susan, the Volunteers and Members Manager.

Apart from painting, Betty enjoys listening to music and is a keen classical listener. She has a great sense of humour and is a well loved member at Sight for Wight.





Striders and Walk & Talk



Monthly Striders: Normally around six miles and walked at a pace of around three miles per hour. The route goes across the Isle of Wight countryside, taking in many different terrains. The group are joined by members' guide dogs who enjoy the freedom of the countryside and our wonderful volunteers who help guide members throughout the walk. Striders is normally held on the last Friday of the month and transport is available if the route requires the minibus; this depends on the start and finish location for each walk. If you would like more details on the walk, please call Susan.



The cost is £4.00 and £3.50 for transport if required. The group normally finish at a pub and enjoys lunch together.

Monthly Walk and Talk: This is our shorter walk of between two and three miles, giving members, volunteers and staff an opportunity to talk and walk along the route. Walk and Talk is only held between April and October on the second Friday of each month. We are very lucky to have the first two walks planned for April and May so you have time to book in your diaries:



Friday April 11th - Freshwater Honnor and Jeffrey Garden Centre, Freshwater to Yarmouth.

Friday May 9th - Binstead to Quarr Abbey.

The cost for this group is £2.00 plus £3.50 if transport is required. The Walkers normally enjoy coffee and cake before heading home at a local café at the finishing location. Again, please contact Susan to book for further information.

Susan Volunteers & Members

For those with Macular Degeneration or Stargardt Disease, learning eccentric viewing may help with reading and recognising faces.

The eccentric viewing strategy is a way of learning to use your peripheral vision more effectively.



‘Eccentric’ simply means ‘off centre’ and eccentric viewing involves learning to change your point of focus away from the area of damaged central vision onto an area of the retina that works better.

Eccentric viewing uses a single eye technique - it’s not something you can do with both eyes.

Eccentric viewing takes a lot of practice; however can, for some, allow for big improvements.

To start, you can try the following exercises to identify your best direction of gaze.

Exercise One - Points of a compass

This method is based on using the four main points of the compass – north, south, east and west.

Stand in front of a mirror or hold a mirror, then close the eye with the worst vision; look straight at your reflection and see which parts of your face you can see.

If you can’t see your nose, try looking at each of the four main points of the compass in this order:



Eccentric Viewing

Eccentric Viewing



- Look north (up), towards your forehead; can you see your nose?
- If not, try looking west, towards your left ear; can you see your nose?
- If not, then look south (down) towards your chin.
- If you still can't see your nose, look east towards your right ear.

If looking north brought your nose into view, then your best area of vision is at the bottom and to view things more clearly you need to look up. If north doesn't work, viewing west is the second most effective for reading as you're not blocking anything you need to see next.

Clock face method

If the compass method didn't work, let's try the clock face method.

First, hold a round clock at arm's length. Close the eye with the worst vision and look at the centre of the clock. Note how well you can see the numbers around the edge. Which numbers appear the clearest and can you see any parts of the hands? If:



- one was the clearest, try looking towards seven; do the hands appear clear?
- two was the clearest, try looking towards eight; do the hands appear clear?
- four was the clearest, try looking towards ten; do the hands appear clear?



Eccentric Viewing



- five was the clearest, try looking towards eleven; do the hands appear clear?
- seven was the clearest, try looking towards one; do the hands appear clear?
- eight was the clearest, try looking towards two; do the hands appear clear?
- ten was the clearest, try looking towards four; do the hands appear clear?
- eleven was the clearest, try looking towards five; do the hands appear clear?

Eccentric viewing in practice

Now try taking this eccentric (off centre) viewing technique to look at things around the home. For example, if you found that looking up (12 o'clock) made your face in the mirror the clearest, try looking slightly above the TV screen.

You can use eccentric viewing with our suggested visual strategies once you've found the fixation point that works for you.

For example, if your best point of vision is at the bottom, you'll need to look up slightly before trying the strategies.

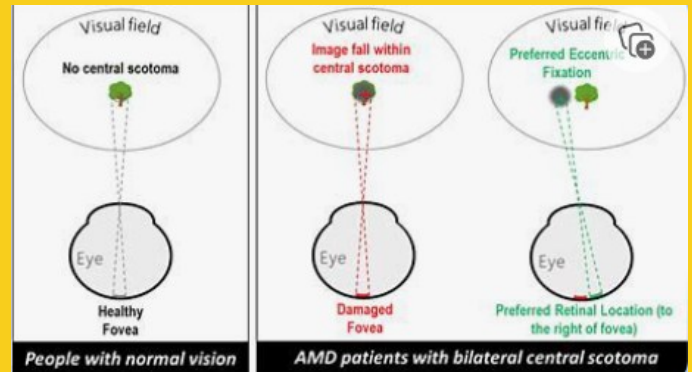
You may not need to use eccentric viewing if, when you looked in the mirror, your nose was clear when looking straight ahead and/or the centre of the clock was clear when looking straight ahead.



Eccentric Viewing

The steady eye strategy

The steady eye strategy is a technique that helps specifically with reading. Usually when fully sighted people read, they keep the page still and move their eyes systematically over the words. If you have central vision damage, this process is difficult, if not impossible.



The steady eye strategy means that you keep your eyes fixed in one position and pass the letters and words in front of your eyes from right to left. Once you get to the end of the line, move the page up and back across to the right and repeat with the next line.

If you use eccentric viewing at the same time, move your view so the best point of vision is in the centre and then move the letters and words through the area of best vision. This skill doesn't come naturally to most people but it will come with practice.

The Macular Society runs 1-2-1 sessions to assist with learning these skills. These can be done over the phone or online courses.

Either call The Macular Society on 0300 3030 111 or we can refer you.

Caron Member Support

Isle of Wight Disabled Bus Pass

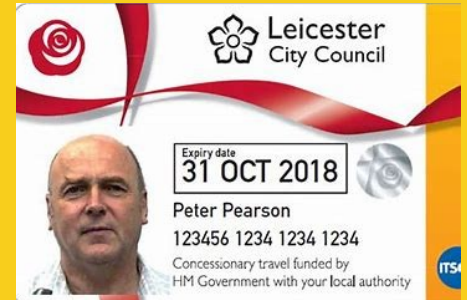
You can obtain an orange disabled bus pass here on the Island if you have a CVI (Certificate of Visual impairment) showing you are registerable as Blind (Severely Sight Impaired) or Partially Sighted (Sight Impaired). These are issued by the Isle of Wight Council and Caron here at Millbrooke House can help you with your application.



Bus Pass (continued)



You can then add an Islander Card if your CVI is registerable as Blind (Severely Sight Impaired). These Islander cards can be certified by Caron here at Millbrooke House.



This bus pass (and Islander card giving a free companion) can then be used as follows:

- at any time of day on all Southern Vectis buses (except the open top tour buses).
- On the mainland buses after 9:30am
- On the Cowes Floating Bridge as a foot passenger
- On Island Line trains

Fundraising

We are delighted to announce we have been chosen by the Cooperative as one of their Charities of the Year. In order to support us, if you use any of these branches for food, please nominate us as your chosen Charity. Please register at:

<https://www.coop.co.uk/LCF>

The more votes we get, the more funds we will receive at the end of the year. The stores collecting for us are Hight Street, Sandown, Pier Street, Ventnor and Landguard Road, Shanklin.

TESCO - We are also delighted to confirm we have won £1,500 from the Stronger Starts Blue Token scheme at **Tesco, Freshwater**. Our slot had to be emptied three times due to the overwhelming number of blue tokens (votes) we received. A huge thank you to Maria, their community champion.



May I start by wishing you all a very Happy New Year. I hope 2025 is treating you kindly so far.

I'm looking forward to another busy year at the Eye Clinic, providing support to our wonderful patients. As always, the clinical and secretarial teams are going above and beyond to meet demand for appointments. More than ever, it is important to attend your appointments so your eye condition can be monitored or let us know if you need to rebook.

Last year, the Trust introduced a new patient engagement portal so you can access appointment letters digitally. The digital letters have accessibility features which enable you to increase the font size, zoom in or out, to have the letter read aloud and to change the background colour.

If you have registered a mobile phone number with the hospital, you will receive a text message to your smartphone with your appointment details. It will come from 'IOW NHS' and say, 'This is an important letter from the Isle of Wight NHS Trust for 'First Name,



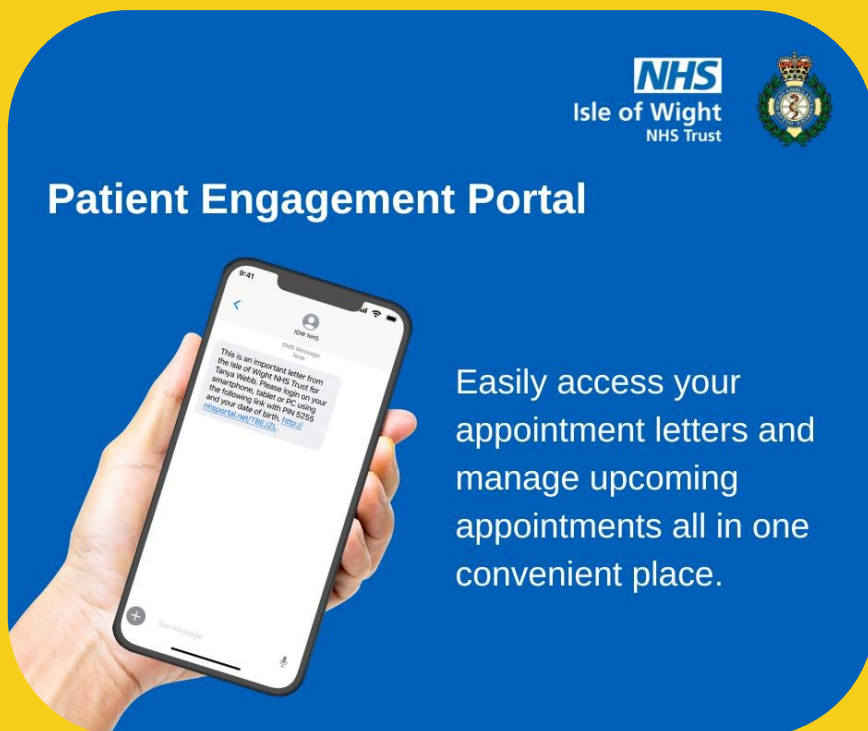
Surname'. There is a weblink in the text message which takes you through to the portal. To gain access to your information, enter your date of birth and four-digit PIN from the text message. This will take you to your appointment page, where you will be able to see the date and time of your appointment, as well as hospital and clinic information.

If you can't attend the date specified in the letter, you can choose to rebook or cancel your appointment. If you select to rebook, the hospital will contact you to arrange another date. You can view the accessibility features in the top right-hand corner of the page.

The new digital communication method is optional and you can let our appointment booking team know if you want to opt out of the portal. Additionally, if you do not view your digital letter within 48 hours, your appointment letter will be posted to you automatically.

I fully appreciate that smart phones, portals and digital engagement are not for everyone so please let me know if you encounter any issues with the system, particularly, if you have trouble accessing the information as your feedback will help me to inform those managing the system. You also have sources of support from the RNIB Technology Team and our very own Sam here at Sight for Wight. Please do contact us if you require any support getting comfortable using the system and using the accessibility settings.

I'm anticipating another busy year for the ECLO service and remain incredibly grateful for the support I receive from my colleagues in the hospital, RNIB and here at Sight for Wight and Wight Sense. I feel so privileged to be an ECLO and my role is made so fulfilling by all the wonderful patients I meet on a daily basis.



It's my intention to come along to the first coffee morning of each month this year, but please do bear with me if this doesn't always go to plan because of demands in the Eye Clinic. One of the joys of the ECLO role is your plan for the day can sometimes go out of the window because a patient needs some moral support or a shoulder to cry on. However, being able to join members for the couple of hours they get together is such a joy and I always come away with the biggest smile on my face thanks to you all.



The coffee mornings are always full of laughter, shared information and I always leave with lots of tips to share with future patients.

As an ECLO, I am available Tuesday to Friday at the Eye Clinic and can support with queries relating to the clinic, your eye condition, certification visually impaired, benefits, counselling and employment. All of my details are at the end of my article and I can honestly say, that no question or query is ever too small or too silly!

If I miss you at a coffee morning then please do get in touch or let one of the Sight for Wight team know.

I look forward to catching up with you all over the course of the year.

Phone : 07885 210 891 or 01983 534924

E-mail : laura.gooljar@rnib.org.uk or laura.gooljar@nhs.net

Laura ECLO

Tips for Members



"I quite often used to go out with odd shoes on as I struggled to see to match my shoes together until my friend suggested using clothes pegs to attach my pairs of shoes together. This helps me find them easier and makes it less likely for me to go out to meet my friends with odd shoes on."

June from Ryde

"I've put a bell on my cats collar so I can hear where my cat is in my house by listening for the bell. I'm sure this would work with dogs as well. Just a tip for those pet owners like me!"

Rachel from Godshill



"When I am making my cup of tea, I like to have 2 sugars but I often miss the cup and get sugar everywhere until I tried to use sugar cubes instead. This has worked better for me to make less mess but still enjoy 2 sugars in my tea."

Adam from Ventnor

If you have any tips to include in our newsletter, please let us know!

Which health service should you use?

For common ailments and illnesses such as **sore throat, grazed knee, diarrhoea or indigestion.**

CARE AT HOME

For advice and treatment for common conditions like **sore throat, earache, headaches and upset stomach.**

PHARMACY

For ongoing **health concerns or symptoms that don't go away.** Your practice can offer appointments with a range of health professionals including a GP, nurse, clinical pharmacist or physiotherapist, depending on your situation.

GP PRACTICE

If you're unsure what to do **visit 111 online** or call **111** and a trained advisor will direct you to the best service for your needs.

111.NHS.UK OR CALL 111

For minor conditions such as **suspected broken bones, sprains, minor burns and minor illness.**

URGENT TREATMENT CENTRE

For life-threatening emergencies only such as **loss of consciousness, severe chest pain, breathing difficulties, stroke or heavy bleeding** that cannot be stopped.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR CALL 999

For more information visit

hantsiow.icb.nhs.uk/your-services

A little help caring for your little ones

Download the **Healthier Together app** for instant advice on all the most common childhood illnesses.

It will guide you on how to look after your child at home when they're poorly and when and where to get help when you need it.

Find us online at www.what0-18.nhs.uk



Think Pharmacy First for minor illness



Your local pharmacy can now treat, and offer prescription medication when needed, for seven common conditions

Shingles - 18 years and over

Sore throat - 5 years and over

Infected insect bites - 1 year and over

Earaches in children - 1 to 17 years

Sinusitis - 12 years and over

Impetigo - 1 year and over

Uncomplicated urinary tract infection (UTI) in women 16 to 64 years

Surfing - Wave Project

Have you ever wanted to try surfing but don't have the confidence? At the Wave Project, we have seen growing demand for surfing from people with a wide range of disabilities. To meet this need we have acquired the skills, training and specialist equipment to deliver safe and enjoyable surf sessions for everyone. We are passionate about making surfing accessible for all.

Established in 2024, our Adaptive Surf Hub in Sandown Bay operates from the iSurf Surf School, just a few steps from the beach. Our surf coaches are ISA, Adaptive Surfing and Surf Lifeguard qualified, with a wealth of surfing experience to ensure everyone has a safe, fun session.



Our range of specialist equipment, including adapted boards, wetsuits and wheelchairs, ensures every surfer has a bespoke session. For those with additional physical needs we are key holders for the fully equipped changing place, and a beach mat walkway is in place during the peak season.

Every session lasts two hours and we always work at the pace of the surfer, trying different boards or sticking with the same board to ensure they get a true surfing experience.



We have worked with many individual surfers and love to get the rest of the family involved where possible. We have also worked with British Blind Sports and Guide Dogs for the Blind.

To book or for more information email:
adaptivesurfing@waveproject.co.uk or call: 07534 514675

Volunteer Update

Welcome to all our wonderful Volunteers to our first newsletter of 2025.

We started the year as normal attending the Isle of Wight Volunteers Fair at the Riverside Centre and I would like to thank Lorna, Tracy, Veronica and Sandra for coming along and promoting the Charity to perspective volunteers. We all had an enjoyable day and made lots of contacts for future activities and talks provided from other charities.



I have been planning the year ahead and we have lots of exciting events, talks and activities being planned for both our Members and you our wonderful Volunteers. I will keep you updated as dates are announced and, as always, please read this newsletter as several are advertised in here.



All volunteers are very welcome to come along to our group, Eye on Social, where we have talks and outings during the year, also to our Walk and Talk group starting, again, in April.

If you would like to volunteer at Sight for Wight please give me a call and we can have a chat.

Thank you, as always, for all your Help, Time and Support.

Susan Volunteers & Members

Artificial Intelligence is proving to be a new and lucrative tool for scammers. Cybercriminals are now using readily available AI technology to clone voices to trick us. BBC Watchdog invited a volunteer group to the University of East Anglia to show just how easy it is to fall for an AI scam, with the help of Professor of Cyber Security, Oli Buckley. Our volunteers knew that they were taking part in an experiment; however, had no knowledge of what we were about to attempt. We ensured that our group consisted of a cross section of society by age, gender and profession. We invited each of them into a recording room one at a time and asked them to talk about themselves for just 2 minutes, which we recorded. This audio would provide ample source material for the AI software to use, just as scammers would use the content of a fake marketing phone call to allow the software to replicate their voices. Oli then used these recordings to reproduce each voice using AI software.



Our group were shocked by the results. Included amongst our volunteers were a mother and daughter, Sam and Amelia. Both were stunned to hear the fake voicemail from Amelia. Sam recognised that the sense of urgency in the voicemail caused a physical reaction from her, and a need to help, despite Amelia sitting next to her and the complete knowledge that the message was false. We advised our audience to always listen to the subtle nuances in a voicemail and, if in doubt, always make a direct phone call to the person to double check. Equally, when uploading online content, background noises and music make a harder job for the scammers to steal your voice.



Deaf Blind Support Officer



Have you had an assessment with the Sensory Service?

Wight Sense offer assessment visits for people in their own home. These are for people who have a diagnosed hearing loss, and/or an eye condition that cannot be rectified, for example, by wearing glasses.



Once an assessment has been carried out you may be entitled to equipment on long-term loan.

If you don't meet the criteria to have equipment issued, our assessors will be able to point you in the right direction to purchase equipment.



You may, however, have had an assessment for your eyesight and have now got a diagnosed hearing loss or you may have an existing hearing loss and have now been diagnosed with an eye condition.

We are able to carry out a further assessment to help with your new condition. Please contact Wight Sense on 01983 240222 and one of our sensory team will be able to help.

If it is some time since you were assessed by the Sensory Team (we have also been known as RNID, Action on Hearing Loss and Sound Advice) and your circumstances have changed, you could also be eligible for an updated assessment.



Also don't forget you can follow us on Facebook to keep up with news of what is going on at Wight Sense and Sight for Wight.

Karen Deaf Blind Assessor

Save the Dates

We have planned the dates for Feedback and Chat for both Wight Sense and Sight for Wight, together with Living Well with Sight Loss hosted by Ruth. Please note the Feedback and Chat dates for Wight Sense have been changed to those printed in the previous newsletter as they are now being held with the Deaf Café meet ups.



Wight Sense Feedback and Chat as part of Deaf Café meet up - Contact Paula 240222. Held on Mondays:

- 10th March
- 9th June
- 17th September
- 26th November

Sight for Wight Feedback and Chat - 11am as part of Wednesday Coffee Morning at Millbrooke House - Contact Susan 522205

- 26th March
- 25th June
- 24th September
- 3rd December

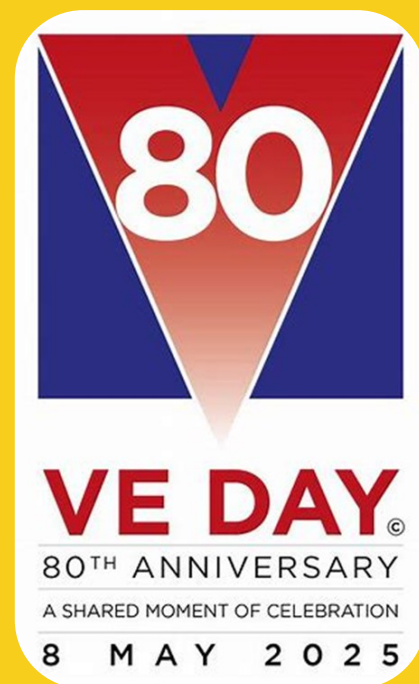
Living Well with Sight Loss - 10am at Millbrooke House - Contact Caron 522205

- 7th March
- 6th June
- 5th September
- 5th December

Our VE Street Party

We are planning a “Street Party” to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day on Thursday 8th May. It will, once again, be held at Wendes Hall, 1st Newport Scout Hall, St John’s Road, Newport from 2:00pm until 4:30pm.

Afternoon tea will be served along with entertainment. Numbers will be limited so if you would like to come along, please call the office and reserve a seat. This is open to members, volunteers, family and friends of the Charity.



A suggested donation of £5 will be made.

Theatre Trip



Saturday 19th July 2025 - Apollo Theatre, Newport 7.30pm - Tickets £10.00.

This is the classic story of Cockney flower-seller Eliza Doolittle who is taught to “talk more genteel” by Professor Henry Higgins so that she may pass as a lady. But it’s not only Eliza who gets an education.

Funny, moving and vivid, My Fair Lady has been acclaimed as the perfect musical, full of unforgettable songs including ‘Wouldn’t It Be Lovely?’, ‘With A Little Bit of Luck’, ‘I Could Have Danced All Night’ and ‘On The Street Where You Live’.

Please call Susan and reserve a ticket. Confirmation must be made by March 31st and a non-refundable deposit of £5.00 is required to secure your seat.

Hearing Help Update

Bluetooth technology is now embedded in most hearing aids, including some from the NHS. Bluetooth is a technology that allows information to be shared between devices; for example, you may have used it to listen to music that is saved on their mobile phone through an external Bluetooth speaker.

Using the Bluetooth facility on your hearing aids means that you can receive phone calls directly from your mobile phone into your hearing aids. Please note all hearing aids have this capability and for some you may need an additional small streamer pendant too.

You will need to first pair your hearing aids to your device; e.g. your mobile phone. You may then be able to use your phone independently instead of maybe having to ask another person to take or make the call for them which, especially for private conversations, this could be essential.



It's also possible to connect your aids to other Bluetooth enabled devices such as TVs, laptops, and tablets.

Albeit for some people having Bluetooth enabled hearing aids is a life changer, there are some downsides too; for example:

- They can take some time to adapt to
- Bluetooth only works up to 10 meters
- The Bluetooth will drain the battery faster than normal
- Some may need a small streamer pendant .

To find out more about Bluetooth enabled hearing aids, please do contact your hearing aid dispenser who should be able to answer any questions you may have.

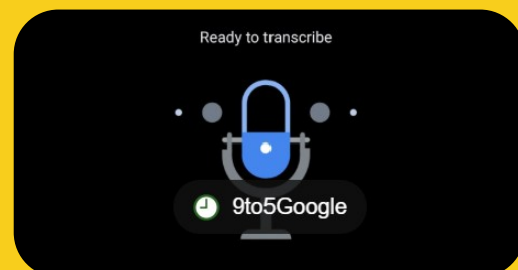
Paula

Hearing Officer

Deaf Church

Newport Minster have contacted us and asked us to test their hearing loop which, of course, we did. The best position is the front four rows but we did find it worked quite well across the whole area with only two dead spots which we made them aware of.

They have now asked us to gauge interest in offering further facilities for those living with hearing loss.



The first is for large screens with live transcription so people can read what is being said; we know this would not work for those living with Sight Loss too. Or, secondly having a BSL interpreter available. Depending on demand, this might be for major events such as Easter or more often if there is enough demand. Please could you contact Paula, here at Wight Sense (240222) if you would like to register your interest.

Fundraising Through Books

We held a pre-loved book sale at Tesco in January and raised £485 in just two weeks!

The stand is run on a donation basis; we recycled just under 1,000 books. We have a chance in May to run another stall and need **excellent condition, clean books**. If you have any, please contact the office.



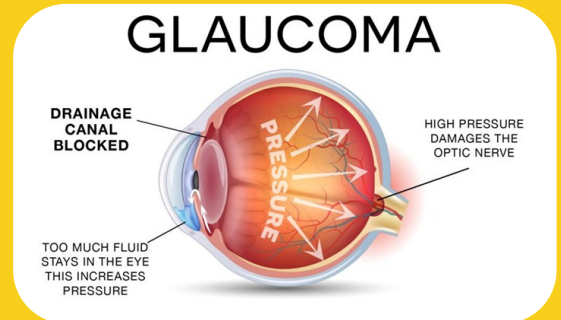
Other Recycling

Our glasses recycling scheme so far has saved 1.3 tonnes of glasses from landfill and we are still collecting them.

We also recycle stamps and all coins here at Sight for Wight. If you have any items you would like to donate please contact us on 522205.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is an eye condition, which can affect any age but mainly people in their 70s and 80s where the optic nerve becomes damaged; it is often caused by a fluid build-up in the front of the eye increasing pressure inside the eye. It is important to attend eye appointments regularly as Glaucoma can lead to the loss of vision, if undiagnosed.



Glaucoma affects people in different ways; in some people the pressure of the fluid can be raised, and this may cause the optic nerve to get damaged; in other people there could be a weakness which can cause similar nerve damage.

There are different types of Glaucoma:

Primary Open Angle Glaucoma – Known as POAG. This is painless, there are no warning signs for this. This is the most common type of Glaucoma. Where the eye does not drain fluid as well as it should.

The effects of this can happen slowly over many years. The pressure in your eye increases gradually.

Angle Closure Glaucoma

This is an uncommon type of glaucoma. This happens when the circulation of fluid round the eye is blocked slowly or suddenly. It can be caused by a narrow opening or 'angle' between the front of the iris and the drainage meshwork in the eye. It is often sudden and painful and can cause permanent damage if untreated. (Sight Loss the Essential Guide - Need-2-know, by Antonia Dawson & Victoria Dawson).

Apprentice VRS

Everyone should get their eyes checked at least every two years. During the eye test an optometrist will carry out some tests. By looking at the back of your eye with a light, the optic nerve can change in appearance which can be seen in this test; they will also measure the pressure in your eye by using an instrument that blows a puff of air into the eye. The Optometrist will also check your field of vision, you will be asked to put your chin on a rest and look at different spots of light which will flash up, one after another.



Treatment:

There are various types of treatments and preventatives, such as eye drops. These will help your eyes by opening the drainage meshwork reducing the amount of fluid produced; you will need to use these for life unless suggested for surgery.

Laser treatment: This treatment is usually for Angle Closure Glaucoma only.

Drainage Surgery – also known as ‘trabeculectomy’ this makes a small path that the eye can drain through; you may also need to use eye drops after surgery.

For any support please visit:

UK Glaucoma Support Groups/Community/Care & Support/
Glaucoma UK

Call the helpline on 01233 648 170 or
email helpline@glaucoma.uk

Opening hours: 9.30am – 5.00pm on weekdays.

Emma Rehabilitation

Meet Volunteer Sam

I'm an islander, but not a caulthead. Born on December 10th 1987 in Jersey, I spent my early years in the port town of St. Aubin, where my parents managed The Tenby pub and restaurant chain, Randalls.

In August 1990, we moved to the Isle of Wight, initially settling in Bembridge. My siblings and I attended the local primary school, while Dad worked as a chef at Inver House and Mum had various jobs before joining the Lane End Co-Op.



In April 1994 we relocated to neighbouring St. Helens, where my teenage years saw me collect for Goose Island Carol Singers each Christmas and, in August 2004, finish third in the mile race at the Sports and Carnival. More recently, I've participated in quizzes at The Vine Inn and attended Historical Society talks at the Isle of Wight Festival and, latterly, the Isle of Wight County Press.

At Sight for Wight, since March 2024, I've read articles selected from both the County Press and the Isle of Wight Observer for the Talking News which goes out every Friday.

I took this positive and fulfilling role in an effort to improve my communication and confidence. Despite doing a fair amount of public speaking activities over the years, I've struggled to be the most outgoing person, or initiate conversation and fit in. I therefore hope this opportunity enables me to reverse some of this so that, in time, I can form more friendships with people of my own age or similar.

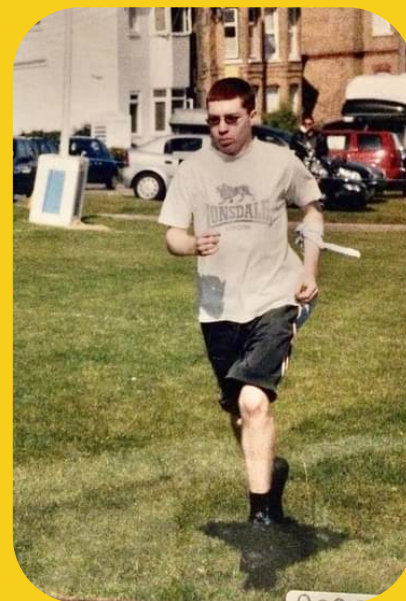


Meet Volunteer Sam



I've also found it rewarding to help the sight loss community, having lived with glaucoma since 2009, and have appreciated meeting new people at Sight for Wight in the friendly Millbrooke House environment every four to six weeks.

Away from Sight for Wight, I've been sustained by reading, writing and sport. As a child, I was fascinated by words, often turning my diary into reports inspired by Grandstand and Match of the Day, while I quickly graduated from Roald Dahl books to the back pages of the newspapers Dad brought home from work.



In recent years, I've taken these interests more seriously by contributing articles to football magazine, Late Tackle, and news items to the now defunct creative writing publication, Writers' Forum. Sport also led me to volunteer at the 2011 Island Games for the results service, and raise funds for Mountbatten by participating in Walk The Wight for the last two years.

As for the future, since 2014, I've been working at Portsmouth University as an academic support worker specialising in note taking, but because of increasing travel costs from the Isle of Wight I'll soon need to seek alternative employment or turn my writing interest into full-time work.

Additionally, at some point, I'd like to volunteer with the Open University, with whom I studied English Language and Literature after doing A-levels at Ryde School, as a reader at their Audio Recording Centre, and I intend to continue my Sight for Wight involvement as this has given my life more structure, direction and purpose.

Sam Volunteer

Steps you can take to live well and avoid falls



We are working with the Isle of Wight Council to support people living safely and part of this is offering advice on fall prevention.

Falls are not an inevitable part of getting older and you should always tell your GP or another health professional if you have a fall as it may be a sign of a new or worsening health condition.

There are lots of ways to reduce your risk of falling. Start making your action plan today and look at the following checklist:

- **Can I reduce my alcohol intake?**

Try to cut back on drinking alcohol regularly.

If you are concerned, or someone else has expressed concern that you are drinking too much alcohol, contact Inclusion Recovery Isle of Wight on 01983 526654.

- **Am I getting dizzy frequently?**

There are many possible causes of dizziness, including low blood pressure and inner ear problems. To reduce dizziness; when moving from a bed or chair, do it slowly, ensure you are drinking enough water; if seated for long periods move your arms and legs to increase circulation, have your hearing checked and, if you are worried, contact your GP.

- **Is there anything I can do to have a healthy diet?**

Taking part in physical activity and a diet rich in calcium and vitamin D will encourage strong bones and help prevent brittle bone disease (Osteoporosis). The Royal Osteoporosis Society can provide advice through their helpline: 0808 800 0035.

- **Do I need to get my eyesight tested?**

You should have it checked every two years or when you notice any change in vision. Early detection means treatment can prevent or slow down further changes. If you wear glasses, follow the four Cs:

- Make sure my glasses are correct.
- Make sure my glasses are current.
- Make sure my glasses are clean.
- Make sure my glasses are comfortable.



- **Do I take my medicine on time and correctly?**

Some medicines, and taking many medications, can make you more likely to fall. Ensure you understand each medicine and have an annual review with your GP.



- **Do I need to change my footwear?**

Trimming nails, wearing well-fitted sensible shoes with ankle support can help you to stay steady.

- **Am I well hydrated?**

Drinking plenty of fluids helps to maintain a steady blood pressure and boost the health of your bladder. There are several ways to keep your bladder healthy including: drinking 6 - 8 glasses of fluid daily (unless your doctor advises otherwise) cutting down on caffeinated, carbonated, acidic and alcoholic drinks that irritate the bladder and contacting your GP with any concerns or incontinence.





Fall Prevention



- **Is my home falls safe?**

Many falls occur at home but these can be prevented by removing trip hazards, using non-slip mats and arranging good lighting around your home.

For people who use a Zimmer frame or walking aid, get a professional to review if this is the best walking aid for you to be using and check that it is still in a good condition.

Some people are eligible for adaptations in their home to help prevent a fall. Contact IW Council on: 821000 for advice.

Arrange a Safe and Well visit from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue by calling: 023 8064 4000. Safe and Well is a free home fire safety visit tailored to your needs, or for more support at home with health and safety, call Blue Lamp Trust: 0300 777 0157. Please contact Wight Sense on 240222 for help organising a visit.

Island Flower Club

Recently, one of our Trustees, Ruth, gave a talk to the Island Flower Club, based in Newchurch, as we have been their Charity of the Year. We were delighted to receive a cheque for £200 and would like to thank them for their support and for thinking of us.



Glide - What Is It?

I went to London to see the new AI assisted mobility aid, GLIDE. It looks a little bit like a long handled vacuum cleaner, is very light and was very easy to handle. Speaking to you through headphones or aloud, you push it along, it keeps you straight, breaks when it detects an obstacle and can guide you along pre-programmed routes.

Glide believe that freedom of mobility for those who experience vision loss – whether fully blind or vision impaired – is a right; not a luxury. That's why they're on a mission to break down barriers to independent movement for everyone. What are it's Capabilities:

- **Glide simply guides the way** - Hold Glide's ergonomic handle in one hand in front of you and walk at your own pace. Glide will simply guide you by steering its wheels.
- **Avoid obstacles** - With obstacle detection for both stationary and moving objects, you can confidently navigate high-traffic areas.
- **Find doors, lifts, crossings, stairs, & more** - With its camera and sensors, Glide will detect and direct you to key waypoints and line-of-sight targets and apply its haptic handle and automatic braking system when you arrive.
- **Have your surroundings described with an active scene description** - As you walk, voice feedback keeps you updated on relevant details within your environment.
- **Pre-mapped and spontaneous walking** - Pre-programme your most frequent routes or simply start walking without a set destination in mind. Glide will keep you on a path and avoid obstacles.



There are plans to integrate it with voice controlled map apps to give a seamless guidance system from your home to your destination. They are around £1500 and will be available from September 2025.

If you want further information, please call me at the office.

Lisa CEO/Member

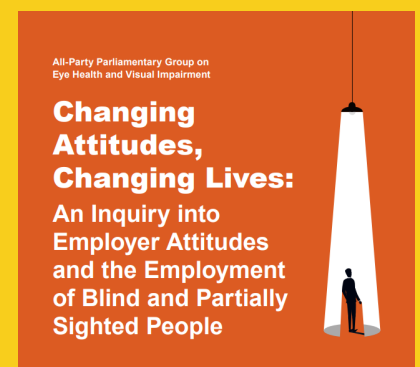
New Report on Employment

The 'Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives' report is calling on the UK Government to implement a Disability Employment Strategy that will improve employer attitudes and increase the number of blind and partially sighted people in work.

The report came out of an inquiry by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Eye Health and Visual Impairment (APPGEHVI), held in spring 2024, which obtained written submissions and held a series of sessions with people sharing their expertise and experience.

It highlights the practical barriers faced by blind and partially sighted people when looking for work and progressing in their careers and made twenty-two recommendations including:

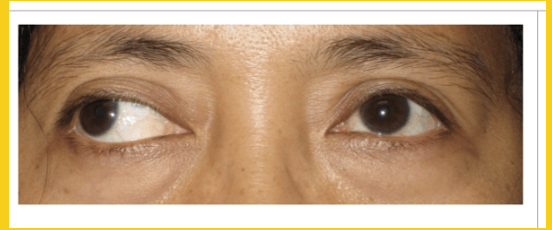
- Reviewing the Equality Act (2010) to make sure it's fit for purpose in the 21st Century to support blind and partially sighted people to participate in the labour market.
- Addressing the current failings in the government's Access to Work scheme, including tackling the current delays and backlog.
- Asking employers to take practical steps to ensure their workplaces are inclusive, such as producing information and documents in accessible formats and regularly testing their interface, for compatibility and accessibility.



The report was launched in Westminster in October and I attended the launch welcoming Employment Minister, Alison McGovern, MP, comment “a big change is needed so that all blind and partially sighted people can play their full role in society”. She said that a new employment white paper will be coming, and this report would be seen as an early submission to this.

Duane Syndrome

Duane Syndrome is a rare eye movement disorder that affects the ability of the eye to move. People with the condition have difficulty moving their eyes left and right with their eyes moving sharply upwards when they try. They can experience frequent double vision.



Are you or someone you know living with Duane Syndrome? We have been contacted by a family who are looking to engage with other Island families for peer-to-peer support. Please contact Emma on 240222 if you would like to engage.

Cowes Sailability



Do you enjoy the sea and sailing? If so, Cowes Sailability meet on a Monday afternoon from May to September running dinghy sailing for disabled people who are members of the club.

Members can also enjoy other boating experiences throughout the year. They charge an annual membership starting from £42.00 per year.



For more information about joining please email:
info@cowessailability.co.uk



Short Story Writing Competition



Award Ceremony 2024

Celebrating our 15th annual Short Story Writing Competition, Sight for Wight held the Awards Ceremony at The Riverside Centre, Newport on Friday 6th December to a full house! This year's theme was 'A Funny Thing Happened When.....' Maurice Kachuk (pictured above) was our Master of Ceremonies.



Once again, we secured an enviable range of British talent, which this year included, Chesney Hawkes (Singer/Songwriter), Richard Cadell (Sooty & Sweep), Joe Pasquale (Comedian), Steve Power (Nation Radio South) and Selina Ross (Nation Radio South) as the celebrity readers. The High Sheriff, Graham Biss, presented the awards to the three under 18 categories:

Under 8's First Place – Olive Miller with her story, 'The Giraffe Who Had The Longest Neck'. Olive won a book token, kindly donated by TESCO.

8 - 11's First Place - Lillian Woodford with her story, My Story. Lillian won a Waterstones Voucher, kindly donated by Wight Computers.



**Under 8's Winner
Olive Miller**



**8 - 11's Winner
Lillian Woodford**



Short Story Writing Competition

Award Ceremony 2024



12 - 17's First Place - Rachel Lambert with her story, Blurred. Rachel won a Waterstones voucher, kindly donated by Wight Computers.

Edana Minghella Award - Karleigh Riches was the winner with her story, Karleigh Riches Short Story. Karleigh won a voucher kindly donated by HoverTravel.

18+ First Place - George Miller with his story, A Funny Thing Happened When Kevin Revolted. George won a voucher, kindly donated by Red Funnel.



**12 - 17's
Rachel Lambert**



**Edana Minghella Award
Karleigh Riches**



**18+ Winner
George Miller**



Short Story Writing Competition



Award Ceremony 2024

The results were announced amidst an evening of local Island music talent with the melodious sounds of Solent Singers, and singer/songwriter Ruby.

Gioia Minghella-Giddens presented the prizes to the Edana Minghella Award and the 18+ category.

Sue Bungey, Chair of Trustees, closed the evening.

In total, we raised £1,037.00 which I was delighted with and would like to thank everyone who gave up their time for free.



**Gioia Minghella-Giddens
With Chris Cane**



**Chair of Trustees
Sue Bungey**



**Singer/Songwriter
Ruby**



**Choir
Solent Singers**

Chris Centre Manager



Education Update



Since the last Education Update we have been to Broadlea Primary School for the fourth time. The children remembered us from our previous visits and could name some of the eye conditions we spoke about and some of the ways we can keep our eyes healthy, which is great! In February, we are going to St Thomas Primary.



None of this would be possible without the support and time of the wonderful Volunteers.

One of the games, the Volunteer leads the activity where children have the opportunity to use blindfolds and vision goggles displaying different eye conditions to complete puzzles, challenges and blindfolded drawing!



The second game is where another Volunteer leads the activity and the children learn about who created braille and how it can be used to read and write.

The last game is where the final Volunteer leads the activity where children use a penfriend device that makes different sounds when pointed on a sticker. The stickers are placed on an Isle of Wight map and the children have to work out the places using sound and sight to see if they can identify the different places across the Island. For example, one sound is a donkey and some donkeys are located at the Donkey Sanctuary, so that is where the sticker is placed.

If this sounds like good fun to you and you'd like to come along to the schools with me then please give me a call!

Jasmine Education



CHARITY Fashion Event

All your fashion needs for Spring/Summer 2025

Treat Mum this Mother's Day weekend and raise money for Sight for Wight.

High quality clothing and accessories for Weddings, Cruises, Mother of the Bride, holiday essentials and everyday wardrobe staples. *Don't miss out!*

FREE GIFT
Spend £50

Saturday 29th March
2pm - 4.30pm
26 Castle Road, Cowes
PO31 7QZ
Glass of Prosecco and light refreshments
Ticket £12
(Bring Mum too for £10)

Sight FOR WIGHT

www.iwsb.org.uk Scan the QR Code to book and pay via Eventbrite

Charity Fashion Event

We are hosting our Charity Fashion Event on Saturday 29th March at the Masonic Lodge, Castle Road, Cowes. Our volunteer models will be highlighting some of the outfits available, with all items for sale including occasion wear and your every day essentials.

Guests will be welcomed with a glass of Prosecco and light refreshments, tickets can be purchased via Eventbrite through our Facebook page.

Debbie Dress for Less

Chris's Crackers!



I was robbed by six
dwarves today!
Not happy!

A man came up to me and
said, I've got bubonic plague;
I said, don't give me that!

I went to the sweet shop and
said, do you have any Twix?
The shopkeeper said, I'm
quite good at juggling!

A man asked me if I knew
where he could buy a
toupee. I said, I can't think
of anywhere off the top of my
head!

I went to a restaurant and there was a sign
outside saying, look out for our new menu so
I walked in and it hit me on the back of the
head!

My great nephew came up to me all excited as
he's started swimming and recently got a 10
metre badge which I thought was way too big!

I was reading in the paper the
other day that exit signs are on
their way out!

I just found out about
barefoot bowls. I was
going to give it a try but
got cold feet!

My friend wants me to do an
Escape Room. I'm not keen and
don't think I can get out of it!



Our 100 Club



Did you know we have our own 100 Club. This is our own lottery but restricted to 100 members. Each month entrants pay £2.00 for a number with 40% prize money distributed as a single prize and the remaining 60% going directly to support our services.

This quarter's winners are PJ, Willem and Linda. We'd also like to welcome our new members Maureen, Betty, Linda and Anna.

If you would like to join the Sight for Wight 100 Club, it is just £2.00 a month; you can pay annually or by Standing Order each month.



SIGHT FOR WIGHT (01983) 522205 enquiries@iwsb.org.uk
sightforwight.org.uk

WIGHT SENSE (01983) 240222 info@wightsense.org.uk
wightsense.org.uk

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm

DRESS FOR LESS (01983) 523197 retail@iwsb.org.uk
57 Pyle Street, Newport, IOW PO30 1UL

NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE IN THE FOLLOWING FORMATS:
Alexa / USB / Braille