



# Newsletter

Spring 2025

Your Local  
Sight Loss Charity

*Farewell to Lisa*

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*Dress for Less*

*Plus much more*

**SCAN &  
LISTEN**



Hello and welcome to our Spring Newsletter for 2025.

As usual, you will find it packed with our usual updates, activities and helpful information which I am sure you will enjoy reading.

This issue is a little different in that we want to reflect on Lisa Hollyhead's role as CEO, during the last five years. Sadly, for us, Lisa is retiring from the Charity and moving on to new and exciting challenges. She has made such an enormous difference to all facets of our charity life, think of the number of activities we can offer, the help supplied from our knowledgeable and supportive staff and how, through her determined and innovative fundraising, we are still at the forefront of Island life and the visually and hearing impaired community.

It has been my privilege to have worked with Lisa as CEO during the last five years. Her energy and enthusiasm for improving the lives for all those living with sensory loss has been inspiring. Lisa's financial skills have been central to the ongoing viability of the Charity and to the provision of the support, education and activities we can provide. Because of her exceptional leadership and tireless dedication, forging links with other organisations, speaking at conferences and innovative applications; for example, the QR Code, the Charity has become energised and proactive. We are recognised as providing an essential service to all visually and hearing impaired islanders.

I am immensely grateful for all her contributions and wish her all the best for the future. We are in the process of trying to find her replacement, a hard act to follow, as I'm sure you will agree but what a tremendous legacy for our next CEO to carry forward.

***Sue*** Chair of Trustees







# CEO Update



Hello and welcome to our Newsletter; for anyone who has not yet heard, this is likely to be my penultimate edition. I am due to retire from the role of CEO over the next few months!

I have made the difficult decision to retire, having reached the grand age of 55 to enable me to spend time with my children before they leave the nest for university and college.



However, my 55th birthday coincides with the date in 1865 when the Charity was first born. John Cooper wrote to the local paper, the Isle of Wight Observer, asking for people to come forward to fund the Charity to aid the Blind residents of the Isle of Wight.

This newsletter includes a little of our history and lots of photos from past years in celebration of this and an article on how we are fundraising to celebrate.

As I work with Trustees to help recruit my replacement, I have taken time to look back to when I joined in 2018 and am compiling a report for the next newsletter of then and now, which I hope will make interesting reading.

I would like to sincerely thank Bridget and David Preston who nominated us as their Cowes Masonic Lodge Charity of the Year. I cannot quite still believe they raised £10,000 for us including Bridget running Yoga classes raising over £1,100 of this; such a huge thank you from everyone here at Sight for Wight, your donation really will help us to change people's lives.

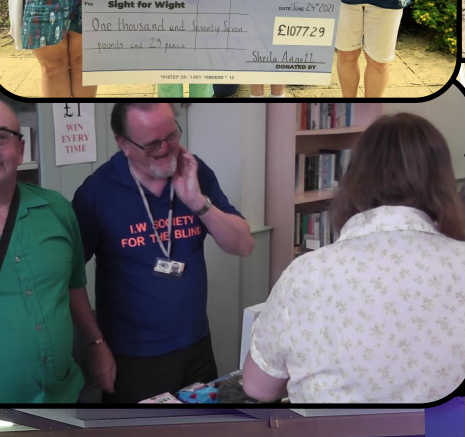
And indeed thank you to every single supporter and volunteer who make us possible; please save the date of 30th July as our Open Day, here at Millbrooke House, to celebrate every person involved in Sight for Wight.

*Lisa* CEO













# Sight for Wight Celebrates 160 Years!



Sight for Wight (The Isle of Wight Society for the Blind) is the oldest working Island Charity and celebrates its 160th birthday this year.



Further recent delving into archives has revealed that, in fact, the Charity was founded on the 5th April, the birth date of my 55th birthday.

Sight for Wight is looking for 365 people who can each donate £160 to support the Charity for a day. This would raise a staggering £58,400 which would fulfil 78% of annual fundraising needs of the Charity.

We have been the very grateful beneficiary of donations for people in lieu of birthday presents and this gave me the idea of making this more official, recognising that individual, on their chosen day, as the person who has supported our charity for that day. Dates will be allocated on a first come, first served basis and we will only have one person each day.

But it is not just birthdays, I want to extend this to include companies celebrating the day they were formed, anniversaries, last day of school, first kiss, first date, receiving an award, accomplishing any personal goal or 'just because.'

Sue Bungey, Chair of Trustees, praised the idea, "I truly believe that we can find 365 people to support our work; this fundraising idea really would allow us to meet the vast majority of our annual target, leaving staff and volunteers free to help our members even further by reducing time spent on fundraising. The remainder of our target will be through raising awareness events which are equally important."

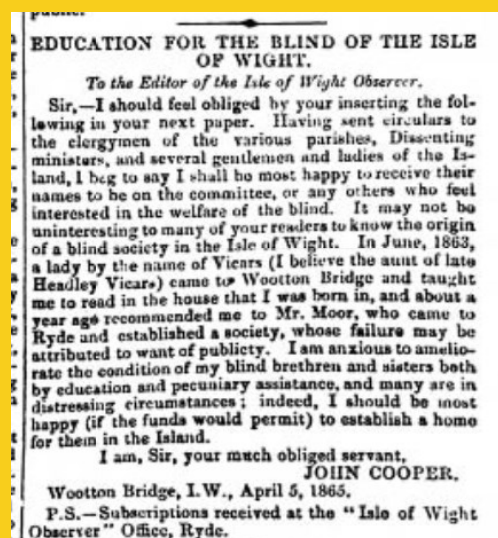
*Lisa* CEO



## 1865 to 1895

During the mid-Victorian period in Great Britain, interest and concern began regarding the plight of blind people and their families living in the community. This concern brought about the formation of societies whose specific aims were to support “needy blind” people in the community.

On the 5th April 1865 John Cooper wrote to the Editor of the Isle of Wight Observer asking vicars of all denominations and interested ladies and gentlemen to come together and form a committee to represent the needs of the blind and raise money. The Isle of Wight Society for the Blind was born!



The year 1920 saw the introduction of the Blind Person’s Act which laid certain responsibilities on Local Authorities to provide some services for blind people. It was permissible for Local Authorities to delegate some or all of these responsibilities to a voluntary agency and in 1921 this Society became affiliated to the Council and this remained true until 2007.

## Home at Polars for blind IW residents



In 1946, GP, Dr Finley, proposed opening a home for the blind and by 1951 the Society had plans in place to build a 20 bedroom home at Polars, adjoining a council care home. A total of £22,750 had to be raised for the build; the County

Press bore a front page fundraiser offering people the chance to purchase a brick for a shilling.



## 1950's Blind Employees

1 chartered physiotherapist  
3 chair caners  
1 carpenter  
1 boot maker  
2 boot and shoe repairers  
1 machine knitter  
2 tea agents  
1 hand loom weaver

It is believed this was the first home built after the National Assistance Act was passed in 1948 and the only one built in conjunction with an old people's home allowing blind people to mix with sighted people and become friends.

As I am now at the helm of the Isle of Wight's oldest working charity, I stand in

awe at my predecessors and what they have achieved. The early records show from 1928 - 1958, Mr S B Dore was the only employee and was famed for 'his unfailing compassion for the blind.' When ill health took control, he was followed by his daughter, Mrs Noreen Taylor, who introduced the Home Teacher and fought hard with the Isle of Wight Council to introduce, eventually, two full-time paid rehabilitation officers.

Ian Attrill followed Noreen Taylor who was a huge instigator in the Charity moving forward with the very significant increase in the number of members, both blind and partially sighted. In 1999, Olive Light took over gaining the Investors in People award.

This would be followed in 2014 under Estelle Thomas with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. I took over from Miriam Tong in 2020 who saw through the change of name, 'Sight for Wight.' Since then, I have been at the helm with our amazing team of staff, volunteers, trustees and members. I am very sad to be retiring from the role but will remain in post until a suitable replacement is found.



**Lisa** CEO



# Short Break to Warner's

Twenty one members, staff and friends of the Charity have just spent a wonderful time at Norton Grange, Warner's in Yarmouth. During our stay, members enjoyed several activities including Archery, Axe Throwing, Rifle Shooting and Laser Shooting. The group also took part in daily activities including a quiz, although we did not win the daily prize.



The group enjoyed many laughs together and showed the dance floor a few moves every night. It was a unanimous vote to book again next Spring to enjoy the opportunities on offer that are not normally accessible to members. Details to follow in due course.

***Susan*** Members and Volunteers Manager

## 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.



**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. The group has a waiting list, so please call to put your name down.



**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.





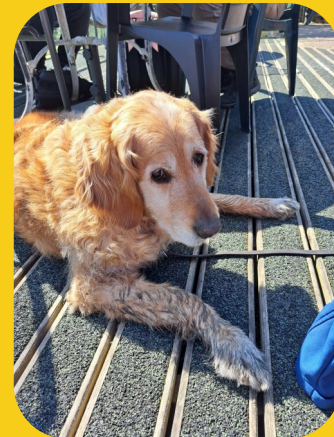
## Monthly Groups

**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.

**Second Friday of the Month:** Walk and Talk group, as an alternative to Striders, involves a walk of around two miles. The cost is £2.00 plus £3.50 transport. 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. The group always enjoys lunch in a local pub and is a great social event.

# 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. 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, hopefully with the better weather coming. 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 fresh air.





# Member Activities

**Fortnightly Bell Tennis** is held at Ryde Mead Tennis Club on alternative Mondays between 9.30am and 10.30am. Volunteers of the Club are on hand to assist. This is weather dependant. Volunteers of the Club will meet you at the nearest bus stop if required. The group is always looking for new members so for more details, please call the office and speak to Susan.



## 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 and tours are booked; the cost is £3.00 which includes refreshments:

- ♦ **May 14th - Isle of Wight Bus Museum**
- ♦ **June 11th - Northcourt Manor Gardens Tour**
- ♦ **July 15th - Bembridge Fort Tour**

**Please call Susan to reserve your place on 522205.**



# Tribute to Lisa



One of Lisa's many strengths is her ability to come up with new and innovative ideas including the 'Hello Everyone' QR codes. This gave me the opportunity to create QR codes for the following organisations: Wightlink, Gift to Nature, Hover Travel, Isle of Wight Council, Hampshire Police, Shanklin Theatre, Sandown Town Council, Quay Art Centre, Independent Arts. These now enable visually impaired people to navigate an area that would normally be unfamiliar to them. I appreciated Lisa giving me the opportunity to utilise my video skills. Happy retirement!

**Chris Cane (Centre Manager)**

From day one of starting the Education Programme, Lisa has always believed it will be successful, which I am thankful to her for. I'm sure the programme will continue to be effective and be a big learning opportunity for all the children, teachers and teaching assistants as it continues into the future.



**Jasmine Edwards (Education Manager)**

I'd like to thank Lisa for all her support and feedback she has given me through my job role and doing my course so far. I like that her door has always been open, she has always taken on board anything I've had to say, even if it's when I'm away travelling!



As she moves into early retirement, I'd like to wish her a happy time and to hopefully learn to relax a little.

**Emma McAndrew (VRS Apprentice)**



# Tribute to Lisa

I have been with Sight for Wight and Wight Sense for three years now. During this time Lisa has always been the CEO. I always admire her commitment and support to those on the Isle of Wight living with Sight and Hearing loss. I thank her for her support as my line manager and I wish her well in her retirement.



**Karen Chessell (Deaf Blind Support Officer)**

When Sight for Wight was awarded the Sensory Service contract three years ago it meant a lot of change for me. Lisa was very welcoming, supportive and empathetic through the transition process which made it so much easier and much less stressful. Her dedication and professionalism is an inspiration and she will often “go the extra mile” if it benefits the Charity, more so if it’s associated with an opportunity to gain funding, networking with other professionals or promoting Sight for Wight and its achievements. I wish Lisa all the best for her forthcoming retirement, she will be missed and I hope she takes the time to have some well-deserved rest and relaxation and looks forward to new adventures in the future.



**Paula Matthews (Hearing Support Officer HI)**

I had been chairman of a road safety charity for many years when I joined Lisa and her team last year. I was delighted to find our charity was extremely well run and morale among the staff was very high. It still is today. This is a great tribute to our CEO, Lisa, who has been an outstanding leader of the team and a great ambassador for the sight impaired and hard of hearing on the Island for the past five years. We shall be sorry to see Lisa step down but happy that she will stay in touch with us.



**Tony Spalding (Trustee)**

# Tribute to Lisa

I think the best way I can sum up Lisa is to say that she is tireless and constantly goes above and beyond that which is asked of her. Lisa took the helm at a challenging time for the Charity and has steered us admirably through stormy seas. We are so grateful for the time, knowledge and determination she has shown throughout her tenure, all whilst keeping her sense of humour. From my perspective as a Trustee, she has always made herself available for any query and has been a great advocate for rehabilitation services and the ECLO role. Lisa, we will really miss you and the place will honestly not be the same without you! Good luck in all your future adventures!



**Laura Gooljar (ECLO & Trustee)**

I would like to thank Lisa for giving me the opportunity to join the team here at Sight for Wight. Being visually impaired myself I have struggled for many years in a wide range of jobs that never quite understood the challenges I faced. This all changed when I was offered the job as Accessibility Officer and also becoming part of the Talking News production.



I would like to thank Lisa for all the opportunities she has given me, along with all the new skills I have acquired. She has given me the confidence to push myself and made me realise that nothing can hold me back.

I would like to wish her all the best in her retirement; she will be greatly missed by all.

**Sam Whitaker (Accessibility Officer)**





# Tribute to Lisa



I have worked with Lisa from the beginning when she joined as the Finance Officer; she has always been very driven and passionate about the Charity and the work it carries out supporting Island people.



The work she puts in behind the scenes with grant funding and sourcing new opportunities has been instrumental in the Charity's survival and I think everyone should be very grateful for that and for the Charity going from strength to strength under her guidance.

I wish her a long and happy retirement, although knowing Lisa she will never sit still with her feet up!! Spend time with the boys and enjoy life.

**Susan Earley (Members & Volunteers Manager)**

Having started work here four years ago as Member Support Officer, Lisa has always been encouraging, patient and a mine of information. Through her dedication to the Charity and to championing those who are living with a sight loss, I have learnt so much and been able to become an assessor for the Sensory Service at Wight Sense.



Lisa never gives up and her motto must be, "where there's a will, there's a way." It has been an absolute pleasure working with Lisa and although she will be greatly missed I wish her a very happy and healthy retirement.

**Caron Fezzani (Visual Impairment Support Officer)**

I opened my eyes on the world in the middle of the Second World War. I lived my early life in Pemberton Gardens, North London which was the setting for the hilarious book, 'Diary of a Nobody' by George & Weedon Grossmith.

I can remember a VE street party as a young person and getting up on stage to sing, 'You Are My Sunshine', holding hands with Vera, the girl next door.



I went to Chartesey Grammar School, North London (experimental; no Latin; more arts/vocational) and, in 1960, I enrolled in an Art College for four years on a degree course. Pauline Boty, who taught at the College, was an originator of Pop Art along with Sir Peter Blake; an influence on my own artistic endeavours.

In 1976 I studied for an Art Teacher's Certificate at London University.

For a while I lived with ex students from college to exchange ideas and work out philosophy.

I became a teacher myself in Further Education (Point 5 Lecturer) teaching Art and Life class.

A few memorable moments of my life involved a train ride from Kingston, Jamaica, over the Blue Mountains to Montego Bay, an earthquake, looking up at the calm from the eye of Hurricane Gilbert when I was in Jamaica in 1988, finding a biography written by my Great Uncle Benjamin William Findon on his cousin, Sir Arthur Sullivan, visiting the grounds of the hospital in Kumasi, Ghana and tugging at the sword, unsuccessfully, implanted there by the Ghanian Merlin. Apparently a great leader who will, in future, succeed.



I also helped to mount an exhibition of Raymond Briggs' original Snowman illustrations at the Battersea Art Gallery where my friend, Joan, was Curator. It was Joan who persuaded me to buy a space at the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building and, after a makeover, sold it, which helped finance my move to the Isle of Wight in 1999.



About four and a half years ago, my eyesight started to deteriorate so I went to an optician who recommended I go to the Hospital Eye Department which revealed I had AMD (Age related Macular Degeneration). I also mentioned to the staff about hallucinations I was having and they suggested I make an appointment to see Laura Gooljar (Eye Clinic Liaison Officer) at St Mary's who diagnosed Charles Bonnet Syndrome. She also presented me with a Sight for Wight newsletter and thought I would benefit from contacting the Charity. This I did and decided to go along to their Wednesday coffee morning which I'm so glad I did.

My thanks to all the helpful staff and volunteers who help make my life that bit easier.

Long may it continue.

**Robert** Member





# Second Hand Equipment Sale

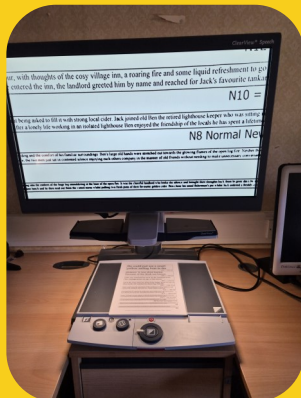
## Wednesday 21st May

### 10.00am and 2.00pm



On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May at Millbrooke House we are holding a sale of preloved items from our Resources Room. These items are mainly designed to support those with a visual impairment. We currently have desktop magnifiers, both with and without speech. These are around £2,000 upwards if you were to purchase brand new; however, we have pre-loved models available for a suggested donation of £400.

We also have talking microwaves, various task lamps, selection of handheld magnifiers, computer keyboards, kitchen equipment, big button phones and various other items. Sam will also have mobile phones to demonstrate with various VI friendly apps installed for you to try before you buy.







# Member Support Officer



It's that time of year with the weather getting warmer that some of us think about getting away and taking a short break or a longer vacation.

Having just got back from Warners with Sight for Wight you realise how a change of scenery, a switch to your routine and different social interactions can truly benefit our wellbeing; however, being Visually Impaired and not being in familiar surroundings can also be extremely daunting and can even stop us from trying something new.



However, if you want an adventure or to meet new people, maybe explore different cultures and soak up new atmospheres, a holiday especially designed for VI travellers may just be the answer.

Traveleyes and Seable are just two organisations that offer holidays tailored for VI travellers. From the Lake District to Tandem Bikes in the Loire Valley, Stately Homes in the Peak District to the Sacred Lands of the Inca in Peru, holidays are suitable for solo travellers, couples, family holidays or groups of friends. Assistance is offered right from the beginning and you can have a sighted guide with you and local tour guides that are VI trained so you get the very best out of your experience.



For more information, either contact me or contact Traveleyes on 0113 834 6094 [www.traveleyes-international.com](http://www.traveleyes-international.com) or Seable on 020 3375 6947 [www.seable.co.uk](http://www.seable.co.uk)

*Caron* Member Support



# Meet Volunteers Tracy & Matt



Hello everyone, my name is Tracy and I am currently a volunteer for Sight for Wight. I have been asked if I would tell you a little bit about myself. Initially, I thought “why would anyone want to know about my life? I am pretty boring.” However, I gave it some thought and here goes!

I was born in 1966 and lived in a village on the outskirts of High Wycombe called Tylers Green. As well as mum and dad, I had an older sister and brother. We had a menagerie of animals including three dogs, a cat, goldfish and budgie. The funfair would come every September and mum would groan when we came home with yet another goldfish. She always got lumbered with cleaning them out every week.



Every summer we would drive down to Swanage where we would meet up with aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and their dogs for a two-week caravan holiday. I have very fond memories of those times. We hired two beach huts and would spend the whole days on the beach and in the water. It hardly ever seemed to rain but, if it did, we would be taken to the Tank Museum. The boys loved it, but it was a feat of endurance for me. I was more into the Punch and Judy show, trudging up the beach every day at 2pm to watch yet another performance.

My world changed in 1982, when I was fifteen years old, as my lovely dad died very suddenly of a heart attack, at the age of 47. My poor mum was widowed at 44 and left with three kids to look after and a house that still had a mortgage to pay. Mum was fantastic. She remortgaged the house and, although money was very tight, life went on.



# Meet Volunteers Tracy & Matt

I left school in 1984 and worked for five years in a shoe shop. I then worked for the NHS for a total of thirty two years. I carried out a variety of admin roles, both in the local hospital and then a few GP surgeries.



In 1984 I met Matt in a local night club and, in 1987, we got married. Like me, Matt was born in High Wycombe and had never left. He has three brothers, one older and two younger. Matt served an apprenticeship as an engineer and worked in engineering for twenty two years, sixteen of which were permanent night shifts. We rarely had a cross word, because we hardly saw each other. As I went to work in the morning, he came home and went to bed. He then went on to work for Thames Water for twenty two years, until his retirement last year.

Unfortunately, life was a little unkind and we were never able to have children. Instead, in 1999, we began adopting French Bulldogs, our first little girl was called Anna. They weren't popular dogs back then, not like today and people used to ask us if she was a pig. We have



adopted a few Frenchies over the years and currently have Tilly and Nelly. We also have Winnie, our miniature dachshund, who belonged to my mum. He is our little old man, at 14 years old.

Let's fast forward to the present and how Matt and I came to be living on the Island. Matt always wanted to retire when he was 60 and, in March 2024, he did just that. I was 57 at the time and ready to retire also.



# Meet Volunteers Tracy & Matt



I have a chronic health condition which leaves me in a lot of pain and extremely tired, so it was time to call it a day with work. In 2023, both Matt's parents passed away, so we decided it was now "our time."



We had holidayed on the Island several times and fell in love with it so, in 2023, we put our house in High Wycombe on the market and put a deposit on a new build in Godshill. After a lot of angst and stress, we moved over here April last year. Neither of us had lived anywhere other than High Wycombe, so it was a big deal for us.

I knew I wanted to do some volunteer work, but I was also aware of my limitations. Late last year, I saw that Sight for Wight were looking for volunteers, so I applied to become an escort (no, not that sort of escort!!) on their minibus. I currently do alternate Thursdays, taking the lovely members home after Mix and Mingle and, once or twice a month, I escort some members to and from their swimming session on a Monday. I loved volunteering so much that I talked Matt into helping too. He now drives the minibus and does some odd jobs at Millbrooke House. Just this morning, he has repaired the shed roof at Millbrooke. Like me, he also gets great pleasure from helping where he can. We both find it very rewarding and, although we don't volunteer to get thanks, the members are really very grateful to us. Not only are we helping Sight for Wight, they are helping us. Retiring, after working all our lives, is hard. We both felt like we were just floundering and volunteering gives us purpose and fulfilment.

Well, after thinking I had nothing to tell you, I seem to have rambled on quite a bit. You are pretty much up-to-date with our lives up to now, so I will sign off.

*Tracy & Matt* Volunteers





# Volunteer Update



Welcome to all our new volunteers, I hope you enjoy your time with Sight for Wight and feel welcome by staff and fellow Volunteers of the Charity.



Our member activities are running very well, with new members coming aboard and enjoying what we have to offer. I am glad to report that Walk and Talk is, once again, running for the summer months and I would like to thank Trish and Jackie for offering their help, along with other volunteers to plan this monthly activity.



Alongside Member Activities, we have held several fundraising events and, once again, I thank those volunteers who come along and offer to help, raising both the profile and much needed funds for the Charity.

Thank you also to all the Volunteers who came to our first Catch Up for 2025, it was well attended and I hope everyone enjoyed coffee and cake. It was a great morning, full of conversation and laughter and I hope those who came along tell others about our charity and bring them along to the next one so we can showcase the marvellous work we all do.

Every activity we run and every fundraising event we hold I could not do without the backup and support of the many volunteers our charity is very fortunate to have and I thank you for all your time, help and support you provide me and the Charity, I cannot thank you enough.



***Susan*** Volunteers & Members Manager

# A Poem by Sheila

## MIX AND MINGLE

Mix and Mingle means to me  
Such a lot of hilarity  
A meeting of friends and repartee  
Lovely ladies to bring us tea  
No milk, no sugar, we're so fussy  
Then we have our activity  
Quizzes, sticking - oh no, not glue  
My eyes and my nose too



Maurice is my favourite and John sings and fills the room  
We also dance to rid any gloom

The Three Maids are such fun  
We laugh and sing, they are not humdrum  
Susan looks after us with love and care  
We all appreciate her being there

In the car and bus at two o'clock  
They shut the door for sure  
I think they say 'whoopie'  
No more, no more!





# IT Tips for Members



On your Android mobile phone, you can enlarge the text and icon size. Simply go to 'settings', 'accessibility', 'font size' and 'text.' Here you can choose how big text appears when using the phone.



Google Assistant can be installed on your phone and is free to use. Google Assistant can do lots of things for you by simply saying, 'Hey Google.' Google Assistant can make calls for you, send messages, set reminders and even tell you the weather forecast for the day.

Seeing AI is a free app from Microsoft; once installed, this app can read text from food packaging or even your latest gas bill. Simply hold the phone over the text and it will read it aloud. It also has a mode called 'describe'; this mode will describe everything you point the camera at in great detail.



If you have a PC or laptop, you can increase the size of the desktop icons very easily. On the desktop, hold down the 'control' key on your keyboard and then use the scroll wheel on the mouse to increase or decrease the size of the desktop icons.

On Android and iPhones there is a very clever feature that detects certain sounds and alerts you when they happen. Once set up, your phone can alert you to sounds such as, doorbells, smoke alarms, dogs barking, babies crying and more. This can be found in the 'accessibility' menu of the phone under the heading, 'hearing enhancements.'



**Sam** IT Accessibility Officer

# Audio Adventures Game Review

**By Aaron Danvers-Jukes**  
**(a totally blind gamer)**

It is not every day that something modern, yet something so amazingly retro, seem destined to cross over and bring its own flare to the table and yet that day is today. It starts with the modern: a crowdfunded Kickstarter campaign with one man, Lee McGeorge, inspired by radio dramas of the past plus the Nintendo Game Boy, successfully funding this vision within the hour of the



campaign going live. There was no question I would definitely back a project like this. Now, a year later, that initial vision is on my desk as I write this very review. This consists of a device from Truman Toys and Games, not that much larger than the Nintendo Game Boy, but with four buttons on it: A, B, C, and D, from left to right, on its top. Moving to the right-hand side, there's a power switch, very flicky, clicky sounding and above that, is a slot which is designed to hold a cartridge. On the left is a USB C port and a headphone plug. There are lights built into the unit as well.

The first, big surprise reveal was that these cartridges actually have Braille on them. They can go one way in and one way out; however, I am getting ahead of myself because what these cartridges contain are games or adventures. I got three with mine: 'The Psychotronic Mind', a daring do type thriller set in World War 2, 'Hotel of Secrets', a noire drama in the 1930's, and 'Bewilder', a fairytale-inspired adventure. Bewilder is the one I have currently played through at the time of writing. But here's the second kicker, this device has no screen, meaning that it lives up to its namesake of an audio adventure system.



This, essentially, consists of you listening to the story, then you are asked to make a choice. Do you, press A, to follow the scorpion, or press D, to pick it up? This system brings in all four buttons later, when you not only have puzzles to solve, but some action-like sequences to react to and some maze-like sequences too. Each game has four episodes, with each episode taking 20 to 30 minutes to complete, plus 're-playable' challenges and paths. There are a few caveats; you can tell it's a first attempt. Some voice acting sounds a little rushed and even getting the cartridge back out of the device is a bit tricky. The cartridge boxes themselves do not have Braille, due to the expense. Despite all that, the best reveal and praise I can give this project is that all of this was developed by one man who programmed the electronics, developed the cartridge format in its own programming language and found a manufacturing partner and, against the odds, succeeded with the initial wave, with more to come.



Audio Adventures is available from [trumantoy.com](http://trumantoy.com). The price point is £65.00 for the device and one game or you can buy all three for £109.00 or mix and match. The individual games cost £22.00.

Lastly, there are three more games coming this year. 'Ice Cold', 'Bank Robbin' Bunnies' and 'Where is the Ghost.' The next one is scheduled to be Ice Cold and here is a tease: "A bankrupt mining operation on a distant planet has been taken over by new owners. They've sent a security team to ensure safety of the miners but, on arrival, the team come under attack from a unique kind of alien, a being that holds together ice and rock to create its shape and attacks without mercy. It's going to be a while before you can leave, so prepare yourself for a fight to survive on a frozen alien world."

*Aaron*

Member



# Hearing Officer



I came across a really fascinating article from the University of Sheffield regarding research into hearing loss and how it can be treated. The article is titled, “On the Verge of Reversing Deafness.”



The article describes a revolutionary approach to, in essence, curing/reversing deafness in people with a sensorineural hearing loss. Sensorineural is the most common type of hearing loss; it's caused most commonly by age, (wear and tear) but can also be caused by exposure to loud noise, certain medications or an underlying medical condition. Researchers based at Rinri Therapeutics are using the science from the University of Sheffield to experiment with using regenerative allogeneic stem-cell therapy, meaning using donated cells from a healthy donor rather than a person's own cells to treat sensorineural hearing loss. This could make a huge difference because, at present, the only treatment for sensorineural hearing loss is hearing aids or cochlear implants; although this approach is effective for a considerable number of people, it can never restore their natural hearing and this new treatment, theoretically, may be able to do just that. The treatment has been called Rincell-1 and they're hoping to begin human trials at some point in 2025.



If the trials are successful, it could, potentially, benefit an awful lot of people with sensorineural hearing loss.

Reference: University of Sheffield: On the Verge of Reversing Deafness available at:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/research/features/verge-reversing-deafness](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/research/features/verge-reversing-deafness)

*Paula*

Hearing Officer





# Deaf Blind Support Officer



As part of my role as Deafblind Support Officer there are a few meetings that I attend, one of which is the Local Authority Workers' Deafblind Interest Group,



otherwise known as LAWDIG. This group meets quarterly and, prior to Covid, was held face-to-face at Sense

Headquarters in London. With the obvious

restrictions of Covid, this meeting, like most others, went online.

LAWDIG has now got far more attendees from all over the country and has never gone back to face-to-face meetings.

At meetings, we usually have a speaker and also a section about equipment and problem solving as well as best practice. At the last meeting in April 2025,



Judith Potts was a speaker. Judith was a founding member of Esme's Umbrella, a charity named after her mother giving support for people with Charles Bonnet Syndrome, or visual hallucinations after sight loss. Esme's Umbrella is dedicated to raising awareness of Charles Bonnet Syndrome and giving support to those with the condition. Judith told the story of her mother, Esme who, one day as Judith was leaving the house, said she wished all the people sat on the sofa would go. There was, however, nobody on the sofa. She also said that a young Edwardian girl was with her all day. If this is also happening to you it is possible that it could be Charles Bonnet Syndrome. On the NHS website it advises you to dial 111 to rule out more serious conditions.

**Further help can be found:** [www.charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk](http://www.charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk)  
Helpline 0303 123 9999 (Answered for Esme's Umbrella by RNIB.  
Callers can be referred to Esme's Umbrella).

*Karen* Deaf Blind Assessor

# Apprentice VRS

## Diabetic Retinopathy (member question)

This is caused by having too much sugar in the blood vessels over a continuous period of time. The back of the eye can be affected; this can cause disruption to the vision and vision loss.



This can happen in three main stages; they are:

**Stage 1** Background Retinopathy - This is when tiny lumps are formed in the blood vessels which might bleed a small amount but do not usually affect the vision. Treatment is not needed at this stage, but preventative measures could be put in place.

Such as:

- Diet changes, cutting down salt, fat and sugar.
- Losing weight, regular exercise, like cycling, swimming, or walking 10,000 steps a day is recommended.
- Stopping smoking.
- Controlled alcohol levels to recommended amounts (no more than 14 units a week).

**Stage 2** Pre-proliferative Retinopathy – This is when more changes are noticed and some vision loss may occur caused by more significant bleeds into the eye. You will be more at risk of your vision being affected.

You'll usually be advised to have more frequent screening appointments every 3, 6, 9 or 12 months to monitor your eyes.





# Apprentice VRS

**Stage 3 Proliferative Retinopathy** – This is when scar tissue has developed onto the retina; this causes a higher risk to vision loss. This can cause retinal detachment. Treatment offered can include laser, injections, eye operation to remove the scar tissue.

Information based on NHS website - Diabetic Retinopathy - NHS ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)).

## What can Wight Sense do to help?

If you have a diagnosed eye condition or diagnosed hearing loss, Wight Sense could offer a free assessment in your own home where you may be entitled to equipment to help you with your day-to-day living; we can also offer free kitchen skills, mobility and cane training if desired.

Please call 01983 240222

Or email [info@wightsense.org.uk](mailto:info@wightsense.org.uk)



**NORMAL VISION**  
Vision remains intact



**DIABETIC RETINOPATHY**  
Vision is obstructed by macular edema



# Access Rights for Guide Dogs



## Your access rights with your guide dog

This document provides you with information on your access rights as a person with sight loss with a guide dog. It also provides details on the support you can expect from Guide Dogs should you experience an access refusal or have been treated less favourably because you have a guide dog.



People and businesses are generally very happy to assist guide dog owners and you should be able to use most services and be welcomed into most establishments with your guide dog. However, if you believe that you've been treated unfairly because of your sight loss or because you have a guide dog, you may want to challenge the service provider using equality legislation.

Whether you go on to challenge service providers or not, please let Guide Dogs know of any access refusal or incidents where you've been treated less favourably. This information will help to support our campaigns work and better understand the prevalence of disability discrimination affecting people with sight loss and guide dogs.

**The law** - As a person who is blind or vision impaired, you have important access rights which are protected by the Equality Act 2010 in England, Scotland and Wales and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 in Northern Ireland.

Service providers have a legal duty to explore and make reasonable adjustments to ensure people with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to people who are not disabled. In practical terms this means that you should have the same level of access as everyone else; however, please be aware there are some exceptions.



# Access Rights (member question)

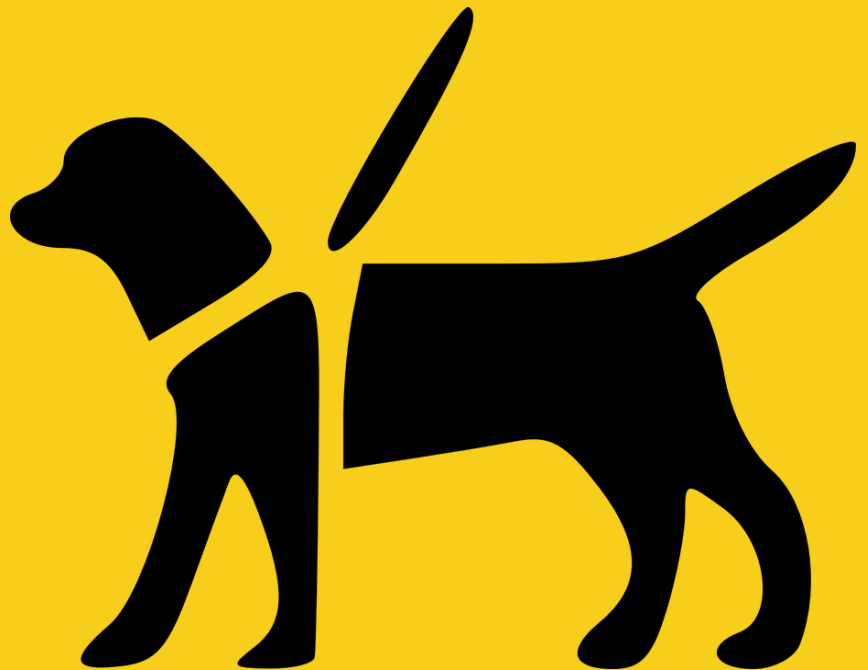
Note: It is important to remember that it is you who has access rights as a person with disabilities, not your guide dog. Your guide dog can legally accompany you to most places (when it's working) as your dog is supporting your safe and confident mobility.

## **Examples of potential discrimination**

- You're refused access to a restaurant, shop, or hotel, because you have your guide dog with you.
- You're told that you cannot sit in the restaurant area of a pub to have a meal – you are instructed to sit in the bar area because you have a guide dog.
- A hotel, other accommodation provider or taxi, charges you extra for having a guide dog.

## **Examples of exceptions to equality law**

While you may still need your guide dog to accompany you to a medical facility, there may be areas within the facility in which a guide dog may not be permitted due to infection control or health and safety issues. An example of this is a dentist's clinical treatment room.



A reasonable adjustment here could be that your guide dog is accommodated in another office or behind reception while a staff member sighted guides you to the treatment room.



# Access Rights for Guide Dogs



Before visiting a zoo, animal or wildlife park, we recommend that you contact them to let them know you will be accompanied by a guide dog and to discuss your access needs; for example, to request a sighted guide.



Protection of all animals is

crucial, so it may be necessary to leave your dog with a member of staff (if this can be facilitated) or, alternatively, you may need to make arrangements to take a sighted guide with you.

## Access Information and Empowerment Officers at Guide Dogs

Access Information and Empowerment Officers (AIEOs) are at Guide Dogs to support you to independently challenge and resolve access refusals and other discrimination issues related to being vision impaired and having a guide dog. The team offers information and support and can provide a range of information leaflets and documents so you can feel confident when challenging or educating service providers.

They also offer advice on issues relating to barriers in the external environment, such as pavement parking, wheelie bins and crossings, all of which may impact your ability to get out and about safely and with confidence.

Resources available to assist and empower you include:

- A memory aid (CLEAR) to assist you in responding to access refusals and other potential incidents of discrimination.
- An access card, a wallet friendly card with relevant information relating to your access rights which you can keep with you when out and about.





# Access Rights for Guide Dogs



- Educational and good practice leaflets for service providers which explain their legal obligations, including but not limited to: Retail outlets, taxis, restaurants, hotels, leisure facilities, medical facilities and more.

## Key takeaway messages

Remember, as a person with sight loss you have important access rights.

- Service providers must make reasonable adjustments, including amending any no dogs policy to allow access for you with your guide dog. Where exemptions apply, other reasonable adjustments should be made to enable you to access the service.
- Taxis – It's against the law for an operator or driver of a taxi or private hire vehicle (PHV) to refuse to carry you and your guide dog, unless they have a valid medical exemption certificate that has been issued by the licensing authority they are registered with. You should not be charged extra if you have your guide dog with you. If you're refused a taxi or PHV because you have a guide dog, you should report it to the licensing authority where the refusal took place.
- Retail and hospitality - Some shops, restaurants, pubs, hotels, holiday cottages and B&Bs etc. incorrectly believe that because they have a 'no dogs' policy they can refuse guide dogs and other assistance dogs. They also may believe they can charge you extra for having your guide dog, which could be a breach of the law.

To get advice, discuss or report an access refusal or potential discrimination:

**0800 7811444 or [information@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:information@guidedogs.org.uk)**





# AI Intelligence with Waiting Lists



Thanks to the help of Dora, an artificial intelligent telephone assistant, average waiting times for low complexity cataract surgery for patients in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight has reduced from 35 weeks at the beginning of January 2024, to 10 weeks or less.

Dora calls patients waiting for cataract surgery, speaks to them in a natural voice and gathers medical history. Dora is also capable of offering patients a choice of treatment locations based on waiting times and distance from their home.

Aris Konstantopoulos, consultant ophthalmologist at University Hospital Southampton and Ophthalmology Clinical Lead for NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight said: “All hospitals in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have made massive strides in reducing the waits for cataract surgery in the area. Dora has enabled this by allowing us to develop a single point of access for referrals, reducing the burden of administrative processes and providing clear options to patients. Using Dora has also allowed us to free-up time for our nursing teams to concentrate on more surgical work while Dora makes the phone calls and completes the administration duty.

“We have had some great feedback from patients who have said that Dora is very clear and easy to understand. She also engages and interacts with patients and can understand what they are saying and asking.”







# AI Intelligence (member question)



Dora has made more than 1,200 calls to patients since January 2024 which has freed up many hours of nursing time who previously made the calls.

Feedback from patients who were contacted by Dora, include:

- “It was very clear and efficient and prompt and it worked very well.”
- “Very simple and straight to the point.”
- “I had no problem understanding Dora and it answered my questions.”

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight has a high volume of cataract surgeries with around 15,000 patients undergoing surgery each year.

A Dora patient experience survey from July to December 2024 showed that 92% of patients were extremely satisfied with the experience.

Ophthalmology is one of the busiest specialties in the NHS, carrying out more than 500,000 operations every year (6% of the NHS total) and more than 7.5 million outpatient appointments.

Further information about Dora and how it is being used across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight can be found here:

<https://www.hantsiow.icb.nhs.uk/cataracts>





# Fashion Event

## Masonic Lodge, Cowes

Our much anticipated fashion event took place in Cowes on the 29th March and I am delighted to say that it was a huge success. The event itself was a sell-out, as evidenced by the queues at the doors for the 2pm opening; the rooms were packed with ladies seeking and finding bargain clothes, shoes and accessories.



Our Dress for Less volunteers went above and beyond in the weeks leading up to the event as well as moving the entire contents of the shop and back again in 48 hours. The entire event was very much dependent upon their voluntary contribution and it would not have succeeded without them. Thank you very much ladies.

Kenny, from Page the Packers, was truly outstanding in safely delivering and returning our stock and nothing was too much trouble for him.

Our models were amazing and showed the outfits so well that customers were chasing them back into the changing room to claim them. A huge thank you to all of you for giving up your time to help us.





In addition to the magnificent bargains, we held a raffle for a Radley bag and prosecco. We also provided free gifts to those who spent over £50, all of which were claimed.

I would personally like to thank Bridget (our Trustee) and her husband, David, for their help in providing the venue and facilities, without which the event would not have been possible.

Thank you to all the ladies who attended and for your kind comments. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

Last, but most certainly not least, I would like to take this opportunity to say a sincere and heartfelt thank you to our amazing CEO, Lisa. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with her as we have achieved so much.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to develop the shop, realise my vision and promote Sight for Wight. I will treasure the memories of our collaboration and wish her every happiness in her much deserved retirement. I will, however, miss her hugely.



**Debbie** Dress for Less



# Education Update

Since the last Education Update we have been very busy visiting multiple schools! We have been to St Marys Primary, St Thomas Primary, Shalfleet Primary, Lanesend Primary and Gatten and Lake Primary.



In May, I will be visiting Greenmount Primary, June Newport CE Primary, July Brading Primary and finally, Wootton Primary.

Some of the schools this year are new to learning about our Education Programme but, mostly, we get invited back to schools as they really enjoyed the previous visits!

I am very grateful to all the schools that invite us to attend, we are very well looked after and the children really engage with learning.



None of these school visits would be possible without the help of the Volunteers who assist me. I am so grateful to every one of them who gives me their time and support to attend these schools.

I am always looking for Volunteers to come along to the schools with me and help with providing the sight loss related games that go along with the programme. I am thankful for any time anyone can give, even if it's an hour and a half every couple of months. Your time and support will be very much appreciated by me so if you're interested in helping, please feel free to call the office to have a chat with me!



*Jasmine* Education

# Chris's Crackers!

I've decided to sell my Hoover; it was just collecting dust!!

I once played football on a plane....there I was, running up the wing!!!



So I went into a video shop, and the man asked if I'd like to rent Batman Forever - I said; no, just for 2 hours!!!!!!

So I took my dog for a walk and it was really angry - well it would be, it's a cross breed!!

I said to this bloke, 'I've just been to Australia.' He asked me who I travelled with and I said, 'I don't remember the names of all the passengers!!'

When I was a kid my dad worked 12 hours a day to put food on the table.  
Great dad; slow cook!

So I said to my gym instructor; 'Can you teach me to do the splits?' He said; 'How flexible are you?' I said; I can't do Tuesdays!!!

Conjunctivitis.com;  
that's a 'site' for sore eyes!!!

This bloke said to me: 'I'm going to attack you with the neck of a guitar.' I said; 'Is that a fret?!!'



# 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 Gillian, Chris and Denise. We'd also like to welcome our new members Mary, Gwyneth and Lee.

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.

As a Charity, Sight for Wight relies entirely on donations from our supporters and the time and expertise our volunteers kindly donate to us.

We are always looking at new ways to raise both awareness and funds. If you would like to help, please never hesitate to contact Lisa or Susan at the office on 522205 with your ideas.

**SIGHT FOR WIGHT** (01983) 522205 [enquiries@iwsb.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@iwsb.org.uk)  
[sightforwight.org.uk](http://sightforwight.org.uk)

**WIGHT SENSE** (01983) 240222 [info@wightsense.org.uk](mailto:info@wightsense.org.uk)  
[wightsense.org.uk](http://wightsense.org.uk)

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm

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

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