



SIGHT MATTERS

Corrin Court

**TURNS 21
THIS YEAR!**

AND WE ARE CELEBRATING!

Edition 43/Winter 2024



Find out our
plans
inside!

Celebrating 21 Years of Impact: Join Sight Matters in a Year of Fundraising Creativity!

On **April 25th 2024**, Sight Matters will be raising a toast to a significant milestone – the **21st birthday** of our cherished premises, **Corrin Court**. Over two decades, Corrin Court has been the heart of our mission, providing support, community, and resources for individuals with visual impairments.

To mark this momentous occasion, we are thrilled to announce a year-long celebration filled with creativity, community spirit, and, of course, fundraising! We invite each and every one of you to join us in coming up with fun and innovative fundraising ideas throughout the year and ideally, implementing them for us.

Why Fundraise? Sight Matters continuously strives to make a positive impact on the lives of those with visual impairments. The funds raised through this year-long celebration will empower us to expand our reach, enhance our programs, and make an even greater difference in the lives of individuals facing visual challenges.

What we're doing.

We're hosting a variety of events throughout the week of Corrin Court's

birthday (starting on Saturday 20th), including Dining in The Dark, a 21st Coffee Morning, an event held by ManninSight and a series 21st birthday party celebrations in our lunch club



We're linking our 21st celebrations to our SUN-Raiser campaign, our initiative to install a solar panel array on Corrin Court. As such, this year we're looking to raise **Twenty-One for Twenty-One** and secure £21,000 for this worthy cause before the end of the year.

Donate: Visit our website or contact our office to make a direct contribution towards our £21,000 goal. Every pound brings us closer to a greener, more sustainable future.

Spread the Word: Share our campaign on social media, with friends, family, and colleagues. Your voice amplifies our reach and impact.

Join the Celebration: Follow our social media channels for updates, stories, and live events as we celebrate 21 years of Corrin Court. Your engagement is a testament to the strength of our community.

As we embark on this exciting journey, let's unite to make Twenty-One for Twenty-One a resounding success.

And we're asking for your help, too! We'd love to see you get creative and come up with your own unique fundraising ideas that resonate with the spirit of celebrating Corrin Court's 21st birthday. Perhaps it's a 21st birthday themed dress down day, walking 21 miles in 21 days (or, if you're very brave, running 21 5ks in 21 days!), or hosting a 21-question trivia night. Whatever it is, we'd love to hear about it – and we will do anything we can to support. So please keep us up to date with your fundraising ideas.



Dive into Darkness: Join Us for Dining in The Dark on 20th April



We're excited to extend a special invitation for you to join us at Sight

Matters' upcoming fundraising event: Dining In The Dark!

Save the date for **Saturday April 20th** and head to Corrin Court for an evening that promises a unique sensory adventure filled with laughter, surprises, and, most importantly, a chance to make a difference.

Immerse yourself in a culinary journey like no other as you experience a 3-course meal served in total darkness. Picture this: heightened senses, tantalising aromas, and the excitement of trying to identify each bite without the aid of sight. Our talented chefs have curated a menu with three options – meat, fish, or veggie – ensuring a delightful challenge for your taste buds, whatever your preferences.

The element of darkness adds mystery and fun to the dining experience. You'll find yourself relying on your sense of taste and touch, engaging in lively conversations with fellow diners, and perhaps sharing a few laughs as you navigate the unique adventure of eating in the dark.

As you savour your mysterious meal, the intrigue continues with post-meal entertainment designed to engage your senses in unique and unexpected ways. Get ready for surprises that will tickle your taste buds and entertain you.

And it's all for a good cause. Dining in The Dark supports Sight Matters in our

mission to make a positive impact on the lives of those with visual impairments. Your ticket purchase will contribute to providing essential resources for Sight Matters' cause.

With limited tickets available, this event is expected to sell out quickly. Secure your spot now by emailing events@sightmatters.im. Tickets will be priced at **£75** which includes a bottle of wine per head.

So, get ready to join us for an evening of mystery, flavours, and entertainment – all for a good cause. We can't wait to share this extraordinary experience with you.

Coffee Morning

In celebration of the 21st birthday of Corrin Court we are having a Coffee Morning **Thursday 25th April**. Come along for coffee and chat with your friends and the team. We'll have a raffle, cake stall and games stalls. With a 21st theme – it's sure to be a special morning. No need to book, £2 on the door. Doors open at 10.30am

Annual General Meeting

Manx Blind Welfare Society

This is notice of our Annual General Meeting to be held on **Wednesday 27th March 2024 3.30pm** at our Headquarters - Corrin Court, Heywood Avenue, Onchan

New Sight Matters Amateur Radio Club (Ham Radio)



CQ, CQ, CQ, this is the Sight Matters Amateur Radio Club calling all current amateur radio operators, or those interested in learning about the hobby, to our QTH (headquarters at Corrin Court in Onchan). We will be holding an open afternoon and first Annual General Meeting of the Club on **Friday 8th March**. We will have volunteers on hand to demonstrate some of the different types of radio equipment that we will potentially be using in the Club, and you can have the opportunity to get on the air yourself and chat to some radio amateurs around the world. We can also explain a little more about how things work and what we hope to do with the Club.

To go on the air an operator needs to obtain a license, although you can operate at club meetings under supervision. There are three levels of license available. A foundation, intermediate and full license. They come with varying levels of privileges. A person sits an exam to obtain each license. Special adaptations are put in place to assist those with additional needs to take the exams. The Club will be setting up a training programme to allow its members to gain their licenses.



Lots of modern radio equipment has a talking feature built in so it can be made to work for those with sight problems. You also don't always need to have antennas installed on the side of your building to be able to operate, a simple and cheap handheld radio which is setup properly, can allow you to talk to radio operators around the world. We intend to have some radios available for loan to licensed members.

So, if you would like to find out more, have a go, or even get involved by joining the Club Committee, then come along on the **8th March** to Corrin Court between **12 - 5pm**. The AGM will be from 3.30pm.

73's (Best Wishes)

Dave.

Sight Matters Amateur Radio Club
(S.M.A.R.C)

Radio Callsign MT0KKG (mike, tango, zero, kilo, kilo, golf)

Quiz Night

We are holding our annual Quiz Night at Corrin Court on **Friday 16th February, 7pm**. Our quiz master Dave holds all the answers- no questioning him please – for a fun filled night. Tickets are £10 per person to include soup and cake. Enter as a team or individually (and we'll make sure you are teamed up!). To book

email events@sightmatters.im or call 674727

Race Night – 15th March, 7pm

Back for 2024 is our ever-popular Race Night – not sure how it works? We play old horse races and you place £1 bets on the winners! We also have the crazy pig race – just remember to hold your piggies in the air like you just don't care! Horse pundit Dave and Bookmaker Debbie make sure this night runs without a hitch – but remember it's a night to put the 'fun' into fundraising! Tickets are £10 to include soup and cake. To book email events@sightmatters.im or call 674727

Calling all Octogenarians

Local photographer Tony Lloyd-Davies is looking for local people over 80 to be part of a photography project. It basically involves those having a portrait photograph taken in their own home or other familiar environment and will be used in an exhibition. We know we have many fantastic members over 80 who would make wonderful models, so if you're interested in taking part, please contact Cathryn Bradley on 674727 or enquiries@sightmatters.im who will coordinate with Tony.

Your Best Story"

Podcast – Call for Participants

As a valued member of the Sight Matters community, we're excited to extend a special invitation to you.

We are thrilled to introduce our brand-new podcast, Your Best Story, dedicated to sharing the best stories and anecdotes from Sight Matters members and those associated with our organisation.

Why You? We believe that everyone has fantastic story in them – it could be a story from your childhood, a funny memory, an unbelievable coincidence or something you found moving or inspiring. Whatever it is, we'd love to hear it. It doesn't have to be long – ideally under ten minutes; and it doesn't have to be rehearsed. We're looking for real human stories and personality.

How to Participate: If you're interested in being featured on "Your Best Story," please email pmarshall@sightmatters.im. We'll coordinate a time for a casual and friendly interview where you can share your story.

Your participation not only adds a personal touch to our podcast but also

helps build a stronger sense of community within Sight Matters.

We look forward to hearing from you and sharing your best story with Your Best Story listeners!

Over 18 Activity Club



Upcoming members events for members over 18

If you are interested in any of the events below please contact Julie Cannon on **674727** or jcannon@sightmatters.im

Please be aware that there is no charge for any of the activities and numbers in some sessions may be limited. Transport is provided for the events.

Saturday 27th January – Poetry with Boaksey Closs, Manx Bard at Corrin Court 13.30-15.30

Always fancied writing poetry, but don't know where to start? Or are you an experienced poet, looking for inspiration and ideas to take your work

further? Join Boakesey, the IXth Manx Bard in a fun, supportive workshop, giving you the opportunity to play with words and see what happens. No critiquing of work, just a chance to enjoy yourselves.

Monday 5th February – Art Exhibition called HOME at the Manx Museum 10.30-12

The artworks in *HOME* are from a collective of around 65 artists on the island and represent different ideas and aspects of the Isle of Man, the place in which we live – whether real or ideal, celebratory or critical. Visitors can explore artworks from members of the Creative Network including paintings, sculptures and decorative arts.

Sunday 11th February – Evita at the Gaiety Theatre- 14.30 show.

The **Douglas Choral Union** presents Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's iconic musical **Evita**. This compelling production recounts the remarkable journey Eva 'Evita' Duarte, the former First Lady of Argentina, from her modest beginnings to her ascent as a powerful and controversial political figure. Dive into the narrative that explores her meteoric rise, unwavering advocacy for social justice, and the profound sacrifices she made to achieve her ambitions. 'Evita' features a plethora of unforgettable songs including 'Buenos Aires', 'Another Suitcase in Another Hall', 'Oh What a Circus' and the stirring 'Don't Cry for me Argentina'.

Friday 23rd February – Neil Diamond at the Villa Marina-19.30

The World's Greatest Celebration of The Life & Work of NEIL DIAMOND... Evocative imagery, video and narration enhance the magic, as the show takes you on a musical journey through Neil Diamond's glittering 50 year career.

From The Bang Years to the present day you'll soon be singing along to all the hits including Sweet Caroline, Cracklin' Rosie, Forever in Blue Jeans, Song Sung Blue, Hello Again, Love on the Rocks, America and many more.

Saturday 9th March – Creative Writing with Boaksey Closs, Manx Bard at Corrin Court 13.30-15.30

Another chance to play with words in the company of IXth Manx Bard, Boakesey. This workshop will look at creative writing and will offer tips on writing prose. If you fancy being an author of short stories or even a novel, you will have an opportunity to have a go. It's a brief introduction to the craft, but I hope it will be lots of fun. No critiquing of work will be done, so there's no pressure at all.

Sunday 17th March – Oliver at the Gaiety Theatre -14.30

The **Manx Operatic Society** presents **Oliver!** Oliver is a coming-of-age stage musical by Lionel Bart, based on the 1838 novel, Oliver Twist. It premiered at Wimbledon Theatre in London in 1960 before opening in the West End, where it enjoyed a record-breaking long run.

Many revivals have shown how popular this musical is to this day, with its familiar themes and well-loved songs.

Monday 25th March –Have a go Acoustic Shooting at Corrin Court (1/2 hour slots)

Back by popular demand. Try something new and have a go at shooting an air rifle by listening to sound to. This is a sport for any degree of sight loss and you do not need to have any previous experience. The session is safely supervised. Acoustic shooting uses specially adapted rifles fitted with special sights, which measure the level of light reflected from a target. Participants wear special headphones to hear a sound, which becomes more frequent and a higher tone the closer they are to the target.

Activity Groups

The monthly activity groups are now up and running in the East, North and West of the island and are due to start in the South in January 2024.



The sessions are a mix of activities including craft, games such as bingo,

curling and quiz's as well as social activities. This is a great way to try new activities, meet new people or catch up with old friends. If you would like further information please give Julie a call on 674727 for a chat and dates can be provided.

South – Monday 10.30-12.30 at Thie Rosien, Port Erin

East - Monday 13.30-15.30 at Corrin Court

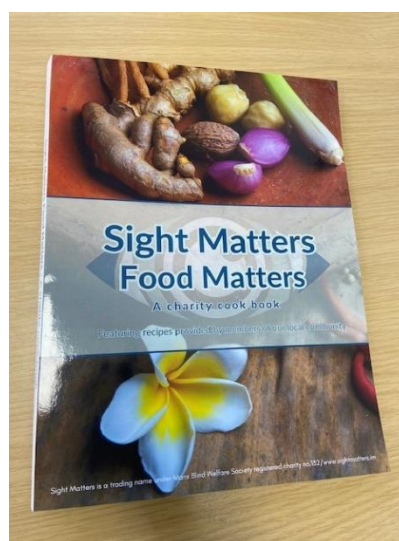
North - Friday 10.30-12.30 at Jurby Community Centre

West- Friday 14.00-16.00 at Peel Football Club

For us to hold these activities, it costs an average of £210.64 with the cheapest in 2023 being £38 and the most expensive being £609.65.

If you are interested in supporting any of these events please let us know!

Food Matters



We are pleased to announce the launch of our cookbook "Food

Matters," a heart-warming charity cookbook that offers a delectable journey into the kitchens of Isle of Man residents.

Curated by one of our devoted volunteers, Pauline Jones, the cookbook boasts over 70 recipes contributed by a diverse range of local personalities. Notable contributors include Lady Lorimer, The Right Reverend Peter Eagles, several MHKs and MLCs, as well as the dedicated volunteers and staff of Sight Matters.

The book is more than just a cookbook; it's a local community project that brings people together through the love of food. The recipes inside aren't just about ingredients and cooking techniques; they're a reflection of the diverse tastes and stories that make the Isle of Man special. This cookbook is a simple, heartfelt celebration of our community, where everyday residents, public figures, and volunteers come together to share their favourite dishes. From timeless comfort foods to contemporary culinary delights, "Food Matters" is a testament to the rich and varied flavours that define the Isle of Man's culinary landscape. The cookbook serves as a celebration of community and the unique tastes that bring people together.

"Food Matters" is now available for purchase at Sight Matters in Onchan, the VIP Store in Strand Street & the

Bridge Bookshop in Port Erin & Ramsey Books are priced at £15.

Co-op members

The Co-op have chosen Sight Matters as one of their local community causes for the next 12 months

We would love it if you could choose us as your cause. If you do, 2p from every £1 you spend will be donated to our cause which is to expand our younger members group!

Our Younger Members Group was formed in 2018 with the specific aim of enabling visually impaired children to meet, form lifelong friendships, enjoy new experiences, learn new skills and make happy memories.

You can sign up or log in to the Co-Op card in store, via the app, or on the web <https://membership.coop.co.uk/>

and choose **"Sight Matters"** as your local cause. Or click the link below.

<https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/81943>

Every time you shop in the Co-Op stores from now until October 2024 will help raise funds for our children's group!!!!



Dying to Talk about Death Conference

In a departure from the norm, we held our Dying To Talk About Death conference in November. Many questioned what such a topic actually had to do with Sight Matters but we felt we had a responsibility to let our community know about the administration surrounding death. The attendees included members, professionals, the public and colleagues from other third sector organisations. We had an excellent panel of guest speakers and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Thanks must go to the speakers who made the day so interesting, informative and despite the topic, amusing. Special thanks must go to our Chair of Trustees, Charles Fargher, MBE who stepped in at the last minute to comper the event.

Legacy Packs



At the Conference we launched our new Sight Matters legacy packs. These packs are to help you to understand the importance of planning and writing a will. If you would like a copy please let us know and we can post one out to you or you can find it on www.sightmatters.im/support-us.

Younger Members Activity Club

Over the Autumn our younger members activity club took part in many, fun & varied activities.

They visited the Home of Rest for old horses to stroke and feed the horses, donkeys and chickens. They enjoyed lunch in their café before heading to Archallagan Plantation, and who doesn't love jumping in muddy puddles? The group certainly did – if only we had a photo of the aftermath!



For the next activity the younger members came up to Corrin Court to help to make their own dinner – chicken wraps with chips and salad. Under the expert tuition of our Chef, Claire Quayle, they helped to make the batter and coated their chicken pieces then they peeled and chopped their own potatoes. Now we couldn't leave them without dessert, our Chef had premade some Halloween shaped short bread biscuits. The children happily decorated them using lots of different coloured icing and then of course sampled them!! They must have been good as there was none left for the staff on Monday morning!!!



And as if it wasn't fun filled enough, they also made clay Christmas tree decorations ready to hang on their Christmas tree in December!



During the October half term, the group enjoyed lunch at the Creg ny Baa before heading down to the Villa Gaiety Cinema to watch 'Trolls band together'. It must have been a good film as after that big lunch we thought we might have heard some snoring!

The next activity held was the Hot Rocks Climbing Wall. For some of the group this was the first time they had attended and tried this. They had no fear and were climbing straight away, some of the older members even managing to get to the very top!! Rather than us!!!

Where do you take our Younger members for their Christmas lunch that not only offers fabulous food but a dance floor and a multi-talented Chef

who can use the DJ system? The Douglas Golf Club of course. The Younger Members had their Christmas lunch on Saturday 2nd December, a private event which included a carvery lunch for those that wanted it and a children's lunch for those that didn't. Everyone had a fantastic time, there was laughs, music, dancing, friendships forged and many versions of the Macarena seen.

Our groups promote independence, build a support network, help the children to socialise and are fun!!!



If you would like to know more about supporting our groups, please contact us!



Roc Vannin Choir



Thanks to the fabulous local choir, Roc Vannin who nominated us as their charity of the year for 2023. Some of our members and volunteers are part of the choir and performed a number of times over the last 12 months at various places round the island, including entertaining the shoppers during the Christmas period. Thanks to member Tanya Longworth and her gorgeous Guide Dog Delsie for this photo.

ManninSight Thanksgiving Dinner

ManninSight, one of our fundraising arms held a Thanksgiving Dinner at Bonds restaurant on Friday 17th November, 2023. It was very well attended; the food was fantastic and a fabulous £2,362 was raised. Our CEO, Cathryn drew the raffle; somehow the first ticket to be drawn was her very own ticket – we're not sure how that happened?! ManninSight have another planned fundraiser to tie in with our

21st birthday celebrations, so please watch out for future events.

Social Welfare & Inclusion Lead

Social Welfare and Inclusion Lead, it's a long title and a very diverse role. I get to travel round the island, spot some beautiful views and picturesque places, visiting people new to us and those who know us already. Uphill and over dale as they say, sometimes finding where I need to go, other times not so lucky. But when phoning someone to say "hi, I'm lost, where are you?" I can sit and admire the view. While having words with the Sat Nav for not taking me to the right place..... I grumble quietly as I admire the scenery!

Referrals to Sight Matters are vast and varied, having a chat about how visual changes have impacted in daily life. Looking at what works well and what can be a challenge, supporting people to adapting the usual way of doing things, to a way that works for them. This can be reminding everyone around them to put things back in the same place, to simple but effective gadgets. The Liquid Level Indicator (every home should have one) that beeps as the hot water reaches the desired level in the cup. The bump on "dots" that make the world of difference when differentiating between items that are similar...but not

the same, or just to know where the marker is on the washing machine dial. Promoting independence for people with visual impairments not only boosts their self-confidence but their wellbeing too. Our filter glasses are also big hit, they help to remove the bad light and allow more good light to filter through. People are always coming back to me with stories of how they have helped them in daily life. Then we have the more complicated bits of equipment.....but that's another story for Dave to tell.

I also get to support the groups we run, anything from canoeing and horse riding (well leading the horse, but not necessarily to water...sometimes we were dragged along) with the younger members, to guided walks and activity groups around the island (really must remember to keep spare boots and coats in the car). Lunch club is always a good place to meet and catch up with members...though I do end up with 'something to do' after chatting with people.

A diverse role most definitely!

If you'd like to contact me - Michelle Ferrer, email

MFerrer@sightmatters.im or phone 674727



I trust you all had an enjoyable time over the festive period? Particularly good news from my point of view is the continued success with the Iluvian implant I received last May. As most of you know this is an expensive treatment costing the NHS/DHSS £7000 an implant. The manufacturers hope to extend its effective life to 36 months but currently NICE are saying they hope for between eighteen and twenty-four months. In my case I had check-ups in August and November and am due the next one at the end of March. So already this expensive implant has saved the cost of my monthly travel and eylea injections for what will be 11 months when I next visit St Pauls. As each injection, travel and surgeons time was costing the DHSS/NHS around £2000 a month that is a current saving of £15000 compared to the Iluvian implant. The potential savings country wide to the health service in time and money are certainly a game changer. Sadly, this treatment is not for everyone at present.

Talking of changes, we hold our AGM on Friday the 19th of January starting at 1100 hrs in Sight Matters. Anyone reading this is welcome to attend. We also meet as a group on the third Friday in the month at Sight Matters, but a recent questionnaire has

revealed that monthly is too much for the majority. The majority view was for six meetings a year at Sight Matters, and this will be explained at the AGM and accepted. There has been a significant reduction in those attending since Covid. Whereas we regularly enjoyed thirty to thirty-five members attending prior to Covid, last year we have been lucky to see ten and sometimes as low as five. It's difficult to recruit presenters when you answer their first question of "How many do you expect to attend." Of course, we will keep this under review and if the appetite to change grows so will the frequency of the meetings increase again.

There is one other important matter we will discuss at the AGM. We are looking ahead and planning for continuity in terms of the number of serving Trustees. We currently have five whose average age is eighty plus. We are seeking volunteers to join the current Trustees with a view to them taking over as the current ones retire. Anyone interested in more information call Nigel Malpass on 813774 or email at nhmalpass@manx.net. You do not need to have macular problems just a wish to help those here on the Island that do.





Our Services

Transport

We currently have four Society vehicles, two minibuses, a people carrier and one car. We are therefore able to offer help to many of our members to attend our centre and to travel to and from the various functions and events we hold throughout the year.

Audio Library

We have a range of mp3 stick audio books. We are supported in the delivery of these audio library books by the IOM Post Office who deliver the books and our weekly news sticks as items free for delivery to visually impaired and blind people.

Outreach visits

A member of our team can arrange to visit you at home/hospital to assist with supporting your needs.

Specialist Equipment

We have a range of assistive technology to help visually impaired and blind people; some of the simplest items like talking clocks, make the biggest difference in helping people with sight difficulties to live more accessible lives

Weekly News

Our well used weekly news service provides an invaluable source of information to in excess of 100 people who rely on hearing the local news brought to them in detail on MP3 sticks; we issue players to all who require this fabulous service.

Social Activities

We run a series of activities designed to enhance the lives of the local blind and visually impaired community, and we have new and exciting ideas being brought forward regularly, some of which provide real challenges to the staff and volunteers who provide our services. We hold luncheon clubs in our centre on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. These consist of a three course meal with a menu second to none and we can cater for all dietary and most other menu preferences.

Visual Impairment Awareness training

We run courses designed to assist organisations who may occasionally deal with blind and visually impaired clients. We can bring the training to businesses and provide them with a chance to strengthen their customer service for this vulnerable group of people.

Events

We regularly run events for the Society. These vary from week to week and we have adopted a no holds barred approach to the entertainment provided!

Buddy Service

We provide a carefully matched volunteer Buddy service for some of those of our members who prefer to have occasional one to one assistance in their own homes

Charitable status

We are a charity totally reliant on the contributions and donations of our many wonderful supporters; in particular we are grateful to the people of the Island who continue to give generously to our work. Much of our work is supported and delivered by our fabulous teams of volunteers. Membership is free to anyone living with challenges to their vision and most of our services are provided without charge.



Please feel free to visit our Centre and review our operations. We welcome constructive feedback and thoughts and ideas on how we can further improve our services. We are pleased to offer 'walk and talk' tours of our facilities to organisations of all types. Sometimes it can be very difficult to find out what help is available. We have a wide range of services and support to offer the best help possible.

We are here to discuss any issues that affect the lives of people with serious sight loss.

Call us confidentially on 674727

SIGHT MATTERS

Corrin Court, Heywood Avenue, Onchan, Isle of Man, IM3 3AP

☎ (01624) 674727 | ✉ enquiries@sightmatters.im | www.sightmatters.im

Sight Matters is a trading name under Manx Blind Welfare Society Registered Charity No. 132.

If you would like this letter in large print, please contact our office on 674727.

