

SIGHT MATTERS

Optic Topics

Issue 46

Autumn 2024



Introducing EyeRis: Our new Mascot promoting sight loss awareness

We are thrilled to introduce our newest team member, **EyeRis!** EyeRis is not just any mascot; she is a symbol of hope, awareness, and support for those affected by sight loss. Standing tall, round and proud, EyeRis embodies the spirit of resilience and advocacy for the blind and visually impaired community.

EyeRis aims to shine a light on the challenges faced by individuals with sight loss and the importance of supporting us. She serves as a beacon of inspiration, reminding us all to embrace inclusivity and understanding.

As we welcome EyeRis into our community, we invite you to join us in raising awareness for sight loss and supporting the vital work of Sight Matters. Together, we can make a difference and create a more inclusive and compassionate world for everyone.

Let's rally behind EyeRis and her mission to promote sight loss awareness and advocate for those in need.

Look out for EyeRis on social media or alternatively if you would like a visit from EyeRis, please let us know and we'll check her schedule!

Coast 2 Coast

A big thank you to each and every one of you who participated in our recent **Coast 2 Coast** walk sponsored by **Conister Bank**. Your dedication, enthusiasm, and unwavering support made this event a resounding success.

Together, we conquered approx 12 miles, united by a common goal to make a positive impact through our fundraising efforts to support the local blind and visually impaired community. Your commitment to this cause is truly inspiring, and we are immensely grateful for your contributions.

We would also like to express our heartfelt appreciation to our generous sponsors, **Conister Bank**, for their invaluable support throughout this journey. Their partnership and belief in our mission played a crucial role in the success this event.

It is through the collective efforts of our participants, sponsors, and supporters that we are able to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need. Your generosity and compassion are truly commendable, and we are honoured to have you as part of our community.

Thank you once again for your incredible dedication and support. Together, we have shown that by walking side by side, we can create

positive change and make a difference in the world





A Big Thank you



A very generous gentleman, Ivan Soulsbury has donated £490,000 to Sight Matters to support the Island's blind and visually impaired community. This donation is significant as it aligns with the number of participants, 490, who took part in the coast-to-coast walk. It's heart-warming to see such a direct correlation between the number of participants and the amount donated. This act of kindness will undoubtedly make a meaningful impact on the lives of those who are visually impaired. It's wonderful to witness such generosity and support for important causes like this.

Celebrating the Young Heroes: Kids Go Coast 2 Coast

After the resounding success of our recent Coast 2 Coast walk, we are thrilled to share the heart-warming story of our youngest participants who took on a special challenge for a great cause. The children from Hopes &

Dreams nurseries embarked on a journey of their own, walking around Freedom Field, completing five laps in support of charity.



With smiles on their faces and determination in their hearts, these young heroes embraced the spirit of giving back and making a difference. Their energy and enthusiasm were truly infectious, inspiring everyone around them to join in and support their noble endeavour.



As they crossed the finish line, each child not only completed the laps but also symbolised the power of unity, compassion, and generosity. Their dedication to helping others serves as a shining example of the impact that even the youngest members of our community can have when they come together for a common goal.

We are immensely proud of these kids for their incredible feat and unwavering commitment to supporting those in need. Their actions remind us all that kindness knows no age limit and that together, we can create positive change in the world.



Let's applaud these young champions for their remarkable achievement and thank them for embodying the true spirit of giving back and making a difference.



If you would like to take part in our Kids Coast 2 Coast next year, sign up now!

✧ Empowering Young Hearts: A Summer of Adventure with Our Bright Stars! ✧

We are thrilled to share the exciting adventures our young members embarked on recently, thanks to our supporters unwavering support the activities are filled with laughter, courage, and unforgettable experiences that truly showcase the boundless potential within each of our bright stars.

They attended an activity at Hot Rocks, kindly sponsored by **Conister Bank**, where the thrill of conquering the climbing wall, helped our young climbers fearlessly reached new heights, proving that determination knows no boundaries. The cheers and encouragement echoed through the air, uniting everyone in a shared sense of achievement.

Next, our young adventurers embarked on a pony trekking journey, forming special bonds with their gentle four-legged companions. The joy on their faces as they rode through nature's beauty was a testament to the magic of connection and trust that transcends words.

But the excitement didn't stop there! Our group then set out on a Beach Buddies clean-up mission, where they not only cleaned the beach but also cleaned our hearts with their dedication to preserving our environment. Their passion for making

a positive impact shone brightly, inspiring us all to do our part in caring for our planet something Sight Matters is passionate about.

During their visit to the wildlife park, our young explorers had a fascinating bug encounter! This up-close experience with nature's tiny wonders left a lasting impression on our young adventurers, igniting a newfound curiosity and appreciation for the delicate balance of the natural world

And the thrill continued as our young stars raced against the wind in an exhilarating go-karting adventure! The sound of engines roaring and the rush of speed added a new dimension of excitement to their day, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

As we reflect on these activities of adventure and camaraderie, we are reminded that true vision lies not in sight but in the courage to explore, the kindness to connect, and the strength to make a difference. Our young members have shown us that with determination and support, anything is possible.

Thank you to all who made this day of empowerment and joy possible. Together, we continue to create a world where every individual, regardless of sight, can shine brightly and thrive.

If you would like to sponsor an activity for the Younger Members group just let us know! Your support would greatly benefit the club and help provide more enriching experiences for

the children. Your sponsorship could contribute to future exciting adventures and educational activities, ensuring that the club continues to offer valuable opportunities for young minds to explore, learn, and create lasting memories. Your generosity would make a significant difference in fostering a positive and engaging environment for these young explorers. Let us know if you're interested in becoming a sponsor and being a part of this wonderful journey!



Grown-Up Fun: A Peek into our over 18's Activity Scene



Our over 18's activity cub have enjoyed exciting activities such as curling, boat excursions, crafts sessions, bowling, meals out and pottery classes. These activities provide a wonderful opportunity for members to socialise, have fun and feel less isolated.

Would you like to join in with the Adult Activities?

All of the events are free of charge and transport can be provided if required. Please contact Julie on 674727 or jcannon@sightmatters.im to express your interest in attending as soon as possible, spaces are limited.

Upcoming events:

Saturday 2nd November – Ceramics – Christmas Decorations at Corrin Court

You may be more creative than you think and there's no right or wrong way in pottery. Why not come and join us in making a Christmas decoration from scratch, it is a fun session led by Anna Clucas Art Teacher, who gives you step by step instruction and support.

10-12am -Members living in the South & East of the island

2-4pm – Members living in the West & North of the island

Sunday November 3rd – The Phantom of the Opera at Broadway Cinema 2pm.

To celebrate its 25th Anniversary year, Cameron Mackintosh presented The Phantom of The Opera in a fully-staged, lavish production set in the sumptuous Victorian splendour of the Royal Albert Hall. Phantom of the Opera at The Albert Hall stars Ramin Karimloo as 'The Phantom' and Sierra Boggess as 'Christine'. They are joined by a supporting cast and orchestra of over 200, plus some very special guest appearances.

Friday 8th November – Manx Museum 10.30am

All at Sea – Join me to visit a new exhibition exploring the Isle of Man's remarkable maritime heritage and honouring the 200th anniversary of the RNLI which is now open at the House of Manannan. 'All at Sea' uncovers some of the tragic events in Manx waters which motivated Manx resident, Sir William Hillary to establish a national maritime lifesaving institution.

Monday 25th November – Have a go Acoustic Shooting at Corrin Court

Would anyone like to come and have a go at Acoustic Shooting? This is a sport for any degree of sight loss and you do not need to have any previous experience and 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.

Saturday 30th November – The Makings of a Murderer 2 at the Gaiety Theatre 7.30pm

Join us for a chilling, thrilling night at the theatre as Colin, who was head of a Metropolitan Police murder squad tells us the stories of how he caught some of the UK's most evil murderers.

In this all-new show, Colin; who the ITV drama series 'Manhunt,' played by Martin Clunes, is based on, will talk you through his remarkable career and what it is like to chase and catch a serial killer in a unique and one-off night at the theatre - for true crime fans and theatre goers alike.

Thursday 12th December– Manannan's Winterfest at the Gaiety Theatre 7.30pm

Manannan's Winterfest returns to the Gaiety Theatre in a unique concert celebrating Manx Christmas traditions through a collaboration of the Island's finest exponents of classical, folk, brass and choral music, with a sprinkle of local humour and drama added to the mix!

Sunday 30th March - Billy Elliot the Musical Live at Broadway Cinema 2pm.

Billy Elliot the Musical has won the hearts of millions since it opened in London's West End in 2005. Set in a northern mining town, against the background of the 1984/85 miners' strike, Billy's journey takes him out of the boxing ring and into a ballet class where he discovers a passion for dance that inspires his family and whole community and changes his life forever.

Domiciliary services

Home visits – can you help?

Manx Care are in the process of seeking a solution to the current lack of home visits by Optometrists (Opticians). It will be helpful if we are able to provide supporting evidence of the need, demand and what the service may need to consist of. Manx Care are looking to establish the following:-

How many patients require a home visit because they are unable to leave the house due to infirmity?

How many patients would prefer a home visit because leaving the home is difficult due to mobility issues and the difficulty in getting to a local Optometrist?

How many patients would prefer a home visit because they find getting to an Optometrist difficult? This may be due to factors such as a lack of public transport or an Optometry practice not being accessible.

Should you wish to respond, please contact Cathryn Bradley on 674727 or via email cbradley@sightmatters.im

Striking for a Cause!

ManninSight, one of our fundraising teams and Ballaugh Bowling Club held the inaugural Reo Carey Bowling Competition on Saturday 3rd August. Reo is one of our younger members and his family kindly sponsored the Cup and event, with Reo turning up to present it. The weather was glorious, probably the one sunny day of August and 9 teams took part, from the corporate and totally inexperienced, to the Ballaugh Bowling Club totally experienced and a team of our own fabulous members and volunteers, the 4 B's – Better Bowlieve it, Blind Bowlers.

The 4 B's consisted of Kath King, Julia Barnes, Terry Bates and volunteer Libby Andrade and whilst they didn't win, they played a good game and demonstrated what our members can achieve.

The day raised a fantastic £2,593 all of which will go to providing member services and was down to the hard work of the ManninSight Committee,

Elaine Fenton from Callin Wild and the Ballaugh Bowling Club members who cooked throughout the day, planned and ran the competition and their winning team kindly donated all their winnings back to us.

Safeguarding Matters

A copy of our Safeguarding policy is available in your preferred format on request.

Our Safeguarding Officer is Cathryn Bradley

Our Deputy Safeguarding Officer is Michelle Ferrer

New E.C.L.O.



We have a new E.C.L.O. at Nobles - **Lesley Hankinson**. The E.C.L.O. is the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, and is based at Nobles Hospital, in the Ophthalmology Department.

Lesley will provide a person-centred service to people of all ages affected by sight loss and provide eye health information on a range of topics to patients and their family members, friends and carers and be the link

between social services and secondary care to ensure patients are supported across the Island.

She can also offer practical advice, emotional support and act as a key information and advisory link in the certification and registration process for blind and partially sighted people and eye clinic staff.

She is available to accompany patients during their ophthalmology clinic appointments or support patients after their visit to help with their understanding, with the intention of supporting and providing information regarding eye conditions and diagnosis.

She can be contacted via the Eye Clinic at Nobles Hospital or via Sight Matters.

Will Writing Month with Callin Wild



We have joined forces to encourage residents of the Isle of Man, regardless of their age, to plan for their future. Sight Matters and island law firm Callin

Wild have partnered for 'Will Writing Month,' a collaborative effort aimed at motivating people on the Isle of Man to create a will.

Throughout November, individuals who mention Sight Matters when using Callin Wild's legal services for Will creation will benefit from a special discount. The cost will be reduced to £200 for individuals and £300 for couples, with 50% of the fees for each will being donated to the charity.

Callin Wild is a highly regarded full-service legal firm with expertise in various areas of general practice.

This initiative is designed to emphasise the significance of having a Will and to inspire more local residents to take steps towards creating one in 2024. Simultaneously, it will generate funds for Sight Matters, an organisation that supports the interests of over 700 blind and visually impaired individuals on the Isle of Man.

Marc Furness, Partner at Callin Wild, explains that, "a Will not only empowers you to determine how your finances, property, and personal possessions are dealt with after your passing, but also enables parents to decide who will look after and care for their children if they are minors when their parents pass away".

He goes on to emphasise the importance of having a Will, highlighting that without one,

numerous difficulties can arise, especially for unmarried or non-civil partnership couples.

The 'Will Writing Month' has been established through the partnership of Callin Wild and Sight Matters, with the goal of encouraging more local residents to carefully consider their future and the implications of their passing. Marc emphasises that although it may be uncomfortable to contemplate, having a Will in place is essential, as it gives individuals control over their assets and their distribution.

Peter Marshall, Fundraising and Marketing Lead at Sight Matters, adds his perspective, noting that writing a Will is something we encourage their members to do, as we have witnessed how situations can turn difficult without one. He says, "We are pleased to be continuing this important initiative for another year alongside Callin Wild, and the donations received will help us greatly in continuing to provide the vital services we offer to the Isle's blind and visually impaired community. We know that Callin Wild have procedures in place to help blind and visually impaired people requiring their services; as such, they are a natural choice to partner with on this scheme."

Join Bright for Sight day!

Our Bright for Sight day is being held on **Friday 25th October**. The idea is for participants to wear their brightest item of clothing, make the brightest cakes or whatever you can think of and donate to the important cause of sight loss.

This event not only adds a splash of fun and colour to the day but also raises awareness about the significance of supporting sight-related causes. It's a wonderful chance to engage staff in a meaningful act of giving back and make a positive difference to a local charity.



Festive Wreath Making

Join Us for a Festive Wreath-Making Session

Are you ready to get crafty and embrace the Christmas spirit? Look no further! We are hosting a special wreath-making session on **Sunday, 1st of December**, from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm at Sight Matters, Corrin Court.

This creative and heart-warming event is open to all who wish to participate. For a price of £50, you can join us for a delightful morning of wreath-making. The session fee includes all the materials you'll need to craft your own beautiful wreath, as well as some lovely refreshments to keep you energised and inspired.



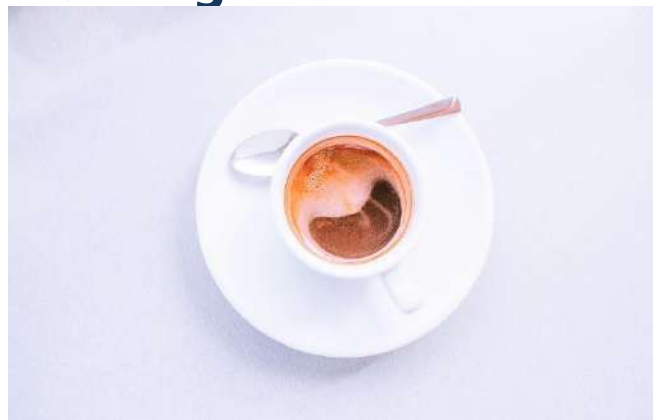
Whether you're a seasoned crafter or just looking to try something new, this event is perfect for everyone. Not only will you get to create a unique wreath to adorn your home, but you'll also be supporting a great cause - making a difference in the lives of visually impaired individuals, and your

participation helps fund their important work.

Don't miss this opportunity to unleash your creativity, connect with others, and contribute to a meaningful cause. Mark your calendars for Sunday, the 1st of December, and join us for a memorable wreath-making experience!

For more information and to reserve your spot, please contact events@sightmatters.im or 674727.

Christmas Coffee Morning



Kick off the Christmas season with our festive Christmas Coffee Morning and join with the festive cheer.

Indulge in a steaming cup of tea or coffee, browse the Christmas stalls, satisfy your sweet tooth at the cake stall, and try your luck at the raffle to win some fabulous prizes. It's the perfect way to start the festive season with friends and family!

When: **Thursday 28 November - Doors 10.30am**

Where: **Sight Matters, Corrin Court**
Cost: **£2.00**

The Giving Tree

From tiny acorns, mighty oaks grow

Stuck for that Christmas gift or want to remember that special person? Why not purchase a lasting memory with an engraved leaf or acorn, to be placed on our **Giving Tree**?

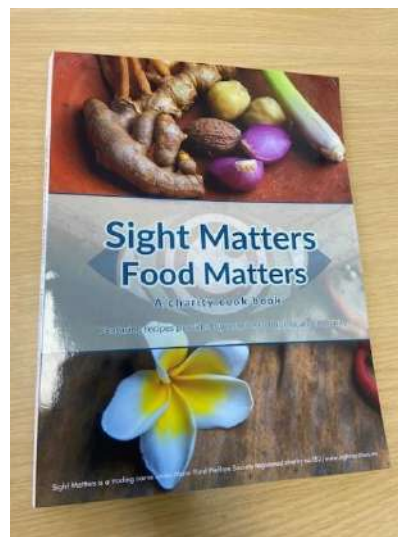
The giving tree is a handmade, 3D, wooden display of a large oak tree, attached to a wooden board, with branches running of it. It is situated on the wall in our headquarters Corrin Court.

Prices start at £25 for a silver leaf (5cm x 3cm) and go up to £500 for a gold acorn (9cm x 7cm). Your message can be up to 35 characters on smaller items and 45 on larger. For more details contact us on 674727 or enquiries@sightmatters.im or download a form at www.sightmatters.im/support-us/the-giving-tree

www.sightmatters.im/support-us/the-giving-tree



Food Matters



Another lovely Christmas gift is a copy of our cookbook "Food Matters". Food Matters is 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.

Volunteering

Why volunteer?

Volunteering can be a truly rewarding experience for both the volunteers and the individuals being helped. When you volunteer at Sight Matters, you get the chance to make a meaningful impact on the lives of visually impaired individuals. By offering your time and support, you can help enhance their quality of life, provide companionship, and assist them in various activities.

As a volunteer, you can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by visually impaired individuals and develop empathy and compassion. It can also be a great opportunity to learn new skills, such as guiding techniques, communication methods, and assistive technologies.

We benefit greatly from the dedication and support of all of our volunteers. Volunteers help in lots of different ways, some examples are organising events, aiding with our luncheon clubs & activity groups, driving our members to & from luncheon club & activities, offering emotional support, raising awareness about visual impairment issues & working in our charity shop. Their commitment and enthusiasm play a crucial role in creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for visually impaired individuals.

At present we are looking to fill various roles at Sight Matters. These include:

- Driving (car and/or minibus) This could be on a regular basis or one-off activities
- Helping out in our luncheon clubs (held on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursdays)
- Entertainment for our luncheon clubs - This could be on a regular basis or one-off and is for approx 45 mins.
- Working in our charity shop – The VIP Store, Strand Street, Douglas

If you are interested in any of the above, please contact us for job descriptions and a chat!

Full training will be given for all roles.

Sight Matters New Minibus Hits the Road



We're thrilled to announce the newest addition to the Sight Matters fleet – our new fully liveried minibus that's now on the roads and ready to support the Sight Matters community!

The new bus will serve alongside our existing fleet, providing essential transportation for our members to a variety of events and activities. Whether it's getting to social outings, the lunch club, and special occasions, our minibus will ensure that no one is left behind.

A special thanks goes out to the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company for their generosity in transporting our minibus to the island free of charge.

So, when you're out and about on the roads, keep your eyes: it's bright blue with a big Sight Matters' eye on the side! If you spot it, make sure give us a wave. As usual, a huge thank you to our incredible volunteer drivers, who are all MIDAS trained, for their dedication and support in helping our members get where they need to go

safely and comfortably. We hope you enjoy driving the new vehicle.



Its great news Lesley Hankinson has been appointed as our new ECLO and we wish to send her our very best as she took up the role on Monday September 2nd. We are also pleased to hear she will be attending Sight Matters for an ECLO drop in on Monday 7th October between 2pm and 5 pm. Many of the Macular society will be there to meet with her.

We also wish to extend a warm welcome to Lisa Perrie who has recently joined the Department of Health and Social Care as Engagement Manager. Lisa's role is to foster partnerships, facilitate communication, and help the Department to engage stakeholders in initiatives that enhance health and social care services for individuals and families across the Island. Lisa is keen to understand and engage with stakeholders in order that she can help the Department to involve patients, service users and the public more effectively in the Department's work.

Lisa sent a message saying 'If I can assist further, please let me know'. Her contact details are as follows:

First Floor, Belgravia House, Circular Road, Douglas, IM1 1AE

Lisa.Perrie@gov.im

Tel: 642248

You have probably heard the rumours about our Patient Transfer lounge closing in Liverpool Airport. This lounge had been organised by the Islands Breast cancer charity for everyone's use and is a real boon for many when returning to the Island after treatment. I've been in touch with Manx Care who tell me the area is to be converted into more retail outlets but the Patient Transfer lounge will be relocated. At present this location hasn't been decided but will be welcome news to all those that use it.

On Friday the 18th of October at Sight Matters the Manx Macular Support Group is to hold its next meeting. The guest of Honour and speaker is Dave Wilson from Sight Matters. He is to give his annual presentation on the latest and best aids for people suffering visual impairment. This meeting is open to anyone and not just for our members so look forward to welcoming anyone reading this article and would like to attend, and join us for coffee or tea and biscuits afterwards.

Finally, the ongoing news for my Iluvien implant is good. As you will recall Professor Harding decided that eye lea wasn't making any improvement month on month so they would switch to what is an American

product called Iluvien. He told me it wasn't for everyone but thought with my Diabetic Macular Oedema it would be beneficial. The cost of the implant administered only by a qualified surgeon who has been trained to do so is a staggering £7000 at time. I had the implant in May 2023 since which it's been monitored every six months and, on each occasion, further improvement has been achieved with no further treatment required. I go again in early November for the latest check-up which means it's now eighteen months since I had an injection. The manufacturers claim its effectiveness for 36 months but NICE have licenced it in the UK for 24 months. Against the £7,000 initial cost I will have not needed 18 eye lea injections and 18 flights plus saving the Surgeons time to be looking after other patients. This means that if I had continued to have my monthly eye lea injection it would have cost since May 2023 £25,200 so a tremendous saving to the DHSS of £18,200.

Nigel Malpass – Chairman



Our Services

Transport

We currently have five Society vehicles, three 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!

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.

