



# OPTIC TOPICS

## SIGHT MATTERS

January 2025

### A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Welcome to our new-look Optic Topics for 2025!

As we approach our volunteers' afternoon, which will be celebrated on March 10th at 13.30, I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for the invaluable contribution each of our volunteers makes to Sight Matters.

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do, and their dedication ensures we can continue to support our members. On average volunteers dedicate around 800 hours a month!

So, whether they're helping out at lunch club, assisting in the audio library, welcoming visitors on reception, working in the kitchen, providing transport, or recording the audio news, their efforts are deeply appreciated.

Every task they take on, no matter how big or small, helps us deliver our services and make a difference in the lives of our members.

Their generosity, kindness, and willingness to give their time make Sight Matters a truly special organisation. Simply put, we couldn't operate without them.

To all our volunteers, thank you for all that you do.

To help us celebrate, I would love to hear your stories about volunteers either as one yourself or as a member.

Warm regards,

*Cathryn Bradley*

CEO, Sight Matters



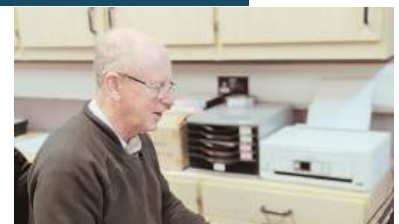
DAVID AND JOHN, DRIVERS



PAULINE, LIBRARIAN



JENNY, RECEPTIONIST



BOB, LIBRARY ASSISTANT



KATHLEEN AND RUTH, RECEPTIONISTS



LORNA, LUNCH CLUB ASSISTANT



## CONGRATULATIONS, SHELIA HEALEY!

We are delighted that one of our volunteers, Sheila Healey has been awarded a Lieutenant Governor's Commendation in recognition of the fantastic work she does with the Onchan Branch of the Royal British Legion.



For over 20 years she has supported local veterans and particularly Burma veterans. Sheila is also heavily involved in organising the annual poppy appeal and can be seen tying her love of the TT with the poppy appeal and can be found during TT and Grand Prix selling the Isle of Man design pins.

She is also a central figure in helping school children to understand what veterans have done for our community by working closely with primary schools and arranging for veterans to visit local schools to share their wartime experiences.

His Excellency will present the award to Sheila in the near future.

## WE'RE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the heart of Sight Matters! From reception to driving minibuses, they make our services possible, whether working on the front line or behind the scenes.

Our audio library depends on librarians who choose the right books and tech experts who transfer them to USB sticks. Drivers safely transport members and check vehicles, while receptionists handle queries and keep operations smooth. Fundraisers give their time to organise vital events.

We are currently looking for volunteers to assist with our fundraising activities. This could involve helping to organise events, selling raffle tickets and serving food and refreshments. If you'd like to find out more, contact Debbie on 674727 or [debbie@sightmatters.im](mailto:debbie@sightmatters.im)





## End Of An Era: Closure Of The VIP Store

It is with great sadness that we announced the closure of the VIP Store, our charity shop located on Strand Street, Douglas. After nine years serving the Isle of Man community, the shop closed its doors for the final time on Saturday the 21st of December.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who supported the VIP Store over the years: volunteers, staff, loyal customers, and those who made donations.

While the closure of the VIP Store is undoubtedly a loss, we remain committed to its mission of empowering and supporting individuals living with sight loss on the Isle of Man.

We will continue to explore other opportunities to fundraise and engage with the community, ensuring that our services remain accessible to those who need them most.

Together, we will continue to make a difference for those living with sight loss on the Isle of Man.

## Welcoming Sue Moore

We're thrilled to welcome Sue as Sight Matters' new Lunch Club Assistant!

Not only is Sue joining the team, but she's also just passed her MIDAS Minibus Training, so you may soon be seeing her behind the wheel.

Sue is excited to meet all our members and be part of the fun — so if you haven't already crossed paths with her, you'll be seeing her around very soon.



# SIGHT MATTERS' HIGHLIGHTS



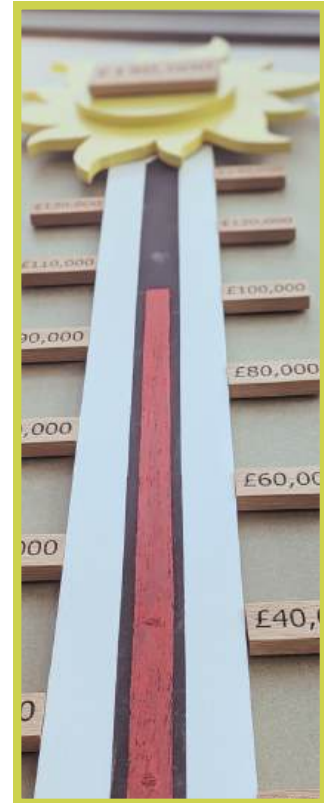
## Freddie: Top Reader

We were delighted to award Freddie our Sight Matters Top Reader Certificate. Freddie has managed to read all the children's and young people's books in our audio library. A great achievement, Freddie!



## Helping Ukraine

Member Anne Cashen has been knitting for several months and has made 4 blankets and over 40 bobble hats. These were taken to Ukraine, alongside a fire engine in October. Well done, Anne!



## Twenty-One For Twenty-One Sunraiser Update

As we celebrated 21 years of Corrin Court, 2024 was a milestone year for Sight Matters. Our ambitious Twenty-One for Twenty-One SUN-Raiser campaign set out to raise £21,000 towards installing a solar panel array at Corrin Court. Thanks to your incredible support, we've exceeded that initial goal and raised £100,000, two-thirds of the total £150,000 needed!



## Picture Perfect

Members in our luncheon club showcased their creativity by taking part in a painting competition. The judging was a challenging task but eventually a winner was chosen. Jean who only has 5% vision, was crowned the winner with her autumnal tree scene.

# INSIGHT: THE OVER-18S GROUP



## The Over-18s Group

Before Christmas, the Over-18s Group had a brilliant time attending some fantastic shows at the Villa Marina and Gaiety Theatre, including Hits from the Musicals and The Makings of a Murderer. These outings were not only highly entertaining but also a wonderful opportunity for members to come together and share memorable experiences.



We also organised two creative ceramic sessions where members crafted and decorated festive Christmas trees and charming Christmas Gnomes. These hands-on activities provided a relaxing and enjoyable way for everyone to express their creativity.

This year, we're thrilled to have even more activities and outings planned for the Over-18s Group. From cultural events to interactive workshops, the calendar is packed with opportunities for members to socialise, learn new skills, and have fun.

The Over-18s Group offers so much more than just enjoyable activities. It provides a vital space for adults living with sight loss to build friendships, develop new skills, and increase their confidence in a supportive and understanding environment. By participating in group activities, members can feel less isolated and more connected to their community, which makes a meaningful difference to their overall wellbeing.

## INSIGHT: THE YOUNGER MEMBERS GROUP



### The Younger Members Group

The Younger Members Activity Group recently enjoyed a memorable day filled with exploration and creativity. Their day began with a fascinating behind-the-scenes tour of Tesco, where they gained unique insights into the daily operations of one of the UK's leading supermarkets

Following the tour, the group made their way to Pulrose Golf Club for a delightful afternoon tea, featuring delicious sandwiches and an array of cakes. Laughter and conversation flowed as they reflected on their Tesco experience and shared their favourite treats.

To embrace the festive season, a Christmas craft session was organised, offering the group an opportunity to unleash their creativity and get into the holiday spirit. This engaging activity proved to be a fun and rewarding outlet for artistic expression.

Looking ahead, the Younger Members Group has an exciting six-month schedule packed with activities that promise fun, creativity, and teamwork. From football kickabouts and cupcake baking to windchime making, climbing walls, and creative workshops, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Each activity offers a chance to build skills, make friends, and have a fantastic time together!

# USEFUL INFO



## Meet The ECLO

Lesley Hankinson, recently appointed Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) is keen to meet as many members as possible and is holding another drop in at Corrin Court between 1pm and 3pm on Wednesday 12th March. Just turn up.



## Aintree at Nobles Update

There is currently an ongoing review of local capacity and ability to repatriate patients from Aintree back to Nobles for treatment.

Eylea 8mgs is now in stock alongside the usual dose given currently.

Eylea is the drug used to treat age-related macular degeneration and a larger dose will enable patients to have an extended time gap between injections.

Appropriate patients will be switched over to this dose which will lead to an increase in patient capacity at Nobles.

We'll keep you abreast of any update



## Queen's University Trial

We have been asked to sit as an independent, external non-clinical representative on a clinical trial being led by Queen's University, Belfast. Put very simply the trial is to determine the effectiveness of undertaking cataract surgery at the same time as a patient is having surgery for a detached retina, if the individual also requires cataract surgery. We'll let you know more about this as and when we can.

## 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

## INSIGHT: FUNDRAISING

**Dining In The Dark - 5th April,  
7pm, Corrin Court Tickets £75.  
Sponsored by Simcocks**

Dining in the Dark, sponsored by Simcocks, is back! This extraordinary evening invites you to step into a world of heightened senses, savouring a gourmet meal while blindfolded. Relying solely on taste, smell, touch, and sound, you'll embark on a culinary adventure designed to surprise and delight, you'll be guided through a sensory journey like no other. The evening will also include a blind auction, adding an extra element of excitement and mystery.

Beyond offering an unforgettable dining experience, Dining in the Dark provides an opportunity to support Sight Matters' work with blind and visually impaired individuals, while gaining a deeper understanding of some of the challenges they face. Tickets include a three-course set meal and wine, and every effort will be made to accommodate dietary requirements upon request.

Follow our Facebook/website or contact Peter ([peter@sightmatters.im](mailto:peter@sightmatters.im)) for further details. Dining in the Dark promises to be an evening of discovery, connection, and support – one that you won't want to miss. Mark your calendar and prepare for a night to remember.



## Launching: Paws 4 Thought



Sight Matters is thrilled to launch Paws 4 Thought, a special area to honour beloved pets, opening February 2025 in Freedom Field at Corrin Court, Onchan. This safe space, primarily for the blind and visually impaired and their assistance dogs, also supports those with hidden disabilities.

Paws for Thought offers a unique way to celebrate cherished pets. By purchasing a personalised tag, engraved with your pet's name and a short message, you can commemorate their memory. Tags will be displayed on a dedicated wall.

Tags are £20 and can be purchased online or at Sight Matters.



Visit [sightmatters.im](http://sightmatters.im) or contact [Peter@SightMatters.im](mailto:Peter@SightMatters.im) or 674727 for more details.



## Thank you, The Grosvenor!

A huge thank you to the Grosvenor Pub in Andreas for their fantastic support! Your darts competition raised an incredible £320 for Sight Matters, and we are so grateful for your generosity. This contribution will make a meaningful difference in supporting those living with sight loss on the Isle of Man. Thank you to everyone who participated!



## Upcoming Events

### Race Night: Friday, 7th March @7pm

Back for 2025 – it's our ever popular Race Night. Supper included, BYO drinks. Tickets: £10.

### Coffee Morning: Thursday, 17th April @10.30am

Catch up with your friends with a coffee and chat. Entry – no need to pre-book.

### Bank Holiday Bingo: Friday 23rd, May @7pm

After the success of last years bingo, we are holding another. £10 per person to include a 10 game bingo book with cash prizes! BYO drinks and snacks.

For more information call 674727.

### Raffle Request



Did you receive extra gifts this Christmas or have unused items at home? Our raffle cupboard is always in need of donations, and we'd be grateful.

### Sponsorship

If you'd like to find out how to support or sponsor our events and activities, or publications, please contact [peter@sightmatters.im](mailto:peter@sightmatters.im)

# 2024 FUN!

## PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



## Transport

Where possible we provide transport to events and activities. We operate a number of vehicles, enabling many of our members to attend our centre and participate in events throughout the year.

## Audio Library

Our extensive collection of MP3 audio books is delivered free of charge, thanks to the Isle of Man Post Office.

## Outreach Visits

Our team offers home or hospital visits to provide personalised support and assistance tailored to your needs.

## Specialist Equipment

We supply a variety of assistive technology, from talking clocks to advanced tools, helping visually impaired individuals live more independently.

## Weekly News Service

This valued service provides detailed local news via MP3 sticks. We supply players to those who need them, ensuring everyone stays informed.

## Social Activities

Our activities enhance the lives of the local blind and visually impaired community. These include innovative and challenging events for members and volunteers alike. We also host luncheon clubs every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, offering three-course meals and aim to cater to all dietary needs.

## Visual Impairment Awareness Training

We offer tailored training to businesses, helping them enhance customer service for blind and visually impaired clients. Training can be delivered at your location for added convenience.



# SIGHT MATTERS

## Charitable Status

As a charity, we rely on the generous contributions of our supporters, especially the people of the Isle of Man. Volunteers play a crucial role in delivering our services. Membership is free for those living with vision challenges, and most services are provided at no cost.

## Visit Us

We welcome visitors to our centre to explore our operations and share ideas for improvement. Organisations can arrange a “walk and talk” tour to see our facilities and services in action.

## Here To Help

Navigating available support can be challenging. We’re here to discuss any issues affecting people with sight loss and provide the best assistance possible.

Contact us to learn more about how we can help.

Corrin Court  
Heywood Avenue  
Onchan  
Isle of Man  
IM3 3AP

Call us on: (01624) 674727

Email us at : [enquiries@sightmatters.im](mailto:enquiries@sightmatters.im)

[www.sightmatters.im](http://www.sightmatters.im)

“Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see” – Mark Twain.

