



SIGHT MATTERS

Optic Topics

Issue No 135
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**A newsletter for blind & visually
impaired people**

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Introduction

Welcome to the July 2025 issue of Optic Topics. This edition is packed with updates, engaging stories, and important information to keep you connected and informed.

In this issue, you'll find an update on the valuable feedback we received from our recent questionnaire, highlighting the services you value most and areas where we can improve. We're also excited to share the vibrant activities our younger members have been enjoying, from football to crafting and museum trips

Discover details about upcoming events for over 18s, including musical performances, theatre shows, and unique experiences like acoustic shooting

Learn about changes at airport security and useful travel tips from the Macular Society. Plus, get ready for our "Stride for Sight" challenge in August and the return of the "Ivan Soulsbury Coast 2 Coast Walk" in September, sponsored by Conister Bank. We also introduce "Paws 4 Thought," a heartfelt way to honour your beloved pets while supporting Sight Matters.

You Spoke, We Listened: An Update on Your Feedback!

Recently, we asked for your feedback through a questionnaire, and we were truly delighted by the response! 87 of you took the time to share your experiences and suggestions, providing us with rich insights that will help us shape our services moving forward.

So, what did you tell us?

Your Overall Experience:

The vast majority of you are highly satisfied with your experience at Sight Matters. An impressive 79% of respondents rated their overall experience as "Very satisfied," with a further 13% indicating they were "Satisfied." This positive feedback reinforces the dedication and hard work of our entire team.

Services You Value:

We were keen to understand which of our services you find most beneficial. The responses highlighted a diverse range of valued offerings, including:

- Audio Library: A clear favourite, providing access to a world of literature and information.

- Lunch Club & Outings: Opportunities for social connection and engaging activities are clearly appreciated.
- Crafting & Younger Members' Club: These initiatives cater to specific interests and age groups, fostering creativity and community.
- Practical Support: Services like the provision of white canes, talking clocks, and MP3 players are making a tangible difference in your daily lives.

Quality and Communication: Areas of Strength:

You also shared overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the quality of our services and the support provided by our staff. A remarkable 84% rated the quality of services as "Excellent," and 76% felt the same about our communication and support.

Listening to Your Ideas for Improvement:

While the feedback was largely positive, we also value your suggestions for how we can enhance our offerings. Key areas for potential improvement that were highlighted include:

- More Crafting & Sporting Activities: There's a clear appetite for expanding our range of activities to cater to diverse interests.

- Return of Calls: We've heard you, and we're committed to ensuring timely and reliable communication.
- More Eye Specialist Drop-ins: Access to expert advice and support is crucial, and we will explore opportunities to facilitate this.

Exciting Ideas for the Future:

Your responses also gave us a glimpse into what you'd like to see more of in the future. We were thrilled to receive a wide array of suggestions for future events, our members certainly are an imaginative bunch and there are some great ideas. We have to be realistic about what we can manage with the resources we have, including staff numbers and being as inclusive as we can by offering free at the point of delivery activities.

The suggestions included:

- Creative Pursuits: Paintings & crafts, clock making.
- Social Gatherings: Musical evenings/afternoons, more meals out, bingo.
- Active Options: Basketball sessions, running & climbing, curling, dance classes.
- Learning & Technology: IT/laptop sessions, Facebook for beginners, sessions on using equipment.

How You Heard About Us:

Understanding how you connect with Sight Matters is vital for us to reach more people who could benefit from our support. The top ways you heard about us were:

- Friend/Family (35%)
- Other (39%) - This included a variety of sources, highlighting the diverse ways you connect with us.
- Hospital (50%) - Indicating the importance of our partnerships with healthcare providers.
- Events (12%)

Moving Forward Together:

The feedback you've provided is invaluable in helping us to understand your needs and priorities. We are carefully reviewing all your comments and suggestions and will be using them to inform our future planning and service development.

Thank you once again to everyone who took the time to complete the questionnaire. Your input ensures that Sight Matters continues to be a supportive and empowering resource for individuals living with sight loss on the Isle of Man. We are committed to acting on your feedback and look forward to sharing updates on the exciting developments to come!

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

A Green Oasis for Healing: Life Grows on with Manx Lottery Trust Support

We're thrilled to announce that we have received a fantastic grant of **£21,385 from the Manx Lottery Trust** through their Thematic Funding Programme! This generous funding will help us create something truly special: a tranquil, therapeutic garden called "**Life Grows On.**"

This new garden will transform an unused dog pen into a peaceful, inclusive space for emotional healing and well-being. We're not doing this alone; we're partnering with **Cruse Bereavement Support Isle of Man, Alzheimer's Society, and the Manx Deaf Society** to make this a sanctuary for members of all four charities.

Nurturing Well-being and Community

The "Life Grows On" garden will offer a calm environment for participants to connect with nature, reflect, and build resilience. Gardening is widely recognised for its mental health benefits, from reducing stress to improving cognitive function. This project will also help foster stronger community ties, allowing individuals to come together and support one another.

Designed for Everyone

Accessibility is at the heart of the "Life Grows On" garden. It will feature **raised planters, tactile signage, and guided gardening sessions**. This ensures that everyone, including individuals with sight loss, hearing impairments, or cognitive challenges, can fully participate and enjoy the healing power of nature. This initiative perfectly aligns with local health strategies, providing a meaningful and sensory-friendly space for those who need it most.

We are incredibly grateful to Manx Lottery Trust for their generous support. This project embodies the Manx Lottery Trust's Thematic Funding Programme, whose "Space to Thrive" theme aims to fund initiatives that create environments where individuals and communities can flourish and grow, promoting well-being, inclusivity, and community engagement

Benefits & Allowances

What is the difference?

Benefits are generally government-provided financial assistance programs.

Benefits often have eligibility requirements and may be paid based on income or other circumstances (means tested).

Allowances are usually tax-free amounts given to individuals or households to cover specific needs or expenses.

Allowances are typically linked to specific situations or are part of broader tax systems.

Benefits and allowances generally fall into 2 out of 4 categories:

Contributory – you must have paid or been credited with enough National Insurance contribution to get these benefits

Non-Contributory – you don't have to have paid any National Insurance to get these benefits, but will need to meet other conditions

Income-related – these benefits are means tested, depend on your circumstances and income/capital

Not income-related – any income or capital will not affect your entitlement, but you will have to meet other conditions

Benefits and allowances can be **taxable** (you may have to pay income tax) or **Non-taxable** (you won't have to pay any tax on the amount received).

Benefits can include:

Income Support – income related (means tested) benefit if you are over 16 years and meet basic qualifying conditions and don't have enough money to live on. Helps to meet basic living costs for those working 16 hours a week or less. Non contributory, income relates and can be taxable.

Incapacity Benefit – paid to you if you are unable to work for health reasons and satisfy certain National Insurance contribution conditions.

Carers Allowance – paid to you if you care for a severely disabled person who is in receipt of Attendance Allowance or High or Middle rate Disability Living Allowance. Non-contributory, subject to weekly earnings limit and taxable.

Allowances can include:

Disability Living Allowance – paid to you if you are over 16 years but under state retirement age and meet qualifying conditions for the last 3 months and needs are expected to continue for at least the next 6 months. There are two components, care Component and Mobility Component. It is non-contributory, not income related and not taxable.

Attendance Allowance – paid if you have reached state pension age, and are severely disabled and need frequent care or supervision, or terminally ill with life expectancy of 6 months or less. There is a higher or lower rate depending on care and supervision needs. This is non-contributory, not income related or taxable. It may be payable for a child with a disability.

Benefit and Allowance forms can be long and feel quite intrusive, if you need support to complete them please get in touch with us as soon as possible so that we can arrange a suitable time to meet.

That's a quick overview of some of the applications we have supported people to make. If you want to know a little more you can call or email Michelle 674727 MFerrer@sightmatters.im

Or visit the IoM Government website
<https://www.gov.im/categories/benefits-and-financial-support/> or call them on 685656

IOM Steam Packet Code

The Steam Packet offer a 'carer goes free code' for foot passenger bookings, off a standard fare only. This can be booked in person or by telephone with code **RBLN**. You will need proof of your blind or partially sighted registration.

VillaGaiety Essential Companion Scheme

The scheme for those with a disability who need somebody to be present, in order to assist them to readily access the theatre and its services, by the means of mobility or guidance.

The scheme grants members a complimentary ticket with the purchase of a full-priced ticket, so that they can bring an essential companion with them at no additional cost

Being part of the scheme does not guarantee you a ticket, only a certain allocation of ECS seats are available per event which are bookable on a first-come first-served basis.

How to apply

To join the scheme, the online application needs to be completed by the eligible person or their carer/representative

(<https://www.villagaiety.com/your-visit/ecs/ecs-application/>)

Membership to the scheme is valid for 2 years, after which the eligible person will need to reapply and confirm they still require an essential companion

Meet the VSS Team

The Department of Education, Sports and Culture (DESC) have a small but specialised team, the Vision Support Service (VSS) who work with nursery/school/college staff, parents/carers and a range of outside agencies to provide specialist educational advice and support for children and young people with a vision impairment, up to the age of 25. They carry out vision assessments which are functional rather than clinical but there is close liaison with the Eye Clinic at Nobles Hospital and the Ophthalmology Department at Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

The services provided include:-

- support for children and young people, families and schools from the point of identification or diagnosis of a vision impairment
- advice and training for those involved in all aspects of education
- direct teaching of specialised vision impairment areas of the curriculum e.g. Braille literacy, touch-typing
- functional assessment and ongoing monitoring of how a young person is using their vision
- guidance on the effects of reduced vision for development and learning, and practical strategies to help
- support for successful inclusion in education settings
- recommendations for the adaptation of the environment, to support teaching strategies and access to the curriculum and school life
- attendance at annual reviews
- recommendations for examination access arrangements
- advice and support for successful transitions

- advice and training on the use of assistive technology

What criteria do the VSS use?

To be eligible for support, a child or young person must have:

- vision acuity (with glasses if worn) recorded as 6/18* or higher (with both eyes open and being used together)
- vision acuity (with glasses if worn) recorded as 6/18* or higher in the better eye (if results for each eye are given individually)
- a diagnosed eye condition which affects safe and full curriculum access (even if the acuity is better than 6/18*)
- registration as sight impaired or severely sight impaired, on the recommendation of an ophthalmologist.

*Please note that the higher the second number, the greater the vision impairment e.g. 6/6 or 6/12 are within standard limits - 6/60 is a significant vision impairment.

How to make a referral.

If parents/carers think their child is having difficulties with their vision, they should make an appointment with an optician. If hospital assessments are then carried out, parents/carers can ask the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (who is based at the hospital) to make a referral via email to the Head of Vision Support Service.

If an education setting thinks a pupil is having difficulty with their vision, they should obtain parental/carer consent before making a referral via email to the Head of VSS, giving details of the difficulty along with details of the young person – name, DOB and current school year, together with address and contact details for parent/carer(s).

Parents and carers may also make a direct referral by emailing the Head of VSS, Jon Roe.

Contact details.

Email - jonathan.roe@sch.im

Telephone – 685808.

Younger Members Embrace Fun, Creativity & Adventure!

What a whirlwind of fun it's been for our younger members so far this year! They've dived headfirst into a fantastic range of activities, making memories and learning new skills along the way.

Our journey began with a lively football extravaganza at The Tommy Clucas Sports Hall. The air was thick with cheers and friendly competition as our young athletes (and some bravely participating parents!) kicked around, proving that fun and fitness go hand-in-hand. Shortly after, the sweet aroma of success filled The Cup Cakery in Castletown. Under the expert eye of Catherine, aspiring bakers meticulously decorated cakes, each a miniature work of art – we're told they tasted as delightful as they looked!

Nurturing green fingers, our members cultivated new life at Corrin Court. Tomatoes, spring onions, and carrots found new homes, and it was a joy to see each child proudly take home their own tomato plant. Updates confirming their healthy growth have been a testament to their dedication! The creative spirit bloomed further as vibrant wind chimes were painted, now adding a beautiful, gentle symphony to the outdoor space at Corrin Court.

A mid-year highlight was our cinematic escape to the Villa Gaiety Cinema for *Dog Man*. The rustle of popcorn bags and the collective giggles confirmed that this animated adventure was a hit with all ages, proving that sometimes, the simplest pleasures are the best. Artistic expression

continued with a special visit from Anna Clucas, who immersed the children in the tactile joy of clay. Little hands moulded charming Easter Gonks, which, after a trip to Anna's kiln, emerged as truly amazing, colourful creations.

The Easter holidays dawned bright and beautiful, perfect for our captivating trip to the Grove Museum. The staff's incredible attentiveness made history come alive, blending interactive elements with fascinating facts. For the more adventurous, Hot Rocks Climbing Wall offered an exhilarating challenge, pushing boundaries and building confidence. After working up an appetite, a delicious lunch at Aqua Café was savoured before embarking on Sight Matters' inaugural Easter Trail – a fantastic scavenger hunt that ended the day on a high note!

The centre transformed into a bustling kitchen at the end of April as Claire Quayle led a fantastic cookery session. The sweet start involved concocting "fluff" – a light, airy dessert of whisked tinned milk and jelly liquid. Then came the savoury star: homemade meatballs! With the help of talking scales, ingredients were weighed, and despite a few tears from grating onions (a true sign of a chef in the making!), little hands

confidently combined mince, egg, and onion, shaping perfect meatballs for a superb lunch.

Capping off this incredible period was a family fun barn event, a delightful kaleidoscope of controlled chaos. Slide races, joyous leaps into ball pits, and general playful pandemonium ensured smiles all around.

While our full six-month schedule is eagerly awaited, we can hint at an absolutely action-packed summer ahead! Get ready for thrilling adventures like canoeing, an insightful lifeboat tour, gentle pony trekking, and exciting experiences at the Outdoor Learning Centre – just a taste of the excitement to come!

Over 18 Activities groups

Our activity groups have been buzzing with excitement, enjoying a fantastic range of events recently. From the historic Moon at Peel Cathedral & VE Celebrations to the toe-tapping performances of Calendar Girls the Musical and Chicago The Musical, there's been something for everyone.

Members also soaked up the sun at a delightful Garden Party, experienced thrills at the Sim Centre, and explored scenic routes on our Guided

Walks. It's been a busy and enjoyable time for all involved in our activity groups!

If you'd like to join in the fun, just **phone Julie** on 674727 or email Julie@SightMatters.im to find out more!

What's Happening? Something New-

Come and join Julie (from Sight Matters) and Lesley Hankinson, (Eye Clinic Liaison Officer who is based at the hospital) for our friendly 'You and EYE' sessions. These sessions are a great chance to connect with others who understand what it's like to live with sight loss. It's a great opportunity to ask any questions, explore helpful resources, enjoying some refreshments and have a good chat. We look forward to seeing you there!

No transport is available for these sessions.

When & Where?

Thursday 11th September 2-3.30pm
Ramsey Swimming Pool Cafe

Tuesday 7th October 2-3.30pm Peel
Swimming Pool Cafe

Wednesday 5th November 2-3.30pm Port
Erin - Falcons Nest bar

Upcoming activity events for the over 18's

If you are interested in attending any of the events please contact **Julie** on 674727 to express your interest.

The events are free but there are limited spaces. Transport can be provided for these events.

IOM Wind Orchestra - Sunday 13th July 3pm at the Villa Marina Arcade

The orchestra has a wide and varied repertoire ranging from classic wind orchestra tunes and show music, to film scores and modern pieces.

Little Shop of Horrors – Monday 14th July, 7.30pm Gaiety Theatre

For the misfits of Skid Row, life is full of broken dreams and dead ends. But there's hope on the horizon for flower shop assistant Seymour, when he discovers a mysterious new plant with killer potential. As the succulent grows and grows, it offers Seymour the kind of success he could only ever dream of...as long as he keeps feeding it! Will his newfound fame and fortune win the attention of sweet, delicate Audrey?

This uproarious sci-fi comedy brings together Motown hits, a delightfully twisted plot, and a hilariously deranged dentist. Don't miss your

chance to experience the funniest, hungriest show in town.

**Rushen Town Band – Tuesday 15th July
7.30pm Villa Marina Arcade.**

Love the sound of a brass band? Come along and enjoy a performance by one of our talented local bands, playing a great mix of music.

**Tony Christie - Thursday July 24th 7.30pm
Gaiety Theatre.**

Would you like to come and see the legendary crooner and sing along to 'Is This The Way to Amarillo', to other classics including 'Avenues & Alleyways', 'Walk Like A Panther', 'Las Vegas' and 'I Did What I Did For Maria', through to new singles 'Thank You For Being A Friend', together with some show stopping covers from the late greats that helped shape the career of the humble veteran from Yorkshire.

Sailing for the Disabled

Feel the wind in your hair and have the opportunity to take the helm of the Pride of Man III, a 48ft yacht as we sail around the stunning coastline of our beautiful island, weather permitting! The available dates are below-

- **Monday 28th July 11.30am -4.15pm**
- **Friday 22nd August 8.45am -1.15pm**

- **Tuesday 9th September 9.45am -2.45pm**

**Acoustic Shooting- Monday 8th September,
Monday 6th October and Monday 8th
December at Corrin Court**

This activity is becoming a firm favourite with members and all those who take part want to do it again. Why not try something new and different and have a go at shooting an air rifle? To get a bullseye you listen through headphones for the changes in tone only. It challenges your coordination and concentration as well as building your confidence, have fun whilst learning a new skill. **Ring and book a slot.**

**Back to Bacharach – Wednesday 10th
September 7.30pm Gaiety Theatre**

Experience his finest hits, performed live by incredible West End vocalists and the sensational Magic Moments Orchestra: What the World Needs Now, Do You Know the Way to San Jose, Walk on By, The Look of Love, Anyone Who Had a Heart, 24 Hours from Tulsa, I Say a Little Prayer for You and many more.

**Ireland The Show – Wednesday 17th
September 7.30pm Gaiety Theatre**

Join an all-star Irish cast of highly talented singers and performers accompanied by the fabulous Keltic Storm band and world champion Gael Force Irish dancers from an unmissable "Ireland the Show" that will take you on a rip-roaring journey through the decades of a globally loved culture

**Exhibition- Leonard McCombe: Through the Lens of War – Friday 19th September, 2pm
House of Mannanan**

Leonard McCombe was one of the Isle of Man's most successful photographers, forging a career with Life magazine and producing some of the 20th Century's most iconic images. To mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, Manx National Heritage has worked with Leonard's family to curate an exhibition of his war photography; many of the images have never been seen before, and all are a testament to the reality of war.

Hello Again, the Neil Diamond Songbook – Friday 26th September 7.30pm Villa Marina

Follow Neil Diamond's story from his early song writing days to international stardom through six decades of all your favourite hits, including Sweet Caroline, Cracklin' Rosie, Forever in Blue Jeans, I am I said, Song Sung Blue, Hello Again, Love on

the Rocks, Red, Red Wine, I'm a Believer, America and many, many, more.

The Band - Sunday 12th October 5pm Gaiety Theatre

Get ready for a night of pure pop nostalgia with The Band – the official Take That musical! Set in 1992, The Band follows five inseparable teenage girls, united by their shared love for their favourite boy band. But as life takes them in different directions, they lose touch with one another. Fast forward 25 years: the women reunite when one of them wins a competition to see their beloved band perform in Prague. Together, they embark on a hilarious, heartfelt journey of rediscovery and reconnection.

Archibald Knox Exhibition – Friday 24th October, 10.30am Manx Museum

As an innovative artist, designer and teacher he has left an extraordinary legacy both on the Isle of Man and beyond. Today his distinctive Celtic designs are synonymous with Manx art and culture and his work continues to be a source of inspiration worldwide. *KNOX: Order & Beauty* will feature over 200 pieces from collections across the British Isles.

Legend – The music of Bob Marley Thursday 11th December Villa Maria 7.30pm

Direct from a sell-out show at London's Adelphi Theatre, together they recreate the timeless hits Could You Be Loved, Is This Love, One Love, No Woman No Cry, Three Little Birds, Jammin', Get Up Stand Up, I Shot the Sheriff and many more reggae classics.

Sponsor Our Activity Clubs

Both our activity groups offer opportunities for fun, learning, and connection within our community, with no cost to members.

We rely on sponsorship to continue these programs.

Would you consider sponsoring one activity, a few activities, or a full year of our clubs? Your support directly enables our members to participate in these activities.

To learn more about how your sponsorship can help, please contact us enquiries@sightmatters.im

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Enclosed is a copy of the summarised minutes of the Manx Blind Welfare AGM held on Wednesday 12 March 2025.

Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

An EGM was held on 7 May 2025 to discuss one specific topic, the proposed changes to Rules of the Society ("the Rules").

The vote was unanimous and "the Rules" duly accepted and approved.

Impact Story

Do you have story to tell that you would be willing to share with our readers on how Sight Matters have helped you? It could be the talking clock that changed your daily routine, joining the audio library left you feeling less isolated or how by attending our activity groups you have made lifelong friends!

If you have a story please let us know on 674727 or email enquiries@sightmatters.im

80's Quiz Night

Get ready to rewind time at our ultimate 80s Quiz Night on **Friday 18th July** at Sight Matters! Dust off your leg warmers, tease up that hair, and join us for a totally 80s evening packed with trivia and throwback tunes, neon vibes. Whether you're an expert on 80s movies, music, fashion, or pop

culture, this is your chance to prove you're the raddest of them all. Grab your team, dress to impress in your best retro gear (optional!), and get ready for a nostalgic night of fun, laughs, and epic memories. Don't miss out — it's gonna be like, totally awesome! Tickets are just £12 and include some retro food! Booking is essential on 674727 or email events@sightmatters.im

Step Up for Sight: Your August Challenge Awaits!

This August, we invite you to move, get motivated, and make a real difference in our community. Join our **Stride for Sight** challenge, a month-long event designed to boost your wellbeing while supporting blind and visually impaired people across the Isle of Man.

Whether it's five miles, five minutes, or five mindful moments, we're asking you to commit to a daily activity that suits your lifestyle and ability. Every step you take, every minute you dedicate, helps raise vital funds for a cause that truly matters.

What is the "5-A-Day" Challenge?

Our "5-A-Day" challenge is all about **flexibility, inclusivity, and consistency**. You choose a

daily commitment centred around the number five and stick with it throughout August. It's that simple!

Need some inspiration? Here are just a few ideas:

- Walk 5 miles
- Run 5 kilometres
- Swim or cycle for 5 minutes
- Spend 5 minutes stretching, meditating, or dancing
- Do 5 laps of your garden or 5 sit-to-stands from a chair

No matter your age or fitness level, there's a way for you to participate. Go solo, team up with friends or family, or even take it on as a workplace challenge – it's a fantastic way to build camaraderie and make a collective impact.

Why Get Involved?

Beyond supporting a crucial local charity, taking part in Stride for Sight offers numerous personal benefits:

- **Boost your physical and mental wellbeing:** Get active and feel great!
- **Create healthy new habits:** Build consistency into your routine.

- **Prepare for the Ivan Soulsbury Coast 2 Coast:** A great training opportunity!
- **Support your local sight loss charity:** Your participation directly impacts lives.
- **Make your steps matter:** Every effort helps foster confidence, independence, and community for others.

How to Take Part

It's easy to join the Stride for Sight challenge:

1. **Download** the Stride for Sight fundraising form (or the screen reader friendly version) from www.sightmatters.im.
2. **Choose your activity** and set your personal fundraising target.
3. **Share your challenge** with friends and family and start collecting sponsorship.
4. **Return your form and funds** to Sight Matters by post or email.

Prefer to fundraise online? You can easily set up your fundraising page in minutes by joining our official campaign on JustGiving. It's a quick way to share your challenge and collect donations.

Questions or want to help promote the challenge? We'd love to hear from you! Contact us at enquiries@sightmatters.im or call 674727.

Thank you for striding with us – every step you take makes a profound difference!

The Ivan Soulsbury Coast 2 Coast 2025:

Sight Matters is thrilled to announce the return of its much-loved annual **Coast 2 Coast Walk**, now proudly renamed the **Ivan Soulsbury Coast 2 Coast Walk**. This year's event, honouring a dear friend and dedicated supporter, promises a fantastic day out for everyone while supporting a vital cause.

A Scenic Journey Across the Isle of Man

On **Sunday, September 7th, 2025**, join us for a memorable journey from the east coast to the west coast of the beautiful Isle of Man.

The **full 12-mile walk** offers a relatively flat and gentle route, kicking off from the **National Sports Centre (NSC) in Douglas** and culminating at the **House of Manannan in Peel**. If you're looking for a shorter, equally rewarding challenge, a **3-mile option** will begin from **St John's**.

Open to All Ages and Abilities

This non-competitive and inclusive event welcomes participants of **all ages and abilities**.

Children are welcome when accompanied by an adult, and even your well-behaved canine companions can join in the fun, with water bowls provided along the route. Inclusivity is at the heart of this walk, ensuring everyone can participate at their own pace.

Event Details:

- **Date:** Sunday, September 7th, 2025
- **Distance:** 12 miles (with a 3-mile option from St John's)
- **Start Time:** 1:30 PM (Check-in opens at 12:45 PM) (or St John's 3.30 PM start – Check-in opens 3.00 PM)
- **Start Location:** NSC, Douglas
- **Finish Location:** House of Manannan, Peel

Sign Up and Make a Difference!

We encourage all participants to consider taking on the Coast 2 Coast Walk as a sponsored event to raise funds for Sight Matters. Your support directly contributes to the vital work they do.

Ready to join us?

- **Sign Up Online:** <https://sight-matters.idloom.events/c2c2025>

- **Download a Sponsorship Form:** <https://sight-matters.idloom.events/c2c2025>

More details about the event will be shared closer to the date, so be sure to keep an eye on our Sight Matters **Facebook page** and **website** for updates.

We can't wait to walk with you and together support the incredible work of Sight Matters!

Save the Date: Bright 4 Sight Day

Date: Friday 3 October

Get ready to shine for Sight Matters!

Bright 4 Sight Day is back — our colourful celebration that invites schools, workplaces, and community groups to dress up in their brightest outfits to help raise awareness for people living with sight loss.

Whether it's neon socks or glittery hats, the brighter the better! Let's light up the Isle of Man and show your support in style.

Save the Date: Dying to Talk About Death

Friday, 7th November | Sight Matters HQ, Onchan

We're pleased to announce the return of *Dying to Talk About Death* — a thought-provoking day of conversation, clarity, and compassion.

Join us as we welcome a panel of professionals who deal with end-of-life matters. Expect a safe, respectful space to ask questions, share experiences, and challenge common myths around death and dying.

Full programme to follow — but for now, mark your calendars. Let's open up the conversation. Contact Peter on 674727 or email Peter@SightMatters.im to register your interest.

Will Writing Month Returns This November

Plan for the Future, Protect What Matters Most

Sight Matters is proud to announce the return of *Will Writing Month* this November, once again in collaboration with leading local law firm, **Callin Wild**.

This important initiative aims to encourage everyone on the Isle of Man — regardless of age

or circumstances — to take a proactive step in securing their future by writing a will. Many of us put off making a will, but it remains one of the most vital things we can do to ensure our wishes are honoured and our loved ones protected.

Throughout the month of November, individuals who mention Sight Matters when using Callin Wild's will-writing services will benefit from a significantly reduced rate: **£200 (+VAT) for individuals and £300 (+VAT) for couples**. In addition, **50% of the fees will be donated directly to Sight Matters**, helping us continue our essential work supporting people with sight loss across the Island.

We've seen first-hand how having a will can ease the burden on families during what can already be an incredibly difficult time. Taking part in this initiative isn't just about legal documents — it's about peace of mind, knowing your wishes are clearly stated and your loved ones looked after.

Callin Wild's services are fully accessible and sensitive to the needs of those living with sight loss, making them an ideal partner for this campaign. As Peter adds:

By taking part in Will Writing Month, not only will you be making a meaningful investment in your

family's future, but you'll also be supporting Sight Matters in our mission to improve the lives of blind and visually impaired people on the Isle of Man.

Speakers Brunch

This year's Speakers Brunch will be on Monday 24th November at Sight Matters. For more information or for bookings email events@sightmatters.im

SUN-Raiser Success: Solar Panels Now Installed at Corrin Court

We're delighted to share that the solar panels funded by our SUN-Raiser campaign have now been installed on the roof of **Corrin Court!**

Thanks to the generosity and support of our community, we raised an incredible **£100,000** towards our £150,000 target. To ensure we could complete the project without delay — and to stay ahead of rising costs due to inflation — we made the decision to use reserves to fund the remaining balance. This allowed us to press ahead with the installation and begin reaping the benefits of cleaner, more cost-efficient energy sooner rather than later.

Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who contributed — from individual donors and corporate sponsors to those who simply helped us spread the word. Your support is helping Sight Matters create a more sustainable future while protecting the services that so many people across the Island rely on.

But the journey doesn't end here. We're already looking ahead to **Phase 2** of our SUN-Raising efforts, and will continue to fundraise so that we can build on this fantastic progress and further enhance the environmental and financial sustainability of Corrin Court.

Together, we've taken a bright step forward — and we're excited about what comes next.

Christmas Coffee Morning

Our Christmas Coffee Morning will be on Thursday **20th November, 10.30am** at Corrin Court. We're already collecting items for the raffle and red stall so if you have anything suitable please pop it in!

Paws 4 Thought: A Special Place to Honour Our Beloved Pets

Paws 4 Thought is a unique and heartfelt space at Sight Matters dedicated to celebrating the incredible animals who've touched our lives.

Nestled within the tranquil **Freedom Field at Corrin Court, Onchan**, Paws 4 Thought offers a beautiful way to remember or recognise your cherished animal companions, past or present. The Freedom Field itself is a secure and welcoming environment, thoughtfully designed to support individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with assistance dogs, and also embraces those with hidden disabilities or other challenges.

How Paws 4 Thought Works

Participating in Paws 4 Thought is simple and creates a lasting tribute:

- **Purchase a Tag:** Commemorate a beloved pet, whether they're still by your side or forever in your heart, with a specially designed personalised tag.
- **Personalise Your Tag:** Add your pet's name and a short, meaningful message that captures their spirit and the joy they brought you.

- **Display Your Tribute:** Your personalised tag will be proudly displayed on our dedicated **Paws 4 Thought wall**, becoming a permanent part of this loving tribute.

Why Participate?

Paws 4 Thought offers more than just a tag; it provides a meaningful way to:

- **Celebrate the deep love and immense joy** your pet has brought into your life.
- **Create a lasting and beautiful tribute** to your furry friend in a serene and meaningful setting.
- **Support the vital work of Sight Matters**, directly helping blind and visually impaired individuals right here on the Isle of Man.

Costs and Payments

Each personalised tag costs **£20**

You have several convenient payment options:

- **Online:** Pay securely via PayPal or card. Please use the reference "**Paws 4 Thought**".
- **In-person:** Visit us directly at Sight Matters, Corrin Court, Heywood Avenue, Onchan.

- **By cash or cheque:** Make cheques payable to "Sight Matters."

Get Involved and Visit

Whether you're purchasing a tag for yourself or as a thoughtful gift for another animal lover, Paws 4 Thought is a wonderful way to honour the pets who bring so much unconditional love into our lives. You're welcome to visit the Paws 4 Thought area during designated times or by arrangement to see the growing display and feel the collective love shared by all participants.

Contact Us and Download Form

For more details or to purchase your tag, please don't hesitate to **contact us** on 674727 or enquiries@SightMatters.im. Together, let's celebrate the pets who've touched our hearts while making a real, positive impact on the lives of others.

MBWS audio library

Please remember if you need an up to date catalogue, please let us know and we will forward one onto you.

Item No	Title	Author Surname	Author Forenames
FI9309	A Christmas Baby at Rookery House	Hendry	Rosie
MM2217	A Deadly Discovery	Byrne	Ciar
MM2255	A Death in Berlin	Scarrow	Simon
FI9324	A Different World	Lennox	Judith
RO541	A Dreamy Summer on the Lake	Ashley	Phillipa
MM2264	A Fortune Most Fatal	Bull	Jessica
FI9338	A Foundling at the Wartime Bookshop	Eames	Lesley
FI9322	A Heart Full of Hope	Seeley	Kay
FI9345	A Locket Full of Hope	Fielding	Lily
CH341	A Manx Dragon Called Rufus	Cowley	Robert G
FI9337	A Mother's Hope	Mason	Maggie
FI9330	A Secret in the Family	Revell	Nancy
MM2254	A Serial Killer's Guide to Marriage	Mackay	Asia
FI9323	A Sister's Dream	Gill	Elizabeth
WS248	A Spy At War	Beaumont	Charles
MM2244	A Very Lively Murder	Watson	Katy

FI9300	A Wartime Christmas at Rookery House	Hendry	Rosie
FI9346	A Wartime Wedding in the Dales	Firth	Betty
MM2253	Acts of Malice	Gray	Alex
MM2225	An Ambush of Widows	McDonald	R.W.R.
MM2247	An Excellent Thing in a Woman	Montclair	Allison
FI9347	An Orphan's Dream	Summers	Judy
WS249	As The Storm Clouds Gather	Henry	M. B.
MM1637	Backlash	Riches	Marnie
FI9348	Best Summer Ever	Swain	Heidi
MM2212	Blood Sacrifice	Jackson	Douglas
MM2248	Bonded in Death	Robb	J. D.
FI9349	Bowen River	Seaton	Annie
FI9310	Cherish the Dream	Jackson	Gemma
FI9301	Christmas Carols at Rookery House	Hendry	Rosie
FI9339	City Girls Forever	Scanlan	Patricia
BM421	Clough & Revie	Hermiston	Roger
MM2267	Consumed	Buchanan	Greg
MM2266	Curtain Call to Murder	Clary	Julian
FI9308	Dare to Dream	Jackson	Gemma

MM2230	Death at Dead Man's Stake	Oldham	Nick
MM2228	Death Comes in Threes	Jecks	Michael
MM2216	Death in Helmand	Belsham	A
MM2229	Death in the Arctic	Hindle	Tom
MM2252	Death in the Dressing Room	Brett	Simon
MM2256	Death Upon A Star	Meade	Amy Patricia
CH344	Donk the Dinosaur	Cowley	Robert G
CH339	Dragon Times	Mulvey	Anita
WS227	Dust Clouds of War	Wilcox	John
MM2257	Easeful Death	Harrod-Eagles	Cynthia
MM1677	Edge of Darkness	Rose	Karen
RO540	EscapeTo the French Riviera	Jensen	Helga
MM2235	Falconer's Crusade	Morson	Ian
RO535	Falling in Louvre	Leitch	Fiona
FI9340	Forgotten Child	Flynn	Katie
FI9298	Frankie	Norton	Graham
RO538	From London With Love	Fforde	Katie
CH343	Gertrude the Circus Elephant	Cowley	Robert G
MM2245	Give Him to Me	Koomson	Dorothy

CH345	Harvey the Manx Mouse	Cowley	Robert G
FI9331	Her Prodigal Husband	Masterman	Becky
MM2249	Her Sister's Killer	Hannah	Mari
FI9332	Home Comforts At Rookery House	Hendry	Rosie
FI9355	Home for Christmas	Swain	Heidi
MM2258	Houston Night	Leather	Stephen
FI9354	Hunted	Mukherjee	Abir
MM2213	In at the Death	Cutler	Judith
MM2219	Into the Flames	Delargy	James
CH338	Invisible Charlie	O'Brien	Caoimhe
FI9325	Life Begins	Eberlen	Kate
FI9302	Living is a Problem	Johnstone	Doug
NF160	Love Lay Down Beside Me and We Wept	Taylor	Helen Murray
RO536	Marry Me in Italy	Pellegrino	Nicky
MM2226	Metropolitan Mysteries	Edwards	Martin
FI9341	Miss Burham and the Loose Thread	Knight	Lynn
FI9039	Miss Martha Mary Crawford	Cookson	Catherine
RO542	Moving On	Meaney	Roisin
MM2231	Murder as a Fine Art	Carnac	Carol

MM2262	Murder at the Palace	Daws	N. R.
MM2223	Murder in Berlin	Koning	Christina
MM2112	Murders at the Rookery Grange Retreat	Kirkham	Gina
MM2263	Nine Hidden Lives	Gold	Robert
MM2232	Notes on a Drowning	Sharpe	Anna
RO537	Nothing Without You	Forrest	Rhonda
MM1385	Odessa Sea	Cussler	Clive
RO539	One Night at the Chateau	Henry	Veronica
MM2246	Open Season	Kellerman	Jonathan
MM2240	Pacific Vortex!	Cussler	Clive
MM2218	Passions in Death	Robb	J.D.
MM2236	Piranha	Cussler	Clive
MM2237	Plague Ship	Cussler	Clive
FI9317	Queen Lucia	Benson	E. F.
FI9311	Reunited at the Lakeside Cottage	Green	Erin
FI9299	Revenge of Rome	Scarrow	Simon
FI9312	Rosabelle Shaw	Stevenson	D. E.
FI9342	Secrets of Foxglove Cottage	Alexander	Rebecca
FI9343	Secrets of the Toffee Factory Girls	Young	Glenda

FI9304	Shy Creatures	Chambers	Clare
BM420	Slow Puncture	Berry	Peter
MM2250	Tea on Sunday	Cooper	Lettice
CH340	The Adventures of a Manx Fairy	Cowley	Robert G
FI9327	The Book of Days	Kay	Francesca
MM2259	The Bookshop Murders	Gladwell	Jennifer
NF159	The Bookshop The Draper The Candlestick Maker	Gray	Annie
MM2221	The Boot Camp Murder	Ross	Matthew
FI9328	The Bridesmaid	Quinn	Cate
FI9321	The Broken Kingdom	Donald	Angus
MM2241	The Chase	Cussler	Clive
MM2242	The Chase	Leather	Stephen
MM2227	The Chrysanthemum Tiger	Clare	Alys
MM2260	The Cure	Smith	Eve
MM2222	The Dead Shall be Raised	Bellairs	George
MM2238	The Emperor's Revenge	Cussler	Clive
MM2239	The Eye of Heaven	Cussler	Clive

MM2220	The Family	Heller	Mandasue
FI9306	The Forgotten Daughter	Mason	Elsie
FI9307	The House of Hope	Clague	Joanne
FI9314	The Iron Facade	Cookson	Catherine
MM2261	The Isis Covenant	Douglas	James
FI9313	The Island Swimmer	Kelly	Lorraine
FI9344	The Italian Flame	Ley	Rosanna
FI9315	The Last Letters from Villa Clara	Steele	Sarah
FI9351	The Lightfingered Lass	Clague	Joanne
FI9335	The Loveless Child	Mason	Elsie
MM2224	The Party Season	Holliday	Sji
NF161	The Queen and the Countess	O'Brien	Anne
MM2243	The Ravening	Church	Daniel
FI9305	The Royal Rebel	Chadwick	Elizabeth
FI9334	The Scent of Oranges	George	Kathy
FI9316	The Sea of Silence	Hunter	Seth
NF158	The Story of a Heart	Clarke	Rachel
MM2214	The Unspoken Truth	White	M J

MM1800	The Venetian Legacy	Gwynne Jones	Philip
FI9326	The Watchmakers of Pencarrack Moor	Nixon	Terri
MM2251	The Well	Jolley	Elizabeth

Manx Macular Support Group- Registered Charity No 1258 **LOSS OF CENTRAL VISION**

Unexpected Encounters and Travel Tips – Nigel Malpass Chairman

I recently wrote this article from **Blyth**, Canada, a small township three hours west of Toronto, where I was staying with my son and his family. During my trip from the Isle of Man, two incidents occurred that I believe could affect many readers.

Airport Security: A New Level of Scrutiny

First, Gatwick Airport has implemented new advanced security devices that flagged my flight bag for further inspection. This hadn't happened at Ronaldsway, but I have no doubt other airports will follow suit, if they haven't already. When the inspector approached me, I asked, "What's wrong with the contents of my flight bag?" "Nothing," he replied, "it's the flight bag itself. Our machine has

detected that it's impregnated with twelve different prescribed drugs." I was then asked to accompany him to a side room for an interview.

As you can imagine, I was amazed and had no idea how that could be. I always carry a copy of my latest medical letter from St Paul's, listing my conditions and regular prescriptions, just in case I need medical help while abroad. To cut an hour-long interrogation short, the experts they consulted determined that my flight bag had absorbed the twelve drugs from the atmosphere during my nearly monthly visits to Aintree and St Paul's over the past thirteen years. This clearly demonstrates how sensitive their new equipment is.

Upon my release, they suggested, and I subsequently did, have my flight bag **thoroughly machine washed** upon arrival in Blyth. I fly back next Monday, and the proof it's worked will be evident when I go through security at Gatwick. I highly recommend that anyone who uses the same flight bag for regular hospital visits machine wash their bag to avoid similar delays.

Navigating Airline Seat Selection

The second event involved pre-booking my seat for the flight to Canada. Like many airlines, Air

Transat attempts to compel you to pre-select your seat online but charges 29 Canadian dollars for doing so. I object to such a charge, so I arrived at Gatwick wearing my green neck ribbon covered in sunflowers – the Hidden Disabilities Society ribbon. The check-in assistant noticed it and asked if I had any requirements. I simply stated I would like an aisle seat, which was granted, and since the check-in person handled it, there was no charge.

Healthcare in Ontario: A Glimpse into the Future?

As a final thought, you might be interested to know that Ontario now has a form of NHS. Everyone is assigned a yearly total amount that can be spent on their health. So, treatment at a doctor's or dentist's office is paid for by the state until you reach that limit, after which you pay. My son and his family drive 45 minutes for a doctor and 90 minutes for a dentist, such are the shortages of these professionals. I wonder how long it will be before we have to start paying towards our healthcare on the Island?

Thank You

At Sight Matters, our mission is clear: to support blind and visually impaired individuals on the Isle

of Man. Your continued generosity is fundamental to achieving this.

To our donors, partners, and supporters, thank you. Your contributions directly fund our services, enable us to provide essential equipment, and foster a supportive community.

Your commitment allows us to:

- **Deliver direct support:** Offering practical and emotional assistance to those facing sight loss.
- **Provide essential training:** Equipping individuals with skills in daily living, mobility, and technology.
- **Facilitate community engagement:** Running luncheon and activity groups to combat isolation and build confidence.
- **Advocate for accessibility:** Working towards a more inclusive Isle of Man for everyone.

Every donation, regardless of size, makes a tangible difference. It directly contributes to independence, builds confidence, and improves lives.

From everyone at Sight Matters, and on behalf of our members, thank you for your support!

Special dates for your diary

July

80's Quiz -Fri 18th

August

Stride for Sight (the Whole of Aug)

September

Ivan Soulsbury Coast 2 Coast Walk – Sun 7th

October

Bright for Sight - Fri 3rd

November

Dying to Talk About Death – Fri 7th

Will Writing Month (the Whole of November)

Speakers Brunch -24th

Christmas Coffee Morning - Thurs 20th

Complaints Procedure

Whilst we appreciate the positive feedback that we receive on a regular basis, there may be times when we have not provided an acceptable standard of service. If you do have a problem or concern and you are able to make a member of staff aware of it at the time, they will endeavour to resolve the matter quickly. If this is not possible then we have a complaints procedure available on request in your preferred format.

A standard digital version of Optic Topics can be obtained from the Manx Blind Welfare Society on request.