**Outlook**

**The iSightCornwall Newsletter**

**Autumn 2016**

**Welcome to the autumn 2016 edition of Outlook**

“This has been, and continues to be, an exciting year for iSightCornwall. In the past six months alone we have introduced a new Community Outreach Service, launched our Inspiring Futures Fund, improved our membership package and welcomed a royal visitor to open our Resource Centre.

This month we are celebrating our 160th birthday, making us one of the oldest charities in Cornwall. This is an extraordinary achievement and as we continue to grow from strength to strength, we are looking forward to the next 160 years!

I would like to thank our members for your continued support and look forward to seeing you at the AGM on the 9th of November.”

Terri Rosnau-Ward, Chief Executive

**Celebrating 160 years of iSightCornwall**

1856 – The Society for the Itinerary Teaching of the Blind in the County of Cornwall is founded to support miners who lost their sight in mining accidents.

1910 – Volunteers began collecting money for the Society.

1920 – The Blind Persons Act was passed. All societies related to people with sight loss had to be registered and co-operate together.

1923 – The Society changes its name to Home Teaching Society of the Blind in Cornwall & County Association with the South Devon and Cornwall Institution for the Blind

1925 – The name was shortened to the Cornwall County Association for the Blind

1948 – Malabar House in Truro was opened as a home for the blind.

1994 – The Association moved into Penryn House renaming it the Sight Centre.

1997 – The Association changed its name to Cornwall Blind Association.

2006 – ‘A Cornish Vision’ was published celebrating 150 years of the Cornwall Blind Association.

2015 – Rebranded as iSightCornwall to reflect the needs of everyone with sight loss whatever their age, circumstance or condition.

2016 – The iSightCornwall Resource Centre is officially opened as we celebrate 160 years.

**iSight Membership**

To celebrate the charity’s 160th anniversary, we have introduced a range of new benefits that will be attractive to all supporters, old and new, creating an exciting and inspiring membership community.

For just £15 a year members will now receive:

* A 10% discount on a range of accessible everyday products from our Resource Shop
* A Discount on our volunteer car scheme to help with essential trips to eye-related medical appointments and visits to the Sight Centre. Petrol costs are 42p per mile for all members.
* Invitations to our local community drop-in events and clubs and activities.
* The latest eye care news and announcements
* Free technology and equipment demonstrations at the Sight Centre on an appointment basis
* The opportunity to cast your vote at the Annual General Meeting.

And of course a free copy of our Outlook magazine delivered directly to your door.

**Latest News**

**HRH the Duke of Gloucester Opens Resource Centre**

His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester officially opened our Resource Centre on Thursday the 8th of September.

The Resource Centre, on the ground floor of the Sight Centre, provides a hub of services and support; from advice on low vision aids, gadgets and technology that make everyday living easier to confidence-building workshops in our independent living kitchen.

During his visit the Duke was introduced to clients, volunteers and staff. He was given a tour of the Resource Centre where our customer services advisor Dominic Hall demonstrated some of our bestselling products in the shop. The Duke also spoke with clients having low vision and assistive technology appointments as well as chefs from Jamie Oliver’s Fifteen Cornwall who were making fresh pasta with clients in the new independent living kitchen

**Our Patron Melissa Reid wins Rio bronze medal**

iSightCornwall Patron Melissa Reid made her Paralympic debut in the women’s PT5 triathlon event on Sunday 11th of September.

Despite the sweltering conditions and tough competition, Melissa finished in bronze medal position following a thrilling sprint finish that saw her overtake US Para Athlete, Elizabeth Baker.

Melissa is now targeting the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Japan.

**A Night with iSight**

On Thursday the 18th of August, iSightCornwall hosted a special fundraising event in partnership with The Poly in Falmouth which included an audio enhanced screening of the critically acclaimed film ‘Notes on Blindness’.

The evening got underway with our Chief Executive, Terri giving a moving question and answers session about her own experience of coming to terms with sight loss.

This was followed by the award winning film ‘Notes on Blindness’ which charts author and academic John Hull’s experience of sight loss through audio diary entries that he began recording in 1983.

One viewer had the following to say about the film:

“The film was unlike anything else, meditative but with urgency to live, simply beautiful”

If you missed the screening, you can catch up with the film when it comes out on DVD on the 24th of October.

**iSightCornwall & Kernow King Fundraising Quiz**

Our annual fundraising quiz will take place on Thursday 3rd of November at Woodlane Social Club in Falmouth. This year Cornwall’s comedy sensation, ‘Kernow King’ has offered to host the evening.

Tickets are currently on sale priced at £40 per team (a maximum of 5 members are allowed in any one team).

Tickets can be purchased in person from the Resource Centre Shop or by ringing us on 01872 261110.

**SENSE annual camping trip**

iSightCornwall are proud to support SENSE Cornwall, a charity for young adults will little or no sight, many of whom have additional needs and other sensory impairments.

This year we funded a camping trip which took place at the Dragon Leisure Centre in Bodmin. Over the course of the weekend the group went swimming, practiced their archery skills and went coasteering in Port Quinn.

We received some fantastic feedback from the group and we’re glad that everybody involved had a great time.

Kat, one of the young adults involved in the camp said the following:

“I had an amazing time on camp! Each activity gave me a sense of having achieved something new, from jumping high in coasteering to completing a six mile walk to and back from Lanhydrock House”

**Get Involved**

Have you ever thought about taking up dancing, bowling or even shooting?

Why not join one of Cornwall’s VIP clubs and give it a try.

You can take part in a range of activities in a safe and friendly environment, socialise and make new friends. If you don’t want to take up a new activity, there are plenty of social clubs to join instead. The club organisers arrange the transport, activities and venues and make sure the groups have the best possible experience.

**Blind in Song Choir**

The Blind in Song Choir (or BLIS Choir) meet every fortnight at Richard Lander School in Truro with members from across Cornwall including St Austell and Penzance. The choir has a large repertoire of over 100 songs and they perform concerts throughout the year.

**Bude Social Club**

Once a month the Bude Social Club meets up for lunch at venues in Bude and beyond. A minibus is provided on days that they go further afield, and if lunch is at a garden centre there is often time for a spot of shopping

afterwards. Many of the venues provide club members with a meal deal.

**Bugle Blues Bowling Club**

The Bugle Blues, bowling club meet every Thursday morning at Goonbarrow Bowling Club in St Austell. During the Summer they play outside on the six rink grass green and during the winter they move into the heated clubhouse to play short mat bowls. There are friendly competitions to take part in or you can go along to have a practice and meet with friends.

Pauline is the club organiser for the Bugle Blues:

“I lived with visual impairment all of my life. Before joining the club 15 years ago I would never go anywhere without my family but now I’m a new woman! I have got more confidence, I go out on the train with my guide dog, I have joined competitions all over the country and I have become the club organiser”.

**BUGS (Blind Unguided Shooting)**

The Blind Unguided Shooting club (or BUGS as they are also known) attract a broad age range of people who go along to St Austell Rifle Club every Wednesday afternoon. The sights on the adapted rifles measure the level of light reflected from the target and emit a pitch which increases the closer you get to lining up with the target. Members of the club enter national competitions each year but you don’t have to be good at shooting to join, everyone is welcome to come and give it a try.

**Dance Club, Par**

The Par Dance Club has been running for over 20 years, this dance club takes place on Monday evenings, twice a month at Par Methodist Church. Dance instructors teach ballroom as well as line dancing and barn dancing. Members enjoy the social side of meeting at the club as well as the dancing.

**Dance Club, Townshend**

Members of the Townshend Dance Club meet up once a fortnight on Wednesday evenings in Townshend Village Hall. A minibus is provided by Age UK and picks up members in the surrounding areas of Camborne, Redruth, Illogan and Pool. You can learn ballroom and sequence dancing or just sit back and enjoy the music.

**Gardening Club**

Every couple of months members of the Gardening Club meet at Duchy College’s Rosewarne Campus in Camborne to sow seeds, take cuttings and get gardening tips from one of the college lecturers. They also arrange quizzes and sensory meetings and in previous years have entered the Camborne Show to sell plants and raise funds.

**Guitar Club**

You don’t need to have your own guitar or even know how to be able to play to join the guitar club. If you would like to meet up with other visually impaired musicians to practice or learn, the Guitar Club meets once a fortnight on Monday lunchtime in Ponsanooth Hall.

**Gweek Visually Impaired Club**

The Gweek Visually Impaired Club has been running for over 20 years and is going from strength to strength. Every Tuesday, members and volunteers meet for indoor bowls and a spot of lunch. It is the highlight of the week for many of those involved.

**Hayle Social Club**

Hayle Social Club meets twice a month at the Hayle Day Care Centre for drinks, lunch and entertainment. Following lunch which is provided by the Day Care Centre, members can enjoy the entertainment that is regularly organised from quizzes and raffles to singers and musicians.

**Launceston Social Club**

The Launceston Social Club meets on Tuesday lunchtimes twice a month, at different venues each time. The Launceston Social Club is for people who love to meet up with their friends.

**Saltash BAPS (Blind & Partially Sighted) Social Club**

The Saltash BAPS (Blind and Partially Sighted) Social Club meet on Tuesday afternoons once a fortnight. Members can enjoy entertainment, often in the form of speakers or musicians, as well as have tea and cakes. A club minibus is provided for those who live locally. The BAPS club organiser is an active fundraiser which means members are treated to Christmas dinner as well as a few special outings during the year.

**Truro Lunch Club**

Members of the Truro lunch club meet for a few hours one Tuesday each month to socialise over lunch. The venues vary from pubs to garden centres and wherever possible the club organiser will arrange a lunch deal to keep the costs as low as possible. Depending on the venue, lunch could be followed by a look around the garden centre as well as a bit of shopping.

**Young at Heart Social Club**

The Hayle, Young at Heart Social Club was founded by a former iSightCornwall trustee who was looking for a social club close to his home. Young at Heart meet once a month for lunch and a pint at the Turnpike Inn, Hayle. Everyone is welcome to join and most members bring their partners and families along too.

**Become a Volunteer**

Cornwall’s VIP clubs continue to operate because of the help of dedicated volunteers that run them. If you would like to become a volunteer please contact Chris Kent on 01872 261110.

**Support for All**

We understand from member’s feedback that transport and rural isolation can be barriers to accessing our services, which is one of the reasons we have launched our Community Outreach Service. The free home visiting service will enable more people from across the county to access the information they need.

We offer personalised advice and information; show you gadgets that could help make everyday tasks easier and provide information about our other services that may be appropriate such as benefits advice and support with assistive technology.

Debbie Vivian runs the Community Outreach service:

“Visiting people and their family members in their own home gives our clients the opportunity to talk about their needs and aspirations. It enables me to give the best possible person centred, holistic advice and information”.

Throughout October and November we are running the first of a series of local drop-in events showcasing our services. Our team will be on hand to provide advice and information about low vision aids and equipment; the latest mobile phones and video magnifiers and answer any queries regarding benefit entitlement.

Our first drop-in event will be taking place on Wednesday the 26th of October at Chapel Street Methodist Church, Penzance, TR18 4BE.

Our second event will be taking place on Wednesday the 16th of November at Camborne Wesley Methodist Church, Camborne, TR14 8EG.

Our final drop-in event will be taking place on Wednesday the 30th of November at Falmouth Methodist Church, Falmouth, TR11 3PG.

All events will be held from 10am until 3pm.

For more information on our Community Outreach Service please contact Debbie Vivian on 01872 261110.

**Benefits Support**

Knowing what benefits you’re entitled to and making an application can be a daunting process, but we can help.

You can book a one-on-one appointment with our Benefits Advisor to find out more. You will receive personalised advice based on your specific circumstances as well as full support throughout the application process.

**Changes to the Benefit Cap**

Lately there have been several changes within the benefits sector including changes to the Benefit Cap. The Welfare Reform and Work Act has introduced changes to the benefit cap. These changes, which will take effect in autumn 2016, include changes to the benefit cap levels to £20,000 a year for couples with or without children and lone parents and £13,400 for single people without children.

They also include additional exemptions for recipients of Guardians Allowance and Universal Credit claimants who receive payments towards carer’s costs. Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independent Payment are also excluded from the cap.

To book a one on one appointment with our Benefits Advisor or find out more about the benefits you could be entitled to please contact Ruth Broad on 01872 261110.

**Everyday Living**

Here at the Resource centre we have a selection of products that have been designed specifically to help with everyday tasks.

From simple lighting solutions and magnifiers to talking clocks, mobile phones and colour detectors, we have something for everyone.

Here is a selection of some of our most practical products:

**Talking Cube Clock**

Simple and easy to use alarm clock which announces the time at the touch of a button.

**Z LED Rechargeable Lamp**

This lamp provides up to eight hours or light, has two brightness settings and is highly portable due to the Z fold design.

**3x Optima Go**

This pocket magnifier is strong and durable with an LED light and three times magnification. It’s portable and perfect for reading

**Dom’s Review: Sonic Portable USB Player**

Our customer services Advisor, Dominic Hall has given us a review on one of his favourite items available in our shop, the Sonic Portable USB player:

Q) Hello Dom, can you please tell us a little about what the Sonic Portable USB player does?

A) The Sonic is an MP3 talking book player. It can play any MP3 that has been stored onto a USB memory stick. It can also act as a Bluetooth speaker.

Q) Is the Sonic player easy to use?

A) Extremely, it has one control button on the front for volume on/off. There are three buttons on the top for pausing and skipping tracks. It is exceptionally portable and can be taken from room to room very easily.

Q) What are the pros and cons?

A) The Sonic is extremely portable and offers high quality sound. It has a great battery life of up-to 5 hours play time. The only negative feature is that I would have liked to have seen a built-in radio function.

Q) How does the Sonic measure up to its alternatives?

A) It has been a great replacement for the older Boom box model.

Q) Would you recommend the product?

A) Having bought one myself, most definitely!

**Making your kitchen more accessible**

His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, officially opened our new Independent Living Kitchen in September. We have exciting plans for our newest addition to the Resource Centre including cookery workshops and equipment demonstrations.

In the meantime here are our top tips for making your own kitchen more accessible:

* Choose matt surfaces rather than shiny surfaces to help minimise glare
* Outline the edges of countertops with tape in a colour that contrasts your work surfaces
* Mark commonly used or important settings on appliances with brightly coloured nail polish or with raised Bumpons
* Purchase large print, braille or recorded versions of popular cookbooks
* To avoid accidents and spills when pouring liquids use a liquid level indicator
* Purchase audible gadgets such as talking microwaves, thermometers and weighing scales
* Install additional lighting beneath wall cabinets that shine onto worktops
* Use clip-on spotlights when required
* Place stick-on LED lights inside of cupboards
* Use a pen-friend to quickly identify ingredients and tins and jars
* Use a deep-sided saucepan instead of a frying pan to ensure no hot foods or liquids escape

Items available from our shop can be purchased in person at the Resource Centre Shop or over the telephone by phoning 01872 261110. We have recently launched our gift card range available in denominations of £5, £10 and £20.

**Looking after your Eyesight**

Here at iSightCornwall we take eye health matters very seriously. It is estimated that there are currently as many as 22,000 people living with sight loss in Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly.

Evidence suggests that over 50% of sight loss could be avoided by receiving regular sight tests. Eye tests don’t just indicate if a change of prescription is needed, they also provide a vital health check which can detect the early signs of eye conditions before any symptoms are apparent – many of which can be treated if found early enough.

We have compiled our top 5 tips to promote eye health:

**Stop smoking**

Smoking has been shown to increase your chances of developing macular degeneration and cataracts. For support on how to stop smoking contact the free NHS helpline on 0300 123 1044.

**Get moving**

Research has shown that exercising may help reduce the risk of sight loss which can occur due to high blood pressure, diabetes and the narrowing and tightening of the arteries. To help you get moving there are many exciting clubs and activities on offer in Cornwall.

**Eat healthily**

The following foods are recommended for improving eye health; carrots (there’s no surprise there), kale, spinach, oysters, apricots, sweet potatoes and eggs.

**Drink within the recommended limits**

Heavy alcohol consumption associated with an increased risk of early age-related macular degeneration. Sticking to the recommended daily limits could help to minimise this risk. Government guidelines suggest that we should drink no more than 6 medium glasses of wine or 6 pints of beer per week.

**Protect your eyes from the sun**

Wearing a hat or sunglasses with a high level of UV protection will protect your eyes from UV rays. We have a range of solar shields designed to block out UV rays and prevent glare, which are available on a free long-term basis from our low vision clinic.

**Low Vision Clinic**

We offer free Low Vision assessments for people with eye conditions that cannot be improved with prescription glasses or surgery.

To book your free assessment you will need a referral from your optician or eye hospital consultant, unfortunately we are unable to book an eye appointment without one. To book your assessment please call the Low Vision Clinic on 01872 261110.

**Gadgets & Technology**

Computers, tablets and mobile phones are such valuable communication tools for people with visual impairments, yet they can be daunting for those who have never used them before. We have experts who can show you all of the options available and help you make the right decision.

Our inside expert, Rodney Keat has picked a selection of his assistive technology favourites:

**GeorgiePhone apps**

Georgiephone is a family of apps for your smartphone with large icons and text. Created by Roger Wilson-Hinds who is registered blind, Georgiephone makes it easy to call pre-set phone numbers, use voice commands to send text messages and map out saved locations such as safe places to cross the road.

**Synapptic software**

Synapptic software runs on Android smartphones and tablet computers and is an all-in-one software package for people who are blind or partially sighted. Synapptic allows users to surf the web with ease, access your social media accounts, Skype with friends and family and much, much more. The software can be loaded onto existing tablets, smartphones and computers or new devices can be purchased with the software already built-in.

**Dolphin Guide for Windows**

The Dolphin Guide for Windows software allows users to browse the internet, send e-mails and manage files. You can choose high contrast colours, easily zoom in and out and have the contents of your screen read aloud.

Whether you want easier access to a desktop computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet there is an option available for you.

Call us on 01872 261110 to book a one-on-one assessment or to arrange an assistive technology demonstration.

**Every Penny Counts**

Every penny that is raised for iSightCornwall stays in Cornwall so we can ensure the very best for everyone living with sight loss in the county.

**Who’s been fundraising?**

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has been busy helping us raise funds.

The St Agnes Theatre Players donated £1.50 from every ticket sold of Louis De Bernieres ‘Sunday Morning at the Centre of the World’ which raised a total of £360.

NoteAbility teamed up with Champagne Cornwall Chorus to raise £200 for iSightCornwall at their recent charity event.

Mullion Golf Course donated £156 taken from the entry fees from their recent men’s and women’s golf competitions.

St Column Rotary Club has also made a donation of £500.

Sally Grint ran the 2016 Virgin Money London Marathon in a time of 5 hours and 33 minutes raising over £1,000.

Joanna Carthew and her colleagues from HSBC took part in the Bodmin Lions Ten Tors walk on Sunday the 15th May and raised over £1750 which included a donation of £500 from HSBC Wadebridge.

Our volunteers Margaret Oldham, Win Oats, Jenny Salmon, Vic Coop, David George, Maureen Chapman, Martin Doyle, Chris Kemp and Maureen and Ivan Shipman have collectively raised £545 this year through store donations.

**Coming up**

Don’t forget that all proceeds from the ticket sales of our quiz on Thursday 3rd November will be donated to iSightCornwall.

**Planning a fundraising event?**

If you are planning a fundraising event you can find all of the help and support you need to get your fundraising off of the ground on our website at [www.isightcornwall.org.uk/fundraising](http://www.isightcornwall.org.uk/fundraising)

**Inspiring Futures**

As part of our 160th anniversary we have launched our Inspiring Futures Fund.

If you are sight impaired or severely sight impaired and live in Cornwall you can apply for a grant of up to the value of £1000 to be used in a way that will help to ‘Inspire Your Future’. This could be anything from talking kitchen equipment and video magnifiers to tandem bicycles for exciting fundraising challenges!

**Feeling inspired?**

We have collected a couple of stories detailing how the fund has been able to really make a difference to the lives of some of our clients.

**Sylvia is now the proud owner of a Samsung Galaxy smartphone.**

“This is the first mobile phone that I have owned and it means that I can now make phone calls on my own without asking anyone to help me.

All I have to do is say the name of the person I want to call and the phone starts calling them. Rod helped me to set it up and I’m looking forward to a couple more lessons with him to learn what else the phone can do.

Without my sight I am totally reliant on audio and with this phone I can now be more independent”.

**Claire has started a marketing course.**

“Being able to do this course has given me a real boost. The qualification will give me more confidence in my job at a local pre-school. At the moment I do various jobs there but once I take on the responsibility for marketing and promotion I will have extra job security.

I don’t want to have to rely on benefits or my husband for money and I feel that gaining a qualification is the best way to stop this happening.

I want to prove that Usher Syndrome won’t stop me from having a life.

Getting the bus to and from college is the first thing I have done on my own since having to give up my driving license so the course is helping me to become more independent”

**Legacy Donations**

Over a quarter of the vital work we do is only possible thanks to people remembering us in their wills and it is thanks to these incredible gifts that we have been able to launch the fund.

**Inspiring Futures Applications**

If you would like to apply for the fund please call us on 01872 261110 or visit the iSightCornwall website at [www.isightcornwall.org.uk/inspiringfutures](http://www.isightcornwall.org.uk/inspiringfutures)

**With special thanks to:**

We would like to offer a special thank you to the following:

Fifteen Cornwall for helping us to launch our independent living kitchen.

Peggy Hines who is retiring as club organiser for the Bude VIP Club after an amazing 33 years.

Dave Whiley who is retiring from the Blind and Unguided Shooting Club after many years as a club organiser.

Janet Bray who is stepping down from volunteering after many years as a talking support volunteer.

And Penn and Angela Morcom-Webb who have been volunteering for iSightCornwall for over 20 years and are taking a well-earned break!

**iSightCornwall 2016 AGM**

This year’s Annual General Meeting will be taking place on Wednesday the 9th of November at Trispen & St Erme Community Hall. All members are invited to attend and in order to cast your vote you must have an active membership. Current memberships can be renewed on the day of the AGM however it is not possible to sign up for a new membership at the venue.

Please let us know in advance if you would like to attend the event, we look forward to seeing you all there.

**Outlook is available in a number of different formats**

To ensure our Outlook magazine is as accessible as it can be we have made it available in a number of different formats. Outlook is available as an A4 magazine, a large print word document, an audio recorded CD and you can also listen online.

Please contact us to let us know your preferred format. We hope that you have enjoyed reading this edition of Outlook and we welcome any feedback you may have, have a fantastic Christmas and a great New Year.

**Contact information**

iSightCornwall

The Sight Centre

Newham Road

Truro

Cornwall

TR1 2DP

01872 261110

[www.isightcornwall.org.uk](http://www.isightcornwall.org.uk)

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