

Outlook

The **iSight**Cornwall Newsletter

Autumn / Winter 2019



iSightCornwall[®]

Inspiring futures for
people living with sight loss



Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2019 edition of Outlook

This summer we reached a special milestone as we celebrated 25 years of the Sight Centre. The move to our current home in Newham Road, Truro, in 1994 marked a change in direction for the charity. We went from providing residential care to a small number of clients, to providing a wide range of services to a much larger number of people.

I have no doubt that our ability to adapt to meet the needs of visually impaired people is one of the reasons we're still going strong after 163 years. In fact in the last year alone over 4,000 people have benefitted from our services.

Thank you to everyone who has completed a sight loss survey for us – your views will help us to shape the next chapter for

the charity. We will be collecting responses until January 2020 so if you have not yet had your say, please get in touch.

Finally, thank you to everyone who came to this year's AGM. It was a fantastic day and wonderful to see so many people there.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Terri Rosnau-Ward'.

Terri Rosnau-Ward
Chief Executive

2020 calendars on sale now!

Our popular large print wall calendars are back in stock and available to buy from the Sight Centre in Truro, at our upcoming events or via our online shop. They cost just £4.50 and as always members will receive a 10% discount.

Staff News

We're very sad to announce that Lynda Thomas will be retiring at the end of November. Lynda has been with us for 15 years, originally joining us as a receptionist before moving into Low Vision. Lynda will be familiar to many of you from the Low Vision clinics that she has been running for the past 7 years. Shannon Smith from our Community Outreach team will be taking over the role of Low Vision Adviser from Lynda.

James Spencer from the Marketing and Communications team has also moved on after three years at the charity to work a little closer to home. We will be announcing the new Marketing Assistant shortly.

Trustee Update

We're also sad to announce that our chair of trustees, Christian Wilson, has stepped down after seven years on the board. Seven years is the maximum term that any of our trustees can serve before having to step down. Mel Colton-Dyer has taken over the role having previously been vice-chair.

Award Winning Volunteers

Without the generous support of our volunteers we wouldn't be able to provide many of our vital services, so we're always delighted when volunteers get recognised for the work they do.

Special congratulations go to volunteer Diane Roberts and trustee Steve Holyer who have been named in Cornwall's '60 over 60' list which celebrates extraordinary people across the county who help to make a difference within their community.

Diane has been a volunteer for 20 years running Truro Lunch Club and helping out at BLIS Singers. Her commitment has meant we have been able to continue these clubs which benefit a great number of people.

Steve was nominated alongside his wife, Helen, who together developed RoomMate, a device which audio describes the layout of public toilets making them more accessible. Steve, who volunteers as a trustee for **iSight** Cornwall, was also one of five finalists at the Stelios Awards for Disabled Entrepreneurs where he was awarded £10,000 to help develop RoomMate further.

Latest News

Sonic Kayaks

New technology is being developed in Cornwall to help people with sight loss experience kayaking on a new level.

Sonic Kayaks have speakers on them which play underwater sounds while kayaking. The organisation that created the technology, FoAM Kernow, want to develop it further to play safety sounds that will enable visually impaired people to kayak independently.

A number of our members were amongst the first people to try the Sonic Kayaks in order to help develop this technology further. They took part in a sound mapping workshop on a lake at the Clowance Estate near Camborne. Sounds were automatically triggered to play through speakers on the kayaks when they travelled in particular areas of the lake, creating a map of sounds.

For anyone interested in kayaking, Access Lizard Adventure offers inclusive kayaking for people with additional needs

in Cornwall ranging from one off taster sessions to a series of lessons that could lead to national qualifications. For more information contact 07845 204040.

Photo: Sonic Kayaks



AGM

We had a fantastic turnout for this year's AGM. Almost 100 people came along to cast their votes and enjoy the rest of the day's entertainment which once again included singing, dancing and a game of bingo. We also enjoyed talks from consultant ophthalmologist at Treliske hospital, William Westlake, as well as our very own Assistive Technology Advisers Dominic Hall and Rod Keat. They were joined by trustee Joe Stinton to demonstrate some of the technology that makes independent living easier.

Working with Businesses

Over the last couple of months we've continued to work with Cornwall's business sector to improve their understanding of the needs of people living with sight loss. Over the summer we worked with the Minack, Cornwall's famous outdoor theatre, to trial new audio kit and how best to describe the live action.

We have provided reports on how to make small changes to improve lighting, magnification options and large print for Lanhydrock House and Garden owned by the National Trust and the newly opened Kresen Kernow Cornish archives in Redruth.

We've also provided visual awareness training to personal assistants who are employed by local disabled people using their social care personal budget. Recently Carole was among the guest speakers at the Accessibility in Cornish Hospitality conference in Newquay. The Victoria Inn at Threemilestone, Truro, have already announced that they are bringing in large print and audio menus for customers as a result.

We had another opportunity to speak to businesses at the Cornwall Business Fair in October where we advised organisations on how to make their services and facilities more user friendly for people with sight loss.

Pre-loved Shop

It is important to us that everyone can access the support aids they need so we've launched a pre-loved shop, selling a range of quality second-hand items that have been donated to us to help raise funds. All the products have been checked and are sold at a fraction of the cost of a new product.

Pre-loved items currently include a variety of clocks, watches, phones, audiobook players, daily living aids and electronic magnifiers. However our stock is always changing so if there is something you are specifically looking for, get in touch with us to find out what we have.

And if you have items that are for someone living with a visual impairment that you no longer need, don't throw them away. If you donate them to us we will make sure they go to a new home for someone else to enjoy.

25 Years of the Sight Centre

This summer marked a very special milestone for the charity as we celebrated 25 years of the Sight Centre. Opened by HRH the Princess Royal on 23 June 1994, the move to the Sight Centre on Newham Road in Truro marked a new chapter for the charity.

After running a residential 'home for the blind' for over 20 years for just 35 people, the charity was looking for ways to support more of the growing number of blind and partially sighted people in Cornwall. The home was sold and Cornwall County Association for the Blind (as we were then known) was able to purchase the

new premises. The Sight Centre became a permanent base for demonstrating specially adapted tools and aids for daily living.

The new premises were also able to accommodate a growing number of staff which allowed us to introduce new services including low vision, assistive technology and benefits advice which are still going strong to this day.

We now support over 4,000 people each year and have added community outreach and eye clinic support to the services we offer.

Photo: Jenny, Steve, Carole and Joe at the Sight Centre



“Opening the Sight Centre was a change for the better for the charity. There are a growing number of people with sight loss in Cornwall and the move helped the charity to expand to meet the extra demand for its services. I know from personal experience that being diagnosed with sight loss comes as a huge shock, but thanks to **iSight**Cornwall there is always support available for anyone who needs it.”

Steve Holyer, Member for over 30 years and currently on the board of trustees.

Share your memories

Were you involved with the charity when we moved to The Sight Centre in 1994? Do you have any stories or photos that you could share with us? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

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

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 changed 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 thankfully 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 the Sight Centre.

1996 – The first edition of Outlook magazine was published.

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

2015 – The charity rebranded as **iSight**Cornwall.

2016 – The Resource Centre was officially opened by HRH The Duke of Gloucester.

2017 – Cornwall's first Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) was introduced.

A Brief History of **iSight**Cornwall

Although we have been in our current location for 25 years, the history of the charity dates back to 1856 when we were set up to support Cornish miners who lost their sight due to the hazardous working conditions at the time.

The Society for the Itinerant Teaching of the Blind in the County of Cornwall (as it was then known) was the first organised attempt to improve the lives of people with visual impairments living in Cornwall, over a decade before the RNIB was founded.

The Fox family from Falmouth, along with the Society of Friends (Quakers) were instrumental in founding the charity at a time when there were an estimated 500 people living with sight loss in Cornwall. The charity employed home tutors to teach blind and partially sighted people to read using a form of embossed type called the Moon system.

After World War One the Society became the Cornwall County Association for the Blind. The

Association moved away from home teaching and began arranging pensions and financial assistance for clients.

In 1948, the Association opened Malabar House, a residential home for people with visual impairments which ran until the 1970s. The charity then rented office space until the purchase of the Sight Centre in 1994. Three years later the name changed again, this time becoming Cornwall Blind Association.

The most recent transformation took place in April 2015 when the charity changed its name to **iSight**Cornwall in order to reflect the views of visually impaired clients, many of whom did not identify themselves as being 'blind'.

We may have had several different homes over the years and been known by several different names but the heart of the charity is the same now as it was in 1856 – helping people with sight loss to lead active and independent lives.

Foreign Currency Appeal

Did you know that you can help us to raise money by donating foreign coins and notes?

According to British Airways, Britain alone hordes foreign coins worth more than £30 million every year, because banks and bureaux de change won't exchange them.

We can turn your unused currency into much-needed funds allowing us to continue providing our vital services.

How do I get involved?

By post: If you have a small amount of coins and notes (even obsolete currencies such as those replaced by the Euro), please request a pre-paid envelope and send them to us free of charge.

Collection point: If you prefer not to send your money by post, please drop your currency off at the Sight Centre in Truro.

Home collection: If you have over 10kg of coins and notes, please call us on 01872 261110 to arrange a free local courier collection.

How to package your currency

Place all coins and notes together in a carrier bag and wrap it around itself tightly then secure with plenty of tape. Repeat this in a second carrier bag again with plenty of tape.

For 2kg or less place the wrapped currency in a jiffy style bag or small box which again should be sealed with tape on all openings and all edges.

For all weights above 2kg place the wrapped currency in a strong tight fitting box with any spare space filled with scrap paper or newspapers to stop any movement. Secure the box on all openings and all edges.

Every Penny Counts

Truro Golf Charity Day

In August, 28 teams took part in a charity event at Truro Golf Club as we were the Captain's chosen charity of the year. Following a round of golf, the players moved onto the club house for a meal and charity auction which together with ticket sales raised over £3,000.

Asda Green Token event

We were one of three charities chosen for the Green Token Event at Asda in Falmouth. Shoppers were given a token each time they shopped in the store to put towards one of the charities and after three months the tokens were counted and each charity was given a donation. Thanks to everyone who supported **iSight**Cornwall we received a £200 donation.

London Marathon 2020

We're already looking forward to the 2020 London Marathon as Claire Parkyn, who has Usher's Syndrome, and her guide

Rachel Taylor-Simmonds will be running together to raise money for **iSight**Cornwall. They have already taken part in the Indian Queens half marathon this year but the marathon will be by far the longest distance they have run together. You can follow the ups and downs of their training on Facebook (search for My Guide & Me) to find out how signs, low branches, cows and brambles have all been causing trouble! You can also donate to their fundraising page to help them reach their £2,000 target: uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Team/MyGuideandMe

Photo: Rachel and Claire, after the Indian Queens half marathon.



Online Shopping

Did you know that every time you shop online you could be raising money for **iSight**Cornwall? Easyfundraising is a website that allows you to shop at over 3,700 online stores such as Tesco, Ebay and John Lewis and raise money at the same time. Simply visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk, choose **iSight**Cornwall as your cause and then continue to shop online as usual. When you make a transaction, the online store will donate a percentage of your total spend to us at no extra cost to you. You can also do the same each time you shop at Amazon by logging into smile.amazon.co.uk.

Stamp Appeal

Thank you to everyone who has collected their used stamps for us - we've raised over £300 so far. We're still collecting them so please keep hold of any stamps you receive. It's free to send them to us, just get in touch and we'll send you a pre-paid envelope to pop them in.

Thanks to our Supporters

Asda Falmouth
Beresford Hotel
Boscawen Mark Lodge
Camborne Redruth Floral Club
Crowan Church
Headley Trust
Horizons Association
Inner Wheel Club of St Austell
Landrake Community Lunch Club
Lanhydrock War Memorial Hall
Leek Seed Methodist Church
Mullion Golf Club
Red River Singers
Rotary Club of Helston-Lizard
RRL
Tregrehan Methodist Church
Truro Golf Club

The Red River Singers held a cream tea and raffle, which included a knitted blanket made by the group and raised £250.

The Importance of Good Lighting

Our eyes need light in order to send visual images to our brain. As we get older, the amount of light our eyes pick up reduces, meaning that from the age of 60 it's likely that we'll need three times as much light to see clearly than we did when we were 20.

Photo: Table top lighting

If you have a visual impairment, good lighting can increase clarity and help you make the most of the sight you have. It can also make your home safer too. Our eyes can take up to 12 minutes to adjust to differences in light levels between rooms and it's in these moments that we are at greater risk of falling or tripping. By keeping lighting levels consistent throughout the home you can reduce these risks. Using lighting from more than one source will also help reduce the effects of shadows and dark corners.



It is important to make the most of natural lighting around the home, but take care to avoid glare which can be painful and reduce visibility. By positioning your furniture so that you have your back to the window you can let natural light shine over your

shoulder and minimise glare from direct sunlight.

There are many simple ways to improve lighting around your home. For more information speak to a member of staff.

Top tips for lighting your home

- White ceilings and white or light coloured walls will help reflect light throughout the room to ensure it is well lit.
- Keep window sills clear and avoid using net curtains to allow as much natural light in as possible.
- Horizontal or vertical blinds can help to reduce glare and control daylight.
- Lighting at the head and foot of stairs can reduce the risk of falls.
- Use LED light bulbs to simulate natural day light to help illuminate a room whilst reducing eye strain, specifically B22 LED bulbs with a colour temperature of 6500K.
- Task lighting under cupboards can be used when preparing foods in the kitchen to help prevent injury.
- When using task lighting, keep lamps at nose level to avoid shining into eyes.
- Paper globe shades can be used on pendant ceiling lights to prevent a direct view of the bulb.
- Uplighters can be used to illuminate darker areas. As light is directed away from direct sight, it will help reduce the effects of glare.
- Providing dimming options on lighting will help accommodate varying needs.

Talking Technology

An app is a piece of software that can be downloaded to your smartphone or tablet to perform specific tasks at the touch of a button. There are many accessible apps specifically designed to help people with sight loss. One we particularly like is Be My Eyes which is available for both Android and Apple devices.

Be My Eyes is a free app that connects blind and partially sighted people with sighted volunteers who can provide on the spot visual assistance through a live video call.

By simply tapping a button on your phone you will be instantly connected to the first available sighted volunteer who will be able to see what you are pointing your phone camera towards – for example a bottle of milk. They can then help you find the expiry date on the bottle and let you know whether you should avoid drinking it or not. And because there are over 2 million sighted volunteers signed up to the app

across the world, you can use it at any time of day or night. The calls are always free, all you need is an internet connection.

The app also has an additional Specialised Help feature which means it is possible for you to receive assistance from representatives of certain companies for their specific product or service. Companies include Microsoft Disability Answer Desk, Google Disability Support, Herbal Essences, Clearblue, Lloyds Bank, Halifax and Bank of Scotland,

If you would like advice on apps, smartphones or any other type of assistive technology please get in touch with Rod or Dom on 01872 261110.

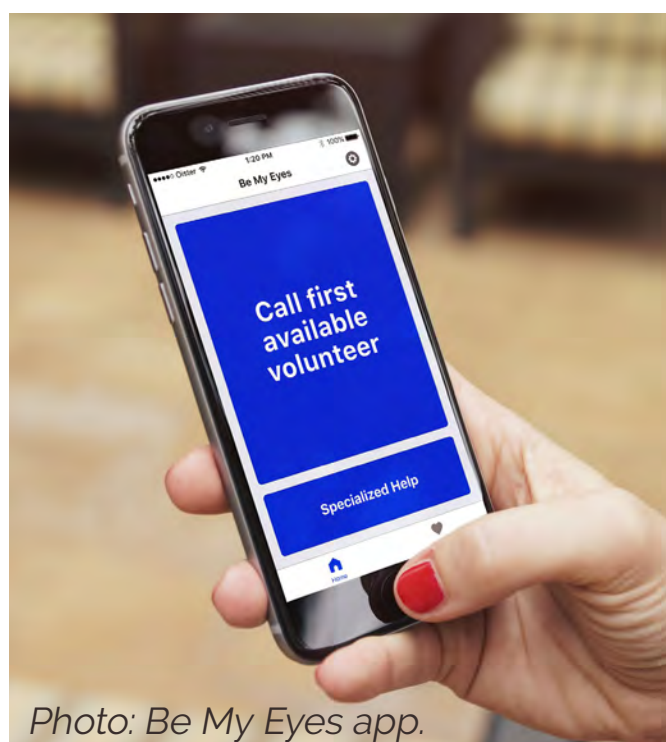


Photo: Be My Eyes app.

Top 10 uses for 'Be My Eyes'

There are many situations where a pair of friendly eyes can be helpful. Here are ten examples from the Be My Eyes website.

1. Finding lost or dropped items

For example: Where is the earring back I dropped on the bathroom floor? Where did I put the lid to my drinks bottle?

2. Describing pictures, paintings or other artwork

For example: What does this picture show? What are the colours of this painting?

3. Matching or explaining colours

For example: Does this shirt match my jacket? Which pair of shoes are the black ones?

4. Reading labels on household products

For example: Is this window or bathroom cleaner? Shampoo or conditioner?

5. Identifying expiration dates on perishable food packages

For example: Is this food 'best before' or 'use by' a certain date?

6. Reading on computer screens if websites are inaccessible or screen readers are not available

For example: My laptop restarted unexpectedly – can you walk me through the login screen?

7. Shopping in supermarkets

For example: Is this curry sauce mild or extra hot?

8. Familiarising yourself with new places

For example: Is this the street I'm looking for? Where is the plug socket in this hotel room?

9. Distinguishing between food items

For example: Is this tinned sweetcorn or tinned pineapple?

10. Finding out when public transport is departing or arriving

For example: How many minutes does the screen say I have until the next train?

Benefits and Concessions

South West Water

Priority services

South West Water offer free services if you have additional needs or if your circumstances change and you require a little extra help.

By signing up to their Priority Services Register you could receive your bills in a different format such as large print or Braille or even have your bills read out to you over the phone.

You could also have your meter read up to an extra four times a year if you cannot easily read it yourself.

The service is available to anyone living within the region even if you are not the bill payer.

You can register online at southwestwater.co.uk/priorityservices or by calling 0344 346 1010.

Help with your bill

South West Water also offer support if you are having trouble paying your bill. They offer a number of flexible payment plans

to help you spread the cost of your water bill as well as home visits from one of their WaterCare Advisors who can talk you through the tariffs available and support you with completing any application forms.

Winter Fuel Payment

If you were born on or before 5 April 1954 you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a 'Winter Fuel Payment'.

You usually get a Winter Fuel Payment automatically if you are eligible and you get the State Pension or another social security benefit (not Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit or Universal Credit).

If you're eligible but do not get paid automatically, you will need to make a claim. The deadline for claiming payments for winter 2019 to 2020 is 31 March 2020.

Most payments are made automatically between November and December. You should get your money by 13 January 2020.

TV Licence Changes for over 75s

The provision of a free TV licence is a major lifeline for many older and visually impaired people who are subject to isolation and loneliness. However under new rules, free TV licences for all over 75s will come to an end in June 2020.

From 1 June 2020, there will be a new scheme. Under the new scheme, anyone aged 75 or over who receives Pension Credit will still be eligible for a free TV licence which the BBC will pay for. Households where there is no one aged 75 or over that receives Pension Credit will need to buy a licence if one is needed.

However if you or someone you live with is registered as severely sight impaired, regardless of their age, you may be eligible to receive a 50% discount on the cost of your TV licence.

If you have any queries regarding the upcoming changes, please contact our Benefits Adviser, Ruth Broad, on 01872 261110.

Warm Home Discount

Did you know that you could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2019 to 2020 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme?

You are eligible for the payment if you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit or you're on a low income and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme.

The discount will not affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between September and March. You can still qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter. And you may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity.

To find out more contact your energy supplier directly.

Around the Clubs

Clubs are a brilliant way to get involved in a new activity or meet up with other people in your area for a cup of tea or a bite to eat.

Anyone wishing to join an affiliated club must become an **iSight** Cornwall member. This helps us to provide insurance for everyone who attends as well as providing all the necessary DBS checks for volunteer drivers.

Affiliated Clubs

BLIS Singers

Meet fortnightly on Tuesday evenings from 7-9pm in Mount Hawke Church Hall.

Bude Club for the Visually Impaired

Meet once a month on a Tuesday lunchtime in local pubs or garden centre restaurants.

Bugle Blues Bowling Club

Meet every Thursday from 10am to 12pm at Goonbarrow Bowling Club, St Austell.

BUGS Shooting Club

Meet every Wednesday from 1-4pm at the St Austell Rifle Club.

Dance Club, Par

Meet four times a year in Par Methodist Church.

Dance Club, Townshend

Meet fortnightly on Thursday afternoons from 2-4pm in Townshend Village Hall.

Guitar Club

Meet fortnightly on Monday afternoons from 1-3pm in Ponsanooth Hall.

Gweek Visually

Impaired Bowls Club

Meet fortnightly on Tuesdays from 10am-2pm in Gweek Village Hall.

Launceston Social Club

Meet fortnightly on Tuesday lunchtimes in local pubs, restaurants or cafés.

Ludgvan Bowling Club

Meet every Wednesday afternoon from 2-4pm in Ludgvan Community Centre.

Saltash BAPS Social Club

Meet fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons from 1.45-3.45pm in Ashtorre Rock, Saltash.

Truro Lunch Club

Meet once a month on a Tuesday lunchtime in local pubs or garden centre restaurants.

Non-affiliated Clubs:

Able Bowling Club,

Shortlanesend

Blind at Sea (BATS), Mylor

CABS Shooting Club, Helston

Hayle Social Club

Optimists Social Club,

Grampound Road

Young at Heart Social Club,

Hayle

Gweek Club needs you!

We need volunteers to help run the bowling club at Gweek otherwise there is the possibility it will close.

If you are available to volunteer once a fortnight on Tuesdays between 10am and 2pm to help with setting up, bowling, and making teas and coffees please get in touch. It's a fantastic club, with lovely members, and is a very rewarding role.

Latest Products

We are always on the lookout for products that will make life easier for people with visual impairments. Here are a couple of handy items that we have recently introduced.

Partially sighted badge

We now stock lightweight pin badges that display the words 'I am partially sighted' to highlight to other people that you have a visual impairment.

Double ended clamp

This is a device that is particularly useful for holding magnifiers in place when two hands are required for a task (for example knitting or sewing). The clamp is easily attachable to a table edge and has a fully adjustable yet sturdy 46cm long neck, that allows you to position the clamp securely where needed.

Both are available to buy from our Sight Centre shop, our community events or online and as always, members get a 10% discount.



We are the first centre of resource for all in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly who are affected by sight loss, whatever their age, circumstance or condition. We care passionately about helping anyone living with a visual impairment and have done ever since our foundation in 1856 when the charity supported Cornish miners.

01872 261110
www.isightcornwall.org.uk

iSightCornwall
The Sight Centre, Newham Road,
Truro, Cornwall, TR1 2DP

Registered charity number 1108761

Events Diary

2019

Nov 14 All Saints Church
Community Centre,
Camborne 12.30-3.30pm

2020

Feb 4 Saltash Library, **Saltash**
11am-3pm

Mar 4 Padstow Memoiral Hall,
Padstow 10.30am-3pm

Apr 15 The Passmore Edwards
Institute, **Hayle** 10.30am-3pm

We will be adding further dates over the next few months so please keep checking our website for details.

Members will be written to with details of events.

Outlook is also available as:

- **USB Stick**
- **Audio CD**
- **Large Print word document**
- **Online audio via our website**