

# Outlook

The **iSight**Cornwall Newsletter

Spring / Summer 2020



**iSight**Cornwall<sup>®</sup>

Inspiring futures for  
people living with sight loss

# iSightC

**Stay safe  
everyone**

We are  
here for you



## Special Announcement from the Board of Trustees

We're delighted to announce that, after a robust and challenging process, Carole Theobald has been appointed as our new Chief Executive. Carole, who has been with **iSight**Cornwall for four years, impressed the Board of Trustees with her ideas, enthusiasm and vision for the charity.

"We would like to thank Carole for the excellent work she undertakes on behalf of **iSight**Cornwall. We are excited for the future of the Charity and the support we can offer those with visual impairments in Cornwall. Congratulations Carole and we look forward to working with you as CEO."

Mel Colton-Dyer, Chair of the Board of Trustees

## Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2020 edition of Outlook

Firstly I would like to thank Terri Rosnau-Ward for everything she did for the charity during her time as chief executive. Terri had been involved with **iSight**Cornwall for over 10 years including her time as Chair of Trustees. As chief executive she oversaw the rebranding of the charity from Cornwall Blind Association to **iSight**Cornwall - a significant piece of work that repositioned the charity as a modern and more inclusive organisation. We wish her all the best for the future.

I feel very privileged to take the helm of this fantastic charity and will ensure that we continue to provide a consistently high level of service to our clients and members.

Secondly I want to update you on the action we are taking regarding the coronavirus. We want to make sure that all our members, volunteers and people who use

our services are protected as much as possible.

We know that older people and those with a health condition are especially vulnerable to this virus. For this reason we have suspended all our face-to-face services including low vision clinics and all of our clubs' meetings for the time being.

Whilst the Sight Centre is closed to the public our staff will continue to provide lots of support services over the phone and online and anyone who would like support during this period is encouraged to call us.

And finally, we will continue to monitor current Government guidance and contact members when our services resume. Together we will get through this!



Carole Theobald  
Chief Executive

## Emotional Support

We know that living with sight loss can be very isolating at times, even more so now that other people around you are keeping you safe by keeping their distance and staying at home. But it's at times like this when people really pull together and we've been contacted by many of our wonderful volunteers who want to help.

So we're setting up a telephone befriending service for people who want to speak to someone regularly for a friendly chat. If this is something you would benefit from, or if you want to volunteer as a telephone befriender, please call us on 01872 261110 and leave your name, telephone number and a brief message and we'll get back to you.

If it's more practical support that you would like help with such as getting groceries or prescriptions collected, you can contact Volunteer Cornwall's Flu Friends.

Email them at [requestforhelp@volunteercornwall.org.uk](mailto:requestforhelp@volunteercornwall.org.uk) or call 01872 266988.



# Board of Trustees

Trustees have a very important role as they oversee the governance of the charity and make sure it's being run correctly. Our trustees meet on a regular basis to discuss the charity's vision, mission and strategic direction and they volunteer their time to do this.

After seven years on the board, our trustees have to step down to allow for new people to come forward. However, after a year off trustees can be reappointed to the board if they wish. Several of our trustees are currently on their second term of appointment.

## **Mel Colton-Dyer (Chair)**

Mel is the Commercial Strategy Director and Town Clerk at Looe Town Council. She also represents the wider business community on a number of boards and steering groups as well as being a trustee for The Aspire Academy

Trust. She became a trustee of **iSight**Cornwall in 2015 and stepped up to the role of chair of trustees in 2019.

## **Clare Green**

Clare Green is a Financial Controller at Cornish Mutual. She previously worked in forensic accounting and financial investigations in London but gave up the hustle and bustle of city life when she moved to Cornwall in 2011. She joined us in 2019 as our finance trustee.

## **Stephen Holyer**

Stephen has been a member of **iSight**Cornwall for over 30 years and joined the Board of Trustees in 2018. Stephen was a satellite communications engineer at the Goonhilly Satellite Earth Station until 1993 when his eye condition deteriorated. In 2014 he set up ADI Access Ltd with his wife Helen. Together they created 'RoomMate', a device which provides bespoke audio description in disabled access toilets to help people with visual impairments to become familiar with the surroundings.

## **Ian McCormick**

Ian McCormick has been a senior manager of various universities across the UK for the past 20 years. He moved to Cornwall in 2010 and set up his own management consultancy business. Sight loss is a subject close to Ian's heart as he was diagnosed with glaucoma in 2015.

## **Ian Pullum**

Ian has a family history of eye care and has been working in the industry for over 40 years. He worked in Batemans in Falmouth before becoming self-employed in 2012. Ian started his second term as a trustee for **iSight**Cornwall in 2015.

## **Joe Stinton**

Joe has been on the board of trustees for over 10 years. Joe aims to represent the views of visually impaired people across Cornwall as he is visually impaired himself. He is an active member of the CABS Shooting Club in Helston.

## **William Westlake**

William Westlake is a Consultant Ophthalmologist at Royal Cornwall Hospital with specialist interests in glaucoma and cataract surgery. He has been on the board for over 10 years and is interested in working to improve the lives of visually impaired people.

## **Staff News**

**We're delighted to welcome two new members of staff to the team. Bethan Perry has joined our Marketing and Communications team, having previously worked as a journalist and photographer at the Newquay Voice.**

**Gareth Wilby has joined our Community Outreach team where he will be working with Roseanne Foxwell to provide personalised advice and support for people with sight loss through home visits and community open days. Gareth comes from a health and social care background and has previously worked for the NHS.**

# Latest News

## New kayaking club

We've teamed up with Access Lizard Adventure to provide a new kayaking club for people with sight loss. The accessible kayaking sessions will take place at the Clowance Estate near Camborne and will be led by fully trained instructors.

Each session will last an hour with 15 mins preparation before and after and costs £10. Subsidised transport is also available.

If you are interested in taking part in some or all of the sessions (we would ask that you commit to a minimum of two) please let us know by contacting Jodi Strick on 01872 261110. Due to the uncertainty of when these sessions will be able to start we are currently adding people to the waiting list and we will call you when we know more.

## Mileage price increase

For those of you that use our transport scheme for eye-related medical appointments you will know that we have kept our mileage charges the same

for over five years. However, this means that our volunteer drivers have been paid the same rate all this time despite the rising cost of fuel. With that in mind we have decided to increase our mileage charges to 45p per mile for members and 48p per mile for non-members so that our volunteer drivers are not out of pocket. This brings us more in line with national guidelines but unlike national guidelines we have decided that we will still not charge an admin fee for each journey so that we can still try to keep the cost as low as possible for our clients and members.

## TV Licence

The BBC is delaying TV licence fee changes for people over the age of 75 due to the coronavirus situation. Free TV licences had been due to be scrapped on 1 June, but that has been put back to at least 1 August and maybe even beyond that.

If you or someone in your household is registered as severely sight impaired, regardless of their age, you may be eligible to receive a 50% reduction on the cost of your TV licence.



## London Marathon 2020

The London Marathon has been postponed until 4 October 2020. However, before that news was announced, Claire Parkyn and her guide Rachel Taylor-Simmonds took some time out from training to help raise awareness of the difficulties visually impaired runners can face with the help of Neil and Lucy from Pirate FM's breakfast show. Neil, who used to run for Great Britain, was given a pair of goggles that simulate the tunnel vision that Claire lives with as a result of Usher's Syndrome. Wearing the goggles he then

ran around an athletics track whilst trying to navigate some strategically placed obstacles with Rachel as his guide.

Afterwards Neil said: "I found it really frightening. I had an almost sick-like feeling from having one of my senses taken away. I tried to be as alert as possible but it was really tricky and I was really in the hands of my guide. I had to completely hand over to someone else which was totally alien to me."

There is a video of Neil attempting his run with Rachel on our website.

*Photo: Lucy, Claire, Rachel and Neil.*



# Stay in, work out

With current Government advice recommending against non-essential contact and all unnecessary travel, British Blind Sport is joining with Sport England and encouraging people with visual impairments to #StayInWorkOut.

Physical activity is proved to relieve stress, improve mental health and boost the immune system, and British Blind Sport want to do their best to help you achieve this.

So they've created some audio exercise programmes, covering a wide range of activities such as yoga, Pilates, cardio and gentle exercise among others.

The audio downloads include the audio description for the workout itself, the audio description for each individual exercise or movement and a transcript of the workout for anyone who would prefer to read the instructions.

**You can download the workouts at [britishblindsport.org.uk/stay-in-work-out](https://britishblindsport.org.uk/stay-in-work-out).**

# Friends of iSightCornwall

As an independent charity we rely on donations to deliver our essential services.

Particularly now, more than ever, as our income has significantly reduced due to the closure of the Sight Centre during the coronavirus outbreak.

So we've launched a new fundraising scheme to make it easier for people to support us and make a genuine difference to people's lives.

It's called Friends of **iSight**Cornwall and gives people the option to set up regular donations from as little as £2 per month.

We are lucky to have a number of regular supporters already but with the launch of Friends of **iSight**Cornwall it is now even easier to donate thanks to the introduction of direct debit payments.



All the money raised in Cornwall stays in Cornwall. These are some of the things that regular monthly donations will help us to provide:

- Essential transport for people living alone to attend our social and activity clubs.
- Home visits to assess the needs of individuals and support their independence.
- Community events to deliver sight loss support to people in rural Cornwall.
- Simple pieces of equipment to assist visually impaired people with everyday tasks such as making a cup of tea, telling the time or reading their post.
- Assessments to help blind and partially sighted people to get the welfare benefits they are entitled to.

To find out more about Friends of **iSight**Cornwall visit [www.isightcornwall.org.uk](http://www.isightcornwall.org.uk) or contact the Sight Centre on 01872 261110.

## Thanks to our Supporters

Anne and Alan Cox  
Come to Good Quakers  
Falmouth Women's Institute  
Looe Town Council  
Marcfarlanes LLP  
Mid Week Club  
Penryn Town Council  
Penzance Town Council  
Porthleven Christadelphians  
Redruth Town Council  
Residents of San Lorenzo Court  
Sir John St Aubyn Lodge  
St Agnes Parish Council  
St Austell Brewery  
St Austell Town Council  
St Day Parish Council  
St Mary's Methodist Church  
Bright Hour Group  
Truro Golf Club

We've also been chosen as Charity of the Year by the Captains of Newquay and Carlyon Bay Golf Clubs.

# Talking Technology

Our Assistive Technology Advisers Rod and Dom are always testing new products and looking for useful apps that might be beneficial to people with visual impairments.

Some of the things that have impressed them recently are a desktop magnifier from HumanWare, a new mobile phone and an app that makes smartphones more accessible.

## Humanware Reveal 16i desktop magnifier

This state-of-the-art digital desktop magnifier also functions as a scanner and an Android tablet. Unlike other desktop magnifiers it is designed to be easy to fold, carry and store. It has a 16 inch screen which you can use as a touchscreen as you would with a tablet or you can use the large easy to see contrasting buttons instead. It is high resolution with up to 45x magnification and the ability to change the colour contrast.

One of the key features of this magnifier is the ability not only to do close up work such as reading but also distant viewing using a built in camera at the back of the stand. This is perfect for looking out into your garden and watching birds or reading a whiteboard from the back of a classroom.

As you might imagine, a new magnifier like this is at the higher end of the market at just under £3,400.

## BlindShell Classic mobile phone

The BlindShell Classic mobile phone is designed specifically for people with visual impairments. It has a physical keypad with big well-spaced buttons to make it easy to distinguish between each one.

*Photo: Humanware Reveal 16i*



It also has voice control and voice dictation so you can give the phone voice commands without having to use the keypad. With voice control you can select contacts to call and open applications within the phone. With voice dictation you can dictate text messages, emails and notes without having to press any keys.

One of the unique features of this phone is that it can be used for object tagging in the same way that a Penfriend can. By using special stickers you can label objects and use your phone to tell you what those objects are. For example you can record a short voice message or enter a written description to describe what is labelled such as a tin of beans.

*Photo: Blindshell Classic mobile phone*



When you need to find the tin of beans in your cupboard you can use your phone to read the label. Each phone comes with a free set of labels, and costs around £300.

## BIG Launcher smartphone app

The BIG Launcher app can be used with almost any Android smartphone or tablet to make them more accessible by replacing the user interface with enlarged buttons and text. It makes your device much simpler to use and has high contrast colour schemes and three different large font sizes to choose from.

It is easy to customise allowing you to put shortcuts for apps and websites directly on your home screen whilst hiding the apps you don't use as much to stop you getting lost in the navigation.

It costs around £3 to download but there is a demo version that you can try for free.

For more information about the featured products or any other accessible phone, tablet, electronic magnifier or computer software please get in touch with Rod or Dom on 01872 261110.



# Coronavirus Support

## Benefits

### **Update from the Department of Work and Pensions**

Reviews and reassessments for disability benefits are being suspended for three months from 24 March 2020. This means that:

- There will be no new reviews or reassessments across all benefits for three months – this includes Universal Credit (UC), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.
- Face-to-face assessments for all sickness and disability benefits have been suspended for the next 3 months including for any new claims.
- PIP claimants, if an assessment has already taken place this will continue to be processed. If an assessment has been scheduled, claimants will be contacted by the assessment

provider to discuss how this will be taken forward.

- ESA and UC claimants whose cases have been referred to the provider will be contacted to take this forward.

The suspension will be kept under regular review and extended if necessary. If people experience a change in their needs they are still encouraged to contact the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure they are receiving the correct level of support.

Where awards are due to expire, the Department will be extending end-dates so that claimants continue to receive financial support at their current rate during this period.

Other welfare benefit changes include:

- Increasing the universal credit standard allowance and the working tax credit basic element by £20 a week for the next 12 months from 6 April.
- Raising the 'generosity' of housing benefit and universal credit, so that the local housing allowance will cover at least 30% of market rents in an area.

## Shopping

If you have a medical condition that makes you extremely vulnerable to coronavirus you can register for additional support from the government for example getting deliveries of essential supplies such as food.

You can register yourself or ask someone to register for you at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable)

If you're not sure whether your medical condition makes you extremely vulnerable, the government advises that you register anyway.

You'll be asked for your NHS number (but you can still register if you do not have it). You can find your NHS number on any letter the NHS has sent you or on a prescription.

Some branches of some of the major supermarkets, including Sainsbury's, M&S, Asda, Morrison's and Tesco, are offering a quieter hour for shopping for vulnerable groups (older people, people with long-term health conditions, and disabled people).

## Utilities

Gas and electricity suppliers have agreed an emergency package of measures to ensure vulnerable people do not get cut off at this time.

People who are on prepayment meters will receive help if they cannot get out to top up. This may include credit being sent in the post, funds automatically added to their meter or sending somebody out on a customer's behalf to top up their meter.

Those struggling to pay bills will receive support and no disconnections will take place.

South West Water are encouraging customers that are self-isolating or social distancing to sign up for their Priority Service at [www.southwestwater.co.uk/coronavirus/priority-services](https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/coronavirus/priority-services), even if it is for a temporary amount of time.

If you or a member of your household is self-isolating South West Water can help by delivering drinking water to your home during an unplanned interruption to your supply.

# 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.

All clubs, including non-affiliated clubs, are temporarily suspended due to the coronavirus but you can still let us know if you are interested in joining so that we can add you to a waiting list and contact you when the clubs are back up and running.

## 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 on Monday evenings from 7.00-9.30pm 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.

**Kayaking Club** Meet on Saturday mornings, dates to be announced.

**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** Not currently able to take new members, please contact **iSight**Cornwall for more information.



## Non-affiliated clubs

Able Bowling Club, Shortlanesend

Blind at Sea (BATS), Mylor

CABS Shooting Club, Helston

Hayle Social Club

Optimists Social Club,  
Grampound

## Gweek Club update

Due to a shortage of volunteers we have taken the difficult decision to close Gweek Visually Impaired Bowling Club. However, the good news for members of the club is that they will now be joining Ludgvan Bowling Club instead.

## Volunteers needed!

Do you have family or friends that could help out at our clubs? We currently need volunteers for Ludgvan Bowling Club and Truro Lunch Club. We also need volunteer drivers across Cornwall but particularly Falmouth, Truro and St Austell. If you know of anyone who might be interested in helping out please encourage them to get in touch with Jodi Strick on 01872 261110.

## Celebrating 20 years at Saltash BAPS

Congratulations to Shirley Evans who has recently celebrated 20 years of running Saltash BAPS with a special anniversary event attended by the Mayor of Saltash. Shirley joined the club as a member when she lost her sight but soon became club organiser and since then Saltash BAPS has gone from strength to strength.

Shirley said: "My favourite part about running the club is helping other visually impaired people and making them happy, just doing something to help people is the best bit."

*Photo: Celebrating 20 years of Saltash BAPS*



<sup>®</sup>**iSightCornwall**

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](http://www.isightcornwall.org.uk)****iSightCornwall**

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

Registered charity number 1108761

## Useful contacts

Don't forget that you can still contact us to request replacement magnifiers, telephone befriending or advice whilst the Sight Centre is closed due to the coronavirus:

**01872 261110****[info@isightcornwall.org.uk](mailto:info@isightcornwall.org.uk)**

For practical help with shopping or picking up prescriptions you can contact Volunteer Cornwall's Flu Friend scheme:

**01872 266988**

### Outlook is also available as:

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