



Bury Society For Blind and
Partially Sighted People

Bi-Monthly V.I. Link – Issue 37

July 2023

Introduction

Welcome to this July edition of VI Link. This week I had the pleasure of accompanying eight members to the Three Sisters Racing circuit to take part in the Speed of Sight Blind Drive experience. Although I was only a spectator, it was an amazing day. Just listening to the reactions of the guys who attended and seeing their faces beaming at the end made our day. Thank you to Mike and his team for making the day so special for us all. If you would like to listen to the interviews then go onto our News and Events page on our website for the link and photos of the day.

I can't believe we've sneaked in a date for your Christmas diaries further on – where is this year going! Don't worry though, there's plenty of events and activities still to come but we do seem to have a focus on health and activity in this issue. Carole and Mags have embarked on a two-month sponsored weight loss challenge in an effort to avoid the dangers of diabetes and cholesterol and in September we are launching a 'Coast to Coast' static bike challenge –why not have a go? I have a sneaky suspicion I may find myself involved in this! Enjoy your read and don't forget, we are here if you need us.

Jill Logan – CEO

Update on Services and Support

'Tech Talk': Following the successful first session in June when a selection of USB players were compared and discussed, the sessions are continuing as a monthly group but moving from a Friday. Now meeting on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 10.30am-11.30am. There's light breakfast refreshments available and plenty of 'sharing hints and tips. Why not come along to this informal 'think tank' and pick the brains of your peers! You never know what you might learn! Next meeting Wednesday 26th July.

Talking of Tech: One of the suggestions mentioned at both our User Forum and the 'Future Plan' questionnaire was the chance to have access to Wi-Fi in

the Centre. Thanks to a small grant, we are in the process of making this happen so you will be able to tap into our Wi-Fi and save your mobile data! You asked, we did!

Eye Talk Support Programme: This informative course lasts three weeks, every Tuesday afternoon 1.00-3.00pm and covers a range of subjects that directly impact on newly diagnosed clients and their families, including:- practical demonstration of equipment, benefits and allowances available, travel advice and emotional support. Transport can be provided if required, to attend these sessions. Please contact Gill Currie if you wish to be included.

Family Support Group: First Wednesday of the month. 1.30pm-2.30pm. These sessions are particularly useful for family members/friends who are supporting each other due to health issues. Each month members will be joined by representatives from other agencies to share information and support in their area of expertise. It also provides an opportunity for members to help others understand how they can adapt their services for sight loss. Shelley Caulfield from the Living Well Services will be attending the August meeting, Dementia Support in September (TBC) and Speakeasy in October. Please do come along and join, and help raise awareness of sight loss within these organisations as well as obtaining information and support yourself.

Eye Matters – Working Age Clients. In May we launched these sessions with a ‘Virtual workshop’ by Blind in Business. Following on from this, and listening to clients who are experiencing challenges either within the work environment or when looking for work, the next session, on Wednesday 9th August at 1.30pm will be held in the Centre and provide the opportunity to find out about Access to Work and what support is out there. We are delighted that Rachel Berry, Disability Employment Adviser, DWP, Bury will be joining us for the discussions.

8th August: Millgate Job Centre: Health & Disability Event. Whether you are looking for:- advice, volunteering or jobs, speak to your Job Coach to book a slot at this event. BBS will have a stand there too.

Wednesday 26th July, Glaucoma Support Group, 1.30-2.30pm. This month the group have asked Shelley Caulfield back to demonstrate further chair-based exercises to the group as they enjoyed it so much when Shelly visited last time.

The Healthy Living Group were visited by the lovely yoga teacher Clare in June. The session was so popular, we are looking to have a regular monthly slot with Clare. If you are interested in attending, please contact the Centre for further details.

Wednesday Wisdom Sessions: 10.30am-12.00pm. We are now using the first Wednesday to implement a rolling programme of Refresher Sight Guide training for volunteers, family members and friends. This will be on alternate months, with the Wednesday Wisdom daily living skills/knowledge sharing on the other month. July – October as follows:

August: VI Friendly recording equipment demonstration. Sid will be demonstrating Evo8 recording and editing equipment for visually impaired.

September: Sighted Guiding session – useful for volunteers, relatives and fellow professionals.

October: Daily Living Skills – kitchen equipment.

Calling all train users!

Train operators have launched a consultation on plans to close all ticket offices at train stations across England. This could result in the closure of up to 1,000 ticket offices.

We, along with many other organisations, are deeply concerned that these plans will have a negative impact on passengers with sight loss, in particular. Reliable, consistent and clearly identifiable ticket offices, with staff who are able to offer a variety services, are essential for many people with sight loss to use the railway. Without these ticket offices you will only be able purchase tickets at the automated machines at the station, online, or by booking in advance by phone.

It is important to tell Transport Focus what help you get from the ticket office staff at your station and why the loss of this could affect your safe travel. The closing date to respond is very soon, the 26 July! Have your say, provide feedback via the Transport Focus link

<https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/train-station-ticket-office-consultation/>

OR Contact Bury Blind Society on 0161 763 7014 if you need help to do this.

Automated Reception in Leisure Centres: Is there anyone else struggling with the changes at their local Leisure Centre? With the introduction of on line booking and no reception we have had a number of clients saying they are struggling to attend and then navigate their way to the changing rooms and lockers. We are currently arranging a meeting with Leisure centre staff to see how this can be addressed, but do let us have your views too so we can include them at the meeting. Contact BBS and speak to a member of staff.

Increasing Awareness with Local Shopping Centre: Together with GM Sight Loss Council, we are working with the Millgate Shopping Centre, providing a 'Mystery Shopper Experience' and feeding back on the results. The Millgate are also keen for their staff to undertake Visual Awareness Training in the near future.

Regeneration proposals for Prestwich, Whitefield and Radcliffe: If you live in any of these areas you will be aware there is considerable investment taking place to improve these areas. Following our feedback, we are pleased to say, the project managers have been consulting with us on how they can ensure your views are taken into consideration. We have also been asked to review certain changes for accessibility in Radcliffe. We are hopeful that we can monitor the situation as it progresses and input if changes are made. Once the proposals have been drawn up, a consultation is taking place in Whitefield and we are looking to hold either a separate, accessible session for clients in the area, or to attend the public consultation to support clients.

Future Planning Questionnaire: Thank you to the many people who have given feedback on our questionnaire. If you have not had the opportunity yet, please do feel free to phone or pop in to complete the questions. Your opinion counts! To implement your wishes, we are looking to close the questionnaire at the end of September.

Spotlight on: Blind Driving Experience. In our last edition we were promoting a dinner with Mike Newman from Speed for Sight, a great charity that provides a driving experience to people with a range of disabilities, including sight loss. Following on from this meal, as a result of our own fundraising efforts and sponsorship of two places by Radcliffe Rotary, we were

able to offer 8 places for clients to experience this adventure. Here is a brief account from just one of the drivers, Diane Webb.

Maybe, before you lost your sight, you were a driver, or perhaps you've never driven, either way, what would it mean if you got the chance to drive? Well eight clients from BBS fulfilled this dream on Tuesday 11 July at the Three Sister Racing Circuit in Wigan. The group consisted roughly of half previous drivers and the other half, complete newbies. I am in the 'complete newbie' category and have always been told I will never drive.

Transport was provided by Jill Logan and two volunteers, Les and Mike, who then spent their day cheering us on as we each took a turn racing round this winding track. We were greeted warmly by a large team of enthusiastic volunteers, several qualified driving instructors, and of course, Mike and Karen Newman from Speed of Sight. If you attended the evening organised by BBS back in May, you'll know that the Charity was set up to give people without sight the opportunity to experience driving at speed, but safely. From my own experience, and from hearing the comments from those around me, this goal was certainly achieved. It was an amazing opportunity and one I certainly would repeat, given the chance. Many thanks go to both organisations, Speed of Sight and BBS for making this happen. If you ever get the chance it's well worth it.

Having seen the impact of this event, we are really keen to offer this experience again next year so if you know of an organisation or business that would like to help us, please get in touch with Jill Logan, 0161 764 7014 or email jill.logan@buryblindsociety.org.

A Little Bit of Pampering! Many of you have utilised the skills of Katy Whitewell and her Wellbeing Clinic over the past few months. Last month Katy informed us she had decided to use her own experiences as a visually impaired person to become an ECLO (Eye Clinician Liaison Officer). Whilst pleased for Katy, we were sad to lose her massage skills. Knowing how popular this service has been, we were keen to continue the clinic. We are therefore delighted to announce that Emma is joining us – not just once a month, but three days a week! Emma will be able to offer all of the treatments Katy did and more from September. Below, Emma introduces herself.

Hi my name is Emma, I am the owner of Nails and Beauty by Emma, and am embarking on a new adventure here at Bury Blind Society. I am delighted to announce that from September the doors to my brand-new beauty room will open within the Society's building. I will be located on the second floor and will be offering a range of nail treatments alongside massage, waxing and tinting treatments. Don't worry, like Dougie, the Foot Practitioner, I can offer limited sessions on the ground floor for clients who are unable to access the stairs so don't let that put you off from treating yourself! Currently I am looking at the salon being open three days a week, Wednesday 9am-3pm, Thursday 10am-8pm and Friday 9am-3pm, plus one Saturday a month 10am-4pm so plenty of opportunities for those who are working to come along too.

To celebrate I will be hosting an Open Evening on Friday 18th August, 4pm-7pm giving you the opportunity to come and meet me and have a look around my new beauty room. There will be complimentary Prosecco and nibbles on arrival with a 10% off voucher for any treatment booked with me for the month of September. I am also coming along to the next forum meeting on 9th August at 10.30am so look forward to meeting you and cannot wait to start this exciting new venture at the Centre. Emma

Funding & Volunteering News:

Garden Update: Thank you so much to everyone who submitted their wonderful thoughts for our 'garden for the future'. Jill met with Nina from RHS Bridgewater and Grace from Greenspace on Wednesday and had a great time discussing, amongst other things, insect houses, kitchen gardens, herb walls and community food – all ideas put forward by yourselves. Nina is now going to put together a plan incorporating these ideas for us all to consider. Of course, now the big part is getting funding but let's see the ideas first!

Appeal: we desperately need good quality soft toys (not huge ones please!) as prizes for our 'raising awareness' game using Simulation specs. Can you help?

A big thank you to Bury Grammar and in particular Mark and Julie Hone who were the leads in putting together the recent talk at Bury Grammar. Julie has been volunteering with us for the past few months, prior to both herself and Mark moving to Wales in August. We have really valued her input and wish them both well.

Volunteers: Picking up feedback from the volunteers both in Centre and at the recent Forum, we have introduced a 'Refresher Programme' of training. The first area has been Sight Guiding, which all volunteers will now undertake every 12 months. Further areas will include, role specific training and health and safety. All volunteers will be issued with new lanyards to ensure clients and visitors can easily identify volunteers.

'A little Upgrade': We have been successful in receiving a small pot of funding, with thanks to Skelton Trust, to undertake a refurbishment of the reception/resource area. As many of you will be aware, the cupboards and drawers are looking a little tired and showing their age so it will be a pleasure to have a refresh!

Thank goodness for the generous public at the Summer Shows! We're just coming to the end of our Summer Show events with the last one on Sunday 23 July at Whitehead Park, off Ainsworth Road, Restart the Heart Fun Day 12pm-5pm. Unfortunately, in the Centre, with the heavy showers we've had, our flat roof and the guttering at the back of the building has been leaking so guess what the funds raised are being spent on! Thank you to everyone who supported these events, either by volunteering or by attending.

Other ways to support and help us continue our support and activities:

A big thank you to all who have donated to us during this period and a quick reminder of the various ways you can support us:

- **Text via your phone.** Just use your phone and Text to: **70450**, with the message **BURY** to donate £5. You will also receive details to make a regular donation if you wish.
- **Facebook:** We have a 'Donate' button on our Facebook page.
- **Regular donation:** direct into our Bank. For more details, contact Jill at the Society. jill.logan@buryblindsociety.org or 0161 763 7014
- **100 Club:** Our Monthly Prize Draw. Just £1.00 for a number and you can 'purchase' as many as you like! 50% of the money raised is distributed in prizes and the other half contributes directly to BBS. Application packs are available from the office. Winning numbers since our last VI Bulletin:
June: 413, 285, 59.
First Prize £118.50; Second Prize £59.25; Third Prize £19.75.

- **Wills:** We are pleased to announce we are now working with Bequeathed who are able to offer a free will service to our members and supporters. For further details, please contact us. As always, we are so grateful to the relatives who think of us when they have lost a loved one and ask for donations for the Society. Without your support we would not be able to provide such a wide range of support. Thank you.

What difference will your donation make?

£5: Would provide transport for a sight impaired member to attend an activity.

£10: Would fund a piece of specialist kitchen equipment for our daily living skills sessions.

£25: Would provide afternoon tea for a group of socially isolated visually impaired members.

£50: Would allow us to train a new volunteer in sighted guiding, first aid and visual awareness.

Celebrating members, volunteers and friends.

Our thoughts and best wishes go out to Roy Smithies and his wife Jean following Roy's stroke. Roy has been a great supporter of the Society and always been so positive about his eye condition, a real ambassador.

A special 'Happy Birthday' to two of our senior fundraisers. At the end of this month Alan Norman will be another year young, and just this week, Michael Garratt, who is a dedicated 'can collection monitor' will be celebrating being 88 years young. Many happy returns to both these gentlemen and to anyone else who is celebrating their birthday.

Fundraising and Events:

Sponsored Team Slim: Carole and Mags have embarked on their fundraising healthy eating slimathon due to complete on 1 September. They have set themselves a target of, together losing 3 stone between them in 2 months! In week 1, together they have lost 7lbs! Help them to keep to this amazing challenge by sponsoring them for each pound they lose. There is a sponsor sheet in the Centre (and a 'trackometer' keeping a note of their progress!) as well as a link on our website to sponsor on line. Please support this fantastic effort by Carole and Mags – and help them to stay healthy!!

Margaret Haes Riding Centre BL8 4NX. If you fancy something a little more relaxing why not support Margaret Haes Riding School and enjoy an Open-Air Theatre experience? The Illyria Theatre Company are performing Twelfth Night on Friday 28 July at 7.00pm or Robin Hood on Friday 18th August at 6.00pm. Tickets are available either via Margaret Haes web site or direct from Illyria.co.uk 0333 666 3366

Are you interested in acting and the theatre? We are looking to take a small group to All Saints Elton Theatre Company to listen and observe rehearsals for their forthcoming play 'Blood Brothers'. Let us know if you would like to join this trip.

September is our 'Sports September' month. Last year, Sid, on his static bike, achieved 100 miles to celebrate our Centenary, this year we're making it a Team effort and asking people to book on a session to complete a virtual 'Coast to Coast' bike ride, totally 193 miles! We're going to pitch our exercise bike in areas throughout the borough and log all the miles achieved. Why not give it a try, or see if a local business will take on the challenge! Details, and how to support this mammoth task, will be on our website and in the Centre during August. All the money raised by this effort is going directly to support future 'active' events including another Blind Driving Experience next year, 10 Pin Bowling Tournament, Fishing, Croquet and tennis taster sessions, pottery and wood carving workshops to name a few.

Talking of Activities, Greater Manchester Sight Loss Council invites blind and partially sighted people across the north west to their 'Let's Get Active in Greater Manchester' event. This free, multi-sport event is being held on Saturday 19 August 2023, from 10.30am – 4.30pm, at The Great Academy, Ashton-under-Lynne. It is not essential to have experience in any sports or activities to attend.

There will be something for everyone, including curling, cricket, and cycling. If you fancy something a little gentler, why not come along and try yoga or Pilates? It will be a great opportunity to try out a range of sports and activities which have been adapted for people with sight loss.

Find out more and how you can book your place via the link:

<https://bit.ly/42AyH3p>

On the 10th September Leyland Social Club are having a 'North West Shadows' show, and we are delighted to report they will be donating funds raised on the raffle to Bury Blind Society. Starting at 1pm, ring the office for further details.

Dates for your diary.

Themed Lunches - Fourth Friday of every month: Themed lunches at £10 for a 3-course meal! July is Mexican; August is Chinese, September is 'Back to School' and October is Halloween. What's not to love. Book via the office before 12pm the Thursday before.

Dates have already been set for the Christmas lunches in the Centre, Friday 8th and Friday 15th December so Carole and Mags are really getting organised!

On Friday 3rd November we will be holding a Race Night at Elton Liberal Club. Fun for all the family. Further details in September's VI Link.

'Take Five Quiz'.

Answers to edition 36.

1. Which planet is the hottest in the solar system? **Venus**
2. What is the name of the world's longest river? **The Nile**
3. What is your body's largest organ? **The skin.**
4. In what year was the first-ever Wimbledon Championship held? **1877**
5. What animals are pearls found in? **Oysters**

Questions for this edition:

1. What is the name of the famous Austrian composer who wrote works such as Symphony No. 9 and Ode to Joy?
2. What is the name of the largest canyon in the world located in the United States.
3. Name the traditional Korean dish that is made with spicy fermented vegetables, usually cabbage.
4. Rita Maria Crudginton became famous after ripping her skirt off, but what name did she chose to perform under?
5. Who had a number one hit in 1970 with 'Band of Gold', a song about a broken engagement?

Stay safe and well.

Jill and all the Team at Bury Society for Blind & Partially Sighted People.



Bury Society For Blind and
Partially Sighted People

Registered Charity No. 1102525

Regular Centre Activities:

Monday:

Morning: Drop In 10.00am-12pm: You are welcome to drop in any time for a cuppa. Volunteer Margaret will provide a warm welcome as your 'Meet & Greet' Host.

Music Buddies Fun Afternoon: 1.30pm-2.30pm: Held every Monday apart from the Fourth of the month.

Every Monday 10am-2.30pm - Foot Practitioner New Weekly Clinic: Have your feet pampered and support the Society at the same time. Dougie Warrington kindly donates £7.50 for every appointment he has. Appointments booked via the Centre.

Third Monday: meeting at 1pm: Monthly Walk group – weather permitting. Please let the office know if you need a sighted guide.

Fourth Monday of the Month: 1.30pm-3.00pm – Musical Social Afternoon. £3.00 includes entertainment and refreshments. To book please contact the Centre.

Tuesdays: The Centre is available for external room bookings. Specialist courses such as Eye Talk are held on this day.

10 Pin Bowling at Hollywood Bowling. 11am-12pm. £2.00 pp. Book in advance via the office.

Wednesday:

Mornings: 10.00am-12pm. Light refreshments always available at our Wednesday Drop in Sessions and a warm welcome with Sid, Carole and Gary.

First Wednesday: Alternate Wednesday Wisdom/Sight Guiding Session.

Second Wednesday: August, Volunteer Forum, Sept, User Forum.

Fourth Wednesday: Tech Talk 10.30am-12.00pm: Informal peer support on all things 'techy, a problem shared is a problem halved. Light refreshments available.

LVA Clinic: 9.30am onwards. Weekly except Fourth Wednesday. Referral through BBS or ring direct on 0161 762 1692.

Afternoons:

First Wednesday, 1.30pm-2.30pm: Family Support session.

Second Wednesday, 1.30pm-2.30pm: Eye matters – Working Age information session.

Third Wednesday, 1.30pm-3.00pm: Macular Degeneration Support group.

Fourth Wednesday, 1.30pm-3.00pm, Glaucoma Support Group.

Thursday:

10.30am-12.00pm: Healthy Living Group – this weekly group, led by Jixie, covers a wide range of subjects and on the third Thursday of every month invites a guest speaker. For further details please contact the office. Booking is helpful for refreshments but all are welcome.

Afternoon 1.30pm-3.00pm: featuring: First Thursday: Bingo with Mags, Second Thursday Gary's Quiz, subsequent Thursdays, Tea and chat & table top sale. For details, contact the office.

Fridays:

Weekly: The main lounge area is taken over with our 'Lunch Brunch'. Carole and Mags provide either a cooked meal or light snack each week. 11.30am-2.00pm. Places must be booked and paid for in advance. For menu details and to book, (no later than Thursday morning) call the office on 0161 763 7014.

Fortnightly: Henshaws/BBS Digital Clinic from 10.00am: Referral via BBS.

Please note: The Centre will be closed on Bank Holiday Monday 28th August 2023.