



Bury Society For Blind and
Partially Sighted People

Quarterly V.I. Link – Issue 50

July - September 2026

INTRODUCTION – JILL LOGAN, CEO

Hello everyone. Summer has certainly arrived, bringing hot days, lighter evenings, colourful flowers, and the lovely scents of gardens in bloom. While this time of year can be a real pleasure, please do take care in the heat. Keep cool where you can, drink plenty of fluids, and check in on friends, neighbours and loved ones who may appreciate a call.

In this edition, we share updates on technology, digital support, volunteering, trips, activities, and general knowledge.

Thank you, as always, for being part of the Bury Blind Society community. Stay safe, stay cool, and we look forward to seeing or hearing from you soon.

TECHNOLOGY

Brews & Views

In the last edition of VI Link, we invited people to come along to the Centre to learn about the latest technology craze - Smart Glasses – and what a turn out we had. We couldn't have squeezed in another person. The Centre was bursting at the seams!

Many thanks to Lynn, Michelle and Tony for sharing with us how they are using their glasses day to day and for their balanced feedback, which highlighted some of the pros and cons of the devices, though it seemed there were more pros than cons, and it was interesting to hear them say they wouldn't go back to not having the glasses – quite an endorsement.

A big thank you to all of those who joined us and for making it such a success. From the feedback we've received we know you found it enjoyable and informative – so much so that a number of you are now contemplating buying a pair. If you missed the session and

would like to attend a future one, then we would be happy to organise this. Just contact the Centre on **0161 763 7014** to register your interest.

Digital Inclusion sessions – Get to Know Your Device Better

In the last VI link we also invited you to come along to a series of warm and welcoming digital workshops designed especially for vision-impaired beginners. Our aim was to help you feel more confident and in control of your everyday devices and to be able to correct those annoying little glitches when they occur. Unfortunately, there was little uptake on our offer so we had to cancel the sessions, which was a shame when so many people had said they would be interested in attending. This said, all is not lost. We would be happy to arrange the workshops again, in September if we have enough people to make it worthwhile doing. If you would like more information or to book a place, then please contact the Centre.

INFORMATION, SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Disability Card UK

Are you looking for a bargain or two? Have you heard of the Disability Card UK programme? The Disability ID Card service is designed to support people living with disabilities or long-term health conditions. Members receive access to exclusive discounts, helpful resources, and partner benefits aimed at making day-to-day living more affordable and more accessible.

Anyone with a disability or long-term health issue recognised under UK law is eligible to apply. This includes both visible and non-visible disabilities. Parents, guardians or carers may also apply on someone's behalf, with that person's permission and appropriate documentation.

To join, applicants need to create an account on the Disability Card UK website, upload a valid disability document and pay a membership fee. Once your details are verified, your digital Disability ID Card and full access to member benefits will be activated.

There is a small annual fee to join the service, which helps the administrators to operate the service and secure new offers for members. Most people find that regular use of discounts quickly saves more than the cost of the membership.

If you decide the service isn't right for you, then you can request to cancel within 14 days of your payment. If you haven't used any offers or benefits in that time, you may be eligible for a refund

Once you have been approved, your card details will appear in your online account dashboard. If you're using the App, you'll also be able to access your digital ID directly from the profile or card section. Each discount explains how it works on its own page. Some provide a promotion code for you to copy and enter at checkout, others apply automatically when you follow the link, and some may offer cashback after purchase. Always read the instructions on the offer before using it.

New offers are regularly added as new partners join and existing partnerships grow. Members are advised to check their member dashboard and email updates frequently to see the latest deals and seasonal promotions.

According to the Disability Card UK website, members are entitled to:

- discounts on over 300 brands
- free companion tickets at over 500 UK venues
- savings of up to 25% at over 4,000 gyms, leisure centres, health clubs across the UK
- online exercise classes, exercise videos, and audiobooks on demand from home

If you would like to know more, then visit Disability Card UK at:
<https://www.disabilitycarduk.co.uk>

SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering opportunities

Help Shape Support for Working-Age Adults & Younger People with Sight Loss

Are you of working age or a younger person with lived experience of sight loss? If so, we would really like to hear from you.

We want to make sure our services reflect the experiences of people who are navigating adult education, looking for work, managing challenges in the workplace, balancing family life, maintaining independence, supporting their wellbeing, and living day to day with visual impairment. We are setting up a panel of representatives and would like to invite people from across the Borough to get involved. Your views could help us understand what support feels useful, what barriers still exist, and how we can reach and support more people with sight loss.

The panel will look at topics such as employment, confidence, mental health and wellbeing, communication, younger people's needs, and how employers and the wider community understand sight loss.

You do not need to be an expert or have all the answers. We simply want people who are willing to share honest thoughts, personal experiences and ideas about what would make a real difference. It won't be a big commitment — just a few relaxed meetings each year, either in person, on Teams, or a mixture of both, depending on what works best for the group.

If this sounds like something you would like to be part of, or if you would simply like to find out more, please contact the Centre on 0161 763 7014 and ask for Carl. We would love to hear from you.

More opportunities

we are seeking volunteers in the following areas.

- **Macular group co-ordinator** – meets first Wednesday of the month at the Centre from 1.30 to 3pm
- **Sight support group Co-ordinator (Prestwich)** – meets second Wednesday of the month at the Creative Living Centre in Prestwich from 2-4pm
- **Newsletter mailing assistants** – to help prepare our quarterly newsletter for posting by stapling, folding, and inserting into envelopes, ensuring each issue is neatly assembled and ready for timely distribution to our clients.
- **Event Helpers** – Various local venues over the course of the year.

Whether you have a couple of hours to spare each week, each month, every few months, or just now and then, you could make a difference

There is nothing onerous about these roles, and they allow you to give a little something back in a way that feels personal. Training will be given and qualified staff are always at hand to support you. If you feel you would like to help us and be part of a fantastic team, then we would love to hear from you. For more information, contact Carl at the Centre.

Carole's Story

We continue our spotlight on volunteering with a few words from Carole Allen on how she became a volunteer with Bury Blind Society

“I was about to retire and wanted something to occupy my mind, and I thought about volunteering at the hospital.”

“My mother was diagnosed with a macular condition and came to a meeting at Bury Blind Society. When she got home, I asked her what it was like, had she enjoyed herself. Her reply was yes, and ‘Oh, I have volunteered you because you said you wanted something to do.’ Okay mum!”

“I came along, spoke to Jane, went through everything I liked to do, my hobbies and interests and as I had worked in offices and spoken to people on the phone, it seemed the ideal role would be working in Reception. I came in two half days a week. The lady who prepared lunches on Fridays left due to illness and because I liked to cook, I offered to take over.”

“I have also helped at various events such as Christmas gift wrapping, which is such fun and there is always a man or husband who rushes up at Christmas eve desperate to wrap his presents for mum or a loved one. There is always something to do here at the Society so if it is gift wrapping, managing a stall at some of our outdoor events, or giving a lift to one of the group meetings, there is always something, and the atmosphere, as well as the welcome, is amazing.”

Wednesday 9th September: Volunteer Forum, 10.30am to 12pm.

The volunteer forum provides a similar informal opportunity for volunteers to discuss activities, share experiences, and suggest improvements. This forum meets quarterly on the **second**

Wednesday in March, June, September, and December – from 10.30 to 12.00

Tuesday 15th September - Group co-ordinators' meeting, from 10am to 12pm

These meetings offer a friendly space for group co-ordinators to share ideas, learn from one another and help shape how our groups continue to develop and meet the needs of group members. These meetings will be held at the Centre on the **third Tuesday of January, May, and September.**

DID YOU KNOW?

The Snellen chart is one of the oldest tools in Optometry

The history of testing eyesight can be traced back to ancient times. Around 300 BCE, Euclid described how the eye sees things using the idea of a 'visual cone', to help explain how the eye perceives objects. Much later, around AD 1754, researchers began trying ways to test how clearly someone could see, and by the early nineteenth century opticians in Germany and England were developing test charts to support more reliable spectacle prescriptions.

A major breakthrough came in 1862, when Dr. Hermann Snellen introduced what most, if not all, of us today recognise as the familiar chart on the wall of every high street optometrist comprising black letters on a white background that decrease in size as you move down the rows – the Snellen eye chart.

Snellen designed the chart using optotypes, which are letters constructed on a precise 5×5 grid to ensure geometrically consistent proportions, allowing accurate measurement of vision. The original chart included alphanumeric letters arranged in rows of decreasing size, with the smallest row a person could read indicating their visual acuity. Its simple design was revolutionary and allowed for test results to be compared reliably from one practice to another. This helped people receive more accurate prescriptions, especially as travel and industrial work made clear vision increasingly important.

Snellen also developed alternatives for people who could not read letters, including the 'Tumbling E' chart, where patients indicate which direction the letter E is facing. Today, symbol-based charts and digital eye tests are used too, but the basic idea behind Snellen's chart remains the same and central to routine eye examinations around the world.

Why your eyes are the colour they are?

Have you ever wondered why no two pairs of eyes are quite the same colour, and what makes yours uniquely yours?

The colour of your eyes primarily depends on melanin, the same pigment responsible for skin and hair colour. There are two main types of melanin in the iris: eumelanin, which is dark brown to black, and pheomelanin, which is yellow to reddish.

Brown eyes have a high concentration of eumelanin in the front layer of the iris (the stroma), while green and hazel eyes have varying ratios of both eumelanin and pheomelanin. Blue eyes contain very little melanin, and their colour results from light scattering, not a blue pigment.

The stroma, the front layer of the iris, contains cells and collagen fibres that influence how light interacts with the tissue. In lighter-coloured eyes, such as blue or grey, Tyndall or Rayleigh scattering causes shorter wavelengths of light to be reflected back, producing the perception of blue or green. This is why eye colour can appear to shift slightly depending on lighting conditions.

Eye colour is a polygenic trait, meaning it is controlled by multiple genes. Variations in these genes, along with small changes called single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), contribute to the wide range of eye colours seen in humans. While brown is the most common eye colour worldwide, green is rare, and blue eyes are more prevalent in certain populations.

Humans are typically born with blue eyes, and the final eye colour develops as melanin accumulates in the iris during early childhood. Eye colour can also be influenced by cellular density in the stroma and the interaction between the pigmented epithelium at the back of the iris and the stroma. Rare conditions like heterochromia or albinism can further affect eye colour.

In summary, your eye colour is the result of a complex interplay between melanin type and concentration, iris structure, light

scattering, and multiple genetic factors, making each person's eyes uniquely coloured.

The term 'Flaming June' is not a reference from a weather forecast

If, like others, you thought it was, then you'd be mistaken. It is actually the name of a painting by Sir Frederic Leighton. Produced in 1895 and painted on a 47-by-47-inch square canvas, it was originally intended as a motif to decorate a marble bath in another of his works, *Summer Slumber*. Though he found the painting troublesome to create, he was so enamoured with the image, a woman with flame red hair clad in an orange dress asleep under a canopy in the summer heat, he decided it should be a painting in its own right. Was her name June or did Leighton intend her to be the personification of the month? We will never know!

TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES NEWS

Tuesdays, from 1.30pm - Walking Group

We are pleased to share details of a VI-friendly walking group that meets at Burrs Country Park. The group offers a welcoming opportunity to enjoy gentle exercise, fresh air and good company in an accessible outdoor setting. Walks take place on Tuesdays from 1.30pm, with routes in and around the park adapted to suit the abilities and preferences of those attending.

Please note that this is not a Bury Blind Society group or event, so transport will not be provided. Participants will need to make their own arrangements to travel to and from the venue. Burrs Country Park can be reached by the 477 and 474 buses, with the 474 stopping slightly closer to the park. The group leaders have completed vision impairment awareness training and understand how sight loss may affect VI members of the group.

Anyone who requires one-to-one support is very welcome to attend but is asked to bring a family member or friend who can act as a

sighted guide if needed. The group leaders are unable to offer dedicated assistance to individuals, as they will be monitoring the group as a whole during the activity.

Monday 24th August 2026 - Visit to Margaret Haes Riding Centre

After the wonderful feedback we received following last August's visit to Margaret Haes Riding Centre, we are delighted to announce that we will be returning again this year. Come along and enjoy a relaxing and uplifting experience in the beautiful countryside above Holcombe Village. You'll have the chance to meet some amazing animals, take in the peaceful surroundings and enjoy a real sense of freedom and wellbeing.

Event details:

Date: Monday, 24th August 2026

Time: 2.45pm

Duration: Up to an hour

Cost: £5.00 (Full cost subsidised by Bury Blind Society).

Venue: Margaret Haes Riding Centre, Moor Road, Holcombe, Bury, BL8 4NX

Eligibility: Participants will need a suitable level of fitness to access the Centre and must weigh no more than 13 stones.

Don't worry if you haven't ridden for a long time, or if you have never ridden before. You'll be in the safe and capable hands of experienced trainers throughout the visit.

Places are limited, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

For more information, or to reserve your place, contact Bury Blind Society on 0161 763 7014.

Please note payment will be requested at the time of booking.

Wednesday 9th September 2026 - Sailing Day at Elton Sailing Club

We are organising a special sailing day at Elton Sailing Club in September, and we would love you to come along and enjoy the

experience. Whether you have sailed before or have never set foot in a boat, this promises to be a fun and memorable opportunity to spend time on the water, learn a few sailing basics and enjoy the peaceful surroundings of Elton Reservoir.

Lunch will be provided, giving everyone the chance to relax, chat and enjoy time together after time on the water. Come along, try something different and enjoy a great day out.

Event details:

Date: Wednesday 9th September 2026

Time: 12 – 4pm

Lunch is included

Cost: £10.00 (Full cost subsidised by Bury Blind Society).

Venue: Elton Sailing Club, Elton Reservoir, Bury BL8 2BR

Again, places will be limited so If you are interested please let us know as early as possible by contacting the Centre on 0161 763 7014 so we can confirm numbers and final arrangements.

Sunday 20th September 2026 - Run for All Bury 10K

Lace up your trainers for the Run for all Bury 10K on Sunday 20 September 2026. This fun and friendly event, staged in partnership with Bury Council, starts and finishes close to The Rock and welcomes runners of all abilities. Whether you are taking on your first 10K, chasing a personal best or simply looking for a great challenge for a good cause, we would love you to get involved. Our resident runner, Peter, will be running for us again this year — thank you, Peter! Why not join him on the day, and help raise money for us to continue supporting vision impaired people across the borough? Every step you take will make a difference.

Tuesday 22nd September 2026 - Visit to Oswaldtwistle Mills

We are pleased to announce a planned visit to Oswaldtwistle Mills on Tuesday 22nd September 2026. Set in a former weaving mill in

Lancashire, Oswaldtwistle Mills offers a welcoming day out with more than 100 retailers, places to eat, a garden centre, fashion, home and gift departments, a food deli, and a textile and heritage museum. It is a popular destination with plenty to browse, enjoy and discover under one roof. If you would be interested in joining us, please contact the Centre on 0161 763 7014 for more information or to register your interest. The cost will be £5 per person.

Wednesday 14 October: User Forum, 10.30am to 12pm.

Come along to hear what we've been up to and tell us what you want! The user forum offers a relaxed setting for clients to share feedback, meet others, and help guide the direction of our work. The forum meets quarterly on the **second Wednesday in April, July, October, and January – from 10.30 to 12.00**

Other Activities:

Brief information on the Calendar of events involving BBS over the next couple of months at the time of going to press. The majority of shows are on from 11am-4pm unless stated otherwise.

- **Monday 10 August - Craft Workshop** with Nick at Bury Blind Society. Places are limited so book your place early by contacting the Centre
- **Sunday 16 August - Car boot**, ELR car park, Railway Street, Ramsbottom BL0 9AL, 7.30am to 3pm
- **Monday 24th August – Music Social group** at Bury Blind Society. Artist to be confirmed.
- **Sunday 6th September – Car boot**, ELR car park, Railway Street, Ramsbottom BL0 9AL, 7.30am to 3pm
- **Monday 14th September - Craft Workshop** at Bury Blind Society. Activity to be confirmed. Book your place early by contacting the Centre
- **Monday 28th September - Monthly Music Social**, Geoff Kenyon
- **Are you interested in joining a writing group?** If so, then contact the Centre to register your name. Depending on the level

of interest, we will arrange a 'taster session' and send you the details.

100 CLUB, MONTHLY PRIZE DRAW

Is 2026 proving to be your lucky year? Have you bought a number? Numbers cost £1 and you can purchase as many as you like! Half of the money raised is distributed in prizes and the other half contributes directly to BBS services to help support local blind and partially sighted people. Packs are available from the Centre.

Winning numbers since our last VI Bulletin:

April: 1st prize: No. 339, 2nd prize: No. 84, 3rd prize: No. 32.

May: 1st prize: No. 274, 2nd prize: No. 374, 3rd prize: No. 164.

June: 1st prize: No. 129, 2nd prize: No. 454, 3rd prize: No. 393.

If you have any articles, a story or information you would like to be included in future editions of our VI Bulletin, then do let us know!

Thanks, and enjoy!

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

REGULAR CENTRE ACTIVITIES:

Monday:

Drop In 10 – 11.30am: Come in for a cuppa.

First Monday of the Month: Housing & Benefits with Calico and CAB. 9.30am-12.30pm.

Music Buddies: 1.15pm-2.30pm: Every Monday except 4th Monday.

Bury Aces Showdown, 6 - 8.30pm join the fun!

Second Monday of the Month: 10.30am - Creative Workshop

Fourth Monday of the Month: Musical Social, 1.15pm-2.45pm –
£3.00, entertainment & refreshments. Contact the office to book.

Tuesday:

Pheonix Foot Clinic, 9.30am – 3pm Appointment only. Contact the office to book.

Ten pin bowling – Summer break – Resumes 8th September 11am

Wednesday:

LVA Clinic: 9.30am onwards. Appointment only. Referral through BBS or ring community booking service on 0300 323 3316

Drop-In session: 10.00am-12.00pm - welcome from Carole and crew.

First Wednesday:

Introduction to Sight Loss Awareness: 10.30am-12pm Open to volunteers, friends, family, and carers.

Macular Support Group: 1.30pm-3.00pm

Second Wednesday:

Sight loss support group (Prestwich), 2 to 4pm

Third Wednesday, Macular Support group 1.30pm-3.00pm

Fourth Wednesday, Glaucoma Support Group, 1.30pm-2.30pm,

Thursday:

Drop In & Crossword club, 10.30am-12.00pm:

Tea & Chat: 1.30pm-3.00pm: Quizzes, Bingo - Contact the office.

Bury Aces Showdown: 6.00pm - 8.30pm Learn how to play.

Friday:

Friday Lunch: 11.30am-2.00pm, Places must be booked and paid for in advance. For the menu and to book, call the office on 0161 763 7014.

Every fortnight, Tech Support Clinic, 9.15am-4.00pm: with Henshaws, for referral, contact the office.

Every Third Saturday: Book Club, 11am-12.30pm: Please contact the office to confirm your attendance.