

Manx Blind Welfare Society

Volunteer Functions

Below are some of the activities the Society cover:

Buddy Scheme

As a Buddy you would help visually impaired people on an occasional basis with a task they are having difficulty doing. This could include assistance with correspondence; choosing talking books; personal shopping for gifts or clothes etc. Alternatively there may be a particular appointment or outing where they need someone to accompany them, or a difficult time where a visually impaired person would appreciate someone to chat to over coffee. You would not be allocated to a specific visually impaired person but would help different people as the need arose and depending on your availability. Once a suitable day and time was arranged for a visit I would telephone the visually impaired person with these details and the name of the volunteer who would be visiting. In addition, the volunteer would be provided with an identity badge in large print and would be given a code word to provide to the visually impaired person on arrival so they could be sure they were not letting a stranger into their home.

Mini bus drivers

We do employ drivers but are always in great need of volunteers who can drive a mini bus to fill in should anyone be off through illness or holidays. We bring visually impaired members to our Centre and take them on outings. The latter might be organised shopping trips, afternoon tea outings or a trip to the theatre. We would provide training for mini bus drivers. We would require sight of your current driving licence and to keep a copy on file.

Transport

We also need volunteers who can drive their own car to bring visually impaired people in to our centre in Onchan or to outings, certain appointments etc. and would welcome assistance with this task from all parts of the Island. If you were driving your own car, for safeguard, we would wish to ensure that you have it noted with your insurance company that you are a volunteer for MBWS. We have a form for the insurance company to stamp and this would need to be returned to us before you transported any visually impaired members on your own car.

Mini bus escorts

It is a huge help to drivers if they have an escort on the bus. This would be most suitable for a relatively mobile person.

Social Club

The Social Club for our members operates 4 days a week. On Monday it is at Southlands, Port Erin and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday it is at our premises at Corrin Court, Heywood Avenue, Onchan. There is often entertainment in the form of talks, music, quizzes etc. The visually impaired people love company and either help providing this or assisting with refreshments etc. within the social groups is always very much appreciated.

If you have a talent for arts and/or crafts you could help a small group within the social club with this activity. Alternatively, if you were able to collate general knowledge, music quizzes etc. at home to use within the social groups this would also be a great help.

Also, our members love musical entertainment and to hear of other people's travels, adventures, hobbies or tales from the past. If you could provide occasional or even one off entertainment or talks in any of these areas it would be very helpful. Sally Quayle, our Welfare/Activities Officer would welcome any assistance with the social groups.

Bowling

We take visually impaired people short mat bowling on a Wednesday afternoon at the NSC and would appreciate help with this activity. You do not have to be a bowler to assist.

Walking

Particularly in the summer months, some of our members may like to go for a short walk or a longer stroll, or alternatively go to Walk & Talk, which involves walking at your own pace in a safe environment around the National Sports Centre track.

Gardening

If anyone could provide a little time once a month or once a fortnight in the summer for light gardening/clearing work in the grounds of our premises in Corrin Court, Onchan this would be very useful. If we had enough volunteers there could be a rota, so it may even be less than once a month.

Library service

The tape book service run from the Centre has a wide selection of tapes for lending to members and the service runs on volunteer librarians. At present the library is covered with regular volunteers but we always need people who can fill in occasionally during holidays, illness etc.

Reception

Our reception area at Corrin Court is covered totally by volunteers who give a weekly commitment of half a day. At present we have a full quota of regular receptionists but we do need people who could cover occasionally during holiday/illness.

Reception cont.....

This could work out to once or twice a month or sometimes only once every 2 or 3 months, depending how often we need cover. Sometimes it may be at short notice but obviously if you are unable to do it that is totally understandable. The main tasks are meeting and greeting visitors and answering the telephone (it is a simple telephone system, not a complicated switchboard).

Manx Recorded News Service

We have a studio at our Centre where a weekly tape of Manx news and current affairs is produced by volunteers. There are readers, copiers, dispatchers and technicians. The reader has to have the tape prepared by Friday at 12pm. If it is not feasible for a volunteer to use our studio during our centre opening time of 9am-5pm it may be possible to record the news at home on our portable recording equipment. We would welcome readers who could go on the reserve list, should regular readers be unable to do their shift. Copiers then copy 100 tapes on our simple to operate copying machines and dispatchers send these tapes out in wallets and mark them off in the register. Copying/dispatching duties are done on a rota basis, volunteers coming in every 4-6 weeks for approximately 2 hours. You do not have to possess technical knowledge to be a dispatcher or copier and we would be very grateful for any volunteers who feel they could slot in to either of these positions.

Isle of Man Fund for the Blind

Last but not least, this group of vital people arrange and organise the various fund raising events to raise the money, without which this charity could not function.

Training

Anyone volunteering to help with any of the above mentioned activities would be given adequate training to enable them to perform the chosen function and for them to get the most out of it. This would include how to guide a visually impaired person. We would emphasise that, with the exception of the Manx Recorded News Service and fund raising, all areas of the Society's work would include guiding. This is a simple task but volunteers do have to be mobile enough to guide.

We would provide ongoing support/training as needed and also have an annual get together for volunteers. This is a relaxed, friendly evening that gives the opportunity to meet others and for us to show how much we appreciate the time given by volunteers, without which we could not possibly provide all our services to make lives easier for the Island's visually impaired people.

As we are working with vulnerable people the Society undertake an excepted persons police vetting check on all staff and volunteers.