

Wakefield District Sight Aid

St. Swithun's Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield, WF1 4RR

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President: The Lord St Oswald | Company No. 7432897 | Registered Charity No.

Hello everyone and welcome to our January 2025 newsletter!

Happy New Year! We hope you have all enjoyed a lovely break over the festive period. It was great to see so many people at our events during December, especially at our Christmas lunch and our Christmas wreath making workshop!

Huge thanks to everyone who supported our Christmas raffle. A list of the winning tickets is published on page 12 of the newsletter. We are delighted to share that the raffle and donations raised over £2,100 which makes it our most successful raffle ever! We are so grateful for your continued generous support of this annual fundraiser.

As usual, the newsletter is packed with information, including all our regular groups, our next fish & chip lunch, the latest news about our Art Beyond Vision project, the opportunity to get involved in a new project with disabled artist Jason Willsher-Mills, and lots more! We have also made our calendar of events larger and put it in the centrefold of the newsletter, so the print is bigger, and it is easily removed for those who like to display it at home. We welcome your feedback on this change.

As always, we love to hear your suggestions of trips out and activities you'd like to do, so please don't hesitate to get in touch and share your ideas!

With warm wishes,
Hayley Grocock (Chief Executive Officer)



CEO Hayley holding her Christmas wreath.

What's on at Wakefield District Sight Aid

All our events up to the end of April 2025 are shown on the calendar on the middle pages (p6-7). We've made this bigger to hopefully make it easier to use. Here is a summary of what's coming up:



People enjoying our Ridings coffee morning.

The Ridings coffee morning 10.00 – 12.00 on the first Monday and third Wednesday of the month held at The Events Space, Middle Mall, The Ridings, Wakefield, WF1 1DS – outside M&S Food and Poundland. There is plentiful disabled parking at The Ridings, but it is not free of charge. Blue badges can be used on-street and in nearby Council car parks.

Please note that Monday 3rd March will be a Demo Day rather than a coffee morning (details below).

Horbury coffee morning 10.00 – 12.00 on the second Tuesday of the month (The Cluntergate Centre Café, Cluntergate, Horbury WF4 5DA). Our small but perfectly formed Horbury group is ready to welcome you!

Wakefield evening social group (WESG – formerly the younger members social group) 17.00 – 19.00 on the fourth Thursday of the month (held at Calder & Hops, 60 Northgate, Wakefield, WF1 3AP). This friendly and informal evening meet-up welcomes members of all ages and is looking forward to meeting new members!

NEW! Pontefract coffee morning! 10.00 – 12.00 on the fourth Thursday of the month (at The Broken Bridge Wetherspoon, 5 Horse Fair, Pontefract, WF8 1PD).

Our brand-new social group for the Pontefract area is now up and running! Come and join us for a cuppa and a natter. The Broken Bridge has step-free access and is very close to Pontefract bus station. You can find us towards the back of



People enjoying our Pontefract coffee morning.

the pub, near to the toilets. If you are not familiar with The Broken Bridge, staff will be happy to help.

NEW! Pontefract evening social group (PESG) - 17.00 – 20.00 on the first Thursday of the month (held at Iron Dram, 27a Ropergate, Pontefract, WF8 1LG). This new social group is the latest addition to our regular groups and is hoping to welcome lots of new members!

Equipment Demonstration and Advice Day - Monday 3rd March, 10.00 – 13.00 in the Events Space, Middle Mall, The Ridings, Wakefield, WF1 1DS – outside M&S and Poundland.

There will be a range of daily living equipment for you to try, along with the usual opportunities for socialising over a cuppa with other like-minded people. Joining us will be Graeme Marden from Sight and Sound Technology and other guests to be announced. Our Art Beyond Vision team will be demonstrating some of the techniques from our accessible art project and helping you to have a go yourself.

Equipment Demonstration and Advice Days for the rest of 2025: Monday 7th July, Monday 3rd November.

Living Well with Sight Loss course (LWWSL)

Are you newly diagnosed, feeling nervous about navigating the world, or want to start getting out and about more? Feeling like you need a boost of confidence?

This free, informal, two-day course delivers:

- Practical advice and local information.
- Daily living skills and leisure activities.
- Wellbeing and emotional support.
- The opportunity to share experiences with others.

A recent course attendee said:

“The course was so useful – lots of information, well presented, and a chance to meet others with sight impairments.”



A group of people at a Living Well with Sight Loss course.

Living Well with Sight Loss is a partnership between WDSA and RNIB, made possible with the kind support of Wakefield Council. Our next course will provisionally be taking place on Monday 20th and Monday 27th January at Lightwaves Leisure Centre, Lower York Street, Wakefield WF1 3LJ (opposite Wakefield Bus Station). Access to Lightwaves is step-free. Places are limited, so please contact the office on 01924 215555 and we will be happy to give you further information.

Fish & chips, with cash prize bingo! Wetherby Whaler Empire Outwood, 12.00 – 15.00 (approx.) on Wednesday 12th February



Two ladies holding up a large print bingo card.

Join us for a fish & chip lunch at the Wetherby Whaler Empire Outwood, 550 Leeds Road, Outwood, Wakefield, WF1 2DX. After lunch there will be the option to play cash prize bingo (50p a book), followed by tea, coffee, and biscuits.

There is a one-course menu available at £12.25 or a three-course menu available at £15.45. We will ask for your preferences at the time of booking, but payment will be taken on the day.

Starter options: homemade soup of the day **or** fruit juice.

Main course options: haddock, plaice or scampi and chips (chips may be substituted for a salad garnish if preferred).

Dessert options: ice cream **or** sweet of the day.

Mushy peas, beans or curry sauce are an extra £2.40 each. Soup may be substituted for mushy peas, beans, or curry sauce with your main course if preferred.

All main courses are served with Yorkshire tea or filter coffee. Please note that speciality coffees (e.g. latte, cappuccino), soft drinks and alcohol will be billed separately.

There are vegetarian/vegan/gluten free options, and all dietary requirements can be catered for, so please let us know your



Ladies enjoying fish and chips.

needs when booking. Prices may vary for different options, and we will advise you of prices at the time of confirming your booking.

All are welcome, including sighted companions. Parking is plentiful and free, and the 110 bus from central Wakefield and Leeds stops very close by on Leeds Road. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Please ring the office on 01924 215555 to book your place!

Invitation to work with disabled artist, Jason Wilsher-Mills

“My name is Jason Wilsher-Mills, and I am a disabled artist. Next year, I will be creating work for a major new exhibition at Wakefield Exchange, in summer 2025.

As a disabled person myself, I am passionate about working with other disabled people.

I will be creating work about Wakefield’s rich history, as well as telling new stories from the city’s disability groups.

I would like to offer you the opportunity to take part in this FREE groundbreaking project.

Come along and learn new skills at one of my workshops and be part of something very exciting.”

The workshops are due to take place in March 2025. We are thrilled to be included in Jason’s latest project, having worked with him on his Talking Rhubarb Totem project back in 2019, so if you would like to register your interest, please contact the office on 01924 215555 and we will share more details about the workshops as soon as we have them.



Jason pictured in his wheelchair with some of his work.

Calendar of events January – April 2025

January	February	March	April
1 We New Year's Day	1 Sa	1 Sa	1 Tu
2 Th	2 Su	2 Su	2 We
3 Fr	3 Mo Ridings	3 Mo Demo Day	3 Th ABV / Ponte Evening Group
4 Sa	4 Tu	4 Tu	4 Fr
5 Su	5 We	5 We	5 Sa
6 Mo Ridings	6 Th ABV / Ponte Evening Group	6 Th ABV / Ponte Evening Group	6 Su
7 Tu	7 Fr	7 Fr	7 Mo Ridings
8 We	8 Sa	8 Sa	8 Tu Horbury
9 Th Art Beyond Vision	9 Su	9 Su	9 We
10 Fr	10 Mo	10 Mo	10 Th
11 Sa	11 Tu Horbury	11 Tu Horbury	11 Fr
12 Su	12 We Fish & Chips	12 We	12 Sa
13 Mo	13 Th Art Beyond Vision	13 Th Art Beyond Vision	13 Su
14 Tu Horbury	14 Fr	14 Fr	14 Mo
15 We Ridings	15 Sa	15 Sa	15 Tu
16 Th Art Beyond Vision	16 Su	16 Su	16 We Ridings

10 Th Art Beyond Vision	17 Mo	17 Mo	17 Th	10 We Ridings
17 Fr	18 Tu	18 Tu	18 Fr Good Friday	
18 Sa	19 We Ridings	19 We Ridings	19 Sa	
19 Su	20 Th	20 Th Art Beyond Vision	20 Su	
20 Mo Living Well with Sight Loss Day 1	21 Fr	21 Fr	21 Mo Easter Monday	
21 Tu	22 Sa	22 Sa	22 Tu	
22 We	23 Su	23 Su	23 We	
23 Th Ponte / ABV / Wakefield Evening Group	24 Mo	24 Mo	24 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Grp	
24 Fr	25 Tu	25 Tu	25 Fr	
25 Sa	26 We	26 We	26 Sa	
26 Su	27 Th Ponte / ABV / Wakefield Evening Grp	27 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Grp	27 Su	
27 Mo Living Well with Sight Loss Day 2	28 Fr	28 Fr	28 Mo	
28 Tu				
29 We			29 Tu	
30 Th Art Beyond Vision			30 We	
31 Fr			31 Mo	

Art Beyond Vision

The next phase of our fully accessible creative programme, Art Beyond Vision, will be starting on Thursday 9th January and running for six weeks until Thursday 13th February. The sessions will run from 1pm to 3pm. We will cover a variety of art and craft techniques throughout the course. All techniques are made fully accessible so you can create no matter what your level of sight. The course is run by a qualified teacher with support from facilitators with living experience of sight loss. No experience is necessary, and all equipment and materials are provided.



Facilitator Tom with course participant Jean [photo credit: David Lindsay, photosbydavid.co.uk]

The weekly workshops will be taking place in the Activity Room at the St. Swithun's Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield, WF1 4RR.



A collage of people making crafts

The next course after this will be starting on Thursday 27th February for 6 weeks, finishing on Thursday 3rd April. We are delighted to share that we will be returning to The Art House for a ceramics course led by Hannah Way. Hannah is the Ceramic Studio Coordinator and Technician at The Art House and has worked brilliant with our groups in the past. The Art House is located on Drury Lane, Wakefield, WF1 2TE. It has step-free access and accessible toilet facilities.

Previous participants have said:

"I've thoroughly enjoyed the course, and I'm so pleased it has given me the confidence to carry on being creative like I used to be."

“I’ve looked forward to every Thursday as I live alone. Getting out regularly has been great, helping with my mental health. I’ve enjoyed learning new crafts and socialising with others.”

To help towards the costs of running the classes, we ask for a contribution of £5 per class per participant. This will include all equipment, materials, tuition, and refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits). If you would like to attend but the cost is difficult for you, please talk to us and we will see what we can do.

Places are limited, and priority will be given to people who have not participated in Art Beyond Vision before. If we are over-subscribed, remaining places will be allocated via random ballot. If you can’t make it to either of these courses but would be interested in future courses, please let us know and we will be pleased to add your name to our waiting list.

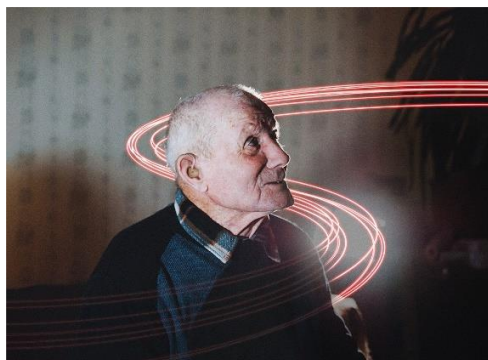
Cost of living support

The rising cost of living is a big concern for everyone right now. Please don’t struggle alone. We have a limited emergency fund available to help blind and partially sighted people who find themselves in financial hardship.

We can help with unexpected expenses, sudden increases in bills, or one-off emergency costs. Over the past two winters we have been able to support our members with things like the cost of emergency repairs to a heating system, a replacement bed for someone struggling with mobility and other health conditions, and alternative cooking provision for someone who could no longer use their oven.

For a confidential discussion about your situation, please contact Hayley on 01924 215555.

Have you heard of the Northern Powergrid Priority Services Register?



- If you, or someone you know may need a bit of extra help in a power cut, Northern Powergrid have a **free Priority Services Membership Scheme**.
- By telling them a little bit about your circumstances, they can help you or someone you care for plan in case the lights go out and, if they do, provide extra support and help.
- Already a member? Great, please ensure your details are up to date.

Why should you join?

- If they know who needs more support, and a power cut happens, they proactively get in touch and let you know what is happening, and when the power should be back on.
- They make sure to keep in touch and check in to understand if there's any extra help needed.
- There is a free phone number **0800 169 2996** which gets you straight through to a dedicated team who are there to listen and support you.

For those in most need they can provide a portable generator or battery pack which can keep equipment running if you are medically dependent. They have relationships with home oxygen suppliers so could get back up oxygen delivered if needed.

In addition to their own Customer Services Responder Team, their partner the British Red Cross can help provide welfare visits and reassurance. They also have a Just Eat account which they can use to help organise free hot meals for you.

Who can join? Anyone who:

- Is medically dependent on electrically powered equipment.
- Is of pensionable age or has children 5 years or under.

- Has hearing or visual impairment.
- Has a serious illness or limited mobility or suffers with a mental health condition.
- Has additional communication needs.

How do I join?

- Call **0800 169 2996** – free phone direct to their dedicated membership team.
- Fill in the form online by going to www.northernpowergrid.com/care.

Helpline hours and office cover

Following our move to the St. Swithun's Community Centre, our telephone number remains the same: 01924 215555. The operational hours of our helpline are also unchanged: 09.30 – 13.30 Monday to Thursday. Please continue to use our telephone number and not the St. Swithun's main switchboard as they cannot transfer you to us.

Please note, there are only three of us in the staff team and we are all part-time. At times we may be out on visits, at meetings, working from home, or running events. There will be occasions when there is no-one in the office at St. Swithun's, so visits to the office are by appointment only. Please ring in advance if you need to come to the office. This will ensure the right person is available to help you and avoid a wasted journey. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Newsletter format

The newsletter is available in large print, on audio CD or audio USB, in Braille, and via email. Please let us know if you would like to receive the newsletter in a different or additional format, or if you would like us to send one to a friend or family member. The newsletter is also available to download for free from the News section of our website, at www.wdsa.org.uk/news. Audio USB subscribers, please remember to return your reusable mailing pouch to us promptly as these are very expensive to replace.

Christmas Raffle 2024: prizes and winners!

Huge thanks to everyone who supported our annual Christmas Prize Draw by buying tickets and donating prizes. Here is a list of the winning ticket numbers and their prizes. Please note all winners have already been contacted:

1. Ticket number 4838 – Deluxe M&S Christmas Hamper, donated by Newmedica.
2. Ticket number 3098 – Luxury Christmas Hamper, donated by Lord St. Oswald.
3. Ticket number 0417 – M&S Christmas Hamper, donated by Notay Consulting.
4. Ticket number 5328 – M&S Christmas Hamper, donated by Notay Consulting.
5. Ticket number 7122 – Christmas hamper, donated by Pam Walters.
6. Ticket number 3223 – Family ticket, donated by the Brontë Parsonage Museum.
7. Ticket number 5783 – Family ticket, donated by York Archaeology Attractions / Jorvik Viking Centre.
8. Ticket number 4547 – Pair of travel vouchers, donated by the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.
9. Ticket number 5468 – Pair of open Club tickets, donated by Ripon Races.
10. Ticket number 3196 – Crockpot slow cooker, donated by Janet Fielder.

