

Wakefield District Sight Aid

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

01924 215555 – admin@wdsa.org.uk – www.wdsa.org.uk

President: The Lord St Oswald | Company No. 7432897 | Reg. Charity No. 1140483

Hello everyone and welcome to our April 2025 newsletter!

This quarter's newsletter contains information about all our regular groups, as well as special events including a technology open day with Ian from Optelec, a lunch and chat session with Lauren from the Yorkshire Cancer Community, and a coach trip to Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills. We are really excited to be visiting Armley Mills for the first time, especially because we will have a special tour and artefacts handling session just for us!

We are also delighted to invite you to a summer celebration event which will incorporate our Annual General Meeting. This gives us the opportunity to share lunch together and enjoy a special afternoon of games and activities. If this proves popular, we will look to start a regular games group, so please come along and try it out.

Over the past few months, we have been trying to contact people to do a short telephone survey about our services. We know that people don't always answer unexpected phone calls, so we are also including a paper survey with this newsletter. On one side are questions about our coffee mornings and social groups, and on the other there are questions about our home visiting service. If you have attended a group or received a home visit in the past 12 months, please complete one or both sides as appropriate and return in the reply-paid envelope. We are so grateful for your time.

With warm wishes,

Hayley Grocock (Chief Executive Officer)

What's on at Wakefield District Sight Aid

All our events up to the end of July 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 10am – 12 noon 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. The ground floor of the Blue car park at The Ridings is allocated for disabled visitors, but it is not free of charge. Blue badges can be used for free parking on-street and in nearby

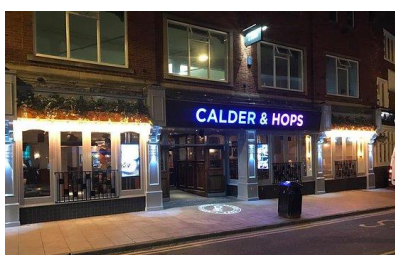
Council car parks. We are pleased to announce that Vicky Thompson, Regional Manager from the Macular Society, will be attending our coffee morning on Wednesday 21st May to chat with members about their services.

Please note there will be no coffee morning on Monday 5th May, due to the Early May Bank Holiday, and Monday 7th July will be a Demo Day rather than a coffee morning (details below).

Horbury coffee morning 10am – 12 noon on the second Tuesday of the month (The Cluntergate Centre Café, Cluntergate, Horbury WF4 5DA). Our friendly group of Horbury regulars would love to welcome you to our monthly gathering in this vibrant community centre!



Members of our Horbury group.



Outside view of Calder & Hops.

Wakefield evening social group 5pm – 7pm on the fourth Thursday of the month (held at Calder & Hops, 60 Northgate, Wakefield, WF1 3AP). This informal evening meet-up welcomes members of all ages and would love for you to join them!

Pontefract coffee morning 10am – 12 noon on the fourth Thursday of the month (at The Broken Bridge Wetherspoon, 5 Horse Fair, Pontefract, WF8 1PD). 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 the pub, near to the toilets. If you are not familiar with The Broken Bridge, staff will be happy to help you find us.

We are pleased to share that Vicky Thompson, Regional Manager from the Macular Society, will also be joining our Pontefract coffee morning on Thursday 22nd May and is looking forward to meeting members and sharing information with you.



People enjoying our Pontefract coffee morning.

Pontefract evening social group 5pm – 8pm on the first Thursday of the month (held at The Iron Dram, 27a Ropergate, Pontefract, WF8 1LG). This social group is the latest addition to our calendar and is hoping to welcome lots of new members!

Living Well with Sight Loss course

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.
- Tips on daily living skills and leisure activities.
- Sources of wellbeing and emotional support and how to access them.
- The opportunity to share experiences with others.



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

A recent course attendee said:

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

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 be taking place from 10.30am – 2.30pm on Monday 28th April and Thursday 1st May 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.

**Optelec Assistive Technology Clinic –
Monday 12th May 10am – 3pm at St. Swithun’s
Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield,
WF1 4RR**

We are delighted to welcome Ian Thwaites from specialist equipment manufacturer Optelec to Wakefield for a dedicated clinic with WDSA members. Ian will be showing and

demonstrating the latest assistive technology and will be available for 30-minute individual appointments to enable you to try some of the latest aids and adaptations on the market for blind and partially sighted people.



Optelec staff demonstrating wearable technology.

To book an appointment, please call Optelec on **0800 145 6115** or email **sarahk@optelec.co.uk**. Don't forget to let them know when booking if there is something specific you would like to discuss with Ian.

This event is free of charge and there is no obligation to purchase. Family members are of course welcome to join you at the appointment. The centre has step free access and accessible toilet facilities.

The nearest bus stop is Eastmoor Windhill Stores on Windhill Road, next to Eastmoor Health Centre and the fish and chip shop. Buses 100, 102 and 103 from Wakefield Bus Station stop there. It is about a five-minute walk from the bus stop to St. Swithun's. We have a free car park at the back of the building and on-street parking is unrestricted. The St. Swithun's Centre's Café on the Moor will be open between 9am and 2pm if you fancy a low-cost, home-cooked lunch or snack whilst you are here!

Wakefield District Sight Aid summer celebration, incorporating Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 4th June - 11.30am until 3pm at St. Swithun's Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield, WF1 4RR

All members, stakeholders, supporters, and friends are welcome to join us for a summer celebration, incorporating our AGM. This is an opportunity to celebrate our achievements over the past year, hear about our future plans, ask questions of the staff team, and meet the Board of Trustees.

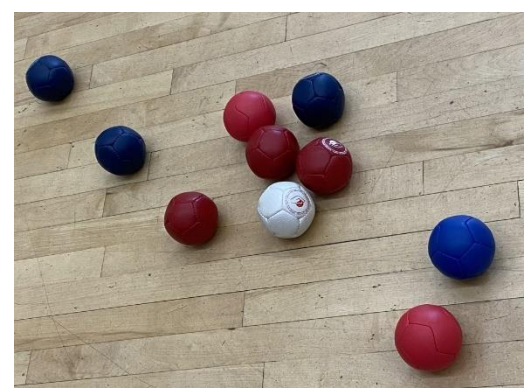
This year we are doing things a bit differently and would love to invite you to join us for a delicious home-made lunch at our new home in the St. Swithun's Community Centre. We will conduct the formal business of the AGM first, and we are delighted that our President Lord St. Oswald and the Mayor of Wakefield will be joining us.



Kurling.

After lunch, we would love you to stay for a games afternoon with a difference. All our games are designed with people with sight loss in mind, and we will have a variety of activities on offer, from Boccia bowls, to kurling, magnetic darts to giant dominoes. Come along and try something different, meet with friends old and new, and help us celebrate everything we've achieved together during the past year.

This event is completely free (who said there's no such thing as a free lunch!), but places are limited so please RSVP by ringing the office on 01924 215555 or emailing Hayley on ceo@wdsa.org.uk by Tuesday 27th May at the latest. This ensures we are catering for the right number of guests. Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements or need help planning your journey.



Boccia bowls.

Calendar of events April - July 2025

<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>
1 Tu	1 Th LWWSL Day 2 / ABV / Pontefract Evening Group	1 Su	1 Tu
2 We	2 Fr	2 Mo Ridings	2 We
3 Th ABV / Pontefract Evening Group	3 Sa	3 Tu	3 Th ABV / Pontefract Evening Group
4 Fr	4 Su	4 We AGM & celebration	4 Fr
5 Sa	5 Bank Holiday Mon.	5 Th ABV / Pontefract Evening Group	5 Sa
6 Su	6 Tu	6 Fr	6 Su
7 Mo Ridings	7 We	7 Sa	7 Mo Demo Day
8 Tu Horbury	8 Th Art Beyond Vision	8 Su	8 Tu Horbury
9 We	9 Fr	9 Mo	9 We
10 Th	10 Sa	10 Tu Horbury	10 Th Art Beyond Vision
11 Fr	11 Su	11 We	11 Fr
12 Sa	12 Mo Optelec clinic	12 Th Art Beyond Vision	12 Sa
13 Su	13 Tu Horbury	13 Fr	13 Su
14 Mo	14 We YCC lunch & chat	14 Sa	14 Mo
15 Tu	15 Th Art Beyond Vision	15 Su	15 Tu
16 We Ridings	16 Fr	16 Mo	16 We Ridings

16 We Ridings	16 Fr	16 Mo	16 We Ridings
17 Th	17 Sa	17 Tu	17 Th
18 Fr Good Friday	18 Su	18 We Ridings	18 Fr
19 Sa	19 Mo	19 Th Art Beyond Vision	19 Sa
20 Su	20 Tu	20 Fr	20 Su
21 Mo Easter Monday	21 We Ridings*	21 Sa	21 Mo
22 Tu	22 Th Ponte* / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Group	22 Su	22 Tu
23 We	23 Fr	23 Mo	23 We
24 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Group	24 Sa	24 Tu	24 Th Ponte / Wakefield Evening Group
25 Fr	25 Su	25 We Leeds Museum trip	25 Fr
26 Sa	26 Bank Holiday Mon.	26 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Group	26 Sa
27 Su	27 Tu	27 Fr	27 Su
28 Mo LWWSL Day 1	28 We	28 Sa	28 Mo
29 Tu	29 Th	29 Su	29 Tu
30 We	30 Fr	30 Mo	30 We
	31 Sa		31 Th

ABV: Art Beyond Vision

LWWSL: Living Well with Sight Loss

***: Macular Society attending**

**Lunch and chat with Yorkshire Cancer Community
– Wednesday 14th May 11am – 1pm at
Lightwaves Leisure Centre, Lower York Street,
Wakefield, WF1 3LJ**



More information can be found on the last page of the newsletter, but all are welcome to this free lunch event to share your experiences of accessing cancer screening appointments, as well as diagnosis and treatment. Even if you have never had cancer, we are keen to make sure that the voices of blind and partially sighted people are heard. For catering purposes, please ring the office on 01924 215555 and let us know how many people will be attending and any dietary requirements.

**Coach trip to Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills – Wednesday
25th June 11.30am – 4.15pm approx.**



*Leeds locomotive Aldwyth, at
Leeds Industrial Museum.*

We are delighted to invite you to join us on a day out at Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills! The museum is housed in a Grade II listed building which was once the world's largest woollen mill. Built in 1805, the current buildings reopened as a museum of industrial heritage in 1982.

Itinerary for the day:

- 11.30am – coach leaves from the back of Wakefield Bus Station (near the Scope shop).
- 12 noon – arrive at Armley Mills, time for lunch (please bring a packed lunch).
- After lunch, we will be given a tour of the site by Aleks Fagelman, Assistant Community Curator at Leeds Industrial Museum.
- Following the tour, Aleks will run an object handling session for us, focusing on some of their textile artefacts.
- There will then be some free time for you to explore the museum or enjoy the beautiful garden. We will also have access to a room with tea, coffee and biscuits provided.

- 3.30pm coach leaves for Wakefield.
- 4.15pm approx. coach arrives at Wakefield bus station.

The cost of this trip will be just £13 per person. All are welcome, including sighted companions. Places are limited so please book early to secure your place. If you need a sighted guide and cannot bring someone with you, please let us know and we will do our best to allocate a suitable volunteer. To book, or to find out more, please ring the office.

Equipment Demonstration and Advice Day - Monday 7th July 10am – 1pm in the Events Space, Middle Mall, The Ridings, Wakefield, WF1 1DS – outside M&S Food and Poundland.

There will be a range of daily living equipment for you to try and guest exhibitors to meet, along with the usual opportunities for socialising over a cuppa with other like-minded people. 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.

Our final Demo Day of 2025 will be on Monday 3rd November.

Art Beyond Vision

Our fully accessible art group meets every Thursday during term time, from 1pm until 3pm in the Activity Room at the St. Swithun’s Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield, WF1 4RR.

We cover a variety of art and craft techniques during our informal and fun sessions. You don’t have to come every week, and all techniques are made fully accessible so you can create pieces to be proud of no matter what your level of sight or previous experience. There is always a choice of techniques on offer, so you will always find something that appeals to you!



A collage of people making crafts.

The group is run by a qualified teacher with support from creative facilitators with living experience of sight loss. All equipment and materials are provided. Come along and learn new skills, meet new friends, and enjoy a cuppa together.

To help towards the costs of running the classes, we ask for a voluntary contribution of £3 per session per participant. This helps towards the costs of equipment, materials, tuition, room hire, and refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits).

Here's what group members have said:

"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."

"I'm new to my loss of sight. It's been great to meet others and learn new crafts and activities."

To find out more, please contact Ruth on 07947 836267. The dates are shown on the calendar on pages 6 and 7.

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. We have been able to support our members with items like emergency repairs to a heating system, a replacement bed for someone struggling with mobility, 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.

Forever Young: Adult Wellbeing Activities at Wakefield Libraries

Chair Based Exercise – Free

weekly beginner sessions aimed at reducing slips, trips and falls and supporting living independently. People who wish to participate just need to turn up.
Mondays – Pontefract Library (11am – 12 noon), Wakefield Library 1.30 - 2.30pm, Horbury Library (2 - 3pm)

Tuesdays – Sandal Library (3 - 4pm)

Wednesdays – Featherstone Library (12 - 1pm)

Thursdays – Normanton Library (10 - 11am)

Fridays – Castleford Library (10.30 - 11.30am), Stanley Library (1 - 2pm)

Library Walks/Strolls – Free weekly or monthly beginner walks aimed at reducing social isolation. Please note for the monthly walk, it's advised that participants call the library to confirm a date.

Mondays – Castleford Library (12 - 1pm)

Tuesdays – Horbury Library (10.30 - 11.30am), Sandal Library (11am – 12 noon monthly), Stanley Library (12 - 1pm)

Wednesdays – Pontefract Library (11am – 12 noon)

Thursdays – Hemsworth Library (10 - 11am), Featherstone Library (12 - 1pm monthly), Wakefield Library (2 - 3pm monthly)

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: 9.30am – 1.30pm 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.





**Wakefield District
Sight Aid**

**You're Invited: Lunch and Chat with
Yorkshire Cancer Community**

Join us for an informal and welcoming event focused on making cancer screening more accessible for people affected by sight loss. Any travel expenses can be reimbursed.

Where: Lightwaves Centre, Lower York St, Wakefield, WF1 3LJ

When: Wednesday, 14th May, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Anyone with sight impairments, their families, and carers are invited to share their experiences. Your views will help us improve cancer awareness, screening accessibility, diagnosis, and treatment.

What to Expect:

- **Help identify and address barriers to care for those with sight impairments**
- **Enjoy a relaxed discussion over complimentary sandwiches, snacks, and cake**

Your views matter—come and have your say! We look forward to welcoming you.

