



Wakefield District Sight Aid

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

Hello everyone and welcome to our Summer 2023 newsletter!

As usual, it's been a super busy quarter, with all our usual activities plus our AGM and a coach trip to Bridlington! Thank you to everyone who has joined us at these events. Our seaside trip was so much fun that we have decided to run the same trip again in September, so be sure to book your place today!

We are delighted to share that we have been successful in securing further funding for our Art Beyond Vision programme, so if you are interested in taking part in our fully accessible art project, further details can be found later in the newsletter. There's also information about a special surgery with Graeme from Sight and Sound Technology here at our office, another fish and chip lunch, and information about how to get involved with the launch of the new Sculpture Trail in Wakefield.

We're also thrilled to announce that we have been nominated for The King's Award for Voluntary Service! Equivalent to an MBE, The King's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest Award given to local voluntary groups in the UK and is awarded for life. Simply to have been nominated is a huge achievement and honour. Our nomination is a tribute to all the amazing volunteers who make our work possible. We will find out if we have been successful in November of this year.

We hope you have a wonderful summer!

With warm wishes,

Hayley Grocock (Chief Executive Officer)



CEO Hayley holding a sign that reads: Sight support means a fuller, happier life.

What's on at Wakefield District Sight Aid

All our events up to the end of October 2023 are shown on the calendar on page 12. Here is a summary of what's coming up:



Photo of people enjoying hot drinks and board games at our Ridings coffee morning

The Ridings coffee morning 10.00 – 12.00 on the first Monday and third Wednesday of the month – we are now located in the Events Space on the Middle Mall, The Ridings, Wakefield, WF1 1DS – outside M&S and Poundland). There is plentiful disabled parking at The Ridings, but it is not free of charge. Please use the Blue car park level 5 and take the glass lifts to the Middle Mall. There is on-street parking nearby where Blue Badges can be used. Nearby Council car parks also offer free parking for Blue Badge holders.

Horbury coffee morning 10.00 – 12.00 on the second Tuesday of the month (The Cluntergate Centre Café, Cluntergate, Horbury WF4 5DA).

Younger members social group (YMSG) 17.00 – 19.00 on the fourth Thursday of the month (held at Calder & Hops, 60 Northgate, Wakefield, WF1 3AP). This friendly and informal meet-up is for anyone of working age, and new members are encouraged and welcomed!

Sight and Sound Technology surgery – Tuesday 19th September 10.00 -14.00 at WDSA, 35 Peterson Road, Wakefield WF1 4DU

We are delighted to welcome Graeme Marden from Sight and Sound Technology, who is running a surgery at our office on Tuesday 19th September. Graeme will have a range of products specifically designed for visually impaired people, from magnifiers and mobile phones to AI-powered smart glasses. To avoid disappointment, we are running this event on an appointment-only basis, so everyone can discuss their needs individually and privately with Graeme. Call the office today on 01924 215555 to book an appointment.

Coach trip to Bridlington! Wednesday 13th September

After the success of our trip to Bridlington in May, we are delighted to be able to offer another opportunity to join us at the seaside on Wednesday 13th September! We will be leaving central Wakefield (behind the bus station on Borough Rd/Providence Street, WF1 3AQ) at 09.00, picking up in Pontefract (on the Horsefair, outside the Pontefract Royal Mail Sorting Office, WF8 1AA) at 09.35 and onwards to the Harbour at Bridlington.



Yasmin, Alan and Ania, paddling in the sea on our last trip to Bridlington.

You will then be able to spend a few hours in Bridlington as you wish, and we will depart Bridlington at 16.00, with the aim of being back in Wakefield for around 18.00.

The cost of the trip is just £20 per person to cover the cost of the transport. We are very grateful to our friends at Open Country who are allowing us the use of their fully wheelchair accessible minibuses and experienced drivers for the day! Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Sighted companions are welcome, as always. If you will need a sighted guide during the day, please let us know at the time of booking. We do hope you'll be able to join us!

NEW PROJECT! Art Beyond Vision



Participants at our Art Beyond Vision course in the Treacy Hall [photo credit: David Lindsay, photosbydavid.co.uk]

Following a very successful pilot earlier this year, and thanks to further funding from Wakefield Council Culture Grants, we are thrilled to announce that our Art Beyond Vision programme will be starting again in September! As before, the courses will be run by local artist Ruth Fones, assisted by Ania and Tom, our two facilitators who both have lived experience of sight loss themselves.

The courses will run weekly on Thursdays for eight weeks, and we have three options to choose from, so please pick the one that suits you best:

Course 1:

10.00 – 12.00 Thursday 7th September - Thursday 26th October.

Course 2:

13.00 – 15.00 Thursday 7th September – Thursday 26th October.

Course 3:

10.00 – 12.00 Thursday 9th November – Thursday 30th November (4 weeks) then resuming on Thursday 11th January – Thursday 1st February 2024 (4 weeks).

The courses will be held in the Treacy Hall, adjacent to Wakefield Cathedral. The Treacy Hall is fully accessible.

These courses are open to everyone, irrespective of whether you have previously been creative, or have never done anything like this before. You will be given the skills and materials to create work to a high standard and that is original to you. Participants in the pilot earlier this year are welcome to attend again to further develop their skills.

The courses focus on techniques that anyone can engage with, no matter what level of usable vision (if any) they have (such as tactile drawing, origami, collage, embossing, basic stitch techniques). We do not use techniques such as watercolours as these are not accessible for people with no vision.

We are also planning to run a series of fully accessible ceramics workshops in partnership with our friends at The Art House. These sessions will be starting in November.

There are just ten places available per course, so please book now to avoid disappointment. To register your interest in any of the courses, please call 01924 215555 or email Hayley on ceo@wdsa.org.uk.

Fish & chip lunch! 12.00 – 14.00 on Wednesday 11th October at the Wetherby Whaler Empire Outwood!

Join us for a three-course fish & chip lunch at the Wetherby Whaler Empire Outwood, 550 Leeds Road, Outwood, Wakefield, WF1 2DX.

Choose from homemade soup of the day **or** fruit juice, followed by haddock, plaice or scampi and chips (chips may be substituted for a salad garnish if preferred), with ice cream **or** sweet of the day to finish. Mushy peas, beans or curry sauce are an extra £2.05 each.



Service users enjoying a fish & chip lunch at the Wetherby Whaler.

If you don't want a starter, you may have mushy peas, beans or curry sauce with your main course instead of a starter at no extra charge.

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

The cost is £15.45 per person for the three-course lunch, payable on the day. There are vegetarian/vegan/gluten free options, and all dietary requirements can be catered for, so please let us know your 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 book now by calling 01924 215555!

Advance dates for your diary

Next Demo Day: Monday 6th November at The Ridings.

Christmas lunch: Monday 4th December – details will follow in the Autumn newsletter (there will be no Ridings coffee morning that day).

Dare to Dream

Wakefield District Sight Aid, working in partnership with Yorkshire Mentoring and WEA (the adult learning specialists) are pleased to announce phase 3 of our Dare to Dream programme!

If you are of working age and would like to get into paid work or volunteering, are thinking of a career change, would like to explore starting your own business, or have other professional goals, then Dare to Dream is the course for you!



Participants at one of our Dare to Dream courses.

This FREE course consists of weekly 2-hour sessions, for 7 weeks. By the end of the course, you will have reviewed your skills and experience, considered your options and opportunities, identified possible challenges and how to overcome them and set some realistic goals for the future. We also hope to pair you with a professional mentor who will offer support and advice to help you work towards your goals.

Feedback from previous participants:

“As a result, I have secured interviews for two jobs.”

“I have increased my confidence and enjoyed the group work and discussions.”

“I now feel ready to find work and/or to volunteer.”

Our next course will be starting as soon as we have enough participants, so please contact the office to find out more and register your place!

Emotional support

If you are struggling with the emotional aspects of losing your sight, or are going through tough times and would like someone to talk to, we can help. Through our partnership with **GASPED** we can provide access to counselling, free of charge.

Client A, who has received counselling through this programme, said:

“When I first met you [at WDSA], I wanted to end my life. I was really down in the dumps and couldn't see a way out. Now, I feel much more open about talking about my feelings. Since having the counselling, I just find it much easier to cope.”

Contact us today for a confidential chat about how to refer yourself.

Tech Buddy with Dean Wilcox and Alan Rayner

Our technology support service provides in-person and telephone support with technology, and one-to-one computer training, from people with lived experience of sight loss themselves. Dean provides support with mobile phones, tablets and other technology over the phone or in person at our office on the second and fourth Mondays of the month. Please ring the office on 01924 215555 to discuss your needs and make an appointment with Dean. Alan is available to provide free training on Microsoft basic software packages, and speech and magnification software on the computers at Wakefield library. To find out more, please contact Alan on 01924 365357 for an informal chat about your needs.

Living Well with Sight Loss course (LWWSL)

This free course aims to help you increase your independence, boost your confidence and connect with others to share experiences. Whether you are newly diagnosed, facing a change in circumstances, or simply want to start enjoying life more, Living Well With Sight Loss delivers practical advice, useful information and resources available across Wakefield.



A group of people at one of our Living Well With Sight Loss courses.

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 25th September and Monday 2nd October, so please contact the office on 01924 215555 to register your place.

The Gathering – Saturday 16th September

Our friends at The Hepworth Wakefield have invited us to share this information to encourage as many people as possible to come and be involved in some of the exciting cultural events that are happening in Wakefield this summer.

Wakefield already has a great reputation as a city full of creativity. As well as the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and The Hepworth Gallery, we are home to hundreds of artists making work across the district. The latest high-profile addition to our exciting cultural offer is a new million-pound Sculpture Trail, comprising six new outdoor public sculptures by five British artists that will be installed in the city centre this summer.

People across Wakefield from all walks of life, ages, backgrounds, and different abilities are getting involved in the lead-up and the celebrations. Local community groups and organisations will be working on the project across the summer, getting ready for 'The Gathering' - a final celebration event which will happen on the afternoon of Saturday 16th September in the city centre.

At the event, community groups and members of the public will come together to create a very special performance which will bring to life the themes and inspirations behind the sculptures. There will be lots of ways to get involved on the day with free art workshops and the opportunity to learn how take part in the performance. More information will be coming very soon in the local press and on social media about free public access art workshops happening in different locations across the summer and how to sign up. You can also contact Eleanor Barrett on EleanorBarrett@hepworthwakefield.org to find out more.

One of the artists featured in the new Sculpture Trail is Wakefield-born Jason Wilsher-Mills, who worked with Wakefield District Sight Aid members on his Talking Rhubarb Totem project in 2019. You can still listen to Jason in conversation with WDSA members online here: <https://www.hotknife.co.uk/wordpress/Jason/>

Make your Will For Good – free and professionally drafted with Bequeathed - the simple way to make the right will for you.

We all need an up-to-date will, but it's one of those jobs many of us put off. Make your free Will For Good with Wakefield District Sight Aid and Bequeathed in three easy steps:



1. Take the online will interview, with support and guidance available throughout the process. Bequeathed transfer your answers, as well as the will their system creates from them, to your chosen legal firm. You can start this online yourself at any time, but if you need assistance and cannot do it online then please contact us. We can make an appointment for you to come to the office and a member of staff will be happy to complete the online questionnaire with you.
2. Attend a 30-minute appointment, via telephone or video call, at home or at our office with staff support. The firm will discuss your situation and your wishes and confirm the will fully caters for your needs.
3. Receive your free Will For Good in the post, sign it in front of witnesses and return it to the legal firm. They will check it has been executed correctly and securely store it for you, also at no cost.

The service is accessible and inclusive to offer every supporter a free Will For Good. There is never any charge for a standard will, which is suitable for most people. If your circumstances are complicated and you require further legal advice, the legal firm will explain what's needed and give you a quote to consider.

Start your Will For Good today at <https://www.bequeathed.org/wdsa>.

Big button phones – giveaway!

We still have a limited number of fantastic big button landline phones that were donated by our friends at Direct Marketing in Wakefield! They have large, high contrast square buttons and are ideal for people with low vision. They are completely free of charge, so if you or someone you know would like one, please contact the office and we will be delighted to post one out for you!



A silver telephone handset with large square buttons.

Library Services for Visually Impaired People

Everyone can use and enjoy their library. There are many FREE services available to people who have poor sight.

- A huge range of books both in large print and audio and you can download free audiobooks, magazines, newspapers, and e-books.
- Readers Groups meet throughout the District to chat about reading and audio books.
- If you find it difficult to visit your local library due to illness, age or disability, you can apply for the Home Library Service to visit your home.
- Our Mobile Library has regular stops throughout the District.
- All our computers have Microsoft accessibility options such as screen magnifier as standard.

For further information telephone 0345 8 506 506 or www.wakefield.gov.uk/libraries-and-local-history

Wakefield Libraries are also currently having a big sale of their old stock, including lots of audio books on CD at very low prices. Please do pop along to Wakefield Library at Wakefield One to have a browse and pick up a bargain!

Hospital engagement

Have you recently had a stay in hospital? As someone with a visual impairment, was your stay comfortable and did you feel that staff were

fully aware of your needs? We are currently working with colleagues in the Patient Experience Team at Mid Yorkshire NHS Trust to try to make sure that, when people who have additional requirements must stay in hospital, their stay is as comfortable as possible. Therefore, we'd like to hear from you if there are questions you wish you'd been asked that would have made your stay more comfortable. Please call the office on 01924 215555 and ask to speak to Hayley to share your experiences.

Volunteers

Without volunteers, much of our work would not be possible. We are looking for telephone befrienders, helpers at our outreach events, fundraisers, and people to join our Board of Trustees, which is responsible for the governance of the charity (we are particularly interested in hearing from people with lived experience of sight loss). If you or anyone you know would be interested in joining our friendly team, please contact Nicola Ellis (Finance and Outreach Manager) on 01924 215555 or operations@wdsa.org.uk, for an informal chat or to find out more about the roles on offer and how you can help.



Opening hours

Our phone number is 01924 215555. The office is open 09.30 – 13.30 Monday – Thursday (answerphone operational at busy times and outside of these hours). You can also reach us by email at admin@wdsa.org.uk.

Newsletter format

The newsletter is available in large print, audio CD or USB, and in Braille. We can also send you a copy by email. Please contact the office on 01924 215555 to request a different or additional format. For our audio subscribers, please don't forget to return your mailing pouch and USB stick (if you receive one) so we can use them for the next newsletter. We've just had to buy 50 more pouches at a cost of £3.37 each and we cannot afford for these to not be returned. Persistent non-returners will be removed from the audio subscribers list (you will still receive a paper copy). Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Calendar of events – July – October 2023			
July	August	September	October
1 Sa	1 Tu	1 Fr	1 Su
2 Su	2 We	2 Sa	2 Mo Ridings/LWWSL
3 Mo Demo Day	3 Th	3 Su	3 Tu
4 Tu	4 Fr	4 Mo Ridings	4 We
5 We	5 Sa	5 Tu	5 Th Art Group
6 Th	6 Su	6 We	6 Fr
7	7 Mo Ridings	7 Th Art group	7 Sa
8 Sa	8 Tu Horbury	8 Fr	8 Su
9 Su	9 We	9 Sa	9 Mo Tech
10 Mo Tech	10 Th	10 Su	10 Tu Horbury
11 Tu Horbury	11Fr	11 Mo Tech	11 We
12 We Fish & Chip Lunch	12 Sa	12 Tu Horbury	12 Th Art group
13 Th	13 Su	13 We Brid Trip	13 Fr
14 Fr	14 Mo Tech	14 Th Art group	14 Sa
15 Sa	15 Tu	15 Fr	15 Su
16 Su	16 We Ridings	16 Sa	16 Mo
17 Mo	17 Th	17 Su	17 Tu
18 Tu	18 Fr	18 Mo	18 We Ridings
19 We Ridings	19 Sa	19 Tu Sight & Sound Surgery	19 Th Art group
20 Th	20 Su	20 We Ridings	20 Fr
21 Fr	21 Mo	21 Th Art group	21 Sa
22 Sa	22 Tu	22 Fr	22 Su
23 Su	23 We	23 Sa	23 Mo Tech
24 Mo Tech	24 Th YMSG	24 Su	24 Tu
25 Tu	25 Fr	25 Mo Tech/LWWSL	25 We
26 We	26 Sa	26 Tu	26 Th Art/YMSG
27 Th YMSG	27 Su	27 We	27 Fr
28 Fr	28 Mo Bank Hol	28 Th Art/YMSG	28 Sa
29 Sa	29 Tu	29 Fr	29 Su
30 Su	30 We	30 Sa	30 Mo
31 Mo	31 Th		