



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 Autumn 2023 newsletter!

We hope this newsletter finds you well and having enjoyed the summer! Don't miss details of our forthcoming Demo Day and our Christmas lunch later in the newsletter! Our Art Beyond Vision programme is also up and running again, with spaces available on our courses starting on Thursday 9th November. All the information is below.

Included with the newsletter is our annual customer care survey, a book of raffle tickets for our Christmas prize draw, and a return envelope for your completed survey, raffle ticket counterfoils and payment for any raffle tickets you wish to purchase. Tickets are £1 each and available in books of five tickets. More raffle tickets are available from the office. As always, we have some great prizes, including Christmas hampers, four tickets for Sleeping Beauty at Theatre Royal Wakefield, and much more!

Please do take the time to complete our survey if you can. Your feedback is very important to us. If the printed survey is tricky for you to complete, please contact the office and we would be happy to go through it with you over the phone. You may remain anonymous if you wish. We really appreciate your time.

Please note that the office will be closed for the Christmas and New Year break from Friday 22nd December, reopening on Wednesday 3rd January 2024. We hope you have a wonderful Christmas!

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 January 2024 are shown on the calendar on the back page. 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, 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 and Council car parks nearby where Blue Badges can be used.

Please note Monday 6th November will be a Demo Day (details below).

There will be no coffee morning on the following dates:

- Monday 4th December, due to our Christmas lunch taking place the same day (details below)
- Wednesday 20th December
- Monday 1st January, due to the New Year's Day Bank Holiday.

Our last Ridings coffee morning of the year will therefore be on Wednesday 15th November. Our first one in the New Year will be on Wednesday 17th January.

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! *Please note there will be no group in December due to the Christmas break.*

Art Beyond Vision – places available!



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

Our next Art Beyond Vision course is running from 1pm until 3pm from 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 step free and fully accessible.

These courses are open to everyone, irrespective of whether you have previously been creative, or have never done anything like this before. The course is run by local artist Ruth Fones, assisted by Ania and Tom, our two facilitators who both have lived experience of sight loss themselves. You will be given the skills and materials to create work to a high standard and that is original to you. Participants in previous courses 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.



A close-up of a person's hands practicing paper folding techniques.

We are also running a series of fully accessible ceramics workshops in partnership with our friends at The Art House on Drury Lane, Wakefield, WF1 2TE. These sessions will run on the same dates as above, from 10am until 12 noon.

Supported with funding by
wakefieldcouncil

Wakefield Council logo, with the words "Supported with funding by Wakefield Council".

There are just ten places available per course, so please book now by calling 01924 215555 to avoid disappointment.

Equipment Demonstration and Advice Day: 10.00 – 13.00 on Monday 6th November 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.

Our guests will be Nigel from VisionAid Technologies (who are kindly sponsoring this event and this newsletter), Katy from Citizens Advice who will be able to chat about a range of issues from energy bills to welfare benefits, Jill from the Yorkshire Cancer Community who will be promoting the Cancer SMART message, David from RNIB who will be bringing along a selection of their latest daily living products, and Ann Marie from Healthwatch Wakefield who will be gathering your views and experiences of accessing health and social care services. You will also be able to order large print 2024 diaries and calendars.

Next Demo Day will be Monday 4th March 2024.

Christmas lunch – 12.00 – 14.00 on Monday 4th December

We are delighted to announce that our Christmas lunch this year will be taking place at **The Bridge Inn (formerly The Ruddy Duck), Bridge Street, Wakefield WF1 5RT.**



Photograph of the outside of The Bridge Inn

The Bridge Inn will be offering its festive set menu (£18.99 for two courses, £21.99 for three courses) alongside its usual menu. There is no need to pre-order your food, you can choose what you want on the day and pay for your own food and drinks at the time of ordering.

The Bridge Inn is entirely step-free. There is a large free car park and the Wakefield Free City Bus, which runs every 10-12 minutes from stand 1 at Wakefield Bus Station, stops just across the road (outside Spectrum Community Health Centre, next to The Hepworth). We are happy to meet anyone coming by bus to help guide you across the road.

Please let us know by Monday 20th November if you will be attending, so we can ensure that The Bridge Inn can reserve a large enough area for us all. We ho-ho-hope you can join us!

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.



Two ladies trying out at talking book player 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 22nd and Monday 29th January 2024, so please contact the office on 01924 215555 to register your place.

Emotional support service

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 and discuss a referral.

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.

Survey on behalf of Yorkshire Sport Foundation

We understand that blind and partially sighted people are less likely to be physically active than the general population. We know this isn't because

people don't want to be physically active, but rather because blind and partially sighted people must overcome various barriers in order to be active.



Yorkshire Sport Foundation logo

Yorkshire Sport Foundation's vision is to create a vibrant, healthy, and prosperous Yorkshire through everyone moving more. We are working in partnership with them to find out more about what activities people are already doing and what barriers they experience to participation. Information provided by you will help us potentially work together to develop and improve the sports and physical activity opportunities for the blind and partially sighted community in the District.

If you are able to complete the survey online, you can do so here:

<https://yorkshire.sportsuite.co.uk/forms/view/6108>

If you are not able to complete the survey online but would like to share your views, please call the office on 01924 215555 and a member of the team would be happy to complete the survey for you over the phone.

Working with children and families

Do you have a child with a visual impairment, or do you know a family with a blind or partially sighted child? Wakefield District Sight Aid is starting to think about how we can support children, young people, and families better and we would love to hear your ideas about how to do this. We held two lovely family events over the summer in our garden here at Peterson Road and would like to make family activities a regular part of what we do. Please get in touch to share your thoughts.



Two children holding up cuttings they planted at our family garden party.

Wakefield Safe Space

Wakefield Safe Space provides free, confidential, one-to-one mental health support and group social activities to anybody aged 16+ in the Wakefield District. They are open from 6pm until midnight, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year. There is no waiting list or need for a professional referral.



Wakefield Safe Space logo of hands holding a tree.

They offer individual support for anyone in mental health crisis, dealing with self-harm, suicidal thoughts, feelings of overwhelm, mental distress, and any other mental health issues. They also offer a safe place for games, chat, mindfulness, and the opportunity to share food together, from 8pm until midnight.

One-to-one support is available over the phone on 07776 962815 or face-to-face at Prosper House (formerly Caduceus House), 59 Upper Warrengate, Wakefield, WF1 4JZ. Parking for visitors is free. If you are unable to drive or pay for public transport, they can pay for taxis to enable you to access their support.

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:



Bequeathed logo

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> or call us in the office to find out how we can help you make your Will.

Volunteers

As we come to the end of the year, we would like to extend a special thank you to all our volunteers, who do so much to make sure that we are able to continue to offer all the services and activities we do. This newsletter would not get to you without volunteer support, our social events and trips out would not be possible, and services such as befriending would not happen without our dedicated volunteers.

We are blessed with many wonderful volunteers, but we are always happy to hear from anyone who would like to give some of their time to us. We are always looking for telephone befrienders, helpers at our outreach events, and anyone with a background or interest in fundraising. If you or



*Wartime 'We Need You!'
graphic*

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.

VisionAid

Independent Family Business Est. 1996

VisionAid invite you to join us at the WDSA Demo and Advice Day

Explore the latest solutions with our friendly and knowledgeable specialist, Nigel Crook.

**Mon 6th
November
2023**

10:00am - 1:00pm

The Events Space

(Middle Mall, by M&S Food and Poundland)

The Ridings, Wakefield, WF1 1DS

We are the largest independent low vision and blindness solution provider in the UK.

We are passionate about assisting every person to find the best possible solution for their unique needs.

Accessible Mobile Phones

- Simple to use
- Clear, tactile, well-spaced buttons
- Loud speaker and high contrast display
- Reads everything out loud: menus, messages, callers etc.
- Easy voice control / dictation
- Smartphone features if required



**If you can't make it on the day, don't worry!
Please just call us to arrange a free in-home demonstration**

Freephone 0800 002 5555



Call VisionAid for your free catalogue: 0800 002 5555



Video Magnifiers

- Handheld, transportable & desktop
- **Replace** all your magnifying glasses
- **Adjustable magnification: 2x to 150x**
- Read **faster** and more **comfortably**
- **Colour & contrast enhancement**
- **Near, self & distance** viewing options



Text-to-Speech

- When magnification is not sufficient
- Push **one button** to have **post, magazines, books, newspapers** etc. read to you with **natural, clear voices**
- **New! OrCam Read 3** - an all in one solution that can even **read handwriting out loud!** • **Pocket-sized**



Wearable Solutions

- **Hands free magnification** allows users to **watch TV, cinema, see loved ones' faces, cook, play cards** etc.
- Ideal solution for practical tasks
- Some devices offer **colour detection, facial, barcode & money recognition**
- **Easy to use** and **comfortable** to wear



New! Eye5: Our most glasses-like wearable

VisionAid
Independent Family Business Est. 1996

Freephone:
0800 002 5555
www.visionaid.co.uk

Calendar of events – October 2023 – January 2024

October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024
1 Su	1 We	1 Fr	1 Mo Bank Hol.
2 Mo Ridings/LWWSL	2 Th	2 Sa	2 Tu CLOSED
3 Tu	3 Fr	3 Su	3 We
4 We	4 Sa	4 Mo Xmas lunch	4 Th
5 Th Art Group	5 Su	5 Tu	5 Fr
6 Fr	6 Mo Demo Day	6 We	6 Sa
7 Sa	7 Tu	7 Th	7 Su
8 Su	8 We	8 Fr	8 Mo
9 Mo Tech	9 Th Art Group	9 Sa	9 Tu Horbury
10 Tu Horbury	10 Fr	10 Su	10 We
11 We Fish & Chip lunch	11 Sa	11 Mo Tech	11 Th Art Group
12 Th Art group	12 Su	12 Tu Horbury	12 Fr
13 Fr	13 Mo Tech	13 We	13 Sa
14 Sa	14 Tu Horbury	14 Th	14 Su
15 Su	15 We Ridings	15 Fr	15 Mo
16 Mo	16 Th Art Group	16 Sa	16 Tu
17 Tu	17 Fr	17 Su	17 We Ridings
18 We Ridings	18 Sa	18 Mo	18 Th Art Group
19 Th Art group	19 Su	19 Tu	19 Fr
20 Fr	20 Mo	20 We	20 Sa
21 Sa	21 Tu	21 Th	21 Su
22 Su	22 We	22 Fr CLOSED	22 Mo Tech / LWWSL
23 Mo Tech	23 Th Art/YMSG	23 Sa	23 Tu
24 Tu	24 Fr	24 Su	24 We
25 We	25 Sa	25 Mo Xmas Day	25 Th Art/YMSG
26 Th Art/YMSG	26 Su	26 Tu Boxing Day	26 Fr
27 Fr	27 Mo Tech	27 We CLOSED	27 Sa
28 Sa	28 Tu	28 Th CLOSED	28 Su
29 Su	29 We	29 Fr CLOSED	29 Mo LWWSL
30 Mo	30 Th Art Group	30 Sa	30 Tu
31 Tu		31 Su	31 We