



Wakefield District Sight Aid

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

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President: The Lord St Oswald | Registered Charity No. 1140483

Hello everyone and welcome to our October 2026 newsletter!

As usual, this quarter's edition is full of trips and events for you to get involved with, including our very popular Christmas lunch! Places on all these events are limited, so please book your place today!

In other news, we would like to congratulate our volunteer Catherine Brocklesby for being shortlisted for a Community Foundation Wakefield Unsung Heroes Award 2026! Many of you will know Catherine, who not only volunteers for us but also for Open Country, and is a vital part of both of our teams. The awards ceremony is on 15th October, and we'd like to wish Catherine lots of luck. She is already a winner in our eyes!

It has come to our attention that Calibre Audio has started charging for its talking books service. If you are currently receiving talking books from Calibre and would like us to transfer you over to RNIB's service (which is currently still free), please ring the office on 01924 215555 and we will be delighted to do this for you.

As usual, we've enclosed a book of raffle tickets for our annual Christmas Prize Draw, plus an envelope to return payment and the ticket counterfoils. There are Christmas hampers and lots of other prizes to be won. We are very grateful to everyone who supports this fundraiser.

We hope to see you very soon!

With warm wishes,

Hayley Grocock (Chief Executive Officer)



CEO Hayley & Trustee Sarah at The Yorkshire Business Awards 2026.

What's on at Wakefield District Sight Aid

All our events up to the end of January 2027 are shown on the calendar on the middle pages (p6-7). 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 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.

Please note, our Ridings coffee mornings are continuing as usual. There will be a sale of items made by our Art Beyond Vision group at our coffee morning on Monday 2nd November, including Christmas cards and gifts! There will be no Ridings coffee morning on Monday 7th December due to our Christmas lunch taking place the same day.

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 regular gathering in this vibrant community centre!



Members of our Horbury group.

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. You can find us towards the back of the pub, near the toilets. If you are not familiar with The Broken Bridge, staff will be happy to help you find us. *Please note there will be no coffee morning in December as it would fall on Christmas Eve!*



People enjoying our Pontefract coffee morning.

Cuppa and Connect! 10am – 12noon on the third Wednesday of the month (at St. Swithun's Community Centre).

Please join us at St. Swithun's Community Centre for a friendly, warm, welcoming group for blind and partially sighted people of all ages. Enjoy tea, coffee and biscuits, plus a different activity every month. It's a great chance to relax, connect with others and enjoy some midweek wellbeing together. Here's what's coming up at Cuppa and Connect:



We enjoyed a talk from Wakefield Badger Group in August.

Wednesday 21st October: Spooky quiz with Quizmaster Michael

Wednesday 18th November: Equipment demonstration from Paul at Optelec

Wednesday 16th December: Christmas quiz with Quizmaster Michael (and mince pies!)

Wednesday 20th January: accessible games

Why not stay for a low cost, home cooked lunch in the Community Café afterwards?

Wakefield evening social group: *please note this group is currently on pause until the New Year as we are considering refreshing the format. We are running a survey to find out what people would like from this group. You can complete the survey online via the link below, or please ring the office and we will be happy to go through it with you over the phone:*

<https://polls.plinth.org.uk/surveys/Wakefield%20District%20Sight%20Aid-wo8e0w8ybwU0XuvIZMy>

Pontefract evening social group: 5pm – 8pm on the first Thursday of the month (held at Iron Dram, 27a Ropergate,



People enjoying our Pontefract evening social group.

27a Ropergate, Pontefract, WF8 1LG). This growing and welcoming social group is looking forward to meeting you! The Iron Dram has a unique and charming vibe and members of all ages attend (please note there are a couple of steps to navigate).

Art Beyond Vision: 1pm – 3pm every Thursday during term time (in the Activity Room at St. Swithun's Community Centre).

Dates are shown as ABV on the calendar on p6 - 7. There will be no group on 29th October, 24th December or 31st December due to school holidays.

Our informal, sociable, and fun sessions cover a variety of art and craft techniques for everyone to enjoy. All ages and abilities are welcome – no previous experience is necessary. We have long-time crafters, people who've not been creative since school, and everyone in-between!

Whether you are completely blind or have some usable vision, all techniques are adapted so you can create pieces to be proud of no matter what your level of sight or previous experience. We also provide tea, coffee and biscuits, because the social element is just as important as the creative side!



Members of our Art Beyond Vision group.

The group is run by a qualified teacher, alongside creative facilitators with lived experience of sight loss, so you can be sure of a supportive and understanding environment. All equipment and materials are provided. Come along and learn new skills, meet new friends, and enjoy a cuppa together.

One group member said, *“As a person with visual impairment, being able to meet people with similar eyesight problems and be creative together is wonderful. We feel like a team and we all help each other.”*

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.

We are hoping to run a six-week willow weaving course starting in January. Places for this must be booked in advance so please call Ruth on 07947 836267 or the office on 01924 215555 to find out more.

Living Well with Sight Loss course (LWWSL): 10.30am – 2.30pm on Monday 18th and Monday 25th January 2027 at Lightwaves Leisure Centre, Lower York Street, Wakefield WF1 3LJ (opposite Wakefield Bus Station)

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 focuses on:

- "Out and about" - mobility, transport and concessions
- "In the home" - daily living skills and technology
- "Starting out" - CVI process and main eye care services
- "Looking after ourselves" - eye health, wellbeing, leisure and next steps



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

Recent course attendees have said:

"I totally loved the course and by the end I felt so much more confident. Thank you."

"It's a great course and gives you all the information you need and having the right people speaking at the course really helps."

Living Well with Sight Loss is a partnership between WDSA and RNIB, made possible with the kind support of Wakefield Council. You are very welcome to bring a sighted family member or friend with you.

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 and book your place.

Calendar of events October 2026 – January 2027

<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>January</u>
1 Th Art Beyond Vision / Ponte Evening Group	1 Su	1 Tu	1 Fr New Year's Day
2 Fr	2 Mo Ridings	2 We	2 Sa
3 Sa	3 Tu	3 Th ABV / Ponte Evening Group / Panto	3 Su
4 Su	4 We	4 Fr	4 Mo Ridings
5 Mo Ridings	5 Th Art Beyond Vision / Ponte Evening Group	5 Sa	5 Tu
6 Tu	6 Fr	6 Su	6 We
7 We Macular info morning	7 Sa	7 Mo Xmas lunch	7 Th Art Beyond Vision / Ponte Evening Group
8 Th Art Beyond Vision	8 Su	8 Tu Horbury	8 Fr
9 Fr	9 Mo	9 We	9 Sa
10 Sa	10 Tu Horbury	10 Th Art Beyond Vision	10 Su
11 Su	11 We	11 Fr	11 Mo
12 Mo	12 Th Art Beyond Vision	12 Sa	12 Tu Horbury
13 Tu Horbury	13 Fr	13 Su	13 We
14 We	14 Sa	14 Mo	14 Th Art Beyond Vision
15 Th Art Beyond Vision	15 Su	15 Tu	15 Fr
16 Fr	16 Mo	16 We Cunnna & Connect	16 Sa

10 Th		10 Mo	10 We Cuppa & Connect	10 Sa
17 Sa		17 Tu	17 Th	17 Su
18 Su		18 We Cuppa & Connect	18 Fr	18 Mo LWWSL day 1
19 Mo		19 Th Art Beyond Vision	19 Sa	19 Tu
20 Tu Safe Anchor Trust		20 Fr	20 Su	20 We Cuppa & Connect
21 We Cuppa & Connect		21 Sa	21 Mo	21 Th Art Beyond Vision
22 Th Ponte / ABV		22 Su	22 Tu	22 Fr
23 Fr		23 Mo	23 We	23 Sa
24 Sa		24 Tu	24 Th	24 Su
25 Su		25 We Afternoon tea & Xmas decoration workshop	25 Fr Christmas Day	25 Mo LWWSL day 2
26 Mo		26 Th Ponte / ABV	26 Sa	26 Tu Plastic Fantastic exhibition
27 Tu		27 Fr	27 Su	27 We
28 We		28 Sa	28 Mo Bank Holiday	28 Th Ponte / ABV
29 Th		29 Su	29 Tu	29 Fr
30 Fr		30 Mo	30 We	30 Sa
31 Sa			31 Th	31 Su

Macular information morning: Wednesday 7th October 10.30am – 12.30pm at St. Swithun's Community Centre

Come and join our experienced Sight Loss Advisor Nicola Ford for an information morning about all things macular. From spotting the symptoms, the different types of macular degeneration, to treatment options and coping strategies, and a bit about Charles Bonnet Syndrome, this informal, friendly session is for anyone who is living with macular disease and wants to find out more, or for those who simply want to connect with others living with a similar condition. We also welcome those who are caring for someone with macular degeneration.



Nicola Ford, WDSA Sight Loss Advisor.

The session is free and refreshments will be provided. Please book your place by calling the office on 01924 215555 as places are limited.

Safe Anchor Trust canal boat trip: Tuesday 20th October 10.15am – 3.45pm approx.



WDSA members on a previous Safe Anchor Trust trip.

After the success of our previous trips with the Safe Anchor Trust, we are delighted to be taking another canal boat trip with them on Tuesday 20th October!

We will travel by minibus from Wakefield Bus Station at 10.15am, arriving at Shepley Bridge Marina in Mirfield ready to set off at 11am.

We intend to travel 6 and a half miles to Kirklees Lower Lock to arrive back at Shepley Bridge by 3pm. We will then take the minibus back to Wakefield Bus Station and should arrive back comfortably by 3.45pm.

We will be taking two boats out, which can accommodate a total of 22 guests (including WDSA staff and volunteers). The boats are specially adapted for disabled visitors (including wheelchairs) and are manned by a full crew of Safe Anchor Trust volunteers.

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, and anyone who has not been on a Safe Anchor Trip before will be given priority. Places will be prioritised for people with visual impairment, but sighted companions are absolutely welcome if you need to bring someone.

The cost of the trip, which includes a contribution towards the coach transport and a donation to The Safe Anchor Trust, is £15 per person, which must be paid in advance. Tea, coffee, and biscuits are supplied onboard, and please bring your lunch with you. Please call the office on 01924 215555 to book your place!

Festive afternoon tea and Christmas table decoration workshop:

Wednesday 25th November 12.00 – 2.30pm at St. Swithun's Community Centre



Example Christmas table decoration.

Come and join us for a delicious festive afternoon tea of home-made sandwiches, quiche, cakes, and of course the St. Swithun's signature scones, followed by a Christmas table decoration workshop!

The decorations are easy to make, and no previous crafting experience is necessary. You will be able to go home with a lovely item for your home or a gift for a loved one. The cost is just £10 per person which includes all food and drink, as well as the workshop and craft materials. Pre-booking is essential and all places must be paid for by Wednesday 18th November.



Beauty & the Beast pantomime trip!

Thursday 3rd December, 7pm – 9.45pm (approx.) at Theatre Royal Wakefield, 12 Drury Lane, Wakefield WF1 2TE

This trip is now fully booked but if you would like to go on the waiting list, please contact the office.

Christmas lunch: Monday 7th December 12noon until 2pm approx. at Create Café, Wakefield One, Burton Street, Wakefield WF1 2DD



Members enjoying last year's Christmas lunch.

The Create Café is a social enterprise which not only makes quality food from scratch on the premises, but it also has a vision to help those in society who may not be as fortunate as others. Through their social mission, they use the money they make to support people with learning difficulties or other mental health issues to experience the world of work, helping them to develop new skills for life.

This year we will be offering a two-course menu as standard, at a cost of just £16.50 per head. Please choose from the following main courses (all served with a selection of seasonal veg and roasted new potatoes):

- Turkey and stuffing roulade, cranberry compote
- Slow roasted pork belly, crackling, apple sauce (Gluten Free)
- Individual parsnip, butternut and cranberry wellington, veggie gravy (Vegetarian)

(Vegan Gluten Free options are available to pre-order)

To finish, choose from:

- Triple chocolate brownie, chocolate sauce, Chantilly cream (GF) (V)
- Winter berry cheesecake tart, berry compote (V)
- Individual Christmas pudding, custard (V)
- No room for a dessert? Go for a mince pie with tea or coffee as your dessert if you wish!

If you would like a main course only, this will be charged at £11. You can add a tea or coffee after your meal for £2 extra.

To ensure things run smoothly on the day, we are also taking pre-orders for drinks on arrival at the time of booking. A full range of hot drinks, including speciality teas and coffees, plus canned and bottled soft

drinks is available. We will go through the options with you and confirm the final price at the time of booking.

The Create Café is very close to Wakefield Westgate train station and is on the Free City Bus route which runs from Wakefield Bus Station. If you need help planning your journey, just let us know. Access is step-free and accessible toilets are available.

Places are limited, so please contact the office to book your place today! Places must be booked and balances settled by Thursday 19th November, please.

Plastic Fantastic? Exhibition: 10.30am – 12noon or 1pm – 2.30pm
Tuesday 26th January at Wakefield Museum, Wakefield One, Burton Street, Wakefield WF1 2DD

We are excited to invite you to join us on a trip to Wakefield Museum for a new exhibition entitled *Plastic Fantastic?*, showcasing Wakefield Council's remarkable collection of colourful mid-20th century plastic homewares. The exhibition is accessible, hands on and interactive, including tactile replicas and audio descriptions.

Plastic transformed 20th century life. Lightweight, affordable and durable, it quickly became part of almost every home. But plastic can also be harmful to our planet. Visitors to the exhibition can discover the development of plastics, think about the role of plastics in everyday life, and consider their effect on the environment.

Our very own Ruth Fones created 3D printed replicas of key objects using a sustainable bio-plastic made from plant protein. She worked with members of our Art Beyond Vision group to develop the resources, which enable visitors to explore and engage with the exhibition, using touch, sound and sight.

We will be running two trips, one starting at 10.30am and finishing around 12 noon, and the other starting at 1pm and finishing around 2.30pm. Your visit will include an introduction and tour of the *Plastic*

Fantastic? exhibition, some object handling with the plastics collection, and a quick tour highlighting a few star objects in the main gallery too.

The trip is free, and places are limited due to space restrictions in the gallery, so please ring the office and book your place today! Why not visit the Create Café for lunch as part of your visit?

Focus on fundraising:



Our group at the summit of Pen-Y-Ghent.

We are really proud to announce that a group of our visually impaired young people, along with their parents, staff from A1 Football Factory, and our CEO Hayley and her son took part in the Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge on Saturday 5th September to raise money for our activities with children and young

people. All participants completed Pen-y-ghent, with 13 people going on to also complete Whernside, and a hardcore group of six also completing the third peak, Ingleborough. At the time of writing, a fantastic £3,345 has been raised! If you would like to support this fundraiser, you can do so online at <https://gofund.me/72ee1035d> or please ring the office.

Helpline hours and office cover

Our helpline number is 01924 215555 and operates 9.30am – 1.30pm Monday to Thursday (answerphone operational out-of-hours and at busy times). We only have three part-time staff and we all work flexibly. 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.

Please note the office will close for the festive break at 1.30pm on Thursday 17th December, reopening at 9.30am on Monday 4th January.

Newsletter format

The newsletter is available in large print, on audio CD or audio USB, in Braille, and via email. Please remember to return your USB stick and reusable mailing pouch to us promptly. Thank you so much.