

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 January 2026 newsletter!



Members at Nostell Priory.

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 panto trip, Christmas lunch and our festive trip to Nostell Priory!

Huge thanks to everyone who supported our Christmas raffle, including all the organisations and individuals who kindly donated prizes. We are so grateful for your support. A list of the winning tickets is published on page 11 of the newsletter. We are delighted to share that the raffle and donations raised £2,274.50 - our most successful raffle ever!

We still have places available for our Winter Warmer event here at St. Swithun's on Wednesday 28th January. Come along and enjoy a home-made lunch and have fun with friends old and new, it's a great way to beat the January blues! We're also delighted to announce that we will be visiting The Hepworth Wakefield in March, and this trip is completely free, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

We love to hear your suggestions of trips out and activities you'd like us to run, so please don't hesitate to get in touch and share your ideas!

With warm wishes,

Hayley Grocock (Chief Executive Officer)

What's on at Wakefield District Sight Aid

All our events up to the end of April 2026 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 there will be no Ridings coffee morning on Monday 2nd March because our Wellbeing and Demo Day will be taking place at the St. Swithun's Community Centre, and there will no Ridings coffee morning on Monday 6th April due to the Easter Monday Bank Holiday.

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.



People enjoying our Pontefract coffee morning.

Cuppa and Connect! 10am – 12noon on the third Wednesday of the month (at St. Swithun's Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield, WF1 4RR).

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 range of fun activities including games, quizzes, guest speakers, crafts and more. It's a great chance to relax, connect with others and enjoy some midweek wellbeing together. We will aim for the activities to be a bit different each time so there's always something new to experience. Why not stay for a low cost, home cooked lunch in the Community Café afterwards? *Please note the return to the original time of 10am – 12noon.*

Wakefield evening social group: 5pm – 7pm on the fourth Thursday of the month (held at Calder & Hops, 60 Northgate, Wakefield, WF1 3AP).

This friendly and informal evening meet-up of members of all ages would love for you to join them! *Please note there will be no group in April due to volunteer holidays.*

Pontefract evening social group: 5pm – 8pm on the first Thursday of the month (held at Iron Dram, 27a Ropergate, Pontefract, WF8 1LG). This small but welcoming social group is looking forward to meeting you!

Art Beyond Vision: 1pm – 3pm every Thursday during term time (in the Activity Room at St. Swithun's Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield, WF1 4RR). *Dates are shown as ABV on the calendar on p6 - 7. There will be no session on 1st January, 19th February, 2nd April or 9th April due to the school holidays.*

Our fully accessible group covers 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 adapted so you can create pieces to be proud of no matter what your level of sight or previous experience. There is a choice of techniques on offer each week, so you will always find something that appeals to you!

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.

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).



A collage of people making crafts.

To find out more, please contact Ruth on 07947 836267.

Living Well with Sight Loss course (LWWSL): 10.30am – 2.30pm on Monday 19th and Monday 26th January 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.

A recent course attendee said:

“Very informative, very lovely. It gave me great clarity of what was involved in the sight loss journey and what was available.”

Living Well with Sight Loss is a partnership between WDSA and RNIB, made possible with the kind support of Wakefield Council.

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.

Winter Warmer: Wednesday 28th January, 12 noon until 2pm at St. Swithun's Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield, WF1 4RR

Beat the January blues and come and join us for a delicious home cooked lunch of soup, sandwiches, and the famous St. Swithun's scones, as well as a bit of cash prize bingo! This friendly, informal event is for anyone who just wants to get out of the house and have some fun. All are welcome, including sighted companions.

The cost is just £10 per person which includes tea, coffee and the lunch. Places must be booked and paid for by Wednesday 21st January at the latest please, for catering purposes.

New style Demo and Wellbeing Day: Monday 2nd March 10am until 1pm at St. Swithun's Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, WF1 4RR

We have refreshed the format of our Equipment Demonstration and Advice Days to include more wellbeing information and activities. We are also trialling holding our Demo Day event at St. Swithun's rather than The Ridings. Confirmed guests include Optelec, Healthwatch Wakefield, Open Country, and the Adult Wellbeing Team from Wakefield Council who will be running a taster chair-based exercise session for us! Our Art Beyond Vision team will also be on hand to demonstrate some of the techniques our art group have been learning and help you to have a go yourself. There will also be items the group has made on sale to help raise funds towards materials.



*Alan from our Art
Beyond Vision group.*

Calendar of events January – April 2026				
January	February	March	April	
1 Th New Year's Day	1 Su	1 Su	1 We	
2 Fr	2 Mo Ridings	2 Mo Demo & Wellbeing Day	2 Th Ponte Evening Group	
3 Sa	3 Tu	3 Tu	3 Fr Good Friday	
4 Su	4 We	4 We	4 Sa	
5 Mo Ridings	5 Th ABV / Ponte Evening Group	5 Th ABV / Ponte Evening Group	5 Su	
6 Tu	6 Fr	6 Fr	6 Mo Easter Monday	
7 We	7 Sa	7 Sa	7 Tu	
8 Th Art Beyond Vision	8 Su	8 Su	8 We	
9 Fr	9 Mo	9 Mo	9 Th	
10 Sa	10 Tu Horbury	10 Tu Horbury	10 Fr	
11 Su	11 We	11 We Hepworth visit	11 Sa	
12 Mo	12 Th Art Beyond Vision	12 Th Art Beyond Vision	12 Su	
13 Tu Horbury	13 Fr	13 Fr	13 Mo	
14 We	14 Sa	14 Sa	14 Tu Horbury	
15 Th Art Beyond Vision	15 Su	15 Su	15 We Cuppa & Connect	
16 Fr	16 Mo	16 Mo	16 Th Art Beyond Vision	

16 FI	16 MO	16 MO	16 MO	16 Th Art Beyond Vision
17 Sa	17 Tu	17 Tu	17 Tu	17 Fr
18 Su	18 We Cuppa & Connect	18 We Cuppa & Connect	18 We Cuppa & Connect	18 Sa
19 Mo Living Well with Sight Loss Day 1	19 Th	19 Th	19 Th Art Beyond Vision	19 Su
20 Tu	20 Fr	20 Fr	20 Fr	20 Mo
21 We Cuppa & Connect	21 Sa	21 Sa	21 Sa	21 Tu
22 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Grp	22 Su	22 Su	22 Su	22 We
23 Fr	23 Mo	23 Mo	23 Mo	23 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Grp
24 Sa	24 Tu	24 Tu	24 Tu	24 Fr
25 Su	25 We	25 We	25 We	25 Sa
26 Mo Living Well with Sight Loss Day 2	26 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Grp	26 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Grp	26 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Grp	26 Su
27 Tu	27 Fr	27 Fr	27 Fr	27 Mo
28 We Winter Warmer	28 Sa	28 Sa	28 Sa	28 Tu
29 Th Art Beyond Vision			29 Su	29 We
30 Fr			30 Mo	30 Th Art Beyond Vision
31 Sa			31 Tu	

Outing to The Hepworth Wakefield: Wednesday 11th March - session 1 runs 10.30am – 12.30pm, session 2 runs 1pm – 3pm.



WDSA members are invited to The Hepworth Wakefield on Wednesday 11 March to enjoy a Highlights Tour with their trained tour guide team, incorporating sighted guiding, audio description and touch elements. Highlights Tours are a great starting point for your visit and involve an introduction to the temporary exhibitions and the Barbara Hepworth collection. There will also be

time for independent browsing, followed by refreshments in the gallery's auditorium. The sessions will take place 10.30am to 12.30pm and 1pm to 3pm, with spaces for up to ten attendees per session. It's an exciting time to visit with temporary exhibitions including:

Playing with Fire: Edmund de Waal and Axel Salto

The artist and author Edmund de Waal (b.1964, Nottingham) has curated the first major exhibition of acclaimed Danish ceramicist Axel Salto (1889 – 1961), considered one of the greatest masters of 20th-century ceramic art. Salto was a radical polymathic figure who crossed boundaries from one discipline to another, producing an extraordinary body of ceramic work alongside paintings, wood-cuts, drawings, book illustration and textiles.



Kira Freije: Unspeak the Chorus



The first major solo exhibition of Kira Freije's (b. 1985, London) work in the UK, Freije has created a new body of work comprising around 20 life-size figures arranged in small groupings affecting a society in various states of action.

The groupings suggest narrative fragments, or interior states of mind and evoke a time and place, without specifically referencing a history or geography.

The visit is free and pre-booking is essential (please advise morning or afternoon session when booking). The Wakefield Free City Bus serves The Hepworth (stop 5: Spectrum Community Health Centre) and runs every 10-12 minutes from Stand 1 at Wakefield Bus Station. We will meet in the foyer 15 minutes before the start of each tour, but please let us know if you need help with guiding from the bus stop.

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, cashflow issues due to benefits changes, or one-off emergency costs. Over the past three 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. We can also support with emergency supermarket vouchers and utility top-ups.

For a confidential, no judgement discussion about your situation, please contact Hayley on 01924 215555. We are here to help.

St. Swithun's orientation and confidence building sessions



If you'd like to come to an event at St. Swithun's, but you've never been here before and would like some support to plan your journey and familiarise yourself with the relevant buses and routes, please call the office on 01924 215555 and put your name down for one of our orientation and confidence building sessions.

St. Swithun's Café on the Moor

Mutually convenient dates will be arranged with our wonderful volunteers, who will meet you at the bus station and show you which buses come to Eastmoor, make the journey with you so you know when to get off, and walk the route to the centre with you.

If you are visiting the centre by car, there is a small free car park behind the centre (off Kilnsey Road) and on-street parking is unrestricted.

Access to St. Swithun's is step-free and an accessible toilet is available.

Helpline hours and office cover

Our helpline number is 01924 215555 and operates 9.30am – 1.30pm Monday to Thursday. An answerphone is in operation out-of-hours and at busy times. Please note, there are only three of us in the staff team and we all work part-time. 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.

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 USB stick and reusable mailing pouch to us promptly as these are very expensive to replace.

Closure of Pontefract & Castleford Express Talking Newspaper

If you were a subscriber to the Pontefract & Castleford Express Talking Newspaper and would like to receive the Wakefield Express instead, please call the office on 01924 215555 and we would be happy to make the onward referral to our colleagues at Wakefield Talking Newspaper. We would like to thank the wonderful Mary and her team of dedicated volunteers who kept the Pontefract & Castleford Express going for so long. You will be missed!

Christmas Raffle 2025: prizes and winners!

Please note all winners have already been contacted:

1. Ticket 1296 – Deluxe M&S Christmas Hamper, donated by Newmedica.
2. Ticket 0281 – Luxury Christmas Hamper, donated by Lord St. Oswald.
3. Ticket 0006 – M&S Christmas Hamper, donated by Notay Consulting.
4. Ticket 3449 – M&S Christmas Hamper, donated by Specsavers Wakefield.
5. Ticket 4640 – Pair of open paddock tickets, donated by Ripon Races.
6. Ticket 0036 – Pair of complimentary tickets, donated by Wakefield Jazz Club.
7. Ticket 4920 - Family ticket, donated by the Bronte Parsonage Museum.
8. Ticket 1325 – 2 x adult and 2 x child travel vouchers, donated by the North Yorkshire Moors Railway.
9. Ticket 0856 – Family ticket (5 people), donated by York Archaeology Attractions / Jorvik Viking Centre.
10. Ticket 5080 – Large box of shortbread, donated by Janet Fielder.
11. Ticket 5479 - A4 framed art print, donated by Ruth Fones.
12. Ticket number 1865 – Bottle of wine, donated by Cllr Heptinstall.



Compact 10 Speech.



**The perfect magnifier for those with an active lifestyle,
available with or without text to speech.**

Sale Price: £1450
RRP £1660

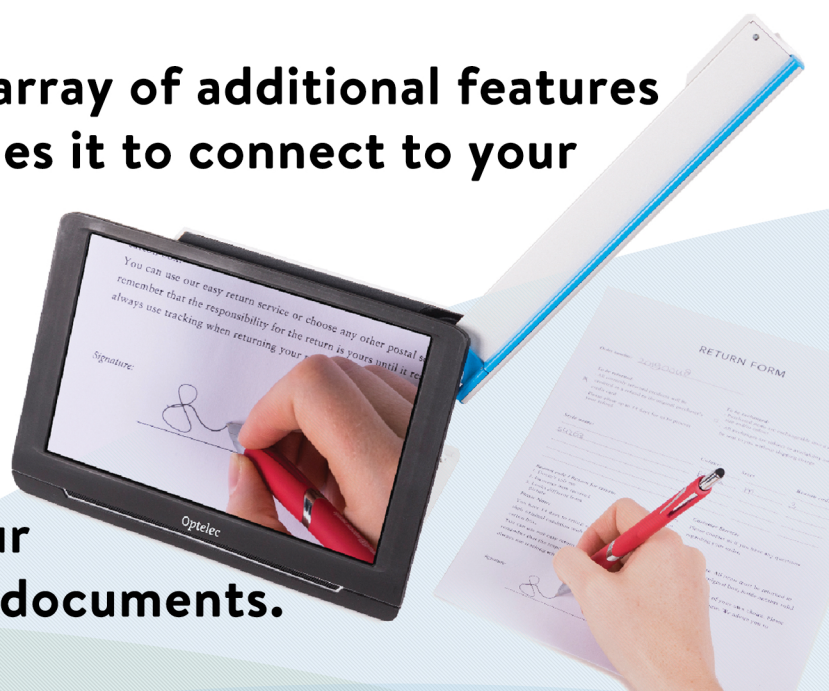


With its large large 10" screen, customisable and intuitive operation, the **Compact 10 HD** offers all the benefits of a desktop magnifier, but in a much smaller, foldable, and portable design. Magnification on the Compact 10 goes upto 22x.

With the arm unfolded, you can easily look at photos, write your signature, view medicine packaging, and even read around cans, without being restricted in your movements.

The **Compact 10** boasts a huge array of additional features including Miracast, which enables it to connect to your smart television.

Compact 10 Speech also reads material aloud. It captures a full a4 page with just one press of a button. Great for when your eyes get fatigued or for longer documents.



Freephone: 0800 145 6115 For a FREE home demonstration or for more information.