



# Wakefield District Sight Aid

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

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

## **Hello everyone and welcome to our Autumn 2024 newsletter!**

The big news this quarter is that we have just moved premises! We are now located within the St. Swithun's Community Centre on Arncliffe Road on Eastmoor, close to Wakefield City Centre. Our telephone number has not changed, and our core office hours remain the same, but please ring to make an appointment if you wish to visit the office.

Included with the newsletter is a book of raffle tickets for our Christmas prize draw, and a return envelope for your raffle ticket counterfoils and payment for any tickets you wish to purchase. Tickets are £1 each and available in books of five. Further books are available from the office. As always, we have some great prizes, including Christmas hampers!

In further festive news, we really hope you will be able to join us for our annual Christmas lunch on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, and we are delighted to be running a Christmas wreath making workshop on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December too, so please see details later in the newsletter!

The office will close for the festive period on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December, reopening on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January (which will be a Ridings coffee morning so we will look forward to seeing you there!). If you need help whilst the office is closed, please ring Social Care Direct on 0345 8 503 503.



*CEO Hayley holding our crystal King's Award for Voluntary Service.*

With warm wishes,  
Hayley Grocock (Chief Executive Officer)

## **What's on at Wakefield District Sight Aid**

All our events up to the end of January 2025 are shown on the calendar on page 12. Here is a summary of what's coming up:



*People enjoying our Ridings coffee morning.*

**The Ridings coffee morning 10.00 – 12.00 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. There is plentiful disabled parking at The Ridings, but it is not free of charge. Blue badges can be used on-street and in nearby Council car parks.**

*Please note that Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November will be a Demo Day rather than a coffee morning (details below). There will be no coffee morning on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December due to our Christmas lunch happening the same day.*

**Horbury coffee morning 10.00 – 12.00 on the second Tuesday of the month (The Cluntergate Centre Café, Cluntergate, Horbury WF4 5DA). Our small but perfectly formed Horbury group is ready to welcome you!**

**Wakefield evening social group (WESG – formerly the younger members social group) 17.00 – 19.00 on the fourth Thursday of the month (held at Calder & Hops, 60 Northgate, Wakefield, WF1 3AP). This friendly and informal evening meet-up welcomes members of all ages and is looking forward to meeting new members!**

**NEW! Pontefract coffee morning! 10.00 – 12.00 on the fourth Thursday of the month (at The Broken Bridge Wetherspoon, 5 Horse Fair, Pontefract, WF8 1PD).**

Our brand-new social group for the Pontefract area is now up and running! Come and join us for a cuppa and a natter. Hot drinks are just £1.04 and are refillable for free all day. The Broken Bridge has step-free access and is very close to



*People enjoying our Pontefract coffee morning.*

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. *No event in December as it's Boxing Day.*

**NEW! Pontefract evening social group (PESG) - 17.00 – 20.00 on the first Thursday of the month** (held at Iron Dram, 27a Ropergate, Pontefract, WF8 1LG). This new social group is the latest addition to our regular groups and is hoping to welcome lots of new members! *Please note there will be no group in January.*

**Equipment Demonstration and Advice Day - Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November, 10.00 – 13.00 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. Confirmed guests so far include Nigel Crook from VisionAid, Wendy Jewitt from Wakefield Libraries, Carers Champion Emma Newton and Chloe Bottomley from the Technology Enabled Care team at Wakefield Council, and advisors from Citizens Advice. 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. You will also be able to order large print diaries and calendars for 2025.

*Equipment Demonstration and Advice Days for 2025 – Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November.*

**Christmas lunch! Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 12.00 – 14.00 approx. at The Bridge Inn, Bridge Street, Wakefield, WF1 5RT**

We are delighted to be holding our Christmas lunch at The Bridge Inn again this year. You can choose from the festive set menu (£19.99 for two courses, £22.99 for three courses) or the usual menu. The festive menu needs to be pre-ordered so please choose from the following:



*People enjoying our Christmas lunch last year.*

## Starters

Tomato soup (vegan and gluten free options available)  
Chicken liver and brandy pate (gluten free option available)  
King prawn cocktail (gluten free option available)  
Breaded mushrooms



*People enjoying our Christmas lunch last year.*

## Mains

Traditional roast turkey (gluten free option available)  
Grilled hake (gluten free option available)  
Spinach and butternut squash tart (vegan and gluten free options available)  
Festive beef burger (gluten free option available)  
Festive mac & cheese with pigs in blankets and pork stuffing  
Festive mac & cheese with chicken-style crispy strips (vegetarian)

## Pudding

Christmas pudding (vegan and gluten free options available)  
Lemon tart  
Sticky toffee pudding (gluten free option available)  
Banoffee chocolate tart (gluten free option available)

Payment will be taken on the day for food and drinks. Please note drinks are not included in the set menu prices.

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 18<sup>th</sup> November if you will be attending.

**Christmas wreath making workshop: Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 10.30 – 13.00 at St. Swithun’s Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield WF1 4RR**



*A Christmas wreath hanging on a door.*

Join us for a Christmas wreath making workshop led by Claire Waddington. Claire is one of our Art Beyond Vision facilitators and has living experience of sight loss herself, so the workshop has been designed with blind and partially sighted people in mind. All materials will be provided, as will tea, coffee and mince pies!

The cost of the workshop is just £10 per person which must be paid in advance to secure your place. There are just 12 places available so book early to avoid disappointment!

**Living Well with Sight Loss course (LWWSL)**

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?



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

This free, informal, two-day course delivers:

- Practical advice and local information.
- Daily living skills and leisure activities.
- Wellbeing and emotional support.
- The opportunity to share experiences with others.

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 provisionally be taking place on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> and Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 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.

## Art Beyond Vision

The next phase of our fully accessible creative programme, Art Beyond Vision, will be starting on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November and running for six weeks until Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December. The sessions will run from 1pm to 3pm. The technique being taught at this course is embossing. This is the art of producing raised patterns on paper. This can be done using hand tools or by creating a collaged embossing plate and running it through a press. The technique can be used to create greetings cards and paper-based art.



*Facilitator Tom with course participant Jean [photo credit: David Lindsay, photosbydavid.co.uk]*

The weekly workshops will be taking place in the Education Room at Wakefield Cathedral, Westmorland Street, Wakefield, WF1 1PJ. The venue is step-free and has accessible toilet facilities.

Art Beyond Vision focuses on tactile techniques that can be used by anyone, irrespective of your level of usable vision. No experience is necessary, and all equipment and materials are provided. The course is run by a qualified teacher with support from facilitators with living experience of sight loss. Previous participants have said:

“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed the course, and I’m so pleased it has given me the confidence to carry on being creative like I used to be.”

“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.”

The next course after this will be starting on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January for 6 weeks, finishing on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February. The technique being taught on this course is beading. This involves creating beaded jewellery and other decorative items. This course will be led by one of our facilitators who is registered blind, and she can’t wait to show you what’s possible!



*A group of people at one of our previous Art Beyond Vision classes.*

Because the funding we have received does not cover the whole cost of delivering the project, we will be charging a nominal fee of £5 per class per participant. This will include all equipment, materials, tuition, and refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits). If you would like to attend but the cost is difficult for you, please talk to us and we will see what we can do.

Places are limited, and priority will be given to people who have not participated in Art Beyond Vision before. If we are over-subscribed, remaining places will be allocated via random ballot. If you can't make it to either of these courses but would be interested in future courses, please let us know and we will be pleased to add your name to our waiting list.

### **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. For a confidential discussion about your situation, please contact Hayley on 01924 215555.

### **Don't lose out on your Winter Fuel Payment**

If you were born before 23 September 1958, you could get help to pay your heating bills during winter.

If you receive Pension Credit, then you will be automatically eligible for the Winter Fuel Allowance. An award of just £1 in Pension Credit can unlock more support. Have you checked recently if you are entitled to more support?

People entitled to Pension Credit can also get help with:

- Housing benefit
- Mortgage interest
- Council tax support
- A free TV license (over 75s)
- NHS dental treatment and glasses
- Transport costs for hospital appointments
- Heating costs

Advisors from Citizens Advice Wakefield District will be at our Demo Day on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November and will be available to help you with FREE confidential advice on the support available for energy bills and Pension Credit.

Not yet retired but need help with money, benefits, or debt? Come along and speak to them anyway! They will be pleased to help.

**Partner news: Wakefield Libraries**



Everyone can use and enjoy their library! There are many free services available to people who have a visual impairment.

- There is a huge range of books both in large print and audio which you can borrow. You can also download audiobooks, magazines, newspapers and e books, all for free.
- Readers Groups meet throughout the District to chat about books 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 and this is currently under review. For further information please visit <https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/libraries-and-local-history/your-local-library/mobile-library-service/>.



- Many of our libraries run regular events for adults such as Chill and Chat, crafting, Knit and Natter and author events.
- All our libraries have computers that are free to use (you just pay for printing) and they also have free WiFi.

Joining the Library is easy. You don't need to show any ID and we now no longer charge fines if you forget to bring your books back on time.

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

### **Partner news: Beyond Braille – a Dream Time Creative/Forgotten Women of Wakefield project**

A unique opportunity to gain research skills from Forgotten Women of Wakefield lead researcher and work together with others to create a timeline of information about the history and heritage of Wakefield District Sight Aid, is open to interested members.

During the Autumn 2024 and again in Spring 2025, beginning with a taster session on the 17th of October at Wakefield One Archives, interested members will be able to explore how to access different and varied research sites over 9 workshops. We will explore a variety of documents to build a picture of the lives of two inspirational forgotten women from Wakefield, Emily Wright and Esther Fennell, and their campaign to empower blind people in Wakefield from the turn of the 20th century.

During Spring 2025 (dates tbc) Dream Time Creative, the arts company behind the Forgotten Women of Wakefield blue plaque parity campaign, will also host 3 weaving workshops with members to share the findings from the research group and encourage conversations whilst weaving our own stories into the looms.

We'd love to hear from anyone who was part of the Stories of Insight podcast project with the One-To-One Development Trust available online

<https://onetooneddevelopment.org/stories-of-insight/> for an update of your lives too.

Our team will be putting together a Heritage Walk for next September to share stories from members alongside information the research has uncovered as part of our existing series of Heritage Walks across the city.

Funded by Historic England, the aim of this project is to have a waist height blue plaque in both raised letters and Braille to honour the legacy of these women as advocates of an enlightened and inclusive approach to working with the blind.

Research dates – Autumn 2024:

- Taster 17th October 12.30pm - 2.30pm Wakefield One Café/Archives
- 24th October 12.30pm - 2.30pm Wakefield One Café/Archives
- 31st October 12.30pm - 2.30pm venue TBC, possibly Wakefield History Centre
- 7th November 12.30pm - 2.30pm venue TBC
- 14th November 12.30pm - 2.30pm venue TBC

Please contact Sarah Cobham from Dream Time Creative on [sarahcobham@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahcobham@hotmail.com) or 07733180416 with any questions and to register your interest in the project.

### **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 remain unchanged: 09.30 – 13.30 Monday to Thursday.

Please note, we only have three members of part-time staff and at times we may be out on visits, at meetings, working from home, or running events. There will be times when there is no-one in the office. Visits to the office are by appointment only so please ring if you need to make an

appointment. This will ensure the right person is available and avoid a wasted journey. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

### **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. Audio USB subscribers, please remember to return your reusable mailing pouch to us promptly.

### **Tribute to Margaret Dodd: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1945 – 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024**



*Margaret in the rain on  
Blackpool seafront, early 2000s.*

Many of you will already be aware that Margaret Dodd, who had been involved with our charity for almost 40 years, sadly passed away in July following a short stay in hospital and residential care.

Margaret came to what was then the West Riding Voluntary Association for the Blind (Wakefield Area) in 1986, running the charity until a cancer diagnosis forced her retirement in 2005. When she recovered from cancer, she returned as a volunteer and continued working with us right up until her death.

There was a period when Margaret ran the charity from the spare bedroom of her home in Stanley when there wasn't enough money for premises and Margaret feared it wouldn't last six months. It is not an overstatement to say that without Margaret's hard work and dedication to the support of the visually impaired community, Wakefield District Sight Aid would not exist today.

Margaret started to struggle with ill-health towards the end of 2023 and was finally diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in May this year. By this time, Margaret had completely lost the power of speech and was finding communication very hard, but she still attended Sight Aid events and helped us in the office on a weekly basis. We already miss her more than words can say.

**Calendar of events October 2024 – January 2025**

<b>October</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>January</b>
<b>1 Tu</b>	<b>1 Fr</b>	<b>1 Su</b>	<b>1 We NY Day</b>
<b>2 We Trip</b>	<b>2 Sa</b>	<b>2 Mo Xmas Lunch</b>	<b>2 Th</b>
<b>3 Th* PESG</b>	<b>3 Su</b>	<b>3 Tu</b>	<b>3 Fr</b>
<b>4 Fr</b>	<b>4 Mo Demo Day</b>	<b>4 We</b>	<b>4 Sa</b>
<b>5 Sa</b>	<b>5 Tu</b>	<b>5 Th* PESG</b>	<b>5 Su</b>
<b>6 Su</b>	<b>6 We</b>	<b>6 Fr</b>	<b>6 Mo Ridings</b>
<b>7 Mo Ridings</b>	<b>7 Th* PESG</b>	<b>7 Sa</b>	<b>7 Tu</b>
<b>8 Tu Horbury</b>	<b>8 Fr</b>	<b>8 Su</b>	<b>8 We</b>
<b>9 We</b>	<b>9 Sa</b>	<b>9 Mo Wreaths</b>	<b>9 Th*</b>
<b>10 Th*</b>	<b>10 Su</b>	<b>10 Tu Horbury</b>	<b>10 Fr</b>
<b>11 Fr</b>	<b>11 Mo</b>	<b>11 We</b>	<b>11 Sa</b>
<b>12 Sa</b>	<b>12 Tu Horbury</b>	<b>12 Th*</b>	<b>12 Su</b>
<b>13 Su</b>	<b>13 We</b>	<b>13 Fr</b>	<b>13 Mo</b>
<b>14 Mo</b>	<b>14 Th*</b>	<b>14 Sa</b>	<b>14 Tu Horbury</b>
<b>15 Tu</b>	<b>15 Fr</b>	<b>15 Su</b>	<b>15 We Ridings</b>
<b>16 We Ridings</b>	<b>16 Sa</b>	<b>16 Mo</b>	<b>16 Th*</b>
<b>17 Th*</b>	<b>17 Su</b>	<b>17 Tu</b>	<b>17 Fr</b>
<b>18 Fr</b>	<b>18 Mo</b>	<b>18 We Ridings</b>	<b>18 Sa</b>
<b>19 Sa</b>	<b>19 Tu</b>	<b>19 Th</b>	<b>19 Su</b>
<b>20 Su</b>	<b>20 We Ridings</b>	<b>20 Fr</b>	<b>20 Mo LWWSL</b>
<b>21 Mo</b>	<b>21 Th*</b>	<b>21 Sa</b>	<b>21 Tu</b>
<b>22 Tu</b>	<b>22 Fr</b>	<b>22 Su</b>	<b>22 We</b>
<b>23 We</b>	<b>23 Sa</b>	<b>23 Mo</b>	<b>23 Th*</b> Pont/WESG
<b>24 Th Pont/WESG</b>	<b>24 Su</b>	<b>24 Tu</b>	<b>24 Fr</b>
<b>25 Fr</b>	<b>25 Mo</b>	<b>25 We Xmas Day</b>	<b>25 Sa</b>
<b>26 Sa</b>	<b>26 Tu</b>	<b>26 Th Boxing Day</b>	<b>26 Su</b>
<b>27 Su</b>	<b>27 We</b>	<b>27 Fr</b>	<b>27 Mo LWWSL</b>
<b>28 Mo</b>	<b>28 Th*</b> Pont/WESG	<b>28 Sa</b>	<b>28 Tu</b>
<b>29 Tu</b>	<b>29 Fr</b>	<b>29 Su</b>	<b>29 We</b>
<b>30 We</b>	<b>30 Sa</b>	<b>30 Mo</b>	<b>30 Th*</b>
<b>31 Th</b>		<b>31 Tu</b>	<b>31 Fr</b>

**\* Art Beyond Vision class for those who are booked on**