

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 | Reg. Charity No. 1140483

Hello everyone and welcome to our October 2025 newsletter!

As usual, this edition of the newsletter is absolutely packed with events to get involved with! We are very excited to be running our first ever canal boat trip with the Safe Anchor Trust on Tuesday 21st October. Places for this trip are very limited so don't delay, book your place today! Our next Demo Day is on Monday 3rd November, and is being held here at the St. Swithun's Community Centre. We are shifting the focus slightly to include more wellbeing information and activities, so please come along and let us know what you think of this refreshed format.

Our Christmas events season includes a trip to the pantomime at Theatre Royal Wakefield (oh yes it does!), our Christmas lunch at the Create Café, and a trip to Nostell Priory for their Christmas experience based on the CS Lewis story The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe. We'll also be getting festive at our Cuppa & Connect event on Wednesday 17th December before closing for Christmas on Thursday 18th.

We know January can be a bit miserable, so we'll be holding a Winter Warmer event on Wednesday 28th January to give us all something to look forward to, as well as all our regular groups of course.

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.

Warm wishes,

Hayley Grocock (Chief Executive Officer)

What's on at Wakefield District Sight Aid

All our events up to the end of January 2026 are shown on the calendar on the middle pages (p6-7). Here's 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 3rd November because our Demo and Wellbeing Day will be taking place at the St. Swithun's Community Centre, and there will no Ridings coffee morning on Monday 1st 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 Day!*



People enjoying our Pontefract coffee morning.

NEW! Cuppa and Connect! 10.30am – 12.30pm 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 try. Why not stay for a low cost, home cooked lunch in the Community Café afterwards? On Wednesday 17th December we plan to show a festive film and serve mince pies, so please let us know in advance if you're planning to attend so we can make sure we have a large enough room and have catered for everybody. *Please note the slightly later start time to allow extra time for travel to Eastmoor.*

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 December as it would fall on Christmas Day!*

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! *Please note there will be no group in January due to it falling on New Year's Day.*

Art Beyond Vision: 1pm – 3pm every Thursday during term time (at St. Swithun's Community Centre until 23/10 and again from January, at The Art House in Nov. and Dec.) *Dates are shown on the calendar on p6 - 7.*

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

are a variety of techniques on offer, so you will always find something that appeals to you!

The group is run by a qualified teacher with support from creative facilitators with lived 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.

Safe Anchor Trust canal boat trip: Tuesday 21st October 10.15am – 3.45pm approx.



A canal boat at a lock.

We are delighted to announce that we will be taking our first ever canal boat trip with the Safe Anchor Trust on Tuesday 21st October! We will be travelling via taxis 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 taxis back to Wakefield Bus Station and should arrive back comfortably by 3.45pm.

The boat is specially adapted for disabled visitors (including wheelchairs). It can only accommodate 10 guests, two of which need to be WDSA staff/volunteers for safeguarding reasons, so we only have 8 places which will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. If the trip is successful, we will aim to do this again in 2026 (possibly several times), so we will be operating a waiting list to make sure everyone who wants to go will get the opportunity. To prioritise places for people with sight loss, on this occasion we ask that you only bring a sighted companion if absolutely necessary.

The Safe Anchor Trust do not charge for the use of their boats, so the cost of the trip is just £10 per person towards the cost of the taxis.

Calendar of events October 2025 – January 2026				
<u>OCTOBER</u>	<u>NOVEMBER</u>	<u>DECEMBER</u>	<u>JANUARY</u>	
1 We	1 Sa	1 Mo Xmas lunch*	1 Th New Year's Day	
2 Th LWWSL* / ABV / Pontefract Evening Group	2 Su	2 Tu	2 Fr	
3 Fr	3 Mo Demo Day	3 We	3 Sa	
4 Sa	4 Tu	4 Th ABV / Pontefract Evening Group	4 Su	
5 Su	5 We	5 Fr	5 Mo Ridings	
6 Mo Ridings	6 Th ABV / Pontefract Evening Group	6 Sa	6 Tu	
7 Tu	7 Fr	7 Su	7 We	
8 We	8 Sa	8 Mo Nostell trip*	8 Th Art Beyond Vision	
9 Th Art Beyond Vision	9 Su	9 Tu Horbury	9 Fr	
10 Fr	10 Mo	10 We	10 Sa	
11 Sa	11 Tu Horbury	11 Th Art Beyond Vision	11 Su	
12 Su	12 We	12 Fr	12 Mo	
13 Mo	13 Th Art Beyond Vision	13 Sa	13 Tu Horbury	
14 Tu Horbury	14 Fr	14 Su	14 We	
15 We Cuppa & Connect	15 Sa	15 Mo	15 Th Art Beyond Vision	
16 Th Art Beyond Vision	16 Su	16 Tu	16 Fr	

TO Th Art Beyond Vision	TO Su	TO Tu	TO F
17 Fr	17 Mo	17 We Cuppa & Connect*	17 Sa
18 Sa	18 Tu	18 Th Art Beyond Vision	18 Su
19 Su	19 We Cuppa & Connect	19 Fr	19 Mo LWWSL*
20 Mo	20 Th Art Beyond Vision	20 Sa	20 Tu
21 Tu Safe Anchor trip*	21 Fr	21 Su	21 We Cuppa & Connect
22 We	22 Sa	22 Mo	22 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Group
23 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Group	23 Su	23 Tu	23 Fr
24 Fr	24 Mo	24 We	24 Sa
25 Sa	25 Tu Panto trip*	25 Th Xmas Day	25 Su
26 Su	26 We	26 Fr Boxing Day	26 Mo LWWSL*
27 Mo	27 Th Ponte / ABV/ Wakefield Evening Group	27 Sa	27 Tu
28 Tu	28 Fr	28 Su	28 We Winter Warmer*
29 We	29 Sa	29 Mo	29 Th Art Beyond Vision
30 Th	30 Su	30 Tu	30 Fr
31 Fr		31 We	31 Sa

ABV: Art Beyond Vision

LWWSL: Living Well with Sight Loss

***pre-booking required**

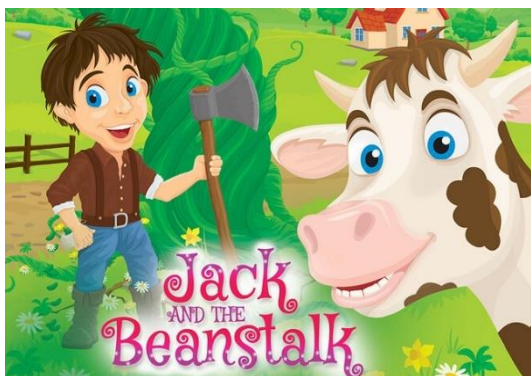
New style Demo and Wellbeing Day: Monday 3rd November 10am until 1pm at St. Swithun's Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, WF1 4RR

We are excited to announce that we are refreshing the format of our Equipment Demonstration and Advice Days to include more wellbeing information and activities. We are also trialling holding the event at St. Swithun's rather than The Ridings. Confirmed guests include VisionAid and Wakefield Recovery College, with more guests to be announced. As usual, 2026 diaries and calendars will be available to order.

Our Art Beyond Vision team will 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, including Christmas cards and small gift items, with all monies raised being reinvested for the continuation of the group.

Please note there will be no Ridings coffee morning on 3rd November.

Jack & the Beanstalk pantomime trip: Tuesday 25th November at Theatre Royal Wakefield (start 5.30pm, approx. finish 10pm)



As part of our partnership work with our friends at the Theatre Royal Wakefield, we are delighted to invite you to join us at 5.30pm on the evening of Tuesday 25th November for a buffet tea and workshop, before settling in for the performance of Jack & the Beanstalk at 7pm.

Our seats are in the front three rows of the stalls, so the best seats in the house! Thanks to some grant funding secured by the Theatre, we can offer these top-tier tickets for just £10 each (usual price: £35)! Carer tickets are free of charge. The food and workshop beforehand are complimentary (please let us know if you have any dietary requirements).

Places are very limited, so please call the office now to book your place. If you have already been involved in our work with the Theatre, your name will be on the list but please call the office to confirm. Thank you.

**Christmas lunch at the Create Café, Wakefield One, Burton Street,
Wakefield WF1 2DD: Monday 1st December 12 noon until 2pm approx.**

We are thrilled to announce that our Christmas lunch this year will be taking place at the Create Café at Wakefield One!



The interior of the Create Café.

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 develop new skills for life.

This year we will be offering a two-course menu as standard, at a cost of just £15.50 per head (drinks not included).

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 and butternut wellington, veggie gravy (vegetarian)

* Add a large pig in a blanket for an extra £2!

(Vegan gluten free options are available to pre-order)

To finish, choose from:

- Triple chocolate brownie, chocolate sauce, Chantilly cream (GF) (V)
- Sticky toffee pudding, toffee sauce, Chantilly cream (V)
- Individual Bakewell tart, pear and cinnamon compote, Chantilly cream (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 main course only, this will be charged at £10.50

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!

Christmas at Nostell Priory – Monday 8th December 10.30am – 3.30pm



approx.

Step back in time and into your imagination as we become evacuees, go through the wardrobe and enter the magical kingdom of Narnia as we experience Christmas at Nostell together!

We will meet at Wakefield Bus Station at 10.30am and travel to Nostell to arrive for 11am. We will have a dedicated room available to us throughout our visit where belongings can be left, and we will have tea and coffee when we arrive. We'll start our tour of the house around 11.30am and, as we make our way through the rooms, the friendly and knowledgeable Nostell volunteers will be available to talk to us about what is in each room. There is a lift if you require step-free access inside the house.

The café can get very busy at Nostell so please bring a packed lunch which we can enjoy together in our dedicated area.

After lunch, there will be time to explore the gardens (weather permitting), browse the gift shop and second-hand bookshop, or explore the house again independently, before heading back to Wakefield at around 3pm. There may also be craft activities to join in with if you wish.

We have been fortunate enough to have been given a Community Pass by our friends at Nostell, so the cost of the trip is purely a £10 contribution per person towards the cost of the transport. You do not need to be a National Trust member, and you can also make your own way there if that's more convenient. Just let us know at the time of booking your place. All are welcome, including sighted companions, but places are limited so please contact the office to book your place today.

The festive experience at Nostell is always special and we are very excited to be offering this opportunity for the first time. We really hope you can join us.

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 (please let us know dietary needs).

Focus on fundraising

You may remember that last quarter we wished Jean Shorthouse from the Carleton Grange Dance Club a happy 92nd birthday for September. Jean and the members of the Dance Club have supported us for many years and typically raised between £350 and £400 every year. After we went to print, we learned that Jean had sadly passed away, so we wanted to pay tribute to Jean and thank her, her family, and the Dance Club members for their continued support of our work in Jean's memory.



Jean Shorthouse.



Mia as she begins her descent.

We would also like to thank Mia Jackson-Goodall, who took part in a charity abseil down Wakefield Cathedral on Saturday 13th September to raise money for WDSA in memory of her grandad Brian. Brian was a member of ours for many years and sadly passed away in October 2023. Mia raised a fantastic £462.50, and we are so grateful that this brave young lady chose to take on such a challenge and support our work in this way. Well done, Mia!

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.

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.

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 are all 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. Please ring in advance if you need to come to the office.

Please note that the office will be closed for the Christmas and New Year break from 1.30pm on Thursday 18th December, reopening on Monday 5th January. Please note our Ridings coffee morning will go ahead as normal on Monday 5th January so we will not be back in the office until the afternoon. If you need urgent support over the Christmas closure, please contact Social Care Direct on 0345 8 503 503.