



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 April 2026 newsletter!

Well, I'm not sure where the first quarter of the year has gone! It seems like only two minutes since we were having Christmas lunch!

It has been a really busy few months, and it has been lovely to see so many of you at our regular groups, at our Winter Warmer event, and on our trip to The Hepworth Wakefield. If you would like to visit The Hepworth independently, entry is free for Wakefield residents, and they offer sighted guiding and free highlights tours that are really worthwhile.

Sarah Shooter (one of our wonderful Trustees) and I attended the Yorkshire Business Awards at Wakefield Trinity at the end of January, and we were thrilled to not only be a finalist for the Community Impact Award, but to win the Team of the Year Award! There are only three of us in the staff team, so this recognition is absolutely wonderful.

You might have seen our amazing visually impaired youth football team on BBC Look North in February, and we were delighted that the BBC also chose to broadcast the segment nationally on BBC Breakfast!

As usual, this newsletter is packed with lots of groups and events for you to get involved with, so we really hope to see you soon!

With warm wishes,

Hayley Grocock (Chief Executive Officer)



Hayley and Sarah at the Yorkshire Business Awards.

What's on at Wakefield District Sight Aid

All our events up to the end of July 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, our Ridings coffee mornings are continuing as usual until further notice. There will be no Ridings coffee morning on Monday 6th April or Monday 4th May due to the Bank Holidays for Easter and May 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.



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.



Our Cuppa & Connect group enjoyed a talk from the Friends of Waterton's Wall in March.

Wednesday 15th April: Spring pen making
Wednesday 20th May: Quiz
Wednesday 17th June: Bingo
Wednesday 15th July: Equipment demo from Jason at VisionAid

You don't have to join in with the activity if you prefer to sit and chat. Why not stay for a low cost, home cooked lunch in the Community Café afterwards?

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! A full food menu is available, including pub classics and light bites, alongside a full drinks selection.

Please note, there will be no group in April due to volunteer holidays.



People enjoying our Pontefract evening social group.

Pontefract evening social group: 5pm – 8pm on the first Thursday of the month (held at Iron Dram, 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 (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, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield, WF1 4RR). *Dates are shown as ABV on the calendar on p6 - 7. There will be no session on 2nd April, 9th April, or 28th May due to the school holidays. The last group before the summer break will be on 16th July.*

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, “If I didn’t come to this group, I wouldn’t get out and meet people. I started doing art for the first time when I came here. Now I love it and do it at home. Everyone is so nice. We’re a family.”

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.

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

Living Well with Sight Loss course (LWWSL): 10.30am – 2.30pm on Monday 20th and Monday 27th April 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:

"We were very grateful to be offered this course. We found it to be so helpful and informative, nothing was too much trouble, and we were treated with kindness and respect. It was also good to speak and mix with other sight loss people. It has opened doors to various sources of help. Thank you to everyone concerned."

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.

Provisional dates for the next course: Monday 6th and Monday 13th July.

Calendar of events April - July 2026

<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
1 We	1 Fr	1 Mo Ridings	1 We
2 Th Ponte Evening Group	2 Sa	2 Tu	2 Th Art Beyond Vision / Ponte Evening Group
3 Fr Good Friday	3 Su	3 We	3 Fr
4 Sa	4 Mo Bank Holiday	4 Th Art Beyond Vision / Ponte Evening Group	4 Sa
5 Su	5 Tu	5 Fr	5 Su
6 Mo Easter Monday	6 We	6 Sa	6 Mo Ridings / LWWSL day 1
7 Tu	7 Th Art Beyond Vision / Ponte Evening Group	7 Su	7 Tu
8 We	8 Fr	8 Mo	8 We
9 Th	9 Sa	9 Tu Horbury	9 Th Art Beyond Vision
10 Fr	10 Su	10 We	10 Fr
11 Sa	11 Mo	11 Th Art Beyond Vision	11 Sa
12 Su	12 Tu Horbury	12 Fr	12 Su
13 Mo	13 We Safe Anchor Trust	13 Sa	13 Mo LWWSL day 2
14 Tu Horbury	14 Th Art Beyond Vision	14 Su	14 Tu Horbury
15 We Cuppa & Connect	15 Fr	15 Mo	15 We Cuppa & Connect
16 Th Art Beyond Vision	16 Sa	16 Tu	16 Th Art Beyond Vision

10 Th Art Beyond Vision	10 Tu	10 Sa	10 Su
17 Fr	17 We Cuppa & Connect	17 Su	17 Su
18 Sa	18 Th Art Beyond Vision	18 Mo Self-Confidence & Me workshop	18 Mo Self-Confidence & Me workshop
19 Su	19 Fr	19 Tu	19 Tu
20 Mo	20 Sa	20 We Cuppa & Connect	20 Mo LWWSL day 1
21 Tu	21 Su	21 Th Art Beyond Vision	21 Tu
22 We	22 Mo AGM & summer celebration	22 Fr	22 We
23 Th Ponte / Wakefield Evening Group	23 Tu	23 Sa	23 Th Ponte / ABV
24 Fr	24 We	24 Su	24 Fr
25 Sa	25 Th Ponte / ABV / Wakefield Evening Group	25 Mo Bank Holiday	25 Sa
26 Su	26 Fr	26 Tu	26 Su
27 Mo	27 Sa	27 We	27 Mo LWWSL day 2
28 Tu	28 Su	28 Th Ponte / ABV / Wakefield Evening Group	28 Tu
29 We	29 Mo	29 Fr	29 We Afternoon tea & planting
30 Th	30 Tu	30 Sa	30 Th Art Beyond Vision
31 Fr	31 Fr	31 Su	31 Fr

ABV = Art Beyond Vision

LWWSL = Living Well with Sight Loss

Afternoon tea and spring flowerpot workshop: Wednesday 29th April, 12 noon until 2.30pm at St. Swithun's Community Centre

You are warmly invited to join us for a home-made afternoon tea of sandwiches, quiche, cakes and of course the St. Swithun's signature scones, after which we will be creating our own spring flowerpots!

You will be given a pot, which you can choose to decorate or leave plain, and everything you need to create a pretty flower display to take home and enjoy. Don't worry, these won't be heavy so you will be able to manage them on the bus home!



This workshop is suitable for everyone, irrespective of your level of vision or gardening prowess! Please feel free to bring a friend or family member with you. Sighted volunteers will also be on hand to help.

Come along, have some delicious food, and enjoy creating something lovely for yourself or to give as a gift.

The cost is just £10 per person, payable in advance. Pre-booking is essential and please let us know any dietary requirements at the time of booking. Please call the office on 01924 215555 to book your place!

Safe Anchor Trust canal boat trip: Wednesday 13th May, 10.15am – 3.45pm approx.



WDSA members on our last Safe Anchor Trust trip.

We are delighted to announce that, after the success of our first trip in October, we will be taking another canal boat trip with the Safe Anchor Trust on Wednesday 13th May!

We will be travelling by coach from Wakefield Bus Station at 10.15am, arriving at Shepley Bridge Marina in Mirfield ready to set

off at 11 am. 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 coach back to Wakefield Bus Station and should arrive back comfortably by 3.45pm.

This time 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 was on the waiting list for our last trip will be given priority. Places will be prioritised for people with visual impairment, but if you need a sighted companion with you to access the trip then of course this is absolutely fine.

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!

Self-confidence and Me workshop, in partnership with Live Well

Wakefield: Monday 18th May, 1pm – 3pm at St. Swithun's Community Centre

We are hugely grateful to our friends at Live Well Wakefield for partnering with us to deliver a Self-Confidence and Me workshop, which aims to help you develop skills to challenge low self-confidence, and explore ways to improve self-esteem and overall wellbeing.

What to expect

A free, 2-hour, small group workshop providing an opportunity to:

- Explore the effects of low self-confidence
- Practice relaxation and distraction techniques
- Explore how to challenge negative thinking patterns and remain positive

- Learn strategies to help manage emotions
- Practice setting achievable goals to build confidence

Live Well Wakefield workshops are led by a team of trained staff and volunteers with their own experiences of living with a long-term condition. This will be an informal, non-judgemental space for mutual support and understanding.

Anyone living with sight loss is welcome to attend. If you require sighted support to access the workshop, please let us know at the time of booking. Places are limited, so please contact the office on 01924 215555 to secure your spot today.

Wakefield District Sight Aid summer celebration, incorporating Annual General Meeting: Monday 22nd June - 11.00am until 2.30pm at St. Swithun's Community Centre, Arncliffe Road, Wakefield, WF1 4RR



Last year's AGM and summer celebration

All members, stakeholders, supporters, and friends are invited to join us for a summer celebration, incorporating our AGM. This is an opportunity to celebrate our achievements over the past year, hear about our future plans, ask questions of the staff team, and meet the Board of Trustees.

After the success of last year's event, we will be following the same format and would love to invite you to join us for a delicious home-made lunch after the formal business of the AGM has been completed.

We are delighted that our President Lord St. Oswald and special guest speakers will be joining us. After lunch, we would love you to stay for games and activities. Come along and try something different, meet with friends old and new, and help us celebrate everything we've achieved together over the past year.

This event is completely free (there is such a thing as a free lunch!), but places are limited so please RSVP by ringing the office on 01924 215555 or emailing Hayley on ceo@wdsa.org.uk by Monday 8th June at the

latest. This ensures we are catering for the right number of guests. Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements.

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.

Focus on fundraising: Collection boxes



This quarter we would like to say thank you to all the local businesses who kindly have one of our collection boxes. These boxes not only help us raise vital funds but also make us more visible in the community. We would especially like to thank the customers of Crofton Express

and Post Office, who always give so generously, and to the patrons of Gem's Bistro in Normanton, who have also been supporting us for many years. We are also extremely grateful to everyone who puts money in collection boxes at our coffee mornings. These donations help us keep these groups running and we are so grateful for your support.

St. Swithun's orientation and confidence building sessions



St. Swithun's Café on the Moor.

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.

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 on 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.