



Wakefield District Sight Aid

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Hello everyone and welcome to our Spring newsletter!

Can you believe that 2019 marks our 150th birthday year? The fact that we have been supporting visually impaired people in our community for 150 years is a tremendous achievement, so we will not only be celebrating this amazing milestone, but also looking at how we ensure we can support people in the best possible way for the next 150 years!

I am thrilled to kick off the celebrations by letting you know about our brand new website. It is much more accessible and user-friendly, with an updated logo and a fresh new look and feel, which we have carried through to the newsletter. The website can still be found in the same place – www.wdsa.org.uk – but we hope that it will be a much more useful tool in helping people find out more about what we do, forthcoming events, and how they can get involved. We'd love to hear what you think so please do give us your feedback!

There is always so much going on, and barely enough room in this newsletter to tell you the half of it! If you would like to be added to an email list so we can remind you about events and keep you updated with news from time to time, you can sign up by contacting the office (details at the top of this page), or via the website. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter by searching "WDSightAid".

With warm wishes for a very Happy Easter,

Hayley Grocock, Chief Executive Officer

Wakefield District Sight Aid – charity news

Update from Nic Ford, our Sight Loss Advisor:

Happy New Year! I'm not sure where the last 2 months have disappeared to! We had another great Demonstration Day at the end of January, and it was lovely having our friends from Guide Dogs for the Blind join us for the first time. Each time we hold our Demonstration Days, we look to invite different visitors to ensure each time there is something new for people to enjoy. We are very excited to announce a trial of our Demonstration Days in the Pontefract area, and hope it proves to be really successful too.

Home visits continue to be extremely busy. I am blown away by how life changing some visits can be, whether it is issuing a piece of equipment that can make a real difference, or a chat about what struggles someone is having and helping to find solutions. If you think you would benefit from a home visit please contact the office and we will happily arrange an appointment.

Update from Jo Brook, our Community Coordinator:

Since I wrote to you last time, we've enjoyed festive gatherings and a Saturday Social at Wakefield One – the big library with friendly staff ready to recommend audio books and show you specialist IT equipment to use there. For further information on library services for visually impaired people please telephone 0845 8 506 506 or visit www.wakefield.gov.uk.

It's a new year and Spring will soon be on its way, so if you fancy spending more time outside when better weather comes along, let us know as we are continuing to explore out and about links with Open Country and healthy walks groups. You may fancy fishing, or making bird boxes, so let us know and we'll help you find those possibilities!

We are pleased to let you know we will be running a return trip to Winthrop Gardens on Tuesday 21st May! More details are below!

Update from Neil Newton, our Tech Mate Project Leader

I am pleased to report that the Tech Mate project continues to be busy, with lots of people reporting how the help I'm able to provide has helped make their lives easier. We now have a range of equipment and software that you can try for yourself to see what might suit you best, including:

- Tablets – Apple iPad, Samsung Galaxy tab (Android)

- Mobile phones – iPhone, Samsung Galaxy J5 (Android), TT Fone Lunar, TT Fone Jupiter 2, Doro 6520, Doro Secure 580, In Your Pocket (basic voice-controlled mobile phone, with talking newspapers/magazines/books functionality)
- Software – Synaptic (all-in-one Android software package for visually impaired people, available to try on smart phone and tablet), Dolphin SuperNova (magnifier, screen reader, and Braille for Microsoft Windows), Dolphin GuideConnect (talking digital assistant to help you manage Microsoft Windows), JAWS (screen reader and Braille output for Microsoft Windows), KNFB Reader (document reader for Android and Apple devices as well as PCs running Windows 10)

There are many apps available on smart phones and tablets to assist people with visual impairments. I am asked about this a lot when I'm meeting with members or visiting them in their homes, so I thought I would share two of my favourites with you in this newsletter.

Be My Eyes is a free app for Apple and Android devices that lets blind and partially sighted people contact a network of sighted volunteers for help via a live video chat. Using the app, the sighted volunteer is able to tell the user what they see when the user points their phone at something using the rear-facing camera. For example, the user may want to know what a label says on a tin of food or other household products, or the colours of items of clothing.

The beauty of this app is that the user can request assistance at any time of time of the day or night and from any location.

Be My Eyes can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store or via their website <https://www.bemyeyes.com/>.

Seeing AI is a free app for Apple devices which scans text and documents and reads them out aloud to the user. It also has other built-in options of a product barcode scanner and a new handwriting reading feature.

Seeing AI can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or via their website <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/seeing-ai>.

My normal working days are Wednesdays and Thursdays. I run a drop-in service from our Outwood office on Thursdays between 10am and 12.30pm. Just turn up, or you can make an appointment by calling 01924 215555 or emailing techmate@wdsa.org.uk. I am also able to visit you at home and provide technical advice and support over the phone. Please get in touch to find out more.

A word about funding

We are the only charity providing direct individual support to people living with sight loss in Wakefield. We are heavily reliant on voluntary donations and grant funding in order to keep running. We are very grateful to Wakefield Council, who provide a contribution towards the costs of running our home visiting service, but this money only accounts for about 10% of what it actually costs us to operate each year. We do not receive any funding from national partners or central Government.

The reality of running a small local charity is that most years our total income is around 50% of what it actually costs to keep operating. Some years, we are fortunate enough to receive a large gift or legacy payment, and this money sees us through the lean years, when our income does not meet our running costs. We were very lucky to receive such a gift in 2017, but it had been 4 years since our last such payment. As things stand, we have enough money to keep operating until the end of 2021.

Like any organisation, we have rent and bills to pay, office equipment and stationery to buy, together with staff costs and project running costs, whether that's room hire for coffee mornings and Demo Days, transport for outings, printing our newsletter and producing it in alternative formats, or petrol for travelling to and from home visits.

Without donations and legacy payments, we simply wouldn't be here, so we are hugely thankful to all of our supporters whose kind gifts help us to provide direct support to so many local people living with sight loss. We have been serving our community for 150 years and we would love to be here for the next 150. The need for our services is growing all the time.

We have never charged a membership fee, and do not intend to start doing so, but if you feel able to make a contribution towards the costs of running our services, we would be incredibly grateful. We accept one-off donations by cash, cheque and postal order (we do not advise the sending of cash through the post), and we can provide a Standing Order Mandate if you would like to give a regular gift. If you are considering leaving us a gift in your Will, and have a particular purpose in mind for your donation, we would be happy to discuss your wishes with you sensitively and in strictest confidence.

We remain eternally grateful to all our supporters who make it possible for us to provide services to around 1,000 people every year. Thank you.

Quiz (with thanks to Jack and Pam Reynolds)

1. What is Queen Elizabeth II's date of birth?
2. With which spirit does the Queen like to mix her Dubonnet?
3. In which county is the royal residence Sandringham House?
4. Who designed the Queen's wedding and coronation dresses?
5. Name the Mediterranean island which was home to Elizabeth and Philip between 1949 & 1951.
6. How many different Prime Ministers have there been during the Queen's reign?
7. What colour are the boxes containing official papers for the Queen's attention?
8. Which horse did the Queen ride at the Trooping of the Colour for 18 years?
9. When the Queen said "An Uachtarain agus a chairde" – what language was she speaking?
10. What does Scott Methven do for 15 minutes at 9.00 each weekday morning, under the Queen's window?

The answers are at the end of the newsletter!

Dates for your diary

Younger members social group – this mixed, friendly group of working age members meets regularly at various venues in central Wakefield, and

welcomes new people. Please see our website, Facebook page or call the office for details of forthcoming meetings.

NEW! Pontefract Demo Day! Following members' requests, we are thrilled to announce we will be holding an **Equipment Demonstration and Advice Day** on Wednesday 20th March at St. Mary's Community Centre, The Circle, Chequerfield, Pontefract, WF8 2AY from 10.00am until 2pm. Lizz Johnson, our previous Volunteer and Community Coordinator has returned on placement from the University of Leeds to support us with this. A separate flyer is included with more information. The centre is fully accessible with a car park and on road parking for those travelling by car. If you will be coming by public transport, the centre is on the bus terminus, and buses from Pontefract Bus Station stand A, will take you to the shops opposite the centre. We will have someone at the door to welcome people. We are very grateful to our friends at Dolphin, for their kind sponsorship of this event. If the event is a success we will look to hold more, so please come along and support it!

Artwalk Wakefield: You're invited to join us for our next accessible guided tour for people with sight loss on **Wednesday 27th March!**

Ask anyone who has visited and they'll tell you, Artwalk is Wakefield's best kept secret. For the past eleven years they've been entertaining audiences with bi-monthly **free** events across the city including exhibitions, live music, performances, poetry, and so much more. Last year we did our first guided tour and had a great time discovering how fun and inclusive the event was. You don't have to know anything about the arts to get involved, everyone is welcome and many of the events are suitable for people with visual impairments.

Agenda: We will gather at The Art House at 5pm for a welcome drink and an introduction to their new show by artist in residence, Tony Heaton OBE. The tour will then move on to a number of other venues nearby. We anticipate that the tour itself will last around an hour and a half, and if people would like to have a drink together afterwards there are plenty of places close by. Walking time between venues will be limited to around 5 minutes, and the venues chosen will be as accessible as possible. One of Artwalk Wakefield's volunteer team will guide the tour and we will have staff and volunteers on hand to audio describe the work and help

guide people. You can book your place online (<https://bit.ly/2TUsPyP>) or contact us in the office if you need help booking your place.

Our next **Equipment Demonstration and Advice Day** at the **Parkside Centre, Outwood**, runs from 10.30am – 2pm on **Monday 29th April**. We have various partner organisations coming to join us in the coming months, including the Yorkshire Cancer Patient Forum, Humanware, Healthwatch Wakefield, Wakefield & District Society for Deaf People, so do come along and have a chat with them about what they do.

Forthcoming Demo Days: 15th July and 4th November.

Annual General Meeting (AGM): All members are welcome to join us for our AGM on Monday 20th May 2019 in the main Church Hall at **Parkside Methodist Church, Leeds Road, Outwood**, Wakefield WF1 2PN.

Refreshments will be served from 10am and the meeting will start at 10.30am. Our speakers will include our Patron, Lord St. Oswald D.L., and Debbie Linford, Community Engagement Officer with Guide Dogs Leeds Mobility Team. Please let us know if you are planning to attend so we can make sure there is enough cake for everyone!

Outing to Winthrop Gardens: We will be returning to Winthrop on Tuesday 21st May! As before, there will be minibus transport from central Wakefield and Pontefract, tea and coffee on arrival, a garden tour and buffet lunch. Last year, we were able to subsidise this trip by 41% due to a generous one-off donation. The actual cost of running the trip is £21.20 per person, therefore we are asking for a contribution of £17.50 this time. This still represents a discount of 17.5% per person. Please contact the office on 01924 215555 to book your place. We hope you can join us!

Coffee mornings (all 10am until 12 noon)

Parkside Centre, Outwood: 1st April, (no event in May due to May Day Bank Holiday and AGM), 3rd June, 1st July

Cluntergate Centre, Horbury: 12th March, 9th April, 14th May, 11th June

St. Giles' Centre, Pontefract: 16th March, 20th April, 18th May, 15th June

Live Well Wakefield Expert Patients Programme, in partnership with Wakefield District Sight Aid especially for visually impaired people

- Are you struggling to manage your day-to-day life with a long-term condition (including sight loss and other conditions)?

- Would you like to learn some tools and techniques to improve your health and wellbeing?
- Do you feel isolated and would like to meet others who understand some of the difficulties you face each day?
- Finding it difficult to stay positive?

Come and join us on this FREE six-week course and share ideas with other like-minded people to help you improve your self-confidence. The course is delivered by specially trained tutors who all have personal experience of living with a long-term health condition.

Dates: Mondays 15th July to 19th August 2019

Time: 1pm to 3.30pm

Venue: Nova, 11 Upper York Street, Wakefield, WF1 3LQ

Places are limited, so please get in touch and book your place today!

Office availability

Our office is open Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 1.30pm. If possible, please get in touch before dropping into the office so we can make sure someone is available to help you.

Newsletter format

The newsletter is available in large print, Braille, audio CD or USB stick, or by email. Please contact us to change how you receive it.

Quiz answers

1. 21 April 1926
2. Gin
3. Norfolk
4. Norman Hartnell
5. Malta
6. 13
7. Red
8. Burmese
9. Gaelic
10. Plays the bagpipes