# Monthly What’s On E-Newsletter for August 2024

Welcome to your monthly update of accessible services and events in Wiltshire and Swindon. This update mainly covers August 2024.

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# Wiltshire Sight Events and Notices

## Eye Can Exhibitions

Our partner charity Sight Support West of England are busy organising and planning the next Eye Can exhibition after the success of Eye Can Gloucestershire which was held at the beginning of June.

* Eye Can Bristol will be held on 9th October from 10am at BAWA, 589 Southmead Rd, Bristol, BS34 7RG.

If this is too far for you to travel we will be holding Eye Can exhibitions in Salisbury and Bath in 2025.

The event is free to attend and is a one stop shop for all things sight loss related. There will be a wide range of suppliers demonstrating equipment and assistive technology designed to make life easier for anyone living with sight loss. It’s a great chance to try them out and find what works best for you. You will also find local and national organisations offering helpful services. In addition, there will be a range of interesting talks held throughout the day. Pre-booking will be open soon but call us if you would like more information.

This event is sponsored by: Optelec - [lowvisionshop.co.uk/](https://lowvisionshop.co.uk/) and Humanware - [humanware.com/en-united\_kingdom/home](https://www.humanware.com/en-united_kingdom/home)

### Review - Could you represent us?

We are receiving an increasing number of requests for our charity to be represented at a variety of events, such as awareness-raising talks, cheque presentation ceremonies, and charity of the year engagements, and we are also seeking opportunities to run fundraising stalls at various community events, such as summer fairs, fetes, and information days.

We are keen to hear from people who would be interested in helping out at whatever level you feel comfortable: from telling us about suitable community events in your area, to manning a stall at an event, to representing the charity at award ceremonies and saying a few words about the work that we do, through to being one of our Volunteer Speakers, delivering talks to community groups about your personal story as well as increasing audience understanding of visual impairment and the work and impact of Sight Support or Wiltshire Sight (training and support given). If you’d like to find out more, please contact Becs on 07849 833 047 or email volunteering@sightsupportwest.org.uk

# Wiltshire Sight Community Hubs & Socials

Our sight loss advice hubs provide a local space for consultations with your advisor, offering information, guidance, and advice on equipment and technology. You can explore a selection of helpful aids and discover how technology can help you. Additionally, most hubs host social groups where you can meet others, share tips and tricks, and enjoy a chat.

For full details of our sight loss advice hubs and social groups, see our website which has the latest information, or you can call our office on 01380 723682. [Click here for our website hub and social group listings.](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/events/) You can put your postcode in the search bar to find your nearest hub.

## Changes To Note for Upcoming Hubs

* Our Chippenham hub will be changing location as of August. New location is Chippenham Community Hub,1 Gladstone Parade, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 3BS. The next hub is on 14th August at the new location.
* Our Salisbury Resource Centre will be open on Tuesdays as of August. You will still be able to book appointments and drop in from Tuesday 6th August.
* Marlborough hub on Tuesday 10th September has been cancelled. But will be running in October.

# Events & Notices From Other Organisations

These events and notices are from other organisations. Please check with the contact given that the event is going ahead as planned. Sometimes changes need to be made to dates and times at short notice, so it is best to check with the organisation before the event takes place.

## Sensing Nature – volunteer guides wanted

Volunteer guides play a vital role in enabling visitors to explore Westonbirt National Arboretum, sharing their passion, knowledge, and experience to connect people with the significance of the tree collection. Sensing Nature walks offer multi-sensory experiences designed to challenge traditional landscape appreciation. The walks run Fridays from April to September,

Westonbirt is seeking individuals with varied sensory perceptions, particularly welcoming those with visual impairments. They are offering training for guides interested in leading walks. Volunteers are asked for a minimum of 2 shifts per month, involving about 3 hours each. Training includes onsite visits, mandatory training sessions, and mentorship. No prior expertise in trees is necessary; enthusiasm for nature and people is key. Guides should be confident in engaging with visitors, effective communicators, patient, and detail-oriented. The role involves walking in all weather conditions and terrains. The organisation provides extensive support, including sighted assistants if needed, access to resources, volunteer benefits, and ongoing training opportunities. Interested individuals can contact the volunteer office for further information and to initiate the application process. Email volunteer.westonbirt@forestryengland.uk or call 0300 067 4847.

## Sighted Guide Training from Guide Dogs

Guide Dogs offers a range of free sighted guide training. [www.guidedogs.org.uk/sightedguiding](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/sightedguiding) 0800 781 1444.

## Review - Free Alexa Device from British Wireless for the Blind Fund

People living with sight loss can still apply for a free Echo Show or Echo Dot device from British Wireless for the Blind Fund. To get a device, they need to be in receipt of certain disability or income-related benefits and have an internet connection at home. Apply for a free Alexa device by using the following link: [Referrals - British Wireless for the Blind Fund](https://blind.org.uk/referrals/)

# Leisure and Sporting Activities

## Review Location - Swindon Audiobook Reading group

1st Monday of the month (5 August)

Swindon Audiobook Reading group will be discussing a lovely non-fiction book “Mudlarking” by Lara Maiklem, describing the history of London and its people told through objects found along the banks of the River Thames, at the 5 August session 10 – 11.30am. All welcome, please call-in advance to indicate your attendance (01380 723682).

The September title (available to download on Borrowbox from 1 August) is “The Lie Maker” by Linwood Barclay.

## Are you interested in joining an audio book group at Marlborough or Pewsey Library?

Register your interest in this new audiobook group, which will meet at Marlborough Library and potentially at Pewsey Library, and will use library audiobooks, by contacting Jenny Spencer at 01380 723682 or jenny.spencer@wiltshiresight.org

## RNIB Social Groups in Swindon

At this social group you can relax, chat, and have a tea or coffee. General chat with advice from Eye Clinic Liaison Officer / Rehabilitation Officer

* 4th Thursday of each month 10 am to 12 pm.

 Craven House, 145 Victoria Road, Swindon, SN1 3BU

Bernice.Cocking@rnib.org.uk or 07761 328571.

George.Hinton@rnib.org.uk Tricia.sail@rnib.org.uk

## Swindon Blind Craft Club

Swindon Blind Craft Club meets every Tuesday between 10 am and 1 pm and is run by Lou Curtis at Swindon Blind Association, Craven House, 145 Victoria Road, Swindon, SN1 3BU. Parking available and bus stop opposite. Bring your own lunch. Carers welcome.

You can enjoy a wide variety of activities, including creating baskets, painting, and tile decoration! Get in touch with Lou if you want to come along and find out more: 07703 306 403.

## **Swindon Bats Sports & Social Club**

Swindon Bats have a variety of groups:

### Swindon Bats Bowling

1. every Wednesday afternoon 12.15 pm
2. every Thursday 6.45 pm

They meet at the Ten Pin Bowling Centre, Shaw Ridge, Swindon the cost is £5 for 2 games.

Anyone interested in playing should contact Sue Mead by email or phone beforehand to book a place: SueMead@outlook.com or 07788 150487.

### Swindon Bats Social Group

Their social group meets at Craven House in Swindon from 2 to 4 pm on the 2nd Monday of the month. On these occasions they play skittles, indoor kurling and sometimes speakers are organised.  This gives visually impaired people the chance to talk about anything and everything from what’s in the news to how they cope with visually impaired life.

### ****Swindon Bats Walking Group****

2nd Thursday of every month (Weather permitting) starting in March at Coate Water Country Park, Swindon (Meeting outside the cafe).

10:30am - 12pm (stroll around the lake followed by a drink in the nearby pub or cafe for those who would like to stay to chat)

## England & Wales Blind Gold Association Have a Go Day

Location: Meon Valley Hotel, Golf & Country Club, Sandy Ln, Shedfield, Southampton SO32 2HQ

Date: Sunday 4th August 2024

Time: 2pm to 4pm

They will be running 3 challenges at the event that people can have a go with. Help and support will be available for anyone who needs it. It is a free event and refreshments will be available. Contact by emailing enquiries@ewblindgolf.co.uk

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/england-and-wales-blind-golf-have-a-go-day-tickets-931888011127>

## Westonbirt the National Arboretum at Tetbury

**Sensing Nature and Wellbeing Walks**

Let our visually impaired guides lead you through an immersive and interactive sensory experience that aims to shift your perception, enjoy the arboretum at a slower pace and explore the trees of Westonbirt through your nonvisual senses.

Walks occur at 11:30am every Friday of the month from April - September.

Please note that dogs are not permitted on these walks (except assistance dogs). Some of our visually impaired guides will be assisted by a guide dog. Please do not disturb the assistance dogs while they are working.

How long? Approx. 1.5 hours

How much? Free after admission.

Where to meet? Meet at the Welcome Building, where you will be guided to the starting point for the walk.

Do I need to book? No.

What to wear? Please wear suitable clothing and footwear for outdoor walking as you will be going off path and over grass.

Accessibility? Dependent on weather, these sensory walks may not be suitable for wheelchair users due to the off path experience.

Westonbirt National arboretum Westonbirt Tetbury Gloucestershire GL88QS.

Call 0300 067 4890

Email customerrelations@forestryengland.uk

## Bowls Club in Chippenham

The Bowls Club in Chippenham are running a weekly indoor bowls club for people with sight loss and other disabilities.  Taking place at North Wilts Bowls Club in Chippenham (near Sainsburys) each Friday 4-5pm, September - Easter.  Coaching is given.  The contact for this club is Maureen on 01249 657228.

## Devizes PHAB Group

(Physically disabled and Able bodied) an organisation which brings people with and without disabilities together. See their program of events at [Devizes PHAB meetings and events](https://www.devizesphab.co.uk/uploads/1/2/3/4/123478387/phabprogramme16apr2023.pdf)

## Devizes PHAB Group Bowls Event

Devizes Phab Bowls will be running from May to August at the Bowls Club. On Friday afternoons from 2pm to 3.30pm on: 9th August, 23rd August (Grand Final) Contact Terry Bazeley on 01380 82961

## Free Pilates Classes

Based in Woodbrough, SN9. Emma is looking to offer free Pilates classes to people who are blind / partially sighted. Contact Emma 07971 880695. Limited spaces available.

## RNIB Telephone Groups

* Gardening Group Talk everything gardening. Every two weeks on Tuesdays from 11am to 12 noon.
* Book Group. Different book each month. Third Tuesday of the month

Bernice.Cocking@rnib.org.uk or 07761 328571.

George.Hinton@rnib.org.uk Tricia.sail@rnib.org.uk

## Find a Sensory Walk Near You

Sense have partnered with [Ordnance Survey](https://updates-sense.org.uk/6RW-8AFYT-A1ZIP7-559AJL-1/c.aspx) to help you find and follow an accessible waling route. Call Sense: 0300 330 9256 or visit [www.sense.org.uk/our-services/](http://www.sense.org.uk/our-services/)Local Audio

## Are you ready for an Olympic Summer?

Experience the Olympics and Paralympics through touch and sound!

The 2024 Olympics and Paralympics are just around the corner and we're getting ready to cheer on Team GB as they battle it out for gold. We believe no blind or visually impaired individual should feel left out of the celebrations and learning!

With our new range of Olympics and Paralympics sensory experiences, we're bringing the rich history and visual spectacle of The Games to life through touch and sound.

Explore more below and order yours for free in time for The Games!

If you are interested check out their Website [Living Paintings](https://livingpaintings.org/celebrating-the-olympics-and-paralympics)

# Support Groups and Courses

## Social Prescriber Drop-in, Trowbridge Library

Recently launched - a new drop-in service held at Trowbridge Library which runs on the first Wednesday of the month between 9.30am-12.30pm.

“Are you struggling to manage your health and wellbeing? Your social prescriber from the local GP surgery may be able to help you. Drop into the library to find out more.

Social prescribers can put you in touch with the people and activities that might help you to feel better. This could be an introduction to a community group, a new activity or a local club. Or support to find legal advice, assist with paperwork and form filling, or debt counselling.”

**Retina UK Bristol, Bath & Wilts Peer Support Group Meeting**

* Men’s Peer Support Group Thursday 22nd August 7pm - 8.30”pm
* ‘Talking’ Tech Peer Support Group

Thursday 29th August 7pm - 8pm Register now on this link [Retina UK Peer Support Group](https://retinauk.org.uk/event/bristol-bath-wilts-local-peer-support-group/)

Call 0300 111 4000 or contact Mark.Baxter@retinauk.org.uk for more information.

## Swindon Chat group

Last Tuesday of the month 5.15pm

Contact: Bernice.Cocking@rnib.org.uk 07761 328571

## RNIB Free Health and Social Care Development Courses

RNIB’s Health and Social Care Skills Development Team have a series of free sessions over the coming months, which can be found via the following link: Courses for Health and Social Care Professionals. These introductory sessions are aimed at health and social care professionals to provide an overview of the subject and more information on the team.

# Described Arts Events

## Salisbury Playhouse

Audio Described Shows at Salisbury Playhouse:

12 September – Birdsong

17 October – Stones in His Pockets

31 October – Play On!

17 and 19 December – Sleeping Beauty

To buy tickets call 01722 320333 or email ticketsales@wiltshirecreative.co.uk

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Tel: 01380 723682, Email: info@wiltshiresight.org

Wiltshire Sight is a registered charity no 1119462. Registered Office: St Lucy’s Sight Centre, Browfort, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 2AT