# Monthly What’s On E-Newsletter

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

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# Wiltshire Sight Events and Notices

## Announcing Our New Virtual Hubs!

Are you looking to connect with others who understand life with sight loss? We understand that living with sight loss can feel isolating, but finding others who understand can make all the difference. That’s why we’re launching our new virtual hubs to help you connect with people who share similar experiences in a welcoming and supportive environment.

As a partnership of three sight loss charities – Sight Support West of England, Wiltshire Sight, and Insight Gloucestershire – our new hubs are open to people affected by sight loss across all the areas we cover. Each group will meet regularly on Microsoft Teams and be facilitated by volunteers with lived experience of sight loss. Training is available if you’re new to Microsoft Teams.

### Upcoming Groups:

* **Parent Support**: For parents of visually impaired children up to age 25, starting 28th November, meeting fortnightly on Thursdays at 7:30 pm.
* **University Students:** For over-18s (studying at Level 4 or above), starting 15th January, meeting fortnightly on Wednesdays at 7pm.
* **Working Age** (25–65): Starting in January.
* **Young Adults** (18–30): Starting date to be confirmed.

To join, simply let us know which group interests you. Once you’re signed up, there’s no need to book for each session, and attendance is flexible - you’re welcome to attend whenever you wish. It’s an opportunity to meet new people, share, learn, and build connections without pressure or obligation – all from the comfort of your home.

We’re also looking for volunteer facilitators for our Young Adults hubs – could this be you? Contact Becs at volunteering@sightsupportwest.org.uk

## Exciting Opportunities to Join Our Team at Wiltshire Sight

We’re currently recruiting for two key roles within Wiltshire Sight, and we’d love to hear from anyone who is passionate about making a difference in the lives of people living with sight loss.

### Advice Team Manager (Wiltshire)

We are seeking a dynamic manager to lead our team of Community Sight Loss Advisors and oversee the delivery of our technology support service.

**Salary**: £28,500 per annum

**Hours**: Full-time (35 hours per week)

**Location**: Based in Wiltshire

This role involves recruiting, training, and supporting a team of tech volunteers, organising tech training events, and managing our advice and peer support services to maintain high standards. Previous experience working with sight loss is not required, as comprehensive training will be provided.

**Closing date**: Monday 2nd December, 5pm
**Interviews**: 12th December, in Devizes

### Ebay Assistant (Devizes)

We’re also looking for an organised and proactive Ebay Assistant to help manage and grow our online shop, supporting the charity’s work through online sales.

**Salary:** £22,500 per annum (pro rata)

**Contract:** Part-time (2 days per week)

**Location:** Based in Devizes

This role involves listing and marketing donated items for sale on platforms such as Ebay, Vinted, and Depop, collaborating with our charity shop teams, and providing excellent customer care. Experience with online selling is desirable but not essential, as full training will be provided.

**Why Work With Us?**
Both roles offer the chance to make a real impact while benefiting from flexible working, a generous holiday allowance, and a 5% pension contribution. As a sight loss charity, we particularly encourage applications from people with personal experience of sight loss.

**How to Apply**
For more details about these roles, as well as an additional opportunity offered by our partner charity, Sight Support West of England, visit the [Work for Us page](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/get-involved/work-for-us/) on our website to apply.

If you know someone who might be interested, please share this information with them!

## Christmas Mice Return to Devizes

Following last year’s success, Wiltshire Sight is excited to launch its Christmas Mice Celebration at the Devizes charity shop! This year’s window display features 15 handmade mice, each dressed as a favourite character to spread festive cheer in the marketplace.

Visitors are invited to take part in a free Christmas competition by identifying who each mouse is dressed as. Entry forms are available in-store, with Giant Print and audio versions of the clues provided upon request. The audio version even includes extra hints for those who may not be able to view the display clearly.

The Christmas window will be unveiled on Saturday, 23rd November, and the competition runs until 12th January.

Lisa Swanston-Smith, Devizes Shop Manager, said:
“Our Christmas competition is our way of saying thank you to everyone for supporting us throughout the year.”

Don’t miss this magical display – pop in, take part, and celebrate the season with us. Find us at Wiltshire Sight, 36 The Market Place, Devizes, SN10 1JG.

## Visit Our Christmas Trees!

### St Thomas’s Church, Salisbury, Christmas Tree Festival

This year, we’re proud to take part in the St Thomas’s Church Salisbury Christmas Tree Festival, celebrating 20 years of festive trees and music in the heart of Salisbury.

Be sure to look out for our Wiltshire Sight Christmas Tree, which is decorated to raise awareness of different sight conditions. The tree features special tags with messages written by people with sight loss, offering examples of how others can support them during the Christmas season.

**Festival Dates**: Tuesday 3rd – Sunday 8th December
**Opening Times**:

* **Tuesday – Saturday**: 10am – 6pm
* **Sunday**: 12pm – 6pm

**Location**: St Thomas’s Church, Salisbury
**Entry**: Free

### St John’s Church, Devizes, Christmas Tree Festival

Join us at St John’s Church in Devizes for their Christmas Tree Festival, starting on 7th December. This magical event features up to 40 beautifully decorated Christmas trees, including our very own Wiltshire Sight Christmas Tree!

Our tree is designed to raise awareness of different sight conditions and has a snowman theme. It also includes braille tags with festive messages.

The festival is part of a wider celebration, including a Christmas raffle and the Devizes shop window trail. Proceeds from the event will support Wiltshire Sight and other local causes, helping us continue our vital work in the community.

# 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 offices will be closed from 4.30pm on the 24th December and will reopen 2nd January 2025.

* **Pewsey and Calne Community Hubs**: Not running in December.
* **Swindon Audiobook Reading Group:** Monday 2nd December 2024 at 10.15 – 11.30am. The audiobook reading group will be discussing “The Manningtree Witches” by AK Blakemore.
* **Wroughton Community Hub and Social**: On 4th December, Stuart Ling from Humanware will demonstrate the latest electronic magnifiers using AI.
* **Devizes, Salisbury, and Trowbridge Resource Centres**: Closed from 24th December to 2nd January.
* **Wroughton Hub**: Cancelled on 1st January.
* **Bradford on Avon Hub**: Cancelled on 1st January.
* **Trowbridge Resource Centre and Social**:
	+ The Resource Centre will be closed from 13th December and will reopen for appointments on 3rd January 2025.
	+ The Trowbridge social is cancelled in December.

# 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.

## RNIB Autumn Survey

RNIB is seeking feedback from adults with sight loss on a range of important topics, including getting around, personal safety, employment, family, and relationships.

This feedback will help RNIB improve the support available to blind and partially sighted people across the UK and ensure it focuses on what matters most.

To take part, complete the Autumn 2024 survey by visiting the link below before the closing date on 20 December 2024:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LWJFYHP>

For those unable to complete the survey online and who have not yet registered to participate, RNIB invites you to call their Helpline on 0303 123 9999. Advisors will assist by completing a registration form and arranging a follow-up call to ask survey questions on future topics.

## Shape the Future of Assistive Technology with Hope Tech Plus

Hope Tech Plus is an assistive technology company dedicated to creating innovative solutions that empower blind and partially sighted individuals. Their products are designed with input from real users through research and testing – and they need your voice to make a difference.

By taking part in a **short, confidential survey**, you can share your experiences of accessing assistive technology. Your feedback will help improve access to these tools and provide greater support for the visually impaired community.

**Take the survey here:** Hope Tech survey

Would you like to contribute even further? Hope Tech Plus is also inviting individuals to share their personal stories and experiences with assistive technology. If you’re interested in helping shape the future of these vital tools, contact Laura directly at **Laura@HopeTech.Vision**

Your input is invaluable, and Hope Tech Plus will share the survey results soon – thank you for supporting this important work!

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

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

# Leisure and Sporting Activities

## Salisbury Museum would like to create resources for visually impaired people

Following the opening of their new galleries in July 2024, they would like to work with a group of visually impaired people to devise audio described tours and object handling. Are you interested in history and making museums more accessible? If so they would love to hear from you! The work will take place during 2025 and participants will need to be able to attend workshops at Salisbury Museum – all expenses will be covered. Please contact Bridget Telfer, the Community Curator, for more information:

Email: bridgettelfer@salisburymuseum.org.uk

Telephone: 01722 332151

## Swindon Audiobook Reading Group

Swindon Central Library, Regent Circus, Swindon, SN1 1QG
Monday 2nd December 2024 at 10.15 – 11.30am
The audiobook reading group will be discussing “The Manningtree Witches” by AK Blakemore. Contact us at Wiltshire Sight if you have any questions

## Join Age UK Wiltshire's Fitness and Friendship Clubs

Age UK Wiltshire's Fitness and Friendship Clubs offer a warm, welcoming environment where you can enjoy gentle exercise, socialise, and relax. The sessions are designed for older adults, and adjustments can be made to support people with sight loss. For assistance with making the session accessible, you can also reach out to your Community Sight Loss Advisor, who can call ahead on your behalf.

**What to Expect at a Session:**

Each two-hour session includes:

* 45 minutes of chair-based exercises using bands and squishy balls.
* A 30-minute break for tea, biscuits, and a friendly chat.
* 45 minutes of meditation and tai chi to end the session.

**Cost and Booking:**

£5 per session, payable on the day (some locations are free). Your first session is free.

No booking is required, but it’s recommended to contact the trainer if you have specific needs related to sight loss.

**Locations:**

The Fitness and Friendship Clubs are held in various locations across Wiltshire, including Amesbury, Calne, Chippenham, Corsham, Devizes (2 clubs), Marlborough, Melksham, Mere, Royal Wootton Bassett, Salisbury, Swindon (3 clubs – including Toothill and Penhill, where all sessions are free), Trowbridge (2 clubs), Warminster, Westbury, Tidworth, Tisbury, and Bradford on Avon. For a full list of locations and details, visit the Age UK Wiltshire website here: [Fitness And Friendship webpage](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/activities-and-events/fitness-and-friendship/)

**Contact Details:** For more information, you can contact Tracey, the Fitness and Friendship Clubs organiser:
07754 612 569 fitnessandfriendship@ageukwiltshire.org.uk

## All Abilities Bowls Wiltshire

Join All Abilities Bowls Wiltshire, where you’ll receive guaranteed, top-quality coaching from day one! Our internationally qualified coaches are dedicated to helping players of all abilities improve their game. With adaptive equipment, expert guidance, and a welcoming community, everyone can enjoy this inclusive sport. Join us Saturdays, 10 am to 12 pm, at Swindon Manor Indoor Bowls Club. Equipment provided—just bring flat-soled shoes. Contact Richard Ball at 07703893166 or email richardb290@gmail.com for details.

## 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:

Contact them at: info@swindonbats.org or call their Secretary Sue Mead on 07788150487

### Swindon Bats Monday Club

Takes place at Craven House, Swindon on the 2nd Monday of the month from 1pm-3pm a chance for you to meet and socialise with other VIPs. This month they will be learning about and having a go at VIP Chess!

### Swindon Bats Weekly Tenpin Bowling

Meets at Tenpin West Swindon:

Wednesdays-12:15pm-2:30pm

Mondays- 18:45pm-21:00pm

## 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)

# Support Groups and Courses

## Swindon Chat group

Last Tuesday of the month 5.15pm

Contact communityconnectionsouthwest@rnib.org.uk

## RNIB Living Well with Sight Loss Courses

These RNIB courses cover a range of topics related to sight loss, including daily living tips, eye health, magnification, lighting, technology, and wellbeing.

**Upcoming Phone Group Sessions:**

**December Courses:**

* **Course 1:** Mon 2nd Dec, Wed 4th Dec, Mon 9th Dec and Wed 11th Dec. **Time:** 11am
* **Course 2:** Thurs 5th Dec, Fri 6th Dec, Thurs 12th Dec and Fri 13th Dec. **Time:** 11am

**Contact Information:**

* Email: communityconnectionsouthwest@rnib.org.uk
* Call: Trish Sail (07843 979975), George Hinton (07711 188292), Bernice Cocking (07761 328571)

## RNIB Swindon Chat group

Fourth Thursday in the month from 10am to 12 noon.

General chat with advice from ECLO / ROVI at Craven House, Swindon. Contact: Bernice Cocking

Bernice.Cocking@rnib.org.uk 07761 328571

# Audio Described Arts Events

## Salisbury Playhouse

Malthouse Ln, Salisbury, SP2 7RA

**Wiltshire Creative’s ‘Sleeping Beauty’ Panto**

Audio described performances:

* Tuesday December 17th at 5.30pm
* Thursday 19th December at 7.00pm

There will be touch tours for both shows. Tickets can be booked online at [Wiltshire Creative Accessible Performances webpage](https://www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk/whats-on/access) , by phone on 01722 320333 or in person at The Playhouse.

Please remember to book your Touch Tour as well as your tickets. Touch tours are free but do need to be booked!

## Wyvern Theatre

Wyvern Theatre, Theatre Square, Swindon SN1 1QN

**‘Cinderella The Magical Pantomime!’**

Audio described performance: Mon 23 Dec 2024 at 1.00pm

To book tickets: [Wyvern Theatre Cinderlla Webpage](https://trafalgartickets.com/wyvern-theatre-swindon/en-GB/event/pantomime/cinderella-tickets) or call the box office on 0343 310 0040.

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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