

Newton News

Incorporating The Newtonian - Newton Aycliffe's Free Community Newspaper
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G.N.A.A.S. - Busiest Year On Record



The Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) had its busiest year on record after responding to more than 2100 incidents in 2023. This is an increase of over 260 incidents compared to 2022's figures and is a consequence of the charity's expansion of their service. At the start of January 2023, GNAAS began operating seven nights a week in the North East and later that year extended their night-time service in Cumbria to four nights.

The charity currently provides air ambulance services across the region, mainly in hours of daylight, while on a night-time, from 8pm to 8am, the team transfer to a rapid response vehicle.

The car carries the same life-saving equipment as its airborne counterpart and is staffed by a highly skilled paramedic and doctor team who can deliver blood, anaesthetic procedures, and other advanced treatments, to critically ill or injured patients.

David Stockton, chief executive officer at GNAAS, said: "We're very proud of the fact that we have been operating a 24/7 service in the North East for over a year and we're hoping to replicate this in Cumbria in the coming months. Our rapid response vehicles were deployed nearly 300 times more last year in comparison to 2022. This is a direct result of our night-time expansion and just proves how vital it is for our team to be able to deliver a high level of pre-hospital care to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

In total, the charity's critical care teams, which are based in Eaglescliffe in the North East, and Penrith in Cumbria, responded to 2124 incidents in the North East, North Yorkshire, Northumberland, Cumbria, Scotland and the Isle of Man. The bulk of incidents were road traffic collisions, followed by cardiac arrests, falls and assaults.

Mr Stockton added: "As a charity, we do not receive government funding, and must therefore raise £8.5m per year to keep the service operational. While it has been challenging to raise funds over the past few years, with factors such as Covid, the war in Ukraine, and the cost-of-living crisis impacting us, I just want to say how truly thankful we are to those who have either donated or fundraised for GNAAS. We're coming up to our 22nd year as a charity, and it would not have been possible without the fantastic support of the public."

To find out more about how you can support the charity visit: gnaas.com or call 01325 487263.

Huge Success for Local Railway Modellers at Exhibition

The Rotary Model Railway Exhibition, held on Saturday 23rd March, organised by the newly formed Rotary Great Aycliffe, was a huge success with well over 500 visitors.

Enthusiasts from as far away as Edinburgh and Wolverhampton visited the Newton Aycliffe Youth and Community Centre on Burn Lane to view the 23 working layouts, in a wide variety of scales, which attracted a lot of interest, especially 'Thomas the Tank Engine' for the young children and 'Dorlington' with its cameos from film, television and real life, for the big kids.

The ten trade stands did good business selling new, 'pre-loved' and all those little bits that are so hard to find.

Winner of the John H. Jones Memorial Trophy, voted for by the exhibitors, was 'Foxton Town' from the Foxton family.

Kevin and Maggie Smith, from Whitby, won the Hardaker Memorial Trophy, voted for by the visitors, for their 'Sandy Bay' layout.

The Edwina Burrows Memorial Trophy, where the winner is the personal choice of the Rotary Club President, Geoff Knapton, was 'Penna Lane' by Colin Batchelor. Rotary Great Aycliffe would like to thank Great Aycliffe and Middridge Area Action Partnership (GAMP), Great Aycliffe Town Council and our partner organisation Shildon Model Railway Club, without whom the event would not have taken place. John Burrows, Event Manager.



Help Create Peace Doves for Summer Installation

Over 15,000 paper doves, created by visitors with messages of peace will be suspended in Durham Cathedral this summer.

Peace Doves, a mass-participation artwork by Peter Walker, is set to take centre stage in the Nave of the cathedral from 25th July. It will be made up of thousands of individually handmade paper doves which will be suspended above the Cathedral's historic Nave.

The artwork will be set to music by composer David Harper making it an even more atmospheric experience. However, before that date, each of the 15,000 paper doves will need to be created by visitors to Durham Cathedral.

Andrew Usher, Chief Officer: Visitor Experience and Enterprise at Durham Cathedral, says, "We're delighted to be showcasing the Peace Doves installation this summer and we're aware that it will take a long time to handcraft the amount of doves needed. So we're now asking for the help of visitors, schools and local communities and inviting everyone to come and create one of the 15,000 doves that make up this meaningful installation. As a mass-participation artwork, it's a unique opportunity for people to be involved in creating something truly special."

From Easter Monday, 1st April visitors, groups and local communities are invited to head to Durham Cathedral and create a dove for the installation. People will be given a paper dove on which they will be encouraged to write a message of peace, love,

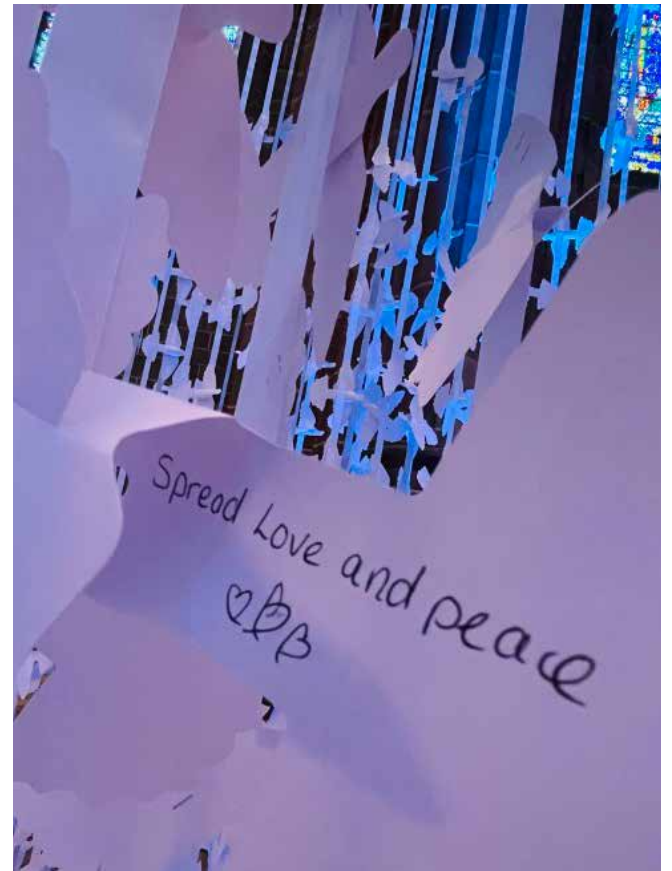
friendship or hope.

The Very Revd Dr Philip Plymington, Dean of Durham, says, "Jesus said 'blessed are the peacemakers' and certainly, in our world today, peace is needed more than ever. The Peace Doves installation represents a chance for people of all faiths and backgrounds to come into this historic house of prayer and offer their own different voices, wishes and prayers in the cause of peace. I am looking forward to welcoming people from across our communities to Durham Cathedral to be part of this remarkable artwork and offering to God." The final result, which will be installed on 25th July, will give the sense of serenity and peace. As the paper doves are illuminated and hung from the Nave, visitors are invited back to the cathedral to see if they can find their dove and reflect upon other public messages of peace - making this installation unique to those who took part.

A programme of events will accompany the installation, including late night openings, family activities and a special Evensong on Sunday 28th July, 3.30pm, to reflect on the artwork and pray for peace. Visitors will be able to make a Peace Dove every day in Durham Cathedral from Monday 1 April to Saturday 20th July. The installation will open to the public at Durham Cathedral this summer, from Thursday 25th July until Monday 9th September. There is no admission charge to enter the cathedral, but donations are welcome.

For more information visit:

www.durhamcathedral.co.uk/PeaceDoves



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Councillor's Rights Charter for Thieves

Dear Sir,
I was surprised and dismayed to read Cllr Phillip Hawkins' letter in last week's Newton News (It's your right to refuse).
Knowing that shoplifting is a big problem in the town, his words appeared to be a rights charter for shoplifters!
Shoplifting is a crime for which we ALL pay - the shopkeepers and consumers. And, of course, there is the additional cost of police and court time.
Just recently, we read about a shoplifter, a repeat offender, who was caught thieving, again, on the day that he was released from custody.
This is business to shoplifters. They thieve to sell and to make money - more than likely to fund a drug habit.
Please don't lecture your voters Cllr Hawkins. Shoplifters already know their rights. And if you are a law abiding citizen, of course, you would let someone search your bag.
To tell shoplifters: "Don't allow anyone to try and intimidate you" is just crass.
I am all for citizens' rights but, Cllr Hawkins' comments are way off the mark, however well meaning.
Debbie Ingram
St Oswalds Court.

Largest Collection of Historic Rail Vehicles



Locomotion in Shildon, County Durham, is to undertake the museum's biggest ever rail shunt to create Europe's largest undercover display of historic rail vehicles.

Managed by specialist teams from Locomotion and the National Railway Museum, the shunt will see 46 vehicles (and one road vehicle) moved carefully inside the newly constructed £8m New Hall. Locomotion is a partnership between the Science Museum Group and Durham County Council, with the latter having provided significant funding towards New Hall.

Situated opposite the museum's existing collection building, New Hall is scheduled to open to the public on 24th May 2024. Before then, the hall needs to be filled with the collection of rail vehicles in a complex shunt that will take more than four weeks to complete.

With a crane, two snow ploughs, a pair of track inspection velocipedes, historic steam locomotives, numerous freight wagons and even a tracked Bren Gun Carrier, the lineup is sure to include something to complete every train set. When added to the vehicles already at Locomotion there will be 99 rail vehicles - creating the largest undercover display of historic rail vehicles in Europe.

New Hall will open in time to celebrate the museum's 20th anniversary in September this year. The museum is also built close to the site of Shildon Works - once home to a thriving railway workshop, employing thousands, which closed in June 1984.

To mark this important link, the new building and the vehicle display will recognise the important role of railways in shaping communities in Shildon and across the North East, as well as the development of the railways across the UK. The interpretation will also tell new stories of the significance of coal in the development of the railways along with related stories of industry and freight transportation.

Durham County Council successfully applied for £20m Levelling Up funding to allow it to invest in Locomotion, including the creation of New Hall. The council seeks to promote the county and its assets to visitors as part of its Inclusive Economic Strategy.

Once rail vehicles are in place, New Hall will receive new interpretation, seating, wayfinding, lighting and other finishing touches ready to open for visitors on Friday 24th May 2024.

New Hall is the centerpiece of a site-wide programme of improvements at Locomotion which incorporates historic coal drops, a collection of railway buildings and Gaunless Bridge - one of the world's oldest iron railway bridges. A restoration project is taking place to repaint and display the bridge which was originally part of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. This is being funded by the Ironmonger's Company and members of the public.

As well as New Hall, visitors to Locomotion can see many highlights from the national collection - from the world's fastest diesel locomotive, HST 43102 The Journey Shrinker to Stephenson's original Rocket and Locomotion No.1, which hauled the first train on the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825.

The new building will be a key part of plans to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 2025 as part of Railway 200.

Locomotion's New Hall has been generously supported by Durham County Council (Lead Funder), The Friends of the National Railway Museum (Major Funder), Wolfson Foundation (Major Funder), The Foyle Foundation (Major Funder), Sir James Knott Trust (Associate Funder), The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust (Associate Funder), The Platten Family Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland (Funder), and Northumbrian Water Branch Out Fund (Funder). The Gaunless Bridge project has been generously supported by the Ironmonger's Company (Funder) and members of the public.

For more information about Locomotion visit: www.locomotion.org.uk

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If you run a club, charity or non-profit organisation and would like the opportunity to raise some funds, please contact Noel via email: noelbennett@uwclub.net and ask about tickets for our charity event, 'An Evening of Entertainment'.

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You buy the tickets for this event at £2.00 each and sell them for £4.00 each. Act now and you will have plenty of time to sell them.

The event is on Friday 10th May 2024. Doors open at 6.30pm for a 7.00pm start. If there are any tickets left in our hands on the evening of the event, these can be purchased at £5.00.

New College Durham (NCD) has won the City & Guilds Award for College Engagement with Employers at this year's Association of Colleges Beacon Awards.

Attracting hundreds of applications from all over the country each year, the Beacon Awards are the most prestigious awards in further education and have been running for 29 years.

The Beacon awards celebrate the best and most innovative practice in further education colleges and demonstrate the far-reaching impact of colleges on their students and the communities they serve.

The award is in recognition of New College Durham's proactive approach to employer engagement and the positive impact it is having on the region. NCD has committed to contributing significantly to the region's skill requirements by implementing a strategic and invested approach to stakeholder engagement and collaboration to create a curriculum that meets skill needs and maximizes opportunities for employers and individuals.

This award, supported by City & Guilds, recognises exemplary practice in the delivery of provision: responsive to the needs of employers. The winner needed to demonstrate an outstanding ability to work with and provide a direct service to employers, be highly effective in meeting employers' skills needs and/or apprenticeship requirements.

Andy Broadbent, Principal and CEO of New College Durham, said, "We are absolutely delighted to have won this accolade. It is recognition of the huge amount of effort our team at NCD and our employer partners put in to creating a relevant and skills led curriculum that will shape the North East's workforce both now and in the future. It is also extremely rewarding to have this celebration as part of Colleges Week 2024, where we all come together to celebrate our FE colleges across the country."

Mark White, Chair of AoC's Charitable Trust, said: "The AoC Beacon Awards showcase exactly why colleges are so important to every community and why people value them. This award recognises examples of excellent practical teaching and learning. The work of the winning college shows how important colleges are in providing students with the necessary skills for the real world."



Youth Football

Not a lot of football anywhere last weekend, however, a few games went ahead:

Hartlepool Youth 0 v Aycliffe U14 Eagles 2

A huge performance from all the lads in a match in which they dominated 95% of the play, restricting Pools Youth to very little threat on their goal. First half, Aycliffe were tremendous in the face of the strong wind and to take the lead into half-time was no fluke, great football all-round. Good build up play led to Will threading a through-ball to Oliver, who clipped it over the advancing keeper. A nail biting second half, mainly due to the opposition keeper pulling off numerous saves, to keep Pools in it. Deservedly though, Aycliffe got another in the final minute. Will calmly slotting Posi through, who used his pace to get one on one. The keeper saving the first attempt well, but made no mistake with the rebound.

The win moves the lads up to second by a point, with a game in hand on third (Pools Youth). Well done to Josh and Fin, for picking up Parents' and Coaches' MOMs.

Aycliffe U8 Wildcats v Crook Town Ravens

Holidays and injuries depleted the squad, but all the girls continue their improvement, in their first season in the league. Not the right result, but the girls still enjoy every game they play.

Aycliffe U9 Wildcats

The newest girls team continue to prepare for upcoming friendlies and tournaments, as they look towards their league debut in September. Still a couple of spaces left in the squad for any girls who are looking to play team football or are looking for a new team.

Ring Berni 07939 045242.

Editorial Contributions

Editorial contributions, stories and tidbits can be sent to the Newton News editor via email:- paul@newtonnews.co.uk
Alternatively, you can 'contact us' via our website:- www.newtonnews.co.uk

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PLEASE NOTE:

Any letter for publication should be accompanied with the author's email address, name, address and contact number. These details can be withheld from publication on request.

Aycliffe Senior Football News



Another game postponed for our Wearside Men's team, however, our ladies did manage to get in a cup game, but not the right result:

Consett Ladies Reserves 4 v Newton Aycliffe Youth Women 0

Poor day at the office and the winning streak comes to an abrupt end. With several players unavailable, due to injury and holidays, this was always going to be a tough away game in the cup. Despite the best efforts from the team, they definitely weren't anywhere near their best to reach the levels from the previous games, but all credit to Consett who appeared to want it more. Aycliffe did create a few chances, but these weren't converted, whilst Consett took their chances. However, we march on this week for another cup semi final, away to Seaham Coast (Sunday 14th April).

Player of the match goes to Tanisha, came on as a sub, did everything asked of her.

Photo: Newton Aycliffe Youth Women FC sporting their new coats, sponsored by our newest sponsor Fresh Business Solutions. We're looking forward to working with you.

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Opportunities for Volunteers

Shildon Community Bus provides regular shopping trips for people living in Shildon and Newton Aycliffe. The destination is the shopping area at Tindale Crescent, West Auckland where the larger supermarkets are situated.

These trips are very popular as passengers are picked up at their door and safely delivered back with their shopping. Phone the office for more details.

We also provide buses and volunteer drivers for local groups and associations, so that they can enjoy outings and activities. Our increasing popularity means that we need more volunteer drivers.

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Watercolour Workshop at Green Arts



Green Arts are offering further workshops as part of their spring programme. April sees the return of popular artist Jayne Blacklock who brings the opportunity to learn new skills and techniques and make amazing artwork to take home.

The session will help you work with a specific palette of the season and find new ways to express yourself with watercolour. Jayne's popular workshops are a great way to improve your craft in a lovely welcoming environment. The workshop will run on Friday 19th April from 13:30 – 16:30 at Green Arts, Eco Centre, Moore Lane, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 5AG. Our welcoming studio is a great place to come together to inspire creativity and is suitable for all levels. The session costs just £24 (plus small booking fee) for 3 hours and participants can learn new skills and meet with likeminded people.

To find out more just email info@green-arts.co.uk or visit our website www.green-arts.co.uk to find out more and reserve your place. Green Arts are committed to bringing a high quality arts provision to the community and inspiring creativity and care for our environment.

ASB 'Hotspots' Receive Floral Makeover

Communities prone to anti-social behaviour across County Durham and Darlington have been treated to floral makeovers thanks to funding from Police and Crime Commissioner Joy Allen.

The County Durham and Darlington PCC secured Government funding, some of which has funded a bulb planting scheme in ASB hotspots across the country as part of her plans to build pride in the local community and deter crime and nuisance behaviour.

The planting was carried out by people who have offended and are currently subject to Community Payback. This is part of a programme of reparative activity which encourages the volunteers to give back to their communities and make amends for their past behaviour.

Durham County Council's Clean and Green team and Darlington Borough Council's Street Scene Service worked alongside the National Probation Service to enhance the entrances to 34 locations and specific areas where ASB occurs.

The bulbs, sourced from suppliers based in Amsterdam, were planted in mixed designs to achieve longevity of colour over a longer period, typically from February to July.

Three specific mixes, containing a selection of Narcissi (daffodils), Alliums and Camassias, were used. The different varieties flower in sequence and provide a change of colour and height throughout the flowering months.

Commissioner Allen said: "I am proud to back this project which not only supports the rehabilitation of people who have offended, but also helps to discourage and prevent further unwanted behaviour in these areas. I know that floral displays enhance and improve the quality of life in communities in so many different ways. This continues my well-known support for bloom. When I was a County Councillor I drove the project which saw us win Best Large Town Category in the Northumbria in Bloom competition.

"Reducing ASB is a key priority for me and helping to restore a sense of pride in our neighbourhoods is one of many strategies we are employing to improve safety. If we don't care about our public spaces, then we are unlikely to care about other issues that impact negatively on people's lives and will invite others to treat those areas with contempt. Residents are in for a real treat in the coming months as these displays bloom."



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Methodist Church Update

At the Methodist Church Neville Parade we have had WiFi installed in the lounge area, which is now our main meeting room for both Church services and other activities. This service is available free to all users of our premises and our thanks go to Great Aycliffe & Middridge Partnership and Councillors Atkinson & Jones along with Durham County Council for helping us fund this.

There is availability to hire our premises either on a weekly basis or as a one off for example, meetings, birthdays etc.

In addition to the lounge we have a large hall and small meeting rooms, as well as kitchen facilities.

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N.A.F.C. REPORT

Saturday 6th April
Bridlington Town 3 v Newton Aycliffe 5

Newton Aycliffe were the victors of an eight goal thriller in Bridlington. The final away game of the season made great viewing for the Aycliffe supporters who had travelled in numbers to back Brian Atkinson's side as they look to secure a playoff spot.

Ethan Wood opened Aycliffe's scoring after 37 minutes with a rocket of a finish. He was teed up in the centre of the D by Cole Kiernan, and Wood's shot saw the ball fly above every Bridlington player in the box to sweetly hit the top corner. Four minutes later and Aycliffe saw their second come from Liam Jarvie at even further range than Wood's finish. Jarvie jinked past Tom Algar and Pete Davidson with ease to fire from distance. At the other end, Winter, yet again, exhibited brilliant reflexes to deny Norfolk's free kick on the cusp of half time.

Aycliffe remained the dominant side going into the second half and they made it 0-3 in the 59th minute. Cole Kiernan got his second assist, this time his pass found substitute Cieran Jackson who wasted no time in firing it past Hitchcock. Winter was once again proving resolute in the Aycliffe net, reacting at just the right time to stop Lewis Dennison's potentially dangerous run. Cole Kiernan was proving a tricky customer for Bridlington to handle, Toby Pascoe crossed the perfect ball which found Kiernan's head to make it 0-4 in the 63rd minute.

It should have been plain sailing by the seaside for Aycliffe after this, until Bridlington pulled one back courtesy of Andrew Norfolk who fired a strong shot to make it 1-4. It seemed now the wind was firmly in the sails of Bridlington.

Will Sutton launched a cross into the box that hit the crossbar and fell to the feet of Lewis Dennison who scored with a tap in to make it 2-4 in the 89th minute. Aycliffe were on the ropes now and in the 91st minute Ali Aydemir dribbled past several Aycliffe defenders to fire a low shot past Winter to make it 3-4. The final goal went the way of Aycliffe, Kyle Davis fired the ball past Hitchcock at such velocity all Bridlington's Benn Lewis could do was poke it into his own net to make it 3-5 with the referee blowing his whistle soon after.

Aycliffe now have three home games to finish their first NPL season. Carlton Town visit Moore Lane on Saturday 13th April, with Dunston returning on Tuesday 16th to try again after the Easter Monday game was abandoned. Pontefract Collieries conclude the season on Saturday 27th April.

Photo by Yvonne Wood, Cole Kiernan, scorer of Aycliffe's fourth goal at Bridlington. Match report by Ryan Livingston.



Hitachi Fiasco

Dear Sir,
I am not a resident of Newton Aycliffe, however, I do come here quite regularly. I was reading a recent copy of the Newton News and was interested in the article by MP Paul Howell, especially the section about what he is doing to resolve Hitachi's problems. On the face of it, it would seem quite a lot, but having achieved little or nothing. He states the opposition could solve it with a stroke of the pen. We all know that no political party couldn't or wouldn't do that. What intrigues me is the explanation that he gave, that it wasn't done because it can't be. So far so good. Then he goes on with more legal gobbledygook, but offers no explanations. My own guess is that any work offered by the government would have to be put out to tender under the old EU rules, which we still seem to be part of! If Hitachi was offered a contract, then it would have to go through the due diligence process to see if it is a fit and proper firm to complete the contract. This is what is happening to Rolls Royce with their mini nuclear reactors. I really hope that I am wrong on all counts, but time will tell.
R.C. Crook.

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Solicitor Retires After 57 Years



After a remarkable career spanning 57 years, David Hogg, Solicitor with Close Thornton Solicitors in Darlington, has announced his retirement in April 2024.

David joined Close Thornton straight from Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Darlington in 1967. He has held roles in various capacities including as a Legal Executive and then as a Solicitor and former Partner and has experience in many areas of the law ranging from residential conveyancing to agricultural property, landlord and tenant issues, other commercial property matters and company/commercial law, business sales and purchases and company mergers and acquisitions.

David has, most recently, held a role as a practising consultant liaising with clients, overseeing matters for long established clients and introducing them to Andrew Price, Mat Haynes and James Webb who will continue his legacy. David has been widely regarded for his unwavering commitment to Clients, his meticulous attention to detail and his profound understanding of the law.

David said "My intention is to put my feet up and relax both at home, at my static caravan in Cumbria and spend quality time with my wife. I am secretary to my Rotary Club at Great Aycliffe, Co Durham, and I also intend to play more golf if it ever stops raining!"

Andrew Price, Head of Commercial Property, said "I would like to thank David for his hard work, loyalty and expertise. He has provided invaluable support to the people of Darlington and beyond for many years, and I am proud to continue his legacy with my fellow Partner, Mat Haynes, together with James Webb, Solicitor, and the rest of the Commercial Property Team. I wish David a well-deserved and happy retirement."

As David embarks on this new chapter of his life, the entire Close Thornton and Milners Group family extends its heartfelt gratitude for his years of service and friendship. While he may be retiring from his role as a solicitor, his legacy will continue to resonate within the firm and the broader legal community.

Travel Communication

I travel a lot on the bus in my life,
and this can give you several tiers of strife.
People on mobiles who talk at the top of their voice,
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irregardless who else is on the bus.
So, next time you travel and have to call,
please keep it down, no-one else needs to hear you ball.

Folk Night

The Candlelite Club's next event will take place on Wednesday 17th April from 8pm-10.30pm. Our guests are the 'Gingle Buddies' from Leeds, supported by 'Eric Johansen' with a mixture of music from folk to the 60's - there will be a small charge on the door. Please ring to reserve a place, Joan 01740 621347. Joan Edmundson.

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Parliament Talk

Tel: 01325 790580 - Email: paul.howell.mp@parliament.uk

Week commencing 1st April started with Easter Monday when I was at Ferryhill and Sedgefield, then it was constituency work on Tuesday. This started with a local business coming to see me at the office before I then went to Hitachi for another meeting with the Union team. We were joined by management, but I then had separate conversations with the shop stewards. Despite the worrying circumstances, these meetings are convivial with all parties looking for how we find the best way forward. I ensure that all outputs from these conversations are communicated to the Secretary of State and his team to maximise the possibility of success. Meetings with all parties will continue to explore all options over the coming weeks.

I then caught up with a constituent and his mum in Costa at Newton Aycliffe before going to Aycliffe Village Hall to meet residents, in particular about the smell from the quarry, I will be meeting the Environment Agency on 11th April to see what they are going to do next as this has gone on for far too long.

This was followed by a catch up with my team, to discuss casework and plans for the week as I was taking a few days away over Easter. When I return there will be more constituency work, with issues including the Arriva bus connections, in particular between Trimdon Fishburn, Sedgefield and Newton Aycliffe, but also to Cornforth and Ferryhill etc. I am encouraging Durham County Council to either get a resolution with Arriva or find another way to reconnect people. I will be going to the Aycliffe Community Hub meeting before the regular session between Durham County Council and all their MPs before a couple of constituency meetings and then it is the Darlington Mayor's Ball. Sedgefield Constituency is about 40% in Darlington Borough Council and 60% Durham County Council, by area.

When I head to Westminster, on Monday 15th April, we will start with questions to the Home Secretary and then to the business of the week. The Palace of Westminster itself is a particularly interesting place and here is a little glimpse into the history of Big Ben and the Elizabeth Tower.

Following the Great Fire of 1834, which was caused by the unsupervised burning of two large cartloads of wooden tally sticks (a form of medieval tax receipt) that destroyed most of the Palace of Westminster, the architect Charles Barry won a competition held to choose a design for the new building. The Astronomer Royal, Sir George Airy, judged another competition to build a clock for inclusion in Barry's design. Although the clock is commonly referred to as Big Ben, Big Ben is in fact the Great Bell which sounds the hour. Big Ben is thought to be named after Sir Benjamin Hall, Chief Commissioner of Works at the time the bell was installed. The first bell, cast in 1856 at Stockton-on-Tees, was brought to London by rail and sea. During tests in New Palace Yard a fatal crack appeared. The bell was broken up and a second bell was cast at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry. Edmund Denison, an amateur horologist, designed the Great Clock and the clockmaker Edward Dent constructed it. The Great Clock was installed in 1859 and started on 31st May. The Great Bell, Big Ben, began striking on 11th July 1859. The BBC first broadcast the Westminster Chimes on New Year's Eve 1923. In 2012, the Clock Tower, at the north end of the Palace of Westminster, was renamed the Elizabeth Tower in recognition of HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and stands as a symbol of not only the United Kingdom, but of democracy. The bells of Big Ben have been ringing for over 160 years, despite the effects on the building of bombing during the Second World War, as well as weather and pollution. But, like other buildings of a similar age, the Elizabeth Tower suffered from problems that needed to be overcome and, in 2017, the largest and most extensive conservation of the Elizabeth Tower began to preserve the clock tower for future generations. In 2022 Big Ben was brought back into regular service and the conservation was completed in the same year.

It's hoped that you enjoyed the brief insight into some of the history of the Palace of Westminster and, as always, if you want to get in touch, please call Newton Aycliffe 01325 790580 or email: paul.howell.mp@parliament.uk

N.A.F.C. JUNIORS

Under 7's travelled away at Great Ayton.

Aycliffe scored early through Cooper and continued to battle for the rest of the game.

Under 8's Whites played Richmond Pro Players in the spring cup and new league. With only five players available it was always going to be a struggle playing against a team who never lost a game in their old league. MOTM, awarded by the opposition coaches, was Jacob.

Under 8's Juniors travelled to Nunthorpe Athletic Blues, in an end-to-end game that had the whole team giving 100%. Goals coming from Reuben (3) and Colton. MOTM went to Felix K for great decision making and arduous work.

Under 9's played away to Prissick Rovers Athletic in a friendly. Aycliffe gained experience with help to the existing squad. Aycliffe's goal came from Brodie with a great strike.

Under 10's Blacks entertained Prissick Rovers Juve, controlling much of the game and scoring five great goals. There was a hat-trick of long shots from Jack B, a quick corner, and finish from Alfie S and a first league goal for Sid P. POTM awarded to Liam B, by opposition, for countless excellent saves in goal.

Under 11's Blacks hosted Riverside Juniors Barca with an early kick off, the wind made it difficult, but both sides tried to get the ball down and played good football. Lapses in concentration by Aycliffe were punished, despite battling on. Aycliffe could not find a goal. MOTM was Charlie who was outstanding in defence all game.

Under 11's Whites played Brandon Community Youth in what turned out to be a tough game for Aycliffe. The goal was scored by Ethan and MOTM was Will W.

Under 12's Juniors faced high flying Bedale



Juniors in a tough assignment. It was not to be Aycliffe's day, with a late goal from Will being the highlight. MOTM was Oliver who made some great saves.

Under 14's had a fantastic 10-2 victory, away to Stockton Royals. Goals from Danyl, Harry (2), Mo (3), Blake (2) and Harley (2).

Under 15's Whites entertained Leven in an evenly matched game. Aycliffe went in 1-0 down at half time, but a spirited second half performance saw Adam equalise. Leven pushed on and got two further goals to win 3-1. MOTM went to Jayden for his first half performance, a big shout out to Trystan in goal who took a shot straight to the face and had to come off.

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Paul Howell

Member of Parliament for Sedgefield

paul.howell.mp@parliament.uk

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Railways, Castles and the Plague



Sunday's Around Town was both informative and entertaining. Our guests were Margaret Fenwick and Caroline Hardie from Friends of Stockton and Darlington Railway. In conversation, we learned about the history of Heighington Railway Station, its status as a Grade Two Star listed building, and its place in the history and development of the railways nationally, and around the world, and the future plans for what is a major historical building, Caroline was able to share both anecdotal and factual stories of the development of the railway story in Aycliffe, Darlington, Shildon and the surrounding areas. How Middlesbrough eventually became a bustling port town, and how the country faced a major lockdown in the 1800's when a ship docked at Sunderland and unloaded the plague, as well as their cargo, which quickly spread throughout the country. We learnt how Caroline was bought Scargill castle, by her future husband, for the princely sum of one hundred pounds plus tax. As with most castles, it was a bit of a doer upper and required more than a little TLC, primarily because of its age, and because, during the second war the home guard tried to kill it by using it for target practice. The internationally successful Time Team television show recorded an episode of the programme at Scargill Castle entitled 'The Wedding Present' which is available to view on YouTube. The castle has been fully renovated and is now available as a holiday or short break let. Anyone wishing further information on any of the topics covered on the show can find the various links by clicking on the Friends of Stockton and Darlington Facebook page. Phill & Andy
Around Town, Aycliffe Radio.

In Memoriam

Christine Patterson



To my beautiful angel, four years have gone, we miss you so much. We will always love you. We think of you all the time. You left an empty place in our hearts since you left.
From your Mum, Dad, Brother and Sisters xxxxxx

I wish I could go back in time, when you were young, watching you play, building castles in the sun, picking sea shells and watch the sun go down. I wish I could have these moments with you my love.
I wish I could go back in time and see your beautiful face, hold you in my arms and hear the beautiful songs that you sang, share your love that we always had. I wish I could have these moments with you my love.
I wish I could go back in time and share your dreams that you had, listen to your jokes and laugh with you one more time. Those were the happiest days of my life. I wish I could have these moments with you my love.
I wish I could go back in time and have you back in my life. You gave me so much joy and purpose to live. But now you are gone and left one empty space in my heart. I love you and miss you so much, I wish I could have you back to hold you in my arms and have all the beautiful moments back.
Love from Mum, Georgina.

Joan Nicholson

16th April 2007
The world changes from year to year, our lives from day to day. But the love and memory of you, shall never fade away. Also birthday wishes for Derek on 19th and Joan on 22nd. From all of your family.

In loving memory
of our Son
Stephen P. Ibinson
16th April 2009



Gone are the days we used to share, but in our hearts you are always there. The gates of memories will never close, we miss you more than anyone knows. We love and miss you so much every day, 'til we meet again, always and forever. We love you Son, now reunited with Dad. Mam, family here and in Northern Ireland.

Obituary

Raymond Ian Kemp (Retired Pharmacist)



Peacefully at St. Teresa's Hospice, Darlington on 30th March.
Dearly loved Husband of Margaret and beloved Father of Paula and Sharon; dear Father-in-Law of John and Geoff and much loved Grandad of Pippa, Jacob and Isla. Will family and friends please meet for the service at Wear Valley Crematorium on Friday 19th April at 11.30am. Family flowers only, but, if so desired, donations may be made to St. Teresa's Hospice, Darlington.

Graham Holter

On 24th March in Darlington Memorial Hospital, Graham, aged 63 years. Dearly loved Son of Geoff and Mary; dear Brother of Keith; cherished Uncle of Claire and Lee. Friends and family kindly meet for Graham's funeral service on Thursday 18th April at 1.30pm at Wear Valley Crematorium. All are welcome to share memories of Graham at The Phoenix Club, Newton Aycliffe after the funeral service. Donations, in lieu of flowers, to Kidney Research UK may be given as you leave the crematorium.

Sudoku

8		4				9		
	7		9			3		
3					8			1
			8	4			9	
	6	3				1	4	
	4	8			2			
6			2			8		
		2			3		1	
		7	6			5		9

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Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th July,
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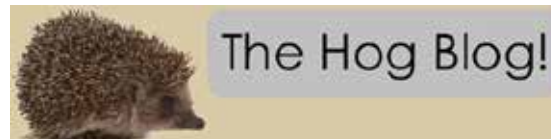
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It's been an eventful time, I have managed to release some to safe, support fed gardens, Willow, Keira, Summer and Lucky, Lilly has gone to Durham, these are places that they can adapt to being wild again, they all came in as very small babies, they will be supported fully. I have more releases but the weather is against them at the moment, I also have some here that still need to finish treatment.

Here is an example of what not to do if you see a hedgehog out in the day! Do not watch him or her for 48 hours plus, then contact a rescue. This happened to me last Monday, I received a call at midday from a Darlington lady who said she had seen a hedgehog, when I questioned her further she said her first sighting was Saturday. I asked her to bring the young hog in, supplied my address, she arrived three hours later. This poor little soul spent two hours here before passing away. This is unacceptable behaviour. I need people to know that whilst they look ok to the naked eye, there is a time bomb ticking inside them, when they need help they come out in the open so they can be picked up to get that help from rescuers. Had I admitted her the same day she saw her, she would have stood a chance.

A big thank you to all of you who have made donations, you have kept these beautiful creatures fed, warm and with the medical attention they need to grow and get that second chance in the wild, as a rehabilitator who has put massive amounts of work into these hedgehogs, if I feel the release sight isn't suitable I have some wonderful places to let them free. You, as finders, will be informed, of course. We all need to protect them and give them a safe and happy future.

This rescue works with Grange Vets, if you are unable to reach me, they will admit a hog for you without any cost implications, Angela and her team are excellent at what they do.

I would like you to meet my smallest hedgehog, she came in as a baby last year, she is called Autumn, she is very nice natured and no problem at all.

Here is some useful information for you:
The British Hedgehog Preservation Society telephone number is 01584 890801. My Facebook page is: Prickly Haven Hedgehog Hotel. My email is: pricklyhaven@yahoo.com (not to be used for emergency admissions for hogs) or Hedgehog Street App.



Heighington Matters



Thanks to the many volunteers, including many children, over 300 new trees were planted in the Sports Field last Sunday morning. Despite the cold and windy conditions, over 24 strong willed residents braved the inclement weather to do their bit for the village and climate change - your time and effort was greatly appreciated and, with time, when the young trees have grown into maturity, even more so.

As there are still more whips to plant, there will be a second planting this Saturday afternoon at 2pm. So, please come along and join us - but do bring a spade.

And, on the subject of volunteering, why not join this Saturday's litter pick at 10am outside of the Village Hall. Our thanks to Phil Innis and Mark Henerson who have kindly picked up the full bags after our litter pick and brought them into the village for DBC to remove. As they have both had to step back from helping, we are pleased to welcome Gary Raistrick, who has come forward to help us out but, because of work commitments, Gary may not be available on the second Saturday morning of every month. So, we are looking for someone with a van or a towing bar and trailer to volunteer for the job which is to keep this wonderful village of ours, and the immediate area, free of litter. If you are willing to pick up the bags and need help, Mark Henderson is happy to do so.

Councillor Gerald G. Lee.

Homelessness Support

Over £6 million is being committed to tackle homelessness in County Durham after its council was successful in a bid for funding. Durham County Council has been awarded funding from the government's Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP) to create new accommodation and increase support for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The objective of SHAP is to increase the supply of high-quality accommodation and support for adults, and younger people aged 18 to 25 years, who are either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. Included in the funding is £2,762,382 from Homes England for the provision for 32 new bed spaces in supported accommodation. As part of the council's emerging Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which outlines a commitment to reduce homelessness and an ambition to ending rough sleeping for good, the council will also allocate £1,841,588 towards the cost of providing this accommodation.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) will also provide £1,656,181 over three years for the provision of specialist support services for those housed by the programme.

Cllr James Rowlandson, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for resources, investment and assets, said: "We are pleased to have been successful in our bid for SHAP funding. In County Durham, we are committed to breaking the cycle of homelessness and supporting people to live well and lead independent lives. This funding will help us to continue providing this support. This project isn't just aimed at providing accommodation, it includes intensive wrap around support tailored to each individual to help them turn their lives around and regain their independence."

A specialist external support provider will be procured, through a competitive process, to provide wrap around support to those housed by the programme. A mix of accommodation will be provided through the project, with multiple self-contained flats plus dispersed properties. Some of the accommodation will have 24-hour support every day of the year and some will have lower levels of support with regular visits by the specialist team. All the applicants will be fully assessed, including their housing and any other relevant history, before being accommodated by the project.

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RUNNING CLUB NEWS



It's been another busy week for Aycliffe Running Club with the lighter nights now upon us. On Wednesday 3rd April, an amazing 23 members turned out for the second in the Darlington Trail Series of races and the Locomotion 5k. John Firby (20:01) finished first in the race with Richard Campbell (20:58) third. Also representing the club were Sam Keenan (new 5k PB of 21:47), Martin Turnbull (22:08), Richard Holland (23:00), Jimmy Agnew (23:30), James Cooper (23:40), Lucy Postle who finished as second female in a new 5k PB of 24:11, Andrew Tweddle (25:28), Trevor Agnew (26:29), Bernadette Cooper (26:44), Joe Dickinson (26:46), Laura Hudson (in a new 5k PB of 27:28), David Stothard (27:58), Keith Hatton (30:51), Kelly Dickinson (31:28), Carley Cooper (31:56), Melanie Varley (33:17), Rob Nicholson (34:12), Peter Varley (36:07), Nicola Ingman (37:06), Em Flynn (37:13) and Ian Stothard (46:55).

At the same time, two members took part in the Pea and Peas 5k at Trimdon Grange. In pretty atrocious weather conditions, Kieron O'Connor (22:22) and Max Todd (22:39 and first male junior) both represented the club. On Sunday 7th April, two members took part in the Wild Deer Bramham races. Tracey Pickering (1:28:41) was intending on running the half marathon distance. She changed her plans during the race when her knee locked up but still managed to complete the 10k distance showing true grit and determination. Daniel Tatham (2:28:15) ably supported Tracey to get through the 10k and pushed on to complete the half marathon distance himself. Amazing support and spirit shown by both members. At the same time, one member took part in the London Landmarks Half Marathon taking in some of London's finest landmarks through Westminster and the City. Lou Mann (2:30:45), who recently joined the club, was the sole representative for the club taking in this special route across London.

On Saturday, 33 members started their weekend with a parkrun, taking in the Town Moor, Sedgefield, Redcar, Darlington South Park, Hackworth, Hartlepool, Flatts Lane, Fulham Pace, Victoria Dock, Jubilee, Hamsterley Forest and Wynyard Woodland events.

At Redcar, Steve Williams (29:21) and Viv Williams (31:32) both completed the course for the first time. At Hackworth, Melanie Varley (30:41) set a new personal best for the course with Peter Varley (33:41) completing the course for the first time. At the aptly named Flatts Lane, which is quite the opposite of its name and quite undulating, Jean-Pierre Hupin completed the course for the first time whilst taking in his 50th different parkrun location, a fantastic achievement.

Angela Sutherland (25:24) travelled to London to take part in the wonderfully named Fulham Palace event for the first time. Lou Mann (31:48) took in the Victoria Dock event for the first time prior to her half marathon the next day. At Jubilee, Jimmy Agnew (23:00) finished third and Trevor Agnew (24:30) fifth, both completing the event for the first time. At Hamsterley Forest, Sue Podmore (32:22) was the sole representative for the club. At Wynyard Woodland, Jayne Rudd (30:03) set a new personal best for the course.

If you are feeling inspired, and are interested in joining the club, you can turn up for one of our sessions. More information is available on our website www.ayclifferunningclub.org.uk - or our Facebook page. If you would like to chat with someone, then you can email ayclifferunningclub@gmail.com - If interested in the Junior Section you can email arc.juniorsection@gmail.com - make this year the year you or your children get into running and join us to keep it going for many years to come.

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