

Newton News

Incorporating The Newtonian - Newton Aycliffe's Free Community Newspaper, published on the first and third Friday of each month.
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Aycliffe Town Centre Illuminates the Night as Crowds Welcome the Start of the Festive Season

Aycliffe Town Centre burst into festive brilliance on Friday evening, 28th November, as the community gathered for the annual Christmas lights switch-on, officially marking the start of the holiday season. Despite temperatures well below seasonal averages, a remarkably large number of residents turned out, creating a warm and lively atmosphere that defied the cold.

From mid afternoon, families and visitors filled the town centre to explore a bustling Christmas food market, which featured a wide range of seasonal delights and handmade goods. Bacchanalia's traders offered an extensive selection of festive food treats and gift-worthy artisan products. The scents of mulled spices, baked goods and savoury street food filled the air, adding to the sense of celebration.

A rich programme of live entertainment kept spirits high throughout the event. Performances from Shine Choir, McAdam Performing Arts and the Aycliffe & Brancepeth Brass Band brought a mix of traditional and contemporary Christmas music with harmonies and brass arrangements echoing across the town centre mall. Each group drew enthusiastic applause from the crowd, many of whom gathered early to secure a good view. The excitement continued as younger visitors eagerly lined up to meet Santa Claus in his festive grotto. Supported by the Great Aycliffe Rotary Club, Santa greeted children with warm smiles and handed out gifts, adding an extra touch of magic to the occasion. Rotary volunteers helped manage the steady flow of families ensuring every child received a memorable moment.

Meanwhile, Aycliffe Radio maintained the festive mood, broadcasting Christmas favourites and providing backing tracks for the performances. Their presence has become a much-loved tradition at the annual switch-on event, and this year they once again delivered an uplifting soundtrack that kept the crowd singing along.

Adding to the spectacle, visitors were treated to a visit from three of Santa's reindeers as well as appearances from a dancing Christmas tree, who entertained children and adults alike, and a playful Elf on a flying bike, whose energetic antics became a highlight of the evening. These whimsical characters roamed the event, posing for photos and bringing smiles wherever they went.

As darkness fell, the anticipation grew for the



main moment of the evening. The countdown to the Christmas lights switch-on, led by Mayor and Mayoress Ken and Elaine Robson, was met with cheers and as the town centre lit up with sparkling displays, the crowd erupted into applause. Shimmering trees, illuminated decorations and glowing archways transformed the area into a winter wonderland. Event organisers expressed their gratitude to all who attended and supported the festivities, noting their pleasant surprise at the impressive turnout given the chilly conditions. "The community really came together tonight," organisers said. "Despite the cold, the atmosphere was fantastic and it was wonderful to see so many residents start the festive season with us."

The evening concluded with families lingering to enjoy the lights, food and entertainment, capturing photos and soaking in the festive spirit. With such a successful turnout and a joyful start to the season, Aycliffe Town Centre looks forward to a month filled with further seasonal celebrations and community events.



Pop-Up Indoor Cinema

Festive entertainment continues with an indoor pop-up cinema showing children's Christmas favourites.

Saturday 6th December:

9.30am - The Polar Express

11.30am - The Grinch

Saturday 20th December:

10.00am - Elf

12.00pm - Home Alone

2.00pm - National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

Seating is available and admission is FREE. Located in Unit 17, next door to Boyes on Beveridge Way.

Ice Skating Rink

If you love skating - or want to give it a go - don't miss the synthetic ice skating rink on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th December, 10am-4pm on Beveridge Way. Sessions are £3.00 for twenty minutes - skates are provided for both children and adults.

Military Pension

Dear Sir,
We once again have a Labour government in power who, like those since 1974–79, say they will look after our military veterans - including our current MP, Alan Strickland.
In 1975, Harold Wilson changed the pension structure for the Armed Forces, resulting in veterans receiving less money when they were demobbed. Later, Tony Blair introduced further changes, reducing the pension paid to widows of service personnel from 50% to 33%. By comparison, council employees' widows currently continue to receive 50% of their partner's pension.
Mr Strickland visited serving military personnel in Cyprus in July this year, the same location where many veterans served in July 1974 during heavy bombing, in which lives were lost.
I would therefore like to ask Mr Strickland to show his support for veterans by seeking to restore the pension allowance for widows to the previous 50%, in line with council workers.
Name and address supplied.

Cuppa & Chat

Everyone is welcome to Aycliffe Village Hall for a 'Cuppa and a Chat' on Wednesday 10th December between 2.00pm and 3.00pm. We look forward to seeing and meeting you.

Cancer Champions Project



As Movember brought men's health into the spotlight this November, the Cancer Champions Project is stepped forward with a powerful message: early detection saves lives. Every 90 seconds, someone in the UK is diagnosed with cancer. For some, spotting the signs early and attending routine screenings can save lives.

The Cancer Champions programme is a new initiative designed to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of common cancers and encourage people to attend vital screening appointments. At its heart is a network of trained volunteers, known as Cancer Champions, who will be supporting their workplace or the wider community. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, with around 55,300 cases diagnosed every year in the UK. Yet many men delay getting checked, often because they don't recognise the symptoms or feel uncomfortable talking about them. Movember was a timely reminder that these conversations matter - and the Cancer Champions Project is here to make them happen.

Over the next 12 months, the project aims to recruit and train 60 Cancer Champions, building a sustainable network that uses innovative digital tools and community engagement to spread awareness. Delivered in partnership by health and wellbeing charity, Pioneering Care Partnership, and County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, the programme will focus on areas where cancer-related health inequalities are most common in County Durham.

This collaborative approach ensures that cancer awareness isn't just a campaign - it's a movement. By embedding Cancer Champions in workplaces and communities, the project is creating everyday opportunities for people to learn, ask questions, and act. Because, when it comes to cancer, knowledge really can save lives.

If you're friendly, caring, and passionate, about making a difference, the Cancer Champion Project would love to hear from you. Becoming a Cancer Champion means helping others spot the signs early, attend screenings, and ultimately, live longer and healthier lives. Get in touch by emailing: cancerchampions@pcp.uk.net or phoning 01325 321 234.

Is It Worth It?

Dear Sir,
There have been a few rumblings recently regarding the standard of service from Royal Mail, specifically the lack of postal days for letters and rumours that parcels are taking priority over mail in general.
I had cause to go to the sorting office at Newton Aycliffe to retrieve an important letter a couple of weeks ago. I strongly suspected that it would be sat there and 'lo and behold' it was - but it was not going out that day.
I spoke with the manager who informed me that Royal Mail are indeed prioritising parcels over letters and that they are only delivering letters every other day, whether first class or not. This 'every other day postal service' officially goes live in April next year and that is apparently across the whole country.
If this is the case, then hospitals, for one, will have to take this into account when issuing important hospital appointments. Personally, I can no longer see the point in paying the extortionate amount of £1.70 for a first class stamp anymore, when there is every chance that it is not even going to arrive next day, as most people paying for this service, rightfully expect.
Now that I have heard this officially, I felt I should let your readers know so that they can make their own informed decision as to whether or not they buy first or second class stamps going forward.
Name and address supplied.

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Woodham Paris Trip



A recent Woodham Academy art trip to Paris provided students with an opportunity to explore the city's artistic treasures, from world-famous museums to hidden street art gems.

The journey began with a visit to the stunning Sacré-Cœur Basilica in Montmartre. The panoramic view of Paris from the basilica's steps was breathtaking. Seeing the inspirational work of street artists in Place du Tertre provided an inspiring start to the trip before enjoying an evening meal in a traditional Parisian restaurant where Van Gogh is believed to have visited regularly.

Next on the itinerary was a visit to the Musée d'Orsay, a former railway station transformed into a haven of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces. The students were mesmerised by the works of Monet, Degas, and Renoir, amongst others. The museum's grandeur and architectural beauty only added to the artistic experience. This was followed by a visit to Notre-Dame Cathedral, where students were able to take in the Gothic architecture and see the progress made since returning the cathedral to its former glory following the fire in 2019. The opportunity to observe an unexpected wedding inside the Cathedral made the visit extra special. Following this, students enjoyed a guided bus tour around Paris, seeing many iconic landmarks closely, such as the Arc de Triomphe and the magnificent ancient Egyptian Luxor Obelisk. After an evening meal in Paris, the day concluded with a surprise trip to see the fully illuminated Eiffel Tower, which proved a real highlight for our students.

The second day began with breathtaking views of Paris from the Montparnasse Tower Observatory. Located on the fifty-sixth floor, the rooftop platform allowed students to take some very impressive photographs of panoramic views of the city. This was followed by a cruise on the Seine on the renowned Bateaux Mouches, where students viewed the famous Paris landmarks from the river. The day concluded with a hands-on graffiti workshop at Bercy Park, where the group had the chance to express themselves artistically through spray cans and urban art. Under the guidance of a local graffiti artist, they learned about the street art culture and created their own vibrant pieces. Before embarking on their journey home, a visit to the Louvre provided a fitting end to the trip, where students explored the countless galleries filled with sculptures, paintings, ancient artifacts and saw the world-famous Mona Lisa.

Table Top Sale

Sunday 7th December at Simpature Court from 9.00am to 2.00pm - most items 50p or less. Everything must go. Free tea/coffee available. This will be the last sale here, many thanks to all who have supported us over the past years.

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Middridge History Society

At Middridge Village Hall on Wednesday 10th December at 7.30pm.

'The Castles of County Durham' with Keith Simpson, who is Chair of Tudhoe & Spennymoor Local History Society, will be providing an interesting insight into some of the castles that have existed in and around Co. Durham.

Everyone will be most welcome.
Admission £3 which includes refreshments.

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Public Urged to be Vigilant This Winter

People in Durham are being asked to stay vigilant this Winter, as crowds are expected to visit the city to celebrate the festive period. With footfall increasing in the city as people enjoy the Christmas markets, shops and restaurants this month, Counter Terrorism Policing and Durham Constabulary are urging members of the public to trust their instincts and report anything that doesn't seem right. Superintendent Mark Jessop is the Head of Protect and Prepare at Counter Terrorism Policing North East. He said: "We're delighted to team up with Durham Constabulary to launch regional support for this year's winter vigilance campaign. The festive season is a busy time for many people, and that includes the police and security services who are working to keep people safe in our region's towns and cities.

"Sadly, the terrorist threat hasn't gone away, and the threat level nationally remains at SUBSTANTIAL, which means an attack is likely. Whilst there is no intelligence to suggest there is a specific threat to Durham, or our region, we still need the public to be our eyes and ears and help keep each other safe. Counter Terrorism Policing is working around the clock with MI5 and other partners to monitor the threat and protect our communities from harm. Last year we arrested more people for terrorism related offences than in previous years, but the support of the public is essential to our mission to keep people safe. "Our message is simple. If you see something that doesn't feel right, please report it to police or security staff. Don't worry that you're wasting our time, we take every report seriously. Let's look out for each other this winter, so that everyone can enjoy the season safely."

The request comes as national figures revealed that 19 late-stage attack plots were disrupted by the police and MI5 since 2020, including three that were stopped last year. Like many other cities across the UK, police in Durham are taking appropriate, precautionary steps to deter terrorists and to promote vigilance.

Durham Constabulary Superintendent Dean Haythornthwaite said: "Our officers work 24/7 every day of the year to make sure Durham is a safe place to work and live and while there is no specific threat to our area, more can always be done which is why we welcome the collaboration with our colleagues at Counter Terrorism Policing. We would encourage anyone who sees anything suspicious this winter to report it and help us to keep the streets safe where you live."

If you spot something suspicious, or think you might have useful information, please report it in confidence on 0800 789 321, or at gov.uk/ACT - in the case of an emergency, always call 999.

N.A.F.C. REPORT



Aycliffe recorded one win and a loss with a postponed game against Matlock Town. Brian Atkinson's side make the trip to Blyth Town this Saturday for the first time. Aycliffe have already played Town twice this season in the league and Trophy, recording one loss and one win against them.

18th November

Newton Aycliffe 2 v Bradford (Park Avenue) 0

Newton Aycliffe pulled off an impressive home win against playoff chasers Bradford. It took Jack Robertson just three minutes to find the net with a curling finish after he was teed up by Scott Fenwick. Just ten minutes later a great finish from Brennan Fitzpatrick, from outside the box, flew into the top corner past Bradford's Jack Hall. The rest of the game saw Bradford apply pressure but Aycliffe stood firm and held on for three points that take them out the bottom four.

22nd November

Newton Aycliffe 0 v Emley AFC 1

This was a tight game with a sparse amount of chances for Emley and an even sparser amount of chances for Aycliffe. Early goals have become the norm at The Ashcourt and the only goal in the game was a penalty scored by Emley's Gabriel Johnson in the fifth minute. In the second half Johnson found himself one on one with Kyle Seymour and Seymour pulled off a smart reflex save to deny the pacy number 10. Aycliffe had a lot of possession for the remainder of the second half, but the score remained the same and Emley had the final chance of the match when a breakaway from an Aycliffe set-piece gave Emley's Kieron Ceasay a good striking chance, but Seymour denied him. Emley didn't score from the resulting corner and the game ended 1-0.

NEW SIGNING - JAKE ORRELL

Newton Aycliffe have signed Ashington's Jake Orrell. Orrell is no stranger to football at this level after featuring for both The Colliers and Consett AFC. He has also plied his trade for Spennymoor Town and Blyth Spartans in the National League North. A forward who is also capable of playing in the midfield and on the right wing. Orrell began his career at Sunderland and also had a pro contract at Chesterfield.

Upcoming Fixtures

Saturday 6th December v Blyth Town (a)
Tuesday 9th December v North Ferriby (a)
Saturday 13th December v Garforth Town (h)
Saturday 20th December v Brighouse Town (a)
Friday 26th December v Bishop Auckland (h)

Photo by Yvonne Wood of Jack Robertson celebrating his goal against Bradford (Park Avenue).

MP Visits Woodham Burn



Woodham Burn Primary School welcomed a special visitor as local MP, Alan Strickland, visited to meet with the School Council. The visit held personal significance, as it marked a return to the school 23 years after the MP first spent time there on a work experience placement.

The pupils began with thoughtful questions and creative ideas on how to improve their school and their local community. The MP praised the council for their commitment to improving the lives of their fellow pupils and their creativity for designing new ways to communicate such as their brilliant podcast. Reflecting on the occasion, the MP described it as "a brilliant experience" and expressed gratitude for the warm welcome from staff and pupils. The visit underlined the importance of giving young people a voice in shaping their education and community, with Woodham Burn Primary continuing to shine as a place where children can express themselves.

FUTURE ISSUES OF NEWTON NEWS

Christmas Edition: Friday 19th December

Deadline: Wednesday 17th December, 11am

New Year Publication Dates

Friday 9th January 2026

Friday 23rd January 2026

Friday 6th February 2026

Friday 20th February 2026

(Deadline: Wednesdays at 11.00am)

Advertisements are accepted at our reception or via email to paul@newtonnews.co.uk

Office Opening Times

Closing 2.00pm on Monday 22nd December.

Minimal staff will be in attendance until re-opening Monday 5th January 2026 at 9am

The Management & Staff at Newton Press and Newton News would like to wish all Newtonians a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous New Year



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The Wonders of Space & Light

Pupils at St. Joseph’s were treated to an extraordinary educational experience when Adam and James from Kielder Observatory visited with their remarkable inflatable planetarium. This immersive dome transported children on a journey through the cosmos, allowing them to explore stars, planets and galaxies in a way that truly brought science to life.

Following the planetarium adventure, pupils participated in an interactive workshop focused on Light. The session went beyond the basics, introducing pupils to the fascinating concepts of infrared and ultraviolet light. Using specialist equipment, including diffraction glasses, an infrared camera, and UV-sensitive beads, children investigated how light behaves and uncovered the hidden world beyond what the human eye can see. These hands-on demonstrations sparked curiosity, encouraged scientific thinking, and made complex ideas accessible and engaging.

Adding to the excitement, some pupils had the unique opportunity to explore the school’s exclusive meteorite collection, which forms part of its science programme. This collection includes genuine fragments of rock from space, originating from the Moon, Mars, and the asteroid belt. Handling real pieces of celestial bodies provided pupils with a



tangible connection to our solar system and made the experience truly unforgettable. Head Teacher (Mrs Evans) commented: “This event was a fantastic opportunity to inspire our pupils and deepen their understanding of science. The combination of interactive learning and real-world artefacts made the day both educational and awe-inspiring.”

Run By Coffee!



A chance quest for coffee and cake has resulted in a brand-new adult training boat and strengthened community bonds between Durham Freemasons and the Chester-Le-Street Amateur Rowing Club. Earlier this year, the Durham Freemasons Parkrunners visited Chester-Le-Street Parkrun, only to discover that their usual post-run café spot was unexpectedly closed. Determined not to miss their traditional coffee, cake and banter ritual, the runners wandered over to the nearby Chester-Le-Street Amateur Rowing Club, which happened to be open and warmly welcomed them inside.

Over steaming mugs and friendly conversation, members of the Parkrun group learned that the rowing club faced a major challenge. Despite growing adult membership, the club lacked an adult-sized training boat, an essential piece of equipment for safely introducing new rowers to the sport. Encouraged to apply, the Durham Freemasons Charity received a formal request and approved a £4,500 grant to fully fund the much-needed boat.

On Saturday 29th November, the Durham Freemasons Parkrunners returned to the Rowing Club after completing their latest Riverside Parkrun to formally hand over the new boat and present the grant certificate. They stayed to enjoy coffee and cake, this time in celebration.

Martin Rankin, Assistant Head of Durham Freemasons and Chair of the Durham Freemasons Charity, led the handover. Rankin, who had not been in a rowing boat since his days in the Sea Cadets, also took the opportunity to take the new craft out onto the water. He said: “This is the perfect example of how unexpected community connections can turn into something lasting and meaningful. What began as a search for coffee has grown into a partnership that supports grassroots sport and strengthens local opportunities. We are delighted to help the Rowing Club expand its adult training and to see this boat already making a difference.”

With smiles, gratitude, and many slices of cake, the collaboration born from a closed café has become a shining example of community spirit. It is truly Run By Coffee!

The new adult training boat is already supporting newcomers to the sport and will play a key role in growing the club’s inclusive rowing programme.

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Busy Bees



Sarah Gray, on behalf of Husqvarna employees, handed over £180.00 on Tuesday 25th November to Thelma Cook and Nora Brewster from the Busy Bees at Shildon (Supporting local Charities). Funds were raised by the team when they raffled a 4-night stay in a cabin with hot tub. Money was also raised by Audrey Barker selling off her Christmas crafts.

SITUATIONS VACANT

We are looking to recruit an Administration Assistant to work in our office on the Newton Aycliffe Business Park. Forty hours per week Monday - Friday 8.30am - 5pm.

Main Purpose:

Working with the Operational Support Manager to provide support to the Operations Director, Operations Team, and wider business.

General Duties and Responsibilities:

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UK Parliament Week

St. Joseph's proudly marked UK Parliament Week with an inspiring visit from local Member of Parliament, Alan Strickland. The event aimed to deepen pupils' understanding of democracy and the role of Parliament in shaping the nation. During his visit, Mr. Strickland spoke to the children about his responsibilities as an MP and the importance of representing constituents. He then took part in a lively Q&A session, where pupils asked thoughtful questions using the traditional 'bob' system, mirroring the practice in the House of Commons.

Deputy Headteacher, Mr Hunt, commented, "This was a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to learn about how decisions are made and how their voices can make a difference. We are grateful to Alan Strickland for taking the time to engage with our students and inspire them to be active citizens."

One pupil shared their excitement about the experience, "I really enjoyed learning about how Parliament works and asking questions. It made me feel like our opinions matter."

The visit was part of a nationwide initiative to encourage young people to learn about Parliament, politics and civic engagement.



Coffee Morning

The Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group will hold its next coffee morning on Friday 12th December 2025 between 10.00am-12noon in the shop and hub in Newton Aycliffe town centre, opposite Savers. We welcome everyone from the surrounding area to come along and enjoy a cuppa and home-made cakes, and to find out how Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group supports anybody within Newton Aycliffe and surrounding towns/villages who have been affected by cancer.

This much needed local charity now has two shops open during the week in Newton Aycliffe Town Centre, opposite Savers, and in Darlington, opposite the entrance to the Cornmill Centre. Within the Aycliffe shop is an information hub for members of the community who have received a cancer diagnosis, are living with cancer or are receiving treatment for cancer.

Services provided by the charity include the following:

- Providing information on issues affecting cancer patients.
- Patient transport.
- Influencing cancer services in the future.
- Regular social activities, with others affected by cancer.
- Assistance with benefits claims.
- Day trips, social events, meals out.
- Confidential and emotional support in a safe & friendly environment.
- Use of our holiday caravans.

You can keep in touch with our future events and fundraising opportunities by visiting our Facebook Page from our website: www.greataycliffecancersupportgroup.co.uk - Contact details can be found on the website or alternatively call 07442 991859.

Christmas Services

Services at St Michael's Church
7th December, 4.00pm - Christingle Service. A joyful family-friendly start to the Christmas season.

14th December, 6.00pm - 9 Lessons & Carols. Traditional carols sung by an enhanced choir, with lessons read by representatives from the community. All are warmly invited to join us afterwards for mulled wine and mince pies.

21st December, 6.00pm - Christmas Evening at St Michael's. A festive community event featuring live music and singing. Seasonal refreshments served from 5.15pm.

22nd December, 7.00pm - Blue Christmas Service. A gentle, reflective service for those who find Christmas a difficult time.

Christmas Eve, 3.00pm - Carols Round the Tree. Don your Christmas jumpers and join in the fun for this much-loved family favourite!

Christmas Eve, 8.30pm - Communion by Candlelight. A warm and uplifting candlelit service, led by Revd David Payne, welcoming Christmas in a spirit of peace and joy. Please note the earlier start time of 8.30pm.

Christmas Day, 9.30am - Christmas Morning Worship with Holy Communion. Join us in celebration with worship, carols and a true spirit of Christmas. The service will end in candlelight, as we form a circle around the nave, each holding a candle of hope.

Services at St Andrew's Church, Bolam

20th December, 7.00pm - Community Carol Service. Celebrate the season with your favourite carols and festive cheer. Refreshments served afterwards.

Christmas Day, 9.30am - Christmas Morning Worship with Holy Communion. Christmas morning celebration with joyful worship and traditional carols.

May the light of Christ fill your heart with peace, your home with joy, and your life with hope this Christmas season.

Fibromyalgia

This is a safe supportive space where you can connect, share and find real understanding from others attending. Refreshments will be available.

The group meets weekly, every Tuesday afternoon from 12 noon to 2pm. Meetings are held at the Bus Preservation Society, Langton Business Park, Aycliffe Business Park, Newton Aycliffe DL5 6BL (behind Aycliffe Physio) – if you can afford a donation that would be great. No need to book, just pop along ... anyone can attend with you (partner, friend, carer). Contact for the group is: 07543 477773.

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The County Council Of Durham
(A167 Ricknall Lane, Newton Aycliffe)
(Temporary Road Closure) Order 2025

The Council on 31/1/2025 made the above Order under Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, to prohibit all vehicular traffic from proceeding on the following lengths of road, a 5.36 kilometre length of the A167 between its junctions with the A689 Rushyford Roundabout and the B6443 St Cuthberts Way, Newton Aycliffe to enable carriageway re-surfacing works to be undertaken. An alternative route will be available to vehicular traffic from the northern side of the closure from A167/A689 Rushyford Roundabout, westerly on A689 to Bishop Auckland, south westerly on A688 to Tindale Crescent then south easterly on A6072 to the junction with B6444 to Aycliffe, or continuing south on A6072 onto A68 leading to A1(M) Junction 58 Burtree to the southern side of the closure, and vice versa. Local diversions will be available between A167 and Ricknall Lane via Lime Lane. The maximum duration of the Order is 18 months. The resurfacing works were carried out from the 10/2/2025 over a period of 5 nights, however it is now necessary to carry out additional carriageway re-surfacing works which will be carried out between 8pm and 6am from Monday 15/12/2025 for a period of 2 nights. On occasions, alternative dates for the closure may be necessary and these will be signed on site accordingly.

DATED: 5/12/2025



Helen Bradley
Director of Legal & Democratic Services
County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UL

Prevention Training

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you about the amount of times our local emergency services have been called out to suicide and self-harm incidents. The Government currently doesn't ensure our emergency services provide staff with any national standard of suicide prevention training; and yet, Samaritans found that last year, North East Ambulance Service were called out to 40,016 mental health-related and 21,481 suicide and self harm-related incidents. These new figures show just how often our local emergency workers are in contact with those in suicidal crisis - and why training all emergency response workers in suicide prevention is urgent.

Right now, our emergency responders and anyone who is in crisis from our community are being failed. These workers are often first on the scene when someone is suicidal, so providing them with the skills and confidence they need to identify and support anyone who is suicidal could save lives.

I urge readers to email your local MP and back Samaritans' call for mandatory suicide prevention training for our emergency responders, to help reduce lives lost to suicide in the area.

Susan Teasdale,
Local resident.

St Elizabeth's 40th Anniversary

Dear Newtonians,

We would like to share some exciting news with you. This December marks the 40th anniversary of our first service at St Elizabeth's of Hungary.

Over the past 40 years we have seen many changes in terms of incumbents, clergy, church wardens, congregations etc, but one thing has remained constant and that is our commitment to the community.

We are marking this special anniversary with a celebration coffee morning on Saturday 6th December, opening at 10.00am. There will be an opportunity to meet with friends old and new; to reminisce over the history and achievements over the years. There will be a raffle, crafts for all ages and seasonal refreshments with also the opportunity to look around and take a moment of quiet in this busy season. We will be offering a soup lunch for anyone who would like to stay and share some added time together.

We will also be holding a special service on Sunday 7th December, at 10.30am, where we will be offering extra thanks to God for the Past, Present and Future of our Church in the Parish of Great Aycliffe.

Please know that you all are very much included in this and the invitation is for all to come along.

From that tiny seed grown in a home group started over 40 years ago, something quite remarkable has grown.

Rev. Helen Musson

Helen, Christine and Milly (Church Wardens).

Mark Solan Visits Vane Road



Vane Road had a very special guest this week speaking in their Monday Assembly, Mark Solan. Mark is the Founder of The Solan Connor Fawcett Family Cancer Trust (Team Solan) an amazing charity based in Spennymoor who has raised thousands of pounds to support families battling with Cancer. As part of our Career's Curriculum, Mark talked to the children about a day in the life of a Charity Founder. He also detailed the roles of his team and the volunteers who help run the charity. The children asked thought provoking questions such as, "How did you become a founder of this charity?" and "What kind of support does your charity offer?"

Mark commented on the children's excellent behaviour during his Assembly. As a thank you to Mark, we are inviting our children to make a small donation to wear their Winter Jumpers on the 17th December. The Solan Connor Fawcett Family Cancer Trust (Team Solan). teamsolan.org.uk

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It was really inspiring to visit five of our local schools to mark Parliament Week, an annual event to increase understanding of Parliament, our democracy and participation in public life.

The school council at Woodham Burn Primary School asked brilliant questions and were full of great ideas for adding new equipment to the playground. After our meeting, the school council members took me on a tour of the school. The students were a real credit to our town. The school had also run a competition for the students to pitch their ideas to me about how we can all improve the environment. I'm very grateful to the 65 students who wrote down or drew their many ideas for what we could do. From these brilliant ideas, I've picked three winners, who will be receiving certificates and small prizes from the parliamentary gift shop very soon!

At St Joseph's Primary School I took questions from a number of classes in the school hall. To add some fun and give a taste of life in Parliament, I asked the pupils to 'bob' to ask questions rather than raise their hands - this is the tradition in the Commons that members stand up to show they'd like to speak. What followed was an energetic and enthusiastic question time! Again the questions were excellent, with the young people showing real concern about a wide range of issues and coming up with lots of ideas for improving our town and wider world. At Elemore Hall special school in Chilton, the students in the junior leadership team showed me round the school, so I could meet and take questions about Parliament and democracy from a range of classes. It was great to hear about the work happening at the school to involve young people in democracy - shaping ideas for the changes they want to see.

I also had wonderful visits to Ferryhill School, where I took questions from year 10 about a wide range of issues and to Dean Bank Primary School to meet the pupils there.

All of the visits showed just how interested young people in our communities are in the world around them. I was struck by their motivation to make a difference and to powerful ideas they had to improve their schools and society more broadly. Really inspiring and I look forward to continuing to encourage young people to have their voices heard as I visit schools throughout the year.

In other news, the Labour government has delivered its Budget for this year. I was particularly pleased to see full compensation announced for members of the British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme which affects many of us locally. I've been campaigning on this since my election, both in the House of Commons and privately with ministers, so I'm really proud to see a good resolution for members of the Scheme. It was also good to see measures in the Budget to tackle the cost-of-living crisis, which I know has been having a huge impact on people in our area. Because of steps taken by the Chancellor, an average of £150 will be taken off the cost of household energy bills. I'm also really pleased that the Labour government have frozen prescription charges and rail fares, and have expanded free breakfast clubs to save more families more money, putting more money in families' pockets.

Trapped . . .

Woke up Saturday morning 22nd November to find that I had been barricaded in without any form of prior notice.

Not only could I not use my car, but there was no way I could physically leave my property on foot as the only egress point was the drive and this was cordoned off with heavy barriers.

I talked to several of the workmen, informing them that I needed to leave, not one of them spoke

English, all they would say was 'Rumanian' or 'BT'.

The company signage read 'DLF Group', but no search of the internet could identify them as a bone-fide company, or provide a contact telephone number. I tried to contact DCC Highways Department, but as expected, they are closed over the weekend.

Besides the extreme inconvenience of being imprisoned within my own property, how was I to know if their intentions weren't egregious?

Why are non English speaking foreign contractors allowed to severely inconvenience property owners without having the ability to explain themselves, surely an interpreter should be a minimum requirement? Have any other residents had dealings with this outfit?

Name and address supplied.



Aycliffe Youth Football News

Another blank week for our teams scheduled to play at the Oakleaf, however, a few teams did manage to play:

Sunderland City Juniors 0 v U13 Eagles (Cup) 1

The lads started the game very well. After a cross into the box, the ball broke to Noah H, to shoot from just outside the box, hits the underside of the crossbar and crossed the line, back out for Patrick to shoot, again crosses the line, but not given. Patrick struck again and finally the goal given. Second half was tougher, Ethan keeping the lads in it, to earn a place in the quarter finals.

Gateshead 2 v U13 Girls 2

Aycliffe dominated the first half, but Gateshead were the first to score. HT 1-0. Second half and Poppy went up front, she received the ball from the half way line, through their defensive line and slotted it past the keeper. With Aycliffe pushing high, Gateshead scored to take the lead. However, Amelia made a break down the right wing, cut inside and smashed the ball past the keeper. POTM: Goalkeeper Daisy, pulling off amazing saves.

U9 Eagles v Gateshead Fell

A quick start from Gateshead saw them grab a goal from a defensive error. However, a resilient Aycliffe came fighting back with two goals from Luke T. And the third goal came from a sensational lob from just past the half-way line for Ollie.

U10 Pumas v Hetton Juniors

Pumas only had six players available for the game. Hetton took an early lead before Louisa's corner found Millie Pickard for the equaliser. Millie Vickers ran clear of the defence to score before half time to put the Pumas 2-1 up. Another great through ball found Sophie who held the ball up well before scoring the third.



U10 Wildcats v Gateshead Cleveland Hall

Injury and sickness meant that only seven girls were available, but they worked so hard for each other for the full game. Aycliffe went down 1-0 early in the game, but fought back to equalise following an excellent solo effort from Elise. In the second half they continued to attack and Freya added four goals with four assists from Matilda, the pick of the bunch, a lovely well worked goal down the left hand side. Defensively it was an excellent game with Sienna, Floretta and Emily working really hard to win the ball before starting numerous attacks.

Wildcats Girls Development and Little Eagles Boys Development

After another three teams started their footballing journey, we now have spaces available for Year 1 boys and girls at our development academies, if you are interested and need more info contact Berni 07939 045242.

Community Enhancement Garden Competition

Great Aycliffe Town Council officially recognised the winners of this years Community Enhancement Garden competition last week. The winners in the three categories each received their trophy and certificate from the Mayor of Great Aycliffe.

The overall garden winner was Mrs and Mr Stayman from Burghley Mews. Their garden has been immaculate and appreciated by all their neighbours and visitors throughout the summer, with an excellent show still available into October.

The best Community garden was awarded to the residents of a street of bungalows at St Andrews Close, Aycliffe Village. They have worked together, planting pots and hanging baskets along the front of their properties. The combined effect was a sea of colour for much of the summer.

Finally, the best hanging basket/ flower tub display was awarded to a property in Marshal Road. Judges thought the garden stood out as it was dotted with various garden ornaments, painted fences and flower baskets on every available space. The effect created a bright characterful garden that made many people smile as they walked by.

Congratulations to all the winners and thank you to those who nominated them.



Seaham Food Festival

A popular food festival, promising something for the whole family, will return next summer, with applications now open for traders.

Delivered by Durham County Council, Seaham Food Festival will return to the region's coast for a weekend of food, fun and entertainment on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd August.

Attracting thousands of visitors each year, and featuring more than 120 traders, there's something for everyone at the event, from street food and sweet treats to local beverages and savoury goods. Plus, applications are now open for traders interested in running a stall next year.

Interested traders are asked to include as much information as possible about their business in their application, including latest news and awards, images of their stall, social media handles, and details of their produce.



Potential applicants have until Thursday 12th February to apply, which can be done online.

As with other years, the cookery theatre will be a highlight of this year's festival and will feature a series of cookery demonstrations from a star-studded line up of TV chefs, details of whom will be revealed next year. For more information, and to find the link to the application form for traders, visit: www.seahamfoodfestival.co.uk

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Licensing

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Christopher Clark trading as Chris Clark Transport of 54 Staindrop Road, West Auckland, Co Durham, DL14 9JX is applying to change an existing licence as follows: To add an operating centre to keep 8 goods vehicles and 8 trailers at Chris Clark Transport, Yard 2, IES Centre, Horndale Avenue, Newton Aycliffe DL5 6DS. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centres who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-objections-and-complaints-goods-vehicle-operator-licensing 5th December 2025

In Memoriam

Rachel Maughan



Remembered with love, my beautiful Sister Rachel Maughan, taken from us 10 years ago on 8th December 2015. Deep in our hearts a memory is kept of one who we loved and will never forget.

John McRoberts

7th December 2018 John, it is seven long years, you will always be treasured forever in our memory. The presence I miss, the memory I treasure, loving you always, forgetting you never. Nanna, Dad, Tyler

Ian Cutter

Passed away on 9th December 2024. Loved and missed every day. Always in my heart. Loving Wife, Heather

Joyce McCartin

25th November 2024 You may not be here, but you'll always be remembered for the wonderful person you were. You were loved and will never be forgotten. Love, Val, Kimberley, Bethany, Jessica, Matthew, Amelia and Isabelle xx

Stephen Paul Ibinson



50th Birthday Remembrance 30/11/75

Remembering you on your 50th birthday. We miss you more than words can say and will always cherish the memories we shared. Today we celebrate your life and the love you brought us. We are sending all our love to you and Dad. Love you always, love, Mam and family; Wife Marion and family in Ireland xxx

Obituary

Redvers Williams

Of Newton Aycliffe, formerly Ferryhill, passed away peacefully on 2nd November, aged 90 years. Dearly beloved Husband to Joan; a much loved Dad, Grandad and Great Grandad. The funeral service took place on Monday 1st December at Durham Crematorium.

Mary Vickers



1935 - 2025

Passed away suddenly on 12th November 2025. Wife of the late Denis; Mother of Paul, Kevin and the late Linda; Mother-in-Law to Carol and Colin; Grandma, Great Grandma and Great Great Grandma. Friends and family please meet at Darlington Crematorium on Thursday 11th December at 3.00pm

Marjorie Robinson

6th November 2025 Passed away peacefully at home, aged 85. Wife of the late Albert Robinson; beloved Mam to Neil, Sharon, Paul, Mark, Barry and Diane; much loved Mother-in-Law, Nanna and Great Grandmother. A big thank you to the community nurses, Premier Care and Marie Curie for all their care and support. The funeral was held at Wear Valley Crematorium.

Mr Malcolm Thomas Doherty

Sadly passed away, peacefully, on 8th November in Darlington Memorial Hospital. Thank you to all the staff for their support. Malcolm is sadly missed by his carer and daughter.

Rose-Marie Meade

Of Newton Aycliffe, formerly of East London, passed away unexpectedly on 11th November aged 57 years. Very much loved and missed by her Daughter, Wenzday and Partner, Mark. Rose-Marie is going to be sadly missed by family, friends and the community of Newton Aycliffe and around the world. Will family and friends please meet for a service at Durham Crematorium on Wednesday 17th December at 3pm.

PUZZLE CORNER

Sudoku

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

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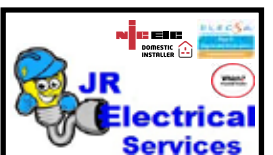
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Distributing Dictionaries

Our members have now completed the distribution of free dictionaries to all Year 6 pupils in eleven primary schools including Newton Aycliffe, Heighington and Aycliffe Village. DICTIONARY 4 LIFE is an initiative supported by Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland and a project first undertaken by Rotary Newton Aycliffe a number of years ago. We always receive many thank you letters and cards from pupils telling us how useful they find the dictionaries as they progress to secondary school and this year was no exception. Photo shows our President Margaret Ord presenting the books to pupils.



ACORN Residents Association

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday 11th December at 6.00pm in the upstairs room of the Phoenix Club. Everyone is welcome to attend. Tea and biscuits and a good welcome to all. Best wishes for Christmas and 2026 to everyone.

Tan On Demand Achieves Second

Tan On Demand, a thriving small business based in Newton Aycliffe, has been awarded second place nationally for its outstanding spray tanning services, marking a significant achievement for both the company and the local community. This national recognition highlights the exceptional professionalism, skill, and dedication behind Tan On Demand's services. The accolade also shines a spotlight on Newton Aycliffe, helping to place the town firmly on the map as a destination for high-quality, award-winning beauty treatments. "We are incredibly proud of this achievement," said the team at Tan On Demand. "This recognition is not only a celebration of our commitment to excellence, but also a moment of pride for the Newton Aycliffe community that has supported us from the very beginning." Tan On Demand welcomes the opportunity for the local community to join in celebrating this milestone. The business hopes that, by sharing its success story, more residents will be inspired to support and champion local enterprises.



S.A.C.A. Events

School Aycliffe Community Association (S.A.C.A.) Community Hall located at the bottom of Eastfields, School Aycliffe (please follow the brown/white information signs).

December Events

Christmas Quiz our Annual and ever popular Christmas Quiz is being held on Friday 12th December and is now sold out.

Community Choir held fortnightly 7pm to 8.30pm, £3 per session, including refreshments, please contact Julie on 07742 015609.

Christmas-A-Long Monday 22nd December, 5pm onwards, please note that this is a free community event and light refreshments will be available too. Contact Julie 07742 015609.

January 2026 Events

Indoor Table Top Sale Sunday 25th - further details to follow. A great opportunity to declutter and start the year clutter free. Please contact Georgette on 07951 758118 for further details.

Coffee, Cake & Stuff being held on Thursday 29th from 11am to 2pm. First one for 2026. Please come and join us at our ever-popular monthly Coffee, Cake & Stuff where we will be selling our gorgeous homemade sweet and savoury bakes, and the opportunity to catch up with friends and neighbours! Please contact Elizabeth on 07813 523050 or Christine on 07981 992686 for details. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Chris & Elizabeth.

The Committee would also like to thank you for your continued support during 2025 and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Cash for Bricks

North East Families Earn Hundreds from Forgotten LEGO® Sets

A growing number of families across the North East are discovering their old LEGO® sets could be worth a small fortune, with some earning £100s simply by clearing out their attic. A new UK-based service, WeBuyBricks, is making it simple for LEGO® fans to cash in their boxed collections, without the hassle of private selling. With the LEGO® resale market booming, even used and retired sets are often fetching more than their original price. From Star Wars™ Millennium Falcons that sell for £650+ to Harry Potter™ castles and rare Technic sets, WeBuyBricks is helping everyday families uncover hidden value in their homes and turn it into fast cash. The average seller earns nearly £80 and many earning between £150-£300 just by decluttering a child's bedroom.

Ben Wadsworth, Marketing Manager for WeBuyBricks, said: "We've tried to make it as easy as possible for people to rid themselves of their old LEGO® and get their cash fast. Customers can receive an online quote for their boxed sets in minutes, avoiding the hassle of auctions, messaging, or postage complications, as we arrange a driver to come and collect used LEGO® directly from them." With thousands of sets already sold through the platform, WeBuyBricks is the UK's trusted way to turn LEGO® into pounds, helping families make room, make money, and make smart choices with their old bricks. With Christmas around the corner, it's the perfect time to declutter, cash in your unused LEGO®, and put the extra money towards gifts, celebrations, or savings. Visit www.webuybricks.co.uk or download the WeBuyBricks app to get a free quote and discover what your collection could be worth.

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Newton Aycliffe Juniors

Week ending 23rd November 2025

Under 8's Juniors played against Middleton Rangers, in the first half both teams had opportunities with Arron smashing home a great goal for Aycliffe. The second half was close, with Aycliffe finding their rhythm late, Jacob M scored two great goals, and Oscar scored a screamer. MOTM was Jacob C for a solid performance at the back, he was calm, dependable, and everywhere he needed to be.

Under 9's Juniors hosted Marton Whites, with Aycliffe starting quickly and Cooper bagged a first half hat-trick. Marton came out fighting and reduced the deficit before Cooper finished the game with a great finish. There were some great performances from James at the back and Henry bossing the midfield as well as Cooper with four goals.

Under 10 Juniors travelled to Richmond Pro Player, Aycliffe started slowly and invited pressure from Richmond. In the second half, Aycliffe turned the game on its head with goals from Connor (2), Zach, Lincoln and Kian. MOTM was Connor, who was a constant threat and showed magnificent work ethic.

Under 11's travelled to face Mount Pleasant Rangers, coming away with a particularly good result. It was a tense first half, but Noah scored first, with Oliver coolly finishing Aycliffe's second. George T was MOTM with some excellent defending, contributing to a well-deserved clean sheet.

Under 11's Whites faced South Park Whites, playing some fantastic football and showed some real character. Dexter scored a thunderbolt into the top corner and Olly finished coolly in off the post. MOTM was Olly who put in a real captain's performance with a great goal and relentless fighting spirit.

Under 12's Reds faced Marton, in what was a game of two halves. Marton led early, before Laitia scored a wonderful hat-trick, with Jace adding a fourth before the break. Marton rallied in the second half to snatch a point in a 4-4 draw. MOTM was Alfie.

Under 12's Blacks travelled to face Riverside Junior Yellow's, it was a tough day for Aycliffe, who could not convert their chances, with Riverside proving more ruthless. POTM was Liam who made some great saves.

Under 13's Blacks travelled to play Riverside City U14 Girls, coming away with a great 3-0 win. Aycliffe controlled the game from start to finish, taking the lead through Kai before Ethan added a superb double. MOTM was Levi and Kai.

Week ending 30th November 2025

Under 10's Reds faced Riverside Juniors United, it was a tough assignment, but Aycliffe's togetherness never wilted, with Fox scoring four goals, with assists from Jacob, Michael, Thomas and Korben. POTM was Thomas for an amazing midfield display and Korben who did very well on the left side of midfield.

Under 11's Whites travelled to face Hardwick, putting in an amazing performance. From the first whistle Aycliffe dominated, with Elliot smashing home early after Dexter's perfect pass, then it was Dexter who added Aycliffe's second with a brilliant finish. Every player was outstanding, but POTM was awarded to Rowan for relentless tackling and grit & Elliot who had his best game so far, capped with a superb goal.

Under 14's Blacks entertained Roseberry Falcons, with Connor putting Aycliffe ahead early. Kaylm added another two before Roseberry replied before the break. Roseberry then reduced the deficit to 3-2, before Kaylm



completed his hat-trick to restore the two-goal lead. Connor scored a lovely free kick to complete the 5-2 victory. MOTM was Connor, Kaylm and Jack.

Under 23's welcomed New Brancepeth in a top of the table clash. The game started at an extremely high tempo, with Aycliffe pressing and fighting for every ball. A great move saw Aycliffe take the lead with a great header from Charlie. It was the other Charlie who finished well on 20 minutes to double the lead going into the break. In the second half Aycliffe kept good possession, with Brancepeth scoring a late consolation goal. A great 2-1 win with MOTM going to Cameron who was superb in defence. The win keeps Aycliffe top of the league.

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