



Five Acres Thank You

Page 12

Newton ⚡ News

May 2026

Incorporating 'The Newtonian'

Newton Aycliffe's free community magazine published at the beginning of each month
Editorial and advertising contact: Telephone: 01325 300212 - Email: paul@newtonnews.co.uk - Website: www.newtonnews.co.uk



Hopetown Carnival - Page 26



REME Presentation - Page 25



Together 21 - Page 18



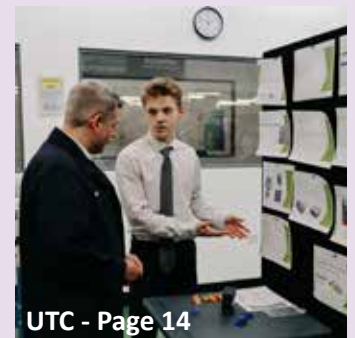
Heighington Surgery - Page 3



200 - Page 4



Scarlett Start - Page 10



UTC - Page 14



Pensioner Trips - Page 9



Treetops Donation - Page 32



100 - Page 7



Aycliffe Radio Visit - Page 5



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New Enhanced Facilities Following Renovation at Heighington Surgery



We are delighted to share the exciting transformation of the Heighington Branch of Bewick Crescent Surgery following the completion of recent renovation works.

The project involved a full reconfiguration of the downstairs space, designed to better meet the needs of our patients and staff. A key feature of the upgrade is the creation of a significantly larger dispensary, alongside the addition of a brand-new clinical room. These improvements have enabled us to expand our services and enhance the overall patient experience.

Thanks to this new layout, we are now able to run clinics for both GPs and nursing staff simultaneously. GP clinics are currently being held at least three times per week, with nurse and healthcare assistant clinics taking place even more frequently. This increased capacity allows us to provide more accessible and flexible care for our patients.

We are also pleased to announce that our opening hours have been extended to 8:30am–12:00 noon and 2:00–5:30pm, Monday to Friday, offering even greater convenience for patients in Heighington village and the surrounding areas.

These enhancements reflect our ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality, patient-centred care within the community. We look forward to welcoming patients into our newly improved space.

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St Joseph's Pupils Mark 200 Years with Inspiring Hopetown Visit

Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils from St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School enjoyed an unforgettable educational trip recently as they travelled by train (Key Stage 2) to Hopetown in Darlington to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the world famous Stockton &

Darlington Railway.

The excitement began before pupils even stepped off the platform, with many eager to experience travelling by train - just as people would have done two centuries ago when the historic railway first opened the door to modern transport.

Once at Hopetown, the children took part in a lively debate exploring whether building the original railway was a good idea. Working in groups, they weighed up the advantages - such as easier transportation of coal and increased trade - against the disadvantages, including pollution and concerns for the environment.

Pupils then enjoyed a guided tour of the museum, where they learnt about the pioneering work of George Stephenson and the influential Pease family, whose vision helped bring the world's first passenger railway to life. The tour included time exploring the interactive exhibitions, handling artefacts and discovering how railway engineering has changed over the last 200 years.

A particular highlight for many was viewing the miniature railway and comparing different types of engines from throughout history. The children also climbed the tower overlooking the museum site, giving them a rare bird's eye view of the train workshop below. Deputy Headteacher Mr Hunt said, "At school we have also installed a recycled plastic train on our school field to celebrate this special historical occasion. Children are already enjoying imaginative play on it and we can't wait to get the next part of our station installed."

The visit to Hopetown not only brought local history to life, but also helped pupils understand how the Stockton & Darlington Railway changed transport - and the world - forever.



Bishop Auckland College Students Bring Their Talent to Aycliffe Radio

A group of seven talented music students from Bishop Auckland College have taken an exciting first step into the world of professional broadcasting, after visiting Aycliffe Radio to record a specially pre-produced show, which aired on Thursday 2nd April at 6.00pm.

The students - currently studying a variety of pathways within the College's Music department - were invited to the station as part of an ongoing initiative to strengthen community links while giving young people practical, hands-on experience in real-world creative industries. The visit offered them a unique opportunity to experience first-hand the processes involved in producing and broadcasting a radio programme, from initial planning through to the final on-air product.

During their visit, the group worked closely with Aycliffe Radio volunteers to develop, record and refine a full hour-long programme. The show, carefully curated by the students themselves, features a dynamic mix of music, local shout-outs, lively discussions about college life and special segments spotlighting the creative talent emerging from Bishop Auckland College. Each element of the programme allowed the students to explore different aspects of radio production, from presenting and scripting to technical operation and audio editing.

Tyler Pateman-Jones, Music Lecturer and Course Coordinator, praised the students' commitment and professionalism: "Opportunities like this give our learners hands-on experience they simply can't get in the classroom alone. The team at Aycliffe Radio were incredibly welcoming and the students really rose to the occasion. They demonstrated creativity, teamwork and a real passion for their craft." The collaboration also received glowing feedback from station volunteers and presenters, who noted how impressed they were by the students' enthusiasm, preparedness and adaptability in a professional studio environment. For many of the young participants it was their first time experiencing the technical and creative demands of live radio, allowing them to develop skills that will be invaluable in future study, projects and careers in music, media and broadcasting.

This initiative is part of a broader effort by Aycliffe Radio to engage with local youth and showcase the voices and talents within the community. By providing a platform for emerging artists and creative students, the station hopes to nurture local talent and inspire the next generation of broadcasters and musicians.

The College and station hope this collaboration marks the beginning of a continuing partnership that celebrates creativity, supports young people and strengthens community connections in and around Newton Aycliffe.

Through projects like this, Bishop Auckland College students gain not only practical experience, but also a taste of professional life, fostering confidence, teamwork and a sense of achievement that extends far beyond the classroom.



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Spring into Summer at the Green Arts



The Green Arts Spring and Summer programme is underway with something for the whole community to take part in. We are thrilled to announce that we have been offered a further three year contract at the Eco Centre in Moore Lane and would like to thank Great Aycliffe Town Council for the support they have shown for our organisation, it means that we can expand our programme and increase our offer for the whole community!

This season you can explore a vibrant range of creative activities, hosted at the welcoming Eco Centre. We are offering lots of inspiration, learning and a chance to connect with others who share a passion for the arts.

The highlight for budding writers is our lovely writing workshop, designed to welcome all levels and provide a welcoming space as part of a 'Happiness Hub'. The sessions are led by published writer Fran Harvey and cater for all skill levels and beginners are welcome! Participants receive hands-on guidance, practical tips, and proven techniques to help unlock their creative potential. Everyone who takes part has the exciting opportunity to publish their work in a collaborative anthology, celebrating the diverse stories and talents within our community.

For families, the programme offers a range of holiday activities tailored for young people. Our Free May half term session led by popular artist Dawn Belshaw is now available to book. This fun session blends art and recycling and allows young people to discover the world around them through guided creative activity. Just visit our website or Eventbrite to reserve your space.

Green Arts continues its commitment to nurturing creativity by offering a space to our regular groups. Creative Wellbeing meet each Thursday, led by Sheila and Sonia, the relaxed group create amazing work and enjoy the warmth of a social group. Creative Forum, led by artist Sharron Bates, is a lovely group, bringing together creatives on a Friday morning, who can catch up whilst enjoying creating their own chosen craft. The two groups generate lots of laughter and fabulous artwork and Green Arts are privileged to collaborate and be inspired by the members. Just contact us to find out more.

Our Fabulous Cree group are continually busy creating planters for the community and our young Explorers are joining forces with the Men's Cree to locate the wonderful fairy house the two groups have collaborated on. We are so proud of the two groups and, again, a big thank you to Richard Agar and Dawn Belshaw for supporting and guiding the amazing projects.

Look out for our fabulous regular workshops coming up with artist Jayne Blacklock and Elaine Vizor and a new exhibition coming up in our Little Green Gallery, we are excited for the months ahead!

Everyone is welcome at Green Arts. Whether you're seeking inspiration, looking for enriching activities for your children, or hoping to connect with fellow art lovers, there's a place for you here. To find out more just visit our website www.green-arts.co.uk - or contact the team by emailing info@green-arts.co.uk where you can find out more and sign up to our regular Newsletter.

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Dear Reader,

For all readers of the Newton News. This could be the opportunity for one, or perhaps two, of you to start a long and happy working life. No matter how much time you have available or what age you are. You may be retired and just want a few hours to fill in your time. If you already work full time and have a few hours available, this could be for you.

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Aycliffe Radio Tonight's Show

A new monthly show, going in a new direction, securing its evening slot on the station's schedule. With an emphasis on facts rather than opinions, truth and sound reasoning rather than just being feelings led. A show that looks at current affairs at home and abroad, politics with a large and small P, as well as the issues and challenges facing our region and our own community.

A smattering of music, if I can remember to play the tracks amongst the lively discussions, with guests popping into the studio to share their thoughts and ideas and even taking the co-pilot seat from time to time as a guest presenter.

Commencing on Wednesday 29th April, The Tonight's Show will be live from 7.00pm to 9.00pm on the final Wednesday of each month. I intend to make the show informative, interesting and maybe even shake things up a little in the process.

That's 'The Tonight's Show' on the final Wednesday of each month, 7.00pm to 9.00pm on Aycliffe Radio, with me Phill Hawkins, I hope you can join me.

Phill Hawkins,

The Tonight's Show, Aycliffe Radio.

Celebrating Theresa Newell's 100th Birthday

Born on 7th May 1926, Theresa Newell will mark a remarkable milestone as she celebrates her 100th birthday. This centenary is a testament to a life filled with family, resilience, and community. Theresa spent her early years in Dublin, where she met her future husband, John Newell, while he was on holiday there. She married John in 1956 and moved in with his family in East Howle, a bit of a culture shock at the time. Theresa and John moved into Dormer Terrace in East Howle and lived with John's family. John worked at the pit as a Blacksmith. Eventually they got a home of their own in East Howle. In later years they moved to Newton Aycliffe, but eventually came back to Ferryhill, where Theresa still lives. Together, Theresa and John welcomed five children, building a loving and supportive family, Paul, Benedette, David, Angela and Kevin, unfortunately Theresa lost her husband in 2003 and her sons Paul in 2006 and David in 2015. She has devoted most of her years to Ferryhill, where she has become a cherished member of the local community.



Theresa and John loved their coach holidays and, over the years, Theresa was a regular visitor to Dublin to see her Mam, brothers and sister.

Working in the garment industry in her youth, in Dublin, Theresa then moved to Ferryhill and worked as an outworker at home for a clothing manufacturer, she also worked in Coomers in Spennymoor for many years and then for the rest of her working life she worked in Carrick's bakery in Ferryhill village, today she is still recognised from working there. Over the years she visited Lewellen's in Ferryhill for a coffee and a natter with her late sister Kathleen and still gets up to the village for a shopping trip or two today.

There are 7 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren in Theresa's family, sadly she lost her eldest grandchild Darren in 1996 at only 13 years old. In 2012 Theresa met her companion John, on one of her many coach trips away. John is from Hartlepool and she has enjoyed many cruises and trips away over the last few years with him. Even now, Theresa likes to get out for trips as much as she can.

Theresa has always loved singing at home and family gatherings and over the years was a regular visitor on a Saturday night to The Square and Compass in West Cornforth. In recent years she has had weekends away in Redcar, visited The Swan in Durham, many memorable times, and is having her 100th birthday party at Ferryhill Working Men's Club in May, organised by her family and friends.

Wouldn't it be nice if Theresa received 100 cards for her 100th Birthday? A very Happy Birthday Theresa, what a milestone!

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Fifty Years of Dedicated Music Service for Worship



April marked a remarkable milestone for Paul and Lynne Arnold, as they celebrate 50 years of dedicated service providing music for worship. Their unwavering commitment and passion have enriched countless services over the past five decades, making a lasting impact on the community and uplifting the spirit of worship for generations. Their musical journey began on Palm Sunday, 11th April 1976, when they first played together at St Thomas Church in Middlesbrough. Having met just shortly before, they joined forces to lead the Sunday morning service, marking the beginning of a partnership that would go on to enrich countless worship experiences over the years. Following their marriage, they relocated to Stockton-on-Tees and spent several years offering their musical talents at St Peter's Church. Later, when they moved to Woodham, they became the inaugural musicians at St Elizabeth's Church, where their dedication and artistry continued for an impressive 25 years. This long-standing commitment not only shaped the musical landscape of the church, but also enriched the worship experience for everyone involved. Over the following twelve years, their musical journey continued as they provided music at St Luke's Ferryhill and Holy Trinity Cornforth. During this period, their son Simon began playing the piano alongside them, while their daughter Ruby contributed her talents on the violin. Eventually, Ruby left for university in Aberdeen, where she remains actively involved with local churches, continuing the family's tradition of musical service. Simon, studying nearby at Teesside, was able to carry on performing with them. Notably, Simon has now reached the impressive milestone of twenty years playing music for worship, further testament to the family's enduring dedication. Now firmly established as an integral part of worship at St John's in Shildon, they continue to share their musical talents and have no plans to stop any time soon. Their dedication over the past eight years has enriched the church community and shows no signs of waning. Throughout their remarkable journey, they have contributed their musical talents to a wide range of significant events and sacred spaces. Not only have they supported Sedgefield Deanery pilgrimages with their music, but they have also had the honour of performing at some of the country's most revered sites, including Durham Cathedral, Ripon Cathedral, Holy Island Priory, Whitby Abbey, Lanercost Cathedral, Carlisle Cathedral, and Walsingham. Their dedication has left a lasting impression on each of these spiritual communities.

Django Wizardry

It was an absolute delight to be in the presence of such a musician as the Parisian jazz violinist Daniel John Martin on his return to Bishop Auckland. This event hosted by #bishopaucklandjazz also featured the brilliant local talents of Mick Shoulder and Dave Smith on guitars and Paul Grainger on bass, collectively known as Swing Manouche. The evening took off with renderings of Douce Ambience and Lulu Swing before a calmer Clair de Lune gave the players (and audience) more time to breathe and to display their lyrical improvisations. Throughout the evening the solos from DJM dazzled us with his complete mastery of the violin and its potential to deliver incredibly rapid passagework whilst being truly expressive and fun. Similarly, Mick Shoulder delivered his solos with consummate ease extracting so many different tones and timbres as he progressed. Dave's rhythm guitar and Paul's bass playing were rock solid and provided the foundation for the others to build their solos. Troublant Bolero and Dinette closed the first half, but after a brief interval they were back with Coquette, Danube and Danse Norvegienne. Then came the biggest shock in Sheik of Araby when DJM took to the microphone to sing a few familiar verses. It brought the house down! Then they simply had to do Djangology by Django Reinhart who was especially associated with this style of "Gypsy Jazz" followed by a poignant version of Je Suis seul ce soir and finishing with I Love You. Memories of Stephane Grappelli were provoked throughout the evening, but I think DJM went further still. The audience gave warm applause throughout and left with very happy faces having been so royally entertained. The next event is on Friday 8th May at 1pm and features the Alan Law trio. Let's make Bishop Auckland great again!



Senior Citizens' Excursions



Application forms and information brochures for Great Aycliffe Town Council's free Senior Citizens' Excursions are currently available from the Library and Recreation Centre in Beveridge Way, the Oakleaf Sports Complex, Golf Complex and Great Aycliffe Town Council Offices, School Aycliffe. You can also visit www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk for the forms and full details of the excursions. Please note, however, that the library does not open on Wednesdays.

The application process continues during the first week in May, opening at 10.00am - 12.30pm on Tuesday 5th May 2026 at the Council Offices on School Aycliffe Lane. The closing date for applications is Friday 8th May 2026.

To be eligible, you do not have to be drawing a pension or have a bus pass, but you do have to be a resident of the electoral parish of Great Aycliffe and 60 years old with a date of birth on or before 31st March 1966 (applies to both men and women). You must provide proof of your age and address. We do not keep records from previous years, so please do not assume we will be able to check from last year. If you are in any doubt, please telephone 01325 300700 and we will check your eligibility. You can bring proof of residency and age, to our offices at School Aycliffe Lane during the times shown on the brochure which is available with the forms. You can send your forms and copies only of your proofs via the post or email the form and proofs to info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk This year we will be visiting York, Whitby, Keswick, Alnwick, Northallerton and Thirsk (dual destination), Tynemouth, Seaham and Dalton Park (dual destination) and Redcar (shorter day). Please note that places are limited and given out on a 'first come, first served' basis. The coaches provided are 49-53 seater executive coaches with toilet facilities. There is also one executive coach with a wheelchair hoist to Whitby, Alnwick and Redcar. This ensures that people with mobility problems can enjoy a day out too. The hoist can be used for loading wheelchairs for residents who need to travel in their wheelchair.

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Young Artists Celebrated at Surgery Easter Competition



Children from Sugar Hill Primary School in Newton Aycliffe were all smiles as they received their prizes for a special Easter poster competition organised by Bewick Crescent Surgery.

The competition invited pupils to showcase their creativity by designing colourful Easter-themed posters. Staff at the surgery carefully reviewed all entries and selected their top three favourites, impressed by the imagination and effort shown by the young artists.

The winning children were presented with their prizes during a small celebration, where their artwork was proudly recognised. The event highlighted not only the artistic talents of the pupils, but also the strong connection between the surgery and the local community.

A representative from the surgery, who was present to hand out the prizes, said it was a pleasure to be involved and to see such enthusiasm from the children.

The competition was a great success, bringing together creativity, community spirit, and a touch of Easter joy.

Promising Start for Scarlet

Newton Aycliffe based Junior Pro-kart racer Scarlet Whitaker Dunn attended Round 1 of the Teesside Sprint Series held at Teesside Autodrome on Sunday 22nd March.

Scarlet was competing in the popular Junior Pro-kart class, which saw its biggest ever UK grid with an impressive 25 entrants.

The racing was incredibly close all day and Scarlet represented herself well in a quality field of competitors from across England and Scotland.

All of Scarlet's races (Junior Pro-Kart no7) at Teesside this season will be live streamed on the circuits YouTube channel, which can be found by searching tsk-media on YouTube.

R1 - 21st-22nd March

R2 - 25th-26th April

R3 - 16th-17th May

R4 - 20th-21st June

R5/6 - 25th-26th July

R7 - 26th-27th September

R8/9 - 24th-25th October

We would like to thank Amaron Racing, PHM (Peninsula Historic Motorsport), Carbon Arc Training & Consultancy, Grandad Ron and Rob Storey for their generous assistance and financial support making this possible. Thank you to Robert Borowik Media for supplying the photo.

To support Scarlet in her journey, please email: mail@amandawhitaker.com - every little helps.

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Cycling Challenge for Quinn's Retreat

On Sunday 10th May 2026, Eric Stapleton, Michael Fitzgerald and Michael Brown will take on the Etape Caledonia - an 85-mile closed-road cycling event set against the stunning, yet demanding, backdrop of the Scottish Highlands. Known for both its beauty and its difficulty, the route offers an unforgettable challenge for even the most experienced riders.

Participants must complete the course within eight hours, pushing themselves over long distances and steep terrain, including two significant climbs: Trinafour (374m) and Schiehallion (382m). Widely regarded as one of the toughest sportives in the UK, the event is a true test of strength, stamina, resilience and determination.

The trio is undertaking this challenge to raise funds for Quinn's Retreat, a Shildon-based charity that provides free respite breaks for individuals and families bereaved by suicide. Through its peaceful caravan retreat, the charity offers a safe, comforting environment where people can rest, reflect, and begin to recover during some of the most difficult times in their lives. The support it provides has a lasting and meaningful impact on the mental wellbeing of those who need it most.



Any support, no matter how small, would be greatly appreciated and will go a long way in helping this important cause continue its vital work. Donations can be made online at:

justgiving.com/page/eric-fitzy-brew-3-roosters

You can also contribute via collection boxes located at Corner Café in Shildon and Mike's Fish Bar in Newton Aycliffe. Thank you for your support.

Photo: Eric Stapleton, Michael Fitzgerald and Michael Brown.



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Fibromyalgia Support

Our group has now moved to the Glow Church, Long Tens Way, Aycliffe Business Park DL5 6AP. We meet every Monday afternoon from 12.30pm to 1.30pm, with the coffee shop alongside for refreshments.

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

No need to book, just pop along - anyone can attend with you (partner, friend, carer). Contact for the group is: 07543 477773.

Co-Option of Town Councillor

Make a Difference. Become a Town Councillor.

Are you passionate about the community of Great Aycliffe and do you want to help make it a better place for all to live, work and grow up? If this sounds like something you are interested in, then we encourage you to apply to become a Town Councillor.

Great Aycliffe Town Council is currently looking for a councillor for the vacant seat in the Woodham Ward of the Parish.

The vacancy is currently being advertised via a formal Notice of Co-Option on the Council website, social media platforms and notice boards throughout the Town.

The Town Council welcome applications from any interested and enthusiastic members of the public, of all backgrounds and experiences, who wish to be part of the varied work that the Town Council is involved with and help to drive the community forward.

By becoming a Councillor, you will represent the views of the people of the Parish and help shape the community by bringing new ideas forward and into fruition.

The closing date for applications is midnight on Friday 22nd May 2026.

Candidates will be invited to the Meeting of the Council on 10th June, where they can introduce themselves, give information on their background and experience and why they wish to become a member of the Council. The successful candidate will be selected at this meeting.

Please note that co-opted members are not eligible to claim the Basic Members' Allowance. If this press release has caught your attention and you would like more details, please check the Council website: www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk/council-democracy/councillors/co-option or contact Dan Austin, Town Clerk at the Council Offices on 01325 300700.

Five Acres Thanks New Coundon Three Tuns



Following the recent burglary at our new site, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the New Coundon Three Tuns who, following an Easter Raffle, have raised a fantastic cash donation of £550 - thank you to all their customers who have kindly given so generously in these harsh economic times. The money will be used for resources for the new site. Special thanks to Julie Dodds and Robbie Downs, Carole Hunter, Cheryl Brown and Anne Best, who is the grandmother of one of our Champions, Megan.

Thank you from the Five Acre Champions and Staff.

Bridge Club

Newton Aycliffe Bridge Club Social Evening and Presentation of Trophies was held at The Hammer and Pincers on Monday 13th April. Starting 6 for 6.30pm, and having the place to ourselves, a lovely atmosphere prevailed as visitors from The Darlington Club were welcomed. A meal was enjoyed before a good session of Bridge was played. Sadly six of our members were unable to be with us, two of which, Phil and Chrissie Constable,

will be presented with the Peacock Cup at the next Club meeting. The star performers and worthy winners, Linda Lawson and Tony Mawston, were presented with The Autumn Bowl and The Walker Trophy, popular winners! The Club meets every Monday, apart from Bank Holidays, at The OakLeaf Sports Complex, 7.00pm, in very best surroundings and visitors are very welcome. For further details contact: Chairman: Linda Lawson, 07817 822196 or Secretary: Cynthia Scott, 07873 758087.



Heighington Matters

Village Greens, Dogs & the Churchyard: A Springtime Reminder

Spring has arrived in Heighington once again - daffodils glowing, greens looking bonny, and children doing exactly what children should do: running, laughing, and returning home with grass stains that tell the story of a good day.

But, as the little ones enjoy their freedom, a familiar grumble returns from parents and residents around the Greens... dog fouling. Yes, that old chestnut.

To be fair, many dog owners are brilliant - bags at the ready. But a few seem to believe their dogs are blessed with magical disappearing droppings. Sadly, they are not. Even the tiniest trace can end up on a shoe, a hand, or - worst of all - a freshly washed school uniform. So, by all means, let your dogs enjoy the Greens, but please don't let them decorate them. If nature calls, take your four-legged friend out of the village first. Everyone will thank you.

Dogs & the Church Cemetery

A gentle reminder: the churchyard is consecrated ground. It's a place of peace, reflection, and remembrance - not a canine convenience stop. Families should feel confident that the resting places of their loved ones remain undisturbed. Please help keep it that way.

School Aycliffe Path - Job Done

After a fair bit of chasing, over a long period of time, Street Scene have cleared the grass from the path down to School Aycliffe - and they have done a brilliant job. A special thank you to our own Alexander Carr, who was very much involved. Thank you Street Scene and Alexander.

St Michael's Monday Drop-In

A heartfelt thank you to Ruth Lee and her wonderful helpers who make Monday afternoons such a warm, welcoming haven. The Drop-In has been running for an incredible 20 years, fuelled by kindness, conversation, and the occasional raffle where people often win the prize they donated. Thanks also to Christine Houghton and Allison Cunliffe for the home-baked cakes that put the icing - sometimes literally - on the afternoon. 2pm - 4pm every Monday. All welcome. Free entry or voluntary donation.

Play Area Equipment - Funding Secured

Good news: over £19,000 has now been paid into the Parish Council by DBC to repair the play equipment in the Sports Field. This follows my meetings with council officials to ensure S106 funds were directed for use by the Parish to improve the Play equipment in the Sports Field. The Parish Council will now place the order with our supplier.

Hopelands Parking Bays - The Saga Continues

The quest for additional parking bays in Hopelands rolls on. Costs have come in at more than double the S106 money that I negotiated with Bellway. I am in talks with DBC and they are looking positive, but I'm still waiting for confirmation. As ever, more work for me to do. If you'd like further details, please get in touch.

Hopelands Court Parking - A Polite but Firm Word

A resident of Hopelands Court recently received abuse after reminding a school parent that the Court's parking bays are for the residents who live there - many of whom have mobility or breathing difficulties. The Council may say the bays are for general use, but common sense says otherwise. Hopelands residents themselves have always respected this, never parking in the Court. So, to the small number of school-run drivers who try to get as close to the gates as possible:-

Please do not enter Hopelands Court and please do not park on the yellow lines.

To those few parents who park in Hopelands Court - please think and respect the residents living there.

Damage to Darlington Bus stop bench

Over the past week there has been a great deal of discussion on the Village WhatsApp group and our Facebook page following the circulation of a video showing a young lad repeatedly jumping on a bench until it broke. As you would expect, this prompted a wide range of views on how those involved should be dealt with.

I have since met with two of the fathers and their sons who were present during the incident. We had a long and honest conversation about what happened, why it happened, and what should happen next. I can report that both boys apologised without hesitation and showed genuine

remorse. The father of the boy who caused the damage came to see me immediately, accepted his son's responsibility, and arranged for the bench to be repaired. The repair was completed on Saturday morning - less than 48 hours after the incident.

My thanks go to the resident who acted quickly to take photographs and the video and passed them on to me. Because of that prompt action, the young people were identified swiftly and the damage was put right just as quickly.

I want to emphasise the importance of reporting any crime or incident - either directly to the Police or, if you feel more comfortable, to me.

Most of us now carry mobile phones, many homes have CCTV or doorbell cameras, and there is a very good chance that anyone causing damage or mischief will be identified.

So, a message to parents: please remind your young ones to think before they act. And, to the young people themselves: take heed - you will be seen.

Cllr Gerald Lee (Heighington & Coniscliffe Ward).

Sports Day

Aycliffe Town Centre, in partnership with Aycliffe Radio, is currently organising a community Sports Day on Saturday 20th June 2026, taking place in the town centre mall.

We're inviting local sports clubs and activity groups to get involved in what promises to be a fun and engaging day for everyone.

Do you run, or are you part of, a local sports club and looking to attract new members?

Whether you're involved in football, gymnastics, karate, athletics, walking, dancing, or any other activity, we would love to hear from you.

This is a fantastic opportunity to meet local residents, showcase what your club has to offer, and encourage others to get involved.

The event is completely free to attend as an exhibitor, so we warmly encourage you to take advantage of this chance to promote your club and grow your membership.

If you're interested in taking part, please email info@ayclifferadio.co.uk to reserve your spot.

We look forward to bringing the community together for a great day of sport, activity and connection!



Future Workforce on Show as UTC South Durham Hosts Major Industry Event

Students at UTC South Durham, Newton Aycliffe, showcased innovative solutions to real-world business challenges at the college's Industry Projects 2026 event, held on Thursday 26th March. The event saw Year 10 and Sixth Form students present the outcomes of 12-week projects delivered in partnership with leading regional employers including Tekmar, Meldrum Construction, Costain, SNOP and Sunderland University. Working from live briefs, set by Industry, students collaborated in teams to tackle genuine challenges faced by businesses, applying their academic and technical knowledge in a practical setting while developing key skills such as teamwork, communication and problem solving. Throughout the day, students pitched their ideas to panels of employers, took part in judging sessions and celebrated their achievements at an awards ceremony, with winning teams recognised for the quality, creativity and impact of their work. Industry Projects are a cornerstone of the UTC South Durham model, which places employer engagement at the heart of education. This approach continues to deliver strong outcomes for students, with 35% of Year 13 leavers progressing into apprenticeships in Summer 2025, significantly higher than both the Durham average of 9% and the national average of 7%. Many of these students move directly into advanced and degree-level roles with leading employers. Tom Dower, Principal of UTC South Durham, said: "It was fantastic to see our students present with such confidence and professionalism, demonstrating not only their technical knowledge, but also the employability skills that businesses are looking for.

"Our Industry Projects give students the opportunity to work directly with employers on real challenges, and events like this show just how valuable that experience is. The quality of work on display was exceptional and highlights how combining technical and academic study with meaningful industry engagement prepares young people for successful futures."

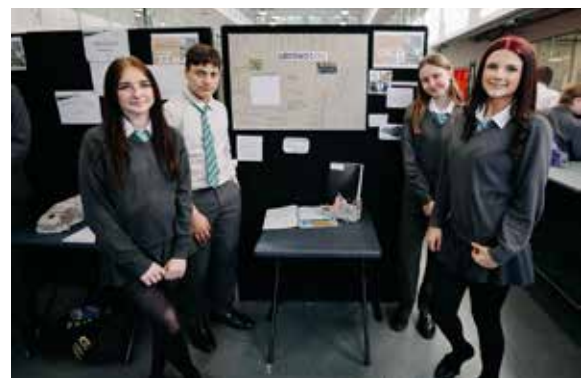
The impact of the programme can already be seen in industry, with previous students developing a solution to reduce downtime at SchlegelGiesse's Newton Aycliffe site, which has since been implemented and is now being explored for patent and wider rollout.

David Land, chair at UTC South Durham, said: "Initiatives such as our Industry Projects show how powerful an employer-led approach can be. We're seeing real, tangible results, with UTC South Durham ranked among the very best in the North East and in the top 0.5% nationally for students progressing into apprenticeships.

"By embedding industry engagement throughout the curriculum, students gain direct exposure to real workplaces, develop confidence and build the technical and professional skills employers are actively seeking. This consistent pipeline of work-ready, capable young people, is increasingly recognised by industry, with many students moving straight into advanced and degree-level roles with leading regional and national employers."

UTC South Durham, established in September 2016, is a STEM-focused technical school and sixth form in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, for students aged 14–19, specialising in engineering and advanced manufacturing. It partners with local employers, like Hitachi, to offer specialized T Levels, A-levels, and vocational courses, often moving to a 4-day week for Sixth Form.

The Industry Projects 2026 event once again demonstrated how UTC South Durham is equipping young people with the skills, experience and connections needed to succeed, while supporting businesses across the region with fresh thinking and innovative ideas.



Fundraising Comedy Night Bishop Jazz

Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group (Charity No. 1188444) continues to provide essential support to cancer patients and their families throughout their treatment and ongoing journeys. Services include free hospital transport, respite breaks, welfare support, and a range of additional practical assistance.

In recent months, the charity has seen a significant increase in patient and member numbers, largely due to earlier cancer diagnoses. While this is a positive development, it has placed considerable strain on resources. Transport demand, in particular, has risen sharply, with monthly costs increasing from approximately £400 to over £6,000, even before recent fuel price rises.

To help meet this growing need, the charity is hosting a fundraising comedy night, accompanied by a grand raffle, to raise vital funds. The evening will feature entertainment from comedian, actor and radio host Steffen Peddie, who will serve as 'Games Master', alongside close-up magic from local magician Darren Bonas (Mr Twister).

Tickets are available from the following locations:

- GACSG Hub (Aycliffe Town Centre)
- Darlington Shop (Queen Street Centre)
- The Big Club (Newton Aycliffe)
- Workshop Supplies (Aycliffe Business Park)

Tickets are priced at £10 each, which includes a complimentary bingo ticket (18+ only).

Raffle tickets are also available at the same outlets for £2 per strip. Prizes include tattoo vouchers, Wetherspoons gift cards, massage treatments, beauty products and sweet hampers, among others.

Local businesses wishing to donate prizes are encouraged to contact the organisers.

All proceeds will go directly towards supporting cancer patients in Newton Aycliffe and surrounding areas.

The charity extends its thanks to The Big Club, Newton Press and Purple Tiger Events for their support and sponsorship.

Event Organisers: Abbey Stoker, Fee Edden and Charlotte Walker (on behalf of Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group).

"What a lovely way to spend a Friday lunchtime", listening to a jazz performance by guitarist Joe Steels and the house trio of Mick Shoulder on bass, Dean Stockdale (piano) and Abi Finn (drums). A near full house enjoyed some wonderful sounds as a tribute to the great guitarist Wes Montgomery. Amongst the tunes were Wes Montgomery standards Full House, Carriba, Four on Six and Far Wes with a beautiful rendition of I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face, to calm everybody down before more fireworks. Jingles and a final encore of Gone With The Wind closed the event and everyone left with a smile.

The next event hosted by #bishopaucklandjazz is on Friday 8th May where we have the Alan Law trio for the usual monthly lunchtime event. These events are becoming increasingly popular so come early to secure your seat!



GREAT AYCLIFFE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP PRESENTS

COMEDY GAME SHOW FUNDRAISER + GRAND RAFFLE

Featuring comedian, radio host & actor **Steffen Peddie** as Games Master

With close up magic & frivolity from local magician **Darren Bonas**

A fully immersive evening of comedy, fun, interactive games, prizes & our Grand Raffle

- SATURDAY 16th MAY -

- The Big Club -
Sheraton Road, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 5NU

- 7.30pm - 11pm -

Sponsored by **newtonpress** | **Tickets £10 -** (includes free bingo tickets) | Sponsored by **THE BIG CLUB**

All proceeds go directly to Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group

Tickets & Raffle Tickets available from:
 Darlington Hub, Queen St. Arcade
 Aycliffe Hub - Aycliffe Town Centre
 The Big Club - Sheraton Road, Newton Aycliffe
 Workshop Supplies, Aycliffe Business Park

CAR BOOT SALE

To be held every FRIDAY
From 15th May 2026
on land at Rosemount Road,
South Church, Bishop Auckland,
Co. Durham DL14 6SY
 (Road B6282, just off the A688)

Public Entry from 12.00noon - 2.00pm
 Adults: £1.00 per person
 Children under 14 years free (must be accompanied by adult)
FREE car parking on field
 Dogs welcome, but must be on lead

Sellers
Car - £5.00 | Van from £5.00
 Gates open from 10.30am

For further information Tel: 07900 460 068
or check out our Facebook - South Church Car Boot Sales UK

Help is There But we must make it easier to reach

Last week, I spent time with people in treatment and recovery at a local drug and alcohol service. It was one of those visits that stays with you, because I was able to see the excellent service being provided by County Durham Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service and hear directly from service users who bravely shared their lived experience with me. I met people at different stages of their journey. Some were just at the start of their recovery journey. Others were attempting to rebuild their lives after years of addiction. What struck me most was not just their resilience, but how many of them said the same thing: "I wish I'd known about this service sooner."

The majority of those in the room told me their path into support could have been simpler. Some had gone to their GP and left with a phone number rather than a direct referral. Others said they didn't feel confident enough to make that call on their own. In that moment, when someone is ready to ask for help, the system must meet them halfway. One woman shared how she was finally referred into support through hospital care. That intervention changed her life and that of her young daughter. But it also raised a question, why did it take a near death experience, to connect her to help that already existed?

We need to do better at joining the dots, across GPs, hospitals, policing, and community services, so that no one falls through the gaps and we don't lose valuable opportunities to signpost people into treatment and rehabilitation services.

Another powerful message from those in recovery was about families. They told me addiction doesn't just affect the individual, it impacts everyone around them. They stressed how important it was that families are supported too.

Addiction can affect anyone, from any walk of life. Recently, Andrew Lloyd Webber spoke openly about his own experience of alcohol



addiction and impact on his loved ones and friends, and how support from Alcoholics Anonymous helped him on his path to recovery. Hopefully his admission will help break down stigma and reminds us that no one is immune, and no one should feel ashamed to seek help. The good news is that help is out there across County Durham and Darlington.

Digital support, like Breaking Free Online, offers people a confidential, evidence-based programme they can access at any time. It helps people understand the root causes of their addiction and develop practical coping strategies for long-term recovery.

For some, that flexibility, being able to reach out in their own time, in their own space can make all the difference.

But services alone are not enough if people don't know they exist, or don't feel able to access them.

So, my message is simple, if you are struggling, or someone you love is struggling please know that support is there. You are not alone, and it is never too early or too late to seek help.

Take that first step, visit:

- County Durham and Darlington Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (03000 266 266) <https://codurhamrecovery.co.uk/>
- Stride (Supporting Treatment & Recovery in Darlington) 01325 809 810 <https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/local-hubs/darlington-at-stride>
- <https://www.breakingfreeonline.com>
- Al-Anon UK (for families & friends of alcoholics) Helpline 0800 0086 811

Drug & Alcohol addiction doesn't just affect the individual. It impacts everyone around them.

Help is out there across County Durham and Darlington.
Take that first step. Contact: County Durham & Darlington Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service 03000 266 266.

Help is also available from the following...

codurhamrecovery.co.uk breakingfreeonline.com [wearewithyou.org.uk](https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk)

JOY ALLEN
DURHAM POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER



Newton Aycliffe Juniors

Week ending 29th March 2026

Under 8's faced Riverside Juniors Lions, putting in a tremendous performance, with Noah (4), Seb (2), Ethan, Harrison and Jacob C scoring Aycliffe's goals. MOTM was awarded to Harrison.

Under 9's Blues were away to Billingham Synthonia in the cup. A great result saw Aycliffe progress, with Leland and Nate both scoring four goals each and sharing POTM.

Under 9's Juniors played their final game of the season v Riverside Juniors, a great result to end the season. Goals from Cooper (2), Joey and Harry.

Under 10's Reds entertained Nunthorpe Athletic Yellows, in their final league game of the season. Fox scored both goals for Aycliffe. POTM was Jacob and PPOTM was Orig.

Under 11's faced Middleton Rangers Spitfires, getting a great result. Henry C (3), Noah A (2), Oliver T and Jacob C scored the goals. Theo W was awarded MOTM.

Under 12's Blacks travelled to face Kader Athletic, coming away with a well-earned 5-4 win for back-to-back wins.

Under 12's Blues faced Washington FC, grabbing a 5-0 win. Goals from Alfie (2), Charlie, Roman, Miles and Yash who was awarded MOTM.

Under 12's Reds faced Grangetown Boys, coming away with a terrific 3-1 win. Yash, Laitita and Alfie scored the goals for Aycliffe. MOTM was Alfie.

Under 14's Juniors hosted topflight Hartlepool United in the cup, being edged out 1-0. A wonderful team performance with MOTM shared between Marley, Cody and Sammy. OMOTM was Jonah.

Under 23's welcomed Spennymoor Voltiger aiming to keep up their 100% record in 2026. Aycliffe dominated from the start, winning with goals from Curtis L, Andy B and Noah E and Cam H.

Week ending 5th April 2026

Under 13's Whites hosted Gateshead Fell Oranges, Aycliffe were punished for missed chances, losing 2-1. Oscar scored an excellent free kick, with Jarrod being awarded MOTM.

Under 23's travelled to promotion rivals Waldrige, putting in the best performance of the season with a great 5-1 win. Sean R (2), Damo and Andy B scored the goals. MOTM was Sean R.

Week ending 12th April 2026

Under 7's faced Guisborough Town Whites, putting in an industrious performance, with goals from Leo (2) and Arthur.

Under 8's travelled to face Normanby in an action-packed match. There were plenty of chances for both teams, with Oscar (2), Jacob M and Noah scoring for Aycliffe. MOTM was Noah.

Under 8's travelled to face Billingham United, in what turned out to be a close entertaining match. Noah scored two well taken goals. MOTM was Sab.

Under 9's Blues travelled to face Whitby Fisherman in the cup, Leland and Jude scored Aycliffe's goals. POTM was Leland.

Under 10's Juniors travelled to face Darlington FC in the Cup, putting in an impressive performance. Goals were scored by Kian and Zeke. MOTM was Felix for a combative display.

Under 11's got a great 4-1 win over Prissick Rovers Milan, with Noah A grabbing a hat-trick and Oliver T adding the other. Jake S was awarded MOTM.

Under 11's faced Redcar Athletic Navy, in an end to end game. Jacob C and Noah A scored Aycliffe's goals. MOTM was Harvey P who was excellent in goal.

Under 12's Reds faced Normanby in the challenge cup 3rd round, putting in their best performance of the season, running out 8-1 winners. MOTM Marshall helped himself to a hat-trick with Laitia, Alfie (2), Finley and Koa adding the other goals.

Under 13's Blacks travelled to league winners Thornaby Town Reds, putting in a good performance with a depleted squad. Kai C scored the goal for Aycliffe. MOTM was Dan B who played central midfield.

Under 13's Whites hosted Craghead Milan, losing 2-3 in a tight game. Elliot and Oscar scored goals. MOTM was awarded to Chase.

Under 14's Juniors hosted Leven, coming away with a comfortable 5-0 win. Ashton, Jonah and Jensen (3) scored the goals.

Under 15's hosted Spraire lads, running out 6-0 winners in a formidable team performance. Goals were scored by Layton W (4) and Oscar J (2). MOTM was Sam.

Under 15's put in another superior performance at home to Stokesley, coming away with a 5-0 win. Goals were scored by Layton W (3), Kodi and Oscar J. MOTM was Layton W.

Under 15's faced high flying Nunthorpe, a resilient performance, saw Aycliffe get all three points with a 3-0 win.

Goals were scored by Layton W (2), and Sam. MOTM was Kodi.

Under 23's travelled to face Washington Celtic, with a depleted squad, Aycliffe come away with a 2-1 win. Goals from Sean R and Andrew B. MOTM was Alex B for a composed performance in midfield.

Week ending 19th April 2026

Under 7's faced Wolviston, completing their first season in league football with a terrific performance. Goals from Frankie (2) and Lennon.

Under 7's faced North Ormesby, in the sun, going goal crazy. Lennon scored an amazing five goals, with the others coming from Leo (3), Henry (2), Frankie (2), Arthur, Brooklyn and an OG.

Under 8's travelled to Stokesley for a cup quarter final, they didn't get the outcome they wanted, but put in a really good performance. Noah S scored the goal for Aycliffe, with Jacob C picking up MOTM.

Under 8's were at home to Riverside, putting in a tremendous performance with four goals from MOTM Jacob M, Noah (4) and Harrison.

Under 9's Blues travelled to face Saltburn Athletic, Aycliffe put in a superb performance with goals from Nate (3), Reggie, (4) and Leland. PPOTM was Reggie for the four goals and POTM was Isaac who did well defensively.

Under 11's faced Kader Athletic, in an entertaining game, with Noah A (2), and Oliver T scoring Aycliffe's goals. Harvey P was, once again, MOTM.

Under 11's faced Riverside Athletic in an eight-goal thriller. MOTM was Oliver T who helped himself to a hat-trick, with Oscar-George and Noah A adding the other goals.

Under 11's faced Prissick Rovers United, a tough first half give Aycliffe a lot to do. Noah A managed to grab his 30th goal of the season with Harvey P winning MOTM.

Under 12's Reds faced Normanby, coming away with a superb 6-3 win. MOTM Koa scored two goals, with Alife, Marshall (2) and Laitia adding the others.

Under 12's Blues faced Gateshead Rutherford, avenging the earlier loss to the same opposition with a smart 4-0 victory. Goals from Koa (2), Alfie and Yash. MOTM was Alfie.

Under 12's Blacks had a game of two halves, after Grayson and Jarrod both scoring early, it was not to be Aycliffe's day, going down 4-2.

Under 12's Blues faced South Shields, running out 11-0 winners. Goals from Koa (2), Charlie (2), Miles (2), Finley, Pricy, Roman and MOTM Alfie (2).

Under 13's Whites hosted Blaydon Community Jets, coming away with a great 4-1 win. Goals from MOTM Aaron (2), Charlie and Oscar.

Under 14's Blacks travelled to face Whitburn & Cleadon, securing a valuable win with some real grit and determination. Kaylm (2) and Kai scored the goals. POTM was Connor.

Under 14's Juniors were crowned champions of TJFA Division 4, with Jonah H scoring a tremendous thirty-one goals. A record of P18 W14 D1 L3 was enough to secure the title.

Under 15's travelled to Spraire Lads, Aycliffe came through a tough test to win 3-0, with goals from Layton W (2) and an OG. MOTM was Riley.

Under 15's entertained Middleton Rangers, dominating the game from start to finish with a great 10-3 victory. Layton W (3), Jonah (3), Lucas (2), Rhys and Kodi scored the goals. MOTM was Oscar M.

Under 23's hosted promotion rivals Brandon, securing a vital 2-1 win. Goals from Damo and Andy B, with Curtis L being awarded MOTM.

Together 21 Achieve Regional Support for World Down Syndrome Day Campaign

To celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, Together 21 launched its annual 'Rock Your Socks' campaign, raising over £2500 to support local children and young people with Down syndrome. The Rock Your Socks campaign encourages everyone to wear brightly coloured odd socks, to raise awareness and celebrate the uniqueness of individuals with Down syndrome.

Together 21 is a specialist service supporting the education, development, and inclusion of children and young people with Down syndrome from birth to 18 years old. This service is proudly delivered by health and wellbeing charity, Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) at the Pioneering Care Centre, in Newton Aycliffe.

Gayle Goldsmith, Project Development Manager at PCP, said: "We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all who supported the campaign this year. Being funded by donations and fundraising, Together 21 is reliant on the support of local people and communities, so that they can continue to provide specialist support and a safe space for young people with Down syndrome, and their families.

"I would like to give a special mention to Velocity FC and Swifties, who have been phenomenal in their fundraising efforts. Velocity FC managed to raise us a grand total of over £1,300, with Swifties raising donations equalling to £500.

"Families travel from across the region to attend Together 21 sessions. Last year, Together 21 supported 42 local children and young people through their specialist interactive sessions, and provided 122 parents, carers and siblings with over 1,600 hours of carer respite.

"Without the support from the incredible North East public, Together 21 would not be able to continue making a difference, and provide this vital support that has become so valuable to those who attend our service."

This year, Together 21 appealed to local organisations and sports clubs, hoping to gain support and amplify the campaign's message. Durham Football Association (Durham FA) became one of the main campaign supporters this year, encouraging local football clubs to rock their socks, and help Together 21 raise vital funds to ensure the service can continue supporting families from across the North East. Durham FA is dedicated to creating a safe, inclusive, and accessible environment for all people. They work to ensure that everyone involved in football has a great experience, regardless of ability or disability, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, faith or age. The FA and County FAs are committed to enshrining equality, diversity, and inclusion in their day-to-day operations improving the experience of all. They demonstrated this by the incredible support shown to Together 21 throughout this campaign.

Speaking on their involvement, John Topping, Durham Football Association CEO, said: "The Durham County FA are delighted to have been involved in the campaign which is in aid of Together 21 and highlights the service they provide that supports children and young people with Down syndrome. It was great to see so many of our affiliated teams take part in the day."

The campaign gained further traction this year when local regional landmarks decided to join in, lighting up blue and yellow on World Down Syndrome Day on Saturday 21st March.

Participating landmarks included the likes of Durham



Cathedral, Peshaw Monument, Silksworth Pit Wheel and Fulwell Windmill. Together 21's Rock Your Socks campaign takes place every year, throughout the month of March. While this year's campaign has now wrapped up, the need for support continues all year around. To learn more about how you can get involved or make a difference, contact the team at together21@pcp.uk.net.

Together 21 would like to say a huge thank you to all who took part in our campaign this year, including the following:

- Durham FA
- Velocity FC
- Billingham Juniors FC
- Central Surgery, South Shields
- Hiyed CIC
- Wearside FC
- Whickham Fellside Youth FC
- Willington Youth Blues
- Swift-Tees Pacers
- Bishop Auckland Girls FC U9s
- Hebburn Town Juniors FC
- Whiteleas Vipers, Cobras and Wolves
- Dunston UTS FC Juniors
- Tesco, Newton Aycliffe
- DMA Law
- 12th Darlington Beavers
- Ferryhill Town Band
- Darlington Library
- Cockerton Library
- Costa Coffee, Darlington
- Coundon and Leeholme U14s
- Rutherford AFC Lobley Hill
- ESPA 8 The Cedars and Coach House
- Sunderland City Council Community Therapy Team
- Shildon AFC and Shildon Youth
- St John the Baptist Primary School
- Walworth Primary School
- Washington Athletic FC Girls
- Springwell Blacks FC
- Pools Youth
- Skelton Castle U11s
- The Grey Bull, Stanhope
- Durham Cathedral
- Peshaw Monument
- Silksworth Pit Wheel
- Fulwell Windmill

Sometimes You Just Have to Crawl . . .

Aycliffe Fell Walking Club took 48 walkers into the Yorkshire Dales for some lovely walking between Masham, Ripon and Pateley Bridge. Whilst one group chose to walk from Masham across the Kirkby Malzeard and Fountains Earth moors and then along the length of Gouthwaite Reservoir into Pateley Bridge, many more were attracted to routes via Fountains Abbey, Sawley and Brimham Rocks. There are some fabulous established long distance paths in these areas, with many encountering sections of the Ripon Rowel Walk, Six Dales Trail and the Nidderdale Way. There was much more climbing involved than anticipated along these up-and-down routes which appeared so much easier on the maps at first glance, but, despite early rain and a late downpour including hail in the afternoon, everybody was happy. My group walked from North Lees Grange (A6108) via the beautiful villages of Winksley and High Grantley. Other routes from Studley Royal and Gowbusk (B6265) eventually joined our route as so many headed for the main attraction of Brimham Rocks. This is a remarkable site of water and weather eroded rocks over an extensive area it's well worth a family visit on its own and is a site of 'Special Scientific Interest'.



Having left the rocks, we encountered a stream, over which the only way across was via a very long log. Whilst many were able to walk across with care, some walkers in our group, including me, crawled across to the great amusement of the others. Having done so, we scaled the steep bank and a further three mile walk eventually took us to the welcoming town of Pateley Bridge. There we enjoyed the hospitality of the local pubs, cafes and an excellent fish and chip shop.

The next walk on Saturday 9th May is in the Lake District with a selection of walks between Legbuthwaite and Grasmere taking in the Helvellyn Range with other options to the west, up Greenup Edge and High Raise and lowland routes in the valley below.

Aycliffe Fell Walking Club is a very friendly walking club. Please look at the website aycliffefellwalkingclub.com for further details or if you are interested in joining us. Annual membership of £10 runs from January to December with each walk outing costing £15 to cover the cost of the coach. Feel free to join us on the next walk. We look forward to your interest.

Many thanks to Newton News who, by printing these articles, are largely responsible for our increase in numbers.

Another Aycliffe Radio Exclusive

The Tamla All Stars are a four piece band who deliver powerful covers of classic Motown and Northern Soul records. All members of the band grew up in the local area - Sax Player Alan Thompson specifically remembers the Newton Aycliffe Soul Scene that was vibrant in the mid to late 1970s.

With a strong soul influenced base, and reinterpretations of songs by the likes of Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Curtis Mayfield and Jackie Wilson, the band deliver a set of guaranteed floor fillers, so put on your dancing shoes!

Growling sax and vocals, over funky guitar, melodic bass and in-the-pocket drums! This band really do know what they're doing, and they do it very well. Soul music. 'How sweet it is'.

On Sunday afternoon 10th May from 4.00pm until 6.00pm on the Steve and Cols Folk Rock show on Aycliffe Radio, the band are right here in the studio playing live songs and talking about growing up and influences.

The Tamla All Stars play the Stockton Georgian Theatre on Saturday 23rd May, tickets £15. Imagine The Jam playing soul music with a sax player and you start to get the picture.

On local DAB Channels as Aycliffe_Radio, or listen live on the link below Sunday afternoons 4pm-6pm.

<https://www.ayclifferadio.co.uk/listen>



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Folk Night

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On Wednesday 17th June at the Candlelite Music Club, held at the Navy Club, Newton Aycliffe DL5 7PW.

The Hayley Sisters plus support from Ray Tomm.

For tickets please contact Margaret on 01325 319857 or Diane on 07756 298453.

School Aycliffe Community Association

Our Community Hall - is located at the bottom of Eastfields, School Aycliffe DL5 6QH (please follow the white/brown information signs).

May

Ladies Night held on the first Wednesday of the month. £3 per person including light refreshments. Our next session will be on Wednesday 6th May, 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Behind the Chequered Band a humorous look at life in the police force! Please contact Christine for further info on 07981 992686.

Junior Badminton Classes - Summer 2026. Classes started again on the 28th April 2026 and these ever-popular sessions are limited to 8 pupils per hour and filled on a first come first serve basis.

The first session is timed from 5-6pm for ages 7yrs and up. Parents are welcome to drop children off and collect at the end of the hour or stay with the child and wait in the meeting room whilst their child is on court. The second session is timed for 6-7pm for ages 11yrs and up. It is necessary for children to wear trainers and advisable to bring a drink, all other equipment will be supplied. Phil and Matthew, our coaches, are both fully qualified by Badminton of England with up-to-date Enhanced DBS Checks, and I will be on hand to fulfil Safeguarding standards.

Remaining Sessions: 5th May, 12th May, 19th May, 2nd June and 9th June. Please contact Elizabeth Harker for further information and cost. Money will be taken in full on the first night, with registration details. If your child is interested, please contact soon to claim a place on the course. Elizabeth Harker, Tel: 07813 523050.

Community Choir held fortnightly, our next session is on 11th May (due to the Bank Holiday, not on the 27th May) commencing at 7.00pm until 8.30pm. £3 including light refreshments. Please contact Julie McGarth for further information on 07742 015609.

Monthly CCS (Coffee, Cake and Stuff) - Please note this will not be held in May due to bank holidays. So, our next gathering will be held on Thursday 4th June, 11.00am until 2.00pm. A selection of savoury and sweet items, all home-made, will be on sale. Come along and catch up with friends and neighbours with a cuppa and make some new friends! Looking forward to seeing you there, Elizabeth & Chris.

Used Stamp Collecting we have a collection box in the foyer for used postage stamps. These are collected and sent to the RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People), raising funds of up to £20 per kilo, £40 would help provide the RNIB's Talking Books Service to one blind or partially sighted customer for an entire year. All that we require from you is that you trim any excess paper, leaving no more than a 1 cm border, then pop in our collecting box. Many thanks, Stephanie Atkinson.

Important Dates for your Diary - AGM

Our AGM is due to be held on Monday 18th May at 7.00pm, light refreshments will also be served. Come along and support your hall. All reasonable suggestions will be considered, have an input on events and how we can use our hall more, all residents are welcome and we look forward to seeing you there. This will be followed by our usual monthly committee meeting and will conclude by 9.00pm at the very latest.

Mobile Food Van Dates

Weird Dough 4-7pm, Wednesday 13th May, 10th June and 8th July.
Huntley's Fish & Chips 4.30-7pm, Wednesday 20th May and 17th June.
Please refrain from parking on the road when placing or collecting orders. Thank you.

Please feel free to visit our Facebook page School Aycliffe Community Centre, we are at the heart of our community and a warm, welcoming space for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect, learn and grow. Just a reminder, when you visit our hall, please can you be mindful when parking and thank you for supporting our events.

School Aycliffe Community Association Committee Members.

Aycliffe Village WI May Events

Coffee 'n' Chat

Wednesday 13th May

Our Coffee 'n' Chat on Wednesday 13th May between 2.00pm and 3.00pm will be part of the national 'A Million Acts of Hope' event.

The aim is to connect people in communities, allowing them to be healthier and happier. Come along, have a drink and maybe make new friends.

Tanfield Railway Afternoon Tea

Sunday 17th May

Members of the Women's Institute are visiting Tanfield Railway for an afternoon tea and rail trip.

Women's Institute Meeting

Wednesday 20th May

At our next Women's Institute meeting there will be a talk by Lee Morris, 'My Acting Life'. This will be held on Wednesday 20th May at 7.00pm in Aycliffe Village Hall.

Non-members are more than welcome to what will be a very interesting evening. Refreshments are provided, so why not come along and see what we do.

Newton Aycliffe Women's Institute

The longer daylight hours are back and we have had a great first meeting (AGM) in our new temporary venue at Neville Parade Methodist Church on Tuesday 14th April.

Our speaker for 12th May will be from the amazing institution which is the R.N.L.I. The topic is Wooden Boats & Iron Men.

The May excursion will be to the History Wardrobe, South Shiilds, on the topic of 'Love & Marriage'.

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.00pm in the Methodist Church at Neville Parade. We have speakers on varied topics, craft evenings, auctions and parties. We also have access to all manner of informative and varying workshops at WI House, all at reasonable prices to suit your budget.

There is no need to be lonely as a WI member, come and join our friendly and welcoming Newton Aycliffe WI. All women are welcome. If you have any questions or queries please contact our President, Christine Robinson, on 07981 992686.



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One of my key priorities is ensuring that every child in our area gets the best possible start in life. That's why I'm delighted to have secured investment to bring Sure Start back into our communities through new Best Start Family Hubs in Tudhoe, Ferryhill and right here in Newton Aycliffe. These centres will mean local families can access a wide range of support in one place, including parenting advice, health services and SEND workers to help support kids from an early age.

This comes on top of the four new free breakfast clubs that will be opening in local schools, helping children start the school day ready to learn, while also providing parents with reliable early morning childcare.

I'm absolutely delighted that Lifeline Community Action have been awarded more government funding, this time through the Common Ground Award. I've been really proud to support their important project to move to their new premises in the old Woolworths shop in the heart of the town centre and it's great to see them getting more support. It was really good to get an update from the Lifeline team when I held my MP advice surgery in their new building on Friday. If you haven't had a chance yet to pop into Lifeline, it's worth a visit. They've got a great café and lots of services for local residents.

It was a privilege to visit the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship Tidespring as part of the Royal Navy Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary do an amazing job providing fuel, food, ammunition and other

crucial provisions to Royal Navy vessels at sea. On Friday, at my coffee morning, I met a local resident who'd served in the Royal Navy. I'm really proud of all the local residents who give their time to our Armed Forces, as regulars or reservists.

I am also holding a consultation event on proposed changes to the SEND system on Saturday 2nd May in Ferryhill, 10am-12noon.

This is an important opportunity for parents, carers, schools and young people to hear more about the proposals, ask questions and share their views. I will be taking all feedback directly back to Education Ministers to ensure local voices are heard in shaping the future of SEND provision. To book a place, please email: alan.strickland.mp@parliament.uk

I've also been proud to secure some great wins for local residents, including speeding up the return of driving licences that were stuck with the DVLA, having a wrongly issued fine cancelled and getting repairs done and compensation paid to a local family after problems caused by a housing association.



CONSULTATION EVENT

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Alan Strickland MP
Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor Constituency

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Aycliffe Youth Football News



U16 Girls Cup Final

As the season draws to a close, several teams are still in contention for league and cup honours, but this month brought some exciting game and notable results.

Aycliffe Wildcats U12 Girls 6 v Thornaby 3

The result completed a flawless league campaign, sealing the title with 16 wins from 16 games, scoring a total of 100 goals. This has been a season built on consistency across the pitch. In defence, Erin, Alice Heddle, Millie and Amelia have provided a solid base week after week, with Penny standing strong in goal behind them. In midfield, Poppy and Georgia have set the tone with their work rate and tough tackling. Elsie, Toddy and Alice Richardson brought creativity, linking play and creating chances, while Florence and Lucy have added pace and direct running from the wings. Up front, captain Elly Barber has led the line with determination, contributing goals throughout the season and setting the standard for effort.

The key moment of the season came away at Hartlepool, where a late winner ultimately proved decisive in the title race. It was a result that summed up the group's resilience and belief. Across the season, the Wildcats have combined organisation, hard work and attacking intent, with goals coming from a range of players and performances remaining at a consistently high level. The team now look ahead to a new challenge in the top division next season, with this campaign providing a strong platform for the step up.

Aycliffe U16 Girls 3 v Stockton Town 1 (League)

Aycliffe U16 Girls 0 v Norton & Stockton Ancients 5

Durham FA U16 Girls County Cup: Final

Norton have only lost once in all competitions and have scored 96 in 13 matches.

The odds were against the girls. They came so close to executing the game plan to perfection and, but for a bit of luck, it could have ended differently. The back four of Erin, Daisy, Evie and Eveie were awesome. Ruby, Hannah, Heidi, Faith, Emily and Isobel all worked consistently hard in midfield to deny Norton time and space. Poppy and Georgia taking turns to press in the lonely forward position. Between the sticks we had Maddi who produced several good saves and one unreal double save in the first half. HT 0-1.

Aycliffe were still in the match at the hour mark, but they couldn't create any clear chances and, by necessity, were pushing players forward and inevitably losing their shape. Norton then finished strongly to run out the winners. It wasn't the result they wanted, but County Cup finalists isn't too shabby, especially with a performance to be proud of. Players & Parents: Erin, Coaches: Evie.

Recruitment has started for next season as the girls move to under 18 football, if you are wanting a change or your team isn't going forward, ring Berni 07939 045242.

Aycliffe Youth Under 17 Boys

The Under 17 boys have had a fantastic season playing in second division, two divisions above where they played at

under 16's. With only one game remaining, a win could see them win the league depending on another result going our way in a very competitive league. Every player on the pitch, from back to front, has contributed to the results, with ten wins, only one defeat and four draws, these boys have grown not only physically, but in footballing ability. The team spirit and support from the sideline has been outstanding and has contributed to a very successful season. Whether they manage to win the league or not, this group have made their coaches and parents extremely proud and have battled in every game with heart and passion They look forward to their final game and, following that, taking the team forward to under 18's.

Aycliffe Youth Little Eagles and Wildcats

Another group of boys have progressed into a team preparing for league football next season. The Under 8 Eagles have started playing friendlies against teams that have been competing in the TJFA this season. The first game was tough as the boys adjusted to playing competitive football, but with further games scheduled, their development will progress. There are still a couple of spaces available with the team for year 3 boys.

A mixed group of year 1 boys and girls, played in a Durham FA event, introducing the new 3v3 format for U7's next season. The team showed the talent that is in the squad and are ready for next season. We are still looking for any year 1 boys and girls, to join both the girls and boys teams. If you are interested in either contact Berni 07939 045242.

Adult Football

Both our adult teams, the men playing in the Wearside League and the Women in the Durham FA First Division, are left with a few games in May to complete their seasons, but preparation is already underway for next season. Training continues and recruitment has started. If you are interested in a new challenge or wanting to restart after a break from football, contact Berni 07939 045242.



U12 Girls Champions

REME Presentation



South West Durham REME Association had the pleasure of presenting a plaque to the Veterans Community & Enterprise Centre (CIC) based at the IES Centre, Newton Aycliffe (next to the Blue Bridge). The presentation was made by Philip Rolfe, President of the Association, to Chris Morgan, the Centre Director, with members of the Association in attendance.

A few South West Durham REME Association members have attended the centre to do a variety of practical skills at the various workshops available. The centre offers 3D printing, a VR experience, wood working with lathe turns and making models, also model painting for war gamers. "This is something that gets me out of the house since retiring, talking to other veterans. There are so many people with such a variety of skills, it reminds me of the film 'The Great Escape', someone there can do that," commented one member.

There is also an added bonus of a really great canteen called 'The Trenches', where the food is all wholesome and of an excellent quality at reasonable prices.

Daisy Lane Play Cafe

We are delighted to announce the opening of our new Play Café, located within Newton Aycliffe Youth & Community Centre.

Our café will be open Monday to Friday, offering two daily sessions from 9.30-11.30am and 12.30-2.30pm. Designed for children up to the age of seven, the space provides a safe, fun and stimulating environment where little ones can play, explore and socialise.

We also feature a dedicated baby area, ensuring even our youngest visitors have a comfortable and engaging space tailored to their needs. Alongside our play facilities, we offer a selection of hot and cold food as well as drinks, creating a welcoming setting where parents and carers can relax while their children enjoy themselves.

Looking ahead, we hope to expand our opening hours to include weekends, as well as introducing birthday party packages and a range of special events for families in the community.

"Opening this Play Café has been a long-held dream of mine, and I am truly thrilled to bring it to life. As a local mam, I understand how valuable it is to have a place where parents can unwind, connect with others and feel confident that their children are playing in a safe and engaging environment. I am incredibly excited to welcome families through our doors and to become a part of the local community," said owner Emma. For more information contact: 07580 743265 or via the website: www.bookwhen.com/daisylaneplaycafe



Croft Circuit

- 9th May
Croft Classic to Modern Car Show
- 30th/31st May
No Limits Motorcycle Race Meet
- 27th/28th June
Ginetta Fest Weekend
- 11th/12th July
British Racing & Sports Car Club Car Race Meet
- 22nd/23rd August
Darlington & District Motor Club
Battle of Britain Race Meet
- 5th/6th September
Kwik Fit British Touring Car Championship Meet

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All Aboard: Darlington Hopetown Community Carnival

Darlington's much loved Community Carnival, a fixture in the town's calendar since 1983 and a proud successor to the historic Railway Carnival, is embarking on an exciting new adventure for 2026. After more than four decades based in Stanhope Park, the Carnival Committee has charted a new course, bringing this year's festivities to the railway rich landscape of Hopetown Darlington.

The decision to relocate has been made by the Darlington Community Carnival Committee, ensuring the future of the event stays on the right line and ensuring it continues to flourish while maintaining its strong roots in the town's cultural heritage.

This year, the Carnival takes inspiration from the classic tale *Around the World in 80 Days*, inviting visitors to join a global voyage of imagination, creativity and colour, all within a setting symbolic of journeys, locomotion and discovery. This Carnival will begin with a traditional, vibrant procession departing North Lodge Park and travelling through the Denes area of the town like a colourful locomotive, before arriving at its new festival site on Foundry Green at Hopetown Darlington.

The Carnival will take place on Saturday 27th June 2026, from 10.00am to 5.00pm.

Hopetown Darlington, the town's railway themed heritage attraction, offers a fitting backdrop for the Carnival's next journey, celebrating community spirit on a site that reflects Darlington's pioneering place in railway history and the birth of the modern railway.

This year's Carnival will also support the Arthur Wharton Foundation as its chosen charity for 2026. The Arthur Wharton Foundation celebrates the pioneering life and legacy of Arthur Wharton, recognised as the world's first Black professional footballer, and works to promote equality, diversity and inclusion through sport, education and community engagement. The charity has been selected to coincide with a new exhibition at Hopetown Darlington exploring the extraordinary life, achievements and enduring legacy of Arthur Wharton, further connecting the Carnival's journey of discovery with Darlington's rich social and cultural history.

John Howarth, Head of the Darlington Community Carnival Committee, said: "Darlington Community Carnival has always been carried forward by the strength and spirit of local people, and as we look to the future, we felt it was time to switch points and chart a new journey, and what better theme than *'Around the World in 80 Days'*? Our move to Hopetown Darlington gives us the perfect departure point, rich with the railway heritage that has always powered our town's identity.

"The decision to change location was made by the Carnival Committee after much careful thought, and we're confident this new platform will help the event grow, thrive and inspire for years to come. We're excited to welcome everyone aboard for what promises to be a landmark year." Once at Hopetown Darlington, visitors can enjoy a vibrant programme of performances, community activities and themed attractions. Among the highlights will be a special



'Around the World in 80 Days' exhibition in the Stores, created by local schools and artists, transforming the historic industrial space into an imaginative voyage across continents, cultures and creativity.

Mike Crawshaw, Head of Heritage and Culture at Darlington Borough Council, said: "Darlington's railway story is world famous, and Hopetown Darlington embodies that spirit of adventure, innovation and connection - values that align perfectly with this year's Carnival theme. While the decision to relocate rests with the Carnival Committee, we're delighted to host and support an event that continues to evolve while staying true to its roots and bringing the community together in such a creative way. We look forward to welcoming the procession as it steams into its new destination."

Community groups, traders, and organisations wishing to book a stall can reserve their place by emailing: stalls@darlingtoncommunitycarnival.org.uk

The Carnival, both the procession and the festival, are free to attend. The festival inside the grounds of Hopetown Darlington will be ticketed. Tickets will be released via the Hopetown Darlington website in the coming weeks.

Photos: DCC and Hopetown.



Lib Dems Win Horndale By-Election



The Liberal Democrats have secured a decisive victory in the Horndale by-election for Great Aycliffe Town Council, with local resident Richard Burchell elected in a straight contest against Reform UK. The result is being seen as a strong endorsement of community-focused representation over national political messaging.

Councillor Michael Stead (Aycliffe North & Middridge) said: "This result sends a clear message from residents - they want councillors focused on Newton Aycliffe, not Westminster. Reform's campaign leaned heavily on national talking points, but that simply doesn't reflect what people care about here. Residents want action on local issues, not slogans. Richard Burchell is a genuine local champion who understands the area and will work hard for the community from day one."

Liberal Democrat Group Leader on Great Aycliffe Town Council, Linzi Aston, added: "This is an excellent result and shows that, when given the choice, voters back strong local representation over political noise. Richard will be a valuable addition to the Town Council and a strong voice for residents."

The Liberal Democrats say the result demonstrates that voters in Newton Aycliffe expect their Town Council to focus on local priorities, with little appetite for national political posturing.

Celebrating a 20 Year Canine Care Success Story

K9 Pursuits Dog Day Care & Training Centre is celebrating a remarkable milestone this year, marking twenty years of delivering exceptional canine care, training and enrichment to families across County Durham and beyond.

Founded by best friends Andrea Rogers and Gill Crawford, what began as a shared vision has grown into one of the region's most respected dog care facilities. Their aim was simple yet ambitious: to create a safe, professional and stimulating environment where dogs could learn, play and thrive. Two decades on, that vision has evolved into a thriving centre with an outstanding reputation and a loyal client base.

K9 Pursuits holds a prestigious Five Star rating from the local council, reflecting its unwavering commitment to high standards in animal welfare, safety and professional expertise. The centre employs six dedicated team members, all highly experienced and/or fully qualified in dog training and behaviour—an essential foundation for safely managing group environments and delivering high-quality training programmes. The facility itself is equally impressive, featuring a spacious indoor centre, secure outdoor areas, and a standout 18ft by 9ft heated dog swimming pool. This unique addition provides dogs with a fun, low-impact way to exercise, build confidence and enjoy enrichment activities.

Over the years, K9 Pursuits has cared for an incredible variety of dogs, from tiny Chihuahuas to towering Great Danes. Its training programmes cater to all ages and abilities, offering everything from essential life skills for puppies and adult dogs to agility, obedience, Heelwork to Music, freestyle, Dogability training, and more. Every session is designed to be positive, engaging, and tailored to each dog's individual needs.

To celebrate their 20th anniversary, K9 Pursuits will host a special summer tea party for both dogs and their owners. Guests can enjoy tea, coffee and cake, while canine companions will be treated to homemade dog-friendly cookies. The event is open to everyone—long-standing clients, new visitors, and anyone who would like to join the celebration. After twenty years of dedication, innovation, and community spirit, K9 Pursuits continues to set the benchmark for dog care and training in County Durham. Andrea, Gill, and their team look forward to celebrating this milestone with the community that has supported them every step of the way.



Newton News

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Wellbeing Festival

The Women's Mental Health and Wellbeing Festival is a motivating and inspiring all-day festival taking place on Thursday 18th June 2026 from 9.00am until 5.00pm at Glow in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham.

Featuring expert speakers, interactive workshops, exhibitors and a chance to network with like-minded mental health and well-being professionals.

The day will be a transformative wellbeing festival dedicated to highlighting the unique mental health challenges that women face, and empowering the attendees with practical tools for growth and resilience.

If you are a professional working in women's mental health, wellbeing, or healthcare, or have a personal interest in women's mental health, you will be welcome at this inclusive wellbeing festival. Your ticket price includes a light lunch, refreshments, parking and access to all speakers and exhibitors. Our profits go to two local charities in the North East that work with women supporting their mental health and wellbeing.



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OBITUARY

Doreen Shaw

Aged 90 years, passed away peacefully on 13th April.

Beloved Wife of the late Bill Shaw; much loved Mam of Christine; dear Mother-in-Law of Michael; devoted Gran to Anna, Laura and Andrew also treasured Great-Gran to Harry and Freddy.

Special thanks to St. Clare's Court Care Home for their care and kindness shown to Doreen during her time with them.

Private cremation.
Forever in our hearts xx

IN MEMORIAM

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, till we meet again, always and forever.

We love you Son, now reunited with Dad.
Mam, family here and in Northern Ireland.

Joan & Derek Nicholson

There are always faces before us and voices we'd love to hear.

Smiles we will always remember of parents we loved so dear.

Deep in our hearts lies a picture more precious than silver or gold. It's a picture of our parents whose memories we hold so dear.

Loved and missed by all of your family.

Also birthday wishes for 19th April and 22nd April.

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THANK YOU

The Late **Anne Stayman**



Thank you to everyone who attended the funeral of my Wife, Anne at Wear Valley Crematorium on 9th April.

To those of you who kindly donated to Cancer Research UK, we have decided to split donations between Cancer Research UK and Macmillan, total raised was £426.50.

Also, my Grandson, Ryan, completed 24 peaks in 24 hours, raising another £465 for Cancer Research UK.

Thank you all.
Brian Stayman and family.

Tessa McDonald
5th November 1939
- 27th April 2023



Missed and loved always with your loving daughter, Kim. Forever close to our hearts.

Love, Husband Ian, Sons Craig & Martin and Betty the Greyhound xxxx

Mick Allen
2/1/1949-2/5/2024

Two years have passed since you left us all too soon. Forever in our hearts, thoughts and prayers.

Loved, missed and remembered always.

Your loving Wife Kath, Sons John, Craig and families.

Newton News is published at the beginning of each month and available from multiple pick up points

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Wheel chair, £20; lots of fishing rods and gear, £70. Tel 01325 320800.

Steam Train Rides

May 2026 will mark a spectacular new chapter in Darlington's railway heritage as Hopetown Darlington prepares to launch steam train rides on a newly built railway line with the support of the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust. The new addition to the site is an exciting new seasonal attraction bringing history vividly to life and celebrates the continuing legacy of S&DR200.



Passengers will board a beautifully restored 1910 built, luxury Edwardian style London & South Western Railway No.1520 passenger carriage, finished in classic salmon and brown livery. The carriage will be hauled by a selection of locomotives, beginning with Andrew Barclay Works No.2134 known as 'W.T.T.'. Further down the line, selected journeys will also be hauled by Darlington's internationally renowned legend No.60163 'Tornado', as well as our very own Replica Locomotion No.1. Tickets will be released to the general public on Thursday 30th April. Potential passengers are being encouraged to sign up to Hopetown Darlington's mailing list to be among the first to access ride tickets. This brand-new seasonal experience marks a major milestone for the award-winning visitor attraction and its onsite partners, offering visitors the rare opportunity to ride behind historic steam locomotives on the attraction's brand-new heritage railway line. Passengers will check in for their journey at Hopetown Darlington's main reception before proceeding to the historic 1861 Shed from where the ride will depart, bringing the drama, power and romance of steam railways to life.

The steam rides celebrate Darlington's pioneering role in railway history, the enduring legacy of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, and the international significance of the S&DR200 Bicentenary. More than a one off attraction, this is a permanent new experience designed to inspire, excite and be enjoyed by generations to come.

From the hiss of steam to the rhythm of the rails, this is history in motion. Whether you are a lifelong railway enthusiast or discovering steam for the first time, visitors are invited to create unforgettable memories where heritage, engineering and family fun come together.

Opening dates and times

- Rides will initially operate Tuesday 26th to Friday 29th May 2026
- Operating hours: 10.15am - 3.15pm
- Steam rides will run seasonally, with future dates to be announced

Duration

- The ride will last approximately 20 – 25 minutes
- Rides depart every 30 minutes

Ticket price

- £7.50 per passenger, regardless of age

Location

- Boarding at the 1861 Shed, accessed within the grounds of Hopetown Darlington

Tickets

- Advance booking recommended at: hopetowndarlington.co.uk/steamrides

While work begins on constructing a permanent platform at the 1861 Shed, passenger boarding will take place outside of the building using a temporary boarding arrangement. During this initial phase, access to the carriage will be via a set of temporary platform steps and, unfortunately, will not be fully accessible as there is currently no ramp or lift in place.

This is a temporary limitation and Hopetown Darlington is actively working on a thoughtful alternative offer for those who are unable to take part in the ride during this early phase, and further details will be shared soon.

A permanent new platform at the 1861 Shed will be fully accessible when opened later this year.

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Generous Donation for Treetops Ward

Children receiving care at Treetops Ward at University Hospital of North Durham are benefiting from a generous donation from Happy Smiles Nursery in Consett.

Nursery manager Danielle Casey, who regularly raises funds for hospitals and charitable causes across the North East, has kindly donated four televisions for use in the ward's individual children's rooms.

The donation will help provide entertainment and comfort for young patients during their hospital stay.

Danielle has also donated two Toniebox Audio Player sets with a selection of characters.

The storytelling boxes allow children to listen to their favourite stories and songs, helping them relax and enjoy story time while in hospital.

The donation tied in perfectly with the spirit of World Book Day, encouraging children to



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Janine Collins, Ward Manager for Treetops Ward, said: "Danielle and everyone at Happy Smiles Nursery have been incredibly generous. The TVs and Tonieboxes will make a real difference to the children staying with us, giving them something enjoyable and comforting during what can sometimes be a difficult time. We are also very grateful to the nursery parents and carers for their thoughtful donations for both the children and our staff."

Families connected to the nursery also donated arts and crafts materials, books and games for the children on the ward, along with coffee, chocolates and biscuits for the hardworking staff team.

Rich Jones, Charity Manager for County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Charity, added: "We are hugely grateful to Danielle and the families at Happy Smiles Nursery for their kindness and generosity. Donations like this help create a more comfortable and positive environment for children receiving care in hospital, and it's wonderful to see the community coming together to support our patients and staff." The team on Treetops Ward would like to thank Danielle, the nursery staff and the families who contributed for their kindness and support.

You can help support Your NHS Charity with a text donation, simply text YOURNHS to 70480 to donate £5. Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message, or by organising a fundraiser, please contact the team on 01325 743781 or email cddft.charity@nhs.net