

Greenfield Milestone

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Newton News

June 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



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1407 Squadron Annual Inspection



1407 Squadron held their Annual Formal Inspection, proudly hosting Sqn Ldr Burton (Deputy OC DNW), FS Waite (Inspecting NCO), and Mrs Rowell (Wing Civilian Committee Chair).

We are delighted to have been awarded a Bronze rating, with Silver well within reach for next year - a fantastic achievement and a testament to everyone's hard work.

A special congratulations to WO Baguley, who was awarded her Long Service Medal in recognition of 12 years of continuous service to the RAFAC organisation - a truly outstanding achievement.

Congratulations to all the cadets involved - your dedication, effort and commitment do not go unnoticed.

A huge thank you as well to our staff team for their unwavering support over the past year, and for everything still to come.

At the Durham & Northumberland Wing Cross Country competition Cdt Smith was placed second in his category, and FS Socha, who achieved 3rd place in his. At the Inter Squadron Volleyball Competition Newton Aycliffe came out as winners.



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Brass Bash Locations Confirmed for Durham Brass Festival 2026



Durham Brass Festival's Big and Little Brass Bashes are going on tour again this year, bringing free concerts to towns and communities across County Durham.

With new locations as well as firm fan favourites, organisers Durham County Council have promised a party at every location.

In an exciting line up, residents can enjoy performances from the likes of Loud Noises, Back Chat Brass, Girlesque, Oompah Brass, Artistas del Gremio, Mr Wilson's Second Liners, Diddy Sweg, Yorky Pud Street Band, Brazen Brass Band and She's Got Brass.

Cllr Karen Allison, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for leisure, tourism, regeneration and high street, said: "Our Big and Little Brass Bashes are a household name for Durham Brass Festival and very popular with our communities, so we're excited to bring the party back for 2026.

"As we celebrate 20 years of Durham Brass Festival, we've tried to bring the Brass Bashes out to even more communities, with gigs being held in some areas for the very first time.

"We've got some great events planned for this year, so would encourage everyone to come along and join the party."

This year's Brass Bashes will be at:

- Quarrington Hill Little Brass Bash - Monday 13th July, 6pm to 8pm, Quarrington Hill Community Centre.
- Shildon Little Brass Bash (collaboration with Durham Music Service's Momentum project) - Monday 13th July, 6pm to 9pm, Locomotion.
- Barnard Castle Little Brass Bash - Tuesday 14th July, 6pm to 8pm, The Witham.
- Crook Little Brass Bash - Tuesday 14th July, 6pm to 8pm, Crook Community Leisure.
- Willington Big Brass Bash - Wednesday 15th July, 6pm to 9pm, Town Park.
- Bishop Auckland Little Brass Bash - Wednesday 15th July, 6pm to 8pm, Auckland Palace Courtyard.
- Coxhoe Little Brass Bash - Thursday 16th July, 6pm to 8pm, Village Green (Pit Wheel).
- Spennymoor Big Brass Bash - Thursday 16th July, 6pm to 9pm, Jubilee Park.
- Seaham Big Brass Bash - Friday 17th July, 6pm 9pm, Terrace Green.
- **Newton Aycliffe Big Brass Bash - Friday 17th July, 6pm to 9pm, Aycliffe Town Park.**

Tickets are also on sale for Durham Brass Festival's full line up of concerts and performances.

Highlights include Viva Brass Vegas, a dynamic collaboration between

Oompah Brass XXL - the UK's original rock 'n' roll brass band - and crossover tribute band ELVANA.

At Durham Cathedral, the most iconic movie scores will be brought to life as the EverReady Band brings its new programme, Myth, Magic & More.

Brassed On is back for its third year, with emerging North East artists Dilettante and Isabel Maria playing alongside Peterlee's Vice Killer at Gala Durham.

Hector Gannet returns to Durham Brass Festival, ready to play tracks from its new album in the setting of Redhills Durham Miners Hall, accompanied by the Durham Miners' Association Brass Band.

Following its hugely popular debut at Bishop Auckland Town Hall last year, the Tyne Valley Big Band returns to bring tea dances to Easington Colliery, Pelton and Bishop Auckland. Joining the band at Pelton are The Revolutionaires.

And, as the film Brassed Off celebrates its 30th anniversary, Grimethorpe Colliery Band will be playing a standalone concert at Gala Durham.

The festival will culminate with the return of the Brass Boat Cruises in Durham City, alongside the iconic Streets of Brass and Party in the Park.

For more information about the festival, and to book tickets for events, visit:

www.brassfestival.co.uk



Rotten Luck for Scarlet!

Scarlet Whitaker Dunn, the Newton Aycliffe based Junior Pro-kart racer, competed in round 3 of the Teesside Sprint Series held at Teesside Autodrome on Sunday 17th May.



Scarlet was competing in the ultra competitive Junior Pro-kart class, which saw an impressive grid of 24 entrants.

The racing was incredibly close as usual, but poor fortune in the heat races resulted in both disappointment for Scarlet and damage to her kart for the team to repair. This meant that she would start the meeting final in a sub-optimal 18th place.

Scarlet was making a good recovery drive in the meeting final and managed to get herself up to 12th place, only to be punted off the circuit by a fellow competitor who made a clumsy attempt to overtake her. She rejoined the race, but insufficient laps remaining prevented her from regaining what she had lost.

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.

R4 20-21 June

R5/6 25-26 July

R7 26-27 Sept

R8/9 24-25 October

We would like to thank Amaron Racing, PHM (Peninsula Historic Motorsport), Carbon Arc Training and Consultancy, Grandad Ron and Rob Storey for their generous assistance and financial support making this possible

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

Menopause Support Group

Join our friendly face to face support group where we get together to chat, share experiences, feel understood and support each other in a safe and welcoming space.

Whether you are struggling with symptoms, feeling overwhelmed or simply want to connect with other ladies who 'get it' - you are most welcome!

No booking required - just pop along on Thursday 4th June 2026 at 6.00pm at PCP, Carer's Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4SF
Contact Jules Howe, WBFL Team, for further info on 07809 342192.

Aycliffe Village WI Events

Coffee n Chat

Our Coffee n Chat will be on Wednesday 10th June between 2.00pm and 3.00pm at Aycliffe Village Hall. Everyone is welcome to come along for a drink and a chat in a very friendly and relaxed atmosphere. You don't have to be a member of the WI and we look forward to seeing new faces.

Visit to Durham Oriental Museum and Botanical Gardens

Members of Aycliffe Village WI will be visiting Durham's Oriental Museum and Botanical Gardens on Saturday 13th June.

June events for our members include our annual BBQ, Book Club, St Clare's Craft Group and monthly collection for our local Food Bank. And, finally, members had a fabulous afternoon tea on the Tanfield Railway in glorious sunshine and style.



Candlelite Music Club

NOT TO BE MISSED

On Wednesday 17th June at The Navy Club, Newton Aycliffe DL5 7PW the fabulous 'Hayley Sisters' plus support from 'Ray Thom'.
For tickets please ring Margaret on 01325 319857 or Diane on 07756 298453.

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Breaking the Cycle:

Why prevention and rehabilitation are critical to safer communities

When I became Police and Crime Commissioner, I made a clear commitment to tackle not only crime itself, but the root causes driving offending, addiction, anti-social behaviour and repeat victimisation.

That commitment sits firmly at the heart of my Police, Crime and Justice Plan 2025–2029 and my ambition to build communities that are safer, stronger and more resilient to alcohol and drug-related crime and disorder.

It was this determination that led me to establish the Criminal Justice Policy Roundtable, bringing together policing, prisons, probation, health, housing, universities, charities and people with lived experience, to confront some of the biggest failings and pressures within our criminal justice system.

The Roundtable was never designed to be a talking shop. It was created to challenge outdated thinking, drive practical reform and identify evidence-led solutions that cut crime, reduce reoffending and better protect victims and communities. It was meant to add value to the excellent partnership working that exists around the Local Criminal Justice Board that I Chair.

Because the reality is stark: we cannot arrest our way out of addiction. Across the country, courts are overwhelmed, prisons are overcrowded, and reoffending rates remain far too high.

Meanwhile, communities continue to suffer the consequences of repeat offending, acquisitive crime, anti-social behaviour, violence and exploitation linked to drugs and alcohol.

Behind many offences lie deeper problems, addiction, trauma, mental ill-health, homelessness, domestic abuse and social exclusion. If we fail to address those drivers, we simply trap people in a revolving door of offending, custody and crisis while communities continue to pay the price.

The Roundtable examined these issues head-on.

One major focus was women in the criminal justice system. Many women who offend are themselves victims of abuse, exploitation and trauma. Short prison sentences often fail to rehabilitate and instead worsen instability, break family ties, and increase the risk of reoffending.

The report calls for stronger trauma-informed support, earlier intervention, improved diversion schemes and community-based alternatives that tackle the causes of offending while maintaining accountability and protecting the public. Housing and homelessness were also identified as major drivers of repeat offending.

People leaving prison without stable accommodation are far more likely to relapse into addiction, become involved in crime again or fall into exploitation and rough sleeping.

That is why the Roundtable recommended stronger “through-the-gate” support and far better coordination between housing, probation, healthcare and treatment services.

The discussions also highlighted the enormous impact addiction has on crime and anti-social behaviour.

Around half of acquisitive crime is linked to drugs, while addiction continues to fuel violence, disorder and repeat offending.

The Roundtable explored innovative approaches including Drug Testing on Arrest, recovery-focused treatment pathways and diversion schemes designed to break the cycle of addiction and crime before more victims are created.

None of this is about being soft on crime. It is about being smarter, tougher and more effective in reducing crime long-term. Every prevented relapse, every avoided reoffence and every person successfully supported into recovery means fewer victims, fewer crimes and safer streets.

The Criminal Justice Policy Roundtable was created to drive action, influence national debate and deliver practical change that improves public safety and strengthens communities.

And, this report is only the beginning. You can read the full Policy Roundtable Evaluation Report and explore the recommendations in more detail by scanning the QR code below or by contacting:

general.enquiriespcc@durham-pcc.gov.uk

PCP AGM

This year the Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) is holding its Annual General Meeting on Thursday 23rd July 2026, 11.00am at the Pioneering Care Centre, Carer's Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4SF.

For over 28 years, health and wellbeing charity, PCP, has proudly delivered high quality accessible projects and activities aimed at improving health, providing access to services and reducing social isolation.

As well as managing the Pioneering Care Centre in Newton Aycliffe, thriving Growth Hubs in Seaham and Stockton - PCP delivers a wide range of projects across the North East supporting the charity's mission of 'Health, Wellbeing and Learning for All'.

If you would like to meet the Board of Trustees or hear our Chief Executive highlight some of PCP's key achievements, please contact Kelly on email: kelly.fletcher@pcp.uk.net by Friday 3rd July 2026.

For further information on PCP call 01325 321234, email: enquiries@pcp.uk.net or visit: www.pcp.uk.net



JOY ALLEN
DURHAM POLICE AND
CRIME COMMISSIONER

Breaking the cycle:

Why prevention and rehabilitation are critical to safer communities

The Criminal Justice Policy Roundtable

Read their Evaluation Report by scanning the QR code or please contact: general.enquiriespcc@durham-pcc.gov.uk

Thriving Netball



Woodham Academy's netball programme has been thriving, with students recently taking part in two memorable trips that showcased both their passion for the sport and their excellent conduct. The first trip saw students travel to watch an exciting live fixture between the Leeds Rhinos Netball and Nottingham Forest Netball. It was a closely contested and thrilling game, providing a fantastic opportunity for students to experience high-level netball and gain inspiration from elite athletes in action. The second trip took students to PGL Boreatton Park in Shrewsbury for the annual netball tour. The event was a great success, both on and off the court. Woodham Academy's Year 7/8 team and a Year 9 team both proudly secured bronze medals. Students on the trip also took part in activities including zip wire, laser tag, rifle shooting and abseiling. Beyond their sporting achievements, all students represented Woodham Academy with pride. Their positive attitudes, teamwork and sportsmanship were evident throughout both trips, making them a real credit to the school.

Community Service?

Dear Sir,
 I am writing regarding the community service teams that regularly visit the boating lake in Ashfield, Newton Aycliffe. Over several weekends, I have observed groups in the area supposedly carry out cleaning work. However, very little appears to be done. On most occasions, only a small amount of litter is collected, while some individuals spend time sitting or lying in the sun instead of working. What I witnessed recently was particularly unacceptable. One man urinated against the school fence in full view of nearby homes, including my window. This behaviour is completely inappropriate and disrespectful. I was always under the impression that community service was intended to give something back to the community through meaningful work. What I witnessed raises questions about the level of supervision and the value taxpayers are receiving. To add to my concerns, I noticed the team van leave at around 10am and return approximately twenty minutes later, which appeared to be for a break. Most working people are expected to earn their breaks through productive work. I hope the relevant authorities will review how these community service activities are being managed and ensure proper standards are maintained.
 An Angry Pensioner
 Name and address supplied.

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A Life in Full Bloom

Celebrating 90 Years of Doreen Trevor



On April 28th, 1936, in the historic border town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, a life began that would come to be defined by resilience, devotion and quiet strength. Born to May and Fred Trowbridge, Doreen Trevor (née Trowbridge) grew up surrounded by the bustle of family life alongside her brother and sisters - an upbringing that would shape her lifelong commitment to those she loves.

It was in Berwick that fate intervened. A young soldier named Mick - Michael Trevor - was stationed in the area when the two met. Their connection quickly blossomed into a lifelong partnership and, in June 1957, they were married, beginning a journey that would span decades. The early years of their marriage saw them settle in Darlington, initially living with Mick's parents. By 1959, they had moved to Newton Aycliffe, where their family life truly took root. Their first daughter, Susan, was soon joined by Keith and Ann, and Doreen embraced motherhood with unwavering dedication. Today, her family has grown to include four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, a legacy that reflects the love and care she has poured into every generation.

Beyond her role as a mother and grandmother, Doreen carved out her own path. She had a fondness for knitting, a hobby that reflected both her patience and creativity. She was also a keen sports fan - rarely missing a football match - and enjoyed the simple pleasure of a good game of bingo.

Her working life was equally industrious. Starting at the Fine Fare supermarket in Newton Aycliffe, Doreen later worked part-time at the Oak Tree off-licence. Her strong work ethic saw her continue in retail well into her later years, only retiring at the remarkable age of 79. Thirteen years ago, Doreen faced the loss of her beloved Mick. Yet, even in grief, her strength endured. She took it upon herself to maintain his pride and joy, the garden, tending to it with the same care and devotion that defined their life together. To this day, her flowerpots remain a source of pride, a quiet tribute to love that continues to grow.

When asked the secret to her long and fulfilling life, Doreen's answer is simple, yet profound: "Be there for your family and never give up." It is a philosophy she has lived by and one that shines through in every chapter of her story.

Her 90th birthday was celebrated in fitting style, with a joyful surprise party surrounded by those she holds dear. Family travelled from far and wide including Germany, Scotland, London, Carlisle, Birmingham and Manchester - joining local friends and loved ones to honour a woman whose life has touched so many.

At 90, Doreen Trevor stands as a testament to resilience, love, and the enduring power of family. Her story is not just one of years lived, but of a life truly cherished.

A Busy Month

The squadron has had a very successful month of activities and is now seeing cadets getting away on camps across the region.

Cadets from 1407 (Newton Aycliffe) Squadron Air Training Corps enjoyed a great climbing session at ROF 59 Climbing Centre, building confidence, teamwork and resilience, while taking on new challenges.

Six of our cadets have finally completed their expedition aspect of their Bronze DofE - and are already on track to have their award done entirely!

This was a great weekend for them for team building, navigation and overall being in the outdoors; many of these cadets are looking forward to try and complete their Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the future.

1407 Squadron attended Durham & Northumberland Wing's annual Wing Adventure Training Challenge and were proud to come away with the overall win.

Competing across walking, archery, mountain biking, first aid and orienteering, the team put in a fantastic performance throughout the weekend, achieving full marks in both walking and orienteering.

The challenge tested teamwork, leadership, resilience and problem solving, and every member of the team represented the squadron brilliantly from start to finish.



Fibromyalgia

PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Please join us at our new group venue at: Glow Church, Long Tens Way, Aycliffe, DL5 6AP.

We meet every Monday afternoon from 12.30-1.30pm - 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 number is: 07543 477773.

Kynren's New Land of the Vikings

Constructed from durable Douglas fir and carefully designed to mirror the distinctive shape, craftsmanship and seafaring heritage of vessels used during the Viking age, the enormous timber structure is already emerging as one of the defining visual



features of the new attraction. Due to its immense scale, the full-size Viking longboat is being assembled in two separate sections before being joined together on site, where it will ultimately form the dramatic and highly immersive entrance into Land of the Vikings - one of the flagship experiences within the ambitious new live-action day park.

The Viking-themed world has been created to transport visitors deep into the heart of Norse culture and storytelling. Combining richly detailed scenery with theatrical spectacle, the attraction will feature an immersive walk-through Viking settlement designed to recreate the atmosphere of a bustling Norse community. Guests will then experience a large-scale seated live show with capacity for 1,250 people, blending cinematic storytelling with high-energy performance. The production will feature choreographed combat sequences, large-scale stunts, fire effects, live action and an original storyline centred on a Viking settlement torn apart by internal divisions, rival loyalties and escalating conflict.

Land of the Vikings forms part of Kynren - The Storied Lands, a major new visitor destination that combines live performance, historically themed environments and immersive storytelling experiences in a format organisers say is unlike anything currently offered elsewhere in the UK. The attraction aims to bring history to life on an unprecedented scale, combining theatrical spectacle with detailed world-building to create a fully immersive day-park experience for visitors of all ages. The new development has been created by the team behind the award-winning Kynren - An Epic Tale of England, the acclaimed outdoor live-action show that has become one of the North East's most successful visitor attractions. Kynren - The Storied Lands is set to open in Bishop Auckland this summer, with anticipation continuing to build ahead of the launch and tickets now officially on sale.

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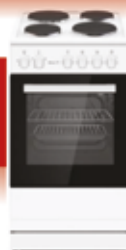


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Rotary Raise £1800 for Local Charities



The 16th annual Model Railway Exhibition, organised by Rotary Great Aycliffe, has once again proven to be a resounding success - raising a total of £1800 in support of local charitable causes.

A key portion of the proceeds, £600, was dedicated to supporting three vital local hospices: Butterwick Hospice Care, St. Teresa's Hospice, and St. Cuthbert's Hospice. These organisations provide essential care and support to individuals and families across the region, making the contribution especially meaningful.

On Wednesday 22nd April, Rotary Great Aycliffe Senior Vice President, Malcolm Masterman, personally delivered the cheques during a whirlwind tour of South West Durham, visiting each hospice to present the donations in person.

Reflecting on the day, Malcolm said: "That has been one of the most satisfying days of all my years in Rotary."

Representatives from each of the hospices expressed their sincere gratitude for the donations, emphasising how much the support means to their ongoing work. They also asked for their heartfelt thanks to be passed on to all Rotary members and everyone involved in making the exhibition such a success.

The continued success of the Model Railway Exhibition highlights both the generosity of the local community and the dedication of Rotary volunteers, whose efforts help make a real difference to important local services year after year.



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Council Bin Collection Data App

Bin collections are one of those small household tasks that can quickly become frustrating. Different coloured bins, alternating weeks and ever-changing bank holiday schedules mean many households still find themselves rushing outside after hearing the lorry halfway down the street. A new North East-based service called BinPing is aiming to solve that problem with a simple reminder system, designed around local council collection data.

BinPing, which officially launched in May 2026, provides residents with weekly email reminders and optional text alerts ahead of their scheduled collections. The system works by accessing publicly available information published by local authorities and automatically tracking collection schedules, including any amendments caused by bank holidays or service changes.

The platform was created by Adam, owner of Newton Aycliffe-based technology business Heüvel, after repeatedly forgetting to put his own bins out. What began as a personal coding project soon attracted attention from friends and family, who began using the early system themselves.

Over time, the idea evolved from a simple personal tool into a more structured platform. Around a year ago, a closed pilot scheme was quietly rolled out across County Durham to test how residents would respond to the service. Following strong uptake and positive feedback during the trial period, the decision was made to officially launch BinPing to the public this spring.

Speaking about the idea behind the project, Adam said: "It started as a bit of a running joke because I was constantly forgetting which bin was due out and when. Once friends and family started asking to use it as well, I realised there was a genuine gap for something simple that just quietly works in the background and saves people the hassle."

The service is currently live across County Durham and Darlington, with North Yorkshire expected to join the rollout pipeline in the coming weeks. Long term, the ambition is significantly wider, with plans to eventually support councils and counties across the UK.

The launch also comes at a time when many households are preparing for changes to waste collection services, including the continued rollout of food waste collections and additional recycling separation requirements, expected across parts of the UK during 2026. The system itself has been developed by Heüvel, the Newton Aycliffe-based digital agency behind the project, which typically delivers complex websites, systems and integrations for hospitality businesses across the UK. BinPing has been developed alongside the agency's growing client work as a side project, with the team now keen to see how far the platform can grow following its public launch.

Although the system currently relies on publicly available data supplied through council websites, the longer-term ambition is to work more directly with local authorities themselves. The aim would be to create deeper integrations that could help reduce missed collections, improve communication with residents and provide more accurate real-time updates when schedules change.

Adam added: "At the moment, the system works using publicly available information supplied by councils, but longer term we'd like to create more robust direct integrations where possible. The whole point of BinPing is that people shouldn't need to keep checking council websites, calendars or collection pages - it should just quietly work in the background and keep people informed automatically."

BinPing offers free weekly email reminders, with optional SMS alerts available for users who want a notification the evening before collection day.

We're live in Newton Aycliffe. Sign up for free.

Bin schedules are weirdly hard. Different colours, different weeks, bank holidays that shift everything. We pull the timetable straight from your council and send a friendly weekly email reminder – with optional text alerts the evening before collection.*

- 1 Register with your postcode**

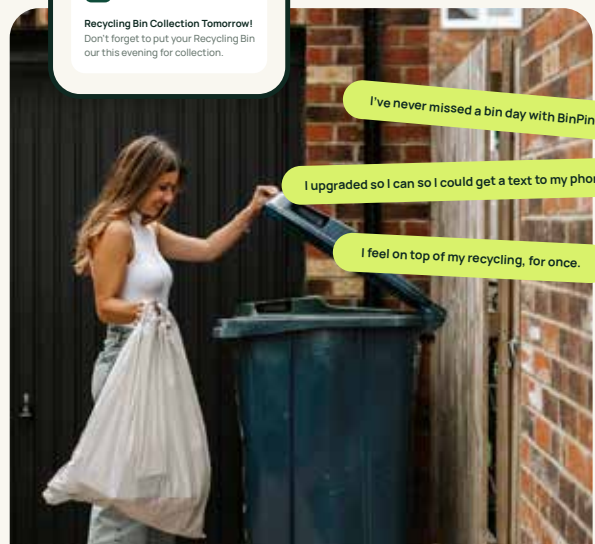
We'll find your council, collection days and bin colours automatically through our smart portal.
- 2 Pick your alerts**

Weekly email reminders are completely free, or upgrade to SMS alerts for a reminder the evening before collection.
- 3 Sleep easy**

We'll send a friendly weekly email every Sunday, or a handy SMS alert the night before collection.

Bin day – sorted.

*Weekly email reminders are free and sent every Sunday with your collection schedule for the week ahead. Evening-before SMS alerts are available as an optional paid subscription.



What Does a Former MP Do?

There has been so much happening in my world in the last month that I thought it was worth putting pen to paper. Firstly, can I thank those residents who were kind enough to donate toys and clothes for me to donate to a care home in Zambia. I was fortunate enough to be passing through Zambia, enroute to a wedding, and being able to take your donations to the care home was a wonderful experience. The Sisters that run the care home are truly inspirational. Then, not long after returning home, I had the immense pleasure of attending the Aycliffe Business Park Community 'Make Your Mark' awards. My congratulations to the Winners, Nominees and all involved on the night. I have attended many times and this is one of my favourite nights of the year, with so many people celebrating the many outstanding people and businesses we have in Aycliffe, it was both surprising and disappointing that my successor failed to turn up. Our businesses deserve and need his engagement.

As I have more time on my hands now, I was able to support the Northumbria Blood Bikes in their 360 challenge which involves riding a motorbike around their region in one day, this was a 275 mile trip, but I raised over £500, so well worth it. I also supported Durham University in their examinations by being a 'Board' member for students to present to, always great to see young people growing. I will finish by saying how pleased I was to see Nev Jones found not guilty to the charges made by the Police. Nev and Jo have done so much for our town over the years and hopefully they will feel able to get back to what they do best. I had a great relationship with the Police when I was MP and it has been difficult to watch this play out, but it concerns me that they could apply so much time and resource to something that ultimately proved to be a false charge by themselves when there are so many pressing concerns for residents, not least shoplifting in our town centre. Let's hope they can reflect and focus efforts where they should be.

I am also doing work with a policy group called True North that is cross party and advocates for all of us in the true north, which we define as being from about Teesside up, not Leeds and Manchester as Westminster seem to think. So, if anyone has any contributions they wish to make, please get in touch at paul.howell.xmp@gmail.com - It would be great to hear from you.

Newton Aycliffe WI

On our most recent WI meeting we had an excellent presentation of the history, funding and life saving services carried out by the RNLI, which has been operational for over two centuries.

Our next meeting on 9th June will be a craft social evening and our June excursion will be to Helmsley Market and the Flower Belt, where members can enjoy the beautiful colours of old English wild flowers, refreshing drinks and baked treats at The Honey Tap café and take in the views over the glorious North Yorkshire countryside.

As a WI member, you can have access to the events catalogue from WI House, including early evening walks, coffee mornings, cookery demonstrations, lunches and coach trips, all at reasonable prices to suit your budgets.

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Methodist Church at Neville's Parade. We have speakers on varied topics, craft evenings, auctions and parties.

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.

Woodham DofE



The Year 10 Duke of Edinburgh's Award students at Woodham Academy completed their first practice hike on Saturday 2nd May. Students practiced their navigation and First Aid skills on the 10-mile hike. They have been working very hard in the training sessions since September, so it was great to see them building their confidence out in the countryside too. Whilst route finding didn't always go to plan, there was lots to be learned about map reading. We were very lucky to be able to appreciate the lovely weather and our surroundings, including the bluebells in the woods and meeting various animals along our route. There were some aching feet and shoulders at the end of the day, as this was the first time many of the students had completed a hike whilst carrying a significant amount of kit. The students displayed brilliant teamwork, were polite to staff and public, considerate of the environment and maintained such a positive attitude, even when the going got a bit tough. Several students have already completed their Volunteering, Skill and Physical sections of the Award too, so are well on their way to achieving their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Well done to everyone for your progress so far.

Three Peaks Challenge

A team of police officers, special constables and staff are taking on the National Three Peaks Challenge for charity.

The hike takes in the three highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales - Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon - and covers a distance of around 23 miles, with 3,000 metres of elevation.

Participants aim to complete the challenge in 24 hours.

The 20-strong team, which includes officers from Durham Roads and Armed Policing Unit (DRAP), Durham Special Constabulary and the force's Media Team, will begin the challenge on the evening of Thursday 18th June in Scotland, and aim to finish the following evening in Wales.

The team are raising money for the baby loss charity, 4Louis, which works to support anyone affected by a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of a baby or child.

The challenge will also raise awareness of the Fatal Four, which are the four main factors that contribute to deaths on the UK's roads. They are speeding, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, not wearing a seatbelt and mobile phone use.

DRAP Sergeant Steve Adey, who is organising the challenge, said: "Many of the officers taking part in this challenge are specialist roads policing officers, who are dedicated to keeping the roads safe for everyone. All too often, they have to deal with collisions which involve one or more of the fatal four and must deliver the horrendous news to a family that their loved one has been seriously hurt, or worse, killed.

"Sadly, a number of these involve children, who are one of the most vulnerable road users. Six children are killed or seriously hurt on the UK's roads every day, which is the equivalent of a whole class of children every week - these figures are utterly heartbreaking and completely unacceptable. Through this challenge, we hope to raise awareness of the fatal four and the devastation they can cause, while also raising funds for 4Louis, to provide much-needed support to anyone affected by child loss."

The charity is particularly close to Sergeant Adey's heart after his daughter, Primrose, tragically died just a week before her second birthday in 2019. All money raised from the challenge will go towards 4Louis' vital work within the north east, supporting bereaved parents and those who have been affected by child loss.

The charity provides memory boxes, cold cots that allow families precious time with their baby, bereavement training for healthcare professionals and support resources during and after loss.

The team are being supported by Workwear Express, who have provided clothing and rucksacks for the challenge, as well as the Police Federation and Durham Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Joy Allen.

PCC Allen said: "This is an adventure with purpose, and I am full of admiration for the officers and staff who will be testing their endurance to the limits with this charity climb. With over 3,000 metres of climbing involved it isn't going to be easy, but with every step they take these brave officers and staff will know their efforts are making a vital difference for two amazing causes. I wish DRAP every success with their challenge. The team knows only too well the life-shattering impact of road tragedies through their work, and it is truly inspiring that their experiences continue to drive their efforts to save lives on the roads even while not on duty."

To donate to the team's fundraising, visit:

www.justgiving.com/page/durham-police-4



Farewell from outgoing Mayor and Mayoress



Thank you to all Newtonians, fellow chairs and civic dignitaries, local schools, clubs, businesses, friends' organisations and especially my family for supporting me throughout the current Mayoral year.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to represent you across the Northeast region; we have made many friends and helped raise funds for charities across the north and, in particular, our own chosen charities 'Options' based at the Pioneering Care Centre and 'Wishing Well Club' based at Woodham Golf Club. It has been a busy year visiting clubs and organisations including the Air Training Corps who are a superb group of young people and an inspiration to us all. In all, we have made hundreds of visits and attended many civic events, but some of the most enjoyable have been to present flowers and cards to those residents celebrating 100th birthdays and sixtieth anniversaries.

Local events, such as the visit by the Knife Angel were poignant reminders of the times in which we live, but services remembering the debt we owe to our forefathers at the Remembrance Parade always bring a tear to my eye. I would like to extend my thanks to Reverends John and Helen Musson for their support and Milly from St Elizabeth's Church, Woodham, for her ready smile and jolly demeanour when helping to organise our recent coffee morning.

This year has been an adventure for me as I wrote a book based on a talk at St Andrew's, given by churchwarden David Blair, about the coming of Locomotion to Aycliffe. I surprised myself, as I am no scholar, but the book seems to have been a great success in that the local children seem to have enjoyed it as much as I enjoyed writing it. Many thanks to Rotary Great Aycliffe and, in particular Brian Winwood for organising the printing of the books, which were distributed free to all primary schools in Great Aycliffe.

We have a wonderful town, and it has been our pleasure to represent you. We take great pleasure in wishing the new Mayor every success in representing Great Aycliffe Parish.

CLlr Ken Robson and Mayoress Elaine Robson.



Great Aycliffe Town Council NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026

Big enough to matter
Small enough to care

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All Aboard the Aycliffe Village Infant Play Area

Work steamed ahead on Monday 18th May as construction began on the long awaited Aycliffe Village Infant Play Area - a brand new station of fun designed especially for local children.

Just like a busy railway hub, the new play area has been carefully planned so every young passenger can hop on, join in, and enjoy the journey.

A Play Area Built for Little Travellers

Aimed at children aged 2 to 7, the new space will sit right beside the existing junior play area, creating a full 'play line' for families to explore.

The equipment has been chosen with inclusivity in mind, making sure as many children as possible can take part. Highlights include:

- A role play ticket office where children can pretend to buy tickets, run the station, or send their friends on imaginary adventures
- A train themed climbing frame inspired by the nearby East Coast Main Line
- A brand new cantilever 'birds nest' swing, replacing the damaged one in the junior area and bringing back a much loved favourite

Fun Train Facts for Young Readers

To celebrate the progress, here are some playful railway themed facts to keep excitement on track:

- Trains and imagination go hand in hand - children often love trains because they spark stories about journeys, destinations, and adventure.
- Climbing frames are like mini locomotives - they help build strength and confidence, just like an engine powering up a hill.
- Swings feel like flying down the tracks - the back and forth motion helps children develop balance, rhythm and coordination.
- Inclusive play is the real express route - when everyone can join in, friendships grow faster than a high speed train.

When Will the Play Area Open?

The final touches are weather dependent, but Council Officers are confident the new play area will be ready to welcome its first young passengers by the first week of June.



You can find Great Aycliffe Town Council on the following platforms:



JOIN US FOR GATC'S
FUN IN THE PARK

DAY	DATE	PARK
WEDNESDAY	22ND JULY 2026	TOWN PARK
FRIDAY	24TH JULY 2026	SIMPASTURE PARK
WEDNESDAY	29TH JULY 2026	MOORE LANE PARK
FRIDAY	31ST JULY 2026	OAK LEAF SPORTS COMPLEX FIELD
WEDNESDAY	5TH AUGUST 2026	ST OSWALD'S PARK
FRIDAY	7TH AUGUST 2026	HORNDALE PARK
WEDNESDAY	12TH AUGUST 2026	AYCLIFFE VILLAGE PARK
FRIDAY	14TH AUGUST 2026	WOODHAM PARK

Fun in the Park is our summer holiday event series designed for children aged 3 to 8 years. Taking place across eight of our local parks, each session runs from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm and is packed with activities for young families to enjoy.

These events offer free entertainment for families throughout the day. Additional attractions such as side stalls, body art, food vans, and ice cream vans will also be available, with charges applying for these extras.

*Height, weight, and age restrictions apply to inflatables, fairground rides, the climbing wall, and bungee trampolines.

WWW.GREAT-AYCLIFFE.GOV.UK

Great Aycliffe Town Council
ELEVATE

Elevate your summer, with big thrills, high energy, and non stop fun. Join us on Tuesday 11th August 2026, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm at the Town Park, Newton Aycliffe, for an action-packed afternoon designed for young people aged 10-16 (give or take). Your £2 entry (cash only) gets you access to five awesome attractions.

Attractions:

- Ghost Train
- Frog Ride
- Miami Ride
- Bumpy Slide
- Assault Course

T & C's: Cash only, one turn per attraction, height and weight restrictions apply to equipment. Side stalls, body art, and food vans will also be available, with charges applying for these extras.

ANNUAL REPORT

During 2025/26 the Council has continued to provide many valued services, facilities and events to the residents of Great Aycliffe.

The Town Council will face significant challenges over the coming years as it deals with the financial impact of the withdrawal of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant by Durham County Council, and increasing budget pressures as a result of the ongoing economic difficulties which are causing particular strain on the Council's Revenue Budget.

The Council will always strive to support the community and protect and maintain important services and facilities, including our cemeteries, allotments, green open space and environmental areas, parks, play areas, pre-school, community events, football pitches, and the sports and golf complex.

However, the Council will continuously review the services it currently offers in line with community priorities and needs, consider how they are delivered, and seek more efficient ways of running services to ensure that they are providing the best value for money.

I will now provide an overview of the many services that the Town Council has planned and committed to provide to the community of Great Aycliffe during this coming year.

Environment

The Town Council takes great pride in the green environment of the town and provides a number of services in support of this. This includes the provision of:-

Allotments

The Town Council provides 220 allotment sites

located at:

- o Clarence Chare
- o Finchale Road
- o St. Oswald's
- o Aycliffe Village and
- o Byerley Park

In addition to the allotments gardens, the Town Council also offers facilities for keeping pigeons and poultry, as well as beekeeping plots at specific allotments sites.

The Council also provides a home at Clarence Chare Allotments for the Great Aycliffe Garden Guild, who run a not-for-profit allotments shop and community room on site.

Cemeteries

The Town Council provides, maintains and undertakes burial services at its two cemeteries at West Cemetery and Stephenson Way. We also provide a burial service for St. Andrews Church in Aycliffe Village.

Environment and Green Open Space

The Town Council carry out the environmental management of a number of nature and conservation areas and other green open space in the Parish, including the Great Aycliffe Way, Woodham Burn, South Agnew Plantation, Cobbler's Hall Plantation, Simpasture Railway Walk, Aycliffe Nature Park, School Aycliffe Wetlands and Byerley Park Nature Area. The Town Council is also the custodian of Aycliffe Village Greens.

We deliver a comprehensive programme of environmental activities for schools and scouts and guides groups, work with community and voluntary groups such as Great Aycliffe Tidy

Team, run environment events, and deliver an Environment Week, which involves visiting the primary schools in the town to give an interactive presentation on litter and then offering the opportunity for the children to take part in a litter pick in their local community.

We own the Eco Centre at Moore Lane Park, which is currently occupied by Green Arts who run green arts programmes, activities and events from the building.

The Town Council has also declared a Climate Emergency and is working towards reducing its carbon footprint and becoming carbon zero by 2050, putting in place an ambitious Carbon Reduction Plan.

Planned projects for this coming year include the installation of solar panels on land at the works depot, seeking funding for electric vehicle charging points at Council facilities and tree planting across the Parish, including a significant ongoing tree planting project on the **Oak Leaf Golf Course**.

Grounds Maintenance

The Town Council undertakes grounds maintenance e.g. the provision of flower beds, grass cutting and tree planting and maintenance, on all Council owned land and facilities.

Street Equipment

The Town Council provides public seating, bus shelters, and litter and dog bins on Town Council owned land.

Recreation

Leisure facilities and community events have formed a major part of the Council's service

BYERLEY PARK, HORNSDALE & COBBLERS HALL WARD



(I) Jackie McFadden (I) Dorothy Bowman (LD) Rich Burchell



(LD) Anne Woodward (LD) John Woodward (I) Sharon Hutchinson

YOUR TOWN COUNCILLORS

AYCLIFFE CENTRAL

AYCLIFFE VILLAGE

WEST WARD



(I) Martin Ashcroft (I) Arun Chandran (I) George Gray



(I) Tracey Williams (I) Ken Robson (I) Chris Clement

WOODHAM WARD



(LD) Lindsey Aston (I) Neil Collinson Vacancy



(I) John Moore (LD) Sandra Kirby (LD) Michael Stead

AYCLIFFE CENTRAL



(L) Luke Ellis

AYCLIFFE CENTRAL



(I) Richard Hutchinson

NEVILLE



(I) Phillip Hawkins

NEVILLE



(I) Tony Beddard

SIMPASTURE



(I) Andy Hill

SIMPASTURE



(I) Brian Sowerby

SHAFTO/ST. MARY'S



(I) Tony Armstrong (LD) Tunde Akinsanya

SHAFTO/ST. MARY'S



(I) Brian Haigh (LD) Kyle Robinson

provision over the years. This includes the provision of:-

Parks and Play Areas

The Town Council owns and operates eight very different parks, all with their own individual character. These are found around the town at:

- o Moore Lane Park
- o St. Oswald's Park
- o Town Park
- o Horndale Park
- o Simpasture Park
- o West Park
- o Byerley Park
- o Woodham Park

We provide modern and well-maintained play equipment at all of these parks, as well as specific play areas at the following sites:-

- o Oakleaf Sports Complex
- o School Aycliffe
- o Aycliffe Village
- o Scott Place
- o Cobbler's Hall

The Town Council also provides five multi-use games areas at Moore Lane, Simpasture, Horndale, Woodham and Cobbler's Hall, as well as a skate park in the Town Park, a scoot track at Horndale Park and a BMX track at Woodham Park. This year the Council will be investing in the refurbishment of Aycliffe Village infant play area.

Park Patrol Service

The Park Patrol Service provides an out of hours service to monitor and safeguard the Council's parks and other facilities and the safety and welfare of their users.

Oak Leaf Sports Complex

The Oak Leaf Sports Complex provides an indoor bowls green, a multi-use sports hall, four squash

courts, a darts facility, a function room and bar and catering facilities. A games room has also recently been developed within the function room.

The Sports Complex is also home to an indoor bowls club, squash club, running club and archery club, and provides a number of coaching and activity sessions for both adults and children, including an activity programme for children during school holidays.

In recent years, a programme of events has been developed at the sports complex including dog shows, model railway exhibitions, Cliffe-Con and Fantazmagoria events, pantomimes, and seasonal craft markets.

Oak Leaf Golf Complex

The Town Council also manages and operates the Oak Leaf Golf Complex, comprising an eighteen-hole golf course, 18-bay floodlit driving range, golf shop, and changing rooms.

Football Pitches

The Town Council provides several football pitches, including junior football and six a side pitches at three sites:

- o Sports Complex
- o Simpasture
- o Moore Lane

Community Events

The Town Council runs a programme of annual community events including:-

- o Senior Citizens' Excursions
- o Fireworks Display
- o Fun in the Parks
- o Santa Tours and Santa Letters
- o Christmas Lighting Display

The Senior Citizens' Trips for 2025 were once again very popular, with 993 local residents visiting destinations including York, Seahouses,

Harrogate, Keswick, Hexham, Helmsley and Ripon and Knaresborough.

The trips are again taking place in 2026, with this year's venues York, Whitby, Keswick, Alnwick, Redcar, Tynemouth, Seaham and Dalton Park, and Northallerton and Thirsk. A total of 1,000 places were available and have all been taken up.

The Fun in the Parks for 2025 were extremely busy, with numbers of attendees exceeding expectations at all parks.

The Council also developed a new Fun in the Park style event last year for older children, called 'Elevate', offering fairground rides and attractions.

For 2026 we have another full programme of Fun in the Parks scheduled for the summer holidays and will again be running the Elevate event.

The Council also held two events last year to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day. The Council again provided the use of our land at the Oak Leaf playing fields to community interest company to hold the Aycliffe Music Festival at the end of July. The event was a great success and is taking place again this year, with support from the Town Council.

The Council also funds and helps facilitate the Big Brass Bash in the Town Park which also takes place in July.

The Council also provides funding, use of land and staffing support to events run by local organisations including the following events:-

- o Remembrance Day Parade
- o Fun Fair at Moore Lane
- o Cyclocross Event
- o Aycliffe Bus Preservation Society Vintage Bus Event

MEMBERS ATTENDANCE - 14th MAY 2025 - 30th APRIL 2026

Councillor	Council			Policy & R			Special P & R			Recreation			Environment			Sub Committee Totals			Working Groups Totals			TOTALS		
	Att.	Apols.	Poss.	Att.	Apols.	Poss.	Att.	Apols.	Poss.	Att.	Apols.	Poss.	Att.	Apols.	Poss.	Att.	Apols.	Poss.	Att.	Apols.	Poss.	Att.	Apols.	Poss.
Akinsanya T	8	2	10	7	1	8	0	1	1	5	3	8	4	4	8	1	2	7	0	0	0	25	13	42
Armstrong T	9	0	10	4	4	8	1	0	1	6	2	8	6	2	8	4	2	7	1	0	1	31	10	43
Ashcroft M	8	2	10	8	0	8	1	0	1	8	0	8	8	0	8	10	0	10	1	0	1	44	2	46
Aston L	8	2	10	6	1	8	1	0	1	7	0	8	7	0	8	2	3	6	0	0	0	31	6	41
Beddard J	9	1	10	7	1	8	1	0	1	7	1	8	7	1	8	8	2	10	1	0	1	40	6	46
Beddard T	9	1	10	7	1	8	1	0	1	7	1	8	7	1	8	10	4	14	1	0	1	42	8	50
Bowman D	8	2	10	6	2	8	1	0	1	8	0	8	8	0	8	2	1	4	0	0	0	33	5	39
Chandran A M	10	0	10	8	0	8	1	0	1	8	0	8	8	0	8	12	2	14	1	0	1	48	2	50
Collinson N	8	2	10	6	2	8	1	0	1	7	1	8	7	1	8	5	6	12	1	0	1	35	12	48
Conners L	3	2	8	0	3	7	0	1	1	0	5	8	0	5	8	3	1	8	1	0	1	7	17	41
Ellis L	7	1	10	7	1	8	1	0	1	8	0	8	7	1	8	1	1	3	1	0	1	32	4	39
Gill J	5	2	7	6	0	6	1	0	1	6	0	7	5	1	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	24	3	28
George G	10	0	10	8	0	8	0	1	1	8	0	8	7	1	8	2	0	2	1	0	1	36	2	38
Haigh B	6	4	10	7	0	8	1	0	1	7	1	8	7	1	8	2	2	4	0	0	0	30	8	39
Hawkins P	10	0	10	7	1	8	1	0	1	8	2	8	5	3	8	4	2	9	0	0	0	33	8	44
Hill A	8	2	10	8	0	8	1	0	1	6	2	8	6	2	8	5	1	6	0	0	0	34	7	41
Hutchinson R	9	1	10	4	3	8	0	1	1	4	3	8	2	5	8	6	3	10	0	0	0	25	16	45
Kirby S	10	0	10	7	1	8	1	0	1	5	2	8	4	3	8	2	1	5	0	0	0	29	7	40
Mc Fadden J	8	2	10	5	3	8	1	0	1	4	4	8	4	4	8	5	5	10	1	0	1	28	18	46
Moore J	8	2	10	6	2	8	1	0	1	7	1	8	7	1	8	2	0	2	1	0	1	32	6	38
Robinson C	10	0	10	6	2	8	1	0	1	5	3	8	5	3	8	10	2	12	0	0	0	37	10	47
Robinson K	7	3	10	7	1	8	0	1	1	6	1	8	6	1	8	7	2	10	1	0	1	34	9	46
Robson K	9	1	10	6	2	8	1	0	1	7	1	8	7	1	8	10	1	12	0	0	0	40	6	47
Sowerby B	8	2	10	4	4	8	1	0	1	7	1	8	6	2	8	0	0	2	0	0	0	26	9	37
Stead M	10	0	10	8	0	8	1	0	1	5	3	8	5	3	8	3	1	7	1	0	1	33	7	43
Williams T	10	0	10	8	0	8	1	0	1	8	0	8	8	0	8	3	1	4	0	0	0	38	1	39
Woodward A	10	0	10	7	1	8	1	0	1	7	1	8	7	1	8	6	1	7	0	0	0	38	4	42
Woodward J	10	0	10	7	1	8	1	0	1	8	0	8	8	0	8	7	0	7	0	0	0	41	1	42
Burchell R	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Where apologies are not received, the entry will be left blank

Other Services

Other services provided by the Town Council include:-

Pre-School Learning Centre

The Town Council provides a Pre-School Learning Centre located in St. Oswald's Park which is currently registered for 40 places for 3 and 4-year-old children.

The Council also provides a setting for two-year olds called 'Tots in the Park', offering 12 places, morning and afternoon, 5 days per week.

Both pre-schools are classified as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

Grants and Donations Fund

The Town Council operates a grants and donations fund offering financial support to community organisations and local charities.

Community Recognition Scheme

The Council operates a Community Recognition Award Scheme to provide a means of recognising and acknowledging the dedication, commitment and outstanding contribution that nominated individuals make to improve and promote the Parish of Great Aycliffe.

Civic Events

The Town Council hold a number of civic events including Mayor's at Home and the Annual Charity Civic Dinner.

Newsletter

The Council produces four newsletters each year to keep the public advised of current activities, services, and events. Most newsletters are now published electronically.

Investment in Community Assets

The Council has continued to develop its Asset Management Plan in order to plan investment in Council and community assets such as buildings, vehicles, machinery, play equipment and street equipment.

The Council's Capital Programme makes budget provision each year for an ongoing programme of investment in these assets and significant investment has been made in recent years in community assets such as play equipment, bus shelters, cemeteries etc.

Last year, capital expenditure totalled £411,300 and included essential investment to council buildings, replacement vehicles and machinery, replacement photocopiers, drainage improvement works at Simpasture football pitches, replacement driving range and golf course machinery, replacement heating system at the Sports Complex, drainage improvement works at both cemeteries, replacement of the swing unit in the Town Park, significant tree planting works on the golf course, information technology improvements, play area safety surfacing, bus shelter repairs, footpath repairs and bridge repairs.

This year planned investment totals nearly £1 million and includes further essential investment to Council buildings including roofing works, heating systems, window and door replacement, and changing room refurbishment at the Sports Complex, works vehicles and machinery, replacement computer equipment and cyber security investments, Council Chamber audiovisual technology, purchase of a vertidrainer machine, festive lighting, refurbishment of Aycliffe Village infant play area, play area safety surfacing replacement and footpath repairs, tree works, and bus shelter and bridge repairs.

Council Finances

Despite the challenges created by the ongoing economic difficulties over the last year, the Council ended the 2025/26 year in relatively strong financial health, having delivered a significant saving on its Revenue Budget, which

offset the investment in capital assets and allowed the Council to maintain balances and reserves in the region of £2 million.

The majority of the savings last year were as a result of the planned top-up of capital reserves, an unused contingency sum, significantly increased investment income, substantial increases in golf complex memberships and income, increased sports complex income, increased income at St Oswald's Pre-School as a result of good attendance numbers and SEN funding. There have also been savings in running costs such as gas and electricity and savings from staff turnover and vacancies.

The positive financial position has also been helped by the prudent budget management of all service managers, overseen by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee, which has resulted in savings across most budget areas. In doing so the Council has continued to deliver efficiency savings across all services and deliver value for money to local taxpayers. This healthy financial situation, combined with the identification and delivery of various efficiency savings, was important looking ahead to next year, as notice was received from Durham County Council that it would be withdrawing, in its entirety, the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grants payable to town and parish councils with effect from 2026/27. This resulted in a loss of £145,250 for the Town Council. However, as a consequence of the Council's strong financial position and efficiency savings being delivered, the Council was able to avoid making cuts to services, and set a 2026/27 Revenue and Capital Budget that will enable all current services, facilities, and events to be provided to the usual standards this year, continued capital investment in community assets, and the ongoing replenishment of Council reserves. Unfortunately, this meant that despite planning to limit the Town Council Tax increase to less than 2% in 2026/27, unfortunately, in order to offset the grant cut, and other inflationary budget pressures on staff pay and running costs, the Council was left with no choice but to implement a higher increase than initially planned. This resulted in a total increase in the Town Council Tax of 3.99%, which increased the Band A Town Council Tax by £8 this year, taking the yearly bill to £208 per year or £17 per month. This equates to 11p in every £1 of the total Council Tax bill.

The Council also achieved another unqualified external audit report in relation to its Annual Governance and Accountability Return last year. This was a very pleasing outcome and provides independent assurance that the Council's accounting statements present fairly its financial position, and that its financial management, governance, and internal audit arrangements are all sound.

Looking further ahead, the Council continues to face significant financial challenges, including pressure on staffing costs linked to increases in the National Living Wage, and increasing inflationary pressure linked to global conflict and economic difficulties.

The Council is also due to make significant capital investment next year and over the medium to longer term and this will result in a significant depletion in the Council's balances and reserves.

However, the Council has strong foundations in place due to its healthy financial position and will seek to manage the future challenges faced via the forthcoming update of its Medium-Term Financial Plan with a view to keeping any future increases in Council Tax to a minimum.

New Mayor Appointed



At the Annual Meeting of the Council, on Wednesday 13th May 2026, Councillor Neil Collinson was duly elected to the appointment of Mayor of Great Aycliffe. The Chain of Office was handed to him by the previous Mayor, Ken Robson.

Councillor Collinson thanked the Council on his election as Mayor and is now looking ahead to a busy year visiting various residents and organisations around the parish and fundraising towards his chosen good causes; Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group and All Disabilities Matter.

Outgoing Mayor's Donation

Former Mayor, Councillor Ken Robson, presented a cheque to Linda West, Options Services Coordinator, for £1,240 at the Town Council's Annual Meeting in May. A further cheque for £1,240 was sent to the Wishing Well group, as they were unable to attend.

Councillor Ken Robson thanked everyone for their support over the last twelve months.



Meeting Dates

2026

27th May	Recreation	7pm
	Environment	*7pm
3rd June	Policy & Resources	7pm
10th June	Full Council	7pm
8th July	Recreation	7pm
	Environment	*7pm
15th July	Policy & Resources	7pm
22nd July	Full Council	7pm
2nd September	Recreation	7pm
	Environment	*7pm
9th September	Policy & Resources	7pm
16th September	Full Council	7pm
14th October	Recreation	7pm
	Environment	*7pm
21st October	Policy & Resources	7pm
28th October	Full Council	7pm
25th November	Recreation	7pm
	Environment	*7pm
2nd December	Policy & Resources	7pm
9th December	Full Council	7pm

2027

13th January	Recreation	7pm
	Environment	*7pm
20th January	Policy & Resources	7pm
27th January	Full Council	7pm
24th February	Recreation	7pm
	Environment	*7pm
3rd March	Policy & Resources	7pm
10th March	Full Council	7pm
7th April	Recreation	7pm
	Environment	*7pm
14th April	Policy & Resources	7pm
21st April	Full Council	7pm

* The Environment Committee follows the Recreation Committee Meeting.

Wednesday 12th May 2027, Council Annual Meeting 7pm
 Wednesday 19th May 2027, Parish Meeting 7pm.
 Audit, Risk and GDPR meet quarterly.
 Other sub-committees meet as and when required.
 The public and press are cordially invited to attend. The public entrance to the council chamber will be open 30 minutes prior to the commencement of meetings.

2025/26 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Listed below for public disclosure is the allowances and other expenses claimed by the Council's Elected Members during the financial year 2025/26 in line with statutory requirements as set out in the Local Authority (Members Allowances) Regulations 2004.

Surname	Forenames	Title	Total Payment	Member's Allowance	Subsistence	Mileage Claim
Adam	Eddy	Mr	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
Akinsanya	Tunde	Mr	£1,219.13	£1,219.13	£0	£0
Armstrong	Tony	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Ashcroft	Martin	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Aston	Lindsey	Mrs	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Atkinson	James	Mr	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
Beddard	Jacqueline	Mrs	£1,219.13	£1,219.13	£0	£0
Beddard	Anthony	Mr	£1,219.13	£1,219.13	£0	£0
Bowman	Dorothy	Mrs	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Chandran	Arun	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Clark	John	Mr	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
Collinson	Neil	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Connors	Lisa	Cllr	£1,169.68	£1,169.68	£0	£0
Ellis	Luke	Mr	£1,219.13	£1,219.13	£0	£0
Gill	Jordan	Mr	£1,108.30	£1,108.30	£0	£0
Gray	George	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Gray	Ian	Mr	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
Haigh	Brian	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Hawkins	Phillip	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Hillary	Jed	Mr	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
Hillary	Wendy	Mrs	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
Hill	Andrew	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Hocking	Simon	Mr	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
Hutchinson	Richard	Mr	£1,219.13	£1,219.13	£0	£0
Jones	Neville	Mr	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
Jones	Joanne	Mrs	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
Kirby	Sandra	Ms	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
McAnaney	Brian	Mr	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
McFadden	Jaqueline	Cllr	£1,219.13	£1,219.13	£0	£0
Moore	John	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Musa	Peter	Mr	£110.83	£110.83	£0	£0
Robinson	Carl	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Robinson	Kyle	Mr	£1,219.13	£1,219.13	£0	£0
Robson	Kenneth	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Stead	Michael	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Sowerby	Brian	Mr	£1,219.13	£1,219.13	£0	£0
Woodward	John	Mr	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Woodward	Anne	Mrs	£1,329.96	£1,329.96	£0	£0
Williams	Tracey	Cllr	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total Member's Allowances			£35,859.47	£35,859.47	£0	£0

2025/26 Grants and Donations

Date of Meeting	Minute No.	Charity Number (If applicable)	Name of Beneficiary or Organisation	Purpose of Donation	Donations £15,000 Budget	Community Benefit Fund £8,510 Budget	Community Events Budget £4,000 Budget
16/04/2025	103a (i)	1168614	Lifeline Community Action	A grant for £2,500 towards the development of the new Community Hub facility.	£2,500.00		
16/04/2025	103b (ii)		Newton Aycliffe Pipe Band	The provision of 30 ties bearing the Town Heraldic Shield (Armorial Bearings) to be taken from existing stocks.	£0.00		
16/07/2025	32 a(i)		Catherine Lenahan	A donation for £1,000 towards the production of reading materials for early years children.	£1,000.00		
16/07/2025	32 b(i)	1131381	Welcome Café	A grant for £2,000 towards the purchase of an industrial dishwasher.	£2,000.00		
16/07/2025	36(ii)		Baccanalia	A grant of £1,001 towards the costs of artist fees, materials, venue infrastructure, and marketing for the South West Durham Heritage Festival 2025. Please note that the event was cancelled on 3rd October due to Storm Amy - Event went ahead on 17.11.25			£1,001.00
10/09/2025	43a)		Rachael Tumelty	A donation of £200 towards American Football training and travelling expenses.	£200.00		
10/09/2025	43b)		Cute Fox Events	A grant of £700 towards the venue hire costs of a 'comic-con' style event in May 2026. Please note that this grant will be provided via an internal recharge, to the sports complex income budget.			£700.00
10/09/2025	43 c)	1034862	Rotary Newton Aycliffe	A donation of £900 towards the costs of a Welfare in the Community initiative.	£900.00		
22/10/2025	57 a (i)	1209817	Rotary Club of Great Aycliffe	A donation for £400 to assist with the costs of room hire and accommodation for some of the exhibitors at the 2026 Model Railway Exhibition.			£400.00
22/10/2025	57 b (i)	1209817	Rotary Club of Great Aycliffe	A donation for £850 to support the cost of running their various Christmas activities.	£850.00		
04/03/2026	107 (ii)		Oak Leaf Golf Club Captain's Charity	A donation of a 4-ball voucher, a driving range card and a voucher to spend in the golf shop, to a total value of £270, for use by the Club Captain in one of his charity competitions and events.	£270.00		
11/03/2026	133 (ii)	1113088	NE War Memorials Project	A donation of £100 be made to the Northeast War Memorials project.	£100.00		

TOTAL PAYMENTS	£7,820.00	£0.00	£2,101.00
BALANCE REMAINING	£7,180.00	£8,510.00	£1,899.00



Newton Aycliffe Juniors

Week commencing 20th April 2026

Under 8's hosted Darlington Young Bulls in an entertaining game, Noah grabbed a first half hat-trick, with Seb and Ethan adding the other goals.

Under 8's Juniors travelled to Northallerton Town Reds, with Noah (2) and Jacob M (3) scoring the goals. Jacob M was MOTM.

Under 9's Blues finished their campaign at home to Middleton Rangers Hurricanes, putting pressure on the opposition, Aycliffe scored through Leland and an OG.

Under 10's Juniors hosted Darlington FC in a friendly, it was a great game, ending remarkably close. Goals from Kian, Lincoln and Connor.

Under 11's had a tough day against Billingham Juniors Lions, they maintained a great attitude throughout but could not get the goal they desired.

Under 12's Blacks played their last league game away against Normanby United Oranges, drawing 1-1 in a hard-fought game.

Under 12's Blues faced Wrekenton, running out with an amazing 11-1 win. Goals from Charlie (6), Alfie, Yash, Koa, Roman, Finley C and an OG. Finley C was MOTM.

Under 12's Reds faced Seaton Carew, in the quarter final of the Challenge Cup. Aycliffe got an amazing 3-2 win over a team from three divisions higher. Finley, Marshall and an OG with the goals. Fletcher was MOTM.

Under 13 Whites travelled to Consett Junior Warriors, looking to avenge a heavy defeat from earlier in the season. An industrious performance culminated in a win with a goal from Oscar, who was also MOTM.

Under 14's Blacks travelled to Shincliffe and participated in an amazing 4-4 draw. Goals from Cody, Kaylm and Connor (2). MPOTM was Oliver, PPOTM were Cody and Sammy.

Under 15's entertained Leven Whites, with a depleted squad, Aycliffe secured a 3-2 win with goals from Oscar J, Layton W and Rhys. Sam was awarded MOTM.

Under 15's travelled to face local rivals Shildon in what was a competitive game. Despite leading 2-0, Aycliffe went down 2-3. Both goals were scored by Layton W, with Miles being awarded MOTM.

Week commencing 27th April 2026

Under 12's Reds got a great 4-2 win against Darlington RA Rockets, with goals from Koa, OG, Marshall and Charlie. Alfie was MOTM.

Under 12's Reds faced Billingham, drawing 1-1, with Yash scoring a wonderful bicycle kick. Finley S was awarded MOTM.

Under 12's Blues faced Hartlepool St Francis, narrowly losing 3-2 against a wonderful team. Finley C scored both goals, with Jenson awarded MOTM.

Under 12's Reds faced Billingham Synthonia in the semi-final of the Challenge Cup. An amazing 2-1 saw the Reds progress to the final. Goals from Alfie and Yash, who was also MOTM.

Under 14's Blacks welcomed Whitburn & Cleadon to Woodham, drawing



3-3. Goals from Kai and Connor (2). PPOTM was Jack, MPOTM was Riley.

Under 14's Blacks faced Brandon, coming away with an amazing 7-3 win. Goals were scored by Kaylm (3), Kai (2), Cody and Connor. MPOTM was James and Kai. PPOTM was Kaylm.

Under 15's were away to Marske, on a tough night for the team. Layton W managed to score Aycliffe's goal and was awarded MOTM.

Week commencing 4th May 2026

Under 11's Blacks were in a tournament and put in an exceptional performance, progressing to the final and ending up runners up. Goals throughout were scored by Kaiden (4), Shaun R and Ollie.

Week commencing 11th May 2026

Under 12's Blues faced Wrekenton, running wild with an amazing 10-1 win. Goals from Charlie (2), Finley C (2), Laitia, Roman, Finley S (2) and Alfie (2), who was awarded MOTM.

Under 12's Reds faced St Francis in the Challenge Cup final. A day for the team to be proud of, they battled, but could not get the win, going down 4-3. Goals from Charlie, Marshall and Alfie. Jenson was MOTM.

Coffee, Cake and Stuff

School Aycliffe Community Centre.
All proceeds towards upkeep of Centre.

Thursday 4th June 2026

11am until 2.00pm

Hi folks, due to Whit Week our next coffee morning will be held in June. During this session we will also be introducing Shane Stanely, our new digital inclusion officer. Shane will be on hand in the meeting room throughout the morning to offer digital support to anyone who is feeling left behind in technology. Bring along your own devices for help, or use our office computers to get started, all free of charge.
Elizabeth & Christine.

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Buddy's Journey To Spain and Back 2026

In September 2026, Buddy, Makayla, Granddad Bill and Kim, who all live in Newton Aycliffe, will be setting off on an unforgettable road trip from the UK to Benidorm, Spain - and all the way back again, in our trusty car.

But this journey is about far more than the miles we'll travel.

After receiving the blessing of Makayla and Millie's Grandad Bill, we are proud to announce that the trip will be raising money for an incredible cause: The Great North Children's Hospital.

Every penny raised throughout the journey will go directly into our dedicated charity fund and will be donated in full at the end of the trip.

How Supporters Can Get Involved:

To make the fundraiser even more special, the car itself will become part of the journey.

£1 Donation - Add Your Name to the Car
Supporters can have their name written on the car and travel with us from the UK to Spain and back again.

£5 Donation - Add a Personal Message
For a £5 donation, supporters can add a short personal message to the car. Many choose to dedicate messages to loved ones who are no longer with us - giving them a meaningful place on the journey too.

By the time we reach Spain, we hope the car will be completely covered in names and messages, each one representing someone who has helped support this amazing cause.

Challenges for Makayla:

Throughout the trip, Makayla will also be taking on a series of sponsored challenges along the way.

Some may be funny, some difficult, and some completely unexpected. Supporters who sponsor the journey may even get the chance to suggest challenges for Makayla to complete during the road trip.

Following the Journey

We'll be sharing daily updates throughout the adventure, including:

- Photos and videos from the road;
- Stories from our travels;
- Progress on the fundraising total;
- The growing collection of names and messages covering the car;

From motorway service stations to arriving in sunny Benidorm, supporters will be able to follow every step of the journey with us.

A Journey in Memory of Millie:

This trip is especially meaningful because it is being made in memory of Millie, and in support of every child bravely fighting cancer.

As Part of the Tribute:

Memory Balloon / Lantern Release. When Makayla reaches Spain, we plan to release balloons or lanterns carrying the names of loved ones remembered throughout the journey.

Message Mile. Messages written on the car will travel thousands of miles, alongside Makayla, becoming part of the story and spirit of the trip.

How You Can Help

You can support Buddy's Journey by:

- Donating whatever you can.

- Suggesting a challenge for Makayla.

Sharing the campaign to help spread the word.

Every donation, no matter the size, will help support the incredible work carried out by The Great North Children's Hospital and the

families facing some of the hardest moments of their lives. We want this journey to be memorable, meaningful, and full of heart - exactly how Millie would have wanted it.

Thank you to everyone supporting Buddy's Journey To Spain and Back 2026. Together, we hope to raise as much as possible for a hospital that provides life-changing care and support to so many children and families.

All money raised will go directly into our Great North Children's Hospital charity fund and donated in full at the end of the journey . . . Let the adventure begin.

For more information telephone 07412 744931 or email: kim.hedley@hotmail.com



A Year in Politics . . .

A year on from the political upheaval of 25th May, serving as councillor for Aycliffe North and Middridge has been both challenging and rewarding. Since being elected, I've gained a deeper understanding of local government, the role councillors play, and the realities of politics - from difficult moments to the privilege of meeting residents and hearing their stories.

Working alongside fellow councillors across Aycliffe, we have supported a range of local projects, including Aycliffe Live, community events, veterans' charities, footpath improvements, and football facilities. We've also worked closely with community groups, local police, housing providers and residents, to address local concerns.

As Cabinet Member for Rural, Farming and Transport, I'm helping deliver the change residents voted for. Key priorities include tackling the growth of HMOs through a new countywide Article 4 direction, improving roads and congestion hotspots, introducing additional 20mph school zones and addressing potholes, through new repair methods.

Looking ahead, new Local Networks will soon provide £200,000 for local improvements, with residents encouraged to get involved in shaping spending priorities. The forthcoming Newton Aycliffe Strategic Place Plan also aims to support much-needed regeneration in the town centre.

While the council continues to face financial pressures and the impact of long-term national policy challenges, we remain committed to delivering for residents and improving County Durham. If you need assistance, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

CLlr Tim McGuinness, Aycliffe North.

Topping Out Milestone Celebrated at Greenfield Academy, Newton Aycliffe

Another key milestone has been marked at Greenfield Academy in Newton Aycliffe as Esh Construction celebrated the topping out of the academy's new three storey teaching block.

Representatives from the Advanced Learning Partnership Multi Academy Trust, Durham County Council, Atkins Realis, staff and pupils joined Esh's project team to mark progress on the multi-million pound development, which is delivering a modern education hub alongside enhanced sports and community facilities.

Durham County Council is helping to fund the new education hub and updated facilities, alongside the Multi Academy Trust, with provision ultimately for up to 750 students.

As the Academy's new three-storey block reaches its peak, Esh Construction is also working on a sports centre extension and refurbishment of the existing school facilities. Grant Watson, Construction Director at Esh Construction, said: "Reaching topping out at Greenfield Academy is a significant moment for the project and a real testament to the collaboration between the academy, Durham County Council and our project teams. With the building envelope now largely complete, we're making strong progress internally and looking ahead to the next phases of fit-out and external works that will bring these new facilities to life."

The new three-storey teaching block is now structurally complete, with the roof fully installed and tested, brickwork nearing completion and the windows fully glazed, creating a secure and weather-tight building. Internally, works are progressing across all three floors, with partitions formed and classrooms taking shape, while initial mechanical and electrical works, including containment, pipework and cabling, are well underway.

Once complete, the new teaching block will provide 19 classrooms, and specialist subject hubs for IT, art, design & technology and science. Meanwhile, brickwork on the sports centre extension is now complete, with cladding and internal works due to begin. The centre will incorporate new changing facilities and a dedicated dance studio for both curriculum delivery and wider community use.

James Keating, Executive Headteacher at Greenfield Academy, said "This new building will transform the lives of our young people for generations to come. It will give our pupils access to an outstanding learning environment, one



that truly reflects their potential, nurtures their ambition and provides the facilities they deserve.

"These state of the art spaces will inspire creativity, curiosity and confidence, and will support our staff in delivering exceptional education every single day. We are incredibly proud of the progress being made and deeply grateful to all partners involved in bringing this vision to life."

An additional refurbishment contract includes works within areas of the existing school, where spaces are being reconfigured and upgraded to create new layouts and improved facilities, going beyond cosmetic improvements to deliver long-term functional benefits.

The combined multi-million pound redevelopment project will provide modern, flexible teaching spaces, enhanced sports provision and improved facilities designed to support current and future generations of students, while strengthening the academy's role at the heart of the community.

Cllr Cathy Hunt, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for children and young people's service, said: "This is a key milestone in developing a modern education hub at Greenfield Academy and we are pleased that our strong collaboration with Esh Construction and the academy has allowed us to reach this important moment. We're excited for this multi-million-pound development to be completed, when it will provide a cutting-edge facility for families in Newton Aycliffe."

To find out more about Esh Construction, visit: www.eshgroup.co.uk





Member of Parliament Update

Email: alan.strickland.mp@parliament.uk | Telephone: 01325 344185

It was a real privilege to be in Westminster last week to see His Majesty, the King, join us for the State Opening of Parliament. In the first session of five-year parliament, which finished recently, we passed 64 new laws. I'm really proud that a number of new laws were agreed, which will really help local families and residents struggling with multiple jobs or poor-quality housing. I've met residents at my surgeries being badly treated by 'gig-economy' employers. That's why it was real progress for Parliament to pass the Employment Rights Act, which will ban exploitative fire-and-rehire practices, end zero-hours contracts and strengthen rights around sick pay and family leave, so everyone's treated fairly at work. Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour is a top priority for me and our community. That's why I welcome the Crime and Policing Act we passed, which will put more police back on our streets and introduce tougher punishments for offenders. Residents consistently tell me they want to feel safer where they live and these measures are an important step forward. Another major step forward has been the removal of the two-child limit, which is expected to lift thousands of local children out of poverty. Giving every child the best possible start in life is something I care deeply about



and this change will make a real difference to families across the country. Over recent weeks I've continued holding constituency events to hear directly from local residents. This included my regular coffee morning events, this time in Trimdon Grange, following a successful event in West Cornforth in April.

I also want to thank all the parents, carers and young people from across the constituency who attended my SEND reform discussion event in Ferryhill. It was invaluable to hear directly from families with experience of the SEND system and gather feedback on the government's proposals, which I'm raising directly with ministers. SEND is an issue raised with me regularly and I'm determined the government gets these reforms right, so children and young people receive the support they need.

I'm continuing to support local residents with a wide range of personal issues and am proud to have secured some really positive wins recently. This includes helping one constituent secure a backdated payment of £850 Carers' Allowance, as well as an extra £86 weekly payment, supporting another resident to successfully reduce a repayment. I also resolved a challenging cloned number plate case and got wrongly issued fines repaid to the resident.

Helping residents with problems like these is one of the most important parts of my role as a local MP. If you need support with an issue, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

alan.strickland.mp@parliament.uk

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Rotary Newton Aycliffe Working in the Community



A busy few weeks for Rotary Newton Aycliffe with, firstly, an invitation from Simon Day to hold our meeting at Junction 7. This was the ideal opportunity for President Margaret Ord to present Simon and Wife Jane with a Paul Harris Fellow. A PHF is the highest award given by Rotary and, in this instance, is to recognise the huge impact which Simon and Jane have on the welfare of the community and the unfailing support available to anyone walking through the door of the charity.

A massive thank you to both of you, Simon and Jane, for all you do.

Then we moved on to the Town Centre Hub where three of our members, Stewart Wilson, Margaret Fenwick and President Margaret, met with Andy Boyd, who is the Community Safety and Engagement Coordinator working for Lifeline Community Action. Andy readily agreed to place one of our used spectacles collection bins in the hub. Why not pop in, have a cuppa and find out why we need your unwanted specs and what happens to them after you donate?

We also have collection bins in Specsavers, McGuinness Opticians and Sainsbury at Cobblers Hall.

Next, and a warm welcome for President Margaret and Rotarian Sue Dobson, who visited Woodham Burn Primary School and the work their after-school club pupils are doing in creating a garden, both for wildlife and growing fruit and vegetables. More of that with photos next time.

June Events

School Aycliffe Community Association - Community Hall, Eastfields, School Aycliffe DL5 6QH (*Follow the white/brown information signs*).

June Events & Activities

Ladies Night - First Wednesday monthly. Next session: 3rd June, 7-9pm £3 including refreshments. Contact Christine: 07981 992686.

Junior Badminton Classes - Summer 2026

Ages 7+ (5-6pm) and 11+ (6-7pm). Trainers required; equipment provided. Contact Elizabeth Harker: 07813 523050.

Community Choir - 2nd & 4th Monday monthly.

Next session: 8th June, 7-8.30pm, £3 including refreshments.

Contact Julie McGrath: 07742 015609.

Used Stamp Collection Box available at the hall.

Mobile Food Vans

Weird Dough - 10th June, 4.30-7.30pm

Huntley's Fish & Chips - 17th June, 4.30-7pm

Please avoid parking on the road when ordering or collecting food.

Visit the School Aycliffe Community Centre Facebook page for updates.

Everyone is welcome - thank you for supporting our community events.

Outdoor Leadership Courses for Students

Outdoor leadership students are celebrating the launch of a new qualification designed to help them reach new heights in their career. Emerging outdoor professionals will soon be able to study for a two year foundation degree at Darlington College, developed to prepare them for employment.

Designed to build advanced technical, coaching and professional skills, the course has been approved by Teesside University and is now accepting applications for September.

Current Level 3 students have already signed up for the new programme, which is aimed at making learners work-ready in an increasingly competitive sector.

The course features modules including coaching science, practical leadership and coaching in key outdoor disciplines, adventure therapy, and a business module to support students who wish to work freelance or develop their own outdoor enterprises. Course content has been designed to develop students in line with the requirements of outdoor industry national governing bodies, including Paddle UK and the British Mountaineering Council, helping students to gain established industrial qualifications alongside their academic studies.

The college will also offer support towards securing placements in the outdoor industry, using a wide range of existing industrial contacts to help students gain meaningful work experience and develop appropriate industry specific skills.

Anyone interested in applying for the foundation degree, or the level 3 qualification in Outdoor Activity Leadership at Darlington College, should visit: www.darlington.ac.uk or the Darlington College Outdoor Facebook page.





Youth Football News

The season is now complete for most of our teams. There have been successes, consolidations and some disappointments. The season review is as follows:

Under 17 Boys - A fantastic season playing in RFYL division 2 and finishing as League Champions. Every player on the pitch has contributed to the 11 wins, only 1 defeat and 4 draws. The boys have grown not only physically, but in footballing ability. This group have made their coaches and parents extremely proud.

Under 13 Eagles - League championship secured before the final two games of the season, the Eagles have gone through the season unbeaten in the Russell Foster League. The quality of football played from all the lads has been excellent and a joy to watch every week.

Under 12 Wildcats - Finished the season as league champions after completing a superb campaign with a perfect record, winning every game and scoring 100 goals. The girls combined hard work, organisation and attacking football throughout the season. Even more important than the results, the girls have shown a real commitment to developing together as a team, building resilience, teamwork and growing confidence week after week.

Under 14 Eagles - After a slow start, the lads went on an 18 game unbeaten streak including reaching the ¼ finals of the Challenge Cup. A division deciding final game against Darlington TSC ended in a narrow 2-1 loss. However, we still secured promotion and have had a memorable season.

Under 7 Wildcats - What began as a group of girls in Wildcats has grown into something truly special — a team built on friendship, confidence and fun. Their hard work and determination saw them crowned League Shield Champions as well as FC Hartlepool Plate Winners. The girls had a memorable mascot experience as a sister club with Durham Women's FC. Individual development opportunities have one player joining the Foundation of Light PDC and two invited to start Durham WFC's Pre-Academy next season.

Under 16 Girls - A tough season playing in a really strong premier division. The results didn't always go our way, but we held our own in all but a couple of matches. With a small squad of 14, we were able to stay competitive and produced an amazing run in the U16 Durham FA County Cup and ended as runners up.

Under 7 Eagles - The season began in impressive fashion, finishing runners-up in their first two tournaments.

In their first ever league campaign, the Eagles competed brilliantly in a strong and competitive division. During that run they scored 42 goals, conceding just 9, demonstrating both exciting, attacking football and growing defensive strength. More importantly, every player has developed enormously throughout the season.

Under 10 Wildcats - With six girls new to competitive football, it was all about learning and developing. The more experienced girls made the new girls feel at ease and the football began to flow. Narrowly missing out on promotion by one place, but coming back strong in the league cup with 5 wins from 6, with only three games left to play, promotion to the Premier league is in our sights.

Under 10 Pumas - The Pumas' first season together has been great fun. It's been brilliant to see the girls develop in confidence, improve week by week, and grow together as a team.

Under 8 Wildcats - This has been the team's first season together, but the progress, in a short space of time, has been outstanding. They have competed very well in the Russell Foster League, with some excellent results along the way. The team have the potential to be even better next year.

Under 12 Falcons - A good solid season, with some ups and downs. We moved up a division this season and finished mid-table. Lots of development as a team, and some strong performances.

Little Eagles Boys Development and Wildcats Girls Development

Another successful season at our development sections for children aged 5-8 years old. Each week over 50 boys and girls attend our Tuesday and Sunday sessions. Next season we will have new teams at U7 & U9 Boys as well as U7 Girls and a 2nd team at U8 Girls.

If you are interested in starting a football journey, contact Berni 07939 045242.

Bishop Jazz

Come rain or come shine, Bishop Auckland Jazz gave us another wonderful lunchtime performance and, despite the heavy downpour, a smaller audience than usual enjoyed a real treat.

In a beautifully relaxed session, headed by Alan Law on piano, we were entertained with I Wish I Knew in a Latin style, before playing two of his original tunes Bluish and Tyneside Blues, the latter with an outstanding bass solo from Mick Shoulder. Never Ever, You and the Night and the Music, Autumn Leaves, It Could Happen to You and Bye Bye Blackbird completed the set. I was really struck by some incredibly sensitive drumming from John Bradford throughout the set and some lovely informative introductions from Alan before each tune.

The next session features pianist, the Dean Stockdale Trio on Friday 12th June 1.00pm at Bishop Auckland Methodist Church. These piano trio sessions are really welcome and hats off to #bishopaucklandjazz for putting on these events. Let's make Bishop Auckland great again.

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Charity Car Wash

Meynell & Mason are to hold a Charity Car Wash in support of Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group.

Meynell & Mason Funeral Directors will be hosting a charity car wash at their Stephenson Way branch in Newton Aycliffe on Saturday 20th June from 10.00am to 4.00pm.

The event aims to raise funds for the Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group, with all proceeds going towards supporting the charity's valuable work in the local community.

Local residents are warmly invited to bring their cars along for a wash, enjoy tea, coffee and refreshments, and support the fundraising efforts. Meynell & Mason would also welcome any volunteers who would like to help on the day.

The team hopes the community will come together to support a worthwhile cause and make the event a great success.

Construction of New County Durham Cultural Venue Complete

Work to create a new cultural venue and tourist attraction in Durham City has reached an important milestone, with the main construction phase now complete.

The building, which was once home to the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Museum and Durham Art Gallery, was handed back to the council, following its transformation into a multipurpose cultural space.

Over the last two years, construction firm Willmott Dixon has undertaken significant works to the original building, which has been stripped down to its basic structure and almost completely rebuilt. As a result, the venue is now capable of staging world class exhibitions.

Its links to military history, meanwhile, will be retained through a dedicated DLI gallery telling the story of the 'Durhams' through objects, documents and film footage from the DLI Collection.

More than just an exhibition space, The Light has also been designed to include facilities for hosting private events and conferences. A ground floor café, meanwhile, will provide a place for visitors and passers-by to stop for refreshments. Set within beautiful natural grounds, The Light also offers outdoor space for visitors to explore, play and enjoy, alongside quieter areas designed for reflection.

The Light's location, at the heart of Aykley Heads, will also make the venue an anchor institution of Durham's Innovation District. Acting as a meeting place and a creative hub, it will support the game-changing ambitions of the new district and play a key part in the sustainable growth of the site.

And, as a sister venue to The Story, which provides the permanent home to the DLI Collection, it will work alongside attractions across the county to support a visitor offer that celebrates County Durham's heritage and highlights its ambition.

The Light will employ around 18 members of staff, along with opportunities throughout the year for placements, residence schemes, volunteering and fixed term paid employment.

To find out about career opportunities at The Light, visit: www.durham.gov.uk/workingatthelight



Aycliffe Fell Walkers Club

Despite an adverse weather forecast for rain, 32 Aycliffe Fell Walking Club members joined the coach for AFWC's first of four outings this year to the Lake District. The Helvellyn Range was their target, with walks between Legburthwaite and Grasmere. However, there was no rain, but most chose to avoid the highest peaks like Helvellyn and Dollywagon Pike since the cloud level would have obscured any views from the top. Many chose to climb the slightly lower peaks of Greenup Edge and High Raise, to the west, whilst others stuck to more lowland paths with a potential lunch stop of climbing to Grisedale Tarn and the scenic views from there. For myself, I got to Middlehow on the way up to Greenup Edge, but felt very dizzy. I was very grateful to Colin who accompanied me, cutting across the fell to the well-made path coming from Greenup Edge. On our way down to Grasmere we encountered a huge flock of sheep being ushered up the lane by two dogs and a whistling farmer! We caused him a few problems as the sheep shot into an open-gated field to avoid us. He managed to recover them all and it was fascinating to see the dogs working to his commands. The sheep carried on their way whilst all walkers arrived safely in Grasmere for the usual refreshments and engaging chatter.

The next walk on Saturday 13th June is in the North Yorkshire Moors, with a selection of walks between Sutton Bank, Helmsley and Osmotherley, taking in sections of the Cleveland Way with other options across the moorland and Cleveland Hills.

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.



Local Network Drop-Ins

Residents in County Durham can find out more about their Local Network at a series of information events.

Each of Durham County Council's 12 Local Network's will be hosting drop-in sessions for residents throughout June.

Residents and partners can meet their Local Network team, find out what areas they cover, and how the networks function.

They can discover how to share their views about, and priorities for, their local area via each network's Local Network Community Forum and learn more about the council's consultations platform; Let's Talk County Durham.

There is also the chance to hear about funding opportunities the Local Networks may have available in the future.

Drop-in sessions will be taking place on the following dates:

- Crook, Weardale and Willington - Crook Civic Centre, Tuesday 2nd June, 9.30am - 2pm and 4pm - 6pm.
- Consett - Consett Library, Tuesday 2nd June, 10am - 12pm and 2pm - 4pm.
- Teesdale area - Barnard Castle Library, Tuesday 2nd June, 10am - 2pm & 4pm - 6pm.
- Horden, Peterlee and surrounding areas - Eden Hill People's Centre, Wednesday 3rd June, 10am - 2pm.
- Coxhoe, Ferryhill and Spennymoor areas - Trinity Methodist Church, Thursday 4th June, 2pm - 6pm.
- Chester-le-Street and surrounding areas - Chester-le-Street Library, Thursday 4th June, 11am - 7pm.
- Bishop Auckland and Shildon areas - Bishop Auckland Town Hall, Monday 8th June, 10am - 4pm.
- Stanley and surrounding areas - The Louisa Centre, Wednesday 10th June, 11am - 7pm.
- Mid Durham and surrounding areas - Meadowfield Leisure Centre, Thursday 11th June, 10am - 3pm and 5pm - 7pm.
- Easington, Seaham and surrounding areas - Seaham Library, Thursday 11th June, 10am - 2pm.
- **Newton Aycliffe and Sedgfield areas - Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre, Monday 15th June, 9.30am to 4.30pm**
- Durham City and surrounding areas - Clayport Library, Thursday 18th June, 11am - 6.30pm.

Anyone interested in finding out more about their Local Network or the drop-in events can e-mail: LocalNetworks@durham.gov.uk

Wood Carving Club in County Durham



It matters not if you are a complete novice or an experienced wood carver, why not come along to our club and experience the wonderful craft of wood carving. Turning a plain piece of wood into a tactile, beautiful piece of art, is not only satisfying and rewarding, it is also a great way of relaxing and helping to relieve (for a while) the stresses of modern day life.

Wood carving is an ancient craft originating to around 12500 years ago, but don't just think it's a craft from the past, it's also relevant in the present day and beyond with so many modern, new design ideas. It is therefore our desire to ensure it continues with future generations and, with this in mind, it is our motivation to recruit new members to join us. The first four visits are completely free, so it's your opportunity to come along for a few weeks and see if it's for you, with no commitment to join and, what's more, tools and wood will be provided for you throughout this complementary period.

If you are new to carving, one of our existing carvers will be on hand to mentor you and provide guidance and advice as needed.

Wood carving really is for everyone, no matter your gender or indeed your age. You will receive a very warm welcome from our members.

If you do decide to become a member, you are free to carve what ever piece appeals to you. Carvings such as love spoons, wall art carvings, walking sticks, letter openers, animals, caricatures, netsuke, gargoyles or modern abstract carvings, there are so many different opportunities and, with practice and a little patience, you will soon be able to adorn your home with beautiful pieces of your own handiwork.

Our members also have access to the club's free to borrow library, which has a large array of books and DVD's to give inspiration, with many step by step projects to complete, that will assist and guide you through your wood carving journey. We also have some very experienced members who are always willing to give advice and guidance.

Several of our members design their own projects from photographs, or they take inspiration from the internet, so the possibilities really are endless.

At Coniscliffe Carving Club, we have a long history and were established some 26 years ago, originating in Darlington, before finding our new home at Bowburn Community Centre. The majority of our members are not from Bowburn, but they are happy to travel and meet with like minded people for some carving, chat and even a cup of tea.

We meet every Tuesday evening, so if you, or someone you know, may be interested in coming along to see what we get up to, please give me a call to discuss further. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

For more information contact Brenda on 07710 748239.



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OBITUARY

Stephen Maddison
(Steve)



21/3/1928-24/4/2026
A long life of 98 years ended peacefully after a short illness. A bonus Grandfather and dear friend to Paul, Caroline, Richard, Laura, Daniel, Ollie, Joshua, Jess and Steve; a beloved Father to the late Lynne Wright, whom we all miss enormously. Enjoy being back together again.
'Fair winds and following seas Sailor'.

Iris Sinclair

Passed away suddenly on 27th April 2026, aged 88. Beloved Wife of the late Jim; adored Mam of Helen and the late David; loving Nanna to Alex and Auntie to Alison, Carole and Kathryn. Special thanks to Ventress Hall Care Home for their care during her time with them. Funeral took place on Thursday 21st May 2026. Rest in peace Mam xxx

IN MEMORIAM

Agnes Hills

28/4/48-1/5/14

Always loved. Never forgotten.
Your loving
Husband Tom xxx

Gerard Wise



of Hunters Green. Passed away peacefully on the 26th April surrounded by his loving family, aged 64 years. A special Brother and Brother-in-Law; much loved Uncle and friend to all who met him. Reunited with Mam, Dad and his late Sister, Margaret. Internment has taken place. R.I.P.

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Alan and Pauline would like to express their sincere thanks to family, friends and neighbours and the staff at Defoe Court for their kindness and sympathy shown during their recent bereavement. Thank you for the many cards, beautiful flowers and messages of condolence received and generous donations to GNAAS. Thanks to Jodie McCombie for her comforting words and the lovely service and to Kevan Doods and his colleagues at Whitehouse Funeral Services for their professionalism, guidance and compassion during this difficult time. Loved and missed every day xx

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Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro

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Online: www.themajestictheatre.co.uk
Tickets: £17 Adults; £5 u18s / students.
You will definitely not be disappointed by Opera Nova's production of Mozart's playful comedy The Marriage of Figaro, now only a few weeks away. This is a fantastic opportunity to enjoy a vibrant, staged performance - sung in English by our established principals and some wonderful singers from around the North East, joining Opera Nova for this exciting production. We're very proud that our cast includes some talented young singers taking their very first steps onto the operatic stage.

The Marriage of Figaro, we're told, hasn't been performed locally by an amateur group for more than 25 years. It's the first time that Darlington's historic Majestic Theatre has hosted an opera. Our production, set in modern times, brings out the relevance of Mozart's work to today's world, like all the best comedy, it has a darker side.

Don't miss this golden opportunity to immerse yourself in the magical and intriguing world of opera. Come and enjoy The Marriage of Figaro. For more information visit our website: www.operanova.org.uk

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Hopetown Darlington Celebrates 10 Years



Hopetown Darlington marked a proud milestone as the Railway Coffee Morning Group celebrated its 10th anniversary. The celebration took place on Thursday 30th April at the new Darlington Locomotive Works, with cake, conversation and a room full of railway memories.

Established a decade ago, within the former railway museum, the group began as a simple monthly coffee morning and has since quietly grown into a vital community lifeline. For ten years, it has brought together former railway workers and their relatives, creating a welcoming space for friendship, storytelling and connection, all set against the unmistakable backdrop of Darlington's railway heritage.

The group has previously undertaken day trips to National Railway Museum and Locomotion and, during Hopetown Darlington's redevelopment, the group regularly met at Morrisons North Road Café. This isn't just about railways, although that shared history brings people together - it's about connection, wellbeing and belonging. For many of our members, this monthly gathering has become a real anchor. Seeing everyone together today, sharing stories beneath these locomotives, has been a deeply moving reminder of why Hopetown and the Coffee Morning matters and why community spaces like this are so important. The anniversary celebration took place on Thursday 30th April, with long standing members gathering to reminisce, laugh and share personal stories from lives shaped by the railway. The atmosphere was warm and distinctly local, enhanced by the rare sight of the UK's newest steam locomotive under construction - Prince of Wales - side by side with Darlington's internationally famous locomotive Tornado - a powerful visual symbol of Darlington's past, present and future at the heart of British railway history.

Guests enjoyed a small pop up exhibition exploring Darlington's locomotive building history, featuring photographs and objects from Hopetown's collection, alongside a celebratory cake cutting ceremony. The members of the group shared stories from their time on the railways, reminisced over the last 10 years of the Railway Coffee Morning, and remembered former members of the group no longer with us.

Les, one of the original members of the Coffee Morning, said: "I started coming along years ago for a cuppa and a chat, but it quickly became much more than that. This group keeps you connected to each other and to the railway history we're all so proud of, allows you to make genuine friends and to reminisce about the good old days in North Road Works. It gives you something to look forward to every month, and that means a lot."

The Railway Coffee Morning Group's 10 year celebration is a reminder of the power of local places and people, and the lasting impact that shared heritage, conversation and community can have.

Croft Circuit Meets 2026

June 27th/28th

Ginetta Fest Weekend

July 11th/12th

British Racing & Sports Car Club Car Race Meet

August 22nd/23rd

Darlington & District Motor Club Battle of Britain Race Meeting

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Aycliffe Man Takes on 500-mile Charity Cycle



Raising funds for Dementia UK and the British Heart Foundation, Garry Henderson, 64, from Newton Aycliffe, is set to embark on a remarkable 500 mile solo charity bicycle ride along the famous Camino de Santiago route, cycling from St Jean Pied de Port in France to Santiago de Compostela in western Spain. Garry began his journey travelling from Darlington by train and ferry on 21st May, ahead of starting the cycle ride on 24th May. Over 18 days, he will cover approximately 500 miles and tackle more than 11,000 metres of ascent, finishing in Santiago on 10th June, before driving back to catch the ferry in Bilbao.

The challenge aims to raise funds for two important charities, Dementia UK and The British Heart Foundation. This cause is deeply personal for Garry, as in 2017, he survived a serious heart attack and received life-saving treatment at James Cook University Hospital, where four stents were implanted. His experience has inspired him to support the British Heart Foundation and raise awareness of heart health.

In addition, Garry's father is currently living in a nursing home following a decline due to vascular dementia, making it difficult for his 86-year-old mother to continue caring for him at home. This has strengthened Garry's commitment to supporting Dementia UK and families affected by the condition.

"This challenge means a great deal to me," said Garry. "After everything my family and I have experienced, I wanted to do something meaningful to give back and help others facing similar situations. It's going to be tough, but the causes couldn't be more important."

To donate to this cause, visit:

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