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# Newton ⚡ News

August 2026

Incorporating 'The Newtonian'

Newton Aycliffe's free community magazine published at the beginning of each month  
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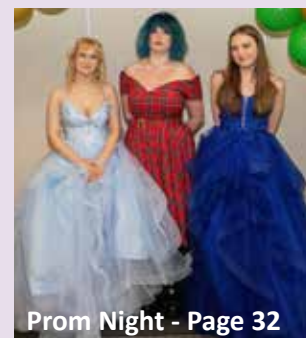
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# Well Done Ayclive



As Ayclive 2026 comes to an end, we'd just like to say a huge thank you to everyone who made it such a fantastic weekend. While thousands of people have enjoyed the music, the atmosphere and everything else the festival had to offer, it's easy to forget just how much work goes on behind the scenes. From setting up on Wednesday to the final pack down, an incredible team of volunteers gave up their time, without being paid, to help make sure everything ran safely and smoothly. Huge thanks also to the stage and sound crews, performers, traders and everyone working behind the scenes who helped bring the festival to life. A special mention must also go to the directors and organising team. Although the festival lasts just a couple of days, the work behind it goes on all year. Countless hours are spent planning, fundraising, organising and solving problems, long before the first stage is built. Thank you to Husqvarna as headline sponsor, together with Primex European Division, SecuriCorp, ESH Construction, Supportive, McDonald's, Hall Construction, Woodham Golf Club, Bewick Pharmacy, Newton Press, Durham County Council, Dobsons Marquees, Hiyed, Northumbrian Water, North East Ambulance Service, Total Traffic Management, Aycliffe Cleaning Services, Great Aycliffe Town Council, Clear Brew Bar Services, Bishop Auckland College, Alan Strickland MP, and 5 Acres, this year's nominated charity, along with the many other businesses, organisations and individuals whose support helped make this year's event possible. Community events like Ayclive don't just happen. They happen because people and businesses come together, give up their time, lend their expertise and support one another to create something special for the whole community. From all of us at Anything Aycliffe, thank you to everyone who played a part in making Ayclive 2026 another event the town can be proud of. We hope you all enjoy a very well deserved rest after everything you've put into it. Roll on Ayclive 2027.



# Council Recognised on National Stage

A council has been recognised on the national stage for the work it has been doing to develop procurement as a tool for growth. Durham County Council is celebrating after winning the Excellence in Social Value Award at the prestigious National GO Awards. The prize celebrates organisations, projects or initiatives that are breaking new ground in delivering social value. The council was recognised for its sector-leading approach in procurement, at the heart of which is the County Durham Pound. This ambitious social value programme, established in 2021, brings together housing providers, emergency services, education partners, and other institutions to increase the impact of public sector spend. Through this approach, the local authority is making sure that every pound spent delivers measurable economic, social and environmental benefits for residents across County Durham. It is also working to incorporate social values directly into service planning and delivery. At the event, the council was praised for its commitment to delivering meaningful, measurable outcomes that go beyond the contract and make a genuine difference to people, places and communities. Cllr Stephen Gray, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for transformation, efficiency, digital and procurement, said: "We are absolutely delighted to have received this award. It goes a long way towards recognising the efforts we make as an organisation, and the work we do with our partners, in using procurement as a means to drive economic growth, improve life opportunities and strengthen our communities. "The success of the County Durham Pound demonstrates what can be achieved through strong partnership, and while we're proud of the progress made so far, we are excited to build on this momentum." The local authority also received Highly Commended in the Innovation in Delivering Sustainability and Social Value category at the MJ Awards.



# Local Football Star, Ebony, Chasing World Cup Dream in China

A talented young footballer from Newton Aycliffe is preparing for the opportunity of a lifetime after being selected to represent her club at this year's prestigious Club World Cup in China. Ebony Newman has been part of the footballing community in Newton Aycliffe for almost as long as she can remember. Starting out with Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club's Wildcats programme as a young child, she has progressed through every stage of the club's pathway, developing her skills, determination and passion for the game.

Her talent and dedication saw her rise through the age groups before earning a place in the club's women's team. From there, Ebony's impressive performances attracted attention, leading to an opportunity with Park View Football Academy in Chester-le-Street, where she continues to go from strength to strength. An exciting and skilful forward, Ebony has thrilled supporters with her pace, creativity and eye for goal. Her performances have now earned her selection to represent Park View Football Academy at the Club World Cup, which takes place in China this October.

The tournament will bring together talented young players from around the world, providing Ebony with the chance to compete on an international stage, gain invaluable experience and proudly represent both her club and the North East.

While being selected is a tremendous achievement, players are required to fund the trip themselves, meaning the costs of travel, accommodation and tournament participation must be met by the individual and their family.

Ebony's family is now appealing to local businesses and organisations for sponsorship to help make this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity a reality. Any contribution, large or small, would help support a talented local athlete as she embarks on one of the biggest moments of her football career.



Sponsoring Ebony is not only an investment in a promising young sportswoman, but also a chance for local businesses to support grassroots football and help a local player fulfil her dream of competing on the world stage. Anyone interested in offering sponsorship, or finding out more, is encouraged to contact John Newman on 07591 294166.

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# Spectrum Skaters at National Competitions

Spectrum Roller Skating Academy recently competed in two roller skating events in Breydon Arena, Great Yarmouth - The National Summer Roller Cup Competition, held on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th June and British Championships Tots - Cadet Dance, held on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st June. The back to back competitions are the culmination of a year of hard work in five disciplines of skating.

In Summer Roller Cup, skating in the Pairs events, Liam Stevens and Ella Hutchinson achieved 1st place in Level 2 Pairs and Nicola Stevens and Christoph Prior achieved 1st place in Level 1 Pairs!

Liam and Ella scored new elements including a new lift and throw jump in the level up from last year, while for Nicola and Christoph this was their first time entering a Pairs competition and to come away with gold was a fantastic success.

Lucy Owen, skating to a Viking themed programme achieved 6th place, skating for the first time in a tough Level 3 free skating category and 3rd place in Level 5 figures.

Ella Hutchinson performed a Juliet themed routine and achieved 4th place, narrowly missing out on 3rd (and achieving a new PB) in Level 2 free skating and came 9th in figures.

Nicola Stevens placed 6th in Level 1B free skating with a routine to Robbie Williams, Angels, and came 7th in figures.

Millie Seaton-Lawes skated to The Secret Garden in Level 1A free (with a new PB) and came 14th and 9th in figures.

For three skaters, Effie Railton, Isla Bainbridge and Anastasia Fothergill, it was their first ever National event and they did amazingly well! Anastasia placed 3rd in her Level 1A free skating event, and 4th in Level 1 figures. Isla came 10th in free and 16th in figures. Effie came 12th in figures.

"It was incredible skating once again, with every athlete giving it their absolute all, we are very proud of all the skaters who took part," said coach Tracy Stevens.

In the next event, British Championships Tots-Cadet Dance, Liam Stevens and Ella Hutchinson competed in Cadet Couples Dance with Liam skating up an age category. They completed their first ever style dance to a medley of Spanish music and a Freedance routine to music from Stranger Things to gain a new PB of 39.77 which earned them silver medals and the titles of Cadet Vice British Champions in Couples Dance. Liam competed in Espoir Solo Men's Dance performing a Swing Foxtrot, Roller Samba and a Backstreet Boys themed Freedance placing 4th, narrowly missing out on a medal.

Ella competed in Cadet Ladies Solo Dance performing a classic themed style dance and a Tangled theme Freedance. She achieved the highest technical score for her Travelling element, achieved a new PB and placed 16th out of 22 skaters.

"We are very proud coaches and would like to thank everyone who supports our club."

"We are incredibly happy with how the team performed and are looking forward to the upcoming British Championships for the other disciplines of Figures, Free, Pairs and Youth-Senior Dance Championships in July, as well as hosting our very own Spectrum Competition in August."



# Next Archdeacon of Auckland Announced

The Bishop of Durham is delighted to announce the appointment of the Revd Stephen Edmonds, currently Acting Archdeacon of Doncaster in the Diocese of Sheffield, as our next Archdeacon of Auckland.

Stephen, who served his curacy in Sunderland at St Ignatius the Martyr, Hendon and, before ordained ministry, lived and worked in Darlington, is expected to start his new role later this summer. Welcoming the appointment, Bishop Rick said: "I look forward very much to Stephen returning to the Diocese of



Durham, now as Archdeacon of Auckland and a member of the Bishop's Leadership Team. Stephen was clear that his love for the North East of England, its people and its saints lay behind his clear sense of call to this role, and I am confident that he will rapidly gain the affection and trust of the churches of the Archdeaconry as he serves them.

"We are working and praying for the renewal and revival of the church here in the Diocese of Durham and I am excited that Stephen is coming to join us here in that mission."

Stephen grew up in Nottinghamshire and first experienced the joy of the North East when he came as an undergraduate to study Theology at Durham. He then worked in housing, firstly for the Northern Housing Consortium in Sunderland and latterly for Darlington Borough Council as Housing Strategy Manager.

Having met and married Rachel, they settled in Darlington, where their daughter, Sarah, and son, Samuel were born. No longer able to resist the call to ordained ministry, he had felt since his early teens, Stephen was eventually selected and trained for the priesthood at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield.

Looking forward to returning to the North East, Stephen said: "I am profoundly moved to be invited by Bishop Rick to take up the baton from him in the Archdeaconry of Auckland and humbled by the confidence the panel have shown in me. The whole Diocese is clearly on the cusp of a newly energised chapter and I eagerly look forward to working with all parishes, clergy and lay leaders for the flourishing of the Christian communities across Auckland and the wider diocese.

"Durham is the cradle of formation for me as a husband, father and a priest, and whilst I have benefited hugely from the development and investment I have received in the Diocese of Sheffield, and I will miss it deeply and the colleagues, parishes and communities I have served, I cannot deny a strong sense of a call home."

# Owner Sought

A large envelope has been found on Woodham Way, and efforts are underway to reunite it with its rightful owner.

As the envelope may contain important or personal documents, it has been kept secure.

To help ensure it is returned to the correct person, anyone claiming it will be asked to describe its contents and provide the name written inside before it is handed over.

If you believe the envelope belongs to you, please contact the finder on 07804 786362.

Please help spread the word by sharing this notice with friends, family and local community groups, as the owner may not yet be aware that it has been found.

# Going Green?

I recently read an article in the Newton News by Councillor Tony Armstrong (no relation), explaining that he is leaving the Liberal Democrats and is reportedly intending to join the Green Party.

If Tony believes this move will help him better support our local community, then that is, of course, his decision. However, I would encourage him to take a closer look at the leadership and policies of the party before making that commitment.

The current leader of the Green Party, Zack Polanski, has faced scrutiny over statements about his background, and some of the party's policies on issues such as immigration and drug reform are likely to concern many local residents. These positions may not reflect the views of everyone in Newton Aycliffe.

I would simply ask whether this is the kind of party Tony wishes to represent. Before making such an important decision, I hope he will look more deeply into the party's policies and consider the views and priorities of the people of Newton Aycliffe whom he was elected to serve.

John Armstrong

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# Newton Aycliffe Youth Football Club



## Healthier Community

As our team's affiliate and get ready for the start of their pre-season games, the football club is always looking at new initiatives, to get our community healthier and fitter, alongside our football activities. The club has started an FA Just Play 18+ group for Women. Complete beginners welcome, returning players welcome, no pressure, no commitment, just fun, fitness, friends and football. The sessions are led by a qualified coach very Sunday morning, outside on the Oakleaf pitches, 10am 'til 11am. If you're looking for a place where effort is recognised, improvement is celebrated and everyone supports each other, come and join us. To register, contact Club Secretary Berni 07939 045242.

## Kenya Update

Our sister club in Mombasa, Kenya, goes from strength to strength, with the support from our football club. The Newtonians are competing in leagues and regular tournaments for boys and girls, across all age groups. The oldest U18 group of boys have now qualified for the regional premier league with 22 teams in the league. It will be a great challenge for these talented young men as they open up, against Barawa FC, a well backed and funded team from the centre of Mombasa. The lads will run out in a strip donated by Doncaster Rovers, thanks to the help of Luke Molyneux, a player for the team from Newton Aycliffe. The club remains committed to supporting all the boys who want to play football, but wouldn't have had the opportunity, but for the dedication of head coach Ahmed and the rest of his volunteers. As well as supporting the football, the money raised by the club has also helped fund school books, pens and pencils for the local village school, where most classes have up to 90 pupils and books etc are so difficult to get, with limited money that the school has.

If you want regular updates on either of these stories or just the football club, in general, follow us on Facebook: [News@NewtonAycliffeYouthFootballClub](mailto:News@NewtonAycliffeYouthFootballClub)



# School Aycliffe Community Association (S.A.C.A.)

Eastfields, School Aycliffe, DL5 6QH.

## Ladies Night

First Wednesday of every month.

Next meeting: Wednesday 5th August, 7-9pm

Topic: Meynell-Mason Funeral Directors - Dispelling the Myths. £3 per person (includes light refreshments).

Contact: Christine - 07981 992686.

## Community Choir

Second and fourth Monday of each month.

The choir is taking a summer break and will resume on Monday 14th September. £3 per session (includes light refreshments).

Contact: Julie McGrath - 07742 015609.

## Reading Group

Next meeting: Friday 14th August, 7.30-9pm.

£5 per person, including light refreshments and room hire. We meet monthly to discuss our chosen book and select the next one to read. Books are available at a discounted rate through the group, or you can read via Kindle, audio book or borrow from the library.

Contact: Georgette - 07951 758118.

Email: [georgetterouse236@hotmail.com](mailto:georgetterouse236@hotmail.com)

We look forward to welcoming new members!

## Hall Hire

Looking for a venue for a party, meeting or social event?

Our facilities include:

- Large hall & a small meeting room
- Off-road and accessible parking
- Accessible toilets with baby changing facilities
- Enclosed garden/play area
- Large kitchen with serving hatch

Contact: Zanna Bewick - 07929 916725.

## Join the Committee

We're always looking for new committee members. Make a difference in your local community. For an informal chat, contact Christine Robinson on 07981 992686.

Thank you for your continued support.

S.A.C.A. Committee.

# Croft Meets

**22nd/23rd August:** Battle of Britain Race Meeting

**5th/6th September:** Kwik Fit British Touring Car Championship Meet.

**19th/20th September:** 750 Motor Club Car Race Meeting

**29th November:** Christmas Stages Rally

# Local Autism Charity Celebrates Ten Years of Supporting Families

A local charity that has supported thousands of families across the North East is celebrating a remarkable milestone this summer, and the community is invited to join the celebrations.

Little Treasures Autism Charity was founded ten years ago by Michelle Abbs after her son was diagnosed with autism and complex needs. At the time, Michelle found there was very little local support available for families navigating an autism diagnosis.

Rather than simply accepting the lack of services, Michelle decided to create something herself. What started as a small community support group welcomed nineteen families to its very first session from across Co. Durham and Darlington, and quickly grew beyond all expectations. Within its first year, Little Treasures had expanded to ten support groups across the North East, providing a safe, welcoming space for autistic children, young people, and their families.

For the past decade, the charity has remained entirely volunteer-led, with dedicated volunteers giving their time to ensure families have access to support, friendship and inclusive activities. The charity has become a lifeline for many, building a strong community where families know they are understood and never alone.

After leading the organisation for ten years, Michelle has now stepped down as a trustee to focus on the final stages of her university nursing degree, where she hopes to continue making a difference through her professional career.

Michelle said: "When my son was diagnosed at the age of four, I felt utterly alone and overwhelmed. There was a significant lack of support in our community, and at that time, many around us had little understanding of our situation. I spent countless hours searching online for resources, but came up empty. That's when I decided to take matters into my own hands and create support for others in similar circumstances. I never anticipated that what began as a small support group would evolve into a large charity that has assisted thousands of families over the past decade. I take immense pride in this charity; it's a reflection of what I have accomplished, and it will always hold a special place in my heart, alongside all the incredible things our volunteers and community have achieved together. I truly hope this charity will continue to flourish and provide support for many years to come."

To mark this special anniversary, Little Treasures Autism Charity is inviting everyone to a **Tenth Anniversary Family Fun Day** on Saturday 29th August at Ferryhill Sports &

Education Centre, 10am-3pm.

The event promises fun for all ages with a football tournament, raffle, tombola, bouncy castle, face painting, family games, refreshments and much more. Entry is £5 per child, with adults admitted free, and all proceeds will help the charity continue its work supporting autistic children and their families throughout the local community.

Whether you've been part of Little Treasures over the last ten years or are discovering the charity for the first time, everyone is welcome to come along, celebrate this incredible achievement and help ensure the next chapter is just as successful as the first.

## Little Treasures Autism Charity Fun Day

Come and help us celebrate ten incredible years of supporting local families at our biggest and best Fun Day yet. Bring your family and friends for a fantastic day filled with fun, laughter and community spirit, all whilst raising money for Little Treasures Autism Charity and the amazing children and families we support.

Every ticket purchased and every raffle ticket bought help us continue providing vital support and opportunities for autistic children and their families. We can't wait to celebrate ten years with you.

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# Plan to Achieve SEND Reform at Local Level

Durham County Council has submitted its SEND Local Area Reform Plan (LARP) to the Department for Education, as all councils up and down the country have been asked to do.

Local authorities were asked to produce the plans as part of reform to SEND provision at national level.

Should the plan be approved, the council will receive more than £32m from government towards the deficit it has accrued in the cost of supporting young people with high needs. 'High needs' budget deficits are common across local authorities in the region, and nationally, and have been accrued because the funding being provided falls short of the unavoidable costs of meeting statutory requirements placed upon councils.

The authority has allocated £11m in an earmarked reserve in anticipation of having to cover the minimum ten per cent of the deficit write off requirements laid out by government, to 31 March 2028.

Cllr Cathy Hunt, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for children and young people's services, said: "The SEND reforms nationally present us with an opportunity to reshape the system within County Durham in a way that delivers better outcomes for children and young people while addressing longstanding financial and operational pressures.

"The work we have done in preparing our response plan has shown we have strong foundations in place, with good relationships between agencies and a willingness to collaborate.

"We want to convert our strengths into consistent, measurable system wide improvement - but it is imperative that the government delivers the funding we need to achieve this goal.

"It is disappointing we are having to set aside £11m of our taxpayers' money towards the deficit we have unavoidably built up. This has been due to the funding we are given for supporting our young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities not being enough to meet the statutory demands placed upon us.

"Because this is a statutory service we are providing, that is supposed to be funded by specific grant funding from central government, the government should be covering the whole cost. Government should also be covering the interest we have lost in having to manage the deficits that have accrued over recent years, rather than place that burden on local council taxpayers to fund."

A meeting of the council's Cabinet on 1st July heard that the national SEND reforms, set out in the government's Schools White Paper programme, require all local authorities to produce a Local SEND Reform Plan, supported by a self-assessment.

Councillors will be reminded that in County Durham, like all areas across the country, demand for Education, Health and Care Plans has continued to increase 'at pace'.

The report to the meeting says there is "strong evidence of early identification of need" within the county; as well as "strong relationships across agencies" and an "established culture of collaboration".

The plan produced by the council sets out a delivery model centred on strengthening inclusion in mainstream provision, improving access to specialist support, embedding effective partnership governance and securing better outcomes for children and young people while addressing financial sustainability.

Cabinet will hear that the council met the government's target of 19th June to submit the plan.

Should it be approved, the council will receive £32.472m in High Needs Stability Grant. This amounts to 90% of the deficit the council had accrued in supporting children with high needs by the end of the 2025/2026 financial year - a situation mirrored among local authorities nationally.

# Woodham Sports Day



On Friday 3rd July, Woodham Academy held its annual Sports Day, providing the opportunity for around 600 students to participate in a fantastic day of athletics, teamwork and friendly competition.

Students proudly represented one of four teams: Bolt, Ennis, Farah and Hoy - competing in a range of track and field events throughout the day. Every participant demonstrated determination, resilience and excellent sportsmanship, making the event a great success.

The high level of competition reflected Woodham's recent success in the South West Durham District Athletics competitions, where teams achieved multiple 1st, 2nd and 3rd place finishes across the eight team events for Years 7 to 10.

After a series of outstanding performances, Team Ennis retained the Sports Day trophy. Congratulations to everyone who competed and contributed to such a memorable day. The celebrations concluded with Team Ennis captains, Payton and Jaiden, proudly lifting the Sports Day trophy to round off a brilliant day for the whole school.

Well done to all of the students and staff for making this year's Sports Day such an enjoyable and successful event.



# Bishop Auckland Hospital Becomes Accredited Surgical Hub

Bishop Auckland Hospital, part of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, has achieved accreditation for delivering high standards in clinical and operational practice in surgery as part of NHS England's Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme.

The national quality assessment scheme, delivered in collaboration with the Royal College of Surgeons of England and supported by the Royal College of Anaesthetists, assesses surgical hubs against a nationally recognised framework of standards.

The accreditation recognises the Trust's commitment to providing high quality elective care and helping patients access some of the most common planned surgical procedures more quickly, including hip and knee replacements.

Surgical hubs are a key part of national plans to increase capacity for planned operations through improvements in productivity. Separate from emergency services, they provide dedicated operating theatres, beds and clinical teams focused exclusively on planned surgery.

The hubs primarily deliver high volume, low complexity procedures across six specialties: ophthalmology, general surgery, orthopaedics, gynaecology, ear, nose and throat (ENT), and urology.

As part of the programme, Bishop Auckland Hospital has been accredited in recognition of its achievement against a defined set of clinical and operational standards, including:

- Patient pathways
- Workforce, staffing and training
- Clinical governance and outcomes
- Facilities and ring-fencing arrangements
- Utilisation and productivity

By bringing together specialist skills and expertise in a dedicated setting, surgical hubs help reduce waiting times for patients and improve the efficiency of surgical services. Because they are protected from the pressures of emergency care, beds and theatre capacity can be reserved for planned procedures, reducing the risk of short notice cancellations. Will Manning, Consultant in Orthopaedics and Hub Clinical Lead at County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Achieving surgical hub accreditation represents an important milestone for Bishop Auckland Hospital and is a testament to the professionalism and dedication of our surgical teams."

"Establishing a dedicated environment for planned surgery, separate from emergency care, helps protect bed capacity for patients awaiting procedures and reduces the likelihood of short notice cancellations."

"This approach enables patients to access treatment more quickly, experience shorter waiting times and, where appropriate, return home on the same day as their surgery. While this accreditation marks a significant step forward, it also signals the beginning of the next phase of our improvement journey, as we continue to build on this strong foundation and further enhance the care we provide to our communities."

Steve Russell, Chief Executive at the Trust, added: "Achieving this accreditation is a clear demonstration of the progress our teams are making across the Trust to enhance the quality of care we provide. It is a significant achievement for everyone involved and reflects our ongoing commitment to reducing waiting times and delivering better outcomes for our patients."

"Through further improvements, our ambition is that the Bishop Auckland elective hub will be amongst the best for the experience of patients, the clinical outcomes and productivity. This accreditation reflects the hard work of our staff, whose commitment to delivering high quality care has made this possible, and who will continue to go even further".

# Solar Eclipse

This years Glorious 12th (August) will have another meaning? There will be a first total eclipse of the sun in Europe for nearly thirty years. This will be a partial eclipse in the UK. At its peak it will cover just over 90% of the Sun. It starts around 6.10pm and peaks around 7.07pm, ending at around 8.01pm.

**Please Note: This can only be viewed through special glasses, not by the naked eye or through ordinary sun glasses - please take care - be prepared!**

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# Musical Celebration of Achievement



Some of County Durham's finest young musicians have taken to the stage at Gala Durham for a note-worthy evening.

Durham County Council's Music Service hosted its Leavers' Gala Concert at the local authority venue, celebrating the musical skills of those supported by the service.

Featuring Durham Music Youth Orchestra, Youth Choir, Senior Wind Band and Youth Jazz, students showcased their talent with a range of dazzling performances across the evening.

Durham Music's newly crowned Young Musician of the Year, Eilidh Huddart, also took to the stage for a special solo performance.

It's the second year that Durham Music Service has held an end of year celebration, recognising the talent of those who are moving on at the end of this academic year.

Cllr Cathy Hunt, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for children and young people, said: "We'd like to pass on our huge congratulations to all the incredibly talented young people who have worked so hard to deliver such a wonderful concert.

"The majority of these students joined our music service at primary school, when they were as young as six or seven. We're very proud at how far they've come to flourish into such talented musicians, and we wish them all the very best for their future. Hopefully, we can welcome them back to Gala Durham and our other venues as they continue their musical journeys into higher education and passion for music."

More information about Durham Music Service can be found at: [www.durhammusic.org.uk](http://www.durhammusic.org.uk)

# Clunk Click Every Trip!

Every day in Britain, families receive the knock on the door no one wants to hear. Across England and Wales, an average of five people lose their lives and 68 are seriously injured on our roads. Yet many of these lives could have been saved by wearing a seatbelt.

Seatbelts are estimated to have saved tens of thousands of lives in Britain. They reduce the risk of death in a collision by around 50%. And yet, some people are still breaking the law and risking their lives.

Government data shows that around one in three vehicle occupants killed in collisions were not wearing a seatbelt. A recent seatbelt enforcement operation, carried out by Durham Constabulary's Roads and Armed Policing Team, during the February half-term, produced shocking results.

One driver received three separate tickets in just one week for failing to wear their seatbelt, totalling £300 in fines. But what concerned officers even more was that when some drivers were stopped, children travelling in the vehicle were also unrestrained.

Failure to wear a seatbelt is one of the behaviours linked to the most serious collisions, alongside speeding, drink or drug driving and mobile phone use.

As PCC, I strongly support the Vision Zero approach, the belief that no death on our roads should ever be considered inevitable.

Here in County Durham and Darlington, Durham Constabulary is deploying advanced roadside technology that is capable of detecting drivers using mobile phones or not wearing seatbelts. **Road safety is also about personal responsibility.**

Before you start your journey Click your seatbelt. Check your passengers. Because the life you save could be your own or someone you love and no family should have to endure the heartbreak of losing someone so needlessly.

## Another New Service . . .

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# Residents Critical of County Durham Future

Residents are being invited to shape the future of the county, from housing and jobs to transport and town centres, through the creation of a brand-new County Durham Plan. Durham County Council is preparing its new local plan to meet the changing needs of the county, while aligning closely with national policy and ensuring growth.

As part of this, an eight-week consultation is being launched which will finish on Monday 17th August, marking the first step in preparing the new plan. It will be the first opportunity for residents to have their say on topics and issues that matter most to them. The council is keen to hear residents' opinions on the place they live, such as what the area does well and what it could do better.

The local authority has created a document to guide the consultation, which identifies the strategic priorities, key issues, and overall direction the plan should take. It provides guidance on how development in the county should be distributed, and the locally specific challenges and opportunities that require more attention. By outlining this information from the start and asking for feedback, the council can create a framework that the local plan can build on at a later stage.

The document looks at a range of different ways the county can grow. These options include focusing growth on the main towns, spreading development across many villages, concentrating growth along key transport routes, creating a new settlement or major extension, prioritising regeneration of existing areas, or combining several of these approaches.

As part of this growth, residents are invited to give their views on:

- Housing needs, from affordability and choice, to the needs of older people or those who require specialist or accessible homes.
- Jobs and the local economy, and where new employment sites should go, which future industries the council should plan for, and how it can strengthen important sectors like tourism and town centres.
- Transport and movement, and how important good transport connections are to residents
- The environment, and how it can be protected while the authority plans for future growth.
- Community facilities and local services, and how new development should contribute to improving these.
- Health, food and local quality of life, and creating healthier neighbourhoods across the county.

Following a review and analysis of all the feedback, the council will then carry out a formal self-assessment throughout September 2026.

After this, further public consultation will take place in March 2027, this time focused on proposed content for the local plan, followed by consultation on the proposed document during Autumn 2027.

For the plan to be adopted formally, a further assessment and examination will be undertaken, with hopes that the new plan will be adopted from March 2029.

Residents can take part in the consultation by visiting:

[www.letstalkcountydurham.co.uk/localplan](http://www.letstalkcountydurham.co.uk/localplan)

# Amazing Job

I wanted to send you these beautiful pictures of St. Oswald's Park. Michael, the park keeper, does an amazing job every year and we get a lot of pleasure seeing it change with the seasons. It is such a lovely oasis.

Thank you.

Janice Sinclair.



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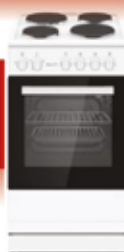


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# Popular Woodland Adventure Playground to Increase in Size

A popular adventure playground will be increasing in size to provide families with more to discover.

Almost as if stepping into Narnia, the trees will part to reveal the Hidden Forest, set across over an acre of magical woodland, where a secluded playscape is waiting for young adventurers to discover.

The Plotters' Forest, woven within a Christmas tree plantation at Raby Castle, Park and Gardens, is opening access to a new section of woodland to the north with the works scheduled to be completed in time for the summer holidays, from Monday 13th July. The extension will reveal a route into The Hidden Forest, which will feature an informal ground level trail that gently climbs the hillside and a series of play moments that encourage exploration, interaction, movement and discovery along the way.

Exciting challenges along the new pathway are designed to encourage adventure, friendship and bravery. Families will be able to travel along the path and begin their quest by completing a series of play experiences and installations, including a cascade wall which has been designed for all ages to enjoy.

Larger installations include a stilt walk and balance beam for little explorers to practice their physical skills, as well as parallel bars and a double swing with both a toddler and regular swing seat for multi-age use.

Claire Jones, head of leisure and tourism at Raby Castle, Park and Gardens said:

"Thousands of families have spent countless hours having fun in The Plotters' Forest since it opened in 2022 and the adventure playground has proved to be immensely popular with visitors from near and far.

"We hope that revealing a route into The Hidden Forest will ignite young imaginations as they realise the new playscape was always there, hidden amongst the magic of the trees. The forest setting evokes a sense of wonder and invites children to explore, imagine and connect with nature through play, whilst helping each other through the fun but challenging obstacles on the way. We hope to draw out qualities of kindness and support from little ones, whilst also encouraging bravery in their exploration of a new, hidden world."

Raby Castle, Park and Gardens has enlisted world-class playground designers CAP.CO (Creating Adventurous Places Ltd) to design The Hidden Forest, following their work on the original Plotters' Forest.

Raby's Family Explorer ticket, which provides access to everything at the lifestyle destination including The Plotters' Forest, the new Hidden Forest and an exclusive immersive experience in the Riding School known as the Hidden Garden, is £65.80 for two adults and two children when booked online in advance until Tuesday 1st September.

For more information and to book tickets, visit: [www.raby.co.uk/events/family-explorer-tickets](http://www.raby.co.uk/events/family-explorer-tickets)



## Aycliffe Village WI News and Events



### Trip to Saltburn

Our annual trip to Saltburn on the train was again a huge success in July. Members treated themselves to plenty of coffee and cakes and the obligatory fish and chips. A wander along the pier and the seashore wore off some calories, enough for an ice cream, before the return ride home.

### Crafting with St. Clare's Court residents

Our crafting group continue to visit St Clare's Court Care Home to participate in a variety of art and crafts projects. This month the ladies decorated fans with colourful designs. The fans were just what was needed during the heatwave.

### Coffee n Chat

This is holiday month, so there won't be a meeting in August.

### Our next WI Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th August at 7pm in the Village Hall which will include a Summer Floral Demonstration by Karen McKenna. Visitors are most welcome to join us and refreshments are provided. For more information about Aycliffe Village WI and our events, trips and visits, email [aycliffevillage@durhamwi.co.uk](mailto:aycliffevillage@durhamwi.co.uk)

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# Aycliffe Juniors Impress at Competitions

Aycliffe Juniors athletes have enjoyed a remarkable run of success across regional and county competitions, delivering personal bests, championship titles, and national level recognition. Their performances across the NEGP meeting, Durham County Schools' Championships, Inter Counties Championships and English Schools have showcased both individual excellence and collective strength.

## **NEGP Athletics Competition – Monkton Stadium**

Aycliffe Juniors opened their strong run of results at the NEGP meeting with a series of standout performances. In the Under 18 Women's 100m, Elizabeth Rose Clay produced a composed sprint into a challenging –2.2 headwind, clocking 12.62 seconds to win her age category.

Middle distance runner Persephone May Risbey impressed in her first competitive mile, running a personal best of 5:37.44 in a high quality field. The evening also delivered a superb debut from Iwo Socha, who threw 9.84 metres in the Under 20 Men's Shot Put (6kg). His first ever athletics competition ended with a personal best and first place, marking an outstanding introduction to the sport.

## **Durham County Schools' Track & Field Championships**

Aycliffe Juniors continued their momentum at the Durham County Schools' Championships.

Seffie dominated the Inter Girls 3000m, taking control early and securing the county title with a commanding run.

In the Senior Girls 100m, Lizzie delivered a sharp, powerful sprint to claim gold and the county crown. Maisie showed strength and consistency in the Inter Girls 200m, progressing through heats and finishing second in the final. Charlotte made a blistering start in the Inter Girls 100m before an injury at 60m forced her to ease off, though she showed real determination to finish.

Meanwhile, Bridget produced a clean series in the Triple Jump at York University, earning a strong fourth place.

These results earned Seffie, Lizzie, and Maisie selection for the Northern Schools' Inter County Championships.

## **Inter Counties School Championships – Hexham**

Aycliffe Juniors athletes again rose to the occasion at the Inter Counties Championships.

Maisie battled tough headwinds in the Inter Girls 200m, finishing just outside her personal best after a committed run. In the Inter Girls 3000m, Persephone took the lead early, opened a comfortable gap, and powered home to become Inter Counties Champion.

Elizabeth added another title to her season with victory in the Senior Girls 100m, securing the sprint crown. Following these performances, Elizabeth was selected for the English Schools Championships, a major milestone and well deserved recognition of her season's achievements. Persephone also awaits confirmation on potential county selection.

## **English Schools Championships – Senior Girls' 100m & Mixed Relay**

A brilliant performance from Elizabeth capped off her season at the English Schools Championships. In a very fast Senior Girls' 100m heat, she delivered a superb race in tough conditions, running a personal best under the hot sun. Against 29 of the best sprinters in the country, she finished 19th in the UK — a fantastic achievement at this level.

She also competed in the mixed relay, joining a sharp and well drilled team. The whole Durham squad rallied behind them, creating a brilliant atmosphere of support and pride. A great weekend, great racing, and a performance she can build on.

## **Aycliffe Juniors Triumph at CDAN Outdoor Championships**

Aycliffe Juniors rounded off their run of competitions with a superb all round performance to secure first place at the CDAN Outdoor Championships — the first time the club has



lifted the trophy.

Across all four events, every junior stepped up with strong, determined performances, contributing vital points and showcasing real team spirit. Their collective effort proved decisive, putting Aycliffe firmly at the top of the standings.

## **Individual Medal Winners**

- Sammy Ashmore (U10)
  - Noah Farrell (U14)
  - Persephone May Risbey (U16)
- A huge well done to all athletes for their hard work, commitment, and brilliant results.



# Bishop Auckland College Reveals Huge Improvements to Student Experience

Bishop Auckland College has unveiled a major £1.1m investment in its campus facilities, delivering a significant boost to the student experience as enrolment numbers continue to rise year on year.

The extensive refurbishment, designed to accommodate the college's sustained growth and modernise its social spaces, was delivered in partnership with Manners, the historic North-East construction company.

As the college continues to see a steady increase in applications following successive years of continuous improvements, leadership recognised the pressing need to expand and upgrade the campus environment.

The substantial investment has transformed the main social areas, creating a top-class setting that matches the high standard of education it provides.

To execute this ambitious campus upgrade, the college turned to a trusted local partner. Manners, which recently rebranded from T Manners & Sons (retaining the same team and service), was selected to deliver the new facilities.

Shaun Hope, CEO and Principal of Bishop Auckland College Group, said: "We are thrilled with the refurbishment work Manners carried out. It is great to have a local company supporting us as we modernise the student experience at our college."

"When we took on the project, the aim was to increase the capacity of our main social areas, as the number of students coming to Bishop Auckland College continues to grow year on year. We needed facilities that not only match that growth, but also provide the high-quality environment our students richly deserve."

The upgrades span across various aspects of campus life, catering to both academic needs and student wellbeing.

Shaun said: "We have added a new fitness suite with state-of-the-art equipment that will be used for both curriculum activities and student enrichment. We now have new student services facilities, a new reception, and an expanded retail shop, alongside a brand-new coffee shop."

"There are new meeting spaces for students and opportunities for collaborative group work, and we have significantly increased the size and offering of our food court."

The decision to partner with Manners was driven by a shared commitment to the local area.

Formed in 1860, Manners is believed to be the oldest family-owned construction company in the North East of England. Managing



director Simon Manners is the great, great-grandson of founder Thomas Manners, and the business has proudly remained in family ownership since its formation over 160 years ago.

Shaun said: "During the procurement process, we were clear that we wanted a partner capable of delivering high-quality refurbishment work, and, in Manners, we got exactly that."

"Not only did they meet our high standards, but we also found a company that is loyal to its local area. Just like our college, they have the community at the heart of everything they do. This is one of many things we will do with Manners to help our local community here in Bishop Auckland."

And Simon, managing director of Manners, highlighted the broader impact of such investments.

He said: "Education projects are about far more than buildings; they are about creating environments that inspire learning, support wellbeing and provide opportunities for future generations to thrive."

"We are proud to have worked with Bishop Auckland College on a project that will benefit students, staff and the wider community for years to come."

"With more than 160 years of experience, and a strong track record across the education sector, we understand the importance of delivering high-quality facilities while maintaining a collaborative approach with stakeholders and minimising disruption to day-to-day operations."

"Projects like this demonstrate how investment in education infrastructure can help unlock potential, strengthen local skills and create lasting value for the communities we serve."

Bishop Auckland College offers a diverse array of pathways ranging from vocational courses and apprenticeships to adult skills training and higher education.

The college is renowned for its practical, career-focused curriculum, encompassing everything from construction and engineering to digital skills, hospitality and health and social care.

*Photo: Simon Manners, Managing Director at Manners, with Lynn Heighton, Assistant Principal (Finance & Resources) pictured in the newly refurbished reception.*

# Taster Days at UTC South Durham

UTC South Durham held 'Taster Days,' on Thursday 9th and 10th July for incoming Year 12 'T Level' students recently, under the watchful gaze of Heather Pehrson, Chris Atkinson, and Head of Engineering, Mike Donnelly.

Set several tasks during the day, Luke was one student who has humanitarian objectives in addition to his vocational ambitions to gain his subject qualifications before entering the workforce. "Ever since Year 9, when I did Design Technology, my ambition has been to design things to help people," said the Bowburn domiciled enthusiast. Callum's fascination thus lies in the expertise of bridge building, an enthusiasm inspired by his engineer Grandfather. A Newcastle fan, and unashamed 'Big Dan Burn' disciple, he has already shown promise in laser cutting. Another young

student, Tyler, was absolutely engaged in his work, which he described as being, "so much better than classroom learning that allows me to stay 'on task,' without distractions".

Jess likes the idea of developing technologies, Amber was genuinely enthusiastic about 'any practical challenges,' and Alfie is looking forward to an RAF career, as being the focus of his work and study.

Mike Donnelly is emphatic that "This programme reflects that today's youth, given genuine qualification and learning opportunities, is capable of engaging with, and progressing keenly, in the vocational sector," and proudly points to The UTC South Durham currently boasting a 100% FE or workplace placement rate for the programme's graduates to date, and limited course vacancies for a September start.



## Know Your Rights as a Victim of Crime

### You have the right to:

1. Be given information in a way that is easy to understand and to be provided with help to be understood.
2. Have details of the crime recorded by the police as soon as possible.
3. Receive written confirmation when reporting a crime and information about the criminal justice process.
4. Be referred to services that support victims.
5. Be told about how to claim compensation for any loss, damage or injury caused as a result of crime.
6. Be provided with updates on your case and to be told when important decisions are taken.
7. Make a Victim Personal Statement, which tells the court how the crime has affected you and is considered when sentencing the offender.
8. Be told the time, date and location of any court hearing and the outcome of those hearings in a timely way.
9. Be told the outcome of the case and be given an explanation of the sentence.
10. Claim certain expenses if you attend court and if any of your property was taken as evidence have it returned.
11. Be given information about the offender following a conviction.
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**My Victim Care and Mentor Service offers free, independent and confidential support for victims of any crime, witnesses and their families (details below)**



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# Students hold a Big Debate



Durham County Council's Youth Council held its annual Big Debate at the civic building, inviting Year 5 pupils from across the county to test their public speaking and debating skills.

For the last time before County Hall is closed, the building's council chamber witnessed the youngsters discuss modern issues from the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to proposed social media bans.

The day was guided by youth councillor Miah Burns, who chaired the event for the first time and kept the lively debates on track.

But, before the debate began, the event opened with an inspiring speech from newly elected Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for County Durham, 14-year-old Makayla Harwood.

"You are part of history today," Makayla told the chamber.

"This building might not be here next year, but the skills you learn today and the memories you make here will last a lifetime. Change does not start when you turn 18. It starts right now, in this room, with your voices."

Pupils also got the chance to learn about local government in a question and answer session with Cllr Cathy Hunt, the council's Cabinet member for children and young people's services, and Cllr Joe Quinn, Cabinet member for planning, investments, and assets.

Using a red and green card voting system, the Year 5 students then debated and passed judgment on topics. These included:

- **Mental health in schools:** Students voted that schools should make student happiness and wellbeing a priority, arguing that happy children naturally learn better.
- **Social media bans:** While acknowledging online dangers, the chamber rejected a total ban on social media for under-16s, voting instead for tighter restrictions, robust filters, and giving parents better control tools.
- **The ethics of AI:** The pupils voted in favour of limiting heavy AI reliance in classrooms, insisting that future schooling must protect human critical thinking and problem-solving through traditional testing methods.
- **The future of local spaces:** The chamber issued a strong call for increased funding and investment in safe, adult-supported, but youth-led, community spaces.

The tradition of the Big Debate will continue, with the event to be held in an alternative venue next year. For more information about the Durham Youth Council, visit: [www.durham.gov.uk/youthvoice](http://www.durham.gov.uk/youthvoice)

# New Support Service

Residents in County Durham will now be able to access support through a new, easy-to-use, online directory.

Connecting County Durham, launched by Durham County Council, brings local organisations, activities, and support services all together in one place, for residents and professionals.

The directory will include details, and access, to care and support organisations, activities and social groups, mental and physical wellbeing services, childcare and family support, and special educational needs and disabilities services.

Residents will be able to explore these services using simple keyword searches, filters, or by looking up their postcode, and the site will offer easy links to further information and support on key topics such as mental health, care services, the SEND Local Offer and more.

The site, which has been designed in partnership with local people, is a replacement for the council's Families Information Service and Locate websites, bringing information from them together into one place. It hopes to provide accessible information, and support prevention and early help services across communities.

Working with a range of partners and professionals, the council hopes the site will also become a useful tool for those organisations offering or facilitating support for residents. The website allows users to save listings they feel are useful and share these with service users, friends and family through an email, link code, or by printing them out.

Cllr Cathy Hunt, Cabinet member for children and young people's services, said: "I am delighted to see the launch of this new site.

It is an easy-to-use service which will help families to access childcare, holiday activities, and groups or services for young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities."

It is free for organisations to register to the directory and promote their services. For more information and to register for the directory visit: [www.connectingcountydurham.co.uk](http://www.connectingcountydurham.co.uk)



# New Funding Set to Expand Support for Families Affected by Child to Parent Abuse



Up to 120 children, young people and their families are set to benefit from specialist support thanks to fresh funding for a service tackling violence from young people towards their parents or caregivers.

Police and Crime Commissioner Joy Allen and members of the County Durham and Darlington Serious Violence Prevention Partnership have approved a £47,510 grant to expand and sustain the delivery of the Respect Young People's Programme (RYPP) across the force area, alongside funding two new additional Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) Ambassadors.

The investment, from of the Violence Prevention Fund, is in addition to funding already in place to deliver the existing service within both Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council.

RYPP is a well-evidenced, whole-family intervention designed for children and young people aged eight to 18 who are using violence or abuse towards parents or carers.

It addresses a high-risk but often hidden form of domestic abuse, supporting families to reduce harm, improve relationships, and prevent escalation into more serious violence.

The project is expected to directly support around 80 to 120 children and young people and their families over a 12-month period and addresses several key commitments in the PCC's Police, Crime and Justice Plan. These include preventing and diverting young people away from serious violence and criminality through targeted early intervention services for young people and delivering on a statutory duty to prevent serious violence and tackle the causes and impact of serious violence.

Police and Crime Commissioner Joy Allen said: "Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse is a hidden harm but is recognised as having a high prevalence across the UK and beyond. Studies have suggested as much as 40% of those experiencing it do not report it, with parents often feeling immense shame and blaming themselves or

fearing criminalisation of their child.

"We know that families often reach out for help at a crisis point, but partners are working hard locally to ensure families and young people receive support much earlier to stop abuse before it escalates. These efforts are already delivering impressive results.

"For this reason, we are pleased to support an expansion of this vital work and further support young people and their families to reduce harm, improve relationships and eliminate the risks of more serious violence in the future. The interventions delivered through RYPP are rooted in holistic approaches that offer families and children the emotional sustenance they need without judgement, hopefully encouraging more families to seek out and accept help in the future."

The funding will enable increased delivery of RYPP group programmes across the force area, targeting children and young people aged eight to 18 using harmful behaviours towards parents and carers, particularly those known to Early Help, Children's Social Care or Youth Justice, those experiencing multiple vulnerabilities including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma and those at risk of escalation into serious violence or offending. Participants will be identified through established referral pathways involving multi-agency partners.

Meanwhile, two additional CAPVA Ambassadors will complete the structured RYPP Ambassador Programme, delivered by Respect, which will include intensive training, shadowing, co-delivery, supervised practice and portfolio assessment.

The Serious Violence Prevention Partnership was created to oversee the implementation of the Government's Serious Violence Duty in January 2023 and requires organisations to work together to reduce and prevent serious violence in their local areas.

Members have since developed and published the Serious Violence Response Strategy 2024, setting out how partners will work together in the future to better protect young people from being drawn into serious violence.

# Local Fighter Chasing World Glory After England Selection



A former Newton Aycliffe resident has been selected to represent Team England at the prestigious IMMAF World Championships, taking place in Georgia from 1st - 7th November 2026.

Jess Catleugh, who attended Stephenson Way Primary School and Greenfield Community College, has earned her place in the England squad after just five years in mixed martial arts (MMA).

Now training at Sensei MMA in Darlington, Jess has built an impressive amateur record of thirteen fights and is aiming to bring home a world championship gold medal for England.

Although she has recently moved to Darlington to be closer to her gym, Jess spent most of her life in Newton Aycliffe, where her family remain proud supporters of her achievements.

The opportunity to compete on the world stage is entirely self-funded, with athletes responsible for covering the costs of flights, accommodation, competition kit and travel expenses. To help make the trip possible, Jess has launched a GoFundMe fundraising campaign and is appealing for support from the local community.

Her father, Dave Catleugh, a lifelong Newton Aycliffe resident of 73 years, said: "Jess has worked incredibly hard to reach this level in such a short time. Representing England at the World Championships is a fantastic achievement, and we're all immensely proud of her. We're hoping the local community can get behind her as she prepares to compete on the world stage."

Anyone wishing to support Jess's journey can donate via her GoFundMe page: <https://gofund.me/a4f676738>

# New Monthly Craft Market



The new monthly Newton Aycliffe Town Centre Craft Market continues to grow and is becoming more popular each month.

What started as a trial, alongside the Town Centre Easter event in April, has now developed into a popular monthly market with a good mix of stalls each month. Organised by Candy Queen Events, the markets of May and June were popular, but the latest market in July saw the best footfall yet with an extra 100 people through the door compared with June.

The market currently takes place in the unit that was, until recently, occupied by Heron and has up to 20 stalls each month. The types of stalls vary each month so, even if you have been before, it's worth going along the following month to see what's different, or to see if your favourite stall is there!

The next market takes place on Saturday 22nd August and is open from 10am until 4pm. For further details, follow Candy Queen Events on Facebook.

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# Diabetic Support Group

Come and join us on Tuesday 4th August at Simpature Community Lounge, Simpature Court, Newton Aycliffe DL5 5JZ from 1.00pm - 3.00pm.

Shared experiences, practical tips, encouragement, family friendly atmosphere, **EVERYONE WELCOME** (adults and children) - no pressure to talk, just come and listen . . . Don't feel alone if Type 1 or Type 2 Diabetes is in your life - this group is for you. Contact Kayleigh 07950 885454 for more information.

# Wheelchairs

In the UK it is estimated 4.3 million people experience a short-term mobility need that could benefit from a wheelchair. 44% of these people believed they would have benefitted from one, to attend appointments or to continue in their normal social environment.

The NHS provides wheelchairs for long-term users, but those in temporary need often have to apply privately, some have a waiting list and most have a charge. If the need for a wheelchair is unplanned, such as after an accident, a wait or a charge might have a dramatic effect on their lives.

Community Spirit Newton Aycliffe can supply transit and self propelled wheelchairs, children's and bariatric chairs, on a temporary loan basis, free of charge - they can delivered to the door if you live within Newton Aycliffe.

Please contact email: [communityspiritaycliffe@gmail.com](mailto:communityspiritaycliffe@gmail.com) or call Anne on 07506 123561.

# Woodham Academy Student Leadership Team for 2026/27



Woodham Academy is delighted to announce its Student Leadership Team for the 2026/27 academic year following a highly competitive application and interview process.

Students impressed staff with their innovative ideas, leadership potential and commitment to the school, demonstrating the values that define the Woodham Academy community.

The successful applicants will play an important role in representing their peers and supporting school life throughout the coming year.

Congratulations to Joseph B, who has been appointed Head Boy and Scarlet D, who has been appointed Head Girl. They will be supported by Deputy Head Students Oscar J, Benjamin K, Emily D and Freya A.

In recognition of the exceptionally high standard of applications this year, Woodham Academy has also introduced a new student leadership role: Prefects. Congratulations to Billy R, Lillie H, Addison J, Ellie M, Carter R, Emily C, Emmie S and Grace P, who will support the wider leadership team and take responsibility for key areas of school life.

Congratulations to all of the students who applied. We look forward to seeing the positive impact our new student leaders will make across the Woodham Academy community throughout the year ahead.



# Neonatal Service Recognised with Prestigious UNICEF Accreditation



County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust is celebrating after its Neonatal Service became the first Special Care Baby Units (SCBU) in the Northern Neonatal Network to achieve the prestigious UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative Neonatal Accreditation.

The achievement was celebrated at Darlington Memorial Hospital, where Chief Executive Steve Russell and Director of Nursing, Gill Hunt, presented the team with their award and unveiled the unit's Baby Friendly plaque in recognition of their commitment to providing outstanding family-centred neonatal care.

The internationally recognised accreditation reflects four years of work to improve the experience of babies and their families, supporting parents as their baby's primary caregivers while promoting and supporting the provision of breastmilk and breastfeeding, encouraging and empowering parents as their baby's primary caregivers. To achieve the accreditation, the team introduced a number of improvements across the service, including supporting parents to spend as much time as possible with their baby, creating more family-friendly facilities, supporting early skin-to-skin contact, introducing parent-led ward rounds and ensuring families are fully involved in decisions about their baby's care.

The accreditation also recognises the team's commitment to supporting mothers to provide breastmilk for premature and sick babies, supporting their baby's immune system, helping to give babies the very best start in life.

The journey began in 2021 and involved significant changes to policies, staff education and ways of working. Following a successful assessment earlier this year, the team achieved full accreditation in February 2026.

Gail McAllister, Neonatal Sister, Infant Feeding Lead and UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative Project Lead, said:

"Receiving this accreditation is an incredibly proud moment

for our whole team. It reflects four years of hard work, commitment and collaboration to improve the experience of babies and their families during what can be one of the most challenging times in their lives.

"While supporting breastfeeding and breastmilk is an important part of the Baby Friendly standards, this accreditation is about so much more. We've worked hard to create a culture where parents are recognised as their baby's primary caregivers, are fully involved in decisions about their baby's care, and feel supported to build close, loving relationships with their baby from the very beginning.

"Achieving the accreditation isn't the end of our journey - it's our foundation. We're committed to continuing to develop the service and ensuring every family receives the very best care and support."

The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative is a globally recognised programme designed to improve care for babies, mothers and families. Accreditation is awarded following a rigorous independent assessment demonstrating that recognised standards of best practice have been achieved and embedded.

Gill Hunt, Director of Nursing, for County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, said:

"I'm incredibly proud of our Neonatal team for achieving this prestigious accreditation. Becoming the first Special Care Baby Unit in the Northern Neonatal Network to receive this recognition is a fantastic achievement and reflects years of dedication, innovation and commitment to improving care for babies and their families.

"This award demonstrates our commitment to delivering compassionate, family-centred care and ensuring parents are supported and involved throughout their baby's journey. I'd like to congratulate everyone who has contributed to this outstanding achievement."



# Member of Parliament Update

Email: [alan.strickland.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alan.strickland.mp@parliament.uk) | Telephone: 01325 344185



Giving more opportunities to local young people is one of my top priorities, so I was delighted to run a Summer School programme for students from UTC South Durham in Aycliffe. The programme gave local students a unique opportunity to learn more about Parliament, industry and the exciting careers available here in County Durham. Throughout the Summer School, students met representatives from local space businesses in NETPark in Sedgefield, the Royal Air Force and UK Space Command, as well as gaining first-hand experience of how Parliament works. The key focus of the summer school was to task the pupils on how we can grow the space and satellite sector in our constituency. Students were challenged to develop ideas and recommendations for how we can strengthen and grow this innovative industry, helping to create future jobs, investment and opportunities for local people. The programme concluded with a visit to Parliament, where I was delighted to present certificates recognising the students' successful completion of the Summer School. They also met the Speaker of the House of Commons. Their enthusiasm, professionalism and thoughtful contributions throughout the programme were a real credit to both them and their college and I was proud to support them as they explored future career paths and developed

the confidence to succeed. It was a pleasure to meet the School Council at Greenfield Academy. They asked excellent questions about my role as their MP and shared their views on a range of issues affecting our community. It's always encouraging to see young people taking such a keen interest in the area where we live and wanting to make a positive difference. Their passion and enthusiasm for helping others gives me great confidence for the future. It was also brilliant to have a tour of the new school which, when finished, will be an excellent new learning space for all the students.

Supporting local families is really important to me, so it was really good to visit Deaf Hill Primary School and see their free breakfast club in action. It was fantastic to see children arriving at school early, enjoying a healthy breakfast and taking part in activities before the school day began. Breakfast clubs provide an important boost for children while also offering valuable support for working families.

I'm also pleased that seven more local primary schools will introduce free breakfast clubs, from September, through Government funding. I'm delighted to share that my new website is now live. Residents can use it to keep up to date with my work as our MP, request a surgery appointment, complete surveys and find out more about campaigns and events taking place across the constituency - [www.alanstricklandmp.com](http://www.alanstricklandmp.com)

I want your views on local bus services. Reliable and affordable public transport is vital for connecting people to work, education, healthcare and leisure opportunities and I want to hear directly from you about what is working well and where improvements are needed. I'm particularly interested in hearing suggestions for new routes and ways to improve existing services. The feedback will help inform discussions with bus operators, Durham County Council and the North East Mayor/ as we work to improve transport links across our communities.

As always, if there is an issue you would like to raise with me or if you would like to attend one of my advice surgeries, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



## BUS SURVEY

# Newton Aycliffe WI Age UK Events

Our July meeting including a fascinating presentation by Jane and Rebecca of Cutting it Fine, who presented their hand made versions of costumes worn by ladies of the 13th Century. They explained how researching the costumes for accuracy was quite a time consuming challenge to get the historical accuracy they need for costume reproduction.

Our August meeting will be a lovely social evening and, just as a reminder, we will be providing a bake and sandwich table at Shildon Fair on 1st August and the ever popular Sweet Delights evening, which will be held at Neville Parade Community Centre, is on 21st August. In September, one of our members will be running the Great North Run, raising funds for Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group, our charity of 2026.

As a WI member, you can have access to the events catalogue from WI House, including early evening walks, coffee mornings, cookery demonstrations, lunches, ladies days 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.

On 10th August, in the Simpasture Lounge, Simpasture Court, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 5JZ, there is a free talk on benefits, open to those aged over 50. The talk is from 10am-11am.

On Wednesday 9th September, Chapter50, working in conjunction with the Pioneering Care Partnership Wellbeing for Life Team, is holding an 'Insight into the Menopause'. This event is in the Lifeline Community Action Hub, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4DS, from 10am-12 noon. Free coffee available.

On Thursday 1st October, Chapter50, working in conjunction with the Pioneering Care Partnership Wellbeing for Life Team, and the Cancer Awareness Team, is holding a 'Talk on Bowel Cancer'. This event is in the Lifeline Community Action Hub, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4DS, 10am - 12 noon, free coffee available.

On Monday 5th October, Chapter50, working in conjunction with the Pioneering Care Partnership Wellbeing for Life Team, and the Cancer Awareness Team, is holding a talk on 'Prostrate Cancer'. This event is in the Lifeline Community Action Hub, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4DS, 10am - 12 noon, free coffee available.

## From Nashville to Darlo

Nashville-based singer songwriter Shelly Fairchild is trading Music City for Darlington with a show at The Forum Music Studios in August.

The gig is one of a small number of UK shows for the artist, who's toured with acts such as Martina McBride, Keith Urban and Tim McGraw, and provided backing vocals for Jason Aldean, Eric Church, Melissa Etheridge, Martina McBride and more.

Shelly's also written tracks, cut by Little Big Town and Tanya Tucker, and graced the hallowed stage of The Grand Ole Opry multiple times.

Her Darlington show, on Thursday 13th August, comes in the same month as the release of Fairchild's first album in ten years, Sacred Southern Daughter.

Support on the night will come from Cambridge country act, Tennessee Twin.

Allison McKay, Chief Executive of The Forum Music Studios, said: "This is going to be a great night of original live music, all the way from Nashville. Shelly Fairchild has played with some of the greatest names in country, and on one of the most iconic stages of them all, The Grand Ole Opry, so to see her here at The Forum is something we're really excited about and not to be missed."

Tickets cost £15 from: [theforumonline.co.uk](http://theforumonline.co.uk)

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# British Championships



Academy recently attended Figure, Free, Pairs & Inline British Championships held on Friday 10th, Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th July and came home with six British Champion titles and two Vice Champion titles!

Skating in their first ever Pairs events, Jackson Bainbridge and Elizabeth Thompson achieved 1st place in Mini Basic Pairs with a programme to music from Pirates of the Caribbean. They gained a fabulous score which earned them level 1 pair skating certificates.

Austin Armstrong, at his first ever championships, won 1st place in both Mini Basic Figures and Mini Basic Free Skating. He completed his first programme to space themed music.

Jackson Bainbridge competed in British Championships for the third time. This was his first year in Mini Men and he achieved 1st place in figures and 2nd place in free skating where he performed a karate kid routine.

Liam Stevens skated in Espoir Men's figures and achieved 1st place and Espoir Men's free skating and achieved 2nd place with a new PB. He completed routines to Around the World in 80 days and Ninjago. At only 12 years old, this is Liams fifth consecutive figure and free championships. During his competitive years in various disciplines he has achieved 15 British Championship medals and 8 British Championship titles.

Ben Prior, aged 50, competed in Senior Men's figures and achieved 1st place where he became Senior Men's British Champion proving skating is for all ages. He came back to competing after an over 30 year break and has shown how perseverance, discipline and hard work can make what seems impossible become possible.

"Over the years we have been to some great competitions and this one is right up there with the best!" said coach Tracy Stevens. "Our team skated extremely well and it was a fantastic weekend full of fun and laughter."

"What a wonderful experience! We are incredibly happy with how the team performed and are looking forward to the upcoming British Championships for the Youth-Senior Dance Championships, where Lucy Owen will be competing in Youth Dance. We are also hosting our very own Spectrum Competition at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre in August."

# Cooler on the Tops for AFWC

Despite a slight lull in the heatwave conditions around County Durham, it was full-on in the Lake District and a strong turn-out of 39 Aycliffe Fell Walking Club (AFWC) members headed towards the Glenridding and Patterdale area to walk the Grisedale Horseshoe amongst others. Fortunately, this club offers many options on walk routes, so although quite a few went all the way to the tops of Helvellyn, Nethermost Pike and Dollywagon Pike via Swirral Edge enjoying a cool breeze as they traversed the ridge, others set off with similar intentions but, due to the heat, decided to deviate from the higher peaks in favour of Grisedale Tarn and St. Sunday Crag. Other groups opted for a Place Fell circular or more lowland routes. Everybody had a great day out, finishing in one or all of the three pubs, and local cafes attracted others. The next walk on Saturday 8th August is on the Northumberland Coastal Path with a selection of walks from Bamburgh, Seahouses, Beadnell and Craster to Alnmouth.

Aycliffe Fell Walking Club is a very friendly walking club. Please look at the website [aycliffefellwalkingclub.com](http://aycliffefellwalkingclub.com) for further details or if you are interested in joining us. Annual membership of £10 and 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.

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## Newton Aycliffe Juniors

**Under 10's Blues** came away from the Pro Motiv Summer Tournament as tournament winners, having played eight games throughout the day.

**Under 10's Blues** finished off their seven-game summer mini league away at Middleton Rangers Spitfires. Aycliffe were excellent from start

to finish, looking controlled defensively and a constant threat moving forward. Goals came from Leland (2), with Carter keeping yet another clean sheet at the other end which earned him POTM.

**Under 10's** have been playing a round robin against seven other local sides, with the final days being played with Heighington the opposition. Aycliffe went on to win the tournament with great goals from Lee and Harry.

**Under 11's Reds** entered the Dormanstown Rovers Tournament and came away as winners. After keeping a clean sheet in the first game, they went on to win the second game and never looked back.

**Under 11's Reds** played a friendly against newly formed RND Youth, playing some good football, scoring goals through Fox (5), Thomas (2) and Orig. POTM was Fox, PPOTM was Orig.

**Under 12's Blacks** got a great 5-4 win over Gateshead. Kaiden scored an amazing four goals with Olly adding the fifth goal. Isaac, Theo and Elliot providing the assists.

**Under 12's Whites** faced Dormanstown, coming away with a well-earned 0-1 win. The only goal of the game came midway through the second half when Teddy calmly finished from a superb assist by Brodie. Joint POTM were Max and Leo for their rock-solid performances at the back, with Thomas also deserving a special mention after an excellent display in defence.

**Under 12's Whites** had another excellent test, travelling away to South Park Whites. It was an entertaining game that finished 3-3, with goals coming from Teddy, Alfie and Ethan. POTM were Archer and Oscar.

**Under 13's Reds** played their first pre-season game against a division 4 team. It was going to be a tough game, with only nine players available, but Aycliffe put on an impressive performance, eventually losing 4-3.

**Under 14's Whites** kicked off pre-season away to Sunderland Foundation of Light who are four divisions above Aycliffe. After leading 4-1, Aycliffe ended up drawing 4-4.

**Under 15's Juniors** travelled to Redcar for the Junior Champions League Tournament. The team went through the group stage unbeaten, which included an emphatic 8-0 win, meaning Aycliffe qualified for the semi-final with ease. A meeting with old foes Guisborough proved to be a step too far with a combination of fatigue and rising temperatures leading to a 3-0 defeat.

**Under 23's** faced Sports Club, who sit a division higher, in the first preseason game for the Ian Lawson Memorial Cup. Aycliffe controlled the game from the start and ran out 1-3 winners. Sean, Lewy G and Damo scored the goals. MOTM went to Andrew B. There was money raised after the game for Ian's family's charity of choice, Kidney Research UK.

**Under 23's** travelled to face the Iron Horse in a local derby, coming away with a fantastic 4-1 win to ramp up their pre-season. Goals were scored by Ellis T, Elliot D, Lewis G and Adam M. MOTM was chosen by the opposition, and they chose Adam M, whose hold up play and work rate was superb.

**Under 23's** continued their impressive pre-season with a 5-3 away win at Witton Gilbert. Leading 3-0, Aycliffe changed things up and conceded two goals. They reverted to their original plan and went on to get the win. Goals were scored by James R, Noah E, Taylor B, Matty M and Andrew B. MOTM was Curtis C.



## Lucy at British Championships



Lucy ,Owen from Shildon, represented Spectrum Roller Skating Academy in Dance Youth-Senior British Championships held on Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th July and came fifth in Youth Ladies British Championships! Skating a Styledance to music by Elvis Presley and a Freedance, themed Vincent Van Gogh, Lucy took part in her fourth British Championships.

"Lucy is an asset to the club and has a great attitude to learning. Another great performance which now concludes the 2026 championship season. We can start looking forward to hosting our very own Spectrum Competition at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre in August."

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# Trust Introduces Open Visiting at Local Hospitals

Open visiting began across hospitals at County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust from 1st June 2026, giving patients greater flexibility to spend time with loved ones and welcoming children as visitors as part of a more family-centred approach to care.

**Visitors will be welcome daily between 10.30am and 7.30pm.**

Gill Hunt, Chief Nurse at County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Introducing open visiting is an important step in supporting our patients to stay connected with the people who matter most to them. We know that spending time with family and friends plays a vital role in wellbeing and recovery.

"As part of this, we are pleased to welcome children as visitors during the open visiting hours where appropriate, recognising how important those family connections are. We do ask that children are always supervised, that visits are planned with ward teams where needed, and that no visitors visit if they are feeling unwell.

"While visiting is now more flexible, patient safety, dignity and the delivery of care will always remain our priority. There may be times when visitors are asked to step out briefly to allow for care or rest, and we appreciate everyone's understanding and support.

"We would like to thank our patients, families and communities for working with us to create a safe, respectful and compassionate environment across our hospitals."

As part of the updated visiting policy, children are now encouraged to visit where appropriate, recognising the importance of maintaining family connections during hospital stays.

## Children visiting

- Must be supervised at all times
- May require planning in some areas
- Should not visit if unwell

## Visiting guidance

- Maximum of two visitors at a time
- Visiting may be paused in some circumstances
- Staff may adapt visiting arrangements based on patient needs
- Infection prevention measures must be followed

Visitors are asked to always follow staff guidance to help maintain a safe, respectful and compassionate environment for patients, families and staff.

# Durham Brass Strikes the Right Chord



The Durham County Council-run festival has filled all corners of County Durham with music, as brass bands descended to perform across its communities and venues. Celebrating twenty years of Durham Brass Festival, the packed programme played to the tune of all music tastes, with unique collaborations, lively street bands and traditional brass for audiences to enjoy. The festival kicked off in style when visitors in Durham City were treated to a pop-up performance in the marketplace, led by Italian street band Girlesque.

A favourite of the street bands programme, the all-female ensemble gathered the crowds, giving audiences a snippet of the Big and Little Brass bashes that were to come to communities throughout the week. The Brass Bashes built a crescendo to the weekend, where the historic streets of Durham came to life with the iconic Streets of Brass and Party in the Park. Bands also took to the water, with the return of the festival's boat cruises.

Other highlights of the festival included opening act ELVANA, a Nirvana-Elvis tribute band, who played their eclectic set at Gala Durham alongside rock n roll brass band Oompah Brass XXL.

Another collaboration saw North East band Hector Gannet play songs from their new album in the setting of Redhills Miners Hall, accompanied the Durham Miners' Association Brass Band.

Meanwhile, Brassed On returned for its third year, shining the spotlight on a trio of emerging artists by pairing their performances with brass ensembles.

True to its roots, the festival celebrated the county's brass heritage with concerts from renowned brass bands, including the world-famous Grimethorpe Colliery Band; Stanhope Silver Band; and the EverReady Band, who played a magical set of movie scores inside Durham Cathedral.

And communities in Easington, Pelton and Bishop Auckland came together for tea dances, accompanied by the Tyne Valley Big Band and blues band The Revolutionaries.

Audiences young and old also got to experience the sounds of brass, as, throughout the week, street bands delivered lively performances in a tour of the county's schools and care homes.

To find out more about Durham Brass Festival visit:

[www.brassfestival.co.uk](http://www.brassfestival.co.uk)

*Photo: Loud Noises at the Big Brass Bash in Newton Aycliffe*

# A Summer Safety Message: Cold Water Shock Can Be Fatal

As temperatures soar across County Durham and Darlington, many families will do what generations before them have done – head to rivers, lakes, reservoirs and the coast to make the most of the good weather. But, beneath the surface, lies a deadly danger that too many people still underestimate.

Cold water shock can kill in seconds.

Sadly, every summer we hear about heartbreaking tragedies. During periods of hot weather, lives are lost not because people cannot swim, but because the human body simply cannot cope with the sudden shock of entering cold water.

My thoughts are with the families, friends and communities affected by such heartbreaking losses.

Even on the hottest days, rivers, lakes and reservoirs remain dangerously cold. The sudden immersion can trigger an involuntary gasp, rapid breathing, panic and muscle paralysis, leaving even strong swimmers in difficulty. Behind every drowning tragedy is a family whose lives has been changed forever.

One such family is that of Fiona Gosling, who heartbreakingly lost her 14-year-old son Cameron after he jumped into the River Wear near Bishop Auckland in 2015. Cameron was a confident swimmer, but confidence offered no protection against cold water shock.

Rather than allowing grief to define her, Fiona has shown extraordinary courage by launching the 'Dying to be Cool' campaign. Working alongside County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Durham County Council and our emergency services, she has helped educate thousands of young people about the dangers of open water. Her determination to ensure no other parent experiences the pain she lives with is both humbling and inspirational.

Her message is simple, powerful and one we should all hear: education saves lives.

Our emergency services do an incredible job, but they cannot be everywhere. We cannot put barriers around every river or reservoir, but together we can build awareness. We can give people the knowledge to recognise the risks, make safer choices and look out for one another.

As the school holidays are now here and this exceptional heat continues, that conversation has never been more important. Social media can make jumping into open water look exciting and harmless. The reality can be devastating. Please remember these simple but lifesaving messages:

- Never jump or dive into open water.
- Enter the water slowly to allow your body to adjust.
- Never swim alone or after drinking alcohol.
- Tell someone where you are going.
- If you fall into cold water, fight the instinct to panic. Float on your back until your breathing returns to normal, then call for help.
- If someone is in difficulty, call 999 immediately and use the "Phone, Float, Throw" principle. Never enter the water yourself unless you are trained to do so.

This summer, I am asking every parent, grandparent,



teacher and friend to have one important conversation.

Talk about cold water shock.

Talk about the dangers.

Talk about making sure everyone comes home safely.

If that conversation persuades just one young person to stop and think before entering dangerous water, it could save a precious life and spare another family unimaginable heartbreak.

That is the community I want us to build together: one where we look after one another, where education helps prevent tragedy, where every one of us plays our part in creating safer, stronger and more resilient communities, and where we do all we can to ensure more people get home safely to their loved ones.



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## PUZZLE CORNER

### Sudoku

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

## IN MEMORIAM

## Laurence Cowper

17th August 2023

You are loved and missed every day. Memories of you are locked in our hearts forever and there they will always stay. Remembered always by loving Wife Valerie and all your family.  
xxxxxx

## Yvonne Robinson

8-8-2016

Too well loved to ever be forgotten.  
Every day you are in our hearts.  
Sid and family

## Steve Toroni

20-12-49 - 8-8-21

Forever in our hearts and minds.  
From loving Wife Jen and family  
xxxxxx

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## CONGRATULATIONS

## Joanne and Neville Jones



We didn't just survive the storm, we walked through it hand in hand. Nine years married, forever best friends.  
Happy Anniversary Nev, love always, Jo xxx

## OBITUARY

## Sad News for the Newton Aycliffe Community

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of  
**Ann Hordon** (née Mortimer),  
formerly Belton and Allen, aged 87.

A lifelong resident of Newton Aycliffe, Ann was known and loved by so many. To many she was simply 'Auntie Ann', a familiar face who always had a smile, a chat and time for everyone. Many will remember Ann as the Milk Lady, delivering milk around the town, while others will know her from the many happy years she spent socialising at the Phoenix Club, where she made many lifelong friends.

A much-loved Mam, Grandma, Auntie and friend, Ann touched the lives of countless people across the community. Her warmth, humour and kindness will be fondly remembered, and she will be greatly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing her.

Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with all of Ann's family and friends at this difficult time. Rest in peace, Auntie Ann. Your legacy will live on in the hearts of everyone who knew you.

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# PCP Summer Fair

Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) is inviting local residents to its Summer Fair at the Pioneering Care Centre in Newton Aycliffe on Saturday 1st August, from 10am to 2pm.

The free community event will offer a range of family-friendly activities, including children's crafts, face painting, Steve's Animal Ark and an inflatable golf driving range, alongside a variety of stalls and refreshments from the Garden Kitchen. PCP is looking forward to welcoming people of all ages for a fun-filled day of entertainment and community spirit.

## Lunchtime Jazz



What a joy it was to be back in Bishop Auckland listening to a lunchtime performance of Gypsy Jazz hosted by #Bishop Auckland Jazz. Today's artists known collectively as Swing Manouche featured Steve McGarvie on clarinet, Mick Shoulder on lead guitar, Dave Smith on rhythm guitar and Paul Grainger on bass. Starting with a free introduction by Mick on guitar, the group came together to play 'When Day is Done' and 'Russian Lullaby' by Irving Berlin. They reeled off standards including Clair de Lune, Lulu Swing, Chez Jaquet (a light waltz), Dinette, Je Suis Seule Ce Soir, NoTo Swing, Roses of Picardie, Djangology and finished with Minor Swing. Most of these were popular Django Reinhardt classics or by Lulu, a German gypsy guitarist from the 1970s, hence the references. The group gelled together from start to finish generating a lovely relaxed atmosphere - even more amazing when we were told Steve McGarvie was seeing it for the first time. His lovely soft, velvet tone seemed effortless as he zoomed in and out of the music with such grace. We are so lucky to have such outstanding musicians coming to Bishop Auckland to perform and the almost capacity audience were not disappointed, applauding every solo.

The next month's jazz on Friday 14th August, 1.00pm at Bishop Auckland Methodist Church, features the John Settle Quartet with John on Vibraphone (a rare chance to showcase this instrument). Let's make Bishop Auckland great again!

## Editorial Contributions

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

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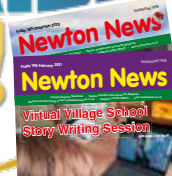
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# Woodham Academy Class of 2026



It was a very special night at Hardwick Hall Hotel on Wednesday 1st July for Woodham Academy's 'Class of 2026'. After an intense year focussing on GCSE's, our Year 11 students celebrated (in style) the end of their exams and also their last official day with Woodham Academy.

The students had been looking forward to their 'End of Year 11 Celebration' for months and it didn't disappoint. The setting was perfect and even the weather was kind to us so we could take the group photo in the stunning grounds of the hotel. Everyone looked amazing- and certainly very grown up! It was a wonderful sight; watching them arrive at school with their proud parents and family. And so, the celebrations began with speeches, photos and a welcome drink, followed by a look back at their time at Woodham in an emotional video and finishing, as always, with lots of dancing and singing. A great night was had by all: laughter, fun and timeless memories. We wish all of our Year 11 students good luck for their exciting future ahead. We are looking forward to hearing all about your successes. A huge thank you to the staff at Hardwick Hall Hotel, Sedgefield for their hard work in making the End of Year 11 Celebration a night to remember.

