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New Indoor Soccer Centre for Aycliffe

Plans for an exciting new indoor Soccer Centre have been passed by the County Council, promising a real boost to the Town and surrounding areas. The Soccer Factory Ltd had plans approved to convert the former Thrislington site into 7 five-a-side courts.

The courts will have the latest 3g AstroTurf, which looks and plays like traditional grass, giving a far better user experience. In addition there are plans for a fitness suite, multi-purpose studios, a small café and associated function room, as well as a suite of offices and meeting rooms.

The 85000 square foot site has been vacant since 2008 and this development offers further evidence of the attraction of Newton Aycliffe for businesses to locate.

Dan Lewis, Managing Director of The Soccer Factory commented "we feel this site and the area in general is perfect for The Soccer Factory. There are huge amounts of people, male and female, young and old who regularly play football and offering this facility will hopefully ensure that they can continue to play, and that their experience is enhanced. The numerous junior and senior clubs in the area will be welcomed at The Soccer Factory as a training base to ensure their training is uninterrupted throughout the winter, as well as looking to run leagues for males and females, at both junior and

adult levels.

We have worked closely with Jeff Blackwell from Blackwell Architectural Services to come up with plans which are exciting and innovative, and promise to offer a much needed new sports development to the area".

It is also envisaged that The Soccer Factory will offer a number of employment opportunities, both full and part time, in a further boost to the area at a time when so many people are finding work difficult to come by. As with all ventures of this size, The Soccer Factory are committing a significant amount of private money into the area in order to convert what was a factory into a state of the art sports facility. To this end The Soccer Factory are always looking to be introduced to potential new investors who might wish to be involved in a project such as this.

If anyone is interested in learning more about The Soccer Factory plans, they are asked to contact Mr Lewis via Newton News.

Woodham Golf Course Development Approved

County Council. Paul Gittins informed Newton News the local planning committee had granted Outline Planning Permission to Woodham Golf Club to develop the Golf Course.

The Committee met on Tuesday and after hearing all the information including details of 80 letters of objection and 168 letters of support agreed unanimously the £32 million project would be in the best interest of Newton Aycliffe.

Houses will be built first to provide the necessary funds to proceed with the improvements to the area which include a bridal walk alongside Middridge Road.

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NEWS FROM MIDDRIDGE

The Community Cinema is coming to Middridge Village Hall on Saturday 17th March, at 3pm - the film to be shown is Tangled. Everyone welcome, entrance is free. Middridge Village Association is holding their AGM on Wednesday 14th March at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. All residents welcome to attend.



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Community Learning Courses to Help Job Seekers at PCP

The Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) has added a variety of community learning courses to the long list of activities delivered in the Pioneering Care Centre in Newton Aycliffe.

The courses are an ideal way to gain a taste of something new or something you've always thought about doing. Plus it's a great start in longer-term learning opportunities or employment.

The majority of courses last 6-8 weeks and are free if people are in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) or Job Seekers Allowance (JSA).

Courses include:
Introduction to Youth



Work: starting Thursday 8th March 1 - 3pm for 6 weeks. Learners will gain an understanding of Youth Work and other related career pathways. Cost: £27.60 if not in receipt of ESA or JSA. Computers for the Terrified: starting Monday 12th March 10am - 12 noon for 7 weeks. Beginners' course on how to use internet, keyboard, mouse, send and receive emails and understand technical terms. Cost: £32.20 if not in receipt of ESA or JSA.

Introduction to Teaching Assistant: starting Monday 12th March 1 - 3pm for 6 weeks. Learn about managing children's behaviour, keeping children safe, health and safety and supporting literacy and numeracy. Cost: £27.60 if not in receipt of ESA or JSA.

Introduction to Counselling: starting Thursday 15th March, 6 - 8.30pm for 6 weeks. An introduction to the theory and practice of counselling. Cost: £27.60 if not in receipt of ESA or JSA. Family History: starting Saturday 21st April 10am - 12 noon for 8 weeks. Access

Parish Registers including the history, census data, birth, marriage and death certificates, local and county archives. Cost: £36.80 if not in receipt of ESA or JSA.

Food Safety: one day course 11th April 9am - 4.30pm. Learn about the importance of food safety and knowledge of the systems, techniques and procedures involved. Cost: £15.10 if not in receipt of ESA or JSA.

Carol Wood, Business Development Director for the PCP says: "We feel there is a full range of courses on offer to help people learn a new skill, discover a new hobby or improve their confidence and self-esteem.

We would also like to know if there is something people want to do that isn't on offer. Please get in touch to tell us and we will do our best to provide, depending on numbers (a minimum of 10 people is required)".

All courses run subject to sufficient demand and it is recommended that places are booked as soon as possible either by telephone 01325 321234 or email: enquiries@pcp.uk.net or in person at the Pioneering Care Centre, Carers' Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4SF. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

PARKING OUTSIDE SCHOOLS

Deare Sir,

My son goes to Stephenson Way School and every day when trying to get to pick him up the cars that are parked outside on the road is unreal!

Last week a bus was almost stuck and I had to put my car on the grass so the bus could pass.

This is due to yellow "no parking" being taken away on the school side. I think there is the danger of a child being injured because they cannot see over the cars.

A police officer should be there at 3pm till 3.30pm just to watch and see what goes on and help control the traffic.

Keith Atkinson

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For more details please ring 01325 312768
or email Shaun on: kps56@tiscali.co.uk

Golden Wedding Anniversary

Fred and Freda Poulter of Lilburn Crescent celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on the 3rd March and the Mayor Mary Dalton called to present a bouquet on behalf of the townspeople.

Fred was born in Ferryhill Station and Freda in Spennymoor. They first met at a Miners Institute Dance in Ferryhill Station. Fred was a miner who eventually came with his wife Freda to work in Aycliffe for Permoids and Moores.

They have three children, Karen, Johnathan and Leanne. There are eight Grandchildren with one expected and eight Great Grandchildren. The family came together for a celebratory meal.

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Saturday 17th March - "MUGSHOT"

Bio: MUGSHOT, a four piece band from the South Shields area playing modern and classic rock covers by bands such as Bon Jovi, Chili Peppers, Kings of Leon, Metallica, Muse, U2, Van Halen and Whitesnake, to name but a few. "We hadn't seen this band before so we didn't know what to expect and boy did they rock The Heart!! Something for everyone in the set that had the dancers on their feet, the one's I remember were U2, Whitesnake, Killers, Kings of Leon, Tom Petty, Nirvana, Guns n Roses, The Cult, Radiohead... etc, all played and sung brilliantly!! If you haven't already seen this band, go and see them, you won't be disappointed!! www.myspace.com/mugshotrockband

Saturday 24th March - "THE KILL"

"The band took to the stage, from the off it was a great hard rock attack that set the vibe that would continue throughout the performance. Vocalist Gregg took centre point on stage and really went for it. Not just vocally but physically too! I've said it before and I'll say it again, the Office stage is bigger than most pub set-ups and it needs a band with a genuine physical presence to attract the audience's attention in a building of that size. They had that charisma about them. The rock style of the band continued on with a commercial AOR feel on such songs as Def Leppard's 'Animal', and even though the group did generally go down the path of recognisable rock anthems, it never became too cheesy or entirely predictable. I think they hit a marvellous balance of choosing songs that would have a larger appeal, and yet still maintained an element where you weren't too sure what was coming next" - Colin Smart Review. Tracks covered by: Bon Jovi, Fee Fighters, Def Leppard, Guns n Roses, Linkin Park, Metallica, Ozzy, Pearl Jam, Skid Row, Poison and More - www.thekill.co.uk

Friday 30th March - SKA-MANIA

Rockermouth review from 'Stormin the Castle': "I'd never seen Ska-Mania before. I'd briefly met the singer when he was at The Office one evening watching a band play, and I knew John the keyboardist as he is also the keys-player with the local Whitesnake tribute band, Slip of the Tongue. But I was very impressed with what I saw. They are a seven-piece outfit, comprising of bass, drums, guitar, keys, horn section of sax and trombone, plus a separate lead singer. They have a great full sound, lots of visuals to see on stage with the group having plenty of members, and you got all the superb bouncy ska classics that you'd expect to hear. I must have missed the first half of the gig, but I did get to hear songs like 'On My Radio' by Selector, plus a ton of Madness tunes including 'Embarrassment', 'Madness' and the awesome 'Nightboat to Cairo'. Most of the band were dressed up for the occasion (all suited and booted), and performed extremely well. For the stage/band area, nothing that much had changed from previous set-ups for 'Stormin'. Even the terrible weather couldn't dampen the spirits of the bikers out front dancing along to the music. Ska music has that infectious groove inherent within it, and like-wise there were plenty of folk out there loving it all and getting right in to it. Time was the only real factor that the bands had to battle with for their performances, and unfortunately it took longer time than anticipated to get Ska-Mania off and running. So they had their set cut short by 10 minutes to try and catch back up on schedule with the rest of the acts, but for their brief appearance they did a highly impressive job and certainly brought with them a bit of sunshine for the soul for all those watching. So good in fact that I'd like to see their full set someday, and hope that I can do it soon". NO COVER CHARGE - BE EARLY - FULL HOUSE EXPECTED

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Town Council Gives Least Support to CAB

FUNDS DESPERATELY NEEDED TO KEEP OPEN

Dear Sir,
If you've never been in debt, never needed to claim benefits, always had employment and been treated fairly, never had purchased goods become faulty, never had the threat of eviction hanging over you and been given a rough deal by your landlord, then perhaps no, you won't know what CAB

is. CAB stands for The Citizens Advice Bureau, they are an independent charity that provides advice and solutions to all these problems and many more, with a free, confidential and unbiased service. Why am I writing this letter? It is because we, as a country, have entered into a time when the situations mentioned

above will become even more desperate with more and more people finding themselves in difficulties and needing help.

It is at such a time that the financial support for the CAB is being reduced dramatically which means they have to cut back on the face to face help and advice they are giving. Sedgefield & District CAB covers all of the former Sedgefield Borough area: Chilton, Fishburn, Newton Aycliffe, Sedgefield, Shildon, Spennymoor, Trimdon and all the small villages in between.

I wish to say how disappointing it is that one of the largest town councils in the Sedgefield area, Great Aycliffe Town Council has provided the least support of all the larger local councils to CAB which I think is a poor reflection of their attitude towards those who would use this service in their area. Unless financial support is made available the service in Newton Aycliffe will be reduced even further to only a few hours a week.

You may have noticed that the CAB is considered by the Government and the television news programmes

as an important reference point when requiring evidence of what is really happening in the country, in homes and the work place. Every Local Authority, every loan company, even TV programmes all suggest you contact your local CAB if you are having difficulties. But even charities cost money to run, there are overheads such as rent, heat, light, supervision costs, membership of Citizens Advice who provide the detailed information necessary to give quality advice.

Therefore I am requesting that all those who contribute towards the upkeep of this service do not reduce their contributions, but in fact, dig deep to ensure this service continues.

I am also asking all those who are reading this article to challenge their Councillors to find more money to support this wonderful organisation, which is mostly run by volunteers. Also, if any of the large organisations on our Industrial Estates would be willing to contribute even a small amount annually to get us through this very difficult period when it is important that the service increased rather than reduced

If anyone would be willing to contribute to the continuation of this service however

large or small, please call or contact Donna Stewart the Business Development Manager.
Lorraine Cook

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Greenfield Student Shape up!



Pupils from year 10 and 11 visited Catterick Army Barracks to take part in an Army Experience Day. On arrival they were greeted by soldiers who had seen active service abroad (including Afghanistan) and any pupils hoping for an easy time of it were shocked to discover they would start the day with a 1.5 mile run! This was won by Bradley Beaumont in a time well under the 10 mins 30 seconds required to be a real soldier! Next, they were split into groups and took part in team work exercises (along with lots of press-ups!)

Then, during lunch time, everyone was asked to take on plenty of fuel as they would face the dreaded 'Obstacle Course' in the afternoon. On a cold and windy day, pupils climbed ladders, crawled through muddy trenches, ran through deep water, scaled enormous obstacles, helped each other over walls and jumped over water filled pools. Every single pupil completed the course and the team spirit displayed was outstanding. Well done everyone for a memorable day.


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FORTNIGHTLY COLLECTIONS UNPOPULAR

Dear Editor

I write to raise the subject of the fortnightly rubbish collections that the council will be imposing in a couple of months time.

Whilst I welcome the new recycling bins that we will be receiving (as they are more practical than the current 'sacks' that we have), I am concerned that we seem to be taking a step in the wrong direction with regards to non-recyclable rubbish collection. I certainly don't think it is wise for example to have food sat rotting in bins on our doorsteps for 2 weeks before collection (or longer if you accidentally miss a collection). Fortnightly collections have been tried by other councils and proved so unpopular that the government pledged to set up a £250m fund to help local authorities in England switch back from fortnightly to weekly bin rounds.

In light of this I would welcome comments from readers and the Council on this subject. Particularly if this is something that the majority of people want and whether the council as our elected officials are serving the majority.

David Evans
 Bewick Crescent

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REPORT ON COUNCIL MEETING

Great Aycliffe Town Council continues to serve the people who elected it, hopefully to their satisfaction! The last few meetings have been about nuts-and-bolts administration and business, but also about 'blue skies' thinking-for-the-future.

At the end of last month a meeting heard a presentation by consultant Chris Bowden of Navigus Planning. Although the government has yet to publish detailed guidance for Neighbourhood Plans, Mr Bowden had spent the day working with Council officers on what our 'Neighbourhood Plan' process might look like, and he briefed councillors about the potential of a 'themed' approach which would allow the Council to gather people's ideas and deliver a successful Plan.

Then, at last week's Policy and Resources Committee, Livin gave councillors a presentation on their 'Community Plan'. As a social landlord, councillors were told, Livin recognises that its role goes beyond merely renting out houses, and it is trying to set its core business within a wider frame which includes greener living, improving health, community regeneration, financial inclusion, employability,

mortgage rescue, crime and education.

After the presentation, however, it has to be said that all the questions were about housing. Councillors still receive requests for help, even though control of housing was taken away from them a long time ago. So it was requested that representatives from Livin might return at some time to talk in more detail specifically about housing matters.

In other business, the P&R Committee meeting also discussed the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and agreed to reduce the price of Junior Season Tickets on the town council golf course (in order to attract more young people to join ... hint). Amongst a number of donations, the Council also agreed to place a £35 advert of support for the Durham Gala, because members felt it is an important aspect of our local community's heritage. Three Great Aycliffe Independents voted against this, because they disagree with the political messages which comes out of the Gala.

Finally, the Committee agreed to defer a decision regarding a request from the Citizens' Advice Bureau. Members felt that – before they could intervene – they needed to know much more,

and also, probably, that they would need to seek a steer from the wider community. There is no doubt that CAB faces huge challenges, and it is something which all the people of Aycliffe should know about and be discussing.

J.D. CLARE

COMPUTER COURSES APPRECIATED

Dear Editor

I would like to say a big thank you to the team at Woodham Village Community Centre, where I have just completed two courses, basic computer skills, and the use of digital cameras.

Christine, Dave, Tim, Daniel and Mike were very supportive, as I had very little computer experience and they gave me a great deal of help and advice.

The facilities at the centre are excellent and the people are friendly and welcoming – we had a laugh and learned at the same time.

I have been able to put my new skills to great use and hope to attend further courses at the Centre. I highly recommend that other people give it a go too.

M. Fenwick

BOKWA Comes To Aycliffe!



Emma Cox, Principal of Aycliffe Dance Academy has recently returned from Leeds where she was put through her paces in an 18 hour BOKWA Fitness Instructor Course, trained by the creator of BOKWA himself, Paul Mavi!

She said: 'Wow! What an amazing experience! Paul is such an inspiration, a genius, I didn't think I could learn so much in one weekend! I just can't wait to bring the next big dance fitness craze to Aycliffe and start teaching BOKWA at ADA!'

BOKWA is the latest fitness craze to take the world by storm! BOKWA is a very unique dance fitness program due to the use of letters and numbers as placement combined with use of hand signals and American Sign Language.

It is refreshing and builds strength and endurance driven by the pulsating rhythmic beats of African, Latin, and Popular dance music. BOKWA is an innovative dance fitness program that is an abundance of fun and does NOT feel like a workout! BOKWA is energetic, exciting,

exuberant and exhilarating and consistently remains challenging, however is tailored for every type of individual to guide and assist with weight loss. Basically, if you can Move and Spell, you can do BOKWA! So come on 'Let's sweat the alphabet and dance the digits!'

Want to know what all of the fuss is about? Then why not come along to try BOKWA out for yourself, for FREE? Classes are held on a Monday Evening from 7.45pm to 8.45pm at the Bethany Centre, Woodham, DL5 4UD. The first two

Goods Stolen from Vehicles

Police in South Durham are reminding people to take care when leaving vehicles unattended overnight. There have been two reports locally over the past few days where tools have been stolen from vans parked overnight.

Sgt Andy Crowe commented: "Our advice is always to store any valuables out of sight, and make sure vehicles are left properly secured when parked. It takes only a few seconds to lock a vehicle and stop it being a target for an opportunist thief."

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P.A.C.T. Meeting

Police And Community Together

PC 1452 Alan Thompson will be holding the following PACT Meetings.
Tuesday 13th March at Simpature Court Coffee Lounge 6-30pm to 7-30pm.
Saturday 17th March at Aycliffe Village Hall from 11-00am to 12noon.

Representatives from Great Aycliffe Town Council, County Councillors and Livin have been invited to attend. Everyone welcome. Please come along and meet your Community Police and Civic Representatives to voice any concerns you may have and get updates on current issues.

Organisations Keep 75% of Ticket Sales in Town Jubilee Draw

TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE

Last year the Rotary Club held the biggest charity fundraiser ever attempted in Newton Aycliffe, involving the whole town and benefitting many of its clubs and organisations.

The club organised a raffle of high quality prizes with the sale of tickets delegated to as many of the town's schools groups and organisations who wished to be involved. It was very successful and over £8,000 was raised.

This year they are repeating the exercise around the Queen's Jubilee raffling 60 prizes and allowing the sellers to retain 75% of the ticket sales money. The Rotary Club, as the promoters, would be responsible for gathering prizes, registering and organising the draw, printing the tickets and covering all expenses from the proceeds. The Draw will be held at the Royal British Legion on Tuesday 5th June, 2012.

The Rotary Club will receive the full co-operation of "Newton News" in publicising this major fundraiser, printing the names of all donors and their prizes as they are received. This is an invitation to all organisations in Newton Aycliffe to get involved and raise money for themselves or a charity of their choice. There will be no charges and participants only need to sell tickets. These will be available in March and the valuable sixty prizes will ensure their easy sale.

The Rotary Club hope businesses in the area will want to be part of this exciting venture and invite them to donate a prize or offer a voucher for the service they offer. In return Newton News will publicise their generous support.

President of the club Alan Crawshaw said: "This is the Rotary Club's effort to help the funds of town organisations, schools and charities - we hope they see the value of participating in the draw." Please contact Syd Howarth on 300212 if you wish to take part. syd@newtonpress.net

APPEAL FOR EASTER EGG DONATIONS

The Co-operative Funeralcare is appealing for donations of Easter Eggs again this year. All eggs or gifts received will be shared between the children of mothers living in local women's refuges and local facilities for children and teenagers with learning disabilities.

All donations will be gratefully received at our funeral home in Macmillan Road, Newton Aycliffe up until Monday 26th March and distributed before Easter. Thank you.

DENTIST VISITS CAN BE FUN



During the half term holidays Jamie and Becca from Oasis Dental Practice of Bishop Auckland visited Woodham Burn out of School Club. They brought lots of resources to look at so the children could learn about cleaning, looking after their teeth and general mouth hygiene.

During the afternoon the children were split into three groups with an opportunity to look at different foods and guess how much sugar is in them and got quite a shock. The children were given a puppet to help them in the practice of cleaning their teeth correctly. Jamie then gave all the children a disclosing tablet to chew to make their teeth purple! They were given their own tooth brush and paste to

clean their teeth correctly for three whole minutes. All the children and staff had a great afternoon and wish to thank Jamie and Becca for visiting us and giving the children fun activities to enhance their teeth cleaning routine and making an educational visit fun and informative.

For information about Oasis Dental Practice please contact Oasis Dental Care on 01388 603164 email: Reception.B-Auckland@oasis-healthcare.com

For information about Woodham Burn out of School Club contact Maureen or Sandra on 01325 300080 or email: woohamburn.outofschool@gmail.com

C.A.T.S. GET "GREASED UP"

There will be lots of "Summer Nights" and "Greased Lightning" going on at the Civic Hall, Shildon later this month when the C.A.T.S. Youth Theatre Group take to the stage with their latest production "Grease".

A spokesperson said "Local youngsters Aidan Robson plays the part of Danny Zukos sidekick Kenickie, whilst Madalyn Patrick is Roger, one of the T Birds gang. Emily Neal is the Principal of Rydell High School, whilst her Sister Layla is one of the "Pink Ladies."

The ever popular DJ Vince Fontaine is played by Georgia Brown. Katie Wright, Amy Ogden, Laura Edwards and Holly Coates are amongst the very versatile dance troupe. All the young people are aged between 8 and 11 years, so please come along and support them in there production"

Performances are on Thursday 22nd, Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th March at 7.30pm. With a final show on Sunday 25th March, at 2pm. Get your "Beauty School Dropout" to pre book tickets priced £4-50 Adults, £2-50 Children and Concessions by ringing 01325 313363 or 01388 774838

www.cats-theatre.co.uk

WHEELIE BIN EYESORE



Dear Sir,

A blue lidded, third wheelie bin monstrosity has arrived at my door without permission. Like many houses in the town there is no back access so the bins have to stay in the front garden in front of the window creating an eyesore! You could keep the bins at the back, but you would then have to wheel them through the house on collection day and this is unacceptable.

On "Green Box" days it means I have to carry a full box of empties to the front at 7.30am in time for the collection which at 74 years of age I resent.

Three bins and a box is too much and I wonder why we need them when Darlington still manages with black bin bags? We once had one wagon and now we have three and maybe another for green box collections all causing congestion on the roads.

I think the whole system has got out of hand and needs to be scrapped as unworkable and impractical. We see on TV rubbish from one source of collection being sorted at the recycling depot and this must be a better system.

Alan Snowball

Noir

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Thursday - Steak Night
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Friday Lunchtime Special
 Haddock, Chips, Mushy Peas with Bread & Butter £6.50
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 Buy 2 Main Meals (excluding specials), receive 2 FREE desserts
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WHAT'S ON AT THE GEORGE & DRAGON
Saturday 17th March - St Patricks Night
 In aid of St Teresa's Hospice
 IRISH STEW AVAILABLE - RAFFLES - FREE ENTRY (£2 donation)

MOTHER'S DAY SUNDAY LUNCH
 Bookings now being taken for three course Sunday lunch
 £20.00 per person - £10.00 for OAP/Child

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Keeping Tabs on Town Council

on Livin' that they will be installed, but I have no say at all in the matter, all I can do is stress the importance for the safety of the pedestrians. Many good causes have benefitted from the money from my Neighbourhood Budget, as there is no secondary schools in my ward, I have given money to the schools, so our children in West Ward benefit. Everything from mock interviews, helping school leavers find work, various charities have also benefitted including the handicapped people who now have their own allotment. I cannot really understand Cllr Curtis trying to make people think he actually cares and yet he has never attended one estate walkabout with me, never been to one PACT meeting (which is held only a few hundred yards from his home), never been to one GAMP meeting (to bring ideas to the table), never been to any residents meetings - if you care so much Cllr Curtis, I suggest you start attending these very important meetings and try helping me rather than criticising something you don't fully understand.

County Cllr Enid Paylor

PS: If anyone would like a full list of where my allocated money has been spent, I will be more than happy to oblige

Dear sir,
I noticed with great interest the flurry of letters that appeared over the past few weeks initiated by Councillor Bob Fleming's letter reporting the fiscal health and well being of the Town Council.
We are indeed fortunate to have a well run prudent organisation that can keep within its budget, thanks to the expertise of the staff as well as councillors.
I noted however, the response of Mr Ducker who reacted with a very touchy reply denouncing the Labour councillors, and their running of the council finances, which has resulted in the precept being frozen for a third year.
One would have thought that Councillor Ducker would have been pleased with the freeze considering five years ago the Independents' were going to cut council tax by 50%, according to their election promises.
Strange that he libels a council which he himself is a member. Surely by now his party could have made a viable case to put to the council for debate? The proof is recorded on who have participated in decision making debates by the minutes taken at every council meeting, just as the proof is there recording councillors who do not

attend meetings, or attend the bare minimum and still claim their full allowance. Anyone can enquire to the Town Clerk Mr Bailey about the attendance figures and I can assure them they would be as surprised as I was at the silent Independent "party", silent in the council chambers, half the time because they can't organise themselves to attend the meetings. But they are very vocal in the Newton News - a classic case of smoking mirrors I think - give enough bluster and take attention away from where it should be. So I am making a point of drawing attention to one area of the council finances that Mr Ducker forgot to include in his letter, and that is of the number of Independent Councillors who do not attend meetings and yet still receive an allowance for doing so. For instance, between May 2010 and April 2011 Councillor Irene Hewitson only attended 9 meetings, and from May 2011 to date has only attended 6 meetings. Between May 2010 and April 2011 Councillor Paul Gittins attended 9 meetings and May 2011 to date 7 meetings. The same can be said for Councillor G R Gray who attended 9 meetings last year and for this council year to

date only 6 meetings. These same councillors have few if any registered attendances at any of the Council's various committee meetings. They will of course claim they are not on the committees but you do not need to be to attend, as illustrated by other councillors who do. In fact I can state I have been to more meetings as an observer and I am not even a councillor in receipt of over £1000 allowance per annum. I attend because I care about how decisions are made which affect me and my neighbours in our living environment, and I also care about the fact that a portion of our money is being used to pay for these non attendees. If they have lost interest, or cannot attend due to work or family commitments, perhaps they should do the decent thing and stand down to allow someone with the commitment to serve the town take their place. If as Mr Stubbs states, the Independents are more organised then perhaps they can organise themselves to attend council, and contribute to the decision making by positive participation rather than costly negativity and through non-attendance

Wendy Hillary
Ross Walk

Students from Region 1 (Teesside - Durham) GKR went to Bradford for the first tournament of the year. Aycliffe had a great tournament with all students really putting a lot of effort into there Kata + Kumite. Region 1 brought back 28 medals with 17 medals for Sensei Dez's classes in Newton Aycliffe and Darlington. So a big well done to all who took part and good luck for the next tournament in June.

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<p>Karles Close Woodham Village</p>  <p>Extended 4 bedroom detached, left recreation, luxury carpets, fitted kitchen, north facing, 3 car garage</p>	<p>Lingard Walk Newton Aycliffe</p>  <p>Three bedroom terrace house, fitted kitchen, DS, BSH, rear garden, well maintained lawn and garden</p>	<p>Peckfield Newton Aycliffe</p>  <p>2 bedroom terrace property, Lounge, modern fitted kitchen/dining, garage, DS, very maintenance garden</p>	<p>Spetchfield Newton Aycliffe</p>  <p>Three bedroom well finished, Lounge/dining room, fitted kitchen, DS, very maintenance garden, 4th good and pale area</p>	<p>Stonydale Station</p>  <p>2 1/2 bed semi, off street parking, modern WC, 3 bed a family bathroom, front and rear garden, parking, flower borders and storage shed</p>	<p>Pinchale Rd Newton Aycliffe</p>  <p>Three bedrooms detached family home. Front driveway, landscaping, rear, kitchen, utility, central garden, garage</p>	<p>Stones Road Newton Aycliffe</p>  <p>Two bedrooms good detached property, off street DS, conservatory, modern kitchen, internal dining, double garage, rear garden</p>
<p>Malinsley Crescent Newton Aycliffe</p>  <p>Three bedroom terrace house, fitted kitchen, double garage, modern bathroom, garden, well paved</p>	<p>Hatfield Road Newton Aycliffe</p>  <p>2 bedroom and terrace property. Close to local facilities. Double fronted, Lounge, kitchen, dining room, WC, double living with central heating, front garden</p>	<p>Stirling Road Newton Aycliffe</p>  <p>4 well presented improved 3 bed and terrace house, modern fitted kitchen, DS, BSH, modern bathroom, large garden, driveway, Conservatory, Ideal family home.</p>	<p>Chillingham Grove Woodham Village</p>  <p>An excellent 3 bedroom and detached property, fitted kitchen/dining, bathroom/WC, DS, BSH, finished exterior location.</p>	<p>Easton Court Newton Aycliffe</p>  <p>Three bedrooms detached property, lounge, dining room, kitchen, conservatory, garden and garage, BSH, DS</p>		



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Famous Author Visits Aycliffe



Stephenson Way Community Primary School celebrated World Book Day in style this year. On Thursday 1st March all children and staff came dressed as their favourite book character. Everyone really put a lot of thought into their costumes and the children were able to explain who they were and which book they came from.

In addition to this the award winning author Wes Magee spent the day in school. All children enjoyed his 'Poetry Show' in the morning and then during the afternoon children from Y4 up to Y6 had the opportunity to take part in his writing workshops, creating their own poems. It was a great day, enjoyed by all.

Sports Club Cancellation

The Disability Sports Club at Agnew Community Centre will NOT be on this Tuesday 13th March, but will resume on Tuesday 20th at 5.30pm.

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Plants Have Feelings Too!

Dear Sir,
In response to Mr Metcalfe's letter condemning all carnivores as hypocrites I would like to raise a few flaws in the logic of his arguments. He mentions the 'murder' of millions of animals by the fast food industry and states that it is hypocritical of any meat eater to look on the events of the holocaust with contempt.

Following his logic then he too is indeed a hypocrite as I would assume that at some point in the course of his life he has been involved in the genocide of many of our salad related cousins. He suggests it isn't appropriate to eat meat related products as animals are capable of 'fear' and he points out that they shake and tremble when faced with threats to their well being. Is Mr Metcalfe aware that there are plants which are also capable of displaying 'anxiety' when faced with predation?

The acacia plant transmits a chemical SOS when approached by animals that are likely to eat it. With this in mind I strongly suggest that Mr Metcalfe desist from persecuting our vegetation any longer as clearly they too are comparable to humans if you are selective with your definition. After all, according to evolutionary biologist Robert May, President of Britain's Royal

Society, "We share half our genes with the banana".

Mr Metcalfe's final emotive strategy is to invoke metaphoric aliens and to ask us how we would feel if they descended and attempted to eat us. I for one would not be best pleased and would be writing to the Newton News to express my displeasure! I would strongly suggest that anyone approached by such an alien offer them a burger as they are very tasty and I am sure they would satisfy their appetites.

Yours
A carnivore who wrote a light hearted reply but was deeply offended by the sentiment and language of the initial letter.

Name & Address Supplied

Charity Night at George & Dragon

The George & Dragon at Heighington hold a Charity Night in aid of St. Teresa's Hospice on Saturday 17th March - St. Patrick's Day.

Live music will be performed by "Preacher" and Irish Stew will be served. The evening entertainment starts at 8pm and there will be a raffle with Guinness and two Cask Stouts sold at reduced prices. Free entry, but £2 donation requested for the charity.

Award for Volunteer

Darlington Building Society has honoured a member of staff who dedicates a substantial amount of her spare time, including holidays, to an Aycliffe project which supports young adults with learning and physical disabilities.

Kelly Barker, a mortgage administrator, was named as Volunteer of the Year at the Society's annual staff conference.

The 23-year-old volunteers at The Options Project, which is managed by the Pioneering Care Partnership. It provides educational and social opportunities to promote independence, choice and personal development.

Among its service provision is a social club where members meet and make new friends, and take part in activities such as pool, table tennis, bingo and discos. The project also gives carers a break from their responsibilities.

Kelly helps out for two and a half hours at the social club every other week. She also spends some of her holidays supporting special events held by The Options Project such as lunches and art sessions.

Kelly, has been a volunteer at the charity for two years. She said: "The Social Club is a wonderful asset to the community. Not only does it provide for its members the opportunity to play games, socialise and make new friends and have an entertaining evening out, it also allows carers to have a



much-needed break. "I never expected to be officially recognised for volunteering at The Options Project. I was so overwhelmed I cried when I was presented with the award. I love helping out at the project, it is such a rewarding experience."

Darlington Building Society encourages all its staff to participate in volunteering in the community and are allowed to take at least one full day off each year on full pay on such activities. Many staff members however, Kelly included, also volunteer to support their communities in their own time in the evenings and at weekends.

The Options Social Club is held fortnightly at the Pioneering Care Centre, Carers Way, Newton Aycliffe on a Thursday 6pm-8pm. Anyone wanting to know more please contact the Centre on 01325 321234 or email: enquiries@pcp.uk.net

From the 12th March, Neville Pharmacy is changing and we are opening a new pharmacy at Bewick Crescent



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Music Hall Returns



Come along and enjoy 'A Night at the Music Hall' with Aycliffe Musical Theatre at St. Clare's Church Hall, Newton Aycliffe on Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th March starting at 7pm.

Special appearance of Bert Draycott, local comedian and World Champion Spoons Player. If you have never seen Bill you will enjoy his style.

Tickets adults £6 and children under 14 £3. Contact 01325 318968 or e-mail aycliffemt@live.co.uk

Co-operation and Compromise Needed

Dear Sir,

In his letter to Newton News recently, Councillor John D Clare claimed that the idea of an Eco Centre was originally his and his apparent (or professed?) indignation and distress that Councillors Haigh and Ducker have raised the topic again and are claiming some credit themselves seems to me to be simply an attempt by him to gain some "green credentials".

He states in his letter that he conceived the idea in the late 1990s for the "Moors" marshland which is now a designated nature reserve.

Can I suggest to Mr Clare that if he spent less time promoting himself and his often extreme views and more time talking to and discussing issues with his fellow Town Councillors of all political persuasions better progress may have been made.

Time and again we see our Town Councillors using the columns of Newton News to lambast and criticise their fellow Town Councillors in an extremely vitriolic way which does nothing to advance any arguments for or against a particular issue. It is high time that someone banged the heads of all our Councillors together and told them to stop petty party driven bickering and start talking with one another to reach solutions to the issues before them. They would do well to remember that they are all there representing all of the people of Aycliffe and if sometimes co-operation and compromise is needed to make progress, then so be it.

Does it really matter who came up with the idea of an Eco centre? Does anyone really care whose idea it was anyway? Leonardo da Vinci first had the idea and designed a helicopter in the 15th century but it was not

until the early 20th century that one was built and flew. I cannot recall Da Vinci's descendants whingeing and complaining that it was all Leonardo's idea and he should get the credit rather than the guys who actually built and flew one!

Should it not be enough that Councillors Haigh, Ducker and Clare all seem to want the same thing and should they not work together (yes forget party affiliations) to achieve it instead of fighting amongst themselves?

I seem to recall Councillor Clare recently opposed a planning application to build houses on the waste ground adjacent to the Huntsman public house claiming preservation of green space was more important. That is fine in itself, and I have no issue with him on that. It does though, seem extraordinary that as someone claiming to have green and environmental matters near the top of his agenda, he now (having apparently more than once changed his mind along the way) supports the destruction of green space and wildlife rich land at the edge of Woodham with the planning application for 50 houses and a hotel on Woodham golf course. Where is the consistency? Knowing that Councillor Clare always likes to have the final say, no doubt he will respond in next week's edition.

Bob Taylor

Diamond Wedding Celebration

A marriage sixty years long was celebrated on 1st March by John and Thomason Murphy who live in Barrington Road. Mary Dalton our Town Mayor called on the couple to bring congratulations on behalf of Great Aycliffe Town Council.

They were both born and bred in Chilton and moved to settle in Newton Aycliffe in 1957.

John was a miner and also served in the RAF, before taking a job with SAB at Aycliffe. Thomason was employed for a while as a Shop Assistant.

They have two children June and John. June is married to Rob with a daughter Vikki. John married Trudy and they have two sons Adam and John. There are two Great Grandchildren.

There was family meal to celebrate the Diamond anniversary and then John and Thomason enjoyed a trip to Blackpool.

Women's Walk to Help Local Hospice



Volunteers at a local Hospice are appealing to Newtonians to vacate the comfort of their homes for one evening and help raise money for a great cause. Last year 86 people from Aycliffe took part.

The Twilight Walk in aid of Butterwick Hospice is a six mile walk which starts from Bishop Auckland College. The route covers local bridleways and footpaths, and also takes walkers through the beautiful park at Auckland Castle.

Louise Gregson has been a Daycare volunteer for 9 years, and has participated in this annual event for the last two years. "You never know if you or your family will ever need the services of a Hospice, and to keep the charity running is so important. The atmosphere is always spectacular on the day and the route is very scenic. It's certainly a special event."

The women's only charity walk takes place on Saturday, 26th May from 5pm, and this year aims to raise over £30,000. In 2011, Butterwick Hospice cared for over 620 patients,

and with this number rising every year, it's more important than ever that these free services continue to exist.

Butterwick Hospice at Bishop Auckland provides palliative care services to the Durham Dales and Sedgefield areas. The Hospice provides day care services from its base in Bishop Auckland and also in Sedgefield Community Hospital,

Weardale Community Hospital in Stanhope and the Richardson Hospital at Barnard Castle.

Entry to take part in the walk is £12.50. Sponsor forms, a t-shirt and fundraising support packs will also be given upon registration. For more information or to enrol for the walk contact the fundraising department on 01388 603003 or email lynnabury@butterwick.org.uk

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Free software is provided for these courses so there are no hidden costs. Drop in Sessions are held every Wednesday from 9.30 am to 12 noon at Woodham Village Community Centre. For further information, phone Dave on 01325 316144. Next Terrified of Computers course will start soon. Telephone Dave to book

Not Enough Space for Recycling Bins!

Dear Sir,
With reference to the new recycling bins that are currently being delivered to every household in the Aycliffe area and beyond.

It has to be said that these bins are long overdue, however, one would be forgiven for thinking that they will make life easier - mainly for the elderly and infirm - in terms of taking away the lifting element involved with the current plastic box and ridiculous looking bag that was provided for plastics and cardboard.

Alas this is not so, as anyone who has read the accompanying leaflet that came with the bin will know, the bin is for paper, cardboard, plastics and tins etc. whilst the plastic box has still got to be used for glass - the heaviest of all the materials that are to be recycled!

So now we have a bin for recycling, a bin for garden waste and a bin for general household refuse AND the plastic box. How much room does the supposedly wise and wonderful decision makers in Durham County Council think people have at their properties for storing this ever growing number of waste receptacles? Councils such as South Tyneside and Sunderland can supply recycling bins that have an inner compartment for paper, with everything else including glass going into the main part of the bin. Is it really too much to ask of Durham County Council to supply the same?

Someone, somewhere within DCC must ultimately be responsible for the supply of these inadequate bins and the decision to keep the plastic box. Obviously they have no interest in the repetitive lifting and bending that the recycling crews have to endure, or the requirement to aim for a reduction in the wear and tear and resultant back injuries that arise from such repeated actions.

Back injury claims have cost the NHS £millions over the years, hence the no lifting policies that now exist and the subsequent introduction of hoists on hospital wards. Is the lifting of a box full of glass really all that different? It's probably down to cost somewhere along the line but if other councils can get it right then what's DCC's excuse?

Ian Archbold
Woodham

Miranda Wright Singers



The Friends of The Bowes Museum have arranged for the Miranda Wright Singers to perform in The Bowes Museum on Saturday 17th March at 7.30 pm

This exciting group of young classical singers, aged between 16 and 22 are all taught by Miranda Wright. Between them, they showcase the talent of the North East region and give a chance to glimpse some of the most up and coming young singers.

Fresh from their acclaimed production of The Marriage of Figaro at The Sage, Gateshead, this summer, the singers will perform a varied programme of music to include Mozart, Schubert, Quilter and Gilbert and Sullivan. Many of these young performers are hoping to pursue a career in classical singing and this concert is an opportunity for you to see and hear them before they make their way into the world of professional music. Presented by the young performers themselves, the concerts are always engaging and vibrant. David Murray joins the group as accompanist, having had a close working relationship with Miranda and the group for several years.

For tickets, Tel: 01833 690606 Ext 233 (voicemail)

or email friends@thebowesmuseum.org.uk
Adults: £7.50, Friends £6.00, Under 16s (accompanied) free.

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Extra Help to Recycle

Recycling will be even more convenient for hundreds of County Durham residents who are set to receive smaller bins.

Durham County Council is currently delivering new recycling bins to homes across the county in preparation for the start of its new alternate weekly waste and recycling collection system.

Most properties will receive a bin that is the same size as their normal wheelie bin, with more than 75,000 expected to have been delivered by the end of this week.

However, the authority is also distributing 2,000 smaller capacity bins for those homes with storage or access problems.

Oliver Sherratt, Durham County Council's head of direct services, said: "We understand that for some people it would be extremely difficult for them to have two full-size wheelie bins at their property, whether it's

because they live in a flat and have limited storage space or because there are issues in accessing their property.

"In these circumstances, we will be offering them a smaller bin so that they can continue to recycle and take part in the new collection system."

Residents should start using their new bins as soon as they have been delivered, leaving them out for collection on their regular collection day.

The council is also purchasing 1,200 large bins so that businesses can also join the alternate weekly collection scheme and new recycling service.

For more information about the new collection system, including Frequently Asked Questions and an A to Z of what can be recycled, visit www.durham.gov.uk/bins

For details of your specific collection days enter your postcode in the My Durham section. Alternatively call 03000 26 1000.

CHANCE FOR A £MILLION



Joy Marie Hair Design was a sponsor of a Race Night at the North Briton on Saturday 25th February. With a chance to win a £million (the prize included £25 worth of Lotto tickets as well as a bottle of champagne for the winner). Organiser Billy Blenkinsopp wishes to thank all who attended and supported this fantastic night especially sponsors John Wade, Planet Leisure, The County, Don Walker and many others. Special thanks to the Cubby ladies for running the Tombola, Dawn Herbert and friends, Co-presenter Georgie Stokes, Tote Manager Nick from Corals and the History Society for use of their equipment, not forgetting the wonderful co-operation of North Briton Landlords, Karen and Brian. The grand sum of £725 was raised for the restoration of Aycliffe Village Church ancient graveyard.

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Saving Money at St. Mary's Using B.E.E.

Pupils in Class 5 at St. Mary's School have been having meetings with Sam Jackson from Oasis, investigating ways to save energy in school. After surveying the school, looking at ways we waste energy, and coming up with ways to help everyone save energy, they presented their findings in a school assembly. Parents, friends and governors were invited to encourage them to save energy too. They came up with a logo B.E.E. standing for "Be Energy Efficient"



and encouraged everyone to use the sunlight and open blinds before switching on lights. keeping doors closed to keep heat in, and switching off heaters before thinking about opening windows. A team of B.E.E.'s will be around school, randomly

checking up on those wasting energy. They hope to buy some new sports equipment and possibly help with school laptops with the money they will save. They ended their assembly by saying to everyone "Don't be a energy wasting bat, be a B.E.E."

FRESH LOOK FOR YOUTH CENTRE

It's been all change at Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre over the past year. This has culminated in a new logo being designed for the centre. Michael Stead, a member of the management committee, who designed the logo said, "I am thrilled that the new logo is now in place. This to me indicates the fresh new look of the centre that is taking place, bringing an increase in room bookings too. There are more changes still in the pipeline which will be obvious to anyone passing the centre but I won't say anything more at this moment in time." Joan Clark, the Secretary of the Management Committee said, "The centre was pleased to have hosted Young Aycliffe's Got Talent recently. Some amazing talent was uncovered. We look forward to a forthcoming showcase when the original judges will join some of the acts to take place in May. We have been working hard since May last year to increase the income of the centre and maintain its ongoing success as a viable community asset. This has been achieved by a number of sub-committees being formed to work in specific areas of the centre management. We are looking to introduce a weekly coffee morning, as well as considering the introduction of an activity group for mothers and babies. The centre is an excellent venue for children's birthday parties and we are considering the option of providing a complete party package including food, entertainment and goodie bags too". Vince Crosby, chairman of the Management Committee said,

"We never lose sight of the fact that the centre is predominantly for the youth of the community. Some of the new youth-based activities taking place within the centre include a Sports Academy aimed at developing young apprentices. The group meets each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and also works closely with young people who use the centre, as well as minority groups who currently use the centre facilities. We also have a Dance Coaching Group, which meets on Tuesday and Thursday, and a Judo Club on a Tuesday. These sit alongside the Thai Boxing Group held on a Sunday and Monday. The music and drama group, Mad Productions meets at the centre on a Wednesday. For the wider community, the centre is used by Weight Watchers and Age UK hold two fitness and one T'ai Chi session. Many local community groups and training groups use the centre's excellent facilities. An Internet connection is available in most rooms and in partnership with Bishop Auckland College, the centre hopes to maximise its potential as an easily accessed, central location for the delivery of adult education classes. For details on this, as well as a full list of all the activities available at the centre - including sessions run by the Youth Workers - ring us on 01325 307522 to have a copy forwarded to you, or simply call into the centre and pick one up your yourself. More information can be found by visiting South Durham Halls website www.southdurhamhalls.org.uk

BIG BUG HUNT

Dear Editor,
I am inviting people in Newton Aycliffe to hold a Big Bug Hunt event for local toddlers, to help in the fight against meningitis. Schools, nurseries and clubs have the chance to support Meningitis UK to stamp out a deadly disease which puts the under-fives most at risk. Nurseries and playgroups in the area can get involved this spring to help educate youngsters and adults about the disease while raising money for vaccine research. The Big Bug Hunt can take the shape of a variety of events and activities tailored to children's abilities and interests. Fun ideas include a sponsored bug hunt, fancy dress, cooking bug cakes and colouring competitions. Money raised from the Big Bug Hunt will go towards Meningitis UK's Search 4 A Vaccine Campaign. There are endless opportunities for learning, whether the children are counting bug's legs, painting and colouring or searching and exploring. It can also help to reach their Early Years Foundation Stage goals. We can send out Cheeky Bug, our mascot to bring the event to life, as well as free resource packs with Cheeky Bug stickers, tips on running your event, sponsorship forms and posters. To register for the Big Bug Hunt or find out more about the event and Meningitis UK's work visit www.bigbughunt.org or call 0117 947 6320. Emily Mitchard Fundraiser, Meningitis UK

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Is There a Future for Town Centres?

Town Centres around the country are suffering not only from the current economic climate but also for other reasons such as high rent and rates, on-line shopping and out of town retail parks.

Newton Aycliffe has been a victim for a number of years and the local authorities are powerless to do anything as everything is privately owned - even the pavements we walk on!

Other Town Centres in the County benefit from makeovers while we wait patiently for the promised redevelopment of our town to start.

Radical proposals to change the whole concept of retail town centres are being studied with some common-sense ideas brought into play.

One which would help Newton Aycliffe is to return to the time we had people actually living above the shops. There is also a move to open up shopping precincts at night, bringing in social clubs, community activities as well

as restaurants and takeaways etc.

Town Centres should not be locked up after the shops close and we ought to encourage a vibrant social night life which would bring greater security to business premises and town centres.

If town centres are to survive it will be necessary to open the debate and introduce some changes on how they are used in the future.

One thing Aycliffe lacks is small shops at low rents where start-up businesses can have a go, hopefully succeed and graduate to something bigger. We have suggested an Indoor Market would be good for Aycliffe - another way where small businesses could flourish.

Landlords have to look carefully at benchmark rents, service charges, removing restrictive clauses in their leases and accepting lower margins of profit.

The County Council will need to look at Business Rates and introduce schemes encouraging people to take town centre premises for business use or as residents.

ATKINSON RETURNS WITH SPENNYMOOR

Brian Atkinson admits coming back to Aycliffe as Spennymoor's assistant manager in a fortnight will be strange.

The ex-Sunderland midfielder, who left Aycliffe last November after four years with the club, was appointed Spenny's new number two last week.

They were due to do battle in the Newtonians' last game of the season on April 21 - but the game will now be played on Saturday March 24.

And Atkinson admitted: "It will be strange. I have a lot of good memories of my time with Aycliffe.

"But that's football. I've got a lot of big games coming up for Spennymoor that I need to concentrate on, but I'll be looking forward to going back to Aycliffe, and I hope I get a good reception.

"I've got a lot of good friends at the club. When I first joined the club with Allan, we were playing on park pitches, and it's come so far in such a short space of time. "It's a fantastic club, fantastic

people and I wish them all the best."

Atkinson says the chance to join Spennymoor, who are looking to win the Northern League title for a third consecutive season this year, was too much of an opportunity to turn down.

"I had to step away from Aycliffe, I had to spend more time with the family and look after the children, and I enjoyed that time," he said.

"It's an opportunity for myself, to get myself out the comfort zone. I don't really know anyone at Spennymoor, so it's a chance to go and prove myself and see if I'm up to the task, and I'm looking forward to that big challenge.

"It's an established club, well run on and off the pitch, and it was too good of an opportunity not to take."

Meanwhile, Aycliffe are giving free admission to Darlington season ticket holders at their home game with Dunston this Saturday (March 10).

The Newtonians are offering Quakers season ticket holders the incentive as there's no game for the Conference club this weekend, with their scheduled tie at Newport County re-arranged due to their involvement in the FA Trophy.

Darlo fans are instead invited to make donations to the Darlington Supporters Club.

Chairman Gary Farley said: "We just thought it would be a nice gesture to Darlo fans, who are having a tough time of it lately.

"Their support has been fantastic, the money they've raised has been hugely commendable and shows how much they care about their club.

"We've enjoyed two pre-season friendlies with Darlington in the last few years which has enabled us to raise vital funds, so this is a gesture of goodwill.

"If we can play our own small part, then we'd be delighted to help."

Darlington Supporters Club chairman Andy Smith added: "This is a fantastic gesture by our friends and neighbours at Newton Aycliffe.

"With us not having a game on Saturday, I'd urge all our fans to get along and show some support to both Aycliffe and Darlington.

"Cash collected on the day will go to Darlington 1883, the community club bidding to take over, so all money taken at Aycliffe will buy shares in the new club - it's all very much appreciated."

Aycliffe stretched their latest

FIXTURES

Saturday 10th March: Dunston UTS (H), 3pm

Saturday 17th March: Penrith (A), 3pm

Saturday 24th March: Spennymoor Town (H), 3pm

Saturday 31st March: Whitley Bay (A), 3pm

Saturday 7th April: Guisborough Town (H), 3pm

Saturday 14th April: Tow Law (A), 3pm

www.newtonaycliffefc.co.uk



unbeaten run to 11 games as their patched-up side produced a dogged display at league-leaders Sunderland RCA last Saturday.

Without 'keeper Scott Pocklington, winger Paul Broom, midfielder Josh Knox and 11-goal Dale Jardine, the Newtonians shaded the few chances in an otherwise lacklustre game.

Team: Richardson; Gibson, Gray (Campbell, 63), Craddock, CLOSE; Wood, Tarling, Wilson, Oliver, Owen; Mellanby (Byrne, 46). Unused: Black.

WATER POLO NEWS

Sedgefield Water Polo club have 4 players in the Great Britain Boys 16 and under squad: Adam Courtley, Alex Miller and Joe Barker.

All 4 players were in the North East District team for the National Championships in Gloucester and the only players from County Durham as the rest of the team was from Yorkshire despite Sedgefield being North East Champions.

The team performed well and finished in third place out of 10 Districts. Joe Barker was the leading scorer for the North East with 15 goals.

The record in District National Championships is still held by Scott Carpenter from Aycliffe with 29 goals from 2003. James Pratt contributed all over the pool and scored 7 goals. Alex Miller and Adam Courtley performed admirably and scored 3 goals each.

Other GB junior squad members from Sedgefield are Ben Turnbull, Rhiannon Foulds, Sarah Sanderson and Emily Pilkington.

Mathew Calvert 17 is a key member of the GB junior team. Sedgefield should have at least 2 members in the GB Olympic team for Women with only illness or injury preventing it in Angela Winstanley Smith and Chloe Wilcox. Both girls are very highly rated.

Scott Carpenter arguably the leading GB Male player

ever in the modern era may still be in the Men's team if the differences with the World Class Performance Programme can be sorted out. Scott controversially decided not to stay in Europe in Barcelona this season to return to Australia with the Victoria Tigers in Melbourne to take up a contract which made him one of the highest paid water polo players in the world.

Theft of Fire Extinguishers

Police are investigating the theft of three fire extinguishers from a building site.

Between 4.45pm on February 29th and 7.30am on March 1st a building site on Baliol Road, Newton Aycliffe, at the back of the Oak Tree public house, has been entered by three people, believed to be children or youths, and three fire extinguishers removed.

They were later found in the pond of a nature reserve about 300 yards away, having been discharged into the pond.

It is believed the three people walked down Gilpin Road to get to the reserve. Any witnesses are asked to contact Durham Police on 101 and ask for Newton Aycliffe police station.



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MARCH 2012

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Arrive 7.00pm, Buffet served 7.30pm - £16.95 per person.

Friday 23rd March - The 80's Experience
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Monday 26th March - Wedding Open Evening
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Friday 30th March - ZU2
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VRH reading helpers support the same children week in, week out, giving each child an hour of quality, one-to-one time. Primary schools interested in finding out more about the scheme or local residents interested in volunteering as reading helpers should contact VRH's Volunteer Services Manager Clare Sandford on 0845 450 344, email northeast@vrh.org.uk or visit www.vrh.org.uk for more information.

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Roots Hairdressing Salon in the Leisure Centre offers a professional, friendly service with consideration for all clients at affordable prices. "It's all about the clients and what you can do for them" says Proprietor Keith Bailey.

Roots cater over a broad spectrum of clients from students to successful professionals and have always employed experienced stylists who have been trained by top teachers of hairdressing and use only exclusive high quality products. The salon established in 1978, is led by Keith Bailey, dedicated to his art for over forty years, carrying on a family tradition spanning five generations. The salon employs a team of talented hairdressers who are specialise in colouring techniques, and long hair. This month (for a limited period) Roots offer cut and blow dry for £20.00 and a Gent's hair cut for £8.00. The salon is constantly training staff and are looking for models each month - please call in and register. Mark Bailey, Training Educator, often returns to his 'Roots' where he began his career washing hair in his Dad's Aycliffe Salon. He is now credited with work seen in high glossies "Elle" and "Vogue", and is based in London, Paris and New York.

Many generations in Newton Aycliffe have grown up with the Salon and continue to bring their children for hairdressing services. Call for a free consultation. Open Monday till Saturday late night 9 till 5 late nights Tuesdays and Thursdays. Roots are now recruiting graduates with an opportunity to be involved with Fashion Week in London and Paris.

"My family has built this company based on a simple idea that caring for staff and giving them a chance is a formula for success. Over the forty years I have I have trained employees from all walks of life and consider them all part of my family" said Keith.

New Recruit for BHP Law

Family legal services in South West Durham are expanding with the appointment of a new solicitor at BHP Law. Rebecca Stephenson has joined the team based at the regional law firm's office in Newton Aycliffe town



centre. Her background is in family and criminal law, adding to the experience of others within the Aycliffe team.

Rebecca said: "As mine is a new role at BHP Law, I'm not taking over existing cases so am available now for anyone who needs legal advice over separation, divorce, financial matters and the custody of children."

Rebecca, 30, studied at Hull University and York College before training with a firm in Newcastle and specialising in family law at her previous practice.

"I'm really pleased to have joined BHP Law, which is a large, regional firm with an excellent reputation. The firm is among the Top 200 law practices nationally and offers a wide range of services to many families and businesses across the region," she added.

Rebecca is currently studying to obtain higher rights of audience, which will allow her to represent clients at Crown Court, and is seeking police station accreditation so she can be called in as a duty solicitor to represent people who have been arrested.

Eligible clients can receive Legal Help through BHP Law as the firm has a contract to act for clients who qualify based upon their income and other criteria.

Rebecca added: "There has been talk of Legal Help stopping for matrimonial matters but at the moment nothing has changed so people should still enquire."

BHP Law also has offices in Darlington, Stockton, Durham, Newcastle and Halifax.

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Durham County Council has

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the Society of Information
Technology Management
(SOCI TM) following an
inspection of its website
www.durham.gov.uk in
November 2011.

Every year, SOCI TM
assesses 433 local authority
websites against a range
of criteria including
accessibility, navigation and
how well different systems
work.

This year, the review focused
on 'top tasks' - the actions
residents want to carry out on
a website, such as paying for
Council Tax or finding bin
collection days.

Durham County Council
was one of 160 authorities
to achieve a three-star rating,
reflecting ongoing work to
improve access to the top
tasks on the site.

Roger Goodes, Durham
County Council's head of
policy and communications,
said: "We do a lot of work to
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"The website is fundamental
to this as it gives people
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More Cuts Further Reduce CAB Services to Aycliffe

The Board of Sedgefield & District Citizens Advice Bureau have had to make some very difficult decisions in relation to service delivery as a direct result of funding cuts to its core service. Unfortunately due to funding being redirected to other areas of the county, Sedgefield & District Citizens Advice Bureau's core funding is being cut by over £36,000. In addition to the £20,000 it lost last year from the Durham County Council cuts, it has no alternative but to reduce and restructure services. Although everything is being done to try to find other funders to bridge the gap in resources it seems likely that from 1st April CAB clients will experience a significant reduction to the service they have been used to in previous years. CAB services will still operate from Spennymoor and Aycliffe at a reduced level, but all outreach work

across the former Sedgefield Borough will end and be replaced by a telephone gateway service. Service provision will be as follows: Drop in face to face gateway assessments will be available in Aycliffe on a Tuesday 10am – 1pm and in Spennymoor on a Thursday 10am – 1pm. The telephone gateway service will now be available 5 days a week which can be reached on 0844 499 4123 Monday – Thursday 10am – 3pm and Friday 10am – 1pm. Chair of the Board Cllr Vince Crosby said "Unfortunately, the reality is that more than 50% of clients still need face to face advice so if self-help information does not resolve a problem and a face to face appointment is required, long delays are anticipated. We currently have a waiting list for appointments of 2 weeks whilst we are offering in the region of 65 appointments a week.

With the new structure in place, appointments will be cut to only 33 a week. We understand that clients will feel let down by this as we won't be able to deal with their emergencies but the board have to set a realistic budget based on the income it can bring in". Last year we held over 10,500 face to face interviews, opened over 6,800 enquiries and helped more than 4,500 individual clients – many of these returning more than once. We brought in excess of £4million to the local economy and handled more than £9.3 million of debt. Taking into account the above cuts, we know there will be a significant reduction in the number of people we can help. We are very sorry that we have to reduce services but we hope by changing the way we work you will still be able to access some of our services. The specialist casework of debt, welfare benefits, housing and financial guidance remain unchanged. If you find these cuts unacceptable then I would urge you to contact your local councillors as they may be able to find alternative ways of helping both you and funding this service. CAB advisers will continue to deliver outreaches across the Sedgefield area until the end of March and will be available to discuss what the changes in service delivery will mean for local residents.

Fire Authority Sets 2012/13 Budget

The Authority has agreed a budget of £30.589M for the year, an increase of 2.4% on the 2011/12 position. The budget results in an increase in council tax of 2.97%. This increase is the equivalent of £1.74 per year or 3 pence a week for Band A properties which represents most households in County Durham and Darlington. Cllr Gordon Tennant, Chairman of the Fire Authority said "We have faced a number of difficult decisions in setting the 2012/13 budget. The level of grant cut that we have received is amongst the highest in the country, and we expect this to continue in future years. We froze council tax last year and made some extremely difficult decisions which resulted in compulsory redundancies for a number of our support staff. We considered carefully the option to freeze council tax again for the coming year. However, this option places an additional burden of more than half a million pounds over the medium term plan

because the government funding for the freeze grant is only for one year. This would have significantly increased the risk of cuts to front line services, which is something we are trying extremely hard to avoid." John Hewitt, Treasurer to the Fire Authority said "We have received a disproportionate reduction in our funding compared to other fire and rescue services across the country. The Authority's medium term financial position is extremely challenging because the majority of grant cuts for the fire service have not yet been announced. We have spoken to local people about our plans for reducing costs and the council tax options that are available and they are generally supportive of our approach. Local people are telling us that they want to maintain front line services in their communities. The Authority will continue to seek out new ways of reducing costs and is on target to implement savings totalling almost £3M by 2014/15."

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Thank You

Catherine "Button" Wright

Surprise 40th Party THANK YOU

A special thank you to my best pal (Caped Crusader), beautiful girls, loving family and wonderful friends. I had a fantastic night, which I will treasure forever. To the people I have loved and lost, who got me through my first 40 years, I will treasure my memories forever. Life truly does begin at 40! I love you all Cabs xxxxxx

BRENDA HUTCHISON would like to say a huge thank you to everybody for their cards, gifts and flowers on her retirement from Aycliffe Young People Services. It was a wonderful day, with the buffet and cakes making it even more special. Special thanks also to my daughter, son and families for the lovely birthday celebration on Sunday xxx
REX CLOTHIER would like to thank everyone for their cards, messages of sympathy and floral tributes on the recent passing of his dear Wife, June. I thank all members of my family, some who travelled far; for the way they have rallied round and a special thanks to Thomas, Rex, Trevor and Gareth who carried out the Pall bearers duties. Also Andrea Todd of the Co-op Funeralcare for the help and understanding she gave and the Rev Bill Simms who conducted the Service as a celebration of her life. June will live on in the hearts and minds of all the family and will be sadly missed.
JIM SMITH The family of the late Jim wish to express their sincere thanks to all relatives, friends and neighbours for the cards and flowers. They were a great comfort at a sad time. We would also like to thank Rev. Linda Potter and Seaton Leng for a lovely Service

Birthday Remembrance

WALTER DICKINSON You would have been 72 years on 15th March. We miss you more than words can say. Your loving Sister, Denise, Steve and family xxx

TOM HURST 8th March. Thinking of you on your birthday Dad. But that's nothing new, for no day dawns and no day ends without a thought of you. Love always, from your family xxx

In Memoriam

Peter Soulsby
10th March 1999

Silent memories are true and tender.
Just to show I still remember.

Love, Valerie xxx

JOAN BOYES God saw you getting tired and a cure was not to be. So he put his arms around you and whispered "Come to Me". With tearful eyes we watched you, we watched you fade away. Although we loved you dearly, we could not make you stay. A golden heart stopped beating, hard working hands now rest. God broke our hearts to prove to us He only takes the best. Loved And Missed Always from June & Mike, Steve, Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren.
RICHARD (Rick) Stephen Miller. Passed away 10th March 2011. Much loved Son, Brother and Uncle. Always in our thoughts, we miss you dearly.
RICK MILLER 10th March 2011 - Your presence I miss, Your memory I treasure, Loving you always, forgetting you never! Miss you Dad. Love, Tiffany xxx
RICHARD MILLER 22nd December 1975 to 10th March 2011. You are in our thoughts and in our hearts forever. From Sheila, Lisa and Peter Thompson
WALTER PURDY In loving memory, passed away on 11th March 2011. Cherished memories of a loving Husband, Father and Grandfather. Love and miss you always
STUART WALKER (Dad) 13th March 2012. It has been two years since you left us Dad. You will always be in our hearts. We miss and think about you every day. Love you always, Kerry, Michael, Kristy and Dean xxx
MARY HIND 15th March 2009. You were a wonderful loving Mam and a devoted Nana. You are always in our thoughts and our hearts. We miss you so much. All our love, Janet, Tony and David xxx
THOMPSON, Margaret Rose. 7-3-2012. Deep in the heart lies a picture of a loved one laid to rest. Memories frame we keep it, because she was one of the best. A sadness still comes over us. Tears in silence often flow, though you died ten years ago. From your loving family
MARILYN BAKER 8th March 2012. We thought of you with love today, but that is nothing new, we thought about you yesterday and days before that too. We think in silence, we remember how you look. Now all we have is memories and your picture in a book. Your memory is our keepsake with which we will never part. God has you in his keeping, we have you in our hearts. Love from all your family

Congratulations

GERRARD HACKETT

Happy 21st Birthday
8th March 1991

Love from DAD, Sharon, Kathleen, Harry Hill, Ellie, Rueben, Scot, Sharha, Rusty and Son of Belton

ALISON CULLING. Happy Birthday Alison, Love you loads, Ian xxx
ALISON CULLING. Happy Birthday to the best Mammy ever! Lots of love and cuddles, Chloe xxx
GORDON CULLING. Happy Birthday Dad, Have a great day, love from Ian, Alison and Chloe xxx
GEORGE ROSS Happy 2nd birthday. Love and kisses, Granma and Grandad Ross and Sister Olivia xxx
PRESCOTT Happy March birthdays to Luke and Jake. Love you. Great Gran Lily xxx
LUKE PRESCOTT Happy 11th birthday. Lots of Love, Grandma, Grandad, Kim, Adam and Eva xxx
LUKE PRESCOTT Happy 11th birthday, so proud of you. Lots of love, Mam and Jake xxx
LUKE PRESCOTT Happy birthday. Lots of love, Auntie Karen, Uncle Matt, James and Thomas xx
ROSS MOLLOY and Lauren Craggs, congratulations on your Engagement. All our love for your future together. Mam, Dad, Robyn and Reed xxx
ROSS MOLLOY and Lauren Craggs. Congratulations on your Engagement. Lots of love from Nana, Auntie Lynne, Uncle Peter, Yolanda and Ricky xxx
ROSS MOLLOY and Lauren Craggs congratulations on your Engagement. Lots of love, Uncle Ian, Auntie Karen, Curt, Brad, Megan, Karen, Jack, Brogan and Charlie xxx
LOUIS BAXTER 10 years. Congratulations Louis and Ollie, winning gold medal in NPD Qualifiers on Sunday 4th March 2012. They will now represent the North East in the British NPD Gymnastics Competition in Stoke in May. Well done boys. All our love, Mam, Dad, Owen, Grandma and Grandad xxx
BROGEN SMITH Happy 12th birthday. All my love, Mam xxx
HADYN RANDALL 15th March. Happy 2nd birthday to our little Prince. Love you millions. Mammy, Daddy and Stella xxx
HADYN RANDALL 15th March. Happy 2nd birthday to our gorgeous Grandson. Love you, Nanna, Grandad and Auntie Danielle xxx

Jessica Mary Butterworth

Happy 10th Birthday
8th March 2012

Happy 10th Birthday Jessica Mary, double figures at last!!! Lots of love, Mam, Matthew, Ruby, Grandma, Grandad, Aunties Eddie and Tina and Alex xxx

Violet Bennett
2nd March 2012

Happy 80th Birthday Mam

You are my sunshine, I love you to the stars and back. Happy birthday Nana. Love, Sean, Dean and Rebecca. We love you Nana Vi from Great Grandchildren Cory, Brooklyn and Levi

Obituary

LES KELLY February 29th, of Newton Aycliffe (formerly of Witton Park). Les aged 84 years. Beloved Husband of the late Irene (nee McKimm) and a dearly loved Dad, Granda and Great Granda. The Funeral Service took place on Thursday March 8th at St. Mary's R.C. Church followed by Interment at West Cemetery, Newton Aycliffe. "We know you loved us all"

EDNA CARR 25th February. Peacefully in Bethany House Nursing Home. Edna, aged 89 years. The funeral took place on Friday 9th March at 3.30pm at the Wear Valley Crematorium, Coundon. Donations in lieu of flowers to Parkinsons UK (details from Cooperative Funeralcare, Darlington).

WHAT'S GOING ON! Oak Leaf Sports Complex

Monday 6.00pm-10.00pm Bridge Club
Monday 7.00pm-10.00pm Adult 5-a-Side League
Tuesday 4.15pm-5.15pm Junior Beginners Squash
Tuesday 5.15pm-6.15pm Junior Intermediate Squash
Wednesday 8.00pm-9.00pm Badminton
Wednesday 7.00pm-8.00pm Cardio Pilates & Zumba
Thursday 5.30pm-7.00pm Yoga
Thursday 7.00pm-10.00pm Adult 5-a-Side League
Saturday 9.30am-11.00am PASS fun for kids
Sunday 12 noon - 2.00pm Sunday Lunches
Sunday 6.00pm-10.00pm Adult 5-a-Side League
Sunday 6.00pm-7.00pm Cardio Pilates
Bookings available 7 days a week for Indoor Bowls, Badminton, Netball, Squash, 5-a-Side, Table Tennis.
For further information on any of the above call 01325 300600

Town Sub Aqua Club Develops Diver Skills

Aycliffe Sub Aqua Club (ASAC), which won the Sub Aqua Association (SAA) Golden Club award in 2011, continues to develop its club members skills. Andrew Spencer, Paul Thomas and Paul Simmons all recently qualified through a tough, and newly structured, regional Oxygen Administration and Emergency Diver First Aid course.

Paul Simmons (left) and



Paul Thomas (right) being awarded course certificates from club Training Officer Steve Cockburn

Club chairman, Martin Green said "I'd like to congratulate Andy, Paul and Paul on completing this new tough and challenging course. It's very important, as divers, we continue to improve our skills for safe and enjoyable diving. ASAC offers its members the chance to develop skills and enjoy diving at minimal cost as a non profit organisation". ASAC are also in the running for the SAA Golden Club 2012 for recognition of another outstanding year of diver development. Some



achievements over the past year include: training instructors, advanced divers, new boat handlers, deep rescue divers as well as training novices. Results should be known by April. If you would like to learn to SCUBA dive, or are maybe already qualified and want to join an active dive club then please email Paul Simmons at secretary@aycliffesubaclub.co.uk or visit their website www.aycliffesubaclub.co.uk for further information and to book a try dive. The club are planning lots of dives this year in Farne Islands, Oban, Eyemouth, North Shields amongst other places, learn to dive now and get involved!

Free Dance & Fitness Bokwa Class

Women and girls aged 14 years and over are being invited to attend free taster sessions of a brand new dance and fitness workout just across from America. Bokwa blends the upbeat rhythms of African, Latin, dance and house music and is a fun exercise for everyone. Durham County Council is running the Sports England funded sessions, which are being held at Sunnysdale Leisure Centre and Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre over the next few weeks. The Bokwa classes are taking place on three consecutive Tuesdays 13th, 20th and 27th March at Sunnysdale Leisure Centre between 3.30pm and 4.30pm, and at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre from 6.15pm to 7.15pm.

For further information please contact www.fitnessdna.co.uk or call Helen Tones on 07966 332 882.

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