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Week Ending 26th February, 2010

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Dear Sir,
After reading last week's bitter, cruel, envious, and totally misleading character assassination of Dorothy and Raymond Bowman by Derek Atkinson, I put him in the same bracket as "Poison Pen Ken" and another dozen or so self important, non-productive local politicians. I would like to thank Ray Bowman for keeping me fuelled up with free burgers and Bovril during the freezing Winter Charity Car Boot Sales.
During January and February the stall raised £625 for the Cougar Cheerleaders, £100 for Avon Court, £350 for 3rd Newton Aycliffe Brownies and £350 for 2nd Newton Aycliffe Guides.
Thanks to all who support the stall.
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NEW LEISURE FACILITIES PLANNED FOR AYCLIFFE

10 PIN BOWLING & ICE RINK

The Company that owns Ruff'n'Tumble have applied for permission to provide a 10 Pin Bowling Alley, Synthetic Ice Rink, Laser Games area, Aerial Trekking Course, and a Restaurant at Maple Way, Durham Way South on Aycliffe Business Park.

This is great news for the town that someone has, at last, recognised the opportunities Newton Aycliffe offers.

It is to the discredit of people responsible for the planning and development of our town that they have failed to market our growing population. We have been forced to travel out of town for most of our shopping and social activities.

Other areas have romped ahead of Newton Aycliffe with smaller towns than ours sporting 3 and 4 Supermarkets and regular High Street Stores while we struggle to maintain one Tesco Extra.

We still have to travel out for the cinema and theatre. Other smaller towns have a community hall with proper stage facilities for amateur productions - we have to use school and church halls.

This newspaper called on the former Borough

Council to provide a theatre in our Leisure Centre similar to what they gave to Spennymoor which already had a Town Hall with a stage. Nothing came of it, although they did buy ramped seating for the main hall so that Basketball Games could be held.

Whilst we were calling out for all these facilities the Borough Council were taking £millions from the sale of Aycliffe land for housing development. A promised recreation development by the Borough was never met and the County Council must be pressed to honour this provision.

We can be grateful to our Town Council who have undertaken ambitious plans in the past to provide the Sports Complex, Golf Course, Pre-School Playgroups, Nature Reserve and other initiatives a normal Parish Council would not even consider.

The surrounding areas including Bishop Auckland and Darlington have grown fat on the patronage of Newtonians. More people shop out of town that in it, and anything that saves people journey time and costs for leisure activities is very welcome.

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EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS ON SHAFTO HOUSE

A response form allowing you to be part of the consultation on the future of Shafto House is available at:

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/PDFApproved/Care-Home-consultation-response-form.pdf>

Anyone can complete this form. They do not need to have a relative in the home. So if you have a view on care for the elderly in our community please visit this website.

PUBLIC MEETING

If you do not have access to a computer please come along to the Public Meeting called by the Residents Association on Thursday 4th March at 7.30pm in St. Mary's Church.

The idea was that you listen to all the arguments and then make up your mind. We expected Councillors representing our town to be present to explain details of the County Council report and questionnaire.

The Residents Association invited Councillors and Officers to the Public Meeting to explain the reasoning behind the proposal, but as they have not responded it is unlikely any will attend.

This may be relying on a presentations being given at the regular AAP meeting called for 30th March which is unfortunate as we thought they would take every opportunity to face the public.

They gives the impression they are scared of a backlash from what appears to be an unpopular move by the County Council.

If they fail to attend, the meeting can only record one side of the argument and the County Council will have lost an opportunity to contribute to the consultation.

Our MP will attend if it does not conflict with his Parliamentary duties.

He says however he cannot take a stand on the subject.

Attempt to Gag Councillors

The County Council is trying to block opposition to its care home closure plan by gagging members of the council from commenting during the consultation. The Labour-run Council has sent a letter to all councillors saying that if they speak out against the care home closures before the consultation is over they will be "excluded from the decision making process".

Lib Dem councillor Carol Woods said "It is totally unacceptable that the council is effectively trying to gag members of the council. This is a vitally important issue and I, for one, refuse to be silenced. Residents from across the county have contacted me to thank me for speaking out and I will continue to do so.

This consultation is fundamentally flawed as they are offering no alternative to residents of the care homes. It is the job of local councillors to speak out on these issues and the Council's efforts to prevent free speech on this are shameful."

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HOW TO HELP PAY FOR CARE HOMES

Dear Sir,
Has anyone got a calculator? What is 8 x £33,000? I make it £264,000. That is the amount of money that our eight local Unitary Authority Councillors have to GIVE AWAY, during this financial year, to any organisation that they choose. This is not out of their salary. Oh no, that £300+ a week is safely placed into their personal bank accounts. In American politics, it is known as 'Pork Barreling'; money that they receive to give away to organisations in their wards, to keep them sweet! Many councillors use it to make it look as if they are actually doing something for their constituents. All that they generally ask is that you thank them in the local newspaper with a smiling photo of

themselves.

I have a great idea! Why not ask the seven Labour Party and one Independent County Councillors, to pool all of this money - £264,000 and use it to keep Shafto House open.

There are 126 County Councillors. Let us use all of their £33,000's (Community Fund, Initiative Fund, Highways Fund) to keep all of the under-threat homes, such as Shafto House, open.

This sham 'consultation' process, must be costing a pretty penny. Why not upgrade the homes with this wasted cash, too? After all, all those £33,000's and the rest, is OUR money, so let's use it for the good of the most needy and vulnerable in our community. Councillor Alison Palmer
Liberal Democrats

Aycliffe & Heighington Stations Up for Adoption



The Heritage Line Community Partnership is looking for local community groups to adopt two local rail stations.

Both Newton Aycliffe and Heighington rail stations are up for adoption through a scheme supported and managed by the local rail operator Northern Rail.

The 'Adopt a Station' scheme is a national initiative from the Association of Rail Partnerships, with the key aim of improving a station and its local environment, making it safer, more secure, attractive and encouraging more people to use it.

Newton Aycliffe and Heighington stations are part of the Heritage Line which serves diverse communities on its route from Bishop Auckland to Darlington, which formed part of the original Stockton to Darlington railway. The aim is to maximize commuting, tourism, business and leisure links and increase the number of people using the railway.

Community Rail Officer Bob Whitehouse said "Railway stations are important community facilities but as most are unstaffed it is all too easy for them to become untidy and look unattractive. Through community involvement working in partnership with the train companies, local authorities and other groups, it's possible to reverse this. Volunteer groups can take on a variety of tasks depending on how much time they have to spare.

I'd like local community groups like local schools, youth groups, gardening clubs

and art groups to get in touch and get involved. Many hands make light work and 'station adopters' can provide their support and demonstrate pride in these two local stations in a number of ways such as planting pots of flowers, developing local information boards at the stations, or even promoting train services through leaflets, fun days and events.

Station adoption schemes in other parts of the country have been really successful; those involved have found it rewarding and fun. I'm hoping we can do the same here and make a big difference to the local community."

For more information about adopting Newton Aycliffe or Heighington stations, contact Bob Whitehouse on 07813 696 283 or robert.whitehouse@darlington.gov.uk

Birthday Party Aids "Help the Heroes"

Newtonian John Short decided to celebrate his 70th Birthday with a fundraising party for "Help for Heroes" at the Scout Centre organised by Susan Short.

With donations the total amount raised was £1320. John wishes to thank all who supported the event with appreciation to Babs, Neil, Alan, Neil Dixon and Ray Patison who provided professional entertainment.

John and his wife are really grateful and say they had a night to remember.



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100 Years of Guiding

February 22nd was an important date to remember for Guides, Brownies, Rainbows & Senior Section of Girlguiding UK as they thought of all the members of the worldwide Girl Guide & Girl Scout Association celebrating the centenary of the Movement.

In September 1909 a group of girls turned up at the Boy Scout Camp and asked Robert Baden Powell to form a group for girls.

The following year his sister Agnes started the first Girl Guide Group which has gone from strength to strength across the world. On Sunday Durham South celebrated with a special service at Durham Cathedral. On Monday Newton Aycliffe Division held a Thinking Day Celebration, with games and activities at Burnhill Way Church. A good time was had by all.

Were you a Brownie or a Guide? Do you remember the good times you had?

If you have a daughter or grand daughter aged 7 -10 years bring her along to Brownies on Wednesdays to Neville Parade Church from 5pm. For further details tel 313397.

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Air Cadets Presentation Night



Newly promoted 1407 Squadron NCO's

1407 (Newton Aycliffe) Squadron, Air Training Corps held their annual Presentation Night at the RAFA Club recently. The evening was held to celebrate the considerable achievements of the cadets over the last year and was presided over by the squadrons Commanding Officer Flt Lt Karin Scott. Guests included Durham/Northumberland Wing Staff Officer Sqn Ldr John Scott, former squadron CO Flt Lt Rick Fiskel, Mr Barry Hutchinson, vice president of Newton Aycliffe Rotary Club and Mr John Balmer-Howieson, RAFA. On parade were over 30 cadets led by CWO Richard Dolan watched by many family and friends.

The evening began with the enrolment of 3 new cadets by the squadron's Padre Paul Harper and continued with the presentation of Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Awards, certificates and other awards gained by the cadets in 2009. The main event



Flt Sgt Lauren Wise receiving the Fryer Shield from Sqn Ldr. John Scott

was the presentation of the squadron's trophies, assisted by the guests, followed by eagerly awaited promotions for the NCOs.

The recipients of trophies for 2009 were:

Best Probationer: Cdt A McFarlane
Scott Shield for Most Improved Cadet: Cdt E Birkett
Tom Downs Trophy for Endeavour: Cdt H Murphy
Sports Trophy: Sgt L Wise
Crabbe Trophy for Aircraft Recognition: Cdt C McMillan
RAFA Wings Appeal Trophy: Flt Sgt A Marrison
Boddy Trophy for NCO's: Flt Sgt A Marrison
Laverick Memorial Trophy for Shooting: Miss S Porter (ex CWO)

Scott Trophy for Citizenship: Cdt O Lakey & Cdt N Ellis
Fryer Shield for Best Cadet: Sgt L Wise

The squadron is very active in all aspects of the Air Cadet organisation from flying and gliding to adventure training and fieldcraft. Any young people aged 13 - 18 who would like to find out more can come along to the squadron's HQ at Barnard Armoury, Greenwell Rd (opposite the Leisure Centre) on Monday and Thursday evenings at 7 pm.

MAKING COUNTY DURHAM A FAIRER PLACE

Durham County Council is inviting people to have their say on its new Equality Scheme. The scheme is a plan to ensure all residents are treated equally and fairly in the way the authority provides jobs and services and in the way decisions are made.

The Single Equality Scheme will replace the separate equality plans currently in place and help the Council deliver its commitment to equality and diversity. The forthcoming Equality Act places a legal duty on local authorities to eliminate discrimination and promote good understanding between people regardless of gender, transgender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

Kay Winter, Principal Equality and Diversity Officer said: "We intend to consult across the County from next month (March 2010)

"We want to make Durham a fairer place for everyone so I really hope people from many different backgrounds and communities will come along and help us make a difference with our new equality plan.

"It will affect everyone who lives or works in County Durham as well as visitors so the more involvement we have from the public, the better our final plan will be."

There are a number of consultation events open to anyone with an interest in

equality and diversity but the Council is particularly keen to hear from people with disabilities and can provide support for them to take part. The consultation already includes the County Durham Faiths Network, Disability Partnership, Age Concern and Gay Advice Durham & Darlington (GADD) among others.

The Consultation Events will take place on:

22 March at the Glebe Centre, Murton 11am - 3pm

25 March at Witham Hall, Barnard Castle, 12 noon-4pm

30 March at Consett Civic Hall, 11am - 3pm

31 March at Ferryhill Leisure Centre, 11am - 3pm

26 April at County Hall, Durham, 11am - 3pm (Lunch will be provided)

The events will provide more information on the Single Equality Scheme and an opportunity for people to tell us what is important to them. Space is limited therefore places must be booked in advance by Monday March 15.

In addition to the events, people can take part online at www.durham.gov.uk, by e-mailing equalities@durham.gov.uk, by phone on 0191 383 4207, or by writing to Equality & Diversity Team, room 4/10, Durham County Council, County Hall, Durham, County Durham, DH1 5UF

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Fine Thing to Forgive

Dear Sir,

The hate brigade have taken full advantage of Counc Bowman's folly in losing her chain of office, but have they stopped to think how they would feel in a similar position. Dorothy must have been frantic and had many sleepless nights.

Dorothy does a lot of good work in the town and that should be remembered. It is easy to pick fault in people, but those in glass houses should not throw stones and a little human forgiveness might not be a bad idea.

Counc. Bowman seems to have made a few enemies and they jump on every incident to pour scorn. Give her a chance and don't let it mar her chance of becoming Mayor at the second attempt.

Observer
Name & address supplied

So spoil her - she deserves it!

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Mothers Day Lunch

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Two Course Menu for only £7.50 per adult £5.50 per child (under 12's) (main meal and dessert)
Waitress Service, Please Pre-Book
Payment Required on Booking

Dessert

Fruit Crumble
Cheesecake
All served with custard, cream or ice cream

All Mothers will receive a **FREE** glass of wine with their meal

Normal Sunday Lunch will still be served in the Bar. A warm friendly welcome guaranteed

RESPECT FOR POSITION

Dear Sir,
To be elected Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the town is an honour and when you receive your chain of office you take great care of it and wear it with pride.
Councillor Bowman treated it as a trophy and just "lost" this valuable item. It was found with Christmas ornaments she put away, but if she respected the position of Deputy it would not have gone missing in the first place! And why did she not report it immediately? Why wait 7 weeks?
This could explain why she could not fulfill her official engagements during that time. The chain has its own box and it should be worn with special pins to avoid being lost.
As for her becoming Mayor where does it say the Deputy Mayor should automatically take that position? Surely it is up to all Councillors to vote on that on the night of the changeover.
M. Gray

GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL
Dates and Times of Statutory Meetings of the Town Council and its Committees
Wednesday 3rd March 2010
Policy & Resources Committee - 7.15pm
QUESTION TIME
A period of up to 15 minutes has been set aside for electors to ask questions at the Recreation, Environment and Policy & Resources Committee Meetings. Written questions must be received by the Town Clerk at least 5 clear days prior to the meeting. Oral questions may be asked at the meeting which relate to an agenda item or is a matter for which that committee has responsibility. Agendas/Reports are available on the Council's Website on the Friday afternoon preceding the meeting (www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk).

The press and public are cordially invited to attend.

The Public Entrance to the Council Chamber will be open 70 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Great Aycliffe Resident's Association
PUBLIC MEETING
To discuss consultation on proposed closure of SHAFTO HOUSE
St. Mary's Church
Thursday 4th March
7.30pm
Followed by Association AGM including reports and election of committee

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VOLUNTEER LITTER PICKERS RESTART



Dear Editor
Your readers may like to know that on Saturday 13th Feb the Heighington Parish Litter Pick Group restarted our monthly litter pick around the verges and sides of roads running through the Parish. We are a month late due to the snow which made the task for the 16 volunteers much tougher and we collected 40 bags full of litter in just under two hours from the roads around and between Heighington, Redworth and School Aycliffe.
The picture shows Mrs Katie King being handed the Maclean cup by Kit Bartram the secretary of the HPLG for her outstanding contribution during last year.
The picks for the year are scheduled to take place each month and the next pick will be on Saturday 13th March starting at 10am.. Volunteers can join the pick at three locations but preferably outside Heighington Village Hall where safety briefing and tools to help with the pick can be collected. We will be pleased to welcome Mums and Dads with children. Other meeting points are Old Farm Cottage, School Aycliffe (just beyond North Cottages going towards Heighington)

Keep Shafto House Open

Dear Sir,
The care home at Horndale closed a while back and now we are told that Shafto House may be closing. I don't know what brought on the closure proposal, but the negatives outweigh the positives in my opinion.
If it closes it will only cause problems for the elderly residents and their families and where will the employees and the residents of the Shafto House go? We will only be adding more numbers to the unemployed list.
I understand there is no en-suite available, but these could be added in the future. The fact many residents would not wish to move should be enough to convince any Councillor. Perhaps instead of closing Shafto House it should be renovated.
This would be easier, keep the staff employed and stop reducing the number of care homes available on the town. Let's save the residents the distress of relocating to another care home.
Garth Willmer

and 2 Main Road, Redworth. Refreshments will be served after the pick in Heighington Village Hall.
Please also make a note of the date of this year's Grand Spring Clean that will take place on 17th April 2010. We would be delighted to welcome new volunteers to help us keep the Parish tidy. We would be even more pleased if residents of Newton Aycliffe and Shildon could also join in and help to make all surrounding areas tidy.
It would also be a great help if people eating McDonalds takeaways would take their packaging home rather than throwing it as litter.
Lou Bedocs

Last Push to Eradicate Polio

Rotary club members of Newton Aycliffe, and the rest of Great Britain and Ireland, are calling on the public to take part in a major co-ordinated RIBI campaign during February in an effort to raise £1 million for polio eradication.
Clubs are carrying out a range of initiatives, including:
Organising a Polio Eradication fundraising event in their local community
Dressing empty shop windows to publicise the campaign

25 years ago, Rotary made the pledge to eradicate polio worldwide. Since then, millions of children have been saved, thanks to the determination and devotion of Rotarians across the globe. Whether it is fundraising or delivering the vaccine in developing countries, every member of Rotary is part of the final push to wipe out this crippling and sometimes fatal virus.
President of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, David Fowler, said: "To see tiny children struggling to stand or even breathe just breaks your heart. It's frustrating too, knowing it could have been avoided. These youngsters should be running and playing but instead they are in pain and face a lifetime of hardship unless they are among the lucky few who can get hospital treatment.
"Polio is a crippling, and sometimes fatal, disease.



We take for granted polio is gone for good but it is still a harrowing reality for children in parts of Africa, Asia and India. Rotary clubs work tirelessly throughout the year, raising funds to pay for the Rotary 'End Polio Now' initiative. Since Rotary got involved with the eradication work in 1985, new cases have fallen from 1,000 a day to around 1,500 a year - saving over 5 million children from being infected. That's an incredible achievement and really shows Rotary to its full strength."
At least twice a year, Rotarians fly out to India to help with National Immunisation Days. Thousands of vaccination stations are set up in cities across the country, ready to welcome families and their children. Once immunised, the children's little fingers are dyed purple to keep track of who has already been given the medication, now known as

the Purple Pinkie. Some families find it difficult to travel to the vaccination stations, so Rotary volunteers travel to remote villages taking volunteers to the slums where families live in appalling conditions. Dirty water runs through the makeshift streets in open drains where children play and people live in piles of rubbish, increasing the risk of contracting polio.
The campaign to fight polio is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation which has donated \$355m in challenge grants. Rotary will match their generous donations by raising \$200m. The generosity of the Gates' is very much appreciated.
To find out more about the Rotary Thanks for Life campaign or to join Rotary visit www.ribi.org/thanks-for-life. Donations to the Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe can be left at Newton News Offices at St. Cuthberts Way.

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Dennis Raised £2061 for Cancer Ward

60 year old Cancer Victim Dennis Archer of Cheviot Place wanted to give something back to the Nurses who are treating him and others in Bishop Auckland Hospital.

Supported by his two daughters Helen and Sharon a Charity Night was held last Saturday at the Navy Club. Proceeds from this and various other fund raising events organised by friends and family amounted to £2061 which was presented to the nurses on his visit for chemotherapy on Wednesday. Dennis worked for Darchem for 25 years and although terminally ill maintains a cheerful attitude and still enjoys fishing which is his main hobby. In April he and his daughter Helen go on a fishing holiday in Cornwall. He calls his daughters "best mates", and they recently enjoyed a weekend in London with their Dad, taking in a West End show. "It was a great



Dennis with daughters Helen and Sharon

laugh and we had a marvellous time together" said Dennis. Dennis is a well known local drummer playing for popular band "Uncle Gilbert" and he wishes to thank them and "Full Circle" for giving their services for the Charity Night. He thanks his daughters, Mam and Dad and all the family for

their love and support with special thanks to Dr. Wadd and the Hospital nurses for their care. Helen and Sharon are grateful for all the support they have received from Julie Dolphin, staff and customers at The Worx Salon, Mary Barry who ran an auction and to everyone who has donated to the cause in any way.

BRIDGE PLAYERS REQUIRED

The Rotary Club of Durham Elvet in conjunction with the Wearside Bridge Club are holding a 24 hour "BridgeAthon" to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support on Saturday 22nd May 6pm until Sunday 23rd May 6pm at Wearside Bridge Club, 17 Park Place West, Sunderland. We are looking for bridge players to cover the following sessions:
Sat 22nd 1800hrs - 2200hrs
Sat 22nd/Sun 23rd 2200hrs - 0200hrs
Sun 23rd 0200hrs - 0600hrs
Sun 23rd 0600hrs - 1000hrs
Sun 23rd 1000hrs - 1400hrs
Sun 23rd 1400hrs - 1800hrs
Contact Margaret Reid on 0191 5294919
mreid9@hotmail.co.uk

TOWN FIRE-FIGHTER SAVING LIVES IN AFGHANISTAN



A 29 year old Royal Air Force Fire Fighter from Newton Aycliffe has been in the thick of it evacuating seriously wounded casualties to Bastion hospital in Afghanistan.

For Senior Aircraftwomen Teresa 'T' Lewis from RAF Brize Norton this has been her first taste of operational experience and one that she is not likely to forget, as she has had to move severely traumatised patients and work quickly under pressure. "The challenges for me are the casualty evacuations as we get to see things most wouldn't in a life time, but knowing that we're helping someone get first aid care as quickly as possible gets me through it" Teresa has received great support from her family in Newton Aycliffe. Her Mum Susan and Dad Robert are justifiably proud of their daughter, as is her big brother Martin. Teresa knows that they are concerned that she could be injured but wants to reassure them. "I have represented Great Britain at ice-hockey for over 10 years but I have

temporarily traded the ice-rink for the desert. Being out here is completely different to my daily life back home. You have to put your own feelings to the back of your mind and make sure that you are helping out the best you can. I am as safe as houses here at Camp Bastion, good job too as the new ice-hockey season beckons when I return." "The role of the fire-fighter is aircraft fires and domestic cover, a typical week varies from control, casualty evacuations, dangerous air cargo cover and immediate response truck cover. It's different from my local station as we have different aircraft and helicopters and I also get to work with coalition forces." Teresa said.

New Guest House Owner Celebrates 1st Year

Local lass Lesley Bussey celebrates her first year running Bury Road Guest House in Newton Aycliffe.

She has helped in excess of 50 people find their feet when they have found themselves homeless through one reason or another. Some people have only needed the odd night, most for several weeks and some decide they just don't want to leave.

Lesley works closely with the police and local authorities to offer a safe, secure, drug free, homely place to live for people at a vulnerable stage of their life. Lesley has been updating the guesthouse since she took over including rewiring,

cctv, up-to-date fire alarm system, microwaves, wifi, fridge, dvd player etc.

She will continue to invest in the guesthouse throughout 2010 to keep the reputation of the best guesthouse in its field in the area. The guesthouse also offers a homely temporary bed to people working in the area or just visiting for weddings etc.

Lesley says it hasn't been easy and at times very time consuming being a landlady, friend and a shoulder to cry on, but she looks forward to helping more people get their lives back together throughout 2010 and beyond.

GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL

Customer Panel Meeting

The next meeting of the Customer Panel will be held on:

TUESDAY 9th MARCH 2010
commencing at 6.00pm

The Panel meet in the Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe.

Further information can be obtained from Christine Walton on 01325 300700 e-mail: christine.walton@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

Members of the public are invited to attend.

The Public Entrance to the Council Chamber will be open 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting.

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Free Help with Your Debt Management



The Mayor Mary Dalton and her son Michael attended the relaunch of CAP (Christians Against Poverty) a free debt management charity in Newton Aycliffe. Shown with our civic leaders is Bede Feechan the volunteer manager of the scheme which has some commendable success stories from people who have benefited from their assistance in overcoming the stress of debt.

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Resignation Issue?

Dear Sir,
There are more than Dorothy Bowman doing good work for the young people of Aycliffe and they do not run to get their picture in Newton News. Why did it take 7 weeks to inform the Council she had lost the chain of office? The fall must have been bad to fall off her neck and land in her attic! After losing something of that importance she should resign.
Margaret Tomlin
Lorraine Walk
Ed: After giving this topic a good airing no more letters will be published.

Premiere of New Play in Aycliffe

Following recent auditions the cast for our forthcoming production of 'Kissing Sid James' has been selected. Dean Brennan who has experience performing from humble beginnings of school plays, to singing and stand-up comedy in Spain, is playing the title role of Eddie, an aspiring stationery salesman with a flash car and a moustache he adores, but still lives at home with his mum.

Playing alongside Dean as Crystal as a croupier with a bit of a thing for Sean Connery, is Nichola

Brodhurst. Nichola is no stranger to performing, as from a young age she has been actively involved artistically and creatively in many local productions. Kissing Sid James is an adult comedy of fumbling passion. It tells the story of a couple of 'normal' people trying to ignite the fires of passion in a seaside resort. It is a comedy which everyone will be able to relate to and probably see a little of themselves, as two opposites desperately try

and find the spark of love for each other. Does it have a happy ending? Will opposites attract or should Eddie have stayed at home with his mum? Whatever happens an hilarious laughter-packed evening is guaranteed. Performances will take place at St. Clare's Church from Wed 2nd to Sun 6th June. Tickets go on sale from 1st March. For booking details go to www.stage-one-productions.co.uk. Tel: 01325 324932.

meeting people and making new friends along the way. I am really looking forward to being part of Stage One Productions and playing the part of Crystal in 'Kissing Sid James'.

Dean Brennan was born in Newcastle and moved to Aycliffe aged 6 where he had a happy childhood.

Through unavoidable encouragement he found himself in show business just like his dear Mam. After a roller-coaster 20 years and the passing of his Mother, Dean has settled in Aycliffe where he has his happiest memories and his partner Tracy.



Nichola Brodhurst
27 Years old.

I have been into amateur dramatics from early age. My family will tell you it is because I like to be the centre of attention. I played Martha Von Trapp in the 'Sound of Music' and was also in the 'Music Man' both put on by Newton Aycliffe Amateur Operatic Society.

I have been a member of The Acorn Players since the group started 14 years ago. Not just on stage, I also got involved in helping with the production side and even choreographed a number of shows.

I enjoy acting, singing and dancing but most of all



Four Trophies for Town's Girl Racer



Aycliffe's girl racer Amanda Whitaker took a large collection of silverware home from the annual British Women Racing Drivers Club awards last weekend.

She was once again the most prolific winner of the evening, being awarded four trophies: The Hillwood Jewellers Coupe des Dames Trophy for the member with the most wins and lap records, The Goodwin Trophy for 1st place in the overall BWRDC Championship, The Monoposto Trophy for the highest placed BWRDC single seater competitor and The Embassy Trophy for the overall BWRDC Champion of the year (for a record 5th time).

Presenting the trophies was Wing Commander Andy Green OBE, holder of the World Land

WOODHAM STUDENTS ON ANNUAL SKI TRIP



During the week before half term students from Woodham CTC headed off for a week of snow sports tuition in Pila, Italy. After a long and arduous coach journey the group arrived mid-afternoon on Sunday at their hotel high up overlooking the mountain range of the Gran Paradiso National Park.

The views from the hotel St. Nicolas were stunning and the clear blue skies enabled them to be seen in all their glory. Although this year's hotel was some 30 minutes drive from the ski lift, it was well worth the journey due to the spectacular scenery, the splendid food and the hospitality we enjoyed.

Whilst in resort, the fantastic snow conditions and visibility allowed all

students to make excellent progress on the slopes beneath an idyllic panorama that stretched from Mont Blanc to the Matterhorn. After travelling to the Aosta Valley for 18 years and winning the first ever Group of the Season award Woodham students have an exceptional reputation with

Interski and their staff. This year was no exception, with all instructors complimenting the students on their conduct and behaviour, and the course co-ordinator, who stays with the group in the hotel, requesting that she is able to work with our group again next year.

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LOCOMOTION GETS TOP MARKS FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Locomotion: the National Railway Museum at Shildon in County Durham has shown itself to be at the top of the class for educational visits by being awarded a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge.

Awarded by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, the Quality Badge combines for the first time learning and safety into one easily recognisable badge for all organisations providing learning outside the classroom experiences.

Tony Attle, Education Officer at Locomotion said "Being awarded the Quality Badge is a real coup for all the staff here as it shows that we offer young people the type of high quality learning experiences they really benefit from. We're thrilled to get official recognition for our efforts and we look forward to welcoming even more children and young people from the local area to our museum."

The Quality Badge was developed as part of the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, a

national initiative to ensure young people are given more opportunities to have these experiences as part of the curriculum. The Quality Badge scheme is part of the Government's £4.5m Out and About package which, along with the badges, provides guidance and information for teachers on how to plan and organise high quality activities.

The badge is designed to make it easier for teachers to identify providers of quality educational visits. Organisations will display the badge as a signal to schools that their venue has met required standards, so teachers do not need to carry out their own risk or quality assessments.

The Quality Badge is available to large and small organisations providing quality learning outside the classroom experiences and managing risk effectively. Organisations already awarded the badge include museums, adventurous activity and field study centres, places of worship, art galleries, visitor

attractions and farms, with many more starting to apply. The Quality Badge was developed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in conjunction with a wide range of partners.

Badges are awarded by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. For more information about the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, please visit www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk

More Cash for Rotary Haiti Appeal



Rotary Club President Jean Thompson called round to thank the residents and staff of Woodham Lodge for the magnificent sum of £620 raised for Haiti Earthquake victims from a sponsored walk. The money will buy a Shelterbox which will provide a tents and equipment for ten people.

Jean called in at Britain's Best Fish & Chip Shop, Redz at Woodham, to collect £100 donated by customers. This was followed by a cheque for £200 presented by Freda Jones from the Cumby Arms' recent Charity Night. Jean told Newton News that recent donations had bought another two Shelterboxes and she thanked all those who had supported the Rotary Appeal. "It is not headlines now, but help is still urgently required. Rotary will remain working in the area a long time after all other aid workers have gone. We are the first to arrive and often the last to leave and every penny donated goes to the needy" said Jean.

£3,000 RAISED AT MAYOR'S CHARITY CIVIC BALL

The Annual Great Aycliffe Town Council Charity Civic Ball was hosted by the Mayor of Great Aycliffe, Councillor Mary Dalton, on Friday, 19th February, 2010 at the Hall Garth Hotel and Country Club, Coatham Mundeville. Dancing during the evening was to the 'Midi Dance Orchestra'.

Fund raising at the event was in aid of the Mayor's nominated Charities during her Year in Office and this year Mary has chosen the North East Army Benevolent Fund and Town Organisations. The event was a huge success and special thanks go to Barclays Bank who match funded the evening. A total amount of £2,300 was raised from the Tombola, Raffle, Bottle Draw and Match Funding. Newton Aycliffe Rotary Club also made a donation of £750 towards the Mayor's Charity and this was presented to Councillor Mrs. Dalton by their President, Mrs. Jean Thompson.

Councillor Mrs. Dalton would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported the event by supplying prizes



Ladies from Barclays Bank with the Mayor

or, indeed, attending the event. Special thanks must go to Mary's family, friends and fellow Councillors for their generous help with the fund raising and also to the following who give their support on numerous occasions:

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CLAMPDOWN ON UNTAXED VEHICLES

Twenty-five vehicles in Durham City were clamped and their owners issued with £80 fines during a joint operation by the police, DVLA and Durham County Council. Working with council neighbourhood wardens, police and customs officers impounded 21 of the vehicles after their owners failed to pay the fine.

Dave Riseley, Neighbourhood Services Manager, said: "Durham County Council regularly works in partnership with the police and the DVLA to identify untaxed vehicles across the county.

"Any vehicles we see that do not have a valid tax disk are

clamped. Their owners will also be given an £80 fine. However, the costs could be much higher if they fail to pay the fine and their vehicle is taken away."

Vehicles are removed within 24 hours if a penalty fine is not paid. It can cost up to £200 plus £21 for each day impounded to have a vehicle released.

Vehicles that are not reclaimed within seven days can be destroyed and the owner could face legal action with potential fines of up to £1000. Members of the public can report an untaxed vehicle online at www.direct.gov.uk or by calling free 0800 0325 202.

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Join the Campaign to Tackle Obesity

New data reveals that the average person in Newton Aycliffe is clinically overweight with a BMI of 26.9. Anyone concerned about their weight and health, or that of their family or loved ones, is being invited to join a campaign to tackle obesity in the area. *BMI 18.5-25 is healthy weight, BMI 25 to 30 is overweight and BMI 30+ is obese*

The 'Let's Beat It Together in Newton Aycliffe' campaign has been launched by Slimming World after their UK BMI map showed that 20% of people in the North East are obese and a further 35% are overweight. The UK's leading weight loss company, has now launched a community weight loss challenge in key parts of the region. Woodham Golf Club, RAFA Club, Navy Club and St Clare's Slimming World groups are on a mission to raise awareness in the local community of the benefits of healthy eating and moderate activity. The message is that with the right support, making small changes to our daily routines can be easy and can make a huge difference to our lives and the lives of our loved ones.

Nicola Dale, Slimming

World Consultant, says: "The statistics are shocking and what's more worrying is their impact on our communities. Weight is a worry for so many of us. It affects how we feel, our happiness and wellbeing. Those who are overweight know they ought to do something about it, but many just don't know where to turn for help. They beat themselves up feeling guilty about their weight and increasingly, their children's weight. It's the lucky ones who find Slimming World and discover a world of empathy, compassion and warmth and real solutions. The campaign launches in local groups from 22 February 2010 and the organisers are hoping the community focus will help give people a common goal - to inspire each other to lose between 5% and 10% of their weight in 12 weeks and make Newton Aycliffe a healthier place. Nicola continues, "Losing weight on your own is hard. That's why every Slimming World group promises, without exception, courage, love, friendship, compassion and empathy. Consultants have all experienced taking that first step and understand the courage it takes to walk

through the doors that very first time - and the commitment that it takes to change habits that often have existed for a whole lifetime."

As part of Slimming World's commitment to beating obesity, the company has pledged to give the group with the highest

average weight loss during the 12 week challenge £1,000 for a community project of their choice.

Groups taking part are: Woodham Golf Club, 5.15 and 7pm, RAFA club 6pm, Navy Club 7pm and St Claires 1pm and 5.30pm.

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AYCLIFFE ATHLETICS CLUB JUNIORS REPORT

The junior members of Newton Aycliffe Athletics Club are running well over recent months. Young Henry Johnson (U13) was selected to represent County Durham in the schools inter county cross country on 6th February 2010. The hard course was made even more difficult due to foggy conditions at Meadowfield in Durham. He ran well, improving his time from the previous week, and came home in 8.28, in a marvellous third place. Daniel Inglis competed at the same

venue in the intermediate boys section. He was pleased with his performance over the 3 lap event, and was delighted to be selected to represent Durham County. Daniel improved his own time for that course by 20 seconds and finished in the middle of the pack.

James Askew (U20) is proud to announce that he has been selected as a member of the North East Team at the Inter County Cross Country Championships on 13th March at Birmingham. His selection is based on outstanding performances in the NE Championships (12 Dec 2009) achieving 11th place, and 44th place in the Northern Championships at Blackburn (23rd Jan 2010).

Henry Johnson and William Crossen ventured out to the North East Harrier league event on 20th February. The course at Temple Park, South Shields, was cold and snow covered. Henry (U13) set off with the fast pack and he finished the one lap course in 13.33 William (U15) attacked the same route and gave an excellent run, finishing very strong, finishing in 12th position.

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Thank You

MORGAN. Don, Marie and family would like to thank family, friends, neighbours, Dad's Police colleagues, Rev Linda Potter and the Co-op for their support and condolences, following the sad loss of Dad, 3 months after Mam. Thank you all. (Reunited forever xx)

DORIS MADDISON would like to thank family and friends for cards flowers and phone calls during her stay in hospital

Photography

STUART J. ALLISON (LSWPP and LBIPP) Wedding Photographer. Photographs for all occasions. Tel 01325 300036, Mobile 07970 104646, info@sjallison.co.uk or visit the website: www.sjallison.co.uk

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26-02-10

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We would love for people from Newton Aycliffe to join us on this special day. You are welcome to come on site throughout the day. The official Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be at 2pm, followed by an Event from 3-4.30pm. Log on to www.xcelcentre.com for more information about the Centre. For events hosted by Xcel Church please check out xcelchurch.com or ring 0845 4505871

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BRAND NEW double divan with fully quilted mattress. Can deliver, £120. Tel 07789 113 343

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BONE CHINA porcelain plate collection, large cats, tigers, lions etc. Franklin Mint, Royal Doulton etc. Gold rimmed, 48 plates in all with dark wood display shelves, worth in excess of £2000, will accept £400 ono - no time wasters. Tel 310068

4 x VAUXHALL combo rims and tyres with good tread, 175/70, R14. £25. Tel Aycliffe 304206

PACKARD BELL iConnect PC for sale, excellent working condition, complete with keyboard, mouse, speakers and monitor, Windows XP, internet ready, very clean machine. £60 ono. Tel 319405 or 07875 676 474

DOUBLE BED and mattress, £100; 1 Bunk bed and mattresses, £100; 1 sofa and chair £70; Dining table and six chairs £130; Washing machine, £80. Tel 314031 or 07816 502883

BARCELONA Signed shirt (Yellow) Messi, Henry etc. £75. Comes with C.O.A. Tel 01325 964042

LIVERPOOL Signed shirt. Gerard, Torres etc. Comes with C.O.A. £60. Tel 01325 964042

GARDEN SHED 6x4, joiner made, tanalised, apex, window, felted, delivered and erected, £160. Tel 07538 812963

BRADCOT PORTICO Plus awning, with easy up alloy poles. Excellent condition. £175 01325 312499.

GIRLS BEDROOM accessories: Next single quilt cover and pillow case (red/ multi heart design), red throw, red heart wall light and small heart rug. Red eyelet curtains 86" drop. Ikea wall canvas, 22" x 55", red design, £50 ono. Tel 07919 070 507

SILVERCROSS 3D pram system from birth, jet sport (black), parent facing pram, includes matching changing bag, foot muff, apron and rain cover. Over £300 new, immaculate condition, £150 ono. 07949 051541

JANE Pro-evolution 3 wheeler pushchair from birth, matching foot muff and rain cover, good condition, £70 ono. 07949 051541

MOTHERCARE car seat from birth, rear facing, cost £50 new, good condition, £20. 07949 051541

NEED An old domestic appliance removing? Can't wait for the Council? Tel. 321 678.

£2,370 for Leukaemia Research



Newtonian Allison White, herself a Leukaemia sufferer is currently raising funds for research into the disease. She is shown here presenting a cheque for £2370 to a representative from Leukaemia Research. The money was raised from a Charity Night held at Evenwood Working Mens Club where Allison was supported by friends and family.

Heighington Village AGM

Heighington Village Hall Association hold their AGM on Tuesday 9th March from 7pm. and are keen for villagers to come along and hear the reports of users. There will be elections of Officers and Committee and nominations are welcome. Refreshments will be served. Your support for the Village Hall which is the hub of activities is important.

In Memoriam

DERICK YOUNG 2-3-2005. In loving memory of a dear Dad and Granda. We think of you and miss you every day. Love, Michael, June and family xxx

MAUREEN MAWSON (Nee Nichol). 27th February 1965-2010. My dearest Maureen, what can I say, where do I start? Our second Wedding Anniversary apart, still too much pain in my heart. This was our special time of year, you are still loved so very much, although you are no longer here. You are my special rose, I dearly loved with all your petals open wide, watered by all my tears, I secretly cried inside. Your fragrances fill my life every day, locked within my heart where they will always stay. You are always within my thoughts, each day and the whole year through. There is no one else, so lovingly warm and tender as you. My many happy memories help to ease my pain. Our Wedding Anniversaries will never be the same. "To you who was always loved, from one will always love" Husband, Derrick

JOHN ARRAN HUGHES 22nd February 1992. As long as the stars shine in the evening sky, and the sun continues to rise, you will always remain in our hearts and be part of our lives. My first thought on waking and last thought before sleeping, miss you more than ever. Love you forever. Mam, Dad, Garry, Paul and Vicky xxxx Thinking of you always, Dad. Love always, Maxine xxx

ELLEN ATHERTON Died 25th February 2009. No special day is needed to bring you to our minds, for days without a thought of you are extremely hard to find. Love, Agnes, Georgie and family

JOE WHARTON Died 2nd March 1988. Too dearly loved to ever be forgotten. I miss you, Jessie xxx

JOE WHARTON God bless Grandad. Mark, Vikki, David, Hayley and Peter xxx

EDITH KELL 3-3-2006. Your golden heart stopped beating, your smiling eyes at rest. God broke our hearts to prove to us he only takes the best. Love and miss you every day. Your devoted Husband, Bob and loving family xxx

JIM CLELLAND 2-3-96. Always in our thoughts. Love, Marina, Debbie and Jayne

Birthday Remembrance

BOBBY MORRELL 29th February. Your 1st birthday away from home. Love and miss you always. Agnes and family

BOBBY MORRELL A birthday prayer for my Dad. Love always. Roberta, Reggie and kids xx

BOBBY MORRELL Happy birthday Dad. Love, Julie and kids

ROBERT MORRELL 29-2-1932. Happy birthday to a special Granda. Always thinking of you. Love and miss you loads. Love, Robert, Anne-Marie and Adele xx

ROBERT MORRELL 29-2-1932. Hapy birthday to a very special Great Granda. Sorely missed. Love you lots. Love from Kaitlyn, Jodie, Jack, Rhys and William xxxxxxxx

NANCY WATSON 25th February. Thinking of you on your birthday Mam. All our love always. Joe, John, Lorraine, Karen and families xxxx

JOHN LAMBERT 25-2-1933. May the wind blow softly so you can hear my birthday wishes and all my love are near. Sail softly my darling, Duchess x

For all your print requirements contact
Newton Press
Tel: 300212

Congratulations

Tom Sproates



Happy 80th Birthday
To a wonderful Husband, Father, Father-in-Law and Grandad. With love and best wishes on this special occasion from all of your family and friends.
Have a wonderful day Tom, love from Olive x
Have a great day, you deserve it, love from Peter, Andrea, Shaun, Michael and Olivia x
We hope you have a fantastic birthday, love from Christine and Lauren x

Adam Stott



Happy 21st Birthday "Sadam"
28th February
Hope you have a brilliant day. Love from Sarah-Jane, Craig, Madison, Mackenzie, Maverick and the animals xx

Stephen Jones



Happy 50th Birthday
28th February
(Defected to Essex)
Happy 50th birthday. Love you to bits. From all the Egg and Chippers up north xxx

Mark Brown



Happy 30th Birthday
29th February 1980
Lots of love from Donna and Adam

Place your Mothers Day (14th March) Greetings in your local newspaper the "NEWTON NEWS"

MA BAKER
To a Mam in a Million
Happy Mothers Day
Lots of love from
Dannay, Anita and Kenny
XXXXXXXXXXXX

Above example:
£12.00 (inclusive)
(maximum 15 words)

MOTHER BROWN - Happy Mothers Day to the best Mam in the World. All our love forever and ever. Love from Chai and Dave xxxxx

Above example:
15p per word

MOTHER NATURE
Have a great day on Sunday,
All our love,
Violet, Hyacinth & Rose
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Above example:
30p per word

No of words @p = £..... - Box advert is required YES/NO = £12.00

Write out your copy in the box below, add up the words, put the total cost on and hand in to:

NEWTON PRESS
St. Cuthberts Way

TAYLORS NEWSFORCE
Town Centre or

WALKERS BUTCHERS
Simpasturegate

Deadline: 5pm Wednesday, 10th March
To be printed weekend 12th March 2010

THE TURBINIA

* Saturday Night Live *

The Very Best of Rock - Normally NO Cover Charge

Saturday 27th February - "Facelift"

"Facelift at the Tub - the rebrand! the band! Not a bad night crowd wise, a lot of regulars missing, but a few new faces, which is always good to see. The band cracked off with T Rex, 20th Century Boy, followed by a bit of Bad Company. Fratellis has them all boppin in their seats. Paranoed next, followed by a rocked up version of Spin Me Right Round, and Gilly missed it, they played Priest, Free and therapy were followed by Michael Jackson, Green Day and Motorhead, finished a crackin first set. Second half kicked off with Saturday Nights Alright for Fighting belting out, Whiskey in the Jar, followed, then Cult, Purple and more Lizzy, did an excellent drum solo on a base guitar, now one on my by now the dance floor was checka, for encoras, we were treated to Led Zeppelin, Sex Pistols and Metallica. A great band, great mix of music, classics to get them singing and dancing and a few unusual tracks they did in their own impressive style' Rock Page Review of a previous visit.

Saturday 6th March - Mega 10th Anniversary Party

featuring "Slip of the Tongue"

The ultimate Whitesnake Tribute band

This band are huge, played sell-out gigs at the Journal Tynes Theatre and two recent full houses at Newcastle O2 Academy and a European tour lined up for later this year. Stars of 'Stormin' the Castle 09'. The best band in the north-east all years (free of charge) to help us celebrate 10 years of the Turbinia reopening. Full house guaranteed so be early for best seats.

For more information on bands go to www.turbiniapub.co.uk
or 319700 Free Function Room - Free Disco/Karaoke

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Stan the Man Returns



Stan Fuller, former Landlord of the Huntsman renowned for the very popular Karaoke Nights, has returned to run the same at Woodham Golf Club. You can join in the fun every Friday night from 8pm till midnight. Throughout March this includes a drinks promotion.

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SBH Charity Fundraising



Lee Dunn and Susan Walls, both from SBH

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) has benefited from a fantastic £1,600 boost to their funds due to the fundraising efforts of generous SBH staff.

Chief Executive Colin Steel explains, "We chose the British Heart Foundation as our nominated charity following the tragic death in 2008 of our dear colleague Martin Smith. We are delighted to have played a part in raising over £1,600 for this worthwhile cause and hope this benefits the people in our communities."

Throughout the year staff have participated in numerous fundraising events for the British Heart Foundation (BHF) ranging from dressing down at work to guessing the amount of jelly beans in a glass bowl.

Fundraising for the BHF will continue until the end of March 2010.

Screaming in Anguish

Dear Editor
As the son of a frail and elderly resident of Shaft House I will share with your readers the horror of reading Cllr Mike Dixon's letter. He says that he "speaks for the voiceless" but his mind is clearly made up without either

meeting them or acquainting himself with the grave risks, including premature mortality, of moving them.

Cllr Dixon's arrogance and ignorance is repeated on his website where he says of those with contrary views to his "It is important that facts are part of the debate rather than untruths and distortions" yet he uses untruths and distortions to suit his argument.

He also states "As your councillor I have been elected to represent your views during the council's decision making process." Yet his argument selects a section of views he wants to listen to. The truth is Cllr Dixon would feel very differently if it was him about to be evicted from his home, perhaps to your death!

My mother would never harm another living soul and she would never come to your home when you were helpless and move you away from those that care for you.

They are screaming in anguish Councillor Dixon - you are just not hearing. We will all remember that you are an elected Labour Councillor when we come to vote in future elections.

David Dutch

ST. JOHN AMBULANCE RECOGNISE LONG SERVING OFFICER

Members of the St John Ambulance presented Alex Gibson from Newton Aycliffe with a Silver Salver in appreciation for his years of service with the Aycliffe Division. Alex served as Divisional Officer and Superintendent for Aycliffe Division from 1986 until last year. Although now retired Alex continues to work for the St John Ambulance as a Trainer and Assessor whilst also turning out for public duties to help other Divisions.



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