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## TOWN CENTRE DEMOLITION CLOSER SAYS OUR M.P.

Freshwater, the private owners of the town centre have appointed a demolition contractor to tear down the Dalton Way end of the town centre including the former Health Centre and Library. There have been some delays because of bureaucracy, which like you, I have found extremely frustrating. Plans for a discount supermarket to replace the former health centre and library are being drawn up. The supermarket will be a welcome addition to Tesco and an asset to the town. Because the day demolition starts will be such a landmark event in the history of Newton Aycliffe I have discussed with Freshwater the idea of launching a Demolition Day Lottery, the proceeds from which would go to local community groups and the

person who holds the winning ticket will get to 'swing the hammer' against the Health Centre to start its demolition. Freshwater have agreed to the idea. I have therefore asked a local Club to organise the lottery which will be launched once the timetable for the demolition has been established. The new library has been a great success and very popular with local residents. I am only sorry the Cubby has not taken the opportunity to move out of their dilapidated building and into the community room inside the library. This would be temporary and at a much reduced cost whilst a purpose built unit is provided as part of the proposed community hub at the Leisure Centre. Phil Wilson, M.P.

## Town Council Joins Fight to Keep Shafto House

COUNTY COUNCILLORS RISK THEIR SEATS

**Town Council Leader, Bob Fleming, made an emotional speech at the full Council Meeting last Wednesday on the proposed closure of Shafto House.**

He said he was disappointed after signing to a Charter with Durham County Council, in which they promised to consult with Town Councils over issues in their areas, that they not only did not send a representative when invited to the meeting to inform the Town Council of its proposals re Shafto House, but did not even have the good manners to reply!

Bob appealed to all Town Councillors to attend the meeting of the Area Action Partnership to be held on 30th March, when Shafto House will be discussed.

Bob said: "Many new facts came to light at the meeting, organised by the Aycliffe Residents' Association. A Solicitor, Yvonne Hossack, gave facts, which seriously damaged the County Council's case for closure. The statement that the home does not meet the current standards was misleading, as these standards were for new build or new registration and so the massive amounts of money needed to bring the premises up to new standards were inappropriate. Yvonne also believed that en suite facilities were not appropriate to many of the residents and could be a health and safety risk to many elderly users. The facts regarding the risks of moving elderly people are grounds for concern as many residents die during and soon after such moves".

Counc Fleming believed that with an elderly population, which is increasing rapidly, and in a town with a shortage of bungalows, there is a need for a centre which provides for the long and short term, and also respite care needs of our elderly. Shafto House would make an ideal Centre for such provisions.

Bob informed all Councillors that the electors were closely watching the proposals to close Shafto House and that a

question asked at the meeting was very relevant: "If, at the end of the consultation, the people of Newton Aycliffe and the residents of Shafto House want to keep Shafto House open, how will County Councillors vote?"

This is a question they will have to face, said Bob, intimating the electorate will remember how their Councillors voted when elections come round again.

He concluded by saying "I do not believe the County Councillors and the public had been given all of the facts of proposed closure and they were not counting the cost of the threat to the lives of the residents of Shafto House".

Councillor Fleming seemed



to be saying that the future of Shafto House and the re-election of our County Councillors were inextricably linked. Will they follow instructions or do as their electorate want?

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## AGNEW COMMUNITY CENTRE ACTIVITIES

We are very happy to announce since our recent AGM that we have co-opted 3 members to

### Do You Want to Enter the Dragon's Den?

The new series of Dragons' Den is underway searching for business ideas, inventions or products with serious business potential that are investment ready and looking for funding.

Dragons' Den is a challenging place to pitch, but it's also a genuine business opportunity to secure investment. In the most recent series, 15 entrepreneurs accepted offers of investment in the Den and plenty more have gone on to find success even without the backing of the Dragons. Entrepreneurs wanting to apply can do so by visiting [www.bbc.co.uk/dragonsden](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dragonsden)

our Management Committee, Jacki Birch, Audrey Armitage and Lileen Cuthbertson. The Association have just joined LINK and have become a member of Newton Aycliffe Learning Partnership in an effort to help residents.

Bingo is on each Thursday Evening - 7pm Eyes down and runs to about 8.30pm. for more details ring Margaret Lovelady on 319857 or just turn up on the night where you will be made very welcome. Elevate Youth Club each Saturday morning 10.30am to 12.00 noon. First session free then just 50p per session aged 5 to 12 years to have fun with a wide variety of games to play. Ring James on 07966 266642 for all questions.

Photo Group meets on Tuesdays 6.30pm to 8.30pm. Please ring Keith Blundy on 307783 who will be very pleased to talk to you. Tai Chi Class is held on Wednesdays 6.30 to 8.00pm.

Please ring the Instructor Brett Lambert on 320239 after 6pm who will be very happy to give you details

Freestyle Dance Class on most Saturdays 4.30pm to 6.30pm and Please ring Caroline Race on 312573.

Phoenix Taekwondo is held on Sundays 5 to 7pm and you will be most welcome whatever your age. Ring Instructor Paul Isles on 01388-605960 or 07525820526 should you need to discuss any point

Line Dancing is held on Tuesdays 1pm to 2pm with a highly qualified Instructor. £3 covers the instruction, Raffle & Drink

Parent & Toddler Group will run each Wednesday 12.30pm to 2.30pm from March 31st at a cost of £1 per Family and includes a drink and biscuits for both parent and each child, any questions then please contact Jacki Birch on 07979746458 who will give you her bubbly welcome.

We are having the site grassed once the good weather is back and have many projects that we wish to proceed with if we can find the funders to help us and with our own fundraising efforts, should you wish to help in any way then please ring the Secretary on 07535255098 on this or any other matter.

### Theatre Group Needs New Members

Aycliffe Musical Theatre are seeking new members to join them for their forthcoming production of "HMS Pinafore", to be performed at Greenfield School Community and Arts Centre in July.

Anyone who enjoys singing and performing on stage or interested in working behind the scenes is welcome to come along to rehearsals at Greenfield School any Wednesday evening at 7pm. Tel. 318968 for further details.

### BLACK COLLIE DOG FOUND

Dear Sir,

My daughter found a dog on and rescued it as it was stuck fast in a hedgeback in the Greenfield area of town. After bringing it home, we tried unsuccessfully to find the owner as there was no name tag on the collar so ended up taking it to Deerness Kennels at Langley Moor.

It will be held there for 7 days before there is an attempt to rehome it. The dog is a black and white Collie Cross with a red collar. There is a small badge on the collar reading 'Love'. Should anyone have lost this dog then this may point them in the right direction.

## Dance School at Blackpool



Below are the results of the competition held at Blackpool Winter Gardens on 7th March, 2010:

3-5 years Rosette - Solo  
Natasha Thompson-3rd. Amy Dolan-4th.

David Robinson-6th. Amelia Anderson- th.  
Amber Fenwick-9th.

6-8 years Rosette-Solo: Abbie Kennedy-3rd.

6-10 years Stardance - Solo  
Reece Atherton - 2nd. Libbie Anderson - 5th.

Kasia Shaw-6th Place, Ellie Jade Anderson- 12th.

Up to 9 years - Solo: Lisa Robinson - 9th.

Up to 13 years - Solo: Annis Race - 3rd.

18 - 25 years - Solo: Katie Shepherd - 9th.

Up to 13 years - Pairs  
Annis Race and Charley Haigh - 5th.

14 - 17 years - Pairs  
Rebecca Barber and Becky Allen - 7th.

18 - 25 years - Pairs  
Natalie Bradshaw and Katie Bain - 12th.

Congratulations and well done to everyone who took part in the first Street Nationwide Competition. You all danced fantastically. Thank you to the parents for their continued support. Anyone who has an interest in joining Lee Green Dance Centre, please contact Caroline Race on Tel. No. 07949 911642. Our classes include Freestyle Disco, Street, Lyrical Slow, Rock n Roll, Acro, Ballet and Tap. Adult classes are also available including Salsa, Hip Hop and Aerobics.

Bryan & Brenda Thomson of Lee Green Dance Centre and Caroline Race, Dance Teacher and Choreographer.

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# XCEL CHURCH OFFICIAL OPENING



ON Saturday, March 6, Xcel Church was officially opened. Pastor Glyn Greenow, son-in-law of the church's founder and his wife Pamela cut a ribbon to signal an exciting new era for the church at the Xcel Centre, in Newton Aycliffe.

He was be joined at the celebration by local dignitaries and guests, including the Mayor of Great Aycliffe Mary Dalton.

Established in 1967 by Jack Dickenson, the then named Full Gospel Church met for many years in private homes and community centres in the Aycliffe area.

By 1986, members of what by then had become known as Aycliffe Christian Life Centre had contributed £80,000 to finally build a church in Woodham Way, Woodham, and while the final building cost increased to nearly £150,000, the strength of the church congregation ensured

it was completely debt-free within five years.

By 2008, the church had swelled to more than 600 members and, while the introduction of satellite churches in Durham City and Darlington eased the situation, church leaders recognised it had outgrown its current home and the search for a new one began.

The Xcel Church joined with local businessmen to form a development company, Xcel Holdings, a registered charity, which led the development of the Xcel Centre, a multi-purpose conference and events centre catering for both business and the local community, as well as providing a state-of-the-art new home for the church.

Every Sunday, the centre's 1,000sqm auditorium accommodates upwards of 900 people for church services. After Mr Greenow cut the

ribbon to open the church his son, John, Lead pastor of Xcel Church, began the celebration, featuring the Xcel Gospel Choir and Aycliffe Pipe Band. Afterwards the Xcel Centre was open to the public to tour its facilities, which include the Little Cubs Day Nursery and Jacksons Coffeehouse.

## OUR MP PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR ARMED FORCES



Phil Wilson our MP has pledged to do his bit for the British Armed Forces family. Phil made the pledge on the Royal British Legion's campaign website [www.timeodoyourbit.org.uk](http://www.timeodoyourbit.org.uk). The website also features the charities general election manifesto, which sets out priorities for the next Government to improve conditions for Service Personnel and their families, the bereaved, veterans and dependants.

Kevin Shinkwin, the Legion's Head of Public Affairs said, "We are really grateful to Phil Wilson MP for pledging to do his bit. The entire Armed Forces family needs the support of politicians from all parties and our manifesto outlines the practical ways the next government can help. We hope all parties will give it serious consideration and that every MP will pledge to do their bit"

Phil Wilson MP said "I was delighted to support the British Legion. They have an important role to play in highlighting the needs of the whole Armed forces family. I have pledge to do my bit and would encourage everyone to visit the website to find out

how they can get involved with the campaign.

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**w: [www.fostercare.co.uk](http://www.fostercare.co.uk)**



## Volunteers Wanted for New Play

Do you have an interest in helping out backstage? Do you like working with people and being organised or, are you technically minded?

If so, we are looking for a Stage Manager and Sound Operator for our forthcoming production of 'Kissing Sid James' 2nd - 6th June at St. Clare's Church. Experience is not essential as full training and advice will be given.

This is an excellent opportunity for anyone wanting to discover the backstage element of theatre. For further info go to [www.stage-one-productions.co.uk](http://www.stage-one-productions.co.uk) or contact 07963 804 225 e-mail: [info@stage-one-productions.co.uk](mailto:info@stage-one-productions.co.uk)

Tickets are now on sale at Greenfield Community Arts Centre and every Saturday at St. Clare's Coffee Morning 10 - 12.

## TOWNSFOLK VIEW PLANS FOR NEW BIOGAS PLANT



Site of 20 acre plant on Hurworth Road

Dear Sir  
The Exhibition was well publicised - front page of Newton News - Thank you. Other local press titles covered the event including BBC Radio Tees and TV and on BBC North East throughout the day.

We posted personal invitations to residents who live closest to the site, as well as local businesses. We had almost 50 residents visit throughout the day and there was genuine interest in the technology.

The majority of people were delighted to see this industrial site being put to such good use

and were curious (positively) about whether the local authorities have plans to use residential food waste in the plant.

Residents also enquired if they might be able to buy the liquid fertiliser which is a by-product of the process, this is something we are looking in to.

One or two residents raised concerns regarding traffic implications and possible smells from the food and organic waste. We were able to put people's minds at rest. We can confirm that the site will operate odour-free. We are expecting up to 16 vehicles a day delivering to the site, none of which will travel through Aycliffe Village or School Aycliffe. All deliveries will be in fully sealed containers and enter through double roller shutter doors within a negative air pressure environment. The anaerobic digestion process also needs to operate without air so the technology is fully sealed.

Overall, the response was very positive and we are now progressing with the planning application, which we hope will be submitted next month.

Kind regards,  
Antony Warren  
Director

## Why Vote of No Confidence Was Dropped

Dear Sir,  
Kenneth Stubbs, Secretary of the seemingly mute Independent Councillors, was named by another contributor to your newspaper as "poison-pen Ken". He appears to write what others tell him to as I have not heard any of the dwindling band of independent group members challenge his inflammatory remarks.

I can only assume he speaks for all of them, though I don't know why Independent Councillors need anyone to show them how to use a pen. If the flock of sheep that are independent councillors felt so strongly about bringing a vote of no-confidence in a Labour Party Councillor, why did they not do so themselves? I have no intention of divulging confidences save to say that I am prepared to let the Labour Group have the time and space to discipline their fellow Councillor, in their own way. All my time at the moment is taken up serving my constituents as well as helping to collate the fantastic response we have had to our Lib Dem Focus newsletter, which was circulated to the people of the

Aycliffe Central Ward, which from 2013 is what it will be called. Perhaps, this is what is really worrying this man and his group.  
Cllr Bill Blenkinsopp  
Lib Dems.

## Equal Rights - Equal Charges

Dear Sir,  
We are constantly being told about women's right to equality, but it should work both ways. I have just received my reminder for Oakleaf Golf Course fees for 2010-2011. I notice that membership prices are £36 for a man and £21 for a woman. Is this not discrimination against men, or does sex discrimination not work in reverse?

If the reason is because women do not have the same rights as men, then this is discriminating against women, so could someone please explain who is being discriminated against? They could really set a new trend and charge £21 for men and women, but that's never going to happen is it?  
Dave

## SUGAR HILL PUPILS HAVE 'SPRINGTIME IN PARIS'



Sugar Hill Pupils at the top of the Eiffel Tower

29 pupils from Sugar Hill took a week out from school to extend their educational experiences beyond the shores of Great Britain. Travelling to the small village of Criel Sur Mer, they had a week of activities and excursions that allowed them to understand some of the dangers of being a soldier in World War 1; a visit to the Capital city of Paris while climbing the Eiffel Tower and seeing the city from a River Seine boat cruise; sampling local French culture and conversing in French while visiting a French market and cheese farm; and seeing some of the natural wonders in the amazing Nausicaa Centre devoted to the conservation of the oceans. The children had a wonderful time, declaring the whole trip 'Awesome!'

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**P.A.C.T.  
Meeting**  
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### Neighbourhood Problem?

The next P.A.C.T Meeting for Shafto/St Mary's will be on Tuesday 23rd March at 6pm at Newton Aycliffe Library, Central Avenue.

This will be held for any residents who are having problems in their area and want to work together with the police and other agencies to make a difference to the area you live in.

Local Councillors and Neighbourhood Wardens are also invited to attend.

PC 132 Pete Akiens  
PCSO 7044 Scott Hodgson

### Tenant Celebration Event



Sedgefield Borough Homes (SBH) would like all of our tenants to join us in celebrating the successes of our first year and sharing our plans and priorities for the forthcoming year.

The event will be held on Tuesday, 27 April 2010 from 5pm until 8pm at Spennymoor Leisure Centre, Spennymoor, Co. Durham.

Our celebration will include:

- Local celebrity
- Interactive theatre group
- Free raffle draw
- Refreshments
- Children's entertainer

If you would like to attend but have no transport we can help. For more details contact the Resident Involvement Team on 0845 505 5500 ext 4211 or e-mail [susan.ashton@sedgefieldboroughhomes.co.uk](mailto:susan.ashton@sedgefieldboroughhomes.co.uk) by no later than 31 March 2010.



## Are You a Victim of Loan Sharks?

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## GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

Notice is hereby given that:

A meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of the Town Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe on:

**WEDNESDAY 31st MARCH 2010**  
at 5.45pm

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 meeting.

Agendas and Reports are available on the Council's Website on the Friday afternoon preceding the meeting.  
(www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk)

## CARE HOME RESIDENTS ENJOY BEING PAMPERED



Residents at Rose Lodge Care Home celebrated Dignity Day on 25th February relaxing and enjoying music, hand and nail care and foot massage along with refreshments. Both residents and staff enjoyed their day.

## COUNCILLORS LACKING PROPER ADVICE OR COMMON SENSE ?

Sir  
I believe that some of our Unitary Councillors are hiding behind a smoke screen drawn up conveniently by an Officer or Officers at County Hall designed to enable councillors to evade the public gaze on issues of political contention. Councillors repeatedly say they have been told that if they speak out on the issue of the consultative proposal to close Shafto House, they will be barred from voting on the issue when it comes before the County Council. I have requested under the Freedom

of Information Act, (FOI).. the basis on which, such advice if given, was made. In the meantime I provide some useful pieces of guidance and their relevant sources for our Councillors (and their Officers). Once I have the reply from County Hall, there may well be a legal challenge in combination with others to nullify any decision, where a councillor was barred from voting, or barred from speaking or expressing a preliminary view before the vote.

For purposes of brevity I have omitted the Legal References and Case Judgements. This information is readily available from the Standards Board web site, and my web site and Officers at County Council should have already have it, Councillors should make themselves aware of it. All a councillor has to do is state: "I have yet to finally make my mind up and will do so only at the relevant meeting where the decision is made". This leaves the councillor free to be present and hear all views expressed. Indeed, a councillor can express sympathy for such views and even state that they are predisposed to support such and such. This is not my views or opinions, it is the Law of the Land and strictly the advice of the Standards Board.

I commend Councillor Paul Gittins who as a Unitary Councillor, remained in the Town Council meeting several weeks ago when the Town Council discussed inviting the County Council to attend and address the issue of Shafto House. Well done Paul, this was hardly a detailed discussion but other Unitary Councillors did their usual and disrespectful disappearing act, showing they were not interested in hearing all sides of the issue. (closed minds). Predetermined not to listen! I challenge our Unitary Councillors yet again, to take this matter to County Hall and get the Officers to verify or deny this interpretation. Arun M Chandran, Labour for full details visit: www.greataycliffe.com

## SISTER TOWN DOING MUCH BETTER

Dear Sir,  
In their infancy both Peterlee and our town were planned and built by the same Development Corporation.  
Take a look at Peterlee now and see their town and match it with ours! Their town is vibrant and alive, great shopping areas fantastic markets and plenty of TOILETS. Their Council Tax is less yet they have more amenities etc,  
We seem to pay more and get less in return, no toilets no shops just empty shells of dereliction that no one in his or her right mind would take over.  
A good solution would be TWO TD 9 DOZERS with half a mile of chain between pulled from one end of town to the other. I have lived here over 50 years and I still say the old town centre was the best. Better to re- build our centre than pay MP's false claims with our money.  
Enough! enough! enough! Barry

## GIRLS FOOTBALL GROWS IN AYCLIFFE



The girls section of Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre AFC continues to grow in numbers and stature as more girls want to play competitive football. The current under 16 girls after a strong league season, now concentrate on their final 6 games in the league cup before preparing for under 18 football next season. Meanwhile the girls football development section have worked hard throughout the Winter indoors and with 10 girls now signed we are aiming for an under 11 & under 12 team next season. The outdoor coaching starts Wednesday 31 March 2010 at the Oakleaf Playing fields with Yr 5 & 6 from 5.30pm till 6.30pm followed by year 10 and upwards from 6.30pm till 7.30pm. If you want to play girls football, you will be made welcome at our coaching sessions. Contact Berni 0780 395 3960 or visit our website www.naycafc.co.uk

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## GRADING SUCCESS FOR WOODHAM CHI TAEKWONDO CLUB

Once again the students at Woodham Chi Taekwondo Club performed to a very high standard at the gradings held on Saturday 6 March 2010 at Spennymoor Leisure Centre. The students had trained very hard and their efforts certainly paid off on the day, with everyone being promoted to their next belt. Two students, Michelle and Jack Howarth, were also double promoted and received the best of grade awards in their groups, each being presented with an engraved silver plate.

Being part of a family group can be very rewarding, especially when you can train together, attend the gradings together and are able to support one another. The Howarth family have been part of the Woodham club for approximately 2 years and would recommend it to any families that are interested in keeping fit and doing a sport together. It encourages healthy competition between family members and enables all of the family to be involved in a sport that they can take part in together.

Woodham Chi Taekwondo Club isn't just about gradings though, it also supports competitive fighting. The

Coatsworth brothers have fought in many competitions and have won many medals between them, the latest achievements being at the Scorpion Open held in Barnsley on Sunday 28 February 2010 where Alex won gold and in the Scottish Cup on Sunday 14 March 2010 where Elliot won gold.

So whatever you want to achieve from Taekwondo, Woodham Club can give you the help and support that you need. Why not give it a go!! For families - parent(s) and child(ren) - the first 4 lessons are FREE!!

For further information please ring Master Kevin Mitchell, 4th Dan Black Belt, on 07536061450 or Andrea Mulhearn, 2nd Dan Instructor on 07790438886.



## TEAMS WANTED FOR GREENFIELD LEAGUE



Greenfield's Community Sports Manager Michael Rippon is looking for new teams to increase the school's Tuesday night seven-a-side league. He is pictured presenting winners of the Breakfast Club with their trophy after they held on to top spot with a 4-3 win over Inter on Tuesday.

The 14-week winter season came to an end this week with Cobblers Hall finishing runners-up after they beat Copenbadly 2-0. League organisers want four more teams to take part in a Tuesday night spring/summer season, increasing the league from eight sides to 12.

"We've already had quite a bit of interest," said Michael, pictured handing the league trophy to Breakfast Club captain Sam Hurst.

"It's a very keenly contested league and there's quite a lot of competition between the sides but it's all good natured and sporting." Breakfast Club's winning team also consisted of league top scorer John Hurst, Hugh Osbourne, Rob Tomlinson, Andrew Littlefair, Ryan Durr, Ross Dixon, Conner Blakey, Richy Summerbell, James Robinson and Elliott Holt.

The Tuesday night leagues are played on Greenfield's

state-of-the-art all-weather pitch, which was built in 2005 using the very latest rubber crumb synthetic material technology.

The new season will start early April and will be played over 22 weeks until around August, between 7pm and 10pm every Tuesday night. Registration costs £20 per team and each game, which lasts 30 minutes, costs £21 per team.

There are still places left for teams to enter - so anyone interested should contact Michael on 01325 379041, 07879 117224 or email: michaelrippon@aol.co.uk

## ROCK BAND IN SCHOOL



Sugar Hill School were treated to a Rock Band last week. "Hot Fuzz", Teachers from Durham School Music services, played a range of styles from Heavy Rock to Pop. The Concert was enjoyed by staff and pupils who were rocking in the aisles. The performance was arranged by Teaching Assistant Katherine Halford whose husband Ian is a member of the band.

## POLICE SEEK PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR GRAFFITI DAMAGE



The Police appeal for any information relating to persons responsible for the recent vandalism on the blue bridge and in the multi-storey car park. The two photographs show recent graffiti and the persons responsible are committing offences of criminal damage. The graffiti is not only unsightly and anti-social but is expensive to remove for either private owners or local authorities.

Any information regarding persons responsible please contact either PCSO 7044 Scott Hodgson or PCSO 7183 Ben Cloke on 0345 6060365.



## Leeds Fans

Darlington & District Whites RMC will hold this month's meeting at The Milehouse Pub, Stockton, TS19 9AA on Tuesday 23rd March, with a 7.30pm start. For more information please visit www.darlowhites.co.uk or email darlowhites@hotmail.co.uk

## "GREEN" HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

**SIGNS OF SPRING**  
Sunday 21st March  
10am- 12 noon

We've had a hard winter so why not dust down your

boots and enjoy a gentle stroll while looking for all the signs of spring. Spend a few hours walking to Aycliffe Nature Park through

the mature woodland area in search of all the plants and animals that are re-emerging from their winter slumber. Meet at: Moore Lane Eco Centre

**SIGNS OF SPRING - ART ATTACK**

Sunday 21st March - 1pm-3pm

Spend a few hours making artistic pictures and models of things you see around Aycliffe in spring. Your artwork will then be mounted onto a large display which will be displayed in the centre. Meet at: Moore Lane Eco Centre

**NIGHT OF THE NEWTS**  
Wednesday 24th March - 6.15pm to 7.30pm

Discover a whole new world by joining Aycliffe Nature Park Association and Great Aycliffe Town Council's Environment Officer in search of the some of the more elusive creatures that live around the pond in one of the towns best know countryside sites. We will be in search of several species including the rare Great Crested Newt. Bring along your wellies and torch if you have them. Meet at: Travellers Green (outside Aycliffe Nature Park).

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**Saturday 3rd April 2010 - Bond Night**

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# SBH HELPS VULNERABLE HOUSEOWNERS

Tenants in the Durham area can now benefit from a national scheme to help them in times of difficulty thanks to an established Government scheme.

The Mortgage Rescue Scheme was launched as part of a £284m package nationally and is designed to prevent some of the most vulnerable families and homeowners becoming homeless as a result of mortgage affordability. The adoption of the scheme enables SBH to purchase properties and rent them back to families at an affordable rate.

Colin Steel, Chief Executive of SBH commented: "The introduction of this scheme is a landmark step forward in showing our

tenants and the wider residential community that we are passionate about embracing the need of our community and promoting an area that people want to live in.

Our commitment to this project stems from our ability as a social landlord to introduce schemes to assist vulnerable families across the area."

SBH has set aside over £250,000 to invest in the scheme over the forthcoming year, and three properties in the area have already been assessed and approval has been given to financially help the families involved.

For more information please contact Angela Smurthwaite, Marketing and Communications Officer on 0845 505 5500 Ext 4625

# Swimmers Compete Well in Championships

Swimmers from Sedgefield 75 Swimming Club have just finished competing in the Northumberland and Durham County Championships which have been held over several weekends recently.

First to compete were the older age group who competed at the Aquatic Centre in Sunderland. On the first day of the competition the group swam well during the morning session making 8 finals.

Philip Hodgson finished 4th in both the Open 50 freestyle and butterfly but came away with 2 Gold medals for the same events in the Youth category. Philip also finished 4th in the 200m freestyle in the youth age group and 5th in the open. Caroline Saxby made 2 finals in the 100m and 400m freestyle finishing in 2nd place in both races.

Rachel Howard and Stuart Walker also both made finals, Rachel in the 50m and 200m backstroke finishing 8th and 9th respectively and Stuart finished 9th in the 50m breaststroke.

The second day of swimming got off to almost as good a start with the swimmers making 7 finals. Caroline continued to swim well finishing 1st in the 200m freestyle and 2nd in the 50m freestyle.

Philip also made 3 finals finishing 3rd in the open and youth age groups in 100m

freestyle, 400m freestyle 5th and 200m Individual Medley 3rd Youth and 4th Open. Rachel swam in the 100m backstroke and finished in 8th position and Philip Walker swam in the final of the 50m backstroke and finished in 8th position. The younger age group have this weekend just finished competing in their competition which was held at the Neptune pool in Middlesbrough. The four swimmers, Sam Dixon, Hannah Featherstone, Rhiannon Foulds and Amy Gittins swam well but special mention must go to Hannah and Sam who between them made 14 finals.

Sam had already become County Champion in the 1500m freestyle and he continued his excellent form by finishing 2nd in the 200m butterfly, 3rd in the 400m freestyle, 100m butterfly, 100 and 200m Individual Medley. Sam also finished 4th in the 200m freestyle and 100m backstroke, 5th in the 400m Individual Medley and 7th in the 200m breaststroke.

Hannah also had some tough competition in her age group but finished in 3rd place in the 100m freestyle and narrowly missed a medal in the 200m freestyle finishing in 4th position. She also finished 5th in the 100m butterfly, 5th in the 100 and 200m Individual Medley.

# FIREWALK CHALLENGE

As part of Cobblers Hall fundraising for the Kilimanjaro Projects they are organising a sponsored Firewalk on April 3rd over the Easter weekend. The Landlords are looking for volunteers to take part and raise money for the charity Daisychain.

"Firewalking is the act of walking barefoot over a bed of hot coals. It is a chance to transform your fears and inspire you to do what previously seemed impossible. It is a chance to overcome limitations and create your own reality in every aspect of your life."

If anyone is interested in this once in a lifetime opportunity please contact the Cobblers Hall on 315899 to register and get sponsorship forms. It is £20.00 to register and they need to get £100 worth of sponsorship. If they do this they will get their registration fee back and there will be a prize for the person who raises the most amount of money.

## GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL

Dates and Times of Statutory Meetings of the Town Council and its Committees

Wednesday 7th April 2010

Environment Committee - 7.15pm

Followed by the Recreation Committee

### 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 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting.

## LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

The Library is holding taster sessions for adult activities and would like people to let us know which activities they would be interested in. They will be chosen based on expressions of interest from the following: Family History; Local History; Willow Work Crafts; Sugar Craft; French or Spanish Language; Basic Counselling; Basic IT; and other general adult crafts. The taster sessions will take place in May - dates and time to follow.

Darlington Cancer Awareness will be visiting the Library on Monday 22nd March, 10:30 - 11:30 to give information, help and advice and to raise awareness about Prostate Cancer.

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## Aycliffe Fail to Hold Out

Newton Aycliffe 12 Hartlepool BBOB 22

Newton Aycliffe Rugby Club continued their Durham and Northumberland Division 3 campaign, hosting Hartlepool BBOB who they had beaten in a thrilling match earlier in the season.

From the beginning of the match it was obvious Aycliffe were on top in the scrums with Alan Layfield having been chosen for his scrummaging strength and Cymon Lee strong in the front row.

Aycliffe took the lead from a try from a break by Gareth Parsonage; Neil Morgan was on hand to take the ball before feeding on to Niall Jenkins who exchanged passes with Chris Wilson before running 20 yards to score.

BBOB replied with a try of their own. The dominance of the Aycliffe forwards saw Michael Welsh held up just short of the line, but scrum half Warren Parsonage saw enough of a gap to touch down. Luke Tinkler added the conversion to see Aycliffe 12 - 5 ahead at half time.

Injuries disrupted the Aycliffe side in the second half but the pack, with Ryan Milford playing his first game of the season, were still on top in the scrums.

BBOB made breaks with the backs and added two tries, one converted, to take a 5 point lead. Aycliffe attacked again but despite sustained pressure failed to add to their total. With less than 10 minutes to go, the visitors scored again to clinch the game. The final score was 22 - 12.

On 13th March Newton Aycliffe travel to Whitby with a 3pm

kick-off. Aycliffe's sponsors are Fabtech Engineering and Workshop Supplies. More information is available at www.ayclifferrugby.co.uk.

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## SBH Explain House Letting Policy

Dear Editor

Following concerns expressed by readers of the Newton News in earlier editions, Sedgefield Borough Homes (SBH) would like to respond to those points raised. Since 1 October 2009, SBH has allocated its properties through the Durham Key Options (DKO) Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme. The scheme is an open and transparent way to let properties, which allows applicants to see for themselves the number and type of properties available. DKO is a partnership of housing providers throughout County Durham who have agreed to adopt common criteria to assess all applicants against.

The scheme operates a banding system which means applicants are assessed into groups according to their needs, such as overcrowding. Applicants themselves then express an interest in those properties they would like to be considered for, known as bidding.

The DKO CBL scheme enables applicants to have access to a range of available homes in County Durham. The scheme incorporates alternative housing options such as nominations arrangements with registered social landlords, low cost home ownership and mutual exchange scheme. This increases choice and availability of accommodation.

Since the introduction of the scheme, SBH has let over 100 homes in Newton Aycliffe. The majority of these have been to applicants already living within the town. A smaller proportion have been let applicants who have applied from within the former Sedgefield Borough area and a much smaller minority to applicants who resided elsewhere.

## Clairvoyance

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## A Pleasant Walk Spoilt

Dear Sir,

On a lovely sunny day we decided to go for a walk up the path by Moore Lane to the main road, down to the "Head" and then back to the Nature Park area.

What a sight! Rubbish galore, we lost count of the beer cans, cider bottles, crisp packets etc., and signs of drug taking.

What a shame there's no planned clean-up of these secluded areas. We do see litter picking around public spaces and I realise it would take lots and lots of plastic bags, not counting the hard work, but it would make a real difference to a pleasant walk around our town.

M. Mason

## Do Not Park in Front of Property Entrance

Dear Sir,

I would like to inform the owner of the Renault, whose car I left a note on Wednesday Morning 3rd March, asking them politely, not to park in front of my drive again. Not only does it cause people an inconvenience, but it is illegal

as is parking in front of any drop kerb.

If this driver had read the Highway Code they would have known this. If I feel they are "Illegally Parked" I will inform the Police on the next occasion.

Name & address supplied.

*Editor: If Highway Code Point 217 is breached do not overreact. I know the feeling, you are running late for work, and you need to get to that all important appointment and someone has parked in front of your drive so you can't get out.*

*Politely ask them to move their car. If your neighbours are decent they will move their car and ensure they don't park there again! But maybe they are not decent neighbours?! So what do you do? Well you could write them a letter and point out they are breaking the highway code, if that doesn't work then maybe a quiet word with the local police officer or traffic warden will do the trick.*

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## AYCLIFFE 9th IN TABLE

Newton Aycliffe slipped to ninth in the Northern League second division with a 2-1 defeat at home to Jarrow Roofing last Saturday.

Allan Oliver's side crashed to their sixth home defeat of the season with a below-par performance against a side who jumped to second in the table with their 11th away victory of the campaign.

As with previous weeks, the game was not without refereeing controversy as Chase McMullen unfairly saw red just before half-time. By then Roofing were a goal to the good despite having a man sent off themselves.

Five minutes later a rash tackle in the area by Davey Forrest gave Kevin Davison the chance from 12 yards but Stevie Richardson got down well to his left to smother the spot-kick. The same man atoned for his miss though after 28 minutes when he coolly lobbed the advanced Richardson following an error from Forrest.

Aycliffe drew level on 57 minutes when Dan Mellanby expertly controlled Elliot Gardner's goalbound effort before turning to fire in a from six yards, but Roofing had the last word when Craig Nelson's weakly hit half-volley from 25-yards

bounced up off the turf and over Richardson's head into the net in what was a huge slice of bad luck for Aycliffe.

Aycliffe's home game with Sunderland RCA has been re-arranged for April. The fixture was postponed on Saturday February 27 due to a waterlogged pitch and has been re-scheduled for Wednesday April 14, 7.30pm kick-off at Moore Lane Park.

Aycliffe's next game is at Thornaby on Tuesday (March 23), followed by a home tie against Washington next Saturday (March 27).

### REMAINING FIXTURES

Weds March 24:  
Thornaby (A), 7.30pm  
Sat March 27:  
Washington (H), 3pm  
Sat April 3:  
Northallerton (A), 3pm  
Mon April 5:  
Crook (H), 1pm  
Weds April 7:  
Hebburn (A), 7.30pm  
Weds April 14:  
Sunderland RCA (H), 7.30pm  
Sat April 17:  
Team Northumbria (H), 3pm

WEBSITE:  
www.newtonaycliffefc.co.uk

## RENT BOOKS ARE BETTER

Dear Sir,

Could anyone explain why when Sedgefield Borough Homes took over they replaced rent cards with slips of paper which we have to hand in every week?

I thought we were supposed to be going "green" to help the environment. Instead of each tenant having one rent book containing all the details we end up with 100's of receipts for both rent and Council Tax.

Does anyone prefer this system? I find it a total nuisance and wish they would bring back our rent cards. It would save time and reduce the paper work.

Disgruntled

Name & address supplied

## MEETING OF LIB DEMS

On Tuesday 9th March, Great Aycliffe Area Lib Dems, held their monthly branch meeting in The Cubby. The meeting was very well attended.

Secretary, Paul Thomas, announced their support for the town's Residents Association proposals to the Boundary Commission - so expertly crafted by Arun Chandran - re changes to ward boundaries from 2013, had resulted in these being accepted.

Chairman, Brian Fiske expressed his delight that the Lib Dems, FOCUS newsletter, delivered to most households in what would be 2013, the Aycliffe Central ward - had been such an outstanding success.

Councillor Alison Palmer, stated that it is an excellent way to seek the views of townspeople on a whole range of issues. Discussions took place about further Focus newsletters. The inclusion of a pre-paid envelope had meant that nearly a hundred questionnaires had so far been returned.

Lileen Cuthbertson was delegated to write to all that had responded, thanking them for their involvement. The responses will be analysed and a report sent to Newton News on the findings.

Vice-Chair, Bill Blenkinsopp gave a report on the GARA

Public Meeting, called to discuss the possible closure of Shafto House. He said our, Parliamentary Candidate Alan Thompson, had been in attendance and had spoken on the issues.

This contrasted with the absence of MP, Phil Wilson and many of the local, Labour Party County Councillors. The next meeting of the branch will be held in The Cubby, on Tuesday 13th April, at 7pm.

Derek G Atkinson  
Lib Dem member.

## 100% RECORD MAINTAINED

Newton Aycliffe Youth Under 13s faced their toughest test of the season, running out 2 - 1 winners against a tough Hardwick team to keep their hundred percent record intact.

Aycliffe dominated the early exchanges with skipper Ben Nicholson running the midfield and central defender Thomas Gledhill keeping Hardwick at bay.

Man of the match Connor Halford and Sam Pascoe kept wide players Jake Cane and Ryan Mercer supplied with the ball as Youthy started to take control.

Full backs Billy Bradley and Jordan Howe provided outstanding support to the front men and sweeper James Skerrett ensured keeper Jack Maclaren had another quiet morning. Despite the pressure Hardwick were always in the game but top scorer Dan Kenyon broke the deadlock to fire Aycliffe in front, following neat exchanges with Cane.

Pascoe was replaced by Matthew Dixon and he continued, along with the impressive Halford, to keep Aycliffe pushing forward.

Halford got his reward finishing from close range after some good work from Mercer. James Wren replaced Howe and Aycliffe pushed for that third goal. However it was Hardwick who got the final goal to make it 2 - 1 to Youthy, and keep their title hopes very much alive.

## P.A.C.T. Meeting

*Police & Community Together*

A PACT Meeting will be held in Neville Parade Methodist Church Hall from 6-300pm to 8-00pm on Thursday 1st April, 2010. Anyone with concerns on community issues who wish to talk with PC Alan Thompson and Councillors are warmly invited.

Durham Constabulary are dedicated to making your neighbourhood safer. If you have any issues affecting your quality of life and want to discuss it with your neighbourhood Police Team then get involved in your local PACT Meeting.

This is an informal discussion with the Police and local partners to resolve problems where you live.

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