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Care Home Residents Share Positive Messages



Spirits are high at HC-One's St Clare's Court care home on Central Avenue as residents share rainbows and positive messages with their friends, family and local community during the UK coronavirus outbreak.

To spread happiness and positivity during these uncertain times, residents and team members at St Clare's Court have been busy making rainbows to display in the home's windows. Residents also had their photographs taken with the rainbows to show their loved ones that they are safe and well.

Regular video calls between residents and family members have been arranged and special Easter cards have been sent out to loved ones so that everyone can stay connected during the lockdown. Helen Emerson, St Clare's Court Home Manager said: "It's great to see our team and residents staying positive and reaching out

to the local community during these difficult times." St Clare's Court offers short and long term care packages for older members of the community

needing residential and residential dementia care. The home is also proud to have an impressive 9.9/10 average user rating on the sectors leading comparison website, carehome.co.uk

Aycliffe Boxing Club Funding Appeal

Dear Sir,
Due to the Coronavirus lockdown Aycliffe Boxing Club have been told by England Boxing and the Government to cease all training sessions. Unfortunately the Aycliffe Club, who provide superb training to our community, still need to pay the rent in full each month.

Now as you may already know, Les and Paula run the club at zero profit, in actual fact it probably costs them money from their own pockets to keep the long

running, hard work and dedication going. For 35 years these amazing people have given the people of Newton Aycliffe their time and knowledge of the well loved sport of boxing and I feel it is so sad to think that the potential of permanent closure is a very real possibility.

Les and Paula recently launched a GoFundMe appeal via Facebook, and I am writing to appeal to local residents to donate whatever they can afford to the charity.

To put this into perspective, if every person in Great Aycliffe donated £1 each then Aycliffe Amateur Boxing Club can fight another day and be in a strong position to overcome diversity at this very hard time.

If you would like to donate to this local worthy cause, here is the link to the online donation site: https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/les-gibson?utm_term=ZZzB7rWEy
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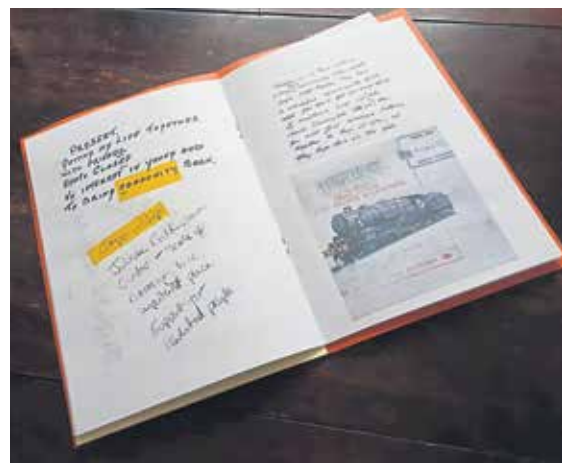
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SHILDON IN MOTION IS GAINING SPEED



Greenfield Arts have been working alongside the Shildon community and regional organisations in an exciting project to realise a new artistic gateway at Shildon Station. The new artwork will be informed by the people of Shildon, the community spirit of the place and its rich and significant heritage.

Creative Director Katy Milne and Artist/Designer Nic Golightly are now busy finalising research and forming the creative designs that reflect the past, present and future of the Shildon community.

Creative Director, Katy Milne states, "although we are all in very extraordinary and challenging times at the moment, this work is still developing, and we are working towards the final outcome that has been informed by the exceptional people from across Shildon. Community is so important, and we intend to recognise and celebrate the Shildon community, it's past, present and future, through the new look and feel of the

Shildon Station platform." Artist Nic Golightly has produced a Zine (magazine) that captures many of the voices heard throughout the project. You can enjoy this and find out more about our designs and the progress the project has made by visiting our blog, <https://bit.ly/2OPiBjB>, or contact Greenfield Arts for further information info@greenfield-arts.co.uk

The project is supported by Northern Heartlands, one of the sixteen Great Place Schemes in England, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England and also by Bishop Rail Community Partnership. Although Greenfield Arts face to face activity in the community is on hold, Greenfield Arts are committed to realising this work for the Shildon community. The project timeline will be extended, due to coronavirus, but will look forward to the time when we can install, share the new work and celebrate this fantastic place and its remarkable community.

THE BEAT GOES ON AS SCHOOL MUSIC SERVICE MOVES ONLINE

Children can continue to experience the joy of music when their regular lessons move online after the Easter holidays.

In normal circumstances, Durham Music Service (DMS) provides small group lessons to more than 4,000 primary and secondary school pupils across County Durham and Darlington per week. This is in addition to whole school sessions, which see 18,000 young musicians hone their skills on a whole range of instruments – from brass and woodwind, to singing and the ukulele.

Government social distancing measures currently mean these sessions can no longer go ahead in schools. However, DMS, which is funded by Durham County Council, Darlington Borough Council and Arts Council England, is determined

to continue sharing the uplifting benefits of music. Over the last few weeks, the team has been working hard to put the technology in place to allow it to offer online lessons to all its regular pupils, and any new students wishing to get involved. Video conference style calls will enable children to continue to learn and socialise with their teacher in their usual groups.

A daily video will also be produced for use in schools educating the children of key workers and will be accessible for youngsters being taught at home. These videos will be based around a daily theme, including: Groovy Moovey Monday; Tiny Tunes Tuesday; Ukulele Fun Wednesday; Singalong Thursday; and Rockin' Rhythm Friday. But the musical mischief does not stop there.



The DMS team is also busy creating fun-filled music videos, which it is uploading on YouTube and sharing on social media under the hashtag #DMShomesessions. It is encouraging families and individuals to capture and share their own musical moments using the hashtag to inspire and bring cheer to even more people.

Mike Summers, manager of DMS, said: "In times of uncertainty, it is important to help create a sense of normality for children, which is why we were determined to continue to deliver our music lessons in a safe and accessible way.

"Thanks to technology, our teachers can continue to connect with their pupils, allowing the children to continue their musical education, while experiencing the sense of joy creativity evokes.

"Face-to-face contact like this is so important when youngsters are not able to see their friends or socialise outside of the home."

Cllr Olwyn Gunn, Cabinet member for children and young people's services at Durham County Council, said: "Michael and the team have done such a fantastic job at moving DMS online in just a few weeks.

"Singing and playing a musical instrument can do wonders for our wellbeing and it is especially beneficial for children. It is more important than ever that we look after our mental health and I am delighted youngsters in County Durham and Darlington can continue to enjoy their music lessons while social distancing.

"I would encourage everyone to join in the fun and share their musical adventures using the #DMShomesessions hashtag. I can't wait to see and hear what everyone has been up to."

DMS will launch the online sessions after the Easter holiday and has written to schools and the parents and carers of children currently receiving tuition. Any parents who have not received an email can also fill in a form online at: www.durhammusic.org.uk/news/email-to-parents-and-carers

For more information about DMS and how to get involved in #DMShomesessions visit www.durhammusic.org.uk or follow @Durhammusiconline on Facebook, @TrustDurham on Twitter and Durham Music on YouTube.

Preparation for Greenfield's Annual Production



Students from Greenfield Community College have been rehearsing for their now infamous Performing Arts annual production. Due to unprecedented circumstances the show is postponed but will still take place at a later date. This year 'Grease' is the word, the popular film and musical is sure to attract a keen audience from all generations. Greenfield staff and students have been entertaining the community with a stream of wonderful interpretations of musical classics over the years. Students this year will have a lot to live up to but have already been working hard to bring about a wonderful evening of live music and performance so that audiences can enjoy a rendition of this Broadway hit.

Students at Greenfield are being supported to learn from home across a range of subjects and many of those involved in the Performing

Arts production will have an opportunity to continue honing their skills and learning lines in preparation for the performance.

"We are really pleased that students are working hard and finding some time to continue to prepare for the show. It's going to be a night to celebrate the incredible skill and ability of our young people." Performing Arts Greenfield Community College is a specialist Arts and Science school and is committed to offering valuable opportunities to students as part of their extended learning programme to encourage self-led learning and enable students to achieve their full potential.

If you would like to know more about the many resources available please contact the school via the school email contact@greenfieldschool.net or visit the website www.greenfieldschool.net for more information.

BEING NEIGHBOURLY

Over the coming weeks/months more and more residents will become self-isolated. If you are aware of a neighbour who finds themselves in this predicament, you can still help. By filling in the form below and posting through their letter box you are showing your willingness to assist them. By working together we can help our neighbours, especially those in our area who are most vulnerable.

Hello! If you are self-isolating, I can help

My name is

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- 11.30am - Jenna Highfield
- 12pm - Aycliffe Radio
- 12.30pm - Jenna Highfield
- 1pm - Mayor Arrives + Piper
- 1.15pm - Aycliffe Radio
- 1.30pm - 1407 Cadets Drill
- 2pm - Jenna Highfield
- 2.30pm - Aycliffe Radio
- 3pm - Piper Plays "Battle Cry"
- 3.15pm - Jenna Highfield
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New Opportunities in County Durham Care Sector

New job opportunities are being created in County Durham's adult social care sector as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

An online recruitment and training programme has been launched by the County Durham Care Academy in response to the pressures placed on the sector by COVID-19.

There are three key roles, including care workers, kitchen assistants and domestic assistants being recruited as part of the campaign.

The academy, which was set up by Durham County Council, is also offering remote training and development to provide potential new staff with the skills they will need to access opportunities in the sector.

These are available to anyone wishing to work in adult social care, including those without prior experience.

Job opportunities, online training modules and an online application form can be accessed on the Care Academy website www.durham.gov.uk/careacademy

The academy will then be able to match candidates' skills against a range of potential vacancies, both within the county council and the county's independent sector providers, once the online form has been completed.

There are more than 100 independent sector care providers in County Durham, supporting adults with social and physical activities including household tasks, personal care and attending appointments.

Cllr Lucy Hovvels MBE, Cabinet member for adult and health services, said: "Social care is the second largest employer in County Durham and it is vital that we work closely with our providers to ensure that they are supported effectively, especially during the extreme challenges that are arising because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are already being proactive in finding out what gaps there are in the workforce and they're being addressed by this campaign from our care academy.

These online training courses and advice will be extremely valuable in allowing us to improve care across County Durham in these uncertain times.

"I would also encourage people who aren't currently working in the care sector to consider upskilling and applying for one of these roles. Some people may be feeling a lack of security in their current role because of the impact of Coronavirus, or would like to support the care sector at this time, and they could find these courses and roles very rewarding."

For more details on each of the three roles and their requirements, you can also visit: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/careacademyrecruitment>

Children's Book by Local Artist

Dear Sir,
My name is Jilly and I am an Artist and Learning Officer (at Auckland Castle, Bishop) but live in Newton Aycliffe. I am not an Author but whilst in isolation I have written a book inspired by my daughter and needing to explain the virus to her and why we are all inside. It is available on Amazon and free from my website.

I hope it will help some parents and children to enjoy it (the cost from Amazon was the lowest I could put and any profits will go to charity - my daughters choice!)

I thought it might brighten the gloomy news currently around!

Website: <https://jilly-keast.wixsite.com/jillianjohnstonarts>

Amazon link: https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B086V118D6/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=Jillian+johnston&qid=1586295724&s=books&sr=1-4
Jillian Johnston

Explaining Coronavirus to the Youth of Britain

A young persons' guide to keeping safe during the COVID-19 pandemic has been launched by a leading health and social care organisation, Turning Point. The digital leaflet aimed at under-18's offers expert support and advice. With easy to read information about Coronavirus, social distancing advice in line with government guidelines and their own in-house expertise.

The social enterprise, which supports thousands of young people in their substance misuse and sexual health services, highlights the strain having whole families isolating together may have, particularly on young people.

Jane Wright, head of young people's services, said: "Being cooped up with your family in the house can naturally be a bit challenging and frustrating for everyone. However if you feel unsafe at home and are worried you or someone else may get hurt it's important to talk to someone you trust"

"If you are separated from your boyfriend or girlfriend during the isolation period there are lots of ways to connect with them at a distance. Be aware of Sexting and don't feel pressured by anyone to share images of yourself. It's illegal for U18's to share or receive images."

The substance misuse charity advises young people to be aware on the strain on the NHS during the COVID-19 crisis, meaning less resources are available to help during an overdose or needing emergency contraception.

The digital leaflet recommends making the most of all digital platforms available to keep up friendships, for example streaming a live concert on Facebook live or using the party feature on Netflix.

The digital leaflet has already been successfully distributed to some schools and colleges across Britain.

Visors for Victory!

UTC South Durham Makes PPE for NHS

UTC South Durham staff are working together to create much needed PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) visors for NHS trusts, district nursing teams, GP surgeries, and care homes throughout the North East region. The school's initiative, known as Visors for Victory, has already produced 200 visors and is currently sourcing more material to continue production.

200 visors have already been distributed, including to district nurses at University Health Centre, Durham, recently set-up Hot Hubs in Darlington and Middleton-in-Teesdale, two GP surgeries, and two care and domiciliary organisations.

The UTC team, led by Vice Principal Jamie Smith, are making use of the engineering facilities on site and creating protective visors using a laser cutter. UTC staff have volunteered to help with production, delivery, and purchasing materials.

Speaking about making the visors, Jamie Smith said: "After hearing about the unavailability of PPE for our health workers and seeing the efforts of other UTCs across the country, we decided to support healthcare providers by making visors. The NHS and other healthcare providers are helping so many people during this incredibly difficult time, and we wanted to give something back to try and keep our healthcare heroes safe."

"The crisis has also shown how much we need people with STEM skills, particularly healthcare workers, engineers and technologists - those UTC is designed to support. It's been a privilege to use my engineering and design skills to develop these visors, and to make and distribute them with the committed team at UTC."

Over the coming weeks,



small teams will be working to produce the visors whilst following social distancing guidelines. UTC South Durham has also donated masks, gloves and goggles to the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust. UTC students are also getting involved in the initiative, with Sixth Form student Connor Lowrie donating 20 visors he had made using his 3D printer at home.

UTC are fundraising via Just Giving to help with the costs of materials for the visors. Teacher Andy Blackett has also organised a National Three Peaks Stair Climbing Challenge, which challenges individuals or teams of up to six people to climb the combined height of Ben Nevis, Snowdon and Scafell Pike in their own homes on Monday 13th April. More information can be found on UTC's website: utcsouthdurham.org/visors-for-victory/how-you-can-help.

Based in Newton Aycliffe, UTC South Durham is a

STEM focused school for 14-19 year olds, specialising in engineering and advanced manufacturing. UTC is one of 20 schools within the UTC (University Technical Colleges) network which are supporting the NHS by making masks and other protective equipment using 3D printers.

Photo: South Durham Nurses at University Health Centre, Durham wearing the visors made by UTC South Durham.

HAVE YOU GOT NEWS FOR US?

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Paul Howell, Member of Parliament for Sedgefield

Along with many others on Thursday evening I went out to clap for our NHS and Care workers and on Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock I also went out to clap for Boris, this made me think more about the personal effects on so many people. I first thought of his partner Carrie and how she must be feeling both Boris and her unborn child. There are of course many other people both local to us and throughout the world who are feeling the consequences of this virus at a very personal level. It is all too easy for us just to think in terms of the numbers we see in the daily briefings. Seeing someone like Boris affected enough for, at the time of writing, for him to have just spent a second night in intensive care shows how indiscriminate this virus is. Prior to being admitted Boris would have been seen as a healthy person and his admittance to hospital shows that this is not just something that affects the elderly or people with underlying health problems it has the potential to affect us all.

That is why we must follow the instructions on social distancing and stay two metres apart from each other. It is why we should wash our hands regularly for at least 20 seconds. It is why we should stay at home unless we are taking daily exercise, going for food going for medical supplies or going to work.

The message remains stay at home stay safe and protect our NHS.

This column originated for me to keep you informed about my Parliamentary

activity and outside of the coronavirus there have actually been other significant happenings this week. As you will probably have seen we now have a new leadership of the Labour Party through Sir Kier Starmer who has now appointed his own shadow cabinet. One of the new members of this shadow cabinet is Rachel Reeves. Rachel used to chair the select committee for BEIS (business, energy and industrial strategy), which as I have told you previously I am a member of. I now await to see who will replace Rachel in the chair but it will be a Labour member as the select committees chairs are specifically allocated to each party.

Moving on to more local politics I would like to applaud Durham and Darlington Councils for their efforts in setting up the local help systems, call them on 03000 260 260 (Durham) and 01325 405000 (Darlington) if you need anything and they have both also been excellent at distributing funds to businesses, indeed Durham are in the top three counties in the country for funds issued.

I also thank each and everyone of you that has volunteered either to organisations or simply to help your extended family or neighbours or even just to do something to put a smile on someone else's face, it all helps.

So to finish this week, please stay at home, stay safe and protect our NHS.

Paul Howell
Member of Parliament
for Sedgefield

Maintaining Support to Unemployed and Young People

A North East council is continuing to provide employment and skills training during the Coronavirus pandemic. Durham County Council is offering support to unemployed residents and young people remotely, as it adapts services to comply with government guidance aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19.

The council's DurhamWorks, Adult Learning and Skills Service and Employability Durham teams have ceased all face to face services until further notice but are continuing to work remotely and providing support via phone, text, email, Facebook and online chats.

- County residents aged 16 to 24 who are unemployed can get information, support and advice on job and apprenticeship opportunities, and courses and training by chatting online to a member of the Durham Works team and/or visiting <https://www.facebook.com/durhamworks/> or <https://durhamworks.info/contact-us>

- People aged 25 and over who are unemployed and living in the county can still seek help and support to get back into work or start their own business through Employability Durham. To speak to the team email employability@durham.gov.uk or visit <http://www.durham.gov.uk/employability> or <https://www.facebook.com/Employability-Durham-2338781619671496/>
- County residents aged 16 and over who are interested in gaining skills and qualifications and/or personal development can access a range of online, distance learning courses offered by the Adult Learning and Skills Service. To find out more phone 03000 266115, email alss@durham.gov.uk or visit www.durham.gov.uk/adultlearning

Meanwhile the council is encouraging people who may be victims of domestic abuse to seek support. Harbour's refuges are still open for victims and providing support in the following forms:

- Refuge accommodation and support
- Video support
- WhatsApp messaging
- Telephone calls
- Email support

Harbour can be contacted by calling 03000 20 25 25

emailing: clientservice@myharbour.org.uk

or visiting: <https://www.myharbour.org.uk>

People in an abusive situation can also contact police without speaking. To do so they should:

- Ring 999
- Listen to the questions from the operator and respond by coughing or tapping the handset if they can
- If prompted they should dial 55 – letting the operator know they are in an emergency situation and to put the call through to police.

Meanwhile, the council's street lighting team is running a limited service but continuing to respond to emergency call outs and repairing single lights where it is possible and safe to do so.

Cllr Olwyn Gunn, the council's Cabinet member for children and young people's services, said: "We are doing everything we can to ensure the essential services our residents rely on are effected as little as possible in these very difficult times. Teams like DurhamWorks, the Adult Learning and Skills Service and Employability Durham are rightly heeding government guidance and not offering their usual face to face service but the vital support they provide can still be accessed remotely and we would encourage anyone needing their help to get in touch."

HELPLINE FOR CANCER PATIENTS

A helpline dedicated to offering support and advice to patients who are undergoing cancer care and treatment has been set up by the cancer care team at County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust.

Macmillan Lead Cancer Nurse, Clare Doney, said, "At this unprecedented time, we wanted to ensure that cancer patients have a point of contact, a number to ring if they have questions - about non-urgent clinical concerns, clinics or investigations, and treatment. They may also need advice about accessing financial support or want to talk about their emotional wellbeing. Undergoing cancer treatment can be complex and worrying. Under the current circumstances, we really wanted to be here for our cancer patients – in a practical way."

"We set up the helpline in less than a week and it went live on Monday 6th April."

"Calls will be answered by our Cancer Pathway Navigators and Cancer Care Coordinators who will deal with all queries and signpost patients to other support services where required. They are delighted to be involved and look forward to supporting our patients."

The helpline will be open 9am-5pm Monday to Friday or a message can be left out of hours. Ring 01207 594466. It's an additional line of support and patients can also continue to contact their clinical nurse specialist or email: cddft.cancerhelpline@nhs.net

Don't forget our local Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group, contact Allison on 07762 258696.

POLICE RECRUITS HIT THE BEAT

It's the final few weeks of training for our newest recruits who are eager to get started.

The latest 24-strong cohort have been completing their final sessions from home in recent weeks and using technology to keep in touch with trainers.

The group will finish on April 24 before hitting the streets in their designated areas on May 4.

PCs Abbie Wallace and Thomas James were snapped by trainer PC Jeffrey Summerhill earlier today.

The next cohorts of 20 PCSOs and 24 PCs are due to arrive at our training centre, in Meadowfield,

on April 20 and April 27 respectively.

The recruits will be split into smaller groups so social distancing measures can be adhered to.

Police skills trainer, Brian Maudling, said: "Our new recruits will be a great addition to our team and we are really looking forward to having them embark on their new careers as PCs."

"It will definitely be an unusual situation for them to begin in such unprecedented times but as always, our officers are ready to adapt and take on new challenges to keep the communities they serve safe."



Abbie Wallace



Thomas James

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101

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WHEN SHOULD I CALL 101?

To report less urgent crime or disorder and for general police enquiries, for example:

- if your car has been stolen;
- if your property has been damaged;
- when you suspect drug use or dealing;
- to report a minor traffic collision;
- to give information about crime in your area;
- or
- if you would like to speak to your local police officer

READERS' PHOTOGRAPHS



My three year old neighbour, Bradley Elwood, painted this picture for us to place in our window. He also did one for the house opposite. I thought this was such a considerate and kind act by a three year old it deserved to be published.

Thank you, Ian J. McDonald

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RESIDENTS ASKED TO STAY AT HOME TO SAVE LIVES OVER EASTER WEEKEND

Residents in County Durham are being reminded about the importance of staying at home during the Coronavirus outbreak.

With the Easter bank holiday fast approaching, Durham County Council is asking residents to continue to stay at home and only leave the house for essential reasons outlined by the government in order to save lives.

These essential reasons are shopping for basic necessities, which should be done as infrequently as possible, one form of exercise per day, any medical need, or to travel for work purposes but only when this cannot be done from home.

Staying at home as much as possible, especially during the Easter break, is vital to stopping further spread of Coronavirus and protecting members of the community who are at risk. Those who do not show any symptoms can still carry and spread the virus to others.

However, staying at home does not mean the holiday break cannot be enjoyed. The council is offering a number of activities and services to keep families

entertained together during the stay at home period, including a wide range of online education and leisure activities for children.

The council is also encouraging residents to take care of their mental health during the stay at home period. On its website, the council has prepared a dedicated page of advice and features five top tips for mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak. This includes limiting news reading and seeking information from reputable sources, keeping in touch with friends, family and colleagues, ensuring to eat and exercise well, maintaining a healthy work from home routine, and focusing on what you can control.

A full list of fun resources, activities, as well as information and advice on staying at home, can be found online at www.durham.gov.uk/stayhomesavelives

Popular attractions, such as Bowes Museum, Raby Castle and museums under The Auckland Project, are offering a 'museums at home' experience. At-



home visitors can explore collections online, listen to oral histories, bake with traditional Easter recipes, as well access a number of resources for families including craft packs and learning materials.

Meanwhile, Durham Cathedral is offering virtual services which are being live streamed daily for morning and evening prayer. The cathedral is providing links to Church of England worship and prayer, as well as downloadable activity resources for children.

Visit County Durham is also hosting a number of online Easter activities including an online egg hunt, where families can follow the clues and discover the highlights of

County Durham. They will also be providing a number of Easter activity content, including colouring sheets of Durham's picturesque attractions, trivia games and Easter baking. All content, and information about virtual services and museum tours can be accessed at www.thisisdurham.com/easter

Children will be able to enjoy County Durham library service's popular storytelling sessions. A series of audio recordings of stories and poems will be broadcasted from the council's YouTube channel, starting from Thursday 9 April at 2pm, with a performance of Chicken Licken. Broadcasts will run weekly until 30 April and can be watched online at www.durham.gov.uk/youtubelibraryonline

Wharton and Hardwick Parks will be hosting a Bunny Bop on Saturday, 11 April, in conjunction with children's entertainer Nikki Noo Noo through Facebook Live. The free sessions will be at 10am for Hardwick Park and 2pm for Wharton Park, which can be accessed by joining the Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/ParksBunnyBop/

While the stay at home period is a good opportunity for residents to have a clear-out, or to do some DIY or gardening, the council is also reminding residents that all Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) are closed under government guidance.

To keep streets clean and safe during this time, and to assist bin crews who are working to prioritise and maintain general waste, the council is asking residents to consider postponing home projects. Where this is not reasonable, residents are being asked to store unwanted items indoors, or consider home composting garden waste, until HWRCs can be reopened and waste can be disposed of appropriately.

There will be no change to bin collections over Easter or during the Bank Holiday and residents are reminded to put their bin out as normal. Bins should be placed at the kerbside by 7am on their usual collection day. To find out your collection day, enter your postcode at My Durham at www.durham.gov.uk

gov.uk

Cllr Lucy Hovvels MBE, Cabinet member for adult and health services, said: "Now more than ever, particularly when people may wish to spend the Easter break outdoors, it is vital that every resident keeps following government guidelines and stays at home to stop the spread of the virus and save lives.

"Even with the temptation of nice weather, it is

important that we all continue to play a part in helping to prevent the spread of Coronavirus and protect those in our community who are vulnerable and at risk.

"There are still plenty of exciting things to do to keep yourself and your family entertained while staying at home during the Easter period, and we are working hard to ensure services are maintained and our residents are supported."

Durham Works Employability Team

The DurhamWorks Employability Team at CACD continue to offer their support to those young people aged 16-24 in County Durham who are seeking employment, education or training.

Despite not being able to run their very popular courses during this period, our highly skilled and experienced team are maintaining contact with young people by phone, email or social media. They are providing their trademark friendly help and useful information, focussing on staying positive, healthy and motivated, setting personal targets such as creating or improving their CV, applying for employment or seeking out volunteering opportunities.

If you or someone you know would benefit from our help please contact Eve Galloway in the first instance on 07876 346 047 or email Eve.galloway@citizensadvicecd.org.uk

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SPEAK UP



That is the message of the Crimestoppers which has launched a new campaign today to help victims of domestic abuse during Coronavirus.

We are backing the charity's campaign which calls for people who are aware of abuse across the North East to tell local organisations.

Domestic abuse can be physical, psychological, emotional, sexual or financial and affects one in four women and one in six men during their lifetime.

The charity estimates that a typical victim endures up to 35 assaults before speaking up, and in some cases results in death.

It says neighbours, family and friends may be suspicious, but are reluctant to get involved because of embarrassment, split loyalties or fear of revenge.

As a force, we join them in reassuring people that they can always report their concerns anonymously and our officers will always respond to reports despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Ruth McNee, North East Regional Manager at the charity Crimestoppers, said: "With the Covid-19 pandemic forcing people to stay in their homes, our fear is that rates of domestic violence will rise.

"It's shocking to think that even in normal times, two women a week are killed by

a former or current partner. This is a serious crime that leaves victims feeling trapped, alone and powerless. They are often too scared or vulnerable to seek help or speak out.

"To be isolated during this lockdown in an abusive household must be terrifying, and you must feel so alone, that there is no one to help you. This is where we as a community can step forward. Often in cases of domestic abuse, the community knows something, but struggles to know what to do to help."

Superintendent Dave Ashton, of Durham Constabulary's Safeguarding Unit, said: "Whilst following the government's advice to stay at home will save lives, for some home is not a safe place and we recognise that restrictions will be causing worry for many victims of domestic abuse.

"That's why it is so important to get this message out that we continue to be here for all vulnerable people and if you feel you are in immediate risk of danger, please call 999 and we will come to your aid."

If you can't speak then you should use the silent solutions service by dialling 999 and press 55. Crimestoppers is open 24/7 and can be contacted for free by calling 0800-555111.

You can also pass on information online at crimestopper-uk.org

CITIZENS ADVICE COUNTY DURHAM

Citizens Advice provides advice on a range of issues – including things that are going to be on a lot of people's minds as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic such as benefits, statutory sick pay, housing and debt. Citizens Advice County Durham has had to take measures to protect the health and wellbeing of volunteers, clients and staff but is still able to provide advice, even during isolation.

Stuart Dexter, Citizens Advice County Durham, Chief Officer said: "Due to Covid 19 we have had to temporarily close our face-to-face advice services to be able to protect our staff, volunteers and clients - however we have worked hard to ensure that we have telephone support in place to be able to continue to answer your questions and provide you with the advice that you need."

"At this time our services are needed more than ever and we have put extra resources in place to cover the additional telephone demand that we expect to see over the coming weeks. All of our amazing

staff and volunteers are working very hard to answer your calls but, please do bear with us if waiting times are a little longer than normal."

Information is also available via the Citizens Advice County Durham website, where they will be providing regular service updates.

Their web address is <https://www.citizensadvicecd.org.uk> and they can be contacted by telephone in the following ways:

Adviceline:
0300 330 9027

Monday to Friday
10.00am-4.00pm

Debt Adviceline:
0300 323 2000

Monday to Friday
9.00am-1.00pm

Consumer Helpline:
0808 223 1133

Monday to Friday
9.00am-5.00pm

Universal Credit New

Claims Free Helpline:
0800 144 8 444

Monday to Friday
8.00am-6.00pm

(if you have received your first Universal Credit payment then please call our Adviceline).

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Chancellor announced a series of measures to support businesses and their employees. One of those measures is the CJRS, that allows employers to claim 80% of the wages of staff (up to a maximum of £2,500 per employee) that they have furloughed (been put on temporary leave).

HMRC is working at pace to deliver the service that will allow businesses to make a claim. Businesses, and agents that are authorised to act on behalf of clients for PAYE

matters, will be able to claim. However, file only agents, including Payroll Bureaus, will not be able access the service due to data protection reasons.

File only agents

If you are a file only agent, we still need your support. You will need to help your clients, as you might hold information that they need to make their claim. Businesses will need the following information on each of their furloughed employees:

- National Insurance number
- salary, National Insurance and pension contribution information that allows business to calculate the claim amount.

Service launch

We are ready to launch on 20 April. This will be made public shortly, at which point we will be contacting businesses to advise them what they need to do. At this point we would welcome you also contacting your clients and offering yourselves as vital support during this process, either directly, if authorised, or indirectly if you are a file only agent.

We are expecting phone demand to be beyond our capacity to offer a normal service. Therefore, the service is designed to be self-serve with guidance in place. Again, your support in helping us achieve this is called on.

Find out more

The latest guidance on CJRS can be found on GOV.UK by searching for 'Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme'. HMRC will also be providing you with further information on our support for businesses and workers over the coming weeks, including more detail on the Coronavirus Self Employment Income Support Scheme.

Support for Homeless, Landlords & Tenants Continues During Outbreak

Residents in County Durham are being reassured they can still receive housing advice and support during the Coronavirus outbreak.

Durham County Council's Housing Solutions continue to deliver advice and assistance, as well as the statutory homelessness duty, to ensure support is provided to those who are homeless, in social housing, or in the private rented sector.

Following national government guidance, the Housing Solutions teams are continuing to support the county's residents throughout this uncertain time.

Whilst housing advice is primarily being delivered through telephone or email, the teams continue to engage with rough sleepers face-to-face, while following social distancing guidelines, and are offering advice, support and sourcing accommodation.

The teams have recently received food donations from food retailer Greggs whilst Tesco, in Durham Market Place, has agreed for officers to visit daily to get a selection of reduced-price sandwiches to hand out to anyone sleeping rough at this time.

Over the last two weeks, the teams have also continued to carry out daily checks on those identified as sleeping rough in the county and are working with accommodation providers to secure suitable housing, including securing emergency places for those needing to self-isolate.

To protect both renters and landlords in private or social accommodation sectors, the government announced a package of supportive measures. The council has a dedicated team within Housing Solutions who are working closely with private landlords and their tenants to assist and provide support with these measures.

As part of this announcement, a three-month mortgage payment



holiday will be extended to landlords whose tenants are experiencing financial difficulties due to coronavirus. This will alleviate the pressure on landlords, who will be concerned about meeting mortgage payments themselves, and will mean no unnecessary pressure is put on their tenants as a result.

In addition, emergency legislation has been taken forward so that landlords will not be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least a three-month period. As a result of these measures, no renters in private or social accommodation need to be concerned about the threat of eviction.

Similarly, the government has announced there will be no new evictions for anyone in the social housing sector, including those who cannot pay their rent for financial reasons.

Durham Key Options (DKO) has sent a message to all active applicants on the housing register informing them of any changes to delivery across the partnership as a result of government guidelines. The council is working closely with DKO and private landlords throughout the region to source accommodation for urgent cases.

Housing Providers will continue to operate under their own individual business continuity plans in terms of allocating, advertising and providing advice and support. Customers should contact their local provider for further information and advice.

Cllr Kevin Shaw, Cabinet member for strategic housing and assets at Durham County Council, said: "I want to assure residents that our Housing Solutions team continue to work tirelessly during the Coronavirus pandemic to provide information, advice, guidance and support to residents, partners and landlords.

"Most importantly, whilst the new initiatives introduced by government go some way to help prevent evictions and homelessness during these unprecedented times, further action is needed, and this should include increased benefit levels and rent relief."

For further information or to receive housing support, visit www.durham.gov.uk/covid19housing

Those who have concerns about a rough sleeper are encouraged to report to the council's outreach team, who will make contact and offer support. This can be done online at www.streetlink.org.uk

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Xcel Online Services

As a Church we are continuing to connect with our church members and the community through a regular online schedule - mostly through Instagram - if you look at our account you will see the schedule which is posted every Sunday afternoon for the week ahead.

Online Sunday Service 10.30am

YouTube
(look for Xcel Church)

8.30am

Devotionals every Monday, Wednesday and Friday (live on Instagram).

6.00pm

Online Prayer every Tuesday (Xcel Church Instagram)

6.30pm

Let's Talk (Ps Julian with guests live on his Instagram).

7.30pm

Planet Youth Live

(on Planet Youth Live Instagram).

We are also continuing to take donations for our Foodbank and provide basic food parcels for those in need at this time.

Donations to the Foodbank are accepted on a Thursday morning between 9am and 10am at the Xcel Centre.

Our preferred method of request for help with a Food parcel is through local agencies or social workers who work with the most vulnerable to ensure we are helping those most in need. They should contact us via info@xcelchurch.com - People can also ring Xcel on 01325 329500 between 10am - 4pm. Messages are being picked up and dealt with appropriately.

It should be noted that we provide a food parcel with some basic food items, with no fresh items included at this time.

An Easter Message

I'm sure you've seen the sign 'please leave this place as you find it'.

The people who put up the sign are asking that we clean up after ourselves, that if we make a mess, that we return things to the way we found it.

(I'm hoping for that in my house in lockdown as we all take turns to do the dishes and the meals in lockdown!) Imagine though, if we went even better than that...?!

How about making things better than how we find things.

Someone once said that life is 'to live, to love, and to leave a legacy'.

A legacy is a gift, and we are all called to make our mark on the world, for good, by leaving every situation, every environment, every conversation better than how it was when we arrived.

What if we all did that? Especially in this season, when we are all doing our best to fight this invisible virus and look out for one another.

I'm hearing and seeing so many stories of acts of kindness in this season, and every act leaves a mark for good.

That's what our wonderful NHS workers, emergency service personnel, and so many people are doing in this challenging time, and can I say thank you to every one who is doing their bit to make everything better, you are amazing!

Two thousand years ago, a man lived, who left everyone

better, every person that he met, he brought life and hope and pointed them to a relationship with purpose with the one who has made us.

This Easter weekend, that seems different to any other that we have experienced, can I encourage us to be inspired by Jesus of Nazareth, to read his words, check out his claims and the way that he left the world better than how he found it in such a profound way.

"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or

else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice". CS Lewis, Mere Christianity.

In uncertain times, when it seems that we can't even plan for the future with any certainty, I encourage you to look to Jesus of Nazareth for hope and for answers as billions across the earth have found life in him.

"I trust Jesus with all my tomorrows, knowing that he will solve the mystery of life beyond the grave". Dr Billy Graham.

I wish everyone a peaceful Easter and that you stay safe and well.

Let's leave everything better,
John Greenow
Lead Pastor, Xcel Church

Holy Week & Easter Reflection

There was life before Covid-19 and life after it. I was recently reading an article, in which a professor of political science, with a wealth of experience of crises around the world, commented that after something as globally significant as Covid-19; many things will not be the same again.

This comment felt uncomfortable and yet had about it a profound truth. While we experience the strangeness and frustration of being shut in, unable to meet and relax with family and friends, unable to engage in the social interaction that is a part of life, we look forward to the day when all this will end and we can get back to normal. Each year during Holy Week, Christians recall that for the first followers of Jesus, this was a period of mounting uncertainty. Jesus' confrontational relationship with the Temple authorities was increasing. The conversations between Jesus and his friends were becoming more unsettling. There was a dread feeling that all this was leading to a dangerous climax, and so it did. On the day we call Good Friday, in the early hours, Jesus was arrested by the Temple guards and taken away to be interrogated. In the hours that followed Jesus was tortured and abused, and finally condemned to die and was crucified.

With these biblical events in mind, I wonder about the low points in our lives: when the people we love die, and the experience of bereavement and loss finds no comfort. The times we betray people, and in fear we desert those who need us. When we don't have the answers, we are looking for. When we find ourselves confined and alone and everything is out of control - No light in our darkness and no hope for the future.

In the Christian calendar, the light of Easter is immensely significant, because it is inextricably linked to the darkness of Good Friday. To a group of frightened isolated people, who have locked themselves in a room, there comes a transforming revelation; they are not alone. Into their darkness comes the light of forgiveness and compassion, peace and grace, mercy and love. This Easter, whatever your understanding of the risen Jesus, what we find in him is the offer of something new. Not a return to the way things were, but rather the offer of new life and hope for the future.

Rev. Andy Bryer,
Methodist Minister.

Simply the Best!

"Simply the best, better than all the rest" sang out Tina Turner as we entered the crematorium at the funeral service of a very lovely lady today. She was just a very lovely lady, fun, lively, full of character and full of love; and love is what it's all about.

We have seen simply the best in recent weeks in our community in the face of the pandemic. A container of milk and box of eggs left at the gate of a neighbour, bins put out, gifts left for the binmen; medicines collected, shopping lists met and goods left on the path. I read of all of the wonderful stuff going on in our community via social media Facebook Groups; people watching out for one another, sharing good stuff, making us smile. Certainly our church community have tried their best, the task shared amongst us all, key people taking up leadership roles and working through a network of people to keep us all connected. Of course, the post has been invaluable, telephone calls, texts, to keep our lovely older members connected, and e-mail and our online presence has served well as a connection for relationships and worship. The Foodbank volunteers have been keeping this important support open throughout, with care for all. Working alongside Livin' volunteers many food parcels have been sent out to vulnerable people in need. This pandemic has brought out the best in many of our community.

The best, and sadly sometimes the worst, even though sometimes it has been understandable. The panic buying and hoarding that has left shelves empty for the older people who haven't got cars and the finances to bulk buy and for the Health Workers who can't get to those shops so easily. The worst seen in the scenes of abuse on staff doing their best in the shops. The worst in the crowds of young people who know they should not be gathering; they could

possibly fight off the virus, the people they spread it to might not. The worst and the best... As we prepare to celebrate Easter in a way we have never before, I am aware that the worst and the best has always been there in people's responses to crises. The people in Jerusalem, excited to receive Jesus into their city hail Him as King, put palm leaves and cloaks on the road, a royal reception; within a week they are shouting "Crucify Him!". The best and the worst. Of course, the best of all is love; and with love God responded. In Jesus He took our worst upon Himself, He was crucified and paid the price for all we do wrong. On the third day, innocent, (He had done nothing wrong, so death had no hold on Him), He rose to new life, a life He shares with those who acknowledges their worst and accepts His forgiveness and love for them, His best. It all boils down to love, and God is love, His is the best. He took our worst and gave us His best, Easter is the best time to realise this truth and accept it for yourself.

Where is God's love for those gasping for breath, young and old on ICU? He is with the suffering (He knows something about that), He is working in every sacrificial act made for the benefit of others (He knows something about that too). As this Easter is celebrated like no other Easter before, one solid unchangeable truth remains, God loves us, He forgives us and welcomes us as His children. He wants the best for us and if we welcome Him into our hearts His love that overcame death will never ever leave us.

Whatever is to come to us, we will remain safe in God's keeping love forever and a day; and that is simply the best.

Visit the 'Parish of Great Aycliffe' Facebook page or our website: parishofgreataycliffe.co.uk
With love from
Rev. Ann Anderson
Team Rector of the Parish of Great Aycliffe



Programme Schedule

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9-10am	Eurovision Show	Simon Harding
10-12am	Moderation	Jack & Garvey
12-2pm	Kitchen Floorfillers	Cazbo Jangles
2-4pm	Weekly Edition	Paul Baker
4-6pm	Northern & Classic Soul (R)	Kevin Sowerby
6-8pm	Evening Session	JimJams
8-9pm	Rock the House	Carl Booth
9-10pm	Retro Trance Mix	OZ-DJ
10-12am	Street 'n' Drum 'n' Bass	MC Supa

SUNDAY

9-10am	Church Service	Xcel Centre
10-11am	Yesterdays Music Today Sponsored by MV Mobility	Alan Brown
11-12pm	Mystery Year	Paul Baker
12-2pm	Country & Americana Show	David Ringer
2-4pm	Bear Blues Show	Colin & Monica
4-6pm	Folk/Celtic/Rock Show	Steve & Col
6-7.30pm	Jazz Time	Mike Dixon
7.30-8pm	High School Musical	Woodham Aca.
8-10pm	The Rock Show	CAD
10-12am	Paul's Down Time	Paul Kjenstad

MONDAY

10-12am	Golden Years	Paul Baker
12-1pm	A to Z of Pop	Richard Smith
1-3pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker
6-7pm	60s Show	Karl Simons
7-8pm	70s Show	Peter Rush
8-9pm	80s Show	Gary Avery
9-10pm	90s Show	Paul Baker
10-11pm	00s Show	Producer Dan
11-12am	Teens Show	Andy Fittes

TUESDAY

10-12am	Golden Years	Paul Baker
12-1pm	A to Z of Pop	Richard Smith
1-3pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker
6-7pm	All About the 60s	Honest John
7.30-9.30pm	Northern & Classic Soul	Kevin Sowerby

WEDNESDAY

10-12am	Golden Years	Paul Baker
12-1pm	A to Z of Pop	Richard Smith
1-3pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker
8-10pm	Alternative Aycliffe	Gaz n Alby

THURSDAY

10-12am	Golden Years	Paul Baker
12-1pm	A to Z of Pop	Richard Smith
1-3pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker
6-8pm	The List	Colin McNeillie
8-10pm	BeatRoote	Graeme Roote

FRIDAY

10-12am	Golden Years	Paul Baker
12-1pm	A to Z of Pop	Richard Smith
1-3pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker
6-8pm	Techno Trance Mix	PVR Studios
8-10pm	Guest Presenter Session	
17th April - 10-12am	Nathan Abbott - 90s Classix Alternative Aycliffe (R)	Gaz n Alby

**Check our website for full schedule
www.ayclifferadio.co.uk**

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Free Digital Skills Training at Local Uni

Businesses and public, private and voluntary sector professionals in the Tees Valley and County Durham are now able to sign up to free digital skills training – both technical and creative – following some quick thinking by Teesside University as part of its comprehensive response to Covid-19.

The Digital Skills for Growth programme was

due to run as physical events but is now being offered as a series of online accredited courses scheduled for 20th April to 24th June. The eight courses span a combination of half-day and full-day sessions meaning that public, private and voluntary sector workers from any industry or any size, including those on furlough, can immediately sharpen up their professional development in areas such as art for games and film, coding, data visualisation, developing personalised business intelligence solutions with Microsoft POWER BI, digital

marketing, making sense of digital business, and web production.

The programme is part-funded by the European Social Fund and delivered by the University's School of Computing, Engineering and Digital Technologies. University colleagues at DigitalCity, funded from the European Regional Development Fund across Tees Valley, will also provide a mentoring service to Tees Valley learners and SMEs to help their employers gain maximum benefits for their upskilling. "Given the unprecedented situation we have adapted

our project for the immediate short-term and changed the way we are going to be delivering some of our accredited courses so that everything is online," explained Siobhan Fenton, the School's Associate Dean (Enterprise and Business Engagement).

"Whilst we understand that minds are focused on the immediate challenges, given the positive feedback we had originally from organisations about our training we wanted to offer people the opportunity to continue to access the courses in a safe environment. It presents a fantastic opportunity for public, private and voluntary sector employees to future-proof their digital skills at this time. Importantly there is no charge for the courses. "The world in which we work, live and play is clearly changing and we need to keep up with technology in all aspects of our lives. Digital technology, particularly artificial intelligence and data analytics, has introduced revolutionary changes in every sector to enhance efficiency, increase productivity and reduce costs. Arguably this is going to be even more important for business once the coronavirus pandemic has passed."

For primary and secondary school teachers – and non-teaching staff in schools signing up to the Digital Skills for Growth programme – they will also get a six-week lesson plan to take back to school and deliver to pupils. "Whilst again we understand that

teachers are extremely focused at this time, the bespoke training will help to address the digital skills gaps and teacher training needs in the region that were identified by schools and we wanted to deliver against our original promise to help them," Siobhan said.

DigitalCity Director Lynsey Robinson added: "With our extensive network of digital expertise, DigitalCity is able to provide a mentoring service that will help businesses come out of this crisis stronger than ever. We want to support as many local businesses in the Tees Valley as we possibly can during these challenging times."

Anyone who completes the short accredited courses will receive a University Certificate in Professional Development in Digital Skills Qualification.

For more information please email digitalskillsforgrowth@tees.ac.uk or call 01642 738701/07917 473992.

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A Lockdown Benefit

UK Travel Related Restrictions Reduce CO2e* Emissions by over 80 Million Tonnes

• Reduction of over 80 million tonnes of UK carbon emissions due to coronavirus travel restrictions (equivalent to 9% of total UK emissions) The fight against the coronavirus pandemic has delivered an unexpected boost to the fight against climate change. According to figures from Pawprint, the eco companion app; the reduction in aircraft in the skies over the UK combined with essential only road travel will result in a reduction of over 80 million tonnes of carbon emissions this year - equivalent to a 9% drop in the annual footprint for everyone in the UK.*

As the country continues its enforced lockdown Pawprint have studied the impact this is having on harmful CO2e emissions and the findings deliver a glimmer of hope for the climate change crisis. The average carbon footprint for a UK citizen is 13.1 tonnes per year (the equivalent of driving 25,000 miles in a diesel car - once around the world) and it's been widely recognised that if everyone in developed countries could manage to reduce this to 10 tonnes per year this would make a dramatic difference in saving the planet from global warming. Already the restrictions on human activity around the world have had a surprising and immediate impact on nature as city smog lifts and dolphins have been spotted in

the now clear canal waters of Venice.

Transportation may be one of the key drivers of harmful CO2e emissions but there are many others where collective action with many of us making small changes can make a huge difference and many of these are happening in homes around the country during lockdown;

• our diets - eating seasonal local food, reducing our meat intake, reducing waste etc,
• our homes - turing down our heating slightly, working in natural sunlight and leaving lights off, choosing showers rather than baths etc, and

• our shopping habits - borrowing, mending and buying second hand. Christian Arno, founder of Pawprint, said; "The immediate threat from coronavirus has prompted behavioural change at an incredible global scale, and on our travel more than any other aspect of our carbon footprints. At Pawprint, we want to help people make decisions that are right for them and for the planet. We're hoping that some of the new behaviours we're learning - reduced travel, more video conferencing and more, more people cycling - will become embedded. With everyone finding themselves with more time at home, it's also a good chance to understand what other areas of our lives have a significant impact on our 'Pawprints' and making the most of what we have." Pawprint the free eco companion app is launching in summer 2020 and helps users understand, measure and reduce their carbon footprints in a fun, one small step at a time, way!

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Church & Community Life Move with Times

• Diocese of Durham COVID-19 updates are provided on various aspects of church and community life through the Diocesan Website here: <https://durhamdiocese.org/covid-19/>
Recent Stories

Stories of Hope - how churches are changing with respect to the COVID-19 Pandemic and doing church in new ways.

• A wide range of churches across the Diocese are providing 'church' online through Facebook Live-Streaming, YouTube channels, Zoom gatherings and regular updates on websites. A directory of churches providing online content is here: <https://durhamdiocese.org/covid-19/live-streamed-services/>
• Throughout Holy Week and Easter, the Diocese will be putting out Daily Reflections each morning at 9 am starting on Palm Sunday 5th April and ending on Easter Day. The content will be provided via <https://durhamdiocese.org/covid-19/>

and <https://www.facebook.com/durhamdiocese>

• The Bishop of Durham will be Live Streaming services from his home-office on Maundy Thursday and Easter Day via the Durham Cathedral and Diocese of Durham Facebook Pages. 11 am Maundy Thursday for the Renewal of Vows for Clergy, and 11.15 am on Easter Day for a service of Eucharist

(Holy Communion).

• Also on Easter Day SING RESURRECTION will be occurring, a project that started in Durham and is now being adopted across the country by Churches Together. The idea is to stand at your front door, or gate, or open flat windows at 10 am and sing 'Jesus Christ is Risen Today' and 'Thine be the glory'.

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Local NHS Trusts to Benefit from £1.3 Billion Debt Write Off

Health secretary announces £1.3 billion of debt will be written off in the North East and Yorkshire, as part of a major financial reset for NHS providers

15 NHS Trusts in the North East and Yorkshire to be rid of historic debt, freeing them up to invest in maintaining vital services and longer-term infrastructure improvements. From the start of this month, £1.3 billion of debt of NHS debt across 15 NHS Trusts the North East and Yorkshire will be scrapped as part of the £13.4 billion debt write off announced by the Health Secretary last week. This is part of a package of major reforms to the NHS financial system, designed in a collaboration between the Department of Health and NHS England, which will begin from the start of the new financial year. The changes will provide much needed financial support during this unprecedented viral pandemic, as well as laying secure foundations for the longer-term commitments set out last year to support the NHS to become more financially sustainable. Health Secretary Matt Hancock said: "As we tackle this crisis, nobody in our health service should be distracted by their hospital's past finances. "Today I'm pleased to confirm the value of this package for the North East and Yorkshire. This £1.3 billion debt write off will wipe the slate clean and allow NHS hospitals to plan for the future and invest in vital services." While many NHS trusts manage strong finances,

under the existing rules, some took out loans to plug financial gaps in their day-to-day (revenue) or capital (infrastructure) budgets.

107 Trusts have an average of £100 million revenue debt each, with the two trusts with the highest debts reaching a combined total of over £1 billion.

For hospitals in the North East and Yorkshire, this means writing off around £1.2 billion revenue debt and £103 million capital debt.

NHS chief executive, Sir Simon Stevens, said: "We've advocated for and support this pragmatic move which will put NHS hospitals, mental health and community services in a stronger position - not just to respond to the immediate challenges of the global coronavirus pandemic, but also in the years ahead to deliver widespread improvements set out in our NHS Long Term Plan."

Under the new rules set out in a letter to all NHS Trusts, should hospitals need extra cash this will be given with equity, rather than needing to borrow from the government and repay a loan.

The letters also include details on every local area's capital budget for 2020/21, providing certainty to the NHS for the new financial year and enabling investment in vital longer-term infrastructure upgrades as soon as possible.

These budgets come on top of the capital facility the Government launched in February to ensure the NHS has access to whatever extra capital investment it needs, without charges, to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The debt write-off package was launched in combination with a simpler internal payment system to help NHS trusts in dealing with the Covid-19 response, agreed with NHS England.

This significant change will mean hospitals will get all the necessary funding to carry out their emergency response, despite many hospitals cancelling or limiting their usual services such as elective surgery or walk-in clinics due to the virus.

Keep Pets From Avoidable Chocolate Emergencies over Easter

The British Veterinary Association (BVA) is advising pet owners to be extra careful and keep chocolate eggs and other sweet treats well out of reach of inquisitive pets to avoid an emergency trip to the vets over the Easter holidays. The advice comes as veterinary practices in the North East follow strict social distancing measures and have restricted services to emergency and urgent cases only to help curb the spread of coronavirus.

Chocolate can be very dangerous for dogs even in small quantities, and vets usually see a spike in chocolate toxicity cases over festive periods such as Easter and Christmas. With pets spending more time indoors due to the lockdown, there is an increased risk of easy access to these treats. Findings from BVA's Voice of the Veterinary Profession survey reveal that more than eight in ten vets (81%) working in companion animal practice in northern England saw at least one case of chocolate poisoning over the twelve months leading up to Easter last year. More than half (51%) of the vets had seen three or more cases in this period.

Chocolate contains theobromine, a chemical naturally found in cocoa beans. Dogs metabolise theobromine much more slowly than humans, so even a tiny amount of chocolate can result in toxic levels, especially for smaller dogs and puppies. Cats can also fall sick from eating chocolate, but they are much less inclined to sniff out and eat sweet treats than their canine counterparts. Raisins and sultanas, found in hot cross buns and simnel cakes, can also be dangerous for dogs and cats if ingested.

British Veterinary Association President Daniella Dos Santos said: "While families prepare to celebrate Easter during the Covid-19 lockdown, it's important to remember to keep any chocolate treats well away from pets to avoid an emergency trip

to the vet. Chocolate can be poisonous for our pets and dogs, in particular, can easily sniff out sweet treats, so make sure any chocolate goodies are stored securely out of reach of inquisitive noses.

"This is especially vital at a time when strict social distancing measures mean vets are only able to see emergency cases and may have smaller teams working in the practice as they try to do everything they can to look after pets while protecting clients and themselves.

"If you suspect that your dog has eaten chocolate, don't delay in calling your vet first for advice on bringing it into the practice. The quicker the animal gets expert veterinary advice and treatment, the better. Your vet will want to know how much chocolate your dog has eaten and what type. If possible, keep any labels and have the weight of the dog to hand."

Whilst prevention is always better than cure, if your dog does consume chocolate then recognising the signs and promptly seeking veterinary care is vital.

Dogs will usually start showing signs of chocolate toxicity within 12 hours, but symptoms can last for up to three days. Initially, pets are likely to experience excessive thirst, vomiting, diarrhoea and restlessness. These can develop into symptoms of hyperactivity, tremors, abnormal heart rate, hyperthermia and rapid breathing. Severe cases may result in fits and heartbeat irregularities, and even coma and death. If you notice these symptoms in your dog and suspect chocolate ingestion, seek veterinary advice as soon as possible.

For more information on pets and poisons, download the free Animal Welfare Foundation 'Pets and Poisons' leaflet at: <https://www.animalwelfarefoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Pets-and-Poisons-1.pdf>

Marie Curie Pledges to Support During Coronavirus Crisis

The terminal illness charity is geared up to care for additional patients at the end of life across the North East following the news that the number of coronavirus deaths in the UK has jumped by more than 100 in a day for the first time.

Marie Curie needs to raise £2.5million a week to continue to run its essential frontline services, however its ability to generate this money has been seriously compromised.

Given the choice, people overwhelmingly say they would prefer to die in their own home, or in a hospice, rather than a hospital. People who are dying can leave hospital quickly, if the right package of care is in place and it is safe to do so. Marie Curie are experts in providing that care.

Now more than ever, dying people who do not want to be in hospital need to be moved to a more appropriate setting, as precious beds in critical care units are urgently required for patients who need lifesaving treatment for Coronavirus.

Marie Curie can help, but only if it continues to raise the donations it needs to fund its vital work.

Marie Curie's Chief Executive Matthew Reed has released a stark warning that the charity desperately needs more donations from people across the North East if it is to continue caring for dying people and help the NHS cope with the Coronavirus crisis.

He said: "At this time of national emergency, Marie Curie Nurses and frontline staff are needed more than ever as the NHS is put under ever greater strain. We're ready and geared up to help, with hospice beds and nurses on standby.

"Sadly, some people's lives will be shortened by Coronavirus, so the need for end of life care will be greater. Marie Curie can meet this need, and in doing so will help free up intensive care beds needed for Coronavirus patients.

"But just as we want to help, our income has been decimated. We need donations urgently to keep our Nurses and Hospice staff on the frontline.

"Unlike other healthcare providers, Marie Curie is

reliant on donations from the public to survive. Every week the charity needs to raise £2.5million to care for the tens of thousands of people who require nursing and hospice care. Now, our ability to fundraise is seriously compromised. Events are being cancelled, and we've had to close our Shops. That is why we have launched an emergency appeal to make up the shortfall and ensure the charity can care for more dying patients, support the NHS and ultimately save lives in the weeks and months ahead."

Matthew added: "We are all in this crisis together and already we are seeing how the public in this country is rising to support each other and

the most vulnerable. Please donate now."

• Donate today, online at: mariecurie.org.uk/emergency

• Text NURSE to 70633 to help us reach the families who need us. Texts cost £5 plus 1 standard rate message. 98% is received by Marie Curie. To unsub text OUT to 78866. Thank you.

If you, or someone you know, is affected by a terminal illness and concerned about Coronavirus, our Support Line team are ready to help with the information you need when you need it. Call free 0800 090 2309*. You can also find more information on our website: mariecurie.org.uk/coronavirus

Obituary

Peter Woodhead Newton Aycliffe

31st March

In Lindisfarne Care Home. Peter aged 82 years.

Dearly loved Husband of the late Frances; beloved Dad of Chris, Gary, Mandy and the late Andrew; much loved Grandad of Kirsty, Donna, Shaun, Stu, Gary-Dean, Charlotte and Chantelle and a proud Great-Grandad.

Due to current circumstances a private cremation will take place at Wear Valley Crematorium on Tuesday 21st April at 1.30pm so it would be lovely if you could think of Peter at that time.

A Service to celebrate his life will be announced at a later date.

Alan S. Oates

Aged 90 years of age, died peacefully at home on Saturday 4th April after a short illness.

Beloved Father, Grandfather and Great Grandfather who led a long and happy life. He will be greatly missed by friends and family. A celebration of Alan's life will take place on a future date.

NEWTON NEWS

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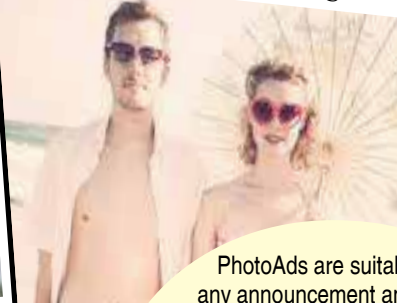
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Bonny and Clyde Cunningham



Golden

ations Mar on 1st Jan ters, Gra

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We are currently working on an archive site which will bring you ALL the past issues of the Newton News as far back as 1948!

'Virtual' Open Event for Prospective Students

A County Durham college and its engineering training centre are inviting prospective learners to join an open event from the comfort of their own home. With colleges, like schools, being forced to remain closed during the COVID-19 lockdown, they are finding innovative ways to both teach remotely as well as help applicants for courses starting in September. Bishop Auckland College and South West Durham Training are therefore holding their first ever 'virtual' open evening next month, where applicants can speak to course tutors and careers advisors via live chat and over the telephone. The event will enable people to log in or dial in and receive instant advice on courses offered, student support and how to apply to secure a confirmed place for

September. Staff will be available from the following curriculum areas: art and design; barbering; beauty therapy; brickwork; business; carpentry and joinery; catering; childcare; criminology; engineering; foundation learning; hairdressing; health and social care; IT and computing; motor vehicle; music; painting and decorating; performing arts; photography; plumbing; sport and uniformed services. There will also be tutors available to advise on apprenticeships and higher education courses. Natalie Davison-Terranova, Principal and Chief Executive of the Bishop Auckland College Group, said: "It has been hard for both staff and students to adapt to working from home over the past.

COUNTY DURHAM BUSINESSES WORKING TO FIGHT COVID-19

Businesses from across County Durham have joined the battle against coronavirus by applying their expertise to everything from technologies to improve virus detection to increasing production of vital personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand sanitiser. While many companies have been forced to shut down to contain the pandemic, six County Durham firms are continuing to work on specialist products and technologies in a bid to limit contagion and protect frontline NHS workers. Four of the businesses are based at the North East Technology Park (NETPark) in Sedgefield including REPROCELL Europe, Graphene Composites, Stream Bio and Kromek. REPROCELL Europe, who

specialise in leading-edge tools and products for stem cell and 3D cell culture research, have joined a consortium with partners in North America and Europe to develop a vaccine for COVID-19. Dr David Bunton, CEO of REPROCELL Europe said: "We are pleased to support an international consortium, led by the Belgian life sciences company eTheRNA, which is developing an RNA-based vaccine." Nano-technology manufacturer Graphene Composites has been working on a graphene ink that can be applied to face masks and other PPE as a viricide (virus killing) to provide added protection against coronavirus. Following an appeal for help from other companies with the project the company has already received a number of offers.

Stream Bio Ltd, which is based at the Centre for Process Innovation's (CPI) within NETPark, develops and manufactures fluorescent molecular probes used for labelling antibodies. The probes increasing the sensitivity of antibody testing, enabling earlier detection. It is hoped that Stream Bio's probes can be used in the fight against COVID-19.

Biotechnology firm Kromek Group, also based at NETPark, is recruiting a Project Engineer to work on the development of a mobile pathogen detection system, to detect biological threats, such as COVID-19.

NETPark is managed by Business Durham, the economic development arm of Durham County Council. Janet Todd, NETPark manager at Business Durham, said: "It's great to see that NETPark companies are looking at innovative ways to fight COVID-19 and proactively seeking out collaborative opportunities. NETPark is a thriving community of science, engineering and technology companies providing over 550 highly skilled jobs working across a range of sectors such as life science and electronics. We wish them well as they work to combat COVID-19."

Joining the four NETPark companies are chemical producer INEOS and science-based technology company 3M, both with manufacturing sites in Newton Aycliffe. Following a critical shortage of hand sanitisers across the UK and Europe, INEOS have opened a new production facility in Newton Aycliffe to help fight the spread of coronavirus.

Hand-to-mouth contamination is one of the main ways that the coronavirus infects people, so the plant will produce 1m bottles of hand sanitiser per month and supply NHS sites across the country. 3M, a leader in personal protective equipment (PPE) for public health and

healthcare professionals and individuals is increasing production at all its plants including Newtown Aycliffe. The science-based technology company is doubling its global output of respirators and delivering them to front line healthcare providers. Sarah Slaven, Interim Managing Director of Business Durham, said: "This is a challenging time for a lot of businesses in the county, but we are delighted to see some of them working to help fight the coronavirus outbreak."

"These businesses are demonstrating tremendous agility, adaptability and innovation. They have the technical knowledge, resources and the manufacturing skills to help produce much needed technology and products which will hopefully help alleviate some of the pressure from other national suppliers and help protect the NHS."

"We are playing our part in tackling the coronavirus outbreak to help protect our communities, our businesses and our workforce in County Durham."

CLLr Carl Marshall, Cabinet member for economic regeneration at Durham



County Council, said: "County Durham has an international reputation as a place of technological and scientific innovation; therefore, I am delighted but not surprised that businesses based here are playing a crucial role in the battle against coronavirus. "At NETPark, and across the county, we have developed a supportive environment where collaboration is encouraged. This is very much at the heart of our Powered by People campaign, which celebrates the contribution each individual makes. "This is an example of where collaboration, innovation

and utilising the skills of our talented workforce has the power to save lives. These companies should feel incredibly proud of the work they are undertaking, and I would like to wish them the best."

Advice for businesses and employees in County Durham can be found at www.durham.gov.uk and at www.businessdurham.co.uk/covid19. For the latest advice and information from the Government, visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses

OFFICE UNITS TO LET

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a dedication

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For more information contact Stuart on 01325 300212



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* Subject to small business relief

Support for Samaritans with Crowdfunding

Darlington Hippodrome staff have selected Darlington Samaritans as their new annual charity partner with the launch of an online crowdfunding page. Darlington Hippodrome has announced that the Hippodrome staff selected Darlington Samaritans as their new annual charity partner. Samaritans is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with over 200 branches across the UK and Ireland. Every year Samaritans answer more than 5 million calls for help through their unique 24 hour listening service. Demand for the service is growing with Samaritans responding to a call for help every 6 seconds. Through the partnership, Darlington Hippodrome will help support Darlington Samaritans' services through various fundraising activities. Darlington Hippodrome has launched an online crowdfunding page to allow individuals to show their support for Darlington Samaritans and find out more about the services they provide. The crowdfunding page can be accessed at : <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/DarlingtonHippodrome> For full information on Darlington Hippodrome visit www.darlingtonhippodrome.co.uk

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