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PCP Here for Local People and Communities



Supportive health wellbeing charity the Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP), has been working hard behind the scenes this past month to aid the NHS and the region-wide community responses to COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

During this challenging time PCP teams have adapted quickly to offer a wide range of support to ensure that vital local services can effectively meet the needs of our communities. Many of our dedicated staff members have been redeployed and are

working seven days a week to support vulnerable people and those who are 'shielding' to ensure they receive essentials and to help them to access key information and advice. Our Healthwatch teams, covering 5 local authority areas, continue to provide vital information and signposting and we continue to make donations to local Foodbanks and provide virtual support through our numerous social media platforms.

In Newton Aycliffe we were sad to close the doors of the Pioneering Care Centre to

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the general public, but have been working with Jubilee Medical Practice to repurpose some areas of the Centre to provide a safe clinical space for COVID-19 assessments or treatment for those who don't require hospital admission. Enabling space to continue to be used in line with PCP's charitable mission of Health, Wellbeing and Learning for All.
The organisations' Chief
Executive Carol Gaskarth

said, "Working in partnership complement the community response is a key element of PCP's approach to supporting people during this worrying time. The majority of our staff are working from home and I am very proud of the resilience shown by those who are providing direct support to people in immediate need and distress. Being friendly, supportive and making a difference are pillars of how we work with local people; these values have been demonstrated even more acutely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our offices may be temporarily closed, but we will be back as soon as we can and we will be ready to help with the recovery efforts. In the meantime, I urge people to continue to show kindness and compassion to those who are trying to keep us all safe and healthy, look after your wellbeing and please #stavhomestavsafe.



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AWARDS 2020

The country needs - and is relying - on UK farmers more than ever before to do what they do best and continue feeding the nation during these unprecedented times.

Today, the British Farming Awards launches to salute the fantastic work taking place across UK agriculture

Back for its eighth year, the 2020 event is brought to you by AgriBriefing, the parent company of Farmers Guardian, Arable Farming and Dairy Farmer, and is supported by Morrisons.

Celebrating the innovative, determined and extraordinary farmers across all sectors, the British Farming Awards showcase the diversity and adaptability the UK's farming community, no matter the size or scale of their business. Alongside farming's core sectors - dairy, beef, sheep, arable and machinery there is also recognition in other valued groups such as family farms, students, new entrants, new agri-technology and the huge number of diversifications, which are now so crucial to many businesses.

Sophie Throup, Morrisons Head of Agriculture, said: "In these unprecedented times, we would like to thank and celebrate the work of British farmers and growers who are helping to feed the nation.

"At Morrisons, we have always valued British farming and being able to

buy products directly from farms for our stores and the many food banks who rely on us is now more important than ever.

"So, whatever form these awards take this year, it's still a good time to pause and acknowledge the effort, innovation and skills which into providing food farmed to high standards that

we all enjoy."
Farmers Guardian Editor,
Ben Briggs, said: "Ensuring
the country does not go
hungry is what British
forming has always done and farming has always done and this spring, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, it is their efforts which will keep families fed and retail shelves full.

'But while the nation's attention may have switched to where its food comes from, for most farmers that core objective of producing healthy, nutritious food has always been key.

always "Agriculture has been a vibrant and crucially important sector and the British Farming Awards has always sought to shine a light on the innovation, determination and excellence that makes our proud industry tick.

"We are pleased to welcome our sponsors and thank them for showing support of our British farmers.

The closing date for entries is

For more information on applying or to nominate individual visit www. britishfarmingawards.co.uk

BRITISH FARMING Local Mum Writes Book for Daughter During Lockdown



Can we go outside to play? Not Today!

Millie Little struggles to understand why she couldn't go to nursery and see her friends, so mum writes book to help her understand.

Lockdown first When started Millie found it really hard, the three-year-old couldn't see her friends at nursery or her grandparents, so her mum wrote a book to help her understand. The book has been released digitally for other parents whose young children might be struggling. You can download it for free from: https://jilly-keast.wixsite.com/jillianjohnstonarts

Jillian Johnston, the author is a local Artist and Teacher, she lives in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham and works for

Auckland Project The as a Learning Officer. "I have always wanted to write a book and this was something I felt was important.

thought that other parents could benefit from the story in the same way that Millie has, it might cheer them up abit - its tricky being inside a lot with little ones.

The story gives activity ideas as well as explaining the virus in very simple terms for young children. Millie loves the story; she loves seeing herself and her brother in the pages."

A paper back version of the book will be released next week available to buy on Amazon and an ebook is now available to buy on Amazon. The book is also available as a free download from Jillian's website. All profits will be given to a charity of Millie's choice.

https://jilly-keast.wixsite. com/jillianjohnstonarts

https://www.amazon. co.uk/Can-outside-play-Not-Today-ebook/dp/ B086V118D6/ref=sr_1_1? dchild=1&keywords=iillia n+johnston&qid=1586798 956&sr=8-1

Virtual Food Festival Supports Region's Traders

The organisers of a cancelled County Durham festival have launched a virtual food festival for the 2020 traders who could not trade at this year's event, aiming to support local businesses through Covid-19. Durham County Council's annual Bishop Auckland Food Festival, originally scheduled to take place on 18 and 19 April, was cancelled in response to government guidance on Coronavirus.

However, a range of exciting street food, tempting tipples and indulgent cakes and desserts are all still on the menu thanks to the new directory. With the nation in lockdown, and food events cancelled across the county, many of the festival's producers are offering special discounts and deliveries

direct to people's homes. Foodie fans can view details of all the tasty treats on offer, at https://www. bishopaucklandfoodfestival.co.uk/supportour-traders/

From local cheeses, baked breads and vegan bakes, to spicy sauces, delicious chocolates and macarons, the website showcases the very best of the region's produce.

Examples of some of the great virtual festival initiatives include an April-long discount from Calders Kitchen, which is offering a mixed box of any three handmade piccalillis for £10, plus a 20 per cent discount off all online purchases; and street food company Hogs N Chix which is offering its delicious hog roast as frozen meals with contactless delivery

Sarah England of Hogs N Chix, said: "We are a local family business, we will miss Bishop Auckland Food Festival, it is the highlight of our year. We created the Yorkie Wrap especially for the Festival in 2016, we are devastated that we can't be there to trade this year

"Like lots of traders we are having to diversify and have come up with a unique menu aimed at people that are socially isolating, including individuals and also pensioner portions. It is important to still have healthy delicious food and we are delivering to their homes, with contactless delivery and contactless payment.

"We leave the food on the doorstep and make sure the food is picked up before leaving, all at a safe distance. This is an absolutely fabulous idea and initiative by Bishop Auckland Food Festival to help small traders in these difficult times. We appreciate it, as a lot of small business will struggle and may not come out the other side. Based in Durham, we are delivering across the North East including DH, DL, TS, SR and NE postcodes."

For those with a sweet tooth, The Hedgehog Bakery is creating postal treat boxes of



six items, including a brownie, a blondie a rocky road, a slice of tiffin and a cookie, which can be posted nationwide. Burtree Puddings' new 'care packages', which can be delivered throughout the UK, make the perfect gift for family and friends who are self-isolating, and include fabulous sticky puddings, delicious tea loaves and famous

flapjack.

Lea Darling of Burtree Puddings said: "I think what Bishop Auckland Food Festival is doing for the traders is fantastic. It is a huge event in our calendar and our most local. We are so sad that it cannot run this year. We, like other traders, are working hard to keep business running with the current coronavirus pandemic putting a stop to all our events we had planned and lots of people stuck at home in isolation.

We wanted to be able to provide something that people could send to their love ones to put a smile on their face. We have created care packages for one, two or four people and these have a mixture of our delicious puddings, cakes and flapjacks. We have had fantastic feedback so far and really hope we are doing our bit to bring some joy to people who are stuck at home during this difficult time. One customer commented 'vou are bridging a lonely gap in my life with loveliness, it's at times like this that people like you play an important part in the life of

Cllr Joy Allen, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for transformation, culture and tourism, said: "Bishop Auckland Food Festival is the region's biggest food event and a key date in the foodie calendar. With this year's festival cancelled, we wanted to make sure we do everything we can to support our fabulous traders.

"Last year more than 29,000 people attended, so we're hoping that these same people will take advantage of the great initiatives, offers and services traders are working on to help keep their businesses busy during this tough time. I'd encourage everyone who can to order incredible produce, either online or over the phone, to enjoy at home and support



Surge in Pest Activity

A national trade body is keeping a watch on pest issues after a survey revealed a significant spike in rat and

a significant spike in rat and mice activity. 51% of pest professionals polled by the British Pest Control Association (BPCA) have reported an increase in rat activity, while 41% reported an increase in mice activity since lockdown restrictions were put in place

by the Government.
According to BPCA, empty buildings, deserted streets and reduced footfall provide an ideal opportunity for rodents to thrive across the UK, with rats and mice seemingly becoming bolder, braver and more innovative in finding food and shelter in the shutdown.

snutaown.
Natalie Bungay, BPCA
Technical Officer, said:
"We've had reports of rats
and mice infesting empty Natalie Technical buildings and it seems their lifestyle patterns are

changing. Rats in particular are also becoming more visible in areas of population. "With less footfall across cities and towns there is less associated food waste being left in bins and on the floor. As a result, rat populations are likely to move further afield to satisfy their need for a food source and this, in turn, is likely to cause more sightings. By nature, rats will also try to avoid humans directly and so, with less of us walking the streets, they may be getting a little bolder and possibly be seen in areas they normally wouldn't." Members of the BPCA are working behind the scenes

to ensure the situation is managed.

BPCA members are trained, dualified and audited to the British Standard in Pest Management BS EN 16636. For more information or to find a professional company visit bpca.org.uk



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COUNTY WORKERS SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

A North East local authority has shown its gratitude to hardworking NHS staff during the Coronavirus crisis, by creating two new roadside displays.

Members of Durham County Council's Clean and Green Team have planted a colourful tribute, in a prominent position on Sniperley Roundabout, near University Hospital of North Durham, using surplus flowers from their winter stock which would otherwise have been destined for composting, and spare decorative stones. Staff followed social distancing guidelines, staying two metres apart, to prepare a colourful rainbow of primulas, surrounding the letters NHS written in white stones.

The team has also created a second display to thank the NHS, using grey and white stones, at Bob Hardisty Drive in Bishop Auckland, a main road which links Bishop Auckland Hospital to residential areas of the town, and close to a local medical centre and





pharmacy.

Graham Cozens, Clean and Green Team Leader, designed the displays. Graham said: "The two displays were a positive way to use up the spare flowers and decorative stones we already had available. Everyone in the county really values the hard work and dedication of NHS staff, and this seemed like a

great way to say thank you. We know that the gesture was appreciated as passing ambulance crews were sounding their horns whilst our teams were creating the displays."

Oliver Sherratt, the council's Head of Environment, said: "Our staff were keen to create the displays to acknowledge the excellent work done in all areas of the NHS at all times, but especially during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

"As well as showing our support for the amazing key workers, the displays are also helping to spread some cheer locally and we've received some lovely feedback from those residents who are still travelling for essential purposes, whose journeys the flowers brighten."

LOCAL HERBAL GIN COMPANY LAUNCH NEW RANGE

The Herbal Gin Company is now producing the first four of its artisan range of gins. Its local owners, Dr Colin Scott and Mr Wayne Richardson have a passion for making delicious gins that are unique in taste and appearance. Both have an interest in the science of gin making and especially the botanicals involved, which has led to a worldwide contribution to its recipes.

In this current climate of severe restrictions this is a story of two people launching a new business against the tide of difficulties that we are currently witnessing. Conventions are being broken, the directors in their own fields were used to the handling of pressure but are now applying these hard earned skills to start up a new and exciting local business against the tide of COVID related restrictions and limiting factors.

Although currently facing supply issues- which has reduced the launch product range, the four gins being marketed currently have been enthusiastically received by the vanguard of gin lovers who have made

the first purchases. The original herbal gin recipe has been balanced by a spiced gin which is oriental in flavour. These first two were then bolstered by Meditteranean Lemon and Herbal Lime flavours that are both proving particularly popular since release.

Botanicals as diverse as eucalyptus and lemongrass are being used in a novel approach to gin making and help to create a flavour that is both unique but lasts a lot longer on the tastebuds than many. This is backed up by a quadruple distilled process that is digitally controlled to allow for the smoothest of products with a mellowness that is felt to rival the best in the business and allows for a product that can be reproduced time and time again.

More exciting flavours are in the pipeline. Raspberry and vanilla along with smoked orange and also rhubarb and ginger with a hint of chilli.

If customers go to the distillery website www. theherbalgin.com or its Facebook shop and enter Discount Code Covid 1910

this will generate 10% off any online purchase of gin, along with free Newton Aycliffe and outlying area delivery. As an added bonus, the customer will

automatically be added to our competition for a Gin Making experience (worth £380 for 4 people) that will be available soon after the restrictions are lifted.

UTC STUDENT LAUNCHES FITNESS WEBSITE TOOHFIT



UTC South Durham student Ralf Fatoohi has launched an online fitness shop to help people keep fit whilst socially distancing and staying at home. The website toohfit.com offers a variety of fitness equipment useful for working out at home, including fitness electronics, yoga, weights, and running equipment and supports

supports.
Keeping fit and finding ways to exercise at home have become widely debated topics over the past few weeks, with medical experts advising the general public to exercise regularly to help support physical and mental wellbeing during the nation-wide lockdown.
The website is a long-term

The website is a long-term ambition of Ralf's, who is in Year 11 at UTC. However, after the government announced social distancing measures, Ralf found the time to design and build the online shop. Ralf developed the website using many of the skills he had learned whilst studying at UTC.

Ralf explained how the UTC had helped him develop his skills: "Before joining UTC,

I felt very inexperienced in the E-Commerce field. However, when I joined the UTC I immediately felt very business-driven. UTC's industry partners in the field have led me to success, and the very supportive yet challenging atmosphere at the UTC has given me the confidence I needed to help me follow my dreams of owning my own business." UTC Principal Tom Dower said Ralf "is an exceptional young man who embodies the qualities UTC aims to foster in their students: determination, resilience and leadership. We're very proud of Ralf and we can't wait to see what other amazing things he accomplishes in the future!" Ralf is hoping to expand his business in the future: "I'm looking to expand the range of products available, and I'm hoping that my business will eventually become a worldwide superstore that will benefit the lives of

others."

Photo: Ralf Fatoohi taking part in a team-building exercise at UTC South Durham in February 2020.





HAVE YOU MADE A WILL?







We are always interested in local news stories. We like to feature **good** news and interesting items on achievements & community service

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Building Society team up with Yorkshire **Dales Distillery**

The North East's largest building society has donated a vital supply of hand sanitiser to communities in the Yorkshire Dales after partnering with a local distillery in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Spirit of Swaledale ordinarily makes handcrafted gin inspired by the dramatic mountains and gorges of the Upper Swaledale landscape. But since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, the Muker-based distillery has added the production of hand sanitiser, following a recipe approved by the World Health Organisation. Now a supply of the hand sanitiser has been bought by Newcastle Building Society and distributed free of charge to the Upper Dales community for local people to use. The building society, which opened a branch in Hawes earlier this year, is working hard to keep its branch network open during the outbreak to enable customers to make essential transactions.

"We're pleased to be able to do what we can to support our communities through these difficult times," said Stuart Miller, customer director at Newcastle Building Society. "Across branch network we're working hard to maintain a safe and healthy environment and this responsibility extends right throughout the community." 'We all know how important regular handwashing and hand hygiene is at the moment. We also know that hand sanitiser can be very difficult to get hold

especially in more rural areas delighted to be working with Spirit of Swaledale to make a donation of their hand sanitiser to the local community.

A total of 500 bottles of hand sanitiser have been distributed across the Upper Dales, and are available free of charge from shops and other locations in Hawes, Reeth, Gunnerside, Muker and Keld.

"We were keen to contribute to the effort against the coronavirus outbreak and help protect the people in our community," said Ian said Ian Purves, founder of Spirit of Swaledale. "Although making hand sanitiser is a bit of a change from the production of gin and rum, we were able to follow a simple and highly effective formula

"The challenge has been around distribution, so the support of both Newcastle Building Society and the Little White Bus has been instrumental in getting the finished product to those in our community who need it

In response to coronavirus outbreak, last month the Society also made a £100,000 contribution to the £1m appeal set up by the Tyne and Wear Community Foundation for its new Coronavirus Recovery and Response Fund.

For more information on Newcastle Building Society and its commitment during the Covid-19 outbreak, visit www.newcastle.co.uk or to discover more about Spirit of Swaledale, visit www. spirit-of-swaledale.co.uk

Invest a Tenner to Help Save the Planet

Pawprint, the eco start up app which aims to unite and empower us all in the fight against climate change has today launched its first crowdfund campaign. Hosted by Crowdcube and seeking investments from £10 to £15,000 in return for equity shares in this globally

impactful start-up.
Pawprint is tackling the biggest global threat facing our planet; Climate Change free Pawprint app (PWA), giving users the power to measure understand and their carbon footprint by implementing changes their lifestyle choices. Founded by experienced entrepreneur and Lingo24 founder Christian Arno, the app is also scientifically backed by the leading by the leading author and expert in carbon footprint measurement Mike Berners-Lee.

Launching in May 2020, already Pawprint has funding £580k from entrepreneurs including Oli Norman of Itison and Kevin Dorren of Dietchef alongside early backers of Tesla, Spotify and Amazon. All investments through Crowdcube will be at the same valuation as these angel investors, enabling everyone to own a stake in

this high impact company. Christian Arno, founder and Pawprint CEO said; "Globally we are currently facing two main threats to our planet and our collective health. Covid-19 is undoubtedly the most immediate but climate change remains the bigger existential threat. It has been both humbling and inspiring to witness people pulling together to help their communities in the fight against coronavirus this is the very ethos that Pawprint is built on.

"Pawprint builds on this traditional community spirit, uniting people throughout the world to take collective action 'for the greater good' delivered via a digital solution.

"Until now, whilst there has been a growing recognition of the problem and a general desire to tackle it, there has been no trusted source that people can rely on to inform their personal lifestyle choices for maximum for maximum impact. This where Pawprint comes in.

"We need to act at scale, and fast, which is why we are launching this crowdfund to help us spread the word and build an army of Pawprinters. We can all play our part in building a globally impactful company that can tackle the next global crisis - climate change.

Luke Lang, Crowdcube cofounder added; "We love businesses with a purpose and ambition to make a difference to the world I look forward to seeing **Pawprint** inspire community and ours with their innovative solution to measuring people's carbon footprint.

Join the Pawprint movement

Unacceptable Domestic Abuse

This Easter will be very different with families trying to stay safe at home in these unprecedented times.

But for some, home is not a safe place, even without the threat of Coronavirus.

The stay at home order will cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at

risk of domestic abuse and if this is you, we want you to know you are not alone and we are still here to help.

Domestic abuse unacceptable situation, no matter what stresses someone is under.

be physical, cal, emotional, can psychological, exual or financial and affects one in four women and one in six men during their lifetime. If you feel you are at risk

of abuse or you are worried that someone you know is experiencing abuse, please remember that there is help and support available and services are open as usual.

As a force, we continue to help victims as normal and will be responding to 999 and 101 calls from victims 24/7

If you can't speak then you should use the silent solutions service by dialling 999 and press 5 5.

If you find yourself at an immediate risk of domestic abuse the message is clear get out of the house and call 999.

Superintendent Dave Ashton, Durham of Constabulary's Safeguarding Unit, said: "Domestic abuse is not acceptable at any time and we want victims to know that we are still here and ready to help.
"We know the lockdown

restrictions will be causing many victims to worry, especially over a bank holiday weekend, but we importance of calling 999 or reaching out to other agencies to seek help – domestic abuse is not something you have to tolerate."

We are also teaming up with our partner agencies to remind people of the many organisations and sources of extra help and support out there for both victims and perpetrators who want to change their behaviour.

Harbour Support Services provide dedicated, specialist support to residents of Durham affected by Darlington domestic abuse.

This includes adult victims children and young people and perpetrators of abuse. Anyone can make a selfreferral or contact for advice and guidance.

Harbour is open 24/7. To contact them call 03000 202525 or email clientservice@myharbour. org.uk

You can also find information on help and support as well as signposting for local women's refuges and council services for County Durham www.durham.gov.uk/ domesticabuse and for Darlington at https://www. darlington.gov.uk/healthand-social-care/domesticabuse/domestic-and-sexualabuse-directory/

also Crime can reported anonymously via 555111 or through www. crimestoppers-uk.org

CPI and Imperial **College Join Forces**



CPI today announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Imperial College London, laying the groundwork for collaboration on a diverse range programmes designed to drive economic growth in the UK's manufacturing sector. By leveraging CPI's expertise and facilities in areas such as industrial biotechnology, technology, materials pharmaceutical manufacturing, the two parties will work together further translate the College's world-leading research and inventions into impactful products and services.

The agreement highlights each party's ambition to collaborate on both defined technical projects strategic major programmes. In addition, the organisations will seek opportunities to host each other's staff with a series training programmes and secondments. This will accelerate the transfer of scientific complementary knowledge and technical skills between CPI and Imperial.

Imperial College London is frequently ranked within the top ten universities in the world and has a rich history of delivering paradigm-shifting research, including the discovery of penicillin and the invention of holography. CPI can support the College with its expertise in product and process development to accelerate discoveries made on the College lab bench into commercial products and processes

Since its inception in 2004. CPI has acted as a bridge between academia and industry, working alongside government and investors

to de-risk and accelerate the translation of bright ideas into the marketplace. CPI offers advanced facilities for developing next-generation and processes products its network of through National Centres, such as the National Biologics Manufacturing Centre. Printable the National Electronics Centre, and National Centre for Healthcare Photonics. By together working world-leading scientists and engineers from Imperial College London, CPI can readily access the latest research and apply it to industrial processes

Professor Nick Jennings Vice-Provost for Research and Enterprise at Imperial College London, said: "This partnership with CPI will let us further diversify the routes we use to validate and develop exciting discoveries and inventions across our research portfolio. We are delighted to be working with colleagues at CPI sites to deliver impact from our research for the benefit of the whole UK. The relationship has the potential both to tackle some of the most challenging issues facing the UK's industrial sectors, and to develop and inspire the next generation of innovators.

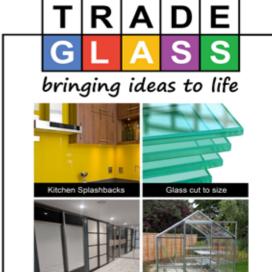
Nick Johnson, Commercial Director at CPI, said: "We are delighted to be forming a partnership with one of the most renowned academic institutions in the UK. This relationship will further strengthen CPI's activities with the academic sector, helping us to deliver on our ambition to commercialise the best research in the UK and enable the UK's manufacturing sector

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101 is now the number to call when you want to contact your local police - when it's less urgent than 999

WHEN SHOULD I CALL 101?

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

- or
 if you would like to speak to your local police officer
- 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;

Government to Offer Testing for "Everyone Who Needs One"

- All symptomatic care residents will be tested for COVID-19 as testing capacity continues to increase
- All patients discharged from hospital to be tested before going into care homes as a matter of course
- All social care staff who need a test will now have access to one with CQC to contact all 30,000 care providers in the coming days to offer tests

All care home residents and social care staff with COVID-19 symptoms will be tested as capacity is built up, the government is announcing today. Currently the first five symptomatic residents in a

care home setting are tested to provide confirmation of whether if there is an outbreak,

However, as lab capacity increases every day the government is expanding testing to include all care home residents who develop

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The safety of residents and staff is a priority and as such, testing will now also be provided to all potential care home residents before they are discharged from hospital. This will provide reassurance and peace of mind to residents and family members, and will help care providers to take appropriate action to ensure that social care workers and other residents are safe - including implementing isolation procedures for those who test

positive.
The measures confirmed today are expected to be outlined further in the government's Covid-19 social care action plan tomorrow, and will help give residents, their families and those that

they care for peace of mind. Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said: "I am deeply conscious that people in residential care are among

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coronavirus. We are doing everything we can to keep workers. residents their families safe, and I am determined to ensure that everyone who needs a coronavirus test should be able to have access to one.

'We have already begun testing social care workers and will roll this out nationwide over the coming days. And as we continue to ramp up our testing programme, we will test all current care home residents with coronavirus symptoms and all new care home residents who are discharged

from hospital into care.
"Testing is key in our battle against coronavirus, and as part of our plan to prevent the spread and save lives we will ensure that everyone in social care who needs a test can have a test.

As the rollout continues the Health Secretary has confirmed that every social care worker who needs a test can now get one.

Dedicated testing has already begun for frontline staff, including social care workers and in addition to over 20,000 tests for NHS workers and their families.

their families.
As capacity grows further through the government's new mega labs, it will prioritise the testing of symptomatic social care workers and anyone in their household who have COVID-19 symptoms.

Quality The Care Commission (CQC) are leading coordination of testing for the care sector, and have already offered 6000 care facilities the opportunity to test their staff. By the end of the week they will have contacted all 30,000 care

Care providers will identify workers eligible for testing and refer them to their local

testing centre. Tests for social care staff and residents will support the government to achieve its ambition of 100,000 COVID-19 tests a day by end

INTRODUCING... ALEX JAMES

New single 'Direction' - Released 8th May





"Being in a wheelchair performing is pretty awesome because it looks so different to what people are used to." - Alex James

Introducing Newton Aycliffe's new indie rock sensation Alex James.

Alex James' debut single 'Direction' release influenced by the likes of Foo fighters, Royal Blood and Sam Fender. 'Direction' has a classic indie rock sound with a catchy hook line "Tell me that you want me, tell me that you need

'Direction' was written about conquering life's difficulties. Diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy at the age of four, Alex James has long questioned which direction his life was headed, but his undoubted talent and self-belief prove an inspiring combination.

Through his work Alex James aims to continue the long rock tradition of challenging pre-conceptions through live performance.

The card you are dealt in life shouldn't mean that you can't be a part of the music industry. There just aren't enough wheelchair artists wanting to perform." – Alex

Artist/Band Bio:

Alex James, an Alternative, Indie-rock band formed in 2019, aims to hit the North East music scene by storm, following the tease of his brand new, debut Single release.

This newly emerging band in the North East music scene, has an accumulation of raw, rock and roll sounds. with influence from popular artists, such as Oasis, the Stone Roses, Royal Blood, Foo Fighters, Sam Fender, The Beatles and many more Frontman and guitarist 'Alex James' Kennedy formed this band in 2019, as part of his Masters in Music degree at Newcastle University. Alex is a full-time wheelchair user, who has an extreme passion for rock music, he is fully committed to becoming one of the first wheelchair user frontmen of a Rock and Roll band.

@itsmealexiames Instagram: @itsmealexjames Twitter: @alex jamesmusic

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Programme Schedule

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Every Night from 12 Midnight to 3am cuddle up and listen to classic "Love Songs"

Some of our shows will be cancelled until the Coronavirus situation is resolved HOWEVER WE WILL CONTINUE BROADCASTING 24/7

Eurovision Show Simon Harding 10-12am Moderation Jack & Garvey Kitchen Floorfillers 12-2pm Cazbo langles Weekly Edition Paul Baker 4-6pm Northern & Classic Soul (R) Kevin Sowerby

"The Saturday Night Experience" Sponsored by Bengal Lounge Indian Restaurant & Takeaway

Evening Session 8-9nm Rock the House Carl Booth Retro Trance Mix 9-10pm OZ-DI . 10-12am Street 'n' Drum 'n' Bass MC Supa SUNDAY

Church Service Xcel Centre 9-10am Yesterdays Music Today Sponsored by MV Mobility 10-11am Yesterdays Music Today Alan Brown Random Reiki Master 11-12pm Phil Hawkins Country & Americana Show David Ringer 12-2pm

Blues Show Sponsored by Whitehouse Funeral Service Bear Blues Show Colin & Monica 2-4nm Folk/Celtic/Rock Show 4-6pm Steve & Col Jazz Time 6-7.30pm Mike Dixon The Rock Show 8-10nm CAD10-12am Paul's Down Time Paul Kjenstad

MONDAY 10-12am Colden Years Paul Baker Richard Smith A to Z of Pop 12-1pm Afternoon Aycliffe Paul Baker 60s Show Karl Simons 6-7pm 7-8nm 70s Show Peter Rush 80s Show Gary Avery 8-9pm Paul Baker 90s Show 10-11nm NNs Show Producer Dan

11-12am Teens Show Andy Fittes TUESDAY 10-12am Golden Years Paul Baker Richard Smith 12-1nm A to 7 of Pon 1-3 pm Afternoon Aycliffe Paul Baker All About the 60s Honest John (sports talk cancelled until sports start up again) 7.30-9.30pm Northern & Classic Soul Kevin Sowerby

10-12am

1-3pm

6-8nm

FRIDAY

10-12am

Golden Years 12-1nm A to 7 of Pon Afternoon Aycliffe 1-3pm Alternative Aycliffe 8-10pm **THURSDAY**

Golden Years 10-12am A to Z of Pop Afternoon Avcliffe The List 8-10pm

BeatRoote Golden Years

A to 7 of Pop 12-1nm 1-3pm Afternoon Aycliffe 6-8pm Techno Trance Mix **Guest Presenter Session** 8-10nm

· 24th April - Pauly Mac - Classic Rare Vinyl Mix (Australia) Alternative Avcliffe (R)

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

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Paul Baker

Paul Baker

Gaz n Alby

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Text: 07512 253333 Email: info@ayclifferadio.co.uk

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NE IN - Tune in to our Presenter's shows and support your local radio station.

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SPONSOR - Sponsor a show, presenter or the station for a nominal fee. **ORGANISATIONS** - You are invited to come along and record an interview about your club, organisation or charity.

ADVERTISE - Could your business benefit from advertising on Aycliffe Radio? LOCAL BAND/CHOIR - Send us a pre-recorded session of your set or invite us along to record you perform. SCHOOLS - We can attend and record your Concerts. Performances.

PUBS/CLUBS - Send us your upcoming events and our presenters will

promote them during their shows (and via our website). EVENTS - If you are organising an event, why not let us help you promote it? We are always interested in local news stories. We like to feature **good**

& community service Tel: Paul

UTC South Durham Stair Challenge Raises £16,000 for PPE Visors

organised a sponsored stair climb which saw competitors scale the combined heights of the National Three Peaks in their own homes on Monday 13th April. 200 people, working as individuals or in teams of up to six, took part in the stair climb to raise funds for UTC's 'Visors for Victory' initiative.
The 'Visors for Victory'

initiative was created at the beginning of April in response to the lack of PPE available to key workers. UTC South Durham staff designed the visors and have been producing them using laser cutters. Since Thursday 2nd April, UTC have donated over 1500 visors to over organisations the North East, including hospitals, care homes, GP surgeries, and Foodbanks.

have been raising funds to cover the cost of materials for the visors on their Just Giving page, through entry and unough entry fees and sponsorship from the National Three Peaks Stair Climbing Challenge. £24,000 in total has been raised far, including £16,100 from sponsorship and entry fees from the Challenge. All funds raised will go towards covering the cost of production for the visors. Any remaining funds will be donated to the NHS.

UTC Principal Tom Dower took part in the stair climb challenge on Monday. Speaking shortly after his family of five completed the challenge as a team, Tom said: "The Stair Climbing Challenge was a fantastic opportunity to raise funds for a very worthy cause. It was hard work, but well worth it considering how much we've raised to help provide visors to key workers!

engineering and technology specialists, UTC



their skills to help provide visors for key workers until they can acquire PPE through medical suppliers.

It has been incredible to see how staff, students, and the wider community have come together to help make these much needed visors. I would like to thank all involved for their generosity!

Tom's son Arthur, aged 11, was one of the youngest competitors in the Challenge. Arthur described taking part in the Challenge as "tiring, hot and brilliant!

UTC have also received generous donations of materials from companies across the country, including acetate sheets from Wright's Office Supplies, and plastic

from AA Flags and the Essex branch of the Netherlandsbased company, Plantpak Ltd.

For more information on the visors, please visit: utcsouthdurham.org/visorsfor-victory
Photo: District Nurses from

Newton Aycliffe, County Durham wearing the visors made at UTC South Durham



Paul Howell, Member of Parliament for Sedgefield

Well there we have it another strange week. At the time writing last week we had a prime minister going into intensive care and we were all concerned about how effective the social distancing would remain over the Easter weekend.

Thankfully we now have a Prime Minister recuperating having left intensive care and being able to thank the NHS at a very personal level and we can all reflect that the vast majority of people did as they should over the

weekend and stayed at home. The message of course remains the same Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives. It appears that the charts are starting to show that this is working but we cannot be certain yet and it is imperative we don't throw away the hard work that has been done. Please, if you have the opportunity join me in saying thanks, not only to our outstanding NHS and care staff but to every front line worker who is helping to keep us going. Whether you

services, council employees or volunteers you are all amazing.

There are always many personal stories in a situation like we are in and I continue to think most on those whose loved ones have died as a result of Coronavirus and I offer them my sincere commiserations, it must be so difficult to not even say goodbye or celebrate their life properly. Please continue to follow the guidance so there are less people needing to endure the heartbreak.

I, and the other Local MP's continue to have weekly conference calls with both the police and the local council where we share our perspectives on the situation and review how we can support each other.

Like everyone I have been pretty much confined to barracks and I am only leaving home to exercise or shop for food, other than occasions when I am able to join some volunteers. I had the pleasure of joining the Play Cafe team at the Big Club to help pack and distribute some food parcels on Easter Monday, my thanks to them all for everything they do and allowing me to help, and happy birthday Kath.

The high spot of the weekend had to be the Easter Bunny. that is Nev Jones, singing live on Facebook at 3.00 on Sunday. Thanks for making us all smile Nev.

Please continue to look after your neighbours,

Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives. Paul Howell MP Member of Parliament for Sedgefield

Drivers Urged to Slow Down as Covid-19 Pandemic Causes More to Speed

Drivers are being urged to curb their speed as coronavirus measures have led to more people walking on the roads.

Campaign group Road Safety GB North East (RSGB NE) said since the North East went into lockdown ten days ago, there had been a notable shift in both driver and pedestrian behaviour on the region's roads.

Research since lockdown began on the evening of Monday, March 23, shows there is less than half the normal amount of traffic on weekdays, and only a third on weekends (down 67%). with larger reductions on local roads.

However, traffic speeds have increased on most roads, with many seeing average speeds around 5mph higher than normal. The data shows that some people are sticking to the speed limit, but there are more extreme speeds being recorded, which is pulling the average up.

Coupled with more people walking, cycling and jogging on the roads in order to social distance from others, an accident is waiting to happen.
"We have only been in

lockdown just over a week, but already we have seen a marked shift in the way some drivers are using the roads. They need to slow down," said Paul Watson, RSGB NE Chairman.

"As the lockdown has resulted in most people working from home and only going out once a day to exercise, there has been an increase in people walking, running cycling around their local areas. In order to give other pedestrians a wide berth, many are walking on the roads, or crossing over frequently, in order to social distance and ensure they are at least 2m from anvone else.

at 20 mph, there is a 2.5 percent chance they will be killed.

still out there enforcing the law and trying to keep our roads as safe as possible. Whilst the roads may be quieter because many people are staying at home, this does not give motorists the go ahead to drive above the legal speed limits, and we have seen

examples of this over the

last week or so.
"There are still other vehicles on the road and pedestrians and passengers to consider as well as yourselves. Collisions could put additional strain onto the NHS and emergency services at an already demanding time, and so we're asking people to take care on the roads and please stick to the speed limits."

In 2019, there were 800 pedestrian casualties on North East roads, 18 fatal, 263 serious and 519 slight. One in ten pedestrian fatalities involved driver, while speeding speeding drivers were involved in 25% of all road deaths.

However, it's important to note that more than half of all pedestrian collisions are at least partly due to the pedestrian themselves failing to look properly. This increases to 75% when collisions involve a child pedestrian.

more information about Road Safety GB North East, road safety advice and campaigns, to https://www. lookoutroadsafety.co.uk. Follow Road Safety GB North East on social media:

Facebook facebook.com/RSGBNE Twitter – @RSGB NE YouTube – search for 'Road Safety GB North

Xcel Online Services

a Church we are continuing to connect with our church members and the community through a regular online schedulemostly 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

Every Wednesday (Pastor Julian with guests live on his Instagram).

7.30pm Planet Youth Live Friday Nights

(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



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Police Inspector Steve Clyburn, from the Cleveland and Durham Specialist Operations Unit, said: "During lockdown, whilst only essential journeys must be taken, we would like to remind drivers that officers are



GREENFIELD STUDENTS INSPIRED Local Housebuilder Achieves **BY WIZARD & TYPHOON**

Students from Greenfield Community College have been inspired by a creative project led by Greenfield Arts and Friends of the Wizard and Typhoon. The project aims to inspire students to explore their own skills and creativity and to realise what they can achieve.

Students have been working successfully alongside artists professional and musicians exploring the life and work of Shildon born Thomas Bulch and George Allan aka 'The Wizard and the Typhoon'. The project celebrates the creativity of two inspirational musical composers from Shildon who were renowned for their contribution to the music world during the late 19th and early 20th century. The project explores our sense of place and celebrates Shildon's heritage and

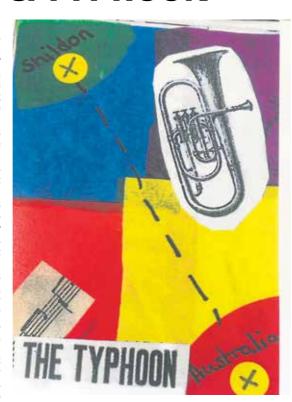
vibrant community.
Artist Theresa Easton has been facilitating workshops with students, engaging them in creative printing techniques resulting in vibrant and thoughtful work. The work has been brought together to create a zine (magazine). The students' collaboration explores and reflects their work creatively, an appropriate response to two significant

Students have also begun working with inspirational and educator Elizabeth Corney. Elizabeth is a musical artist and composer who is helping the young people to explore composition.

David Reynolds, who is part of the Friends of the Wizard and Typhoon group, is keen to draw comparisons between the past, present and future of the area; supporting the aspirations of the students today who have demonstrated skills to explore their ideas and collaborate throughout this project.

"George Allan and Thomas Bulch would have been touched and moved if they Bulch knew that 90 years after they left this life, there would be a group of young people, from the area that they were born, who were discussing what they thought of their story by putting their thoughts and feelings about it into print to share with people... what wonderful things might each and any of them achieve in their lifetimes that future people might marvel over" said David.

You can find out more about the project and Shildon's heritage by visiting www. wizardandtyphoon.org/. If you would like to know



more about the many supported projects Greenfield Arts please visit www.greenfield-arts.co.uk. Greenfield Arts committed to delivering and providing high quality arts provision and are delighted to be able to bring the project

to students by offering an inspiring extended opportunity for learning.
The project is supported by Northern Heartlands, one of the sixteen Great Place Schemes in England, funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council.

Highest Ever Customer Satisfaction Score

Housebuilder Bellway has achieved five-star builder status for the fourth year running.

The developer, whose Durham division is based in Darlington and builds in Teesside and County Durham, has retained the accolade in the latest Home Builders Federation (HBF) Customer Satisfaction

Survey. Published in March each year, the survey measures performance in a range of areas, including build quality and customer service.

For a housebuilder to achieve a five-star rating, more than 90 per cent of its customers must say they would recommend them to a friend. This year, Bellway was one of just 10 large housebuilders to top this mark, achieving its highest ever score of 92.4 per cent.
The developer, which builds

more than 10,000 homes each year, surveyed more than 5,300 of its customers in 2019.

Regional Director Bellway Durham, Jon Horan, said: "No one's opinion matters more to us than that of our customers, so our five-star builder status is something we take enormous pride in. We are committed to delivering the best home possible to each and every



one of our buyers so to receive such a positive response from them in the survey is extremely satisfying.

"The feedback shows that customers would recommend us to their friend because of the excellent customer service we provide, as well as the high build quality and high energy efficiency of our homes, all of which are designed with modern living in mind.

"Achieving five-star status is testament to the hard work and dedication of our people throughout the company. All of us at Bellway are proud to be part of a top housebuilder and take pride in our job to deliver quality houses to our customers.

"However, retaining our five-star status – as difficult as that may be - is not the limit of our ambition. We are continually striving to improve, so to record our highest ever score for customer since the survey is especially pleasing."

One customer who bought a house with Bellway Durham, said: "Bellway have shown us just how reliable a housebuilder can be. The whole process was very positive and pretty much everything was done for us, we had no concerns at all.
"We really needed this home

to be right for the three of us. It's a lovely place to call home and it feels very secure. Overall we're very happy with our experience!"

Bellway Durham is building houses across the region, including developments in Stockton, Yarm, Nunthorpe, Wynyard, Ingleby Barwick, Hurworth, Heighington and Seaham.

For more information, visit bellway.co.uk

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Eight Ways to Entertain Your Dog

With the nation's owners set to spend National Pet Month (April 1st – May 10th) indoors, Dogs Trust is issuing some top tips on how dog owners can keep their dogs happy - all with simple household items - a cardboard box and toilet roll

Kiddie Head of Jenna Canine Behaviour at Dogs Trust, said: "We understand that owners may be looking for ways to keep their dogs occupied, especially when the current advice is to go outside just once a day for exercise with your four-legged friend. Whilst physical exercise is important for your dog, mental stimulation is also

essential to help keep them happy. You can make it fun for them, and because they're using their brains, it's just as tiring as physical exercise.

"It's really easy for you keep your dog's brain busy from the comfort of your own home using simple household items. From activities involving their favourite treats, to games using things you may have left over from online deliveries, there are many ways you can keep your dog active, without stepping outside your front door.

Dogs Trust has come up with eight fun ways to entertain your dog with a cardboard box and tubes whilst you're



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staving indoors, and asking people to share their pictures and videos using the hashtag #MyDogIsForLife tagging @DogsTrust on Twitter and Instagram.

Tutorial videos for the eight games will be released during National Pet Month on the charity's social media pages, with the first one 'the paw-fect figure 8' launching today so dog owners can get

1. The paw-fect figure 8 – Get two boxes and set them out a little distance apart. Hold your dog's treats or a favourite toy in one hand and slowly start to move them in a figure of eight around the two items, swapping the reward into your other hand at the centre point. One arm will guide your dog around the item to the left and the other arm will guide your dog around the item to your right. Repeat several times until you've got the movement smooth and wellrehearsed!

2. Digging deep: Shred or scrunch up newspaper or any paper items and pop them in an empty box. Drop in some treats or toys, and

watch your dog dig away!
3. Paws-up: Can you get them to put their front feet on the box? Their back feet? Can you get them to run round to the left, to the right? Can smaller dogs sit in the box? Think outside of the box and we're sure you won't be able to contain yourself with all this fun! 4. Bowling balls: Create a 10-pin bowling alley with spare kitchen roll tubes. Have a competition and

see how many pins you can

knock down vs. your dog!
5. Tunn-els of fun: Cut the

sides of a few boxes and line

own DIY tunnel. Encourage your dog to go through with the promise of treats or their favourite toy at the end of the tunnel!

them up to make your very

6. Jog your dog's memory: Lay out multiple boxes in a semi-circle and pop a treat in one of them, making sure your dog is watching. Hold up a sheet to block your furry friend's vision, drop and then see if they remember which box the treat was in! Repeat the game and change the box with the treat in, see how many times they get it right!

7. Snoot challenge: next level remember the original snoot challenge where you had to make a circular shape with your hands and wait for pooch to run up and put their nose through the hole? Building from this, cut a hole out in your box and see if you can get your dog to poke their nose through it! *boop*

8. Teach your dog to read for starters write different words (e.g. sit, down, paw) on different boxes that you want your dog to learn. Say the word that's on the specific box in front of them, and ask them to do what the word says. When your dog does as you've asked, reward them with a tasty treat and repeat several times until your dog has associated the new word, with the specific

Images and videos shared with Dogs Trust will appear on the My Dog Is For Life webpage feed for others to see and take inspiration www.dogstrust.org. from uk/mydogisforlife

For more information, visit www.dogstrust.org.uk

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Keeping your Car Safe During the MOT Exemption Period

cars, motorcycles found driving unsafe vans that require a vehicles. Dealerships and vans that require a MOT from 30 March 2020 have been given a six-month exemption from testing, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. This is to enable vehicle owners to continue to travel to work where they cannot work from home, and to shop for necessities. The only stipulation is that vehicles must be kept in a roadworthy condition, with the possibility of for those prosecution

garages may remain open for essential repairs. MOTs due before 30 March 2020 that have not been tested have not been extended by the Government and therefore you are obliged to get an MOT test carried out, or not use the car. However, if your vehicle has a current MOT or 6-month extended MOT you may want to carry out the following checks to ensure ongoing roadworthiness, so the NFDA has compiled a key list that will assist.
Sue Robinson, Director of

the National Franchised Dealers Association (NFDA) explains, many people are selfisolating or avoiding all non-essential travel, vehicles could potentially be unused for weeks, if not months. This means that we are not monitoring the condition of our vehicles closely, meaning there could be missed faults that could prove dangerous when they are used. For those who are making journeys, these are likely to be short, irregular irregular visits to supermarkets and pharmacies, which can also have an impact on your vehicle. "MOT

appointments are still available at garages and dealerships that are still open, as a method of ensuring roadworthiness. However, if this is not possible due to self-isolating, being a vulnerable individual or having someone in your household that is vulnerable, or for any other reason, then the following advice is essential for maintaining your vehicle.

Tyres will deflate over time, so checking the

tyre pressures regularly will help alleviate this. Handheld pressure gauges and inflators are available for use at home, but if you do not have access to these then using an air compressor at your nearest petrol station is the next best option. Ensure that you maintain 2 metres of distance from others and use protective gloves when operating the machine. Check tyre pressure cold 3mm.

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and on level ground to ensure an accurate reading. Tread depth is something that should be checked regularly, as it impacts the only part of the car that connects with the road. For cars, light vans and trailers, the tyre tread depth should be a minimum of 1.6 millimetres (mm), with many organisations recommending that the depth does not go below

It is vital that all light bulbs are operating correctly A simple walk-round check with lights and indicators on will indicate they are operative, but you will need someone to assist you checking the brake lights by depressing the brake edal while you are outside. Light bulbs are available at most dealerships, garages and parts shops, although the fitting of bulbs can range from simple to very complex so assistance of a professional in some cases may be needed. Advice can always be sought if you are a member of the AA or

Fluid Levels

As it may have been some time since key fluid levels have been checked. looking at these are vital to ensure your vehicle is safe to run. Ensure that your car is on level ground and the engine is cold when checking fluid levels.

Engine oil levels on most vehicles can be checked by identifying your dipstick under the bonnet. Remove

this, wipe clean with a cloth or paper towel, replace. and remove once again Check that the oil level is between the markings at the bottom of the dipstick. If the oil level is low, fill the engine with the correct grade of oil detailed by your manufacturer.

Windscreens and mirrors Ensure that windscreen washer levels are within the recommended capacity and top up with diluted screen wash, or just water through the summer months. Be sure to check any holes in the washer jets are clear - these can be

unblocked using a pin.
Windscreen blades must also be checked for wear, on both the front and rear screens. Clean them of any dirt, leaves, insects etc that may have accumulated over the time your vehicle has been stationary.

Robinson concluded, "These tips are the minimum of what needs to be done in the concluded." to be done in order to maintain your vehicle from home in these uncertain times."

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and were tasked with both with support from Durham building a prototype of an international space hotel University. Čarl and then pitching for funds Cabinet member for

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Pupils were invited to

work in teams, developing

ideas based on scientific knowledge and inspired by

the day's keynote speaker, Dr Azadeh Fattahi, a

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Durham County Council's

Durham organised the

day to demonstrate how a

knowledge of languages

and science are used in

the world of work. The

day was led by Business Language Champions

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economic regeneration, from French and Spanish said "This event has been schools a fantastic chance for the included: Dene Academy, young people to practise their language skills in a Ferryhill Business and College, fun and engaging way. School 'It's also demonstrated the Seaham High, Sedgefield important role languages College, can play in real life business situations and the Catholic

future career opportunities that they could open up for young people." Dr Azadeh Fattahi, from Durham University's Institute for Computational Cosmology, said: "Right Science across our Outreach programme here

at Durham University, our aim is to stimulate interest in science and help people understand how it applies to our everyday lives and what exciting careers are available in science.

"The young people at the Space Challenge event had some great ideas and great enthusiasm.

knows, Who some of them will be the scientists and innovators of tomorrow?'

A video of the space available at www.youtube.com/ watch?v=MFKowe1YqGQ

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Helping more than 6000 Households with their Council Tax

More than 6,000 households in County Durham have had a combined £1.7m taken off their council tax as part of a local authority's efforts to help residents through the Coronavirus pandemic.

Durham County Council is giving households in receipt of a partial council tax reduction a further cut of up to £300 from their council tax as it seeks to help residents who need financial support during the COVID-19 outbreak.

That is in addition to its scheme which already delivers a 100 per cent reduction for three quarters of eligible households. The council has today announced that it has so far applied the reductions of up to £300 to 6,100 households, with this equating to the combined £1.7 million decrease in liability.

The authority is also reporting an increase in people applying to its council tax reduction scheme (CTRS) with 2,500 new claims being received last week. Staff are now prioritising processing these claims with the £300 credits to be applied where appropriate.

The council is being supported to deliver the reductions by the government through its allocation from the national £500m Hardship Fund.

Cllr Alan Napier, deputy leader of the authority and its Cabinet member for resources, said: "We fully appreciate that this is a very difficult time for our residents and that many are finding their work affected in some way.

"We are looking to do everything we can to support people who are enduring financial hardship by reducing their council tax.

reducing their council tax.

"Our teams have worked really hard to process 6,100 reductions of up to £300 already and I know many of our staff have volunteered to work additional hours over the bank holiday weekend to ensure other households benefit as quickly as possible. The CTRS provides discounts of up to 100 per cent to eligible households, with the council one of only a small number of local authorities nationally to provide this level of support. Almost 26,000 families receive a 100 per cent discount - 78 per cent of the total number signed up to the scheme.

Households who currently receive assistance through CTRS but still pay some money towards their council tax are receiving the further reduction of up to £300.

This means an estimated 1,600 extra households will benefit from having no council tax to pay this year, while a further 5,700 families will see their bills reduced by £300. The £300 reductions being applied to support people in receipt of CTRS is double the amount recommended by the government.

government.
The council has already postponed debt recovery for anyone falling into arrears with their council tax bills and is encouraging anyone with concerns about their payments to get in touch

payments to get in touch.

A range of options are available to support residents who need help, including

spreading payments evenly over 12 months or starting payments from June instead of April. Many have already taken up this offer.

The authority is also investing an additional £1m from the Hardship Fund into its Welfare Assistance Scheme, which provides short-term cash awards to people in crisis situations. This includes those impacted by benefit sanctions, vulnerable people who need help to cover daily living expenses and residents unable to purchase essential furniture and appliances.

Cllr Angela Surtees, Cabinet member for social inclusion, said: "We know that some of our residents are finding it very tough at this time and we want to reassure residents that we will do all we can to support them. We have a range of support measures in place to provide help to people who need it, including our Welfare Assistance Scheme which can provide further short-term support and assistance."

For more information, visit www.durham.gov.uk/counciltaxreduction

Care Homes Plead for Assistance

Care Home owners across the North East are pleading with the Government to step in and support their efforts, following what they claim is a "deafening silence" from the region's local authorities. And the homes are also hoping to rally the support of the general public to get them to insist that more should be done to save the lives of 36,000 vulnerable residents and care staff.

The industry has become one of the casualties of the coronavirus outbreak, with its staff having to care for elderly and vulnerable people, many of whom have already fallen victim to the virus.

And many owners claim that local councils' lack of action could have potentially deadly consequences for people "who have given so much to society and who we should be able to keep free from harm."

Home operators claim that not only have 12 of the region's local authorities failed to give them adequate funding to deal with the crisis, but they are also being forced to readmit Covid-19 patients to their homes putting both staff and other residents at risk.

Keith Gray, chair of Care North East which represents more than 250 care homes across the region, said this is not about making profit but ensuring the funding was adequate to cover costs.

"It is sickening that at the time of national crisis, when everybody is pulling together, councils in the North East have banded together and refused to provide an adequate support package to help keep the most vulnerable of our society safe," he said.

"The homes are only asking for the basics which would enable them to keep residents and staff safe – but it seems we have just been forgotten.

"No care home is looking to profit from this crisis, the reality is that many homes will be haemorrhaging money, but both the region's local authorities and the clinical care groups don't seem to have any interest in helping our frontline staff." Mr Gray said care homes hadn't been issued with any PPE to give to their staff, beyond a few days' worth of masks, which he believes

has contributed to "Covid-19 ripping through homes, resulting in the untimely death of residents and infecting staff."

Care homes bown

Care homes have asked the local authorities to pay for the additional costs which are being incurred because of having to deal with Covid-19 but claim that to date not one local authority in the region has agreed to this – despite a £1.6b Government grant - offering only an additional five per cent payment – which will only be paid of the homes which agree to take people suffering with the virus into their current resident mix.

"Even the local authorities' own body recommends paying 10 per cent, but the North East councils won't even abide by that," said Mr Gray.

"And the fact that homes are being forced to take Covid-19 patients, without adequate PPE for their staff, is irresponsible and heartless.

"Staff are going to work and then have to return home to their own families and we cannot adequately protect them. It's scandalous."

Representatives from other care homes echoed Mr Gray's words.

Gray's words.
"It's shocking that we are being forced into taking Covid-19 patients into our homes, which can have terrible consequences for other elderly and vulnerable people," said one care home owner.

"Patients should be cared for in separate units so that they are being kept away from other residents — mixing them together is sheer madness.

"The true death toll of residents from Covid-19 might never be known as they are not rigorously testing residents who die with the symptoms of Covid-19, at care homes or in the community."

Care North East is now asking for the Government to intervene and to insist that the local authorities give adequate funding to care homes "to ensure that the most vulnerable are protected from harm."

"Care home staff have become the forgotten army in this fight against coronavirus, yet we are playing a vital role," said Mr Gray.

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.

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NHS Jobs Working N.A.F.C. UPDATE Aycliffe Youth Football News with LinkedIn

NHS Jobs are working with LinkedIn, the world' professional to acces largest network. the recruitment of critical healthcare staff in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. NHS Jobs, the official online recruitment service for the NHS in England and Wales, are working with LinkedIn to promote COVID-19 specific roles as 'urgent' on LinkedIn's platform. Anyone looking for one of these roles can find them by visiting the LinkedIn Jobs homepage or NHS Jobs.

With 28+ million people in the UK on LinkedIn, professionals with the right skills will be notified of relevant roles, helping to quickly match those that can help with critical healthcare

David Roberts, Head of

Service for NHS Jobs, said: "The NHS Jobs team have been working to make it easier for jobseekers to find roles relating to COVID-19 and have been implementing measures to increase the reach of NHS vacancies. We appreciate the support LinkedIn have provided at this time and it is great to be working together to support this national effort."

Josh Graff, UK Country Manager at LinkedIn said: "The NHS has never needed more support than it does today. LinkedIn is proud to help NHS Jobs to accelerate the recruitment of healthcare staff and connect those with essential skills to critical roles. The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest challenge of our time and we all have a role to play in supporting the nation's response efforts."

Following the news that the FA Council has declared the 2019/2020 season null and void Newton Aycliffe FC chairman Allan Oliver has expressed his thanks to everyone involved with the Club.

Allan said, "It's naturally disappointing that the season ended early. However, the country has more to worry about than football at present and we all have a full part to play to support the NHS by staying home."

"I do though want to express my appreciation of the efforts everyone put in this year. The committee and other volunteers put so much time and effort in to the Club. Without them there wouldn't be a Club.

Colin Stromsoy and his management team including Mark Wood and Scott Brassell have worked wonders and produced



Allan Oliver

that entertaining football. They certainly gave us a feel good factor."

"The players applied themselves magnificently throughout the season. Had the season played to a conclusion I have no doubt that it would have been our best Northern League

"None of this would have been possible without the magnificent support of our sponsors. We are immensely grateful to all those companies who contributed to our success. We are incredibly fortunate to have fantastic sponsors in John Elliott at Ebac, Danny Richmond at Bedsos and Alex Lineton at Beaumont Landscapes. I can't thank them enough for all they've done for us this year.'

"I want also to thank our fans for their loyalty and dedication following the team home and away, including the young fans who have given the players such great support.'

"None of us know for certain what the next few months will bring or whether the next season will start on time. Whatever happens our focus will be on preparing a team that can carry on where we left off, continue to improve the ground and also complete the integration Newton Aycliffe Juniors." "On a personal note I would like to pass on my thanks to everyone who has been involved with the club this season. It's been a magnificent effort. These are challenging times but we can come through this together. In the meantime we need to stay at home and keep safe."

football stopped for over 300 young footballers at Newton Aycliffe Youth FC, as all our local youth leagues suspended matches. The football club committee then decided therefore, that we could not continue to bring the children together for any football club events. The committee felt the health of all our children was our top priority. All training sessions were cancelled as well as

Friday 13th March,

scheduled fund raising events. Our individual club decision became a directive from the Football Association the following week, but the hope was that football would recommence by the end of April, to allow our teams to complete their league campaigns. However all our hopes were dashed as The FA announced at the end of March that season 2019/2020 was ended.

Scheduled end of season and pre-season tournaments have been suspended or rescheduled in the hope that football can recommence, but in reality we can only look towards the normal start of next season, which is scheduled for early September.

Meanwhile social media is being used in many ways across all our teams at the football club, from general information, on line training sessions, to fun challenges taken on by individual teams, old photos of past teams and team coaches when they were in their prime, have been dug out from drawers and posted on our Facebook group, to entertain our children, their

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parents and ex-players. However, as an FA Charter Standard Community Football Club, that stretches beyond football and into the heart of our community, our thoughts are with everyone who has been affected by the current Covid 19 crisis. We applaud all those working in the NHS and those working in care homes looking after our most vulnerable, as well as every key worker.

will get through and football will We will this again restart and

GAROLL

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the experiences they have gone through to be even stronger. Until that day be safe and please follow all the government guidelines that are issued.

Newton Aycliffe Youth communities will build on

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- Communal Kitchen and Toilet Facilities
- 24 Hour CCTV Security in Operation

From 42m² (500ft²) to 89m² (958ft²)

For more information contact Stuart on 01325 300212



* Subject to small business relief

Heighington Football

The Russell Foster Youth League teams who normally play on a Saturday have been told that the Under 8s and Under 10s current spring league has been cancelled after a consultation with the Football Association.

The Sunday T.J.F.A. League has not yet made a decision. The two Under 10s teams are in a decent position in their leagues and may have the chance of silverware. But at the time of writing we are not sure what the league are planning.

John Anderson

Please, No **Fireworks**

Please, please, can people reconsider using fireworks when supporting our key workers on a Thursday evening?

K9 Pursuits have received a number of calls from pet owners asking how they can help their traumatised pets in these situations.

A stressed pet is so hard to help when the actual thing that causes them stress is repeated on a regular basis.

Please, please, don't use Gill Crawford K9 Pursuits. Newton Aycliffe.



Phone Lines Open 7 Days a Week

