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AYCLIFFE RADIO FACEBOOK LIVE EVENT IN AID OF SSAFA



Not only have Aycliffe Radio presenters continued to produce shows and keep local residents entertained during the lock-down, but behind locked doors they have also organised various Facebook Live events, the latest of which took place on Saturday 13th June between 1.00pm and 4.00pm and included performances from local entertainers Micky Richards, Jenna Highfield and Neville Jones, as well as a special performance from Jay Murray a Cavern Club (Liverpool) resident singer.

The event took place for two reasons, the first being to celebrate the Queen's birthday and the second to start the celebrations for Renee Glover who is to celebrate her 106th birthday this weekend. Renee is a former 'Aycliffe Angel', it was therefore very fitting that the event be held in ROF59 function room, which turned out to be a fantastic recording studio for the day.

Micky Richards kicked off the proceedings with his take on some cracking 80s tunes and party tracks. Jenna Highfield then took listeners and viewers back in time to music from the 1940s, followed by Neville Jones who entertained in his own inimitable way. Jay Murray finished the afternoon off with a selection of tracks made famous by the Beatles.

The acts all gave their time and performances for free as they attempted to raise funds for the local SSAFA branch (Soldiers, Sailors & Airmens Families Association). Which raised nearly £400.

Aycliffe Radio would like to thank all the artistes, the back stage volunteers, ROF59 Activity Centre for the use of the facilities and in particular, Gary Avery who was the MC for the afternoon.

Photography was also donated by Pink Fairy Captures (Tel: 07584 065123).

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Plans for Maintaining Social Distancing in Towns and on Travel Routes

Residents in County Durham can have their say on how social distancing is maintained as emergency measures are being implemented in towns centres and on countywide pavements and cycle routes.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, plans have been drawn up by Durham County Council to allow people to visit town centres and travel on foot or by bike while maintaining social distancing. Residents in the county are also being encouraged to have their say on where improvements to the walking and cycling network should be delivered.

The first step in this combined approach is to deliver a range of measures in town centres to create more space for people and to allow social distancing. This work began on Saturday, 13 June, and included signage, wider spaces for people walking, the removal of some parking bays and taxi ranks, re-allocation of bus bays and pull-ins, and the introduction of pop up cycle lanes.

Not every town will see all of the measures put in place as each has its own requirements and has been assessed individually.

These temporary measures are to ensure that people can maintain safe social distance as non-essential retail started to re-open this week. The short-term measures

are being put in place to safeguard the general public and they will be continually monitored and adjusted as necessary as people begin to return to town centres.

In response to the pandemic, across the county there has been a marked increase in people walking, running and cycling for exercise and a decrease in car use. The council wants to encourage people to continue using healthier forms of travel.

The council has therefore also applied for funding as part of a £2.62m Emergency Active Travel Fund, shared between seven North East councils. This fund is aimed at emergency measures which will create safer spaces for people walking and cycling.

As the opportunity for the funding is conditional to introducing safety measures almost immediately, they have been planned to tie into existing popular routes, mainly in Durham City.

Finally, in anticipation of further funding being made available to make more permanent safety improvements, the council has launched a Street Space for County Durham consultation for residents to give their views on where more space is needed to encourage more people to walk and cycle.

Residents are being invited to provide their opinion on where they would like to see more permanent measures

via an online form which uses mapping features. This will enable residents to comment on issues in their local areas and the results will be used to help inform future funding bids.

Cllr Carl Marshall, Durham County Council's cabinet member for economic regeneration, said: "We are looking into ways in which safe physical distancing can be maintained as lockdown begins to ease, and even beyond the coronavirus pandemic."

"As town centres begin to reopen for business with the return of retail outlets this week, it is important that we have established both temporary and longer-term measures to ensure people will be able to carry on with their lives safely beyond the outbreak."

"However, I would also like to remind residents of the importance of continuing to follow social distancing and government guidelines at all times during this ongoing pandemic, despite the easing of some restrictions, to protect others, defeat the virus and ensure we can safely return to an everyday normality."

The deadline for comments on the Street Space consultation is 5pm on Friday 31 July 2020. More information about improvements and the consultation can be found at www.durham.gov.uk/saferspaces

GARDEN MAKEOVER DURING LOCKDOWN



Dear Sir,

When I moved to Ashfield at the beginning of March the garden was an unloved area that had also been vandalised from when the house was empty. Myself, (Lucy Walker) and my partner (Gary Welford) were chatting one day and he asked me what I'd like for my birthday in April... I immediately responded with making the garden a nice space for us to enjoy.

Gary got straight to work in March and made my birthday request happen. It has been an absolute life saver for me as I have a stressful job and working from home has been challenging. So, having my garden space to enjoy has been so helpful during such difficult times.

The garden now has decking, a pergola, a dog kennel, artificial grass, a new gravelled area, a fish pond and even a bar! Gary made all of these things from scratch.

The flowers are blooming now too and the solar lights look gorgeous on an evening. This calm and relaxing area has been the highlight of my lockdown and I love sitting in the garden with a glass of wine and a good book! It didn't cost a fortune and I just wanted to share the work that Gary has done as I am incredibly proud and feel very grateful for having such a love my space to enjoy during lockdown. Think I'd have struggled a lot more without it!

Gary is a self employed gardener and handyman and I am so grateful for him taking the time out of his busy schedule to make the garden into something really special. He still wants to add to it and improve it further but so far I think he's done an amazing job!

Lucy Walker
ED: What home and garden renovations did you complete during lockdown? Send your story to paul@newtonnews.co.uk



TOWN CENTRE UNVEILS PLANS FOR REINSTATEMENT...

Newton Aycliffe shopping centre has unveiled the new measures which have been put in place to keep shoppers safe and able to socially distance from this week (15 June).

The centre has remained open throughout the COVID-19 crisis for essential retailers, but with the Government now giving the go-ahead for other shops to trade again, new guidelines for shoppers have been put in place.

This includes a one way system to and from the lift and rear car park – with directional arrows telling people the way to travel – and a queuing system outside of shops, marked with floor tape placed two metres apart.

The detailed plan for when the centre is fully reinstated will see the Management team and Maintenance staff closely monitoring people's behaviour and if they feel social distancing rules are not being obeyed, they will kindly request that people do so.

New signage has been introduced throughout the centre which will give shoppers guidance on social distancing including new signage on post flags reminding customers to remain 2m apart.

The centre has also increased its cleaning which will see dedicated sanitising of all touch point areas throughout the day.

"We are very pleased that we are able to fully reinstate shopping at Newton Aycliffe but with that it is very important that everyone abides by the social distancing rules," said Paul Smith – Centre Manager.

"We have everything in place for that to

happen but it's vital that shoppers take note of the new queueing systems and adheres to the 2m distancing, for the safety of both visitors and the staff.

"We know this is all very new but we would also ask that everyone behaves in a respectful manner, both to our employees and to each other."

Trading times at the centre will remain unchanged, although individual retailers may be changing their opening hours.

"We would advise people to check with the individual shops to see if they are operating at reduced hours," said Paul. The lifts will also be available for anyone needing to use them to access to and from the car park upper levels and again social distancing rules will apply with signage stating that only one person or one family to use them at any given time.

The seating in the main pedestrian walkways will still be available for use but it is requested that while using them customers remain 2m apart.

All car parks – will be open, this includes the multi-storey at the rear of the centre and the single storey ones around the centre.

"Again we are appealing to everyone that they make sure that they stick to the social distancing rules while using the car parks, the stairs and the lifts," said Paul.

"Even though the rules have been relaxed in terms of shops being able to re-open, it is still vitally important that everyone acts responsibly and follows the new systems in place."

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GREENFIELD GAZETTE GOES LIVE

Greenfield Community College have launched a brand-new school bulletin as part of their commitment to keep in touch with students and families and the wider community during these difficult times. This forms part of a communications programme to help inform and support learning and provide helpful signposting to relevant resources at this time. It is also a chance to keep families up-to-date with any changes to the school arrangements and provide engaging reading, information and more. The Gazette is additional to the termly newsletter, The Achiever, which is now available digitally and celebrates

the many achievements of individual students and an insight into the exciting opportunities within the school. You can find a copy of both publications on the school website www.greenfieldschool.net. Greenfield Community College are continuing to offer a range of digital and written resources whilst opening its doors to vulnerable students. Although school as we know it has changed students are continuing to take advantage of support from a range of people and places; families and teaching staff are finding new ways to support learning and students are taking it upon themselves to develop new knowledge to continue their academic studies.

Community Support Look to Emulate Honest John



After the demise of 'Honest' John Hilton a gap opened in the town for a group to mimic John's ideals and ethos.

Tom Carroll and Brian Agar have been busy over the last few months setting up "Community Support" which will follow in the footsteps of Mr Hilton. Good quality items will be accepted as donations and sold on behalf of organisations and charities in Newton Aycliffe. Small items of furniture are also available and will be accepted if in good condition.

The couple have acquired a first floor room in the IES Centre (next to the Blue Bridge), full address is Unit

3A IES Centre (drive past Newton Press offices and follow the signs).

Community Support have been busy cleaning and setting up the store ready for the opening which will take place on **Monday 22nd June at 10.00am.**

There will be social distancing guidelines in place which will allow a maximum of six customers into the store at any one time. There will also be a strict "look, don't touch" policy, but Brian and Tom will both be on hand to show/take the goods out of the cabinets and give more information.

The shop will be open Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm and Saturday

10am to 4pm.

Tom and Brian have applied for charitable status and will run as a not for profit organisation.

A website is in the progress of being completed, but a Facebook page is up and running search for Community Support, Newton Aycliffe. You will also find a selection of items which are available for sale. The organisation recent hit a set back when their van was stolen and written off, they are hoping this will be replaced shortly.

Contact details are as follows:

Tom 07512 251275

Brian 07951 947993

Greenfield College Learning Opportunities

Greenfield Community College are continuing to offer a range of learning resources, support and advice to families and students whilst they are studying at home. Students in all year groups are continuing to develop their studies through written and online material with expert teaching, guidance and communication from their regular teaching staff.

Following government guidelines and in conjunction with educational advice, the school are preparing to offer some face-to-face lessons with Year 10 students at the school site. The face-to-face learning opportunities at school, are at present due to commence from June 18th, and staff are busy ensuring that a safe and supportive welcome will be in place.

Students will be offered face-to-face guidance on the 15th, with helpful conversations to support and develop their learning, emotional wellbeing and offer extra help where needed. It is expected that a blended approach to learning will continue for the foreseeable future, with online lessons, digital learning resources, learning tools and some face-to-face as and when possible.

Any changes will be carefully planned, managed and related to families and students over the coming months. You can keep in touch with our school via our website and twitter page where regular updates and bulletins are available. You can also contact the school via our school email contact@greenfieldschool.net



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Floral Tribute to Heroes of WW2



The 75th anniversary year of Victory in Europe day is being celebrated in a new Durham City flower display. Every summer, Durham County Council plants a decorative carpet bedding display in Gilesgate with a different theme and this year has chosen to pay tribute to those who fought for our freedom in the second world war. Low growing bedding plants with coloured leaves have been used to spell out the words VE DAY 75 on one of the main gateways into the city. Normally, the carpet bed

planting would involve the community, with help from pupils from nearby Gilesgate Primary School. Due to the current coronavirus pandemic, the planting on this occasion has been undertaken solely by staff from the council's clean and green team, in adherence with social distancing guidelines.

The display will remain in place for visitors to enjoy over the summer period, until late September.

Oliver Sherratt, Durham County Council's head of environment, said: "Whilst we're disappointed to not be

able to involve local school children, I'm delighted that we are able to mark this historical event in this special way.

"Our Gilesgate flower display often reflects world, national and regional events, and it was an obvious choice this year to commemorate the seventy fifth anniversary of VE Day and honour the service and sacrifice of the Second World War generation.

"The display is our way of saying thank you to those who gave so much, and will hopefully be enjoyed by those who live, work and visit Durham."

HELP SAVE RIGHTS OF WAY

The British Horse Society is appealing for local people to come forward and help save thousands of miles of unrecorded rights of way which are in danger of being lost forever. These include footpaths and bridleways loved by the country's dog walkers, ramblers and cyclists as well as horse-riders. The Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 changes in the law mean that, come the 1st January 2026, unrecorded routes will no longer be

legally accessible. In order to comply with the 2026 cut-off, valid submissions (called Definitive Map Modification Order applications) are needed and The British Horse Society is hoping to rally local volunteers to get involved. There are two sides to the process – one is visiting these often-little known routes and the other is documenting all the necessary information needed to make an application. Will Steel, 2026 Project Manager at The British

Horse Society says: "The current coronavirus crisis has made many more people recognise the importance of the outdoors, so it is shocking to know that many routes could be lost forever. I am hoping that more local people will get involved as it can all be done while observing social distancing. Lots of the research and investigative work required can be done at home as long as you have internet access. Most local authorities now have online rights of way mapping for their area, and you can also access online OS mapping that shows rights of way based on the local authority's legal record of public paths, the definitive map."

What to do to save your favourite local walks, cycle routes and bridle paths:

- Check the status of the routes you ride or walk along using your Local Authority's online map of rights of way or an OS Explorer Map via bing.com/maps, streetmap.co.uk or via various mapping apps, e.g. OS Maps
- Take action if there's a problem with your routes. To help, the BHS has lots of useful information including a practical toolkit: www.bhs.org.uk/2026

With support from Sport England, the BHS can help with grants to people engaging with the 2026 project in England – to cover expenses like maps and access to records. <https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/access/campaigns/2026/financial-support-dmmo>

Daughter's Story of How Her Mum Fell Victim to Scams

A County Durham woman whose elderly mother was scammed out of thousands of pounds has told her story in the hope of preventing others falling victim.

Thea Khamis has spoken out about what happened to her mother Mary to increase awareness of scams and the financial losses they can cause, as part of a national campaign backed by Durham County Council.

Scams Awareness Fortnight 2020, which starts today, aims to create a network of confident, alert consumers who know what to do when they spot a scam. Organised by Citizens Advice and running until 28 June, the annual campaign is this year focusing on raising awareness of the scams that have emerged as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

Thea has recounted how her retired mother, who was diagnosed with dementia in 2016 and died three years later aged 89, was victim of scams totalling thousands of pounds. These came in various forms be that postal, phone or doorstep. They covered people claiming to be charities, running prize draws or catalogues, or selling medication; as well as bogus roofers.

Thea has revealed how Mary's last records list 101 different companies and organisations she had been sending money to. However the daughter believes the actual number could be much higher.

Thea has told of an occasion where her mother had an issue with her boiler and the daughter suggested they use her savings to get a new one. Thea says her mother "made excuses" about the savings and it soon became apparent that her account, which had had over £10,000 in it, had been emptied to give money to scammers. Mary had also borrowed money from a cousin as well as a credit union.

One of many examples of the scams her mother had been a victim of was an order Mary had placed of almost £1,000 for "duff" medication.

In the last five years of Mary's life, Thea tells how she tried to put systems in place to remind her that the scammers were only out to get her money. She left a script next to the phone so that her mother would tell callers she wouldn't commit to paying for anything without speaking to her children. Call blockers were also installed, Mary was signed up to the Telephone Preference Service and scam mail returned.

However as Mary's details had been shared by scammers, she continued to be contacted. And while there are those genuine services which can block calls, she even received phone calls from scammers purporting to offer the same. As Mary's dementia developed she became less able to cope with money



unaided. Thea tried to stop direct debits going out to scam charities and used power of attorney and third party authority to give her control over her mum's finances. Mary's son also held her debit card in safekeeping so that she could no longer give out the number on the phone.

During the later stages of Mary's life, she finally stopped giving money to scammers as her declining health meant she wasn't able to.

Thea said: "My mum was a very intelligent lady – a member of Mensa even, but it was her kind-heartedness and generosity that meant she would offer to help anyone, especially those she saw as less fortunate than herself. Unfortunately, this extended to criminals orchestrating the scams that she fell victim to.

"It was very hard to convince her not to be scammed, especially when she was developing Alzheimer's. Using humour helped. I remember joking with her about how many direct debits she had, she would go 'oh yeah that is a lot.' She did see that humour and that convinced her.

"I hope my mum's story will make people aware of the numerous kinds of scam and how scammers operate and I would encourage anyone with elderly or vulnerable relatives to speak to them about the risks. I'd also say to people who suspect they are being scammed – please speak up – there is no need to feel embarrassed."

Joanne Waller, the council's head of community protection, said: "It is truly awful that unscrupulous scammers seek to exploit kind and trusting, and in some cases vulnerable, people like Mary for financial gain.

"Scams Awareness Fortnight is very timely as we know that some people are more vulnerable at the moment for various reasons as a result of the coronavirus

pandemic, and therefore more likely to fall victim. Equally scammers out there know this and are trying to take advantage.

"It is therefore crucial that we raise awareness of scams to help people avoid falling victim to them. We encourage anyone who suspects they, or someone they know is being scammed to report it."

To see a video of Thea telling her mum's story visit <https://youtu.be/KoVT45hORNg> Advice for consumers is available at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/our-campaigns/all-our-current-campaigns/scams-awareness-campaign-2019/> Further information about scams and how to report them is available at <http://www.durham.gov.uk/scams> People can become 'Friends Against Scams' by completing a short e-learning course at www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk/elearning/durham

Temporary Chief Executive Appointed for PCVC's Office

The Police and Crime Panel for County Durham has confirmed Sharon Caddell as temporary Chief Executive of the Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (OPCVC.)

The panel unanimously recommended approval of the proposal by acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (PCVC) Steve White.

Ms Caddell is currently Assistant Chief Executive at the North Yorkshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and formerly worked within the Cleveland OPCC as a project manager.

She has been seconded to take over the role on an interim basis from Mr White, who was appointed Chief Executive in 2018 but has been acting PCVC since 2019. Ms Caddell's appointment follows the decision of acting Chief Executive Jon Carling to accept a new role earlier this year.

A further temporary appointment is necessary to allow Mr White to continue as acting commissioner until the election of a permanent PCVC can take place. This was due to take place in May but was postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic and is currently expected to take place the same month next year.

Cllr Lucy Hovvels MBE, Chair of the Police and Crime Panel, said: "The panel was satisfied with the process undertaken by the acting PCVC for this interim appointment.

"We know Sharon was the unanimous choice of the interview panel from five very strong candidates and were, therefore, pleased to support the recommendation for her appointment."

The Police and Crime Panel is made up of elected members from Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council, alongside two co-opted independent members.

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Over £500,000 Raised in 10 Years for Macmillan Cancer Support



Kevin and Christine Richardson part of our Newton Aycliffe Fundraising Group have raised over £500,000 in 10 years for Macmillan Cancer Support in the North East. Now as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic Kevin and Christine have set up an online fundraising solution called Charity Checkout, which also claims Gift Aid and

allows supporters to donate safely and easily. Kevin and Christine and the whole of the Macmillan North East team would very much appreciate the support: Link to the page <https://fal.cn/37MMQ> If you need any help or support you can call Macmillan's Support Line Service on 0808 808 0000.

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A voice that may tremble in the face of great adversity, but when the darkness of ignorance and fear closes in and the light of truth dies, all that will remain is the still quiet voice of hope refusing to be denied.



WOODHAM ACADEMY

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www.woodham.org.uk

Headteacher: Mr. A. Bell

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Closing date for applications: 9.00am Monday 29th June 2020

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SATURDAY

9-10am	Eurovision Show	Simon Harding
10-12am	Moderation	Jack & Garvey
12-2pm	Kitchen Floorfillers	Caz Bojangles
2-4pm	Weekly Edition	Paul Baker
4-6pm	Northern & Classic Soul (R)	Kevin Sowerby
"The Saturday Night Experience" Sponsored by Bengal Lounge Indian Restaurant & Takeaway		
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
12-2am	Night Club Session	

SUNDAY

9-10am	Church Service	Xcel Centre
10-11am	Yesterdays Music Today	Alan Brown
11-12pm	Random Reiki Master	Phil Hawkins
12-2pm	Country & Americana Show	David Ringer
Blues Show Sponsored by Whitehouse Funeral Service		
2-4pm	Bear Blues Show	Colin & Monica
4-6pm	Folk/Celtic/Rock Show	Steve & Col
6-7.30pm	Jazz Time	Mike Dixon
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
1-2pm	Memory Lane	Gary Avery
2-4pm	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
1-2pm	Memory Lane	A DJ
2-4pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker
6-7pm	Mystery Year	Paul Baker
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
1-2pm	Memory Lane	A DJ
2-4pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker
6-7.30pm	Joey's Jukebox	Joey Collins
8-10pm	Alternative Aycliffe	Gaz n Alby

THURSDAY

10-12am	Golden Years	Paul Baker
12-1pm	A to Z of Pop	Richard Smith
1-2pm	Memory Lane	A DJ
2-4pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker
6-8pm	The List	Colin McNeillie
8-10pm	BeatRoute	Graeme Roote

FRIDAY

10-12am	Golden Years	Paul Baker
12-1pm	A to Z of Pop	Richard Smith
1-2pm	Memory Lane	A DJ
2-4pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker
6-8pm	Techno Trance Mix	PVR Studios
8-10pm	26th June - Pauly Mac (Australia)	
10-12am	Alternative Aycliffe (R)	Gaz n Alby
12-2am	Night Club Session	

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

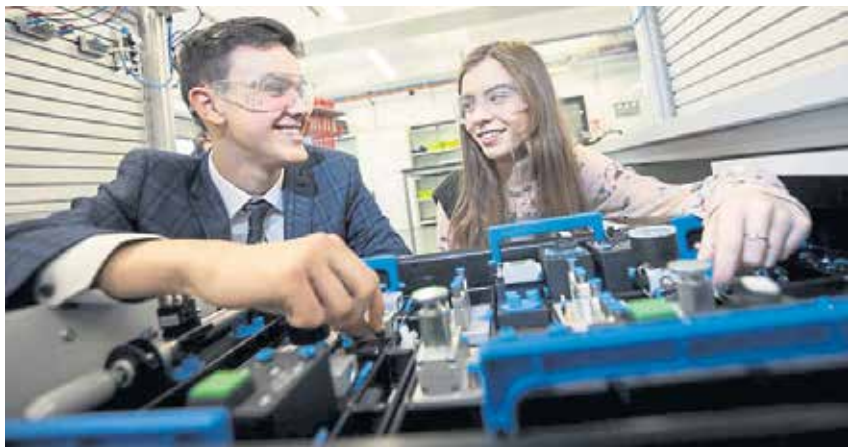
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UTC South Durham Selected as T Level Provider by DfE



UTC South Durham has been selected by the Department for Education as one of 88 new T Level providers from across the UK. The technical school and Sixth Form will be piloting the new Engineering and Manufacturing T Levels from September 2022.

T Levels, which are worth the equivalent of three A Levels, are high-quality technical alternatives to A Levels. They combine classroom theory and practical learning, alongside work placements. T Levels are designed to help students to develop vital technical skills which will support the UK's engineering and advanced manufacturing sector, and help rebuild the economy after coronavirus. After completing T Levels, students will be able to go on further study, employment, or an apprenticeship. UTC Principal Tom Dower said 'We are excited to be piloting a new type of qualification which will revolutionise technical education. T Levels will give Post-16 students the opportunity to focus on developing their technical and professional skills which are vital to closing the skills gap and supporting the local and national economy.'

UTC South Durham is well placed to deliver the new T Levels as we have excellent engineering facilities and equipment, and close ties with over 150 businesses and organisations in the region.' UTC South Durham is a specialist technical school and Sixth Form based on the Aycliffe Business Park.

It opened in September 2016 and focuses on engineering, technology, science and maths education for those who want to move on to careers in those sectors, either via university or directly into apprenticeships or employment. Students in UTC South Durham's electronics lab

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Black Lives Matter

Dear Sir,
The 9-minute video of the murder of George Floyd, and the 'Black Lives Matter' (BLM) movement which it sparked in the US, also struck a chord in the UK, where it has long been accepted that many of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and citizens face deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination. BLM coincided in the UK with an NHS Blood Unit internal report which has revealed active racism; AND with the realisation that BAME citizens are dying of Covid at twice the average rate.

This comes after the Grenfell and Windrush scandals evidenced a 'hostile environment' for some BAME citizens; and after the Angiolini (deaths in police custody), McGregor-Smith (BAME groups in the workplace) and Lammy (criminal justice system) reports of 2017. Although these reports revealed significant levels of discrimination HALF A CENTURY after the Race Relations Act, nothing has been done to address their recommendations in the three years since their publication ... plus (as if to prove the point) the government this month published the BAME/Covid report MINUS those sections which cited the societal barriers facing BAME citizens.

Nobody is saying that white lives do not matter, or that the deprived and disadvantaged communities in County Durham do not need immediate action. But – by the same argument – it seemed to many that the statement 'Black Lives Matter' was also beyond contradiction and so, the weekend before last, huge rallies demanded change for our BAME communities. Unacceptably, there was at those rallies some behaviour which no-one would condone.

THE BACKLASH

The backlash – which, alarmingly, some people are calling the 'push-back' (an indicative distinction) – was at first defensive, but quickly moved onto the offensive, especially aggressively on social media.

Wherever there was to be a BLM rally, and sometimes even when there wasn't,

right-wing political groups called for people to turn up 'to defend our war memorials'. And last weekend – despite the fact that I have not been able to find a single instance of a war memorial being damaged or defaced – people did so in their thousands.

Once there, they often found themselves standing shoulder-to-shoulder with extreme right-wing and racist political groups ... and with groups such as the 'Football Lads' (who have nothing to do with football, but who form the combat wing of the far right). Frighteningly, many seem not to have been horrified, despite the fact that they were 'defending' memorials which commemorate the defeat of everything their co-protestors represent.

As we know, the whole thing descended into thuggery and violence. But by this time the Police were calling for ALL protests to be banned, and many citizens had decided that they 'are all as bad as each other'.

Which is of course a win for the racists and a cue for further inaction.

CALLING ON OUR MP

My fear is that, in all the ruckus, the core principle of BLM – that we need to look urgently to the well-being and equity of our BAME citizens – may get lost. If all that comes out of this is that a couple of statues are taken down and put in museums, then we really have failed as a society.

Together, the Windrush, Angiolini, McGregor-Smith and Lammy Reviews made 201 recommendations. The BAME/Covid and NHS Blood Unit reports have additionally suggested changes to the NHS. These do not amount to the necessary root-and-branch reversal of the deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination facing BAME citizens, but they are a start. So I am calling on our MP to ask the government that those recommendations be implemented.

The Prime Minister has sympathised and promised yet another report, but NONE of these injustices will be solved by reviews and warm words; they need action and funding. Because, after everything, every decent person will always believe that Black Lives Matter.

John D Clare

THE POLICING OF BLM RIOTS

Dear Sir,
The police are the branch of the State where, perhaps more than any other, general consent is required for them to do their job. A huge number of people can actively dislike or hate a serving government without it having much of an impact on the successful functioning of that government. But the police, ultimately, become entirely useless in a democracy without an understanding in place that the majority of citizens trust and respect them. There must be a tacit majority acceptance of their right to constrain, arrest and detain those who break the law. The trust between the public and the police is the a reflection of the health of a democracy, a signal of its peaceful and harmonious function.

Every Country rests on a contract of rights and responsibilities between itself and the people. We accept the responsibilities of taxation and law in return for the defence of our rights. The police are the frontline, the public face of this contract, the people who appear whenever the contract is broken by the citizen (in theory).

But the State can break its side of the contract in one of two ways. It can become tyrannical and unjust, and the police little more than a private army enforcing that injustice. Under tyranny the law is shown to be arbitrary and the police become both political and brutal. They are thugs with a badge, and they stray into areas that no just police would trespass and no justified law would encompass, such as patrolling the private thoughts or emotions of its citizens. Where punishment and police reaction is applied it becomes a political choice, often used solely to buttress the rule of an elite or enforce their ideology on the populace, and not to protect that populace from harm.

The second way the police can break their contract with the people and lose all respect and support is by an undue passivity or uselessness, by failing to do their job rather than by doing it too fiercely. Police who accept bribes not to act, or police who ignore crimes, or police who refuse to investigate out of fear, fall into this category. They have failed in their duty, and are being paid for nothing. The remarkable thing about the British police today is that they are failing in

both these ways. They are tyrants towards the weak and law abiding, and cowards towards the strong and law breaking. They enthusiastically go along with the pursuit of minor, trivial, or ideological offences from those they know will not resist their authority. They avoid dealing with those who will resist their authority. They police in an arbitrary fashion depending on the politics of the moment and the political worldview of senior officers. They will happily issue speeding tickets, but they won't investigate burglaries, violence or rape. They will present a stern face of rejection when patrolling an EDL march, no matter how peaceful it is, but stand back and let anything happen when faced with a BLM march, no matter how violent it is. They will issue tweets and commands criminalising incorrect thoughts and offer sinister warnings to those who think for themselves, but be absent, entirely ineffective or in the very worst cases actual participants when grooming gangs rape children. More and more people are encouraged to report thought crimes, whilst more and more people no longer bother to report real crimes because they know that the chances of the police actually doing something (or the courts afterwards) are vanishingly remote.

Whilst a generally high level of public support gradually turns to contempt, they signal their virtue by dancing at Pride or Notting Hill or by taking the knee at BLM protests. They beg for respect from the criminal, whilst they lose the respect of the law abiding citizen. They become a joke, part sinister thought police and part prancing clown. They go along with the false arrest and imprisonment of some whilst ignoring the law breaking of others. Mythical 'hate crimes' are policed, while burglary, rape, and stabbings are not.

The increasingly few decent members of their profession are in despair as much as we are. The few decent ones left see students straight out of university promoted above them, on the basis of ideology rather than experience, and leave the job in fury. The contract is broken for both the citizen and the real professional, with untold negative consequences for society as a whole.

Clive Taylor-Sholl

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COUNCIL LAUNCHES VIRTUAL MUSIC LESSONS FOR ADULTS

New adult music lessons are offering talented performers and total beginners an opportunity to improve their musical skills.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Durham County Council's Music Service has been teaching school-age pupils at home, completing more than 9,000 lessons via webcam, and has now extended its offer to adults across the county for the first time.

Everyone, from complete beginners to experienced musicians, can now book to receive supportive, professional tuition online. The service is offering blocks of 25-minute lessons in vocal coaching and a number of instruments, including stringed instruments, brass instruments, piano and more.

Classes can be taught one-to-one or in a pair, offering the chance to learn a new skill with a partner, family member or friend. Parents can even choose to share lessons with their child, providing an opportunity to spend some quality family time together.

Students will need to supply their own instrument, but tutors can teach at any level or standard, from beginner



to advanced, as well as supplying the resources to be able to practise between lessons. For those that want to show off their new talents, the service is hoping to perform some remote concerts later in the year.

Michael Summers, Manager of Durham Music Service, said: "We've had fantastic success teaching our pupils via webcam and have had great feedback from parents and pupils about the positive effect the lessons are having on children's wellbeing during this challenging time. We know that lots of people are looking to take up new hobbies during lockdown and activities that they can do as a family or with friends.

"Introducing our new lessons for all age groups

is a great way for adults to also experience the benefits of playing an instrument or singing, from improving memory, to reducing stress, developing multi-tasking skills, and best of all, it's great fun.

"The classes are suitable for all abilities, from people who are already talented performers to those looking to re-learn an instrument they played years ago, and for people who have never even tried to play music before."

More information about the lessons, which are priced at £30 for two 25-minute sessions, £70 for five classes, or £130 for ten lessons, is available online at www.durhammusic.org.uk/adult-online-music-lesson-available-now

Shildon in Motion, Past, Present & Future

Greenfield Arts have been thrilled to be part of a project that gives a voice to the people of Shildon. Creative Director, Katy Milne, has been leading the project and has been working towards realising new artwork at Shildon Station. This will be informed by and reflect the spirit of the town, its significant heritage and most of all its people.

Individual voices from present and past are influencing the artwork for the future and the team have been intrigued and inspired by the many personal stories that the community have shared, the essence of which have been shared within a 'zine' and will inform the new artwork.

The stories include a strong female voice from the past. Alan Ellwood, a key figure who is part of the Shildon local history group, was kind enough to share a great deal of interesting information including the words of 19th Century resident Margaret Anna Young, who's time capsules were uncovered from within the walls of Blyford House in Shildon, an exciting find that gives a unique insight into life in the town.

Significant female voices are often missing from the histories we read, it was refreshing to listen to

Margaret's very personal account of life in Shildon in the 1850s. Her curiosity about life and people was inspirational and aligns well with the curious approach that it is at the core of Greenfield Arts and the Shildon in Motion project.

"Curiosity, perhaps there are few more words which contain so much meaning – few more that result in such fateful and useful consequences – it is that that often prompts me to 'say and act' and to try the apparently impossible things"

Extract from letter - Margaret Anna Young courtesy of Alan Ellwood Margaret's inspiring words and her account of Shildon during her lifetime will be captured in the essence of the artwork alongside being informed by responses from the many wonderful accounts, histories and thoughts of all involved in the project, a big thank you for all of the contributions from the wonderful people of Shildon.

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 our arts centre facility is closed at present



Greenfield Arts are continuing to develop this valuable project and other creative work. We are also busy preparing for our 20th birthday celebrations with a commemorative film, an inspirational poem and creative projects, find out more and keep in touch with our work and progress via our website www.greenfield-arts.co.uk or by following us on facebook and twitter @greenfieldArts for further updates.

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More Businesses Being Supported by Grants Scheme

Business owners across County Durham have spoken of their relief at further financial support being provided during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Durham County Council extended the business rates grants scheme earlier this month, encouraging companies that were not previously able to access support to apply.

The council has been allocated just under £5

million of additional funding to fill some of the gaps in the original grants scheme, which has seen 8,651 businesses receive over £96.5 million of support.

To date, just over £1 million of that extra funding has been awarded to 135 businesses which were previously not eligible for the grants scheme.

Business owners who have received support so far have praised the council for providing the grants so quickly once the extension was announced, and for keeping in contact with them so effectively.

Keith Gill, who owns The Old Post Office bed and breakfast in Lanchester, said: "My wife and I cannot thank the council enough for their communications throughout what has been such an anxious time for us. I suspect that there are many hundreds, or possibly thousands, of small businesses like us, which have been helped by the business support grants and we are all so thankful not to have been forgotten."

"We don't know when business will return to normal but we now have a financial fund that will help to support us until

next spring, when I hope we will be in a more promising situation. For that, we're incredibly grateful."

The additional funding prioritises small and micro businesses in shared offices or flexible workspaces, regular market traders who don't have their own business rates assessments, bed and breakfast operators who pay council tax instead of business rates and charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates reliefs which would otherwise have been eligible for small business rates relief or rural rate relief. In addition to the above which follows the

government guidance, the council's policy also focuses on supporting private nurseries, small manufacturing businesses with small retail outlets within the property that sell to the public, and businesses involved in the supply chain to the retail, hospitality and leisure industry - all of which weren't eligible for support under the previous scheme.

Businesses must be able to demonstrate ongoing fixed property costs and be able to evidence significant loss of income in order to access the support.

Guidelines around which businesses are eligible for

the grant have been set by the government and the funding is limited but the council is determined to allocate this to eligible businesses as quickly as possible.

One of the key eligibility criteria is that a business must have been occupying

a qualifying business premises at 11 March.

Businesses can find out more about the financial support available to them, and apply, by visiting <http://www.durham.gov.uk/covid19business>, emailing businessrates@durham.gov.uk or calling 03000 268 997.

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Director Appointed To National High Streets Task Force

Newcastle Building Society customer director, Stuart Miller, has been appointed to the board of the national High Streets Task Force to help co-ordinate a response to generate the recovery of England's high streets.

The announcement came as high streets minister Simon Clarke MP officially launched a range of support for high streets in England and confirmed the appointments to the board and its chair.

The High Streets Task Force is an alliance of subject matter experts focused on helping communities and local governments across England transform their high streets using data insight, training and practical support. Stuart joins nine other board members to help guide the work of the Task Force.

Stuart will draw on the Society's experience of working collaboratively with its communities. Its creativity and innovative solutions have helped it grow its physical presence on high streets and in rural towns, which includes the new branches recently opened in Hawes and Wooler, ensuring essential access to financial services for local people.

Stuart Miller said: "We still firmly believe in the future of the high street and its role at the heart of our communities. A vibrant high street is crucial to the health of the local economy and has a huge impact on people's social connections and wellbeing."

"We know the devastating impact a declining high

street and the lack of access to financial services has on its communities, which is why we've worked so hard to maintain and grow our branch network over the past few years. There is much more to be done, and it's evident that the COVID-19 pandemic has made that job a lot harder.

"I'm thrilled to be joining the board of the High Streets Task Force and hope our experience and dedication to communities will play a role in the revitalisation of local economies and high streets across England."

Newcastle Building Society is the largest Building Society in the north east and eighth largest in the UK. The Society is currently undergoing a multi-million branch investment programme and recently increased its branch numbers from 27 to 31 in 2019.

To meet the needs of vulnerable customers and those who don't bank online, the Society has maintained an essential transactions service, throughout the Coronavirus outbreak, keeping all but one of its branches open while applying strict safety procedures to keep customers and colleagues safe. Its Yarm branch is located within the town library, which was temporarily closed.

For more information on the High Streets Task Force, visit www.hightstreetstaskforce.org.uk or for more information on Newcastle Building Society, visit www.newcastle.co.uk

Team Effort to Prevent Isolation in the Deaf Community

Council funding is helping a Durham school to work with a charity, to provide support to people with hearing impairments during the coronavirus pandemic. Durham County Council's Durham Area Action Partnership (AAP) awarded grants to two organisations which has helped them to collaborate on a project to help County Durham's deaf residents. Durham Deafened Support received £920 to reduce isolation amongst its members, from a £100,000

pot which the council has made available to countywide initiatives during the outbreak. The charity has been using the funding to contact people by post, providing a range of exciting and inspiring activities. The grant will also allow staff and volunteers from the charity to visit members for a 'garden chat', with a little help from a local secondary school. The Garden Chat project will see Durham Deafened Support visiting its members for a socially distanced talk in the garden or outside people's houses. However, a lot of its members rely on lip reading, which cannot be done if visitors are wearing protective fabric masks. Framwellgate Moor School are supplying the solution

using a £1,197 grant from Durham AAP. The school has been using its facilities to make personal protective equipment (PPE) for local organisations, including full face visors which it is now providing to Durham Deafened Support. The grant has been allocated from Durham AAP's share of £1.4million, which the council has made available to the county's 14 AAPs, to help community and voluntary groups in their area during the pandemic. Jane Atkinson, from Durham Deafened Support, said: "These visors will make a massive difference to late-deafened and hard of hearing people. They will enable us to do our garden chats, visiting members who lip read and need to see people's

full face." Craig Morgan, area action partnership coordinator for Durham AAP, said: "The social distancing measures introduced have left many of us feeling lonely and isolated, and it can be even more difficult for people who are deaf or hard of hearing who might struggle to use the phone, don't use a computer or live alone. "We're delighted that our AAP has been able to fund Durham Deafened Support

and Framwellgate School to help people feel part of a community again during these challenging times." Chair of the school's Trust Board, Cllr Amanda Hopgood, said: "The school was grateful to receive a grant from Durham Area Action Partnership as it has enabled us to keep making vital PPE for local organisations and health care providers. As I am also a member of the AAP Board, I was aware that Durham Deafened Support



had also received a grant and when I found out they were struggling I immediately got in touch with them." Further information about

all 14 of County Durham's AAPs and the work they are doing in their communities can be found at www.durham.gov.uk/aaps

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Paul Howell, Member of Parliament for Sedgefield

Dear Sir,
It is now six months since I was elected as your Member of Parliament, and what a six months it has been. We entered Parliament with one very high profile agenda item, namely, Brexit. We could not have imagined that something would happen that was so significant it wiped Brexit away from the headlines. But Covid -19 has achieved that in spades. As with any new job, it is very appropriate to take stock after six months to evaluate what has happened and understand where best to focus next. So, looking at the last six months, it began with me entering the Palace of Westminster as a new Member of Parliament totally unfamiliar with the building and its processes. As is the case in many old buildings there are many corridors and staircases that seem at times to lead everywhere except where you want to go! I am pleased to say that I have my bearings now but as a result of Coronavirus there are a number of routes now closed off or temporarily designated one way so it's still a challenge.

Where I have made real progress is in developing excellent working relationships with Senior Ministers which makes it so much easier to shout up for Sedgefield. You may have seen the questions that I have asked on behalf of the Constituency at Prime Ministers Questions or PMQ's as it is also known. Whilst these are high profile and can be seen by many it is often also the corridor or tea-room conversations that can help make a real difference. It is there where you get the chance to socialise with ministers and discuss the importance and impacts of decisions they are considering and, hopefully positively influence them in actively considering your Constituency during their deliberations.

I am immensely pleased to have secured a position on the BEIS Select Committee as this gives me direct involvement in the important agendas that affect businesses and their employees. BEIS will be particularly influential as we exit this pandemic and, also as we take the necessary steps to exit the EU and regain our political and economic independence. As I mentioned last week, we will also be looking at the Committee on Climate Change within the context of Energy and Business

which will be very interesting. This week we will have the inaugural meeting of an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) that I will be jointly chairing with Gill Furniss, the Labour MP for Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough. APPGs are cross-party groups of MPs and Members of the House of Lords who meet to consider topics that reflect their concerns as parliamentarians. They examine policies and new developments and ideas that are linked to their topic. They also invite Ministers and other partners like Campaign Groups, Charities and other non governmental organisations to take part and become actively involved.

This APPG will be supported by Local Trust, (you can find out more about them at www.localtrust.org.uk) and will be titled "Left Behind Communities". I will be telling you lots more about this very exciting initiative in the near future.

Back home in the constituency a major disappointment has been the way Coronavirus has stopped me from meeting people. Because of the size of the Constituency we decided to establish our base in Newton Aycliffe and complement it with pop up surgeries elsewhere. We had just started to get momentum in these in Ferryhill, Sedgefield, Middleton St George and Trimdon with many others planned for our other villages and communities when Covid hit us. Similarly progress stopped on our office efforts but these are finally making real strides now and we are very pleased that we are heading into Sydney House.

One thing I am regularly asked is whether I am enjoying the role? I have to say that from day one that this has been the most incredible experience, and it is such a privilege that despite all of the unexpected pressures of Coronavirus, and the drip feed of abuse from those still frustrated at the election result, I would not swap it for anything and I hope to continue to represent you for many years to come.

As always if you want to reach us please use the details below.
Paul Howell
MP for Sedgefield
Paul.Howell.MP@Parliament.uk
020 7219 4272

Hairy Bikers Host Virtual Cake Break

The Hairy Bikers are encouraging people in the North East to host a virtual Cake Break to raise vital funds for people affected by multiple sclerosis (MS).

With millions still in lockdown, the celebrity chefs have teamed up with the MS Society to get friends and family together online to enjoy a Cake Break – whether via Zoom, Teams or House Party – on Friday 26 June. More than 130,000 people live with MS in the UK, with a further one in four likely to know someone affected. The condition damages nerves in your body and makes it harder to do everyday things, like walk, talk, eat and think.

Dave Myers – whose mum lived with MS for over 30 years – is a proud supporter of the MS Society's Cake Break. He says: "My mother lived with MS from when I was a boy until she died, and the MS Society was always a great support to us. Now more than ever, charities that are close to your heart need as much support as you can possibly give them."

"As the MS Society has grown it's helped an awful lot of people with this unpredictable condition and, before the pandemic, it was making incredible strides to Stop MS. We simply cannot take our eye off the ball, and hosting a virtual Cake Break will help keep the momentum going." Whether you're lucky enough to get your hands on some flour, or plan to showcase some ready-made treats, raising any kind of dough could make a big difference.

Dave explains: "As the majority of people won't be able to taste each other's bakes this year, now is the perfect time to get

competitive and up the ante in your cake presentation! Si [Simon King] and I find covering cakes with icing sugar is a great way to hide imperfections without anybody knowing!"

Talking about life in lockdown, he adds: "I've been catching up on jobs that have needed doing for a decade, including cleaning out the food cupboard after we ate some popcorn that had expired in 2011! I've also been tinkering with my motorbikes and have taken my wife, Lil, out on the one we did our courting on. It spluttered a bit, but we made it home!"

"This is the longest time I've gone without seeing Si since we met in 1992! But we talk most days on the phone and have a laugh on our live Instagram chats every Wednesday and Saturday – we haven't missed a week!" Nick Moberly, Chief Executive of the MS Society, says: "We're extremely grateful to the Hairy Bikers for their support – something which our community needs more than ever. More than 130,000 people live with MS in the UK, and by organising a virtual Cake Break you'll be raising vital funds so we can be there for anyone affected by MS, with better treatments, support and information."

The MS Society website is packed with recipe ideas and inspiration, including an exclusive Blueberry and Banana Muffin recipe created by Dave and MS Society Ambassador and Paralympian, Kadeena Cox MBE.

Register for a MS Society Cake Break fundraising pack at cakebreak.org.uk and don't forget to share your virtual Cake Breaks using #CakeBreak2020

Infant Mental Health Matters Week



Award-winning baby class provider Baby Sensory™ offers resources to support baby's development and well-being during stressful lockdown period for parents. Baby Sensory offers sensory experiences and ideas for parents that promote infant well-being and support to their development. They advocate "precious early learning" and firmly believe that the experiences in this first stage of life lay the foundation for future learning.

Dr Lin Day explains, "The newborn's brain is only a quarter of adult size, but by the end of the first year, it will have doubled in volume. This growth is largely due to the trillions of neural connections, which allow messages to be passed from one area of the brain to another. These connections are the direct result of events and experiences encountered from birth."

Parental Top Tips for Infant Mental Health:

<https://www.babysensory.com/happysocialplay>

Baby Sensory is confident in their approach to offer an environment rich in sensory exploration and learning opportunities.

Every activity is accompanied by clear explanations and the benefits to baby's learning and development. It's clearly something parents appreciate voting Baby Sensory the winner of the What's On for Little One's "Best National Baby Activity" 2019.

While face to face sessions are halted, parents have been able to still build on baby's development, create special

one-to-one moments, gain play ideas and even have some much-needed social interaction with other parents through Baby Sensory's move to online classes.

Baby Sensory @ Home provides to families ideas for creative play, massage, tummy time, movement, visual development, textures, scents and music in simple practical ways that can be easily repeated at home. They use a combination of original and traditional songs and rhymes to develop early speech and language skills, and sensory signing activities to help parents and baby communicate from birth.

Baby Sensory Class Leader, Kate Lawless, in Darlington, "Being able to offer our award-winning classes online has been so important to our families because it has provided them with some much-needed social interaction, and a little bit

of routine and normality through these strange times! I'd love to welcome new families to our Baby Sensory @ Home programme this summer."

Baby Sensory @ Home (part of WOW World Group)

Find out more here and contact your local class leader here to book a class.

WOW World Group - a pre-school programme group offering 5 expertly researched child

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Fathers' Day Remembrance

Syd Howarth

A man who has lived well, laughed often and loved much; who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task. Who leaves the world better than he found it, who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it, who looked for the best in others and gave the best he had. Forever remembered Love, Paul and Beverley. John-Paul, Lisa & Family Carrie and Sebastian Matthew

Lester Atkinson

We lost a Father with a heart of gold, how much we miss him can never be told. He shared our troubles and helped us along, if we follow in his footsteps we will never go wrong. All our love forever and always. Stephen, Kelly and Michael

Peter Mooney

Remembering you on Father's Day.

Rosemary, Annette, Paul, Gillian, Clare and families

Syd Howarth

A Dad in a billion, you were always there for us, helping, caring, loving, advising, guiding and hugging us with gusto. Missed every day – I wish I could talk to you and hug you once more. Always in our thoughts. Love, Stuart, Joanne, Adam & Alex.

Syd Howarth

Things will never be the same without you but our memories keep us smiling whenever we think about you. We will raise a glass to celebrate Father's Day the same as we always did. Loved and missed always Chris, Michelle, Jack & Joe xx

READERS' PHOTOGRAPHS



Above is a photo of the "NEW" I.E.P. 4/5 for East Coast Open Access arriving at Hitachi Factory, by John Williamson. Send your photo to paul@newtonnews.co.uk

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The Supporting Families team would like to give a huge THANK YOU to Shirley, Tesco Community Champion, for the baby milk she donated to us to help a client last week.

Each time we mention what we need, she already has it in her cupboard for us, as if she already knows! Thank you so much for your support, Sheena, Yvonne, Liz, Rachel and Bob.

PITCH PREPARATION FUNDING BENEFITS COUNTY CLUBS

Football pitches across Durham County FA are set to be enhanced thanks to £142,500 worth of investment from a new scheme set up by the Premier League, The FA and Government's Football Foundation.

The Pitch Preparation Fund was set up in support of the game, which is currently facing unprecedented challenges because of the COVID-19 outbreak. It is providing grants to clubs that have lost out on normal revenue streams during this difficult period and helping them to get their pitches ready for when it is safe to play football again, following Government advice.

The Fund was greeted with a hugely positive response in the two-and-a-half weeks the application window was open during May.

As a result, £142,500 has been awarded to 42 clubs and organisations. This



will allow 165 football pitches to be made match-fit, benefiting 661 local football teams.

How Durham County FA will benefit from the Pitch Preparation Fund in numbers:

- A total of 62 grants awarded
- £142,500 of investment
- 165 football pitches improved
- 661 football teams benefiting
- 42 grassroots clubs awarded grants
- 20 clubs in the National League System awarded grants

As a result of the exposure of the Pitch Preparation Fund, the Football Foundation also received an increase of 176% in its regular facility grant applications during May, compared with April. So many more football sites will be improved over and above those receiving Pitch Preparation Fund grants.

Robert Sullivan, Interim Chief Executive of the Football Foundation, said: "This new investment into Durham County FA will provide crucial support for football in the area."

"Our national game is a proven driver of mental and physical health benefits, so it's important local pitches are match-fit in the event that the Government announces it's safe for the game to start again."

"That is why we've worked with the Premier League, The FA, the Government and Sport England to set up the Pitch Preparation Fund. These 62 grants we're announcing today will help ensure 165 pitches across Durham County FA are in

a good condition when the time comes."

John Topping, Company Secretary of Durham County FA said; "We are delighted with the number of grants received from the scheme and in such adverse times it is a boost to have a good news message of support which will help our clubs at grass roots level. The Football Foundation Pitch Preparation Fund was specifically set up to help improve football fields and this will go a long way to help clubs and facility providers financially. Our thanks go to all concerned."

The grants awarded will help with essential maintenance works toward grass pitches, including vertical decompaction, slitting, over seeding, fertilising and weedkilling, as well as routine preparatory works such as grass cutting and the setting out and line marking of pitches. For artificial surfaces, eligible works include deep cleaning, overmarking and FA pitch testing.

Clubs and other organisations are also being given access to the Football Foundation Groundskeeping Community. This is a free online resource the Foundation developed with The FA and the Grounds Management Association, containing advice and guidance. Anyone in Durham County FA can sign up at <https://thefa.hivelearning.com/groundskeeping>. The Football Foundation is a charity funded by the Premier League, The FA and the Government, through Sport England.

Coates up to 2nd in Mini Challenge eSeries

Max Coates took a brace of top ten finishes in the MINI CHALLENGE UK Official eSeries at Silverstone last weekend moving him to second in the real-world driver class. Coates qualified his Elite Motorsport MINI CHALLENGE car 10th for the opening race of the weekend. After climbing two positions early on he battled with Ryan Elliott for the duration and ended just behind him in 8th place. This put him 3rd on the grid for the second race and Coates battled at the front in the Primex Plastics and PLASgran Recycling backed car throughout the race. On the penultimate lap Tobin Leigh squeezed into a MINI sized gap to take the final podium spot away from the Yorkshireman.

The second qualifying saw Coates in 9th, just two tenths off the fastest lap time. Like the real world racing the eSeries is incredibly close. The Jic Transport backed driver climbed two positions again, this time finishing 7th in the first of the two races. He started well in the second encounter and was going for a move to take the lead when we was hit from behind into a massive slide. Loosing significant momentum and 7 positions he fell back outside the top 10. The NGK Spark Plugs car had ground to make up and Max became daring with his moves to gain a top 10 slot back, ultimately finishing 9th. The top ten finishes mean Max moves up to 2nd in the real racers category and 7th in the overall standings.

Coates said, "I didn't feel quite as strong pace wise at Silverstone as I did at Brands Hatch, but still felt as though two podiums were on the cards in race two and race four, it just didn't quite go my way. I need a strong round at the International layout this weekend to gain valuable points back on Josh who is leading the real world class."

The next round of the championship comes from the virtual version of Silverstone International. The races can be watched via the MINI CHALLENGE UK social media channels and the links below.

MINI CHALLENGE UK Live Stream Links for Round 4 – Silverstone International:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MINICHallengeUK/posts/4137617159611843>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wImKJz9PKY4&feature=youtu.be>

Twitch: <https://www.twitch.tv/vrracingclub>

Season Calendar:

1. Donington Park National – Saturday 23rd May
2. Brands Hatch Indy – Saturday 30th May
3. Silverstone National – Saturday 6th June
4. Silverstone International – Saturday 13th June
5. Snetterton 300 – Saturday 20th June
6. Croft – Saturday 27th June
7. Knockhill – Saturday 4th July
8. Brands Hatch GP – Saturday 11th July

Event Timetable:

- Live streams start approximately 11:45
- Qualifying 1: 12:00
- Race 1: 12:30
- Race 2: 13:00 (Reverse grid top ten)
- Qualifying 2: 13:45
- Race 3: 14:15
- Race 4: 14:45 (Reverse grid top ten)

Photo: Max Coates in action at the MINI CHALLENGE UK Official eSeries at Brands Hatch



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For more information contact Stuart on 01325 300212



* Subject to small business relief

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