

Friday 4th December 2020

Established 1948

Newton News

Incorporating The Newtonian - Newton Aycliffe's Free Community Magazine

Editorial and Advertising contact: paul@newtonnews.co.uk - Telephone: 01325 300212 - www.newtonnews.co.uk



Addressing Concerns Around Anti-Social Behaviour

See page 2 for more

Special thank you to your Newton News Sponsors:

SHAKE 'N' CAKE



PAUL HOWELL
MP for Sedgefield



Addressing Concerns Around Anti-Social Behaviour in the Western Area

Dear Sir

Over recent months we are aware that there has been an increase in Anti-Social Behaviour within the Western area of Newton Aycliffe. We have been working alongside our partners tirelessly to address your concerns as well as looking at long term solutions to these problems.

We know that we have not resolved the problems completely, however, I would like to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to ensure we put some long term problem solving initiatives together in order to address the concerns you have raised.

We have spent time speaking with the young people who have been causing the ASB, and they have stated that they want to change and want to be involved in projects where they can give back to their community.

They talk positively about wanting to make a real difference. The young people have been engaging with the Police, Livin and the community, in developing a series of mini projects, led by them, with an aim of giving



back to the community.

One young person, who was identified early on as being a ring leader for this group, came to us with an idea where he wanted to create Christmas wreaths to give to families, vulnerable persons and nursing homes within the Western area. All those people will have been affected by the ASB caused by him and his group. The young person has designed the wreaths, negotiated with a local garden centre for the parts and worked with us to secure funding from the Western Partnership. He has taken a great deal of pride in working with his peers in making them.

Over 50 wreaths have been created in total, last weekend we had the pleasure of delivering them to families within our community.

The young person leading this project stated: "We are very sorry for all the ASB around the Western Area. We have created the wreaths for you and your family to say sorry. We are trying to stop the ASB in this area and we really are sorry. Going forward we are wanting to work together to improve our behaviour and try and make a real difference in improving our community".

I really cannot stress the amount of work that went into this from the young people and I am very proud of two of them in particular. Unfortunately I cannot name them, but they know who they are.

We are continuing to work alongside the young people of the Western area in developing many more projects. If you have any ideas moving forward, please private



message the team.

Finally a massive thank you to Steven & Liz and Thinford Nurseries for supporting the lads. This would not have been possible without your support from the beginning. Watch this space for the next project.

Mike Welch

Police Constable 2696
Newton Aycliffe Beat Team



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Christmas Letters to Santa



Each year Santa's Elves put special post boxes around Newton Aycliffe so that all the boys and girls from Newton Aycliffe can post their letters to Santa.

When everything is quiet, and nobody is looking, the elves empty the boxes and take the letters to Santa's Palace in Greenland.

Santa replies to so many letters each year from the children of Aycliffe, as he is very busy, he has asked that you remember to put your full name and address on your letter.

We have been told that the post boxes appeared on Tuesday 1st December at the following locations:

- Youngs Newsagents/Post Office Beveridge Way
- Johns Your Very Own Mini Market Neville Parade
- Horndale Post Office, Silverdale Place
- McColl's, Simpasture
- The Village Store/Premier Express Woodham
- Joy Marie Hairdressing, Aycliffe Village

The boxes will disappear on Wednesday, 16th December, but e-mails and forms submitted to the Council's website will be answered from today, right up to noon on 21st December.

Santa has a special e-mail address: santa.northpole@great-aycliffe.gov.uk and the website address is: <https://www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk/events/letters-to-santa/>

Virtual Santa Experience

Santa loves reading and writing letters to all the children in the world, especially Newton Aycliffe, but this year, due to circumstances, he understands that people might not want to receive a letter and are going virtual. If you feel more comfortable receiving a video message from Santa, there are numerous options online available. One being Portable North Pole, www.portablenorthpole.com which offers personalised Santa videos for individuals, families and more. The best part about them is, you can download their app and have access at your fingertips.

Santa Christmas Eve Tours 2020

Further details will be published shortly, watch Newton News for an update.

Church Service

A socially distanced Service will be held at Neville Parade Methodist Church on Sunday 13th December at 10.30am. The Service will be led by Rev John Purdy and a warm welcome awaits all.

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Newton News

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Town Council Working Toward Freezing Precept

Dear Sir,
In last week's edition of the Newton News, Councillor Stead claimed he would be trying to get a standstill budget at Great Aycliffe Town Council next year. I would like to give you the true facts about the processes leading to this Council's budget and precept next year.
The end of year turnout of the Council's financial position was established in early summer, after the first national lockdown. Meetings were held between myself (as Chairman of Policy and Resources

Committee) the Town Clerk, Andrew Bailey, and Dan Austin, our Finance Manager, to analyse options for the budget 2021/2022.

This was followed by a series of meetings with myself, the Finance Manager and the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of committees. In the interest of fairness, we also informed and discussed senior opposition councillors of the financial position and possible options facing the Council.

The result of these consultations was that it was thought that Great Aycliffe Town Council was in a strong position to maintain most of its services to the public, even though Covid-19 could affect our final situation in the long term.

We also feared that central government could be forced into a considerable period of austerity, owing to the massive debt being forced upon it in combating the result of the virus.

The unanimous decision of these meetings was that we would aim to freeze the Council Tax next year.

Following these meetings, all councillors were informed of the situation and it was decided that the Council would work towards freezing Great Aycliffe Town Council's precept next year and we will formally announce the precept request in early January 2021.

Earlier this year I invited Councillor Stead, through the Newton News, who at that time promised to reduce our precept, to come and present his proposals to myself or the Finance Manager, who would give them due consideration. Councillor Stead has not submitted any proposals and - to the best of my knowledge - has taken no part in any discussion regarding next year's finances. We are at the present in committee meetings discussing next year's budgets for each committee. Last week, Councillor Stead attended the Environment & Recreation Committee meetings, when next year's budgets were discussed in detail. At the virtual meeting Councillor Stead attended as a member of the public and when asked if he had any questions or comments to make, he simply said 'no'. The truth of the matter is that Councillor Stead is already electioneering for next year's County Council elections and trying to claim credit for other councillors' and officers' work. Once again, I must state that I do agree with Councillor Stead that double taxation is unfair, but I will address that issue with readers in the near future.
Councillor Bob Fleming
Leader of the Council
Chairman of Policy and Resources

Tesco Supporting Families



Dear Sir,
The Supporting Families team would like to say a huge thank you to Shirley, Community Champion from Tesco, for her continued support over the past five years and her continued donations of baby milk, nappies and baby toiletries.

Every time she phones to ask someone to pick up the donation, she has exactly what we need for clients coming that week, without being told what we need, which is amazing. Thank you so much Sheena, Yvonne, Liz, Rachel and Bob Supporting Families Team.

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Cree Explore Ways Forward at Greenfield Arts



Greenfield Arts encourage creativity and positive wellbeing through their programme of exhibitions, events, projects and activities. This season we have continued to offer opportunities to help people explore ideas and think about the world around themselves. The Men's Cree group have continued to find ways to meet up regularly in a safe and welcoming environment at Greenfield Arts. Cree is a group of male volunteers who work on a variety of projects to benefit the community which also contributes to their own wellbeing. Their achievements often continue to impact upon the community long after their initial involvement. They have renovated spaces, created little free libraries and produced installations and artwork that can be enjoyed by people throughout the region. Recently the group have been exploring new possibilities and reflecting upon the current climate. The sessions have been inspired

by artists Bethan Maddocks and Paul Theo Murray who have supported the group to explore new ways forward and how they can be instrumental in positive change.

If you would like to know a bit more about the Arts and wellbeing at Greenfield or learn more about our many projects, courses and activities please contact our team on 01325 379048 or email info@greenfield-arts.co.uk alternatively you can check out our website on www.greenfield-arts.co.uk - where you can find out more and join our mailing list.

Christmas Present Appeal to Help the Vulnerable

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Christmas is going to be particularly challenging for many families this year due to the pandemic. The Christmas Story of how the innkeeper welcomes Mary and Joseph into his stable, when there was no where else for them to go, inspires us as a church to reach out to those in need.

The Salvation Army wants to make sure that no child in our area goes without a gift this Christmas. Can you help us by donating a new toy or non perishable food for a Christmas Hamper for families in need?

Due to lockdown Sanctuary 21 is only open for emergency support of our vulnerable guests, however, please contact Darryn via email on darryn.hook@salvationarmy.org.uk to arrange collection of any donations. If you would prefer to make a monetary donation you can do so via our Just Giving page.

Each gift will help us to make Christmas special for those who may otherwise endure a bleak festive season. The Christmas Present Appeal focuses on the local community and all donations you provide will directly benefit those in need in the County Durham area. Details below give gift ideas for children and young people.

All toys have to be new and unwrapped:

0-3 years: soft toys, colourful and fun educational toys, cot mobiles, baby clothes, bath toys, CDs of suitable music and nursery rhymes.

3-5 years: books, dressing up clothes, cars, lorries, dolls, action figures and soft toys, colourful and fun educational toys, CDs (music, stories and nursery rhymes), suitable DVDS, colouring sets, pencils, crayons, books, puzzles, footballs.

5-9 years: dolls and action figures, educational games and toys, stationery (colouring sets, pencils, crayons, school sets), CDs and family friendly DVDs, books, puzzles, word search, crosswords, skateboards, sports equipment and clothing.

9-12 years: games and toys, sports equipment and clothing, stationery, CDs, DVDs, books, T-Shirts, hair ornaments, gloves, scarves, hats.

13-18 years: CDs, DVDs, books, toiletries (please try to ensure non-allergic ingredients if possible), gloves, scarves, hats and other fashion accessories.

We are also hoping to provide families with a food hamper

Suggestions for non-perishable food items:

Tinned meat, tinned fish, tinned fruit, tinned vegetables (including potatoes), tinned custard, tinned rice pudding, biscuits, UHT milk, pasta, jars of pasta sauce, tinned soup, bottles of dilute pop.

Toys and items for the hampers can be dropped off at the

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Hog Blog Latest

This week we have admitted a further three hedgehogs, two of which are babies, Elsa, Betsy and Matty, a young 800g male. They make our total number up to twenty between myself and Tara, all are going to be here in rescue till April/May next year. Matty, being so folically challenged won't be able to protect himself from predators, or the extreme weather, he will take a long time to get well too. We would like to thank Pat for his rescue and also Angie for finding Betsy, Peter and Partner for Elsa.



Rest assured we will always try to keep in touch with finders and also, if we can't take anymore in, we will ask our finders to ring BHPS for rehabbers who can. Can we thank all our regular supporters, Tom and Jane, Karen, Sonya and Jane and Marian at Tesco, your kind gestures are appreciated because providing food, housing, bedding and medical care doesn't come cheap and while this rescue centre is small. We work hard to keep them alive and well. Also June called last week with a monetary donation as well as food with some lovely bowls for our prickly pals.

Weekly tip: Keep putting food outside for our wildlife, some don't hibernate and if they do, they wake up periodically to eat.

Gestamp Donation to Woodham Academy

Newton Aycliffe based automotive component manufacturer, Gestamp, donated £1000 and hundreds of re-usable water bottles to local secondary school, Woodham Academy, to help with the current Covid-19 situation.

Gestamp supply most major car manufacturers and employ 1200 people from the local area. Mr Brian Rees, Human Resources Manager for Gestamp, said, "As a business it has been a tough year, but we read about Marcus Rashford's initiative and the government turnaround on providing free school meals, and we still wanted to help the local community".

Mrs Sarah Dickinson, Deputy Headteacher at Woodham Academy, said, "It's been a tough year for schools and families in the community and this contribution from Gestamp is greatly appreciated and will help students in these difficult times".



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Council Tax Freeze

Dear Sir,
On Tuesday 29th September, the Leader of the Labour Group on the Town Council, met with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Independents, together with Senior Officers present, and agreed that the Council Tax would be frozen for the next Financial Year 2021/2022.

The Finance Officer stated this at Environment Committee on Wednesday 25th November. The relevant Committees of the Council have also gone through their cycle of meetings, approving the budgets on this basis.

In November 2019, Officers and Councillors, Labour and Independent, examined electric vehicles and electric grounds maintenance equipment with a view to investing in zero emission, carbon neutral vehicles and equipment. The Council has an ongoing program of doing just that, replacing vehicles and equipment as and when the time comes for replacing each item.

It has a medium term financial plan, as well as long term, in which the assets and liabilities of the Council are planned for over five to ten years or more (replacement, renewal, repair and so forth). By investing for the long term, the Council is able to manage cost effectively. The Council has always and continues to invest and plan well ahead. The Audit Control Sub Committee, the Asset Management Sub Committee as well as all Committees and Sub Committees constantly monitor and question all aspects of the Council's performance and savings, and investment is a constant ongoing process. The Council produces weekly account control sheets itemising every item of spending, enabling members and the public to question anything, at any time, with Officers by email or phone. Rather than just cheap political point scoring. Our Capital Reserves have been built up prudently and wisely, over many years, and actually mostly allocated for replacement and maintenance of existing buildings, equipment and so forth. By proper planning over the long term this Council is in a better position than most to weather Covid-19 and Government and County Council cuts to our budget, without adding to the burden on the Council Taxpayer.

In 2007 a group of 'loonies' nearly got control of the Town Council, after promising to cut Council Tax by 50%! They won 15 out of 30 seats (but two defected to Labour four weeks after the election). It's funny though, once they got elected they did absolutely nothing to reduce Council Tax nor freeze it. We believe in a low Council Tax whilst providing the range of services and facilities that we do for the local community. Sometimes you have to do things which aren't economic if you live in a civilised, humane society. It's making sure we provide

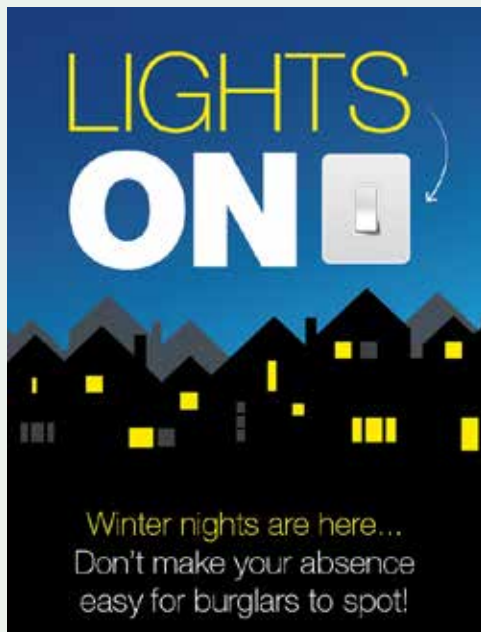
the best value for money in providing those facilities and services and ensuring they are sustainable. If we didn't have those facilities and services, consider how less enriched our local community would be. We have an open mind and continue to strive to ensure that the Council provides value for money, but we will never sell off public land or assets to private developers, nor cut services purely to cut Council Tax for political advantage. The one who plants trees knowing that he will never sit in their shade, has at least started to understand the meaning of life. Cllr. Arun M. Chandran
Independent



At Risk Groups to Receive Free Vitamin D

All care homes will automatically receive a provision for their residents, while individuals on the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable list will receive a letter inviting them to 'opt in' for a supply to be delivered directly to their homes. Deliveries will be free of charge, starting in January, and will provide four months' worth of supplements to last people through the winter months.

The supplements will support general health, in particular bone and muscle health. This is particularly important this year as these individuals are more likely to have been indoors for extended periods due to measures introduced to stop the spread of Covid-19. Evidence of the link of Vitamin D to Covid-19 is still being researched with larger scale trials needed. In the meantime, the Secretary of State has asked NICE and PHE to re-review the existing evidence. The government will publish its findings towards the end of the year. The advice from Public Health England is for everybody to take 10 micrograms (400 IU) of Vitamin D a day between October and early March to keep bones and muscles healthy. Public Health England advises people who are more at risk of not having enough Vitamin D to take a Vitamin D supplement all year round. A range of products and doses are available at supermarkets, pharmacies and other retailers. Anyone who is able to purchase a Vitamin D supplement and start taking them now is advised to do so, even if you are also eligible for a delivery later in the year.



FESTIVE ISSUES OF NEWTON NEWS

Christmas Edition: - Friday, 18th December
Deadline: Wednesday 16th December, 12noon
No Edition - Friday, 25th December, 2020
or Friday 1st January 2021

BACK TO NORMAL ON
Friday, 8th January, 2021

Deadline: Wednesday 6th January, 12noon

Advertisements are accepted at our reception
or via email to paul@newtonnews.co.uk

Office Opening Times

Closing 4.00pm on Wednesday 23rd December.
Skeleton Staff in attendance until re-opening
on **Monday 4th January 2021** at 9.00am

*The Management
of Newton Press and
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STRANGE MEDIA

Humorous news stories from around the world

Tragedy in Canada

Canada's worst air disaster occurred earlier today when a Cessna 152, a small two-seater plane, crashed into a cemetery early this morning in central Newfoundland. Newfie search and rescue workers have recovered 826 bodies so far and expect that to climb as digging continues into the evening.

THANK YOU PEN PALS

Dear Sir,
Bethany House Nursing Home would like to thank Pamela Lovelas, Newton News, Friends from Xcel Church and all the kind people who have taken time to write letters and send cards to our residents - we even received one from Newcastle!
When we read them to our residents, these letters trigger interesting happy memories and we have several conversations - we really do appreciate the kindness you have shown our residents.
A special mention and thank you to Bessie, who completed a sponsored 'Car Park Walk', what an amazing lady.
Thank you also to our neighbours, who leave the staff team tins of biscuits and sweets, to Aycliffe Radio for the Memory Lane Show, broadcast specifically for the local Care Homes.
Thanks again, Debbie and Alan

Sugar Hill Odd Socks Day



Sugar Hill staff and pupils have been busy completing lots of different activities in classes throughout National Anti-Bullying week. On Wednesday 18th November, children and staff came to school wearing odd socks. Odd Socks Day is designed to be fun, where children and staff are able to express themselves and celebrate their individuality. It has become an annual event at Sugar Hill with a very clear message "Be proud of who you are and be accepting of one another."

The children are taught throughout the school year that it takes a collective responsibility, not just in school, but in the wider community, to stop bullying in all its forms. Devoting a week in the school calendar to reinforce these very important messages, to be kind to others in what we say and what we do, raises the profile that bullying will not be tolerated and that everyone knows what to do if they feel they are being bullied by anyone else.
At Sugar Hill, staff, children, their families and the wider community are working together to earn accreditation with the 'Emotional Wellbeing Award'. Lessons taught throughout Anti-Bullying week are central to ensuring everyone feels valued and safe and the children have designed posters to display around school spreading the message that at Sugar Hill bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. Well done Sugar Hill pupils!
The message is simple, in a world where you can be anything, be kind.

AYCLIFFE RADIO

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Weekly Programme Schedule

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Classic "Love Songs" Sun-Thurs 12 to 3am, Fri & Sat 2-4am

Updates from MP Paul Howell at 12noon daily

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	A DJ

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	Paul's Down Time	Paul Kjenstad
10-12am	Sean's Sunday Set List	Sean Lawless

MONDAY to FRIDAY DAILY

10-12am	Golden Years	Paul Baker
12-1pm	A to Z of Pop (Mon, Tues & Wed)	Richard Smith
12-1pm	Call Me No 1 (Tues & Thurs)	Richard Smith
1-2pm	Memory Lane	Gary Avery
2-4pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker
MONDAY		
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

6-7pm	Mystery Year	Paul Baker
7.30-9.30pm	Northern & Classic Soul	Kevin Sowerby

WEDNESDAY

5-6.30pm	Joey's Jukebox	Joey Collins
6-10pm	Alternative Aycliffe	Gaz n Alby

THURSDAY

6-8pm	The List	Colin McNeillie
8-10pm	BeatRoote	Graeme Roote

FRIDAY

6-8pm	Techno Trance Mix	PVR Studios
8-10pm	11th Dec - Martin Norris Movin' Melodies	Gaz n Alby
10-12am	Alternative Aycliffe (R)	

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

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Roads policing officers are once again taking part in a national campaign to target drivers under the influence of drugs or alcohol over the Christmas season.

From Tuesday 1st December, officers from the Cleveland and Durham Specialist Operations Unit (CDSOU) will carry out random vehicle stops and intelligence led enforcement in a bid to remove drivers, who are under the influence, from the roads and keep people safe.

Police will be out morning and night to catch those who may be flouting the law.

Whilst pubs and restaurants must remain closed under tier 3 restrictions across Cleveland and Durham, police are reminding people who may have a drink in their home to ensure that they don't drive whilst over the limit the following morning.

Inspector Jamie Bell, from the Cleveland and Durham Specialist Operations Unit, said: "Whilst pubs and restaurants remain closed at the moment, there will be people who fancy a tipple at home over the festive season, which is absolutely fine as long as they don't get behind the wheel of a vehicle whilst over the limit.

"People will also need to be mindful of driving the following day; they will need to leave enough time for the alcohol to leave their bodies to ensure that they can safely use the roads."

According to the Department for Transport, an estimated 8,680 people were killed or injured by drink drivers nationally in 2018.

Inspector Bell added: "Whilst we tackle this issue all year round, it is more likely at Christmas time that people may get behind the wheel after a drink. It is extremely frustrating, as a roads policing officer, that some motorists still choose to drive under the influence of drink or drugs, in the knowledge that their actions could kill or seriously injure someone else's loved one.

"Drink or drug driving is completely unacceptable and preventing this risk on our roads is one of our main priorities."

Drivers risk up to six months' imprisonment, an unlimited fine and a substantial driving ban if they are caught driving while above the legal limit. Anyone who causes a death while drink or drug driving faces up to 14 years' imprisonment.

Police Commissioner Responds to MPs Letter

Steve White, Acting Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner said, "I acknowledge Mr Jabbour's and the local MPs concerns over building a centralised custody suite, and am open to discussing the plans in a personal briefing like I have done with local MPs and Councillors since July. I would like to address the concerns that have been raised and present the reasoning behind the decision making process.

My appointment by the Durham and Darlington Police and Crime Panel means that they hold me to account, and they rightly expect me to make difficult decisions, with an expectation that such decisions will not be delayed where they reduce risk and where the impact is significant and positive upon force operations. Any delay in the decision making process, for instance until after the Police & Crime Commissioner Elections 2021, would be severely detrimental, potentially leading to the loss of site needed for such a complex project and we are currently managing a high corporate risk because current facilities do not meet Home Office standards.

The estimated cost of the new custody facility would be around £21m and that would be paid for from reserves held by the Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner. Police forces are required to hold reserves in order to maintain good financial health and a sensible and indeed common practice with such funding in the public sector is to use the funding for one-off major capital works that are needed to ensure risk issues are reduced and to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the force.

We have already undertaken and continue to deliver a significant programme of engagement on the proposed custody facility, and have communicated with the Police and Crime Panel, all local elected officials, community safety partnerships, Health & Wellbeing Board, the Area Action Partnerships, health and criminal justice organisations and many others. We will shortly be speaking with parish councils too. However, it must be understood that we cannot consult on a potential planning application in advance of statutory consultation because we could be perceived, particularly if working closely with the local authority, as influencing that process.

It is important to highlight that the new custody facility will not only function as an efficient detention suite but would also enable centralisation of other functions linked to detention and investigation processes including a Crime Scene Investigation office and improved technology capacity to facilitate a virtual court for officers. A new facility would be a safer environment for our staff and officers to work in by enabling full CCTV monitoring systems to be installed. It would also eradicate all blind spots and provide holding areas that would facilitate officers to book multiple detainees in at once, instead of them having to wait as they presently have to. This would have a beneficial impact by allowing officers to get back to the street quickly."

JUNCTION 7 CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY EVENTS

This year we have three projects planned:

1

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Cooked and delivered to your door on Christmas Day. This is for people who will be alone.

2

CHRISTMAS DINNER IN A BOX

This will include all the ingredients and trimmings to cook your own dinner on Christmas Day.

3

TREAT HAMPER

A box of Christmas treats. This is for people who are experiencing financial difficulties.

THERE IS NO COST FOR THESE PROJECTS

CONTACT JUNCTION7 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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READERS' PHOTOGRAPHS



Some of the Canada geese at West Park by Peter Russell



**Parliament
Talk**

Tel: 01325 790580 - Email: paul.howell.mp@parliament.uk

This week saw me participating in two Westminster Hall debates. Westminster Hall is the oldest building on the parliamentary estate. It was built in 1097 under William II, the son of William the Conqueror, and at that time was by far the largest hall in England measuring 240 x 67 feet (73 x 20 metres) with a floor area of around 17,000 sq ft (1547 sq mts). It was here that Charles I was tried and condemned to death for tyranny and treason. It is here that lying in state of monarchs and consorts typically takes place. The most recent being Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and one of the few non royals to receive the honour was Winston Churchill in 1965, when an estimated one million people paid their respects. These "Westminster Hall" debates are actually held in the Grand Committee Room just off Westminster Hall. The first debate I joined was "Infrastructure in the North" where I started by reminding everyone that we are the north of the north and any consideration has to get beyond Manchester and Leeds. The second was "Levelling up in the Tees Valley" where I talked about the need for improved transport links in the region. I also had discussions with a local business fellowship where I took questions and representations as well as another call with the acting PCVC, Steve White, where particular discussions were around the controversial plans to consolidate the custody suites in the county. The Chancellor gave his spending review this week where two particular points stood out for me locally. The first was that the proposal to reopen a passenger train station in Ferryhill had been included in the National Infrastructure Strategy and the second was the introduction of a levelling up fund of £4bn for projects that drive growth and regeneration in places in need. This was something I specifically lobbied the Chancellor for, so I hope to support projects for us bidding into this pot. On Wednesday I met with Oliver Dowden, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, where I discussed the needs of improved Broadband in places like Redworth and how we had to better support grass roots sport. On Thursday David, from my office, held a virtual surgery with residents, discussing actions we are supporting locally on broadband for Redworth and other villages. Friday saw weekly catch ups with first Ben Houchen, the Tees Valley Mayor, and the Conservative MP's in his patch before later with the Chief Executive of Durham and Darlington NHS Trust, Sue Jacques. It

was good to hear from Sue that, although infection numbers are still too high, local trends are in the right direction with falling hospital numbers in particular being good news. I also had the pleasure of switching on the Christmas lights in Ferryhill centre and, if regulations allow, they are well worth a look.

I get representations on whether we should be in tier 2 rather than tier 3 but also from people saying we shouldn't have a relaxation over Christmas at all due to the risks. The Government needs to balance both of these views amongst many others. I understand the complexity of considering the dynamics of absolute infection rates, their trends, the sensitivity of over 60's and the pressure on the NHS means it is not easy to communicate where the tipping points are that mean we can move between tiers. This, however, is something government need to find a way to improve clarity on and my other concern remains the size of the groupings. I believe County Durham is almost too large to consider as an entity for this so to consolidate everywhere from Teesside to Northumberland as one patch is something I am lobbying against and even if we start there I would like to see the opportunity for segmentation of the region as data trends are considered for future tiers.

Can I also remind you that the proposed relaxation over Christmas is to allow flexibility to meet family and friends. It is not a challenge to see how far the rules can be stretched, we all need to remember it is our friends and family we are putting at risk and should therefore take the opportunity to meet, but we should do this as safely as possible. For example, all of your combined Christmas bubble do not have to meet at the same time and the more people in the bubble the more important you consider the vulnerable in it. I will be in a 3 household bubble but we are planning to normally only have 2 out of 3 meeting at any one time as far as possible, but we all expect to see each other over the period.

For now though we need to follow the rules and if we are to work our way down these tiers it is important that everyone follows the guidance, so please everyone do your bit and remember

HANDS-FACE-SPACE Wash your Hands regularly, wear a mask on your Face where required and give people Space, follow the new regulations that will hopefully put us in a better place for Christmas and beyond. Stay safe and have a good week
Paul Howell
MP for Sedgefield

Campaign Continues at Greenfield Arts



Greenfield Arts have been working alongside young people and artist Paul Theo Murray to help bring about a 'climate of change'. Through community workshops and school assemblies word has been getting out asking 'How Can I Help'. Positive slogans are popping up around the school grounds of Greenfield Community College and Greenfield Arts site. The artwork can be found on banners and walls, inspiring young people to think about how they can take positive action and imagine a brighter future. Paul is a visual mixed-media artist who encourages, supports and develops engagement within communities. His work is thought provoking and suggests a call to action that is at the heart of the 'How Can I Help' campaign.

Young people have been invited to share ideas to help create an exhibition with some amazing contributions. One young artist, Phoebe, aged 7, was passionate about her contribution, her theme is around the pollution that causes the sun to burn through and melt the ice filling up the sea and plastic pollution that harms animals on land and fish in the sea, with a simple message "we need to stop using plastic".

Paul has put together an online exhibition which captures the essence of the campaign with striking images that are thought provoking and feature the work of young people. Visit our website to find out more or simply follow the link, <https://bit.ly/33tPgkT> If you would like to know more about the campaign, or the many projects and activities on offer at Greenfield Arts, please visit our website www.greenfield-arts.co.uk

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Cleaner & Greener Communities

County Durham community groups can now apply for funding to help make their neighbourhoods cleaner and greener. Volunteers can apply for a grant of up to £500 from Durham County Council, as part of the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) It's Your Neighbourhood campaign.

The campaign encourages communities to come together to make their neighbourhoods a cleaner and greener place to live as well as providing smaller groups with an opportunity to get involved with the RHS Northumbria in Bloom and Britain in Bloom competitions.

Ten volunteer-led community garden groups will be selected by the council to help support projects that are relevant to local environment issues. This can include cleaning up a local park, setting up community allotments or adding floral or planting displays to outdoor open spaces. Groups have until Friday 15th January to apply and will find out if they are successful in the grant later that month.

It is the fifth year of the funding programme which has previously supported 90 community projects to make a difference in their neighbourhoods.

Cllr. Brian Stephens, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for neighbourhoods and local partnerships, said: "These projects are a fantastic opportunity for people to work together to make a huge difference to their communities. Simple acts, such as planting wildflowers or tidying church yards and other outdoor spaces, can have such a positive effect on those who live and work nearby. The improvements that have been made by previous groups, thanks to the community grant scheme, have been inspiring and have instilled a real sense of pride to so many neighbourhoods. I'm very much looking forward to seeing the benefits of this year's successful applicants."

For more information, visit the council's website:
www.durham.gov.uk/itsyourneighbourhood

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Have Your Say on A689 and Junction 60 Proposals

Dear Sir,
Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) is seeking the public's views on major road schemes in the area. One of these is a range of improvements to the A689 to 'ease traffic congestion'. These changes include 'signalisation' (installation of traffic lights) on junction 60 with the A1(M), and the extension of the cyclepath by the road between Sedgfield and Wynyard. The closing date for feedback on the scheme is 18th December.

I don't want traffic lights on junction 60. I have used this junction for over 10 years and never had a problem with congestion. Traffic lights will break up the flow of traffic and cause unnecessary delays. I believe they also cause driver stress. They will also detract from the rural setting of the junction 60 roundabout and create light pollution.

The signals at the Bowburn junction 61 (which used to be temporary, now permanent) are now a painful driving experience since that junction was 'improved'. The same applies to the Scotch Corner junction. I don't want junction 60 to be a repeat of these bad experiences. The experience is usually one of driving up to the lights on green for them to change to red just before arrival. Then to have to wait with an empty roundabout in front. Drive 100 yards and there is another set of lights at red.

Then another. With the traffic stationary on the roundabout, it becomes more difficult to change lanes. Very stressful.

Does the plan take into account the reduction in traffic coming off at junction 60 to take the A689 into Teesside which should result when the Darlington North Link Road is built? It will then be able stay on the A1(M) through junction 60 to come off at junction 59 and avoid the nightmare driving experience that is the signalised A19/A689 junction at Wolviston.

I have never seen the justification for traffic lights at these roundabouts. If the TVCA can publish the data that shows fewer delays and accidents with signals, I might be convinced

of their worth or necessity. But there's nothing about this in their publicity brochure. The other reason I don't support the proposal is that there is no provision for a cyclepath west of Sedgfield. Let's get the TVCA to include a cyclepath so that we are connected to Sedgfield and points in between. Though I cycle regularly, I have only ever cycled once between Sedgfield and Newton Aycliffe on the A689 and would not recommend it.

If a cyclepath west of Sedgfield was included and the signalisation of Junction 60 dropped, then I would support the plan.

Please have your say by visiting:

<https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/consultations/a689-corridor-improvements/> Your feedback has to be in by 18th December.

David Cook

Cemetery Fencing Damaged



In recent weeks the boundary metal railing fence at Stephenson Way Cemetery has been extensively damaged along the section of land which is adjacent to the path running to the rear of residential properties at Keld Road.

The Town Council spent a significant amount of time repairing this section of fencing last year as part of the site improvements and replanting programme following the removal of the overgrown conifer hedge.

The fence has been pushed and twisted in several locations along the length from outside the cemetery. Great Aycliffe Town Council are appealing for witnesses to come forward with any information that may lead to identification of the culprits.

Local residents are asked to contact the Town Council with any information on 01325 300700 or info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

(MIDDRIDGE ROAD, NEWTON AYCLIFFE) (TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE) ORDER 2020

The Council on 27/11/20 made the above Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984 as amended, Section 14 (1) and pursuant to arrangements made under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 with Darlington Borough Council, to prohibit all vehicular traffic from proceeding on 715m of Middridge Rd between its junctions with Chestnut Way and the road leading to Middridge Farms, Newton Aycliffe to enable new roundabout resurfacing works to be undertaken. Alt route from the eastern side of the closure from Greenfield Way generally southwards and continuing south on Spring Rd then westerly on B6444 Heighington Lane to A6072. The maximum duration of the Order is 18 months. The proposed works are to commence from 8am on 28/11/20 and are anticipated to be completed in 2 days. On occasions, alternative dates for closure may be necessary and these will be signed accordingly.

Dated: 4th December 2020



Helen Lynch
Head of Legal & Democratic Services
County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

Sudoku

5			8	7		4	
9			5		7		6
2	7			4		3	
	2	6		5	4		
	8	9	4				5
4			3	7		8	
		4	7	6		5	
	7			8	6		4
	5		9			8	7

Opportunity for Local Residents to Plant Trees in their Community



People hoping to make a difference to green spaces can plant trees in their area with the help of a new funding grant. Durham County Council has made funding available for community groups, parish councils, schools, and individuals who want to help revitalise local green spaces and combat climate change. The grant coincides with National Tree Week which runs until Sunday 6th December and is the UK's largest annual tree celebration, marking the start of winter tree planting. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, restrictions and safety measures have meant people will be unable to get together this season and plant trees as they normally would. While restrictions currently prevent groups from gathering to plant trees, individuals can also apply for the grant. The council will be accepting applications until February 2021 to provide an opportunity for groups to plant trees once coronavirus restrictions are lifted. The pandemic has had a significant impact on everyone and, with limited trips out, local green spaces have become a place for people to reconnect with the outdoors. During the pandemic, outdoor spaces have helped support people's mental and wellbeing during this difficult time by offering an attractive space for people to enjoy and use for exercise, contemplation, entertainment or a chance to explore their local natural environment. Trees provide many other benefits such as conserving water and soils, supporting wildlife and biodiversity, and are a key solution to climate change. A maximum grant of £150 will be available to communities and individuals that apply and can be used for schemes to plant trees such as fruit trees, commemorative trees, open-grown specimen trees, hedgerow trees, small field corners and coppices. The council's clean and green team is also currently planting trees across the county as part of the wider Forestry Commission's Urban Tree Challenge, a funded project to increase tree coverage in urban areas. Both projects support the council's Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) which aims to reduce the county's carbon emissions and become carbon neutral by 2050 while tackling climate change through hundreds of projects such as tree planting and energy conservation. Cllr Brian Stephens, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for neighbourhoods and local partnerships, said: "Green spaces are vitally important for supporting our own health and wellbeing while preserving the natural environment. During the coronavirus pandemic, people have been relying on these areas for exercise and a trip outdoors where other means have been unavailable. "Now more than ever we are all realising how valuable green spaces are to communities. This grant will help groups and individuals plant trees across the county, improve and preserve local outdoor spaces while helping our pledge as a county to combat climate change." Early applications for the grants are recommended as they will be allocated on a first come first served basis. For further details about the grant, email landscape@durham.gov.uk

In Memoriam

John McRobert
4th December 2018



Age 31 Years

We think about you always, we talk about you every day. You have never been forgotten, we hold you close to our heart and there you will remain. Love you always, Nanna, Andrew, Tyler, Stuart and Michael

Birthday Remembrance

Stephen Paul Ibinson
30th November 1976



Today recalls the memory of a loved one gone to rest, and those who think of him today are those who loved him best. Always loved and remembered, Mam, Dad and Family

Obituary

Elizabeth Jane Horner

On 22nd November, peacefully in hospital. Elizabeth Jane, (Betty), aged 92 years of Barrington Road, Newton Aycliffe. Beloved Wife of the late John, dearly loved Mam of Stephan, Susan, Alison and Tracy, much loved Grandma of Hayley, Curtis, Daniel, Michael, Jack and Gabriel, Great Grandma to Eadie and also a much loved Mother-in-Law. Funeral to take place at Wear Valley Crematorium, Coundon on Wednesday 9th December at 11.30am.

Congratulations

Bailey Nigel Crossen
Benedict Carter Crossen



Happy 18th Birthday

Love from Mam and Dad xxx

Happy 18th Birthday Brothers
Bailey and Benedict Crossen

Love from Luke, Rochelle, Cameron, Lucy, Gerard, Hannah and Finlay

Bailey and Benedict Crossen

Happy 18th Birthday B & B

Lots of love from
Auntie Connie, Uncle Paul and Daisy xxx

Acknowledgement

Alice Doreen Cross

Ron, Marjorie, David and their families would like to thank everyone for their love, support and messages of condolence following the recent sad loss of Doreen. To everyone who donated money to The Alzheimer's Society, in lieu of flowers, thank you. We raised the magnificent sum of £1100.00. Thanks to Aycliffe Care Home for taking care of Doreen for the last four years of her life.

A special thank you to Dave, Louise and Gillian of Co-op Funeralcare for their professional care and kindness. You were a real comfort.

An extra special thanks to celebrant, Carole Briggs, for conducting a fitting and moving ceremony in celebration of Doreen's life. The family really appreciated your help and sensitivity, especially under the difficult circumstances we are all facing.



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Challenge Achieved, Target Surpassed

As you know, I set myself a challenge of running 100k during lockdown to try and hopefully raise £1000 which would be split equally between, two great causes which are The Royal British Legion and Newton Aycliffe FC Junior Section.



I am pleased to confirm that I actually slightly exceeded my target by running 102.75km by Friday 27th November, which was four days earlier than the target date, but more importantly, the sponsorship fund has also exceeded the stretching £1k target set and currently stands at £1030!

It's certainly fair to say that I am genuinely overwhelmed by all the support and kind donations from everyone, especially under the current difficult circumstances we are all having to deal with at the moment due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

So, I would again like to thank everyone who sponsored me, I genuinely appreciate it. Finally, I am keeping the fundraising page open until Tuesday 12th December when the final total will be signed off and the funds distributed accordingly.

Thanks you
Nige Slatcher
NAJFC Junior Section Chairman.

Christmas Appeal on Behalf of Rotary Newton Aycliffe

You are likely to be aware of Rotary Newton Aycliffe from our Santa Sleigh tours and collections in Tesco at Christmas. Sadly because of Covid-19, it has been decided that the Santa Sleigh tours will not take place, but we are still looking to find funding and sponsorship to enable us to provide 50+ food hampers at Christmas as these are so badly needed, especially in these times when many families are struggling.

We have lost numerous fund-raising opportunities, the Big Breakfast, the Golf Day, a knees up with our friends at the Big Club and many other social occasions when you would have been there to support us. The people of Newton Aycliffe, School Aycliffe and Heighington have always been so generous and kind and we do understand that other charities are having problems too - caring is what the festive season is about, isn't it? So please help us out by contributing to our work, however small your donation, it all counts.

Tesco have allowed us to place a collection box and banner in the store and we thank them for this kind gesture. If you would like to contribute, but cannot get to the store, our bank account is:

The Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe Trust Fund.

Sort code 20-25-29, Account no. 13304302. Our grateful thanks to Homeplan for supplying materials free of charge for the collection box and to Rotarian, Brian

Winwood, for the design and construction of both the box and banner. And you know you can trust our members to do the best they can for the community we all love. With best wishes and a huge thank you from President, Trish Pemberton.

Photo left to right: Brian Winwood, Tesco Community Champion, Shirley and Tony Robinson.

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NASSL Appeal

Dear Sir,
NASSL are in urgent need of bedding for the animals in our care over the winter months, items such as towels and sheets. We also urgently need items to sell to support the vets fund.

The wild bird project is in need of bird seed and fat balls, as we look to get bird feeding stations to the people that would like one and to regularly drop off bird seed etc., to the people that have to stay in due to Covid-19. We need your support to help provide them to the people that would like one. Please look on our website for the Amazon wish list and make a rescuers pet happy. Please help us to help the animals in need. For collection of goods telephone 01325 321855 or 01325 311215.

Thank you.

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