

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

Laptop & Tablet Appeal for Local Schoolchildren

See page 2 for more



Special thank you to your Newton News Sponsors:

SHAKE 'N' CAKE



PAUL HOWELL
MP for Sedgefield



Mini Exhibition for Care Home Resident



Chris, on Wednesday 20th January 2021, held an exhibition of his wonderful artwork and proudly displayed the many pictures of his 1,000 piece jigsaws for everyone living in Bethany House Nursing home to see. Champagne and Strawberries were also served.

Laptop & Tablet Appeal for Local Schoolchildren

Dear Sir,
As a result of the newly imposed lockdown, home-schooling is now the norm and it looks likely to be this way for a while. Our local schools are doing a marvellous job providing remote teaching and setting work to be undertaken on-line. Unfortunately, some of our less fortunate families lack the ability to access the full range of teaching, because of resource issues. They may not have the laptops/tablets/smart phones in the household to enable their children to access learning.



The local school, for which I'm a Governor, has 120 children qualifying for pupil premium top up funding. This means the school gets extra funding from the government to help them improve the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils, although this funding does not cover the cost of IT equipment. Evidence shows that children from disadvantaged backgrounds:

- generally face extra challenges in reaching their potential at school
- often do not perform as well as their peers

(source: Dept. of Education).

Despite the number of disadvantaged children, the school in question has received only 30 laptops/tablets from central government to help support home learning. In some homes two or three children are sharing a smart phone to access schooling because this is the only device available. No child should be left behind for lack of basic resources to allow them to actively participate in the excellent home schooling provision being provided by our local education establishments. The challenges facing this particular school is not an isolated case and there are 11 schools in Great Aycliffe.

I would like to ask fellow Newtonians, and our local businesses, if they have any spare laptops, iPads, or android tablets, that are serviceable but no longer used, that they would be willing to donate to our local schools? Any help and assistance to this worthy cause will be gratefully received.

To donate any items for use by local children, please contact:

jed.hillary@btinternet.com
or telephone 07552 758148
Cllr. Jed Hillary.

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Greenfield Students Make Strong Choices

Students from Greenfield Community College are being supported and encouraged to make academic and vocational choices as they continue their journey. Year 11 students are continuing their studies through online learning and a structured timetable to prepare for their future and develop their academic skills. Careers lead, Mr Tait, has offered students a programme of opportunities to help make strong choices that will help all students



realise their potential and make the most of their many skills and attributes. The close relationship between the school, colleges and business have meant that former students have been supported to go on to great academic and career success.

Sixth form colleges in the area are continuing to accept applications and many are offering virtual open events and tours. Support for those students who are still making a decision is available both from Mr Tait, subject leaders and relevant colleges, just contact simon.tait@greenfieldschool.net or visit the school's Facebook page to find out more.

Those wishing to find out more about vocational opportunities and apprenticeships can also access information about local vacancies on the school Facebook page or by contacting apprenticeshiprecruitment@learningcurvegroup.co.uk - or to search more widely visit www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk

Greenfield Community College are committed to supporting students to reach their full potential. The school promotes an inclusive curriculum encouraging students to work together to realise an outstanding learning experience. If you would like further information visit www.greenfieldschool.net or contact the school by emailing contact@greenfieldschool.net or by calling 01325 300378.

Home Schooling Support



PLAY CAFÉ in Newton Aycliffe has been supporting children and parents during school closures by making available Schooling Packs.

We have a limited number of packs to offer and are especially helpful for children from 4 to 7 years of age who have difficulty learning online or using worksheets and need other resources to express their thoughts and record learning.

Early stages / delayed reading and writing skills can lead to terrible frustration and lack of any engagement.

Family support workers who know of families struggling in these circumstances may request a pack.

aycliffeplaycafe@gmail.com

Holiday Camp!!

Dear Sir,
It was interesting to read Ofsted's comments on Aycliffe Secure Centre in last week's edition. It has great play facilities, a fabulous gym with personal trainer, extra support for physical and mental health and well being, and on site health care. Sounds like a wonderful free holiday camp paid for by the taxpayer. I'll bet the TWOKers, muggers of old ladies and other juvenile delinquents are quaking in their boots at the possibility of being confined there!
John Snowball



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POLICE APPEAL

Detectives are issuing a further appeal for information following a serious collision on 12th January. It happened shortly after 9.00am on the A688 at Keverstone Bank, in Staindrop, and involved a white Fiat Ducato van and a Nissan Juke.

Officers would like to speak to a potential witness – a woman who was thought to be cycling between Barnard Castle and Staindrop and is believed to have stopped to speak to the man and woman involved in the collision. Anyone who can help is asked to call Detective Constable Helen Towns or Detective Sergeant Jo Wright, from Durham Constabulary, on 101.

A 36-year-old man has since been charged with attempted murder, causing serious injury by dangerous driving and assaulting an emergency service worker in connection with the incident.



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. . . AND ANYTHING ELSE
PRINT RELATED

Great North Air Ambulance Launch Business Club



The man behind the jet suit paramedic concept will be the first speaker at a new networking group aimed at connecting Northern businesses. The Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) will launch a business club next month to unite businesses from its region and give them the chance to hear from expert speakers. Membership fees from the GNAAS Business Club (GBC) will go towards helping GNAAS continue to provide life-saving critical care to ill or injured patients in the region at a time when the charity has seen a slump in revenue from corporate supporters. In 2019 the charity received £753,000 from businesses, however in 2020 this was down to £412,000.

Although the membership fee will help the charity, the main goal of GBC is to create a group for businesses to network and establish a sense of unity and togetherness, just like when the charity's own critical care team work together to save a life. The first event will be a free taster session taking place virtually on 11th February, with guest speaker Andy Mawson, director of operations and paramedic at GNAAS.

He said: "I'm delighted to be the first speaker at our inaugural event for GNAAS' new business club. GNAAS we strive to stay at the forefront of pre-hospital care and are committed to a programme of research and development, so the first event will be focused on innovation. I will be talking about the launch of the jet suit paramedic which we trialled in September 2020, our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, what the future looks like for us, and my management style, among other things. It'd be great to see as many businesses as possible joining us, albeit virtually, and hopefully we can all meet in person later in the year once it's safe to do so."

Leya Baksh, corporate fundraising officer at the charity, said: "We're really looking forward to meeting local businesses at our launch event. It's a great opportunity for people to network and grow their connections as well as listen to interesting speakers. Membership fees will contribute towards our life-saving service, which is completely reliant on public donations."

Businesses of all industries and sizes are welcome to join GBC. The membership fee is £35 (excl. VAT) per month per member (£420 per year VAT excl).

By becoming a member of GBC, members will be invited to networking events throughout the year and get access to exclusive benefits such as discounted rates on GNAAS' world class facilities hire.

In addition to this, members will receive online and social media support such as shout outs on LinkedIn, and the use of the GBC logo and GBC LinkedIn banner for corporate social responsibility purposes.

To find out more information about becoming a member of GBC please contact leya.baksh@gnaas.com or call 01325 487263.

To register for the first event visit: gna.as/gbc

Newton Aycliffe Tech Company to Revolutionise Customer Experiences

An innovative Newton Aycliffe technology company is aiming to transform the way customers engage and experience entertainment, sport, visitor attractions, hospitality and retail.

Fame Media Tech, led by entrepreneur Bryan Hoare, is on a mission to transform customer experiences through mobile and content technology to help operators create more engaged and loyal customers, fans and visitors.

The Aycliffe business, whose team combines market leading technology with decades of experience in publishing and digital media, has already started to create innovative content experiences for millions of mobile users around the world and is now about to embark on the next stage of development. Existing mobile optimised experiences strive to increase engagement, yet many lack technology and content engagement and miss customer expectations. Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of technology more than ever; showing how important it is to maintain links with customers when a national and global crisis disrupts normal business.

Fame Media Tech is planning to build a

mobile technology platform, called n-gage.io, a highly customisable Software as a Service (SaaS) platform which, when combined with storytelling and innovation in digital media and extended reality (XR) will positively influence behaviour, enhance engagement, and improve customer loyalty.

Founder and CEO Bryan Hoare said: "We're part of the 'Audience of the Future' revolution, where storytelling and innovation in digital media and mobile technology come together to captivate and engage audiences. Customers, visitors, fans and guests' expectations are changing; we expect more standout moments where immersive technology and content combine to enhance our experiences. We're developing the technology to transform the visitor, fan and customer experience leading to more loyal and engaged customers for our clients."

"Through our technology we'll be improving the experience, deepening engagement and building customer loyalty and ultimately revenues for the operator. We have proved the concept and have had constructive discussions with operators across sport, hospitality and visitor attractions. We're already providing content to global businesses such as Vodacom, Uber and MTN, to create more engaging experiences. We now need to secure investor funding to scale up to the next level."

Bryan Hoare, who has more than 20 years marketing, media, and technology experience, is involved in several visitor attraction projects in the UK including the Football Walk of Fame in Manchester, which



is acting as a pilot experience in sport.

The Fame Media Tech competitive advantage also extends to the use of a unique UK trademark – The Walk of Fame, owned by brand ambassador David Courtney. A renowned songwriter and music producer, David is working with Fame Media Tech to target his network across sport, music, hospitality, film and TV.

Fame Media Tech is working closely with North East based fintech company Growth Capital Ventures (GCV) to secure investment to develop its innovative technology platform. GCV aims to raise seed funding via its GrowthFunders.com co-investment platform.

Growth Funders has already successfully raised investment from institutional and individual investors for a portfolio of companies that includes B-North, Hive.HR, Intelligence Fusion, QikServe and Homes by Carlton. More information about Fame Media Tech can be found at: www.famemediatech.com

READERS' PHOTOGRAPHS



Darran Weston took this picture of West Park Lake on a gorgeous sunset evening. Thought I'd share them with your readers as the ice reflecting the sun looks stunning.

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Chinese New Year to be Marked with Online Events for Schoolchildren

Chinese New Year will be marked in schools across County Durham with a series of online events next month.

Durham County Council today announced that a programme of virtual activities will take place in honour of the lunar New Year and the Year of the Ox, which is celebrated from Monday 8 to Friday 12 February.

Although public events cannot take place this year, due to coronavirus, the council's International Relations Team is working with partners at Durham University, Durham Chinese School and GemArts to create online content for schools and pupils of all ages so that they can feel part of the festivities.

Some of this will be in the form of short videos which will be available to schools at the end of January and which class teachers can view and arrange for pupils to access safely from home.

The videos are; the story of the Ox and the Chinese Zodiac told by Durham Chinese School; Life in China today – a short film made by the Durham University Chinese Scholars' and Students' Association; and Make a Chinese dragon at home, a step-by-step guide to building a dragon using simple materials, delivered by GemArts artist Pui Lee.

Durham Chinese School will offer a live craft session to demonstrate calligraphy and simple paper cutting for Key Stage 1 pupils, while there will also be Chinese language taster sessions for pupils to practise simple words and phrases offered at primary and secondary level by students at the university's school of modern languages and culture.

For further information about a new British Council resource pack and video links email michele.thorns@durham.gov.uk

The team will also be running three types of live sessions which schools will need to book. These will be suited for classes with key workers' children or those pupils who are attending schools because of their vulnerability.

The live sessions will be delivered using Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Teachers must be present during the sessions and schools will need to book as they are offered on days and at times when contributors are free.

The sessions include a question and answer segment with an Asian student from Durham University, with the opportunity to ask questions about life in his/her home country specifically around the lunar new year, 25-minute taster sessions in Chinese delivered by students at Durham University, and a craft session by Durham Chinese School with step-by-step instructions.

Those who would like to stream one of these sessions should also email michele.thorns@durham.gov.uk

The number of sessions are very limited so early application is recommended.

Cllr Olwyn Gunn, Cabinet member for children and young people's services at Durham County Council, said: "Despite currently not being able to hold public events due to coronavirus I'm sure that pupils in our schools will enjoy learning all about this festival and the Year of the Ox."

"The online activities will provide a fantastic opportunity to find out more about Chinese culture and traditions."



Neighbourhood Policing

By PC Michael Welch

PACT Meeting: 10th February, 6pm, on Police Facebook page



As part of our ongoing commitment to keep our community up to date with what's going on within Newton Aycliffe Neighbourhood Policing team we have decided to create this weekly blog which will feature a different member of staff each week, giving updates on what going on in the town and what we are doing to combat the issues.

As many of you are aware, we have ongoing problems with Anti-Social Behaviour in the Western Area of Newton Aycliffe and over recent weeks we have seen an increase in this type of behaviour.

These complaints range from youth nuisance to off road bikes. I want you all to know that we are fully committed in tackling these issues, as I know that they are having a huge impact on your quality of life.

At this moment in time we are working closely with our partners in building a project which will enable us to engage with the young people causing these issues and look at diverting them away from their current offending.

As part of our Problem Solving approach, we have been speaking with the young people in order to get an understanding of why they are committing acts of ASB and what we can do to reduce their offending. They all highlight the same thing "lack of things to do" This forms one of our main objectives of the project which will be named "The PIER Project" Pier standing for Prevention, Intervention, Enforcement and Rehabilitation. The project will enable us to engage with the young people positively, educate them around their offending and look at building a series of mini projects where they give back to the community. For me it's all about encouraging the young people to take pride in their community.

This week the team has interviewed 14 young people under caution for their role in some of this ASB across the Western area and the town centre. The majority will now be working with youth offending.

There has also been 2 arrests made.

The beat team also carried out a Magistrates search warrant on and address in Winterburn Place, where a quantity of drugs were recovered and 2 males were arrested. Again, this was on the back of invaluable intelligence from local residents.

I want you all to know that we are fully committed in tackling these issues head on. That being said I would welcome members of our community to contact me on the email address below if you have ideas that you think may help, or if you want to get involved in the Pier project.

I have worked Newton Aycliffe now for 14 years, the main reason for this is that I love the strength of our community. Whenever we have problems, we all pull together to resolve them. This is something I have always admired. Please continue to work alongside us, together we are stronger. Stay safe x

michael.welch@durham.pnn.police.uk



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Open Letter to Paul Howell MP

Dear Paul Howell MP,

Before the pandemic hit, a quarter of County Durham children were living in poverty, the majority of which were from working households. This has only worsened since the Covid pandemic with jobs being lost and workers furloughed on 80% of their normal wage.

The Legatum Institute, headed by Tory Peer Philippa Stroud, reported back to your government in November, saying nearly a million people, and 120,000 more children, have been forced into poverty because of the pandemic, and we now have a total of 15 million people living in poverty.

To negate some of the pain, your government raised U.C. levels by £20, and with so many more people having to depend on this to top up their wages, this was a very welcome and essential boost to benefit levels which are already set at destitution levels.

Now your government seems intent on withdrawing this small rise which will mean almost 130,000 people stand to lose out in our region, and that means up to £2.6 million a week will be removed from the local economy at a time when people need more support, not less, and with people having less to spend in their area, local businesses will suffer at a time when they will be struggling to get back on their feet.

The cut makes no economic or moral sense.

This is not the time that children should be going hungry and a quarter of our citizens living in poverty, it is not the time to take money out of the pockets of people, many of whom are key workers being paid below a living wage, and who will be spending their income to keep local business afloat when many are facing closure putting more jobs at risk.

As our MP you have the opportunity to take this up with government for us, on behalf of the thousands of people in our constituency who will be impacted by this, causing them more insecurity, worry and misery in this already stressful time.

Cllr Kathy Beetham

New Recruits Sworn in Online



It's not every day you swear your policing oath to Queen and country online.

But that's exactly what our newest recruits completed during their attestation before a local magistrate.

The 26 probationary officers are believed to be the first in the force's history to complete the important step solely online amid the Coronavirus pandemic.

The new recruits began their training on January 18 and are the first to embark on the Degree Holders Programme - a two-year-course at our specially-designed training facility at Meadowfield.

Policing Skills Trainer, PC Jeff Summerhill, said: "Completing your attestation is always a defining moment in your officer training and these new recruits will definitely remember theirs. "This continues to be an unprecedented time for the new officers but we are really looking forward to having them embark on their new careers as PCs and are sure they will embrace these challenges as all our officers always do."



Do you want to work with the elderly and vulnerable people in Newton Aycliffe?

Do you want to support them and enable them to remain safely in their own homes?

Just call us on

01388 768271

**and speak to Sophie
or email**

sophie.bullough@dalecare.co.uk

or visit www.dalecare.co.uk/careers



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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
12-1am	Night Club Session	A DJ

SUNDAY

9-10am	Church Service	Xcel Centre
10-11am	Yesterdays Music Today	Alan Brown
11-12pm	Mystery Year	Paul Baker
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
6:30-8pm	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	Colin McNeillie
2-4pm	Afternoon Aycliffe	Paul Baker

MONDAY

5-6pm	Euro Chart Show	Dave Graham
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
7:30-11pm	Northern & Classic Soul	Kevin Sowerby

WEDNESDAY

5-6:30pm	Joey's Jukebox	Joey Collins
8-10pm	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	5th Feb - Nathan Abbott Classix Dance Show	Gaz n Alby
10-12am	Alternative Aycliffe (R)	A DJ
12-1am	Night Club Session	

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

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Greenfield Arts Shout 'bout Shildon



Greenfield Arts are delighted to be involved in a project that has community spirit at its heart. The project, 'Shout 'bout Shildon', benefits from a valuable partnership with Shildon Town Council on a Heritage Lottery funded project to celebrate and be informed by the people of Shildon.

Artist, Paul Theo Murray, will be working with the community exploring the heritage and spirit of the town, bringing to life the characteristics that inspire a sense of community. Paul will be mapping out community moments and places of interest through his artwork.

The project is inspired by the way people came together in positive ways during challenging times and the way this has been celebrated on VE Day. Creative Director, Katy Milne, has been working alongside partners and is looking forward to the artistic outcomes that will inspire community. "This project will highlight and celebrate the fantastic people of Shildon and the way they look out for each other and pull together at difficult times. We have seen so many recent examples and acts of kindness that are worth shouting about. It's important we celebrate the fantastic community spirit we continue to see."

If you would like to get involved in the project or find out more about our programme, please contact our friendly team via email on info@greenfield-arts.co.uk or visit our website to find out more.



Rotary e-Club

ROTARY IS CHANGING SO BE PART OF IT.

You are a responsible person in a responsible job and have a busy life. You would also like to give something back to your community but do not have the time. Perhaps Rotary Newton Aycliffe can help.

For years Rotary has supported communities, charities, and individuals with significant challenges of all types. It has gained a huge reputation for linking professional men and women who meet every week to discuss key community issues and consider ways to raise money to help those in most need. This system has prevailed since inception in February 1905 and changed very little, although it now has 1.2 million members worldwide.

Modern life has changed in all aspects, mainly through the advent and strengths of social media and Rotary recognises that change. A new type of club is being formed in the Newton Aycliffe area to run alongside the long established, Rotary Newton Aycliffe.

It is an E-Club. This is a club for those that want to help with and support local and international issues but in a less formal way. The E-Club will meet via Zoom meetings, setting their own agendas and projects. It is not planned to have formal weekly meetings and arrangements will all be online.

If you think this might appeal to you, and you want to learn more, then you are invited to an online Zoom meeting on Thursday, 12th November at 6.30pm. Log in and hear from established E-Clubs and Rotary Members.

Please register your interest by sending an email to rotarynaclub@gmail.com

Pavement Parking

Dear Sir,
I wanted to ask your readers when it became the accepted normal, in the UK, for vehicles to drive on, park and block pedestrian pavements?

I live in a village and I'd estimate that at least 50% of parked vehicles I see are either partially or fully parked on the pavement. Now, I do accept that there are more vehicles than there used to be and parking fully on the road can cause blockages for other vehicles but, drivers need to be aware that parking on a pavement causes pedestrians to have to take risks by walking on the road to get past vehicles. I saw an awful example online of a blind man whose guide dog was walking him up a busy road because the dog couldn't avoid a row of parked cars on the pavement! In our village there's one particular street where pedestrians are forced to walk up the road and keep dodging into the gaps between parked vehicles - on the pavement, whenever a vehicle comes driving along the road. We also have a village shop where vehicles park on the pavement outside, rather than in a parking bay opposite, so that the drivers can be a massive 5 to 10 metres closer to the shop! I've actually been on that bit of pavement and had an annoyed car driver revving his engine at me as he drove up the pavement and wanted me to walk on so that he could park where I was standing. My attempts at sign language to demonstrate that I was on the pavement were met with confused bewilderment!

Also, to the home owners with garages and driveways ... why do you park your car on the public pavement outside your property rather than use your garage or driveway?

Ultimately, for me, it's not a massive issue, I am relatively healthy and I can generally squeeze past vehicles on the pavement. I also drive a car myself.

I just want some of your readers, who park on the pavement, to tell me why they have this attitude, that they have a right to do it and in which year or decade did this attitude manifest itself?

Name and address supplied

Mysterious Noises Coming from Business Park

Dear Sir,
May I, through Newton News, raise an issue which is causing my wife and I some severe disturbance. Over three months we have experienced a very annoying noise, an invasive sound which penetrates our home making sleeping undisturbed impossible. I have walked, in what I believe to be the direction of the source of the noise, at all times of the day and throughout the night, to the north of the Business Park. The noise is particularly disturbing late evening and through the night, due to the absence of other incidental sounds, such as traffic. From my home in Welbury Grove, along Ross Walk to Moore Lane and the A167 the noise is distinct, following the footpath to Clarence Chare and passing the entrance to St. Georges Close, the noise is quite alarming and clearly coming from the Business Park; continuing along Clarence Chare to Clarence Green the noise is persistent and unpleasant, I sympathise with those residents who have to endure such a disturbance.

I have been informed there has been some comments passed to Great Aycliffe Town Council about a strange noise affecting some households with a south westerly elevation facing open areas in the Shaffo area, but people are unaware of where the noise comes from. Durham County Council (DCC), who are responsible for investigating noise pollution, have not received any complaints.

With the environment very much in peoples mind and an issue which is given great prominence by DCC, noise pollution should be given the same level of consideration, due to the effects it may have on the people who reside in areas affected by industrial noise. Physical health due to sleep deprivation, hearing difficulties and mental health because of repeated exposure are likely to be compromised.

All responsible employers now protect their employees from hazards in the workplace, through rigorous health and safety procedures, and these should extend to others who may be affected by the activity of the business.

I would be very interested to hear from others who have been similarly affected.

R Clarke



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Just 'Doing Our Bit' for Climate Change

Dear Sir,

I was delighted to see last week's Newton News debating Climate Change. Of course some of the views expressed were negative! This is a problem far wider than too much CO2 in the atmosphere - it is a massively complex and interlinked malaise threatening society and economy which already encompasses the devastation of the environment and a growing mass-extinction of species. Neither are the solutions easy - some of the suggestions are wholly unacceptable; we must not envisage a future for our grandchildren where they sit, childless, car-less and jobless, shivering in a well-insulated room at 16°C. Meanwhile, we must appreciate that whatever we do in such a complex issue might damage something, somewhere else ... and it is a platitude to say that most of the problem lies well beyond the ability of our country, never mind our Council, to solve alone.

So, if we are to crack this nut, we would be ridiculous to pursue simplistic solutions thoughtlessly, and we must take full account of all the caveats and barriers, as well as the opportunities and benefits. We must be visionary and sceptical at the same time.

HAVING SAID THAT, I meet few people nowadays who doubt that "climate change is on its way at a great rate of knots" or that "nature has decided to take a hand".

And the answer is not to do nothing - to let it happen and hope it happens to our grandchildren not us.

AS I SEE THE ISSUE, all we can do is 'our bit'.

The nations of the world agreed at the Paris Climate Conference that one thing they could do was to restrict the growth of carbon emissions; they each negotiated what they felt was a fair share of such a restriction (according to a formula which, by the way, favoured the richest nations) - and the UK agreed/offered what would be our nation's share of that restraint.

One correspondent wondered what our MP thought of my Climate Change ideas. In fact the government is fully on board with a 2050 target, has a strategy to achieve that, and has set up a Climate Change Committee to hold itself to any shortfalls.

Consequently, two years ago, the County Council ALSO stepped up ... a unanimous, cross-party resolution to commit to County Durham's fair share of our nation's commitment. Whilst that entails key policy and budget decisions at a Council and regional level, it also involves

engaging businesses and residents to help make our county, as well as our Council, carbon neutral "as quickly as possible".

As part of the Council's commitment, it was my honour to be asked to be DCC's 'Climate Champion'. In that capacity I have addressed numerous meetings in venues ranging from European Conferences to tiny community groups, and I have to say that it has been a disappointment that, despite this recourse 'on your doorstep', only one group from Newton Aycliffe has asked me to visit them. May I offer - albeit just 'virtually' for the time being - to speak with any group which invites me, to answer questions honestly, and to listen to people's ideas and issues.

Email: john.clare@durham.gov.uk

Cllr John D Clare

(DCC Climate Champion)

Bishop Auckland Music Society - Concert Series 2021

BAMS is delighted to showcase its 2021 season which launches on Friday, 9th April with Katherine Bryer (oboe) and Irena Radic (piano) in a concert which includes work by Schumann and Rachmaninoff. Katherine has appeared with many orchestras including BBC Symphony, Philharmonia and London Orchestras after studying at the Royal Academy of Music.

Trio, Anima, will perform work by Faure, Teleman and Debussy amongst others on Friday, 7th May. The trio, which formed at the Guildhall School of Music, have

been delighting audiences for over a decade with their distinctive combination of harp, flute and viola.

Pianist Florian Mitrea gave his debut recital at the Bozar Centre in Brussels together with his first solo tour with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in 2020. His summer concert on Friday, 11th June includes work by Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt. Friday 16th July sees Jamal Alijev (cello) and Maksim Stsura (piano) who will delight whilst performing work by Tchaikovsky and Cesar Franck.

The series culminates with The Meraki Duo on Friday, 3rd September. Formed in 2013, the duo enjoys exploring the diversity of repertoire available to the flute-guitar pairing while contributing arrangements of their own. Both share a passion for chamber music that extends to jazz, Latin American and European folk music.

All concerts are held in the warmth and comfort of Bishop Auckland Methodist Church (DL14 6EN - opposite BA Hospital), non-alcoholic light refreshments are available to purchase during the interval.

Season tickets (£58), which include all five concerts for approximately the cost of four, together with individual concert tickets, are available from Treasurer Brian Varley (01388 606075).

In addition, individual concert tickets - £14 in advance, £16 on the door - are also available from Brotherton's Music (opposite Morrison's car park).

(Concert goers may apply to have ticket costs refunded should concerts have to be cancelled because of the Covid epidemic. See BAMS website for details).



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Remarkable but Bittersweet Donation Increase



A charity has seen a “remarkable but bittersweet” increase in donations left by supporters in their wills. The Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) said the £2.7m it received through wills in 2020 allowed it to continue to operate at normal levels at a time when other fundraising income had collapsed. The £2.7m donated in wills represented 40 per cent of the charity’s entire income and a significant increase on the £1.6m donated through this method in 2019.

The donors included couple Alan and Doreen Watson of Newcastle. Mr Watson died around 15 years ago, but in his lifetime the couple set out plans to donate a portion of their estate to GNAAS. When Mrs Watson died last year, the charity received £60,000. “This money has already had a direct impact on the lives of others,” said Andy Mawson, director of operations at GNAAS.

“We never knew Mr and Mrs Watson in their lifetime – the money came to us as a surprise. This is quite typical of this kind of donation. If we could say just one thing to them it would be thank you for enabling us to keep doing our work. We responded to more than 1,200 call outs last year alone. Sometimes our role is about easing pain and often we’re battling to save lives. We see people make incredible recoveries. We’re trying to give people a chance. This is the legacy of Alan and Doreen and all the others who in their lifetime decided to leave something behind to help others unknown to them.”

Hannah Powell, legacies officer at GNAAS, said: “It’s remarkable but it’s bittersweet. By their very nature these donations are coming to us because someone has died. But that just makes us even more committed to making every penny count. These people may no longer be with us, but we want to remember them and do something that would have made them proud.”

Miss Powell said the charity had seen other fundraising income collapse as the pandemic continues to disrupt events and public gatherings. “It’s been a frightening time,” she said. “The impact of the Great North Run not happening, for instance, is profound. We need to raise more than £5m a year and every year we start from scratch. We can’t just assume the donations from supporters’ wills will continue at this level. Every day is a battle but we just hope people will stick with us.”

To speak to Hannah please call 01325 487 363 or visit gna.as/legacy.



Parliament Talk

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

This week I thought I would do something a little different. I will first do the usual and list some of the main engagements I have had, but then I will talk about to some of the recent points of discussion in Parliament and the media.

I attended a virtual round table meeting with a number of head teachers from the constituency, including some representing schools in Newton Aycliffe, which is always the best way to understand their concerns and asks rather than listening to social media. The BEIS meetings this week saw our fourth session on Industrial Strategy. I also joined a briefing with the new Chief of Staff for No 10 which was very informative and he is a very different character to his predecessor. I had a session with the Confederation of Passenger Transport and also had next step meetings with regard to Ferryhill Railway Station. The week included a meeting of Local Government Finance and one of the regular sessions with the senior team at Durham County Council. I received regular briefings on the vaccination roll out and I am delighted with the progress being made to date.

We had a vote on Monday that was billed by the Opposition as “Conservatives failing to support the retention of the £20 uplift to Universal Credit”. This was the latest in a sequence of Opposition Day debates that have been engineered to deliver sound bites for Labour to falsely claim and insinuate that we are not doing or supporting something. An Opposition Day debate is merely an opportunity for the Opposition to have something debated in the House, it has no standing whatsoever in law, or indeed obligations, to the Government. Despite this for two weeks now Labour have been so desperate to have a vote that their own members have shouted “Against” the same motion in the House and then voted “For” in the Lobby. This is completely against the principles of Parliament. Your Vote should follow your voice. It is a disingenuous practice and is continually wasting parliamentary time during this critical time of the pandemic. On the Universal Credit uplift retention it is worth sharing my position. I have made representations to the Chancellor that I believe it should be extended whilst the pandemic endures but this is in the context that I have confidence that he is looking at how to most effectively offer government support as a whole. It is in the Spending Review and Budget that these decisions are normally considered. The Government have so far put support in extremely and effectively in many ways, including hardship funds; additional school meals in holidays and increasing the minimum wage amongst others and the Chancellor clearly said that the Universal Credit uplift was temporary. It was used as a tool, able to urgently get support in very quickly to people that needed it the most. However, it also helped a lot of people whose financial situation had not actually worsened. I therefore hope and expect that the Chancellor’s next actions will be more focused on targeted delivery as with the benefit of time he can target support more specifically to those in need. The Chancellor has to perform a balancing act here, for instance if we retained the £20 across the

board he would need to add a penny to income tax. This would then cost everyone around £250 per year, which may well hit those families who are just about managing the hardest, creating new problems and hardships.

Another issue this week has of course been the noise around vaccinations and whether any were being diverted South. This was disappointing scaremongering and spoils a good story. The great news is that it is our North East residents who have had more vaccines in their arms more quickly than any other part of the UK and yet, we still see Opposition spokespeople opportunistically trying to falsely use and politicise a national crisis to claim a North/South divide and sow division to engender support.

The position was that when the initial flow of vaccines started to arrive it was our excellent local NHS that were amongst the first ready and we therefore have seen the delivery to our residents being recognised as one of the best in the UK. It was always therefore going to be the case that others would need to catch up, it is after all a “National” Health Service. Deliveries continue to come in proportion to the residents each area still have to vaccinate to achieve the objective of the top four categories across the country being vaccinated and protected by half term and I have every confidence this will continue.

I have to say that it remains disappointing that I get abusive emails from people denying a lockdown is needed, or that Covid is an invented plot cooked up to assist some shadowy “world domination” cause, frankly we’re not inhabiting the plot lines for the X-Men movie franchise, we’re in the middle of an unprecedented international disaster and trying to keep as many people as safe as we possibly can. And we all need to pull together to do so. I guess these are the same people that abuse our supermarket staff and others when they are asked to wear a mask. Let me say to you, and those individuals who propagate these damaging lies and ridiculous conspiracy theories via social media, I suggest you go and talk to the many, many, MANY people who have lost loved ones, or who work in the Covid wards of our hospitals, or in any of our Care Homes that have lost residents earlier than they should. Your denial of this pandemic is bizarre and reprehensible, you are completely out of order and should consider the impact your words and actions are having on our front line workers, our vulnerable and your local communities as a whole.

Anyway, rant over, and I absolutely know that the overwhelming majority of people are doing the right thing and I applaud you for your efforts. Please can I remind everyone that even if you have had the vaccination we do not know yet whether you can still carry and transmit the virus and really importantly it takes the best part of two to three weeks for individuals to attain a good level of protection from their vaccinations. So please can everyone continue to follow the rules, look after yourselves and each other. Stay Home, Save Lives and Protect our NHS. Stay Safe.

Paul Howell

Member of Parliament for Sedgfield

Providing Opportunities for County Durham's Young People

A further £10 million in funding has been provided to help support young people into education, employment and training across County Durham.

The Durham County Council led partnership programme, DurhamWorks, has been awarded the funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) to extend its support to young people who are 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) or who are at risk of becoming so.

So far, over 8,000 young people across the county have been supported and, thanks to the latest funding, the programme will be able to reach an additional 6,300 15-24-year-olds, with funding for its third phase set to continue until December 2023.

Meanwhile, DurhamWorks is continuing to help young people find jobs during the coronavirus pandemic.

It has supported a number into employment since March, including Megan Humpherson, who was first referred to the service in January. Through regular contact with her progression worker, Megan was able to find volunteering opportunities and complete online courses in the support and care sector before securing a job at Mencap.

Twenty-two-year-old Megan, who has a degree in International Development, said: "I first heard about DurhamWorks from my meetings at the job centre after my work coach suggested it. I had my first meeting in January 2020 and have been involved with them ever since. I was really interested in finding a job that involved working directly with people, such as carer roles and support worker positions. I had been researching a lot of companies in the area before I secured the role with Mencap and I'm really grateful for the support given by DurhamWorks in helping me to achieve success there."

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Platinum Mens
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 inside, believed to
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 water at West Park
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 to the bench where
 the slope is into the
 water, on Sunday 17th
 January whilst feeding
 the ducks.
 If found please contact
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Climate Opinions & Facts

Dear Sir,

I've got good news for Mr. Parlour, Cllr. J. D. Clare and Climate
 Extinction; I and 3,000+ climate scientists do not believe that
 Humanity has contributed in any way to Global Warming or Climate
 Change. It has not happened and is not currently happening.
 Further, no trend of a rise in CO2 caused by Humanity can be
 demonstrated because we don't have the past accurate records of
 CO2 levels, and anyway, we cannot accurately demonstrate any
 additional CO2 due to Humanity.

Good news also for Greta Thornburg: CO2 is not a poison; it is
 plant food! A rise in CO2 and sunshine means more plant growth.
 Everybody wins! What sort of parent or guardian would allow their
 teenage daughter, who is on the aspergers spectrum, to be so
 exploited in support of a hoax?

Before Extinction Rebellion start frightening the children again,
 I would ask them how much this hoax has cost Western Society
 taxpayers in, so called, 'Green Technology' to save the planet which
 does not need saving.

Many scientists have been honoured and paid large sums of money
 for their 'flawed' research. Anyone can be wrong, but some, knowing
 they are wrong, have diverted attention to new research. Thus,
 Global Warming, became Climate Change, then Climate Crisis then
 Climate Extinction and now CO2!

Mr. Parlour references Boaty McBoatface (sorry, Sir Richard
 Attenborough). When I was young I learned a lot about the Natural
 World by watching programmes by the late Sir David Bellamy.
 However, I was too young to realise that there was a 'cancel culture'
 associated with the Global Warming hoax. When Sir David Bellamy
 was asked what he thought about the fledgling Global Warming
 theory, he said, "Popycock". He was cancelled! He disappeared
 from our TV screens. There was more fame and money to be made
 out of the Hoax than there was out of the Truth! A responsible media
 would have held a televised debate, but not our media which already
 had its snout in the trough.

I would say to Mr. Parlour, you are old enough not to believe all you
 read in the Media (including the Newton News) or see on TV. Also,
 follow the money! Who is trying to use CO2 as an excuse to oppose
 opening a new coal mine in the North East? I bet they are the same
 people who came up with 'Carbon Taxes', making it cheaper to buy
 coal from Poland than mine it here. How Brexit has upset their little
 plan.

Yours Sincerely,
 Alastair P.G. Welsh

Sudoku

		5		9			3	6
7	9				5		4	
	4		1	7			2	
5			2			4		7
	7		3			9	5	
9	1				7			2
		9			4		7	
		7	9			2		
4				5			9	

THE LICENSING ACT 2003

Notice is hereby given that we, Unit 3 Beers Ltd, have applied to Durham County Council
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Newton Aycliffe DL5 6SP for the grant of a Premises Licence to permit the following
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 premises but will be supplied by delivery service only.

Due to the current circumstances surrounding COVID-19 if you wish to view the full
 application please email the Licensing Authority at licensing@durham.gov.uk

A Responsible Authority or Other Party under the Licensing Act 2003 can make
 representations/objections to these applications.

Representations must be made in writing and received by 24th FEBRUARY 2021.

Under the current circumstances these can be emailed to licensing@durham.gov.uk
 It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with this
 application, the maximum fine on summary conviction is unlimited.

29-01-21



Paul Howell

Member of Parliament
 for Sedgefield

paul.howell.mp@parliament.uk

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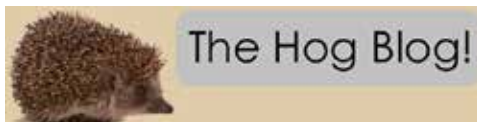
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Who's turned up to write your story today?

Let's start with a statement of fact; you are the creative centre of your personal universe colloquially referred to as Planet Life. If you doubt your ability to create your reality simply take a moment to look back to your past attempts. Some worked, some didn't; some were a great success and some of your creative experiments were an absolute disaster. Now you can plead innocence of the process and deny all responsibility, you can even credit or blame others as much as you want, but ultimately it all comes down to you. Whether you like it or not your thoughts, beliefs and actions create the reality you have to experience and deal with. When it comes to creating a new life story for ourselves we doubt our ability to do so and totally overlook the back issues available to us to draw from. Not to simply copy and paste, thus repeating the past mistakes, but to draw inspiration from. The past provides ample resources for future development if only we know where to look, and find within ourselves the courage to create the next chapter of our life where we take our rightful place as the creator and hero of our own story.



It's been very quiet because a lot of our prickly pals are hibernating but there are still times where little ones are discovered and when the weather conditions worsen these small hedgehogs die in the

wild, which is tragic to say the least. Tara and myself still have twenty healthy, happy, waiting for spring, hedgehogs in the safety of our homes, Cerys, Betsy, Poppet and, not forgetting our latest admission, George, to name but a few who are doing well and the oldest we have had in Rescue. None of this would be at all possible without our supporters who help us fundraise and a lot of them are our hedgehog finders. However, a big thank you to June and Will, they have made some beautiful Easter Treats for us to sell, all profits go to the hedgehogs for their food, bedding, medicine and specialist equipment that most rescues need to diagnose and treat sick and injured hedgehogs. We have our new Facebook page, should anyone like to visit, Prickly Haven Hedgehog Hotel and also a new email address pricklyhaven@yahoo.com if you need to get in touch. **Tip of the week:** If you see a hedgehog and think it's got problems please pick it up, pop it in a high sided box with something warm, like a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel, keep warm and quiet if possible and get help, either BHPS on 01584 890801, or your local Vet.

Obituary

Patricia ANN McCullagh

Peacefully on 20th January, age 77 years. Loving Wife of Peter; dearly loved Mam of Lesley and Joanne; Mother-in-Law of Andrew and Ian; a dear Gran of Craig, Rachel, Lynsey, Andy, Matthew, Jamie and precious Granny Annie to Miles, Jake, Joel and Ellis. Funeral at Wear Valley Crematorium on Wednesday 3rd February at 11.30am. Due to restrictions, family only in the Crematorium.

Steven Bowes

Peacefully on 13th January, Steven, aged 52 years. Loving Son of Evelyn and the late Tommy; treasured Brother of the late Ian and David; a treasured Uncle to his Nephews and Nieces; a Gentleman who will be sadly missed by all who knew him. Private family Service and Cremation to take place on Wednesday 3rd February at Wear Valley Crematorium at 1.30pm. Family flowers only please, donations in lieu, if so desired, to the RSPCA.

In Memoriam

June Boyd

31st January 2019
It's three years since you passed away. I think of you so much. Love you always. Your loving Husband Dave

Birthday Remembrance

Thelma Cowan

2nd February
Thinking of a special Mam and Grandma with lots of love and very happy memories. Peter, John, Dawn, Graeme and Debbie. Jill, Tyler, Aidan and Emily xxxxxx

Rita Smith

Peacefully on 24th January. Rita, (nee Kell), aged 78 years, formerly of Coundon. Dearly loved Mam of Ian, Stephen and Jacqueline; loving Grandma to Stephen, Michael and Naomi and Great-Grandma to Tyler. Sadly missed by all her family and friends. Funeral Tuesday 9th February. Due to current restrictions a small gathering for family and friends will take place at Wear Valley Crematorium at 11.30am.

Marion Melvin

Passed away peacefully in Darlington Memorial Hospital on 14th January, aged 91 years. Beloved Wife of the late Fenwick; much loved Mam of Ian, Eric, John and Valerie; much loved Mother-in-Law to Mandy, Carol and Lynn; also a loving Grandma and Great Grandma. Funeral will take place at the West Cemetery, School Aycliffe on Thursday 11th February 2021 at 1.15pm. Family flowers only please by request.

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Cleo

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Humorous stories reproduced from newspapers from around the world

A robber walked into a store demanding cash and beer. The clerk gave him the cash, but refused him the beer because he thought he wasn't 21. The robber pulled out his drivers license - 2 hours later he was arrested when the clerk reported the name and address that he got off the license.

Planning Application for New Custody & Investigation Suite

Plans have been submitted by Durham Constabulary to build a new 48-cell custody and investigations suite.

The force has formally lodged a planning application with Durham County Council requesting permission to build the two-storey centre opposite Stanley Black & Decker on the commercial business quarter of DurhamGate, near Spennymoor.

Last year, Government inspectors highlighted "the poor physical conditions" in some custody suites operated by the force and recommended improvements to bring them up to 21st Century standards.

The proposed new centre will provide a safe and modern building which is urgently needed to replace the four ageing custody suites currently in use at Bishop Auckland, Darlington, Peterlee and Durham City, which dates back to the 18th Century.

Because several detainees can be booked in at once, the new centre will reduce the average time that arresting officers spend waiting in custody while prisoners are processed and therefore allow the officers to get back out on the streets more quickly. Although the four existing custody suites within the existing buildings will be mothballed, the proposal will have absolutely no impact on the number of police stations across the force area: every town which



currently has a station will still have one once work is complete.

Alongside modern cells, the £21m custody and investigations centre would include interview rooms, CSI facilities, evidence stores and a virtual court to allow officers and prisoners to save time at court by appearing by video link, as well as other facilities such as medical surgeries and forensic examination rooms.

Critically, it would incorporate a number of key safety features to protect police officers and detainees along with the health workers and legal professionals who would work there.

Durham Chief Constable, Jo Farrell, said: "The new custody and investigations suite is vital in making our detainees and officers safer. Most importantly, it will improve our ability to investigate crime and put victims first by ensuring we have the best quality interview rooms and CSI facilities to secure the evidence we need to secure a successful prosecution.

"Even when extra travel time is taken into account, it will mean our cops spend more time on the streets rather than waiting in police stations for hours on end to complete a lengthy prisoner handover.

"Ultimately, that means they have more time to do what they do best: catching criminals, preventing crime and keeping our communities safe, day and night." Steve White, Acting Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner, said: "Following an inspection last year by HMICFRS, it was flagged that our current custody suites across Country Durham did not meet required standards by the Home Office. The cost to renovate existing custody suites would be much more costly in the short and long term, would not provide value for money for the taxpayer and would still not achieve the standard required.

"Any delay in the decision making process would have caused serious detriment, potentially leading to the loss of site needed for such a complex project and it would also likely result in project costs rising due to inflation. 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, eradicate all blind spots and provide holding areas that would facilitate officers to book multiple detainees in at once. This would have a beneficial impact by allowing officers to get back to the street quickly."

Officers from Durham Constabulary and staff from the PCVC's office have carried out a number of engagement events in the area to explain the proposals and address any concerns.

Durham County Council is expected to make a decision on the planning application in the coming months. If approved, the new centre is due to be completed by 2023.

READERS' PHOTOGRAPHS



I didn't take any photos of the young people trying to stand on the ice, or trying to break it, but I took this one this week!!

Yvonne Wood, Newton Aycliffe FC Treasurer

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