

Newton News

Incorporating The Newtonian - Newton Aycliffe's Free Community Newspaper

Editorial & Advertising contact: Telephone: 01325 300212 - Email: paul@newtonnews.co.uk - Website: www.newtonnews.co.uk

Crack Down on Fly-Tipping, Littering and Graffiti

People responsible for fly-tipping, littering, graffiti and other environmental offences in County Durham will face higher fixed penalty notice (FPN) fines.

Durham County Council's move to introduce tougher penalties follows its decision to scrap early payment discounts last summer.

It means the maximum FPN for fly-tipping will soar from £400 to £1,000, with littering FPNs rising from £150 to £250 and graffiti and fly-posting FPNs from £100 to £250.

The maximum FPN for household duty of care offences, which relate to people failing to arrange responsible disposal of their waste, will increase from £300 to £400.

A new £500 FPN will be introduced for any repeat littering, graffiti or fly-posting offences, alongside a £600 FPN for repeat household duty of care offences.

Cllr Mark Wilkes, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for neighbourhoods and climate change, said: "We've really cracked down on environmental offences - issuing more fines and taking more perpetrators to court than ever before. And we're seeing strong results. In the last couple of years, we've seen the number of fly-tipping cases in the county fall to an all-time low and the rate is now at around half the national average.

"It's no coincidence that this has come at a time when we've stepped up enforcement activity and taken a really tough stance in terms of how we deal with these offences. And we're about to get even tougher. Last summer - around the time we scrapped the early payment discounts actually - the government announced it was giving local councils the power to increase maximum FPN levels and we said at the time we were very much interested in exploring it.

"Now, having weighed up the pros and cons around the greater deterrent higher fines can give us versus the potential impact on FPN payment rates, we've decided that that is exactly what we are going to do. We want to reinforce the message that fly-tipping and other environmental offences will not be tolerated here and we know local people want to see those responsible for these kinds of offences face much tougher penalties. Our communities tell us that all the time.

"Of course, we will still try to educate and engage wherever possible, but it's important to



back that up with tough enforcement. The new fly-tipping fine, as well as the new fines for repeat offences will all be set at the maximum sum permitted by national regulations. It's also important for people to be aware that we can only spend the money we receive from these fines on related activities, such as environmental education and communication campaigns and enforcement."

There are lots of ways to get rid of household waste responsibly, from bulky waste collections to disposal at one of the county's Household Waste Recycling Centres.

To find out more about how the council tackles environmental issues, and how waste can be disposed of responsibly, visit:

www.durham.gov.uk/environment

New Gameshow

The makers of Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy are now casting for a brand new ITV game show. Whisper North TV are looking for pairs of contestants to take part in a brand-new parlour game show, involving pairs being teamed up with a celebrity in pursuit of a cash prize. Pairs can consist of any relation. We're keen to hear from couples, friends or colleagues.

Filming will take place between 7th and 10th November, and you must be available on one of these dates. Applicants must be 18 or over and a current legal resident of the UK.

To apply, go to:

<https://eu.castitreach.com/ag/whisper/itvgameshow/welcome.html>

Applications close on 25th October, 2024. Best of luck!

CQC Rates Council's Adult Social Care: Good

The provision of adult social care in County Durham has been rated as 'good' following a recent assessment by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The report praises staff at Durham County Council for how well they meet their responsibilities to ensure people have access to adult social care and support.

As part of the process, the CQC assessed the authority in nine different areas across four themes including leadership, support, safety and its work with people.

The assessment team found that over 85% of CQC regulated provision in the county was rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' and that 95% of equipment aimed at supporting people's independence, such as bathing aids, were delivered on time, sometimes on the same day.

The authority was praised for the way it supported people to lead healthier lives, with the report highlighting its work with community groups to deliver services locally as well as council commissioned preventative services, such as peer support groups and carer breaks. It also noted that the Social Care Direct service "was able to effectively direct people to a range of preventative services in the community."

The council was also praised for retaining phone lines and customer services points to facilitate access for residents and that information was also regularly provided in languages other than English.

Staff felt that leaders were "visible, capable and compassionate" with the report commenting on a "positive culture of continuous learning and improvement in the local authority".

All areas of leadership and support were rated as being of a good standard. This includes how well the council works with its partners and communities to deliver services to its residents.

While the majority of areas were rated as being of a good standard, inspectors did find some room for improvements in certain areas.

Inspectors found that the council was aware that people faced challenges in accessing and experiencing services based on their large geography and areas of deprivation. Although the report states that there is a "need of the local authority to recognise the changing demographic of people accessing services", it noted training was available around equality, diversity and inclusion.

The assessment team found some challenges in sourcing flexible respite services and some delays in mental health provision. However, it was noted that commissioners were working alongside the NHS trust to find placements for people and that partners worked positively together.

Cllr Chris Hood, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for adult and health services, said: "We are pleased with the outcome of the CQC assessment. The 'good' rating reflects the hard work of all our staff and the efforts they go to in order to provide the best possible care for our residents. The report also recognises the work that is ongoing to rise to staffing challenges, for example through the creation of the Care Academy, as well as our close links with our partner organisations to make it easier for people to access the care they need.

"We do understand that there are some areas for improvements which the team will continue to work on. We would like to reassure residents that we are doing all we can to address these areas and that we are always striving to offer the best care and support to our communities."

The full report can be viewed on the CQC website at:

www.cqc.org.uk/care-services/local-authority-assessment-reports

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Aycliffe
TOWN CENTRE



Casbah Split



Dear Sir,

It is with a heavy heart that I would like to inform readers that the newly formed band 'Casbah' have disbanded. As the band leader and bassist, I formed the band back in March, completing the line up by July in time for our first public performance at the Aycliffe Street Food Market. Like all things new, there was a lot of excitement because it's not easy forming a band but, when it seems to work and we appear to click, it's pure magic, but you become blind to the subtle cracks. Just before our launch gig there were a few disagreements and clashes, so my dad came in as our manager to keep an eye on things and to help us achieve our goal, with having experience in the entertainment industry. We were taking off like a rocket! It was an unbelievable experience, so much was happening and the future looked so unbelievably bright. It was working, but, in the shadows the darkness was growing and the cracks were widening, as a certain member of the band began plotting our demise. We made it through our first week and celebrated victoriously. We stormed through the second week and had triple encores. By the third week, the cracks began to show and derailment was inevitable. So much so, it was decided to apply the brakes to sort things out but, the mutiny was revealed. The lead singer, lead guitarist and new drummer had formed their own band and quit! It all came crashing down around me. All my efforts gone in the blink of an eye. It was over . . . well, for now. Not to be deterred, I would like to inform the readers that my band is not out for the count just yet, as I am working on finding new band members to hopefully return by next spring, all new and box fresh with a much better line up and raring to 'rock your socks off' once again, so watch this space!

In the meantime, I would humbly like to thank all those who have supported us and enjoyed our brief moment of existence. We will return. If anyone is interested in auditioning for a place, please email: casbahtheband@gmail.com

Many thanks,
Oliver Gibson (Casbah)

Quakerhouse Gets a Face Lift

The Quakerhouse in Mechanics Yard, which was recently named Darlington's CAMRA pub of the year 2024, has benefitted from upgrades to its façade including new and refurbished windows, fresh paintwork and the installation of a traditional hand painted sign - the first the pub has had since opening as a licensed bar in October 1998.



The completed development marks the start of the next phase of work led by Darlington Borough Council to breathe new life into the town's historic yards as part of Project Darling, an initiative inspired by contemporary artist, Nicky Peacock with the support of ELG planning.

Recently named the best in region at the North East Awards for Planning Excellence, Project Darling is reimagining the area, ensuring the yards are now a destination of choice. Taking inspiration from The Lanes in Brighton, Neal's Yard in London, and The Shambles in York, the project is creating hidden gems in the heart of the town centre which boast colourful and playful designs to surprise and delight visitors.

Brian Dourish and Shelly Allan, co-owners of the Quakerhouse, said: "We are delighted with the updates to our property and the public realm improvements in Mechanics Yard which are helping to bring this forgotten yard back to life."

The Quakerhouse has been fortunate enough to be named Darlington CAMRA pub of the year twenty times and we hope that the changes being made in the yard will help to attract new audiences who may not already be familiar with our fantastic range of top-quality real ales and live music offering."

Croft Meetings

August 24th/25th
Darlington & District Motor Club Battle of Britain Race Meeting
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St. Francis' Thank Rotary



The dictionaries kindly donated by the Rotary Club have been distributed to our future year 6 children! A big thank you to the Rotary Club for their generous support in helping our children excel! The excitement in the classroom was unmistakable as the children eagerly flipped through the pages of their new dictionaries. Their eyes sparkled with curiosity and wonder, discovering new words and concepts that would broaden their horizons. Teachers could already see the positive impact these resources would have, promoting a love for learning and empowering the students to achieve academic success.

With this gift, the Rotary Club has not only provided a practical resource but has also planted the seeds of knowledge and curiosity that will grow and flourish in the years to come. It's a reminder of how collective efforts can make a significant difference in the lives of our children and the community.

Praise For Pupils On Results Day

Students across County Durham are being praised for their hard work after receiving their A Level results. Durham County Council is commending pupils for their efforts, with average grades across the county being in line with 2023. This year, the average grade achieved at A Level is an impressive B-, while the average grade for Applied General qualifications is Distinction+. The average grade for Tech Level qualifications is Distinction-. These are all above national averages and support a strong record of performance over a five-year period.

Feedback from schools has been very positive regarding high proportions of students achieving their first-choice applications to university whilst others are already finding their feet within an exciting range of apprenticeship and employment opportunities.

Cllr Ted Henderson, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for children and young people's services, said: "We're immensely proud of everyone in the county who has received their results recently and would like to congratulate them for their commitment to their studies. "The results reflect the hard work of each and every pupil. They are also testament to the county's schools and colleges for their dedication to our children and young people and we are very grateful for that. We hope that all students are celebrating their achievement. However, I'd remind everyone that great opportunities lie ahead whatever your results are. They do not determine your future potential or prevent you from following your dreams so please be resilient and remember that there is a great deal of support available across County Durham."

Students who did not receive the grades they hoped for and those looking for careers advice, jobs, training or further learning, can find out about support from the council through DurhamWorks at: www.durhamworks.info - or social media channels, @durhamworks on Facebook or through Twitter at @WorksDurham

The mental health and wellbeing community Kooth is offering support to young people via its website: www.kooth.com and social media channels, @KoothUK on Facebook or @Kooth_UK on Instagram. The charity Student Minds is also offering support and guidance online at: www.studentminds.org.uk

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Café Culture in Darlington

Pavement café culture is set to be a permanent fixture in Darlington town centre.

Darlington Borough Council has approved a revised planning proposal to redevelop the western gateway into the town centre; improving outdoor hospitality facilities to support the developing pavement café culture on Coniscliffe Road.

The approved plans include the widening of existing pavements, a new pocket park with seating and the installation of trees and planters. Works will also include the installation of new bollards and signage, realignment of the carriageway and the introduction of a cycle park.

The project, which forms part of wider plans to regenerate the town centre, will clean and green the area, creating a safe and attractive environment where people can dwell and explore the wide range of independent businesses in the immediate area. Work is set to begin in October with a view to this being completed in Spring 2025. Businesses will remain open as usual with access maintained during the works.

Cllr Chris McEwan, cabinet member for economy, said: "The regeneration and improvement of Darlington Town Centre remains a priority for the Council and we are committed to creating an environment in which businesses can thrive while attracting more investment to the town."

HALL FOR HIRE

School Aycliffe Community Centre

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Aycliffe Cricket Club Scoreboard Report



Newton Aycliffe's 1st team, sponsored by Franks the Flooring Store, played the first of their two games over the weekend and were totally outplayed, suffering a 206 run defeat at home to promotion seeking Rockcliffe Park 1st XI in the NYSD second division. Rockcliffe were asked to bat first and piled up an impregnable 302 for 5 declared from 44 overs with Luke Telford (2 for 81), Tom Dearden (1 for 26) and Will Dearden (1 for 64) having some success with the ball. In reply, Aycliffe were skittled for just 96 off 28.1 overs with only Sam Telford (30 off 17 balls), Dan Weldon (23 off 40 balls) and Tom Dearden (10 off 31 balls) reaching double figures for the home side.

On the Sunday, in a much improved performance, Aycliffe suffered an agonising defeat by just four runs away at fellow relegation strugglers Stockton 2nd XI in the NYSD 2nd division. The homeside chose to bat first and were bowled out for 168 after 48.4 overs thanks to some brilliant bowling by Luke Telford (sponsored by JR Smith Electrical Services), who finished his marathon 15 over spell with his seasonal best figures of 6 for 31. In reply, Aycliffe opener Tom Dearden again batted superbly to hold the innings together when he top scored with a fluent 59 off 76 balls, including ten boundaries. Other important contributions came from Chris Palmer (23 runs off 16 balls) and Luke Telford (22 off 36 balls), but Aycliffe were in trouble at 144 for 9, still needing another 25 runs for victory. However, a battling 10th wicket partnership of 21 between Jai Sander (12 not out off 23 balls) and Ben Howard (4 runs off 23 balls) almost took their side to victory, but the pair fell just short as Aycliffe were dismissed for 164 after 41.4 overs. These two defeats leaves Aycliffe's chances of avoiding relegation hanging by a thread as they are now 26 points adrift of safety with only four games left to play.

The second team were beaten by seven wickets away at promotion outsiders Wolviston 2nd XI in the NYSD fourth division. Electing to bat first opener Matty French again held the innings together with 15 runs off 25 balls, but Aycliffe still slipped to a precarious 41 for 9. Thirteen year old Freddie Lawler (sponsored by Athena Gymnastics Academy) scored an unbeaten 18 off 34 balls and fourteen year old Will Moffatt (8 off 26 balls) both batted superbly with the young pair putting on 28 runs for the last wicket to take their side to a slightly more respectable 69 all out after 21 overs. In reply, the homeside romped to victory after 15.4 overs with Will Moffatt (2 for 5) and Matty Greaves (1 for 16) taking the only three wickets to fall.

The club's U17's put in a gallant effort, but were eventually beaten by six wickets away at Hartlepool in the semi-final of the NYSD 100 Cup. Electing to bat first Aycliffe scored a respectable 115 for 6 in their allotted 100 balls. Captain Tom Dearden lead from the front with 35 runs off 21 balls and he was supported well by Leo Stout (13 off 19 balls) and an excellent late order unbeaten 32 off 32 balls by Will Dearden. In reply, the home side paced their innings well and reached their winning target for the loss of four wickets and with 12 balls in hand.

Photo: 1st team batsman Sam Telford.

£10k Raffle Prize



A busy charity air ambulance service whose call-outs were at an all-time high last year is inviting the public to play their £10,000 top prize raffle to help raise the funds needed to keep them operational.

The Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) responded to more than 2,100 incidents across the North East, North Yorkshire, Cumbria, Scotland and the Isle of Man in 2023.

The charity provides advanced life-saving treatment via helicopter, mainly in hours of daylight, while on a night-time, a highly skilled paramedic and doctor operate on a rapid response vehicle in the North East seven days a week and Cumbria most nights.

David Stockton, chief executive at GNAAS, said: "Our critical care team attends to the region's most critically ill and injured patients. Our highly trained doctor and paramedic team can perform surgery, administer drugs and even provide blood products by the side of the road. This highly skilled, emergency medical care comes at a price; it costs £23,200 to run our service daily, and despite the amazing support from the general public, it is still likely that we will need to draw from our reserves to keep the service running. This is the difficulty with being 100% reliant on public donations, but the upsides of this are that it allows our service to set its own criteria, assign finances to the equipment and expertise that matter the most, to ensure our team are able to respond to any eventuality, and ultimately, save more lives."

They have recently launched their annual raffle which has a top prize of £10,000, with some amazing runner-up prizes of an overnight stay in Middleton Lodge, or a three-night stay in Northumberland.

Last year their raffle raised over £112,000 and the top prize was won by Alan Pearson, from Sildon, who decided to share the prize money with his brother Tony and donate some of it back into the charity.

Recalling the phone call he received telling him he was a winner, he said: "I think everything just went blank. I was smiling straight away, it's amazing, it's just something that you don't expect. I would encourage people, if they can afford to play the raffle, do it."

Raffle tickets cost £1 each, drawn in early December, with the winner getting their prize in time for Christmas. Tickets available via: gna.as/raffle_2024 or call 01325 487263.

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RUNNING CLUB NEWS



Another week and another busy and positive week for Aycliffe Running Club with some excellent performances and achievements.

On Wednesday 7th August, 21 members took part in the seventh race of the Darlington 5k Trail series and the Riverside 5k. The club claimed the top three positions in the race with John Firby (17:57) first, Mikey Taylor (18:35) second and Sam Keenan (19:24) third. Lucy Postle (22:54) finished as third female.

Also representing the club were Richard Holland (21:03), Jimmy Agnew (21:43), Daniel Tatham (23:08), Trevor Agnew (25:04), Sarah Gill (25:45), David Stothard (26:10), Keith Hatton (27:37), Carley Cooper (28:00), Sue Podmore (28:19), Rob Nicholson (29:01), Alan Kellett (29:10), Melanie Varley (30:59), Sam Harding (31:03), Em Flynn (33:50), Peter Varley (34:40), Tracey Pickering (38:35) and Ian Stothard (41:50). With one race to go in the series, it is tense to see who will win the overall series of races with one of our members nicely poised to finish in the top three overall.

On Sunday 11th August, one member took part in the Trail Outlaws Branches and Bays 10k with Beau-Louise Mason (1:10:01), the sole representative for the club.

There were some amazing performances by the Juniors section on Saturday 3rd August in the NECAA Open Track and Field meeting at Shildon Stadium.

Elijah McLuckie for the U11s, wearing new spikes, gave a superb run in the 60m sprint and earning a new PB in the standing jump. Trinity Donoghue running a storming 100m, 200m and 800m, winning her 100m and 800m races with a PB in both of those. Abbie Robinson running a great 100m and smashing the long jump board with precision. Maisie Kilpatrick putting on a show with two PB's in the Long Jump (super jump) and 200m. Charlotte Clay and her first competitive 200m, running off the bend with fire to win her race and Elizabeth Clay exploding out the blocks to power down the track to win the U17 100m achieving a PB for good measure.

On Saturday 10th August, thirty members started their weekend with a parkrun. At Darlington South Park, Bernadette Cooper (22:37) completed the course for the first time, achieving her fastest parkrun of the year. At Hackworth, Andrew Tweddle (23:28) set a new PB for the course. At Hartlepool, Angela Sutherland (23:36) finished as third female with Lou Mann (32:02) completing the course for the first time.

At Fountains Abbey, Carley Cooper (28:37) set a new PB for the course with Sandrine Hewitt (30:24) and fresh from her Ultramarathon completing the course for the first time. Em Flynn (34:02) also completed the event. At Cotsford Fields, Sarah Gill (30:12) completed the course for the first time. Steve Williams (26:59) and Viv Williams (32:25) both completed the course at Millfield for the first time. At Chopwell Wood, Richard Trowles (21:26) completed this hilly course for the first time. Over at Hamsterley Forest, Shaun Dodd (28:24) completed the course for the first time, whilst Richard Tonge (31:22) and Kathleen Tonge (32:07) both completed the course at University Parks for the first time.

If you are feeling inspired and are interested in joining the club, you can turn up for one of our sessions. More information is available on our website www.ayclifferrunningclub.org.uk - or our Facebook page. If you would like to chat with someone, then you can email: ayclifferrunningclub@gmail.com - If interested in the Junior Section you can email arc.juniorsection@gmail.com - make this year the year you or your children get into running and join us to keep it going for many years to come.



QE Students Celebrate

Students at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Darlington are celebrating another year of excellent A Level results with a pass rate of 99%, 827 A*/A grades being awarded and 101 students achieving at least 3 A*/A grades.

Laurence Job, Principal, says "The superb results that our students have once again achieved in their A Level and Level 3 Applied General qualifications are testament to their hard work and high aspirations, and to the absolute commitment of our dedicated members of staff who always go above and beyond with the support they provide.

We are incredibly proud of all of our students and we know that, with their fantastic qualifications, talents and personal qualities, they will go on to make incredibly valuable contributions to society.

On behalf of everyone at QE, I wish each of our leavers every success whether they



are progressing to higher education, an apprenticeship or embarking upon their exciting career paths.

Well done to all of our students - it has been an absolute pleasure to have you at QE."

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LIFE IN A NEW TOWN

Newton Aycliffe celebrated its 75th anniversary in June 2023.

In 75 years the town has grown from little more than a muddy building site to the mature town we know today; and alongside that growth has developed a wealth of memories of growing up and living in the town.



On Saturday, 7th September 2024 the 'Life in a New Town' will be launched on Beveridge Way, Aycliffe Town Centre by the Mayor of Great Aycliffe, Councillor John Clark, at 11.45am. The display, filled with personal memories and photographs tells the story of the new town from its beginnings in those early years.

THERE ARE STREET ENTERTAINERS FROM 11.15AM AND A MUSIC STAGE WITH A VARIETY OF PERFORMERS FROM 12PM.

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Sara Davies Fund Raising for Birthing SimMom



Television star and entrepreneur Sara Davies and Emon Choudhury, a former Race Across the World winner, are set to lace up their running shoes and take on the Great North Run to raise vital funds for County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Charity. Sara, a beloved figure from the popular BBC show "Dragons' Den," and Emon will be running the world-renowned half marathon on 8th September to help equip the Trust's Clinical Simulation Centre at Bishop Auckland with a state-of-the-art Laerdal SimMom manikin.

The SimMom, a high-fidelity training manikin,

is an advanced birthing simulator designed to provide realistic training scenarios for medical professionals. With this innovative technology, the Clinical Simulation Centre will be able to offer first-class training and education opportunities, ensuring that healthcare staff across the region are equipped with the skills and confidence they need to deliver exceptional care.

Sara Davies commented on her upcoming challenge: "I'm thrilled to be running the Great North Run for such a worthy cause. The Clinical Simulation Centre at Bishop Auckland is an incredible resource, and I'm honoured to support the County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Charity in their mission to enhance care and patient experience through the training for healthcare professionals. The SimMom manikin will be a game-changer, providing invaluable hands-on experience in a safe and controlled environment. I'm proud to contribute to a project that will have such a lasting impact on patient care in our community."

The funds raised by Sara and Emon's participation in the Great North Run will go directly towards purchasing the Laerdal SimMom manikin, which will be used to simulate a wide range of birthing scenarios, from routine deliveries to complex emergencies. This will allow medical teams to practice and refine their skills, ensuring that they are fully prepared to handle real-life situations with the highest level of expertise and confidence.

The Clinical Simulation Centre at Bishop Auckland has already established itself as a leading training facility, providing cutting-edge education to healthcare professionals. The addition of the SimMom manikin will further elevate the centre's capabilities, supporting the Trust's commitment to delivering high quality and compassionate patient care across County Durham and Darlington.

Pat Chambers, County Durham and Darlington NHS Trust Charity Manager said: "We are incredibly grateful to Sara and Emon for choosing to support our charity through the Great North Run. The funds they raise will make a significant difference in our ability to provide top-quality training for our staff. The SimMom manikin will be a vital addition to our Clinical Simulation Centre, helping us to continue delivering the best possible care to our patients."

Supporters are encouraged to cheer Sara and Emon on as they take on the Great North Run and where possible to donate to help achieve this important goal. Donations can be made through the official fundraising page at: Our Birthing Mama on JustGiving

Under 16 Winners

Sedgefield Water Polo Club are pleased to announce that our Under 16 mixed team were the winners of the Northern League Tournament held on Saturday 22nd June. The team, coached by current player Ben Alderson, won all five of their games, conceding just six goals all tournament and winning the event with an amazing 29 goal difference. This was an excellent outcome given the team only had three players of the correct age group, the remainder of the team were our younger members playing up age groups to gain match experience.

The first game against Tyldesley got the team off to a great start, with a very well deserved 9-3 win. This included a fantastic five goals from Gregor, a hat trick from Kyle and one from Owen.

The team went into their second game with much more confidence, knowing that some of the team had recently played Morley and won a league fixture. Again, three goals from Gregor, followed by two each from Tyler, Owen and Kyle gave the team a well-earned 9-1 win.

The next game was against the first of two Sheffield teams entered in the tournament, with Sheffield A being the stronger players and Sheffield B the development team. Sedgefield knew they had to win this game if they wanted to go home with medals. The first half of the game was much tougher than the first two games had been, but after a motivational team talk from Ben at half time, the team showed their determination and fighting spirit. One goal each from Charlie, Kyle, Gregor and Tyler gave the team a 4-1 win and again, their confidence and self-belief increased.

Sheffield B played next; after beating their A team, Sedgefield were confident of another win and continued to play to the best of their ability. Goals from Gregor, Indie, Kyle, Owen, Tyler, Bram and Harry gave a 9-1 win and a very strong chance of a medal at the end of the day.

The final game of the day was against our local 'friends and rivals' at Rotherham, who we often link up with for matches and tournaments. Again, another tougher game but Sedgefield came away winners with a 4-1 win after goals from Kyle, Theo, Charlie and Owen. This win also secured first place and gold medals for the team!

A huge well done to our young team on this fantastic result, and thank you to all the parents for making the drive to Rotherham on a really warm Saturday afternoon.

We'd also like to advise that we can now offer player sponsorships for just £30 per player for this season in return for regular advertising and promotion on our social media pages. If this is something that your business may be interested in, please don't hesitate to get in touch. All monies raised through sponsorship will be used to allow our fantastic members the opportunity to develop their skills and provide them with the equipment they need in order to succeed in the sport.

Thank you to the following businesses for sponsoring some of our players:

- Coat-It – sponsors Owen
- Shafto Way Garage – sponsors Harry
- Stuart and Margaret Thomson – sponsors Bram
- Julies Pets and Reptiles – sponsors Aston
- MySchoolWellbeing – sponsors Indie

In addition to Junior and Senior sessions, Sedgefield Water Polo Club now offers a beginner session at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre on a Saturday afternoon for those wishing to try this fun and exciting sport. All sessions need to be booked in advance on our club app, so please check our website for further information and joining instructions, email sedgefieldwp@hotmail.com or contact 07579 030598.



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Check Your Voter Information

County Durham residents are being asked to check their voter registration details. It's all part of Durham County Council's annual canvass to make sure every household's voter registration details are up to date. If the council holds an email address for any or all registered electors in a property, it will be sending an email to ask voters to check the information on them is accurate. Where an email address is not available, forms have been delivered in the post. Canvassers will then call at the homes of residents who are required to respond to help with the completion of the form. Linda Spence, Durham County Council's electoral services manager, said: "It's important that residents check their form so we can make sure we have the right details on the electoral register for every address in County Durham. Where households are required to respond, our canvassers are required to do at least one door knock and leave a calling card if no one is home. "All canvassers will have Durham County Council photo ID badges and we would encourage residents to check these before giving out any information. You need to be registered to vote to make sure you can have your say in elections. If you are not currently registered, your name will not appear on the form we send. The easiest way to register is online or you can contact our electoral services office and ask for a registration form to be sent in the post." The next scheduled elections for county and parish and town councils will take place on 1st May 2025.

Residents who have recently moved, or whose details are not included on the form, can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. For more information, contact Durham County Council's electoral services team on 03000 261 212 or email electoralservices@durham.gov.uk

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NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

By PCSO Steven Kipling



Hi everyone, hope you're doing well. Here's a brief update of what has been happening over the past week;
 On Monday, PCSO's Kipling & Dale detained a shoplifter in the town centre. The female, who was already wanted for a number of other offences, was transported to custody.
 On Tuesday, PCSO Todd attended Aycliffe Radio to speak about local policing.
 On Wednesday, a male was arrested on suspicion of Affray and transported to custody. Also on Wednesday, officers responded to a report of a missing 82-year-old lady. Fortunately, the lady was located safe and well shortly after.
 On Friday night a male was arrested on suspicion of a domestic related assault following a report of an argument coming from an address.
 On Saturday members of the Neighbourhood Team were in the town centre for the Blue Light Event. It was great to see so many of our residents and have a chat with them.
 On Sunday morning a female was arrested for a number of offences, including a domestic related assault, and assault on an emergency worker.
 Op Trailblazer patrols have been conducted around anti-social behaviour hotspots. Over the course of the week seven local youths have been spoken to in company with their parents in relation to causing anti-social behaviour in and around the town centre.
 Thanks for reading, have a good week.
 PCSO Steven Kipling.

Recycle Bins

Dear Sir,
 I would like to know if anyone has experienced the same issue before, relating to the collection of recycle bins.
 I would point out that the men who do this job are the salt of the earth, they work in all weathers and do a great job. It's the management that I cannot understand. The bins in our cul-de-sac were not emptied on Friday 16th August because there was road works in the street. I phoned Durham County Council to inform them that none of the bins had been emptied for the whole of the cul-de-sac, but I was told to ring back on the Monday. This I did, only to be told that they don't work on a Monday. I gave all the relevant details for my home and stipulated that all the bins needed emptying in the cul-de-sac. I received an email to inform me that it would be sorted, and it was . . . Great.
 The best bit was that my bin was emptied - but it was the only one, the rest in the street weren't. So when I got back to the council and asked the obvious question, I was told that everyone has to ring to inform the council themselves - "but I told you twice about the situation" I retorted in a pleasant and curious way, but to no avail.
 So, when we get our bills for the council tax, it will have to pay for the extra trips/fuel/wages, when the rest of the residents in my street tell the council to come and empty their bins when it could have been done at the same time that they emptied mine!
 I think the management need to take a long hard look at themselves.
 Name and address supplied

Money, Leisure and the Bobby on the Beat



On Sunday's show we had another instalment of our Money Show with resident financial advisor Michael Stead. The topics discussed included managing your money and the benefits of seeking professional financial advice when you need it. We discussed the difference between a want and a need, and a realistic look at the benefits of downsizing, in order to live within your means and maintain a healthy bank balance. We looked at the tax laws when it comes to making monetary gifts to friends and family, and if you are lucky enough to win big on the lottery, why it pays to get advice before you start to spend, spend, spend.
 The second half of the show was given over to pre-recorded interviews with one of our local PCSO Stuart Fotheringham, and a recent interview with Andy Clark, the manager of the OakLeaf Sports Complex.
 Around Town with Phill & Andy,
 Sundays 10.00am to 12.00 noon on Aycliffe Radio
 Also on local DAB radio or stream online:
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Thank you to everyone who has contacted me with their concerns and issues in recent weeks. My constituency office team are now in place and we're working hard to make sure your issues are raised with the relevant authorities. If you have anything you would like to raise with me, you can get in touch at alan.strickland.mp@parliament.uk. I continue to use the Parliamentary recess to visit key organisations in the constituency. Recently I've had the privilege to meet emergency service leaders to hear about the work they do to keep us safe. I was welcomed to County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service headquarters by the Chief Fire Officer and Chair of the Fire Authority to be briefed on the vital work they do. I visited the 999 Control Centre and spoke to staff about the challenges the service faces. I then saw first hand the Fire Service Training Centre in Bowburn, which is part of the new Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor constituency. It was fascinating to see the state-of-the-art facilities used to train crews to fight fires while using breathing apparatus sets. They even have a replica helipad and helicopter to train oil rig workers to fight fires at sea!

In addition to the fantastic physical training facilities, it was very impressive to see the virtual reality training room in action. I saw a firefighter hoping to be a crew leader practising taking command of a serious incident. Given the importance of our fire service and the significant risks they take to protect us, it was good to see the quality of the training provided.

It was very helpful to sit down with Sarah Honeyman, the Neighbourhood Police Inspector for Newton Aycliffe to talk about the issues facing the Town. The problems of anti-social behaviour in the town centre and the menace of people using quad bikes and off-road bikes came up again and again on the doorstep. It was useful to talk through with Sarah these and other local issues to understand what action the police are taking.

It was also an opportunity to thank Durham Constabulary for their work to help prevent the recent unrest spreading to streets in our area. The police acted swiftly to deal with potential unrest by issuing dispersal orders, gathering intelligence and offering support to local communities and businesses. Durham Constabulary have my full support in taking action to maintain order on our streets.

Many of the issues with public services that residents raise with me are delivered by Durham County Council. So it was important for me to meet the council's chief executive to discuss the current challenges facing our communities and what needs to be done to ensure high quality services. It's clear that the county council, like the Fire Service and Durham Constabulary, suffer financially from various funding changes made by the last government. Along with other County Durham Members of Parliament, I've asked for a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister to pick this up. I also set out the priorities I want to see the council help lead action on, one of which was Aycliffe Town Centre. Finally, I want to say well done to everyone receiving their exam results at the moment. I remember only too well doing my GCSEs at Woodham and waiting anxiously for the results! If you've got the grades you wanted, then many congratulations and I wish you all the very best. If you haven't got the grades you needed, remember your exam grades don't define you and there is a lot of advice available and many options open to you. Take it from me - I was a senior manager in a large housing association for many years, regularly recruiting staff. I never once asked someone what grades they got in their exams. So regardless of how you've done, well done and good luck with your next steps.

HAVE YOU GOT NEWS FOR US?

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

Tel: Paul
01325 300212
or paul@newtonnews.co.uk

Aycliffe Village WI

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 28th August in Aycliffe Village Hall at 7.00pm. Our speaker for the evening is Carl Robinson who will talk to us about 'His Year as Mayor'. Refreshments are provided.

Please feel free to come and join us at the meeting or, if you are interested in joining our W.I. come and find out what we do.

For more details contact, President, Anne Brown via email: aycliffevillageWI@durhamwi.co.uk

N.A.F.C. REPORT

Newton Aycliffe 3 v Whitley Bay 0 Emirates FA Cup Preliminary Round Saturday 17th August

Newton Aycliffe booked their place into the next round of the FA Cup with a confident win against Whitley Bay. It was a game where Newton Aycliffe were dominant throughout and the gap in leagues between the two sides was clear to see as Whitley Bay struggled to challenge Aycliffe for a great majority of the game.

The win earned Aycliffe a trip to Bamber Bridge, playing in the FA Cup First Qualifying Round for only the third time in their history. The game will be played on Saturday 31st August.

Aycliffe's first chance led to their first goal on Saturday. A corner whipped into the box found the head of Alex Nelson. Nelson's header was blocked by Whitley Bay's keeper Daniel Gladstone, but Gladstone couldn't retrieve the ball from the feet of Jake Petitjean who easily tapped it home to make it 1-0 in just seven minutes. In the few times Whitley Bay broke through, Aycliffe's defence stood firm. Alex Nelson and Ryan Lincoln Barrow were particularly effective at snuffing out Bay attacks in the first half.

On the cusp of half time it looked as though Liam Adamson was about to be one on one with Gladstone after he outpaced several Bay defenders, forced into making a quick decision Gladstone ran out his box to try and intercept Adamson head on. Gladstone was successful in chesting the ball away from Adamson, but the ball immediately fell to the feet of Dean Thexton, who promptly took advantage of the misplaced keeper and lobbed him from long

range to make it 2-0.

The second half was mostly more of the same, with Aycliffe managing the game perfectly and keeping Bay threats to a minimum. The result was put beyond doubt in the 64th minute when Toby Pascoe teed up Thexton for the perfect shot. Gladstone blocked Thexton's low shot, but Ethan Wood scored a perfectly placed low strike to make it 3-0 in the 64th minute.

In comparison to Tuesday night against Emley it was a much easier game for Jim Pollard. His superb double save, initially from a Jake Forster shot and then a Thomas Wilson rebound was the last noteworthy incident of the contest. It turned out to be a very comfortable win for Aycliffe, and they go into the next round of the FA Cup.

Before that, however, Aycliffe have two important league games with Ossett United visiting Moore Lane on Saturday 24th August before Brian Atkinson's squad make the short trip to Bishop Auckland on Bank Holiday Monday. Both games kick off at 3pm.
Match report by Ryan Livingston. Photo by Yvonne Wood: Aycliffe Man of the Match Alex Nelson in action against Whitley Bay.



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Vintage Veterans

The Vintage Veterans project is about the restoration of vintage vehicles by Veterans. Something a bit different from the woodworking workshops which will enable veterans to help restore/repair vehicles pre-1960.

There are two starter projects:
A Massy Ferguson T2-Tractor, requiring a complete engine rebuild and a 1032 Albion Lorry which requires a complete rebuild from the 'ground up'.

If you are interested in taking part in this project, there will be an introduction to Vintage Veterans on Tuesday 3rd September 2024 at 2.00pm meeting in the Veterans Centre, Unit 3, IES Centre, Horndale Avenue, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6DS.

Contact Chris at the centre if interested or can offer help please contact: chris@vcec.co.uk or telephone 07872 394427.



This rescue has had a better week and also a busy week with admissions. Mollys passing is still very painful because I had her for so long but I have to move on for the sake of the other hedgehogs here and a lot of them are very small.

Firstly, I admitted a little one last Thursday walking down Humphrey Close, Abi was kind enough to send for me, she is doing ok thankfully, then on Saturday I admitted three, one from Audrey and husband, she is doing well, another little one found walking by Homebase in Bishop Auckland, she is called Ashley doing ok, but, the most heartbreaking situation of the day was Angel, she was discovered down a drain in Marshall Road, Danielle did a brilliant job getting her out and asked Alison to bring her in, she was cold, wet, frightened and in shock, it took her all night on a heat pad to dry her out, she is starting to improve now, thankfully. Then on Monday evening I received another phone call, a female from Greathead Crescent very small, and alone, her finders have named her Lilly, she is pictured above. As you can see she is very shy. She and all the other tinies may have to be overwintered here.

It's a very difficult thing I do, sometimes I struggle when I get new admissions because they are such a worry, it's only when the treatment I select starts to work I can rest easier, they are very complicated animals to treat.

I do fundraising to make sure that I have everything I need here so I can take action as soon as hedgehogs like Angel are admitted and can be treated, she certainly would have died if I hadn't got the knowledge and meds. The last bottle of antibiotic I collected from my vet cost £105.00 that was last week too, but I can't afford to be without, it saves precious little lives. So, thank you Julia, Peter, Anthony and everyone concerned for making my life easier with your donations.

All raffle prize winners have got their prizes by the time this is published, I won't be doing another raffle because my time is precious and limited because of hogs and family commitments so in the next couple of days I am starting my first scratch card. It will be on my Facebook Page, please keep an eye out. I am considering a cash prize.

Finally, useful info: The British Hedgehog Preservation Society, Tel 01584 890801. My Facebook page is Prickly Haven Hedgehog Hotel, email: pricklyhaven@yahoo.com (not to be used for hedgehog emergencies please).

Obituary Notices

Anthony Lee (Tony)

On 8th August after a long battle with cancer, Tony, aged 78, peacefully passed away surrounded by his loving family.

Devoted Husband of Carol, Dad and Grandad. You will always be remembered and kept in our hearts. Funeral taking place for family and friends on Friday 30th August at 10.30am at Wear Valley Crematorium.



Alan KELL

Alan died peacefully on the 11th August 2024, listening to his favourite songs.

We are incredibly sad to lose our Dad, Grandad, Brother and Friend.

Alan taught us all so much about his two passions – music and football. He will influence our lives forever.

You are very welcome to join us to celebrate his life on 28th August 2024 at 2.15pm in St Hilda's Chapel, Teesside Crematorium

Gordon Howe

Of Aycliffe Village passed away peacefully on 11th August in hospital, aged 89 years.

Most dearly loved Husband of Maureen; much loved Dad of Nicola and Stuart; treasured Grandad of Georgia, Michael, Claudia, Andrea and Patrick; dear Father-in-Law of Jennifer and Juanjo.

Friends please meet for service on Tuesday 27th August at 10.30am at Wear Valley Crematorium, Coundon. Family flowers only. Black clothing not essential.

Alan Garner

The Garner family are saddened to announce the sudden passing of Alan Garner. Alan passed away in hospital on 4th August 2024, aged 75 years.

A much loved Husband to Ann; a wonderful Dad to Patrick and Annette and a treasured Grandad to Emma, Liam, Sophie, Zach, Lucia and Clara. He will be sadly missed by all his family. He will also be missed by friends, former workmates and by the local brass band community which he participated in for many years.

His funeral will be held in St. Mary's Catholic Church in Newton Aycliffe commencing at 11.00am on Tuesday 3rd September 2024.

Followed by a gathering of his family and friends at Newton Aycliffe Sports Club, Moore Lane, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 5AG at 12.00 noon. Family flowers only by request.

Any donations in lieu of flowers may be made to Darlington Memorial Hospital, A & E Department. A collection box will be available at the service.

Jean Dymond (née Liddle)

Of Newton Aycliffe, on 10th August 2024, aged 86 years.

Beloved Mam to Christine and Steve; loving Nana to Katie, Christopher and partners Dan and Rhiannon; a Great Nan to Leighton, Em-Ray, Luna and Lyra. A funeral service will take place at Wear Valley Crematorium on Thursday 29th August at 11.30am.

Sheila Allen 6.11.34 - 18.8.24

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our lovely Mam, Sheila Allen, of Newton Aycliffe, formerly Lyon Walk, who passed away peacefully on Sunday 18th August.

Beloved and devoted Wife of the late Billy; loving Mam to Diane, Geoff, Lynne and Janice; loving Grandma, Great Grandma, family member and also a dear friend to many.

Mam will be deeply missed by us all, but comfort is taken, knowing that she is reunited with our Dad.

A celebration of her life will be held at 2.45pm on Tuesday 27th August at St. Clare's Church followed by committal at Wear Valley Crematorium at 3.30pm.

Funeral Cortège will leave from Lyon Walk, as Sheila lived there for over 30 years.

Family flowers only, but a donation plate will be available at the Church, and all donations will be given directly to Defoe Court Care Home, who provided loving and tender care for Mam in the last few months of her life.



Ronald Cross (Ronnie)

2/3/1930-14/8/2024 Died peacefully, but suddenly in hospital, aged 94.

He will be greatly missed by family and friends.

Arrangements for funeral to follow.

In Memoriam

Arnold Rowland

Passed away on 25th August 2023

For my darling Husband, Arnie. The pain of losing you will never leave me, but the love and joy you gave me will stay forever in my heart.

I miss you so very much and my life is empty without you.

Yours forever,
Sandra Rowland.

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Birthday Remembrance

Pauline Pybus

23rd August 2024
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The Veterans Community and Enterprise Centre new Crafty Comrades project will include: Basic Art Sessions, Model Kit Making, 3D Printing, Woodcraft Skills, the new VR Suite will also be open. Interested? Come along to an Open Morning on Tuesday 3rd September and meet the teams from 10.00am to 1.00pm at Unit 3, IES Centre, Horndale Avenue, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6DS - telephone 07872 39442 for more information.

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Back Billy



Dear Sir,
 I am emailing on behalf of Billy Wade, who is a professional boxer who resides and is employed in Newton Aycliffe (3M). He has his third professional fight on Saturday 14th September at Sunderland Live Arena. All being well, he will then go on to fight for the Middle Weight, Northern Area Title in November as the main event live on DAZN. **Join the Team . . .** Billy is looking for sponsors from any local company or business in Newton Aycliffe who would like to jump on board with Billy's boxing journey. Billy is committed to this sport and any backing or support in any shape or form would be much appreciated. For further information regarding sponsorships please contact: 07427 687090 or email: billy1999wade@hotmail.com

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Putting Victims Needs Front and Centre

For far too long, near-record numbers of victims have been dropping out of criminal proceedings (1.5million last year alone) and there is a staggering record backlog of over 60,000 cases in our criminal courts. Backlogs not only hinder the timely resolution of cases, but they also pose a significant barrier to holding perpetrators to account for their crimes. Faced with long waits for trials, victims may think twice about pursuing justice which can lead to a drop in conviction rates and perpetrators walking free to commit further crimes. That's why it is important to me that victims feel confident to come forward to report crime, assured that when they do, they will be given the relevant care and support throughout their criminal justice journey, from reporting to trial. Despite the Victims Code being introduced in 2021, victims are still feeling let down and trust in the criminal justice system (CJS) is at an all-time low. Victims who have already endured trauma and abuse should not be subjected to additional suffering due to inefficiencies and delays in the legal process. The Victims' Code sets out the rights that everyone can expect to receive as a victim of crime (see below) All victims have the right to be informed about the criminal justice process and the support available. Criminal justice agencies are responsible for making sure that victims receive the rights in the Victims' Code. They should all tell you about your rights as you go through the criminal justice process.

The Criminal Justice Agencies include:

- The Police
- Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS)
- Youth Offending Teams
- HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)
- British Transport Police (BTP)

As your Victims Commissioner, I am determined to see The Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) consistently adhered to by CJS agencies, by making sure victims are receiving good information and they are being invited to provide a Victim Personal Statement (VPS).

My team have been working closely with our CJS partners to facilitate the adoption of a whole systems approach to ensure information is shared with each other so that victims voices are heard and justice is done. CJS agencies need to identify and assess the individual needs of each victim so they feel included, seen and heard and ensure they receive appropriate care and support.

My Victims Champion often hears victims complain that they feel unheard, and in some cases, even disrespected. Good quality communication is key. Victims want to receive clear information that demonstrates care, respect and compassion. Over the last three years with the support of my team I have been working hard to put victims back at the heart of the criminal justice system by doing everything we can to ensure victims' voices are amplified, heard, and respected. Following the recent disturbances we have seen the rapid full force of the law being applied against those involved. But sadly the existing backlogs still remain, so I will be calling on the government to ensure victims of crime receive the justice and support they deserve.

I will be pushing them to secure essential long term sustainable funding to invest in support services for victims of crime so we can help them cope with the aftermath of their experience. By offering emotional support, counselling, legal guidance, and practical assistance, victim services help individuals successfully navigate the criminal justice system whilst rebuilding their lives. With the right care and support in place victims will get justice the deserve and perpetrators will pay the price for crimes they have committed!

PCC Joy Allen Reflects On Her Role

Police and Crime Commissioner Joy Allen has reflected on her role to transform policing and secure effective justice for victims as she marks the first three months of her new term of office.

The County Durham and Darlington PCC, who had a resounding victory in May's election, is working closely with key national decision makers to strongly influence change for the benefit of the people of Durham and beyond.

The Commissioner has accumulated a growing portfolio of national roles on behalf of the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC) including appointments as National Lead for drink/drug driving, Addiction & Substance Misuse and as the APCC Lead for Environment and Sustainability.

She has also taken on a new responsibilities as joint Lead for the APCC's Finance portfolio. This follows a sustained campaign, highlighting the inadequacy of the current police funding formula for forces with a low tax base to the present and previous governments. Alongside funding, the PCC is working with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) on the Comprehensive Spending Review and is making national representations for devolved powers to secure PCCs more levers to level up accountability, improve outcomes for victims and improve the effectiveness of policing, crime and justice across England and Wales.

During the first three months of her current term, she has had several ministerial meetings and has worked alongside national partners to influence reform including the British Medical Association (BMA) which saw her address medical experts at a national BMA conference in London calling on the government to cut the drink-driving limit. In her work to tackle drink and drug driving, she is fully supporting a local campaign brought by Shalorna Warner, whose eight-month-old son Zackary Blades and sister Karlene Warner, were killed when a drink driver hit the car she was driving on the A1 (M) in the early hours of 31st May.

Ms Warner is fighting to ensure those responsible for fatal drink or drug drive crashes face a lifelong driving ban - and has launched a petition to secure 100,000 signatures to get the issue heard in Parliament. Locally, the PCC is preparing to consult on her new Police and Crime Plan 2024-28 which will focus heavily on tackling alcohol and drug-related crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) and other key issues the public have told her are important. Alcohol is now a factor in almost

half of all domestic abuse incidents and 30% of all violent crime while almost one fifth of all road deaths are caused by drink driving. National figures also show more than half of all homicides are related to drugs.

Commissioner Allen said: "It has been an extremely busy three months for my office. The past fortnight has been incredibly challenging as we have responded to the outbreaks of violent disorder sweeping the country.

"These incidents and the stirring up of hatred online have consumed significant policing and emergency resources and I have been impressed with the exceptional courage and fortitude of our officers in keeping our communities safe.

"These clashes have illuminated the strong and effective partnerships in place across the Durham force area, with all agencies standing united to confront this inexcusable behaviour and restore peace and safety to our streets.

"The violence has undoubtedly taken priority over the past two weeks, however, I am pleased to report progress in other areas of my work to tackle reoffending and improve trust and confidence in policing.

"Following confirmation that more prisoners will be subject to early release to ease prison overcrowding, I have written to the Minister for Justice and the Home Secretary calling for better resettlement packages to deter reoffending. Far too many prisoners are being released on licence without any practical support and this has to change if we are to alleviate the root of the problems and not just heap additional pressure on police forces and other agencies."

The Commissioner also highlighted the recent implementation of the Right Care, Right Person model to alleviate demand pressures on policing by preventing call outs to mental health incidents that would be more appropriately responded to by suitably trained health professionals

The PCC said the move was an important step forward in improving the care of people in crisis throughout England and Wales but warned that more work was needed to free up frontline capacity so that police could focus more of their time on investigating and cutting crime. In other areas of progress, the PCC, Durham Constabulary and Durham University have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together for the benefit of local communities.

The institutions are already working together to promote safety and the economic development of the area. The MoU formalises the relationship for the benefit of future collaboration opportunities including those aimed at developing new technologies and delivering further academic research. Furthermore, in July, the Commissioner's Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS) received national recognition for effective and 'sophisticated' victim care after securing the coveted Victims Choice Quality Mark accreditation.

The service, which was brought in-house by the Commissioner during her first term, was badged as an example of best practice nationally, with the extent of the specialist expertise available within the team described as 'remarkable'.

The PCC has also travelled the length and breadth of the Force area meeting residents, businesses, landowners and farmers and rural communities to listen to their concerns and represent their voice in her national and local advocacy work.



She is a current board member for the North East Business Resilience Centre and works closely with the organisation to help businesses protect themselves from the threat of online fraud. The PCC is also a board member for the Blue Light Commercial Board, helping police forces and their suppliers develop action plans to make a positive impact on the local environment and economy.

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