

DURHAM

Autumn 2021

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County News



**Events and
festivals
this autumn**

**DURHAM
BOOK
FESTIVAL**

Welcome to the coast

A new visitors' centre and activities on our beaches

Extra Care

Supporting people to stay independent

Maximise your potential

Learning opportunities for all ages



Welcome

to autumn Durham County News

The nights may be starting to draw in, but there's still lots to do in County Durham over the next few months as our schedule of activities and events returns to a more normal programme.

I'm really excited about our bid to make County Durham the UK City of Culture 2025, which you can read more about on page 4.

You can also read about lots of the events that help make up our county's rich heritage and cultural offer, including Durham Book Festival; the return of Lumiere and Bishop Auckland Food Festival; an exhibition about life in the Armed Forces; the annual North Pennines Stargazing Festival; and performances at Empire Consett and Gala Durham.

County Durham is a fantastic place to live and do business. You can read more about how we're helping people to learn new skills, gain qualifications and get into work on pages 10 and 11. And on pages 26 and 27, you can find out more about our Towns and Villages initiative, which focusses on improving local communities – this edition looking at the work taking place in Easington.

There's also information about Extra Care housing schemes, fostering and adoption, and some great activities taking place in our schools.

I hope you enjoy reading the magazine and remember that you can find more stories and videos online at www.durham.gov.uk/dcn



Councillor Amanda Hopgood,
Leader of the Council

Amanda Hopgood

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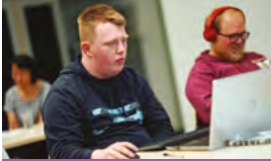


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Front cover: Bestselling author Richard Osman will be appearing at Durham Book Festival.

If you live in the Durham County Council area and haven't received a copy of Durham County News at your home address, please contact us.

To contact the editorial team, call 03000 268 059 or email durhamcountynews@durham.gov.uk



Look out for extra content... You can now view extra content wherever you see this icon by going to www.durham.gov.uk/dcn



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Bedtime stories from across the miles

Families can now read their little ones a bedtime story even if they are thousands of miles away, thanks to a new library scheme.

The free Featherbed Tales service offers the chance to record stories online so that children can listen to them at any time.

They can also be kept forever, so it's a great way of creating a memory with a personal touch or even encouraging children to record their own stories to send to others.

So whether you're a grandparent living on the other side of the world, a parent or carer working away, a relative serving with the armed forces or you want to share a story with someone just around the corner, there's no reason to miss storytime.

There are nine original, illustrated titles available, ranging from short three-page rhymes to longer stories about friendship and adventure.

The stories are available via our libraries webpage where members simply need to enter their library number. They will then be guided through the process of narrating their own shelf of memories to share and treasure.

And as only the second library service in the UK to offer Featherbed Tales, we're hoping to lead the way in using digital technology to keep people connected.

To take advantage of the service, visit www.durham.gov.uk/featherbedtales

If you're not a member of our library service, it's simple to sign up – and there's no charge. Simply visit your local library or visit www.durham.gov.uk/libraries



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[www.durham.gov.uk/
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If you need to phone us, call

Customer Services
03000 26 0000

8.30am – 5pm (Monday-Thursday)

8.30am – 4.30pm (Friday)

Out of hours emergency service available.

For social care and independent living enquiries or adult and children’s welfare issues:

Social Care Direct/Children’s First Contact Service

03000 26 79 79

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Braille, Audio, AAA Large print.

durhamcountynews@durham.gov.uk

03000 268 059

City of Culture

We have submitted a bid for Durham to become UK City of Culture 2025 – with the aim of boosting the county culturally, economically and socially.

If successful we will have a national platform, from which to showcase and develop our vast and varied landscape, heritage and cultural offer.

We believe we have a robust and convincing case and already have the backing of a wealth of partners from across the county and wider region, including arts organisations, business leaders and politicians.

If we are not successful, culture is still set to take centre stage in Durham over the coming years, with a wealth of events, festivals and celebrations already planned.

Residents can look forward to a packed cultural calendar that includes:

- ✓ The launch of the 1950s town at Beamish Museum
- ✓ A programme of events around the display of the Lindisfarne Gospels in the north east
- ✓ The opening of a new dedicated history centre for the county in 2023
- ✓ The relaunch of Redhills, the Pitmens’ Parliament and home of the Durham Miners’ Association, in 2023
- ✓ The 200th anniversary in 2025 of the first passenger railway – created by George and Robert Stephenson’s line and starting in Shildon

There will also be international artistic collaborations with new and contemporary artists; cultural events that explore economics, science and the environment; community-based events, activities and initiatives; and projects that will use digital technology to create and inform cultural experiences.

The bid for UK City of Culture status has been submitted by the council on behalf of Culture Durham, a partnership of organisations, which is also backed by private businesses.

Following a change in the rules that now allows groups of towns to work together to submit joint bids, our submission is on behalf of both the county and city of Durham with the hope that everyone across County Durham can benefit.



#Durham2025



County Durham’s bid for UK City of Culture 2025 launch at Beamish Museum.

Secure home judged outstanding

A secure children's home in Newton Aycliffe has retained its 'Outstanding' status following a recent Ofsted inspection.

Aycliffe Secure Children's Home provides high-quality, specialist accommodation for young people between the ages of 10 and 18. Many of the young people it supports have complex problems and need intensive support to help them turn their lives around. Ofsted inspectors found that the actions of the home contribute to "significantly improved" outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people. It found that the centre's "child-focused staff go the extra mile", and children are involved in their own care, adding that the young people feel safe at the home. The centre was previously rated 'Outstanding' following an inspection in autumn 2019.



Staff from Aycliffe Secure Children's Home outside the home.

Investment benefits families

Families of children with special educational needs and disability can now benefit from enhanced support, thanks to a new information and advice support officer.



Funding has been allocated to recruit the new officer who will support families whose children have social communication difficulties, including needs associated with autism and ADHD, with or without a diagnosis.

The money has been allocated to the Durham Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) by the Durham and Tees Valleys Mental Health and Learning Disability Partnership.

The role was co-created with the Making Changes Together in County Durham, a parent carer forum, and will allow the SENDIASS team to help families by suggesting solution-focussed information, advice, and support to meet the individual needs of their child.

To find more about the help available through SENDIASS, visit www.durhamsendiass.info

To get involved with Making Changes Together in County Durham, visit www.mctdurham.co.uk/parent-carer-training-workshops/

North east report calls for changes to children's care system

The country's social care system does not currently achieve the best outcomes for children and their families – and significant change is needed in order to alleviate unsustainable pressure on services.

These are the key findings of a report on children's social care, carried out by the directors of children's services at 12 north east councils.

The North East Regional Care Report will feed into the national Independent Care Review and aims to provide the views of those working at a local level in the region. The Independent Care Review has been commissioned by the government and directors of children's services in the north east believe that it is important that the regional context they can provide informs it.

The North East Regional Care Report sets out the key challenges local authorities face on a daily basis. It outlines the impact these have on children and their families and makes a number of recommendations for system-wide change.

Apply for a school place

Applications for primary and secondary school places for the 2022 academic year open on **Monday 6 September**.

Apply online or download a form at www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions, where you can also access a guide containing essential information to help with your application.

Anyone who is unable to apply online or download a form, can request a paper copy, from 6 September, by calling **03000 265 896**.

Applications close at midnight on **31 October 2021** for secondary school places and **15 January 2022** for primary school places.



Cracking down on off-road bikes



We've joined forces with Durham Constabulary and other agencies to tackle the problem of illegal off-road and quad bikes.

We are working in partnership with Durham Constabulary and other agencies to re-launch Operation Endurance across the county.

Off-road bikes can be a nuisance to communities, but many of them are also dangerous and in no fit state to be ridden at all. Some bikes are even linked to criminal behaviour.

Through Operation Endurance, we are working with partners to address the issue with regular patrols in hotspot areas. And, as well as seizing bikes, we will be crushing them so they cannot be used again.

To report someone using an off-road or quad bike illegally, call 101.

Driving refresher sessions restart

Older drivers can feel more comfortable on the road with the restart of refresher driving sessions.

We are restarting our Safer Driving with Age (SAGE) driving assessment, which was temporarily stopped due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Designed to help residents over 55 drive safely as they get older, SAGE consists of a 40-minute session with a qualified driving instructor.

Residents can take a drive in their own car, along roads they know well and use regularly, and afterwards the assessor will provide feedback on ways to make their driving safer.

Residents who are interested can call the council's road safety team on 03000 268172 or email road.safety@durham.gov.uk



Angela Redmond, road safety manager and Graeme Ashley, customer service assistant.



3 metre squares and gives each square a unique combination of three words, which you can use to tell people precisely where you are.

With more people exploring our countryside and rural staycations on the rise, get prepared for your autumn activities by downloading the free what3words app. www.what3words.com

what3words emergency help

We're supporting emergency services around the UK to encourage people to be prepared for days out and staycations – by learning how to use the free what3words app in an emergency.

When you're in an unfamiliar environment it can be hard to communicate your location. The what3words app divides the world into



New Elvet Bridge update

Progress on the refurbishment of New Elvet Bridge continues, with the key city centre route set to reopen in late autumn/early winter.

To date, the scheme has seen the northern joint repaired and the southern joint completely removed. Extensive concrete repairs have also been carried out and an electronic concrete protection system has been installed to provide additional protection for the years to come.

The final phases of the work will see the treatment of the underside of the bridge and re-installation of the road and footpath before it reopens to the public.

View the latest project update at www.durham.gov.uk/newelvet



Work begins on new bus station

Preliminary work is now underway ahead of the construction of a new bus station in Durham City.

The old bus station has now been demolished and is set to be replaced with a bright, modern and more accessible facility, which will provide a more fitting welcome to the city for residents and visitors.

During the summer, work has taken place to reroute an underground stream and bring in new utility connections. This will allow the steel frame of the building to be installed and the rest of the building to be constructed, with this phase of work due to begin this month.

The new bus station is expected to open in winter 2022/23.

To find out more visit www.durham.gov.uk/durhambusstation



Flood prevention scheme protects village



Dan Taylor, senior area drainage engineer, at the site of the flood prevention scheme in Shadforth.

An £80,000 scheme to reduce the impact of flooding on one of only two roads into a County Durham village has been completed.

During periods of heavy rainfall, the road linking Shadforth to the neighbouring village of Ludworth has frequently been submerged in floodwater, making it difficult for residents and visitors to enter and leave.

In response, we have carried out significant drainage improvements and introduced a new flood defence scheme. The area also been landscaped, with the creation of wetland habitats.



Welcome to County Durham's coast

County Durham's Heritage Coast is one of the finest coastlines in England and a new visitors' centre will soon be open offering the perfect place to learn more about the unique landscape and its wildlife.

Crimdon Coastal Hub

Crimdon is home to an array of wildlife – from lizards, rare orchids and insects to numerous species of bird, including little terns and ringed plovers.

To help us conserve and protect this wildlife, much of the site is legally protected.

However, visitors are still very much welcome to enjoy the area's picturesque sea views, sandy dunes, and wide-open beach, with a new coastal hub opening soon which will provide facilities including a café, accessible toilets, changing places room, baby changing room and volunteers' room.

The site also boasts low-energy features and the latest technology for water management too, giving the building a low carbon footprint.

The project is sponsored by the Heritage Coast Partnership with £1.35 million funding from the government's Coastal Community Fund. We have also provided £250,000 toward the scheme.

The hub will help school and community groups make the most of the extraordinary site, while also providing a place for volunteers to gather before and after working on the shoreline habitats.

The hub will host events including the Heritage Lottery funded-SeaScapes programme, which aims to explore, protect and celebrate the fabulous coastline that runs from the Tyne to Tees. SeaScapes will focus on 23 coastal projects over the next four years, from South Shields in the north to Teesmouth in the south.

Find out more about our Heritage Coast at www.durhamheritagecoast.org



Help care for our beautiful coastline at a Great British Beach Clean event

Every year thousands of people hit the beach to take part in the Great British Beach Clean.

As well as collecting litter, they help collate important data for the Marine Conservation Society, providing a snapshot of the state of all UK beaches. In 2020, a staggering 425 litter items were found per 100m of beach surveyed, proving there is still much to do to stop the litter plaguing our beaches and seas.

This year's Great British Beach Clean takes place from **Friday 17 to Sunday 26 September**, and the SeaScapes Team needs your help to clean and survey County Durham's beaches.

Join the team on:

- ✓ **Saturday 18 September** at Seaham Hall Beach, from 10am to 11.30am, and at Red Acre Beach, Seaham, from 12.30pm to 2pm.
- ✓ **Sunday 19 September** at Blackhall Rocks, from 10am to 12noon.

Keep an eye out for more events at www.exploreseascapes.co.uk or email info@exploreseascapes.co.uk for further information.

LUMIERE

Light at the end of the tunnel: Lumiere returns

Preparations are underway for the return this autumn of Lumiere – the UK’s leading light festival.

A spectacular new programme of artworks and installations is set to run from **Thursday 18 to Sunday 21 November**, with work by internationally-recognised artists as well as local and emerging talent on show.

As experts in outdoor events, arts charity Artichoke, which produces the event on behalf of the council, will ensure appropriate Covid-secure measures are in place.

More than one million people have attended Lumiere in its 10-year history, bringing visitors into the city, boosting local businesses, and placing Durham in the world’s spotlight. More than 10,000 local people and schoolchildren have benefitted from involvement in Lumiere’s learning and participation programmes and volunteering opportunities since 2009, developing their skills, having a great time and making a vital contribution to the festival in the process.



lumiere-festival.com | [@artichoketrust](https://twitter.com/artichoketrust) | [#LumiereDurham](https://twitter.com/LumiereDurham)

AN
ARTICHOKE
PROJECT

Lumiere is made possible through the support of commissioning body Durham County Council, Arts Council England and a host of funders and supporters.

Commissioned by



#Durham2025

Be a Lumiere Festival Maker

Could you help light up Lumiere?

We’re on the look-out for volunteer Festival Makers to help County Durham’s showpiece cultural event a success.

We’re looking for people aged 18 or over, from students to retirees, to welcome visitors to the city, direct people to installations and be the face of the festival.

It’s a chance to gain new skills and a wonderful way to meet new people and make friends.

Steph Whalen was a Festival Maker at Lumiere 2019 after finding that volunteering helped her rebuild her confidence after being diagnosed with bipolar affective disorder.

“Originally, I began volunteering as a way to boost my confidence and people skills,” she said. “When I initially found out I had bipolar affective disorder, although I didn’t show it, I felt shattered inside. My confidence took a battering for a long time.

“Through volunteering, I have built my confidence again and gone back into education and also, recently, work. I believe the saying goes, ‘Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the heart!’

“Everyone who volunteers will be doing so for a variety of reasons, but they are a community who work together to make the event happen and it is as important to us as anyone else there. I’ll be first in line to help again this year.”

Find out more at
www.durham.gov.uk/festivalmaker



Learning for all ages

From improving your CV and meeting new friends, to building confidence and keeping your mind engaged, learning a new skill can bring lots of benefits whatever your age. We offer a range of courses and lessons across County Durham.



Music-making for young people

Music is for everyone – that’s the belief of Durham Music Service, which currently provides lessons for around 18,000 pupils at more than 300 schools.

Lucy Talbot, from Peterlee, had music lessons with the service as a child and has just gained a First-Class Honours degree in Theatre Studies and Performance Practice.

💧 **Having music lessons really helped my confidence grow and made me enjoy going to school more,” she said. “It was really nice to go into school and do something that I loved and was passionate about.**

💧 **“The lessons were always really fun and when we got the chance to perform at concerts or with others in a band it was a lovely experience. ”**

Whether it’s youngsters in early years, sixth form students or those with individual learning needs, Durham Music Service strives to make sure every pupil gets the most out of their music-making. Affordable lessons are available in nearly all schools across County Durham and Darlington and are a fun and exciting way to develop musical and instrumental skills, from beginner to advanced.

Find out more at www.durhammusic.org.uk/sign-up

Improve your ICT

If the pandemic left you needing to brush up on your digital skills, our Digital Skills for All course could be the answer.

Our Adult Learning and Skills Service offers short, fun, and interactive learning sessions to support you in improving your IT skills, whether it’s to improve your employability or help you with the digital tasks that are increasingly a part of everyday life.

Michelle Young signed up after finding herself unemployed. She was looking for courses to boost her confidence as well as her skills.

💧 **I visited the job centre to ask if I could get some help with my CV and they mentioned the Adult Learning and Skills courses and I took it from there. I have found the computer courses really useful. I would definitely like to do another course around computer safety as I have a daughter. ”**

As well as IT, the service offers a range of courses in other subjects to support learners of all abilities. From autumn, more classroom-based courses will also be available across the county, including at Spennymoor, Crook, Seaham and Newton Aycliffe.

A range of distance learning courses is also available.

Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/ALLS-our-courses, call 03000 266 115 or email alss@durham.gov.uk



Maximise your potential

Need to give your career a boost? There are lots of opportunities to learn new skills and achieve extra qualifications to make yourself more employable through programmes that have benefited from Community Led Local Development (CLLD) funding. Here we look at the support on offer.

In the North Durham CLLD area, **Handcrafted** aims to empower those who have been disadvantaged or faced social exclusion. This could be as a result of crime, alcohol or substance abuse, poor mental or physical health, unemployment, abuse or having been through the care system.

From its training kitchen in Chester-le-Street, Handcrafted provides cookery skills courses to help for those working towards qualifications in food hygiene.

For further information email info@handcrafted.org.uk or go to www.handcrafted.org.uk

Karbon Homes run the **Foundations for Life** scheme which offers pre-entry, functional skills training in literacy and numeracy, along with budgeting, job-seeking, and early stage digital skills, to help people move into education and employment. A team of advisors works closely with people to help build the skills, experience, qualifications and mindset to maximise potential and achieve career aspirations.

More details are available at www.karbonhomes.co.uk

Working in areas of North Durham, including Chester-le-Street and Stanley, **North Durham Assist** offers one-to-one mentoring support for those looking to get back into work. People aged 25 and over can access a qualified and experienced mentoring officer, who can provide information, advice and guidance.

For full details visit www.durham.gov.uk/NorthDurhamAssist or call 03000 262 009.

In the South Durham CLLD area, the **Employability Mentoring Project** offers one-to-one mentoring support with a qualified and experienced mentoring officer. By discussing your motivation, goals and current situation, they can help identify what changes you could make in order to find a job or explore the opportunities available through self-employment. They can also help you develop ideas and support with issues such as housing, health or money advice.

To access the programme, you must: live in the Bishop Auckland, Shildon or Spennymoor area; be aged 25 or over; be unemployed. For further information call 03000 262 009.

The **Reach Project** focuses on those who are aged over 25, unemployed or economically inactive and who are looking to upskill or retrain.

The project has fully trained mentors who can offer one-to-one support including help with CVs, digital skills to enhance job searching and host a job club. For more information email catherine@cornforthpartnership.org

And **My Chance My Future** gives people the opportunity to explore history and heritage through arts, culture and leisure. Sessions include trips to local heritage sites, classroom-based learning, work taster sessions, volunteering opportunities and exploring employment opportunities in the area.

Find out more at <https://bacoll.ac.uk/myfuture> email admin.myfuture@bacoll.ac.uk or call 01388 825 824.



The CLLD can also support businesses in eligible areas of County Durham grow. For more details go to www.durham.gov.uk/CLLD

Independence and support

Our Extra Care service offers an alternative to moving into a care home. If you're eligible, you could have your own flat, in a specially-designed housing complex, with 24-hour care and support on site.

Living alone with a long-term condition can be challenging. After the loss of her mother, Jillian Bussey, who has epilepsy, experienced the difficulties of staying independent.

Her own home in a specialist complex, backed up by 24-hour care and support on site, was a dream solution. So, when she was given the chance of moving into Extra Care, Jillian jumped at it.

After visiting Sycamore Lodge, in Spennymoor, she said: *"I knew when I walked in this was the place for me."*

Having epilepsy doesn't mean you can't live an independent or happy life, but for Jillian there was the risk of injury due to a seizure, which caused her significant worry. Now that has changed.

"I have epilepsy, but it doesn't stop me from doing what I want to do," she explained. "The staff here support me when I need it, but I can do most things by myself. They help me to shower and it's a comfort to know they are on hand 24/7 if I need them. I now have a sense of security that I didn't have before."



Since her move into Extra Care, Jillian has her own apartment and is enjoying turning it into a home. *"I have just had fitted wardrobes installed, I have a lovely view and I love being independent and keeping my flat clean and tidy."*

Your own space, with help when you need it

Extra Care gives you the independence of having your own home in a specially designed complex, with the benefit of on-site personal care and support to meet your needs. You can furnish your flat to your own taste and make the most of the on-site facilities.

These include a communal lounge and restaurant, where you can enjoy three meals a day or socialise with other residents, landscaped gardens to relax in or take a walk, and a guest suite if your family or friends want to stay over. Some sites even offer an on-site shop, a hair and beauty salon and social events and activities to keep you entertained.

"It's wonderful to see people getting out of their apartments and socialising with others," said Jillian. "I have made a new friend here and I look forward to meeting her for lunch every day. The gardens and grounds are beautiful and lovely to walk around, the gardener does a great job. The building is spotlessly clean too – it's like a 5-star hotel."

“ I now have a sense of security that I didn't have before. ”



“ The staff here are lovely, very helpful and caring... It’s like having another family... ”



As well as enjoying home comforts, residents can rest safe in the knowledge that our Extra Care sites have 24-hour care support available if required. The staff team will visit them in line with their assessed needs to ensure all care and support needs are met. Anyone moving into Extra Care will be assessed by a social worker, which will help to create their care/support plan. Care staff are also on hand to provide emergency help, which can be summoned via an alarm system.

“The staff here are lovely, very helpful and caring,” said Jillian. “It’s like having another family as they are all so friendly and approachable that I can talk to them about anything. We enjoy a laugh and a joke, some staff are ‘as daft as a brush,’ making it a fun and friendly place to live.

“I feel so lucky to have been asked to join the tenant committee – I’ve never been on a committee in my life, but it makes me feel valued and included. We all have a chat about what we can do to enjoy ourselves and plan activities for all the residents to get involved in.

“I am so lucky to have been able to move into Sycamore Lodge – I won’t be moving anywhere else – why would I when I have everything I could possibly need here?”

Where are our Extra Care developments?

Extra Care offers people aged 55 plus, or people with needs associated with a specific condition, an alternative to moving into a care home. You have a tenancy agreement and pay rent to the housing association.

There are seven Extra Care schemes throughout County Durham, where the care staff are managed directly by our in-house provider, Durham County Care and Support. Sometimes other home care providers support these schemes too.

The developments are managed by a housing association. Anchor Hanover manages Charles Dickens Lodge in Barnard Castle; Chester View in Ouston; Harbour Lodge in Seaham; Maple Court in Consett; The Orchards in Brandon; and Sycamore Lodge in Spennymoor.

We also support the Extra Care scheme at Southfield House in Crook, with Accent Housing.

Find out more

For more information please call 01388 548 510 or visit www.anchorhanover.org.uk/durhamcare

Remembrance Day



Remembrance Sunday offers the opportunity to remember the contributions of those who served in the First and Second World Wars and later conflicts.

Falling on **Sunday 14 November** this year, the national event will once again see services taking place in communities around the county.

Due to the pandemic, arrangements may change at short notice, so you are advised to check local media for the most up to date information.

Through Soldiers' Eyes

An exhibition featuring a selection of poignant works created by servicemen and women from County Durham opens this month.

The Soldiers' Eyes, at Bishop Auckland Town Hall, features items from the DLI Collection and other historical artefacts from the First World War to the present day. This is not only an exhibition but also a wide-reaching engagement project for veterans and the Armed Forces community.

The free exhibition, which runs from **Saturday 11 September to Saturday 20 November**, takes visitors on a journey through life in the Armed Forces in times of peace, conflict, repatriation and rehabilitation.

With works by serving personnel, veterans and members of the Armed Forces community, it includes wall-mounted artwork, photography and sculptures as well as oral, visual and written elements. Offering a brief snapshot of each individual's personal journey, it aims to challenge audiences in how they think about the Armed Forces.

Alongside the gallery exhibition, the town hall will also be hosting an **interactive digital display**. Running from **Saturday 23 October to Saturday 20 November**, it will offer visitors the opportunity to explore life on the Western Front through the eyes of DLI soldiers. The exhibition, which will be open on Remembrance Sunday, features original First World War pieces that have been digitised and animated.

Bishop Auckland Town Hall is open from Monday to Saturday, 10.00am to 4.00pm and is fully accessible, with adapted toilets and lifts to all floors.

Find out more at www.bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk or email ThroughSoldiersEyes@durham.gov.uk



Armed Forces support

We work hard to support serving and former members of the Armed Forces and are proud to have gained a Gold Award through the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme.

The national initiative recognises employers who demonstrate positive attitudes and policies towards serving and ex-members of the Armed Forces.

During recent years, we have introduced a number of policies aimed at creating fair and equal opportunities for those who serve, including up to 10 days paid leave for reservists and Uniformed Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to attend training.

Our Armed Forces Outreach Service (AFOS) provides help to all forces personnel, reservists, veterans and their families. The service offers support with a range of issues, including housing, benefits and finances, employment, and health and wellbeing

Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/armedforces or contact 03000 268 000.

Time to rethink how you travel

Ditching the car and walking to work or hopping on public transport can have great benefits for our health – but it can also help the environment too by reducing carbon emissions.

If you're only travelling a short distance, swapping the car for walking, cycling or jogging can help you get fitter, improve your mental health and save you money.

For longer journeys, consider using **public transport** – it's Covid-safe and means lower CO2 emissions than using the car. For timetables, visit www.durham.gov.uk/publictransport

One of the easiest ways to change travel habits on a day-to-day basis is to rethink the school run.

Setting up a **Walking Bubble Map** around your school can encourage more families to get active on their journey to and from school. Walking Bubbles also encourage those families who have no choice but to travel by car, to park at least five-minutes away from school, creating a safer space for walking, cycling or scooting. This also reduces the number of cars parked on pavements outside school gates and creates more space for people to socially distance and feel safer. Find out more at www.modeshiftstars.org/staysafegetactive



If you're ready and able to take on the next challenge, why not try swapping the car for cycling. **Cycle September** is a fun, worldwide competition to help more people realise the benefits of riding a bike – including making us happier, healthier and more energetic.

Earn points and enter a draw to win amazing prizes. You can register individually or join as part of your organisation at www.lovetoride.net/durham

If you don't own a bike, help is available via our **borrow a bike** scheme. Visit www.durham.gov.uk/borrowabike

Need help getting to work?

A scheme which supports people who are struggling to get to their workplace, apprenticeship or college has now extended the help available. **Wheels 2 Work**, which is run in partnership with the council, offers support through the provision of mopeds for people to use on their daily commute.

Now the organisation has joined up with **Recyke y'Bike** to provide bikes to eligible applicants. For a one-off fee of £40, people can buy a reconditioned pedal bike through the scheme. You will also receive a helmet, lights and lock and training in how to repair a puncture.

Find out more at www.w2wcd.org.uk, email info@w2wcd.org.uk, phone 0191 303 8442 or message Wheels 2 Work through Facebook at www.facebook.com/wheelstoworkcountydurham



Durham Book Festival returns with a page-turning line up



Durham Book Festival is back this autumn with an exciting programme of digital and in-person events.

Readers can look forward to talks from a diverse line-up of writers ranging from TV presenter Richard Osman to Booker Prize-winning Pat Barker.

The festival kicks off with the **Durham Book Festival Digital Weekend** on **Saturday 9 October and Sunday 10 October**, when there will be more than 20 online events to enjoy. You can either book a single digital event at £5 per household or get access to all the exciting events on-demand with a £20 festival pass.

Highlights include talks from **Richard Osman**, who will be talking about his second novel *The Man Who Died Twice*.

Filmed in Durham City, Osman introduces us to the new book and reflects on some of the stories that have meant the most to him throughout his life.



There will also be talks from County Durham's own **Pat Barker**, who will be discussing her career and new novel *The Women of Troy* and a (disguised) appearance from the Secret Barrister, who will take part in a live Q&A.



From **Thursday 14 October to Sunday 17 October**, Durham Book Festival will return to its live home at **Gala Theatre, Durham**.

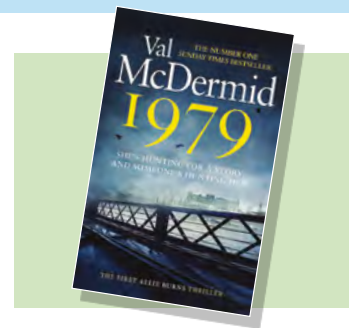
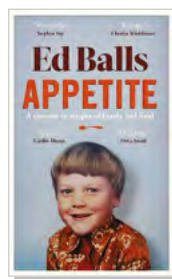
The programme begins on **Thursday 14 October** with the annual **Gordon Burn Prize**, showcasing the six shortlisted books and announcing this year's winner.

The Gordon Burn Prize celebrates exploratory, innovative, and questioning works of fiction and narrative non-fiction that challenge convention and defy categorisation. The winning writer will be awarded £5,000.

The evening will include readings by the shortlisted writers and a special performance.



The theatre is also excited to welcome broadcaster, writer and economist **Ed Balls**, who will be talking about his new memoir *Appetite*, a part-autobiography part-cookbook that celebrates love, family and really good food.



And on **Saturday 16 October**, Gala welcomes bestselling crime writer **Val McDermid**, who will be talking about her new novel, *1979*, which begins her first new series in almost 20 years.

Set in Glasgow and following crime reporter Allie Burns, *1979* draws upon McDermid's own experiences as a journalist, when she witnessed life in the newsroom at first-hand.



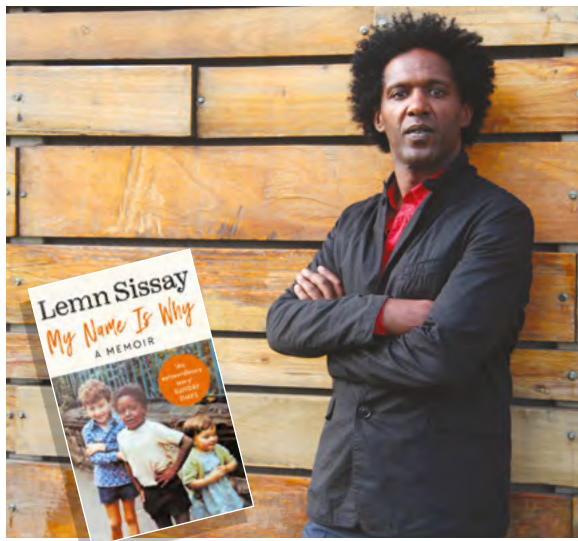
Commissioned by the council and produced by New Writing North, with support from Arts Council England and Durham University, Durham Book Festival is one of the country's oldest literary festivals.

As well as exciting talks, Durham Book Festival is also offering guided literary walks of history and heritage beauty spots around County Durham.

With two trails to choose from, festival-goers can hear tales of crimes gone by in Durham City and discover how the city provides a backdrop for the perfect crime fiction.

Alternatively, spend time walking in the lively harbour town of Seaham and enjoying Durham Heritage Coast, where readers can see the natural environment and explore issues of climate change through the written word.

Book an in-person Durham City walk with tour guide Ruth Robson or complete either walk at your own pace using free digital downloads.



This year's event also sees the return of the ever-popular **Big Read** and **Little Read**, with a combination of live and digital talks to engage and inspire audiences.

Lemn Sissay's My Name is Why is the subject of the **Big Read**, with the BAFTA-nominated, writer and broadcaster speaking about his work at Gala Theatre on **Saturday 16 October**.

At the age of 17, after a childhood in a foster family followed by six years in care homes, Norman Greenwood was given his birth certificate. He learned that his real name was not Norman. It was Lemn Sissay. He was British and Ethiopian and his mother had been pleading for his safe return to her since his birth.

Sissay's powerful story of his quest for identity shines a light on experience within the care system and the discrimination he experienced as a black child growing up in a small post-industrial Northern town.

It also celebrates the voice of the boy who grew up to become one of the country's most celebrated poets, the Chancellor of Manchester University and the recipient of an OBE in 2021.



Durham Book Festival will work with our library service to distribute 3,000 copies of *My Name is Why* to libraries, prisons, and businesses, and to university staff and students across Durham.

DURHAM BOOK FESTIVAL

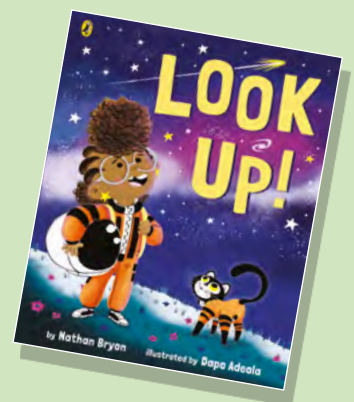
#Durham2025

And for the **Little Read**, Durham Book Festival is proud to present *Look Up!* a heart-warming picture book about space and the wonder of the natural world.

Rocket is going to be the greatest astronaut, star-catcher, space-traveller that has ever lived. But first, she needs to convince her big brother Jamal to stop looking down at his phone and start looking up at the stars.

In this free pre-recorded event, audiences can meet the writer **Nathan Bryon** and the illustrator **Dapo Adeola** as they talk about the book.

The Little Read will be available to watch for free online from **Saturday 9 October to Sunday 31 October**. Durham Book Festival will also be distributing 2,000 copies of *Look Up!* throughout County Durham, including one copy to every nursery and primary school in the county.



For all information about all Durham Book Festival events, to access tickets and digital performances, and to download accompanying guides and resources, visit www.durhambookfestival.com

Make a difference to a child with additional needs

“We wanted to make a difference... we wanted to be able to help children who may not have necessarily had a nurturing, loving and caring environment.”

Lisa and Nigel Rusby have been fostering with us since 2018 and, for the past year and a half, have been caring for two brothers with disabilities.

Due to the boys' circumstances, the couple had little time to prepare for their arrival but had no hesitation in opening up their home.

“We'd only been foster carers for a few months when we got the call about the boys, who needed emergency foster care,” Lisa said. *“We knew very little about them, but we said yes and rushed to get the spare room ready. In the next few hours, we got more information and found out that the boys, who were both under six, both had additional needs.”*

“We didn't necessarily go into fostering planning to look after children with special needs, but the support from the council has been brilliant. It was a steep learning curve, but our social worker was amazing.”

Local authorities often struggle to recruit carers who are willing to look



Lisa, Nigel and daughter Nieve.

after children with additional needs, but Lisa believes the rewards far outweigh any extra challenges.

“Go into it with a completely open mind – every child brings something different to your family and, while children with special needs may mean extra work, it is so, so rewarding,” she said. *“The youngest has just started to say his first words, he's got fantastic eye-contact and he's just started waving and blowing kisses. For him that is huge, and for me, the positives far outweigh the difficulties. When we look back, the change is incredible – you'd think they were different children.”*

The couple, who have two adult daughters of their own, say that although fostering changes the way a family works, it's been a positive experience for them all.

It has even helped their daughter Nieve choose her future career path.

“As the youngest in the family I've never had younger children in the house. It took a bit of getting used to, but I love the boys being here – they are like my brothers,” Nieve said. *“Having them here has helped me to choose my career path and I now work as a support worker for adults with additional needs.”*



Find out more about fostering with us at an online Q&A session:

Saturday 25 September 10am,
Tuesday 5 October 6pm,
Saturday 16 October 10am,
and Monday 8 November 6pm.

Find out more:
www.durham.gov.uk/fostering
03000 269 400.

Providing homes for brothers and sisters



There are 2,030 children in England in need of forever homes through adoption – 44 per cent of whom want new homes with their brothers and sisters.

adopt
Coast to Coast

Adopt Coast to Coast – the Regional Adoption Agency for Durham and Cumbria county councils and Together for Children (Sunderland City Council) – is working to place brothers and sisters with those who may not have previously considered it.

Taking on more than one child at a time could seem like a daunting prospect, with unique challenges, increased immediate and long-term costs, the need for additional space and the extra time you will have to make available. However, there are also many huge benefits – the bond of brothers and sisters is unique and one that lasts a lifetime.

Children who are adopted with brothers and sisters find companionship and reassurance and have a shared understanding of their experiences. Many adopters say adopting more than one child has helped with settling children into their new families and has also enabled them to complete their family at once.

It's also easier to adopt siblings because prospective adopters only go through the application process once, so could be matched within six to 12 months. There may also be additional financial and practical support available.

Andy and Steve always knew they wanted a family and felt adoption was the most suitable route to parenthood for them. Within a year of making their first enquiry, their family of two grew to a family of four when they adopted two brothers, then aged one and two.

Andy said: **“ Our experience was a very positive one. Within just three months of being approved, our sons were living with us and it completely changed our lives. Having them is everything we could have ever wanted. ”**

Steve added: **“ They’ve got their brotherly bond, they play together, they laugh together – it keeps the house lively – it’s just fabulous. ”**

An online sibling-focused information event, on **Monday 6 September at 7pm**, will give an overview of adoption, feature a guest speaker who will talk about their experiences of adopting siblings and provide an opportunity to ask questions.

Other adoption information events will run on Thursday 16 September at 10am and Tuesday 28 September at 12noon.

To book a place, email adoptcoasttocoast@durham.gov.uk



Andy, Steve and the boys.

Find out more

Whether you're new to the idea of adoption or it's been on your mind for a while, Adopt Coast to Coast will offer you support and guidance at a pace that you're comfortable with.

Find out more, view upcoming events or read real adoption stories at:

www.adoptcoasttocoast.org.uk

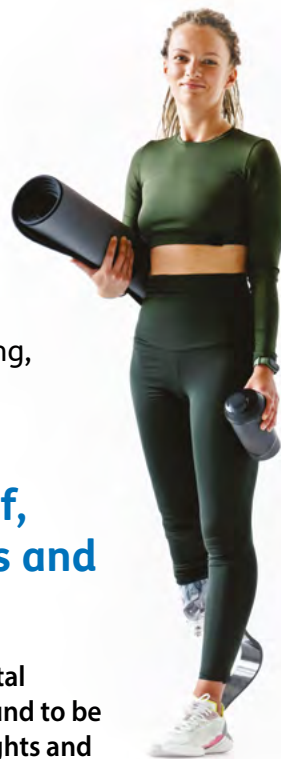
email: adoptcoasttocoast@durham.gov.uk

or speak to the Adopt Coast to Coast team on 03000 268 268.

Better health for body and mind

We all know that looking after our physical and mental wellbeing is important, but it can sometimes be a struggle to get motivated or seek support.

Here we share some advice on how to take care of your own health and wellbeing, as well as tips on how to help others.



World Mental Health Day

Did you know that a quarter of people will experience a mental health issue at some point in their life?

In County Durham, more than 51,000 adults are currently suffering from depression and one in 10 children have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder.

We're joining forces with Stamp It Out Partnership Hub in County Durham to use World Mental Health Day on **Sunday 10 October** to focus on inequality and raise awareness of Mental Health in an Unequal World.

Stamp It Out is currently recruiting Anti-Stigma Ambassadors. If you have lived experience of mental health issues and would like to support the campaign to challenge stigma, visit www.stampitoutcountydurham.co.uk



Look after yourself, look out for others and get help early

People with a diagnosed mental health problem have been found to be at higher risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviour.

But we can all do our part in supporting those who may be affected, simply by taking some time out for friends, colleagues, or anyone who you may be worried about.

A simple 'How are you?' can open the conversation. Listening and being open and understanding can help those at risk by letting them know it is okay for them to share.

If you are struggling to cope, because of issues with your mental health or difficult life circumstances, you don't have to keep it to yourself. Reaching out to talk to someone about your problems or worries is the first step to getting help and dealing with them, and you should feel no shame or embarrassment for doing so.

For support, speak to your GP or visit www.durham.gov.uk/Adultmentalhealthsupport



Advice and information about supporting others is also available from:

North East and Cumbria Suicide Prevention Network
www.stopsuicidenenc.org/visitor/need-support

Zero Suicide Alliance, which offers free online training
www.stopsuicidenenc.org/training





Tune in for health advice

A new TV show will help schools and parents get kids active when it airs this September.

Active 30 Durham has created the show, which will be broadcast from Monday to Friday on Tyne and Wear TV's *Your North East* (Freeview channel 7) at 1.30pm and 6.30pm.

It is recommended that children take part in at least one hour of physical activity a day.

The new show, which will feature local people and schools, will provide advice on how families can stay healthy, with content for children of all ages.

You can also find ideas and inspiration on how to be more active at

www.durham.gov.uk/leisure

or

www.wellbeingforlife.net

www.countydurhamsport.com/young-people/active-30



Don't wait to quit

Stoptober is fast approaching, but smokers in County Durham are being urged not to wait if they want to quit smoking.

You are **three** times more likely to quit with support from Stop Smoking Services. Call us today on **0800 772 0565**.

Stopping smoking:

- ✓ Reduces your risk of developing disease and illness, such as COPD, cancer, heart disease and strokes
- ✓ Improves your energy levels and reduces your stress
- ✓ Protects your loved ones, and even your pets, from the effect of second-hand smoke
- ✓ Improves smell and taste
- ✓ Reduces blood pressure and benefits existing health conditions
- ✓ Helps you look younger, with better skin and healthier teeth and gums
- ✓ Is healthier for your wallet



Taking back control

David Downes from Shotley Bridge has been a smoker since the age of 14. After seeking support from Smokefree County Durham, the 64-year-old has now been smoke-free for six months.

“**There was only one thing that I wasn't in control of in my life and that was smoking,**” David said.

“My partner and I bought a house that we're doing up and it's hard work, especially with my breathing problems and COPD. I've managed to stop smoking a few times in my life, but I knew this was the time for me. I really wanted to stop.”

David used Champix stop-smoking medication to help him quit. It works on nicotine receptors to help relieve cravings and reduce the withdrawal symptoms associated with giving up smoking. Champix can also reduce the enjoyment of cigarettes by blocking the effects of nicotine.

“**As well as the health benefits and the money you save, stopping smoking gives you a huge sense of accomplishment,**” David added.

Smokefree County Durham is a Specialist Stop Smoking Service run by ABL health and Durham County Council. The service offers support for people living and working in County Durham via a range of support including face to face and telephone appointments.

For more information, visit

www.smokefreecountydurham.co.uk

smokefree
county durham

Supporting wellbeing within schools

The past year has had an impact on everyone's wellbeing, including our children and young people. In recognition of the importance of maintaining good mental health, we're supporting our schools to deliver positive changes for pupils.

Every school in County Durham was offered a programme to support children through their return to school following the last lockdown. We also run the Durham Resilience Programme, building resilience in staff and pupils and a Youth Awareness of Mental Health project to raise awareness of mental health in secondary school.

From training in topics such as staff wellbeing, anxiety and trauma, to forums where schools can share and develop effective practice, whole-school approaches to wellbeing are making a big difference.

Wellbeing warriors

Catchgate Primary in Stanley puts wellbeing at the forefront of everything it does.

Reception teacher, Katie Burns, said: *"We believe mental health should be a focus from primary school-age, as children are able to understand it and express their feelings from being very young."*

Initiatives have included bringing therapy dog Thea into school, after children shared how talking to their pets helped them at home. Thea also offers a break for young carers, allowing them to enjoy time away from the responsibilities they face elsewhere.

A peer mentoring programme has also been introduced, with Catchgate's wellbeing warriors wearing green hoodies so they can be easily identified. The peer support group is on hand to offer support to those pupils who may not feel comfortable approaching an adult for help.

Catchgate Primary's successful approach to wellbeing saw them become the first school in the country recognised with an accredited **Wellbeing Award for Schools** in 2019.



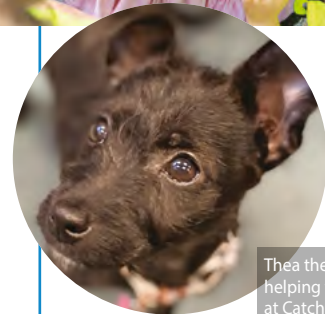
At Catchgate Primary, wellbeing is a crucial part of their ethos.

Durham Resilience Programme

Ox Close Primary School, in Spennymoor, is one of 25 settings across the county to have taken part in the Durham Resilience Programme this year, a project delivered by the Specialist Inclusion Support and Educational Psychology teams.

Head of School, Anna Bowden, said: *"The programme has really focused our way of thinking around resilience and wellbeing and allowed us to put some exciting plans in place to support everyone in school."*

These plans include additional playground equipment to support happy playtimes for pupils and dedicating one staff meeting per half-term to staff wellbeing. The school has also pledged to carry out regular staff wellbeing surveys.



Thea the therapy dog is helping to support pupils at Catchgate Primary.



Schools join international climate change debate

Children and young people in County Durham are being encouraged to think and talk more about climate change ahead of a conference later this year.

Schools in the area are being provided with a range of films and educational resources and to support learning around climate change.

The materials explore a range of themes, including adaptation and mitigation, nature, transport, energy and finance. They aim to empower young people to think about their own response to climate change and share what they are already doing to tackle the problem.

They have been produced by the council, Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists (OASES), and Durham University, through the **ECO₂ Smart Schools Programme**, which involves over 100 schools from Durham and internationally.

Next month, pupils will be invited to attend a live virtual ECO₂ Smart Schools Climate Conference where they will be able to ask questions of experts from Durham University, and hear from David Saddington, a former Durham University student who now works for the government on climate policy.

Pupils from County Durham schools will collaborate with children and young people from around the world to learn, think and discuss climate change ahead of this year's (COP26).

The conference, a collaboration between Durham University's Energy Institute, the council and OASES, takes place ahead of this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties in November.

View the school resources at: <https://eco2smartschools.org.uk/eco2-cop-virtual-event/>



Rented Housing With Care in County Durham

Are you aged 55 and over and have one or more care or support needs? Our independent living apartments are designed to meet the specific needs of older people who want to continue to maintain an independent lifestyle and live life to the full.

All properties benefit from:

- ✔ One and two bedroom apartments
- ✔ Maintenance and gardening taken care of
- ✔ 24-hr emergency call system
- ✔ Pet friendly environment
- ✔ Facilities in most locations including restaurants, hairdressing, café and shops
- ✔ On-site manager and care and support needs met by the on-site care provider

Choose from one of our six locations in County Durham which include self-contained flats with their own front door, allowing privacy and independence in a safe environment.



A warm and safe welcome with regular Covid-19 testing and enhanced cleaning.

For more information please call **01388 548510** or visit www.anchorhanover.org.uk/durhamcare

In Partnership with



New recycling scheme offers big prizes

From coffee machines to smart speakers, we've partnered with AO.com to hand over some fantastic prizes through our new small electricals recycling project.

Every month, we're holding a prize draw for everyone who takes part in the scheme, which has seen more than two tonnes of unwanted electrical and electronic equipment collected since its launch earlier this year.

To be in with the chance to win a prize, simply drop off your small broken and unused electrical items at one of the collection points across the county.

Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/WEEE. If you're interested in hosting a collection point, email wasteaware@durham.gov.uk



Morrison Busty refit update

Young people are helping to transform one of our depots, as work progresses to create a low carbon site with a solar farm.

We received £5m from the European Regional Development Fund to carry out a major refit of the Morrison Busty site, at Annfield Plain.

Supporting the project with an additional £3.3 million from our own Invest to Save fund, we will use the £8.3 million to create a three-megawatt solar farm to power the whole depot, including new electric vehicle charge points for the council's transition to electric vehicles in our fleet.

The work supports the pledge in our **Climate Emergency Action Plan** to reduce our carbon emissions and become a carbon neutral county by 2050. More than 1,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year will be saved as a result and our total emissions will be reduced by up to four per cent.

Work has begun on the main office building and we've been given the green light by biodiversity specialists to commence work on the solar farm. Demolition of the old colliery building is now well underway.

Young people from the council's **Full Circle Service**, which provides post-adoption support, have been working with architects, Howarth Lichfield, to design the interior of the new reception and office spaces.

Morrison Busty provides a base for vehicles and equipment for our North Durham household waste collections, clean and green services, road maintenance and street lighting.



Recycle Week

This year's national Recycle Week takes place from **Monday 20 to Sunday 26 September**, with the theme **Step it up this Recycle Week** and a focus on climate change.

Our recycling officers will be in Durham City Market Place all day on **Saturday 25 September**, to offer tips and advice.





Keeping Wharton Park buzzing

The Friends of Wharton Park have been doing their bit to help our bee population.

Planting for pollinators, they have filled the park's community garden with bee-friendly wildflowers and herbs.

This planting is working in conjunction with the careful management of the wildflower meadows by the park's rangers, to ensure the park is a haven for these essential pollinators.



Making improvements in South Moor

Dumped rubbish, empty properties and pest infestations are some of the issues being tackled by organisations working in South Moor.

Over 11 weeks, our Community Action Team will be looking at improving those concerns that affect members of the public the most.

The team, who will be in South Moor **until Friday 17 September**, includes officers from council teams including our community protection, planning and housing services and neighbourhood wardens. They are working alongside representatives from Durham Constabulary, Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, local housing associations, Groundwork North East and Cumbria, Stanley Town Council and elected members, as well as local community groups and residents.

Compost bin and water butt offer

We're working with [GetComposting.com](https://www.getcomposting.com) to offer residents discounted home compost bins and water butts.

Home composting helps reduce the amount of household and garden waste disposed of and produces nutritious compost, which can be used on flowerbeds, vegetable plots and in hanging baskets.

Around one third of the contents of an average UK household bin can be composted at home. Everything from fruit scraps and coffee grounds to vacuum cleaner dust to cardboard egg boxes can go in a composter, helping reduce waste and reduce our carbon footprint. It also provides great organic compost that can help plants to grow and save gardeners money.

Having a water butt at home, meanwhile is a great way to save water and also money. It is also better for the environment and your plants to save and use rainwater.

A 220-litre compost bins is available from as little as £20 and alongside a 'buy one get one half-price' offer, residents can purchase a second from only £10. Other sizes are also available. A 100-litre water butt kit starts at £26.98 and, under the same offer, residents can purchase a second from only £13.49.

For more information and to order a compost bin and/or water butt, visit www.durham.gov.uk/composting



Providing pest control



Did you know we can help protect your business or home with an affordable, reliable pest control service? We offer a wide range of services. Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/pestcontrol



Focus in and around Easington

We're tackling issues in communities across County Durham as part of our wide-ranging Towns and Villages Investment Programme. Here we focus on work taking place in Easington Colliery and Easington Village.



📍 Old school to be demolished

One of the key priorities of the programme is addressing the problems caused by derelict land and buildings.

In Easington Colliery, an eyesore building that has blighted the community for more than 20 years is being demolished as part of the project.

The former Easington Colliery Primary School, in Seaside Lane, has stood empty since 1997 and was in a significant state of disrepair.

With various owners failing to find a viable use for it, over the past two

decades the building's condition has deteriorated significantly. It has become a target for vandals and its rundown appearance has impacted on property prices.

After bringing the building back into public ownership, we consulted with residents on plans for its future, with 91 per cent of those who responded agreeing that demolition was the best way of bringing the site back into use.

In response to the feedback from residents, we submitted a planning application, which was approved in October 2020, to clear the site and create a pocket park until a permanent use for the land is found.

Preparations for demolition began in July and demolition is expected to take around 16 weeks, which means that residents will soon be able to see a significant improvement in their local community.



📍 Improving road safety

A new road layout and additional parking are helping address safety concerns near Rosemary Lane Nursery School, in Easington Village.

The volume of vehicles accessing the area at peak times was causing congestion and residents, families and the nursery were worried about safety.

Work on a new one-way system from Cadwell Lane around the Green and the creation of 16 new car parking bays is due to be completed in early September.





New lease of life for the Old Pay Office

The Old Pay Office, in Easington Colliery, is welcoming new visitors following a major refurbishment.

The building, on the corner of Ashton Street, was run down and three of its rooms were unused.

Now, thanks to funding from the Government and the Towns and Villages programme, the building has been given a new lease of life.

The volunteer-run venue has been reconfigured and renovated, with the existing café and band room extended and new community rooms created to host activities and heritage displays.

More than £10,000 from the Towns and Villages Programme has been used to install new windows, shutters and signage, carry out repairs and update the paintwork.



More from Towns and Villages

The first people to benefit from a multi-million-pound scheme to improve the energy efficiency of County Durham homes have been talking about the benefits.

External wall insulation improvements are being made to 500 homes in Chilton, New Kyo, South Moor, Coundon Grange and Dean Bank.

Renewable heating systems and solar panels are also being installed in 500 homes in Wheatley Hill, Dawdon, Stanley, Weardale and rural parts of north Durham.

The project has been made possible thanks to grants totalling £10 million from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's (BEIS) Local Authority Delivery Plan and North East Energy Hub.

We also committed £850,000 from our Towns and Villages Fund and a further £750,000 has been received from the Warm Homes Fund and Chilton Community Energy Company.

As well as saving homeowners money on their energy bills, the measures will reduce carbon emissions and contribute to the county's quest to become carbon neutral by 2050.



Doreen McWaters, 78, and her husband Laurie have lived in their home in Dean Bridge Row for 50 years. *"These are quite big houses and take some heating during the winter. Hopefully the insulation will keep us warmer and reduce our bills,"* Doreen said.

Brenda Woods, 70, moved into her home in West Chilton Terrace four years ago. She said: *"The team at the council told me all about the project and I was really impressed. The external wall insulation is all in place now and it looks great. It should keep the house warmer, save me money and help the environment. I couldn't be happier."*



Lord Callanan, Minister for Climate Change and Corporate Responsibility, paid a visit to Chilton earlier this year to see how the work is progressing.

For more information about the council's work to tackle climate change, visit www.durham.gov.uk/climatechange

To find out more about the Towns and Villages strategy, visit www.durham.gov.uk/townsandvillages



Stay safe with fireworks this Bonfire Night

With all the sparkle that Bonfire Night can bring, it's easy to forget that fireworks can be dangerous if not used correctly and responsibly.

Anyone planning on hosting their own display, should follow our advice in order keep themselves, their family and their pets stay safe when celebrating.

Buy fireworks from licensed sellers

Most shops, like supermarkets, can only sell fireworks on certain dates during the year. If you're buying them at a different time, you need to visit a specially licensed shop. It also illegal for people aged under 18 to buy or carry fireworks.



Store fireworks safely

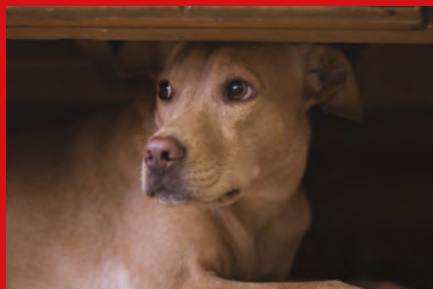
When storing fireworks, keep them in their original packaging, dry and away from sources of heat and ignition, and lock them away from children and animals.

Abide by the fireworks curfew

People are more likely to plan to protect pets and vulnerable people if fireworks are let off on traditional dates so only let off fireworks on these days. The firework curfew is midnight on Bonfire Night.

Be considerate to others

Let your neighbours know in advance if you are planning to let off fireworks, so they can take steps to protect vulnerable people and animals. If you live close to horses, make sure you site your fireworks well away from them. Do not let off fireworks if they will disturb nearby farm animals, wildlife habitats, or roosting bats and birds.



Keep children and animals safe

Children should enjoy any display from a distance and should not be allowed to handle fireworks, tapers and matches. Dogs and cats should be kept inside and have a hiding place. Give small animals who live outside lots of extra bedding and nesting material to burrow in.



Follow instructions

Read all instructions carefully and if you do not understand them, do not use the firework. Read all the safety warnings on the firework box, so you know important information such as how far away people should stand from the firework. Once any debris has cooled down, tidy it up and soak it in water. Then put it in a rubbish bag and in the bin.



Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/fireworksafety

Our theatres are back...

After more than a year, the curtains have risen again at Gala Durham and Empire Consett. Both theatres are offering an exciting autumn programme of live theatre, music and comedy. Highlights include:

EMPIRE CONSETT

Wednesday 29
September, 7.30pm

Dirty Dusting

By Ed Waugh and
Trevor Wood

'Allo 'Allo's Vicki Michelle Coronation Street's Vicky Entwistle star as 'vintage style' cleaning ladies who, threatened with redundancy, change to an 'unconventional' way of earning some extra cash. Recommended age 16+. **Tickets: £22**



Saturday 2 October, 7.30pm

Joe McElderry In Concert

Joe returns with his new tour. An all-round entertainer with a stunning voice, Joe promises to thrill audiences of all ages. **Tickets: £25**



Monday 25 October, 3pm

Pop Princesses

A children's musical spectacular featuring a soundtrack of pop hits from artists such as Little Mix, Ariana Grande, Taylor Swift and more, this magical show stars four fabulous fairytale princesses who just love to sing. **Tickets: £15**



Thursday 11 November,
7.30pm

Lost In Music

This high energy show takes you straight to the heart of 70's disco, with songs from Donna Summer, Earth, Wind and Fire, Sister Sledge and Chic. A sensational live band and talented cast are sure to have you dancing the night away. **Tickets: £24.50**



www.empireconsett.co.uk

03000 262 400

GALA DURHAM

Tuesday 26 October, 7.30pm

Ian Waite and Vincent Simone... Act Two

The Ballroom Boys double act and Strictly Come Dancing stars return for another evening of old-fashioned variety featuring dance, comedy and song. With beautiful costumes and world-class routines including the Viennese Waltz, the Foxtrot and the Rhumba, you won't want to miss this hilarious dancing duo.

Tickets: £29 - £31 (£57 for meet and greet package)



#Durham2025

Friday 29 October, 7.30pm

Haddock and Chips

By Janet Plater

It's a busy night at Frankie's Chippy, but when reports come in of a little girl gone missing, the community must pull together to find her. Funny and heart-warming, Haddock and Chips is a timely play about community and how, in the hardest of times, we can find hope in humanity. Age guidance: 12+ **Tickets: £14 - £16**



Wednesday 3 November, 8.00pm

Sindhu Vee – Alphabet

A nominee for Best Newcomer at the Edinburgh Comedy Awards, Sindhu has appeared on Live At The Apollo, QI and Have I Got News For You. Her new show is about the hair we want, the friends we have and living the vast difference between virus and viral. **Tickets: £16.50**



Saturday 13 November, 7.30pm

The South

Featuring former members of The Beautiful South, including singer Alison Wheeler and sax player Gary Birtles, The South promise a back catalogue of classics, including *Perfect 10*, *Rotterdam*, *Old Red Eyes Is Back*, *Good as Gold* and number one single, *A Little Time*. **Tickets: £25**

www.galadurham.co.uk

03000 266 600

Please note: venue opening is subject to change, please check before you visit. **» KNOW BEFORE YOU GO »**

DURHAM COUNTY RECORD OFFICE



Thursday 16 September, 10.30am to 11.30am

Crime in 1860s Durham City: An Analysis of Durham City Police records

In this online talk, local historian John Sheen talks about his work transcribing and analysing the records of people committed to the lock-up by Durham City Police in the 1850s and 1860s. Now transcribed onto a spreadsheet, the data can be manipulated and reveals some interesting facts regarding criminality in the city at that time. Free.



Thursday 30 September, 10am and repeated at 6pm

Courts and Criminal Records for Family History

This online family history talk is aimed at more experienced family historians who are ready to move on from the basics. It will look at which court and criminal records survive, where they can be found and what they can tell us. £5 per person.

Advanced booking is essential for both events.

<https://recordofficeshop.durham.gov.uk>
03000 267 619



MEGA MINIBEASTS IN OUR PARKS

You can see some of the country's smallest creatures in a big, big way this autumn at **Wharton Park** and **Hardwick Park**. Download the Love Exploring app on iPhone and android to try our brand new Mega Minibeasts trail. Two new dinosaurs have just arrived on the app too, so now is the perfect time to take a dinosaur safari.

Find out more about what's happening in our parks, including ideas for October half term fun, at www.durham.gov.uk/parks



BISHOP AUCKLAND FOOD FESTIVAL



Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 October

Bishop Auckland's free food festival is set to return this autumn with Covid-safe measures in place.

Due to the pandemic, this year's event will take place later in our festival calendar for this year and will look and feel a bit different to ensure the safety of the public and everyone involved in the event.

However, it will serve up the same vibrant mix of food and drink stalls, celebrity chefs, cookery demonstration and family-friendly entertainment.

www.bishopaucklandfoodfestival.co.uk



Find more events and activities to enjoy this autumn at www.thisisdurham.com/whats-on

This is durham

North Pennines Stargazing Festival 2021

The inky black skies of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), make it one the country's darkest mainland areas.

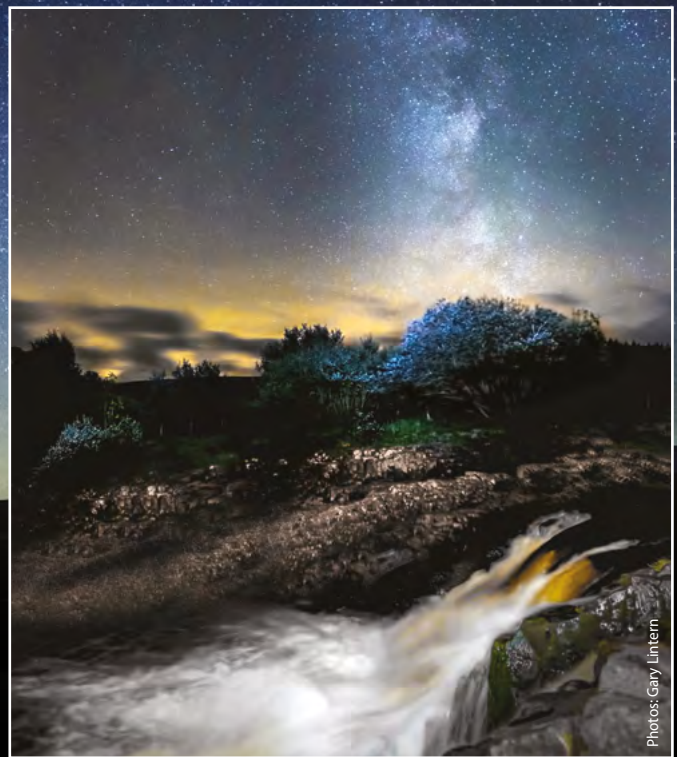
And this autumn offers the perfect time to celebrate this fabulous nightscape – and enjoy some jaw-dropping stargazing opportunities.

Running from **Friday 22 to Sunday 31 October**, the fifth North Pennines Stargazing Festival spans the autumn half-term week and offers a packed programme of fun and informative events.

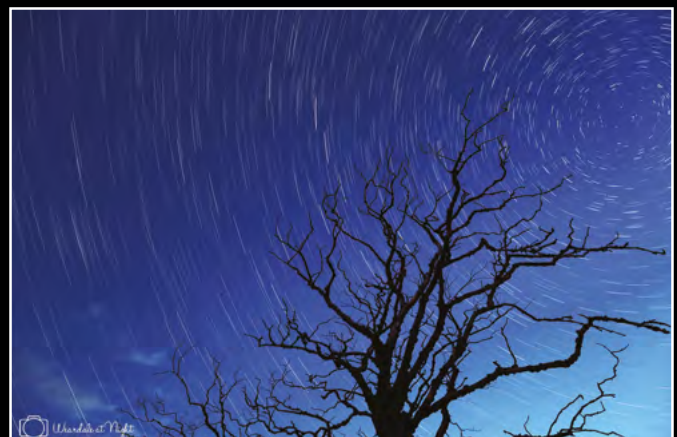
The programme runs across locations in County Durham, Northumberland and Cumbria, with a variety of family-themed activities and stargazing events. For adults and keen astronomers wishing to take their knowledge to a new level, there will also be talks and workshops, ranging from astrophotography to getting to grips with your telescope.

Visitors can explore the stars or gaze on the moon, with events at **High Force, Low Force and Raby Castle** or visit a dark skies art exhibition at **Bowlees Visitor Centre**, in Upper Teesdale. There'll also be a range of activities at **Grassholme Observatory** – from introductory astronomy to aurora nights.

There are also **daytime events** for children and families throughout the week at Bowlees Visitor Centre, with a space-themed family trail, 'Stardom' Wild Wednesday and a nocturnal animals-themed Discovery Club.



Photos: Gary Lintern



Shane Harris, responsible tourism lead for the North Pennines AONB Partnership, said: "The festival went online last year, but for 2021 we're hoping to have live stargazing activities too. We have a wide range of events spread across the whole of the North Pennines AONB and UNESCO Global Geopark,

designed to appeal to local people and visitors.

"The North Pennines is the darkest mainland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is one of the best places in the UK to enjoy stargazing – the festival is designed to make it easy for people to celebrate the area's fabulous starry skies."

Discover the entire programme at www.NorthPenninesStarFest.org.uk. Booking is essential for most events.

COUGHS AND NOISY BREATHING IN YOUNG BABIES

Advice from **THE LITTLE ORANGE BOOK**

Young babies often catch lots of coughs and colds, and their breathing can become noisy. Often, these illnesses can be managed with self-care at home.

When to care for your baby at home

SELF CARE Y N **OFF NURSERY OR SCHOOL?**

- Occasional snorts and grunts in young babies are completely normal and nothing to worry about.
- Many young babies in their first 2 - 3 months can have short episodes where they breathe faster and deeper, then more slowly and less deeply. They can pause and not take a breath for 5 to 10 seconds before starting with the deeper breaths again. This comes and goes, and if the baby is their usual colour and feeding well, it's normal.
- If you're unsure or the problem doesn't go away, call your GP or health visitor.

When to call 999

CALL 999

If your child

- is struggling to breathe and breathing more than 60 breaths per minute at any age under 5 years (1 breath every second)
- has croup, and cannot breathe lying down and/or if the stridor noise is there even when your child is calm
- is grunting (an 'effort' noise with every breath in)
- has caving in of their chest with every breath
- has pauses in breathing lasting longer than 10 seconds, especially if under 3 months of age
- looks very pale and lips are blue or your child is floppy and exhausted/difficult to wake up
- is under 3 months of age and has a temperature over 38°C
- has a rash that doesn't fade with pressure



When you may need to call the GP

CONTACT YOUR GP if the problem doesn't settle **7-10 DAYS** **USUAL LENGTH OF ILLNESS** Y N **OFF NURSERY OR SCHOOL?** (unless too ill to attend)

- Bronchiolitis is a viral infection that affects babies and children up to age 2 years, usually in winter. 1 in 3 babies have had it by their first birthday.
- It starts with the symptoms of a cold and a 'musical' sounding cough.
- After 2-3 days, the lungs also make mucus so your baby will sound 'like a coffee machine' because their chest is full of funny rattles and wheezes which make it harder for them to feed.
- If your child is unhappy with the cough and has a fever, paracetamol or ibuprofen can be given. Most bronchiolitis is MILD and your baby's breathing and reduced feeding will be much better after 5 days. Your baby may still sound 'like a coffee machine' for 3 more weeks but they will usually be happy and feeding well.
- Exposure to cigarette smoke, indoors or outdoors, can make bronchiolitis worse.



UNSURE WHICH SERVICE TO USE?

GP practices are open and are offering face to face appointments. Call your GP practice between 8am - 6pm weekdays. After 6pm or during the weekend call NHS111.



111 is the urgent health advice line that can be contacted 24 hours a day, including overnight and at weekend (and it's free even from a mobile).

A&E is for life threatening emergencies only.



Scan to download the full LITTLE ORANGE BOOK >>>