

DURHAM

Winter 2024

County News

www.durham.gov.uk

Fun for all the family

Chocolate workshops,
festive shows and more

Christmas unwrapped

Your guide to council services
over the festive period

Calling all dads

Groups and activities just for dad

Make a difference

Become a Community Champion

Durham
County Council



Welcome

to the winter edition of Durham County News

The countdown to Christmas is underway and in this issue of Durham County News we've pulled together a wealth of information and advice to see you through the festive season and beyond.

From tips on festive recycling and sustainable gift ideas to information about council services, your go-to guide for the Christmas period can be found on pages 15 to 18. We've also extended our What's On section, with a round-up of seasonal shows and entertainment on pages 24 and 25.

And, on page 19, you can read about the work our highways teams undertake to keep County Durham moving.

We've also got an update on our multimillion pound plans to regenerate Horden on pages 20 and 21; a round-up of the support we offer to dads on pages 10 and 11, and highlights from the latest exhibition at The Story on pages 12 and 13.

I hope everyone has a wonderful festive break and a Happy New Year!



Councillor Amanda Hopgood,
Leader of the Council


Amanda Hopgood

Inside...

Pages 4-7
News



Page 9
Seaham Harbour Marina




Pages 12-13
The Story

Pages 15-18
Christmas unwrapped!



Page 23
Holocaust Memorial Day

Employability Durham



Page 8
Community Champions



Pages 10-11
Support for dads




Page 14
The Big Art Project



Page 19
Winter highways



Pages 24-31
What's On




Pages 20-21
Towns and Villages

Front cover image: The Durham Chocolate Company is hosting a series of chocolate workshops at The Story this Christmas.

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format:

 Braille,  Audio,  Large print.

durhamcountynews@durham.gov.uk

03000 268 059

More content is available at www.durham.gov.uk/dcn or scan this code:



Durham County News is written and designed by Durham County Council. It is available online and at council venues, including libraries and leisure centres. To contact the editorial team, call 03000 268 059 or email durhamcountynews@durham.gov.uk.

When you have finished with printed editions of the magazine, please recycle them.



Wheel your way to better health this winter

Looking for a way to save money, improve your health and protect the planet? If so, why not wrap up warm, get outside and sign up for a winter biking challenge.

We're supporting **Love to Ride's Winter Wheelers** challenge from **1 December to 31 January**, with prizes on offer every week to those who get on their bike for ten minutes or more.

Entry is free and it doesn't matter whether you're a regular rider or haven't been on a bike in years, everyone is welcome to take part. Even if you're a fair-weather rider, you can still get involved by jumping on your exercise bike at home or in the gym.

As well helping you get fitter, cycling can improve your mental health, boost your immune system, speed up your commute and cut down on the cost of fuel.



You can sign up at
www.lovetoride.net and
find out more about cycling at
www.durham.gov.uk/cycling.

Contact us:



Report Apply Book Pay Comment

Save time do it online

Visit our website
to use online services

24 hours a day

7 days a week

[www.durham.gov.uk/
doitonline](http://www.durham.gov.uk/doitonline)

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

To find and/or contact your
local councillor:

[www.durham.gov.uk/
councillorinfo](http://www.durham.gov.uk/councillorinfo)


 [@DurhamCouncil](https://twitter.com/DurhamCouncil)

 [/durhamcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/durhamcouncil)

 [/durham_county_council](https://twitter.com/durham_county_council)

 [/durham_county_council](https://www.instagram.com/durham_county_council)

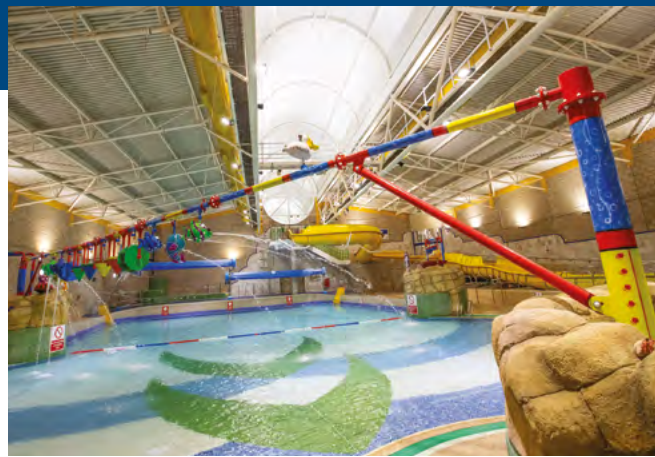
 [linkedin.com/company/
durham-county-council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/durham-county-council)

 [/DurhamCouncil](https://www.youtube.com/DurhamCouncil)

News

Make a splash in Spennymoor

Youngsters can make a splash at Spennymoor Leisure Centre following the installation of a new water play feature.



The swimming pool at the centre has now reopened following essential maintenance works.

And as well as carrying out upgrades to the pool's tank and plant room, to make them more sustainable, we've also installed some new play equipment.

The works make up part of the centre's leisure transformation, which has also included the installation of a new Thrive kitchen, serving healthy food and drinks. A new soft play area will open later this year.

The leisure centre's reception area has been moved to a more central location and the centre now provides a home for the town's library service.



Mural celebrates mining heritage

A mural honouring a town's mining history has been unveiled in County Durham.

Our Youth Council has been working with spray paint artist Lewis Hobson to create a piece of public art on the side of East Stanley Working Men's Club.

The council, which consists of young people aged from 11 to 19, enlisted the help of young people from North Durham Academy to take part in a series of workshops led by Lewis.

Together, they designed a piece of art inspired by the Stanley Leek Show, which is hosted at the Working Men's Club and links back to the town's mining heritage.

The youth council hopes to create a new piece of art in a different area of County Durham next year, with another group of young people.

More information about the work of the youth council can be found at www.durham.gov.uk/YouthCouncil.

New school puts 'spring' in pupils' steps

A new £13 million primary school and nursery has opened its doors.

Springmoor Grange School in Spennymoor has welcomed pupils and staff for its first term, replacing the former Ox Close Primary and Oxclose Nursery Schools.

We've funded and designed the new school, which has capacity for 630 primary school pupils, on the

site of the former Tudhoe Grange Comprehensive.

It also has a 52-place nursery unit for children aged two and older.

The school has been designed to ensure school provision in Spennymoor keeps pace with the growing demand for places.



Apply for a school place now

Don't forget to apply for your child's infant, junior or primary school place as the deadline is fast approaching.

If your child turns five on or between 1 September 2025 and 31 August 2026, you will need to complete an application form telling us which school you would like them to attend.

Apply online at www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions or call 03000 265 896 to request a paper copy.

Applications close at midnight on 15 January 2025.



Thousands of families auto enrolled for free school meals

Nearly 2,000 more families in County Durham will save hundreds of pounds a year thanks to a pilot free school meals scheme.

The project saw an additional 2,500 children automatically enrolled for free school meals following a data matching exercise on their family's eligibility.

That saw 1,727 new eligible households automatically signed up to the scheme, saving the families an average of £400 per child per year on food costs.

Schools across County Durham will also benefit from the initiative through eligibility for the government's pupil premium grant, which provides extra funding for every child registered for free school meals. This will see an additional £3 million of funding going to the county's schools next year.

For more information about free school meals and other support offered to families, visit www.durham.gov.uk/helpforfamilies.

Save the date

Bishop Auckland Food Festival

returns next year on
Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 April

Offering a winning recipe of food, fun, and entertainment, the event will once again include hundreds of independent stalls, cookery demonstrations and a star-studded line-up of celebrity chefs.



Find out more at
www.bishopaucklandfoodfestival.co.uk

Help to reduce energy bills

If you're looking for ways to lower your energy bills, Home Energy Advice North East can help.



This free and impartial service is delivered by the Energy Saving Trust on behalf of the North East Combined Authority. We are assisting with the delivery of the project in County Durham, with support including:

- Simple, clear advice on how to reduce energy bills
- A personalised property report, including recommendations for energy saving improvements
- Guidance on applying for grants to help with upfront installation costs
- Links to certified installers
- Ongoing support to help you every step of the way

This pilot project runs until the end of March 2025 and we're encouraging residents across the county to take advantage of the support on offer. To book a free in-home appointment, visit www.energyadvicenortheast.co.uk/in-home-support.

Members of our own domestic energy efficiency team are also happy to assist with questions about the project or any other queries. Email energyworks@durham.gov.uk or call 03000 263 850.



Welcome Spaces return

Community groups and organisations across County Durham are being invited to apply for grants of up to £3,000 to become Welcome Spaces.

We've once again teamed up with Point North to deliver the scheme, which provides financial support and training to the voluntary and community sector to create a network of places where people feel safe, warm and included.

All Welcome Spaces are added to Locate, an online directory allowing residents to connect with local services in their community.

Organisations wishing to apply for the funding should visit www.pointnorth.org.uk/grants/welcome-spaces-2024.

To find a Welcome Space near you, visit www.durhamlocate.org.uk.

Northumbria in Bloom success

County Durham enjoyed a blooming brilliant year at the Northumbria in Bloom Awards.

This year's winners included 36 entries from across the county, including **Wharton Park** in Durham City, which scooped the Best Park award. **Seaham** won in the Best Coastal Resort category and **Durham City** triumphed in the Best Small City category.

Other highlights included **Riverside Park** in Chester-le-Street receiving a Silver award in the Best Park category, **Bishop Auckland** winning the Best Large Town category and **Greater Willington Parish** scooping a Silver Gilt award in the Small Town category.

Congratulations to the hundreds of volunteers who give up their time to maintain floral displays, parks, green spaces and wildlife habitats and keep County Durham looking its best.





Tackling anti-social behaviour in Durham

New measures to tackle anti-social behaviour have been introduced in Durham City along with upgraded CCTV cameras.

A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) will help to tackle behaviours including begging, urinating in the street and the use of intoxicating substances.

It will be used alongside a wide range of support and education measures and has been welcomed by Durham Constabulary, residents and businesses.

A consultation held earlier this year received more than 400 responses, with 83 per cent of people either supporting or strongly supporting plans for a PSPO to be introduced to control begging, and almost 90 per cent backing a PSPO specifically to

control urinating and the use of intoxicating substances.

Meanwhile, in September, we replaced 34 CCTV cameras in the city with more advanced models capable of capturing higher definition images and footage.

The upgrade was made possible thanks to a £141,840 grant from the Safer Towns Fund.

The new cameras, which are monitored 24 hours a day by council officers, will increase opportunities for the police to secure evidence against offenders. They will also help the police in preventing crime and, hopefully, help stop more people from becoming victims.



Taking action in Deaf Hill

Our Community Action Team is hard at work tackling the issues that matter most to residents and businesses in Deaf Hill.

The team works alongside neighbourhood wardens, colleagues in our housing teams, police and community support officers, and fire and rescue teams to identify and solve housing and environmental issues in neighbourhoods across the county.

They also look into issues raised by those who live, work and visit the area.

The 11 weeks of action in Deaf Hill continues until Sunday 15 December and follows a successful spell in the west ward of Newton Aycliffe.

To find out more, visit www.durham.gov.uk/CAT.

Council tax reduction scheme extended

A council tax scheme which supports County Durham's most vulnerable residents has been extended for another year.

Our Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme offers a council tax discount to eligible residents on low incomes, whether in work, unemployed or retired.

Just over 53,800 residents are currently benefitting from the scheme, with more than 27,500 receiving the maximum 100 per cent discount, meaning they pay no council tax.

To find out more about the scheme, visit www.durham.gov.uk/counciltaxreduction.

Become a voice for your community



Did you know we have a network of 107 County Durham Together Community Champion volunteers across the county?

Community Champions play a vital role in keeping people in their local area informed, sharing public health information about staying healthy, safe and well. They also help keep public health bodies informed about local areas by sharing their own insights, knowledge, and experiences as members of the community.

We are always looking to recruit more Community Champions, especially in rural areas where people can feel more isolated. There are currently only five volunteers in Teesdale and one in Weardale.

One of these is Teesdale farmer Becky Land, who signed up to become a Community Champion after hearing about the scheme, feeling that it was important the voices of people living in rural and farming communities were heard.

She carried out a survey in the area, speaking to farmers about issues affecting their physical and mental health, including worries about the future of farming.

Becky's insights were shared with the County Durham Mental Health Strategic Partnership and the county's

Poverty Action Steering Group and, as a result, County Durham Economic Partnership held a focus session on the rural economy. Becky's feedback was also added to Healthwatch County Durham's farming outreach initiative work and this resulted in a walk-in clinic being organised at Pinfold Medical Practice, offering health checks specifically for farmers. Following its success, a second clinic will be held which will also include mental health checks.

Becky's involvement in this work also led to her receiving training in understanding mental health and she is now a Lived Experience Lead with Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services.

Becky said: "I signed up for the role to promote services in the rural area I am proud to call home. The area faces many a challenge from season to season, day-to-day, but the uniqueness of the farming community makes it an extremely hard area to try and open doors into. I am proud of my farming roots and the people I stand side by side with, so to have the opportunity to do this was amazing."

“ I signed up for the role to promote services in the rural area I am proud to call home. ”

If you are interested in supporting others in the area where you live, you can sign up to become a Community Champion.

www.durham.gov.uk/CDTCommunityChampions





A sea change for the better

From a semi-derelict site on the verge of closure to a thriving tourism attraction, maritime centre and business hub, Seaham Harbour Marina has come a long way.

North Dock in Seaham was originally built in 1831 to ship coal from County Durham mines. However, as coal production reduced, the dock's commercial value declined, and it gradually fell into disrepair. By 2003, it was on the brink of closure. Fast forward to 2024 and the situation could not be more different.

After being identified as a potential leisure asset in the Seaham Regeneration Strategy, a multimillion-pound redevelopment programme began to create the Seaham Harbour Marina we know today.

A new community interest company led by the council and the Seaham Harbour Dock Company was formed to manage the marina, and in July 2013 it was officially opened. It is now home to a variety of **cafés, restaurants and shops**, along with the **East Durham Heritage and Lifeboat Centre** and businesses ranging from a **travel agent to water sports activities**.

Earlier this year, the marina celebrated a milestone moment, with all 96 pontoon berths occupied by pleasure boats for the first time. All commercial units are also leased out.

Kelly Pearson is the latest addition to the Seaham Harbour Marina family, having taken over Mr Jacob's Sweet Emporium in August. *"We are just finding our feet but it's a lovely place to work with beautiful views," she said. "We are looking forward to the future."*



A lifelong love



Alan McLardy, 65, has been fishing in the Seaham Dock since he was nine years old and has berthed both commercial and hobby boats in the marina. He has seen a lot of changes over the years and is thrilled to see the dock thriving once again.

"The staff at the marina are great," he said. "They will do anything for you and if I go away, I know that my boat is safe and looked after. It's a brilliant thing for the local area as it attracts visitors. People can come and try water sports or sit in a café and enjoy the views."

500,000
visitors a year

14
regional
and
national
awards

87 full and
part-time jobs
across the site

17 businesses
based on site

96 pleasure
boats berthed



Calling all dads

Family Hubs are not just for mums, there are lots of groups and activities for dads too. Here is just some of what's on offer across the county.

Did you know that being a hands-on dad can help your child throughout their life?

Enjoying playtime with your baby or toddler won't just put a smile on both of your faces, it can also help to build a positive relationship for the future and support children to succeed in all aspects of life.

All of the groups in our Family Hubs are available to mums, dads and carers, and we encourage dads to come along. However, there is also plenty on offer just for dads – from play sessions with your little one through to making pies and gardening.



Something for everyone

Lots of new parents struggle when they have a baby. There is no instruction manual and chatting and playing may not come naturally. Our Family Hub groups can help build confidence when it comes to caring for your baby and are a great way to meet other dads and make friends.

There are groups to suit all ages and interests.

Dad's Stay and Play

These sessions give dads, uncles and grandads the chance to bond with their little ones through fun activities. They are also a great place to pick up parenting hints and tips, as well as make new friends.

Sessions are held fortnightly across **Newton Aycliffe, Stanley and Peterlee** and refreshments are provided. The sessions run from 3.30pm to 5pm but are drop-in, so it's no problem if dads miss the start or need to leave early.





Durham Young Dads Project

Aimed at dads and dads-to-be aged 25 or under, this group supports young fathers to grow and develop their parenting skills. As well as helping them to deal with current challenges, the group gives them the knowledge to make positive changes that will improve their own and their family's wellbeing.

Weekly drop-in sessions take place **every Thursday at Durham Family Hub from 6pm until 8pm**. Young dads and their partners and children can also attend a monthly Stay and Play at Durham and Bishop Auckland Family Hubs.

Creating support networks

Dads of any age with youngsters up to two years old can attend the **Durham Dads Together** fortnightly workshop. Hosted at **Bishop Auckland Family Hub**, the workshops help dads to understand some of the challenges of early parenthood and find ways to deal with them.

The group focuses on creating a supportive environment where dads can connect with each other, share their experiences, and seek advice about their new roles as fathers.



Feel good activities

For those interested in improving mental wellbeing, the **Knockout Depression** group uses classroom-based theory alongside gentle boxing techniques to help dads cope with stress and mental health challenges. Then there's the **Men's Pie Club**, which focuses on building social connections while cooking pies from scratch.

Dads who prefer spending times outdoors can also join the **Community Allotment Project** for dads. Sessions run every Monday from 1pm to 2pm at Spennymoor and Tudhoe Community Garden, enabling dads, uncles, granddads and male carers to learn some practical skills while making new friends and making a difference to their local community.



Find out more

For more details about the wide range of support available, visit www.durham.gov.uk/dads.

If you have any questions, or would like a workshop to be set up in your area, you can email dads@durham.gov.uk.

Young voices lost in time

Curated by Durham Youth Council, The Story's latest exhibition shines a light on the lives of children and young people in County Durham's past.

Welcome to our County: The Children of Yesterday and Tomorrow shares untold stories about children through history including the Roman Empire, medieval times, the Victorian era and more.

Drawing on objects and records from The Story's collections, the exhibition explores how children's experiences varied greatly due to class, geographic location, time period and opportunities.

It also considers why young people's voices are often omitted from histories and looks at the challenges and opportunities that existed for them in County Durham both in the past and today.

Sam Treweeke, 19, is a member of Durham Youth Council and helped develop and curate the exhibition.

He said: *"The aim of this exhibition is to create a space in which people of all ages can both learn about and reflect on the past while being able to relate to it on a deeply personal level. We, as a youth council, hope you leave this exhibition having thought about your own story of childhood, whether that be your past or present, and of course, appreciate and enjoy learning about history through the lives of children."*

Welcome to our County: The Children of Yesterday and Tomorrow will be on display in The Story's In Focus space until **Monday 5 May**.



Children from Blackhall Rocks on an outing in the early 20th century.



Three children pictured on a side street in County Durham in the 1960s.



Nora and Hugh Dryden pictured at the family farm at Moor Edge, Durham Lane, in the 1920s.



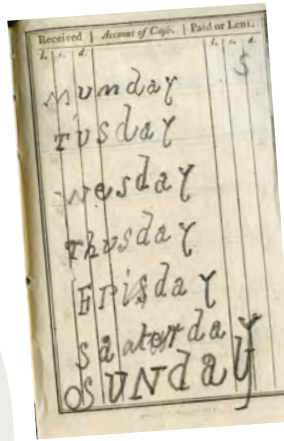


A symbol of a shared fate

Captain Gerald Brian Chipchase Roberts, known as Brian, was three years old when his father went off to fight in the First World War in 1915. His mother bought Brian a tiny military uniform to match his father's. Sadly, Brian's father was killed in action in 1916.



When he was 20, Brian joined the Durham Light Infantry and served in India, Sudan and France, where he was tragically killed during the Second World War. Father and son are buried in war cemeteries ten miles apart in France.



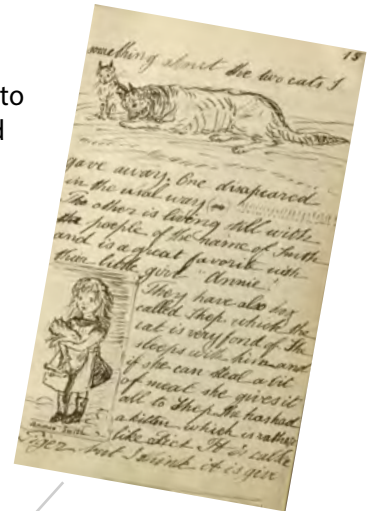
A glimpse into the past

Although young people's voices are not well represented in archive collections, records relating to wealthier children are more likely to have survived.

The family of **Henry Fell Pease**, born in 1838, were prominent Quakers in Darlington. His pocketbook contains charming drawings and is where he practised his spellings.

Venetia Hildyard

was born in 1869 into a family that owned land in County Durham and Yorkshire. Her illustrated diary provides a fascinating insight into her life, along with her talent for drawing.



“ They have also a dog called Shep, which the cat is very fond of. She sleeps with him and if she can steal a bit of meat she gives it all to Shep. ”

The Story offers a gateway to the history of County Durham and contains five collections of historic records and objects charting thousands of years of everyday life.

Located in Mount Oswald House on the outskirts of Durham City, The Story is open seven days a week and includes free permanent and temporary exhibitions, state-of-the-art research facilities and a café. It is also home to the County Registration Service.



To stay up to date with the latest news and events visit www.thestorydurham.org and follow @TheStoryDurham on Facebook and X.



Bringing communities together through art

Bold street murals, 360-degree image projections and friendships forged through shared creativity were among the results of a countywide arts and wellbeing programme.

We funded more than 40 creative workshops and activities as part of The Big Art Project, which was delivered by our public health and area action partnership teams.

The project recognised the power of art to bring people together and improve mental health and wellbeing, with organisations and artists invited to stage free activities in venues across the county.

Aimed at all age groups, the activities covered everything from visual and performing arts to traditional crafts, sculpture, film, literature, music, gardening, cookery and more.

Here are some of the highlights.

Artful Minds

Hosted by MONA LISA Arts and Media, weekly Artful Minds sessions were held at **Kimbleworth and Plaworth Community Centre**.

People were invited to take part in a range of creative activities and experiment with different techniques and materials. The sessions were incredibly popular, with those who took part describing how relaxing and enjoyable they found them. Many new friendships were formed, and people expressed a sense of pride in the objects and artwork they created.



The Marvellous Culines

Inspired by a famous family of travelling performers in the 19th century, The Marvellous Culines engaged with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) communities in the area through a series of street art workshops. Old photographs and histories of GRT communities were collected during these sessions and were the inspiration behind a new mural by **Lewis Hobson, of Durham Spray Paints**, in Spennymoor.



Feeling inspired?

There are lots of free art and craft tutorials online and our libraries stock a selection of arts and crafts books. You could also join a local club or take part in one of our regular community arts activities. Visit www.durham.gov.uk/communityarts to find out more.



Camera Obscura

Located at **Teesdale School and Sixth Form** in Barnard Castle, Camera Obscura was a dark room installation featuring 360-degree image projections. Students were encouraged to have discussions about perspective and how we see the world, using visual arts and creative writing techniques to express their thoughts.



Christmas Unwrapped!

Your guide to council services, sustainability and more over the festive season.

Featuring:

Festive recycling guide

Christmas gifts that don't cost the earth

Christmas opening times

Bin collections dates

Money advice

It's Christmas! Don't miss our bumper What's On guide packed full of events and activities to keep the whole family entertained throughout the festive season and beyond.

From traditional pantomimes and carol concerts to Christmas fairs, craft workshops and more – there is something for everyone in County Durham.

Check out pages 24 to 31 and start planning your next outing.



Dreaming of a green Christmas



For many, Christmas is a time of good food, gifts and celebrating with friends and family. It's not surprising therefore that household waste can increase by up to 30 per cent. Here's our top recycling tips for the festive season.

Don't bin batteries and vapes

More gadgets and toys mean more batteries. Remember, never put batteries in household bins as, when the rubbish gets compressed in our collection wagons, the batteries can get damaged and spark a fire. Vapes also contain lithium-ion batteries, which are often found in other small electronics such as tablets and smart phones, and are equally as dangerous.

Always take batteries to a collection point which can be found in most supermarkets, village halls and community centres or at one of our Household Waste and Recycling Centres. Used vape cartridges can also be taken to our small electrical recycling points and household waste recycling centres.

Unwanted electrical items

Small electrical items which are broken can be taken to one of our repair cafés across County Durham, while unwanted items, which are small enough to fit in a carrier bag, can be dropped off at one of our small electrical recycling points. Find out more www.durham.gov.uk/weee.



It's a wrap

Most plain cards and wrapping paper without glitter, foil or plastic ribbons, can be placed in your household recycling bin along with cardboard boxes. Polystyrene should be taken to the recycling centre or placed in your household rubbish bin.



Deck the halls

Unwanted or broken decorations should be disposed of correctly.

- ✗ **Tinsel cannot be recycled** and should be placed in the rubbish bin.
- ✗ **Glass baubles are not recyclable.** Broken baubles should be wrapped and put in with general waste. Plastic baubles are usually made from plastic that is not widely recyclable or are covered in glitter. They should also go in general waste.
- ✓ **Natural materials on wreaths**, such as ivy, fir cones, mistletoe and holly can be composted as long as they are not covered in glitter.

Recycle real Christmas trees

Are you planning to get a real Christmas tree this year? There's nothing quite like the smell of pine needles to create a cosy, festive atmosphere in your home. A live Christmas tree in a pot is a great option, as you can simply put it out in the garden and reuse it the following year.

We also organise real Christmas trees collections over three weeks **starting on Monday 6 January**. Collections can be booked in advance from Monday 9 December.

To find out more, visit www.durham.gov.uk/christmastreecollections.



A Christmas that doesn't cost the earth

Christmas can be an expensive time of year, but by making use of existing items, buying second hand and making your own gifts, you can save money and reduce your environmental impact.

Traditional trims

Swap glittery, non-recyclable wrapping paper for brown paper or even newspaper. Decorate with ribbons, string and some festive greenery and your gifts will be a treat to behold. Alternatively, cutback on wrapping paper altogether by opting for experiences, theatre tickets or e-vouchers.



Christmas crafts

Homemade gifts such as chocolates, chutneys and decorations are a thoughtful and affordable way to show someone you care.



Old Christmas cards, meanwhile, can be cut up to make new cards and gift tags next year.



Make space

Having a clear out is a great way to make space for this year's festivities. Take unwanted items to a charity shop or sell them online to raise some extra cash for your Christmas shopping. www.durham.gov.uk/reuse



Plan ahead

Don't forget to take advantage of the post-Christmas sales when many cards, gifts and decorations are heavily discounted.



Council services over the Christmas period

Christmas and New Year bin collections

Bins will be emptied as normal up to and including **Tuesday 24 December**. Over Christmas and New Year, the following changes will apply:

Normal collection day		Revised collection days
Wednesday 25 December	→	Friday 27 December
Thursday 26 December	→	Saturday 28 December
Friday 27 December	→	Monday 30 December
Tuesday 31 December	→	As normal
Wednesday 1 January	→	Thursday 2 January
Thursday 2 January	→	Friday 3 January
Friday 3 January	→	Saturday 4 January

Normal collections will resume from Monday 6 January 2025.

You can also find collection details online by entering your house number and postcode into the 'My Durham' section at www.durham.gov.uk.

Bulky waste collections will run until **Tuesday 24 December** and will re-commence on **Monday 6 January**.




Visiting our HWRCs


Visiting one of our **household waste recycling centres** this Christmas? Be sure to check our real time map, which lets you know how busy your nearest site is and when you are least likely to queue.


Our sites are now operating winter opening times with most open between 9am and 3.30pm but check your nearest centre at www.durham.gov.uk/hwrc before you set off.


All sites are closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.


 **Leisure centres** will be open throughout the festive period except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. The last swimming lessons/classes will be held on Friday 20 December. They will resume on Saturday 4 January. Visit www.thriveleisure.co.uk for opening hours at your local centre.


 **Library** opening times may vary. Call into your local library or check for opening times at www.durham.gov.uk/libraries.

 **Family Hub** opening times may vary. Visit your local hub, check for opening times at www.durham.gov.uk/familyhubs or call 03000 261 111 to find out more.

 **Customer Access Points** will close at 12.45pm on Tuesday 24 December and normal opening hours will resume from Thursday 2 January.

 **Register offices** will close on Tuesday 24 December at 12.30pm and will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day. Durham register office will open for appointments only on Friday 27, Monday 30 and the morning of Tuesday 31 December at The Story but opening times will vary. Call 03000 26 6000 to book an appointment. Normal opening hours will resume on Thursday 2 January.

 **Day centres for adults** will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

 **Payments line:** Make a debit or credit card payment 24/7 on 0300 456 2771.



In an emergency, call our out-of-hours number:
03000 26 0000

Keeping County Durham moving

As temperatures drop and the chances of snow and ice increase, our highways teams are doing everything they can to keep you moving on your daily journey.

Our winter gritting teams work from October until April each year, although preparations begin much earlier than that.

Ahead of the winter, checks are carried out to make sure our 37 power gritters, 33 trailer gritters, 11 footpath gritters and 6 snow blowers are ready for the challenges of the season.

We also make sure that our salt barns are replenished with 42,000 tonnes of stock, enough to cover the whole county during the winter months.

When the cold weather finally arrives, our dedicated highways team works hard to ensure that our priority roads are safe for your journeys. This includes pre-salting 1,060 miles of priority 1 routes regularly throughout the winter.

Using advanced forecasting systems and data from our weather stations, our team carefully monitors conditions to determine the best times for gritting.



Our highways team has also pulled together the following advice to help you over the coming months:

- * Stay connected for timely updates on road conditions and gritting routes by following #twittergritterNE on Facebook and Twitter or by checking out our daily gritting plans: www.durham.gov.uk/gritting.
- * Don't forget to check the weather before you set out, especially for longer trips. You can find the latest Met Office weather warnings at www.durham.gov.uk/weatherwarnings.
- * Driving in snowy or icy conditions can be hazardous. While the safest choice is to stay home, if you must travel, take a look at our winter driving tips: www.durham.gov.uk/winterdriving.
- * Winter weather can lead to potholes on our roads. If you spot a pothole, please report it at www.durham.gov.uk/potholes or call us on 03000 26 0000.
- * If your property is at risk of flooding during the wet winter months, we can provide sandbags. Visit www.durham.gov.uk/sandbags or call 03000 26 0000 for assistance.
- * If you notice a salt bin that needs refilling, please let us know by filling out our online form at www.durham.gov.uk/saltbins, quoting the number on the bin.

Spotlight on Horden: A community on a journey

Located on the east coast of County Durham, Horden is a former mining village with a strong sense of community.



However, it's also a community that is still dealing with the consequences of industrial decline and issues associated with long-term empty homes and absentee landlords.

We're helping Horden build a brighter future – from supporting businesses and residents through our Towns and Villages programme and spearheading the Horden Masterplan to setting up a partnership of people passionate about making things better.



Our chief executive John Hewitt, centre, pictured with colleagues from the council at the Horden Together offices.

What is the Horden Masterplan?

The Horden Masterplan is a multimillion-pound regeneration scheme developed in partnership with the community.

After receiving widespread public support, the first phase of the plan was approved in January 2024 and aims to transform the area known as the Numbered Streets. We are investing £6.2 million, including £4.5 million from our **Towns and Villages fund**, to help address the number of empty homes and provide support for those with housing need.

The plans will see a number of new houses and bungalows built, and there is also an opportunity to potentially remodel existing properties. There will also be improvements to walking and cycling routes to Peterlee town centre, Horden train station and the Durham Heritage Coast. And we're exploring options to create a new care facility, shops and business space.

Funding boost

In September, it was confirmed that our bid to the **North East Combined Authority's Brownfield Housing Fund** for Horden was successful. This means we will receive an additional £4.5 million towards regenerating the Numbered Streets, taking the total investment to £10.2 million.

The money will allow us to extend the scope of the work from Third Street into Fifth Street, and potentially deliver more than 100 new properties across Third, Fourth and Fifth Street, including some council housing.

We're working closely with owners to negotiate the purchase of properties in Third Street, as part of the initial acquisition phase. A comprehensive rehousing strategy has been developed to support affected residents.



Horden Youth and Community Centre.



Gills before.



Gills after.

Change is coming at youth and community centre

Horden Youth and Community Centre is a vibrant hub for people of all ages, but at 105 years old, the building itself is in need of some TLC to ensure it is sustainable for future generations.

Our community economic development team is supporting the centre's committee to apply for funding from the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund Community Infrastructure project**.

As well as repairs to the building, the funding will be used to improve digital connectivity and support volunteering opportunities within the centre.



Horden Youth and Community Centre.

Supporting new businesses

Gills restaurant opened in November 2023 and is already proving a success.

We supported the owner in transforming the Sunderland Road premises by providing a £20,000 grant through our **Target Business Improvement scheme**.

The restaurant has created 20 jobs and, together with private sector contributions, represents an investment of more than £400,000.



A walk organised by Horden Together as part of Recovery Month, a national campaign that celebrates people's journey from addiction to recovery.

A collaborative approach

We established the **Horden Together** partnership in 2020 to help make the village a safer and healthier place to live and work. The partnership brings together the many people who make a positive difference within the community, including volunteers, community workers, service providers, charities and others.



Together, their passion for making things better is helping to tackle issues such as crime, anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping and poor housing. The partnership provides a voice for the community and is guided by their needs. Keeping residents informed about what's happening is a priority and the partnership achieves this through its social media accounts and newsletter. To stay up to date with the latest news, visit www.facebook.com/HordenTogether.



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



For more information about the support on offer to retail and hospitality businesses in County Durham, visit www.durham.gov.uk/retail.



Selective Licensing of privately rented properties

Since April 2022, private landlords have been required to obtain a licence to legally rent their properties in selected areas of the county.

About 42% of the private rented sector is covered and you can check if a property is included at www.durham.gov.uk/selectivelicensing



The licence fee is a maximum of £555, per property, for the length of the five-year scheme.

For more information, please contact:
Telephone: **03000 268 000** (press option 2)
Email: selectivelicensing@durham.gov.uk



Selective
Licensing



PROUD NORTHERNER?

We are too but we all need a little extra help sometimes.

Join our free **Priority Services Membership** if you might be more vulnerable in a power cut. Be prepared, whatever the weather. Save our power cut map and **105** in your mobile phone. We're here for you 24/7.



Find out more and join our priority services community today at northernpowergrid.com/care

Kindertransport talk marks Holocaust Memorial Day

The story of how thousands of Jewish children were brought to Britain during The Holocaust is to be told at a special event.

Brenda Dinsdale, honorary life president of Newcastle Reform Synagogue, will give a talk at Empire Consett to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2025.

The memorial day is held on 27 January each year, the date on which Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, the largest Nazi concentration camp, was liberated. Next year marks 80 years since that liberation.

Guest speaker Brenda will explore the extraordinary story of the Kindertransport, a rescue effort which brought thousands of mostly Jewish refugee children to Britain during the Second World War.

Brenda will examine the stories of those who travelled and then settled in the north east of England during the talk on Monday 27 January.



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

Holocaust Memorial Day is organised every year to encourage everyone in the UK to remember the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution; and in the genocides that have followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

For more details on how to get tickets for the January talk and timings, visit www.durham.gov.uk/hmd.

For more information about Holocaust Memorial Day, visit www.hmd.org.uk.



Helping people to find their way

A County Durham woman has launched a mentoring service for people with autism, with a little help from our employability service.

Katriana Johnes has set up the service to help others with autism spectrum disorder navigate challenges and find their strengths.

Katriana was supported in setting up the service by our Employability Durham team, who provide information, advice and guidance to people who are 25 or over, live in County Durham and are not in employment.

Employability Durham adviser Kat De Cruz supports Katriana through regular video appointments; working with her medical team; and by offering advice now the mentoring service is up-and-running.

Katriana said: *“Through my sessions with Kat, I was able to break down the steps towards fulfilling employment until they were manageable, exploring the options available to me and working out which were possible and preferable.*

“In spite of all the obstacles I've encountered and that remain, I am now able to do work that I love within the constraints that life likes to throw at me. I feel immensely privileged that I am now running my own business as an autistic mentor.”



To find out more about the support available from Employability Durham, visit www.durham.gov.uk/employability, email employability@durham.gov.uk or phone 03000 262 009.



Employability
Durham



Let us entertain you this Christmas

It's the most wonderful time of the year and our venues have a fabulous line-up of festive treats guaranteed to get even the most diehard of Scrooges in the spirit.

"He's behind you!"

Pantomimes are a seasonal favourite and we have not one but three amazing productions to choose from...



Beauty and the Beast A Gala Durham Production

Gala Durham

Thursday 21 November to Tuesday 31 December

In a small village in Durham lives Belle renowned for her brains and beauty far and wide. Not far away, in Pity Me, lies an abandoned castle, a magical place inhabited by weird talking inanimate objects and a terrifying beast. Will Belle solve the mystery of Pity Me Castle and escape the evil Gourmand? Come along and enjoy this roaringly beautiful show!

Tickets from £10 (family tickets from £70, minimum of one child under 16).

Accessible performances

Gala Durham will stage accessible performances of *Beauty and the Beast*, including performances with a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter on stage, on Sunday 1 December at 11am, Saturday 7 December at 2pm, and Monday 30 December at 2pm. A relaxed performance will take place on Friday 6 December at 1.30pm and a performance with a BSL interpreter and captions on Tuesday 17 December at 6.30pm.

There will also be an audio described performance for the first time on Saturday 7 December at 6.30pm. Touch tours will be available prior to this performance to allow blind or partially sighted audiences to explore the stage, set, costumes, props and more. Contact Gala Box Office on 03000 266 600.

Empire Consett will stage a relaxed performance of *Cinderella* on Friday 27 December at 11am and a BSL interpreted performances on Saturday 28 December at 3pm.



Cinderella

Empire Consett

Friday 29 November to Tuesday 31 December

Packed full of adventure, fun, dazzling costumes, hit songs, audience participation, and all your favourite characters – Kevin Kennedy (*Coronation Street*), Crissy Rock (*Benidorm*), Leah Bell and company present the most magical fairy tale of them all – *Cinderella*. You'll really have a ball!

Tickets from £10 (family ticket from £58, minimum of two children under 16).



Cinderella

Bishop Auckland Town Hall

Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 December, 2.30pm and 6pm

Mendes Management returns to Bishop Auckland Town Hall to work their panto magic with *Cinderella*. Join us as we follow the downtrodden Cinders as she breaks free to discover new love in the form of a dashing Prince Charming and overcomes the tomfoolery of her Ugly Sisters – all with the help of her foolhardy friend Buttons, and her Fairy Godmother of course!

Tickets: £16 (£14 concession, £53 family ticket, minimum of two children under 16).

Even more festive fun!

Breadcrumbs A Gala Durham and Wrongsemble co-production

Bishop Auckland
Town Hall

**Thursday 28 November
to Sunday 1 December,
10.30am and 1.30pm**

Gala Durham

**Tuesday 3 to Tuesday
24 December, 10.30am
and 1.30pm, plus**

3.30pm Monday 23 and Tuesday 24



Hansel and Gretel are siblings who just can't seem to get along, but when they find themselves lost in an enchanted forest, they must put aside their differences to find their way home for Christmas. Inspired by the classic fairytale, this new festive family show is packed full of music, magic and puppetry.

Recommended for ages three to seven.

Tickets: £8-£10 (family ticket £30-£35, minimum one child under 16).

WIN A FAMILY TICKET TO SEE BREADCRUMBS



To be in with the chance of winning a family ticket to see *Breadcrumbs* at Gala Durham at 1.30pm on Sunday 15 December, simply tell us **which theatre company Gala teamed up with to produce the show.**

To apply, visit www.durham.gov.uk/DCNCompetitions or send your answer – along with your name and contact details – to Durham County News, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UQ.

The closing date is Friday 6 December.



Full terms and conditions can be found at www.durham.gov.uk/DCNCompetitions.

Gala Durham

03000 266 600 www.galadurham.co.uk

Empire Consett

03000 262 400 www.empireconsett.co.uk

Bishop Auckland Town Hall

03000 269 524 www.bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk

André Rieu, Gold and Silver

Empire Consett
**Saturday 7
December, 7pm**

Bishop Auckland
Town Hall

**Saturday 14
December, 1pm**



Celebrate the holiday season with screenings of André Rieu's dazzling Christmas Concert, *Gold and Silver*. Under the sparkle of 150 chandeliers and 50 Venetian candelabras, feel your heart warm with the magical melody of all your favourite Christmas classics. Tickets: £15 (£13 concession).



Make your own chocolates

Satisfy your chocolate cravings at **The Story** this December, with special festive workshops delivered by The Durham Chocolate Company.

On Sunday 1 and Saturday 7 December at 2pm children's Christmas Chocolate Lolly workshops will take place at the Durham City venue. Youngsters will learn about the history and science of chocolate, take part in challenges and make their own Christmas lollipop. Tickets cost £15 per child, accompanied by one adult only.

On Saturday 14 December at 2pm, adults can indulge their sweet tooth at a Truffle Making workshop. Take part in quizzes, handle real cocoa pods, and make your own box of artisan truffles, having learnt the skills to make more. Tickets cost £30 per person.

To book, visit www.thestorydurham.org/whats-on.

Empire Consett

03000 262 400 www.empireconsett.co.uk



Audiences can enjoy a packed programme of entertainment at Empire Consett over the coming months.

It's curtains up at Empire Consett! The popular venue has now reopened following essential remedial works and is once again offering **live theatre performances** and **big screen blockbusters**.

Visitors can also visit the **Empire Lounge café** between 10am and 3pm, Tuesday to Saturday.

Tickets are now on sale for the return of the venue's popular Christmas pantomime, with Cinderella and the Ugly Sisters set to take to the stage this festive season. For more information see page 24.

Other highlights over the coming months include:



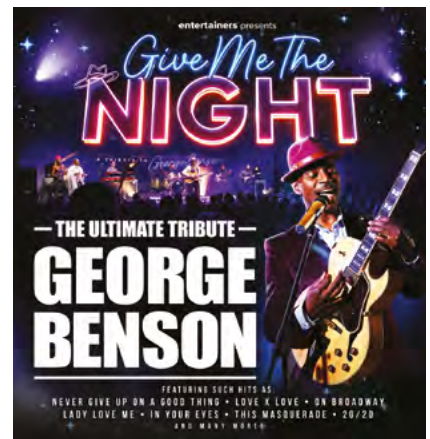
Thursday 30 January, 7.30pm
Lost In Music: One Night at the Disco

Embark on an electrifying journey through the sensational 70s. Get ready to relive timeless hits from icons including Donna Summer, Gloria Gaynor, Earth, Wind & Fire, Sister Sledge and Chic in an unforgettable line-up that'll keep you grooving all night long.

Dress to impress in your most fabulous disco attire as the event pays homage to the golden age of disco. **£28.50.**

Saturday 8 February, 7.30pm
10CCLO

10CCLO are the world's only tribute to both the legendary 10CC and ELO, with an incredible hit-packed two-hour show and fantastic visuals. Both bands have enjoyed worldwide hits over the last four decades with fan favourites including *Dreadlock Holiday*, *Mr Blue Sky*, *I'm Mandy Fly Me*, *Evil Woman*, *The Things We Do for Love?* The classics will just keep on coming. **£19.**



Friday 14 February, 7.30pm
Give Me The Night

Celebrate the life and work of a true legend during a night of George Benson classics, the American soul superstar who helped make RnB soul what it is today in this sensational production. Starring world-renowned leading man Nat Augustin, this show is not to be missed. **£28.50.**



Wednesday 26 February, 1.30pm & 4.30pm
Natural History Museum Presents: Dinosaurs Live!

For the first time since 1881, London's Natural History Museum, the home of dinosaurs, is going on tour. Go on a pre-historic journey to the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods and see dinosaurs come to life on stage. Get ready for a roaring experience like no other. Recommended for ages 3 + and their families.

£16.50 (£15.50 under 16s), £60 family ticket min. two under 16s.

Gala Durham

03000 266 600 www.galadurham.co.uk



Tuesday 21 January, 7.30pm

Ben Elton: Authentic Stupidity

Following the huge success of Ben Elton's critically acclaimed sold-out UK tour in 2019, which marked his return to live comedy after a fifteen-year hiatus, the undisputed godfather of modern stand-up is going back on the road with his new show – *Authentic Stupidity*.

According to Ben, it isn't Artificial Intelligence that will destroy humanity, it's good old fashioned Authentic Stupidity. **£32.50.**

Tuesday 25 to Thursday 27 February

The Baddies

The Baddies love being bad. They roar, spook and cast wicked spells to try and scare a girl out of her wits... who will succeed? Or perhaps the girl is braver than they think.

Presented by Freckle Productions and The Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh, *The Baddies* is a wickedly hilarious adaptation of Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's smash-hit story. Recommended for children aged three and over. **£16 (£14 under 16s).**

Bishop Auckland Town Hall

03000 269 524 www.bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk



Monday 9 December to February 2025

Open Art Exhibition and Young Open Art Exhibition

Featuring work by a range of artists who live or work in County Durham, the annual Open Art Exhibition celebrates artistic creative talents in a mixture of subject matter and mediums.



Thursday 16 January, 7.30pm

Murder: Staged

Following the success of Crime Viral's sell out UK serial killer tour – research psychologist and psychopathy expert Cheish Merryweather is bringing *Murder: Staged* to the stage for the very first time.

Explore the lies embedded in crime scenes and share expertise from those who dig deep for the truth. Featuring forensics, reconstructed real-life crime scene walk-throughs and a deep dive into cases that have not been seen on stage live before. This is an unmissable evening for any true crime fan. Age restriction: 16+. **£20.**



Saturday 25 January, 11am and 2pm

The Velveteen Rabbit A balletLORENT Production

Witness toys come to life through the magic of storytelling, music, and dance in this captivating show the whole family will enjoy. Inspired by Margery Williams' tale, retold by Ben Crompton, the show follows a toy rabbit and boy on a magical adventure, discovering the essence of growing up and the meaning of love along the way.

Youngsters are invited to watch from a comfy cushion of their own up close and will be offered the chance to interact with the costumed performers at the end of the show. Recommended for ages 3 + and their families. **£10.**

The Bowes Museum



Friday 13 to Sunday 15 December Winter Market

The Bowes Museum will be magically transformed into a winter wonderland with dozens of stalls from local artisan traders nestled amongst the twinkling lights of the pretty parterre gardens and the stunning second floor picture galleries.

Listen to carol singers, enjoy gourmet treats, mulled wine and cider while browsing for stocking fillers, unique handcrafted gifts and Christmas decorations.

£6.50 if booked in advance before Friday 6 December or £7.50 thereafter. Children under 18 and carers free.

Festive Artist Makers events

From making festive clay objects to building sculptures from wool and producing prints inspired by the Silver Swan – there are plenty of opportunities for youngsters to get creative at The Bowes Museum this Christmas. Led by talented local artists, a series of festive themed Artist Makers events are taking place on various dates in November and December.

Included in admission.

01833 690606

www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk/whats-on

This is durham

Find more events and activities at www.thisisdurham.com/whats-on

Beamish Museum

**Saturday 23 November to
Tuesday 24 December**

Christmas at Beamish Daytimes

Step back in time and discover how people in the North East celebrated Christmas in years gone by at Beamish, The Living Museum of the North.

From the Georgian period through to the 1950s, delight in traditional decorations, tasty yuletide treats, festive music and lots of fun activities the whole family will enjoy.

Christmas at Beamish Daytimes are included with the general admission fee and are free for unlimited pass holders and Friends of Beamish members.



0191 370 4000 www.beamish.org.uk/whats-on

ONGOING EVENTS

Last Thursday of the month, 2pm
(doors open at 1.15pm)

Durham and District University of the Third Age (U3A)

**Bowbourn Community Centre,
Durham Road, DH6 5AT**

Retired or semi-retired? Durham and District U3A is a great way to make the most of your interests and make friends in the process. More than 30 interest groups meet at least once per month, including crafts, history, singing, quizzing walking and wine-tasting. **Annual fee £11.** An open meeting takes place on the last Thursday of the month with a guest speaker. Call 07300 095174 or visit www.durham-district.u3asite.uk

Tuesday afternoons, 1.30pm-2.45pm
**Movement for your Mind
with Molly**

**Community Room, Tesco Extra,
Genesis Way, Consett, DH8 5XP**

Molly Grey leads a seated-to-standing dance-based movement to music class tailored to those affected by neurological conditions such as MS. There is a **suggested donation of £2.50 per class.**

Upcoming dates are 26 November and 3, 10 and 17 December. To book or to find out more, call 07943 804161 or mollyfreelancedance@yahoo.com

Various dates and locations

Age UK Help us Improve Drop-in Sessions

Age UK County Durham holds regular drop-in sessions across the county to help ensure it delivers the best possible services. To find out more, contact 0191 386 3856 or info@ageukcountydurham.org.uk

SEASON-LONG EVENTS



**Various dates until Tuesday 24
December, 10am-4pm and 4pm-6pm**

The Plotters Forest Enchanted Christmas Trail

Raby Castle, Staindrop, DL2 3AH

This captivating trail promises an unforgettable experience for visitors of all ages, with twinkling lights, festive decorations, and the scent of pine transporting you to a world where Christmas magic comes alive.

Daytime £9 (children £10). Nighttime £6 (children £8).

www.raby.co.uk/events/the-plotters-forest-enchanted-christmas-trail/

Please note: venue opening is subject to change, please check before you visit.

NOVEMBER



**Friday 22 November, 8pm-11pm
Jupiter and Saturn The Giant Planets**

Grassholme Observatory, West Pasture near Mickleton, DL12 0PW
On these dark starry nights, we are treated to a planetary delight as these two celestial heavyweights line up for our telescopes. **£24 adults, £21 seniors.** www.grassholmeobservatory.com

Friday 22 and Saturday 23 November, 10am-5pm, and Sunday 24 November, 12noon-5pm

Brancepeth Castle Christmas Craft Fair

Brancepeth, DH7 8DF
Browse more than 70 stalls of diverse, high-quality crafts from all over the UK, including fine art, photography, jewellery, textiles, pottery, glassware, leather craft, woodwork, sculpture, clothing, household items, and luxury local foods and ales. **£4 adults, £3 seniors, children free.**



**Sunday 24 November, 4.30pm-6pm
Crook Winter Lantern Parade**

Starts at Glenholme Drive, DL15 8QE
Embrace the magic of winter as Jack Drum Arts illuminate the streets of Crook with a Scandinavian-themed Christmas parade. The parade ends with the Christmas lights switch on outside the Civic Centre. **Free and suitable for all ages.** www.jackdrum.co.uk



Wednesday 27 November, 7.30pm-9pm

Farming and Nature Talk: Hefted to the Floristic Fells

Moorcock Inn, Hill Top, Eggleston, DL12 0AU
Part of a series of talks examining the links between farming and nature, Dr Margaret Bradshaw will share her knowledge of the floristic treasures of Upper Teesdale and how important farming is to keep these botanical hotspots conserved into the future. **£4.** www.northpennines.org.uk/event/farming-and-nature-talk-2



Friday 29 November to Sunday 8 December

Bishop Auckland's Christmas Town

Bishop Auckland Market Place, DL14 7NJ
Bishop Auckland's historic market square will be transformed into a winter wonderland, delivering an unforgettable festive experience for visitors of all ages. Giant tipi bars, ice rink, Santa's grotto, traditional Ferris wheel, a magical carousel, vibrant Christmas market stalls, character meet-and-greets, and merry makers workshops are among the attractions in store. **Entry is free, although some events are ticketed.** www.bishopaucklandschristmastown.co.uk



Various dates and times until Tuesday 24 December

The Santa Express – Weardale Railway

Stanhope Station, DL13 2YS
All aboard The Santa Express, Weardale Railway's festive Christmas train. Enjoy live onboard performances from the Christmas cast and crew including the conductor, Santa and Mrs Claus and a team of cheeky elves. The festive adventure starts with a hot chocolate and sweet treat at Stanhope Station before passengers embark on a magical journey through Weardale. **From £10.** www.weardale-railway.org.uk/christmas



Various dates and times until Tuesday 31 December

AGLOW

Auckland Palace, Market Place, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7NR
Welcome to AGLOW, one of the biggest and brightest light trails in the North East. Begin your journey at Auckland Palace and embark on a glittering 1.5-mile trail through the Auckland Palace gardens and grounds. **From £19.75 adult, £13.25 child, and £59.75 family (two adults, two children).** www.aucklandaglow.org

**Saturday 30 November,
12noon-4pm**

Indoor Christmas Craft Market

Trimdon Station Community Centre,
Station Road East, TS29 6BS

Browse a range of stalls selling personalised gifts, jewellery, soaps, Avon, Body Shop and much more. The kitchen will also be selling jacket potatoes, sandwiches, cakes and drinks.

Saturday 30 November, 5pm

Lumley Castle Christmas Concert

Ropery Lane, Little Lumley, DH3 4NX

Now in its third year, this magical concert will include heartwarming carols performed by local choirs, schools, and brass bands. Sing along, enjoy mulled wine and indulge in festive treats. There will also be a raffle with proceeds to Oracle Head and Neck Cancer UK. **£15 adults (£12 children under 16)**. Search for 'magical Christmas concert at Lumley Castle' at www.eventbrite.co.uk

DECEMBER

Wednesday 4 December, 6pm

Horden Christmas Lights Switch On

Horden Memorial Park, Blackhills Road, Horden, SR8 4LJ

Wrap up warm and soak up the festive spirit at the Horden Christmas Lights Switch on event. Everyone is welcome.



Wednesday 4 to Saturday 7 December, 7.30pm-10pm

Bonnie & Clyde

Sir Thomas Allen Assembly Rooms Theatre, Durham City, DH1 3ET

A musical about the most infamous bank robbing and murdering duo in American history, featuring romance, crime and an incredible soundtrack. **£8.50 (£7.50 concessions)**.



**Thursday 5 December,
10.30am-12noon**

Deer Park Safari

Raby Castle, Staindrop, DL2 3AH

Enjoy a scenic tour of Raby Castle's extensive Deer Park, guided by a knowledgeable ranger who will share fascinating insights about the deer and the park's history. **£20**.

www.raby.co.uk/events/deer-park-safari/



Friday 6 to Sunday 8 December

Durham Christmas Festival

Durham City various locations

Offering Christmas shopping and seasonal entertainment, Durham Christmas Festival features three markets; the Craft and Producers' Marquee, the Festive Outdoor Market in Durham Market Place and Market Hall. **Admission to the Craft and Producers' Marquee is £4.50 in advance or £5 on the day**.

www.durhamchristmasfestival.com



Saturday 7 December, 1pm-4pm

Free Christmas Family Fun Day

The Durham Centre (home of Emmanuel Church Durham), DH1 1TN

Enjoy giant inflatables, Santa's Grotto, Christmas trail, crafts, food and much more at this free festive fun day.

www.emmanuel.org.uk



Saturday 7 December, 11am and 1.30pm, Sunday 8 December, 2pm

Carols for All

Durham Cathedral, DH1 3EH

Sing your favourite Christmas carols with family and friends at the Carols for All services in the cathedral. **Free**.



Saturday 7 December, 4pm-6pm

Christmas in Consett

Middle Street, Consett, DH8 5QE

Featuring live music from the Taylor Swift Experience and local brass bands, family entertainment, a Christmas jumper competition, Elf Trail and costumed characters – there is something for everyone at this year's Christmas in Consett. The event will culminate with the Christmas tree light switch on at 6pm.

www.derwentvalleylife.org.uk



Saturday 7 December, 9.30am-6pm, and Sunday 8 December, 10am-4pm

Festive Artisan Market

Dalton Park Outlet & Outdoors, Murton, SR7 9HU

Wander through twinkling lights and festive decorations as you explore stalls brimming with Christmas delights. From exquisite jewellery and handcrafted homeware to delicious seasonal treats and locally produced gourmet foods, there's something for everyone on your holiday shopping list.

Monday 9 December, 10am-12noon

Mindful Morning

Dalton Moor Farm, Dalton le Dale, Seaham, SR7 9JY

Start your week relaxing in nature with guided mindful practices to soothe body, mind and soul in the beautiful surroundings of Dalton Moor Farm. £15. www.daltonmoorfarm.co.uk



Friday 13 December, 7pm-midnight

A Nightmare Before Christmas

Durham Cricket, The Riverside, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3QR

Step into a world where Halloween meets Christmas. As darkness falls, prepare for a night of thrills, chills, and festive delights. From £38. www.durhamcricket.co.uk/events/christmas/

Saturday 14 December, 10am-12noon

Christmas coffee morning

Wolsingham Methodist Church, 22 Front Street, Wolsingham, DL13 3DD

Tuck into delicious cakes and hot drinks at this festive coffee morning. Crafts will also be on sale with proceeds to Stanhope Community Hospital and the church. Entry is free and car parking is available at the back of the building off Rectory Lane.

Saturday 14 December, 12noon-6pm

Spennymoor Christmas Market

Spennymoor High Street, DL16 6AG

Wander through charming stalls brimming with unique gifts, handcrafted ornaments, and seasonal treats. Savour the flavours of the season with warm mulled wine, spiced cider, or a minced pie. Carol singers and family activities will add to the cosy, festive atmosphere.



Thursday 19 and Friday 20 December, 5pm-7pm

Who Stole our Christmas Party?

Lanchester Garden Centre, Bargate Bank, Lanchester, DH7 0SS

Dress up in your Christmas best and enjoy a family fun-filled evening of games, singing, dancing and festive fun with Mr Grinch and Cindy-Lou accompanied by special Christmas party food. Suitable for all ages and fancy dress is encouraged. £21.95 per child (adults free). www.lanchestergardencentre.co.uk

JANUARY

Saturday 11 January, 10am-11am, 11am-12noon, 2pm-3pm

Hand Casting for Families

No 42, Market Place, Bishop Auckland, DL17 7PB



This a heartwarming activity invites up to four family members to create a beautiful 'held-hands' cast from plaster. Guided step-by-step, you'll mould your hands together and once the plaster sets, you'll have a detailed cast preserving a special moment in time forever. £40. www.aucklandproject.org/event/hand-casting-for-families/

Subscribe to Durham County News

To stay up to date with our latest news, don't forget to subscribe. You can sign up to receive an email alert as soon as the latest edition is published at www.durham.gov.uk/DCNsubscribe

Thursday 16 to Sunday 19 January, various times

Robin Hood



Park View Theatre, Church Chare, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3QA

The fine folk of Sherwood Forest are terrorised by the mounting taxes imposed by the wicked Sheriff of Nottingham. Only the outlaw Robin Hood and his band of Merry Men can save the day in this action-packed pantomime adventure. From £10. Search for 'Robin Hood Park View' at www.ticketsource.co.uk

Friday 31 January, 7pm

Stargazing in the Crewe Gardens

Lord Crewe Arms, The Square, Blanchland, DH8 9SP

Enjoy an evening of stargazing with expert Andy Gray who will give a beginner's guide to the night sky. If the weather is clear, there will be an opportunity to look through telescopes. Afterwards a hearty stew and delicious pudding will be served in the Gatehouse. £50. www.lordcrewearmsblanchland.co.uk

FEBRUARY



Friday 14 February, 7.30pm

Hadaway Harry 10th Anniversary Tour

The Witham, 3 Horse Market, Barnard Castle, DL12 8LY

Hadaway Harry is an incredible true story charting the rise of Victorian sporting superstar Harry Clasp from working-class pitman in Jarrow to rowing champion of the world. Written by Ed Waugh and starring Jamie Brown. £16 (£14 under 16s). www.thewitham.org.uk/whats-on

keeping your home warm this winter



The rising cost of living continues to be challenging for many of us, especially during the winter months, when you use more gas and electricity. Heating your home and keeping it warm is important for your health and wellbeing, but there are some steps you can take that may help.

Tips to stay warm and well

Set a comfortable thermostat temperature: If you can, keep your thermostat at the lowest comfortable temperature, recommended between 18°C and 21°C.

Adjust radiator valves: Try turning them up in rooms you use often and down in those you don't.

Lower the flow temperature on combi boilers: Reducing this can improve efficiency.

Use heating timers: Set central heating timers so it only comes on when you need it.

Take regular meter readings: This keeps bills accurate.

Annual heating service: The service ensures your heating system runs efficiently. If you rent your home, your landlord should arrange this.

Your curtains: Open curtains during the day to let in warmth and close at night to retain heat.

Wash clothes on a lower temperature: This can save energy.

Keep radiators clear: Move furniture away to help heat circulate.

Ensure ventilation: It's important to keep your home well ventilated, so try not to block vents, windows or extractor fans.

Help with your heating bills

Check GOV.UK for eligibility:

Cold Weather Payment - available if you receive certain benefits and the temperature drops to 0°C or below for seven days in a row.

Warm Home Discount - £150 off your bills for those with Pension Credit or live in a low-income household.

Winter Fuel Payment - recent changes to Winter Fuel Payments mean that only those receiving Pension Credit are eligible. If you are not currently receiving Pension Credit, now is a good time to check your eligibility.

To qualify for the Winter Fuel Payment, you must have been eligible for Pension Credit during the 'qualifying week' of 16 to 22 September. Pension Credit claims can be backdated by three months, so the latest date to apply and still receive the Winter Fuel Payment is 21 December 2024.

For more support:

- The GOV.UK website has helpful information on available support for energy bills.
- Citizens Advice provides guidance on managing energy costs.
- Your energy supplier may offer assistance, especially if you have a disability or a long-term health condition.

If you rent your home with a housing association and are worried about rising costs, being able to afford heating your home, or the implications of not being able to do so, speak to your landlord or visit their website to find out what specialised and personalised support they can offer you.

Brought to you by

believe
housing

BERNIA

livin

karbon
homes