

# Northumberland news



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Roll out hits halfway  
mark

**What's on**  
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## In case you missed...

### Ahead of target for affordable homes

Northumberland is ahead of its target for delivering new affordable homes in the county.

The council set a target for 1,000 new affordable homes by 2017, and current projections show that half way through this period (by 31st March this year) 641 will have been built.

### Crackdown on litter louts

The council is continuing to clamp down on litter louts with 14 people being successfully prosecuted on one day at South East Northumberland Magistrates.

The authority is targeting the small minority whose behaviour spoils towns, villages and the natural beauty of Northumberland – as well as costing the taxpayer over £2 million each year in clean-up bills.

### Awards recognise young people

Young people from across Northumberland have been honoured for their achievements at the Northumberland Finest Awards.

The awards praised and acknowledged the excellent work being done by our younger generation across the county.

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## Northumberland News

Now available online, by email or in print.

Northumberland News is a quarterly magazine packed with features and news articles written specifically for county residents.

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If you would like to receive Northumberland News in large print, Braille, audio, or in another format or language please contact us.

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**Front cover:**

Sophie Nicoll at Whitehouse Farm Centre, near Morpeth.



Pictured: Rachel Dobbie, Lauren Eadington and Mollie Dow with Youth Worker, Rachel Kerry.

# Stay protected while connected

**Young people in Northumberland have been learning how to take safe selfies thanks to a project that is raising awareness of the precautions that everyone should make when posting pictures of themselves online.**

Over recent months, local youth workers and young people in south east Northumberland have been developing a media campaign after concerns were raised that some young people were putting themselves in a vulnerable position by uploading inappropriate images on social media.

To the uninitiated, a 'selfie' is a self-portrait, typically taken with a handheld digital camera or camera phone.

Rachel Kerry who works for Northumberland County Council's youth service said: "This is such a powerful and relevant project and it has really captured the interest of young people. We are using social media to address problems that have been caused by social media."

Posters, leaflets, wrist bands and lesson plans have been designed to support the campaign.

Mollie Dow who has been working closely on the project said: "Selfies can be fun but we have learnt that you can never be 100 per cent certain where these images will end up. We are hoping the campaign will go viral and help spread our safety messages to people living in other parts of the country."



# Top attractions to take part in Residents' Weekend

Top attractions in Northumberland will be offering free entry or discounts to people living in the county during the annual Residents' Festival on 21 and 22 of March.

The festival aims to give people who live in the county the chance to explore and enjoy some of the world class venues and fantastic heritage that we have right here on our doorstep.

Throughout the weekend, castles, gardens, stately homes and museums will be opening their doors free of charge or offering generous discounts to visitors from Northumberland. There will be something for all ages with tours, events and activities bringing local culture to life.

The event is organised by Northumberland County Council in partnership with leading visitor attractions from across the county.

This year, over twenty attractions are due to participate. These include: The Alnwick Garden, Bamburgh Castle, Chillingham Castle, Corbridge Roman Town, Housesteads Roman Fort, Kielder Water & Forest Park, Paxton House Gallery and Country Park, Warkworth Castle, Woodhorn Museum and Northumberland Archives and Whitehouse Farm Centre.

**Residents will need special vouchers to receive free or discounted entry to the attractions. These can be downloaded from the council's website on [residentsfestival.northumberland.gov.uk](http://residentsfestival.northumberland.gov.uk) They are also available in the Residents' Festival leaflets displayed in local libraries, county council offices, tourist information centres and sports centres. Cut out vouchers will also be placed in the local press.**



# Budget focused on the future

## A two-year budget focusing on the future has been approved by the Council.

Members approved plans for educational excellence, job security and a £350 million pound investment in the local economy.

The budget was approved at the Full Council meeting open to all elected members.

Leader of Northumberland County Council, Grant Davey, said: "This is a budget born focused firmly on our future."

The council has identified four key areas where it will make savings: Driving efficiencies by finding innovative and improved ways of working; working closely with partners to manage demand for services; stimulating economic growth and generating income.

Councillor Davey said: "We're planning ambitious investment in the future of this county across a range of areas. This is part of our long term economic plan which will boost employment, economic opportunities and support frontline services across Northumberland."

Proposals were agreed for more than £350 million of investment in local projects - a number of these are targeted at economic growth and regeneration.

These include the long-awaited Morpeth Northern Bypass, a £30 million project which will start in the spring and take around 18 months to complete.

There are also plans for a new council headquarters in Ashington - at a build cost of just over £19 million.

Councillor Davey said: "This proposed move of the civic building will generate significant economic benefits for the whole of Northumberland. We would not be making this investment if it didn't make sound economic sense."

Focusing on the future was also at the heart of the budget, with building to start on the new Duchess Community High School in Alnwick followed by Prudhoe Community High School and Bedlingtonshire Community High School in March 2015.

Councillors also approved a raft of other investment measures – from more affordable homes across the county to re-introducing the Ashington Blyth and Tyne railway service over the coming years.

Councillor Davey added: "This council has worked extremely hard to develop ambitious plans for investment, housing and jobs and it's fantastic this budget can now be taken forward."



Members approved plans for educational excellence, job security and a £350 million pound investment in the local economy.

# Broadband roll out hits the halfway mark

Thousands of homes and businesses in the county can now access fibre broadband because of a multi million pound partnership

iNorthumberland has passed the halfway mark with more than 37,500 homes and businesses now able to connect to high-speed fibre broadband as a direct result of the programme.

Now homes and businesses in communities the length and breadth of Northumberland, including Wooler, Felton, Stocksfield and Haltwhistle, can take advantage of the benefits high-speed fibre broadband brings.

Engineers from BT's local network business, Openreach, have been keeping busy - clocking up thousands of man hours laying more than 14,000 kilometres of optical fibre. A total of 35

new exchange areas have been upgraded along with the installation of 137 new green fibre cabinets.

A number of areas, including around 1,500 premises in the rural communities of Allendale, Crookham, Harbottle and Wark, now have access to fibre broadband for the first time.

iNorthumberland recently secured funding from the Government's Superfast Extension Plan which will be used to extend coverage in some areas not included in the current roll-out plans.

The iNorthumberland broadband programme, is being delivered by Northumberland County Council and BT.

**For up to date information on available business support and the roll-out visit [www.inorthumberlandbusiness.co.uk](http://www.inorthumberlandbusiness.co.uk) or [www.inorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.inorthumberland.org.uk)**



# Building work to start on three new high schools

**Building work is to start on three new high schools this month marking the beginning of a multi-million pound investment in education across the county.**

In early March the first turf will be cut on the site of the new Duchess Community High School in Alnwick with building work due to start on Prudhoe



Artist's impressions: Alnwick's new Duchess Community High School located at Greensfield to the south of the town will open its doors to students in September 2016.

Community High School and Bedlingtonshire Community High School shortly after.

The new schools are being primarily funded through the Government's Priority School Building Programme.

At the end of last year the authority appointed a new director of education and skills, Andy Johnson, to help drive up education standards in the county:



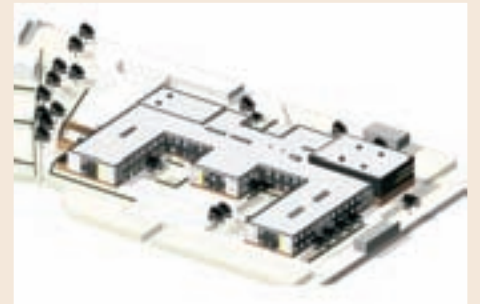
The new Bedlingtonshire Community High School is being built on the existing school's Palace Road site and will open its doors to students in September 2016.

“

The building of these new high schools demonstrates our commitment to education and providing the best possible opportunities for our young people. The new school facilities will create the best, most up-to-date learning experience for our students and transform the educational environment for pupils attending these schools.

Andy Johnson.

”



The new Prudhoe Community High School is to be built on the existing school site and will open its doors to students in Spring 2016.

## Finding out what matters to you!



- Q: What's worrying you about where you live?**
- Q: What are you enjoying?**
- Q: What one thing would make your life better?**

**We have been asking people across the county these three questions so we can find out how they feel about where they live.**

Your answers tell us about the issues and problems in your local area so we can make sure we're tackling the things that are important to you! It's not all doom and gloom – we also want to make sure we know what you're enjoying (eg the parks, beaches) so

that we can maintain and improve them too.

**Who have we asked so far?**

We have asked residents in and around Blyth, Amble, Berwick, Ashington, Hexham and Morpeth.

Over the next few months we will be asking people in Cramlington, Prudhoe, Alnwick and Haltwhistle as well as smaller villages so everyone should get their chance to tell us what matters to them.

**The results of the surveys, as well as information about what we are doing about the issues raised are on our website at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/pulse](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/pulse)**





Maxine Hepple with Andrew who is living with Maxine on a long term foster care placement.

# Could you change a young person's life... forever?

**Maxine Hepple, a former lecturer and head teacher from south east Northumberland, shares her house and her heart with young people. Here she shares her fostering experience:**

"I've been fostering now for 13 years and have cared for over 30 young people. It is fantastically rewarding work. My job is to help young people to get ready for adult life; to learn living skills and to plan and build their future. Sometimes they need support to get through difficult situations, just as we all experience from time to time.

Fostering teenagers does keep you feeling young. I enjoy the music and shopping but simply being around young people gives me a different outlook on life.

“Fostering is the most fulfilling thing that I've done.”

I think some people are put off by the idea of looking after older children and I would say to them “don't be”.

Fundamentally there isn't that much difference between older and younger children. They both need adults to love, care and support them. You do need the ability to set boundaries for children and it's important to have a good sense of humour too! You also get lots of support from the council's children's services team.

Fostering is the most fulfilling thing that I've done – watching a young person grow and enjoy life. That for me is a good enough reason to carry on doing it and it's my privilege and pleasure to foster teens.”

## Do you have time to care?

- Do you have a spare room and the energy and motivation to care for young people?
- We are looking for people of all ages and backgrounds to become foster carers
- You'll get plenty of training, help and financial support
- Most other fostering agencies only pay when you have a child living with you, however, in Northumberland foster carers receive a guaranteed weekly fee.

**Mainstream Foster Carers benefit from: £1,000 - £1,700 per month fees and allowances.**

To find out more contact our friendly Fostering Recruitment Officer, Caroline Matthews.

**Tel: 01670 62 62 62 or visit our website <http://fostering.northumberland.gov.uk>**

# A record year for Northumberland weddings

**We have been busy spreading the word that our county is a fantastic place to get married - and it seems that our message has been heard!**

Northumberland is currently experiencing a wedding boom with a record number of couples booked to tie the knot in the county over the coming year. With the average wedding bringing thousands of pounds into our local economy, this really is excellent news!

What's more, over half of couples who are getting married in Northumberland are actually coming from outside of the county.

Last year our wedding co-ordination team officiated over 1,700 marriages but already these numbers have been exceeded with an extra 117 ceremonies booked for the coming year.

And it is no surprise the county has become such a popular wedding location. With over 70 stunning venues to choose from and such beautiful and dramatic scenery, Northumberland really is a magical setting for any wedding. From stately homes, manor houses, castles, hotels and halls, there is a venue to suit every taste and budget.

A full colour brochure is available on [www.mynorthumberlandwedding.co.uk](http://www.mynorthumberlandwedding.co.uk) showcasing Northumberland ceremony venues. Alternately you can call 01665 602870 and speak to a member of the council's wedding ceremonies co-ordination team.

## Gay couple first to convert to marriage



**Annie and Kate Bromwich-Alexandra who moved up to Northumberland 10 years ago, were the very first same sex couple in the county to convert their civil partnership into marriage when the new law came into effect in December.**

The conversion process is something same sex couples have been eagerly awaiting since the government passed the same sex marriage law earlier last year.

Annie said: "After 26 years together, it was a very momentous day for us."

Photo: Annie and Kate Bromwich-Alexandra outside Morpeth Town Hall where their conversion ceremony took place.





# 10 FAB things to do in Northumberland in Spring



- 1** Take a walk up Hareshaw Linn, a 30 foot waterfall in Bellingham. Watch out for squirrels and deer
- 2** Head to Bolam Lake for a spot of bird watching. Can you spot a nuthatch or jay?
- 3** Look out for hares on the moors and farmland, especially near Yeavinger Bell and Kirknewton in the Cheviots
- 4** Listen to the dawn chorus at one of Northumberland's many country parks
- 5** Test your mountain bike talents at the skills loop at Kielder Castle
- 6** Sit in the meadows at Newton Point and listen to the sounds of the skylarks
- 7** Fill your lungs with fresh sea air while walking along the Northumberland Coastal Path
- 8** Imagine how life was for the Romans as you visit Hadrian's Wall
- 9** Get out on your bike and cycle some of Northumberland's cycling routes <http://www.cyclepad.org.uk/landing/cycle-routes>
- 10** Visit Woodhorn Museum and learn about life down the coal mines



# Win

## two annual Friends of Kielder Water & Forest Park memberships

**With 250 square-miles of the finest Northumberland countryside, you can expect grander landscapes, longer shorelines and wilder mountain-biking trails.**

Whether you want to relax and escape or you want to go on an adventure, Kielder Water & Forest Park is the place to do it. Not only is it home to northern Europe's largest man-made lake, it also has England's largest forest and makes up one of the world's largest dark sky parks - just perfect for star gazing. With all this, it's no wonder Visit England awarded it the number one visitor experience in England\*.

Experience it all now by joining TV architect George Clarke and football legend Jack Charlton, and become a Friend of Kielder Water & Forest Park.

Friends benefit from regular offers and promotions across the Park, such as half price entry into the Kielder Birds of Prey Centre, two for the price of one on Calvert Trust Taster days and exclusive tours and talks.

To win two annual Friends of Kielder Water & Forest Park memberships and start planning your adventure today, just answer this question below:

**Which celebrity is a Friend of Kielder Water & Forest Park?**

- George Clooney
- George Clarke
- George Michael

**To enter send your answer along with a daytime contact telephone number, by email or post to arrive before 30 April, 2015.**

**Email:** [info@visitkielder.com](mailto:info@visitkielder.com) with 'Friends of Kielder Water & Forest Park competition' in the subject heading.

**Post to:** Friends of Kielder Water & Forest Park, Tyne House, Mill Way, Horsley, Tyne and Wear, NE15 0PA.

The winner will be drawn at random from the successful answers.

**See [visitkielder.com/friends](http://visitkielder.com/friends) for more information.**

\*Visit England Gold award for Tourism Experience of the Year 2013



# Health and Wellbeing



## Don't ignore your health check invite

**Northumberland residents are being encouraged to take up their NHS Health Check when they are invited.**

The free check is part of a new national scheme to help prevent the onset of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease, dementia and other serious health conditions.

These conditions, quite often, do not cause any symptoms at the early stages and only become apparent when they cause complications. Early detection and treatment are important to help reduce the risk of developing long-term health problems.

The check is aimed at residents aged between 40 and 74 and should take less than 20 minutes. It will look at your:

- Lifestyle
- Family medical history
- Cholesterol levels
- Blood pressure

It is unlikely there will be anything wrong. But if there is a problem you'll be given plenty of help and advice to make the lifestyle changes you need to improve your health.

## How and where can I have an NHS Health Check?

NHS Health Checks are available at all GP surgeries in Northumberland. If you fit the eligibility criteria and are registered with a Northumberland GP, you will be invited in to have a health check. The check ups take place on a five year rolling programme so you may not get your appointment letter straight away but you can also talk to your medical practice directly to ask for an appointment.

# Health and Well

## Helping families lead a healthier life

**Families in Northumberland are leading a healthier life, thanks to an NHS led scheme to support people to become active and eat well.**

Get Active Northumberland is a targeted healthy lifestyle programme which supports parents, children and young people who want to make positive changes to their diet and lifestyle.

Throughout the programme families receive advice on nutrition, lifestyle and physical activity. The nine week course incorporates information on portion sizes, food groups and product labelling. The families also take part in interactive cooking sessions and are encouraged to take part in physical activity in their community.

Louise Ray is a health improvement specialist with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. She said: "Our support programme does have a serious message but this is given in a fun and informal way with families taking part in games and sports and learning about healthy meals, snacks and portion control."

**For information about Get Active Northumberland call (01670) 784 183 or email [gan@northumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:gan@northumbria.nhs.uk)**



## Make simple swaps to reduce sugar intake

**Change4Life is calling on families to sign up for 'Sugar Swaps'. The new campaign shows parents ways they can help their family cut down on their sugar intake by making simple food and drink swaps.**

It's surprising how much sugar there is in some of the things that we give our children throughout the day. That's a problem because eating too much sugar means extra calories which causes fat to build up inside, and could lead to heart disease, cancer or type 2 diabetes.

**To find out how to reduce your family's sugar intake, search Change4Life online and sign up to receive your FREE Sugar Swaps pack!**





## Partnership approach to dementia support

**Partners across the county have signed up to a dementia strategy which lays out plans to support people living with dementia, their families and the communities in which they live.**

Northumberland has a growing elderly population with 20 per cent of its residents aged 65 and over. This is set to rise to 31 per cent by 2031. The county also has the second highest number of people diagnosed with dementia in the north east.

In Northumberland, resources are being re-focussed to:

- help prevent dementia by encouraging healthy lifestyles and awareness of risk factors;
- encourage people to seek a timely diagnosis; and
- offer high quality support to people with dementia and those who care for them.

A local action plan has also been developed which includes raising public and professional awareness around dementia.



## Mental health first aid for young people

**Professionals from across the county have been taking part in a course designed to help them spot the signs and symptoms of mental health problems in young people.**

The internationally recognised course was attended by adults who work with young people between the ages of 11-18 and included teachers, youth workers, learning support assistants and teenage pregnancy support staff.

The course is designed to increase knowledge in those supporting young people who might be experiencing crisis or who are living with a mental health diagnosis. However, it is also about creating an awareness of the positive changes that people can make to help them have a happier and more fulfilling life.

**For more information about Youth Mental Health First Aid, please contact [Tracy.Bruce@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:Tracy.Bruce@nhct.nhs.uk) or telephone 01670 532013.**



# Health and Wellbeing



## The Golden Guide is out now



The Golden Guide, a free booklet that provides practical support for the over 50s, is now available.

It is packed full of helpful information and advice about leisure, health, money, care and your home.

To get hold of a copy, ring Age UK Northumberland's Advice Line on 01670 784821.

# healthwatch

## Northumberland

Healthwatch Northumberland is here to listen to your views on health and social care. We use your views to influence services across the county.

## We want to hear your views

# your say

Contact us:

03332 408 468

[www.healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk)

[info@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk)

Adapt (North East),

Burn Lane, Hexham, NE46 3HN

 @HWNland

 Healthwatchnorthumberland



## Smoking could rob your eyesight

**Unless they quit, smokers are being warned they could be tripling their chances of developing – Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) - the most common form of sight loss among the elderly.**

Tobacco smoke is composed of at least 4,000 chemicals, most of them toxic and potentially damaging to the eye.

AMD distorts and blurs central vision making everyday activities like watching TV, reading and driving more difficult or impossible.





# National changes to adult care and support

## What is it all about?

- The Care Act 2014 is new legislation intended by the Government to help make care and support for adults more consistent across the country.
- The act reflects in law, changes which have been taking place for a number of years, focused on enabling people to maintain their independence and take control of their care and support.
- Many of the things we were already doing in Northumberland are now enshrined in law, including putting people in control of the help they receive, and placing their wellbeing and what is important to them and their family at the heart of their assessment.
- Adult social care means support for people who need care and support for reasons such as a disability or long-term illness.
- Many adult social care functions in Northumberland are carried out on behalf of the council by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

## What will happen in April 2015?

The Government intends to implement the Care Act in two stages:

### From 2015 there will be:

- Changes to how local authorities assess people's needs, specifying that both people with a disability or a long-term illness and their carers must be closely involved in all aspects of assessments, and must be given more written information.
- New national 'eligibility criteria' sets out when people are entitled to care and support, and when carers are entitled to support in their own right. The new criteria closely match those already used in Northumberland.
- All local authorities will offer 'deferred payment agreements' for people entering care homes, to allow them to make choices about the timing of the sale of their homes. In Northumberland, deferred payments are already offered, however the Care Act defines more precisely the terms under which agreements can be taken out after 1 April 2015.

## What will happen in 2016?

- The Government is planning to introduce changes designed to limit the amount anyone will pay over their lifetime for care and support services; however the final detail of the Government's intentions are not yet available.

**For further information about the implementation of the Care Act in Northumberland visit [www.northumberland.gov.uk/careact](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/careact) or email [CareAct@northumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:CareAct@northumbria.nhs.uk)**

building  
a caring  
future

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# URGENT CARE

## 24HR WALK-IN SERVICES

**GO TO** - 24 hour walk-in services at Hexham,  
North Tyneside and Wansbeck hospitals  
or call 111 for advice.

Minor head,  
ear or eye  
problems



Broken  
nose or  
nose bleed



Sprains,  
sprains, cuts  
and bites



Children's  
minor  
injuries and  
ailments



Minor  
fractures or  
broken  
bones



Abscesses  
and wound  
infections



# A&E CHANGES

across Northumberland and North Tyneside

## COMING JUNE 2015

### SERIOUS EMERGENCIES

### NEW HOSPITAL CRAMLINGTON

**GO TO** - Northumbria Specialist Emergency  
Care Hospital in Cramlington or call 999  
for an emergency ambulance.

Suspected  
stroke



Loss  
of  
consciousness



Persistent  
and severe  
chest pain



Sudden  
shortness  
of breath



Severe  
abdominal  
pain



Severe  
blood  
loss



[www.northumbria.nhs.uk/emergency](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/emergency)

# Dog micro-chipping to become compulsory

**From April 2016 all dogs in England will need to be micro-chipped.**

The Government has brought in the new ruling in a bid to help tackle the growing problem of strays roaming the streets and relieve the burden on animal charities and local authorities.

Micro-chipping is a painless procedure that involves a small chip being implanted under the dog's skin. It has a unique identification number, linked to a secure national database, on which the owner's name and address is stored.

If your dog goes missing you should report it to Northumberland County Council as soon as possible. Stray dogs picked up by our animal welfare officers that cannot be identified will end up in kennels and the owner will have to pay a fee for the dog's return.

## The day Tara went missing...

Gillian Epworth from Morpeth who runs the Tall Maternity Store, recently lost her dog. She said:

“ Our border terrier Tara went missing a few weeks ago when she escaped through the back gate. She wasn't micro-chipped and we had a really anxious wait until she was found and reunited with us. Fortunately she was spotted walking the streets by some children who took her home and kept her warm and safe. I am so thankful to them. It was bitterly cold and if she had been out all night I doubt she would have survived.

The kids called the council's dog warden who took her to a local kennels overnight, and we were reunited with her in the morning.

I would urge every dog owner to ensure their dog is micro-chipped. It offers you the peace of mind that if your pet ever does go astray, then you can be reunited as soon as possible. You can get your dog micro-chipped by contacting your local vet, or the county council. ”

Pictured: Tara, with her owner Gillian and dog warden Andrea Cowens, is about to be micro-chipped.



# Turning the heat on inefficient gas boilers

**Northumberland residents could soon benefit from warmer homes as the UK's largest energy efficiency initiative is offering support to people most in need.**

Warm Up North is offering free or subsidised gas boilers to residents who receive certain benefits, such as Child Tax Credit or State Pension Credit, and who have a lower income and an inefficient gas boiler.

Warm Up North is tackling fuel poverty in the region by making homes more affordable for residents to keep warm. The scheme is endorsed by nine North East local authorities including Northumberland.

Home owners or those living in private rented accommodation and struggling with an old inefficient gas boiler, could now qualify for a free A-rated boiler. Or, for people who do not qualify for fully-funded support, Warm Up North could offer residents part-funding for a replacement.

For more information on Warm Up North and its range of energy efficiency measures including free or subsidised boilers for eligible residents, contact the team.



**For the boiler offer, please call free\* on 0800 316 4320. For all other energy efficiency measures, call free\* on 0800 297 8073 or visit [www.warmupnorth.com](http://www.warmupnorth.com)**

\*Calls to an 0800 number are free from a BT Landline, calls from other lines and mobiles may vary.

## Garden green scheme starts again

**Our fortnightly garden waste collection service has just started up again.**

If you are a gardener and haven't already done so, why not join thousands of other residents in the county and take part in our green scheme which takes your garden waste from your kerbside to recycle into reusable compost and soil conditioner.

Residents who used the service last year have been sent an invitation to renew. There is an annual charge of £26 for each wheeled bin (the equivalent of 1.30p per collection) so we can cover our costs.

If you would like to join up, please contact us to find out if the service is available in your area on 0845 600 6400 (local numbers are also available, check our website for details).

**You can find out more and check your scheduled bin days for any of your collections by using the postcode checker at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/waste](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/waste)**



# Robson Returns

**A TV series which highlighted the beauty of Northumberland to millions of TV viewers has returned for a second series.**

More Tales From Northumberland, which stars actor Robson Green, is being aired on Monday evenings and is expected to provide a great boost to the county's profile.

Robson and his crew spent last summer filming at some stunning locations across the county and meeting some of Northumberland's great characters.

From getting up close and personal with a pod of dolphins, visiting Cragside, the first house powered by hydro electricity and being face to face with Chillingham cattle – one of the rarest creatures on earth, this next series is expected to be just as successful and fascinating as the first.



**I knew there was lots more to explore and discover about an area I knew and loved well. If I can contribute in some way to helping Northumberland, that'll be one of the proudest things I could be associated with.**

**Robson Green.**



**Step up your health with weekly walks**

**Free health walks are taking place across the county to encourage more people to get out into the great outdoors and improve their health. The walks are suitable for all levels of ability and take between half an hour and an hour and a half.**

All you have to do is turn up at one of the venues wearing sensible footwear and appropriate outdoor clothing.

You'll have great company, trained walk leaders and safe walking routes to get you on your way to a healthier lifestyle.

**For further information about health walks in Northumberland contact Rachel Slade, walking coordinator on 01670 623543.**



# Ashington Leisure Centre on track for Autumn opening



**The construction of the new £21million state-of-the art Ashington Leisure Centre has passed the half way mark with completion of the roof, swimming pools and glazing.**

The 78 week construction programme is on schedule with the centre expected to open to the public in Autumn this year.

The family friendly centre will feature two superb swimming pools, advanced gym facilities, a spa, multi-function sports hall and studio space to host classes and activities. It will also include a high quality library, a soft play area and café all together in one convenient location.

Northumberland County Council has invested £20 million to build the new facility which will help draw more people into the town centre from surrounding areas and boost the local economy. Sport England has also contributed £1million of National Lottery funding. The construction is being managed by Arch, the Northumberland development company. Once open, the centre will be managed by Active Northumberland.

## Suppliers and buyers network at trade event

**With over 100 traders, 1,000 visitors and a day packed full of businesses networking, the second annual Northumberland trade event has been hailed a great success.**

The event, organised by Northumberland County Council, brought together both buyers and traders from around the region.

Producers of local food and drink, art and crafts turned up to promote their wares. While buyers, including well-known national retailers and some of the region's top tourist attractions, hotels and restaurants came from far and wide to see what was on offer.

The event was organised by the council to support local businesses and help provide new opportunities for them to build business relationships with other entrepreneurs.

## Workshop to boost business

**Representatives from the food and drink industry recently attended a workshop to explore ways to develop business opportunities.**

Delegates included producers, chefs, distributors, retailers and those in the accommodation and hospitality business.

The event was organised by the council to help support these local businesses which contribute enormously to the local economy and help generate trading opportunities for them.



# Work begins to modernise street lighting

**Work begins this Spring on a £25 million project to modernise all street lighting in the county. The lighting replacement work will begin in Ashington and will be rolled out across the county over three years.**

New eco-friendly lights will be fitted to all 46,000 street lighting columns. Nearly 17,000 of the oldest columns will also be replaced.

We expect to achieve a 60 per cent reduction in the cost of maintaining street lighting in the county, as well as slashing energy costs, reducing light pollution and cutting carbon emissions.

The project is being funded by an Invest to Save initiative, where the funding will be repaid over 25 years from the anticipated budget savings of around £200,000 a year.

## Your questions answered:

**Q. How much notice will I receive if work is to be carried out in my street?**

A. Look out for the notification boards placed around lighting columns to let you know our contractor will begin work in your area shortly. You will also receive a reminder postcard a few days before the work begins.

**Q. How long will the workmen be in my road?**

A. The work should take approximately 20 minutes per streetlight to complete. There will be some instances where the electricity supply to the street light will need to be disconnected and re-connected, which will take longer to complete.

**Q Will the workmen require access to my property?**

A. At no stage will any of our operatives require access to your property. Anybody claiming to need access could be a bogus caller. Please be cautious.

**Q. Will I be able to park in the street?**

A. We will try to keep as much parking space available as possible, while allowing room for the workmen to dig and install the new light.

**Q My street seems darker since the fitting of the LED lights. Why is this?**

A. When lighting with white lights the standards require the lighting levels to be slightly reduced to prevent glare or dazzle. The LED lights will also reduce light pollution, ensuring the footpaths and roads are well lit but avoiding an intrusion of light into people's homes and gardens.

**Q My street seems to be more brightly lit – Why is this?**

A. Some of the streets still have the very old, inefficient orange lighting. Replacing these with LED whiter lighting will increase light levels while still providing energy savings.





## In case you missed...

### MBE for firefighter



Pictured: Jimmy Gair with Chief Fire officer Alex Bennett.

**A Northumberland firefighter who has worked tirelessly for his community for the past 36 years has been awarded an MBE.**

Watch Manager, Jimmy Gair, who combines his role as a retained firefighter with a full-time job as a butcher in Longframlington, has had a distinguished career with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) for more than three decades.

### Green light for fire station

**Planning approval has been given to relocate Hexham Community Fire Station from Tyne Mills Industrial Estate to a new site at Hexham General Hospital.**

The project involves altering and extending the existing buildings to the rear of the hospital site and will have no impact on day-to-day running of the services.

## Secure your vote

**The countdown to the UK general election is now on and voters only have until 20 April to make sure they are registered.**

The way people register to vote has changed and the majority of residents have been automatically re-registered under the new system.

However, for all sorts of reasons, some people did not match existing data records and therefore could not be transferred automatically onto the new register. This might be because they have moved house or changed their personal details since they last registered to vote.

We have written to these people asking them to provide additional information. Many residents responded, but despite repeated reminders, there are still some residents who failed to register and this makes them ineligible to vote.

At every election people lose their right to vote because they are not on the electoral roll. Please make sure you are not one of them by looking out for your letter and replying to us promptly if you are required to do so.

**For further information ring our elections line: 01670 624811 or email: [elections@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:elections@northumberland.gov.uk)**



### Drop in events held on core strategy

**Drop in events have been held around the county about the core strategy - the planning document used to guide development decisions across Northumberland.**

Residents, businesses and community organisations took the opportunity to speak to planning officers and find out more about the strategy at 28 drop in events around Northumberland.

### New bus station for Hexham

**A new bus station is to be built at Loosing Hill in Hexham – replacing an outdated facility.**

The move will also release a key regeneration site at the heart of the town centre, which the council believes can both improve the retail offer and deliver significant economic benefits – estimated to be worth £3.3 million annually.

## March

### Northumberland Residents' Festival

An opportunity for people who live and work in Northumberland to visit participating visitor attractions for free or reduced entry. See our website for more details:

[Saturday 21 - 22 March](#)

[Residentsfestival.northumberland.gov.uk](http://Residentsfestival.northumberland.gov.uk)

### Family Astronomy

Family astronomy at Kielder Observatory: the skies, the universe and everything that is in it! Following the interactive talks, you will enjoy a tour of the observatory and an introduction on how to use the powerful telescopes.

[Various dates from March – May](#)

Booking essential visit [www.kielderobservatory.org](http://www.kielderobservatory.org).



### Thank Folk It's Friday - Greenheart Junction

Thank Folk It's Friday is a free programme of folk music held in the Woodhorn Cafe on the final Friday of each month from 2pm.

Woodhorn QEII Country Park, Ashington NE63 9YF

[Friday 27 March, 2015](#)

Phone: (01670) 624455

### Burgham International Horse Trails

Opposite Burgham Golf Course

Longhorsley

Come and see competitors from around the world complete the ultimate test of horse and rider.

[Friday 27 March - Sunday 29 March – gates open to the public 7.30am daily](#)

Phone: (01670) 517156

[www.burghamhorsetrials.co.uk](http://www.burghamhorsetrials.co.uk)



### Steve Knightley in concert

A unique opportunity to see and hear one of England's finest acoustic folk performers in an intimate and friendly setting.

Allendale Village Hall, Leadgate, Allendale, Northumberland, NE47 9PA

[Friday 20 March 2015, 7.30 pm](#)

£16.00. Booking essential

Phone: (01670) 733897

## April

### Brick Planet

Explore the incredible Brick Planet exhibition and marvel at miniature wonders from around the world recreated in LEGO bricks.

QEII Country Park, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9YF

[Wed 1 April – Sunday 31 May, 10am - 5pm](#)

Booking required.

Phone: (01670) 624455



### Chocolate Party, Kirkley Hall

With a special appearance from the Easter bunny, join in party games, an Easter egg hunt and face painting (at an additional cost). A light chocolate afternoon tea will be served at 3.30pm. Bring a decorated egg along to the event and enter it in the competition (For ages up to 13 years)

[Friday 3 – Saturday 4 April, 2pm-5pm](#)

Adults £8.50, Children £6.50

Phone: (01670) 841235 or email [enquiries@kirkleyhall.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@kirkleyhall.co.uk)

### Roman Cavalry Easter Explorers

It's time to get clue-cracking. Find characters from the past to help you solve the challenge and seek out your chocolate reward.

Housesteads Roman Fort, Chesters Roman Fort, Corbridge Roman Town

[Friday 3 – Monday 6 April, 11am – 5pm](#)

Phone: 0870 333 1183 or email: [customers@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:customers@english-heritage.org.uk)

### Morpeth Amphibian Day

A celebration of frogs and other amphibians you can find in Northumberland and around the world. Come and see rare frogs, Poison Dart frogs including Terriblis! Learn how to keep these jewels of the rainforest and to protect their environment.

This is a family event with games and activities for children.

Entry £3.

Kirkley Hall, Ponteland

[Sunday 5 April](#)

For more information email [northeastfroggers@gmail.com](mailto:northeastfroggers@gmail.com)

### Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering

A festival of Northumberland's traditional music, dance, crafts, dialect and heritage with over 50 indoor and outdoor events, many free.

[Friday 10 – Sunday 12 April](#)

Phone: (01670) 513308 for general enquiries or Morpeth Chantry on (01670) 623455 for tickets.

Programme and competition details: [www.northumbriana.org.uk](http://www.northumbriana.org.uk)

### Berwick Walking Festival

With its great transport links what better location to come for a few days and enjoy the stunning walking and great hospitality of Berwick upon Tweed.

[Friday 10 – Wednesday 15 April](#)

Phone: (01669) 621044

[www.berwickwalking.co.uk](http://www.berwickwalking.co.uk)

### Alnwick Spring Show

Willowburn Avenue, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 2JH  
Daffodils, tulips and other spring flowers, floral art, cookery and children's competitions. Craft and trade stands and a plant stall. Refreshments available

£2.00 entry

[Saturday 18 April 11am – 5 pm](#)

Phone: (01665) 576512

### Hexham Book Festival

Queen's Hall Art Centre, Beaumont Street, Hexham,  
Visit one of the most vibrant festivals around celebrating the brightest and best of new fiction, politics, crime, adventure, poetry and biographies. Tickets will be available in advance, some events may sell out.

[Friday 24 April – Monday 4 May](#)

Phone: (01434) 652477

Book online [www.queenshall.co.uk](http://www.queenshall.co.uk)

[www.hexhambookfestival.co.uk](http://www.hexhambookfestival.co.uk)

### World War One commemoration weekend

Berwick-upon-Tweed  
Focusing on key actions of 1915 and life in Berwick at the time. Exhibitions, re-enactments and interactive performances illustrating life in Berwick during the First World War and marking the centenary of the Gallipoli Landings and the Battle of St Julien.

[Saturday 25 April – Sunday 26 April](#)

[www.berwick900.org.uk](http://www.berwick900.org.uk)

## May

### Rothbury Food and Craft Festival

FREE Entry. Rothbury Food and Craft Festival with over 50 stalls.

[Monday 4 May, 10am-4pm](#)

Email:

[info@rothburyfoodandcraftfestival.co.uk](mailto:info@rothburyfoodandcraftfestival.co.uk)

### Blyth Battery Goes To War

With battles on the beaches, re-enactors, home guard, field kitchen, café, tours of the site.

All on site at Blyth Battery, South Beach, Blyth.

[Saturday 16 – Sunday 17 May, 10.30am - 4pm](#)

Phone: (01670) 368816

[www.blythbattery.org.uk](http://www.blythbattery.org.uk)

### Kirkley Hall Countryside Festival

New countryside festival. A fun family day including entry into the Zoological Gardens, a variety of stalls and land based skills displays including horse riding, tree climbing, dog agility and much more.

Teaching staff will also be available to offer careers advice. Entry £3 per person. Parking will be in a field

[Sunday 17 May, 10am - 4pm](#)

Phone: (01670) 841235

[www.kirkleyhall.co.uk](http://www.kirkleyhall.co.uk)

### How to be a Roman soldier

Chesters Roman Fort  
Could you hack it in Roman Britain? Find out during military drill training. Dress like a soldier in authentic armour, handle ancient artefacts and learn how to defend yourself with a range of weaponry!

[Saturday 23 - Sunday 31 May, 11am - 5pm](#)

Phone: 0870 333 1183 | Email: [customers@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:customers@english-heritage.org.uk)

### Haltwhistle Spring Walking Festival

A selection of walks around the Haltwhistle area, taking you through stunning scenery.

[Saturday 23 – Monday 25 May](#)

[www.haltwhistlewalkingfestival.org/](http://www.haltwhistlewalkingfestival.org/)

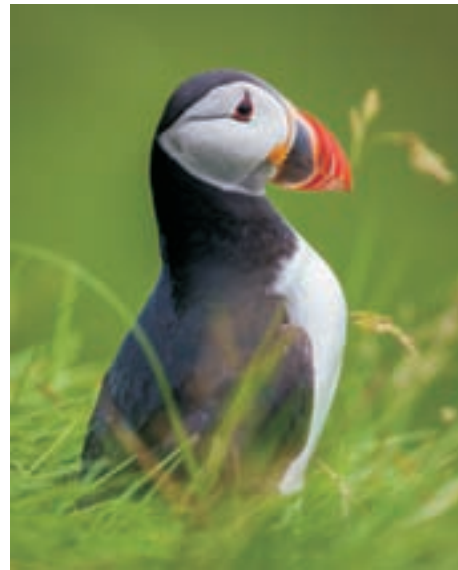
### Hexham Gathering

Hexham Gathering brings top folk and traditional performers together with some of the brightest rising stars in the new generation of folk musicians. It is the county's leading festival with a host of hugely talented young singers, dancers and instrumentalists.

[Saturday 23 - Monday 25 May 2015](#)

Tickets for all events available from Queen's Hall Arts Centre Box Office on (01434) 652477.

[www.sagegateshead.com/tour-dates/folkworks-hexham-gathering-2015](http://www.sagegateshead.com/tour-dates/folkworks-hexham-gathering-2015)



### Amble Puffin Festival

A week-long fun-filled festival, celebrating the puffins of the Northumberland coast, and in particular, welcoming the return of our own local puffin colony on nearby bird sanctuary Coquet Island, only one mile out of Amble Harbour.

[Sunday 24 May – Sunday 31 May](#)

Phone: (01665) 712313

[www.amblepuffinfest.co.uk](http://www.amblepuffinfest.co.uk)

### Northumberland County Show

There will be traditional animal classes, with a huge gathering of cattle, sheep, horses, alpacas, dogs and fur and feather exhibits. Over 300 trade stands – something for all.

[Monday 25 May – Gates open to the public at 9am](#)

Phone: (01434) 604216

Bywell, near Stocksfield, NE43 7AB

Email: [info@northcountyshow.co.uk](mailto:info@northcountyshow.co.uk)

[www.northcountyshow.co.uk](http://www.northcountyshow.co.uk)

### Rusty Bodkins Medieval Archer

Bamburgh Castle

Join Rusty as he explains the life of a medieval archer, his weapons and training, then have a go yourself and see how well you do!

[Sunday 31 May – Monday 1 June, 10am - 5pm](#)

Phone: 01668 214515

# EASTER ADVENTURE QUEST\*

Fri 3 – Mon 6 April 11am – 5pm

It's time to get clue-cracking and seek out  
your chocolate reward.



\*Easter events at Belsay Hall, Castle & Gardens and Hadrian's Wall  
(Corbridge Roman Town, Chesters Roman Fort, Housesteads Roman Fort & Birdoswald Roman Fort).



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