

# Northumberland news

Preparing for winter

Win a 3 night break at Kielder

What's on over Christmas





## 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.

Published each September, December, March and June it is distributed free of charge by Northumberland County Council. Every effort is made to ensure that all information is accurate at the time of publication.

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: Oliver Barlow, aged five looking into the Chantry window in Morpeth.**

# Christmas safety tips



Christmas is a time for celebrating and having fun with family and friends.

It is also a time when extra fire hazards such as fairy lights, candles and decorations are introduced into the home.

Government figures reveal that in England there are more deaths from accidental house fires during the Christmas period than at any other time of year.

Children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to accidental fires in the home, which is why Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service is reminding people to take extra care over the festive season and follow simple fire safety tips to keep their families and loved ones protected.

**On the 1st day of Christmas**  
Check your Christmas tree lights conform to the British Standard. Always use a residual current device (safety device that can save lives by instantly switching off the power) on outdoor electrical equipment.

**On the 2nd day of Christmas**  
Keep candles, lighters and matches out of the reach of children. Never leave burning candles unattended.

**On the 3rd day of Christmas**  
Ensure you have a working smoke alarm installed on all levels of your home and that you check the batteries regularly.

**On the 4th day of Christmas**  
Decorations can burn easily. Don't attach them to, or near, lights or heaters.

**On the 5th day of Christmas**  
Never overload electrical sockets. Take special care with Christmas lights. Always switch them off and unplug them before you go to bed.

**On the 6th day of Christmas**  
Celebrate Christmas and New Year safely. The risk of accidents, especially in the kitchen, is greater after alcohol is consumed.

**On the 7th day of Christmas**  
Most fires start in the kitchen. Never leave a cooker unattended.

**On the 8th day of Christmas**  
If you are planning to celebrate with fireworks, store them in a metal box, read the instructions, never go back to a lit firework and keep a bucket of water nearby.

**On the 9th day of Christmas**  
Make sure cigarettes are completely extinguished before going to bed. Take care when tired or after a few drinks. It is very easy to fall asleep while your cigarette is still burning.

**On the 10th day of Christmas**  
Never place burning candles near your Christmas tree or furnishings.

**On the 11th day of Christmas**  
Take time to check on elderly relatives and neighbours this Christmas to ensure their safety too.

**On the 12th day of Christmas**  
Make sure you have an escape plan and remember to keep escape routes clear. Finally, in the event of fire: get out, stay out and call 999.

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**Twitter at:** [www.northumberland.gov.uk/twitter](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/twitter)



**YouTube at:** [www.northumberland.gov.uk/youtube](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/youtube)

# Be bright morning or night

With the dark mornings and nights upon us we want to remind parents and children to be safe and be seen.

If you're a motorist then you'll know how difficult it can sometimes be to see pedestrians wearing dark clothes at night or when visibility is poor.

**As a pedestrian or cyclist you may see the driver but they might not see you.**

Visibility can be poor even during daylight, as the sun is lower in the sky in winter.

Your child will have been learning the road safety message 'Be Bright, Be Seen' at school, and it's important that you as a parent or carer help your child to be easily seen near traffic. This is an issue for all children, especially as many school uniforms are dark.

Most primary schools don't have rules about outer garments, so selecting a bright coat can help, as can providing fluorescent and reflective armbands and school bags.

Pictured: Leslie Gilbert the county's road safety officer has been visiting schools around Northumberland to talk to children about the importance of being safe and being seen, especially on dark winter nights. He is pictured here with young pupils from Wansbeck First School in Ashington.

**Be Bright,  
Be Seen**



## Five top tips on how to BE BRIGHT & BE SEEN

- Wear bright or fluorescent clothing in daylight or poor light.
- Wear reflective clothing at night; it shows up in car headlights. Reflective vests, sashes and wristbands work well. Remember, fluorescent clothing is not so visible after dark.
- Don't forget to accessorise! Even small items such as clip-on reflectors and stickers on your outfit or school bag are a great way to improve your visibility.
- If you like to cycle, always use your lights when cycling after dark, in the rain or if the weather is overcast. It is law to have clean and working lights at night (white lights at the front and red at the rear) as well as a rear reflector. It's good to fit spoke reflectors too.
- Of course, 'being bright' isn't the only way to stay safe. If you're out at night, choose routes and crossing places that are well lit, avoid listening to music or using your mobile phone while walking outdoors, keep away from the kerb and always use the Green Cross Code.

For more road safety tips, games and videos, visit the Tales of the Road website at [www.direct.gov.uk/talesoftheroad](http://www.direct.gov.uk/talesoftheroad)

# Buying locally to boost economy

A new initiative is being launched by Northumberland County Council with the aim of increasing council spending in the county to help to boost the local economy.

An estimated £406 million is spent annually by Northumberland County Council on hundreds of goods and services.

The authority aims to support and develop businesses within the county by spending more of this money locally.

From social care services, building maintenance, security, petrol, food and horticultural products - there are numerous contracts up for regular renewal.

An estimated 34 per cent of council's budget is spent in Northumberland and the authority is aiming to increase this amount by 10 per cent over the next two years.

Deputy Leader of Northumberland County Council, Councillor Dave Ledger who is responsible for the authority's corporate resources portfolio, said: "The council does spend a substantial amount in the local economy but there is scope to increase this further. While we still need to ensure good value for money, the council wants to use its spending powers to help support businesses within the county and assist regeneration across Northumberland."

The document 'Grow Northumberland: Our Commitment to Sustainable Procurement' outlines how the council aims to support local businesses, communities and the environment when procuring goods and services.

Over the coming weeks and months the authority will be raising awareness of procurement opportunities with local businesses and will be encouraging quality tenders from all sectors of the community.

**For more information email [lee.jackson@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:lee.jackson@northumberland.gov.uk) or telephone 01670 624851.**



# Council's new website launched

Finding out about Northumberland County Council, its services, and local events should be quicker and easier with the launch of its new website.

The council's website has been updated and re-launched with a fresh design, new facilities and a more user-friendly format.

The site uses the latest design technology so pages automatically work for every device including tablets, smartphones and PCs.

The new style web pages allow the public to complete simple transactions, report a problem or pay, apply for or book services online. A new 'find

it fast' directory also means that information on key council services is now much quicker to find.

There were over 2 million hits on the council's website last year and the number of transactions taking place online has doubled.

Almost one third of our website visitors do so from their smart-phones or tablets and the new website has been re-designed to make it easier for them to access the information they need.



# SAVE TIME

*do it online*



Did you know that we have made it easier for you to complete a whole range of tasks on your smart phone, tablet, laptop and home computer?



We've made some key improvements to our site and you can do everything from paying your council tax to reporting a faulty street light.

Simply visit [www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk) and click on the links to 'pay, apply or report' to access the relevant forms.

It's open 24/7, you won't have to wait in a queue or even leave the comfort of your own home to access a range of our services online.

You can even visit our easy-to-use website on the move through your smart phone or tablet.

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With more than 70 stunning venues, all approved for civil marriage, there is something to suit every budget.

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



# Busting adoption myths

This year's National Adoption Week saw a flurry of activity from the new Northumberland Family Placement Service, to encourage more people to come forward and adopt waiting babies and children.

Their campaign message 'Count Yourself in – Change Lives' has been promoted far and wide with the help of local partners.

Adopters are supported every step of the way both by the Northumberland Family Placement Service and by people who have already adopted children. They offer advice, reassurance and ongoing support with the challenges and rewards of creating a family through adoption. Some families also qualify for extra financial support through adoption allowances.

Policy board member for children's services and a member of the adoption panel, Councillor Robert Arckless, said: "Our families tell us that parenting through adoption is one of the most positive and rewarding experiences in life for the whole family but that they put off picking up the phone as they believed they could not adopt for one reason or another. We are urging people to count themselves in and change lives."

## DID YOU KNOW?

- There is no upper age limit when it comes to adopting a child. It's about being able to parent a child into adulthood.
- You can adopt a child if you're single, an unmarried couple, straight or gay.
- It only takes around 6 months to become an approved adopter.
- We are urgently seeking families for young babies and children aged up to eight years old.
- Having a disability or health issue does not necessarily mean you cannot adopt.
- You can still adopt if you have children of your own who are school age or older.
- If you work you can adopt. There is now statutory adoption pay and adoption leave to support you in providing space, time and care for your children.

- Northumberland works with regional and national partners to ensure that we find the right family as soon as possible for children.

Why not sign up for the next adoption information evening on 29 January to find out more. It runs from 6.30pm – 8.00pm in Morpeth. Ring or email to book a place.

**Visit: [adoption.northumberland.gov.uk](http://adoption.northumberland.gov.uk) for more information on adoption, or call a member of our adoption team on 01670 62 62 62 for an informal chat or to book a place on our January information evening.**



Pictured: Councillor Arckless, foster carer Carolyn Stubbs, service manager Alister Brown and corporate director of children's services Paul Moffat at the launch of the campaign 'Count yourself in! Change lives'.

**adoption?**  
**Count Yourself In! Change Lives**

**Northumberland**  
Northumberland County Council

**01670 626262**

**Family Placement Service**

# Have your say on job and housing proposals



The council has launched the latest round of consultation on the local plan core strategy for the county – this time looking at housing, employment and Green Belt policies.

We have been gathering detailed evidence on the level of development needed in the county to ensure that it can thrive economically, while protecting its special environmental qualities.

Residents, businesses and organisations across Northumberland have until January 2, 2014 to express their views.

The latest consultation document maps out a preferred approach for dealing with much

needed growth. Forecasts show that over 24,000 new homes need to be built in Northumberland by 2031 if the county is to hold its own in terms of economic growth.

Without new homes the county will experience a serious reduction in the working age population and areas that have experienced industrial decline will be less likely to be regenerated successfully. Similarly new homes in more rural areas will help to sustain local communities, services and businesses.

Councillor Allan Hepple, policy board member responsible for planning at Northumberland County Council said: “The evidence gathered shows that we need more homes for working families. We have to have a population that will not only support existing and

new jobs in the county but also sustain and develop local services and businesses.

“At each stage of the development of this plan we have listened carefully and responded to feedback provided. By working together with communities we can ensure that the right development takes place in the right places.”

The core strategy is the county's most important planning document, looking ahead two decades and on which future planning applications will be decided.

All documents and maps are available at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy) and paper copies can be found in all council planning receptions, libraries and information points. Paper copies can also be purchased.

During the consultation the council has been holding a number of drop-in events around Northumberland. Each includes a small exhibition from 3pm to 6pm followed by a discussion session between 6.30pm and 8.30pm. The following events are still to run:

- Wednesday 27 November Blyth (Buffalo Centre, Regent Street)
- Thursday 28 November Haltwhistle (Library, Westgate)
- Thursday 5 December Ashington (YMCA, North View)
- Tuesday 10 December Bedlington (Community Centre, Front Street)
- Thursday 12 December Cramlington (Library )

Please book your place for the discussion sessions on 01670 623 629 or by email to [planningstrategy@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:planningstrategy@northumberland.gov.uk)

# Preparing for winter

We can all take steps to ensure that if severe winter weather hits, we are prepared and able to cope.

Northumberland County Council services have been planning for months to ensure it can help keep the road network as clear as possible during winter and continue to provide services to the most vulnerable.

Our highways and local services teams are well prepared for the onset of icy road conditions with a full stock of 36,000 tonnes of salt now in place at depots around the county.

A fleet of 29 multi-purpose gritting vehicles with plough attachments are serviced and ready for use, and another four vehicles are in reserve. We also have gully tankers which are available to assist in case of flooding caused by rapid snow melt.



## **Keeping you informed**

This winter Northumberland residents can once again use social media to help deal with cold weather issues and access vital information over the internet.

More than 20,000 residents are now actively following the council's alerts on Facebook and Twitter. The alerts system provides instant, real-time information on issues like local weather warnings, school closures, road closures, flood alerts, delays to bin collections and any major emergencies.

## **Pothole repairs**

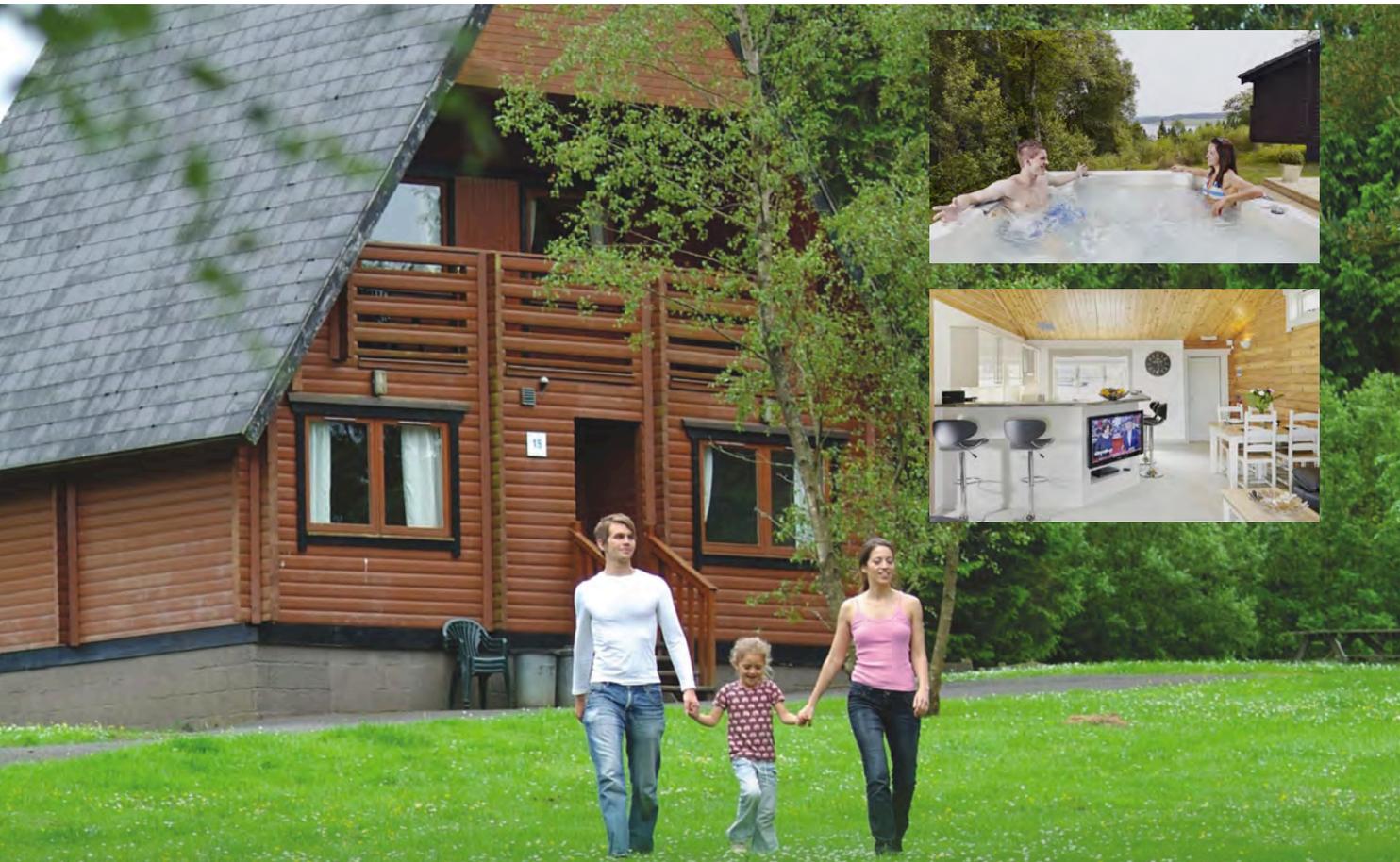
Repairing potholes on the county's massive network of rural roads is a real challenge. Following a successful trial, the council has bought two Jetpatcher machines - self contained units that carry all the necessary equipment and materials to repair potholes. The Jetpatcher is quicker and more effective than the conventional repair methods.

Residents can report a pothole by logging on to [www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

Councillor Grant Davey, leader of Northumberland County Council said: "As winter approaches, our plans are ready to keep the roads clear and deliver vital services to residents.

"I would urge residents to sign up to our alerts services to be kept informed about any winter weather issues."

Sign up for winter alerts at  
[Facebook.com/nccalerts](https://www.facebook.com/nccalerts) or on  
[Twitter.com/@northumberlands](https://twitter.com/@northumberlands)



# Win a luxury lodge break at Kielder

**Visitkielder.com** England's best tourism experience

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 the darkest night skies in England - just perfect for star gazing. With all this, it's no wonder Visit England awarded it the Gold Award for Tourism Experience of the Year.

Start planning your visit now and enter the competition to win your chance to stay three nights in a luxury Scandinavian style lodge\*. They are located at Leaplish Waterside Park, on the lakeside of Kielder Water which is set along 27 miles of shoreline and boasts panoramic views stretching over the lake and forest.



**The lakeside of Kielder is set along how many miles of shoreline?**

To enter send your answer along with a daytime contact telephone number, by email or post to arrive before 31 December 2013.

Email: [communications@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:communications@northumberland.gov.uk)  
Post to: Communications, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF

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

\*Lodge break must be taken between 1 February 2014 to 31 March 2014. Subject to availability. School holidays not included. Sleeps 4 – 6 people. Can not be used in conjunction with any other offer. Quote this competition when booking.



# Christmas fitness

Getting fit is always a popular New Year's resolution - but why wait until the New Year?

Many people pile on the pounds over Christmas then start a new health plan in January, only for it to fall by the wayside a few weeks later.

You don't need to be a gym junkie to stay in shape. Keeping fit and having fun should go hand in hand and you don't need to wait until January to start.

From canoeing to cricket, badminton to bowls, walking or dance, there are hundreds of sport and recreational clubs around the county offering a wide range of activities for everyone to enjoy.

Northumberland Sport ([www.northumberlandsport.gov.uk](http://www.northumberlandsport.gov.uk)) has a directory of sports clubs and activities across the county.

Northumberland's leisure centres and staff are also on hand to help whatever your health and fitness goals are.

With facilities to rival private health clubs and activity programmes to suit all ages the county's leisure operators are currently offering a wide range of Christmas and New Year membership and fitness promotions.

To find out what is happening in your area contact your local leisure centre:

- **ALNWICK:** Willowburn Leisure Centre - Tel: 01665 605030  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)
- **ASHINGTON:** Ashington Leisure Centre - Tel: 01670 542222  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)
- **BERWICK UPON TWEED:** Swan Centre for Leisure - Tel: 01289 330603  
[www.swanleisurecentre.co.uk](http://www.swanleisurecentre.co.uk)
- **BLYTH:** Blyth Sports Centre - Tel: 01670 542222  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)  
Sporting Club Blyth – Tel: 01670 542222  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)
- **CRAMLINGTON:** Concordia Leisure Centre – Tel: 01670 542222  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)  
Sporting Club Cramlington – Tel: 01670 542222  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)
- **HALTWHISTLE:** Haltwhistle Swimming and Leisure Centre – Tel: 01434 320727  
[www.haltwhistleleisure.co.uk](http://www.haltwhistleleisure.co.uk)
- **HEXHAM:** Wentworth Leisure Centre – Tel: 01434 607080  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)
- **MORPETH:** Riverside Leisure Centre – Tel: 01670 514665  
[www.harpersfitness.co.uk/riverside-leisure-centre--morpeth](http://www.harpersfitness.co.uk/riverside-leisure-centre--morpeth)
- **NEWBIGGIN BY THE SEA:** Newbiggin Sports and Community Centre - Tel: 01670 542222  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)
- **PONTELAND:** Ponteland Leisure Centre – Tel: 01661 825441  
[www.harpersfitness.co.uk/ponteland-leisure-centre](http://www.harpersfitness.co.uk/ponteland-leisure-centre)
- **PRUDHOE:** Waterworld – Tel: 01661 833144  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)
- **ROTHBURY:** Rothbury Pool and Gym – Tel: 01669 622834  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)



# Making a stand together

The Council's 'Don't stand for it' dog fouling campaign saw an increase in the number of enforcement officers and a rise in the amount of fines for irresponsible dog owners as the council and residents worked together to tackle this community problem.

During the summer zero tolerance campaign the council increased its efforts to raise awareness of the health problems associated with dog fouling.

Animal welfare officers visited schools to educate children about responsible dog ownership, including information on micro chipping and the importance of picking up after your dog.

In addition, 21 civil enforcement officers have been trained to carry out dog fouling enforcement as well as their regular duties, increasing the taskforce from 10 to 31.

So far this year, 54 fixed notice penalties have been issued and two successful prosecutions have led to substantial fines.



Pictured: Councillor Deidre Campbell, Councillor Dave Ledger, deputy leader of Northumberland County Council and policy board member responsible for public protection; newly trained civil enforcement officers and Titch the dog help launch the campaign during the summer.

Councillor Dave Ledger, deputy leader of the council with responsibility for public protection, said: "We have had a dual focus on enforcement and education. It's not just about punishing offenders, it's also about trying to help people, which is why we go into schools and talk to the children."

As part of the council's on-going effort to listen to the views of residents in order to improve the services it provides, a survey was created so residents and visitors could have their say on dog fouling.

Over 600 residents responded to the survey over the 12 days it ran, and the council received over 1,000 comments and likes on Facebook posts. Reports of dog fouling online are up 260% since the start of the campaign.

One of the successes of the campaign was the ability to directly respond to residents on social media and use residents help to identify problem areas.

**Residents can report dog fouling online at [www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk) or by phone on 0845 600 6400.**

## Northumberland is blooming marvellous



Northumberland blossomed once again this year as numerous awards and trophies were handed out across the county as part of the annual Northumbria in Bloom awards.

The awards ceremony was held in September at Sunderland's Stadium of Light where certificates and trophies were presented to the winners in the major awards and special awards categories.

Trophy winners were spread far and wide across the county. In the west, Hexham Hospital won best hospital and Great

Whittington took home the trophy for best small village. Best individual effort for the upkeep and layout of external premises went to The Alnwick Garden, the 2013 discretionary award to the Pottergate Adult Training Centre in Alnwick and Warkworth won the best large village. Trophies were awarded to Morpeth for best town and the Sanderson Arcade for best shopping precinct or retail park. There was also a special award given to Woodbine Terrace in Corbridge under the combined efforts of residents of a community category.

Councillor Ian Swithenbank, policy board member for streetcare and environment said: "Northumbria in Bloom

is a fantastic competition that recognises and celebrates the efforts of individuals, communities and businesses throughout Northumberland.

"The hard work of residents across the county has truly paid off with so many receiving gold, silver and bronze awards. The winners have such a positive effect on their communities and help keep our county beautiful, but it's also great that they enjoy what they're doing."

Morpeth went on to scoop further awards at the Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom Awards, including the very prestigious gold award for the Best Town in Britain!

# Flu at-risk groups urged to get vaccinated

People at most risk from flu are being urged to make sure they get vaccinated against the virus this winter by contacting their local GP now to book an appointment.

Pregnant women, people aged 65 years or over, adults and children with long term health conditions and carers and healthcare professionals, are known to be at risk.

Flu also affects those with weakened immune systems such as neurological disorders, liver, lung or renal disease, heart problems or diabetes.

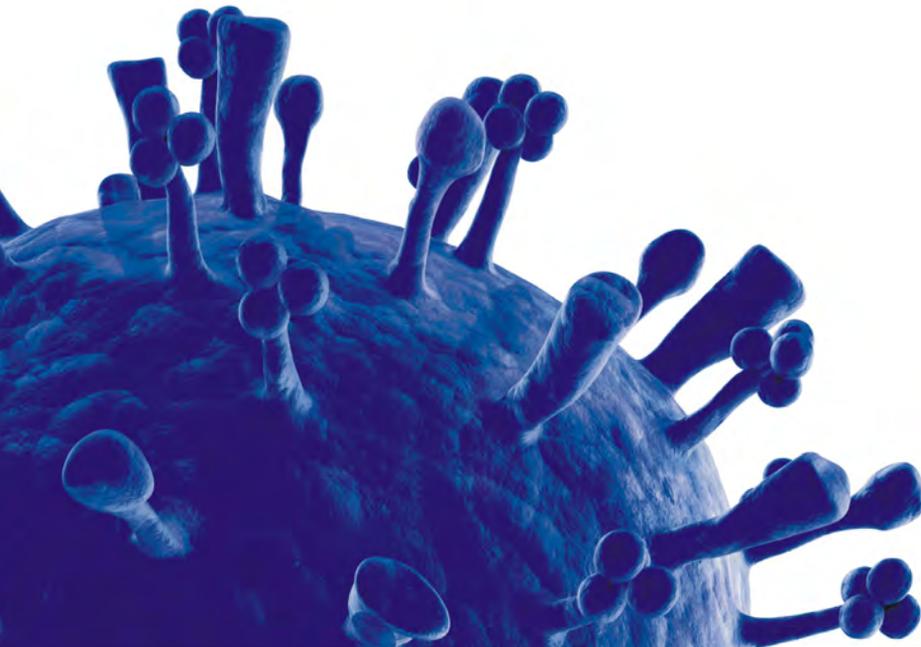
For the first time a nasal spray vaccine will be offered to healthy two and three year-old children

in a bid to slow down the spread of the virus. Young children's close contact with each other means they are more likely to transmit the virus to other more vulnerable groups, including older people.

Flu is a nasty illness which can spread easily. The extension to the vaccination programme for young children will not only protect more children, it will have a wider health impact in terms of protecting other people who they come into contact with.

Almost 800 people in England were admitted to intensive care with complications of flu last year and each winter hundreds of thousands of people see their GP and tens of thousands are hospitalised because of flu.

We urge everyone who is eligible, to get the vaccine and help protect themselves and their families this winter. Contact your GP surgery and make an appointment today.



**For further information about flu vaccination, including who should have it please visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**

## Learning project steams ahead

A heritage railway project has formed a unique partnership that is helping adults with learning disabilities to shine.

Railway-themed snacks baked at Pottergate Pantry are taken to be sold at the Aln Valley railway café on the outskirts of Alnwick.

Flowers and plants reared at Pottergate Potting Shed adorn the area surrounding the café.

Councillor Scott Dickinson, who is chairman of Northumberland's Health and Wellbeing Board recently paid a visit to the café.

He was keen to see how the community scheme is helping adults with learning disabilities to acquire new skills and interact with others on a daily basis.

"Both the café and gardening projects at The Aln Valley Railway are a great way of giving the clients experience in customer service and working as part of a team on a local project. This really demonstrates what can be achieved when we work together." said Councillor Dickinson.

**Pictured: Councillor Scott Dickinson with Stephanie Stafford, unit manager for the Pottergate Centre.**



## Dementia sufferers go green fingered

People with dementia and their carers can enjoy gardening and physical activity to improve their health and wellbeing thanks to a Blooming Well programme.

The programme is designed for people in the early stages of dementia and provides activities to help stimulate memories and conversations and reduce social isolation.

The project is part of the wider Ageing Well initiative funded by Northumberland County Council and delivered by older people

and local partners including Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, community and voluntary organisations, housing associations and leisure services.

**For further information on the Blooming Well programmes please contact Ann Brown on 01670 394 414.**

# Work starts on new £20m Ashington Community and Leisure Facility

The site of the former Asda store in Ashington is being transformed into a stunning new community and leisure facility.

The council is progressing and funding the new £20m development which will create a vibrant place in the heart of the town for people of all ages to have fun, learn, relax, and meet friends and new people. Construction work begins this winter and the new centre will open in 2015.

**Pictured: Artists impressions of how the new Ashington Community and Leisure Facility will look.**



The contemporary leisure facilities will feature a superb new swimming pool, a learner pool, advanced gym facilities, spa, multi-functional sports hall, soft play area and studio space to host classes and activities.

It will be the first point of contact for frontline council services and helpful advice and information. There will also be a café and meeting space, all together in one convenient and modern location.

Arch, The Northumberland Development Company is working on behalf of the council on this landmark building which forms part of the overall renewal of Ashington town centre.

The new building will be a welcoming and inclusive space

that is informative, friendly, safe and accessible to all customers. Northumberland residents will be able to borrow books, use computers, pay bills, access learning and skills opportunities, get information about health and register births, deaths and marriages - all from one location.

The high quality library will feature the latest interactive technology and provide free access to computers. Groups and classes will be on offer to help people learn new skills, such as using the internet to search, apply for jobs, borrow books and other online resources. Children will be able to enjoy an array of fun and exciting library activities to help them with reading and build their confidence.





Pictured: Children from schools in Berwick playing the steel pans.

## Berwick's musical youth

School children in and around Berwick are enjoying free music lessons with the help of musicians from Sage Gateshead.

The initiative has been made possible thanks to a £100,000 grant from Youth Music, the leading UK charity supporting life-changing music experiences and learning for children and young people.

The grant, awarded to Berwick's Holy Trinity First School in the

spring, has enabled the school to join forces with seven other local schools.

Over 700 pupils are to be given lessons in steel pans, singing and the guitar at the school's Mango Music Shed.

Councillor Robert Arkless, policy board member for children's services said: "We know that through music, many young people find a new focus in their lives and in this way the project will be providing them with a real boost to their confidence."



**The classes are open to children from Year 2 to Year 13. Participants will be performing at three celebratory events. The first of these will take place at The Maltings on December 2. To find out more visit [www.mangomusicshed.com](http://www.mangomusicshed.com)**

# Top tips to teach 'stranger danger'

The council works continuously with its partners to educate children and their families about the dangers of strangers. Here are some top tips that you can teach your kids to keep them safe without scaring them.

## Who is who?

It is both common and dangerous for children to think that strangers look scary or sinister, like villains in films or cartoons and in a recent survey the majority of children aged five to eight thought this.

One tip to help teach your child that this isn't always the case is to play a game, asking them to draw a picture of a stranger. This will help reinforce the message that a stranger can look like anyone and because they can't tell if a stranger is nice or not, all strangers should be treated in the same way.

## Don't go – Say no

The best advice to give your child is to encourage them to raise the alarm by saying 'no' if they are approached by a stranger. Teach kids the basic slogan, 'Don't go, say no'. As a parent, you should reassure your child not to be scared and that this is the right thing to do. Teach them to look out for people in uniforms such as police officers, teachers or traffic wardens if they're at the school gates.

Children aged five to eight are the most vulnerable when it comes to strangers. It is stressed that within this age group, children are told that they should NEVER talk to a stranger, NEVER accept gifts or sweets and NEVER walk off or get into a car with one.

## Time to teach

Tell your child that even if they are not sure if someone is a stranger they should always behave in the same way and not take risks. Teach them stock phrases to help give them confidence, for example, a child offered money or sweets should respond, 'No thank you. Please leave me alone.'

It's important children don't think that talking to a stranger is OK if they're with a friend. Teach them they should only talk to someone they don't know if you are there by their side.

## Plan ahead

A situation might arise if you are late collecting them from school, so agree a plan with your child that they know you will stick to if you are late. For example, teach them that you would only ever send a teacher from their school or a friend's parent, that they recognise to collect them if you aren't able to.

Give your child your home, work and mobile numbers so they can reach you at all times, especially if they're aged around 9-11, as they will be spending more time on their own.

## Regular conversations

Whichever way you decide to make your child aware of these dangers, it is important to have regular conversations, especially with younger children, every three to four months.

**For more advice on this subject visit**  
[www.northumberland.gov.uk/SafeguardingChildren](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/SafeguardingChildren)  
**and look under information for parents and carers, or contact Rachel Farnham on 01670 624 036.**



# Ambitious affordable homes plan underway

The council has launched a programme that will see millions of pounds invested over the next five years in more than 2,000 new affordable homes for the county.

Ambitious plans have been approved by the council's policy board which will identify a five year housing development programme split into two phases.

The council is currently building 191 affordable homes on three sites in Blyth, along with 10 new apartments in a combined healthcare facility at Haltwhistle.

In phase one of the programme the council has also identified the first locations for further affordable housing schemes – including Amble, Berwick, Blyth, Craster, Embleton, Shilbottle, Rothbury and Wooler.

Some sites are still subject to detailed feasibility work and relevant permissions, and where the council does not own the land there will also be negotiations with land owners or private developers.

Councillor Grant Davey, leader of Northumberland County



Pictured: Visiting the Tynedale Drive scheme in Blyth, are Cllr Grant Davey, leader of council; Kevin Lowry, Homes for Northumberland; Cllr Allan Hepple, policy board member for housing; Bill Carr, Homes and Communities Agency; Carla Keegans, head of housing and Stephen McCoy from Galliford Try.

Council said: “This is the most ambitious programme to be undertaken by the council for many years.

“We are determined to see many new affordable homes developed and made available for people across Northumberland.”

“We want to make properties available for people on the housing waiting list – but also through the construction programme to create hundreds of new jobs and apprenticeships for a local workforce.”

Need for the new homes has been identified through a county-wide housing needs survey which showed that more than 450 new homes will be

required each year for the next five years. This will address the backlog from a previous undersupply of affordable housing in the county.

The house-building will be funded by a combination of prudential borrowing and money made available through the council's housing revenue account. Following reforms local authorities have been given greater autonomy to make their own decisions in relation to spending on housing.

Funding will also be sought for schemes from the national Homes and Communities Agency.

Details of phase two of the programme will be finalised early next year but are expected to include a mixed programme of affordable housing, with some properties owned by the council and some by other housing providers.

# Gifts galore at Morpeth Chantry

Open all year round with displays full of locally sourced, hand-made quality products, the Morpeth Chantry turns into a true festive treat for all those visiting over the Christmas period.

Delighting Morpeth town centre with its decorative windows and locally sourced food treats, the Chantry is a great place to start your seasonal shopping spree.

Over 100 local crafts people and entrepreneurs sell and display their unique products in the newly extended building, offering gifts for any occasion.



Stalls range from water colour artists and oil painters to bespoke jewellery pieces and fabulous home furnishings including lampshades and professionally restored pieces of furniture. Varieties of artificial floral displays, wood craft products and prints by local photographers decorate the shelves along with a range of painted ceramics, which like many of the products on display, can be personalised to order.

This Christmas, the Chantry is offering a new range of bespoke hampers where the customer can buy their items in store and for a charge of £5, the gifts can

then be beautifully wrapped and decorated in the hamper style.

Owned and managed by Northumberland County Council, the Chantry also houses Morpeth's Tourist Information Centre which provides a host of discounted tickets for local attractions, a booking service for local accommodation providers and for Superbreak and Travel-Sure who offer a fantastic range of mini-breaks and daytrips across the UK.

It is also home to the famous bagpipe museum which houses a unique collection of bagpipes and small pipes from all over the world.



Any craftspeople and producers interested in joining Morpeth Chantry's retail offer can call (01670) 623455 or 623454. The Chantry is open Mondays to Saturdays from 9.30am until 5pm and on Bank Holidays and Sundays from 11am until 4pm throughout December.

People can also visit Tourist Information Centres across the county to purchase their Christmas gifts and hampers.

# Northumberland Tales aired to the nation

Smash-hit TV show Tales from Northumberland with Robson Green has been hailed a major success and has catapulted the county into the homes of millions of viewers each week.

The eight-part series, which is aired on ITV, hit the screens at the end of October and is set to run until December.

The prime-time series sees Northumberland born actor Robson Green take a nostalgic journey around the county. During filming, Robson reconnects with his Northumberland roots and digs deeper into its history to discover stories that he did not even know himself.

Filming of the series took place at some stunning locations. From counting puffins on the Farne Islands, camping on Hadrian's Wall, smoking kippers in Craster, dining on the roof of Bamburgh Castle or joining an impromptu gig at Low Newton, his adventures take him around a part of the country that means so much to him.

Councillor Grant Davey, Leader of Northumberland County Council said: "The programme has been a resounding success and it is fantastic that



**Pictured: Northumberland born actor, Robson Green attended a special screening of his new series Tales from Northumberland which was premiered at Alnwick Playhouse. He is pictured here with rangers from the Farne Islands who featured in the first episode of the series.**

Northumberland has been showcased to a national audience. Millions of viewers across the UK have tuned in every week to watch the great characters and the stunning landscape of our magnificent county.

"Tourism is so important to our economy and this series will undoubtedly boost our visitor figures by inspiring people to come and see the county for themselves. I am sure that once they have been, they will come back for more."

Northumberland County Council has been working closely with production company Shiver to assist with the filming.

The series is screened on Monday evenings at 8pm on ITV1.

**You can follow the conversations about the programme on Facebook and Twitter:**

<https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandevents#!/talesfromnorthumberland>

<https://twitter.com/talesfromnorth>

# Keep calm and be ready for winter

Winter is traditionally one of the busiest times of the year for NHS services and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is working with health and social care partners to ensure that residents across Northumberland are well prepared and looked after during the cold season.

Over the winter months, teams of staff in hospitals and in the community from Northumbria Healthcare will be caring for hundreds of people across the county every single day.

The trust's fleet of four-by-four vehicles will enable staff, such as district nurses and social workers, to continue to provide services in bad weather to residents in the most rural communities, and even in the harshest of conditions.

This winter Northumbria Healthcare is also supporting the North East NHS in its 'Keep Calm and Look After Yourself' campaign, which is funded by NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)



**Community healthcare teams will have access to four-by-four vehicles this winter to ensure they reach residents in bad weather.**

along with the region's other 11 CCGs. The campaign aims to remind people that many common winter illnesses are easily treated at home, or with advice from a pharmacist – with no need to see a doctor or nurse.

The 'Keep Calm' campaign gives advice on how to treat a range of common winter conditions by keeping a well-stocked medicines cabinet at home or speaking to your local pharmacist.

The campaign will feature staff from Northumbria Healthcare in a series of short videos which will be shared online as part of a digital campaign to encourage people to look after themselves well this winter.

Hexham GP and NHS Northumberland CCG lead for urgent care, Dr David Shovlin, said there is no need to panic when feeling under the weather. "Most normally healthy people with a winter illness do not need to see their GP, attend A&E and absolutely do not need to call 999 – so our message this winter is 'keep calm'.

"Colds, sore throats, headaches, hangovers, upset stomachs, coughs, aches, pains, and winter vomiting should all be treated at home or with the advice of your local pharmacist, with pain killers, rest and plenty of fluids.

"By doing this not only are you helping to reduce the spread of winter viruses to other vulnerable patients in NHS waiting rooms – you are also keeping appointments available for people who have serious health conditions that must see a doctor or nurse."

Jane Weatherstone, GP clinical director at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, who works in A&E, said: "Our teams in A&E will always be on hand throughout the winter should people need them in an emergency, however, we would ask people to consider the most appropriate service to help them get the right treatment quickly.

"Most common winter ailments can be treated at home so please 'keep calm' this winter and make sure you look after yourself well."



# KEEP CALM AND LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Colds, sore throats, hangovers, upset stomachs and headaches can all be treated by you at home.

- Make sure you get plenty of rest ✓**
- Take a painkiller if needed ✓**
- Keep a well-stocked medicine cabinet ✓**

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

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

## What's on December

### **Christmas Market**

Sunday 1 December,  
11am – 3pm  
Ford Village  
Phone 01890 820338  
[www.ford-and-et-al.co.uk](http://www.ford-and-et-al.co.uk)

### **Christmas Fayre at Woodhorn**

Sunday 1 December  
Woodhorn, Ashington  
Phone 01670 624455  
[www.experiencewoodhorn.com](http://www.experiencewoodhorn.com)

### **Lantern Making Workshop and Lantern Parade**

Sunday 1 December. Workshop  
10.30am - 2pm, lantern parade  
at 4pm  
Woodhorn, Ashington  
Phone 01670 624455  
[www.experiencewoodhorn.com](http://www.experiencewoodhorn.com)

### **Christmas Lunch**

Friday 6 December  
Ridley Hall, Bardon Mill  
Phone 01434 632274  
Booking essential

### **Morpeth Farmers' Market**

Saturday 7 December, 9am -  
3pm  
Market Place, Morpeth, NE61  
1HG  
Phone 077131 15204

### **Festive Carols and Seasonal Songs**

Saturday 7 December  
Belsay Hall, Castle and  
Gardens. Performances at  
12noon and 2pm  
Ticket prices vary, English  
Heritage Members go free  
Phone 01661 881636  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/)  
Belsay

### **Festive Carols and Seasonal Songs**

Sunday 8 December  
Belsay Hall, Castle and  
Gardens. Performances at  
12noon and 2pm  
Ticket prices vary, English  
Heritage Members go free  
Phone 01661 881636  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/)  
Belsay

### **Spittal Christmas Parade & Fair**

Friday 13 December. Fair from  
5.30pm & parade from 6.30pm  
Main street, Spittal, Berwick-  
upon-Tweed  
Phone 07752403409  
[www.spittalisgreat.co.uk](http://www.spittalisgreat.co.uk)

### **Ghost Stories for Christmas**

Friday 13 and Saturday 14  
December, 7.30pm-9.30pm  
Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens  
Phone 01661 881636  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/)  
Belsay

### **Hexham Christmas Market**

Saturday 14 December  
Hexham  
Phone 01434 603022  
[www.visithexham.net](http://www.visithexham.net)

### **House-Concert with Gareth Davies-Jones**

Saturday 14 December, 7.45pm  
St. Cuthbert's House,  
Seahouses, NE68 7UB  
Tickets are £10  
Phone 01665 720456  
[stay@stcuthbertshouse.com](mailto:stay@stcuthbertshouse.com)  
[www.stcuthbertshouse.com](http://www.stcuthbertshouse.com)

### **The Victorian Christmas Cook**

Saturday 14 and Sunday 15  
December, 11am-4pm  
Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens  
Phone 01661 881636  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/)  
Belsay

### **4x4 Safari through Kielder Forest**

Sunday 15 December  
Phone 08445863484

### **Rudolph's Rustic Reindeer and Christmas Crafts**

Sunday 15 December, 10.30am-  
12pm and 1.30pm-3pm  
Plessey Woods Country Park  
Tickets are £15  
Phone 01670 824793  
[plesseywoods@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:plesseywoods@northumberland.gov.uk)  
Booking essential

### **Festive Carols and Seasonal Songs: Caedmon Choir**

Sunday 15 December, 10am –  
4pm  
Belsay Hall Castle & Gardens  
Ticket prices vary, English  
Heritage Members go free  
Phone 01661 881636  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/)  
Belsay

### **Light Up a Life Service**

Monday 16 December, 7pm  
Berwick Baptist Church  
Phone 0191 246 9123  
[fundraising@stoswaldsuk.org](mailto:fundraising@stoswaldsuk.org)

### **Christmas Concert**

Saturday 21 December  
Bamburgh Castle  
Phone 01668 214208  
[www.bamburghcastle.com](http://www.bamburghcastle.com)

**Netherton Folk Club  
Christmas Party**

Saturday 21 December, 7.30pm-  
11pm  
Netherton Memorial Hall , NE65  
7EZ  
£2 per person  
Phone 01669 630258

**Make a Christmas  
Decoration**

Sunday 22 December  
Bamburgh Castle  
01668 2145415  
www.bamburghcastle.com

**Boxing Day Dip**

Thursday 26 December, 11am  
Spittal Beach, Berwick-upon-  
Tweed  
Phone 01670 622155

**Victorian Christmas**

Saturday 28 & Sunday 29  
December, 11.30am – 4pm  
Belsay Hall  
Phone 01661 881636  
www.english-heritage.org.uk/  
Belsay

**Allendale Tar Barl's  
Ceremony**

Tuesday 31 December  
Allendale  
Phone 01434 683638

**To find out about events  
happening in Northumberland  
visit [events.northumberland.  
gov.uk](http://events.northumberland.gov.uk) or follow us on:**

 **[Twitter.com/EventsNE](https://twitter.com/EventsNE)**

 **[Facebook.com/  
northumberlandevents](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandevents)**

# Bin collections for Christmas and New Year

Homes whose bins are collected on Mondays and Tuesdays are unaffected by the holiday period.

Households whose usual collection day is a Wednesday or a Thursday will be collected two days late during Christmas week and one day late during New Year week.

There is an on-line postcode checker on the council's website [www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk) for those who have internet access. Just tap in your postcode, choose your property and your own calendar for both rubbish and recycling bins will appear.

Please be aware that during times of bad weather bin collections may be unavoidably affected. At these times please check council alerts for information.

## Garden waste reminder

Garden waste  
collections will start  
again in February  
and March 2014.

Existing users will receive a  
letter inviting them to renew  
their subscription.  
New customers will be able  
to apply for the service in  
February 2014.



# Recycle your real Christmas tree

Real Christmas trees can be recycled into good quality compost or soil conditioner, or into chippings.

**You can take them to your local household waste recovery centre at any time**, where they are collected and recycled along with other items of garden waste.

After Christmas, to make it easier to recycle your tree, we have arranged additional collection points across the county. Please ensure that you have deposited your tree there by the end date.



## Alnwick area

You can take your Christmas tree to one of the sites below from 2 January until the chipping day. Please make sure that there is no string or metal attached to it. If you would like a bag of chippings please call at a site during the chipping time.

Collection site	Chipping day	Time
• Alnwick - Greenwell Lane car park	Mon 6 Jan	9 – 11.30am
• Amble - Coquet Street car park	Tue 7 Jan	9 – 10.30am
• Warkworth - Beach Road car park	Tue 7 Jan	11 – 12.30pm
• Longframlington - football field	Wed 8 Jan	9 – 10.30am
• Felton - lay-by at north of village	Wed 8 Jan	11 – 12.30pm
• Rothbury - Cow Heugh car park	Thu 9 Jan	9 – 12pm
• Powburn - Hedgeley Services	Fri 10 Jan	9 – 10.30am
• Embleton - recycling site	Fri 10 Jan	11.30 – 1pm

## Berwick upon Tweed area

Collection site	Dates
• Homepage car park, Tweedmouth	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Bamburgh recycling centre	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Beadnell car park	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Ellingham recycling centre	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Holy Island at Green Lane car park	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Horncliffe Village Hall	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Norham recycling centre	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Lowick recycling centre	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Seahouses car park	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan

## Blyth and Cramlington area

• ASDA – Blyth	Fri 27 Dec – Mon 6 Jan
• Alexandra Park – Cramlington	Fri 27 Dec – Mon 6 Jan
• Ranch Car Park, Links Rd	Fri 27 Dec – Mon 6 Jan
• Manor Walks South, Cramlington	Fri 27 Dec – Mon 6 Jan

## Morpeth and Ponteland area

• Cresswell Dunes boatyard car park	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Ponteland Leisure Centre	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Morpeth Riverside Leisure Centre car park	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan
• Pegswood welfare car park	Thu 2 – Fri 10 Jan

## West area

• Heritage Centre, Bellingham	Fri 27 Dec – Fri 10 Jan
• The Old Playground, Riding Mill	Fri 27 Dec – Fri 10 Jan

## Wansbeck area

• Ravensworth Tce car park, Bedlington Station	Fri 27 Dec – Mon 6 Jan
• Market Place car park, Bedlington	Fri 27 Dec – Mon 6 Jan
• B&Q car park, North Seaton	Fri 27 Dec – Mon 6 Jan
• Newbiggin Sports centre car park	Fri 27 Dec – Mon 6 Jan
• Wansbeck Square car park, Ashington	Fri 27 Dec – Mon 6 Jan
• Ellington Library car park	Fri 27 Dec – Mon 6 Jan

## Help for new and growing businesses

Over £1.3m is being invested in supporting new and growing businesses in Northumberland.

Arch and Northumberland County Council are providing half of the funds, and it is part-funded by the North East European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) competitiveness programme 2007 – 2013.

The Business Northumberland service is dedicated to helping people who are thinking about starting a business or who want to develop and grow a business in the county. The team can help you with:

- Answers to your business questions from sourcing finance and marketing your business to choosing the right premises
- Access to the latest business resources and business support available within Northumberland
- Developing new personal skills by introducing you to a mentor via a free matching service
- Intensive support and advice for high growth business start-ups
- Business workshops on business planning, financial management and tax, marketing, promotion and sales.



Pictured: Mike Jobson Programme Manager, Oxford Innovation and The All-in-One-Company's Managing Director, Kate Dawson.

One Northumberland business that has already benefited from the business coaching is The All-in-One-Company. Since it was established in 2008 the company has exported suits of all shapes and sizes to over 150 countries worldwide.

Despite recording a turnover of over £1million last year, wide seasonal fluctuations in the company's order book was hindering further expansion so Kate Dawson, the Managing Director, turned to the 'Business Northumberland' programme for advice and a solution to spread production more evenly throughout the year.

"I'm really happy with the solution we have adopted," said Kate. "The business was already successful but the next stage in its development had to be very

carefully planned and managed. We are now very well placed to grow and meet the incredible demand for our all in one suits."

Arch has a county-wide remit to deliver development and regeneration and to attract investment. The organisation brings together services in housing, commercial property, physical regeneration, digital transformation and business growth. Wholly owned by Northumberland County Council, Arch has a focus on economic growth designed to bring a more enterprising and business-like approach to development and regeneration in Northumberland.

There is support and information available to help you make it happen – and Business Northumberland is here to help you to find it!

Find out how we can help you, call us today on 08451 444 000 or visit [www.businessnorthumberland.co.uk](http://www.businessnorthumberland.co.uk)

# Book festival success

The 30th Northern Children's Book Festival proved to be one of the most successful yet, with more than 1,500 children turning up to the gala day event to be entertained and enlightened by a range of authors, poets, storytellers and illustrators.

The festival at Woodhorn Museum promoted the sheer enjoyment of reading and celebrated the great writing currently available in this country.

The event was a fitting finale to a fortnight of author talks and workshops that took place in schools and libraries across Northumberland and the North East.

During the event, 10 of the country's leading children's authors and illustrators, including David Almond, Korky Paul and Berwick-based partners Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom, entertained children with their exciting workshops and shows, which were full of jokes and fun. As part of the event there were also storytelling sessions, craft activities and face painting.

Afterwards children were able to buy books that were on sale, meet the authors and take home signed copies.

The event is Europe's longest-running children's book festival and was co-hosted by Northumberland and North Tyneside Libraries.

Councillor Val Tyler, policy board member for community infrastructure and culture at

Northumberland County Council, said: "The feedback was extremely positive with children, teachers, library staff and parents all commenting on how much they enjoyed the events. Hopefully we've managed to inspire lots of local children to be lifelong readers. You never know, we might have fired the spark that will help create the next Michael Morpurgo or Jacqueline Wilson!"



**Celebrating 30 years of NCBF**



# Northumberland breaks reading record



Pictured: Councillor Eileen Burt is pictured with a group of young readers from the Prudhoe area who were all smiles when they were presented with certificates and medals as their reward for a summer full of reading.

A record breaking number of children from around the county signed up to and completed this year's Summer Reading Challenge.

In total, a fantastic 3,657 children in Northumberland signed up to the challenge - an increase of 650 on last year - and the highest numbers since the challenge started in 1999.

Every year Northumberland County Council's libraries take part in the national Summer Reading Challenge which is co-ordinated by the Reading Agency.

The challenge, now in its 15th year, is designed to help children

develop a love of reading, boost their confidence and teach them new skills.

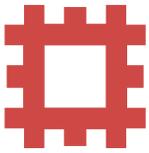
As well as fun games and craft activities held at libraries across the county, the youngsters aged from 4 to 11 are encouraged to read six or more books over the summer. They receive incentives along the way and then a medal and certificate when they complete the challenge.

Councillor Val Tyler, policy board member for community infrastructure and culture said: "It is absolutely fantastic that we have had a record number of children join the challenge this year and I'd like to congratulate every single child who took part.

"It's really important that youngsters are encouraged to read. The Reading Challenge is a great way of doing this so more families visit their local libraries, enjoy reading together and discover all the fantastic free resources that are available."



Pictured: Eight year old Oscar Mitchell from Stocksfield.



ENGLISH  
HERITAGE

# Step into England's story



## A PRESENT FROM CHRISTMAS PAST

This November and December, English Heritage brings the nostalgia, traditions and history of Christmas to life with a series of events at Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens in Northumberland.

Christmas time at Belsay has always been special. It was on Christmas Day in 1817 that the Middleton family (Belsay's ancestral family) moved into the home that had taken over a decade to build. This special link to Christmas is continued every year with a programme of festive events, all centred on the celebration of Christmas past.

### HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS WEEKENDS AT BELSAY HALL

Sat 30 November & Sun 1 December  
**A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Sat 7 December  
**FESTIVE CAROLS AND SEASONAL SONGS (PONTELAND LADIES CHOIR)**

Sun 8 December

**FESTIVE CAROLS AND SEASONAL SONGS (AYRES AND GRACENOTES)**

Fri 13 & Sat 14 December

**GHOST STORIES FOR CHRISTMAS (EVENING EVENTS BOOKING ESSENTIAL)**

Sat 14 & Sun 15 December

**THE VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS COOK**

Sunday 15 December

**FESTIVE CAROLS AND SEASONAL SONGS (THE CAEDMON CHOIR)**

Sat 28 & Sun 29 December

**VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS**

For more information on events at Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens this Christmas, please visit [www.english-heritage.org.uk/belsay](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/belsay) or telephone 01661 881636.