

Northumberland news



CHRISTMAS BIN DATES

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

WARM WELCOME HUBS

CHILDCARE CHOICES





HELPFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT HUB

For up-to-date information for you and your family about local and national cost of living support, including payments that you may be eligible for, your nearest community spaces and people across our county who are here to support you - visit our homepage www.northumberland.gov.uk/support

It contains information such as:

- Discounts and payments from the government including the Household Support Fund
- Support for household bills - gas and electricity
- Benefits checker
- Information on keeping warm this winter and warm community spaces
- Support for families – including family hubs
- Help with transport costs
- Mental health and wellbeing support
- Information for housing and council tenants
- Support for businesses
- Skills, jobs and work
- How to volunteer

The webpages are constantly updated with the latest information.

If you don't have access to a computer, please contact Northumberland Communities Together on **01670 620015**.

If English is not your preferred language, you can ask the advisor to use a translator: Typetalk **01800 10845 600 6400**.

If you are deaf or can't speak on the phone, contact us using Relay UK: **018001 01670 623 515** or Sign video: northumberlandcc-cs.signvideo.net.

ONECALL

If you are worried about a child or adult's immediate welfare: **01670 536400**. Email onecall@northumberland.gov.uk.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties, you can use Relay UK Tel: **018001 01670 536400**.

NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Helping everyone connect. Are you or someone you know worried about staying warm, winter bills, feeling lonely or struggling with family pressures. Email nct@northumberland.gov.uk or call **01670 620 015** between 9am - 6pm, seven days a week.

Language translator: If English is not your preferred language you can ask the advisor to use a translator. Type talk: **01800 10845 600 6400**.

If you are deaf or can't speak on the phone, contact us using Relay UK: **018001 01670 623 515** or Sign video: northumberlandcc-cs.signvideo.net

DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT SERVICE NORTHUMBERLAND

This service is available 24 hours a day, providing confidential support and advice for women and men who are at risk of domestic abuse Tel **01670 820 199**.

CONTACTING THE COUNCIL

If you need to contact the council in relation to council tax, bin collections, housing queries, report, apply, or pay for something. In the first instance, please use the council's website www.northumberland.gov.uk, alternatively call **0345 600 6400**.

CITIZENS ADVICE

For consumer service advice, free phone **0808 223 1133**. Helplines are open Monday - Friday 9am-5pm.

INSIDE

- 4 Foster carers needed
Support for dads
- 5 Join your library
Help for childcare
- 6 A day in the life
Christmas bin dates
- 7 Staying well in winter
Warm Spaces welcome
- 8 Be prepared for winter
- 9 Festive safety tips
- 10-11 The year in review
- 12 Telephone network changes
Make your home more
energy efficient
- 13 Protecting the environment
Sycamore Gap
Free trees
School gardeners
- 14 Rail line's return
New SEND courses
- 15 Kickstarting
engineering careers
- 16 Love your local market
- 17 More affordable housing
National award for school
Ofsted high for local schools
- 18 Playzone progress
Pre-loved sports clothing
Volunteer walk leaders



KEEP IN TOUCH...

To stay informed about all our service developments please follow us on our social media channels.



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



[x.com/N_LandCouncil](https://twitter.com/N_LandCouncil)



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



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

A MESSAGE FROM THE LEADER OF NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL, GLEN SANDERSON

As another year draws to a close, we can reflect on the highs and lows of the previous 12 months.

Sadly, it's been another year where parts of the world have seen strife and suffering, and our thoughts remain with all those affected.

Closer to home, while Covid is still with us, it feels like we're moving forward to a brighter future, and it's been a very busy 2023 for the council.

There have been highlights for me personally which include the re-opening of the Union Chain Bridge connecting England and Scotland, rapid progress on the Northumberland Line due to open next year and the unveiling of our latest £21m leisure centre in Morpeth.

While reflecting on this year, we're investing in new schools in Seaton Valley, Amble and Berwick, and brand-new training facilities for our future generations, major funding to regenerate our town centres and finding more money to keep our huge road network in good condition.

But we know the cost of living, driven by global events, remains



an issue for many of us. That's why we've again been working hard to pull together a comprehensive package of all the support that's available from ourselves and our partners. There's a lot more detail inside the magazine.

Of course, all this work wouldn't have been possible without the dedication and support of the thousands of council staff who work up and down our county on behalf of residents, to whom I am very grateful.

So, as we prepare to bid farewell to 2023 may I wish you all a safe and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Morpeth Leisure Centre



Union Chain Bridge



Northumberland Line

STAY INFORMED

Please enter the link [nland.cc/weekly](https://www.nland.cc/weekly) to sign up for updates on important local news and changes to council services.

A NEW TEAM TO HELP YOU SUPPORT LOCAL CHILDREN

Sadly, there are currently over 6,000 vulnerable children and young people in care across the North East but just over 1,500 approved foster carers available - 33% fewer than a year ago.

We really need more foster carers to come forward, so please don't rule yourself out – you really could make a difference to a child or young person.

There are a variety of paid foster care roles you could choose from. Whether you want to give a youngster temporary support or can commit to a long-term role bringing a child up, there are options available for you.

Our fostering service, Northumberland Fostering has joined 11 other councils in the region to create Foster With North East, a recruitment and applicant support hub to help recruit more foster carers across the region.

It offers a central point of contact and support where you can discuss the type of care you could offer, and should you decide to give fostering a go, experienced staff will be on hand to help you through the application and training process. You will also be buddied up with a local foster carer who will be on hand to offer help and support throughout the process.



Find out more at www.fosterwithnortheast.org.uk or call 0800 917 7771

FAMILY HUBS LAUNCH DADPAD APP TO SUPPORT NEW DADS

New dads in Northumberland can now have free access to the DadPad app to help them give their baby the best start in life.

Northumberland County Council has invested funding from its trailblazing Family Hub programme to make the app free for all dads in the county.

Hard copies of the DadPad book are also available to pick up and borrow from the hubs.



Both the book and the app are packed with trusted advice and support specially tailored to new dads and dads-to-be, helping them to gain confidence and practical skills at what can often be an overwhelming time.

Tom Bowes has been coming to Alnwick Family Hub with his son Ethan since he was just a few months old.

He said: "Becoming a new dad was absolutely terrifying.



"There's very little information out there that seems to be directed towards dads. The DadPad is great as it brings together the information and makes it accessible in a great way to give you more confidence that you're doing the right thing.

"The Family Hub has been absolutely brilliant because it gives an opportunity for Ethan to socialise with children of a similar age in a safe environment.

"I've also been given access to courses such as health and safety and healthy eating and nutrition which have been very useful."

Find out more about support for dads in Family Hubs at nland.cc/ParentZone or scan the QR code





CHILDCARE CHOICES – GET THE HELP THAT FITS YOUR FAMILY

Thousands of families could be saving money on their childcare costs, but some simply don't know what support they might be eligible for.

The Childcare Choices website brings together all the existing childcare offers in one place, so parents can get the help that fits their family.

This could be through Tax-Free Childcare, 30 Hours Childcare, or Universal Credit Childcare. And from next year even more help is on the way:

- From April 2024, eligible working parents in England with children aged 2 will have access to 15 hours childcare.
- From September 2024, the 15 hours childcare offer will be expanded to eligible working parents in England with children between 9 and 23 months old.
- From September 2025, eligible working parents in England with children between 9 months up to school age will have access to 30 hours childcare.



Support is also expanding for primary-school aged children – from September 2024, parents are expected to see an expansion in the availability of childcare in their local area before and after school, between 8am and 6pm, also known as 'wraparound care'.

Don't miss out on getting the support you are entitled to. Visit the Childcare Choices website to check what offer you might be eligible for and sign up to our newsletter to get the latest updates about the childcare support expansion.

Visit: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk



Council Leader Glen Sanderson is pictured at Haltwhistle Library awarding certificates and medals to children who completed the Summer Reading Challenge.

START A NEW CHAPTER AND JOIN YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY

If you think a library is a dusty old building full of people telling you to shush, where all you can do is get a book... then think again!

Your local library is **FREE** to join and gives you access to:

- Thousands of books
- Free wi-fi and access to computers
- Lots of groups and events for adults and children
- A welcoming space to meet, read and study
- Access to digital libraries where you can read eBooks, eMagazines and Newspapers

It's easy to join online or in person and our staff are really friendly, helpful and knowledgeable too!

To find out more head to your nearest library or to sign up online go to: www.mylibrary.co.uk

LIBRARY HOME DELIVERY SERVICE

If you're struggling to visit your local library and don't want to feel reliant on a friend or neighbour, why don't you contact us about home delivery? The perfect link between our bookshelves and your front room, our free service is available at lots of our libraries county-wide.

To find out more, give us a call on **0345 600 6400** or email mylibrary@northumberland.gov.uk

A DAY IN THE LIFE...

NAME: CHRIS MORDUE SERVICE: 23 YEARS
JOB: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES TEAM LEADER



With almost a quarter of a Century's service behind him, Chris Mordue has been asked to do plenty of jobs, but being volunteered to be Santa at the local lights switch on is definitely up there with the best!

As a team leader with the council's Neighbourhood Services, Chris is a respected member of the community – responsible for keeping the villages of Seaton Delaval, Seaton Sluice, Seghill, New Hartley and Holywell looking spick and span. He's become so well known that this year, he was asked to become Father Christmas for the festive lights switch on!

A 'typical' day sees him opening up the depot at 6.30am, out early to enjoy the peace and quiet of Astley Park where he's based, before it gets busy. Once his team arrive, there's the usual admin - addressing any urgent issues which need taking care of.

"We've got around 50 floral beds to maintain, miles of grass to cut from

grass verges and housing estates to three bowling greens, public toilets to look after, beaches to clean and playparks to keep safe," says Chris.

He also needs to ensure all the work is done to a high standard, staff have the right protective gear and equipment is all in good working order.

"There's a real sense of pride in doing this job. And we really do get great feedback – not just from councillors and senior staff, but the people who live in our area – they want their villages to look and feel special and we're helping them achieve that."



CHRISTMAS BIN COLLECTION DATES

When will my bins be collected this Christmas?

The week commencing 25th December 2023 is affected by two bank holidays, one on Monday 25th December and another on Tuesday 26th December - collections will be **TWO DAYS** later to cover this.

The week commencing 1st January 2024 is affected by one bank holiday, on Monday 1st January - collections will be **ONE DAY** later to cover this.

Your collection day will be as follows:

ORIGINAL COLLECTION DAY

Monday 25th December
Tuesday 26th December
Wednesday 27th December
Thursday 28th December
Monday 1st January
Tuesday 2nd January
Wednesday 3rd January
Thursday 4th January

REVISED COLLECTION DAY

Wednesday 27th December
Thursday 28th December
Friday 29th December
Saturday 30th December
Tuesday 2nd January
Wednesday 3rd January
Thursday 4th January
Friday 5th January

WHAT'S CHANGING FOR ME?

Collection 2 days later than normal
Collection 2 days later than normal
Collection 2 days later than normal
Collection 2 days later than normal
Collection 1 day later than normal
Collection 1 day later than normal
Collection 1 day later than normal
Collection 1 day later than normal



CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

We recycle real Christmas trees into good quality compost or soil conditioner, or into chippings. You can take them to your local household waste recovery centre during normal site opening times or to a local collection point.

To find opening times of your local household waste recovery centre or your nearest Christmas tree collection point go to:

www.northumberland.gov.uk/waste



KEEP CONNECTED WITH A WARM WELCOME

Throughout the winter months a network of community spaces have opened up across Northumberland so people can come together in a warm, safe and welcoming environment.

Voluntary groups, community organisations and others have opened up the warm spaces in venues such as community centres, church halls, libraries and community hubs.

Some places offer hot drinks, activities or free access to computers and Wi-Fi. You can come and spend time quietly or meet other people in your community for a chat.

They are free to visit, and we promise a warm welcome when you arrive. Each warm space is different and may not be open every day.

To find warm spaces near you go to: nland.cc/Warmspace or contact Northumberland Communities Together on **01670 620 015** between 9am to 6pm, seven days a week.



If you're an organisation already offering a warm space in your community and you'd like to join the network, please get in touch. All our partners agree to a warm welcome promise.

Complete the online form at nland.cc/WarmSpacesPromise email us NCT@northumberland.gov.uk or call **01670 620 015**.

STAYING WELL THIS WINTER

Winter can be challenging on our health, especially for older people and those with long-term conditions. There are a number of things we can all do to help prepare for the cold weather and ward off common winter illnesses:

- Wash your hands - washing your hands several times a day for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water can help prevent you from getting sick and spreading bugs further.
- Catch your sneeze - remember, catch it (in a tissue), bin it and kill it.
- If you feel unwell - try to stay at home and avoid others.
- Look out for vaccination invitations if you are eligible.
- Cold can affect your wellbeing so try to keep the rooms you regularly use warm.
- Wear layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer - this will trap the heat to keep you warm. Thin layers of clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good for maintaining body heat.

Pick up prescriptions in good time

Pick up any prescription medicines before your GP or pharmacy close for Christmas and keep stocked up with medication such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

Be a good neighbour

Keep an eye out for those who might be vulnerable to illness or the cold – this includes older adults, those who live alone and those with health conditions.

Make sure they are warm enough and have plenty of food and medication to see them through the winter period.

Get vaccinated

Flu and Covid can make you seriously ill. You are more at risk if you are older or have a heart or circulatory condition. Boost your immunity by staying up to date with your Flu and Covid vaccines which are available for **FREE** to eligible groups.

- To find out if you or your child are eligible for the flu vaccine go to nland.cc/influenza
- To find out if you or your child may be offered the Covid-19 vaccine go to nland.cc/covid

Stay active

Exercising can be harder in the winter, however, there are lots of activities and exercises you can do indoors instead and you can find plenty of ideas and inspiration online.

If you want advice on how to get more active visit Livingwellnorthumberland.co.uk

Being active helps reduce our risk of a range of health conditions including diabetes, depression and dementia.

Stay warm

Stay as active as you can if you're indoors avoiding the cold weather. It's a good idea to get up and move around every hour, which will boost your mood and your energy levels.





It's the subject many of us like to talk about the most – the great British weather.

SIMPLE STEPS TO STAY PREPARED **THIS WINTER**

In our county, we often have four seasons in a day, and as we've seen in recent years, that can sometimes mean wild and stormy conditions – occasionally enough to bring down trees, power lines and cut off communities.

So, with that in mind it's always worth taking some simple steps to keep you and your loved ones safe. And as with all emergencies it's best to be prepared in advance if you can.

Think ahead

Think about what you would do in an emergency. What are your personal circumstances – do you have children, pets or a medical condition which you need to prepare for? Are there friends or family you could stay with if needed?

Emergency supplies

Hopefully these won't be needed but it's a good idea to have a few items ready for any household emergencies. Some items to have to hand include:

- A phone charger and a charged battery pack and handwritten phone numbers
- Torches and spare batteries and a wind-up torch if you have one
- Food and drink that doesn't require cooking or heating

- Warm clothing and layers
- A battery powered radio (to keep up to date with events)
- A list of any prescription medicines

Household hints and tips

- Make sure you know where your main switches are (gas/electric/water)
- Do any of your neighbours need any extra help or support?
- If you have dogs or cats, are their microchip details up to date?
- Talk to your family about your emergency plans



Useful numbers and websites

- **Northumberland Communities Together** (for anyone struggling with food supplies or other essentials. Every day - 9am-6pm: 01670 620015)
- **Northumberland County Council:** 0345 600 6400
- **Northern Powergrid:** www.northernpowergrid.com or call 105
- **Scottish Power:** www.spenergynetworks.co.uk or call 105
- **Northumbria Water:** www.nwl.co.uk/care or call 0345 717 1100
- **One Call** (for concerns about vulnerable residents or safeguarding issues): 01670 536400
- If you are experiencing an emergency call 999

Social media channels

Remember, if you are on social media and can get access to the internet, follow the council's alerts channels for latest updates during emergencies or severe weather:

- www.facebook.com/nccalert
- www.twitter.com/northumberlands



OUR FIREFIGHTERS' TOP TIPS TO BE FIRE SAFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

- Keep all candles, lighters and matches out of the reach of children and away from Christmas and Hanukkah decorations. Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Decorations can burn easily. Keep them clear of lights, fires and heaters.
- If you have an open fire, keep your wood fuel away from the fireplace and stack your logs elsewhere.
- Alcohol and cooking don't mix. Leave your well-deserved drink until after you've finished making your delicious Christmas dinner.
- Make sure you have working fire alarms on all floors of your home and test them every week.
- Take special care not to overload electrical sockets and turn off your Christmas lights before going to bed or leaving your property.
- Keep your hallways and landings clear for a means of escape in the event of an emergency.
- Switch any chargers off before you go to bed, especially devices with a lithium-ion battery, such as e-bikes and scooters.

**POWER CUT?
CALL 105**



Helping you be Prepared.

We're here to power your everyday life,
whatever the weather

Would you know what to do in a power cut?
Visit [northernpowergrid.com/be-prepared](https://www.northernpowergrid.com/be-prepared) to find out more.

Do you need extra advice and support if the lights go out?
Join our free Priority Services Membership online
at [northernpowergrid.com/care](https://www.northernpowergrid.com/care) or email us direct
priorityservices@northernpowergrid.com or call 0800 169 2996

**NORTHERN
POWERGRID.**



2023...THE YEAR IN REVIEW

It's been another busy and exciting year in Northumberland. Here's just a snapshot of some of the work and events that took place during 2023 to help boost jobs, the local economy, improve our environment and support our communities.



JANUARY

Over 100 part-time courses and apprenticeships were made available by Northumberland Skills and the council for anyone looking to gain new skills and employment.



FEBRUARY

Over £20 million in Government funding was announced for Blyth to upgrade housing, improve health, access to local jobs and to cut crime.



MAY

Communities came together to mark the Coronation of King Charles III. Our special Coronation Community Fund helped support celebrations across the county.



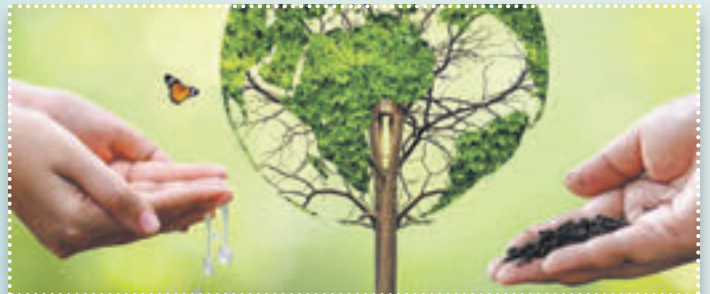
JUNE

The very best in voluntary environmental work was recognised at the LOVE Northumberland awards with groups, organisations, schools and individuals honoured for their hard work.



SEPTEMBER

Northumberland enjoyed stunning success in this year's Northumbria in Bloom competition with communities, parks and public spaces all being recognised.



OCTOBER

A fund of £55k was made available to help voluntary and community groups in the county with projects that enhance nature and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



MARCH

The council agreed £223 million in its budget to regenerate towns and communities, for housing, for schools, road and path repairs and flood prevention schemes.



APRIL

The doors opened on Morpeth's fantastic new £21million Sports and Leisure Centre transforming sport, leisure, library and learning provision in and around the town.



JULY

The council agreed to invest over £40 million in the Berwick partnership of schools to transform education in the north of the county for generations to come.



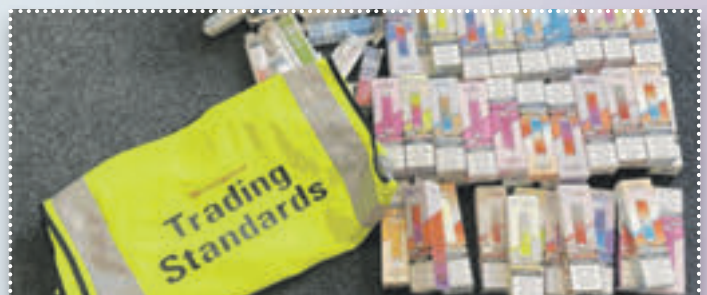
AUGUST

Construction of a new full fibre broadband network started in rural Northumberland to connect more than 3,750 hard-to-reach homes and businesses.



NOVEMBER

A special event was held to mark 70 years of the school crossing patrol service and to thank the men and women who go out in all weathers to make sure school children and their families are able to cross the road safely.



DECEMBER

This year Trading Standards officers seized over 33,000 illicit cigarettes, 576 pouches of illicit hand rolled tobacco and over 1500 non-compliant vapes from shops in Northumberland.

OUR NATIONAL TELEPHONE NETWORK IS GOING DIGITAL

What you need to know

In Summer 2024 in the North East, services that rely on the old landline system such as home phones and healthcare devices will be switched to upgraded digital landline services as part of a national switchover led by the UK telecoms industry.

This may include:

- Home phones (traditional landline)
- Amplified phones (for those with hearing loss)
- Personal telecare products
- Fall and motion detectors
- Portable healthcare devices such as ECG or oxygen monitors

What do I need to do?

Your telephone provider will contact you to give you a switchover date and to check in and discuss what you need to do to make sure your service isn't affected.

If you have telecare safety devices

If you or someone you know depends on their landline and/or use a telecare device connected to a phone line such as a fall monitor, lifeline or personal alarm, then please contact the provider of this service to find out how this device will be affected.

Vulnerable users are entitled to a backup battery free of charge from

their provider if they have critical services running such as telecare/telehealth.

In an emergency

You should tell your telephone provider now if you have no other way of making emergency calls.

What if I have no broadband, internet or mobile phone?

Contact your telephone provider now.

What happens now?

Your telephone provider should contact you before the switchover to let you know if you'll be affected. Please contact your telephone provider directly (BT, Virgin etc) if you have any concerns about the switchover.

HELP MAKE YOUR HOME MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT

Eligible households across the county can apply for funding to help keep warm, improve comfort and affordability, and reduce carbon emissions.



Government Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) funding is being offered through the Council's Warmer Homes scheme to private households in Northumberland who do not have a mains gas connection, or do not have a mains gas heating appliance.

What is included:

Surveys and plans will be carried out on your home to assess which energy saving measures are most suitable.

- **Wall insulation** (internal or external)
- **Floor insulation**
- **Loft insulation**
- **Low carbon heat systems, such as air source heat pumps**
- **Solar panels**
- **Heating controls**

Successful applicants will have a retrofit assessment completed for their

property, after which a retrofit assessor will create a personalised energy-saving plan specific to the property.

All recommendations will be tailored to individual homes so that the most appropriate energy saving measures are installed.

Households can check their eligibility and apply at nland.cc/warmerhomes or call our Customer Services team on 0345 600 6400 for more information.



Image: Jane Colman

AMBITIOUS PLANS TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT



The council is working hard to ensure the county's stunning natural resources are protected and enhanced, now and in the future and has agreed an ambitious new environmental policy.



It highlights the diverse range of activities being undertaken by the council to protect the environment and reaffirms its on-going development of a new Climate Change Action Plan which will set out its climate and environmental targets for 2024 to 2026.

The council highlights its responsibility in preserving the environment through its front-line services. This includes dealing with littering, creating more green spaces, woodlands and new nature trails, improving water quality, encouraging more active and sustainable transport, to tackling major societal issues such as climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

Councillor Glen Sanderson, Leader of the council said: "It's imperative that we balance our growth and progress

with a deep respect for the natural world that sustains us. We all have a responsibility in protecting our environment, ensuring that our county remains a vibrant and thriving place for generations to come.

"We want as many individuals, organisations and communities as possible to play their part, however big or small in helping to tackle environmental issues and we will continue to raise public awareness and encourage more active participation on environmental initiatives."

For more information on climate change initiatives Nland.cc/climatechange



GARDENING PROJECT TEACHES CHILDREN ABOUT HEALTHY EATING

Children from ten schools across the county have taken part in a project at Alnwick Gardens where they learnt how to grow vegetables and harvest food for consumption.

The Roots and Shoots project is a partnership between the Alnwick Gardens and the NHS to teach children about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and diet.



Each school was given a plot of land and with the help of an experienced gardener the pupils planted seeds and tended to their vegetables during the summer, learning skills along the way.

At the end of the scheme, 170 pupils joined in a celebration event to harvest their crops which included carrots, potatoes, parsnips, chard, beetroot and onions.



SADNESS FOR SYCAMORE GAP

Residents of the county and far beyond were understandably very shocked and angry at the news that the Sycamore Gap tree had been felled deliberately in a senseless act of vandalism.

The iconic landmark had stood for centuries on the UNESCO World Heritage Site and was known throughout the world. Part of the 1,900-year-old Hadrian's Wall was also damaged when the tree came down.

At the time of going to print, the police investigation is ongoing.

The council will be supporting the National Trust, Northumberland National Park and all other agencies in ongoing discussions about the future of the site.

FREE TREES HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

This year we've handed out over 15,000 free trees to residents and community groups in Northumberland to help them do their bit to help the natural environment and make

Northumberland a greener and cleaner place to be.

Planting more trees is one way to help make our county carbon neutral. Since the scheme started, 48,000 free trees have been given away.

This year's allocation has been taken but you can log your interest for next year by emailing freetree@northumberland.gov.uk

IF YOU HAVE LAND

If you have land and want to explore planting and funding opportunities for trees, contact the Great Northumberland Forest Team at: enquiries.forest@northumberland.gov.uk



NEW POST-16 COURSES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND

Students got a taste of their future careers as they celebrated the launch of new post-16 courses at The Fuse - Northumberland Skills' Campus in Prudhoe. The talented bunch from Collingwood School and Media Arts College, Morpeth, took part in taster sessions in art and design and occupational studies – two of the study programmes on offer at The Fuse.

Find out more: www.northumberlandskills.co.uk



EXCITEMENT BUILDING FOR RAIL LINE'S RETURN



Excitement is building for the 2024 opening of the Northumberland Line and all the benefits it will bring – from a speedy commute to new employment and education opportunities and a real boost for tourism.

With trains set to start running from next summer, work is continuing at pace along the length of the line between Ashington and Newcastle – with a scheduled journey time of just 35 minutes between the two.

As the year nears its close, progress is continuing across all six station sites, with Ashington Station almost complete at the time of going to print.

AMONG THE AIMS OF THE NEW LINE ARE

- To enhance public transport connectivity within and beyond the region.
- To help to reduce congestion and improve air quality by moving people away from car travel and onto public transport.
- To support local renewable energy, offshore oil and gas and engineering businesses by making it easier for employees to get to and from the south east of the county.

Find out more about the line at www.northumberlandline.uk





WELDING CENTRE KICKSTARTS MORE CAREERS IN ENGINEERING

Northumberland County Council's new £1.4m state-of-the-art welding and fabrication training centre is kickstarting more careers in engineering.

Based in the heart of the Port of Blyth, alongside the flagship Energy Central Learning Campus, the centre is designed to tackle the skills gap, meet the needs of industry and create opportunities for rewarding careers for local people.

From school leavers to part-time evening classes,

there are courses for everyone – no welding experience is necessary. The training centre is run by Northumberland Skills, the council's post-16 education provider, who offer a wide range of full and part-time courses, apprenticeship training programmes and employability programmes to residents across the county.

For more information go to www.northumberlandskills.co.uk/welding

WORK
smart
LIVEwell

Tuesdays at
Cramlington
Community Hub,
9:30am - 1pm

**Friendly, confidential advice to help you
find work, access training and live well.**

There's no need to book, just pop in for a chat.
Or if you have any questions, call us on 0345 6006400 or
email employabilityandinclusion@northumberland.gov.uk

For more information, see nland.cc/worksmartlivewell

Connecting you to great opportunities



Northumberland
County Council

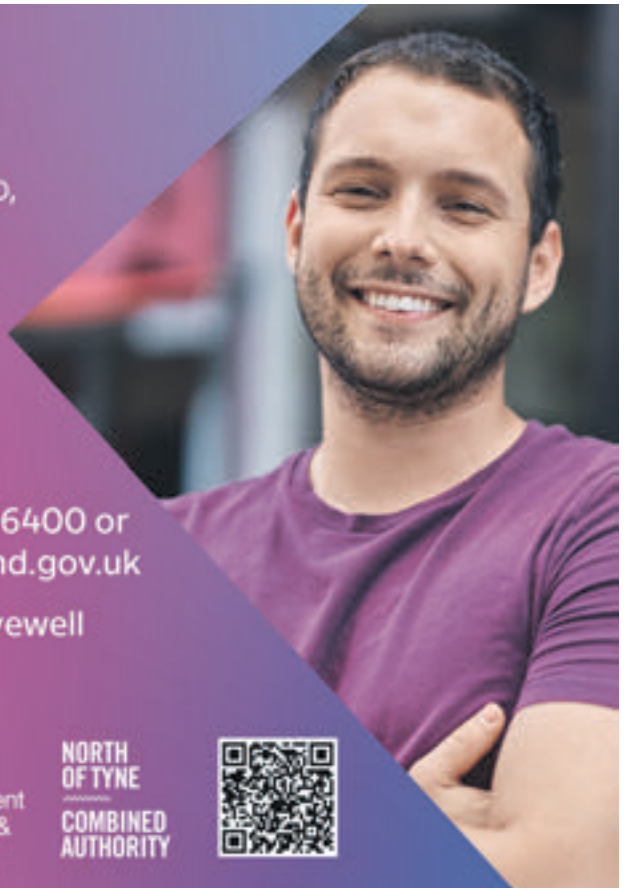


Northumberland
SKILLS



Department
for Work &
Pensions

NORTH
OF TYNE
COMBINED
AUTHORITY





Luke, Priestley & Son Cheesemongers, Hexham market



Elaine, Murphy's Kitchen, Morpeth market



Micky 'The Fish', Ashington and Morpeth markets



Michael and Sue, Ashington and Blyth markets



William, Berwick market

MARKETS ARE FOR LIFE - NOT JUST CHRISTMAS!



Meet some of the traders that frequent our council run markets. They are the lifeblood of towns up and down the county.

You may recognise some of these friendly faces that make up a vital element of Northumberland's business community.

Why shop at your local market?

- You'll be supporting small, independent, family-run businesses
- They offer a great source of fresh, locally sourced produce
- It helps to keep your money in the local economy and protect jobs
- You'll discover a range of unique gifts, food stalls and household essentials
- It's more environmentally friendly than shopping at large corporations

Our local market days:

- Ashington: Tuesday
- Berwick: Wednesday and Saturday
- Blyth: Wednesday, Friday and Saturday
- Hexham: Tuesday (with various stalls trading from The Shambles Monday - Saturday)
- Morpeth: Wednesday and farmer's market 1st Saturday of the month

Discover more about markets at: nland.cc/markets



TOP NATIONAL AWARD FOR MORPETH FIRST SCHOOL

Pupils and staff at Morpeth First School are celebrating after receiving the highest accolade possible for showing outstanding good character.

The school is the only first school and one of only a handful of all schools in the county to be awarded the Quality Mark Plus Award for Character Education by the Association for Character Education (ACE).



Chief Executive Helen Paterson (second left) and Leader of Northumberland County Council Glen Sanderson with staff and pupils of Morpeth First School

OFSTED OUTCOMES FOR SCHOOLS AT RECORD HIGH

Ofsted inspection outcomes for schools in the county are at a record high with 93.8% rated good or better compared to a national average of 88%.

Our school investment and improvement programme also continues to take shape - with over £100m channelled into transforming education and learning facilities for young people now and for generations to come.

Students are already enjoying new and improved facilities at Haydon Bridge High School, Ponteland High School, Hexham's Queen Elizabeth High School and Emily Wilding Davison School in Ponteland.

Projects are now underway to refurbish and rebuild schools in the Coquet, Seaton Valley and Berwick partnerships of schools, which will include state-of-the-art new high schools as well as investment in primary schools, specialist, post-16 skills and post-18 provision.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR THE COUNTY

Providing more quality, affordable homes across the county in areas of identified housing need continues to be one of the council's top priorities.



Councillor Colin Horncastle with Suzannah Knight and her partner Kevin who have recently moved into an affordable home in Longframlington with their two children

Here's what's been happening:

We allocated £48.2 million in the council budget to help create more affordable housing.

Over the last seven years, around 1,700 affordable homes have been built which were secured through the planning process. More than 1,000 were affordable homes for rent, delivered by the council and partner housing associations. The remainder provided opportunities for affordable homeownership through a range of tenures including shared ownership or purchase at a discount.

We've purchased new affordable homes to add to our council housing

stock in Wooler (11), Alnwick (8) and Longframlington (2) and are working on purchasing further homes in Alnwick and Blyth.

We're about to start building 13 dementia friendly affordable bungalows in Blyth.

We're working with Advance Northumberland to build nine affordable rental bungalows in New Hartley.

We've taken advantage of a government grant specifically for housing refugees who are in risk of being homeless. We are in the process of buying 12 properties which will create a lasting legacy by increasing the supply of council owned accommodation available for the future.

We're continuing to identify potential affordable housing development sites, especially brownfield sites that have had buildings on them before.

We've put policies in place through the planning system to restrict the use of new-build homes as second and holiday homes.

Through our Community Led Housing Fund, we're supporting local communities to develop their own affordable housing schemes.

Since 2015, we've helped the owners of over 750 long-term empty properties to bring them back into residential use.

We're spending around £10 million each year modernising and improving our own council housing.



CALL FOR DONATIONS OF PRE-LOVED SPORTS CLOTHING

Why not put a smile on someone's face while doing your bit for the environment by donating any spare good quality sports clothing and footwear to help others in need. The type of items needed include trainers, tracksuits, shorts, gym wear and football strips – for both children and adults. Clothing can be dropped off at donation points in Ponteland Sports Centre, Concordia in Cramlington and Ashington Sports Centre. The scheme aims to help people who are struggling financially to take part in sport by providing them with low-cost or free sports kit.

To find out more about the scheme go to www.grassboots.co.uk



COULD YOU BE A VOLUNTEER WALK LEADER?

If you are a keen walker, well organised, sociable and have some spare time on your hands a walk leader would be a great role for you.

You'll be given full training so you will have all the knowledge you need to plan and lead the walks.

Being a walk leader is such a rewarding role - helping to give people the opportunity to explore the beautiful Northumberland countryside safely and with confidence and you will meet lots of new and wonderful people along the way.

If this role sounds of interest to you, please get in touch with Wellbeing Walks Co-ordinator loliver@activenorthumberland.org.uk



PLAYZONE PROGRESS

Work is progressing well on a scheme to develop new outdoor PlayZones in communities across the county which can be used for a range of sports and physical activities for all ages.

We've asked local communities to get involved and have consulted widely with local organisations and residents about locations and the facilities they would like to see provided. In addition to the 75% of funding contributed by The Premier League, The FA and Government, via the Football Foundation, the county council is investing £300,000 toward this scheme. The scheme has been split into two phases:

PHASE 1

Subject to obtaining planning permission, we anticipate work to start in Spring 2024. Local organisations have come forward to support their development and in many cases have offered to manage the facilities.

- Alnwick Community Centre
- Amble Welfare
- Eastwoods Park, West Wylam
- Hirst Park, Ashington
- Newbiggin MUGA (next to the sports centre and community hub)
- Westlea Football Field, Bedlington

PHASE 2

We are progressing applications in the following areas:

- Berwick
- Blyth
- Cleaswell Hill Park, Choppington
- Cramlington
- East Bedlington
- Haltwhistle
- Hexham East End
- Lynemouth
- Seaton Valley
- Wooler



Adopt North East

**Being adopted together
helps brothers and sisters
feel safe and secure.**

They'll support each other. We'll support you.

**At Adopt North East we have children
waiting now for their forever homes.**



Tel: (0191) 643 5000

www.adoptnortheast.org.uk



Swim
England

SWIMMING LESSONS



LEARN TO SWIM with ACTIVE NORTHUMBERLAND

Here at Active Northumberland, our swimming lessons will give your child all the confidence they need in the water.

6 other reasons to enrol:

- We follow the Swim England pathway
- FREE 'Swim for All' sessions
- FREE Stage badges and certificates
- Online portal to track progress
- Flexible payments
- Enrol at any time of the year

For more information please visit the website,
scan the QR code or pop in to your nearest centre



active
Northumberland

www.activenorthumberland.org.uk/learn-to-swim