the Village Voice

Issue No 11, Volume 25

Lanchester, November 2025



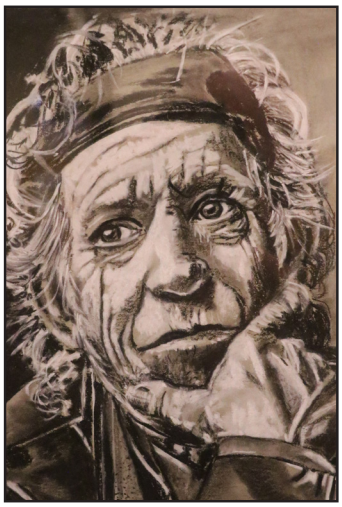
Villagers line up as John Hanley's funeral cortege passes outside his shop (Page 2) Photo Eric Hepplewhite



Remembrance service on the Green (Page 2) Photo David Filmer



Eric receives his BEM (Page 2)



Art exhibition (Page 3)



KoGs make sausages (Page 19)

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Remembrance Sunday



Young, old and those in between turned out in force on Lanchester Village Green for Remembrance Sunday.
The size of the turn-out on a chilly autumnal morning was a credit to the village.
The service was conducted by representatives of all three Lanchester churches and included the singing of the hymn O God, Our Help in Ages Past, the Last Post, the National Anthem and a reading of those names from the village killed during service within the Armed Forces.
Wreaths were laid by multiple organisations and individuals including Luke Akehurst MP, Durham County Councillor Alison Gray, and representatives from the Lord Lieutenant of County Durham, the RAMC, Armed Forces, Labour, Independents, the Parish Council, the Veterans Association, Village Partnership, Scouts, Boys Brigade, Red Cross, Churches Together, Mothers Union, the Thursday Club and the Women's Institute,
The poppy display on the War Memorial was also impressive, as is the case every year.

Neil McKay

Right - the scene after the wreaths had been laid
Below left - the Scouts
Below right - the Boys' Brigade
(photos by a young villager undertaking his Duke of Edinburgh award)





Remembering John Hanley

The village was shocked as Lanchester's well-loved and respected butcher died on 20th October after a short illness.
He was 66 years old and had been a master butcher most of his working life; he had also been a pub landlord. He was a butcher in Langley Park for many years before he moved to Lanchester around 12-13 years ago.
His wife Wendy joined the business six years ago – Wendy and John were together for 11 years and married five years ago.
Wendy said, "John was more than a butcher, he was kind and generous with many, many friends."
When the announcement was placed on Facebook there were over 200 people who expressed their gratitude to John and sympathies to the family. Nearly 700 people placed emojis on the post as well. This one example of the many comments "John helped me solve a problem at a difficult time for which I am very grateful. Such a lovely man who will forever be fondly remembered."



The funeral cortege drove through Lanchester on their way to the funeral. Many villagers turned out to pay their respects (see cover). The funeral took place on 31st October at St Michael's RC Church in Esh Laude, and he was laid to rest in South Road Cemetery. The wake was held at New House Club in Esh Winning followed by a night cap at the Royal Oak in Cornsay Colliery. Such was the respect for John that the church was packed to overflowing with people standing outside. The club was also full to bursting with every room full. The Royal Oak was chosen for the night cap as it was John and Wendy's local – he could always be found there – and it was where John and Wendy went for a pint after work.
I asked Wendy whether she intended to continue to run the business in Lanchester – she couldn't be more clear, "We're going nowhere – we'll be there to serve our loyal customers."

Keith Brown

Eric is presented with his BEM



As many of you know, Eric [Hepplewhite] was awarded a BEM in the King's Birthday Honours List and on 30 September the family had the pleasure of attending the event when he was presented with the medal by Dame Sue Snowdon, Lord Lieutenant of Durham. It was a wonderful day finished off with a meal at Kings Head. Eric was especially pleased that his sister in law Marie was able to join us as he knew his late brother Adrian would have been delighted by the award.
The medal itself is quite heavy and surprisingly it has his name around the edge.
He was, as always, keen to thank those who have helped him achieve the award with particular thanks to those who did so much work to obtain all the necessary information to complete the forms to nominate him – as well as chasing up to see what was happening once the forms were submitted!
Many thanks to everyone who helped in any way.

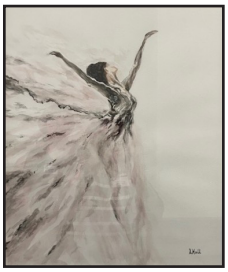
Eric, Sylvia, Karl, Jan, Nigel and Sophie



L - R Nigel, Sophie, Sylvia, Karl behind, Eric, Jan behind, Marie, Dame Sue Snowdon

The Lanchester Art Group Annual Exhibition






Clockwise from the top left: Valter, Tanya, Hare among the Cornflowers and the winner "Grace"

The Lanchester Art Group Annual Exhibition was again well attended.
The group's 42 members displayed some of their wide variety of work over the weekend of October 18 and 19 in the village community centre.
Secretary Margaret Walters said the exhibition was "now firmly embedded in the calendar of Lanchester".
Whilst the majority of the members are local there was an international flavour, with paintings and drawings on display from Ukrainian member Tanya Mykailova and Italian Valter Arciero.
A steady flow of visitors streamed through the community centre to view the works of art, with some paintings fetching three figure sums in sale. The majority of the works were available to buy.
New members included David Kennedy, whose offerings included watercolours of a 'Fox Cub Among the Wheat' and a 'Hare among the Cornflowers'.
Margaret said the membership was fixed at 42 with a considerable waiting list to join.
While many of the works were either landscapes or portraits of friends and family, one member's work included two portraits of legendary Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards (see cover).
Lyndsey Harrison's portraits, one in charcoal and pastel and the other in oil, were on sale for £50 and £60 respectively.
Typically the Art Group members had enjoyed the subject at school, but only took up drawing and painting again in later years.
One such example was Lesley Hall, whose biography said she had "not painted since school 35 years ago."
Her watercolours included 'Dunstanburgh Castle' and 'The Antarctic School Run'.

Neil McKay

Postscript. The visitors' vote for favourite painting was won by Lesley Hall for 'Grace' who won a specially made wooden wall clock made by Ian Patterson.

Lanchester Launches its own version of 'Do They Know It's Christmas?'



A group of local musicians have banded together to raise money for our beloved Willow Burn Hospice. Well known local duo 'The Buskers' have rallied their friends and fellow performers to record a version of the song made famous in the 80s, written by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure.
Lanchester resident and one half of said duo, Barrie McDermid, had the idea after being made aware of how other hospices in the area were having to withdraw support due to funding cuts and the general financial climate.
"I know the support Willow Burn provides costs a lot of money," said Barrie. "I know how important Willow Burn is to the village and the wider area, so I approached some of the best known performers in the area to come together and record the track, which will be released on social media at the beginning of December."
Billed as 'The Buskers and friends', the artists involved include Barrie's daughter Ruby, who has embarked on her own musical career as a vocalist, Soul Street, Miranda Newton, local resident Ellie Caile, Graeme Richardson - owner of the White Room Cafe and Music Venue in Stanley, Lockdown sensation Eddie McDonald, Lee Harrison and Corbin Jenkins.
The recording has taken place in Barrie's home studio apart from the drums, which were recorded at Gateshead College.
The song itself was chosen due to the nature of different vocalists coming together for a common cause.
"The whole process has been a lot of work, but great fun and we hope that our supporters enjoy what we've produced," said Barrie.
For further information about how to download the track and donate click on https://willowburnhospice.enthuse.com/pf/christmassingle. Donations to support the project can be made directly to Willow Burn Hospice or via a donate button on any shares of the video.





From the House

Lanchester looks wonderful in the autumn and winter and I am looking forward to seeing the village light up now that the clocks have gone back. The Christmas lights alone are spectacular, even if you're just passing by car. There has been a lot on recently with Lanchester Food Week offering some incredible deals - it's been great to see so many businesses taking part and bringing people together.

I was very sorry to hear of the recent passing of local butcher John Hanley; it is clear from the outpouring of messages on social media that John was a well loved and important member of village life. I will be popping into Hanley's for lunch again next time I hold my advice surgery in Lanchester.

Last month I visited St Bede's school with Councillor Alison Gray. The headteacher, Mrs Hammill, gave us a tour and we discussed the ways I may be able to support the school, particularly around making representations to the council on road safety and flooding.

Elsewhere in the constituency I have secured £20 million in funding for Stanley South as part of the government's Pride in Place programme. Stanley South is classed as 'doubly disadvantaged' by both the highest deprivation levels and weakest social infrastructure, meaning it is most in need in North Durham. I will be holding a public consultation event about the funding in November as decisions on this funding will be led by local people.

I have recently written to Steve Reed, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking for fair funding for Durham County Council. As it stands, Durham had over £270 million cut from its central government grant funding during austerity, which has had major implications across the services they provide. The government is currently reviewing local authority grant funding, and I am calling for Durham to get its fair share.

Since the election, I have responded to over 8,100 queries. I have helped return over £374,691 owed to constituents in taxes/benefits/utilities.

My biggest priority is to serve individuals and communities across North Durham. I will always make time for constituents and want to help in any way that I can. **If you need help or support, please email me on luke.akehurst.mp@parliament.uk or call 0191 371 8834.**

Luke Akehurst, MP for North Durham

House of Commons

County Councillor Update

Dear Residents,

Another busy month is behind me. I have had meetings with several officers from the council to better understand policy and to try and action some casework in the village.



- Following my meeting with the Drainage and Coastal Protection officer, a larger gulley has been installed on Front Street to help prevent flooding. I am also checking that gulley cleaning is being undertaken regularly.
- I met with the Community Engagement Officer with integrated passenger transport at the North East Combined Authority (NECA). Whilst he couldn't promise improvements, he did listen to the issues. Many of you have asked for better information when buses are withdrawn at short notice, and I passed this on. Buses are also an area that Luke Akehurst MP is monitoring and trying to improve.
- I met with officers from the Strategic Traffic team, and we conducted a walkabout covering Front Street, the car park behind the Spar and walked up to Fenhall Park. We discussed problem issues and possible resolutions including frequent visits by enforcement officers. Traffic wardens visited the village twice at the start of October and will continue to visit this location as part of the routine enforcement patrols in this area.
- Two managers from the 'Clean and Green' department came out following some unresolved and persistent issues of concern around trees. At the time of print, we are awaiting further investigations by the tree officers.
- I had a tour of the excellent Willow Burn Hospice to see the facilities and hear about future plans.
- I continue to report other issues for resolution including the missing sign for the village as you enter from Durham, repainting road markings, cutting grass.



I am also on the Adult Health and Well-being Scrutiny Committee. Last month we had a presentation regarding the new facility to replace Shotley Bridge Hospital. The closure of the facility overnight and the delay of the new build is an area of concern for many. Myself and other local councillors continue to monitor the situation. I also await with concern the report from the CQC into Lanchester Medical Centre.

If I can be of assistance to you with a council matter please email me on alison.gray2@durham.gov.uk or telephone 07469 105096

Best wishes, Alison Gray

Lanchester Wildlife Group Christmas Quiz (and AGM)



Tuesday 9th December, 7.30 -9.00pm, Lanchester Community Centre.

If you know that this is a charm of goldfinches, you are already two points up in the Lanchester Wildlife Group Christmas Quiz. Why not ask friends to join you and earn great esteem and perhaps even a small prize.

If you love Springwatch and David Attenborough programmes, then you will enjoy this fun evening. No charge. All are welcome.

In addition to the quiz, you can also cheer on Chairman Burt Hunter as he tries to beat his own world record of 4m 37s for the shortest ever AGM.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to offer refreshments at evening meetings, but you are welcome to bring your own "Aides memoires" to help you think.

Noel Jackson

Unknown bird – identified

Liana Newstead from Manor Grange contacted the Village Voice.
"On September 23, we noticed an unknown bird on the fence in our garden. We assumed it was an owl, but we weren't sure. If you have the opportunity to identify it from ornithological experts, we would be happy to know who it is. I apologize for the poor quality of the photos, as the bird was close to the window and I didn't want to scare it away."
We asked Noel Jackson of the Lanchester Wildlife Group and he replied "It's a female sparrow hawk. The residents of Manor Grange must be doing a great job feeding the birds because the sparrowhawks only hunt where the density of prey species is high. It can be a bit distressing when it catches a blackbird or a gold finch but it's the cycle of life and the predators take out the weaker species so the whole population is stronger. I always think sparrowhawks look angry. The males are a bonny mix of steel grey and rusty red and, interestingly, they are smaller than the females."
Many thanks to Liana who asked the question, Noel for his answer and Ian Appleby for supplying his photograph of the male and Tom Coulson for supplying the photographs of the female sparrowhawks.
Liana and her husband not only read the Village Voice but also deliver it for us on Deneside.

Wild Notes

Recently, residents of the Manor Grange estate contacted the Village Voice with photos of an unidentified bird of prey they'd seen perched on their garden fence. We were happy to identify it. (See article below)
Judging by the grey-brown barring on the chest, its size, and the striking yellow eyes which contrast with the brown-grey backs and pale underparts, we decided the bird to be a female Sparrowhawk. It's always a treat to have such a close-up wildlife encounter on your doorstep.
Adapted for hunting in confined arboreal habitats, these birds are perfectly suited to our gardens, where feeders and nestboxes provide a reliable source of prey. Similar in size to a Magpie, but with a heavier build, smaller beak and head, and broader and more rounded wings, look out for their 'T' shaped silhouette and distinctive flap-flap-glide pattern, as they glide over treetops or zoom through gardens pursuing prey. Listen out for the alarm calls of smaller bird species as a signal of the presence of the back garden's apex avian predator. Sexes can be distinguished by size, with females significantly larger than males, and also by plumage, with the chest bars of males being a vivid orange colour, and their backs being more of a blue grey than that of the females and juveniles.
Like most other UK raptors, Sparrowhawk numbers plummeted in the 1950s and 60s due to the use of organochlorine pesticides in farming. These dangerous chemicals built up in food chains and led to the shells of Sparrowhawk eggs becoming dangerously thin and liable to breaking during incubation. Numbers recovered after these pesticides were banned, but due to a decline of 25% between 1995 and 2023 - reflecting an overall decrease in garden bird numbers - Sparrowhawks are now on the Birds of Conservation Concern Amber List; this is the second bottom tier of UK species grouped together by conservation status and vulnerability of extinction in our country. This decline is a reflection of an overall decrease in biodiversity in gardens and farmlands, due to intensified farming methods and more gardens being paved and 'tidied,' with fewer trees, shrubs and lawn.
While widespread change is needed to reverse these worrying trends, you can still increase biodiversity in your own garden, by putting out bird feeders and letting the bushes and grasses grow a little wilder; this helps all species, including those like the Sparrowhawk at the top of the food chain.
For many, living in this area provides us with large gardens or allotments, however this privilege comes with responsibility to care for all the different organisms that call your green spaces home, and in doing that we can bring positive change to all of the north east's residents.
We need to remember that we are all interconnected, before species like the Sparrowhawk begin to disappear from our gardens and the damage done to our planet becomes irreversible. So, the next time you spot a Sparrowhawk, think of it as a reminder of what we have to lose and of our duty to work together to protect the communities that we cherish and that give so much back to us.
Junior Wildlife Correspondent

Ladies who lunch

In October we visited The Derwent Walk Inn. From an extensive menu we chose mince and dumpling with veg and mash; mince and dumpling with veg and chips; roast pork loin with veg and potatoes and Yorkshire pudding; Fisherman's platter with battered king prawns; fish and scampi served with tartare sauce, salad and chips; breaded wholetail scampi, salad, tartare sauce and chips; chicken breast escalope, katsu Thai curry sauce infused with coconut, chillies and garlic, rice and chips; breaded chicken escalope topped with bacon and cheese on a bed of tomato coulis and chips.
Desserts were apple crumble with custard; apple crumble with cream; jam roly poly with custard; Biscoff cheesecake and cream; Belgian waffle, butterscotch sauce, cream and ice cream.
Two ladies opted for a coffee latte.
Good service, hot meals, pleasant staff, easy parking.
Once again a very enjoyable lunch.

The Gourmet Girls







Original photo above
Top right and bottom left females and bottom right a male.







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Lanchester Medical Centre: Patient Participation Group

Weathering the storm: public health services across the UK are bracing themselves for the worst winter in their history. (British Medical Association Sept. 2025)

Physical winter dangers

- Slips, trips, and falls: Ice and snow on paths increase the risk of falls, especially for older people.
- Hypothermia: A dangerous drop in body temperature below 35C
- Heart attack and stroke: Cold weather can increase blood pressure and the risk of blood clots, leading to an increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

Health winter dangers

- Infectious diseases and their spread, especially in vulnerable groups. Cases of flu, respiratory syncytial virus, COVID-19, norovirus and respiratory conditions are seen throughout the year, but in winter they escalate.
- Mould: Damp and cold homes can lead to mould, which can worsen respiratory conditions.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning: Malfunctioning or inappropriate heating appliances can cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

Dangers to the NHS

- Overwhelmed services: High demand from winter illnesses and the resulting patient admissions, leading to long waits and critical incidents.
- Staffing issues: There are significant staff shortages, recruitment and retention problems, and a negative impact on staff well-being, which can lead to them leaving the service. Sickness among staff due to winter illnesses strain resources.
- Backlogs: Social care pressures and a lack of available beds prevents patients from being discharged, further overwhelming hospitals.
- Increased demand: The combination of an aging population and more complex healthcare needs places a significant strain on resources.
- Backlog of care: Waiting lists have grown, creating a significant backlog of patients who need treatment.

These combined pressures mean the NHS is struggling to meet demand and is performing poorly against its own targets.

Prevention: how the public can help

There are record numbers of patients waiting for care and treatment. The flu season and COVID-19 cases across the UK is already causing a strain on health services. We can each help reduce winter pressures by:

Keeping your home at a comfortable temperature, ideally between 18-21°C. 20°C for the elderly, very young, or unwell. Heat rooms you use regularly, like the living room and bedroom. Use layers of clothing for warmth.

Wearing appropriate footwear for weather conditions and being careful on icy surfaces helps to prevent falls.

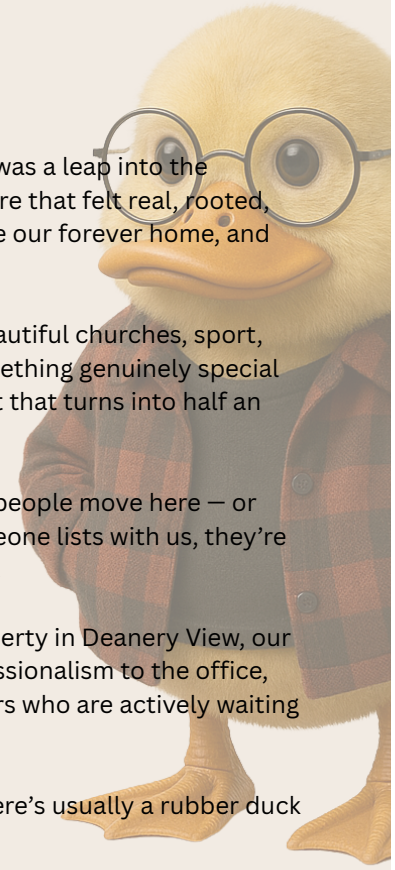
Wash your hands regularly, and if eligible, get your flu and COVID-19 vaccinations, this minimises the spread of illness.

Protect yourself from Carbon Monoxide poisoning by ensuring heating appliances are safe and properly maintained.

We all need the NHS, but the NHS needs us to take these simple steps to reduce our risk of needing their service.

Ref: *nhs.uk https://www.nhs.uk › Live Well › Seasonal health*
British Medical Association Sept 2025 org.gov
https://www.bma.org.uk › advice-and-support › pressures

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When we moved to Lanchester in 2020, it wasn't a stopgap or a stepping stone — it was a leap into the unknown. We didn't know exactly what to expect, but we knew we wanted somewhere that felt real, rooted, and full of life. It didn't take long to realise we'd found it. Lanchester quickly became our forever home, and the longer we're here, the more we fall in love with it.

This village has everything we value — community, independence, great schools, beautiful churches, sport, and, of course, a few canny pubs! But above all, it has people who care. There's something genuinely special about walking through the village and being met with a smile, a wave, or a quick chat that turns into half an hour. It's that warmth and connection that makes Lanchester so unique.

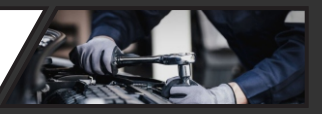
At Bourne & Co, we try to carry that same spirit into what we do every day. Helping people move here — or move within the village — is more than just business for us. It's personal. When someone lists with us, they're getting a team who genuinely love where they live and want others to feel the same.

This month has brought a few lovely wins too. We've just listed a beautiful new property in Deanery View, our Lettings Manager Rachael has brought an incredible level of organisation and professionalism to the office, and we've sold two more homes off market thanks to our growing database of buyers who are actively waiting to move to Lanchester.

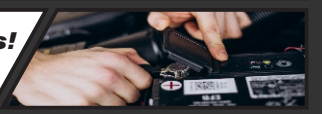
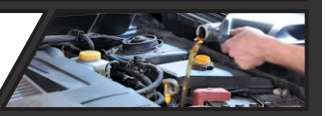
If you're ever passing the office, pop in and say hello. The kettle's always on, and there's usually a rubber duck or two keeping us company.

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Lanchester Medical Centre's Devasting CQC Inspection Report: rated as "Inadequate"

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected the Medical Centre in July 2025, and such was their concern that a restriction was placed upon Dr Kalra continuing to practice from Lanchester Medical Centre. This led to Dr Kalra appointing South Durham Health to provide continuity of medical cover whilst the CQC continued their investigations.

The CQC report was released on 6th November 2025. The CQC rates a provider under five categories. The medical centre was rated "Inadequate" in four categories: Safe, Effective, Responsive and Well-led. In the remaining category the centre was rated as "Requires Improvement. Overall it was rated as "inadequate" and placed in special measures.
Victoria Marsden, CQC deputy director of operations in the north east, said: "When we inspected Lanchester Medical Centre, we found serious leadership failings that jeopardised people's safety." She added "Staff told us they were afraid to raise concerns about people's safety as they felt leaders were unapproachable. Some had experienced bullying, whilst others said colleagues had been threatened when they tried to speak up. This created a toxic culture where serious safety issues could go without being addressed."
Inspectors found:

- The practice didn't have enough qualified, skilled and experienced staff to deliver safe care and treatment to people.
- Leaders didn't have effective systems and processes in place to record and investigate complaints. This meant staff couldn't learn from incidents and complaints to improve people's care.
- The practice didn't ensure that significant events were investigated appropriately. Therefore, staff couldn't learn from them to help prevent them from reoccurring.
- The service didn't control the risk of infection to prevent illnesses spreading or share any concerns with appropriate external organisations in a timely manner.
- Leaders didn't consider the wellbeing of staff, to help them deliver person-centred care. This posed a risk to both staff and the people they were caring for.

This is of course a summary, and the full reports are available on the CQC website.
All patients of the Medical Centre were sent a message via the NHS App and posted a letter on the practice website. In the message it was stated that "The Lanchester Team was disappointed with these findings and has been working hard to put these things right. We are committed to transparency and continuous improvement – we want to keep you informed."
In the letter, Dr Kalra stated that he intends to return and spend at least two days per week at the practice. The long letter repeated the criticisms and addressed how he planned to deal with them. They are also addressing the system deficiencies found and assured the patients that all was in hand. One of the CQC findings was that there were insufficient GPs available in the practice and Dr Kalra has stated that he will ensure that they provide more than 20 clinical sessions per week (a full day consists of 2 sessions) including GP and Advance Nurse Practitioners. They have advertised for permanent staff but have so far been unsuccessful and are currently relying on locum GPs to fill the gaps.
Alison Gray and the Patient Participation Group (led by Sue Graham) have been prime movers in trying effect change at the practice. They organised two public meetings to enable patients to have their say.
Following the report Alison said "Reading this report about services that have impacted on our family and friends is very upsetting. I am working with the PPG to do all we can to rectify this situation and ensure that we do not return to a sole partner practice at Lanchester medical Centre."
And Sue Graham said " As a PPG we are devastated, but not totally surprised, by the outcome of the CQC investigation. We urge Dr Kalra as registered provider to make every effort to address this situation in the coming months. Words are not enough, only long term sustained commitment to delivering outstanding patient experience will rebuild patient trust and confidence. The PPG have become aware of a number of patients with on-going complaints or concerns. If you feel that you need support from the Patient Group, please do but hesitate to contact us."

Keith Brown



LANCHESTER FLOWER CLUB

Member of the National Association of Flower Arrangers Society

Our meeting was held on the 22nd October in Lanchester Community Centre. We enjoyed a social afternoon with friends. We would like to thank Jan Vasey who kindly brought her Call My Bluff quiz on Rivers and Places. It was a very enjoyable afternoon and hopefully we may have learnt a little about rivers and places. Everyone was given a little prize - no expense spared. We had a raffle and tea/coffee and biscuits.

We will be holding our open afternoon meeting on Saturday 22nd November 2025 in Lanchester Community Centre main room at 2pm. The demonstrator will be Linda Fraser, her theme "Fantastically Festive." Tickets £7 from Lestrine Kelly or Helen Tomlinson. You can also pay at the door the day of the event.

It is with great sadness we have decided the November meeting will be our final meeting. Due to declining membership numbers, rising flower and demonstrators' costs, we will be closing the Flower Club doors. It is a very sad time as the club has been going for 52 years. Helen Tomlinson and Maureen Clarkson have been with the club from the beginning, Helen being Chairperson for a great deal of those years. Maureen was also a committee member for much of those years. Lanchester Flower Club owes these ladies a big thank you.



Lestrine Kelly

This picture is from the 50th celebration with the committee at the time. L - R Sue Jones, Rosemary Wilson, Pat Spencer, Lestrine Kelly, the late Maureen Clarkson front row Chairperson Helen Tomlinson.

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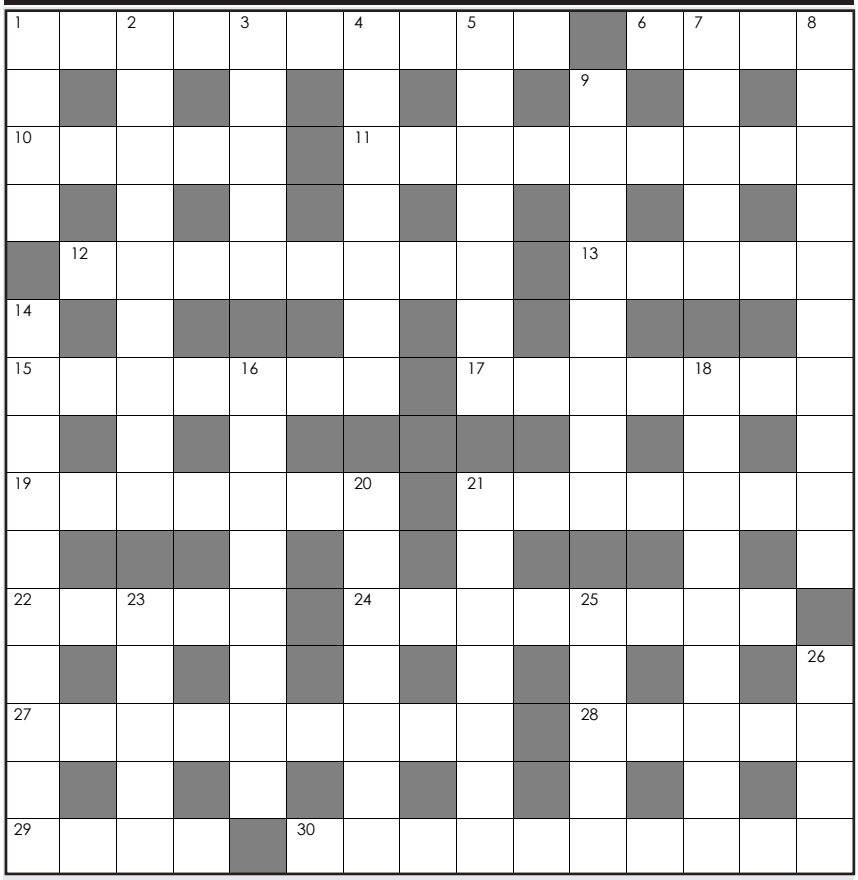
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Clues

Across

1. Unprofessional (10)
6. Tough (4)
10. Milk container (5)
11. Outdoor meals or gatherings (9)
12. Mishap (8)
13. Get the better of (5)
15. Not fortunate (7)
17. Fastener for locks (7)
19. Description of a long-lasting illness (7)
21. Watch (7)
22. Type of hard wood (5)
24. Keep your bloomers in one of these (5,3)
27. Type of cowboy hat (3-6)
28. Stringed instrument (5)
29. Lively dance or the music for it (4)
30. Builder (10)

Down

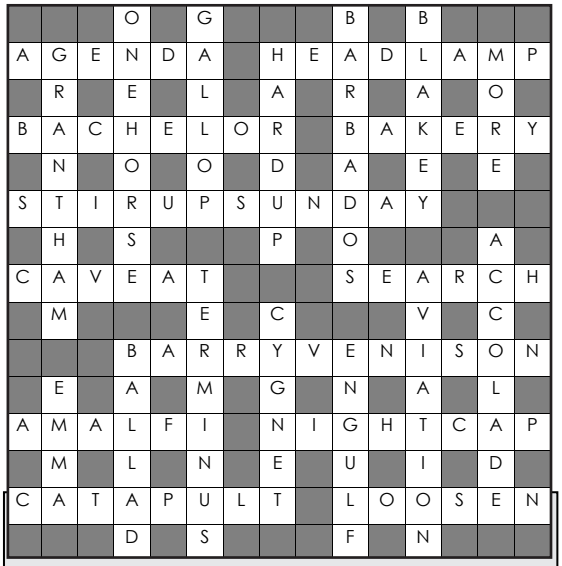
1. Curved structure (4)
2. Like a kindly relative (9)
3. Boredom (5)
4. Type of crime (7)
5. Extend (7)
7. Grown up (5)
8. Fragmentary (10)
9. Cardiovascular exercise regime (8)
14. Fictional town that was the home of 'Crown Court' and 'Billy the Fish' (10)
16. Willy Wonka is one (5,3)
18. Frugality (9)
20. Baked pudding (7)
21. Relating to the seas (7)
23. One sixteenth of a pound or pint (5)
25. Fallen angel who makes work for idle hands (5)
26. Set of two things (4)

Name:_____

Address: _____

_____

Please send your completed entries for the £10 prize draw by **Monday 1st December 2025** to the Village Voice, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0HY



Solution Crossword 212

There were 18 entries of which 15 were correct. The winner drawn out of the hat is Graham Davison.

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WHAT'S ON - December 2025

Lanchester Wildlife Group Christmas Quiz (and AGM)
Tuesday 9th December, 7.30 -9.00pm, Lanchester Community Centre.
If you love Springwatch and David Attenborough programmes, then you will enjoy this fun evening. No charge. All are welcome. Why not ask friends to join you and earn great esteem and perhaps even a small prize. In addition to the quiz, you can also cheer on Chairman Burt Hunter as he tries to beat his own world record of 4m37s for the shortest ever AGM.

Christmas Trumpet Concert
Saturday 6th December, 7pm in Lanchester Methodist Church.
An ensemble of four excellent trumpeters (Sound the Trumpets) will be performing a range of Christmas music, including carols. Mince pies with mulled wine will be served at the end of the concert. Tickets costing £12 are now available. Email: soundthetrumpet2025@gmail.com. Please come along to enjoy this festive occasion which will be raising money for Willow Burn Hospice too!

Christmas with The Argus Singers
Chester-le-Street Methodist Church, Saturday December 20th, 7pm. Tickets £5 from Cornerstones Centre for the Community, 0191 3881313.

Annfield Plain Christmas Concert
'Twas The Night Before Christmas
Innominata Choir will be performing at Annfield Plain Methodist Church on Saturday 20th December at 7pm. The concert will include familiar carols for choir and audience as well as some beautiful readings with carols from composers such as Bob Chilcott, Peter Warlock and Sarah Quartel. 'Twas The Night Before Christmas will be sung in the second part of the concert. A wonderful, innovative Cantata by Oliver Tarney, the words of the poem unfold interspersed with traditional carols. Please join us for a real celebration of Christmas! You will recognise some members of the choir who live in 'our' village and some of the audience who have become regular supporters! For tickets costing £12 to include refreshments please email: innominatachoir@gmail.com.

Social Club
The singers for December:
6th December PENNY HARRIS
13th December STEVE DEE
20th December MICHELLE B
27th. December AD HENRY

WI
The next WI meeting is the Members' Christmas Party on Monday 1st December, 7pm, Lanchester Community Centre.
The January meeting is on Monday 5th January 5 2026, 7pm, Lanchester Community Centre. Visitors always welcome, please come and join us!

Red Cross Fashion Event
British Red Cross Lanchester is holding a late night Christmas Fashion Event in store on 29th November. They are open until 8pm. There will be new clothing, Christmas gifts, tea, coffee, snacks, fun, friends and more! Come along and buy your new clothes for Christmas and Christmas gifts.

Friends of Longovicium (Lanchester Roman Fort)
Visitors and new members are always welcome at our meetings. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month (excluding December) at 7.30pm in Lanchester Community Centre.
For further information about membership please contact: Rodney Hawkins Tel: 0191 4103472 - Email: hawkins_15@sky.com or Mrs M Williams Tel: 01207 520063. Follow us on **Facebook** (Friends of Longovicium). Please have a look at the group's website which is the culmination of decades of research and contains a wealth of information about Longovicium Roman Fort: https://longoviciumcouk.wordpress.com. Friends of Longovicium is part of the Lanchester Partnership.

Paradiso Social Club Christmas Party
14th December, 7pm for seasonal refreshments, a raffle and a Christmas quiz. Followed at 7.30pm by "Maudie" starring Sally Hawkins and Ethan Hawke. The true story of the unlikely romance between reclusive Everett Lewis and his housekeeper, a fragile yet determined woman named Maudie. Maudie, bright-eyed but afflicted with severe arthritis, yearns to be independent, and to create art. To keep herself happy, Maud begins to paint the interior of the house with happy pictures which come to the attention of Sandra, a New York socialite, and eventual recognition and respect in the community. "Sally Hawkins is extraordinary as Maud Lewis. Hawkins impresses as the Canadian outsider artist" (The Guardian).



Lanchester Community Centre. Members: £4, Non-members : £5. Annual membership: £5.

Musical Memories Christmas Party
Join us to share Christmas music, refreshments and fun activities. There's a prize for the best Christmas clothing!
4th December, 2pm, Lynwood House, Durham Road, Lanchester.
Musical Memories is a fun, friendly and stimulating music group using the ability of music to improve your brain activity, wellbeing and mood. We welcome people living with conditions that affect memory. For further information email Helen at lanchesterdfc@gmail.com.

Local History Society
On Friday 5th December we will be having our winter social and quiz night. Early for the seasonal festivities but always an enjoyable event. There will be light refreshments provided so do come along. Party hats optional. Our January meeting will be very early in the New Year on Friday 2nd of January 2026! I have checked and the Community Centre will be open for business. This will be our usual start to the year "Show and Tell" with everyone or anyone bringing an item to just share its story or to test our historical knowledge. Looking forward to seeing everyone over the festive season and don't forget we need to negotiate the door security system. 7pm meeting time but helpful if you arrive earlier to get settled.

City Theatre
"Lucky Numbers" by Mike Yeaman (comedy) will be on at The City Theatre, Durham, from Sun 23rd of November until Sat 29th. Nana has a winning lottery ticket, but where is it? The family schemes to find it but Nana has a hidden agenda. Tickets from The Durham Gala box office on 03000266600 or www.durhamcitytheatre.co.uk and follow the link for tickets. £9.50 each. Concessions £8.50 Sun/Mon/Tues. Performances Sun 2.30 pm, Mon-Fri 7.30, Sat 2.30.

Library
Library Book Club
On Monday December 15th at 2.30 to 3.30pm, the group will review The Cactus by Sarah Haywood. 'An unforgettable love story', 'Susan Green is like a cactus: you can't get too close' (Goodreads review). Will the group enjoy this novel? Come along to the group and discuss.
Thursday Book Club
On Thursday December 18th from 4.00-5.00pm, the group will discuss 'Sophie's Choice' by William Styron, a landmark of mid-century American fiction, three stories are told. If you would like to join this group, pop into the library and speak to the librarians.
Pins and Needles will meet up on December 4th from 10-11.30am. Bring along your wool, thread, needles and patterns and share your makes and get advice too. Do you like knitting, crocheting? Everyone is welcome, enjoy.
Scrabble Group meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 1.30pm to 3.30 pm. Do you enjoy this word game and want to get on the Triple Word Square? Come along and enjoy the company.
Rummikub Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 1.30 to 3.30pm. A great strategic but simple game with tiles that are always changing. It is a very enjoyable game
Children's crafts are available every afternoon and Saturday. Different crafts, ideas and materials are set out in the library for children to be creative, pop along with your children and enjoy.
Did you know Borrowbox, the digital library service allows you to access daily newspapers, magazines and e books. They do add to the library in all areas, so check it out and see if a new addition of a magazine you want to read is now available.

Lunch Club - Cuppa and a Chat
The next meeting of the lunch held at Lynwood House will be Tuesday 9th December, 12pm start, all welcome. This will be our Christmas Lunch.

Thursday Club
The Thursday club is going to the Kings Head for lunch on the 18th December enjoying food, fun and friendship.

Willow Burn Hospice events
To find out more information or to book a place at an event, please see www.willowburnhospice.org.uk/our-events, or call 01207 529 224 (ask for Ali English).

Nurses Christmas Fair
Willow Burn Hospice, Saturday 29 November 11am - 2pm.
Free entry, everyone welcome.

Luxury Cracker Making Workshops
Willow Burn Hospice, Thursday 4 December at 6pm or Monday 8 December at 2pm
Tickets £30 per person including a glass of fizz and a light supper.

Light Up a Life Remembrance Service
All Saints Catholic Church, Kitswell Road, Lanchester, Sunday 7 December at 2pm
Everyone is welcome. Light Up a Life is a warm, loving and festive event to be shared with friends and family. Welcoming you to the service is such an honour and we are privileged to share this special time with you. Together we will gather to sing carols, listen to readings and light candles in memory of loved ones. Following the service there is the opportunity to spend time together with some light refreshments.
If you would like to remember your loved one(s) with a dedication in our Light Up a Life Book of Remembrance, please contact Ali at Willow Burn: 01207 529 224 / aenglish@willowburnhospice.org.uk before 7 November.

WHAT'S ON - December 2025

Watoto Stories of Restoration Tour
Wednesday 3rd December 2025, 6.30pm, All Saints Catholic Church Parish Centre.
Watoto is a charity that brings hope and healing to vulnerable women and children in Uganda and South Sudan. A Watoto Village is a safe place where orphaned and vulnerable children can experience the love of a family. The villages provide homes, families and holistic care to over 3000 children. Watoto Neighbourhood provides adult literacy classes, discipleship, business skills training and job opportunities to some of the most vulnerable women in Africa, women who have been left to bear the brunt of war, poverty and disease. Come and listen to Allen, a Watoto Graduate who was once orphaned and abandoned as she shares her testimony of growing up in the Watoto family. She will share her testimony of redemption, restoration, and the life-changing power of Jesus Christ. You're invited to this special event where you'll have the opportunity to meet two remarkable women, Allen and also Ritah, and hear their incredible stories of how their lives were transformed by the love of Jesus.
Refreshments available! Although there is no charge for this event, an offering will be taken to contribute towards the work of Watoto. There will also be the opportunity to purchase beautiful merchandise made by the talented Watoto Neighbourhood women.

Acappella Choir
(singing without musical accompaniment)
This is held in the Chapter House of All Saints church every Monday between 10.30 and 12. New members are always welcome. No previous choir experience necessary. We sing a wide variety of songs, lead by Sheila Trow, and are open to both men and women.

Methodist Church Coffee Mornings
Coffee mornings are held every Saturday at the Methodist Church between 10 and 12. If you would like to organise a coffee morning for your organisation, please contact Judith Brown on 521898.

Wellbeing Walk
Every Monday at 1pm on the village green next to the war memorial. Walk lasts up to 90 minutes, all welcome. To book please visit www.durham.gov.uk/walkdurham or call 03000 262539.

Playgroup
Every Friday at 9:30 at Croft View Halls. Find us on Facebook, 'Lanchester's new playgroup'.



The Lanchester Community Orchard Work Sessions
We meet regularly to maintain and care for the orchard. Come and join us to find out more and help look after the trees. There are jobs for all ages and we always stop for coffee! New members are always welcome. For all our work session dates please visit the What's On page of our website lanchesterorchard.org

Lanchester Hiking Group
Meets at 10am on the 2nd Wednesday of every month. Walks are about 5 miles long within a 30 minute radius of Lanchester – lifts provided. For further details please call Helen Thomas on 07712425623 (or email hdbthomas@live.com).

Monday Art Group
We are a small friendly group who enjoy painting and drawing, and come together to learn, and give each other support in making art. We meet each Monday in the Community Centre from 10.00am to 12pm with an occasional demonstration by visiting artists or our own members. New members are most welcome. Contact tojimrafferty@yahoo.com if you would like further information.

Vintage Tractor Club
Meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm in Lanchester Social Club.

Scottish Dance
Scottish dancing takes place every Friday 7.30 to 9.30 in the community centre and complete beginners are very welcome, contact Elizabeth Grayson on 0191 384 4836 for more information.

Sewing Group
Every Wednesday, 1-3pm at Lanchester Community Centre. We are a small friendly group with space to grow into. We enjoy sewing, knitting, crochet, embroidery and cross stitch - as well as having a cuppa and a biscuit and sometimes cake! There is chatting and a laugh. Starting Wednesday 10th September. We do have to pay for room hire after 10th September. For more information ring Elaine 01207 520063. No reply, please leave your name and number and Elaine will get back to you. Looking forward to meeting you and for you to join us.

December Church Services

All Saints' Parish Church
14th December, 3pm: Nine Lessons and Carols
21st December, 3pm: A very Messy Christmas! Messy Church party, songs, games, stories and a free Messy Tea!
24th December, 11pm: Midnight Mass
25th December, 10am: Christmas Day Eucharist

All Saints' RC Church
23rd December, 1.30pm Benediction and Mass
24th December, 7.15pm Christmas Vigil Mass
25th December, 9.30am Christmas Day Mass
26th December, 9.30am Mass

Lanchester Methodist Church
Sunday 14th 10.30 Morning Worship;
Sunday 14th 6pm A service for any who have experienced loss during the year
Sunday 21st 10.30 Carol Service; 6pm Candlelit Carol Service with choir and band
Christmas Eve 5pm Reflective Communion (come and go as you wish)
Christmas Day 10am All-age celebration
Sunday 28th (no services)



Christmas Concert Saturday 6th December, 7pm in Lanchester Methodist Church
An ensemble of four excellent trumpeters (Sound the Trumpets) will be performing a range of Christmas music, including carols. Mince pies with mulled wine will be served at the end of the concert. Tickets costing £12 are now available. Email: soundthetrumpet2025@gmail.com
Please come along to enjoy this festive occasion which will be raising money for Willow Burn Hospice too!
Margaret Coates

Community Centre News

Here is your latest news from your Community Centre.

Did you know that we are self-funded? There are lots of ways in which you can help.

- Join our committee
- Volunteer to be our Treasurer or Chair
- Volunteer to help with our garden
- Volunteer to help for 2 hrs between 4.00pm to 6.00pm
- Like and share our Facebook posts
- Join a group or club
- Shop through 'easyfundraising'
- Gift an item to us from our Amazon gift list
- Become a Friend for £24, go to our website for the link to join, or call in at the office
- Collect loose change and donate it to us
- Buy a second hand book for 80p at reception
- Come along to our fundraisers and fayres
- Join our gym
- Book the centre for business meetings, birthday parties, celebrations or funerals.

What's new: We have a new treadmill in the gym. A big 'thank you' to Karbon homes and Cllr Alison Gray who funded this project.
The gym now has 2 treadmills, 2 rowers, 2 ellipticals, 2 bikes, 1 Multi gym, 1 abductor/adductor machine, 1 Smiths Machine with weights, as well as kettle bells and hand weights.
Gym membership is only £19.50. It is open from 7am to 9pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm at weekends. Plus, it's on your doorstep! Call in to book your induction.
The office is staffed Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-1.15pm. On Tuesday and Thursdays, it's 9am-3pm. If you have any en-quiries about any of the brilliant activities or clubs available, please get in touch on 01207 521275.

To keep up to date with what's going on check out our Information Point; follow us on Facebook 'Lanchester Community Centre' or check out our website - https://lanchestercc.co.uk/ or scan the **new** QR code for our website.



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Dear Village

On island crossing points on Durham Road when you hear a siren from police or ambulance do not cross as the vehicle may pass on the wrong side of the road.
This happened to me; I was looking right and nearly crossed when a speeding police car travelling from the left passed on the wrong side of the crossing in front of me.
What would have happened if I had not heard the siren?
Thank you

A.R. Williams

Lanchester Parish Council
Notes from the Ordinary Meeting held in Lynwood House on Tuesday 14th October 2025 at 7.00pm

Minutes – Ordinary Meeting 9th September – approved

Police Reports

Members were updated on the recent PACT report for September. We also had PC Kat Joyce attend the meeting who discussed a number of topics. These included rural operations that were taking place in the Parish, quadbikes, parking and the criminal damage caused to the bus stops. PCSO Paul Egan has now left the police force and we will hopefully have a replacement PCSO soon.

Correspondence

OASES – A letter was received thanking the Parish Council for funding the Summer Holiday Family Activities this year, which wouldn't have been able to go ahead without our donation. The sessions were a success and highly attended by many families.

Durham County Councillor

County Cllr A Gray provided an update on the areas she has recently been working on, these included –

- Alison is on the 'Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee'
- Met with the Clean and Green Team from DCC regarding trees in the Village
- Attending a coffee morning regarding getting more people to travel on buses
- Attended the Longovicium open evening
- Met with the parking team to discuss the parking problems at Fenhall Park and Front Street
- Dealt with complaints about scaffolding causing problems, speeding on Station Road and dog attacks
- Meeting with Joy Allen regarding the problems with quadbikes around the Village
- Contributing towards a drone
- A speeding sign is being installed on Durham Road
- AAPs have been taken over by Local Networks, they have a larger area to support

Councillors asked Alison if she could look into the maintenance schedule for the Village and update at a future meeting.

Haystax Holiday Park

Councillor Keith Harrison attended the Committee meeting for this planning application which was approved. Some concerns were raised from the Committee meeting:

- Static caravans were being called lodges at the meeting, giving a false description of the application.
- The planning consultant stated that there were only four councillors at our Council meeting dated the 9th of September as documented in our minutes there was actually ten Councillors in attendance.

The Council has sent a letter of objection.

Planning Applications

Members were updated on the following planning applications:

- Land East Of Edge Lane Maiden Law DH7 0RY - Installation and operation of a ground mounted photovoltaic (PV) solar energy generation system (solar farm), battery storage facility, electrical substation and associated infrastructure - DM/22/01769/FPA – The Clerk to work with and support Burnhope Parish Council.
- Land South East Of Hollinside Hall Lanchester DH7 0RN - New stable block with associated grazing and recreation area within the gardens of the existing hall - DM/22/03802/FPA – Councillors were updated that this planning application had been approved.

Unadopted Trees

Councillors discussed trees at Valley Grove that residents were concerned about but Durham County Council were not taking responsibility for.

Potential Collaboration on Village Life Project

Members were advised on a project regarding Lanchester – Council are happy to help.

Tree Surveys

Members voted on who to give the tree works to and Batson Groundcare Environment Experts won the vote.

Emails – gov.uk/Assertion 10

Members were advised that for the Council to comply with Assertion 10 Councillors need to change their email address' to a 'gov.uk' address – Clerk attending a training course on Assertion 10 and will give Councillors more information at a future meeting.

Christmas Light Switch on

Members discussed the event, decisions were made on who would switch on the lights this year.

Friends of Longovicium

A grant of £200 was approved towards the open evening the group are having.

Annual Return 2024/25 – approved

Financial report – approved

Accounts for Payment – approved

Chairperson's Announcements – a donation of £150 towards the printing costs and wreath was approved for the Remembrance Sunday Service.

Meetings are every second Tuesday of the month, the next two meetings will be held on 11th November and 9th December.



Poppy's walks

Good day readers. This month's walk is rather special, in that it is called the Lanchester Heritage Walk. A post near to the Newbiggin Lane car park on the railway path tells us that much.

So, although this is a well trodden walk which I have described to you in the past, I am going to make no apologies about going over old ground. Because on this occasion I joined two other dogs and 28 humans (if I counted right) on a Sunday morning hike to raise funds for Willow Burn Hospice. Each human paid £5 to participate, although dogs walked for free I am pleased to say.

By now you will know I am Poppy, a Patterdale Terrier who enjoys sharing with you readers the walks I lead my Humans on. We set off from the post after having our photos taken and I was pleased to note that the distance on the Heritage Walk was said to be 5.1 miles, so I was unlikely to be short changed. We set off past the Railway Station House and across Station Road before following the railway path towards Malton. We veered into Dora's Wood and back out again to rejoin the railway path by walking under a thick metal drainage pipe.

We then walked along the riverbank at Malton picnic area before crossing the bridge over the River Browney and walking towards the row of houses which comprise the hamlet of Malton. This row is called Official Terrace. We turned right to walk in front of the houses. They were on our left with fields on our right. At the end of the row, we turned left along a track which led us to a stile. By crossing the stile, we entered a nature reserve.

We walked through the nature reserve, which had lots of smells to explore, and then turned right after crossing a stile at the end of the footpath. This took us along a fairly rutted overgrown track to another stile. This we crossed into a field after which we had a fairly steep climb uphill to a gap in the fence on our left. Some of the humans were making funny panting noises and looking rather red faced during this stage of the walk. We passed through the gap onto another field which we crossed in the direction of some farm buildings. These turned out to be Biggen Farm and Biggen House Farm.

We passed the first buildings before turning left across a farmyard to another stile. This we crossed and walked downhill on a track at the side of fields which led us past a barn. During this stretch of the walk I must admit I had a difference of opinion over a stick with a terrier called Mabel who was also on the walk.

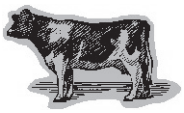
She tried to snatch the stick which was firmly in my possession and I had to let her know in no uncertain terms - a lot of growling and some ruffled fur - that I was not surrendering it. She soon got the message.

At the foot of the farm track, we crossed through a gate and back onto the railway path. By this time Mabel and I had made our peace, and we walked contentedly back in the direction of Lanchester.

The walk, which was led by Kieron from the Consett Hiking Group, took two hours from 10am until noon on a pleasant autumnal Sunday morning.

He confirmed at the end that we had walked an impressive 5.1 miles, which was perfectly fine by me.

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Watoto Charity

Watoto brings hope and healing to vulnerable women and children in Uganda and South Sudan. Watoto villages provide homes, families and holistic care to over 3000 children. Baby Watoto rescues orphaned and abandoned babies giving them a bright future, and the Watoto Neighbourhood Projects return dignity to Africa's greatest resource, her women. God is at the centre of everything Watoto does.

Mark and Julia Lloyd from Lanchester recently spent time in Uganda volunteering with Baby Watoto. They plan to return for 3 – 4 months next year and would love to be able to take out much needed supplies of premature baby milk, nappies, bottles and as much as they can fit into 6 suitcases to support this charity.

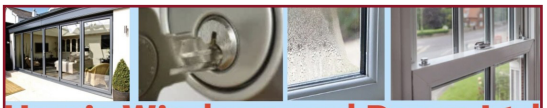
As part of their fundraising for the children and women they are hosting, together with some wonderful volunteers, a Christmas Crafting afternoon at **Lanchester Methodist Church. Wednesday 17th December 1:30 to 3:30pm** Please find all the information in the poster.

Tickets available from:

Helen: dadsapplied@gmail.com – 07913976911

Julia: mj.jm@hotmail.co.uk - 07954320699

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Lanchester Endowed Parochial School

We are all back into the routine of school life again after our first half term. We believe children thrive on responsibility and give our children lots of leadership opportunities. This month, the children have written about some of the roles they undertake in school.

Rotakids

This year, Mrs Lydon and 9 children from Lanchester EP will be working alongside Consett Rotary Club to raise money for charities throughout the year as part of the RotaKids group. The children have come up with some fantastic fundraising ideas - the first one of the year being 'Wacky Hair Day', which was held at school on Friday 24th October.

'As a RotaKid, I am looking forward to helping the community by doing a village litter pick in the springtime. It will help to keep our community tidy and make it a nice place for everyone.'

Jack, Year 5.

'I have been excited for Wacky Hair Day and to raise money for some charities. I am looking forward to planting the crocuses that Mr Brierley brought in for us.'

Franky, Year 3

School Council

Our new school council has been elected for this academic year by their peers. We have 24 representatives from Y1-Y6 who meet regularly to discuss a range of issues relating to life at Lanchester EP as well as suggesting and organising charity and fundraising events throughout the course of the year. Within the council we have also organised some subcommittees where groups of councillors are responsible for working alongside staff on new playground initiatives, looking into buying resources for school, as well as school dinners and meal provisions.

FairTrade Group

As you may already know, we are fairactive school and we have recently selected a new team of Fairtrade leaders. We have lots of exciting things planned this year including baking for the coffee afternoon, hot chocolate stall, tuck shops and 'The Great Lanchester Bake Off'. We hope to see you at our future events because we want to get the community involved.

William, Year 5

Worship Leaders

We have 10 Year 6 worship leaders at Lanchester EP. Every week we make a PowerPoint about the theme of the week and lead worship for the whole school. Sometimes we tell a story from the Bible or do a drama and say some prayers. The themes this term have been about our school's core Christian values. It can be a bit nerve racking to go up in front of every single person in the school including the teachers but it is an important job to do for the school and it is fun.

At the harvest service at church we had lines to read out and we said prayers at the front of church. We also handed out pumpkin seeds so that the pupils could grow them to remind us of harvest.

Ava and Max Year 6

Head Pupils

"Hello. We would like to introduce ourselves – we are the new Head Boy, Head Girl and Deputy Head Boy and Deputy Head Girl team at Lanchester EP. It is such a privilege to be given this role. We had to apply for the posts in writing and then we had an interview with Mrs Davis, Mr Knighton, Mr McLoughlin and Dr Bell, one of our governors. It was a rigorous process and our stress levels were high. However, we were delighted that we were chosen. So far, we have helped show new Reception and Nursery parents around at an open morning and we are looking forward to representing the school in coming events."

Nathan, Ollie, Sienna and Saskia

Mrs Jane Davis, Head Teacher







From the top

Rota Kids wacky hair day

FairTrade Group

Worship Leaders

Head Pupils



Solar Farm Inquiry postponed

Campaigners fighting a long running battle against a planned solar farm in Burnhope have criticised the lack of notice from a council for a key planning inquiry.

The three-week hearing due to be held at Lanchester Community Centre beginning at the end of October was to consider a decision to refuse plans for the 92-hectare (227-acre) solar farm after developers Lightsource bp appealed to the government's Planning Inspectorate.

There were complaints Durham County Council failed to inform the public about the inquiry within the required time frame, and it was adjourned.

The authority has apologised for the error and said the inquiry will be rescheduled for next year.

The council had approved the solar farm in March 2023, but after a judicial review and legal challenge by Burnhope residents, the permission was quashed by the planning court in February 2024, ruling the scheme "unlawful".

An amended plan was submitted but was turned down by the council's planning committee.

Its future now rests with government planners.

However, campaigners claim that despite significant public interest in the inquiry, people living in Burnhope, Lanchester, Maiden Law, Quaking Houses and South Moor did not know when it was due to be held.

Stephen Reed, Durham County Council's planning manager, said: "Due to an error, residents were not given enough notice of the public inquiry starting - we are sorry for any inconvenience this has caused.

"A new date will be set by the planning inspectorate for next year, and we will make sure notices are published in accordance with relevant timescales."

Neil McKay

All Saints' Catholic Primary School

As the golden leaves fall and the season of autumn well and truly settles in, our pupils are celebrating another half term which has been filled with joy, achievement and high standards.

From the youngest learners in Nursery discovering the magic of storytelling and song, to the oldest pupils in Year Six tackling ambitious historical learning related to how Islamic scholars preserved the learning of the ancient world and moved knowledge forward, the school has been a hive of purposeful activity. Classrooms have echoed with laughter, curiosity, and determination as children have embraced every opportunity to grow and succeed.

This term has seen a renewed focus on excellence across the curriculum with a particular focus on 'participation'. Pupils have risen to the challenge, producing work of remarkable quality in English, Mathematics, Science, and the Arts. Teachers have been thrilled with the children's resilience and pride in their learning.

Beyond the classroom, the school has been alive with enrichment. Harvest celebrations brought the community together in a spirit of gratitude and generosity, while school council and House Captain elections gave pupils a voice and a sense of responsibility. Our sporting calendar has begun with cross country and boys' football with our cross-country team qualifying for the upcoming Derwentside finals. Our Welcome Liturgy, European Day of Languages, educational visits and non-uniform days added colour and excitement to the beginning of the year, reinforcing All Saints' commitment to a broad and balanced education.

Our wonderful families have played a vital role, supporting learning at home and joining in with school life; their partnership with staff continues to be a cornerstone of the school's success.

The first eight weeks in term have been joyful; our children have achieved so much, not just academically but in their confidence, kindness and creativity. We are incredibly proud of them and grateful to our dedicated staff and families at All Saints'. As we look ahead to the festive season, we do so with pride in all that has been accomplished—and excitement for the opportunities the next half term will bring.

Frances Stephenson
Head Teacher



Yr5 brass music lesson



After school fencing club



House captains with People's Kitchen donation



Some Yr1 pupils at Durham Cathedral

An Exciting Christmas Concert!

'Twas The Night Before Christmas Innominata Choir will be performing just a few miles out of the village, at Annfield Plain Methodist Church on Saturday 20th December at 7pm. The concert will include familiar carols for choir and audience as well as some beautiful readings with carols from composers such as Bob Chilcott, Peter Warlock and Sarah Quartel. 'Twas The Night Before Christmas will be sung in the second part of the concert. A wonderful, innovative Cantata by Oliver Tarney, the words of the poem unfold interspersed with traditional carols. Please join us for a real celebration of Christmas! You will recognise some members of the choir who live in 'our' village and some of the audience who have become regular supporters! For tickets costing £12 to include refreshments please email: innominatachoir@gmail.com



Margaret Coates

Thursday Club

The Thursday Club is alive and kicking and expanding numbers of members of lively ladies who enjoy each other's company.

This month we had the company of Joan Gray with her fabulous jewellery. She told us how she discovered that she had a flair for this and that she still creates new styles.

Even on the day of the meeting she made some yellow earrings as requested by one of the members.

Many happy shoppers made purchases for early Christmas gifts.

Christmas has to be planned and planning our outing to the Kings Head in December this year was started. People chose their menus to help the arrangements to go smoothly

The next meeting in November is on the 20th when the EP school choir is coming to sing for us.

Jan Vasey

Lanchester History Society Meeting report

We met on Friday 3rd of November to hear George Nairn talk us through some of his postcard collection in the form of a "Journey down the A68 from the Scottish Border to Darlington". The pictures from the top of Carter Bar showed an interesting history of communications. Roads allowed more than just physical links as shown in the picture, the telephone masts and wires slung along the route. Transportation was another theme of the route where railways connected with the road. Stations at Corbridge and Riding Mill were well represented in cards. George recounted tales of various individuals along the road: Tommy Thompson, the hermit of Allensford, Willie Bainbridge of Castleside and further south Mary Ann Cotton with her connection to West Auckland.

We enjoyed the trip down the road punctuated with many anecdotes from George.

Marian Morrison



Top right – Tow Law in the snow





St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College



Eliza, Layla and Mark at Beamish

As half term one finishes, our students have had an amazing start to the year. Students across the school have settled in well and lots of students are taking on additional responsibilities, hobbies and interests which is truly wonderful to see. A big well done to all of our students but special shout outs to the pupils below.

Three of our Year 10 students – **Eliza, Layla, and Mark** – recently completed their work experience placements at **Beamish Museum**, one of the region's most popular and educational attractions. Throughout their time there, they impressed staff and visitors alike with their enthusiasm, professionalism, and willingness to learn. Each student took on real responsibilities, from assisting with historical displays and interacting with the public to supporting behind-the-scenes operations. Feedback from Beamish staff was overwhelmingly positive, describing the students as mature, reliable, and a credit to the school. Their experience not only gave them valuable insight into working life but also helped them develop confidence and communication skills that will serve them well in the future.

Meanwhile, **Faye, Olivia, and Gracie** in **Year 9** have been busy shining on stage in a local production of *The Sound of Music*. Balancing rehearsals and performances with their schoolwork is no small task, yet all three managed to do so with incredible dedication and success. Their hard work paid off as the show received glowing reviews, and the girls' performances were met with admiration from audiences and teachers alike. Taking part in a major production requires discipline, teamwork, and resilience, and these students demonstrated all of these qualities in abundance. We're extremely proud of their ability to pursue their passions while maintaining their strong commitment to their studies.



Bijan at the Karate competition

In **Year 8**, **Bijan** represented both the school and the country when he travelled to **Finland** to compete in a **Kyokushin Karate** competition. This remarkable achievement highlights not only his athletic talent but also his determination and perseverance in mastering a challenging martial art. Competing internationally is a huge accomplishment, and Bijan's success is a testament to the countless hours of training and dedication he has put in.

Finally, the **whole school community** came together to support **Wear Red Day** in aid of the **Show Racism the Red Card** charity. Students and staff wore red and donated generously, raising almost **£200** for this important cause. It was a powerful reminder of the values of respect, equality, and kindness that underpin our school, and a fitting end to a term filled with achievement and compassion.

Catherine Hammill, Head Teacher

Boys' Brigade







Food from around the world, BB knowledge, crafts and the planets of the solar system have all been discussed in much detail during the last month. Items of food were used to explain the different size of planets from a pumpkin to a poppy seed and the distance they are apart was measured in scale on the floor of the hall. We were fortunate that our BB Chaplain Kath came along to do some craft work with the lads and she will also be leading our 96th enrolment service at the end of November.

Nine of our senior boys, Toby, Nathan, Louis, Josh, Arnaud, Jay, Tyler, Thomas and Dylan completed their expedition part of their DofE, 7 for Bronze and 2 for Silver. They started at the bottom of Ebchester Bank and walked approximately 8 miles, carrying all their equipment, tents, clothes, food and cooking gear, through beautiful countryside to Broomley Grange where they erected their tents, cooked a meal and camped. The next day they set off again on another 8 mile circular route around the countryside before ending back at Broomley wet but not disheartened. They again cooked, had a campfire and camped. The third and final day saw them pack away their tents which would need further drying when they were home as they were still wet. They completed some work clearing the guttering of the outside buildings at Broomley Grange which is an activity centre owned by the Boys' Brigade and we often carry out some work for them during our stays. It was a challenging weekend weather wise, being the last weekend of half term but all the lads performed with tremendous endeavour helping one another all the time.

We are now looking forward to the busiest time of year in our BB calendar with the start of the National competitions, Remembrance and Enrolment services, coffee morning, BB Courses as well as our usual weekly activities.

We welcome new members at any time throughout the year just bring them along on a Wednesday evening 6.15 to 7.30pm for 8 to 11 years old and 7.30 to 9pm for 11-18 years old. Anchor Boys for 5-8 years old is on a Thursday from 6.10 to 7.10pm.

Eric Hepplewhite

Santa's Christmas Trail 2025

The Lanchester Partnership

The Lanchester Partnership Christmas Trail - Free fun for all of the family!

Santa's Elves are already busy getting creative with the clues for this year's Christmas trail around the village!

Starting on the day of the Christmas Light switch on in November, look out for Christmas clues around the village shop windows.

Complete the trail in any order until Dec 31st!

Pick up an answer sheet from Lanchester News or The Kings Head to complete the trail…

The answer to each clue will give you a letter which when compiled make up a message. Once you crack the message, take your answer sheets to The Kings Head to collect your free prize!

Thanks to the local businesses who support the trail.

For more information on the Partnership, to join or to volunteer please go to:

www.lanchesterpartnership.org.uk

Sweaty Mama



I have a love for fitness and strength training. In July 2024, I had my beautiful little girl and found it hard to keep consistent with exercise due to a lack of viable options for mums to participate in classes alongside their little ones. Now, I'm so excited to be combining my two loves: working with little ones and bringing fitness back to their amazing mums! I'm a primary school teacher too so I truly love working with people of all ages!

Sweaty Mama Derwent and Tyne is UK's No. 1 Pre and Postnatal Fitness Specialists, helping women to enjoy fun and effective workouts with their child. Whether you're pregnant, with children or looking for a women friendly exercise class then this is for you. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram Sweaty Mama Derwent and Tyne or message 07956244337.

Gina Petterson *Sponsored content*



Lanchester Social Club

A new chapter, a new outlook - come in and see for yourselves.
That is the message from the newly-formed committee at Lanchester Social Club, whose members are inviting villagers - and their friends and relatives - to pop in for a drink and a chat.
"We are open to everyone, all are welcome," said member Jane Parker.
Jane, alongside fellow members Moira and Don Crozier, Richard Young, Johnny Walker, Carol Ann Wright, Claire Stroka, Peter Stephens and Geoff Dance, have taken over the running of the club and are keen to attract families and new customers young and old.
They admit that the club has struggled since Covid and believe it is time to remind Lanchester that they are still very much on the go.
"We have reasonably priced drinks, both alcoholic and soft, a wide variety of entertainment booked, a large concert room available for hire, a decent safe outdoor area for kids to play in the summer, live sport on TV", said Moira, the club secretary.
She added: "And dogs are welcome with well-behaved owners."
While attractions include bingo and domino handicaps, and free entertainment on Saturday nights, Moira said the club would "always welcome any new suggestions."
Meanwhile The Buskers are booked to appear on New Year's Day from 2pm, admission by ticket costing £7. Before that there is a Christmas market on Sunday, November 30 from noon to 4pm.
A host of entertainment and events are also scheduled for the new year, whilst the new committee has also installed a new juke box and pool table.

Neil McKay

DAVISONS
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Winter stock now in!
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WI News

At our meeting on Monday 6 October (which was our AGM), 33 members, 1 new member and 2 representatives from WI House were welcomed. Information was given about future events. Our Treasurer reported that we have had a very good year financially and she thanked members for their ongoing support.
Marie gave her report outlining a very busy year with lots of fundraising events for our upcoming 100th Anniversary celebration. Marie also thanked all of the members of the committee for all of the time and effort that they put in to making our WI successful.
The WI Advisor, Kathryn Ridsdale, then carried out the voting procedure to elect the President. Marie was re-elected for another year.
As a bit of fun for the evening we had two games of 'backwards bingo', enjoyed by all.
Our next meeting is our members' Christmas Party on Monday 1 December.

Marie Murphy



Photo - Kathryn Ridsdale, WI Advisor and Marie Murphy

Talking Heads
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Red Cross Fashion Event

British Red Cross Lanchester is holding a late night Christmas Fashion Event in store on 29th November. They are open until 8pm.
There will be new clothing, Christmas gifts, tea, coffee, snacks, fun, friends and more!

British RedCross

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Lanchester Food Week

Older Lanchester residents will recall when eating out meant a bar meal at either the Kings Head or Queen's Head. Those fancying a takeaway from the village had to make do with Sunley's chippie.
The choice is now of course far greater, and this choice was celebrated with Lanchester's first ever food week.
Held during October half term week the aim was to celebrate the variety available to residents and visitors alike.
Throughout the week, local favourites rolled out special offers. Grandpa's Fish Bar served mini fish and chips in a cone for £5, while the Gallery Coffee Shop offered a free toastie or panini for one child with every adult lunchtime special. Ravello's Italian Coffee Shop, Yanni's Greek Restaurant, Crinnions, and The King's Head also had special offers to mark the week. The Old Ice Cream Shop got into the Halloween holiday spirit. Special offers during the week included Haunted Hot Chocolate, I-scream Shakes and Wicked Sundaes all for the special price of £3 each.
Local organiser Barrie McDermid said the idea came from a love of the village's growing food offer.
He said: "I very rarely have to leave the village if I want to eat out, and I just thought we should all work together to help promotions."



Golden Valley Chinese Takeaway offered a salt and chilli pepper box meal for £12.90, Crinnions tempted diners with 20% off food and a chance to gamble for a bigger discount, and Lanchester Country Basket offered fruit and veg boxes at cost to showcase local produce.
Serendipity Cafe, The Willows Cafe and Potting Shed, and even Lilydale Pet Supplies also took part.
Lanchester Methodist Church joined in, acting as a drop-off point for Stanley food bank.

Neil McKay

All Saints' Catholic Church Lanchester - All Saints Feast Day Celebration

All Saints' Feast Day on Saturday 1st November was attended by many parishioners, families and friends. Father Vernatius welcomed everyone to the Lanchester Social Club, wishing everyone a great evening of celebration. The Whistle Blowers, a local band, provided excellent musical entertainment. It was a lovely social evening with plenty of dancing and chatter. The food, catered by Class Act, Leadgate, went down a treat.



Our Centenary Raffle, intended to start off our centenary celebrations, was drawn at this event. Some of the prizes were: a Ravello's voucher for £40, a car valet voucher, a large basket of fruit and many other prizes - far too many to mention but there were a great deal of happy winners. Our celebrations will begin in earnest next year. The church will be 100 years old in November 2026. We hope to have lots happening all through the year for everyone. We hope many in our village will join us to make this a fitting 100th year celebration. Thank you to all who supported, helped and worked on the night.
A date for your diaries: All Saints' Catholic Church will be hosting a Christmas Carol Service by Consett Brass Band on Sunday 14th December 6pm. Everyone is welcome. There will be a retirement collection at the end of the evening. Everyone is welcome in the Parish Centre after the event where mince pies and ginger wine will be served.

Lestrine Kelly

KoGs Autumn Update!

On Monday 13th October we held our first trip of the new 25/26 school year to Knitsley Farm Shop and Granary Café in Knitsley. We heard from 3 generations of the Jewson Family including the legend that is Billy himself! Massive thank you to the Farm Shop for our amazing behind the scenes tour which included a talk about the business and the buildings from Ellen, Rachel in the bakery for answering questions and to Ian in the boning shed for showing us around and where our meat actually comes from, and of course to William for letting us meet his pigs! We had a beautiful meal of chicken and chorizo lasagne thanks to Rachael Jewson. And of course, thanks to our own Pete for actually teaching us all about meat and how to make sausages! (You'd think it was his job- it is by the way!) Once again thank you to all involved- we LOVED our session and member feedback says "BEST NIGHT EVER"! We have lots coming up in the next few weeks as we start to get excited about bonfire night and dare I say it - CHRISTMASSS!!







We have received a few donations recently and we would like to say a huge thank you to those who have very generously sent them. We won't name any of you but you know who you are! It makes a MASSIVE impact on us and we would like to thank you for all your thoughts and support. They really do help keep all of our running costs to a minimum!

At KoGs we offer a range of activities including: 2 course meals, games, messy games, day trips, evening trips, residential weekend trips, crafts, drama, cell sessions/ life skills and much much more! We start at 5pm to 7.30pm, Mondays during school terms (and some half terms) at Lanchester Methodist Church for all ages 8 – 18 years! The cost of the sessions is £3 per person weekly or £30 per person a term but your first week is free! All activities (excluding additional trips) and your weekly meal is included. We are open to anyone who would like to join us, you don't have to have a religious background! For more information contact Laura & Peter Cole on 07428500059 / 01207 654291 or email kidsofgod@hotmail.co.uk. We also have a Facebook page if you'd like to see more or get in touch with us that way, www.facebook.com/kidsofgodlanchester

Laura Cole

Lanchester Bowling Club - Hat Off



Bob wearing Tillie on tour

Being very fair skinned there are two things I am never without on the bowling green. The first is factor 50, often badly applied, the second is my battered khaki sun hat. I call my hat Tillie - a play on the maker's name - and she has travelled the world with me.
During the four dozen or so matches I played last season, I wore my hat in wind, rain and sun. The only time the hat came off my head was to salute a good shot from one of our players.
A recent hat raise was to Joy Packard, a relatively new bowler. We were at home to Sherburn Park on an awful rink that nobody could master. It was swinging wildly and the bowls just kept running so that each end there were more in the ditch than on the rink. On one end Joy's first wood was within a yard of the jack which in itself was good, but her second wood was superb. She bowled a back hand which curved slowly down the rink and landed within nine inches of the jack. An excellent shot. I raised my hat, Joy curtsied, but, more importantly, it contributed to Joy's first ever win on a bowling rink.
Another Tillie raise was to Tony Warren at White-le-Head. One of their bowls was touching the side of the jack and thus counting. Tony played a backhand shot with perfect weight and trajectory. It curved beautifully up the rink, nudged their wood out of the way and nestled in its place. Another shot nearer what was a pleasing victory.
The final shot, and by far the best shot I saw this season, was by Malcolm Laverick at Leadgate. The jack was surrounded by opposition woods, and it looked like we were going to go down a lot of shots. From the moment the wood left Malcolm's hand, however, things changed. I swear the bowl had a life of its own as it seemed to slalom down the rink missing everything in its path. Slowing down, it trickled past the jack and gently nudged against what had been the shot wood. Malcolm's bowl pushed the shot wood out of the way and then rocked softly back to lie in an unbeatable place.
Such a perfect shot deserved the perfect accolade - a long raise of Tillie.
For the last couple of years or so I have enjoyed writing articles for The Voice. In doing so I hope I have reported, informed, educated and hopefully even in a small way also entertained. Sadly, I write this article in hospital with a stage four cancer and may be too ill to write for some time.
To my regular readers, thank you for being there and for some great feedback.
I doff Tillie to you all.

Bob Cuthbertson

The Village Voice thanks Bob for all his articles, wishes him well and hopes he'll be back soon writing for the Bowls Club.



Malcolm Laverick playing Bob's shot of the season.

Cricket round up

The Final Saturday of September saw the Clubhouse packed for Presentation Day.
Trophies were awarded to the following:
Junior awards
Under 11 Girls batting- Alice Armstrong, Under 11 Girls Player of the Year- Harriet McPhail
Under 11 Boys bowling-Charlie Armin, Under 11 Boys Player of the Year-Tommy Rolfe
Under 13 batting- Ollie Wainwright, Under 13 bowling- Tommy Rolfe
Under 13 Player of the Year- Leo Roberts
Under 15 batting- Riley Sayer, Under 15b bowling- Nathan Watson
Under 15 Player of the Year- Alfie Armstrong
Under 17/19 Batting- James Leary, Under 17/19 bowling- Joe Malone
Under 17/19 Player of the Year- Harvey Wright
Senior Awards
Firsts- Batting- John Meadows, Bowling- Kieran Gohery, POTY- Josh Renton
Seconds- Batting- Glen Harrison. Bowling- Tom Deaville, POTY- Glen Harrison
Thirds- Batting- Dan Scott, Bowling- Leo Johnson, POTY-Michael Oxley
Overall awards
Presidents Trophy- John Meadows
Most Improved Player- Alfie Armstrong
NEW- Junior Volunteer of the Year…Joint- John McGilvray and Tom Deaville
NEW- Volunteer of the Year…John Bell

Andrew McConnell



Collage of some of the winners by Mia Kennington

Tennis Update

Cutting, clearing, weeding and seeding.
Members of the club joined forces for the weekend to help with our end of season maintenance day, we had a great turn out… thank you!
The courts should be in tip top condition for next season!
Don't forget winter coaching for children and adults continues at Croft View, any enquiries please contact: lanchestertennis@gmail.com
This will be my last update for a couple of months but please do follow us on Facebook, and just in case you are stuck for the ideal Christmas present, a membership to Lanchester Lawn Tennis Club is a perfect gift!

Barbara Ridley

Deadlines and contact information

Articles, letters and photos by Tuesday 25th November to lanchestervillagevoice@yahoo.co.uk
Adverts by Tuesday 25th November to lanchestervvadverts@gmail.com or phone Paul 07957 871106 (advertising only)
By post: The Village Voice, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0PB.

Published by Lanchester Publications Ltd, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0PB
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