the Village Voice

Issue No 5, Volume 26

Lanchester, May 2026







Easter in Lanchester from Communities in Focus

Story and more photos page 2











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Easter in the Village

Communities in Focus Project

Easter events in the village

From the Duck Race on Sunday, where a few ducks famously missed the turn, to a children's disco and a visit from the Easter Bunny, it was a lively and memorable Easter weekend for families and local pubs in Lanchester. One lucky winner even took home an egg almost the size of his body! On a more reflective note, it was also lovely to see a flower-decorated cross in the village [with Revd Stuart Earl], reminding those of faith of the meaning of Easter Sunday.

A big thank you to the local businesses and community members who organised such a fantastic weekend.

On Easter Monday, the traditional bowling on Pace Hill took place. Eggs were prepared in the old way—decorated with flowers and onion skins, wrapped in cloth and twine, and boiled for an hour—while the folk "Paste Egg Song" was sung. After judging the eggs for their colours and patterns, everyone headed up Pace Hill to see who could roll or throw their egg the furthest.

Well done to the local businesses and community members who organised such a wonderful weekend of events. Here are a few photos capturing the highlights.

George Ledger

On the cover at the top of the page are photographs of events on Easter Sunday. The photographs on the bottom of the page are of the Pace Egg event - more below.







Thursday Club



It was windy but the sun shone and the sea was blue for our spring outing to Seaham. We found some good places for lunch and then the statue of Tommy the war hero was a safe place for the photo.

Then we went to Dalton Park for some bargains!

The next meeting in May on the 21st in the community centre at 1.30pm is our flower demonstration. Visitors are welcome for a small charge of £5. We hope to be able to hold this in memory of the recently finished flower club and if it is successful then it could happen again next year.

Jan Vasey

Appeal against Burnhope Solar Farm turned down

There have been a number of twists and turns along the road, but the Burnhope Solar Farm has finally cleared all its planning hurdles. The appeal against the decision not to approve the solar farm by Durham Country Council was **upheld**. This was despite a long and spirited campaign by local residents against the development. Essentially the requirement to develop solar energy outweighed any objections against it.

The following is a summary of the Planning Inspector's decision:

Addressing the adverse effects of the climate crisis is recognised as a generational challenge and delivering clean power is a flagship policy of the government. Solar is a key part of the Government's strategy/policy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector and has a role in delivering greater energy independence. This proposal, **given a guaranteed grid connection**, would make an early and material contribution tackling climate change, achieving net zero and providing energy security. The inspector is obliged to give **significant** weight to the benefits of renewable energy and the contribution to a net zero future.

The adverse landscape impacts identified would be temporary, reversible and highly localised. There would be **Major Adverse** landscape character changes within the site boundary, which would endure for the life of the development (40 years). However, given the high degree of physical containment this site displays, harm to landscape character beyond the site would be limited. The visual effect on users of the public footpaths/bridleways, would be **Major Adverse**, reducing to localised **Minor Adverse** as mitigation planting matures.

Both national and development plan policy recognise that large scale solar farms may result in some landscape and visual impact harm. However, both adopt a positive approach indicating that development can be approved where the harm is outweighed by the benefits. Striking that balance is a planning judgement.

The Burnhope Keep It Green Group argued that the contribution the residents of Burnhope have already made to national energy needs and the harm they suffered as a result of mining means that it should not go ahead. The inspector stated "I can fully understand the residents' frustration at the thought of being "done to" again. The restoration scheme acknowledged as being of high quality and a credit to those involved in it, was not compensation for the years of opencast mining. Rather, it was a natural and required end of that process… Whilst the collective concerns of the residents were eloquently, and sometimes passionately, expressed, the planning and appeal system has to operate on an essentially objective basis. As such I attribute **limited** weight to this matter."

Acknowledging the Chapman's Well Sub-Area as a valued landscape is not a bar to development within it. There would be time-limited localised landscape, visual and recreational harm, in conflict with the relevant development plan policies. However, the imperative to tackle climate change, achieve net zero targets and contribute to energy security as recognised in legislation and energy policy, and the other benefits of the scheme clearly outweigh those harms. As such the proposal would accord with the development plan when read as a whole. Accordingly, and having taken all other matters into account, the appeal is allowed.

This has been summarised by the writer highlighting major points only – the full report is available on the Durham County Council's planning portal for readers who want more detail.

Keith Brown

What's going on at Lanchester Methodist Church

Following the Easter activities and the uplifting sight of the cross adorned with spring flowers on Easter Sunday, a group of 30 from the congregation gathered the following Friday to walk the final stage of St Cuthbert's Way. Setting out from Beal, they crossed the sands to reach Lindisfarne (Holy Island), sharing both the physical journey and a deeper spiritual experience of pilgrimage. Along the way, Rev. Stuart Earl offered reflections and readings, creating space for conversation, quiet thought, and shared moments of faith. A pilgrimage is often understood as a spiritual journey, undertaken for religious or personal reasons. It involves stepping away from everyday life to seek meaning, healing, and a deeper sense of connection through personal reflection. For those who took part, the journey across the sands to Lindisfarne offered exactly that: a time of fellowship, contemplation, and renewed perspective. The Methodist Church is planning a series of pilgrimages throughout 2026.





Reminder: Food Bank and Refugee Collections

Food donations can be dropped off at the church on Mondays and Wednesdays between 11 and noon. We are also collecting for West End Refugee Services who create care packs for all refugees arriving in the region. Toiletries and sanitary packs for inclusion are very welcome. Thank you.

Try Praying

You've probably spotted the big "Try Praying" banner outside Lanchester Methodist Church. It's a simple idea, especially at a time when life can feel a bit confusing or overwhelming. "Try Praying" is part of a network of churches across the country, from all sorts of denominations, sharing a message of hope. It's not about being religious or going to church—it's just an invitation to give prayer a go.



You might also notice some small turquoise booklets around Lanchester. They're easy to read and offer a simple seven-day guide to prayer, especially for people who wouldn't usually think of themselves as religious. Interestingly, lots of people who don't go to church still pray at times. If you see a booklet, feel free to pick one up. And when you've finished, why not pass it on to someone else who might like it?

You can also find out more or read it online at trypraying.org.

Methodist church Scientists in Congregations award

Lanchester Methodist Church is delighted to have been awarded a Scientists in Congregations grant for an exciting new project called "The Mustard Seed Microscope."

The project is being led by church members Kath Jones, Roy Quinlan, and Ian Reeve.

The grant comes from ECLAS (Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science), based at St John's College, Durham (https://www.eclasproject.org). ECLAS and the Scientists in Congregations grants are funded by the John Templeton Foundation.

Using macrophotography and microscopes, we're planning a series of hands-on events for September and October 2026 at the EP Primary School, Boys Brigade, and KoGs. The project will encourage children and young people to explore the living things in their local environment, sparking curiosity, creativity, and questions about both nature and creation.

With a strong STEM focus — science, technology, engineering, and mathematics — the project is initially aimed at primary and secondary school-aged children in our community. However, it is also designed to be intergenerational and inclusive, offering something for people of all ages to enjoy.

We're also exploring opportunities for follow-up events at Lanchester Library and the Methodist Church, so that the creativity and curiosity inspired by these sessions can be shared even further.

Watch this space!

Roy Quinlan

Police Report

We are pleased to say that we have a new correspondent from the police.

I am PCSO 8740 Paige Hart and I am the rural crime officer for Consett. Here is an update on things that have been happening recently.

Police have received three reports of farms which have been burgled in the Burnhope area. Some items were taken like an electric bike and tools. It appears that the objective of the burglary was to take their quad bikes. All of these incidents still remain under investigation by police.

We have received several reports of criminal damage within the village of a male who has been throwing dog poo bags in and around the church. An investigation is currently ongoing into this.

A quad bike was reported stolen at a farm in the Lanchester area. An investigation is currently ongoing in relation to this.

PCSO 8740 Paige Hart



Picture of Paige at Burnhope Community Centre, Paige is second from the right

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From the House

Last month was packed with visits across the constituency. I was lucky to get to go along to both Just for Women Centre and Aspire, who both provide support to women from training courses to creche facilities. I was asked to open the new Premier shop in Annfield Plain, it is always nice to see something new opening in the area.

I have also had plenty of time out door-knocking and so far this year have been speaking to residents in Bloemfontein, Bournmoor, Burnhope, Chester-Le-Street North and Blaydon and Consett. Now that we are coming into better weather, I will continue knocking round and speaking with residents. It is a great opportunity to meet people but also I regularly take on casework and help with any issues that are raised.

I have been equally busy in Parliament, where I have spoken on my personal journey with a neurological illness that left me disabled and how the Access to Work scheme helped during my recovery. Up to 50,000 disabled people across the country could find themselves out of work without the scheme, and I have urged the Government to give it significantly more funding. I have also raised the issue of furniture poverty and asked that ministers recognise local housing provider Karbon Homes for their work providing furniture packages.

I also met the Prime Minister along with other MPs from 'red wall' areas to make the case for more industrial jobs in our constituencies. At Prime Minister's questions I shared my pride in Chester-Le-Street Front Street and the new businesses being opened there and asked what the Prime Minister can do to further support our high streets. Finally, I joined colleagues from across the North East to call on the Government to introduce a child risk disclosure scheme, following the tragic death of Maya Chappell in 2022.

My team and I have now retrieved over £570,000 owed to constituents in taxes, benefits, and utilities. If you would like an appointment with me or need my support with any matter, please email luke.akehurst.mp@parliament.uk.

House of Commons



Your county councillor update



Dr Neil Sullivan (left) of the Genome Centre with Alison Gray (right)

It is now a year since I was elected to the council, and it feels like the time has flown. It has been brilliant to meet so many different people in the ward - we have some remarkable people and businesses here, and in particular I was astounded at the scientific expertise sitting in Lanchester at the Genome centre. I had a visit just before Easter and saw the work going on there including DNA testing for different species, paternity testing, blood bio marker testing as well as jewellery design, based on your own DNA. Something I was particularly interested in given the new legislation in the **Renters Rights Act**, was air testing to identify the presence of dangerous strains of black mould in a home. I have had several pieces of case work over the year, around this problem. If you are a tenant and would like information on this law, please get in touch.

The former Area Action Partnerships which acted as vehicles for distributing funds to worthy causes and organisations across the county, were reorganised and called 'Local Networks'. They have been put on hold for now, but if you are a club or organisation needing help with funding please get in touch. The budget is limited but in the last financial year, as well as supporting some projects in Burnhope, I was able to help:

- the community centre with funding towards a treadmill
- the Lanchester Partnership with funding for the village bus
- Lanchester Cricket Club to improve accessibility in the club house
- All Saints' School with resources
- purchase a police drone with Cllrs from Langley Park, Delves Lane, Consett and Shotley Bridge.

I still receive lots of messages from residents about health matters and continue to work with the Patient Participation Group to monitor the situation at Lanchester Medical Centre – we will keep you posted on the outcome of the recent inspection. (24th April)

A doorbell has now been installed at the library for anyone needing assistance with access.

I have put in a request for the footpath up to Lanchester Showground, to be cleared in time for show day.

If I can help with a council related issue please email me on alison.gray2@durham.gov.uk or call on 07469 105096 / 03000 260 683

(Please avoid messenger if possible as these messages can be easy to miss)

WI News

Our meeting was held on Monday 13 April (second Monday due to the Bank Holiday). We had 32 members, 3 visitors and one new member joined us.

After hearing about all of the events coming up we then listened to Marie Thom, 'Midlife Dramas in Pyjamas'. Marie told us of her mid-life journey from being a teacher to becoming an author, blogger, poet and influencer. She was very interesting and highly amusing.

One of our upcoming events is our Spring/Summer Fashion Show on Saturday 16 May at Lanchester Social Club. This will be our third fashion show, the previous two were really well attended and fun events. It would be great if you could support this year's event as part of the proceeds will be going to Willow Burn Hospice and to St Cuthbert's Hospice. We will be having a great raffle, light refreshments will be available, a really fun afternoon, all for £6. Get your tickets early for this popular event.

If you are looking for something new in 2026, please come along and join us, you will be very welcome. Visitors can come along and join us for £4 per visit, you can visit for three times before deciding whether to join us. Check out our Facebook page; Lanchester WI, or email lanchesterwi@talktalk.net for further details. We look forward to seeing you.

Marie Murphy



Ladies who lunch

After a very pleasant journey through countryside bathed in glorious sunshine, we arrived at The Anchor at Whittonstall - a lovely old village hostelry which can be found on the main village street.
We soon settled in and perused the extensive menus with lots of choices among the specials, the pizzas, the favourites and the vast selection of homemade pies.
For our mains we chose chicken, leek and mushroom pie; corned beef and potato pie; Texan chilli and cheddar pie; sausage sandwich with chips; Auchtermuchty chicken - butterflied chicken breast topped with haggis and streaky bacon with whisky cream served with crushed potato and vegetables.
Desserts were sticky toffee pudding; lemon meringue pie; strawberry and prosecco roulade. A very generous latte was also enjoyed.
Our meals also came in very generous portions, with some of us taking home doggy bags. Special mention to be made of the "proper chips ".
We all enjoyed our meals and the desserts were divine and eaten with relish.
Another bonus to be enjoyed at The Anchor are the lovely views even for those with their backs to the windows - a large mirrored back wall affords everyone a fantastic view.
As you might have gathered we rather like The Anchor and we will be back.

The Gourmet Girls



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With that in mind, we are doing something a little different. For any homeowner who instructs us before the end of June, we will include a Featured Property on Rightmove for the first seven days of marketing.

Featured listings sit at the top of search results and are pushed to active buyers, creating a surge of visibility at the point it matters most. In simple terms, it gives your home a stronger launch. It is not just about being online, it is about standing out when attention is highest.



Of course, no marketing tool works in isolation. The best results come when everything aligns, pricing that reflects the market, presentation that invites people in, and communication that builds confidence from the first enquiry. The Featured Property boost simply amplifies that foundation, helping your home capture attention early and hold it. If you are thinking about moving this summer, it is worth considering how you position your home from day one, because in this market a strong launch is often the difference between a steady sale and a standout result.

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Lanchester Parish Council
Notes from the Ordinary Meeting held in Lynwood House on Tuesday 14th April 2026 at 7.00pm

Minutes – Ordinary Meeting 10th March– approved.

Police Report

Members were updated on the recent PACT report for March.

Correspondence

County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) – annual membership fee –that the membership is renewed

Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) – annual membership fee – that the membership is renewed

Lanchester Tennis Club – permission granted for a banner to be placed on the Village Green

Esh Construction – members informed of the works being carried out at Park House play area

Durham County Councillor

County Cllr A Gray provided a report on the areas she has recently been working on, these included

- Had a meeting at the library to try to improve accessibility, this is more difficult as it's not a DCC building. Looking at a portable ramp to use to access the back of the library, one day a week.
- Continuing to press for improvements at LMC – Sue Graham and I are meeting with the MP and the ICB in May.
- I have been promised dropped kerbs for Oakwood and Kings Head since July, hopefully coming in April.
- Speed advisors coming sometime soon for Durham Road and Howden Bank.
- Hedgerow ripped out in field behind Ornsby Hill – planning was alerted immediately and aware.
- Complaints about non EV vehicles parking in EV bays – DCC are aware and are hopefully going to re-mark the bays.
- Worries about the bridge at Malton not being strong enough for the frequent car transporters going down but DCC engineers say it is. They also fixed a pothole on the non-adopted road down to Malton.

Street Lighting - Members were informed that the lighting columns which hold the hanging baskets are due for a structural test. It was agreed that the testing is undertaken at a cost of £1400

Village Signage at Newbiggen

Members considered a request for assistance with new village signage – Members support the request, Clerk to advise that responsibility for village signage lies with Durham County Highways.

Road restrictions Front Street

Members considered the proposed new road restrictions – Clerk to reiterate the Council's concerns to DCC and advise that effective enforcement of the existing 3-hour parking restrictions would help address the current parking issues.

Grant/Donations

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council is able to make a donation towards the Church windows – members approved a donation of £300 to All Saints Church and up to £400 in support of Lanchester Food Week.

Burnhope Gala

Members considered a request for support for Bunhope Gala – the Parish Council approved to loan the banner for use at the event but is unable to provide a financial donation. The Council will also promote the event via our Facebook page.

Solar Walk Project

Councillors were given an update on the project.

Planning application

Councillors considered the following planning applications Retention of already constructed workshop/store – DM/26/00764/FPA – Clerk and Cllr D Smith to write a letter.

Financial report – approved.

Accounts for Payment – approved.

Meetings are every second Tuesday of the month, the next two ordinary meetings will be held on the 12th May and 9th June.

Email for the Clerk: clerk@lanchesterparishcouncil.gov.uk

Gardening Jobs for May

Hi folks, now it is warming up a little, your garden will start to grow away rapidly, including the weeds! Watch out for containers drying out and water every two to three days.
Annuals...Plant out annuals and summer bedding
Border Perennials...Support with canes or wire mesh
Bulbs...Feed daffodils to build up next year's flowers...don't cut back the leaves!
Lawns...Feed lawns for good summer growth - don't cut too short too soon!
Vegetables...Plant tomatoes under glass
Sow and plant tender vegetables
Sow some root crops for winter storing
Prune plum and cherry trees

Adam the Gardener

Bridge School



We would like to acknowledge a company for their kind donation and support offered to The Bridge School.
Jim Kelso from Airedale Forestry Ltd supplied and fixed approximately 20 guards to trees planted in the school grounds. He also supplied, and left with our caretaker Les, 50 guards and canes for him to fit to the hedge plants around the sports court and provided much appreciated advice and support. All donated free of charge to The Bridge School.

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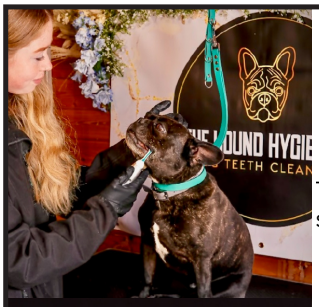
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A Troubadour Journey - Back To The Trails



All Saints' Parish Church, Durham Road, Lanchester
In June 2025 singer-songwriter Gareth Davies-Jones walked from the Holy Island of Lindisfarne to Durham Cathedral via St Oswald's Way and The Way of Light (Northern Saints Trail). Wending their way through a captivating landscape of coast, castles, valleys and mountains, these special routes transport the traveller through the ancient Kingdom of Northumbria, land of the Northern Saints and cradle of the industrial revolution. As Gareth walked, he carried a small guitar on his back and performed concerts for local communities everywhere he stopped. The journey provided the inspiration and raw material for a new album of original songs written on retreat in the Cheviot Hills and back on Lindisfarne in the Autumn of 2025. His new album, recorded with producer and guitarist Graeme Duffin (WetWetWet!) in Glasgow and called "A Troubadour Journey: Lindisfarne to Durham" was available in physical form and on all streaming services.
During 2026 Gareth is taking "A Troubadour Journey" on tour. The concerts will gather together the stories and experiences woven into new music from his time walking through these beautiful parts of Northumberland and Durham. These events promise a vivid and entertaining musical encounter with the sights, sounds, history and contemporary heart of these Northern pilgrimage trails. As well as the new material, he will also feature selected songs from across his career that capture a sense of journeying and particularly the spirit of the Northern Trails.
Do come to see and hear him.
Saturday 20th June. Doors open at 7.00pm and music begins at 7.30pm Tickets: £10.00 in advance, £12.00 on the door. Tickets available from his website: www.garethdavies-jones.com/home.







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Hibiki – lost and found



For 17 days, the village of Lanchester became the unexpected playground of one very determined little explorer.
Hibiki, a mischievous indoor cat with endless curiosity, vanished from home after being startled by a sticky front door, sparking a frantic search by his worried owner while he embarked on what can only be described as his own village-wide holiday.
His first stop? Food, of course.
Hibiki clearly felt cosmopolitan and fancied a change from his usual menu. Rumour has it he began his adventure wandering past Serendipity Café in search of a latte, but they were already closed, as he was potentially spotted after 6pm.
From there, his curiosity led him further into the village, perhaps considering a Chinese takeaway… or maybe he caught the delicious Italian aromas drifting from Ravello Ristorante. Then again, perhaps he fancied a gyro from Yannis instead. But the butcher's shop may have offered something fresher and far more tempting for a tiny explorer.
Not long after, he was potentially spotted near Grandpa's Fish Bar, where the smell of fresh fish drifting through the air was simply too irresistible to ignore, especially at around 2am when he started getting hungry again.
After dining his way around the village, Hibiki must have grown thirsty. He eventually made his way to the river, where he perfected a clever new technique for drinking water, dipping his paw into the water and drinking delicately from it.
Then came farm life.
A welcome phone call revealed Hibiki had made new friends at a farm two miles away, a cow and a horse, no less. Clearly charmed by the country lifestyle, he made himself right at home, curling up in the cow's pen where it was warm, cosy, and safe.
For two days, he lived the simple life, surrounded by hay, hooves, and countryside calm.
But after a couple of nights in rustic accommodation, Hibiki apparently decided it was time for an upgrade.
He moved on in search of a five-star retreat in the pastures, perhaps longing for luxury in a freshly ploughed field.
During his adventure, I also received potential sightings from the local cricket club, and even from what a neighbour affectionately calls our tennis court "local Wimbledon." Every message, call, and update helped piece together his journey and gave hope he was still making his way safely around the village.
Eventually, though, even the most adventurous travellers begin to miss home.
It seems Hibiki started trying to find his way back, travelling through the paddock and wandering roughly around the Humberhill Drive area.
At last came the final message.
A kind lady had found him, not distressed, but shamelessly sunbathing on her deck as though he owned the place. Tired, content, and perhaps ready to retire from his adventures, Hibiki was finally collected and brought safely home.
Back in familiar surroundings, Hibiki spent the evening "chatting" about his grand village tour, telling tales of takeaways, fish and chips, river water, farmyard friends, and countryside retreats.
Then, the very next day… he slept. After all, being such a little adventurer is exhausting work.
Though Hibiki's disappearance was deeply upsetting, it revealed something wonderful, the kindness of an entire community. He even had the local councillor out looking for him… what a spoiled cat! I cannot thank the people and businesses of Lanchester enough. Without everyone's help, there is very little chance I would have found my little boy.
And for now, after 17 days of takeaways, farm stays, and sunbathing… Hibiki is finally enjoying a well-earned rest and he is officially grounded.

Stephanie Maurel

Charity tractor run

A charity tractor run was organised by David Hopps in memory of his cousin Tom Hall. Tom, and his wife Elizabeth, used to deliver the Village Voice to some of the rural areas for many years.
Tom used to live at Low Meadows Farm and later at China Hall Farm so has always had local farming connections.
Tom did not want a funeral as such, but David and his cousin Ian Thompson decided to honour his memory in this way.
The run set off from Moorside Farm, where David farms with his wife Tina, and went through the Greencroft Estate. This route may not be possible in future as this is the site of the proposed commercial forest. They also passed under Hownsgill viaduct (picture below)
The run made £649.60 for Motor Neurone Disease (MND) and The Integrated Critical Care Unit at Sunderland Hospital.
After the event, Tom's family wrote to the Village Voice:
"The family of Tom Hall would like to thank David Hopps and Ian Thompson for arranging a charity tractor run to raise donations for Motor Neurone Disease and Sunderland Integrated Critical Care on Sunday 26th of April. Thank you to all who participated in the event and for the very kind donations, it means a lot to us.
On behalf of Tom's family."









Above: The tractor run sets off led by David Hopps
Bottom right: David looking back to make sure he is being followed!
Top right: Tom Hall
Centre right: The tractors passing under Hownsgill viaduct

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WHAT'S ON - June 2026 and beyond

Wildlife Group
Stronger Shores: using nature to keep the sea at bay.
Blair Wilson, Marine Engagement Officer, Durham Wildlife Trust.
Tuesday 5th June, 7.30pm, Lanchester Community Centre.
All welcome. No charge

WI
Saturday 16th May, Fashion Show, Lanchester Social Club, 2pm – tickets £6 – Get your tickets early for this fun afternoon!
June meeting, Monday 1st – speaker Xerxes Setna, Mezzeh Spice

Paradiso Social Club
Sunday 14th June 2026
THE PENGUIN LESSONS
Based on Tom Michell's 2015 memoir of the same name, The Penguin Lessons chronicles the experience of a disillusioned British teacher who travelled to South America to teach at a boys' boarding school in a divided Argentina in the 1970s. He finds his life transformed when he rescues an orphaned penguin from the beach. Starring Steve Coogan and Jonathan Pryce.
"Steve Coogan gives this film a wonderful and believable humanity".
Lanchester Community Centre, 7pm refreshments and raffle. Film starts at 7.30pm. Members: £4, Non-members: £5.

Musical Memories
Celebrates colours in song - Join us for music, refreshments and fun activities.
3rd June 2026 at 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 lanchesterdfc@gmail.com

History Society
We will be meeting on Friday 5th June to hear from Alan Swinburn. His talk is "Born in Blackhill christened in the steel works". It is his life story told through work. Then on Friday 3rd July Dave Shotton is coming to tell us all about his latest discoveries at Holmside Hall. He seems to have unearthed quite a lot over the last couple of years. Please remember to join us early so you can navigate the security system at the community centre. 6.45 for 7.00 start. All welcome no historical knowledge required.

PPG "Let's Talk"
Let's Talk. Open to all patients of Lanchester Medical Centre.
Last Friday of the month, 12pm - 2pm, Lanchester Cricket Club.

Thursday Club
June outing is to the Weardale Railway with afternoon tea. We will also spend some time in Stanhope exploring the town. Hoping for some fine weather. Leaving the village at 10am. Back at approximately 4pm.

City Theatre
The City Theatre, Durham, presents 'The Girl on the Train'. By Paula Hawkins, adapted by Rachel Wagstaff and Duncan Abel. 28th June - 4th July. Rachel watches from the train window the perfect couple, but, is all as it seems when the woman disappears?
Tickets £9.50 from Durham Gala or from www.durhancitytheatre.co.uk.
Performances Sun 2.30, Mon- Fri 7.30, Sat 2.30.
Concessions Sun/ Mon/ Tues £8.50

Lanchester Art Group
We will be holding a Coffee Morning on Sat May 23rd at the Methodist Church. Paintings will also be available to buy as well as cakes and coffee.

Library
Library Book Clubs are on the 4th Monday and 3rd Thursday monthly. Books are supplied by the library. If you would like to participate in either of these friendly and informal group chats, pop into the library and speak to the librarians.
Thursday Book Club will meet on 18th June from 4-5pm.This group will be reviewing 'The Dressmaker of Dachau' by Mary Chamberlain, 'a compelling novel focusing on the wartime and post wartime life of Ada Vaughan' (Amazon).
Monday Book Club will meet on 22nd June from 2.30-3.30 to discuss 'After the Fall' by Charity Norman. What do you do when your family's dream becomes a nightmare' with 'a fresh start that goes badly wrong?' (Goodreads)
Pins and Needles meet on 1st Thursday monthly. The next meeting is 4th June from 10-11.30am. If you like knitting or crocheting, bring along wool, thread, needles and patterns and get friendly advice and support.
Scrabble Group meets 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 1.30-3.30 pm. Build words and add points according to the letter tiles value.
Rummikub Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 1.30-3.30pm. A strategic, yet simple game with tiles that are constantly changing.
NEW! Bridge Club meets every Monday, 2.30-4pm (except 4th Monday).
Lego Club meets every Saturday from 10-11.30.
Toddler Time group is on Tuesdays from 2.30-3.00 (term time only) and includes stories and nursery rhymes for your child/ren to enjoy.
Children's crafts are available every afternoon and Saturdays. Different craft ideas and materials are provided, so pop along with your children for some creative fun.
And remember, a book opens the doors to many different worlds, experiences and cultures. Come and explore new and exciting genres of books and join in the activities on offer. Your library is waiting for you to step inside.

Lunch Club - Cuppa and a chat
The next lunch held at Lynwood House will be Tuesday 9th June, 12 pm start, all welcome.

Friends of Longovicium Group (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), 7.30pm at 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.

Lanchester Male Voice Choir
Meets every Monday evening 7.00 - 9.00pm in Croft View Hall. We are a small, friendly, supportive group who would like to welcome new members. There is no requirement to have sung before or to be able to read music. For further details email Peter Bridgewater, tootspeteb@live.co.uk

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. 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.

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. Please note that it is no longer necessary to book on to the walk.

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 fortnightly on a Wednesday at 10am. Walks are between 5-6 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 mwalters@gmail.com if you would like further information.

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.

Vintage Tractor Club
Meets on the first Wednesday of the month in the Social Club.

Poppy's walks



Good day readers, this month's walk begins and ends at the Tesco car park in Annfield Plain. Several large notices in the car park say there is two hour waiting limit when the store is open, and only 15 minutes when it is not. Sometimes the male Human goes there to buy a newspaper, cans of beer and dog biscuits (the check-out staff must wonder at his diet!) and takes me along for the ride. As the walk I am about to describe takes about one hour, there is little danger of getting a parking ticket for overstaying.

As you will now know, I am Poppy a Patterdale Terrier who enjoys sharing the walks I lead my Humans on.

From the car park we go alongside the supermarket and then onto a footpath which leads to the right along the other side of the same large building. At the end of the path - which was once part of the Stanhope and Tyne railway - we see the park's tennis courts on our left but we do not go through the gap in the wall to the park, instead we continue in a straight line along a footpath which eventually takes us to a field on our right, followed soon by Annfield Plain football ground. We keep on walking with the football ground on our right and a pond on our left before we come to some open moorland. This, an information board informs us is Greencroft Heath, which is apparently an important nature area. By this time, we can hear the sound of traffic on our left and soon after passing the heath on our right we come to a main road. This is the road from Busty roundabout to Brooms. We cross the road carefully and see a sign which points towards the C2C cycle track.

Instead of turning right towards Leadgate we go left and soon come across another footpath which takes us through more woodland with buildings on the other side of fences on our left and right. After a short while the path splits into two and we choose the left one which takes us alongside a fishing lake to our right. We come across another road opposite Woodland Way and walk diagonally to the right across it towards a doggie bin. This takes us onto another path which we follow in between buildings which make up part of Greencroft Industrial Estate, very close to a large wind turbine.

There are all sorts of diverse paths to explore but by sticking on the main one we follow the C2C cycling route across a footbridge and back to the other side of Annfield Plain park. We walk into the park around the side of a football pitch and then towards the middle of the park where there is an information board giving a history of the aforementioned Stanhope and Tyne railway. By the war memorial we turn left then right alongside the tennis courts. At the end of them we turn left and from there it is a short walk back to where we started at the Tesco car park. As I predicted, the walk took almost exactly one hour and was very enjoyable.

The Monday Art Group

Would you like to lower your stress levels while at the same time indulging your inner creativity?

Come and join us at the **MONDAY ART GROUP,** a very relaxing way to start your week. We are a small, friendly group which meets in the Lanchester Community Centre on Monday mornings from 10 to 12 noon. Everyone is welcome from beginners to those with more experience. Members are always happy to help each other and share their expertise. We work in watercolour, acrylics, oils, collage, mixed media – whatever takes your fancy. Sometimes we have a joint project, sometimes a member leads a session, sometimes we enjoy a workshop by an experienced professional artist and sometimes we just 'do our own thing'. The subscription is currently £60 per annum. If you would like to know more or would like to come along for a free 'taster' session please contact the Secretary, Margaret Walters, on 01207 521214.

Margaret Walters

Community Centre News

Latest News:

After 7 years as Chairperson, Glenda Horne stepped down from 1st April 2026. Glenda has set a very high bar with all her hard work and commitment to the Centre. We would like to thank her for all of her efforts, dedication and continued support she has provided to the Centre and its staff members. Glenda is to remain as Treasurer, so she is not gone completely!

We are looking for someone who is willing to take on the role as Chairperson, in the meantime we are working to a rotating Chairperson system from within the Committee Group. It is a challenging position, but it is also very rewarding; please get in touch if you would like further details.

Coming up:

Bag Workshop: Saturday 6th June, 10:30am to 3pm. Join us to make a bag from a thrifted woolen jumper/cardigan; a piece of lining fabric or an old shirt. A sewing machine is needed; refreshments and a light lunch are included. Only £20. Contact the Community Centre to book your space.

Craft De Stash: Saturday 19th September, 12 noon to 2:30pm. Bring along any excess crafts, sewing or art items that you would like to sell, £10 for a place. Or come along and grab some crafty bargains.

Ways we fundraise:

Books and jigsaws for sale in the conservatory area. Thank you to everyone who has donated or bought a book or jigsaw.

Loose Change Boxes - pick one up from the conservatory area.

Charity boxes we have boxes in a few of the local shops for you to pop your change in while shopping.

Become a Friend - show your support by donating our recommended amount of £24 for the year.

Easyfundraising - shop through the app and money will be donated to us, at no cost to you.

We are very grateful to everyone who supports us using these methods, it all goes towards the running of your Community Centre

The office is staffed Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-1.15pm. On Tuesday and Thursdays, it's 9am-3pm. If you have any enquiries 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 QR code above.

Alison Densham Smith
Community Centre Manager

Tractor push raised over £5,000 for Willow Burn

Mary Ann Suddes died in 2019, just before Covid. She spent the last few days of her life in Willow Burn surrounded by her large family. The family had wanted to fundraise for Willow Burn as a way of thanking them for their excellent care. Then Covid intervened and lots else as well.

One of Ann's sons, Ian, had the idea of a tractor push from the farm up to Willow Burn Hospice to raise funds for the hospice. He organised the event and the tractor they used was the one that Walter, Ann's husband, had used on the farm. The tractor, a Fordson Dexta, had been sold to someone in Cumbria and by a circuitous route the family managed to buy it back!

The push started at Peter Suddes' farm on the lane just off Newbiggen Lane. In the driver's seat was Chloe, one of Ann's great grandchildren, with her daughter Dakota. The route led into the village where it stopped at Church View where Ann used to live where many people donated to the cause. Then they set off towards Willow Burn setting off at a fair pace; going up the bank there were 15 people pushing. When the tractor turned into the estate, Anne Barron (Ann's daughter) took the wheel and it was pushed by Ann's sons: Ian, Peter, Bobby and Tony. They were met by the Willow Burn mascot, Will O'Burn.

After that they went to the Social Club where the raffle was drawn. There were 32 prizes donated by local businesses which raised over £1,400. There was sponsorship and the collection on the day. The tractor they used was sold to raise even more money. At the end of the day, a magnificent sum of £5,184.96 was raised for Willow Burn. A great effort and fitting memorial to the life of Mary Ann Suddes.







Photos
Top: setting off from the farm
Left: pushing through the village
Above: Will O'Burn and the family and friends at the destination Willow Burn Hospice

All Saints' Catholic Church Lanchester

Centenary Celebrations – Call My Bluff Evening

Another centenary celebration, a lovely social night was held on Saturday 25th April. A big thank you to Jan Vasey and Judith Collins who kindly brought along the 1% Quiz. We were extremely well entertained. It was decided to do the quiz rather than the Call my Bluff, we can save that for another time. There were light refreshments prepared by Margaret O'Brien - a big thank you to Margaret. Also, thanks to everyone who worked on the night, supported and participated in the event with such enthusiasm.

Some of the events to celebrate centenary year coming up.

Dates for the diary:

Lanchester Band returns to All Saints Catholic Church on Sunday 24th May 6.30pm. Everyone welcome, free entry, a retirement collection at the end. Tea/coffee will be served in the Parish Centre after the concert.

The Church will be open then for 3 days from the 4th July where we hope people will pop in to see our Flower Festival arrangements depicting the church life. Everyone will be welcome to also enjoy tea/coffee which will be served in the Parish Centre.



Lestrine Kelly

Photo of Call My Bluff l-r Margaret O'Brien, Lestrine Kelly, Ann Allen.

Lanchester Local History Day

Saturday 18th April saw the History Society attending the World Heritage Day in Durham. The University and Durham Castle hosted "The People's Story at Durham Castle" an action packed history and heritage day. There were events around the peninsula and various groups displayed information and artefacts from their collections. There were performances in the courtyard by Vanguard Re-enactment Norman soldiers and visitors were allowed to take themselves off around the castle on self guided tours.

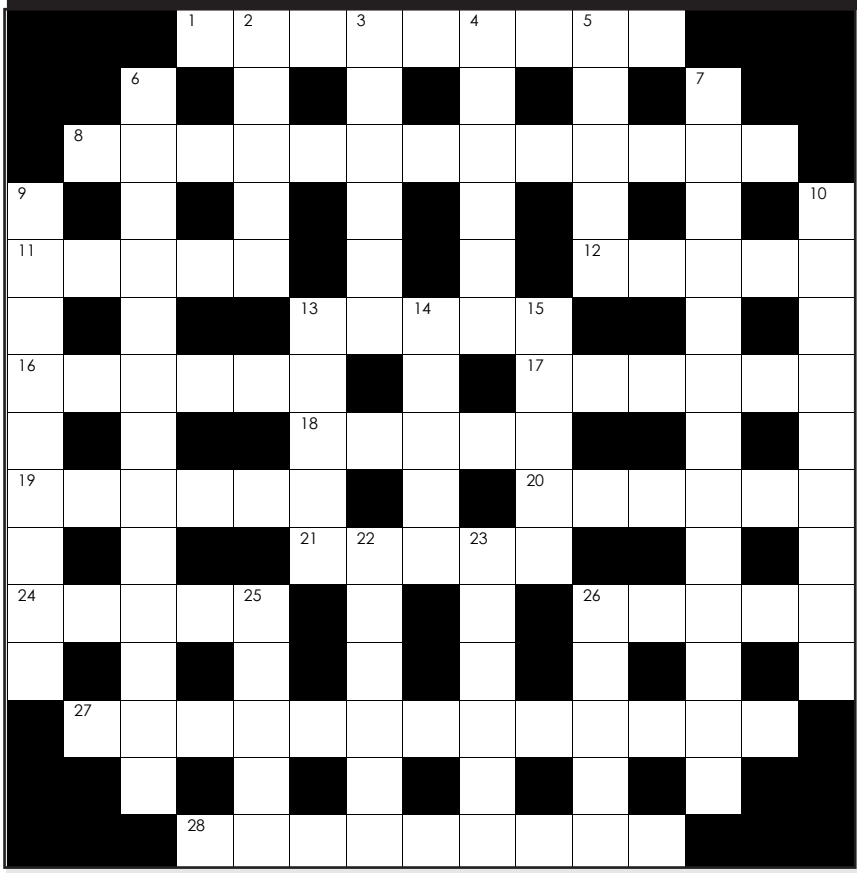




The day was opened by Gary Hutchinson, The Mayor of Durham, and he spoke about the importance of the work or awareness all the groups provide to society. He spoke about everyone being "the emergency responders for history and heritage". This interestingly was a theme which ran through the programme of talks and many of the stalls. There is concern amongst history and heritage organisations that it is so easy for significant artefacts and information to be lost from the county without any of us noticing. The message was clear: it is everyone's responsibility to be alert and try to ensure that change doesn't result in heritage being lost through neglect or ignorance of its importance. We all need to make sure some effort is made to document and record change and what that change replaces.

Marian Morrison

CROSSWORD 219



Clues

Across

1. Treatment of the feet (9)
8. Employment perk (6,7)
11. Enthusiasm or energy (5)
12. Person who poses for an artist (5)
13. Stadium (5)
16. Monotony (6)
17. Scientist or expert (6)
18. Weighted line used in construction (5)
19. As much as you can hold could be injurious to a cockney (6)
20. Finger shaped cake (6)
21. Foe (5)
24. Door attachment (5)
26. Elementary or simple (5)
27. Derwentside village associated with sword making (7,6)
28. Simple, like lemon squeezy (4-5)

Down

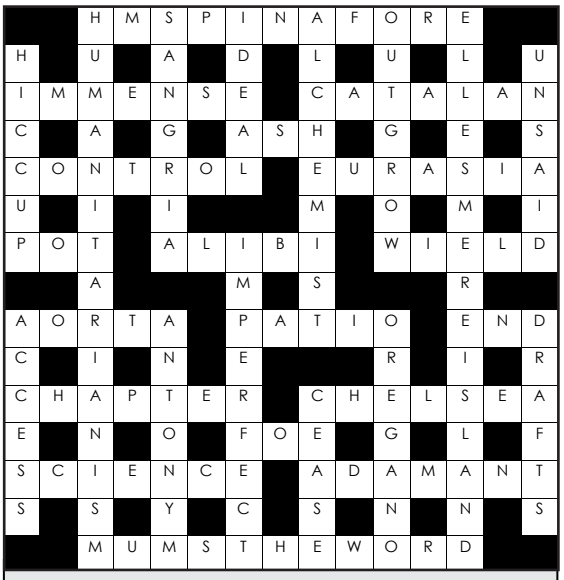
2. Intuitive feeling (5)
3. Type of double-breasted jacket worn by a sailor (6)
4. Simple Simon's nemesis (6)
5. Cherished ideal (5)
6. Mint liqueur (5,2,6)
7. Like somebody who is here today but gone tomorrow (4,2,7)
9. Trouble with your canines (9)
10. Rhythmic Animal, originally from County Durham (4,5)
13. More than sufficient (5)
14. Ooze (5)
15. Type of church (5)
22. 1645 battle site (6)
23. Liggie (6)
25. Additional (5)
26. Cooks in hot water (5)

Name:_____

Address: _____

_____

Please send your completed entries for the £10 prize draw by **Tuesday 2nd June 2026** to the Village Voice, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0HY



Solution crossword 218
There were 24 entries of which 21 were correct.
The winner, drawn out of the hat, is Ian Wilkinson.

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St Bede's Catholic Secondary School and Sixth Form Centre

A Positive Start to the Summer Term at St Bede's

The summer term has begun on a very positive note at St Bede's, with students returning from the Easter break settled, motivated and ready to embrace the weeks ahead. Across the school, there is a strong sense of purpose as pupils continue to demonstrate resilience, commitment and pride in their academic studies and personal development.

This half term, the whole-school focus is on *"Be the best version of yourself"*, encouraging students to reflect on their personal growth, resilience and aspirations. This shared focus supports the development of confidence, responsibility and positive character, helping students to make the most of opportunities both in and out of the classroom.

Year 10 students have had a particularly busy start to the term, completing their second week of mock examinations. They have approached this important stage with maturity and determination, gaining valuable experience as they prepare for the demands of Key Stage 4. Meanwhile, Year 11 students have continued to take purposeful steps towards their futures, attending careers progression meetings with Mrs Jukes and receiving personalised guidance as they consider their next steps beyond school.



Gold awards winners, l-r Lucas Wainright, Francesca Bell and Bethany Pine with Mrs Hammill (left) and Mrs Parker (right)

There has also been much to celebrate beyond the classroom. The school community is immensely proud of **Lucas Wainwright, Francesca Bell and Bethany Pine**, who were awarded **Gold Pope John Paul II Awards** at a ceremony held at the Hilton and presented by Bishop Stephen. These awards recognise outstanding dedication, commitment and service, reflecting the positive impact the students have made within the school and the wider community.

Looking ahead, excitement is building for a significant milestone in the school's history. To mark the **60th Anniversary of the opening of St Bede's**, pupils, families, former students and members of the local community are warmly invited to a **School Open Day** on **Saturday 27 June, from 10:00am to 2:00pm**. The event will provide an opportunity to explore the school, meet staff, reconnect with old friends and celebrate six decades of learning and community spirit. Stalls, refreshments and entertainment will be available throughout the day.

With a positive half term underway and a busy calendar of events ahead, St Bede's continues to be a place where students are supported to thrive, achieve and grow. The school community looks forward to sharing more successes as the year progresses and thanks everyone for their continued support.

Catherine Hammil
Head Teacher

Boys' Brigade news

After the break for Easter we are now fully back into our weekly activities, which started by playing our version of Traitors. Arnaud ably led us through who we chose to eliminate etc amid great excitement from the boys. We then played a Werwolf game which also created a lot of enthusiasm.

This was followed the next week by "Fastest Ear". Split into teams, each boy had a button (like University Challenge). Mr Hume played a sound and whoever pressed their button first was the first to guess what it was but if they guessed wrong it went to the other team. There were some unusual sounds from pulling Sellotape, a chain saw, a lawn mower etc.

Company Section followed this by playing a version of University Challenge with starter questions only. An easy example is "there is a t at the beginning and tea in it and a t at the end what is it". Answer: teapot. A very boisterous set of lads tried to work out the answers with the end score being very close.

The highlight of the year for our badminton team was taking part in the UK final at Falkirk. This is the third consecutive UK final that they have taken part in having visited Northern Ireland, Hertfordshire and now Scotland. They finished fourth which was an excellent result and the best we have achieved to date. Well done to Arnaud, Louis, Reuben and Nathan. After the competition on the Saturday, we stayed over at BB HQ in Scotland, Carronvale which was close to the venue and we used the opportunity of being in Falkirk to visit the Kelpies and the Falkirk Wheel before coming home on the Sunday. Next year if we manage to qualify the UK final will be in Northern Ireland.

Eric Hepplewhite







Top left at the Kelpies
Left Boy's Brigade HQ
Above and right some action shots







The badminton team l-r Reuben Temple, Arnaud Lefoyer, Louis Lefoyer and Nathan Kendrick.

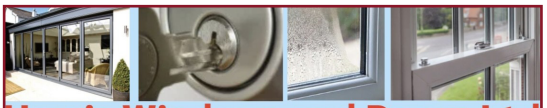
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Lanchester Endowed Parochial School

April has been a very busy month – and we have only been in school for two weeks! Wow! We certainly had to fit lots into our first week back after Easter. We managed two residentials for Year 3 to Birdoswald, two residentials for Year 4 to Seahouses, our Robotics team qualified for the National Finals in Harrogate and we also had a virtual visit from two judges for the Pearson National Teaching Awards!

Year 3 Residentials to Birdoswald, Roman Wall

Our two Year 3 classes were due to stay overnight in the English Heritage site on the Roman Fort at Birdoswald. Unfortunately, we received a call on the first day back informing us that their boilers had broken so we were unable to stay. We did not want to disappoint the children so we managed to quickly rearrange things for them to enjoy a very full day at the Roman Wall before sleeping overnight in the school hall. Read Kitty's report:

First, we all went to school and got on the bus to Birdoswald. When we arrived, it was about 10:30am. We all put our lunch boxes down on a table. Then we went outside and we met a storyteller. She had lots of amazing and funny stories about the Romans! After, we had lunch and I had some yummy German ham wraps! Soon after, we went for a lovely walk along



Hadrian's wall and we were allowed to play along the way as well! We stopped at Gilsland and had some delicious ice cream and a drink of water. Next, we walked back along the wall and stopped by the river. We built cairns as well as walls. There was a lot of rock trading going on! When we got back, we had our tea. I had pizza and chips! Afterwards, we all met a Roman soldier and he taught us a bit of Latin! Finally, we travelled back to school and went to sleep in the school hall.

Year 4 Residentials to Seahouses, Northumberland

Meanwhile, Year 4 thoroughly enjoyed two days in Northumberland, staying at Seahouses Hostel which is a charity run by a Christian foundation within the Diocese of Newcastle. We were so lucky with the weather! Read about their visit below:

Year 4 had an amazing time at their residential to Seahouses. On the first day we visited Alnwick Gardens and loved the cherry blossom and walking around the beautiful flowers. We really enjoyed the Poison Garden - it was interesting to learn about how dangerous some of the berries on trees and plants can be. After that, we visited the beach before having a fish and chips tea which was lovely. We then went to the park and played until it was nearly dark and had hot chocolate before bedtime. We all went straight to sleep and didn't disturb the teachers one little bit!



Next morning, we had breakfast before a quick visit to Beadnell beach. We then travelled to Alnwick Castle where we began with a Wizard Earl workshop, learning about potions and spices and how they were used to treat illness. The tour of the castle was great because we saw lots of very old objects such as chandeliers, swords and furniture. The library had 15,000 books in! Before we went home, we had a look round the filming locations for Harry Potter - we saw where they filmed the quidditch scene and the entrance to Hogwarts. It was a great trip and we all had a fantastic experience!

Hanna, Lyla and Cara

Teaching Awards Finalists

Last month, I informed you that we had been shortlisted for the Pearson National Teaching Awards – Primary School of the Year, Making a Difference. We had a virtual visit from two judges at the end of April and will find out in the middle of June if we have been successful with this. However, the day after that visit, we found out that we are one of only 8 schools across the whole country to be shortlisted for the prestigious TES National Teaching Awards. This is a huge honour for our school. We are so proud that our school has been recognised in this way for the opportunities our pupils have, our academic prowess as well as the outstanding pastoral care and support which have all been recognised as some of the best nationally. For this award, a group of staff and governors, as well as an ex-pupil, will be travelling to London for the Awards Ceremony which will be held at the Grosvenor Hotel on Park Lane in June. What a wonderful occasion that will be!



We are quite humbled that our parents wanted to nominate us for these awards. They have brought a tremendous amount of positivity to the whole school community.

Mrs J Davis, Head Teacher

Lanchester Wildlife Group

Stronger Shores: using nature to keep the sea at bay.
Blair Wilson (Marine Engagement Officer, Durham Wildlife Trust).
Tuesday 5th June, 7.30pm, Lanchester Community Centre.
All welcome. No charge.

How do you prevent the pounding waves from breaking up the cliffs and flooding coastal areas? In the past we have built expensive sea walls which have to be repaired and replaced. Wouldn't it be great if we could do the same job with something that grew and repaired itself? The good news is that we can by recreating coastal habitats such as salt marshes, kelp forests, sea grass meadows and oyster beds. The added bonus is that these are all beneficial to wildlife.

Stronger Shores is a multiagency project to promote marine life and protect the North Sea coast from Berwick all the way down to Redcar. Come along to find out what has been achieved so far and the exciting prospects for the future.

Noel Jackson

Photo of a Pipefish hiding in sea grass.



All Saints' Catholic Primary School

I am pleased to introduce this piece highlighting what makes All Saints' an exceptional place, told by our pupils themselves, and to extend an invitation to our Nursery and Reception Open Morning on **Sunday 5th July 10 – 11.30am**. We take all pupils for fifteen or thirty hours from their third birthday and wrap around care is available from 7.45am – 5pm daily.

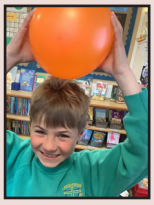


Nursery: We like hearing stories and playing with toys. We like going down the slide and playing outside with our friends. We like counting and exploring with the magnets!



Reception: We like to help others by making friends and by including them. We have a Space station in our classroom and it has fun things in there. We also love the construction and potion station in our classroom.

Year One: We love Geography; we're learning about the continents at the moment. At All Saints', the children here are awesome, hardworking and joyful.



Year Two: At All Saints', all our teachers respect the children. When we are upset they listen to us. We go on lots of trips - they help us to learn and have fun. Oh, one more thing, the school dinners are delicious!

Year Three: This is the best place to be because you can tell the teachers anything and we always help each other and we never give up! We try to be a friend for everyone.

Year Four: All Saints' is a school full of respect, democracy and life. Our top subject throughout the school is History. Although we learn different subjects, we still have time to explore, play football, play tyre tag and hide and seek. We have beautiful displays around this lovely school…and we also have terrific handwriting.



Year Five: Here at All Saints', we know how to live our life and learn from Jesus. This makes us a happy and safe place. After school we have lots of different clubs including: singing, football, netball and art club. It's lots of fun so, overall, we love this school!

Year Six: As soon as you walk into the school building, you are welcomed by the Head Teacher: Mrs Stephenson. The school feels friendly and everyone in it supports you and encourages you to grow. The learning is engaging and we are rewarded for doing good things. We recommend All Saints' to anyone who wants to become part of a family.

Frances Stephenson, Head Teacher

Serendipity sadly closes after four years

Customers of the popular Serendipity cafe in Lanchester were left shocked when it closed suddenly at the end of April.

For four years the corner cafe had been a popular meeting place for residents and locals passing through, many of them cyclists.

But a Facebook message suddenly announced its closure.

The post said: "We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported us over the last four years.

"We have made some amazing friends, and it has been so lovely to see many of our customers become fellow friends. We feel so proud of the family vibe we have worked hard to establish."

No reason was given for the closure.

But over the years the staff at Serendipity built up a justified reputation for serving tasty bites in a friendly atmosphere.

Neil McKay

We received the following from a reader:

"As some of you may be aware, Serendipity Cafe closed for business on Wednesday 29th April.
I have been a regular customer of the cafe since it opened its doors. The proximity from my home coupled with warm and caring staff made it a safe space and the homemade food cooked on the premises by Anne was excellent. It quickly became something I looked forward to.
I have made friends, both customers and staff and the closure will have a significant impact on my life. The staff certainly went the extra mile for its customers (and dogs). Lisa, the owner, made everyone feel valued and I would like to wish Lisa and the staff every success in their future ventures.

Many thanks
Pam Hasler"



Photograph is from Pam's 80th birthday celebration at Serendipity with her daughter Emma.

Wild Notes

As spring comes once again, the arrival of pollinators - such as bees, butterflies and hoverflies will be noticed by many. Whilst some people may find these insects irritating and annoying, we rely on them to help produce countless fruit and vegetables. Without them, not only would we lose the crops they help us to pollinate, but the products made with these plants.

So, in order to keep a steady population of these creatures that we rely on, then why not take part in No Mow May? No Mow May was started by the wild plant charity 'Plantlife' in 2019. To take part, if you have a garden (no matter how small) just leave it to grow and let nature play its part! Even if you don't want to do this with your whole garden, you can still help by leaving a small 'Wildlife Section' that you leave alone during May.

There are over two million gardens in the UK and, with your help, we can turn them into a colourful sanctuary for our flora and fauna. Sadly, we've lost 97% of our flower abundant meadows since the 1930s, but small acts - such as No Mow May - can help to turn the tide and bring back these beautiful ecosystems.

Junior wildlife correspondent



Photo of the Marjory Flatts allotments at the start of their No Mow May

Lanchester Bowls Club

Well here we are, spring has sprung at last. The trees surrounding the green are in leaf and the blossom this year is stunning. The County Council have carried out grasscutting and our thanks again to them for their invaluable service. The club officially opened the new season mid April and whilst conditions are on the heavy side as expected, the green is fast drying out with the fair weather recently experienced.

The club holds a 'jumbles' event every Thursday afternoon at 2pm which is an informal practice session for members and induction and coaching for new members for whom tuition and equipment is available. All you need is a flat pair of shoes! These have been well attended. The session at the end of April was also attended by family and friends of Peter Harrison, a long standing member who passed earlier in the year. An inscribed plaque was affixed to one of the seats surrounding the green in memory of Peter.

The competitive league season started at the end of April, firstly on the 28th, away to Consett Park, one of the strongest teams in the past and we were well beaten. A better performance on the 29th saw us have a good win at Bishop Auckland in a triples match with Richard Hall and Paul Monaghan winning skips.

The month of May sees the start of a full league programme of matches with games on Mondays, Tuesday, Wednesdays, Thursdays (Jumbles) and Saturdays. As well as league matches the club organises numerous singles competitions for members for which trophies are awarded at the season end. For those not able to participate, the game is a popular spectator event and there is nothing better than watching a good close game of bowls on a fine day. That is apart from playing! And not losing!!

Membership for the coming season is looking strong but there is still a need for new faces. Those interested can find relevant information on the club's website or just turn up at one of our Thursday jumbles events (2pm start)

Unfortunately, it looks likely that three of our prominent members will be sidelined this coming season due to debilitating health issues, namely Stuart Lee, David Freisner and Robert Cuthbertson. Stuart has been involved in the running of the club on previous occasions and is currently in a second stint as Secretary. David is a long-standing committee member and also a local Parish Councillor. Robert is also a committee member and was a past regular contributor to the Village Voice. We can only hope that their relevant treatments can restore them all back to full health and of course bowling action again. Our best wishes and thoughts are with them.

Whilst Robert may not be fit enough to play, he hopes to be well enough to resume his involvement with this bowls article in the Village Voice and in that respect this may well be my last contribution to the bowls scene in Lanchester for the present. I wish him well and also to all members and supporters of the bowls club and of course you the readers of this wonderful publication, not forgetting the Village Voice backroom and supporting staff, contributors and deliverers!

Adrian Evans



The first match of the season at Consett Park



Members enjoying themselves in the spring sunshine

Lanchester Medical Centre PPG

It's been another busy month for the PPG.

On the 31st March it was our Let's Talk meeting at the cricket club. It was once again well attended and was combined with our spring raffle draw. Firstly, we want to say a huge thank you to our local businesses who donated some amazing prizes which included vouchers for meals, a massage, a garden planter and a large fruit hamper. Also, members of the PPG donated some good prizes which included a range of wines and spirits.

There were 14 lucky winners. First prize of £100 went to Mrs Jackie Gates. In total £715 was raised. This was divided between our chosen charity this year, "If U Care Share" and the PPG funds. Thank you to everyone who both donated prizes and the people of Lanchester who bought the tickets.

On Saturday 11th April the PPG held our coffee morning at Lanchester Methodist Church. We got to meet and talk to some lovely people of Lanchester, while enjoying coffee and cake. We are definitely blessed in the PPG, we always have an abundance of cakes when we need them, including gluten free options.

The reinspection of Lanchester Medical Centre from CQC took place on 23rd and 24th April. This was the follow up inspection after being placed into special measures. When this occurs CQC comes out and re-inspects within 6 months of the initial inspection. Hopefully we should be able to update you in next month's issue.

Date for your diary: Let's Talk will meet on Friday 26 June. Going forward Let's Talk will be held on the last Friday of the month 12pm-2pm at Lanchester Cricket Club. This is open to all patients of Lanchester Medical Centre. June's Let's Talk will take the usual format with coffee and some lovely, sweet treats and time catching up with one another. A chance to have a chat with the medical centre's representative. Our guest speaker will be Helen McCree from Musical Memories. We are looking forward to hearing all about this and enjoying some music as well.







Photos of the coffee morning (left)



Cricket Round up

The first and second teams have won their opening pair of fixtures, so that both are joint top of their divisions.
The **firsts** entertained Tynemouth for the very first time in a League game and beat them comfortably. They put the visitors in and they failed to adapt to an early season wicket as they were hurried out for just 79 in 25 overs. All five bowlers took wickets with Jamie Dass 3-17 and Josh Renton 3-23 being the pick. Luke McCabe and Callum Brown, a new season signing from Burnopfield, guided the side home by six wickets. They then followed this up by beating title favourites, Whitburn, by 26 runs. Lanchester were put in to bat and made steady progress in the first half of the innings before accelerating to 269 for 4. Kieran Gohery anchored the innings with an unbeaten 75 and the acceleration was provided by Charlie Mustard, on debut, making 67 from 48 balls and then Callum Brown who smashed 75 from just 38 balls. Lanchester took regular wickets to stop Whitburn from building significant partnerships with five of the six bowlers taking wickets. Jamie Dass was the pick taking 3-42 as Lanchester bowled their opponents out with three overs remaining.
The **seconds opened** with an easy 8 wicket win at Shotley Bridge. Tom Deaville took 4-27 and 15-year-old, Alfie Armstrong, took 3-31 against his former club. Nathan Somersall scored 46 of the runs required. They then travelled to Seaham Harbour and came away with a six wicket win. They bowled the Harbour out for 143, the wickets spread between five bowlers, Dan Scott picking up 3-19. 77 at a run a ball by Glen Harrison saw the side home.
The 3rds started their season with a heavy defeat at Burnmoor, with David Selby taking three wickets and Leo Johnson scoring an unbeaten 30, partnered well by Dan Garside who made 31. The under 11s also opened their season by entertaining Cramlington who were a strong side and won by 33 runs.

Andrew McConnell

Lanchester Lawn Tennis Club – April

The summer season at Lanchester Lawn Tennis Club is off to a very positive start. Our popular Monday evening coaching sessions continue to be well attended, with enthusiastic players of all ages and abilities enjoying their time on court and developing their skills.
This month also saw our men's doubles teams begin their campaign in the Northumberland & Durham League. We were fortunate to enjoy excellent weather for our opening fixture on Wednesday 29th April, facing a strong and experienced side from Blaydon Tennis Club.
Our six players rose to the challenge superbly, producing some excellent tennis throughout the evening. As the light began to fade, the final result confirmed a great achievement for Lanchester, with a 7–5 victory. The team's next match takes place on 15th May, and we wish them every success as they look to build on this strong start.
Meanwhile, the grass courts are looking truly magnificent. Both home and visiting players have



Men's doubles - with the sun low in the sky!

commented on how fortunate we are to have such a fantastic facility here in the village.
If you are interested in joining the club or taking part in our coaching sessions, please get in touch via email at lanchestertennis@gmail.com or visit our website for more information: https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/lanchesterlawntennisclub

Barbara Ridley

Some deliverers retire and we welcome their replacements

Eric and Hazel Gaskill have decided to call it a day delivering the Voice which they have done since publication started. Hope you both enjoy your retirement every month.
Please say hello to Eva McHardy who takes over delivering to Newbiggen Lane and Mount Pleasant.
Linda Shovlin has also retired from the Iveston delivery, the round now delivered by Rob Allaker. Linda is still volunteering at the Red Cross Shop.
Many thanks to you all for giving your time to the community over many years.

Mike Stoddart





Photos: far right Hazel and Eric Gaskill; near right Linda Shovlin

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