the Village Voice
Issue No 9, Volume 26
Lanchester, September 2026





Lanchester Show Returns

Lanchester Show returned in August.

The Communities in Focus team captured some of the activities at the Show.











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From the House

It was good to see the return of The Lanchester Show last month after a seven-year hiatus. From what I have heard and seen online, the show was a great success. Local Cllr Alison Gray did a great job arranging for the grass to be cut, making the show field more accessible. I look forward to attending the show in the future.

I continue to work closely with Cllr Alison Gray, the ICB and the Patient Participation Group on matters relating to Lanchester Medical Centre. I have raised several individual cases directly with the ICB and will continue to monitor and act on behalf of residents.

Parliament has been in recess over the past few weeks, but there have been several new policies aimed at tackling the cost of living, improving public services and devolving power from Westminster. There has been action on lowering household costs by capping bus fares, cutting electricity bills, extending rail discounts for young people, and making subscriptions easier to cancel.

There have also been improvements in health and social support, including 159 new mental health centres, support for rough sleepers, and free 24/7 bus travel for disabled people.

Additionally, there has been support for farmers affected by drought, lower business rates for hospitality and entertainment venues and new powers over high street development and much more. I am looking forward to the new Parliamentary session.

Since the election, I have responded to 14,755 questions and enquiries. I have helped return over £892,522 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 my office on 0191 371 8834.**

House of Commons

From our Councillor

Dear Residents,

Whilst August is a quiet month with no meetings at the council I continue to work on a number of projects.

- I have been meeting with residents and securing photographic evidence to try to get areas of grass/trees/weeds cut back.
- I have submitted an objection to the proposed housing development at Oakwood. Whilst I fully agree that more housing stock is needed, I believe this development would add to the chaos on the narrow roads and streets of our village, particularly around school times. There are locations across our ward, in my opinion, far better suited to fill the housing needs.
- Alongside members of the Patient Participation Group, I met with representatives from the ICB, the body which commissions GPs. We discussed the recent inspection of Lanchester Medical Centre, and what the ICB are doing to monitor provision. We plan to meet again in October.
- I have been supporting a number of organisations with grants from the neighbourhood budget. These have included Lanchester Cricket Club, Lanchester and Burnhope Community Centres, Lanchester Bowls Club, All Saints Primary and St. Bede's, and the Lanchester Partnership.
- I am currently working with Lanchester C.C.F.C. to hopefully support them this season.



If you are an organisation needing support, please get in touch.

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

LANCHESTER COMMUNITY CENTRE

Community Centre News

We hope that everyone has enjoyed the summer break and the lovely weather we have had.

The Community Centre was proud to host 'Lanchester - A Community in Focus' Photographic Exhibition from the 10th to 14th August. The attendance was amazing. Over 300 people came and looked at who we are and how our community works, and it's only the first six months of a year's project.

The comments were really positive, not only from those who appeared in the photos, but also from the larger community and visitors to the area. The quality of the pictures is superb, capturing moments and activities. We would like to thank George, Chris, Mark and Juan for all their support given throughout the week to make it such a success. We look forward to seeing photographs of autumn and winter in our community.

It was interesting that visitors from outside the area, and on holiday, commented on how lucky Lanchester is to have such a great Community Centre; many wished they had such a venue where they lived. As a lot of hard work by the staff and committee goes into making our Centre what it is, the compliments were very much appreciated.

The office is staffed Monday and Wednesday 9am to 3pm. On Tuesday, Thursday and Friday it's 9am to 1:15pm. If you have any enquiries about the activities or clubs available; how to join our fantastic gym; or you want to know more about hiring our brilliant venue, please get in touch on 0777 695 301 or drop in and have a chat it will be good to meet you!

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://lanchestercommunitycentre.com

Alison Densham Smith
Community Centre Manager

Communities in Focus Exhibition





From Allotments to Art Club, Bellringers to brass band, a photo exhibition at the Community Centre provided a visual showcase of life in Lanchester.
Photographers Chris Bruce, George Ledger, Juan Fitzgerald and Mark Wilkinson took the photos of many businesses and activities in the village.
It was on show from Monday to Friday, August 10-14 but Mr Ledger said those who did not attend would get another chance to see the photos.
"This is an interim exhibition, we are planning on staging another in the community centre with more businesses who have not been included this time, in possibly December or January.
"Then the complete exhibition detailing life in Lanchester will be on display at Willow Burn Hospice, probably next year."
But Mr Ledger said feedback from visitors to the August display had been "positive" with around 40 visitors each day, nearly 300 in the week.
As well as many local businesses like Ravellos and The King's Head, local organisations such as the Paradiso Club, church bellringers, Lanchester Brass Band, Boys Brigade, tractor clubs, the Art Group, tennis and table tennis players, karate exponents and footballers and cricketers were amongst those photographed.

Neil McKay

WI News

At our meeting on Monday 3rd August we welcomed 33 members and 2 visitors. After hearing about all of our upcoming events and visits we welcomed our speaker, Lesley Anderson, from Durham City Theatre. Lesley is Chairman of the theatre and she gave us a very interesting insight into its history, upkeep of the building, various roles within the organisation, planning of productions, props, costumes, right through to the finished production. A very interesting and informative talk.
After our speaker, as well as catching up with friends we also enjoyed a lovely treat of strawberries, cream and home-made meringues, very tasty!!

If you are looking for something new to do 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!

Lanchester Women's Institute
Fun and friendship in Lanchester since 1925
theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Marie Murphy

THE VILLAGE VOICE

Home for Christmas
Right on time.

There is something especially magical about being in a new home at Christmas. The decorations go up, the tree finds its corner, the kitchen fills with noise, and suddenly a house starts to feel like home.

For many buyers and sellers, the hope of being moved in before Christmas is a big motivation at this time of year. It is not just about dates on a calendar. It is about hosting family, making memories and starting a new chapter in the right place.

At Bourne & Co, we know that timing matters. A move this close to Christmas needs clear advice, proactive communication and a team that keeps things moving wherever possible. While no property journey is ever completely predictable, the right support can make all the difference.

If a move before Christmas is on your mind, now is a good time to start the conversation. Whether you are thinking about selling, buying or simply weighing up your options, we are always happy to talk things through.



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Ladies who lunch

In **July** we were back to the Derwent Walk Inn. Whilst perusing the extensive menu we were given our water in tall glasses with fresh lemon (much better than handling heavy jugs!). Mains chosen were: traditional roast pork lunch with roast potatoes, mash, Yorkshire pudding, fresh veg and gravy; beef dinner with all the trimmings; Cajun roasted fillet of salmon with king prawns, peppers and mushrooms with rice and a garlic naan; breaded chicken escalope with peppers, topped with mozzarella and cheddar cheese in a tomato sauce with new potatoes and fresh veg; and stir fried crispy chicken in a Cantonese sauce with chips.
After a short break, desserts were ordered.
Homemade sticky toffee pudding, one with custard and one with ice cream; Biscoff cheesecake with pouring cream; jam roly - poly with custard.
Two ladies resisted dessert in favour of coffee.
The service was good. There was plenty of parking. Once again, a much enjoyed lunch in good company.

In **August** we were back at the New Board Inn.
We were given a table well positioned with a lovely panoramic view.
Mains chosen were hand carved ham with egg, chunky chips and salad; corned beef pie with peas, chips and gravy; crispy chicken goujons with salad, chips and sweet chilli dip; goats cheese and balsamic red onion with salad; hunters' chicken with salad and chips; salt & pepper parmo with bechamel and Napoli peppers and onions, fresh salt and chilli seasoning smothered in cheese and topped with mini spring rolls.
Desserts chosen were sticky toffee pudding with custard and chef's choice sundae;
Several ladies opted for caffe latte in place of a sweet.
The mains were very generous portions, so not so many desserts were chosen!
Service was good and plenty of parking. Once again good company with plenty of chatting!



The Gourmet Girls

Apologies to the Gourmet Girls as the July review should have appeared in the August edition.

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All Saints' Parish Church

For centuries the Church has played a crucial part in the life of rural communities, marking the great feasts of the agricultural year, supporting everyone who lives in our villages, and being present for significant life events. But those who came to the returning Lanchester show on 15th and 16th August might have been surprised to find, amongst the dog show, horse trials, vintage tractors, food hall and farmers' market, a stand run by Lanchester All Saints Parish church with an unusual invitation. This year we're travelling to Bethlehem to see the Christ child in the manger, and we'd love you to join us!



Photo of Rev'd Lesley by Mark Wilkinson, Communities in Focus

Using an idea from Great Malvern Priory, visitors were given the opportunity to make a peg self-portrait to be placed in our nativity scene during Advent. Members of the congregation and the children of Sunday Club and Messy church are already making the backdrop and stable, as well as scenes telling the Christmas story to be placed in our window niches. Each visitor was invited back to church for an exciting range of Christmas services, and to collect their portrait peg on Epiphany Sunday.
We're hoping not just to increase footfall but to enthuse people anew with the wonder and glory of Christmas, as we see ourselves gathered together at the stable to welcome the birth of Jesus.
Over 200 people made fabulous peg portraits of themselves at the show. Pegs are available in church, and we'll be distributing them to our schools and around the village. Why not join us, to experience just how wonderful the journey to Bethlehem can be when we share it with our whole community?

Revd Lesley Sutherland

Play your part in
The Greatest Story Ever Told
join our
Peg People Nativity
at All Saints Parish Church, Lanchester
Add your personal peg person at our Advent Sunday service
3pm Sunday 29 November 2026



scan the QR code to visit our Facebook page for more information and updates

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Amy's mobile ear wax removal service

Amy Hardy is a wife and mother of two who decided to set up her mobile ear microsuction business to enable her to have a better work life balance for her children.
Amy says, "I love the difference ear wax removal can have on a patient, with hearing, balance, tinnitus and pain improvements to list a few."
The photograph shows Amy and her daughter Ella who helps her mum at some local events.



Calling any photographers who wish to help the Village Voice

If you have a camera, or even an iPhone, and would like to help the Village Voice by photographing village events, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact us on lanchestervillagevoice@yahoo.co.uk

Looking forward to hearing from you!

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The Lanchester Local History Society

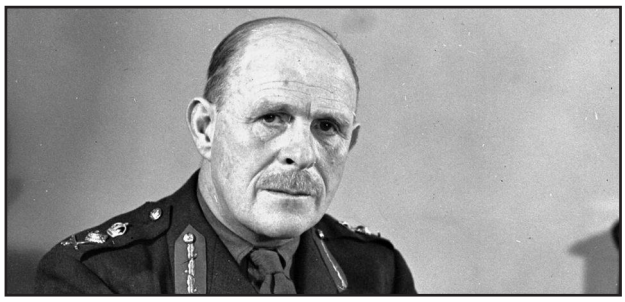
August meeting

We met on Friday 7th to hear from Alan Swinburn about Lord Gort, locally associated with the Hamsterley Hall Estate at Rowlands Gill. We were joined by a group of visitors, all interested residents of houses built on land originally part of the Gort estate. This was formerly part of the Swinburne Gentry Family empire and given by Sir John to his younger brother Henry in 1762. It was Henry who carried out the alterations creating the castellated Gothic Revival mansion we see today. On his death the



hall was sold into the Surtees family and by 1864 it passed to Eleanor Surtees who went on to marry John Gage Prendergast Vereker, 5th Viscount Gort. It is their son John 6th Viscount VC who was the most notable inhabitant of the hall.

The talk focussed on this Gort family member who has a Blue Plaque on 34 Belgrave Square, Belgravia, City of Westminster London which cites Field Marshal Viscount Gort VC 1886-1946. Commander in chief at Dunkirk lived here 1920-1926.



He was awarded his VC in WW1 for directing a stiffly opposed assault at the Canal du Nord while severely wounded, earning him the nickname of 'Tiger'. He continued his military career between the wars and was pleased to leave the desk job on his appointment as Commander in Chief of the British Expeditionary Force in September 1939 to take control at Dunkirk. He was statuesque and his military history made him a bit of a heart throb in the press at the time.

The hall stayed in the family and the Gort Family continued to be in residence with the house passing to Standish, brother of John in 1946. Standish Vereker, 7th Viscount Gort MC lived there till his death in 1975.

Marian Morrison

Wild Notes – the Kingfisher

It's perhaps the most eye-catchingly beautiful, colourful and exotic looking creature to grace our shores. Whether a flash of vivid azure zipping down a stream or across a pond or, if you're lucky, a closer look at the cerulean head and back, orange cheeks and stomach, and if the light's good, the glint of sparkling specks across the head and back, where the light reflects stronger to add to this bird's dazzling beauty.

Any encounter with the enigmatic Kingfisher is sure to make your week. It's no wonder that it's captured the imagination of so many across history, from poets to artists to the ancient Greeks, who set them at the heart of the myth of Alcyone. The story goes that Alcyone, daughter of the god of the winds, married Ceyx, son of the morning star, but in their romantic hubris, they renamed themselves 'Zeus' and 'Hera', provoking the wrath of their namesakes. Zeus sank the boat of Ceyx with a thunderbolt and in her grief, Alcyone threw herself off a cliff and drowned herself. The other Gods took pity on them and reincarnated the pair as kingfishers, giving the bird its alternate name, 'Halcyon'. The ancient Greeks believed the birds laid their eggs at sea, and Alcyone's father therefore calmed the sea to keep the eggs safe, creating the idea of 'Halcyon days' for days in winter when the sun shines and the sea remains calm. A charming tale to fit a charming bird, even if the Greeks made a few mistakes on the breeding habits of Kingfishers, who in spring dig tunnels in sandy riverbanks to lay their eggs. These holes usually have an entrance of around 6cm and extend to up to just under a meter back at a slight incline to a place where the female will lay up to 10 eggs in one brood, of which they usually have about 2-3 in a year. This large number of offspring is necessary, though, to offset both a high mortality rate for young kingfishers who, perhaps fittingly considering their mythological ancestors, often drown after becoming waterlogged in their first dive and the possibility of flooding destroying the brood.

If the young survive, however, it means that autumn can be a great time to spot Kingfishers as the young spread out to find a territory (which will be about 1-3km in length) by mid September. Once they find one, they are mainly sedentary unless the freezing over of open water makes it impossible to provide the high number of fish they need to consume, eating about 60% of their bodyweight in fish and aquatic invertebrates every day, and will ferociously defend their feeding sites. For us this means that once you spot a Kingfisher hunting in an area, it is likely to stay there, providing the chance to get great views with enough patience. Look for overhanging branches over relatively clear or slow moving patches of water. In Lanchester, Malton, Dora's Wood, and the nearby paths along the river accessible from the old railway line are areas where spotting a Kingfisher is possible, although never guaranteed. Look out for the holes in the riverbank from old nests and listen out for a distinctive high pitched flight call and whistle - a sign to stop and watch out for a flash of blue as the Kingfisher flits along the river. Wetland nature reserves are always great places to spot Kingfishers, with Washington WWT and Low Barns DWT especially good places to go. From the comfort of a hide, you can get great views. When they're perched, look for the little bobbing movements that the birds make, and if you're close enough, take a look at the dagger-like beak. In males, it's completely black, but in females it's orangey-pink at the bottom. Perhaps you'll even be lucky enough to see the bird dart into and out of the water in search of the food it desperately needs. They are finely tuned fishers, with a streamlined body designed to travel through water at maximum speed and a transparent third eyelid to keep sight of prey as they hit the water. Despite its adeptness at catching food, however, in winter, frozen rivers, ponds and lakes can prevent Kingfishers from feeding for days at a time, forcing some into fishing in garden ponds and killing many others. They're also challenged by the water quality of its habitats, with decreasing water quality up to the 1980s attesting to its national decline in numbers, although water quality and Kingfisher numbers have increased since, albeit with annual fluctuations. Having a healthy number of Kingfishers, therefore, is a sign of a healthy river ecosystem and clean waters- a marker for a thriving local wildlife population.

So, anytime you're lucky enough to meet this marvel of nature, you're not just seeing a pretty bird, you're seeing an indicator of a river's health, a predator perfectly adapted to kill with maximum efficiency, a parent of up to 30 children a year, an architect who designs and builds their home every year, and, perhaps, a centuries old lover reunited with their companion who knows what it's like to lose a loved one.

Your junior wildlife correspondent.

Photographs of the Kingfisher by Tommy Coulson are on the next page.

Continued from page 6







Lanchester Food Week Returns for 2026

Following the enthusiasm surrounding plans for the first **Lanchester Food Week**, the event is set to return in **2026**, taking place from **Saturday 24th October to Sunday 1st November**.

Lanchester Food Week is a celebration of the fantastic cafés, restaurants, pubs, takeaways and food businesses that we are fortunate to have here in the village.

Organiser and local resident **Barrie McDermid** said the aim is simple: to encourage residents to support local businesses while enjoying the wide variety of food and drink available right on our doorstep.

"Lanchester is incredibly lucky to have such a fantastic range of places to eat and drink," says Barrie. "Whether you fancy a quick takeaway, a family meal, something sweet or a more special dining experience, there really is something for everyone."

Many of the venues that expressed an interest in the original event have again indicated that they would like to be involved, and plans are now underway to make the 2026 Food Week an enjoyable celebration for the whole community.

It is hoped that participating businesses will offer a range of special offers, promotions and perhaps some unique treats throughout the week, giving residents an extra reason to try somewhere new or revisit an old favourite.

"One of the best things about living in Lanchester is the strong sense of community," Barrie added. "Food Week is an opportunity to celebrate the brilliant independent businesses we have here and hopefully encourage people to get out, enjoy the village and support local."

More details about the participating venues and any special offers will be announced nearer the time.

Contact details:
Barrie McDermid
07738 223413
Lanchester Food Week on Facebook
www.facebook.com/lanchesterfoodweek/



WHAT'S ON - October onwards

Thursday Club
The next meeting is on October 15th at 13.30 in the Community Centre. We will be welcoming Mr. Tony Cleary to tell us all about his company 'Lanchester Wines.' Hopefully he will bring some samples either to taste but certainly to purchase (thinking about Christmas gifts already!). Also we are planning our effort for the Community Centre's Christmas tree display in mid December. Bring a brooch with its provenance to put on the tree if you can please. All are welcome. Small charge for non members.

Screening of the People's Emergency Briefing hosted by Lanchester Partnership
Sunday 25th October, 7.30pm - 9.30pm, at Lanchester Community Centre, Lanchester, DH7 0PB.
The People's Emergency Briefing explains how changes to our climate and natural environment could affect our food, health, economy and everyday lives, but it also shows that meaningful action is possible.
Come along to hear the evidence, discuss what it means for our community and explore the positive steps we can take together. The future is not fixed, and every action, individual, local and national, helps move us in the right direction. Tickets are free and available on eventbrite https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/ - to access, type in people's emergency briefing into the search bar along with Lanchester for the location.

Lanchester Wildlife Group
Tuesday 13th October. 7.30pm. Lanchester Community Centre DH7 0PB
Andy Wadds, Reserves Manager Durham Wildlife Trust. Subject is: St Cuthberts Moor
No charge. All welcome

WI
October meeting, Monday 5th – AGM
November – No meeting, birthday lunch for members
Christmas meeting, Monday 7th December.

Lunch Club: Cuppa and a Chat
The next meeting of the lunch club held at Lynwood House will be 13th October, 12pm start, all welcome.

Musical Memories celebrates "Food Glorious Food" in music
Join us for music, refreshments and fun activities on 7th October 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

Paradiso Club
Sunday 11th October 2026: Song Sung Blue (2025)
In this musical romance Lightning and Thunder, a Milwaukee husband and wife Neil Diamond tribute act, experience soaring success and devastating heartbreak in their musical journey together. Starring Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson - critics praised Jackman and Hudson for their high energy, heartfelt performances.
Lanchester Community Centre. 7pm refreshments and raffle. Film starts at 7.30pm. Members: £5, Non-members: £6. Membership fee: £5.

Local HistorySociety
We will be meeting on Friday 2nd of October as usual in the Community Centre. Our speaker will be Paul Heatherington who will be entertaining us with the story of The Revd Peter Cameron, Rector of Ebchester 1891-1895. Then our November 6th meeting will have a Remembrance theme in keeping with the time of year. Dorothy Hall, with her North East War Memorial hat in place, will be talking about War Memorials with particular reference to Lanchester and area. That brings us to the meeting on December 4th which will be our usual social event. Everyone is welcome to our meetings which start at 7.00pm but we advise you arrive by 6.45 to ensure access through the centre security system.

Art Group Exhibition
Lanchester Art Group are holding their Annual Exhibition of Paintings in the Community Centre, Lanchester, on Saturday and Sunday 17th and 18th October. Doors open 10 til 5 on Sat and 10 til 3:30 on Sunday. Lots of paintings will be on display with many for sale. Refreshments will also be available all day, along with a raffle. Admission £1.

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 15th October from 4-5pm.This group will be reviewing 'The List of Suspicious Things' by Jennie Godfrey, a book about 'an intimate tale of family mysteries in a small town' which many in the Monday group gave a seven. (Google books)
Monday Book Club will meet on 26th October from 2.30-3.30 to discuss 'The Good Father' by Noah Hawley, described by The Sunday Times as 'enthralling' and by The Daily Mail as 'superbly written'. Will it achieve a good score then?
Pins and Needles meet on 1st Thursday monthly. The next meeting is 1st October 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.
Bridge Club meets every Monday, 2.30-4pm (except 4th Monday). Learn to play Bridge with experienced, friendly and helpful players.
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. A variety of craft ideas and materials are provided, so come along and enjoy 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.

City Theatre
"Murdered to Death" a comedy spoof by Peter Gordon at The City Theatre, Fowlers Yard, Durham DH1 3 RA from Sept 27th to Oct 3rd. When old friends meet for a weekend in a country manor, who will not be going home? Who dunnit? Will Inspector Pratt solve the case? Join us for a laughter filled mystery. Tickets from Durham Gala or wwwdurhamcitytheatre.co.uk and follow the link for tickets. Performances Sun and Sat 2.30pm, Mon-Fri 7.30 pm.Tickets £9.50. Concessions £8.50 Sun/Mon//Tues.

Ballet Classes at Croft View Halls
Adult Ballet on Mondays 8pm - 9pm
Silver Swans Adult Ballet (aimed at over 55s but all ages welcome) on Thursdays 9.30am - 10.30am
Contact Joyce, 07932 008400 or info@jjtds.com

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.

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.

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'.



WHAT'S ON - October onwards

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 mwalters5346@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.

Christian Aid Christmas Concert.
Advance notice. Saturday 12th December at Lanchester Methodist Church. Concert will be given by the The Glendale Choir and the Argus Singers.

Sponsored Bike Ride

Following the last day of term and leaving Lanchester EP Primary School to move on to Consett Academy, Ollie Thompson decided he wanted to raise some money as a parting gift for "Henry Dancer Days". So, on Sunday 19th July he set off from Consett AFC, the club where he plays football on a weekly basis and rode to the Stadium of Light in Sunderland where he enjoys watching his heroes play. In all Ollie raised £622.50 including Gift Aid for the charity. "Well Done Ollie".

Michael Knowles





The start at Consett AFC and the finish at the Stadium of Light

If you have any events you would like to list on the What's On section please email them to lanchestervillagevoice@yahoo.co.uk

Poppy's Walks



Good day readers and this month's walk is not for the faint hearted. It does include some gradients, a couple of rather high stiles and some uneven footpaths. But it is a perfect dog route around Lanchester.
As you will know by now I am Poppy, a Patterdale Terrier who describes to Village Voice readers the walks I lead my Humans on.
This route started by the village green, from where we crossed Durham Road and walked along to the church, through the churchyard and out at the other side onto Peth Bank.
We quickly crossed Peth Bank and followed a footpath uphill into a road called Holmside Avenue. There at a bungalow I had a noisy exchange of views with a dog who stuck its nose under the fence to bark at me.
Following that contretemps we walked to the end of Holmside Avenue onto Deneside where we turned left. We carried on along Deneside until coming across a grassy area with a children's playground and - luckily - a doggy bin opposite.
We crossed the grassy area and walked through a gap in a hedge into a large field. We kept to the right of the field, all the time climbing and looking back on some panoramic views of Lanchester. There was a dense wood on our right but after a while the wood ended and we turned right diagonally across a field, following a worn track.
This took us eventually onto a footpath which we followed up and down a sort of ravine. The path was quite steep but negotiable with care.
By this time we were close to Peth Bank once again - although a lot further up than when we had left - because we could hear the traffic.
But the footpath we followed took us away from the road once again and into a wood known as Black Wood. I know that because the male Human read it on a map.
This was a very attractive area although the route did take us underneath some electricity wires supported by large pylons.
There was also a yellow arrow marked on a post to reassure us we were going in the right direction.
After so long we came to a crossroads on the footpath - or should that be a crosspaths?
We had been climbing fairly steadily up till that point, and we weren't far from Burnhope mast.
But instead of turning left towards it we turned right and began going downhill again. There was wood on our right behind a stone wall, and a field on our left.
After a short time we came to a rather high stile - I slipped underneath but the Humans had to climb over.
We then came to a narrow footpath with a fence on both sides. On the left was a field with geese, sheep and goats and on the right some farm buildings and also Manor House.
I was on my lead at this point, and we had to cross another fairly steep stile before joining a road above Lanchester where there were also some impressive views.
This road took us downhill onto Durham Road just along from the junction into Oakwood on the other side
We walked along the footpath and then crossed Durham Road carefully before walking down Oakwood and onto the Lanchester railway path.
From there it was a fairly short walk back to the village centre.
The walk took about 90 minutes and was enjoyable for me because for large parts I was able to run free off my lead.
But parts of it would maybe not be advisable after heavy rainfall, when I imagine it would be very muddy.

Laura Ridgeon, Yoga North East





For almost 20 years, Laura Ridgeon has been helping people improve their physical and mental wellbeing through gentle, accessible Hatha Yoga.
Based in Lanchester since 2009, Laura now teaches friendly, beginner-friendly classes at Croft View on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, as well as sessions in Esh Winning, monthly Yoga & Sound Baths, and retreats in Yorkshire and Spain.
With over 25 years of personal yoga experience, Laura understands first-hand how yoga can support both body and mind through life's challenges. Her welcoming classes focus on movement, breathing and relaxation, creating a supportive space where everyone can practise at their own pace.
Proud to call Lanchester home, Laura loves being part of the village community and helping people discover the many benefits of yoga.

Pat Christie, Pre-natal Baby knitter





Born in Palestine, raised in South Africa and eventually settling in England, Pat Christie has led a fascinating life. Her father's work as a welding inspector meant the family travelled extensively during her childhood. While working in Palestine, he was even presented with the keys to the city in recognition of the help he gave to the local community.
Pat began her career with the Post Office before joining Tyne Tees Television as a sales representative. It was there that she met her first husband, John Brown, who later rose to a senior position within the company.
Sadly, Pat's second husband passed away, while her third husband now lives in Cheshire.
Pat has a daughter living in Spain and two sons, one in Plymouth and the other in Lanchester. It was while visiting her son in Lanchester that she decided it was the perfect place to settle.
Now a smart and sprightly 86-year-old, Pat enjoys taking part in the many activities at Lynwood House and meeting people in the village. She also has a remarkable talent for knitting, which she has put to good use by making blankets for pre-Natal babies. To date, she has lovingly created more than 300 blankets, each decorated with a knitted angel, and all donated to Durham Hospitals Pre-Natal unit.
Her latest creative project is making handmade greeting cards. Each card is different in style and made with all sorts of materials including wallpaper. All profits are going to Willow Burn.

499 Festival





Since launching in 2018, the 499 Festival has grown into a much-loved weekend of live music, camping, good food and great company.
With tickets capped at just 300, the festival keeps things relaxed, friendly and spacious — with local food, drinks and plenty of dressing up for the themed Saturday night!
The festival has also proudly supported the Great North Air Ambulance Service since the beginning, raising a fantastic £1,513 in 2026.
This year's event was a sell-out, welcoming 300 guests and more than 70 campervans, caravans and motorhomes.
Next festival: 9 July 2027

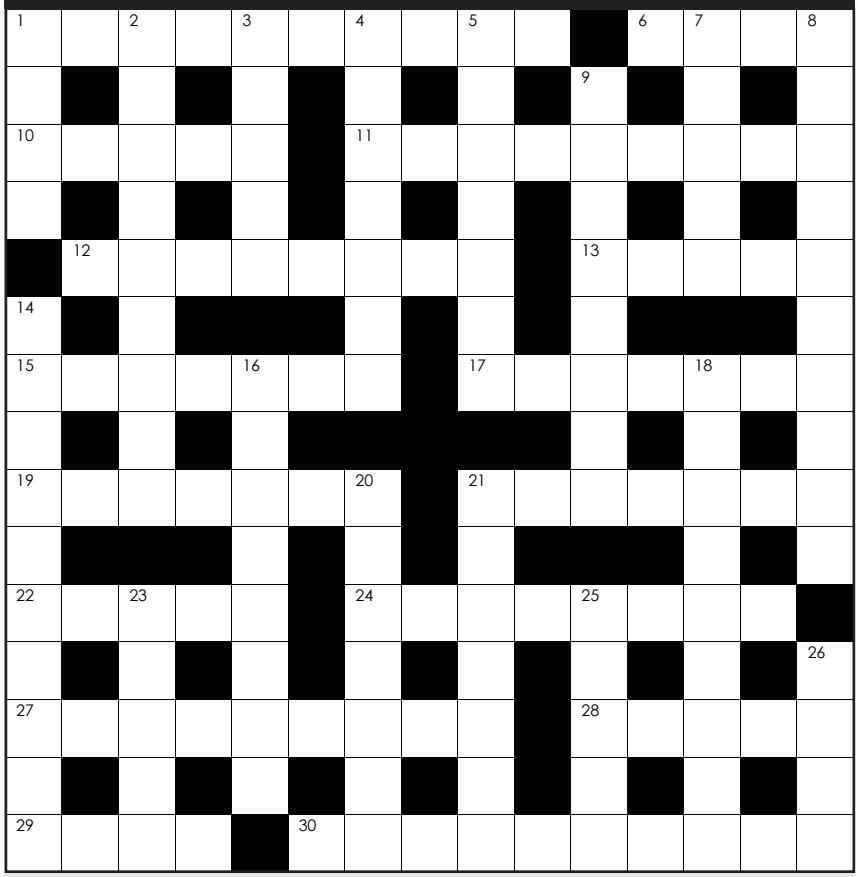
Geoff Venus - GD Autocare





Meet Geoff Venus, the new owner of the well-known Hallgarth garage in Lanchester. *(Geoff is in the middle of the photograph on the right).*
After training as a mechanic in the 1990s, Geoff left the trade to become a Civil Servant. The Covid pandemic inspired him to rethink his career, and he started his own business from home before taking over the Hallgarth garage following Dave Donnelly's retirement in 2024.
Since then, Geoff has invested in new equipment, grown the team to include Kevin, Ben and Heidi, and is building a thriving local business. Independent garages like Geoff's provide trusted, affordable repairs while supporting the local community.
Despite increasing challenges sourcing parts and accessing the latest vehicle diagnostics, Geoff continues to invest in the future, with plans for more equipment, new technology and improvements to the building.
Supporting local businesses helps keep communities moving.

CROSSWORD 223



Clues

Across

1. Used, but not by digital watches (6,4)
6. Geordie detective (4)
10. To throw carelessly (5)
11. Contrast between things that are mutually exclusive (9)
12. Erudite and focused on learning (8)
13. Something experienced when asleep (5)
15. Type of parallelogram (7)
17. Gymnastic entertainer (7)
19. State capital of New Mexico (5,2)
21. Type of rice (7)
22. Type of church associated with monks or nuns (5)
24. Royal title associated with Austria (8)
27. Age at which you might sing about 6 across, 10 across and 26 down (5-4)
28. Stadium (5)
29. Hurry (4)
30. Do battle using upper limbs (3-7)

Down

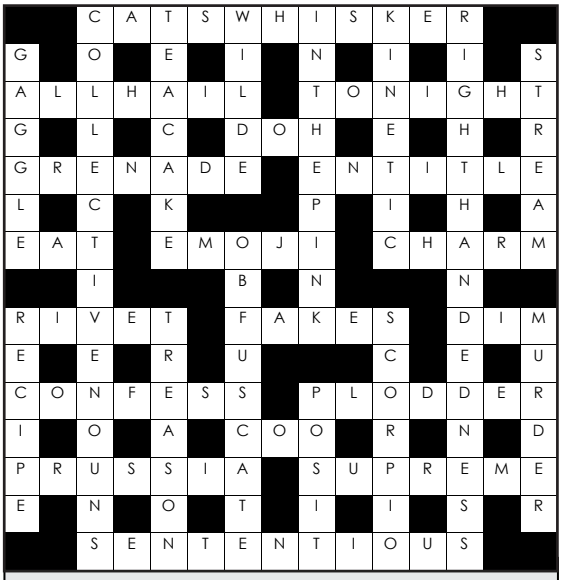
1. Fire from employment (4)
2. ……5,4,3,2,1 (9)
3. Unclothed (5)
4. Grotesque (7)
5. Divided capital city (7)
7. Run off to get married (5)
8. Uneven bars used in gymnastics (10)
9. Central American country (8)
14. Intruder (10)
16. Use this to watch very carefully (5,3)
18. Sign of expertise in martial arts (5,4)
20. Captivate or charm (7)
21. Cinema location favoured by courting couples (4,3)
23. Containers (5)
25. To cover with loose cloth (5)
26. Rodney, according to Trigger (4)

Name:_____

Address: _____

_____

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



Solution crossword 222

There were 16 entries of which 13 were correct. The winner drawn out of the hat is Christine Cowan.

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Lanchester Endowed Parochial School

Great results at the EP!

I am writing this in the middle of August which is always a time of reflecting on the year just finished whilst also having time to think about the forthcoming year. We finished the year on a real high having received our SATs results on the penultimate day of term and also receiving our SIAMS inspection report at the very end of term.

2026 Statutory Test Results

When showing prospective parents and carers around school, I rarely refer to academic success as to us, it is a given. That is the main part of our jobs. But it is still important to celebrate our academic successes as well as everything else we do on a regular basis.

We had a cohort of 58 pupils this year and are proud to share our results below. The children had to wait a little longer for their results to be published this year, but it was definitely worth it!

58 pupils	Expected Standard	Greater Depth
Reading	93.1%	41.4%
Writing	91.4%	36.2%
Maths	93.1%	36.2%
Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	93.1%	41.4%
Reading, Writing and Maths Combined	84.5%	22.4%

SIAMS Inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools)

We had our statutory SIAMS inspection at the end of June after waiting all year for the call! It was a very intense time prior to the inspection taking place but we really felt that the inspector gained a good impression of the life and ethos of our school both from the paperwork submitted, talking to so many different groups of people (including staff, governors, children, parishioners) and being in school for the day itself. The inspection looks at the vision of the school (A Caring Community Where All Can Flourish) and the impact this has on pupils and adults, the curriculum, relationships, worship, justice and responsibility. It also checks whether the teaching of Religious Education is effective.

The full report can be read on the school website, but the headlines are:

Notable Strengths

- ***Leaders, including governors, are driven by a shared vision for the school to provide a 'rich soil' in which all can grow. Thorough monitoring and evaluation ensures that this is the case.***
- ***The caring community nurtured within Lanchester Endowed Parochial (EP) Primary School is encouraged to act justly and responsibly by an intentionally planned curriculum and extracurricular programme. As a result, pupils independently challenge injustice in their community and beyond.***
- ***Vision-led, bespoke and bold support creates a caring and cared for community where lives are changed.***
- ***School leaders are committed to providing a wealth of impactful experiences. These enable pupils and adults to celebrate diversity and grow as individuals.***
- ***Opportunities for spiritual development are varied and resonate with the school community. Consequently, pupils and adults flourish spiritually.***

Other comments from the body of the report are:

- Leaders are clear that members of the Lanchester EP School community are unique and valued.
- Governors benefit from partnerships with the diocese and local church groups.
- The school's extremely broad curriculum and enrichment is thoughtfully and ambitiously shaped by their vision. Notably, global travel and impressive experiences in the arts bring cultural diversity that meets the needs of the school's context.
- Pupils highly value the school's regular 'mindful moments' sessions. These enable them to challenge their thinking and develop spiritually.
- The school's reciprocal partnership with the local church has enabled both worshipping communities to grow as well as providing honest evaluation
- Planned time in woodland spaces enables pupils to experience the tranquility of nature. Through this, pupils experience a sense of calm that enables them to think more deeply.
- Staff work in a supportive environment where they are given training to grow and develop. This extends to school support staff who are clear about the often life-changing impact that opportunities have on them. The school are aware of the challenges faced by some families and provide loving and knowledgeable support.
- Through a skillfully planned curriculum, pupils are equipped and empowered to act with justice and responsibility. The school inspires pupils to explore the impact that their decisions have on each other and the wider world. They frequently take the opportunity to extend their learning beyond the classroom through voluntary acts of service in the community.
- RE is given priority within the curriculum and governors ensure this is the case through knowledgeable and effective support and challenge.

Mrs Jane Davis, Head Teacher

Our Climate, Our Community, Our Future



This summer's long spells of hot, dry weather have been difficult to ignore. For some, the sunshine has been welcome. But high temperatures can also make our homes uncomfortable, affect sleep and health, put pressure on water supplies and create challenging conditions for wildlife, gardens and local food production.

One hot summer does not tell us everything about our climate. However, the wider pattern is clear: extreme heat, drought, flooding and other disruptive weather events are becoming more frequent and more intense. What once felt like a distant problem is beginning to affect the places where we live, the food we buy, our household costs and the services we rely upon.

That can sound overwhelming, but this is not a story without hope. The choices we make now can still shape what happens next. Reducing energy use, wasting less food, choosing lower-carbon ways to travel and creating space for trees, plants and wildlife all contribute. Just as importantly, we can talk about the issue, support local initiatives and ask businesses and decision-makers to take action on the scale required.

Many of the changes that help address the climate and nature crisis can also improve our lives today. Greener neighbourhoods provide shade and reduce flooding. Better-insulated homes are more comfortable and cheaper to heat. Cleaner transport improves air quality, while restoring nature creates healthier and more enjoyable places for everyone.

The People's Emergency Briefing brings these issues together in a powerful and accessible film featuring leading UK scientists and experts. It explains how changes to our climate and natural environment could affect our food, health, economy and everyday lives, but it also shows that meaningful action is possible.

Lanchester Partnership invites you to join us for a local screening at **7.30pm - 9.30pm on Sunday 25th October at Lanchester Community Centre**, Lanchester, DH7 0PB. Tickets are free and available on eventbrite https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/ - to access, type in people's emergency briefing into the search bar along with Lanchester for the location.

Follow this link for further information and a trailer https://www.nebriefing.org/the-film

Lanchester Partnership

All Saints' Catholic Primary School

There is always something rather special about September as we prepare for another academic year. The school feels full of anticipation as we get ready to welcome our children back; it is always wonderful to see our familiar faces return. A very warm welcome to our new Nursery and Reception families. Starting school is such an exciting milestone for children and their families, and we hope that they will quickly feel part of our happy and welcoming All Saints' family!

We also send our very best wishes to our Year Six pupils as they take their next steps into secondary education. We are incredibly proud of them and all they have achieved during their time at All Saints'. We have had plenty of reason to celebrate over the summer, with some exceptional results across the school. At Key Stage Two, 94% of our pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, 90% in writing and 94% in mathematics, with 87% achieving the expected standard across all three subjects. Our high-attainment results were also particularly pleasing, with 34% achieving a high level in reading and mathematics. These results are a wonderful achievement and something of which our whole school community can be extremely proud. Year Four achieved an outstanding 83% of pupils achieving full marks in the Multiplication Tables Check.

Our Year One pupils deserve a special mention too, with 87% achieving the expected standard in the Phonics Screening Check. These are fantastic achievements and a wonderful reflection of the hard work and determination of our children, supported by our experienced staff and dedicated families.

If you are considering a place for your child in our nurturing Nursery or Reception class, we would love to welcome you to our Open Morning on Saturday 19 September, from 9.30am to 11am. It is a fantastic opportunity to come and see our school, meet our EYFS team and get a feel for what makes All Saints' such a special place to grow, learn and flourish.

Frances Stephenson, Head Teacher



Well done and good luck to year six leavers!

Seasonal Events this Autumn and Winter with Willow Burn Hospice

Willow Burn Hospice is looking forward to welcoming the local community to a range of seasonal events this autumn and winter, with something for shoppers, crafters and festive families alike.

Kicking off the programme is the Willow Burn Boutique Autumn Showcase on Thursday 22 October from 4.00pm to 7.30pm. Enjoy a relaxed evening of seasonal shopping, refreshments and community spirit as we celebrate the arrival of autumn. Guests will be welcomed with complimentary fizz on arrival, receive a goodie bag on purchases over £25 and have the chance to spin the Prize Wheel when spending over £10.



Autumn Sip and Shop

Get into the festive spirit at one of our popular Christmas Wreath Making evenings on Thursday 19 November or Thursday 26 November at 6.00pm. Amanda from Simply Blooms will guide participants through creating a beautiful handmade Christmas wreath to take home and enjoy throughout the festive season. The ticket price of £38 per person includes all materials, a glass of fizz and a delicious seasonal supper. Places are limited, so early booking is recommended.

Another addition to our festive programme is the much-loved Annual Nurses' Christmas Fair on Saturday 28 November 2026. The fair will feature Christmas shopping, festive refreshments, gift stalls, homemade cakes, local produce, raffles, games and tombolas. The Willows Café will be open throughout the day, while The Potting Shed will be transformed into a festive gift shop. Children will also have the opportunity to meet Father Christmas before he begins his busiest journey of the year.



Wreath making

Every event helps support the vital care and services provided by Willow Burn Hospice and the team look forward to welcoming you throughout the season. For wreath-making bookings, contact Ali on 01207 529224 or aenglish@willowburnhospice.org.uk. Don't forget to keep an eye on our website and social media channels for details of further festive events, including our annual Light Up a Life Service, a special opportunity to remember and celebrate loved ones at Christmas.

Rachel Quince

Tom Dowson's tractor wins the Ann Suddes cup

On Sunday 23rd August the Lanchester Vintage Tractor Club set out on one of their regular fundraising runs starting at Peter Suddes's farm off Newbiggen Lane.

They were heading off to North Bitchburn, then the Dairy Barn for lunch and then home.

Before they set off, the Ann Suddes Memorial Cup was presented to Tom Dowson for his Fordson Dexta tractor.





Above: Peter Suddes presents the cup to Tom Dowson
Right: Peter Suddes (left) with Tom Dowson and his tractor

All Saints' Catholic Church Lanchester

More Celebrations at our Church

All Saints' Catholic Church has been celebrating once again - it is not just our centenary year.

On Wednesday 19th August Father Vernatius celebrated 20 years as a Priest. There was an excellent attendance for a 6.30 pm mass. Eight priests attended, what a wonderful spectacle in our sanctuary. Sister Chinelo was a visitor from Nigeria for this very special event.



After the mass everyone then enjoyed tea/coffee and light refreshments which certainly became more than light refreshments thanks to so many donating so much lovely food.



We were also privileged to enjoy some lovely Nigerian food cooked by Oechi. Jollof rice, marinated chicken, cooked plantain and mixed salad was served to everyone's delight.

All the young priests surrounded Father Vernatius as he cut his celebratory cake; they all joined in singing a beautiful song, the Latin "Tu es Sarcedos in aeternum" the meaning - You will be a Priest forever in the order of Melchizedek of old. A very special song which is sung by Priests when a Priest is ordained.





A big thank you to everyone who donated, cooked and worked so hard to make it such a success. Once again, a real team effort.

On **Sunday 27th September at 4pm,** there will be a Centenary Talk at Teatime in the Parish Centre: 'Our Beautiful Church - History, Architecture and Furnishings'. Light refreshments served. Everyone welcome.

Another two day event - Centenary 'Exhibition 100' - Highlights of the architecture, furnishings, photographs, documents and vestments will all be arranged and shown in the Church itself. Date of the event **Saturday 17th October** 10 – 2 pm and Sunday 10.30 – 2pm. Everyone welcome

Donations always appreciated.

Lestrine Kelly

Lanchester Methodist Church

Continuing Our Pilgrimage Year

On Saturday 15 August, a group from the Methodist Church set out to walk a section of the Way of Light, beginning at Esh and following the route from the Cross Keys Inn through to Knitsley Farm Shop. The Way of Light is a local pilgrimage route that links Hadrian's Wall with Durham Cathedral. It follows a mixture of footpaths, quiet lanes and countryside, passing through villages (including Lanchester) and historic landscapes.

The five-mile stretch from Esh to Lanchester took around two hours to complete. Those who chose to continue on the full nine-mile walk carried on from Lanchester to Knitsley, where a well-earned drink and some refreshments provided a welcome reward.



We were joined by Steven from the Lanchester Hiking Group, who act as stewards for this section of the Way of Light. As we walked, we took the opportunity to care for the path by collecting any litter we came across along the way. It was a joyful day of fellowship, shared conversation, and quiet reflection, as we gave thanks for the beauty of the countryside and the gift of walking together with the sunshine on our backs.

Music, Worship and Healing

In past issues of The Village Voice, we have discovered how music has been used and developed at Lanchester Methodist Church. Every musician has followed their own path to involvement in worship, and even the instruments have a story to tell.

Christine recalls: "My father was a Minister and was given a violin to use as a prop in his sermons, but I wanted to learn to play, so he had it refurbished and I had lessons."

After a break, while her children were growing up, Christine dusted off the violin and started playing it in the Music Group, bringing its link with the Church full circle. She started singing with the group several years ago and says "I enjoy singing, but I do enjoy playing the violin too – the harmonies as well as the tunes. It's my way of worshipping."

Donna is our other harmony expert and brings a wealth of musical experience. Her background includes musical theatre, playing the violin to grade 8 and working with singing groups. However, her life changed suddenly a few years ago, just before she was forty, when she had a stroke. This affected her speech and left her with severe weakness in her right arm and leg. Since then, it has been a long process of movement and speech therapy, which has led to some recovery. Donna really missed being involved with music and after attending Lanchester Methodist Church she offered to help with the Music Group. She is still unable to sing for long periods but can vocalise beautiful harmonies. This gives an extra dimension to our songs and hymns and is a wonderful example of how music can be therapeutic and play a part in healing.



Christine (left) and Donna (right)

Helen echoes that sentiment. "I used to be really involved in playing guitar and singing, but a thyroid problem affected my vocal chords and I gave it up for many years."

Mike from the Music Group spotted an old photograph of Helen playing the guitar and persuaded her to play in church. "I agreed to cover for a week when there was no one else to play, and several years on I'm still part of the group! I am regaining my confidence and have also had some speech therapy, so I can sing the lower notes. It means so much to me to be able to contribute to the worship again."

Stories like these show that music at Lanchester Methodist Church is about much more than simply singing and playing. It brings people together, gives people the opportunity to use their gifts, and, in different ways, can bring confidence, comfort and healing.



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Talking to someone about mental health

This information comes from Mental Health UK

Starting a conversation about mental health can be difficult or feel overwhelming, but reaching out when someone is struggling can make a real difference. It shows them they're not alone and someone cares about them. Listening to them will be a priority, as well as respecting their boundaries as to how much they wish to tell you. An open and supportive conversation will not only help them feel empowered to speak about their feelings, the situation, and potential next steps — it may also help them seek further support. This guide will help you navigate these important conversations with confidence, compassion, and care.

Spotting the signs of poor mental health: notice the changes

Physical symptoms

- Headaches
- Muscle tension/back ache
- Tight jaw/grinding teeth
- Raised heart rate/faster breathing
- Changes in appetite
- Stomach problems
- Difficulty sleeping

Behavioural symptoms

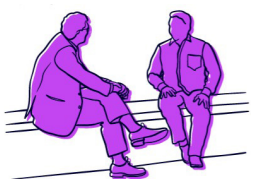
- Avoiding and blaming others
- Eating more, eating less, or comfort eating
- Using alcohol, substances, or smoking
- Snapping at others
- Decreased performance
- Social withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating
- Biting nails
- Worrying about the past or future
- Racing thoughts
- Panic attacks
- Problems concentrating
- Memory lapses/forgetting things
- Difficulty making decisions
- Unable to think clearly

Emotional symptoms

- Frightened
- Fearful, worried and/or anxious
- Angry and/or irritable
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Shame
- Disproportionate reactions, e.g. overreacting, underreacting
- Sadness and/or low mood
- Rapid mood changes

Dos and don'ts to having a supportive conversation

Find the right time and space
Before having the conversation, check that it is the right time and space for them. Ensure you can give the time and attention needed. Consider issues of privacy, noise, distractions, other commitments, practicalities, etc.



Actively listen without judgement
Ensure they feel able to share as much or as little as they are comfortable to — without being judged.

Ask open questions
Asking these types of questions encourages them to explore their thoughts and feelings. "I've noticed you haven't seemed yourself lately. What has been on your mind?" Try not to ask too many questions and give them time to respond.

Avoid making assumptions
You're not expected to be an expert. If you don't know what to say, remember that you don't need to find an answer, or even understand their feelings. Listening will let them know you care.

Acknowledge and validate
It might be tempting to silver-line situations to make someone feel better but it's important to acknowledge what they are saying. Saying "don't be silly, you're okay" could make them withdraw, become frustrated and angry. Instead say, "I can see this has really upset you," etc.

Avoid comparisons
Sometimes we can be tempted to draw a comparison to our own story, to show empathy. However, it could also discourage the other person from opening up. It's important the conversation is about them — so share sparingly.

Reflect back and clarify
By seeking clarity, you are showing them you are listening and want to know more. Avoid making assumptions and putting words into their mouth. Consider saying: "When you say…, do you mean…?" or "Could you tell me more about…?"

Show empathy rather than sympathy
Empathic responses show that you understand where the person is coming from, whereas sympathy often expresses pity. Rather than saying, "I'm sorry for you" say, "That must be really difficult, I'm sorry you are going through this."

Empower them to find solutions
It's important to listen first and not go straight to solutions. It's also better that next steps come from them. Ask questions that help them think of what to do next: "What do you think would help?"

Avoid advising and suggesting an easy solution
What you think might help someone may not be right for them. Suggesting easy solutions might invalidate their feelings. Try to avoid going into 'fix' mode.

Avoid diagnosing
Regardless of your observations and experiences you are not there to diagnose a mental illness. If you are concerned about them, encourage them to seek support from their GP, or they can contact NHS 111 service.

Signposting

Learn more about mental health conditions
If you want to learn more about different mental health conditions, there is information on symptoms, treatments, and useful contacts on a variety of conditions: mentalhealth-uk.org/help-and-information/conditions

Speak to your GP
Let them know they can book a double appointment with their GP to discuss their mental health, so they don't feel rushed. They can request for a family member or friend to attend the appointment with them.

Access the Hub of Hope
Comprehensive online directory connecting people to mental health support services in their local area across the UK.
hubofhope.co.uk

Resources
Access downloadable guides, tools, and resources to support your mental health, enhance wellbeing, and build resilience, while also promoting awareness and understanding of mental health.
mentalhealth-uk.org/help-and-information/downloadable-resources/

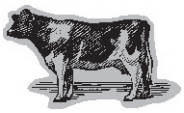
October 10th 2026 is World Mental Health Day.

Lanchester Wildlife Group

Tuesday 13th October. 7.30pm. Lanchester Community Centre DH7 0PB
Andy Wadds, Reserves Manager Durham Wildlife Trust. St Cuthberts Moor
St Cuthbert's Moor is a nature reserve and conservation project that is part of the Teesdale Allotments. However, these are not the sort of places you would grow marrows and leeks but areas of hill farm in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is an extensive area of enclosed moorland and rough grazings which are nationally important for breeding birds including lapwing, snipe, redshank, curlew, golden plover, short-eared owl and black grouse, all species which are declining nationally due to changes in land use. Until St Cuthberts Moor was acquired by Durham Wildlife Trust it was used intensively for livestock production and managed for game. Andy will be talking about how things have changed since DWT took over and the beneficial effect this has had on wildlife.
No charge. All welcome
Noel Jackson



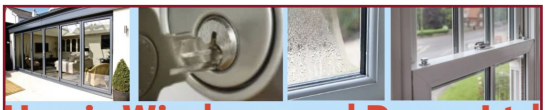
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Lanchester Bowls Club

Snow Shovels in a Heatwave

The playing area for bowling is called a green; unfortunately for much of this summer this has been a misnomer. Like all the greens in the County without a watering system, the extreme heat and lack of rain has meant our grass has turned straw yellow and the ground rock hard. Club members, especially Paul Monaghan and Jeff Hockaday, have spent hours trying to water the rinks with minimal success - the sun always being the winner.

With the green being so compacted, when we did have heavy rain at the beginning of August it didn't drain away and large puddles sat on the surface. *(Photo below by Sally Laverick).* This meant that our game on Tuesday, August



4th had to be cancelled. When the pitch was inspected the following day, standing water still made it unplayable. Attempts to make drainage holes using a garden fork proved futile; ironically a snow shovel in the capable hands of Joe Newton proved effective and Wednesday evening's game was able to be played.

The bowling highlight of the month was the long standing and much anticipated friendly against Birtley Town. This year it was our turn to host it, so on a hot Friday afternoon the two teams faced off against each other on four rinks. Lanchester won three of the four, easily winning the match. Sally Laverick, Joy Packard, Ken Jose and Robert Cuthbertson (skip) were the players on the best rink, each winning a bottle of wine.

Yet again Ann Lee and her team (Trish Jose and Sally Laverick) did an excellent job making the after game tea, so thanks to them and to those who helped set up and tidy away afterwards. Our next friendly is away to Wolsingham at the end of August.



Photo: friendly teams taken by Ann Lee.

By the time you read this, the green will be closed for the season as the council, hopefully, repair and re-seed the rinks. Before then the remaining league games will have been played and the club competitions will have been completed, having reached the semi final stages of the various contests as I write. Nothing much has changed in most of the leagues since the last article. We are still bottom of the Tuesday and Wednesday north west Durham leagues whereas we sit mid-table in the Saturday league. The Monday league has finished with us ending in fourth place despite an eight-two defeat by Dipton in the final game.

Although our South West Durham B team looks as though they are going to finish bottom of league two, the A team still have an outside chance of gaining promotion. That could hinge on the outcome of the final match of the season - the second derby game between our two teams.

Let's hope the decent weather holds for that match and we don't need the snow shovels!

Bob Cuthbertson

Boys' Brigade

Boys' Brigade weekly activities were finished for the summer holidays but it didn't stop six of our lads going on a DofE expedition covering two nights and three days. Arnaud and Louis were doing their qualifying walk for the Silver Award, having already completed their practice walk, Josh, Nathan K. and Jay were doing their practice walk for Silver and Nathan M. was doing his qualifying walk for Bronze. (Photos below)

We all met early on the Friday morning at Castleside and proceeded to the Waskerley Way. Having checked everything was ok they set off at a brisk pace full of enthusiasm. They headed towards the Derwent reservoir and having covered approximately 8 miles they reached their camp site for the night. After pitching their tents, they cooked a hot meal during which they were checked by our DofE assessor Damien and one of our leaders. Everything was fine and they settled down for the night.

They were up bright and early on the Saturday morning, had breakfast, packed away their tents and set off for another full day of 8 miles of walking. They headed towards Broomley Grange which was their stop for the Saturday evening where they were again checked by Damien. A slight difference on that night was that Arnaud and Louis slept in their tent whilst the remaining four had been asked to use the new camping pods at BG and then provide a report on the pods for the trustees. They were a little disappointed that the electricity had not yet been connected, so they had to use the outside classroom to charge their phones, otherwise they found them ideal.

Sunday was the final 8 miles from Broomley Grange to Ebchester, where they arrived around 3pm to be collected by parents. An excellent achievement for them all. When asked how they were Jay's comment was "my feet are killing me" but I know he still enjoyed it.

Normal Boys' Brigade will have already started our autumn session by the time you are reading this but if you have a youngster aged between 5-18 years they are very welcome to join us.

Anchor Boys 5-8 years old Thursday evening 6.10-7.10pm.
Junior Section 8-11 years old Wednesday evening 6.15-7.30pm
Company Section 11-18 years old Wednesday evening 7.30-9.00pm
All sections meet at Croft View Halls.

Eric Hepplewhite







The new café in Lanchester

The proprietor of Lanchester's newest cafe said she had been "overwhelmed" by the demand from hungry, thirsty and curious customers.

"It has been crazy, but wonderful too!" said Philippa Redmond, who opened Pip's coffee shop and cafe on the corner of Percy Crescent and Station Road on Saturday, August 8.

The opening came after weeks of hard work making the premises as attractive as it currently looks, helped by family and friends.

"I could not have managed without them; everybody has been wonderful. And since we opened the feedback we have received from customers has been overwhelmingly positive."

Philippa ("everyone but my mother calls me Pip"), a 38-year-old mum of two boys, married to Shaun, opens the cafe from 9:30-4 Tuesday-Friday and 10-3 Saturday and Sunday, closed only on Mondays.

Breakfast is served until 11.30 and lunch from 11.30. .

She has worked for several years in the hospitality business, but to branch out on her own is a new experience.

"We started in the heatwave, in the middle of the school holidays, so no wonder it has been hectic," she added wryly.

Well behaved dogs are welcome downstairs, there is a kid's menu as well as the adult one, and the upstairs room is available for private hire.

"I have already had a booking for a baby shower, and I would like to maybe have a Christmas wreath workshop later in the year," said Pip.

Pip's is certainly a welcome addition to village life in Lanchester.

Neil McKay



Lanchester FC – The Story Behind the Club

Lanchester FC is a football club that represents the village of Lanchester and has a long history within the local community. The club was restarted in 2023 and currently plays in the Consett & District Sunday League.

This year has brought a lot of change to the club. I came in to take over the club, bringing with me a number of new players and a fresh vision for the future. However, it certainly hasn't all been plain sailing.

When I first took over, our biggest challenge was finding somewhere for the team to play. Unfortunately, we were unable to reach an agreement with Lanchester Cricket Club regarding the use of their facilities. With pre-season ticking along and the season opener getting closer and closer, we still didn't have a home.

At one point, it looked like we may have had no choice but to leave the village. Thankfully, Alison Gray, our local councillor, stepped in to help us find a way to keep football in Lanchester. Alison provided the club with a grant which helped us afford changing-room facilities, giving us the opportunity to remain in the village.

I and a few of the lads also decided that we needed to do everything we could to make it work. We managed to source our own goalposts and, with the help of volunteers, installed them at Kitswell Road. Around nine hours of volunteer labour went into marking out the pitch and installing the goalposts, helping to bring football back to Kitswell Road once again.

With the season now underway, things are looking very positive. We have won our opening two league games and have already reached a semi-final of the league cup. While there is still a long way to go, the early signs are extremely encouraging.

My long-term goal is to make Lanchester FC as big as it possibly can be. I want the club to eventually have junior teams and additional adult teams, giving people within the local community the opportunity to play football regardless of their age or ability. I want Lanchester FC to become a club that the whole village can be proud of.

The progress we have made over the last few months would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors.

The Black Bull

The Black Bull has been a sponsor of the club since 2023 and provided us with our first home kit. We were deeply saddened by the news that the pub will be closing in the new year. It is a great local pub that has played an important part in the community and will be greatly missed.

Crinnions Bar

Crinnions Bar has kindly sponsored our new home kit this season. They have been incredibly welcoming to the club and have provided us with a great local place to enjoy some food and a few drinks together after our matches.

Jewitt Arboriculture

Finally, and certainly not least, Jewitt Arboriculture has been absolutely fundamental to what we have achieved.

Not only have they provided the team with our fantastic training half-zips, but they have also gone above and beyond in helping us develop our pitch and install our goalposts. Kieran has personally put hours of his own time into helping us get the pitch and goals to where they are today. Without his help and the support of Jewitt Arboriculture, we genuinely would not be where we are now.

They are a fantastic local business, and I would strongly encourage anyone in the local area to use them.

The journey is only just beginning for Lanchester FC. We have faced plenty of challenges, but with the support of our players, volunteers, sponsors, councillors and the wider community, we are building something that we hope will be around for many years to come.

Matty Heywood

Below: the team. Below right: Matty Heywood in the new goal.





Cricket Round up

The **firsts** have won one and lost two in this past period and were runners up in a Cup Final. They disappointingly lost at home to Gateshead Fell, only making 216. The Fell went from 109-0 to 149-5 but then lost only one further wicket to secure the win. Luke McCabe made 64 but then injured himself to bring his season to a premature close.

The following week, **the firsts** had a comfortable win over Sunderland by 6 wickets. Josh Renton bagged the top three before Jamie Dass took 4-23. Charlie McPhail made an unbeaten 43 that saw the team return to fourth place. They then finished with a loss to Newcastle City who chased down 269 for the loss of 5 wickets. Having reached the final of the Eric Topham Trophy, Lanchester faced Shotley Bridge who proved too strong on the night. Missing two batters in McCabe and Brown was probably the reason. The Club are hosting a Hundred Finals Day on Bank Holiday with Burnopfield, Chester Le Street and Hetton Lyons the other teams involved.

The **seconds** lost by 5 runs against Gateshead Fell, were well beaten by Sunderland but then rallied to crush Burnopfield by 172 runs. Glen Harrison top scored with 73 in the unsuccessful run chase at the Fell. Lanchester bowled well against Sunderland with Marc Jacobs taking 4-40 and Ben Rayner and Dan Scott took 3 wickets each. Toby Somersall, missing for a long period following injury, top scored with 79 against Burnopfield before all five bowlers got wickets.

The **thirds** finished the season with wins against Sunderland and Willington to leave them in third place just 4 points behind Hetton Lyons who were second. They beat Sunderland by 16 runs with Ben Rayner and Mae Deaville taking 3 wickets apiece. They then beat Willington by 79 runs thanks in part to an unbeaten 90 by Sam Small. Ibs Khan and 13 year old Jack Brooks took 3 wickets each.

Women's and Junior Round up

The **Junior** season has come to an end, and a season of change has not produced any trophies but has seen the club field more teams than ever.

The **Under 19s** who can hardly be called juniors, finished third in their group of five teams, winning two, losing one and one rained off.

The **under 17s**, who were predominantly made up of under 15s, finished eighth out of 10 teams, winning twice, but that is a big age and skill gap to bridge. They will be better placed next year.

The **under 15s** were our highest placed team, finishing third behind Burnopfield and champions Ryton.

The **13 Boys** finished a creditable fifth out of eleven. They ended the season facing the top two teams, Consett and champions Whickham, who won every game.

The **13 Girls**, the first time we have had this team and the first time they had played hardball as a team, won one game beating Seaham Harbour and showed continuous improvement through the season.

The **under 11 Mixed** finished fourth of eight, struggling against the top two Cramlington and champions Whickham, but always competitive against the rest.

The **under 11 Girls** finished ninth of ten but improved throughout, winning their final game against Shields who were four places higher in the table.

Finally, the **under 9s**, have won more games than any other team in the area, but their games are not classed as competitive, so strictly speaking, there are no table placings (but we know they are top!).

Andrew McConnell

Lanchester Lawn Tennis Club - Summer Update

August has continued to provide some lovely weather for tennis, giving members plenty of opportunities to make the most of our beautiful grass courts.

The annual Club Tournament is progressing well, with matches taking place across the various competitions and plenty of friendly rivalry on court. The finals are planned for early September, so we're looking forward to an exciting Finals Weekend as the various competitions reach their conclusion.

Our only Durham & Northumberland League fixture this month was a Mixed Veterans doubles match against Morpeth on Friday 21st August. The courts were looking fantastic and, as always, Dennis and Gareth had been hard at work making sure they were in perfect condition.

Unfortunately, just as everything was ready to go, a sudden heavy downpour threatened to put a stop to the evening's tennis. Fortunately, the rain soon passed, the sun came back out, and the weather held for the duration of the match.

It proved to be a competitive evening of mixed doubles, with Morpeth eventually taking the honours. Our visitors once again commented on how fortunate we are to have such beautiful surroundings and grass courts here in Lanchester and, as ever, our reputation for providing an excellent post-match tea remains firmly intact!

With the Club Tournament finals approaching and plenty more social tennis to enjoy, there is still lots happening at LLTC as we head towards the end of the summer season.

If you are interested in joining the club or taking part in our Monday evening coaching sessions, please get in touch at lanchestertennis@gmail.com or visit our website for further information: https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/lanchesterlawntennisclub

Barbara Ridley



Photo: The all important grass inspection! Dennis Laycock making sure the courts are match ready ahead of the Mixed Vets fixture against Morpeth.

Deadlines and contact information

Articles, letters and photos by Friday 25th September to lanchestervillagevoice@yahoo.co.uk
Adverts by Friday 25th September 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.

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