



Great Aycliffe Town Council

Council Offices - School Aycliffe Lane - Newton Aycliffe - Co. Durham DL5 6QF

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WINTER NEWSLETTER 2014

21st November 2014

MAYOR'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

As I begin this seasonal message I am conscious of how proud I am to represent and work for you, the people of Great Aycliffe.

I have, in the first six months of my year in office, met many of you through various activities, from personal family events of 100th Birthday celebrations and a Diamond Wedding Anniversary, to the more sombre collective remembering to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Great War, commencing with a tree planting in Aycliffe Village and the wonderful turnout on Remembrance Sunday, to the gathering in the Town Centre on Armistice Day.

I have taken great delight in meeting the children and young people of the town at events held in schools and nurseries, or Fun in the Parks during the warmer sunnier days of 2014.

I felt it would be fitting that the Civic Christmas Card should be designed by a young resident of Great Aycliffe. From all the delightful pictures submitted, we had the very difficult task of selecting just one. I am sure you will agree that the design chosen is both seasonal and representative of Aycliffe, bearing in mind the thought of so many future developments happening around our town and in the industrial park... from little acorns grow great Oaks...

My chosen charities, Durham County Benevolent Fund, and Cruse Bereavement Care are benefiting from the support given to various events held to raise funds, and I must extend my thanks to The Newton News for raising awareness when fundraising activities are up and coming. The advertising has been appreciated.

Thanks are extended to the staff of Great Aycliffe Town Council who maintain the appearance of our town, and the smooth running of the Oakleaf Sports Complex. Their collective endeavour enabled our Fireworks Display to be the resounding safe success that it was.

Finally to you, the people of Great Aycliffe, I extend warm wishes to you all for the coming season of goodwill and hope you all have a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Wendy Hillary



Councillor Wendy Hillary
Mayor of Great Aycliffe
2014 - 2015

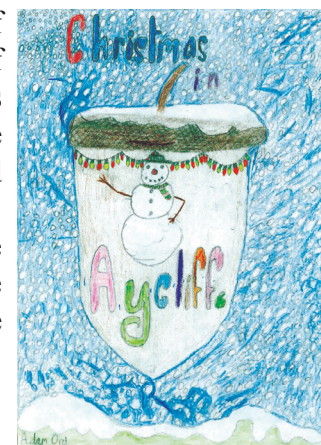
MAYOR'S CHRISTMAS CARD

Councillor Wendy Hillary, Mayor of Great Aycliffe, would like to thank all of the children who entered the Christmas Card Competition to design a Card to be used as the official Civic Christmas Card this year.

We had an excellent response and the decision was not an easy one, however the Mayor has chosen the following picture by Adam Ord to be used this year.

The results of the Competition were:-

- 1st Adam Ord - Year 7 at Greenfield School
- 2nd Ellie Gibson - Greenfield School
- 3rd Mark Chapman - Year 2 at Stephenson Way School



SANTA'S COMING

Check **Newton News** issue 19th **December** for routes and times of **Santas** visits, also **Newton Press Website** or **Great Aycliffe Town Council / Oakleaf websites** (www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk) from mid December. Please remember, because Santa and his helpers don't know how many people will be out to see him, these times are only a guideline.



Santa will soon be touring our streets,
Ringing his bell and giving out sweets.
Sadly, some roads are a 'no-no',
So be ready and waiting to hear his ho-ho
At the corner if you can -
Listen for the music from his van.
Tell him how you've been good all year,
As that's the news he likes to hear.

Whisper the gifts you'd like to receive,
With any luck he'll deliver these.
His reindeer friends will be having a rest,
So a truck he will use, as that's next best.
Rudolf and co will be out later that night
With sleigh piled high, what a wonderful sight!
Our Santa teams wish you all the best
Be happy, keep safe, at this Christmas fest.

We are looking for some new volunteers to help Santa in the mammoth task of touring the streets of Newton Aycliffe. If you would be interested in taking part in this magical event, please contact Rachel Goddard on 01325 300600 for further information.

LETTERS TO SANTA

Children in Newton Aycliffe and Aycliffe Village have a special postal service so that the children can send their letters to Santa and get a reply in time for Christmas.

Santa's elves will be putting out Santa's special post boxes on Monday 1st December and will take them back to Greenland on Thursday 18th December.

Unfortunately, every year Santa receives lots of letters that have no name or address on them so he is unable to reply. **Parents are asked to make sure that the child's name and address is clearly marked on the letter** as the parents might be able to read their child's writing but Santa's eyesight is not so good these days!



Boxes will be placed at:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| ⑤ Post Office in Beveridge Way | ⑤ Post Office in Neville Parade |
| ⑤ Redhouse Post Office | ⑤ Woodham Post Office |
| ⑤ Joy Marie Hairdressers Aycliffe Village | ⑤ Simpasture General Store |

To save the elves extra work collecting all the letters from the post boxes, Santa also has a temporary e-mail address this year, so if any child would prefer to e-mail their letter, please use santa.northpole@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

Further information can be obtained from Great Aycliffe Town Council, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe. DL5 6QF. Telephone 01325 300700, e-mail info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

OFFICE CLOSURES

THE COUNCIL OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON:

Thursday and Friday, 25th / 26th December 2014.

Thursday, 1st January 2015.

*Councillors & Staff wish you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year*

2015/16 BUDGET SETTING UPDATE

"FUNDING CUTS AND SPENDING PRESSURES LEAVE THE TOWN COUNCIL WITH NO CHOICE BUT TO INCREASE THE COUNCIL TAX NEXT YEAR"

The Town Council is currently in the process of setting its 2015/16 Revenue and Capital Budgets and the Council considered and agreed the draft budgets in October.

The Council's finances are currently in a strong position and in the short term the outlook remains fairly positive with a balanced budget in place, savings continuing to be achieved, and healthy levels of balances and reserves.

As a result, the Council will not need to make any reductions to services next year and the draft 2015/16 Revenue Budget has therefore been prepared in a way that maintains existing levels of service.

However, the Council must also keep a close eye on what is likely to be an increasingly challenging future, and try to plan ahead now, for the difficulties that lie ahead.

The Council is currently reliant on Council Tax Support Grant funding paid by the Government, via Durham County Council, of over a quarter of a million pounds and which amounts to nearly 20% of its Revenue Budget. It has been confirmed that this funding will be cut in the coming years by between 10% and 15% a year, and there remains a risk that it could be withdrawn altogether. The Council is also facing a number of significant spending pressures including the increasing move towards the payment of a 'living wage' for council staff, pension and national insurance reforms, and inflation on running costs.

Unfortunately, in order to maintain services, and absorb the cuts to funding and increases in costs faced over the longer term, the Council has been left with no choice but to consider making a small increase in the Town Council Tax next year.

This decision has not been taken lightly, particularly in light of the on-going cost of living difficulties being faced by local residents, and following on from the four year freeze in council tax delivered by the Town Council between 2010 and 2013.

However, by agreeing, in principle to limit the proposed rise to 2% next year, the increase in the Town Council Tax Bill at Valuation Band A would be limited to less than £3 per year or 5p per week.

This increase will ensure that all of the important services provided by the Town Council to the community of Great Aycliffe can be protected and maintained for at least another year.

Finally it is important to point out that it is still very early in the budget setting process and much could change between now and the final budget being set. The Council will need to keep a close eye on any further developments and respond to these as necessary.

The Council is due to set its 2015/16 Precept and the Town Council Tax in January and I will keep local tax payers informed of future developments via the Council website and in the local press.

Councillor Bob Fleming

Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee and Leader of the Council

NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING CIVIC EVENT

MAYOR'S CHARITY CIVIC BALL

Friday, 20th February 2015

Redworth Hall Hotel, Redworth

Arrangements have now been made for the annual Charity Civic Ball to be held at Redworth Hall Hotel, Redworth. Entertainment from Mr Dave Lynn and Dance Music by John Melvin will commence after dinner and conclude at 12 Midnight.

Tickets are on sale from the Council Offices and are priced at £28.00 each.

Proceeds from the event will be donated to the Mayor's nominated Charities: - Cruse Bereavement Care and County Durham School Benevolent Fund.



Application forms for the very first Aycliffe Festival are now available from the Council Offices or the website at www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk.

The concept of the Festival is to involve as many local groups, businesses and voluntary organisations as possible, encouraging them to organise an 'event' within the time-frame of the Festival.

Help is available for anyone who would like to organise an event for the Festival, whether it is just a quick telephone call to the Festival Coordinator to answer questions, or assistance to complete the forms. Additionally, training in Risk Assessments and Durham Safety Advisory Group (SAG) process have been organised for those who wish to organise an event.

It is anticipated that the 'events' organised by the local community will provide a wide variety of experiences for children and adults and will hopefully deliver a range of activities throughout the Parish. It is hoped that the outcome of the meeting will be that groups will give further consideration or agree in principle to providing a community event during the timescale of the Festival.

If you have any queries, or for further information and application forms please ring Marie Robinson, Festival Coordinator on 01325 300700 or e-mail festival@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

ST. OSWALD'S AND WOODHAM BURN PRE-SCHOOLS

"WHERE LEARNING IS FUN FOR EVERYONE"

IMMEDIATE VACANCIES

St. Oswald's and Woodham Burn Pre-Schools are Ofsted registered, providing full and part time nursery places for children from their 3rd birthday.

Nursery Educational funded places are available the term after a child's 3rd birthday.

Until funding is available the cost is **ONLY £3.50** per 3 hour session.

For further information please call into the Pre-Schools (no appointment needed),

contact Jackie Swainston on 01325 319880 or visit our website at

www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk/pre-schools



Still confusion about the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan!

Although there has been large amounts of publicity surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan it appears there is still some confusion about what the Neighbourhood Plan is and why we are doing it.

In a nut shell there is National Planning Policy which the whole of the country must follow. Then each district/county or borough will then have a local plan, in our case the County Durham Plan, which is in the final stages prior to adoption and considers the whole of County Durham. Then there can be Neighbourhood Plans which are very specific to an area. The Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan is concentrating on planning matters which are specific to our area. We must be in 'general conformity' with the County Durham plan and cannot say NO to development.

Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan is a PLANNING document which contains planning policies for land and business use for the next 20 years for the Great Aycliffe area. For example: if we write a planning policy about allocating a certain piece of land for a Community Building. The plan DOES NOT make that development happen, however it DOES make it an attractive option for developers to build here as the planning rules for that site have already been set.

Finally; the plan must be community led and backed by evidence. The town wide questionnaire is the first round of consultation and is where the plan begins. The vision for the plan is yours, the objectives for the plan are yours, the steering group and working groups will endeavour to turn your vision and objectives into planning policies. The final plan will be checked by an independent examiner, if there is not a clear thread from consultation to vision, to objectives and finally planning policies then this plan will NOT be valid.

Angela Corner states "While I have been engaging with the community and analysing some of the early responses it has become apparent there is confusion over the services which the Town Council provide. There have been a lot of issues raised which are the responsibility of Durham County Council but as they are both generally referred to as 'The Council' I believe this is where the problem begins" The Town Council ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE for

- Taking away garden waste and the proposed new charge for this service
- Recycling
- Emptying refuse bins
- Running the Waste Transfer Station (Rubbish Tip)
- Enforcement (litter or dog fouling)
- Education (other than the Pre-Schools at Woodham and St. Oswald's)
- Housing
- Town Centre
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Newton Aycliffe Youth & Community Centre
- Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre
- Community Facilities
- The Library
- Health Services
- Street lighting (other than when on Town Council land)
- Road repairs
- Traffic Enforcement
- Providing bus services
- Highways
- Schools

We understand that's a lot of 'the Town Council don't do' BUT what we are trying to do is plan for the future of Great Aycliffe so whilst we might not be 'responsible' we may be able to help improve things for the residents of Aycliffe"

The Town Council ARE RESPONSIBLE for:

- Special community events – Fun in the Parks, Santa Tours, Fireworks Display, Senior Citizens' Excursions, Christmas Lights, previously Aycliffe Show now Aycliffe Festival
- Assisting and supporting other event organisers – 10k race, 3k Fun Run, Remembrance Parade, Junior Cross Country, Annual Indoor Bowls Competition and Community Enhancement Awards
- 8 excellent parks, all with play equipment
Town Park, West Park, Moore Lane Park, Simpasture Park, Byerley Park, St Oswald's Park, Woodham Park, Aycliffe Village Park
- Additional play areas at Scott Place, School Aycliffe, Oakfield Sports Complex and Horndale
- 6 Football Pitches, Mini-soccer and six-a-side pitches
- A Skate and BMX Park
- 4 MUGA pitches
- An environmental centre at Moore Lane
- An Environmental Officer who works with Communities and Schools to encourage an environmental interest
- 214 allotment plots. 5 allotment sites with pigeon and poultry facilities
- Ground Maintenance and environmental management to:
Great Aycliffe Way, North Agnew Plantation, Cobblers Hall Plantation, Woodham Burn, Simpasture Railway walk, Butterfly Meadow at Rail Halt, School Aycliffe Wetlands, Millfields/Bickford Terrace, Aycliffe Village Greens
- 2 pre-school play settings with 'Good' Ofsted ratings
- Maintenance of Aycliffe Angels Memorial Garden and War Memorial and flagpole
- Public seating in many locations
- Bus shelters with litter bins (not ones with adverts)
- Civic Events
- A Civic Pride Team
- Youth Council
- Community Empowerment – Customer Panel, Consultation and Open Days
- Grants – small grants to local voluntary organisations

If you require any further clarification contact Angela Corner 300700 or email angela.corner@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

AYCLIFFE YOUTH COUNCIL 2014 - 2015



Aycliffe Youth Council elections were held in October and created lots of interest. The Town Council is happy to report that 17 young people were given the chance to be elected to the position of Youth Councillor.

The Youth Councillors this year are a great mix of existing youth councillors and new representatives. This certainly helps with the work of the Youth Council, particularly in the continuity of projects, with the existing members helping the newly elected ones find their feet.

Don't forget Aycliffe Youth Council have a small pot of money available to give grants to local youth or children's groups within the Great Aycliffe area.

If you would like to apply, please state the name and activities of your organisation, how much money you are requesting, what you are currently doing to raise funds yourself and what the money will be used for. The Youth Council will also need to see your recently audited accounts and/or most recent balance sheets. The Grant Guidelines are available on the Town Council website - <http://www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk/info/council-and-democracy/community-engagement/aycliffe-youth-council.html>

Please put your requests in writing to Aycliffe Youth Council, c/o Great Aycliffe Town Council, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6QF.



ALLOTMENT WATCH SCHEME

The Council has recently joined the Allotment Watch Scheme which is an initiative supported by Durham Police to help reduce crime on allotment sites and deter criminal activity.

Each allotment site under the scheme will be allocated a colour and all allotment tenants are encouraged to spray their gardening equipment in the identifying colour with paint supplied by the scheme.

High value items will be covertly marked with DNA Smartwater

solution which will then be registered on the Police Smartwater database. This makes items less attractive to steal and also easily identifiable if stolen allowing items recovered by the Police to be identified to a particular allotment site and tenant.



PCSO Mike Hutchinson and Tenant's at the launch of the scheme at St Oswald's

ALLOTMENT ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Allotments Meeting took place on Wednesday, 12th November 2014 at the Council Offices. The meeting was well supported with tenants from all allotment sites in attendance.

During the meeting trophies were presented by the Chairman of the Environment Committee, Councillor J.D. Clare to the Best Allotment Garden on each of the Council's sites – results were as follows:-

Finchale Road - Mrs. C. Clarke

Clarence Chare - Mr. K. Cooper

Byerley Park - Mr. G. Cherrie

Aycliffe Village – Mrs. G. Wooster

St. Oswald's – Mrs. V. Hickson who also received the 'Angela Fleming' Memorial Trophy.

The Overall Winner of the 'Best Allotment Garden' and the winner of the 'Ken Woodhall' Trophy was Mrs. V. Hickson plot No. 41 at the St. Oswald's Allotment Site.

This year the 'Edward Hubery' Memorial Trophy has been donated for the Best New or Most Improved Allotment and this has been won by Mr. P. Turgoose from Byerley Park Allotment Site.



Mr. Turgoose



Oak Leaf
SPORTS COMPLEX
01325 300600
www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk

THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL OUR CUSTOMERS . . .



WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR CUSTOM IN 2015.

Sports Complex Christmas and New Year Closures
The Complex will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day & New Years Day.

BRING THE CHILDREN TO OAKLEAF COMPLEX FOR A MAGICAL CHRISTMAS PARTY!

on SATURDAY 20th DECEMBER between 1.00pm-2.45pm

Meet Santa and if you have been GOOD, get a present!

PARTY GAMES, SEASONAL MAKE & DO ACTIVITIES AND MUCH MORE . . .

ALL FOR ONLY £4.00 PER CHILD

Age 4-7years (Parents must stay in the building)

Tickets available from Oak Leaf Reception and places are limited, so collect yours soon!

Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve - QUIZ NIGHTS

? Tickets £2.00 - See Bar Staff for Tickets - On Sale 1st December

Hot Meat Sandwiches and Quiz included in ticket price ?

? Food will be served at 8.00pm - Quiz starts at 8.30pm

1st and 2nd place prizes plus spot prizes

Come & join the fun!

(Tickets are limited so get yours now!)

Traditional Christmas Lunch

On Sunday 14th & 21st December
we will be serving Christmas Lunch
in the Function Room
between 12noon and 2pm.

Two Course Menu

for only £10.50 per adult £7.50 per child
(main meal and dessert)

Waitress Service, Please Pre-Book,
Payment Required on Booking

Main Meal

Choose from the following;

Roast Turkey with all the Trimmings
Roast Beef - Roast Pork - Nut Roast

Dessert

Choose from the following;

Christmas Pudding - Ice Cream
- Mulled Berry Crumble

We will be creating a festive atmosphere with
Decorations, Table Cloths and Christmas Crackers

Relax
Celebrate
And
Enjoy



We Have
Christmas All
Wrapped Up
For You

Normal Sunday Lunch will still be served in the Bar
on these days. A warm friendly welcome guaranteed.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ENHANCEMENT AWARDS

The Town Council wishes to receive nominations from local residents within the Great Aycliffe area for the awarding of Enhancement Awards for residential Christmas Lighting displays which portray the spirit of Christmas.

Please return this nomination form to Great Aycliffe Town Council, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6QF or e-mail the details of your nomination to: info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk.

Closing date for applications: - Monday, 15th December 2014.

I would like to nominate the house below for a Christmas Lights Enhancement Award for its display of Christmas Lights 2014.

Address

Householder Name.....
(if known)

Christmas Garland Workshop – Sunday, 21st December 2014

Great Aycliffe Town Council is again providing a free environmentally themed festive activity to celebrate the Christmas period.

Christmas is a time for all the family so we have organised a garland making workshop on Sunday 21st December at 10.30am to 12 noon at Moore Lane Eco Centre. The workshop works best as a family group as the willow needs to be moulded into shape which is best done by adults; the children enjoy being creative and helping to make something that visitors to their home can admire over the holidays. Adults are of course more than welcome to attend if they do not have children.

These events are always popular so booking is essential as materials and space are limited. Please contact the Town Council on 01325 300700 to secure your place.



Volunteering in your Countryside

Great Aycliffe Town Council operate a weekly volunteer programme when local residents can get a chance to help improve and maintain the local countryside and green spaces around the town.

Volunteering on practical countryside management tasks gives volunteers the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new friends, keep fit and help to look after one of the most important assets the town has at the same time.

The group welcomes people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Volunteers will need a reasonable level of fitness, be enthusiastic and not mind working in most weather conditions. The group meets weekly, generally on a Tuesday and Thursday. Participants can be picked up and dropped off at their houses if they live in Aycliffe, volunteers are supervised at all times and suitable tools and equipment are provided.

To find out more please contact Great Aycliffe Town Council on 01325 300700 or e-mail steven.cooper@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

