



Great Aycliffe Town Council

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

Telephone: 01325 300700 • Fax: 01325 301053

Email: info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk • Website: www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk



20th November 2015

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2015

MAYOR'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

As the festive season approaches it gives me the opportunity to reflect on my year so far as the Mayor of Great Aycliffe Town Council. I feel very humble and proud to represent the people of Great Aycliffe, and I have had the privilege of carrying out many and varied functions. Meeting people who live and work in the town and who volunteer their time to help others has been very rewarding. I have had the pleasure of attending local early learning centres in the summer to present the children with their certificates during their "graduation ceremonies". This was a real highlight of my year so far, as was the official opening of the new Hitachi Rail factory on the business park. The employment opportunities that this company will provide will be a major boost to the town. I have had the pleasure of meeting so many people so far, too many to mention them all but they all play an important role in our town.



Councillor Mary Dalton
Mayor of Great Aycliffe
2015 - 2016

I would like to thank my fellow councillors firstly for electing me into this position, and the support they have given me so far and for helping me raise money for my nominated charities which this year are the Renal Unit at James Cook University Hospital together with other local charities. Thanks also for the support from the staff at Great Aycliffe Town Council who work tirelessly behind the scenes in order to make my job that much easier. My personal thanks must go to Christine Ryder, the Mayor's secretary for her work organising my diary and ensuring that I fulfil my engagements, and Mally Wilson my civic driver for ensuring I arrive safely at the various events. Special thanks goes to my consort, my son Michael for his unstinting support particularly considering his period of ill health earlier in the year.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all season's greetings and I hope you have a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Mary Dalton

SANTA'S COMING

Check Newton News issue 18th December for routes and times of Santa's 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, the 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.

FORTHCOMING MAYORAL EVENTS

MAYOR'S CIVIC CAROL SERVICE

SUNDAY, 20th DECEMBER 2015

Councillor Mrs. Mary Dalton will be holding her
Civic Carol Service in St. Clare's Church
on the 20th December commencing at 6.00 p.m.

The Mayor would like to invite you to join her on this Festive occasion.
Refreshments will be available at the conclusion
of the Service in the Church Hall.



MAYOR'S CHARITY CIVIC DINNER

FRIDAY, 19th FEBRUARY 2016

Arrangements have now been made for the annual Charity Civic Dinner to be held at Woodham Golf and Country Club.

Music will be provided by John Melvin throughout the evening and will conclude at 11.30 p.m.

Tickets are on sale from the Council Offices and are priced at £27.50 each.

Proceeds from the event will be in aid of the Mayor's nominated Charities:- Renal Unit at James Cook Hospital, Neville Community Centre and Guides / Scouts of Great Aycliffe.



LETTERS TO SANTA

Each year Santa's Elves put special post boxes in Newton Aycliffe so that all of the boys and girls from Newton Aycliffe can post their letters to Santa.

When everything is quiet, and nobody is looking, the pixies empty the boxes and take the letters to Santa's palace in Greenland. Santa replies to about 800 letters each year from the children of Aycliffe, so he is very busy and has asked that you remember to put your full name and address on your letter.



We have been told that the post boxes will appear on Monday 7th December at the following locations:

- ⊗ Post Office Beveridge Way
- ⊗ Post Office Neville Parade
- ⊗ Horndale Post Office
- ⊗ Woodham Post Office
- ⊗ Joy Marie Hairdressers
Aycliffe Village
- ⊗ McColls Newsagents
Simpasture

The boxes will disappear on Monday 21st December, but e-mails and forms submitted from the Council's website will be answered right up to noon on 23rd December. Santa has a special e-mail address Santa@great-aycliffe.gov.uk and the website address is <http://www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk/events/santa-letters.html>



THE COUNCIL OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON:

Friday, 25th December

Monday, 28th December

Friday, 1st January 2016

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

2016/17 BUDGET SETTING UPDATE

“Funding cuts and National Living Wage increases leave the Town Council with no choice but to raise the Council Tax next year”

The Town Council is currently in the process of setting its Revenue and Capital Budgets for the 2016/17 financial year.

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

As a result, the draft 2016/17 Revenue Budget has been prepared in a way that will ensure that existing services are maintained next year.

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 reliant on Council Tax Support Grant funding paid by the Government, via Durham County Council, of nearly a quarter of a million pounds and which amounts nearly one-fifth of its Revenue Budget. It has been confirmed that this funding will be cut in the coming years, and there remains a risk that it could be withdrawn altogether.

The Council is also facing a number of significant spending pressures including the implementation of the 'National Living Wage', pension and national insurance cost increases, inflation and increasing pressure to take on services that are being cut by Durham County Council such as street lighting and flower beds.

Unfortunately, in order to maintain the Council's own services, and absorb the cuts to funding and increases in costs faced over the longer term, the Council needs 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 1.98% 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, whilst putting in place some additional resources to help the Council to fund the budget pressures faced in the longer term.

The Council is due to set its 2016/17 Precept and the Town Council proportion of the Council Tax in January next year, and I will keep local tax payers informed of future developments in relation to the budget via the Council website and in the local press.

Councillor Bob Fleming

Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee and Leader of the Council

AYCLIFFE FESTIVAL 2016

The dates for the 2016 Aycliffe Festival are Saturday 16th July until Saturday 30th July inclusive. That is an increase of 5 days, making the Festival 15 days long.

The idea of the Festival is that ordinary people from local organisations, residents' associations, or community centres, organise an event for everyone to enjoy.

It doesn't need to be a large event, one of our very popular events last year was the display of Angels at St Clare's Church but there were many events covering all areas including sport, music, dance, crafts and arts. Attendance ranged from many hundreds to just a handful, depending upon what the event was. We need you to organise an event, bring your local community together, create lasting friendships and enjoy the process from the original idea to seeing the event to fruition.

We will help you with any questions or reservations you may have about organising an event, we can offer advice and funding, sometimes for the whole of the event (subject to terms and conditions).

We will advertise in the local press and social media, give you posters to display and booklets containing a list of all the events for you to distribute to your community.

The application forms have been sent to everyone who organised an event last year. If you would like to organise an event or just discuss the possibility, please get in touch with Mrs M Robinson 01325 300700 or by e-mail to festival@great-aycliffe.gov.uk or through our website www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk.



KNOW YOUR NEW COUNCILLORS

Following the by-elections held on the 23rd July and 27th August 2015 the following candidates were duly elected as Councillors to serve on the Town Council:-

Councillor Martin Ashcroft
(Aycliffe West Ward)



Tel: 07811 403 986

Councillor Peter Bergg
(Byerley Park Horndale & Cobblers Hall Ward)



Tel: 07432 070 717

Christmas Garland Workshop

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 family friendly garland making workshop on Saturday 19th December at 10.30am to 12 noon at Moore Lane Eco Centre. This event is always very popular so booking is essential; Booking your place is easy by contacting the Town Council on 01325 300700.

Environment Officer explains "Many people have said the process of making the garlands is very therapeutic and relaxing and so it can be a perfect antidote to this often hectic time of year. Almost all the materials used to make the garlands are locally sourced from vegetation widely available across the town, if participants want to bring along some of their own Christmas decorations to personalise and enhance the garland this often works well."



Volunteering in your Countryside

The post-Christmas months are often a time when many people feel at their lowest. Overindulgents can often result in people feeling lethargic and generally unhealthy, combine this with the short days and cold weather people can often feel unhappy. However, this is the perfect time to get wrapped up and throw yourself into some volunteering 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 to 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 small friendly group meet 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

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, 14th December 2015.

I would like to nominate the house below for a Christmas Lights Enhancement Award for its display of Christmas Lights 2015.

Address.....

Householder Name.....
(if known)

AYCLIFFE YOUTH COUNCIL 2015 - 2016



Aycliffe Youth Council goes from strength to strength with 22 young people being elected from their various schools. There is a great mix of existing youth councillors and new representatives. This 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.

As usual the Youth Council will be assisting the Town Council's Environment Officer, Steve Cooper with bulb planting and the Town Pride Environment Week as well as choosing a project to work on themselves.



Josh Blackburn



Thomas Burn



Finlay Crossen



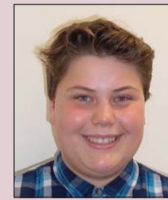
Rebecca Carr



Meghan Cumming



Owen Dickinson



Regan Edden



Emily Edwards



Alex Howarth



Charlotte Johns



Charlotte Kirton



Steven Lowe



Corin Lathan



Bethany Mellody



Katie Oliver



Britney Orme



Francesca Moody



Blake Reed



Thomas Roberts



Erin Theyer

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. So far this year the Youth Council have sponsored the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Event which was held as part of the Aycliffe Festival, they purchased and placed a wreath at the Remembrance Day Parade and provided a raffle prize for Aycliffe Youth Centre Girls under 10 Football Team.



Billy Hardy



Andrew Cumming

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.

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.

If you would like to know more about the Youth Council, contact 01325 300700



Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to the 'Your Issues, Our Proposals'. Although it was available electronically most residents still preferred to complete the paper version which was distributed to residents. These responses will help our evidence base and support the planning policies for the future of Great Aycliffe.

In the main, and as expected, the majority of comments received were about improving retail in Newton Aycliffe.

Once again, I would like to remind everyone about the Independent Soft Market Testing of Retailers that was undertaken earlier this year. Sanderson Wetherall contacted 139 national and local retailers by mail, telephone and email on numerous occasions to complete a short focussed survey about Newton Aycliffe. Only 12 retailers completed the survey and out of those 12 only 3 indicated they would be interested in investing in Newton Aycliffe. One other company did say they would be interested in locating here but had never heard of Newton Aycliffe and it was a site with close proximity to the A1 that they were looking for.

The questions and responses in support of the proposals are set out below.

| CIL- Our Proposals | | |
|-------------------------|--|-----|
| 1 | That the Town Council are consulted in advance where CIL or Section 106 monies will be available | 97% |
| 2 | To set local priorities for investment | 97% |
| Housing - Our Proposals | | |
| 1 | Request an enhanced percentage of bungalows or older persons' accommodation within 600m walking distance from the Town Centre, Cobbler's Hall and Neville Parade as a substitute to the affordable homes provision | 96% |
| 2 | That gardens can be made smaller or of a communal nature to make bungalows more viable | 84% |
| 3 | To avoid small, one bed roomed dwellings, a multi-purpose room should be included in any design that can be used as a bedroom, dining room, study or storage giving greater flexibility to the accommodation | 92% |
| 4 | To specify a minimum garage size or an option to provide a drive, in curtilage, with a car port on new developments. If only a drive is provided, safe cycle storage should be included | 96% |
| 5 | Guidance in the character assessment must be followed. Adequate green open space included in new developments in line with Lord Beveridge's Vision | 97% |
| 6 | Developments built to the highest energy standards will be encouraged | 99% |

| Environment - Our Proposals | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-----|
| 1 | To protect the larger, traditional green areas from future development, except where there is in overwhelming need and demand to alleviate parking problems | 97% |
| 2 | To protect the existing, and encourage new, wildlife corridors by developing a specific policy | 96% |
| 3 | Ensure the tree lined avenues are kept to retain the uniqueness of Newton Aycliffe | 94% |
| 4 | To develop a green wedge policy to ensure Aycliffe Village maintains a buffer zone from any potential development encroachment | 90% |
| Retail - Our Proposals | | |
| 1 | Should a suitable site near the Town Centre, that meets the sequential tests required be identified, we will support and encourage change of use from garage/workshop (B2) to retail (A1) without the need for a change of use planning application, if it could be developed for retail | 90% |
| 2 | We will keep retail changes under review and undertake a detailed assessment when the Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed in 5 years | 99% |
| 3 | We will support and encourage the development of a small 'retail row' within Aycliffe Business Park to serve the needs of the businesses and their employees | 87% |
| 4 | That local labour market agreements are in place to ensure jobs are offered to local people first | 92% |

The Draft Plan is now progressing with the Heritage and Character Assessment Complete, the Consultation Statement and the Basic Conditions Statement nearly complete.

These documents will be passed to Durham County Council to review prior to being incorporated into the Draft Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan.

Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve QUIZ NIGHTS

Tickets £2.00

Available from The Bar

On Sale 1st December



1st and 2nd
place prizes
&
spot prizes

Hot Meat
Sandwiches
& Quiz
included in
ticket price
(Tickets are
limited)



Food will be
served at
8.00pm
Quiz starts at
8.30pm
Come & join
the fun!



The Management and Staff
Would Like To Wish
All Our Customers . . .

**MERRY CHRISTMAS &
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Oak Leaf

Sports Complex

01325 300600

www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk



Children's Christmas Party

SATURDAY 19th DECEMBER

1.00pm - 2.45pm



MEET SANTA

PARTY GAMES - CHRISTMAS CRAFTS

Tickets only £4.00 PER CHILD

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

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

Traditional Christmas Lunch

On Sunday
13th & 20th
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

Relax, Celebrate and Enjoy

MAIN MEAL
Choose from the
following;

Turkey with all
the Trimmings
Roast Beef
Nut Roast

DESSERT
Choose from the
following;

Christmas Pudding
Mulled Berry
Crumble
Ice Cream

*We have Christmas all
wrapped up for you*

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

*Normal Sunday Lunch will still be served
in the Bar on this day.*

A warm friendly welcome guaranteed.



ST. OSWALD'S PRE-SCHOOL

The children have had lots of fun recently making pictures for the Bonfire Poster Competition. They followed simple picture instructions to make printing tools from straws; they then dipped them in paint to make lovely firework prints. They also added lots and lots of glitter, sand etc., to add texture and sparkle to their pictures.

They have also had lots of fun making model fireworks for our role play shop; the children made models at home with their parents and brought them in to show all the children at group time.

The children have learnt many things this week while having lots of fun, which included how to use tools safely, how to use simple tools and techniques; they have talked about their ideas and the materials they could use and more importantly how to stay safe on Bonfire Night.

If you would like to find out more about the Pre-School please either call in, or contact Jackie Swainston on 01325 319880

