

**Swarland Village Action Group Committee:**

Chairman: Neil Mansfield, Secretary / Editor: Bryan Stanley.

Treasurer: Susan Richardson.

Committee Members: Robert & Sue Brotherton, John Richardson, Suzanne Stanley, Caroline Thomas.

**Write it Down Now**

Please supply information to the Editor for inclusion in the June issue by  
**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

The cost of production of this issue of  
The Column has been met by

**Newton on the Moor  
& Swarland Parish Council  
and  
Swarland Club**

The Club provides a newspaper service for our area. All daily newspapers are catered for along with the sale of bread, eggs and milk.

**This service is currently open  
from 7.30 to 10am every day**

Newspapers and magazines may be ordered and reserved.

Call, Text or WhatsApp **Louise on 07502 477 734**,  
Find us on Facebook (Swarland WMC Paper Shop),  
or phone SWM Club on 01670 787 825.

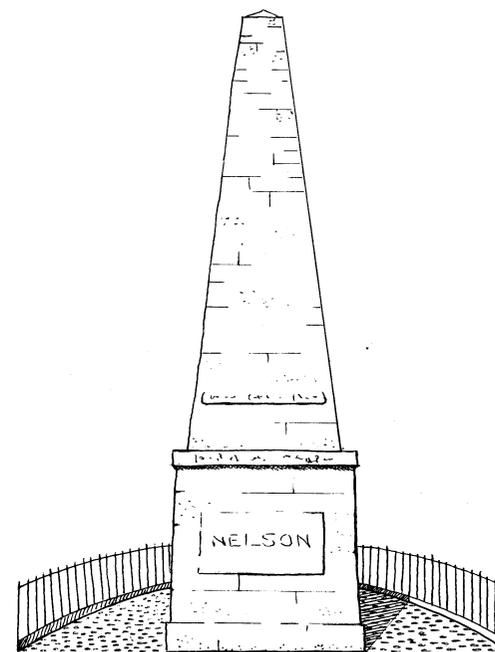
**The Post Office is now providing its  
Monday and Thursday service from 8 – 10.00am.**

**SWARLAND VILLAGE WORKING MEN'S CLUB**

Tel. 01670 787 825

**Swarland Club** is pleased to sponsor *The Column*.

# The Column



**April 2021**

Produced by

**Swarland Village Action**

**Newsletter 112**

**How you can help to look after local  
hedgehogs and Red Squirrels.  
See details inside.**

Welcome to your latest issue of The Column and if you're new to the area, a special welcome to you. **To include something, however small, in the June issue, please supply it for inclusion by Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May. Send it to: The Editor, Bryan Stanley, on 01670 787 916 or by email at maxitoby1@gmail.com .**

With the continued Covid-19 situation, we are still unable to use our usual printer, Northumberland Community Enterprise Ltd (NCE Ltd) at Stobhill. But, once more, rather than just issuing The Column on-line, the NCC Communities Together Scheme is printing it for us. Thanks to Ruth Armstrong for organising this.

## **Swarland Village Action**

### **Mobile Library Dates**

Unlike some other NCC Library services, at the moment the Mobile Library Service is still temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are currently some Libraries open for the 'select & collect' service and there'll soon be 'doorstep deliveries' for some customers.

Please check NCC's website for information at [northumberland.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/msgtrn/wpac/home](http://northumberland.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/msgtrn/wpac/home) . In the meantime, some customers may also want to use Digital Library Services which is also available 24/7. Let's hope that eventually we will get our mobile service back and that we won't lose it permanently.

## **Support for Newton on the Moor and Swarland Residents**

Hopefully with vaccinations taking place and lockdown beginning to lift, we're now on our way out of this pandemic. However, even if you've had your two jabs, you still have to comply with Government restrictions.

I'd like to remind readers of the Column that 45 residents in the Parish have volunteered to help out their neighbours living within the Parish during the Coronavirus Emergency.

In our Parish, we have a population of well over 900, in around 430 houses, and many are elderly and / or living alone. Volunteers are there to help you if you are vulnerable through ill health or age, and don't have anyone else to help you. The sort of support we can provide at the moment is as follows;

- Daily Phone calls to check you are well and not needing help
- Phone calls for a chat
- Collection of prescriptions.
- Collection / delivery of food.

If you need help, email (if possible) [janandersonpc@gmail.com](mailto:janandersonpc@gmail.com) or telephone 07775 060 430 during office hours preferably.

The Parish Council website is being revised frequently and added to with information relating to services available in our Parish; <http://newtononthemoorandswarlandparishcouncil.org.uk/> .

NCC has a very useful page of information including a daily update of infections in each ward at <https://northumberland.gov.uk> .

*Best wishes Jan Anderson (Parish Clerk)*

## **Neighbourhood Watch Update – March 2021**

### **Swarland / Newton on the Moor:**

I am pleased to report that there has been no news of any criminal activity in our area as at 18/03/21. Please note the following:

15/02/21 The police have asked me to circulate the link below to remind residents about keeping dogs on leads, and secure in rear yards:- <https://beta.northumbria.police.uk/advice-and-info/protecting-your-home-and-your-posessions/rural-crime/> .

18/03/21 A male visited a farm in Longframlington, offering to tarmac the driveway. He was driving a black (63 plate) Vauxhall Astra. Please always be careful about purchasing work or buying goods from doorstep sellers, they often charge extortionate prices, or do not complete work to an acceptable standard.

Scammers are still reportedly calling people claiming to be law enforcement officers and that there are issues with the would-be victim's National Insurance Number. If you receive a call like this, do not transfer any money, give any personal details or purchase any type of vouchers. Hang up and report suspected fraudsters to:- Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040, or on line here:- <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/> .“

**If residents have information on any crime, please report this via the following numbers: Emergency issues 999, non emergency issues Tel. 101. To contact Rothbury Police, phone 101 ext 61353, e-mail [alnwick.npt.northumbria.pnn.police.uk](mailto:alnwick.npt.northumbria.pnn.police.uk) , or call in at the office in the Coquetdale Centre, Church Street, Rothbury. If the office is unattended please use the yellow phone on the wall and an officer will be able to assist with your enquiry.**

*NW Co-ordinator, Harold Hinchliffe, 2 Nile Drive, Swarland.  
Tel.01670 783 669 or Mob.07713 097 250*

### **Covid-19 Face Mask Maker**

I am still making face masks. Masks are 3 layers thick and come with an optional filter pocket. They are made to measure and there is a choice of fabrics.

They are £8 each and can be collected from The Square, Swarland, or posted out for an additional £1.

If you would like to order please call **Anna on 07549 537 457.**

**Deadline for items for the June issue of  
The Column: Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

## Swarland Village Hall

The Hall, which is run as a community facility (Reg. Charity No 1058471), has been closed completely, following the Government's latest Covid-19 restrictions. However, some activities involving under-18s will be able to resume from **12<sup>th</sup> April on**. Adult activities will not be permitted until **May**.

You can now support the Village Hall through **AmazonSmile**. To help fund the Hall, before you do any browsing or shopping via Amazon, you first need to select SVH charity (No 1058471) at **smile.amazon.co.uk**, then activate AmazonSmile on your Amazon shopping app on your IOS or Android phone. Then whenever you buy anything via Amazon, it will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price of eligible purchases to the charity at no cost to you. Every quarter Amazon will make its donation to SVH via an electronic funds transfer. Why not carry on with your shopping **AND** help Swarland Village Hall at the same time. **Thank you**.

If you wish to check on whether you can book the Hall for a future event please contact Bryan Stanley (see elsewhere) or Steve Woolfrey (**stevewoolfrey.PC@outlook.com** or 01670 787 883).

## Swarland Moor Local Heritage Group

Mark Hatton presented our March talk. His excellent illustrated presentation explained the symbolism used on 17th and 18th-century gravestones, focussing on those found in the graveyards of the Scottish Borders and Northumberland. We learnt about the beautifully carved symbols of mortality, resurrection, love and trade. This fascinating talk will undoubtedly encourage us all to explore our ancient graveyards. Mark's detailed research and great enthusiasm for this subject should give us the confidence to unravel the clues found on our old gravestones.

Our next talk is on **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April** at 7.30pm. **Colm O'Brien** will talk on the subject of "**Current landscape history studies in mid-Northumberland**".

Colm is a retired archaeology tutor and now is co-directing a broadly framed group project to investigate the historic landscape of an area of mid-Northumberland, between the rivers Coquet and Hart-Wansbeck. He will talk about how the project is developing. Key areas include (1) woodland history, (2) ideas about the emergence of Brinkburn as a key political centre, (3) the charters of medieval religious houses as sources of information and (4) how in 1113, the wedding of Ranulf, Baron Merlay, to Juliana, daughter of Cospatric, opens a window into our understanding of an early landholding.

As usual, the talk will be online using Zoom. We will shortly send our mailing list more details. Please email **SwarlandMLHG@gmail.com** for details of how to join us as a guest. Further information and updates can be found on our Facebook site.

## NotM & Swarland Parish Council

The Parish Council (PC) has continued to hold its monthly meetings by Zoom video-call. As with 'normal' meetings, these are open to the public. The 'joining instructions' are available several days before each Zoom meeting, by contacting our Clerk, Jan. This practice may come to an end in early May, due to a change in the law requiring us to revert to face-to-face meetings. There is a widely-held view across the country that this has been due to a Government foul-up which disadvantages local government, as Parliament can continue to hold Zoom-type meetings.

### **Planning matters**

The Northumberland Local Plan is nearing approval, at last, following a process which began at the formation of the new unitary County Council in 2009. The Inspector appears to have accepted the Plan's settlement strategy, which draws tight boundaries around Swarland and Newton on the Moor. New planning proposals continue to be received by the County Council, mostly for Swarland. These are on the NCC Planning Portal, at **<https://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk/online-applications/>**. One application which is causing particular anxiety is the proposal to site 60 mobile residences on the former golf driving-range, behind Coast View and Springwood. There are significant issues concerning drainage (both foul and surface-water), as well as visual amenity and highway impact. It will also be a test of the robustness of the Local Plan's settlement boundary policy.

### **Communicating news**

We have been pleased to welcome the new Facebook page 'Swarland residents', which was set-up in March to share news and opinions about local matters in Swarland, Newton on the Moor and the wider parish. This will operate independently from the PC or other groups, but we will add news items to it from time to time, as well as continuing with our own website.

### **Road safety at the school**

We have been aware that NCC has been working with the School over the last few years to develop some road safety measures around the Leamington Lane crossroads. We finally received a copy of the plans in March. We regret that NCC has not responded to our invitation to publicise the proposals in The Column, nor indicated whether there will be a public consultation. Briefly, the scheme involves the introduction of a 20mph speed limit with flashing signs. It is not clear whether these arrangements will apply solely during school opening hours, or 24/7. There is no reference to the speed-triggered warning sign which had been promised via the NCC Members' Small Schemes budget.

### **Accounts and audit**

We were pleased to hear that we had been vindicated over an accounting matter where our external auditor had incorrectly served a Public Interest Report relating to our 2018-19 accounts. As a result of our complaint, the national 'Proper Practices' guide has been altered along the lines which we suggested.

**Parish Clerk – Jan Anderson 07775 060 430 or [janandersonpc@gmail.com](mailto:janandersonpc@gmail.com)**

## Vyner Park News

Although I have not written an update since the end of last year, the Vyner Park Committee has not been idle! Our first job, undertaken by 10 volunteers (following COVID rules) was to lay 16m<sup>3</sup> of very expensive specialist bark in the Play Park, as part of our maintenance programme.

Over the winter we have been looking at what potential improvements need to be made to the Park to ensure that it remains not only safe, but a useful amenity to the village. As a result, the following upgrades are planned this summer:

- The playing surface of the MUGA and tennis courts are beginning to deteriorate, but we cannot afford to re-surface the area due to the prohibitive cost. We are, therefore, going to try to stabilise the surfaces by applying a resin.
- Re-marking the tennis court lines and installing better quality net-posts and nets.
- Installing basketball posts and marking out a basketball court on the MUGA.
- Thoroughly cleaning the bowling green area, which looks very neglected.
- Installing three pieces of outdoor gym equipment (near the steps going down to the playing field).

The outdoor gym area is being funded by a grant obtained last year via our County Councillor. If it proves popular, we can try to get funding to expand the equipment.

If a group wishes to seriously start bowling, please come and see us. We would be happy to consider spending the money to bring one or two of the bowling lengths up to the required standard (relaying of kiln-dried, specialist sand).

The paths in Vyner Park and the surrounding vegetation always need upkeep. As we move into summer and COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed, I am hoping to set up a couple of afternoons to cut back some of the vegetation, so please keep an eye out for requests for volunteers – all are welcome!

*Steve Woolfrey, Chairman, VPC Management Team. Tel 01670 787 916 or [stevewoolfrey.PC@outlook.com](mailto:stevewoolfrey.PC@outlook.com)*



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## Let us not be kippered

I hear from some residents that they've experienced problems with neighbours' garden bonfires, and asked that 'something goes in The Column' about it. Checking NCC's website re garden fires, it appears that the law generally allows people to have a bonfire at any time of the day providing that the smoke given off from the fire does not cause a 'statutory nuisance' to other people's premises. This would include:

- smoke entering people's houses
- smoke blowing across gardens and preventing normal use of the garden
- smoke affecting people's washing or
- hot ash and cinders landing on people's property.

If it's a persistent problem for a neighbour or a locality, it can be classed as anti-social behaviour which is notifiable to the police.

In any case, NCC would normally discourage the use of garden fires for disposing of waste as there are several other methods, but if you enjoy having the occasional bonfire, it should just be organic garden waste, and not plastics or other synthetic materials which can smell awful and release toxins.

*Editor*

## Parish Litter Pick Update

Unfortunately, NCC would not allow our March litter pick. Vyner Park and the Parish Council are hoping to arrange a new litter pick date once COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed and we have a clear picture of what is possible.

In the last few days, however, it has been brought to our attention that individuals have been finding used stoma bags left by the roadside on the main roads into and out of the villages. If anyone has any knowledge of the source of this dangerous clinical waste, can they please let a Parish Councillor know. This type of waste presents a very serious health risk.

*Editor*

## Recycling, Wants & For Sale Corner

Why not recycle your unwanted items through The Column? Recipients of free items can make a donation towards this newsletter's running costs. Items for sale? – If successful, the seller can make a similar donation.

**Sony Digital Bravia 32" colour television** (Model No. KDL-32EX503) with remote and USB wireless LAN adapter (UWA-BR100). Full instructions. Now surplus to requirement, ideal for bedroom or large monitor for a computer. **£50**. Contact Bryan Stanley (details at the front of The Column).

## Old Percy Wood Driving Range Development

A resident writes "It has been brought to my attention that a proposed planning application for development of the old Percy Wood Golf Club's driving-range would see a change of use of the land to allow the siting of up to 60 static rental / residential caravans, along with associated infrastructure and hard and soft landscaping.

This proposed development will undoubtedly impact the village and should residents wish to view the progress of the application, or make support or objection comments, they can do by accessing the Northumberland County Council public access website (Planning Application: 19/01687/FUL). [The Parish Council sent in a lengthy objection; and its letter of objection can be seen on the NCC Planning Portal.]

For ease, the following website can be copied into your internet browser, where the planning application can be accessed at <https://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=P50KJVQSGAM00> .

This application will be discussed in May at a full Planning Committee meeting, so there is still time to have your say! **This development will have an effect on both Swarland and Newton on the Moor, NOT just the residential areas closest to the site.** "

If you do not want to comment through the official public channel mentioned above, Jackie and Richard Stent (Swarland residents) have set up a specific email address to allow your views to be registered - it is [nomorecaravans@btinternet.com](mailto:nomorecaravans@btinternet.com) . All you have to do is send an email to this address with a simple comment of support for, or objection to, the planning application. This is NOT about individuals but more a show of strength of feeling within the villages. Please include your name and postcode in your email so we can also measure the scope of feeling.

Your contact details will be password protected and seen only by Richard who will do the number crunching. All data and emails will be deleted when a final decision is made by the Planning Committee.

Thank you in advance for your participation and comments. *Editor*

## Broadband problems??

Problems are being experienced by some residents with poor Broadband Speeds. If you are affected, please could you send details to the PC Clerk (see below).

Also, it would be useful to have details of any responses you have had from your Broadband provider.

A new grant has been announced for Northumberland for Fibre Broadband and it's hoped that we can take advantage of this scheme.

**Jan Anderson 07775 060 430 or [janandersonpc@gmail.com](mailto:janandersonpc@gmail.com)**

## Good News from Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrel Group

Well, we have had a very busy few months in the Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrel Group. We have been monitoring all our regular sites and keeping an eye out for Reds and Greys.

We are concerned about a planning application at Percy Wood Caravan Park, where they are asking to site 60 static caravans; we have submitted evidence of our growing population of Reds in this area and will monitor the situation. We hope it does not go ahead as this may affect the squirrels in the area and the routes they take to get around.



In February one of our team came across a very poorly juvenile Red Squirrel. Ted, as he was then called was promptly taken for expert veterinary care to Robson and Prescott's who treated him for 2 weeks, assessing wounds, treating parasites and nursing him back to health.

In the meantime, some of the team set to work to create a large outdoor enclosure in Swarland to slowly reintroduce Ted back into the wild, using a soft release method. When the enclosure was ready Ted was released into his new palace. This allowed him to learn to climb, build a

nest, feed himself, build up his strength and also meet the locals as he is being regularly visited by other Reds. The first few days were touch and go and he spent a lot of time inside, but he has really developed a cheeky character over the last 2 weeks and has come on in leaps and bounds. He is not the prettiest of squirrels as he is missing an ear, has lots of scars and at the moment not a lot of fur on his back, but over time he will heal and he has lots of identifiable features for when he does get released.

We are now at the stage where we have withdrawn our human presence as much as possible, just checking his food and water are filled when he is hiding in his nest box which was specially made by one of our volunteers. Once we get the all clear from the vets, we will open up the cage and allow Ted to join his fellow Reds in the wild. The cage and nest box will remain in place with the door open for weeks after to allow Ted to return to his nest box if he wants to, but he would be wild and free. So, keep everything crossed ☺.

Thanks for your sightings - and please do continue to let us know if you see any Red or Grey squirrels - via our website - [www.lcreds.org.uk](http://www.lcreds.org.uk) - on the sightings page. It helps us to see the overall picture - and where we can, given suitable volunteers, we can take action. Do join our group, and if you are keen to get more involved, we'd love to hear from you at [info@lcreds.org.uk](mailto:info@lcreds.org.uk) .

*Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrel Group.*

## Northumbrian Hedgehog Rescue Trust

Once a frequent visitor to gardens, hedgehogs are in serious decline. They are listed as 'vulnerable' on The Mammal Society's 'red' list which highlights animals in danger of extinction. The most recent report from the British Hedgehog Preservation Trust estimates that there are around 1.5 million hedgehogs across England, Scotland and Wales, but in the last 20 years, numbers have fallen by up to 30% in urban areas and 50% in rural areas.

Working hard to fight back against this trend is the Northumbrian Hedgehog Rescue Trust. Now a registered charity based in Longframlington, it was set up by animal lover Carole Catchpole in her garden more than 20 years ago.

Today the Trust is run by a dedicated group of volunteers who check the weight of the hedgehogs in their care daily, ensure any necessary medication is administered, clean out cages and provide fresh bedding and food.

During the year, the Trust looks after 600–700 hedgehogs, including more than 100 who spend the winter being cared for in the Centre. In the spring, when they have gained sufficient weight, they are ready to go back either into the wild or to one of several safe release sites where newly released hedgehogs who cannot fully fend for themselves can be monitored. The Trust also has foster carers who look after hedgehogs in their own homes.

The Trust is always looking for additional volunteers who can spare a morning a week and / or are interested in becoming hedgehog carers.

Anyone who would like to find out more can contact Gill on 07584 787 314. To find out more about the process of being a foster carer go to the Trust's website: [www.hedgehogs-northumbria.org.uk](http://www.hedgehogs-northumbria.org.uk) .

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British gardens are becoming poorer homes for wildlife with increased paving, decking and reduced plant life. New roads and housing developments reduce safe pathways between green spaces, leaving hedgehogs isolated.

But hedgehogs are the gardener's friend. Here are a few tips on making your garden hedgehog friendly.

- Hedgehogs need to travel from garden to garden in their search for food. Look at your garden boundary and speak to your neighbours about linking your gardens - one or more small gaps of 13cm by 13cm are all that the hedgehog needs.
- Create a wild area in your garden – leave an area to 'go wild' to encourage hedgehogs to find a home there. In autumn, gather the fallen leaves into a pile in a corner of the garden for hibernating hedgehogs.
- If you have a pond, make sure that a hedgehog can get out of it by putting a slope in place. Hedgehogs can swim but need to be able to get out of the water.

- Stop using chemicals in the garden. Many slug pellets are very harmful to hedgehogs. Regular visits from a hedgehog will help control slugs anyway.
- Don't leave netting lying around. Netting in use should be at least 30cm off the ground to stop hedgehogs getting tangled up in it.
- Check for snoozing hedgehogs before strimming. Strimmers regularly cause serious injuries to hedgehogs.
- Put out suitable food and a little bowl of water - hedgehogs will eat cat food in jelly or dried cat biscuits but both must be **NON-FISH**. In warm weather when the ground is hard, hedgehogs can find it difficult to get enough food and water.

For further advice on helping hedgehogs in your garden please visit Northumbrian Hedgehog Rescue Trust on:

[www.hedgehogs-northumbria.org.uk](http://www.hedgehogs-northumbria.org.uk) or find us on Facebook. NHRT, Dumgoyne, Harrogate Lane, Longframlington, NE65 8EA. Telephone: 01665 570911 or email: [enquiries@hedgehogs-northumbria.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@hedgehogs-northumbria.org.uk) .

## Newton on the Moor Village Hall

“THE BEST THING SINCE SLICED BREAD -----”

**The Newton on the Moor Pop up Cake Stall** will be opening its doors on **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April from mid-day until 2.00pm**. We shall be offering Jen's world class fruit and cheese scones, Judy's sinful chocolate cake, various Victoria sponges, Alison G's sticky gingerbread and Alison C's luxury coffee cakes. We can take orders for gluten free items too.

All these goodies will be served individually packed in single slices. For the full menu at [www.facebook.com/notmvillagehall/](http://www.facebook.com/notmvillagehall/) or our website at [northumberlandvillagehalls.org.uk/newton-on-the-moor-jubilee-hall](http://northumberlandvillagehalls.org.uk/newton-on-the-moor-jubilee-hall) .

We are only allowed to sell cakes that have been pre-ordered from [Jentoliver@gmail.com](mailto:Jentoliver@gmail.com) , no later than **noon on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April**.

Jens Fruit Scones                    50p each,    Jens Cheese Scones 50p each,  
Individual mini Coffee Cakes    £1,            Slice of Chocolate Cake £1,  
Slice of Victoria Sandwich Cake £1,            2 slices of Gingerbread £1.

**Please pre-order by 12 noon on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021** by emailing [jentoliver@gmail.com](mailto:jentoliver@gmail.com) or text / ring Alison C on 07468 420 407. Local delivery available in Newton on the Moor & Swarland. Gluten free options available.

If all goes well, we hope to be able to welcome you back into the hall very soon.

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