

Swarland Village Action Group Committee:

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

Treasurer: Susan Richardson.

Committee Members: Robert & Sue Brotherton, Carmen Hubbard,
John Richardson and Suzanne Stanley.

Write it Down Now

Please supply information to the Editor for
inclusion in the August issue by
Thursday 28th July 2022.

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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.

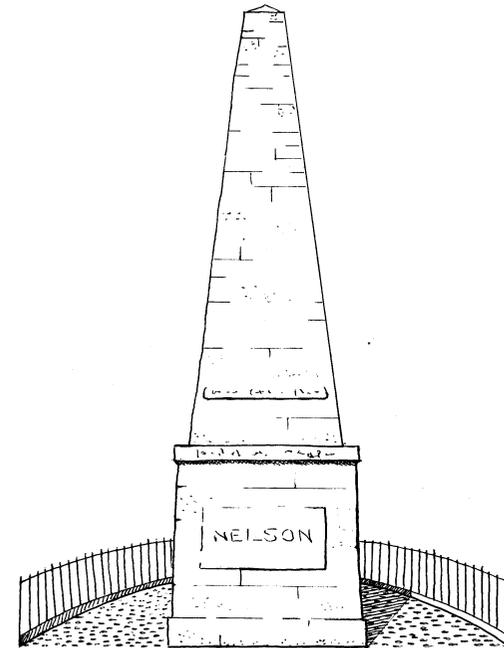
**The Post Office is now providing its
Monday and Thursday service from 8 – 10.00am.**

SWARLAND VILLAGE WORKING MEN'S CLUB

Tel. 01670 787 825

Swarland Club is pleased to sponsor *The Column*.

The Column



June 2022

Produced by
Swarland Village Action
Newsletter 119

**Platinum Jubilee celebrations around
the parish. See inside for details.**

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 August issue, please supply it by Thursday 28th July. Send it to: The Editor, Bryan Stanley, on 01670 787 916 or by email at maxitoby1@gmail.com .**

We are still using the NCC Communities Together Scheme to arrange printing it for us. Thanks to Ruth Armstrong for organising this again.

Mobile Library Dates

The NCC mobile library comes to our parish on some Wednesdays. It stops in **Swarland opposite The Square from 10.00 - 11.00am** and **Newton on the Moor from 11.10 - 11.30am**. If you miss either of these it's also in **Guyzance from 11.40am – 12.00** and **Old Felton from 12.15 – 12.35pm**.

The next visits in our area are on **22nd June, 20th July and 17th August**.

Most Libraries are now open for the 'select & collect' service and there are 'doorstep deliveries' for some customers. You may also wish to use NCC's Digital Library Services which are available 24/7.

You can check NCC's website for further library information at northumberland.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/msgtrn/wpac/home .

Support for Newton on the Moor and Swarland Residents

NOT JUST COVID!

Support is still available from the residents in the Parish who volunteered to help out with their neighbours within the Parish during the Coronavirus Emergency, and also in response to the recent storms.

In our parish, we have a population of over 900, in over 450 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 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.
- Help with other problems where possible.

If you need help, email (if possible) janandersonpc@gmail.com or phone 07775 060 430 during office hours preferably.

The Parish Council website is being revised regularly with information relating to services available in our parish: find the website at <http://newtononthemoorandswarlandparishcouncil.org.uk/> .

In relation to Covid, NCC is still running a very useful page of information including a daily update of infections in each ward (at <https://northumberland.gov.uk>) and also has information relating to other emergency situations.

Best wishes, *Jan Anderson* (Parish Clerk)

Neighbourhood Watch Update – May 2022

Swarland / Newton on the Moor:

So far, I have not received any information from the police regarding any criminal activity in our immediate area.

*** Of General Interest**

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 , 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*

Swarland Moor Local Heritage Group

Our AGM took place on the 12th April 2022. The Committee continues to look for people to join it or support it (existing or new members). If you would like / be able to help please email: swarlandmlhg@gmail.com .

The AGM was followed by an excellent talk about the Smith family of Thirston House, West Thirston which was presented by Eleanor George. This superb talk had us all enthralled, we were taken from Northumberland to Savannah in the USA and back again. The evening was enjoyed by all who attended.

In May we were delighted to welcomed Marjorie Brown, a previous member of the group. Marjorie explained the history of the Alnwick Corn Exchange and in doing so provided insights into what local life was like in the 1800s. Some of the group members could remember going to the Corn Exchange when it was a cinema.

Our final talk of the season will take place on the **7th June 2022** (please note amended date), this will be provided by Dr Tony Barrow. Dr Barrow is a founder member of the Collingwood Society which is a special interest group whose focus is the life, times and legacy of Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood. He will be talking about the Collingwood's Northumbrians. Guests are welcome to turn up on the evening.

We hope you all have a good summer and look forward to you joining us for the 2022 / 23 season which will commence on Tuesday the 13th September 2022. Further information and updates can be found on our Facebook site or by emailing: swarlandmlhg@gmail.com .

Lesley Selfe

**Deadline for items for the August issue of
The Column: Thursday 28th July 2022.**

Do you remember Storm Arwen...

...and the other storms that followed soon after leaving residents in the Parish without power, heating, and communications?

Are you interested in setting up a network of support in the Parish, so in the event of another Arwen we can be sure everyone is safe, warm and fed?

Come along to a meeting for residents to discuss what we could do, and how we're going to do it. One of the Community Resilience Officers from Northumberland County Council will be there to give us support.

Residents Meeting

Swarland Village Hall

6pm Thursday 9th June 2022

Contact: Jan Anderson at Janandersonpc@gmail.com
or 07775 060 430.

Swarland Village Hall

The Hall, which is run as a community facility, is available for hire and is now free of all Government Covid-19 restrictions. **Please support this local amenity.** If you wish to check on whether you can book the Hall for a future event, please contact Bryan Stanley (contact details elsewhere) or Steve Woolfrey (stevewoolfrey.PC@outlook.com or 01670 787 883).

Archery Practice: Monday (indoors) at 7pm. For information on extra outdoor sessions held throughout the summer contact **Steve** on Family.Woolfrey@outlook.com or **01670 787 883**. The Club can supply all equipment.

Crafty Friends: meet on 4th Saturday morning of each month.

For more information contact Anne on **07934 425 844**.

Karate Classes: Tuesdays 5.30 - 8.30pm. Contact **Ashleigh Davidson** on **07947 694 014** or **07930 838 872**.

Qi Gong (Chinese Energy Exercise) Class: Wednesdays, 10 – 11 and 11.15 – 12.15. Waiting lists are currently full – for details contact Anne Raine on **07934 425 844**.

Swarland Craft Group: Wednesdays, 1.30 – 3.30pm. The Group has its summer break in July and August when there will be no meetings, but they resume on Wednesday 14th September when new members will be welcome. All enquiries to: **Margaret on 01670 787 705**.

Swarland Carpet Bowls: Thursdays, 7pm. New members are always welcome. If you would like to give it a try, contact **Malcolm or Joan Nesbit** on **01670 783 140**.

Pilates Classes: Thursdays, 9.30 - 10.30am. To join in contact sandyturnbull6@gmail.com . Possible Monday class soon as well.

NotM & Swarland Parish Council - May 2022

We held the Annual Parish (ie electors') Meeting on 25th May, following a 2-year break due to Covid difficulties. In addition to the presentation of the PC annual report by chairman David Francis, there was a lively public discussion on two current hot topics, as follows:

Swarland school

Several days previously, we were surprised and alarmed to read in the community newsletter Fram News, that in March our local County Councillor had submitted a proposal to NCC to close and sell the Swarland Primary School for housing, and to use the proceeds to build a replacement school in Longframlington. Neither the school nor our PC had been notified or consulted. Thankfully, shortly before the start of our meeting, NCC officers informed the school that it was not taking the proposal forward. However, serious concerns remain, both about how our school and community had been side-lined, and about the apparent disregard for the 'open countryside' protection policies in the new Northumberland Local Plan.

Rashercap bus shelter

In 1972, the 20th anniversary of the Queen's Accession, Swarland's community built a bus shelter at the bottom of Leamington Lane. The purchase of the materials was funded via local initiatives, including a charity football match, and the National Coal Board colliery at Whittle donated the expert labour, in the shape of local resident Norman Wilson, an NCB stonemason. The bus shelter served the then route of the United 505 bus route. However, in due course the route of the service was diverted into Swarland, away from this section of road, and eventually away from the village altogether. More recently still, the County Council assumed the bus shelter to be ownerless, and asked Felton Parish Council either to adopt it or to demolish it. Although the stone walls remain intact, the roof has collapsed, and it would require spending of about £200 on materials to repair it.

Because of its proximity to Swarland, Felton PC asked our PC if it would like to take it into its care. However, strong views against the idea were expressed by a number of residents, and so it has been decided not to proceed with the repair. The additional cost of demolition is not known.

Swarland's back-lanes

More positively, the Annual Parish Meeting heard some promising news about Swarland's unadopted roads, such as Nelson Drive, Percy Drive and lower Kenmore Road. After some years of NCC's Highways Department repeatedly declining to take any responsibility for improving them to a safe standard, senior officers are now 'on the case' and are examining ways in which the road surfaces can be improved and maintained, using the NCC Highways budget. Although it may still take several years to reach a conclusion, and it is not clear whether they technically can be 'adopted', this is nevertheless a significant step towards a resolution.

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Community spirit

The meeting also celebrated the huge amount of voluntary effort which had been undertaken over the past year: improvements to Vyner Park's facilities, post-Storm Arwen support and recovery, the various climate change initiatives, the litter-pick, the new sports activities, as well as preparations for the Platinum Jubilee, the Show, fireworks, good-neighbouring resilience plan and much more. Tribute was also paid to The Column and to the new Swarland Residents Facebook page, and also to Suzanne Stanley who would shortly be standing-down from the Parish Council.

**PC Clerk, Jan Anderson janandersonpc@gmail.com or 07775 060 430.
PC website: newtononthemoorandswarlandparishcouncil.org.uk .**

Jubilee Hall, NotM – appeal for fresh faces and energetic helping hands.

Newton on the Moor's Grade II listed Jubilee Hall is managed by a small group of Trustees for the benefit of the community. We have a large Victorian hall with a small stage, and the lovely 1761 Reading Room, used for small gatherings, church services, and classes. The main hall provides a regular home for music making by fiddlers, choirs and pipers; as well as space for carpet bowls, exercise groups, private parties and weddings and for the use of voters during elections. Several times each year we host musical events or other entertainments. Once a month we run a very popular and well attended coffee morning with fantastic home-baked cakes; this is one of our main sources of income.

However, the Jubilee Hall needs some help. There are seven Trustees and a small group of helpers. Most of this team have supported the Hall for a long time, in some cases over 30 years. But time moves on, and our numbers are diminishing. There is plenty to do and funding is available from various sources to work on the fabric of the Hall and to improve its services. The Charity is Incorporated, so its Trustees are fully protected from any personal financial liability.

If you would like to join us as a Trustee of our charity or simply to help out occasionally at coffee mornings and other events, we would love to hear from you. Please contact the Chair, Liz Rixon on 01665 575 680, or the Secretary, Alison Gallico on 01665 581 173 or any other member of the present team.

**Deadline for items for the August issue of
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Jubilee Coffee Morning at the Jubilee Hall, NotM

We look forward to welcoming all our friends to our coffee morning to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Jubilee. This will be held on **Saturday, 11th of June from 10 am to noon.**

We invite you to celebrate with a glass of Prosecco and a toast to her Majesty to celebrate her many years of service and the affection in which she is held by her people. In addition to our usual coffee and home baked cakes, we hope to offer you some Jubilee Specials! Do come.....

Alison Gallico

Jubilee Picnic in the Park

Saturday 4th June, Vyner Park, 2pm.

Free entry & entertainment

Come along with friends and family to create some fun.

Live music at 3pm, a pay bar and delicious ice creams.

Bring a picnic (but strictly no BBQs).

Gazebos welcome from 12 noon.

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.

Used plastic plant pots, free to a good home! A variety of sizes, shapes, and colours. Phone 01665 581 307 if interested.

Titan Oil Tank: Green, 1,250 litres capacity. H: 130cm x W: 130cm x L: 190cm. Very good condition – can be viewed. Obtained to replace a condemned metal tank, now surplus to requirements due to the Government very kindly giving me a whole new low carbon heating system.

Any reasonable offer – buyer to remove. Tel. 01670 786002.

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Residents' Letters: Percy Wood Caravan Park and other matters

At the end of April Harrison Leisure sent a prior approval letter to NCC regarding the demolition of the former Club House and associated buildings on the site at the top of Coast View – they already have outline planning permission (2019) for 16 houses on this particular site. According to the site notice which went up nearby, the demolition was due to start on the 23rd May in readiness for the redevelopment.

However, in a telephone call in early May between Suzanne Stanley (PC) and Billy Harrison, it was stated that the demolition is unlikely to take place before November and the land is not to be sold to a developer as Harrison Leisure intends to build park homes on the site instead of houses – these will be sold for permanent residential use to over 50s, specifying no children and with other conditions attached. Harrison Leisure will collect annual ground rent but the buyers of the park homes will own the properties and can sell them on via an estate agent.

I am no expert but wonder if you can simply change the accommodation on a site without planning permission or an amendment to permitted planning permission – park homes are very different from houses.

Billy also said they are to enter their appeal about the site for the 60 caravans (planning permission refused in March) but it was intended to put park homes on this site as well instead of caravans – he suggested that the appeal for the caravans would need to go through initially before a change to the planned accommodation was made. Again, I wonder if this is possible as park homes are also very different from caravans. *[N.B. All amendments to planning applications do have to be submitted to NCC for consideration S.Stanley.]*

We will wait and see what happens next.

On a slightly different matter, Arrowbuild Ltd has submitted an application for full planning permission for 9 dwellings on the field at the end of Springwood – they already have outline planning permission (2018) but the conditions have now been met for full permission to be requested. At this time, I have no further information as to whether this has been granted or not. I would say though that Arrowbuild has been communicating with local residents since they bought the land and seem to be willing to share their plans for the site. They have informed us that they will be holding a pre-commencement meeting for residents and have already put out some flyers to residents near the site. They seem to have a different approach to the one Harrison Leisure has displayed in the past.

Jackie Stent

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Swarland and Newton Action on Climate (SNAC)

SNAC has been very busy over the last couple of months producing a questionnaire about bus use in the parish and conducting a survey of all our footpaths and bridleways. We've had a great response to both projects, and you can read more about them below.

With the support of Vyner Park, we have also made a successful application to the Woodland Trust to help us plant around 100 trees in the Park later this year.

And it's good to hear that Swarland School has recently had a heat pump installed which will help to reduce its carbon footprint.

If you're interested in climate change and the environment, why not come along to one of our monthly meetings. Meetings are on the third Tuesday of the month with the next one on June 21st at Swarland Club. We're always keen to welcome new members and there is a range of projects to get involved in. You can find out more by going to our website at www.snac.online. Alternatively contact Liz Clark on Liz@cabrit.co.uk or Carolyn Letts on Carolyn.letts@btinternet.com.

Footpath Survey Results: A big thank you to the 10 people who volunteered to survey our 25 parish footpaths and bridleways. We now have a comprehensive picture of the various issues affecting each path. The general results are as follows:

1) most of them are problematic, either in sections or in full, for people with limited mobility. This is either because of deeply rutted paths, mud, or stiles / barriers. Some of these problems cannot be changed simply because of terrain, expense, or current use of the land.

2) all but three paths have some problems for everyone, but most of these can be fixed as they are due to broken or non-existing signage, gate damage, overhanging branches and such like. The next step is to set up a meeting with the NCC Countryside Officer and two of our SNAC footpath representatives to discuss what is feasible to repair, and perhaps create in terms of linking up paths for circular walks. We hope to have this meeting this summer, and will report back on the fruits of that discussion later this autumn. If anyone has any further information on footpaths, please email Marlene Gray: mgray@spirit.myzen.co.uk.

Bus Survey conducted April 2022

A huge thank you to all who completed the bus survey, either online or on paper. The response was terrific: 97 people completed the survey with all but two indicating that they would use a bus service stopping in Swarland and Newton. Thank you also to the many people who gave us contact details. We found that despite being a considerable distance from a bus stop 40 people indicated that they currently use a local bus service, usually the X15 (Berwick-Alnwick-Morpeth). Just over half arrange to be dropped off at the stop or park their car nearby, 13 individuals indicated that they walk to the nearest stop and others walk to the stop sometimes.

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[SNAC cont]

Of those who would use a service if available within the parish, a majority would use the bus to go shopping or for leisure activities, with attendance at a medical appointment or to connect with a further bus or train also being popular choices. Alnwick, Morpeth and Newcastle are the most popular destinations. In terms of frequency, 39% said they would use the bus several times a week, with most of the remainder indicating once a month or occasionally. The survey also asked what would attract people to using a bus and what would put them off. A large number indicated that they wish to be greener, with issues with parking and lack of access to a car being other key factors. As regards what would put people off, frequency and timing was a clear major factor, with proximity to a bus stop and reliability also being important. Many people made additional comments; the main themes to emerge were as follows:

- A bus service would be a great enhancement for the villages, reduce isolation and improve access to local facilities.
- Expansion of housing within the parish has resulted in increased pressure on the travel infrastructure.
- Concern among older residents that they will be unable to drive or walk to a bus stop as they age, and that they will therefore have to move away from the parish.
- Real difficulty accessing a car or not being able to drive.
- Dangerous walk to bus stops along country roads with no footpath or lighting, plus having to get to the other side of the A1.

To conclude, there is a high degree of support for the restoration of the bus service. This would not only contribute to cutting emissions but be a major social asset to the parish, plus meeting some very real local needs. Our next step is to ask for a public meeting with the NCC Public Transport Manager to discuss ways of taking this forward – so watch this space! A more detailed summary can be found at the SNAC website: <https://snac.online/projects/>.

Jubilee Tree Planting

As we planted an Oak tree at Vyner Park to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, the Parish Council and Vyner Park team decided a Platinum companion was a good idea, and that there should also be a tree in Newton on the Moor. For Swarland, we've purchased a Whitebeam (the appropriately named *Sorbus aria* 'Majestica'), and for Newton, a Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Atropunicea'), both with commemorative plaques. The exact location and planting date for the Newton tree has yet to be decided, but residents will be informed later. The Vyner Park tree will be planted in the **Jubilee Garden** at about **1.30 on Saturday 4th June**, just before the picnic begins.

Suzanne Stanley

Do you know about the Alnwick Foodbank?



Alnwick's Mayor presenting the Foodbank team with its Civic Award, May2022

The Foodbank is located at the Lindisfarne Centre in Alnwick and is open to clients two mornings a week. As you may be aware, the cost-of-living increase is rapidly becoming a crisis for many households; foodbanks nationally are stepping up to provide ever more help. Whilst in our area, it used to be primarily single people that attended, there are now more families; many of the adults hold jobs but struggle to make ends meet. Children and the elderly are particularly affected by domestic stress. At the foodbank, volunteers offer both an excellent food parcel and a non-judgmental ear to anyone who wishes to chat. Clients are referred by healthcare or social services, or can self-refer initially, if they find themselves in emergency crisis. Most feel the sting of shame with foodbank use as a last desperate measure, so it would be wrong to think that only the lazy or unscrupulous attend.

In a fairly prosperous rural area such as ours, it is hard to imagine that anyone is experiencing such basic hardship. But they sadly exist amongst us. Visit the website: alnwickdistrictfoodbank.co.uk to see what specific items are needed and the collection drop-off points. Alternatively, you can donate money using the website button: 100% goes to food purchase. Perishable items are not accepted at drop-off points (because collection is only once per week), but items like fruit and some vegetables can be accepted if you deliver them straight to the foodbank **during opening times**. Many of you have fruit trees or vegetable gardens, and rather than let the excess rot, please consider donating, if not to foodbank, then to someone else who could use it. Food waste seems almost criminal when so many have so little. Foodbank **CANNOT** take homemade jams / chutneys, anything that needs immediate refrigeration or is in poor / limp condition, but in-season fresh apples, plums, pears, potatoes, carrots, onions and courgettes would be fine. If you need anything to be picked up from your home, or require further information, please contact mgray@spirit.myzen.co.uk.



[Cont Felton PPG]

It is not a merger of the practices; it is an alignment of contracts. All partners would sign each other's contracts in order to collaborate over responsibility between the three practices. The practices would still be run separately. This type of collaboration is seen by our GPs as the only way for Northumberland practices to support each other and become more robust. To summarise the discussion with Dr Lees: the merger is about stabilising general practice and rendering our surgeries more resilient. Patients will see an improvement to the service over time.

northumberland HEALTH is currently part of the **Well Up North** network of GP surgeries and being part of it has already shown a beneficial way to work more closely together across a large area. All the practices in Well Up North were invited to consider a more formal cross-practice partnership and **Well Close Medical Group (Berwick)**, and the two Wooler practices (**Glendale Surgery and Cheviot Medical Group**, who have already agreed to merge into a single practice) agreed to do so.

northumberland HEALTH will be joining in partnership with these practices but in practical terms the doctors and staff at Felton Surgery and Widdrington Surgery will remain the same. The aim is to remain locally responsive but to have management and resource strength from being part of a bigger partnership. General Practice is under a lot of pressure and much of that pressure is administrative. Working with partners in like-minded practices will increase the resilience of smaller practices such as northumberland HEALTH.

The name for the new partnership is **Lindisfarne Health**. It may be mentioned on written correspondence alongside northumberland HEALTH. northumberland HEALTH will be a part of the partnership that takes responsibility for day-to-day work at Felton and Widdrington. Funding from the NHS will continue largely to be paid directly to Felton and Widdrington, except where joint funding across the Lindisfarne Health overarching practice has been allocated.

northumberland HEALTH will remain responsible for overseeing the Felton new build and the developer Assura will be dealing with northumberland Health.

Full Minutes of PPG meetings are available to read on the Felton Surgery website. Contact the practice by phone on **01670 787 353** or visit its website for further information at **www.feltonsurgery.nhs.uk** .

Dorinda Jack on behalf of the Felton PPG.

**Deadline for items for the August issue of
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Felton Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG)

northumberland HEALTH: Since January 2022 when the Felton and Widdrington surgeries merged, Felton Surgery has been part of a GP Practice called northumberland HEALTH. You may have noticed a new logo on prescription packets, on the web site and on the PPG Facebook page where the PPG now uses the name as well.

When telephoning the surgery, you may have noticed an option for northumberland HEALTH queries. This is the option to choose if you wish to speak to Felton surgery reception. Felton and Widdrington surgeries currently retain their individual online presence on their own web sites.

Felton Surgery New Build Project

The Developer, Assura, is busy replanning and re-costing the project. Delays caused by Covid restrictions and recent increased costs have delayed work. The PPG is aware of patient concern that the project may fail to meet the Local Authority deadline, meaning funding would be lost. It continues to raise such concerns with the surgery and developer.

Dr Lees remains committed to building a new surgery and has written to NCC to request that the deadline be extended. In her letter she says "*It is my intention that the Felton Surgery new build is progressed as quickly as possible, but I can only work as quickly as the developer is able, and to a new timeline which the developer is yet to present. would like to be able to give patients a firm reassurance that the practice, the developer and the local authority remain committed to this beneficial development. . . .*"

COVID spring boosters

northumberland HEALTH is not directly involved in the spring booster programme. Patients should go online or ring 119 to book appointments through the national system. There are no clinics planned at the Coquet Medical Group, Amble, but patients may use its dedicated Covid vaccine booking line if clinics become available.

Felton services and clinics

The usual clinics and services are operating at Felton Surgery. Childhood immunisation and smear tests are currently only available at the Widdrington surgery and patients will be offered appointments there. Felton is currently operating a reduced hours service. Information and opening hours have been posted on social media and on the surgery door. If you notice that the surgery is not open when advertised, please telephone and let a member of staff know so that the reason can be investigated.

Proposed 'merger' with practices from Wooler and Berwick

We recently let you know that we had become aware of a proposed uniting of northumberland HEALTH with practices from Wooler and Berwick. The PPG sent a list of questions to Dr Lees and has subsequently discussed the proposal at a practice meeting. The response indicates that the unity will be a positive benefit for patients.

[Cont over]

[Cont Felton PPG]

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Felton Surgery New Build Project

The Developer, Assura, is busy replanning and re-costing the project. Delays caused by Covid restrictions and recent increased costs have delayed work. The PPG is aware of patient concern that the project may fail to meet the Local Authority deadline, meaning funding would be lost. It continues to raise such concerns with the surgery and developer.

Dr Lees remains committed to building a new surgery and has written to NCC to request that the deadline be extended. In her letter she says "*It is my intention that the Felton Surgery new build is progressed as quickly as possible, but I can only work as quickly as the developer is able, and to a new timeline which the developer is yet to present. would like to be able to give patients a firm reassurance that the practice, the developer and the local authority remain committed to this beneficial development. . . .*"

COVID spring boosters

northumberland HEALTH is not directly involved in the spring booster programme. Patients should go online or ring 119 to book appointments through the national system. There are no clinics planned at the Coquet Medical Group, Amble, but patients may use its dedicated Covid vaccine booking line if clinics become available.

Felton services and clinics

The usual clinics and services are operating at Felton Surgery. Childhood immunisation and smear tests are currently only available at the Widdrington surgery and patients will be offered appointments there. Felton is currently operating a reduced hours service. Information and opening hours have been posted on social media and on the surgery door. If you notice that the surgery is not open when advertised, please telephone and let a member of staff know so that the reason can be investigated.

Proposed 'merger' with practices from Wooler and Berwick

We recently let you know that we had become aware of a proposed uniting of northumberland HEALTH with practices from Wooler and Berwick. The PPG sent a list of questions to Dr Lees and has subsequently discussed the proposal at a practice meeting. The response indicates that the unity will be a positive benefit for patients.

[Cont over]

