

Great Aycliffe Town Council

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

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25th November 2016

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2016

MAYOR'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

As the evenings draw in and winter approaches, we naturally think of the coming festive season. This is a time of year when we reflect on the past and look forward to the future.

Since taking office as the Mayor of Great Aycliffe, I have been honoured to meet so many of our townsfolk, members of the business community and visitors to the town. The common message that comes across in conversation is how pleased people are with Newton Aycliffe; how it is a clean environment; and how vibrant the flower displays are on our main routes within the town. I have been most impressed by the positivity and enthusiasm that is shown by so many people, especially our younger citizens. The civic calendar started on a sombre note with the funeral of former Mayor of Great Aycliffe, Ernie Elmer. This was followed a few days later with an interview for Tokyo TV, who were excited about the opening of the Hitachi Rail manufacturing site. It's quite amazing to think that only six months later, the first completed train will be leaving Aycliffe.

My chosen charities this year are The Rifles Care for Casualties; Newton Aycliffe Youth and Community Centre; and Great Aycliffe Village Hall Association. I would offer my sincere thanks to the Newton News for advertising the various fund raising events in support of my charities. I would also like to place on record my thanks to officers and staff of the Council without whom the various events would not take place. It would be remiss of me not to mention that the firework display was superb this year, with a change of firing point giving much better views of the pyrotechnics. The Remembrance Parade was once again well attended, in this the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. The sacrifices of so many have benefitted us all in so many ways.

Looking forward, there are great things on the horizon for Aycliffe. The town continues to grow, with planned development of new homes on the former equestrian centre site, on the edge of Woodham Golf Course; and on the eastern side of the A167 at Copelaw. Refurbishment of the Leisure Centre will shortly be completed with the library moving into its new home on the site. A replacement school is planned for the Vane Road site, and development has only recently commenced on an extension to the Business Park, that could create up to 3000 new jobs in the future. I offer my thanks to the emergency services, our service men and women, and those caring for others who will be working on our behalf during the festive season. May I take this opportunity to offer Yuletide greetings to all Newtonians and wish you all a peaceful, healthy and prosperous 2017.



Councillor Jed Hillary
Mayor of Great Aycliffe
2016 - 2017

FORTHCOMING MAYORAL EVENTS

MAYOR'S CIVIC & COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE

TUESDAY, 20th DECEMBER 2016

Councillor Jed Hillary will be holding his Civic & Community Carol Service in St. Clare's Church on Tuesday 20th December, commencing at 6.30pm. The Mayor would like to invite you to join him on this Festive occasion. Refreshments will be available at the conclusion of the Service in the Church Hall.

MAYOR'S CHARITY CIVIC DINNER

SATURDAY, 25th FEBRUARY 2017

Arrangements have now been made for the annual Charity Civic Dinner to be held at the Hall Garth Golf & Country Club at 7.30pm.

Entertainment and dancing will follow the dinner and the event will conclude at midnight. Tickets are on sale from the Council Offices and are priced at £30.00 each.

Proceeds from the event will be in aid of the Mayor's nominated charity: "The Rifles Care for Casualties"



SANTA'S COMING

Check Newton News Christmas issue on Friday 16th December for routes and times of Santa's visits, also Newton News Website (www.newtonnews.co.uk) or Great Aycliffe Town Council / Oak Leaf 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.

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 5th 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 19th 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>

Sorry We're CLOSED
THE COUNCIL OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON:
Monday, 26th December 2016
Tuesday 27th December 2016
Monday, 2nd January 2017

Councillors & Staff of Great Aycliffe Town Council would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL 2017/18 BUDGET CONSULTATION

The Town Council is currently in the process of setting its Revenue and Capital Budgets for the 2017/18 financial year, and we wish to seek the views of the local community on our draft budget proposals and the proposed 1.99% increase in the Town Council Tax.

We would also welcome your views on the Council services that are most and least important to you, and whether there are new services or initiatives that you would like to see the Council make investment in.

Your views are very important to us and will be used to help to inform the Council's service and financial planning over the coming years.

We have developed a survey to formally record your views and we would encourage local residents to complete this questionnaire.

The results of the survey, including any specific comments or concerns, will be reported to the Council before it meets to set the final budget in January.

You can access the survey from the link on the Council website or by typing the following into your internet browser: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/gatc2017budgetsurvey>

A summary of the Council's current financial situation and the draft 2017/18 budget proposals is set out below for your information.



It may only be December, but some people are already planning what they will be doing in July next year. These people are the Festival Organisers, those amongst you who are arranging an event near you for the annual Aycliffe Festival.

The aim of the Festival is to involve local groups, businesses and voluntary organisations, to encourage people to organise an 'event' within the time-frame of the Festival.

The dates for 2017 are 14th – 30th July inclusive, so there is still plenty of time to apply for a grant for an event for your own community.

It doesn't have to be something the size of Glastonbury, it doesn't have to cost a fortune. Your event can be something really simple that would appeal to the people in your community, a board games day, a treasure hunt, a nature walk etc. the possibilities are endless.

Even if you don't need a grant, you can still benefit from our advertising campaign by letting us know about your event.

We will organise training and support to help you with any problems or queries you may have with the organisation.

Any event will be considered, large or small, indoor or outdoor but it must be held in the Festival period in Aycliffe. If you are thinking about organising an event or just want to talk it through with us, contact Marie Robinson on 01325 300700 or festival@great-aycliffe.gov.uk.

The closing date for applications is Friday 31st March 2017.

Town Council to limit the Council Tax increase to 1.99% next year, despite facing further grant cuts and unavoidable increases in costs

The Town Council is currently in the process of setting its Revenue and Capital Budgets for the 2017/18 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 2017/18 Revenue Budget will ensure that the many services provided to the community of Great Aycliffe by the Town Council can be 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 to 15% of its Revenue Budget. It has been confirmed that this funding will be cut by 13% in 2017/18 and will continue to be reduced in the coming years, while there remains a risk that it could be withdrawn altogether at some stage in the future.

The Council is also facing a number of significant spending pressures including ongoing increases to the National Living Wage, pension contribution increases and automatic enrolment, pay awards and inflation, and increasing pressure to take on services that are being cut by Durham County Council such as 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 we know are being faced by local residents, and following on from the four year freeze in council tax that the Town Council was proud to deliver between 2010 and 2013.

However, by agreeing, in principle, to limit the proposed rise to 1.99% 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 maintaining some contingency funds to help the Council to offset some of the budget pressures faced in the longer term.

The Council is due to set its 2017/18 Precept and the Town Council proportion of the Council Tax in January next year, and we will keep local tax payers informed of future developments in relation to the budget via the Council website and in the local press.

Should you wish to have a read of the Council's draft 2017/18 budget proposals, you can view detailed information on the Council website via the following link:-

<http://www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk/meetings-diary/past-meetings.html?y=2016&m=oct>

Detailed information on the Council's finances is also available to view on the Finance Section of the website (found within the 'Council and Democracy' Section).

MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

23rd Nov. 2016	Environment	7.15 p.m.
23rd Nov. 2016	Recreation	* 7.15 p.m.
30th Nov. 2016	Policy & Resources	7.15 p.m.
9th Dec. 2016	Full Council	7.15 p.m.
11th Jan. 2017	Environment	7.15 p.m.
11th Jan. 2017	Recreation	* 7.15 p.m.
18th Jan. 2017	Policy & Resources	7.15 p.m.
25th Jan. 2017	Full Council	7.15 p.m.
22nd Feb. 2017	Environment	7.15 p.m.
22nd Feb. 2017	Recreation	* 7.15 p.m.
1st Mar. 2017	Policy & Resources	7.15 p.m.
8th Mar. 2017	Full Council	7.15 p.m.
5th Apr. 2017	Environment	7.15 p.m.
5th Apr. 2017	Recreation	* 7.15 p.m.
12th Apr. 2017	Policy & Resources	7.15 p.m.
19th Apr. 2017	Full Council	7.15 p.m.

* The **Recreation Committee** will commence immediately after the Environment Committee Meeting.

WED, 17th MAY, 2017 - COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING - 7.15pm

WED, 24th MAY, 2017 - PARISH MEETING - 7.15pm (*)**

(***) (N.B. – this is not a meeting of the Town Council but a meeting of local government electors in the Council's area. Any queries about the Parish Meeting can be made to the Town Clerk on 01325 300700).

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, 12th December 2016.

I would like to nominate the house below for a Christmas Lights Enhancement Award for its display of Christmas Lights 2016.

Address.....

.....

Householder Name.....
(if known)

AYCLIFFE YOUTH COUNCIL 2016 - 2017



Aycliffe Youth Council elections were held in October and created lots of interest. Four additional places have been made available to the South Durham University Technology College. The Town Council is happy to report that 25 out of 26 places were filled by young people who were 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.



Alex Howarth



Bethany Mellody



Blake Reed



Britney Orme



Cameron Brassell



Charles Jemmett



Charlotte Kirton



Danielle Ord



Erin Theyer



Evan Plews



Jessica McKenzie



Jessica Mellody



Josh Blackburn



Lee Reynoldson



Max Hunter



Meghan Cumming



Owen Dickinson



Rebecca Carr



Corin Lathan



Jessica Butterworth



Jacob Ireson



Sam Dixon



Steven Lowe



Thomas Burn



Thomas Roberts

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

Don't forget Aycliffe Youth Council have a small budget 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



ST. OSWALD'S PRE-SCHOOL

(St. Oswald's Park, Wren Close, Newton Aycliffe)



The children have had lots of fun over the last few weeks; they have created some wonderful Bonfire pictures which were entered into the Bonfire poster competition. They have enjoyed walking in the park looking at the changes in the environment, looking at the similarities and differences between themselves, and painting self-portraits.



When revamping our Music Area, we asked the children what they wanted in it, and a microphone was their priority. They have also helped with the decoration of the stage area. We have seen lots of lovely singing and dancing, and we definitely have some popstars in the making!

St. Oswald's is open Monday to Friday 8.45am to 3.30pm during school term time for all children from their 3rd birthday.

If you would like more information please contact the Pre-School on 07974 704213 or contact Jackie Swainston on 01325 319880.



Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve QUIZ NIGHTS

(1st and 2nd Place Prizes)

Tickets £2.00

See bar staff for tickets

On Sale 1st December

Hot Meat
Sandwiches
& Quiz
included in
ticket price



Food will be
served at 8pm
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**

Traditional Christmas Lunch

On Sunday
4th & 11th
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)

Please Pre-Book,
Payment Required on Booking

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

Warm, friendly welcome guaranteed

Children's Christmas Party

Sunday 18th December

2.00pm - 3.45pm

4 - 7 years



**Meet Santa
Party Games**

**Christmas Crafts
Ticket only £4.00 each**

Places limited, available from Oak Leaf Sports Complex



Seasonal Events at Moore Lane Eco Centre

Rockin' Reindeer

Wednesday 14th December

Session 1: 4.30pm - 5.30pm

Session 2: 6.00pm - 7.00pm

This session gives local residents the opportunity to make their own wooden reindeer ready for display at home. Not suitable for children under 6 years. *This is a free event and booking is essential as places are strictly limited.*

Bookings can be made by telephone to Great Aycliffe Town Council on 01325 300700.



Christmas Garlands

Thursday 15th December

Session 1: 4.30pm - 5.30pm

Session 2: 6.00pm - 7.00pm

Here's your chance to make your own natural Christmas Garland from locally sourced materials. One Garland per participating family. Not suitable for children under 6 years. Bring along decorations to personalise your creation.

This is a free event and booking is essential as places are strictly limited.

Bookings can be made by telephone to Great Aycliffe Town Council on 01325 300700.



Making Great Aycliffe a Safer Place



Following a number of incidents Great Aycliffe Town Council has recently successfully deployed key council staff with body worn cameras. Dash-cams will also be introduced to council vehicles over the coming months.

The aim of providing the cameras was to improve the services Great Aycliffe Town Council provide to residents and users of the Town Council facilities whilst also safeguarding staff from potential false allegations and providing evidence of any incidents.

Certain front line members of staff are now carrying the camera while on duty including the Park Patrol Team. The cameras are worn by the operatives at all times, however, they will only be activated when the operative considers there is the potential for a situation to become volatile or an incident has occurred. Body worn cameras are visible at all times with CCTV stickers prominently displayed. Council vehicles which are using cameras will also display CCTV signage.

Guidance on the implementation of the cameras and operational training to users has been provided by Durham Police Authority. Cameras have proved a useful tool on numerous occasions around the town since being deployed when they have been used to record potential incidents without any issues.

If you would like to know more about this service improvement please contact Steve Cooper, Works and Environment Manager, Great Aycliffe Town Council on 01325 300700.



There is Light at the End of a Very Long Tunnel

After an intensive and at times frustrating two and a half years the Draft Plan will shortly be considered by an Independent Examiner to ensure the Plan meets the legal requirements for a future planning document for the Parish.

We are waiting to have an Independent Examiner and examination date confirmed. Once the Plan has undergone this examination - and should there be no major concerns - we will finally be able to undertake a referendum. The referendum will be a simple yes or no vote.