



## SCHOOLS REVIEW

## THE GEFRIN TRUST - A NEW COMMUNITY PROJECT

IN DECEMBER 2004 the County Council launched the next stage of its review of schooling: "Putting the Learner First." As expected, the Council has expressed its preference to move from a 3-tier system of First, Middle and High Schools, to a 2-tier system of Primary and Secondary schools.

The problems facing Northumberland education system have been well aired, for several years: surplus places, a tight revenue budget and a shortage of capital money to improve or replace older buildings. Since Autumn 2003 the Council has introduced a further argument that the transition between tiers in a 3-tier system disrupts pupils' learning, leading to a dip in overall performance. This latter argument is different from previous reviews which were either conducted or commissioned by the Council, in 1995 and in 2001, where it was concluded that the 3-tier system suits the geography of Northumberland well.

In recent years, there have been several different approaches to the review of schools. In 2002, the Council introduced the idea of Area Accommodation Reviews, which would look at each High School Pyramid area in turn, and would involve a wide variety of stakeholders in trying to find appropriate solutions. The OFSTED report on Northumberland LEA, published in September 2003, concluded that the principles underpinning the review were too weak and that the 5-year review timetable was too long. A new Director of Education in Autumn 2003 brought a new, county-wide fast-track approach, based on a promise of £250 million government funding to re-build and/or improve secondary-age schools, within a reorganised 2-tier system. A series of briefing events with head teachers and chairmen of governors during October to December 2003 appeared to offer strong support for this. However, during 2004 various parent's groups emerged in support of action to retain and make viable the existing 3-tier system, and full County Council meetings in June and December for the first time saw some serious debate among County Councillors about the viability of different models of school organisation.

### Dates for CCN Meetings

*Dates and venues for the Community Council's Spring and Annual General Meetings have now been arranged.*

*The Spring meeting will be held at the Knott Memorial Hall, Heddon on the Wall on Wednesday afternoon 4 May 2005.*

*The Hindmarsh Hall, Alnmouth will host our AGM on Wednesday 9 November.*

*Thanks are extended to the management committee of both halls for allowing us to use their premises.*

The New Year, 2005, has begun with a degree of uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the current consultation. Key evidence has been requested but not produced. Key documents have not been made widely available. Key stakeholders in the voluntary and community sector have not been consulted. A County-wide household consultation leaflet has avoided the key question of 2 versus 3 tiers. Doubts about the ability of the Council to find the necessary capital funding are now stronger than ever. Other Authorities in the region who have already secured Building Schools for the Future capital funding are finding difficulties with it. There are anxieties that the protracted review process will blight some parts of the county for the next 10-15 years.

Whether or not the County Council decides to move to a 2-tier system, it is clear that a strategy package will need to be developed which is based on a greater degree of financial realism.

Solutions must be found to the problems of surplus places, unaffordable overheads and poor buildings. The current number of separate school organisations, each in their own separate sites, cannot all be afforded: therefore, Federations, mergers, co-locations and other initiatives will all be important. Equally, there are schools which will need to accept the prospect of repair and refurbishment, rather than new-build.

Education is the largest part of the local government budget, and schools play a key role in the local community and economy in each part of Northumberland. The time is ripe for the Community Council to re-engage with local communities, as it started to do in 2002, to find solutions to which are appropriate to the needs and wishes of localities, while still addressing the financial realities which Northumberland is facing.

- The current phase of consultation in the 'Putting the Learner First' programme continues until early March
- Documents relating to the review may be viewed on a dedicated part of the County Council website: [www.northumberland.gov.uk/learning/docs](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/learning/docs)
- "Educating Northumberland - the BIG Picture" is a broad based educational conference being organised and hosted by NEAG (Northumberland Education Action Group) to be held at Alnwick Castle on Saturday 5th March at 9.30am. NEAG will not be making any presentations as the purpose of the Conference is to inform delegates of ideas and thinking relating to education which may not have been heard before. The conference is open to schools, councillors and stakeholder organisations, including voluntary/community groups.
- A special meeting of the full County Council will be held on 6th April, to take stock of the first stage of consultation, and to agree a way forward.



*Repairing the stone wall boundaries*

THE GOLD FUND in the Glendale area has supported the setting up of the GefrinTrust, a new Charitable Community Trust.

The Trust is a partnership between the local community, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland National Park Authority, English Heritage and private professionals. This group of interested people have been brought together for the purpose of managing a substantial part of the Anglo-British settlement and royal palace at Yeavinger, Northumberland.

With the site donated by a local benefactor, the purpose of the new Trust is to devise and implement policies that focus upon the conservation, preservation, public access, understanding and interpretation of the settlement. The group's secretary Roger Miket is very enthusiastic about the new developments: 'This project will be managed in a sensitive manner, taking into consideration that visitors nowadays enjoy more visual information and evidence on what was there so many years ago. It is quite remarkable that this site has not been developed before now. It could mean a lot to the local community and its economy.'

The Trust managed to set itself up as a Company Limited by Guarantee by using the local GOLD fund. The group was keen to receive this kind of local endorsement and has been invited to speak at several local events since the fund was awarded. CCN has been helping out by giving advice on project development, legal aspects of setting up a trust and fund raising support.

Although still a relatively young company, 1 month old to be precise, the Trustees have directed their initial tasks towards renewal of the boundary fences and restoration of stone-walling. After that they will install kissing-gates that will permit wheelchair access and erect information panels that might stimulate the imagination as to how the settlement appeared at different moments in its history. The long term vision for the Trustees is to provide a sound historical foundation for an individual imaginative experience.

For further historical information about the site, please see the following websites: [www.gefrin.com](http://www.gefrin.com) and [www.pastperfect.info](http://www.pastperfect.info).

For any further information on this Trust please contact our local CDO in Berwick on 01289-304141 (Els Nicol).

## ATAC Strikes GOLD

FOLLOWING AN APPLICATION to the GOLD Fund, the Area Training and Activity Centre (ATAC) in Widdrington Station has been awarded £13248 to provide a youth outreach project in the village.



*Brenda Fordy-Scott receives the cheque on behalf of ATAC*

ATAC was established in 1994 as a community organisation to provide a centre for training activities aimed at supporting young people and other residents of the area. It was successful in attracting a National Lottery grant to acquire and convert its present building and to employ staff. In recent years, volunteers have taken a more active part in running the Centre and it is used extensively by residents of the village, as well as providing office accommodation for our staff serving the former rural coalfield.

The grant will be used to employ two youth workers who will work with those young people in Widdrington Station who have not

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been easy for ATAC to reach in the past, and to include them in the services currently offered by the Centre. It will enable two youth workers to be employed for 12 months.

Applications to the GOLD Fund in the eastern Castle Morpeth area are considered by the Coalfield Villages Community Panel whose members are drawn from local communities. The Chair of the Panel, Councillor Arnold Baker of Creswell said "I am delighted that this project was approved unanimously by the Panel. ATAC is showing great foresight in wishing to take its services out to young people who do not normally visit the centre. I am sure that the project will be successful as an innovative and proactive approach to helping young people develop their full potential."

The Chair of ATAC's Management Committee, Brenda Fordy-Scott who received the cheque on behalf of ATAC said "I am really pleased that we have been successful in attracting this funding for a much-needed project in the village. This money means that we will be able to reach young people who don't normally come to our Centre and encourage them to take part in the decisions made about the future of the village and about ATAC itself."

## LEADER PROGRAMME FUNDING POST-2006

READERS MAY HAVE SEEN ARTICLES in the press and in community newsletters such as this setting out concern that we are all about to fall over a "funding cliff" in 2006 when the current European Union funding period finishes.

The EU Commission is currently midway through its preparations for a new 6 year funding period to start on 1 January 2007. The current review of budgets is perhaps a fundamental review as has ever been conducted due to the significant enlargement of the Union to the East of Europe. The focus of the review is the ongoing reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the replacement of Objective 2 funding with a whole new set of proposals.

Future rural development funding support will be directed through a single European Agricultural Rural Development Fund rather than the current three. The fund will have three main areas of work which it will fund- agricultural, environmental and rural development.

Significantly, for areas such as north Northumberland the European Commission proposes that the Leader approach should be used much more widely as it recognises that it can have a greater impact with its budgets if it works through local organisations.

Whilst it is early days, and the proposals for post 2006 rural funding are to be debated further, there are signs that North Northumberland may not face falling off such a cliff as might be the case in more urban areas which stand to lose many EU budgets.

The EU Commission has already proposed some detail of the types of project it might fund such as:

- *tourism information centres,*
- *signposting of tourist sites,*
- *recreational facilities,*
- *development of rural tourism rural services,*
- *village renovation*
- *upgrading of rural heritage,*
- *rural training facilities.*

The job now is to ensure that the proposals are relevant to our area and that we are able to put forward a strong case for a continuation of the Leader approach in North Northumberland.

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 introduced widespread rights for members of the public to inspect and be supplied with a wide range of files and records which are held by public bodies. The Act has been introduced in two main stages:

- *first, public bodies had to adopt a publication scheme setting out what material, in what form, and at what cost, would be made available on request. This process took effect in 2003.*
- *Now, there is a presumption that all material will be made available on request, unless there are specific reasons for not doing so. These provisions took effect from 1 January 2005.*

The implications of the FoI Act and its regulations are demanding and complicated. Anyone, anywhere in the world, has a right of access. Even very small public bodies, with limited administrative capacity, must comply: parish councils, parish meetings, GP's, NHS-funded pharmacists, schools etc. The system of charging under the new provisions is different from charging under a Publication Scheme. Many supplies of information will VAT free, but others are treated as a business, thus bringing small public bodies into the possible realm of VAT registration. Different government departments are responsible for advising different public bodies about the Act. Different people within a public body may be responsible for managing different aspects of the Act. Various other Acts (e.g. on Data Protection) will sometimes take precedence over the Freedom of Information.

On top of these intentional complications, the use of inadequate mailings lists has meant that not all relevant bodies have been informed about the requirements of the Act.

Parish councils and (separately) parish meetings are subject to the requirements of the Act. Where a member of the public requests in writing to inspect or be supplied with material which may be held by the parish council, the clerk (or other designated person) must reply within 20 working days: to confirm whether the material is actually held by the council, to confirm whether it can be made available, and to indicate the likely charges involved. In the case of charging, parish councils can request payment in advance, before any further work is done to extract and collate the material.

The clerk has been given the power to exercise his/her discretion over the release of information, if its disclosure would be likely to inhibit the free and frank provision of advice, or the exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, or the effective conduct of public affairs.

Both the legal requirements and the practical application of this new regime will be explored further in some forthcoming training events for parish councils, to be run by the Northumberland Association of Local Councils during February and March 2005. For more details contact NALC at Tower Buildings (01670 517178 or email davidfrancis@ccn.org.uk).

## WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FUTURE OF RURAL REGENERATION

VOLUNTARY ACTION CUMBRIA, our neighbouring Rural Community Council, are organising a national conference that will be of interest to women interested in rural regeneration. They have sent us the following information:

20-21 April 2005, Women's Contribution to the Future of Rural Regeneration: challenges, constraints, strategies and solutions, Carlisle, Cumbria

A national conference organised by the Rural Women's Network (a project initiated by the Rural Community Council for Cumbria). This event will highlight and promote the importance of women's contribution to rural communities and economies, explore and develop strategies to facilitate the role of rural women in the rural economy, and will aim to develop strategies to increase the participation of women in decision-making and planning.

Key speakers include: Jenny Shipley, Former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Pam Warhurst - The Countryside Agency, Martin Nesbit - Defra, Chris Collier - Cumbria Vision and Dr Marilyn Waring - economist.

### CLERK REQUIRED

Tillside Parish Council is looking for a Clerk from 1st April 2005. It is a large council, with 14 councillors and 3 wards, and holds monthly meetings in Chatton Parish Hall. All the council paperwork is filed at the hall, which is also equipped with computers so a big advantage is that the clerk can work at the hall approximately a half day a week and not have the council filing cabinet etc at their home.

If you are interested, please telephone Helen Handyside on

01670-783728 or the Chairman, Neil Douglas on 01668-215298."

This event will be of interest to those involved in rural regeneration and/or working with rural women, training and education providers, community and voluntary sector groups, public sector bodies, local authorities and rural women.

To book go to <http://www.nrwc.org.uk> and/or for further details contact Tel: 01768 210997 or Email: [info@nrwc.org.uk](mailto:info@nrwc.org.uk)

## A HELLO FROM GAMBIA

IN OUR LAST ISSUE we reported on the departure of Susan Bower, one of long serving administrative staff, to a new life in Gambia. Susan has since been in contact with Chris Hall, office manager at Morpeth, and Chris gives the following progress report:

Safely settled in Serekunda, Susan Bower has now moved into her home, along with her newly acquired dogs, "Sooty Wooty" and "Nikita", both of whom, I am informed, are in need of some TLC (tender loving care). Susan is slowly getting to grips with the local customs, one of which, "I'll be back tomorrow!" is used continuously by the local handyman, who seems to disappear for days, half way through a job, and then reappear, as if by magic, with no reason given for his absence. Electricity is often non-existent, but whenever there is light, its party time, with neighbours and friends holding an impromptu get-together to celebrate the return of that essential commodity we take so much for granted here. However, the fact that her garden contains banana palms, mango trees and various other exotic flora, more than makes up for such shortages. Coupled with the beautiful climate, lovely palm-fringed beaches and friendly, smiling people, Susan knows she has made the right decision, and looks forward to a very happy and I am sure, very interesting future.

## NORTH EAST GUIDE TO GRANTS FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

FUNDING INFORMATION NORTH EAST has published the 8th edition of its popular, "North East Guide to Grants for Voluntary Organisations" (2005/2006). The Guide contains information on over 110 charitable trusts and foundations which support voluntary organisations and community groups in Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, County Durham and Teesside. Most of the information is provided by the charitable trusts themselves. With an estimated £51 million available annually to voluntary and community groups in the North East of England the Guide provides details on grant-making policies, procedures and recent grants awarded.

There is also a useful section on how to successfully raise money from charitable trusts.

The Guide is available in book format (£15.00 including postage and packing), CD ROM (£18.00) and as an online searchable database. The database is purchased by annual subscription. Cost starts at £50.00.

To order a copy of the Guide, or to find out more information about the database, please contact Funding Information North East, John Haswell House, 8/9 Gladstone Terrace, Gateshead, NE8 4DY. Tel: 0191 477 1253 or email: [enquiries@fine.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@fine.org.uk). You can also find information and order forms at [www.fine.org.uk](http://www.fine.org.uk)

## LOCAL NETWORK FUND: YOUNG PEOPLE'S FUND

THE LOCAL NETWORK FUND for Children and Young People in Northumberland has given away £190,000 in grants this year to local organisations and community groups working to give a better future for the children and young people in the county. The fund is part of a national Government initiative aimed at supporting organisations in Northumberland that focus on helping children and young people up to 19 years of age.

Grants are still available from this fund with a further £80,000 available to award to groups before April 2005. Applications to the fund are very welcome.

There are 4 themes that the Fund concentrates on:

- Aspirations and experiences: activities that give children experiences, or help them achieve goals, that other children may take for granted.
- Economic disadvantage: activities that help families improve their living standards and cope with the difficulties that come from being on low incomes.
- Isolation and access: activities that help children who are isolated or alone, or have trouble accessing services.
- Children's voices: projects that give children and young people the chance to express their opinions and give advice on matters that concern them.

If you have a project that you believe would fit with the criteria of the fund, then you can obtain an application pack by telephoning the National Call Centre on 0845 1130161.

Should you need help with the form or any further advice, you can contact your local development worker whose details can be found on the back page of this publication, or, if your group is located in Blyth or Wansbeck you can contact:

Blyth Valley CVS 01670 353623  
Wansbeck CVS 01670 816751

# 38th MORPETH NORTHUMBRIAN GATHERING

OVER THE WEEKEND of 1 to 3 April 2005 Morpeth will be making a splash as part of the Trafalgar bicentenary and SeaBritain 2005 celebrations. The Morpeth Gathering presents the very best of Northumberland's traditions at fifty-plus events including concerts (including a big sea songs bash with Werca's Folk, Benny Graham, The Keelers and Carolyn Robson on Friday night), dances, children's events, displays, workshops, stalls, races, folk sessions, films, lectures, tours, competitions and even bell ringing.

This year our special focus is on the Battle of Trafalgar, Lord Collingwood and all things maritime. Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood had his home on Oldgate in Morpeth (of which he had fond thoughts when abroad, (which was much of the time). He was known to have planted acorns on the riverside to provide wood for building the future fleet. Over the week end the town will resound to local sea songs, press gangs, hangings and floggings, the sailor's hornpipe, fru-fru bands (did you know the ship's rats ate the bellows of bagpipes on board one of Collingwood's ships?), broadsides, sailors' yarns, shanties, talks on Lord Collingwood and the music of the era.

Witness scenes from life on board ship or visit the town hall treasures including the ship's bell from a vessel of a later era, HMS Morpeth Castle, and, it's hoped, Collingwood's own waistcoat. See how soldiers and sailors of the Napoleonic age lived at a living history encampment in the Park, where you can walk in Collingwood's footsteps.

## BANKING IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

ELECTRONIC (e-banking), which covers both computer and telephone, is now widely available. The advantages, particularly in rural areas, are obvious. Using these methods, banking transactions can be actioned 24 hours a day. Computer banking allows a charity, for instance, to view recent transactions, print out statements and transfer funds between accounts and make payments. Many banks also have the facility for a charity to set up, amend or cancel standing orders. Electronic banking also allows payments to be made to the charity, i.e. acceptance of credit card donations. Electronic banking services differ between the different banks and building societies. If trustees decide that they want to use electronic banking then they should shop around for the most suitable package for their charity.

*What is the Charity Commission's view about electronic banking for charities?*

The Charity Commission recognises that with changing bank technology more and more charities are likely to consider moving away from paper based banking methods; many charities have already done so.

Any decision to adopt electronic banking must be made with the benefits and advantages to the charity in mind. Trustees need to ensure that the organisation's constitution gives them the necessary power and that adequate financial controls are in place.

*What are the advantages and potential difficulties of electronic banking?*

The advantages are that Trustees are able to carry out transactions and accessing their financial statements 24 hours a day with no need to travel to banks, search for car parking and potentially stand in queues. Trustees can instantly see what is happening with the charity's money rather than waiting for statements to be sent.

Potential difficulties arise from possible lack of computing expertise within the organisation and lack of equipment. Necessary purchases of equipment and expenditure on telephone calls need to be covered from the organisation's budget. Without the relevant expertise e-banking may prove too daunting for some organisations.

*Is electronic banking as secure as more traditional methods of banking?*

Organisations and banks have a vested interest in making sure that electronic banking is as secure as possible. Banks have a password system for both computer and telephone banking.

A charity needs to ensure that only trusted people have access to the passwords and Trustees should put in place systems to prevent any one individual from being able to control significant resources.

If this is done then e-banking is as secure as traditional methods.

Special new music and art commissions are planned for the Gathering and the Collingwood's Acorns education programme will be launched, leading later in the year to activities during the national Trafalgar Festival in October.

For non-folkies there is a special evening presented by the admiral's descendant Charles Collingwood, the suave actor famed for playing Brian Aldridge in the Archers. And watch out for Cuthbert's dog Bounce around the town over the weekend.

The latest threatened town redevelopments seem to have faded away for the moment, but to make up for that the town hall roof is scheduled to be repaired, though we are promised that should not impact too strongly on the use of the venue.....

Tickets and accommodation information are available from Morpeth Tourist Information Centre, The Chantry, Bridge Street, Morpeth, NE61 1PJ. Tel.: 01670 500700. Fax: 01670 500710. There are no weekend or family tickets, but you can receive discounts by becoming a Patron: contact Janet Brown on 01670 790465 for scheme details.

All other competition, general and administrative details: please contact Kim Bibby-Wilson, Chairman, Westgate House, Dogger Bank, Morpeth, NE61 1RE. Tel.: 01670 513308 or website: [www.northumbriana.org.uk](http://www.northumbriana.org.uk)

## MEN'S HEALTH

THE MEN'S HEALTH FUND at the Community Foundation for Tyne and Wear aims to improve and increase local men's knowledge about their health. Men's health is a national issue. In comparison to women, men are likely to die earlier and take more risks with their lifestyle. The problem with men's health is particularly relevant in the North East. Here levels of drinking, smoking and obesity are amongst the highest in the country.

So what is the Men's Health Fund at the Community Foundation doing about this problem? Over the last three years they have run three campaigns which have encouraged men to look after their health. They have featured Idle Eric, the campaign mascot. Idle Eric, who was designed by Viz cartoonist Stephen Donald, has appeared in Metro Stations, on buses and even has his own website. These campaigns have captured the regions imagination with Idle Eric having become a regional celebrity.

The Men's Health Fund also awards grants to community groups to organise activities that will increase awareness of men's health at a local level. Within the last year it has awarded a grants to:

*The Just 4 Men group* to organise a men's health event held at the Eldon Square leisure centre in Newcastle.

*The Bridge project* in Sunderland to hold a Bring Your Man Day, which encouraged women to bring husbands, fathers and other family members to an event where they could have a



Lynne Teasdale and David Mordue

health check and learn about how to live more healthily.

The Men's Health Fund is currently looking for suitable projects in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland to award to. Francis Baring the fund manager of the Men's Health Fund says, "Groups applying now will have feedback on their projects by March, so don't wait."

For further information about applying for a grant please contact Francis Baring on 0191 222 0945, email: [fb@communityfoundation.org.uk](mailto:fb@communityfoundation.org.uk) or visit the website on [www.communityfoundation.org.uk](http://www.communityfoundation.org.uk)

# COASTWATCH



Coastwatchvolunteers with Philip Maddoc

'USE YOUR EYES AND SAVE LIVES!' is the motto of a very enthusiastic group of volunteers in Berwick-upon-Tweed. Coastwatch (Berwick) is a coastal safety service run by volunteers and was set up as a charity in December 2003. The aim of the group is to establish look-out sites around the British coastline, in order to improve the standard of safety for everyone who enjoys the sea.

Last year Coastwatch (Berwick) secured an 11 year lease on a derelict foul-weather station on the cliff edge of Magdalene Fields Golf Club in Berwick. They have agreed Berwick Borough Council to improve and maintain this property. CCN has been very involved in organising funds for new railings (see picture), new equipment and promotional materials.

The group has a volunteer base of 25 people from in and around Berwick town. Leslie Wooler, the group's station controller explains that 'all volunteers go through an induction and relevant training before they are allowed to man the look-out. Regular weather reports are given to passing ships as well as regular check-ups on safety on the beaches, safety talks on schools and information to visitors to the watch tower. We have received more than 4,000 visitors from all over the world to our tower last year!' Most volunteers work a 2 hour shift each week.

The group has been very successful in spotting ships in distress and supporting other local rescue services when needed. But you don't have to live near Berwick to become

involved with this kind of work. Coastwatch (Berwick) is keen to promote their latest project called 'Coastwatch Observer'. With the support of Radio Newcastle, the group has managed to launch this new idea of making our coastline safer for all. They already have more than 45 members on their lists, from as far away as Stornoway to the South of England!

Leslie Wooler says that this new project is for anyone interested in helping in some small way: 'By joining us as a Coastwatch Observer, your eyes will play an important part in protecting the safety of people and vessels at sea. No training is necessary - we will give you a card with names and telephone numbers of emergency contacts in the area. If you observe someone in danger at sea, or an impending accident, you simply inform the authorities. You will also be asked to complete a report form giving all the relevant details of the situation. Your stroll along the seashore could be a life-saver!'

For any further information or to join the scheme, please contact Leslie on 01289-386395.

## MEET THE FUNDERS

CASTLE MORPETH Borough Council are holding a "Meet the Funders" event on Monday 14th March at Morpeth Rugby Club. The event will be open from 3pm to 7pm.

This is a free event to assist local organisations to gather information on funding for culture, arts and sports projects. If you are looking for funding in any of these areas you are more than welcome to attend. Even if it's not for you, if you are aware of any other organisations looking for this funding do please pass on the message. The event is open to everyone, particularly useful for anyone with schemes which cross boundaries.

Exhibitors may include:

- Arts Council England
- Sport England
- Heritage lottery Fund
- CMBC Arts Extra/Community Initiatives Fund
- Big Lottery Fund
- Northern Rock Foundation
- Northern Film and Media
- Community Fund
- Awards for All
- Countryside Agency

Refreshments will be available throughout the day. To help with catering arrangements, interest should be registered before the event so please contact Val Knowles on 01670 794796 or email at [val.knowles@castlemorpeth.gov.uk](mailto:val.knowles@castlemorpeth.gov.uk)

This is a great opportunity for all those with even the germ of an idea to get advice on possible support so be there or be square!

# WALKING FOR HEALTH

THE WALKING FOR HEALTH INITIATIVE is a national initiative which aims to improve the health and fitness of people by getting them walking in their own communities, particularly those who do little exercise, or who live in areas of poor health. Barbara King is the CARAD (Communities in Alnwick, Rothbury, Amble & Druridge) Healthy Walks Co-ordinator employed by CCN and based in the Willowburn Sports and Leisure Centre, Alnwick.

Barbara has been leading this project for some 18 months now and with the help of a steadily growing band of volunteers has increased the number of people walking their way back to health. Barbara reports:

"We have an average of 35 walk leaders now, although more are always needed.

The current walks programme is:

- longer walks in Amble every Tuesday at 2pm,
- Alnwick starter walks every Wednesday at 10am from the Tourist Information Centre
- Alnwick long walks on the third Friday of each month from Willowburn Sports and Leisure Centre at 1.30pm
- Rothbury starter walks 1st and 3rd Friday of each month at 10.30am from the Parish Church Hall



Volunteers at a CARAD Training Course, September 2004

- Hadston starter walks every Wednesday at 1pm from Hadston House.

Just over 200 people have registered as walkers for these regular sessions.

Last June there was a good launch in the Alnwick garden for Alnwick walks which had press and television coverage on ITV's early evening news in conjunction with the 'Britain on the move campaign'. This brought forth

about 60 people, many who still continue with the weekly walks.

Shown in the photograph are attendees at the last voluntary walk leaders training group in September. A further course is taking place on 17 February at Druridge Bay Country Park.

For more information on the project please contact Barbara King on 01665 605030 or e-mail [barbaraking@ccn.org.uk](mailto:barbaraking@ccn.org.uk)

## ACOMB BRIDLEWAY

THE BRIDLEWAY from Acomb to The Riding, near St. John Lee, is a well used path with villagers and walkers en-route to or from Hexham. Its historical importance is shown by its appearance on 19th century maps. This was also the route taken by pack ponies carrying lead from nearby mines.

The most interesting and attractive part of the bridleway, with its stone walls and cast iron metalwork, had fallen into disrepair. This was made worse by a beech tree which fell across the footpath and demolished part of the wall and dislodged railings. The walls also began to suffer from the unwanted attention of vandals.

Gordon Close, John Hutchinson and Alan Surtees, residents of the village realised, something had to be done so they decided to try to do the work themselves having amongst them people with the right stoneworking and metalworking skills. The path crosses private land and permission was sought and given from the Estate (Pelhew) to seek funding to pay for the materials (sand, cement, steel, stone) needed to repair the wall and railings. Richard Powell, Community Council of Northumberland, was contacted and he helped the enthusiastic band of volunteers to organise their thoughts about what they wanted to do and what was actually needed and then suggested ways of seeking funding.

The Estate then offered to pay for the materials if Gordon, John and Alan would supply the labour free of charge. The first job was to re-point the wall and replace the broken coping stones. A number had been broken beyond use, so new ones were made by Tyne Valley Stone, working from measurements and photographs to match the existing stones. Some of the railings needed replacing. New cast-iron uprights, that hold the railings in place, were cast by a local foundry (Tyne Valley Metal). These were then leaded into freshly cut holes on top of the new coping stones in the traditional way using a borrowed lead ladle. It was decided to finish off the railings by painting them with a bitumastic paint which gave a more sympathetic finish.

Although there were only three volunteers working on the project, there was a lot of interest shown and encouragement and advice given by many villagers. All of the work was carried out over roughly a three month period with at least one person working on the wall and railings a few days every week.

Gordon, John and Alan are now planning further restoration projects and due to the interest generated, others in the village are looking at possible projects of their own.



Acomb bridleway

## Single Payment Scheme

THE RURAL STRESS Information Network are pleased to relate that Defra/RPA have announced a series of 16 events to help those involved in the biggest change facing farmers in 30 years.

A series of seminars on Single Farm Payment scheme will take place at various venues throughout England:

Each seminar will include a short presentation on the Single Payment Scheme, together with details of the application form and how to apply.

An important feature will be a Q&A session, where individual farmers' concerns will be addressed directly.

The Northern venues and dates for the seminars are:

**Tuesday 8th March** Doncaster Race Course

**Wednesday 16th March** Lancaster Farmers Auction

**Thursday 17th March** Carlisle Race Course

**Monday 21st March** Newcastle Race Course

**Tuesday 22nd March** Thirsk Race Course

Farmers wishing to attend should telephone 0870 043 4109 to book their place or they can register on line at [www.keystone-group.co.uk/sps](http://www.keystone-group.co.uk/sps) Entrance will be ticket only.

## Summer Music Festival 2005

A full programme of musical activity is taking place this year at Rock and Local Churches. Details are:

**13 February 2005** - Rock Festival Choir at St Paul's Church, Alnwick at 7.30 pm

**22 May 2005** - Rock Festival Choir at St Paul's Church, Alnwick at 7.30 pm

**27 November 2005** - Rock Festival Choir at St Paul's Church, Alnwick at 7.30 pm

**11 & 12 June 2005** - Organ Weekend at Rock Church. Recital and Flower Festival. Recital by Scott Farrell on restored heritage organ 11 June at 7.30 pm. Flowers and organ playing throughout the weekend.

**10 July 2005** - 'Come & Sing' at Rock Church - Mozart Requiem from scratch.

**August 2005** - Two summer schools for children aged 8-16 yrs. Come and perform a musical from scratch.

Further details from: Rock Hall School  
Rock, Alnwick, NE66 3SB  
Tel: 01665 579224

## WHAT WE DO

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF NORTHUMBERLAND provides a range of advice and support services for community and voluntary groups to enable people throughout Northumberland to overcome disadvantages and improve their quality of life. These services include:

- Funding advice
- Management committee development
- Advice on constitutions, charity law and legal structures
- Support for village halls / community buildings
- Project management support
- Local regeneration
- Support for parish councils
- Employment services
- Production of community newspaper

CCN is anxious to ensure that it effectively supports local communities and therefore operates a process of continuous evaluation. This requires feedback from our users. Any comments on services provided are not only welcomed but essential to help us to make sure that we are meeting the overall needs of users and maintaining our quality standards.

Northumberland Community News is published bi-monthly. It contains useful information on sources of advice and funding, helps to alert people to changes in legislation or service provision which may affect them, and passes on ideas and news from one community to another. Contributions and items of informative and newsworthy value are welcomed. Please get in touch with the editor at Tower Buildings, 9 Oldgate, Morpeth, NE61 1PY or email items direct to [alanhedley@ccn.org.uk](mailto:alanhedley@ccn.org.uk).

Copy deadline for the next issue is Tuesday 22 March 2005.

For more information on the Community Council check out their website at [www.ccn.org.uk](http://www.ccn.org.uk)

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