

one Darlington

Spring 2025



Full steam ahead for S&DR200 festival!

pages 4-7



Childcare support is expanding

**Recent changes mean
more families can now get
the childcare support they need**

To find out more visit **ChildcareChoices.gov.uk**



HM Government

**Childcare
Choices**

Welcome to One Darlington

Welcome to your spring edition of One Darlington! As the days grow longer and the first signs of warmer weather appear, there's plenty happening in our town to look forward to.

One of the biggest milestones in Darlington's history is fast approaching - the 200th anniversary of the world's first passenger rail journey. This September, we'll be celebrating the pioneering spirit that truly put Darlington on the global map. In this issue, we take a look at some of the exciting events planned for this momentous occasion and how you can get involved. See pages 4-7 for more details.

Also on the horizon is the Darlington Eco Fair, taking place this June. If you're keen to learn more about sustainable living, reducing waste and supporting local environmental initiatives, and enjoy some free family fun, this is an event not to be missed. Turn to pages 14 and 15 to find out what's on offer and how you can take part in building a greener future for our town.

Another important topic in this edition is the work being done to tackle the dangers of illegal vapes. With growing concerns about unregulated products and their risks, we explore what's being done locally to protect public health and ensure safer choices for everyone. See page 23 for more on this important issue.

Spring is also the perfect time to get out and support some of Darlington's fantastic independent businesses. Whether you're looking for a cosy café, a unique gift, or a fresh take on fashion, our town centre has plenty to offer. We've rounded up some of the latest businesses to open their doors in the town centre on pages 8 and 9 - make sure to give them a visit when you're next in town!.

With a packed calendar of events and plenty of ways to get involved in your community, there's lots to be excited about this season in Darlington. As always, we hope you enjoy this edition of One Darlington – thanks for reading.



South Park in spring

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One Darlington, Room 106, Town Hall, Darlington.

Email editor@onedarlington.org.uk

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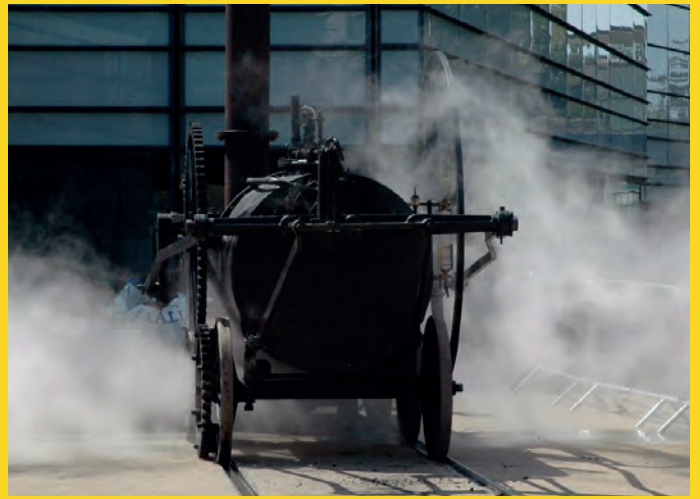
The next issue will be out in early June.

If you haven't received your copy by mid-June, please call 0800 160 1552.

An audio and online version of One Darlington is also available at www.darlington.gov.uk/onedarlington



Courtesy of Beamish Museum



Courtesy of Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales

FULL STEAM AHEAD TO S&DR200



2025 is a very special year for Darlington as residents, historians and train lovers come together to celebrate 200 years since the first passenger journey on the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR).

The S&DR200 festival begins in late March with All Change, a spectacular open-air event in Bishop Auckland combining dazzling projections, drones and up to 100 live performers bringing history to life at the Kynren site. Find out more at www.s&dr200.co.uk

The nine month festival has something for everyone, with highlights throughout the year including a recreation of the first journey on the S&DR by a newly commissioned replica of Locomotion No. 1.

Free large-scale outdoor events, exhibitions focusing on the history of railways, bringing together paintings of national significance, botanical and sensory installations, iconic locomotives, and newly commissioned artworks showcased in public spaces, libraries, and world-class museums.

Hopetown Darlington is front and centre of this world-leading celebration, kicking off with Railway Pioneers – celebrating the rockstars of the past, the first of two free exciting exhibitions, running from Friday 4 April until Sunday 22 June.

Three iconic locomotives will be on show in the Exhibition Hall, showcasing the advancements of rail technology in the early 19th century as well as the engineering innovation which led to the opening of the S&DR.

Pen-y-Darren, designed by Richard Trevithick; Steam Elephant, designed by John Buddle and William Chapman and the original Locomotion No. 1, designed by George Stephenson, will be on show, giving visitors a unique opportunity to see these rail pioneers free under one roof. The exhibition is expected to attract visitors from across the UK and beyond so get your tickets quickly! Book your free tickets at www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk

The exhibition will be complemented by a range of free, fun activities for the whole family at Hopetown. Keep an eye on our website, www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk and social media for all the details.

Loans for Railway Pioneers – celebrating the rockstars of the past:

National Railway Museum, Beamish, Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales, IMechE.

Funders for Railway Pioneers – celebrating the rockstars of the past: Arts Council England.

With thanks to: National Railway Museum, The Story, Durham Archives, The National Archives, Common Rooms, IMechE.



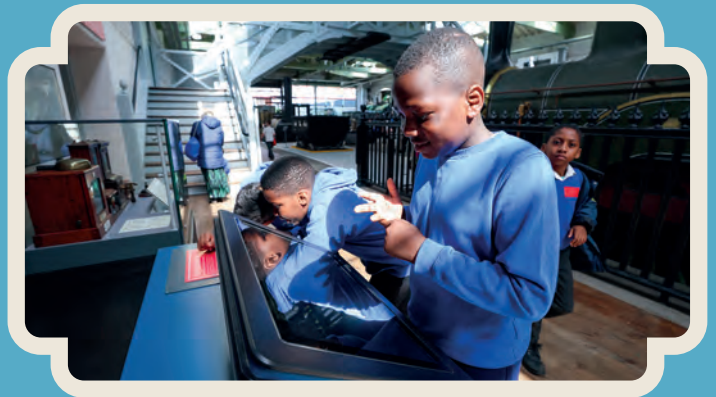
THIS LOCOMOTIVE WAS BUILT BY ROBERT STEPHENSON & COY AT FORTH ST WORKS, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE & WAS THE FIRST TO BE USED ON A PUBLIC RAILWAY AT THE OPENING OF THE STOCKTON & DARLINGTON RAILWAY ON THE 27 SEP. 1825. IT WAS DRIVEN BY GEORGE STEPHENSON & HAULED A TRAIN OF 90 TONS FROM SHILDON TO STOCKTON A DISTANCE OF 18 MILES. IT CONTINUED IN USE ON THIS LINE UNTIL 1841.

For your safety
NO ENTRY

Award-winning

HOPETOWN

- D A R L I N G T O N -



Throughout this celebratory year, Hopetown is the perfect destination for a family day out.

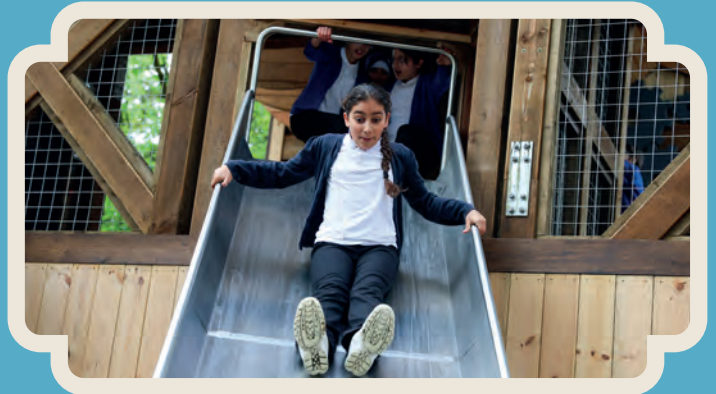
Entry to the site is free and includes the interactive North Road Station Museum and the stores where you can take a look at some of our many historical artefacts.

As the weather improves, enjoy the great outdoors with a picnic on Foundry Green or pop into the Clocktower café for some homemade refreshments.

For a small charge, kids can have a great time at the Wagon Woods adventure playground, a unique attraction complete with intersecting rail-track walkways, a chimney, and a 50 metre boardwalk among the trees. You can also book tickets for Experiment! – a time-travel journey through the history of the passenger railway.

Do you, or your family, have a special connection to the Stockton and Darlington Railway? We would love to hear stories about how the railway shaped your life.

If you remember the S&DR 150th anniversary celebrations or someone in your family has memories of working on the railway, get in touch to share your stories, email feedback@darlington.gov.uk or write to Railway memories, Room 106, Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington, DL1 5QT.



**Hopetown
Darlington**



Hopetown Darlington



hopetowndarlington

To find out more
and to book tickets visit

www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk



A YEAR OF CELEBRATIONS

Railway Pioneers is just the start of the S&DR celebrations in Darlington. Following on from Railway Pioneers - celebrating the rockstars of the past, Hopetown will be hosting STEAM to the Future between Friday 11 July and Sunday 5 October. This exhibition follows the story of the early railways and looks to the future of rail travel including the use of greener solutions. Visitors will enjoy a fully immersive art installation by Studio Swine inspired by steam as a source of power and be invited to create a train for the 22nd century using virtual reality software.

Later in the year, The Whistle Stop, a touring exhibition, bringing together high quality reproductions of historic artefacts and documents from across the UK to showcase S&DR's history, will come to Darlington Library at Crown Street.

In September, we will welcome Ghost Train to the town centre – a free, one day festival featuring performers, live music and a procession of large scale art installations.

On 27 September, a newly renovated replica of Locomotion No. 1 and the passenger carriage Experiment will travel along sections of the original S&DR line and will be cheered across Skerne Bridge, the world's oldest railway bridge still in operation.

There are lots of other events and chances to get involved in S&DR200 – visit www.enjoydarlington.co.uk or the S&DR website, www.sdr200.co.uk, to find out more and keep an eye on Hopetown, the council and S&DR's social media.



Image supplied by National Railway Museum



Image supplied by Studio Swine

KEEPING BUSINESS

Darlington is a great place to live,

Town centre footfall data reflects an increase in visitors and the number of people using council owned, town centre car parks has also shown signs of improvement.

Business confidence is growing and significant investment in our town centre is helping to support a healthy, productive and vibrant business community.

Nowhere is this more evident than the Imperial Quarter.

Recent work to extend pavements and change the layout on Coniscliffe Road is nearing completion, improving outdoor facilities for local bars and restaurants, and creating an attractive and welcoming thoroughfare to the town centre with new planting, permanent seating and a pocket park.

Several new businesses have also opened in the area over the last twelve months including a farm shop, convenience store, prom dress shop, a vintage emporium, and three new bars.

Popular florist, Artichoke, has also moved to a bigger premises on Grange Road and a new natural living shop selling organic, cold pressed juices and cleanses will be opening soon.

Here's what some of our new businesses had to say:

Clervaux farm shop (Coniscliffe Road)

"We're delighted to have launched our Clervaux Farm shop in this fantastic location, which is a key route into the town centre and has benefitted from recent works which will encourage people to spend more time in the area. We're looking forward to growing our customer base and would encourage people passing by to call in and take a look at our great range of high-quality homegrown produce including fresh eggs, vegetables, healthy snacks and homemade gifts. Operated by the Ruskin Mill Trust, Clervaux Garden School, this venture is more than just a shop; it provides meaningful opportunities for young people and adults with autism and other additional needs and helps them to develop essential work and life skills. We're excited to see the positive impact this project will have on our community and participants in the months, and years to come."

Allison Rice, Principal of Clervaux.

Pretty Little Prom (Grange Road)

"We've been in the bridal and prom industry for over 20 years and are delighted to expand our business in Darlington - joining the fantastic range of independents operating on Grange Road. Pretty Little Prom is a stunning and modern shop, with two floors full of prom dresses from the best designers in a huge range of colours, styles and fabrics. No matter your size or budget, we have something for everyone. Our magical garden area is the perfect back drop for your 'I said yes to the dress' Instagram moments too!"

Lisa Maddren and Rebecca Atkinson, business owners.

The Cherry Tree (Blackwellgate)

"Darlington is a fantastic town and the Imperial Quarter has a great choice of bars, restaurants and retail units, making it a great place to do business, day or night. The Cherry Tree, which was formerly Avalon, has undertaken a huge transformation into a high-end cocktail bar and boasts a luxurious new look. We have master mixologists and have launched a fabulous menu with main dishes, light bites and tapas items. We're also offering bottomless brunches and have grand plans for our massive garden which will be a fantastic space to enjoy as we head into the warmer weather."

Chris Moumouris, business owner.

BOOMING

work, visit and invest



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



Elsewhere in the town centre we have welcomed new businesses including:

- **Iyawa Afro-Caribbean Foods & Kitchen**
on Tubwell Row
- **Bubble & Cone and Strides**
in the Cornmill Centre
- **Darlo Fish Inn and Woodland Creations**
in Queen Street Shopping Centre
- **Thai Pan**
on Crown Street
- **The Brotherhood barbers**
in Darlington Market
- **Luminous and Upperclass**, two new hairdressers
on Post House Wynd

Five big-named brands have also renewed their leases in the Cornmill Centre and the future of the iconic Binns department store has been secured.

Growing our economy and attracting more businesses to the town centre is a key priority. We remain committed to the ongoing development of the Yards and Skinnergate and other regeneration projects including transforming the former Northern Echo building into an adult skills centre and business workspace.

We are also committed to filling the few empty shops in the town centre and are among four early adopters of the government's High Street Rental Auction scheme which gives councils new powers to auction the leases of properties which have been vacant for more than a year, where the landlord has not taken sufficient steps to let their premises. We are currently considering the areas where the powers could be applied and will be consulting with residents in the future.

Your EV journey



Ownership and use of electric vehicles (EVs) is increasing as people look to play their part in tackling climate change and air pollution. It's predicted that in five years' time, there will be 50,000 plug-in vehicles in the Tees Valley. As a council, we are committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2040 and part of that ambition includes increasing the use of EVs over the coming years.

If you already own an EV or are thinking of buying one, there's lots of things to consider. How far will it go before it needs recharging, and where can I recharge my vehicle, are perhaps the main questions.

With these questions, and others in mind, we have devised a policy that explores some of these concerns and how we can work towards finding effective and safe solutions to help more people enjoy the benefits of owning an EV.

New house builds are now required to offer an EV charging point and there are many options available for people who have driveways and need to install

a charging point. However, many of the borough's houses do not have a driveway to charge their EV at home. Cables stretched across the street or channels dug into pavements are not suitable solutions.

Accessible community charging points will help to solve this issue as will the increasing number of charging points at workplaces and supermarket car parks. Faster charging technology will mean that you can charge your car whilst doing your weekly shop. It is anticipated that some of these solutions will be funded by central government through Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure which will be accessed through the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA).

We've already worked with the TVCA to install around 50 charging points across seven of our town centre off street car parks, offering more choice for where you can charge your car.

Technology is constantly changing, and we will update our policy as needed. The policy is available in the highways section of our website.

Details of town centre car park charging points and how to use them (you must also buy a valid parking ticket) **are available online at** www.darlington.gov.uk/evparking



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Contact your councillor

Key: (C) Conservative
(G) Green (I) Independent
(L) Labour (LD) Liberal Democrats

Your councillor is there to listen to you and find out about the issues that are affecting life in your ward. Scheduled ward surgeries are detailed below, but you can email or call your local councillor.

Find out more at www.darlington.gov.uk

Emailing councillors

To email your councillor, their email address is firstname.lastname@darlington.gov.uk

For example, if you want to email Stephen Harker, type Stephen.harker@darlington.gov.uk

The only exceptions are Anne-Marie Curry (North Road), Andrew Anderson (Bank Top and Lascelles) and Rebecca Baker (Brinkburn and Faverdale) whose email addresses are shown with their contact details.

BANK TOP AND LASCELLES

Andrew Anderson (L) Tel: 07837 225041, Andrew.G.Anderson@darlington.gov.uk; **Helen Crumie (L)** Tel: 07743 191014; **David Ray (L)** Tel: 07966 048647.

BRINKBURN AND FAVERDALE

Rebecca Baker (L) Tel: 07805 806420, Rebecca.E.Baker@darlington.gov.uk; **David Beckett (L)** Tel: 07982 847837. West Park Academy, Tuesday 11 March, 8 April and Wednesday 4 June, 5-6pm. **Scott Durham (C)** Tel: 07805 505156. The Brinkburn, Tuesday 1 April, 7-8pm; The White Heifer That Travelled, Tuesday 6 May, 7-8pm.

COCKERTON

Jan Cossins (L) Tel: 241124; **Jim Garner (L)** Tel: 241384; **Neil Johnson (L)** Tel: 07504 227351. Cockerton Methodist Church, Friday 14 March, 11 April and 9 May, 10-11am.

COLLEGE

Bryony Holroyd (G) Tel: 07570 776553; **Matthew Snedker (G)** Tel: 07780 807059. Abbey Junior School, Monday 17 March and 7 April, 6-7pm.

EASTBOURNE

Joe Dillon (L) Tel: 07939 221166. Pilmoor Green Community Centre, Tuesday 25 March and 22 April, 6-7pm. **Jonathan Dulston (C)** Tel: 07775 555251. Please contact Democratic Services on 01325 406444 for venue and dates. **Kevin Nicholson (I)** Tel: 07791 807629. Firthmoor Community Centre, Wednesday 19 March and 16 April, 6-7pm.

HARROWGATE HILL

Roz Henderson (G) Tel: 07967 213584; **Richard Lawley (G)** Tel: 07779 993336; **Anna-Maria Toms (G)** Tel: 07954 719211. St Mark's Church Hall, Thursday 13 March and 10 April 6-7pm; Elim Pentecostal Church, Monday 31 March and 28 April, 1.30-2.30pm.

HAUGHTON AND SPRINGFIELD

Chris McEwan (L) Tel: 07947 016598; **Dawn Storr (L)** Tel: 07543 159224; **Nick Wallis (L)** Tel: 07960 247554. Asda foyer, Saturday 5 April, 10-11am.

HEIGHINGTON AND CONISCLIFFE

Paul Crudass (C) Tel: 374537; **Gerald Lee (C)** Tel: 314622. Brafferton Village Hall, Saturday 5 April, 10-11am; Heighington Village Hall, Saturday 7 June, 10-11am.

HUMMERSKNOTT

Kate Mamolotti (G) Tel: 07949 222733; **Thomas Robinson (I)** Tel: 07735 310357. Salutation Hall, Monday 31 March and 28 April, 6-7pm.

HURWORTH

Lorraine Tostevin (C) Tel: 333382. **Paul Walters (C)** Tel: 722097. By appointment only, Tuesday 1 April, 5.30-6.30pm.

MOWDEN

Pauline Culley (C) Tel: 250482; **Alan Marshall (C)** Tel: 359138 or 07807 523106. Mowden Junior School, Monday 7 April, 6.30-7.30pm.

NORTHGATE

Sajna Ali (L) Tel: 405998; **Sonia Kane (L)** Tel: 486754. Ward Surgery appointment only via Councillor Kane's number.

NORTH ROAD

Hilary Allen (LD) Tel: 480277; **Anne-Marie Curry (LD)** Tel: 07531 304050, annemarie.curry@darlington.gov.uk. **James Coe (I)** Tel: 07828 178276; Morrisons café, Wednesday 12 March and 9 April, 6-7pm; The Well, Wednesday 26 March and 23 April, 1-2pm.

PARK EAST

Libby McCollom (L) Tel: 07910 369887; **Michael Nicholson (L)** Tel: 07493 247327; **Matthew Roche (L)** Tel: 07403 208120. Clifton Centre Community Association, Tuesday 11 March and 8 April, 1-2pm; Dolphin Centre, Thursday 13 March and 10 April, 5.30-6.30pm.

PARK WEST

Bob Donoghue (C) Tel: 07767 294194; **Heather Scott (C)** Tel: 468547. By appointment only through Cllr Donoghue's number..

PIERREMONT

Stephen Harker (L) Tel: 380039; **Mary Layton (L)** Tel: 491802 or 07460 980776; **James McGill (L)** Tel: 07964 670793. Reid Street Primary School, Wednesday 2 April, 6-7pm.

RED HALL AND LINGFIELD

Mandy Porter (L) Tel: 07962 363855; **Amanda Riley (L)** Tel: 07764 759554. Heathfield Primary School, Thursday 20 March and 17 April, 3.30-4.30pm; Red Hall Community Centre, Thursday 13 March and 10 April, 5-6pm.

SADBERGE AND MIDDLETON ST GEORGE

Deborah Laing (C) Tel: 07747 863297; All queries to be directed to Councillor Laing's contact number. **Yvonne Renton (I)** Tel: 07486 617516; **Colin Pease (I)** Tel: 07738 422776. Please contact Democratic Services on 01325 406444 for Ward Surgery venue and dates.

STEPHENSON

Ian Haszeldine (L) Tel: 07807 381613; **Mohammad Mahmud (L)** Tel: 07828 898799.

WHINFIELD

Jamie Bartch (C) Tel: 07716 680109; **Andy Keir (C)** Tel: 07597 297654. Asda Foyer, Saturday 29 March and 26 April, 11am-noon.

MPs' SURGERIES:



Lola McEvoy (Darlington MP)

can be contacted by email at lola.mcevoy.mp@parliament.uk or via her constituency office at 35-36 Blackwellgate, Darlington, DL1 5HW or call 01325 526655 during opening hours, Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm.



Matt Vickers (Stockton West MP)

can be contacted by email at matt.vickers.mp@parliament.uk or call his constituency office on 01642 956526.



Ben Houchen – TEES VALLEY MAYOR

can be contacted at Office of the Tees Valley Mayor, Tees Valley Combined Authority, Teesside International Airport, Darlington, DL2 1NJ. Call 01325 792600 or email mayor@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk

CLUBS AND COM

To feature your community group or club, email editor@onedarlington.org.uk



Let's Talk with Trisha

The tragic loss of a family friend prompted lollipop lady Trisha English to form a local support group for people struggling with their mental health.

Let's Talk takes place at the Willow Community Centre on Willow Road, on the last Sunday of the month from 5pm until 7pm. Anyone is welcome, it's free and on a drop-in basis with free refreshments.

Trisha, 46, a busy mum of four and grandmother of eight, talks about the group:

"The sudden loss of our family friend was a real shock to us all. He had talked about ending his life but it was something we thought would never happen. It was this that made me think that there needs to be more support locally for people like him. I spoke to my local church, and they were really helpful and the idea of Let's Talk was born.

"I run the group with the help of local councillor David Beckett who is a trained counsellor as well.

"We have any number from one to around ten turn up to chat and share their feelings. It's not a formal group but a safe space where people can say things in confidence without fear of judgement.

"A 'talking cushion' is passed around in each session – the only person who can talk is the one holding the cushion – this gives everyone the chance to talk without being interrupted.

"We offer information on where people can get extra help and advice as well as other support such as food banks.

"I've never done anything like this before and it was scary at first but it's worth it if we can make a difference to even one person.

"Anyone is welcome to come along to our monthly meetings, just turn up or feel free to email me first."

You can email Trisha at trishaenglish37@gmail.com



Lions give helping hand

Darlington Lions has donated £1,300 to FirstStop, the Darlington charity which combats poverty, isolation and poor mental health in the town.

It supports vulnerable people to help them work on their issues and move towards an independent life.

The money will be used to refurbish the reception area at its offices and Wellbeing and Work Hub at 32 Houndgate in the town centre.

Darlington Lions President Pat De Martino, is pictured (right) with Tracy Freeman of FirstStop (centre) and Lion Ian Barnes (left).

Organisations or individuals can find out more information about applying for support from Darlington Lions by visiting www.darlingtonlionsclub.co.uk and scrolling down the page.

More information about FirstStop and help available can be found at www.firststopdarlington.org.uk or by calling 08081963144 (Freephone).

Join Stitch and Create in their 2025 rail celebration

If you're a keen embroiderer or decorative stitcher, your work could become part of our rail heritage celebrations.

Darlington Stitch and Create is involved in creating a textile artwork to celebrate the bicentenary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway which will be exhibited in September, the group is keen for people to join them.

The group meets on the first Saturday of the month from 1pm at Elm Ridge Methodist Church Hall, Carmel Road South, Darlington DL3 8DJ.

They host a range of speakers and sessions include illustrated talks, workshops and stitching. Members enjoy learning new techniques and sharing knowledge within a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Email secretary@darlingtonstitchandcreate.co.uk for more details.

St Mark's Health and Wellbeing Hub



People of all ages are benefiting from a new health and wellbeing hub at St Mark's Church on North Road. From exercise and art classes, music and health education, there is something for everyone to get involved in to help improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing. All classes are free though donations are welcome.

The church recently hosted a schools' art exhibition where youngsters showcased their skills and hopes and dreams for their futures.

The recently formed Northern Lights Community Choir is going from strength to strength and now has around 50 members. Funded by Point North, the choir is free to join and open to all. Plans are underway for a summer concert, one of six concerts planned for the year.

For more details email stmarkwithstpaul@yahoo.com or visit www.stmarksdarlington.weebly.com

Free family fun a



Make a date for this year's Eco Fair – taking place in and around the town centre on Saturday 7 June from 11am-3pm.

There's a full programme of free family eco activities where everyone can enjoy take part in fun activities and learn more about the importance of living sustainably and looking after our planet.

The marquee in the Market Square is back and will be full of eco-friendly retailers, makers and producers as well as free craft activities and nature organisations.

You can chat to the teams from the RSPB, Tees Rivers and Durham Wildlife Trust, buy goodies from Respect Soaps, Plantopia, Forest of Flowers, Zenotè homemade soaps as well as locally produced food treats and much more.

Busy bees can enjoy free kids' fun including rides on mini tractors, model car racing and much more. Plus, check out the electric cars on display. You can even bring your broken belongings to the Fixit Café.

Eco fun continues across the town centre with a special eco trail for young explorers to search out eco treasure. The indoor market hall and library, as well lots of our independent businesses, will be offering plenty of eco fun for all.

Look out for second-hand fashions and other ways to save money – and the planet.

Keep an eye on our social media sites for news and updates.



t Eco Fair



If you're an eco trader fill out the form here <https://forms.gle/iGuX3yhiLyQkvB8r5> (or scan the QR code) to see if there is space for you to showcase what you offer.



Don't forget to head back into town on Sunday 8 June when our popular Wool Fair returns.



Saturday 7 June
11am - 3pm
Market Square



**ENJOY
DARLINGTON**

Get work in one week!

A couple of months ago 20-year-old Charlie Hawkins had nowhere to live and no job. Now, an exciting initiative from Learning & Skills is helping him, and others, to turn their lives around and get work in as little as one week!

Working together with local employers including Arriva, Aldi, Blackwell Grange Hotel, and several care homes, Learning & Skills offers a series of one-week, bespoke employment courses offering guaranteed interviews upon completion. The free employment academy courses equip people with the basic skills required for a career in care, customer services, hospitality or warehousing and are helping to build people's confidence and give them the skills they need to be successful at interview.

The courses have been running since 2022 and have supported over 182 individuals, including Charlie, into employment.

Charlie said: "I was unemployed and going through a tough time. I haven't got any formal qualifications, don't like being in big groups and have really low confidence. Staff on the course were really supportive. They met me on the first day and helped me to settle into the classroom as well as quietly checking in with me throughout the course.

"The confidence and interview techniques sessions also helped me to talk about myself in a positive way. Because the course was taught in the workplace, I got to see first-hand what working at Blackwell Grange would be like and got to meet the recruiting manager which helped me to feel more confident at interview.

"I was really happy to be offered a job as a commis chef and now work four shifts a week. I'm looking into starting a professional cooking qualification and am saving up for my own set of knives and to live independently."



Chris McEwan, cabinet member for economy, right, with Blackwell Grange general manager Mark Tulett

**Find out about upcoming courses at
www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills or phone 01325 405601**

Do something you enjoy, make friends and improve your wellbeing

Getting out of the house and taking part in fun activities doesn't have to cost the earth. Learning & Skills offers a fantastic range of free, creative and hobby-based courses to help you engage in meaningful activities, make friends and improve your wellbeing.

Thirty-four-year-old Kerry, who initially completed distance learning courses with Learning & Skills, has recently been making the most of their creative crafts offer. She said: "The courses are great for anyone wanting to learn a new skill or explore their interests and hobbies in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Because it's free, I've been able to join in without worrying about the cost and I've learned lots of techniques which I've been trying out at home.

"The courses have also had a positive impact on my mental health. As someone who experiences anxiety and social anxiety, it's been good to come along to a small group and meet people with similar



interests. It's helped to develop my confidence and social skills and has spurred me on to look for another, in person course, to study in the future."

You can find information about courses taking place in April, May and June on pages 21 and 22, including computers for beginners, cooking on a budget, creative writing, family first aid, health and happiness, parenting together and storybook buddies.

Learning & Skills Darlington

Learning & Skills Darlington is a leading provider of adult and community learning courses. There is a huge variety of courses to help you find employment, upskill in your current workplace, or to learn something new and exciting. Some of the courses include:

- **FREE English for Speakers of Other Languages**
- **FREE Adult Maths, English and ICT courses**
- **FREE Courses for 16-18 year olds**
- **FREE Distance learning**



If you'd like to see more of what's available, please visit darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills or scan the QR code.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are available for anyone aged 16+ who is looking to start a new career or upskill in their current job. There are apprenticeships available in a range of industries and sectors where you will develop your knowledge, skills and behaviours, ready for employment. Take a look at all of the current apprenticeships at darlington.gov.uk/apprenticeships.

Learning & Skills



CALL 01325 405601

WEB www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills

EMAIL I&s@darlington.gov.uk

 @DarlingtonL_S

 DarlingtonL_S

 Learning & Skills



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

New platform launched to report allergic reactions

Twelve councils across the North East have come together to launch an online platform where people can report if they have had an allergic reaction after eating in a food business.

The platform, which is hosted by Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, makes it easier for people across the region to report incidents where they suspect they have been exposed to a known allergen and for the appropriate environmental health teams to investigate and take action where necessary.

All food businesses should have controls in place within their kitchen to cater for people with allergies safely. However, a regional survey carried out in 2023 revealed that more than one in three 'allergen-free' samples taken contained traces of allergens.

Food allergies are very serious and potentially life-threatening. Symptoms can range from mild itchy skin and swollen lips, face or eyes, to vomiting, abdominal pain and anaphylaxis - which causes around 20 deaths each year in the UK.

A person can experience anaphylaxis within a few seconds or minutes of eating, or being exposed to, food allergens – most commonly found in peanuts, tree nuts, cow's milk, egg, fish and shellfish, and sesame seeds/sesame oil.

Brian Whelan, environmental health manager, said: "Most food businesses prepare their food safely and manage risks well. However, sometimes things go wrong. This new website gives customers across the North East a simple system to report any allergic reactions which will help environmental health teams to identify businesses where allergen controls are not properly in place; increasing consumer safety and reducing the risk of allergic reactions occurring accidentally."

If you or a family member have experienced an allergic reaction after being exposed to known allergens in food you have bought or consumed in the North East of England, report it online to North East Allergic Reaction at www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/allergic-reactions or follow the links available from www.darlington.gov.uk/foodsafety

Flying the flag for nights out in Darlo!



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Nights out in Darlington have been given the stamp of approval by a team of experts from the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM).

Following a rigorous assessment process, ATCM reaccredited the town with Purple Flag status in recognition of our commitment to creating a dynamic, secure, and vibrant evening and night-time economy.

The accreditation, which is similar to the Blue Flag scheme for beaches and Green Flag for parks, has only been awarded to 80 destinations globally and aims to raise the standard and broaden the appeal of town and city centres between the hours of 5pm and 5am.

The prestigious award highlights the fantastic range and blend of entertainment, dining, and culture in the town centre, as well as the overall safety and wellbeing of residents and visitors.

Assessors specifically noted the improvements and regeneration projects happening across the town, and our continued efforts to improve active travel.

Purple Flag represents the gold standard in the management of evening and night-time economies and is an outward sign that Darlington is a great place to live, visit or work.



ENJOY WHAT'S ON IN

Spring is finally here and with the warmer weather (hopefully) you may be looking forward to getting out and about more, so we've rounded up a list of forthcoming events to enjoy in Darlington.

If you've got an event happening in July, August or September that you'd like to include in the next edition, please email details to communications@darlington.gov.uk

Parkrun and junior parkrun – weekends, South Park. A free, weekly, timed run, walk or jog. The 5km event is on Saturdays at 9am. The 2km junior event, for those aged 4-14, is on Sundays at 9am.

Quiz nights – Thursdays, 7.30-9pm, Darlington Market.

Always something happening at



DARLINGTON LIBRARIES

The Hive

Design & Print – Mondays, 3-5pm. Ages 16+, free.

Design & Print – Saturdays bi-weekly, 10-11.30am. Ages 8+, free.

Make Do and Mend – Tuesdays, 10-11am, Ages 16+, free.

Fabric Friends – Tuesdays, 1-5pm. Ages 16+, free.

Craft & Chat – Thursdays, 10-11am. Ages 16+, £5.

Krafty Kids – Saturdays, 4-5.30pm. Ages 8+, £2.50.

Movie Makers – Saturdays, 2-3.30pm. Ages 8+, £2.50.

The Art Gallery - Golden Moments – monthly. Older adults and those with dementia. Free, but suggested donation of £3.50.

The Study – Watercolours – 3rd Tuesday of every month. Ages 16+, £5.

Cockerton Library – Watercolours – Fortnightly on Fridays. Ages 16+, £5.

Both libraries – Lego Club – Saturdays, 10am-noon. Ages 3+, free.

March

Market Quiz – Every Thursday, 7pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Live & Local – Every Friday, 7pm, Darlington Market. Free.

The Jazz Collective – Every Saturday, 7pm, The Vault. Free.

Creative Crafts – Tuesday 4, 10am-noon, Learning & Skills (L&S) at Salvation Army. Free five-week course.

Storybook Buddies – Tuesday 4, 10-11am, L&S at Darlington Library. Free five-week course.

Misfit Market – Thursday 6, 5-9pm, Darlington Market. Free.



...Earnest? – Monday 10 & Tuesday 11, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £17.50.

Cooking on a budget – Wednesday 12, 9.15-11.15am, L&S at Rydal Academy Community Hub. Free five-week course.

La Boheme – Thursday 13, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £22.

Madama Butterfly – Friday 14, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £22.

RnB The Milkmen & The Dirt Road Band – Friday 14, 7.30-11pm, The Forum Darlington, £21.

Darlington Record Fair – Saturday 15, 10am-4pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Superhero Day – Saturday 15, 11am-3pm, Darlington Market. Free.



Alligator Gumbo New Orleans Swing/Jazz – Saturday 15, 7.30-11pm, The Forum Darlington, £15.

Piano recital – Sunday 16, 3pm, Dolphin Centre. £18, under 21s free, visit www.dpiano.co.uk

Creative Writing – Tuesday 18, 3.15-5.15pm, L&S at Darlington Library. Free seven-week course.



Meteora (Linkin Park) – Friday 21, 7.30-11pm, The Forum Darlington, £12.

The Bench by Teater Refleksion – Friday 21 – Saturday 22, various times, Theatre Hullabaloo. £8 or group ticket (four people) £28.

Live & Local 3 local original band night – Thursday 27, The Forum Darlington, £4.



Horrible Histories – Thursday 27 to Sunday 30, various times, Darlington Hippodrome. From £12.

Gasto Promotions - The Black Heart Orchestra – Friday 28, The Forum Darlington, £16.

Robin Errington – Saturday 29, The Forum Darlington, £TBA.

Mothers Day – Sunday 31, 11am-3pm, Darlington Market. Free. Face painter, kids crafts, Free gift for mum.

April

Market Quiz – Every Thursday, 7pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Live & Local – Every Friday, 7pm, Darlington Market. Free.

The Jazz Collective – Every Saturday, 7pm, The Vault. Free.

Railway Pioneers – Friday 4 - Sunday 22 June. Daily (exc. Mondays), 10am-5pm, Hopetown Darlington. Free.

Nicolas Meier Infinity Group' & 'The Spirit of Jeff Beck – Friday 4, The Forum Darlington, £18.

Dracula – Tuesday 8 to Saturday 12, various times, Darlington Hippodrome. From £15.

Misfit Market – Thursday 10, 5-9pm, Darlington Market. Free.

RnB Messengers Of The Blues – Friday 11, The Forum Darlington, £14.

Big Bird Artisan Market – Saturday 12, 10am-4pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Giants Picnic & Silly Sandwiches – Monday 14 – Tuesday 22, 10am-2pm, Theatre Hullabaloo. Free. Play sessions by Lynda Nelson for ages 0-5, drop-in, no need to book.

Bicentennial Pen Pals – Monday 14 and Tuesday 15, 10am-3pm, Hoskins Room, Darlington Library. A day of creative writing and historical research with Dr Bob Beagrie. For 12-17-year-olds. Free.

Just Between Ourselves – Tuesday 15 to Thursday 17, various times, Darlington Hippodrome. From £14.

Easter Weekend – Saturday 19 and Sunday 20, 11am-3pm, Darlington Market. Free. Various activities including egg hunt, face painting, crafts, egg painting and dress up.

Beatlemania – Saturday 19, The Forum Darlington, £13 adv.

There's some EGGS-tra special events planned for the Easter holidays - check out www.enjoydarlington.co.uk for more details

The Farmer & the Clown by Flibbertigibbet Theatre – Friday 25 and Saturday 26, various times, Theatre Hullabaloo. £8 or group ticket (four people) £28.

Cooking on a budget – Tuesday 29, 10am-noon, L&S at McNay Street Children's Centre. Free four-week course.

Computers for Beginners – Tuesday 29, 9.30-11.30am, L&S at Darlington Library. Free ten-week course.

Health and Happiness – Wednesday 30, 9.15-11.15am, L&S at Rydal Academy Community Hub. Free five-week course.

Everybody's talking about Jamie – Wednesday 30 to Sunday 10 May, various times, Darlington Hippodrome. An amateur production presented by DarlingtonOS.

ENJOY WHAT'S ON

May

Local History Month at the Centre for Local Studies – various times, Darlington Library. Join us for talks, exhibitions, writing workshops and railway related drop-in sessions. For more details contact Darlington Libraries.

Misfit Market – Thursday 1, 5-9pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Market Quiz – Every Thursday, 7pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Live & Local – Every Friday, 7pm, Darlington Market. Free.

The Jazz Collective – Every Saturday, 7pm, The Vault. Free.

Parenting Together – Friday 2, 12.45-2.45 pm, L&S at McNay Street Children's Centre. Free five-week course.

Darlington Food & Drink Festival – Friday 2 - Monday 5, Darlington Market. Free.

Sex Pistols Expose – Friday 2, The Forum Darlington, £12 adv.

Big Bird Artisan Market – Saturday 10, 10am - 4pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Dance Festival – Saturday 10, 11am, Market Square. Local community groups and dance schools come together for a mass dance.

Petty Heartbreakers – Friday 16, The Forum Darlington, £12.

Groovefest25 – Friday 16 to Sunday 18, all day, town centre venues. A weekend of disco, soul and Motown.

Cruel Intentions – Tuesday 20 to Saturday 24, various times, Darlington Hippodrome. From £20.



Spitfire Girls – Tuesday 27 to Saturday 31, various times, Darlington Hippodrome. From £15.

Emergency Services Day – Saturday 31, 10am-4pm, Market Square. Join us as we celebrate our local heroes in the community and show our appreciation for the police, fire and rescue, blood bikes and others.

June

Market Quiz – Every Thursday, 7pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Live & Local – Every Friday, 7pm, Darlington Market. Free.

The Jazz Collective – Every Saturday, 7pm, The Vault. Free.

Creative Writing – Tuesday 3, 3.15-5.15pm, L&S at Darlington Library. Free seven-week course.

Cooking on a budget – Tuesday 3, 10am-noon, L&S at McNay Street Children's Centre. Free five-week course.

Storybook Buddies – Tuesday 3, 10-11am, L&S at Darlington Library. Free five-week course.

Misfit Market – Thursday 5, 5-9pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Parenting Together – Friday 6, 12.45-2.45pm, L&S at McNay Street Children's Centre. Free five-week course.

Eco Fair – Saturday 7, all day, town centre. Explore how you can impact the future of the world we live, work and play in.

Darlington Record Fair – Saturday 7, 10am-4pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Comedy Club – Saturday 7, The Forum Darlington, £12.

Wool Fair – Sunday 8, 11am-4pm, town centre. Traders, crafts and activities all relating to wool.

Big Bird Artisan Market – Saturday 14, 10am-4pm, Darlington Market. Free.

Forever Delayed – Friday 20, The Forum Darlington £12.

Darlington Community Carnival – Saturday 28, all day, town centre then parade to Stanhope Park. The carnival will celebrate our railway heritage and honour its railway roots.

Family First Aid – Wednesday 30, 9.15-11.15am, L&S at Rydal Academy Community Hub. Free five-week course.

Contacts

Hopetown Darlington visit
www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk call 01325 405060,
or email hopetown@darlington.gov.uk

Darlington Hippodrome visit
www.darlingtonhippodrome.co.uk
or call 01325 405405

Theatre Hullabaloo – call 01325 405405 or visit
www.theatrehullabaloo.org.uk

Darlington Libraries – call 01325 349610 or visit
www.darlington.gov.uk/library

Dolphin Centre – call 01325 406000 or email
healthydarlington@darlington.gov.uk

The Forum Music Studios – visit
www.theforumonline.co.uk

Learning & Skills – call 01325 405601 or visit
www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills

Tackling the sale of illegal vapes



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



Our trading standards officers have been working hard with regional partners to tackle illegal vapes, following a rise in the number of complaints of sales to children as young as 12.

Due to easy accessibility and affordability, there has been a general increase in young people purchasing vapes and cigarettes for their own use. Many of the sellers identified had no concerns over who they sold them to and would often sell illegal and over-strength vapes to young children.

While you may think there's no harm in buying a cheaper alternative, they are often full of untested, harmful and illegal chemicals. There are also concerns that the sale of illegal vapes is connected to organised crime and the exploitation of children or other vulnerable people.

Operation Nightstar saw trading standards join forces with officers from Durham Constabulary and the North East regional organised crime unit, the police and crime commissioner's office, public health, our licensing and civic enforcement teams and other local councils to target shops selling illegal vapes and tobacco.

Dozens of premises in Darlington were inspected and illegal goods seized from 28 individual retailers – some on multiple occasions. The teams also looked at vehicles and private homes, which are often used as off-site storage.

While this operation has now drawn to a close, trading standards continue to work closely with other agencies to tackle the issue, conducting further test purchases, visits and seizures of illegal goods. We would urge anyone with information or concerns about illegal vapes being sold to report it – only by working together can we stop this trade altogether.

Operation Nightstar Darlington

Illegal vapes and tobacco with a retail value of more than **£336,700** seized

65 inspections with illegal goods seized from **28** individual retailers

19,687 packs of illegal cigarettes and **65kg** of illegal tobacco seized

14 test purchase attempts - **10** selling illegal vapes

Premises closure orders ranging from two to six months against **seven** stores.

You can report information to police via www.durham.police.uk

Alternatively email tradingstandards@darlington.gov.uk or use our online form (this can be done anonymously) at www.darlington.gov.uk/ts-report-it

Food award

Darlington College nursery staff have recently celebrated being awarded a Darlington Schools Food Qualification (DSFQ).

DSFQ is an accredited Learning & Skills programme for early years providers, kitchen staff and anyone involved in food preparation, to help them create and sustain healthy food in schools, ensuring all children have access to healthy balanced meals during their school day.

Achieving the DSFQ means staff have the knowledge and skills to provide healthy balanced meals for children and young people.

The award has enabled the team to understand the benefits of a balanced diet, food preparation, positive eating environments, eating sustainability, for example making recipes with seasonal fruit and much more.

The qualification involves a maximum of eight hours of learning over two months, all of which can be completed at the participant's own pace.

Kelly Hodgson, Darlington College nursery manager said: "We are delighted to have achieved this Learning & Skills School Food Catering Award,



Darlington College Kitchen staff; (left to right) Dawn McCready, Adele Walmsley, Stacy Herbert, Doni Allan, Lucy Charlton are happy to have been awarded the Learning & Skills Schools Food Qualification

the staff all completed this qualification via an online portal and were able to work through it at their own pace. The course was informative, easy to follow, and gave us new ideas. Following the course, we revisited our menus to ensure we offer healthy, balanced, nutritious meals.

"We have also decided to organise cooking activities for the children, to help them learn more about food and nutrition."

If you work in a school or nursery, find out how your staff can achieve this qualification by visiting www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills or contact the council's public health team, call 01325 406205.

Buy Original Art Online At Affordable Prices by local Darlington artist Rev. John H Bower

View this amazing collection of paintings in watercolours
including many famous local landscapes on our website



All the proceeds from your purchases go to helping local elderly people enjoy a happier life through home visits, socialising at our monthly events and most of all by having fun and meeting new friends.

Kindly Sponsored by Seaton Leng



[f /Darlingtontownmission](https://www.darlingtontownmission.org.uk) www.darlingtontownmission.org.uk

Registered Address 3 Idaho Gardens, Darlington DL1 2RG - Reg.charity no. 235572



**Darlington
Town
Mission**
Enriching Elderly Lives

A local charity trusted since 1838

Switch to paperless billing and DO IT ONLINE



Each year over 100,000 paper council tax bills are issued to homes across Darlington.

Although everyone gets a bill in March, we issue bills throughout the year, for example when you move house or when there is a change in your circumstances which impacts how much you owe.

Switching to paperless billing is a quick and simple way to help us reduce our carbon emissions and ensure that your council tax is being spent where it is needed most. It also supports our drive to address inequalities, make better use of our resources and tackle climate change.

Getting your council tax bill online can also be more convenient, particularly if you already get other bills in this way.

If you receive council tax support, or any other reductions, and the amount you owe is likely to change, you may find being online it a helpful way to keep track of your finances.

To make the change and do it online:

1. Visit www.darlington.gov.uk/counciltax and click the link to 'council tax online'.
2. Sign up for a council tax online account and select 'apply for paperless billing'.
3. Enter your email address and click submit.

Our online services are available 24 hours a day and can be accessed from any internet enabled device.



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Is your school signed up?



Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel is the UK's largest inter-school walking, wheeling, scooting and cycling challenge. It inspires pupils to make active journeys to school, improve local air quality and discover how these changes benefit their world.

On each day of the challenge, schools compete to see who can record the greatest proportion of their pupils walking, using a wheelchair, scooting or cycling to school.

Schools can choose to enter as a whole school or an individual class. There are fantastic daily prizes to be won for schools if over 15% of their pupils take up the challenge on a single day.

Free lesson plans and other activities are available so that everyone can feel involved during Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel.

A recent study showed nearly half of UK children worry about air pollution near their school and that children thought active travel was the best away to bring down these pollution levels.

Travelling actively instead of taking a car is a great way to reduce congestion and air pollution outside the school gates.

It also encourages children to be more active, helping them to arrive at school more relaxed and alert. Plus, it's great for their mental wellbeing.

Registration is now open at www.bigwalkandwheel.org.uk

This work will contribute to the council's pledge to become carbon neutral by 2040. This pledge covers all service areas, and we want to encourage residents and businesses to join us on our journey towards a greener and more sustainable future.

More details are available at www.darlington.gov.uk/sustainable



What a show!

Darlington Hippodrome saw a magnificent night of entertainment with a variety show like no other.

All the contestants in Dementia's Got Talent are living with the condition.

Joanne Hendry, who volunteers with Dementia Friendly Darlington, said: "It was the most joyous evening of entertainment. Our amazing contestants showed that there is plenty of life

after a diagnosis of dementia and they still have their personality, humour and talent."

The seven acts included comedy, music, singing and dance.

The show raised awareness of all the dementia support available across Darlington for those living with dementia and for their loved ones and carers. The show raised over £8,300 for local dementia groups and Alzheimer's Society.

For more information about dementia advice and support services, groups and activities across Darlington, call 01904 929444 or email darlingtonteesvalley@alzheimers.org.uk

New look adult social care web pages

An update of the adult social care pages on the council's website has been completed. It aims to provide clearer, more accessible information to support you on your journey through adult social care.

Here's what you'll find:

- resources, support and training tailored to carers
- a dedicated section to guide young people transitioning into adulthood
- guidance on what to do if you're concerned about someone's wellbeing
- information on available support services, including details on potential costs
- an overview of adult social care – the legal framework and key policies.

Your journey through adult social care - we've structured the journey into clear, actionable steps to help you navigate the process.

How can I help myself? Your journey begins with exploring how you can support yourself. We encourage you to tap into resources within your community.

Joss Harbron, the council's assistant director for adult social care, said: "It's essential residents have accessible and up-to-date information on adult social care. This empowers individuals and families to make informed decisions. The enhanced web pages ensure that support services are visible and tailored to meet people's needs."

Head to www.darlington.gov.uk/adults to see the new pages and scan the QR code to fill out a quick survey to let us know what you think.



Prostate cancer awareness event

Darlington Lions Club is offering free prostate health tests on Saturday 3 May, 11am-4pm at the Freemasons Hall, in Archer Street. The test involves a simple blood sample being taken to check the prostate health of men and is recommended for those over 50 years old. The test is free, as the cost is covered by Darlington Lions, although any donations would be appreciated. To book an appointment visit www.mysatests.org.uk/events and search for Darlington or call 01926 419959.

Petals, pastries & prosecco

An afternoon tea, in support of County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Charity, will be held on Thursday 27 March at Redworth Hall, from 2-5pm. It promises to be an elegant experience, filled with delicious food, a sparkling glass of fizz and a variety of stalls offering something for everyone. All funds raised help enhance patient care and experience. Tickets are on sale at Eventbrite, or by emailing cddft.charity@nhs.net



PETALS, PASTRIES & PROSECCO

County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Charity

Redworth Hall
Surtees Road
Newton Aycliffe
DL5 6NL

Join us for an exquisite afternoon tea, fashion show, raffle and stalls

£30 Per Person

2 PM - 5 PM

27th March 2025

SCAM ME!

Tickets on sale at Eventbrite or by contacting the charity team on: cddft.charity@nhs.net

Together, we care. www.cddft.org.uk

Choose Darlington

Recently engaged or planning to get married?

Choose Darlington for your spring wedding, with ceremonies starting from just £81.

Find out more about booking your wedding:
www.darlington.gov.uk/weddings

Shhh!

Help your dog to be a good neighbour

All dogs bark sometimes, but constant barking and whining can disturb or annoy your neighbours and may be classed as a noise nuisance.

Last year alone our environmental health team received 359 noise complaints about barking dogs – that's nearly one each day and equates to a whopping 40% of all the noise complaints we received in 2024.

Ahead of Noise Awareness Day and Noise Action Week we're asking you to do what you can to keep noise from your dog to a minimum including:

- training your dog as early as possible to prevent them developing bad habits
- making sure your dog has adequate exercise, is not bored and has play time
- not leaving your dog outside if they are barking to get back in
- gradually getting your dog used to being alone by putting them into another room for a few minutes at a time
- walking and feeding your dog before you go out and making sure they have a comfortable bed and toys available
- turning the radio on low if your dog is comforted by hearing human voices
- screening doors and windows if your dog barks to join in with things happening outside
- not leaving your dog for long periods where possible and if you have to, asking someone to pop round to walk them or let them outside briefly.

Remember, dogs which are kept outside are often the cause of complaints so think carefully before you leave your dog alone in a yard or garden.

Helpful information on how to stop your dog barking is also available from www.dogstrust.org.uk and www.rspca.org.uk when you search 'barking'.



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Help us keep the doors open at number forty



Number Forty on Skinnergate offers a safe place for anyone who feels vulnerable on a night out in the town centre.

Our team of amazing volunteers provide practical help and support on a Friday and Saturday night.



From charging phones and giving out water to carrying out first aid and helping report crimes, our volunteers are on hand to help, with support from CCTV team and the police.

We are always on the look out for more volunteers. You can volunteer as much time and as regularly as you want – your efforts will make a big difference.



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



To join the team and to find out more visit
www.darlington.gov.uk/numberforty or
email safeststreets@darlington.gov.uk

Foster carer
Glynne Linley,
pictured with her
daughters Alana
(left) and Roxana,
retires after
39 years of
fostering



Fostering is so rewarding

We are so proud of our foster carers – they do an amazing job.

We urgently need more foster carers for local children for short and long-term care.

You do not need experience, to be in a relationship or married to be a foster carer. You need a home with a spare room and a passion for helping others. Even if you only have a few hours to spare, we would love to hear from you.

Our foster carers are trained and paid and receive an allowance for the child in their care, as well as support from a social worker and a foster carer buddy. Social workers are ready to speak with you now if you are interested.

Recently one of our longest-standing foster carers, hung up her apron strings to enjoy her well-deserved retirement.

We have an incredibly dedicated fostering service and what all our foster carers do for our children and young people in their care is invaluable and so rewarding for both parties.

Foster carers truly make a difference in people's lives.

Glynne dedicated 39 years of her life to helping children in need and in this time, she supported 81

local children, 73 of them living in her home. Some are still in contact with her today - a testament to her time and the relationships she built.

We met up with Glynne and her daughters Alana and Roxana to thank her for her hard work, kindness and dedication to our fostering service and here is what she had to say:

"It has been a pleasure to have been a foster carer for Darlington Borough Council, and it's with great sadness that I've decided my time must end, after looking after 81 children over the past 39 years.

"Being a foster carer is such a rewarding job, it's allowed me to help shape the lives of the children and guide them onto their next steps, whether that be returning home, long-term foster care or being adopted.

"Fostering comes with difficulties – it can be heartbreaking when children move on, but reassuring, knowing they are moving into the next chapter of their lives.

"The past 39 years have been wonderful, I have been supported by a great team of social workers and met other lovely foster carers and some amazing children, and their families."

She added: "If I were younger I would do it all again in a heartbeat."

Could you join our fostering family?

To learn more visit www.darlington.gov.uk/fostering

To apply now visit www.fosterwithnortheast.org.uk



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

SEND inspection outcome

Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are ‘valued, visible and included’, inspectors have found.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission visited Darlington to check on services for young people with SEND. Darlington has seen improvements to services for children with SEND since its previous inspections in 2022.

The council and the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND.

The report said children and young people with SEND have a voice in Darlington. They are valued, visible and included in their communities. Children, young people and their families are included in decision-making about the individual support plans and types of support that they receive.

There are many positives about the partnership’s SEND arrangements and the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Some of the areas of strength the report highlighted include:

- The partnership is ambitious for children and young people with SEND. Leaders work closely together to improve local provision.
- The timeliness and quality of children and young people’s education, health and care plans are improving.
- Children and young people who are in care, and have SEND, are successfully prepared for adulthood.

The report also highlighted areas where the partnership must improve, including:

- Leaders need to continue to develop how they use data to inform strategic planning.
- Children and young people wait too long for some therapy services and a diagnosis for autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- There is a lack of a defined process to assess and support children and young people with a learning disability.

The partnership already recognises and is responding to these challenges. The partnership had developed a new SEND Strategy to be adopted this year and completed a full public consultation on the strategy last year.



You can read the full inspection report by scanning this QR code or visiting <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80458>



DARLINGTON
Borough Council





From left:
 Richard,
 Michelle
 and Clare

Meet the Charity Team!

Richard Jones Charity Manager

Rich came to us in January 2025 and brings enthusiasm and great leadership skills.

Rich started life in a very different career! He joined the Army at 16 years old and served for 25 years. During that time he served in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, Cyprus, America, Middle East and Africa.

Before joining County Durham and Darlington NHS Trust as Charity Manager he was employed as a manager for an armed forces charity.

Rich said: "I was keen to join the NHS as I wanted to be in an organisation that's diverse and supports its staff by providing excellent support network groups and really does look after our health and wellbeing.

"I'm very proud to be a part of this Trust."

Michelle Atkinson Charity Support Officer

Michelle has worked for the Trust since October 2021 where she was a Clerical Support Officer within the Same Day Emergency Care department at University Hospital of North Durham.

She joined the charity team in April 2023 and brings a wealth of knowledge, skill and enthusiasm to the team.

Michelle said: "I enjoy my role, meeting new people, and explaining that CCDFT has a charity to provide much-needed funds for wards and departments.

"This enables me to help make a difference in staff and patient care by securing donations and funding from local people and businesses."

Clare Morgan Charity Support Officer

Clare has also seen a big change in her career although she is not new to the Trust she has been with us since July 1997.

Clare spent her time out and about in the community as a podiatrist.

She said: "I really wanted to be part of the charity team as I know how much they support staff, patients and visitors.

"By tirelessly raising funds which help enhance patient care and making people's visit or stay with us a better experience was something I wanted to be involved with."

To find out how to get involved visit our charity website at www.cddftcharity.co.uk/get-involved

Free holiday fun for eligible children



The Move More team is busy planning an exciting Easter Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF), which offers free activities and nutritious meals for eligible young people aged 5-16 years in Darlington.

Funded by the Department for Education, the activities are delivered by professional staff and include a nutritious meal for all those who take part.

Events take place at locations across the town and activities include sports, arts and crafts, bouldering, cooking, plus much more!

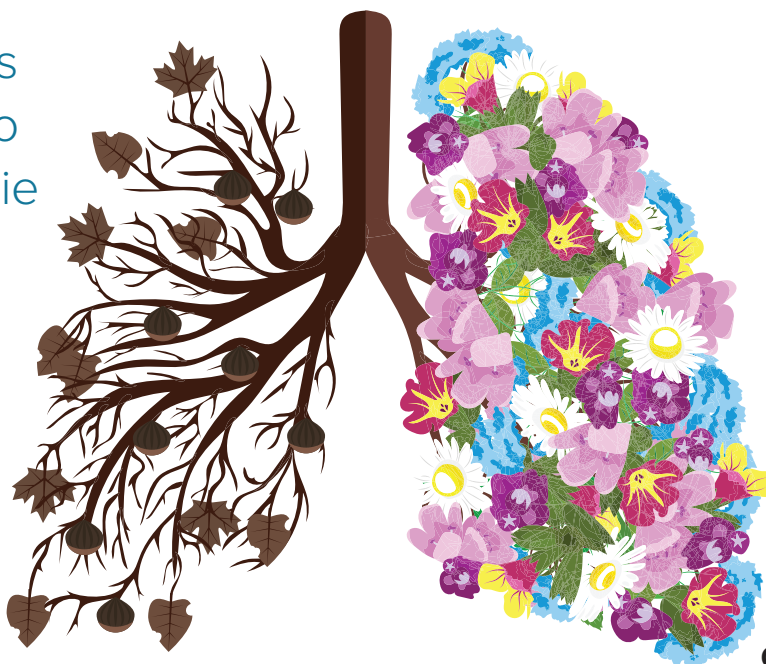
A range of activity sessions is also available for children and families with additional needs.

All children who are eligible for benefits related free school meals can access the sessions every day of the Easter holidays (bank holidays excluded). All eligible families will receive a letter from their school.

Are you ready to stop?

Up to two thirds of smokers who don't quit will die of a smoking related illness.

We can help you kick the habit for good.



Scan the QR code or visit the website below



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

darlingtonstopsmokinghub.org.uk/referrals

NHS

County Durham
and Darlington
NHS Foundation Trust

0800 802 1850



This Easter, become an EGGS-pert recycler

The good news is all our waste and recycling bin collections will remain the same this Easter so please put your bin out as normal, before 7am, and bring it back in as soon as you can.

Follow these seven eggs-tremely simple steps to have a cracking recycled Easter.

- **Easter egg foil** – scrunch it up and throw it in your recycling bin with the tins and plastics. If it springs back open when you try to scrunch it, it's laminated and should go in your general rubbish bin.
- **Cardboard Easter egg boxes and hard plastic trays** can be recycled.
- **Sweet wrappers and plastic cellophane** go in your general rubbish bin.
- **Easter cards and envelopes** can be recycled as long as they don't have decorations on them.
- **Food** – try not to overbuy but if you do have food left over after your celebrations, check out our website www.darlington.gov.uk/foodwaste for ways to cut down on the amount you throw away.
- **Hot cross bun packaging** – throw the plastic wrapper in your general rubbish bin. If there's a cardboard inner (and it's clean) it can be recycled.
- **Flowers** – can be put in your garden waste bin. To sign up to get a bin visit www.darlington.gov.uk/gardenwaste.



TEES VALLEY

Teesside Airport's Backing Our Major Businesses

Three huge announcements have recently shown how Teesside Airport is working for Darlington's business community and workers, as well as local passengers.

Global technology giant Amazon has chosen Darlington as the location for its first UK's drone deliveries in a major international coup for the region.

Amazon has confirmed that its Darlington fulfilment centre will host the maiden UK flights of Prime Air – its drone-based delivery service.

This will see autonomous drones carry out same-day 30-minute deliveries from warehouse to customers' homes.

The project – one of just a handful globally – has been secured following extensive and detailed work between Amazon, Teesside International Airport and the Tees Valley Mayor over 18 months.



Planning permission and authorisation from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for the lightweight delivery service will now be sought ahead of the start of operations.

Long-standing tenant Draken has also cemented its future at the airport after agreeing a new deal with the Ministry of Defence.

The company has confirmed it will renew its agreement with the MOD – securing its Teesside operations for another four years after the firm signed a new £173million contract with the MoD to support military training with the RAF.

It will also see Draken – which has been based at the airport for 25 years – enrol a share of 12 apprentices in Darlington.

The region's reputation as a growing centre for aircraft maintenance has received another big boost after aviation firm Willis secured a second deal with a major airline.

TUI, one of the UK's largest operators, has signed a long-term agreement with Willis Aviation to see maintenance services carried out on its narrow-body aircraft at Teesside.

The deal comes hot on the heels of Willis signing a deal with carrier Jet2 to carry out in-depth "C-check" inspections on its Boeing 737s.

The company leases Hangar 2 at the airport as its base for aircraft maintenance, storage, and disassembly. It has also secured planning permission to also expand its operations at Teesside in aircraft Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul.



OOH AHH MALAGA

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£26million of benefits
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Be water aware.



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