

## Are you interested in Birdwatching?



Wylam Bird Club has been meeting in Wylam for 40 years and is introducing a new programme of monthly meetings throughout the year, commencing this July. They are looking for new members to join an enthusiastic and sociable club which is led by local ornithologist, Bryan Galloway.

A wide range of topics are covered, from bird identification, habitat, migration and surveys to local, national and international birding news. Most of the meetings are outdoors with a three-hour bird survey walk around Wylam on the third Tuesday each month, starting at 9.30am from the Methodist Church Centre car park; a monthly full or half day field trip on a Saturday or Sunday to various parts of the North East, including coastal spots such as Boulmer, Druridge Bay, Hauxley, Budle Bay, Bamburgh and Holy Island and inland visits to Coquetdale and the Cheviot valleys as well as visits to various Nature Reserves in Northumberland, Tyneside and Durham. A two hour indoor meeting is held, usually on the third Wednesday of the month, at 7.30pm in the Methodist Church Centre, Chapel Lane.

New members, of all ages and experience, are most welcome to come to any of the meetings. There's an invitation to join in a free "taster" at the Wylam Walk on Tuesday 19 July or the first indoor meeting on Wednesday 13 July.

For further information you can visit the Bird Club's website at [www.wylambirdclub.co.uk](http://www.wylambirdclub.co.uk), where you will find details of all the activities, including a full programme of meetings, reports, bird sightings, field trips, photographs and Club news.

If you have any questions or would like more details please telephone either Bob Doughty on 01661 853398 or Don Boyd on 01434 633447.

## New Library Opening Times



Please note that Wylam Library is now open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1.00 to 6.00pm and Saturdays between 9.00am and 12 noon.

## Riverside Paths



There has been considerable concern over the closure of the footpath that runs from the end of Stephenson Terrace along the river bank towards Newburn. The ground has collapsed completely, as you can see in this photograph, and is impassable.

The affected area is partly owned by the Parish Council, but the footpath is, as a public right of way, the responsibility of the County Council. Discussions have frequently taken place between the Parish and County Councils and a way to try to move things forward has recently been agreed. The County will lead in seeking quotations from appropriate consultancies to carry out a survey, attempting to establish the cause of the collapse and to recommend a course of action. It is hoped that this will enable remedial works to be carried out and the footpath reinstated, but this will only be undertaken if considered feasible, both technically and financially, and this whole process is likely to take some time.

Walkers have also been frustrated since the winter floods by the closure of the footbridge across the pond to the West of Hagg Bank, which was under a considerable depth of water. Water levels have now fallen, which has allowed the path to reopen, linking Wylam once again to the very pleasant walk towards Prudhoe, along the riverside and "Spetchells".

## Forthcoming Events

The following events will take place in Wylam Institute, unless indicated otherwise.

### Fri 10 June

Wylam First School PTA Quiz

### Mon 13 June

Parish Council, 7.00pm

### Sat 18 June

Antiques Evening at West Mews in aid of St Oswin's Church. (Tks. 852197 or Institute)

### Sat 25 June

Village Summer Fair

### Sun 26 June

Invasive Plants (session 1), 9.30am (see note).

"Gig on the Grass" by Wittonstall Community Band at Wylam Methodist Centre, 3.00pm

### Sat 2 July

Invasive Plants (session 2), 9.30am (see note).

Jumble Sale in aid of "Action Against Hunger", 2.00pm.

### Mon 11 July

Parish Council, 7.00pm.

### And coming up soon .....

### Sat 10 Sept

"Open House" to view new developments at Wylam Methodist Church 10.00am to noon.

### Wed 14 Sept.

Men at Home, "The Extraordinary Gertrude Bell", Mark Jackson, Methodist Centre, 10.30am

### Sat 24 Sept

Film Club, 7.00pm.

### Fri 30 Sept

Giant MacMillan Coffee Morning, 10.00am to noon

### Sat 1 Oct

Jumble Sale in aid of the Zambezi Sunrise Trust.

**Please note:** In addition to the above events, Coffee Mornings in aid of Wylam Institute are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday every month, 10.30am to 12 noon, and "Friends of Wylam" Coffee Mornings continue fortnightly on Tuesday mornings from 10.00am.

## Deadline for material for the next "Wylam Globe" Monday 8 August

Correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to:

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The Clerk to the Parish Council  
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NE41 8AP  
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[e.mail: wylampc@btinternet.com](mailto:wylampc@btinternet.com)

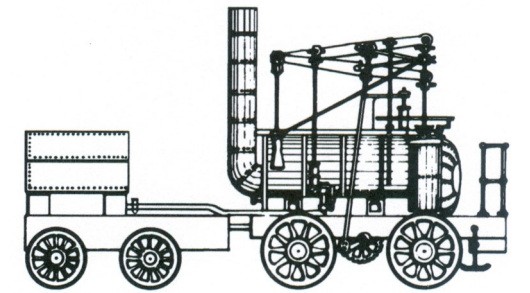
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# THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council

Summer 2016

No. 121



## Wylam Summer Fair Saturday 25 June

Planning is just about complete for this year's Summer Fair to be held between 1.00 and 6.00pm on the Jubilee Playing Field. Many of the plots for stalls have already been taken but if anyone is interested in a last-minute addition, please contact Trish on 07801913653, or [trishmytton@gmail.com](mailto:trishmytton@gmail.com). There will be the usual stalls and activities for young and old alike. The ever popular "egg hoying" is staging a return and for the first time there will be a "bogie" time trial. Posters giving full details of the Fair and the related Scarecrow Competition, now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year, are displayed throughout the village.

The second-hand book sale will be running in the Methodist Church Hall from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Donations can be left at the church during the preceding week and if you would like to help, please contact Jayne Stanton on 854382.

In previous years an evening event, "Wired for Sound", has been enjoyed by many but this has led to incidents of antisocial behaviour outside the supervised area. Although the Police had no objection to the event being repeated, a decision has reluctantly been taken not to run the event in 2016.

### Other Playing Field Information:-

After several years of negotiations and fund-raising the deeds of Wylam Playing Field were handed to The Wylam Community Playing Field Association (WCPFA) in 2000. WCPFA is a registered charity managed by a small committee of hard stretched volunteers who help to manage the field in their spare (or not so spare!) time. The income comes from fund-raising activities, rent for use of the field (mainly Wylam football and cricket clubs), an annual grant from Wylam Parish Council, personal donations and occasional grants from various bodies for specific projects.

This year has seen the renovation of the old tennis court into a multi-user



area with goalposts, basketball nets and markings for football, basketball and netball. The area outside the fencing currently remains a "free play area", for use by all age groups pursuing various activities. The Association would welcome any ideas from the public as to how the area could be further developed. At present this unfenced end is frequently being used for kicking footballs, resulting in concern about adjacent properties and the Association having to plan for the installation of higher fencing!

A new basket swing (shown right) has replaced the old "wobbly bridge" and it is encouraging to see that this is being used extensively by children of all ages. At least one family with a disabled child has specifically praised the swing and how appropriate it is for their daughter. The popular red roundabout has been renovated, the exercise equipment repaired following vandalism and a replacement swing installed in place of one that was stolen.

Play equipment is not cheap and these improvements have cost in excess of £40,000. WCPFA has funded more than half of this with very welcome contributions from Wylam Parish Council, the Community Foundation, the Sir James Knott Trust and the Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation.

As a village resource the Playing Field provides a welcome amenity to many, but sadly a small minority do not treat these facilities with respect and the Association is considering installing CCTV equipment in an attempt to discourage damage.

Everyone is reminded that only guide dogs are permitted on the field and that unauthorised alcohol is not allowed. The Playing Field Association works closely with the Police but their manpower is sadly stretched and regular policing of the area is an impossibility.

We are all asked to report minor damage to The Playing Field Association via Wylam Institute and major incidents to the Police by dialling 101 or 999 as appropriate.

### And finally, back to the Fair .....

The committee of the Playing Field Association value the tremendous support provided from the village and hope that young and old will help to make the 2016 Summer Fair a memorable event. In addition, they are always happy to welcome volunteers to assist in the lead up to the event and on the day itself. Please contact Anne on 852642, [annemfrancis@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:annemfrancis@hotmail.co.uk) if you are interested.



## Parish Council Annual Meeting



At their Annual Meeting in May, at which the Parish Council elects its Chairman, Vice-Chairman and representatives to other organisations such as the Joint Burial Board, it was mainly an option for continuity. Councillor Mrs Anne Francis was re-appointed as Chairman and Councillor Tom Martin as Vice-Chairman whilst most other Councillors will continue their current roles. Sam James was re-appointed to the voluntary position of Tree Warden.

This is the last year of the presently constituted Parish Council, as May 2017 will see new elections for both Parish and County Councils. One or two Councillors have already indicated their intention not to stand next year, so there will be an opportunity for "fresh faces" to contribute to village affairs.

Diana Carney, the Clerk to the Parish Council, or any of the existing council members, would be happy to provide information on what being a councillor entails. Training courses for new members are provided by the Northumberland Association of Local Councils.

## Wylam Post Office

By the time you read this, the much heralded transfer of Post Office services to the Spar shop is expected to be complete.

Although the Parish Council has done everything within its power to prevent the closure of the Post Office as we have known it, we hope that everyone will now look forward and give the new facility their support.

We sense that the whole community has been saddened to see Steve Loveday's efforts to diversify, invigorate and thereby secure the future of his post office business thwarted. However, we are pleased that he will continue in business and as the Parish Council's tenant. His intention is to remain open until Friday 24 June, selling non-Post Office items. The shop will then close for refurbishment until the end of August, when Steve expects to re-open, with a number of additional retail items which he hopes will interest us.

## Parish Council Website

In July 1973 the first Wylam Globe was published by the Council to give "information about what the Council itself is doing, including other items and issues of general interest relating to the village." Over the ensuing years the Globe has continued to deliver this information and although the overall reason for the Globe is still considered pertinent, it is felt important to now supplement this with a website more in keeping with modern trends and ideas. We are therefore pleased to announce that a Wylam Parish Council website is being developed with a completion date expected at the end of July.

Please note that this website is a supplement to the Globe and not a replacement. Many of us still prefer a piece of paper over pixels and it is also acknowledged that not all have access to the internet. What we do hope is that we will reach a wider audience with the website.

In reaching a wider target audience the Council recognises that many more people interact today utilising smart phones, tablets and the like. The website is therefore designed to be compatible with these devices. Coupling to a Council Facebook page is also under consideration and, recognising the need to assist the visually impaired, support for screen readers and re-sizing of font is to be incorporated.

So what will be included on the website? Limited space here prevents including much detail but, suffice to say it will include:- Information about your Councillors; agendas and minutes of meetings; Policies and Procedures; Financial Reports and Accounts. It is also planned to include updated information currently included in the Village Information Card a village diary and, of course, an archive of copies of the Wylam Globe.

Photographs showcasing the village will also be a feature and the Council would be interested to receive any photographs, which must be free of any copyright restrictions and in electronic format, that people may wish to be used on the site.

## Stanley Burn House

You may remember that the Stanley Burn Care Centre, situated on Station Road, was closed by its owners well over a year ago and the property was put up for sale.

The premises have now been sold and, although at the time of writing the plans have yet to receive approval, a planning application has been submitted to the County Council to convert the property into a total of 14 apartments over three floors, ranging from one to four bedrooms.

If approved, the plans will make relatively few external changes to the building and the garden area and trees will be retained.

One of the concerns expressed by Wylam Parish Council relates to the number of parking spaces for the predicted total of 32 to 46 residents with, one assumes, a proportionate number of occasional visitors.

The decision of the County Council is awaited with interest.

## Wylam's "Men at the Somme"

Wylam's 'Men at the Somme', the third in a series of First World War Centenary displays, will be open at Wylam Library on Saturday 2 July between 9.00am and 1.00pm, after which it will continue for a time during normal library hours.

Following the first two displays, 'Lest we Forget' and 'Call to Arms', which attracted much interest in 2014 and 2015, the research team have added to the stories of several of the men commemorated on the Wylam War Memorials who served at the Somme. This has been possible thanks to help from descendants and further research by Aubrey Smith, Philip Brooks and Roy Koerner, and with graphics by David Petrie.

## New Rail Franchise

There was great interest in the guest presentations at the Annual Village Meeting in May by representatives of the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership, Tyne Valley Rail Users Group and Northern (formerly Northern Rail), the operators of the new franchise on the Tyne Valley Line from 1 April 2016.

Peter Myers, for Northern, was extremely positive about their plans, with promises of £1billion of new investment in trains and staff. However, it looks as though it will be 2019 before we see many improvements locally.

In response to questions he promised to consult Wylam Parish Council about facilities at Wylam Station, to report to Northern the view of the Parish Council and residents that charges should either be lifted at the car park or parking fees refunded on the trains. He also agreed to report to Northern the idea of "ticket zoning". Regarding fares, he advised that fare levels, cheaper than bus fares, were determined by Government and that cheaper special offers would from time to time be available.

## Ovingham Bridge

The refurbishment of this bridge started in June 2014, since when floods, unforeseen corrosion, and even the fish spawning season have delayed progress. Now we appear to be entering the end phase with July being suggested for reopening, or possibly September!

Prudhoe Town Council are in favour of the proposal discussed some years ago of a new bridge and road from the eastern roundabout on Princess Way to the A69. Wylam Parish Council was not supportive at that time due to the environmental and visual intrusion of a new Tyne Bridge and road through Horsley Wood and not least the cost.

Following a recent request from Prudhoe Town Council, Wylam Parish Council reviewed this position and decided that there would be no new benefits that change this view. This stance was, perhaps understandably, questioned at the Annual Village Meeting, where it was explained that the Parish Council's response had been to a very limited question as to whether it supported replacing Ovingham Bridge with an alternative crossing. Although the Parish Council's reply did not support the proposal at this time, it did indicate support for a new traffic evaluation to be considered on an area wide basis, to include the effect on traffic of the projected construction of up to 800 new houses in Prudhoe over the next 10 years.

## Himalayan Balsam

The December floods have deposited large numbers of Himalayan Balsam seeds along the river banks and Denis Peel, our adviser and heroic campaigner for destroying these and other invasive plants, is seeking many pairs of hands to remove all the plants which spring up from these seeds before they, in their turn, can produce more. Volunteers for the task are requested to meet Denis at 9.30am in the Country Park Car Park on Sunday 26 June and/or Saturday 2 July. He suggests people wear boots and gloves and bring a hoe, which can be useful for reaching difficult places. It would be useful if everyone could each adopt a short length of river bank and clear all the Balsam plants in that area on a weekly basis until late summer, as new seedlings often germinate in July and August.

For further information please contact Denis on 853278

## Wylam Hills Development

A number of people have expressed curiosity about recent activity on the former Wylam Hills Farm site, soon to see the new housing development by Gentoo Homes.

The machines, like the one shown here, are carrying out a process known as "grouting", in which the old underground mine workings are being filled to ensure the land is stable for development.

Van Elle, the specialist contractors involved in this operation, have explained that, although the four machines they are using employ different mechanics, they all essentially drill holes into the underground void into which a separate machine then pumps a mixture of power station "fly ash", cement and water which, when it solidifies, gives stability. At two years old, the machine shown here is the newest of those in use on the site. It cost approximately £350,000 when new!

Our earlier understanding was that the old mine workings on this site were fairly shallow and mainly "bell" pits, but apparently they are mostly galleries at between 25 and 40m below the surface.

Although the start of building has been delayed for a few months beyond the date we were first given, once the current work is completed, construction is expected to commence soon afterwards.

Within the past few months, on a separate issue relating to this development, Wylam Parish Council has expressed concern about the way in which the developers are proposing to implement a Section 106 agreement, which was a condition of planning permission. This agreement requires the developer to provide a financial contribution towards play or recreation facilities within the site or the local area.

Furthermore, within the site itself, the location now designated for a play area is, in the view of Councillors, totally unsuitable, being adjacent to the road in the north east corner of the main site. There are also unresolved issues relating to the maintenance of this and other open grass areas within the new estate. The Parish Council has been involved in discussions on these issues with Gentoo and is currently awaiting further consultations, also involving the County Council.

## Methodist Church Developments

As we go to press, building and refurbishment work at Wylam Methodist Church is virtually complete.

As can be seen in this picture, much of the work has involved building in the space between the church hall and the church, creating new rooms and a light and spacious entrance area. Steps to the church and throughout the entire ground floor have been eliminated and the opportunity has been taken for significant refurbishment and re-decoration. Work within the older parts of the building exposed serious dampness and associated wood rot. As a result, the entire floor in this part of the premises, built in 1834 and 1876, has been replaced and significant work undertaken to eliminate damp.

The church is inviting everyone to come and have a look around on the morning of Saturday 10 September, a weekend when several exciting activities are planned to mark the re-opening. Look out for publicity nearer the time of these and subsequent events.

## Annual Village Meeting

The Parish Council was delighted to see a packed hall for this meeting on 18 May, with an audience to hear the various reports and ready with a wide range of questions, the responses to some of which are included elsewhere in this issue.

Predictably, concerns about traffic volume and speed through the village were paramount along with the very poor standard of grass cutting by the County Council. On the traffic issue, it was reiterated that it is the intention of Northumberland County Council to make the current advisory 20mph limit compulsory, which will clearly require significant changes to the existing signage.

Anne Francis assured those present that grass cutting problems, along with other specific concerns that were raised, would continue to be addressed by the Parish Council.

