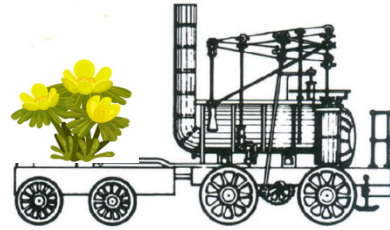


THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Spring 2021

Issue 137

Good news for the Falcon Centre

A step to secure the future of an important building in the village was taken on 17 February 2021 when the Falcon Centre Action Group held its first formal General Meeting (online of course). The meeting adopted a Constitution. It is now an Unincorporated Association - a move to being a charity or similar may follow in due course.



The Railway Museum



Falcon Centre main hall

Officers were then elected - Steve Grinter as Chair (though willing to make way for another in due course), Vicki Strassheim as Secretary, Gray Mytton as Treasurer and Colin Percy as Membership Secretary - plus four ordinary committee members (now five after a later co-option).

The aim of the Action Group is to develop plans that would make the Falcon Centre a community hub for the residents of Wylam. In a press release Steve was quoted as saying "It was good to see a good turnout for an inaugural online meeting that obviously lacked the immediacy of a face-to face gathering and we know from the survey we did last year, that there are lots more residents out there who are keen on what we are doing."

"We are keen to work with the County Council on securing the future of the building as a community asset, especially once the future of the Library in the building is settled for the long term. We hope to get news of this when the Council's Library Service review reports, maybe around Easter or a bit later*. In the meantime, we will be looking to progress a feasibility study, looking at various options for new uses for the building."

Membership of the Group is open to anyone from the area with an interest or ideas for the building. How to join up and lots more information including the Constitution is at

the Group's interim web site at <https://colinwpercy4.wixsite.com/falconcentre>. The new Committee will be meeting monthly and will be setting up topic groups looking at health and well-being, sport and leisure, heritage, education and learning, community-based business and the environment.

* **Stop Press**: Northumberland County Council Cabinet, on 9 March 2021, received a report on the Public Library Service Consultation (carried out in 2019). The report recommended some changes to the service at the centre (including five Hub Libraries – ours at Hexham) but left a lot of detail on running of Branch Libraries to a future action plan. The documents presented to the Cabinet are on the Action Group web site. It is likely that the Action Group, probably in conjunction with the Parish Council, will seek a meeting with the Library Service soon to press for more information. *Colin Percy*

If you go down to the Haughs today...

The Nature Reserve has been getting a little overgrown in places, with some trees now quite close together, making parts of the Reserve too shaded for anything to grow underneath. It's time to think about how best to manage the area so that it continues to be a lovely place to walk and enjoy native plants and other wildlife both now and for future generations.



A Management Plan was drawn up in 2012 and has guided most of the work to date, but now needs updating. The Parish Council commissioned consultants to survey the reserve in 2020 to assess its ecological importance and prepare a new plan (available on request from the Parish Clerk. (clerk@wylamparishcouncil.org.uk)).

Broadly speaking, there are many common features between the old and new Management Plan and prescriptions. Regular walkers during the Winter lockdown may have noticed a small pilot scheme near the main entrance gate. There has been modest clearance of crowded tree saplings, re-coppicing of hazels near the path and cutting back of the rampant climbing rose, thorn and bramble. The idea is to open up the canopy and create a "scalloped" edge to the path where more flowering plants can grow over the spring and summer. Some brambles and hedging have been pruned back from the path to create wider verges in the Haughs and on the riverside public footpath. The arisings have been stacked to rot down and provide wildlife habitat and bug 'hotels'.

During the summer the verges and meadows will be mowed perhaps more frequently if needed. More tree and scrub thinning is being considered, together with selective reduction of the bramble cover. The idea is to develop a rolling 7 year programme with coppicing and thinning on a rotation basis whilst retaining the pleasing mosaic of different vegetation and habitats in the Haughs.

We will identify the existing trees that will be helped to grow on into large mature woodland trees – hopefully to be there for a few hundred years. There will be new tree planting so that a more varied age structure is allowed to develop. At the moment most trees are a similar age and size, competing with each other, with a dense undergrowth of cherry, sycamore and hazel under the canopy which will need to be controlled.

Below are the main aims for the Nature Reserve and the adjoining areas of Parish Council land at the pit heap and along the riverside:

- Prevent excessive shading of allotments, paths, verges and wildflower meadow,
- Thin out overcrowded trees,
- Re-introduce rotational coppicing and deal with dying or dangerous trees,
- Improve the quality and range of wildlife habitats where possible.

The list of work is still provisional, and we welcome comments and will address any questions and concerns. There is a Working Group for the Reserve, contactable via the Parish Clerk. When the Covid restrictions are lifted, the group encourages volunteers to help with managing the Reserve – we know some people already do work there from time to time – thank you! Many others have been involved in the past. Please get in touch and let us know what you think. The Working Group is made up of Councillors Jacqueline Henderson, James Martin, Martyn Jones, Diana Carney and Liz Bray (Wylam Volunteer Tree Warden). *Liz Bray*

Wylam Heritage Partnership set up

Following its announcement that it plans to open George Stephenson's Birthplace on selected days later this year, the National Trust has invited the Parish Council and the Falcon Centre Action Group to help launch a Wylam Heritage Partnership. Other partner organisations are being sought and individuals are invited to help. A Steering Group will be formed and an Action Plan then prepared. Some short-term actions are already in hand.



The idea is to bring alive the story of the village and its people, with an initial emphasis on its place in global railway history.

The 200th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 2025 will inevitably mean George Stephenson will get a lot of attention in the next four-and-a-bit years and Wylam should be part of that. George Stephenson is not the only railway pioneer from the village of

course, and Timothy Hackworth is another key link between Wylam and the S&DR.

The Trust will open Stephenson's Cottage on 10 occasions, from mid-May onwards. It is hoped these dates will link up with a series of guided walks around Wylam to really bring the village's railway heritage to life. Booking will be necessary. To make this happen, the Trust is keen to hear from enthusiastic people with an interest in the

village's heritage. If you are willing to share your knowledge and enthusiasm, and help, please contact heather.cooke@nationaltrust.org.uk for more information.

The focus for the Parish Council and the Falcon Centre Action Group is perhaps more the Railway Museum, but also looking at the village's history as a whole and of course as part of this, getting more activity into the Centre where the Museum and Library are located. The two organisations are proposing a Heritage Working Group, which will link up with the National Trust and the Heritage Partnership as above. Wylam history is not just about railways of course.

If you have some special knowledge, a particular interest or just want to learn, then contact Marie Moore at clerk@wylamparishcouncil.org.uk Colin Percy

Ideas for Charlie's Corner

At the 2019 Summer Fair (remember when we mingled willy-nilly?) the Parish Council asked residents what their thoughts were on the uses of Charlie's Corner. One clear consensus was that it could be a special garden. With this in mind I have been researching ideas to create a 'sensory' garden incorporating links to Wylam's heritage.

A sensory garden, put simply, is a place that's been designed with the senses in mind, and is somewhere that acts to enrich each and every human sense (sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste). One fantastic thing about sensory gardens is that they can help people with dementia reconnect with lost memories as our memories are so closely linked to our senses. There is something about having a beautiful outdoor space to spend time in that helps us to clear our minds whilst improving our mood. A garden is not only somewhere that is beautiful to see and spend time in, but also somewhere that has a therapeutic effect.



We are still at the planning stage but will have a design very soon to share with you which will be posted on the Parish Council website and Facebook page. So, stay tuned - Charlie's Corner could become somewhere we can all enjoy with friends and family, enhancing the quality of life for all those that live, work and visit Wylam. *Jacq Henderson*

Jubilee Field Update

As you may know, the Wylam Community Playing Field is run by volunteers and the Association really appreciates the support the village continues to give us and it is so nice to see parents and children continuing to visit the field safely during these strange times. During last Summer's easing of lockdown, we were able to welcome back the cricketers for part of their season and the Rockets in the Autumn.

We missed seeing you all at the Music Quiz and the Summer Fair last year (but didn't miss the problems the wind and rain would have caused!). We have also sadly missed out on the annual Jumble Sale and Ceilidh last month.



Planning for the Summer Fair in June has already started but holding our Fair in the traditional way is unlikely to happen. We hope that we can organise something that would go some way to giving the village a fun afternoon and bring in some revenue for the field while supporting local businesses and organisations. Renewing and replacing some of the items in the wooden adventure playground area has just been completed and is already proving popular with visitors. We are extremely grateful to Wylam Parish Council for their grant which has contributed to funding this.

The new layered hedging completed last year, is now well established and we have further added to the planting with help from Northumberland County Council with their free trees and hedging plants scheme.

Rockets ready for blast off....

Our Rockets and Rockettes were delighted to be back training and playing matches in the Autumn. We had stopped all activity in March, with training and matches cancelled through the first lockdown and now sadly, the same has happened through this Winter. The social and physical benefits that team sports bring to young people are huge and we very much appreciate how quickly the FA and local leagues respond to changes in national and local guidelines in an attempt to keep our children playing in some way. It will be such a pleasure to get our squads back together. Some of our children won't have seen their football friends for several months.

This season we have the following squads:

- Girls-only squads at U7, U8, U9, U11, U12, U13, U14
- Boys-only squads at U7, U9 and U10
- Mixed squad at U8

If you are interested in joining us, some of our squads have places and we are also looking at demand for next season. We also welcome teenagers and adults who would like to get involved as referees, coaches or to offer training support (we will organise your training). And there are always plenty of administration jobs – at over 130 players, that's larger than many first schools. We're currently looking for a Kit Officer and an Assistant Subs Officer – both roles require just a few hours a month. Please contact us at wylamrocketsfc@hotmail.com or via our Facebook page (@wylamrockets) for more information.

'Light up Wylam' - a Huge Success

Back in August 2020, Sarah Grainger and Anna Allan could not have foreseen that December would be a month of further restrictions when pubs and restaurants in the village would be closed once more. So '**Light up Wylam**' not only brought brightness and joy to the village, but additionally connection and a sense of purpose during the dark evenings when so many people walked around the village and enjoyed seeing the many decorated houses and illuminations.

'Light up Wylam' started as a very simple idea of decorating the exterior of your house to raise money for Fareshare North East, who support the distribution of food to those most vulnerable. The project received huge support from Wylam residents, with many

buying programs, entering the quiz, decorating the communal Christmas tree and of course, their houses. This sense of community was incredibly heart-warming, with shops and businesses getting involved through generous donations and decorating windows. Residents of Tyne View received first prize for their beautiful communal gardens and magical illumination of trees by the riverside. Karl Harms, who lives on Tyne View, commented how much they had enjoyed the project which had *“brought us a bit closer together during dark times.”* This was the very essence of ‘Light up Wylam’ and whilst we all hope that December 2021 will be a lot less restrictive than last year, Sarah and Anna look forward to repeating the project - with the potential of communal lights and maybe even a Santa’s Grotto!

All told a massive £2652.21 was raised for FareShare North East who told us *‘Thank you to the organisers, Sarah and Anna whose idea lit up Wylam, bringing festive cheer and drawing together community spirit. As a result, you have lit up the worlds of many people who are experiencing food poverty and facing the stresses and concerns that this brings to their lives.’*

If you would like to keep in touch with the work of FareShare North East, you can email lara.sayers@fareshare-northeast.org.uk or follow us on Facebook. *Sarah Grainger*

Update from Wylam Community Orchard



Despite Covid, nature has, with the loving help of WCO volunteers, continued to thrive at the Orchard. In the wild flower meadow 112 different species were identified last year, the highest ever recorded, while the annual pollinators' survey found for the first time a tawny mining bee. The 2020 fruit crop, largely apples, was taken both by members and local businesses such as The Ship Inn, who made crab apple jelly for sale. Requests for advice continued from others in the N.E. who are considering setting up Community Orchards. A delayed AGM was held in February this year. Sam Syers was elected as the new Chair and Peter Dodman took over from Tom Martin as Orchard Warden, a role Tom had performed superbly over the last 10 years. Wylam residents are reminded that the Orchard remains open to visitors outside normal school hours and that new members and volunteers are always welcome (contact wylamcommunityorchard@gmail.com). *Peter Dodman*

Local Groups and Services update

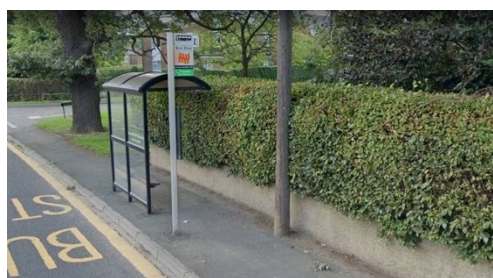
The Parish Council website has a page dedicated to providing contact information for local groups and services. As often happens with things like this, the information becomes out of date as people move on and contact details change.

We want to update this page and ensure as many local groups and services are included and that current contact details are provided. So, if you are involved with a group or service locally can I ask you to have a look at the website and let us know if the details need to be changed. We will send you a short form so that you can consent to your information being shared via the website. Contact Marie Moore, Clerk to the Council on 07903 663680 or email: clerk@wylamparishcouncil.org.uk

Bus Shelters

A while ago we asked you to suggest locations for bus shelters in the Parish area and a number of you got in touch with the following suggestions:

- Acomb Drive - both stops.
- Ingham Terrace.
- North west side of the Holeyn Hall roads, the stop which serves the 685 and X85 Newcastle bound bus service. Apparently, this is the coldest, wettest, windiest bus stop in Northumberland. ☺
- Holeyn Hall Road stop, opposite the Thomas Close development (2 requests).
- There is no shelter in Wylam when travelling to Hexham on the X84 or 686.
- Opposite the Pharmacy for the 686 to Prudhoe as the Charlies Corner stop only serves 2 of the 5 scheduled services.



Things have not happened as quickly as planned due to the pandemic but the Clerk is now working with the County Council to identify the suitability of these locations for shelters, as highway safety is of paramount importance and there needs to be enough space to install a shelter safely. The location will also determine the type of shelter that can be installed.

Once we know from the County Council which locations we can go ahead with we then need to obtain prices from suppliers. We have had companies recommended to us and these are being contacted. The Parish Council will then plan how it moves forward given that the costs are likely to be high i.e. approximately £3,500 per shelter. It is likely that the work will be done in stages on a priority basis. *Marie Moore*

So, what's the problem with Dog Poo?

There are around 8.5 million dogs in the UK creating over 1,000 tonnes of dog poo a day. A 2015 study, led by Professor Christopher Lowe at the University of Central Lancashire, 'sought to investigate the behaviour and attitudes of dog walkers to picking up and disposing of dog poo.' The study found that 3% of owners would not pick up their dog's poo while 8% said they would only pick it up if it was on a path.

Dog poo is also an environmental pollutant. When left on the ground, waste breaks down and ultimately washes into the water supply. This leads to pollution in rivers, streams and local waterways. A 2016 survey by the Marine Conservation Society – 'Great British Beach Clean' recorded 792 bags at 364 beaches during just one weekend, but these numbers don't show the full scale of the problem as volunteers don't record unbagged waste. The total amount of dog poo left on our beaches remains unknown.

It's evident that irresponsible dog owners prefer areas that are either hidden from view, such as long narrow winding paths bordered by trees and foliage or walk their dogs early in the morning or late at night, thinking they can't be seen.

So, what can we do? We need more people reporting dog fouling in our village to Northumberland County Council via their website or by calling on **0345 6006400**. This gives the authority a clear message that dog fouling has increased in Wylam, and they are then more likely to take action. *Jacq Henderson*

Green Matters

From this issue onwards there will be a regular column in The Wylam Globe, called **GREEN MATTERS**. This will include a range of subjects e.g. re-cycling, litter, wildlife that will give information, and offer ideas and practical help in relation to environmental matters and the village. Some of us have already begun to turn our concerns into action, for example Jane Tomlin has been researching rewilding parts of Wylam with a view to increasing insect life (can you remember when our windscreens used to be full of insects after a summer drive?).

Steven Duckworth, our Parish Council Chairman, has been particularly supportive of this venture. Steven believes that not only is it right for the council to be involved in driving forward green and sustainable projects, it's an ideal way of bringing residents together to tackle problems as a community. This is your column, so please use it. If you have any issues you want to raise, or good news stories you think should be highlighted then please contact Lynne Wood - lynnebluebellwood@yahoo.co.uk

BT Facelift

Have you noticed the old BT phone box on the square? It's had a facelift. Phase 1 started with the generous donation of beautiful artwork depicting Wylam's local wildlife and fauna by Steve Pardue, a locally-based artist and designer of signage for outdoor spaces. Phase 2 will be a revamp of the interior with information on the history of Wylam and surrounding walks. The Parish Council would like to thank Steve for all his hard work. *Jacq Henderson*



Forthcoming Events

**All local events are currently working under Covid guidance.
Please contact your groups for further information.**

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