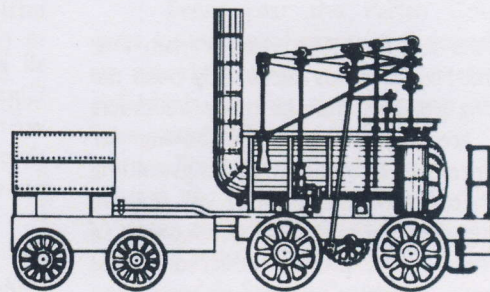


# THE WYLAM GLOBE

Newsletter of Wylam Parish Council



Summer 2010

No. 97

## Blackett Court Closure Plans Raise a Storm

It was with sadness and not a little anger that the Parish Council discovered that the Anchor Housing Trust is to close Blackett Court as soon as feasibly possible. Plans by the Trust to close its property in Wylam and to offer existing tenants alternative accommodation in the Gateshead and Newcastle area, have created a wave of anger and frustration amongst many people in the village, not least the tenants themselves, for whom Wylam has become very important for a variety of very good reasons.

The Trust argues that the mainly "bed-sit" type of accommodation is outdated and increasingly unwanted nationally by prospective tenants. They also claim that the cost of essential maintenance work on the Blackett Court property adds to it being unviable. The first of these arguments may have some basis of truth but the fact remains that the present tenants, many of whom have only moved into the property within the past year or so, are all very happy with the facilities they have. Furthermore, when there have been vacancies, the Trust seems to have made a very low-key attempt to advertise the fact.

On the question of maintenance, this has always been the responsibility of the Trust which appears, by neglect, to have allowed the situation to develop although, once again, the impression of residents is that the Trust's idea of what needs to be done is greatly exaggerated.

Wylam Parish Council has pledged to support the tenants as far as it can and we do know that many local people have also taken up the cause by writing to the Trust, although so far this appears to have been to no avail.

Inevitably this is a complex issue with arguments on both sides, but there is a widespread belief that the feelings and wishes of the residents have been given relatively scant consideration against the decision of the Trust to dispose of the property. This belief is supported by knowledge that the Trust made an approach to Milecastle Housing some 18 months ago, seeking to know whether there would be any interest in that organisation taking over at Blackett Court. We understand that Milecastle asked for more details, which were never provided, while in the meantime new tenants were being taken on without any hint to them as to what might be in the offing.

The Chief Executive for the Trust has publicly stated that "Blackett Court will not close until every customer has been offered suitable alternative accommodation", but there is a fear that there could be a big gulf between a resident being offered something and them being happy with that offer!

Representatives from the Parish Council along with County Councillor Paul Kelly and officers from the County Council have held a meeting with a representative of Anchor Housing, but with the Housing Trust wanting to focus more on the future use of the building rather than the plight of the tenants, little progress was made.

At the time of writing the tenants are still hoping that, in spite of all the indications, there still might be a last-minute reprieve. If others wish to add their voice in support we recommend you write as soon as possible to either Aman Dalvi, Chairman, or Jane Ashcroft, Chief Executive of Anchor Housing at- 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 25 Bedford Street, London, WC2E 9ES.

## Wylam Summer Fair

Preparations for this year's Wylam Summer Fair – which takes place on 26 June – are well advanced. This big event attracts thousands of visitors to the village and raises well needed funds for the Jubilee Playing Field – a major focus in the life of the community providing playing and changing facilities for a range of junior and senior football and cricket teams, a tennis court and a well equipped children's playground.

With very little time to go, the Playing Field Association Summer Fair Committee say there are a few pitches left for trade, charities and voluntary organisations if they want to book a plot. The Fair is also a showcase for live bands, musicians, entertainers, and craftspeople and features a selection of children's competitions, a beer tent and a Glastonbury-style gig in the evening. Alongside the local charities for which this is their largest fundraising event, there will be a selection of food producers all selling locally produced food maintaining the 'Keep it Local' ethos of the Fair. The event runs from 1pm to 5pm and, among other things, will feature children's and adult fun runs, children's races, cake competitions for children and men, a tug-of-war and an egg-throwing contest.

Children can go and sit in a police car or a fire engine, participate in a Scarecrow competition and can also be entertained by a fire-eater and balloon sculptor!

**As usual, thousands of second-hand books will also be on sale in Wylam Methodist Church Hall from 10am to 5pm and, if you have any books you are willing to donate for the stall, please take them to the Methodist Church in the five days before the Fair (preferably early in that week) or telephone Brian Japes on 852151 if you would like someone to collect them.**

An added dimension to the Summer Fair has emerged this year with the inaugural scarecrow competition. Everyone in the village is invited to create a scarecrow and display it outside their property in the week before the Fair. The winner will be awarded the first ever "scarecrow cup" which will be engraved with their name. During the evening visitors can listen to local bands in a marquee and sample locally produced beers.

Anyone wanting to apply for a plot at this year's Fair should contact Koby Bremer on 852010 or, if you want to know more about the Scarecrow competition or have a team of 8 to enter the Tug-of-War, contact Stephen Westgarth on 852325.



A small part of 2009 Bookstall



## Your Playgroup Needs You!!

For the last forty one years Wylam Pre-School Playgroup has successfully been the starting point of many a child's education. We are now desperately looking for volunteers to become longstanding committee members. This will involve playing an active role in the development of the early years provision offered to the youngest members of our community. You do not need to have school age children or previous experience, just drive and determination (plus a few hours spare!!) It will be a challenging yet fully rewarding opportunity. Full induction and support with application for enhanced disclosure will be offered. If you are interested, or to find out more, ring Matthew on 01661 853761. Thank you for your support

## Progressing the Applecart

The Wylam Community Orchard has arrived. At its founding AGM in April a Management Committee and Constitution were finalised and subsequent to that meeting the first grant application was submitted. The Management Committee is hoping that up to 65 trees will be planted this autumn in the grounds of Wylam First School in addition to the construction of an access path between the school and the orchard. Anyone can become a member of the Community Orchard. The project will be run on an annual membership scheme with a small annual fee. All members are encouraged to help with activities such as land preparation, planting, pruning, general maintenance and eventually harvesting and possibly pressing the fruit. For more information please come along to the next meeting. Meetings are usually on a Wednesday evening and are publicised well in advance in the village. All are welcome to come along.

If anyone has any queries, or would like more information please email [wylamcommunityorchard@googlegmail.com](mailto:wylamcommunityorchard@googlegmail.com).

## Shop Your Vouchers to the School

Wylam First School is collecting Tesco "Schools and Clubs" vouchers and Sainsbury's "Active Kids" vouchers. If you have any of these you are asked to bring them to the school or drop them into the box at Wylam Institute, next to the Institute Office. The vouchers are only available for the next few weeks, so please note the deadlines for dropping them off; Tesco vouchers 18 June and Sainsbury's 9 July.

## Keeping Wylam Tidy

Thank you to the volunteers of all ages who took part in the Village Clean-up on Saturday 20 March, working hard collecting litter throughout the village and filling a large waste skip in the car park.

The Parish Council is keen to try and ensure that Wylam stays clean and tidy and that dropped litter or dumped rubbish is cleared fairly promptly. Please report any badly-littered areas to the Parish Council office (contact details at the end of this Newsletter).

There are already people who kindly undertake to clear specific areas of the village on a fairly frequent basis throughout the year. If you are willing to undertake this sort of action, perhaps in an area near where you live or along a favourite walk, please get in touch. The Parish Council can provide "litter-picking sticks", plastic bags and protective gloves to regular helpers.

## Trim Those Hedges

It's some time since we issued this reminder but the need becomes very noticeable at this time of year, when overgrown hedges and trees start to cause problems and generate complaints where they grow out over pavements. Please check your boundaries and trim back growth that is obstructing or potentially will obstruct roads and footpaths. The Parish Council may need to contact residents where action remains necessary.

## Parish Councillor News

We are pleased to report that Judith Beveridge was selected and has now been formally co-opted to fill the vacancy that recently arose on the Parish Council.

Judith, who has lived in Dene Terrace, Wylam, for 20 years, has recently retired after a career as an Occupational Health Nurse with a number of well known north east companies. She can often be spotted taking her Jack Russell terrier "Suzie" for walks.

We trust that Judith will enjoy her experience as a member of the Parish Council.

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on 17 May, Tom Martin was re-elected as Chairman and Caroline Shepherd was elected as Vice-Chairman in place of Melanie Dunnett.

## Hagg Bank Play Area

The Parish Council is pleased to at last be able to report success in obtaining grants that will enable the Play Area at Hagg Bank to be fitted out with new equipment. We are very grateful to the Big Lottery Awards for All Fund for a grant of £6,552 and to the Community Foundation's CE Electric Fund for a further £2,500. The Parish Council has provided another £2,500 from its own Play Equipment Replacement Fund, which has been built up over recent years to help in such a situation.



We hope that the picture below will soon be just a reminder of the old equipment and that the next issue of the Globe will be able to show the brand new set up!



## Bob Whinham

It was only in the last issue of The Globe that we reported that Bob Whinham had stood down from the Parish Council after nearly seven years. It was therefore with great sadness that we learned of his death in hospital in early May after a period during which his health deteriorated rapidly.

Bob was a native of the Isle of Wight but had lived in Wylam for 40 years, where he was well known, whether walking his German Shepherd dog or tending his allotment, and his conscientious service to the community as a member of the Parish Council was appreciated by us all.

We extend our sympathy to Ann and all the family at this very sad time.



## Open at Last!

As we prepare to go to press the land slip repairs close to Hagg Bank have been completed and the road has reopened to traffic after 20 months.

This picture gives only an impression of the total work that was necessary to stabilise the landslip and prevent a recurrence. Ivy has been planted along the wall, which should help it to blend in better in due course.

The Parish Council and County Highways Officers have discussed ways in which safety might be improved on this narrow lane, which many Wylam residents remember was once no more than a rough track which, although improved over the years, was never designed to carry the volume or weight of traffic that has developed. There already is a weight limit on the road but the money to repair the landslip came from a very specific "pot", provided by central Government to tackle urgent road and bridge repairs made necessary by the flooding of September 2008.

For this reason no "extra" safety improvements could be included. The Parish Council has therefore agreed to support the wish of several local residents by including safety issues on this road in the annual submission we make to the County Council's Local Transport Plan. We make the submission this summer for consideration for inclusion in the following year's Plan. It must be stressed that all requests are subject to very close scrutiny and only a very few local schemes are adopted each year. We will, however, make the case as strongly as possible.

In the meantime a further plea to everyone using this road, whether as motorists or pedestrians, to take great care. We all know that accident blackspots appear to be given priority for remedial measures, but accidents are the last thing we wish to see.



## Parish Council Finances

The Parish Council's Precept (the money raised through Council Tax) in 2009/10 was £35,000 and Table 1 (below) shows this alongside other sources of income.

The accounts are yet to be audited.

**Table 1: Wylam Parish Council:  
Income 2009/10**

Precept.....	£35,000.00
VAT Refund.....	£ 1,959.00
Bank Interest .....	£ 18.14
Allotment Rent...	£ 200.00
NEDL Wayleaves	£ 109.00
Sale of Souvenirs£	76.00
Grant (Comm F'dn)	£ 2,500.00
Donations	£ 300.00

**Source: WPC Accounts 2009/10**

Table 2 shows the principle areas of expenditure for the same period, totalling around £43,000.

**Table 2: Wylam Parish Council:  
Expenditure 2009/10**

Staff ...	£ 7,273.00
Administration ...	£ 3,102.00
Publications ...	£ 1,376.00
Open Spaces/Equipm't	£ 7,518.00
Joint Burial Precept	£ 4,590.00
Donations ...	£ 1,788.00
Grants...	£ 4,000.00
Museum ...	£11,000.00

**Source: WPC Accounts 2009/10**

The figures in Table 2 include expenditure under the Museum heading. This is for the construction of a model of the "Puffing Billy" locomotive and was paid from a generous private bequest made several years ago specifically for this purpose. When completed later in the year, this model and one of "Wylam Dilly", completed earlier, will be displayed in the Parish Council's Railway Museum at the Falcon Centre.

The Parish Council has set a Precept of £35,500 for the current 2010/11 Financial Year. Table 3 below gives details of proposed expenditure this year.

**Table 3: Wylam Parish Council:  
Proposed Expenditure 2010/11**

Staff ...	£9,500.00
Administration ...	£3,273.00
Publications ...	£2,100.00
Open Spaces/Equipm't	£4,400.00
Joint Burial Precept	£4,590.00
Donations ...	£3,245.00
Grants ...	£4,000.00
Hagg Bank Play Area	£9,052.00

**Source: WPC Budget 2010/11**

## Grants and Donations

Every year the Parish Council gives a number of grants and donations to local groups, and sometimes individuals. During the past year these have included Wylam Institute, Wylam Playing Field Association, Wylam & District Churches (Youth Worker project), the British Legion, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern and Tynedale Sports Council.

In accordance with Financial Regulations, the full Parish Council accounts for 2009/10 will be available for inspection by Wylam electors between 7 June and 2 July and public notices to this effect have been displayed in the village.

## End of an Era

On 15 May Lesley Duggan and Brian "Soxy" Irwin said goodbye to the Ship Inn. After ten years this certainly is the end of an era and the Parish Council would like to wish them all the best for the future. We're sure they'll enjoy a very well earned retirement! Although they are leaving The Ship they are not leaving Wylam, so they will no doubt be seen around in the village from time to time.

## It's That Weed Again!

At the annual Village Meeting in May, Denis Peel drew attention to the problems of invasive plants, especially Himalayan Balsam, seedlings of which are now springing up in profusion along the river side. Volunteers are needed to remove as many as possible of these plants to prevent its spread. This, Denis suggests, can be done in working parties or when you are out walking the dog or children. The areas to tackle first are the land south of Stephenson's cottage, the top of the Scar, the Nature Reserve and the Hagg Bank area. There is no need to tackle the very edges of the river as fresh seeds are coming down with every flood. The plant is easy to spot from June onwards when in flower and at the time it needs to be uprooted before the seeds can set. Denis will be available for working parties on Sat. 19 June, Sun. 20 June and Sun. 11 July, meeting in the Country Park Car Park at 10am. For further information please contact Denis on 853278.

The plant will only be eliminated when it is removed from further up-stream. The Tyne River Trust web site gives details of other "Balsam Bashing" groups



## Vandals Spoil Riverside

There have recently been a number of complaints about people camping along the north side of the river, something that has been a recurring problem for many years during the summer months. What has made things much worse is that areas in which people have been camping have been effectively vandalised, as this picture illustrates. Those responsible have taken saws and cut down a number of growing trees for firewood, as well as leaving litter. At the Parish Council meeting on 18 May, several Wylam people voiced their concerns. Present was PC Charlie Cross, our local Police Community Beat Manager, who assured residents that complaints were being taken very seriously and they were doing all they could to stop this problem. PC Cross also gave a non-emergency police telephone number to ring for any problems residents may have. The number is 03456 043 043.



## Shed Alert!

We have reported (above) the problem of vandalism along the banks of the River Tyne. Without wishing to jump to conclusions, the police themselves recognise that this type of unwelcome activity is often linked to more people coming into the village when the weather improves.

Another activity which we are frequently reminded about by the police is the increase in break-ins to garden sheds, garages and outhouses, several local ones having fallen victim to this in recent weeks.

Although it might appear to be common sense, the police tell us that many people seem to forget about security at this time of year.

Sheds these days are increasingly used as an extension to the family house so that it's not only things like garden tools and lawnmowers that are at risk but bicycles, power tools and things like golf and fishing equipment. The typical padlock and hasp, when attached to a softwood shed by a few small screws, provides minimal protection. The message is to lock it up using a secure shed bar.

## Flood Protection to Improve

The Environment Agency has recognised for some time that a number of properties on Holeyn Hall Road and in the vicinity of Engine Dene are at risk of flooding when, during periods of heavy or persistent rain, overflows occur from the Oakwood Burn, which is classed as a "main river" and for which the Agency is therefore responsible. The most serious incident in recent years occurred in September 2008, which resulted in damage to several properties, although some further flooding occurred again earlier this spring.

The Agency has now completed detailed assessments of the flood risk, has accepted that action is justified and has secured funding to enable work to be carried out.

Although detailed consultations are still on-going, the main proposal involves raising the embankment of the Oakwood Burn, particularly on the left (downstream) side and creating levels which will prevent water discharging from the field onto Holeyn Hall Road by diverting it back into the burn where it flows beneath Holeyn Hall Road.

We hope to be able to confirm the final details soon. It is anticipated that work will commence in September 2010 and will last for approximately 4 weeks.

## Allotments

You are probably aware that the allotments west of the Jubilee Playing Field belong to the Parish Council but are let to and managed by the Wylam Allotment Association. The Parish Council replaced some of the perimeter fencing for which it is responsible, a couple of years ago and has recently undertaken to restore the fences on the remaining east and west sides over the next few years.

A problem that has bugged the allotments for several years has been the all too frequent flooding on the north side of the site, including part of the track through to the Nature Reserve. There is a firm belief that this problem arose after major pipe laying work by Northumbrian Water several years ago and the Parish Council and Allotment Association are currently in talks with Northumbrian Water, aimed primarily at convincing the latter of their responsibility and trying to get the problem rectified.

Northumbrian Water has attempted to survey the storm drain that runs down from Woodcroft Road and the culvert which crosses the allotment site and a report of these investigations is currently awaited.

## Forthcoming Events

The following events take place in Wylam Institute unless indicated otherwise

### 13 June

"Jump for Joy" (Teddy Parachute Jump) St Oswin's Church grounds from 12 noon

### 20 June

Garden Walk in aid of Wylam Housing Group and Shelter North East, 10.00am to 5.00pm

### 26 June

Wylam Summer Fair (including Book Stall)

### 5 July

Blood Donor session 1.30 to 7.30pm

### 7 July

Tynedale Christian Healing Network - "Journeys into Healing" 7.30pm. (Stories of healing and an opportunity to experience healing).

### 14 July

Institute Coffee Morning 10.30am to 12 noon

### 11 August

Institute Coffee Morning 10.30am to 12 noon.

**Many more events and much more detail is now available in the Diary section of the Wylam Parish Council website:-**

**[www.wylamparishcouncil.org](http://www.wylamparishcouncil.org)**

**To submit entries for this site; go to "Events" on the home page and then to "Submit your local event". A form will appear for you to complete and submit.**

## Deadline for the next "Wylam Globe" Monday, 9th August

The Parish Council wishes to make it clear that anonymous articles or letters received for the "Globe" will not be considered for publication.

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Correspondence relating to this Newsletter should be addressed to:

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