

# one Darlington

Winter 2025

THE OLDEST WORKING RAILWAY BRIDGE IN THE WORLD



**Celebrating 200 years** - page 6



# The truth about begging

**Myth:** All people who beg are homeless.

**Fact:** Very few people begging in Darlington are homeless.  
Some have declined help for a variety of reasons.

**Myth:** The best way to help someone begging is to give them money.

**Fact:** Giving money to people begging may fuel their drug or alcohol addiction.

**Myth:** Nothing is being done to help people begging.

**Fact:** We work closely with charities and other partner organisations to offer support to people at risk of rough sleeping.

## How can I help?

The best way to help someone who is begging is to report it online at [www.darlington.gov.uk/reportit](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/reportit) or scan the QR code.



# Welcome to One Darlington

**Welcome to your winter edition of One Darlington magazine. As 2025 dawns, we're looking ahead to a year of events celebrating the 200th anniversary of the world's first passenger rail journey. Turn to page 6 to find out what's in store at Hopetown as part of the celebrations.**

We're entering the final few days of the council's consultation on its 2025/26 budget and four-year medium term financial plan. Read what's being proposed on pages 4 and 5, with details of how to have your say and a breakdown of how public money is spent in Darlington.

Also in this edition, we're looking ahead to what promises to be a fabulous community event at Darlington Hippodrome – Dementia's Got Talent, an evening of entertainment in which people living with dementia showcase their personalities and their party pieces! Turn to page 9 for full details.

On page 10, you'll find helpful advice on making sure you're not missing out on any benefits you may be entitled to, while page 16 explores the digital divide – some of the barriers that people come up against when it comes to getting online.

With the warmer days of spring still several weeks away, you'll find tips on making your home more energy efficient and keeping warm this winter in this edition. Turn to pages 28 for more information. We've also got a few tips for boosting your wellbeing this year – see page 36 for details.

If you're looking for things to do this winter, you'll find details of some of Darlington's many clubs and societies on pages 12-13, while our what's on guide to events near you is on pages 32-33.

If you are considering new year's resolutions, why not think about volunteering? There are lots of opportunities to get involved in different community projects and to make a real difference in this edition.

Whatever you're looking for in Darlington this winter, we hope you'll find something to interest you in this edition of your quarterly magazine.

Thanks for reading.



Cemetery Lane in winter

## Inside this issue

- 8** Garden waste
- 17** 30 years of CCTV
- 20** The Hive is buzzing!
- 29** Our charity needs you!
- 30** Care about your air

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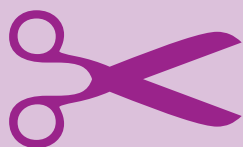
The next issue will be out in early March.  
If you haven't received your copy by mid-March,  
please call 0800 160 1552.

An audio and online version of One Darlington is also  
available at [www.darlington.gov.uk/onedarlington](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/onedarlington)

# Your council finances –

## Funding

The council continues to face significant financial pressures, with rising demands in vital areas such as adult social care and homelessness.



The council's budget was cut by **£46m** in real terms between 2010 and 2019.



We have a legal duty to set a balanced budget – with savings of **£3.6m** identified for the next financial year.



Over the next four years, we have identified savings totalling more than **£21.4m**.



A **2.99%** Council Tax increase and a **2%** adult social care precept, to help fund adult social care, is being proposed. This would generate more than **£3.3m** to help fund vital services.



# the challenges we face

## Where does your money go?

Adult social care.....	£52.9m
Children's social care.....	£37.2m
Environment - grass cutting, parks etc.	£7.7m
Arts, culture & leisure.....	£5.8m
Education.....	£5.5m
Highways.....	£5.2m
Waste management.....	£5.1m
Financing costs.....	£4m
Housing, welfare & benefits.....	£3.5m
Concessionary fares.....	£2.7m
Cost of democracy.....	£2.7m
Planning, development & regeneration...	£1.7m
Regulatory services.....	£1.1m
Councillors' allowances.....	£0.7m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£135.8m</b>



Taken together, adult social care and children's social care account for more than **66%** of the council's annual spending.



We're asking for your views in our budget consultation. You can continue to have your say until

**midnight on  
Thursday 23 January.**

For full details, visit  
**[www.darlington.gov.uk/  
consultations](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/consultations)**



You can send us your comments by emailing

**[MTFPConsultation@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:MTFPConsultation@darlington.gov.uk)**  
or by posting your comments to Finance Team, Darlington Borough Council, Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington DL1 5QT.



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

Printed copies of the budget proposals are also available in Darlington's libraries and the Town Hall customer contact centre.



# CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF RAILWAY AT **HOPETOWN** - D A R L I N G T O N -

**This year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first journey of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR). Preparations are well underway for the nine-month international festival taking place across Tees Valley and County Durham.**

More information on all the events in Darlington, including how you can get involved, is coming soon - keep an eye out

for the spring edition of One Darlington, check out our social media and visit [www.sdr2000.co.uk](http://www.sdr2000.co.uk) where you can also sign up to our newsletter.

There are two exciting exhibitions taking place at the Carriage Works in Hopetown, presented by S&DR200. Both exhibitions will be complemented by a host of fun activities for all the family at Hopetown.



Image supplied by NRM

## **Railway Pioneers, April-June**

Three iconic locomotives will be on show illustrating the advancements of rail technology in the early 19th century and the engineering innovation which led to the opening of S&DR. On display will be Locomotion No. 1, designed and driven by George Stephenson on the historical first journey in 1825, Pen-y-Darren, designed by Richard Trevithick in 1804 and Steam Elephant, designed by John Buddle and William Chapman in 1815.



Image supplied by Studio Swine

## **STEAM to the future, July-October**

Following the story of the early railways, this exhibition takes a playful but important look at the future. A commissioned art piece has been created to showcase the science behind how locomotives and steam works. Japanese and British artist collective Studio Swine has created an immersive installation that celebrates the ethereal essence of steam, whilst showing the mechanics of how momentum and physics are the driving force behind how steam engines are powered. This will then transition into a look to the future and how industry is gearing up for the second revolution - a green one. There will also be a chance for visitors to create their own ideas of the trains of the future.

# EXPERIMENT I

## THE TIME TRAVEL IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE AT **HOPETOWN** DARLINGTON -

**BOOK NOW:**  
[www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/experiment](http://www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/experiment)

Image Credit: PLB Projects / Figment Productions.



# Youngsters inspire play area

**A group of nursery children has helped create a garden-like play space inside Theatre Hullabaloo.**

Theatre Hullabaloo makes, tours and promotes theatre for young audiences, aged 0–16.

Children and staff from Borough Road Nursery, which is next door to the theatre, were invited to help create a new play installation.

Theatre Hullabaloo artists and researchers looked at how the nursery children played and interacted with each other and adults in various creative spaces and used what they learnt to build the Bloom Creative Play Space.

The immersive play area, which is free to explore, encourages all children to use their imaginations and share ideas with each other and their adults.

Visit [www.theatrehullabaloo.org.uk](http://www.theatrehullabaloo.org.uk) to find out more.

# Garden Waste Collection

**Garden waste collections will start again in March and run until November.**

You will be able to renew or sign up and pay your annual fee of £47 online from the end of January. Sign up by Friday 28 February to be included in the first collection.

**DON'T MISS OUT!** Sign up online



What **CAN** and **CANNOT** go into your garden waste bin?



**YES please**

- Grass cuttings
- Hedge trimmings
- Twigs/small branches
- Flowers
- Weeds
- Leaves
- Prunings



**NO thanks**

- Bags or plastics
- Stone, rubble, soil, turf
- General waste
- Food waste
- Animal waste
- Japanese knotweed
- Ragwort

For more information, to renew or sign up and pay your annual fee, visit [www.darlington.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/gardenwaste)

Please ensure you complete the correct form for renewal or new sign up.



# Dementia's got talent is not to be missed!

**A ground breaking talent show at Darlington Hippodrome is coming up this month.**

**Showcasing the personalities of people living with dementia and their stage talents, the show will feature comedians, musicians, choirs, story tellers and more.**

The night will be hosted by Peter Barron, former editor of The Northern Echo, and judged by a panel including BBC Radio Tees presenter, Gary Philipson. They are sure to make this a great night for the contestants and audience.

Joanne Hendry, one of the volunteers from organisers Dementia Friendly Darlington, said: "Auditions and rehearsals have been incredible. It takes guts to get on stage. Our contestants want to show that they have talent and

personality and their dementia does not stop them. They want to show others that life goes on after a diagnosis of dementia."

There will also be supporting performances by Darlington Operatic Society, Reid Street School Dementia Friendly Choir and more.

The show is raising money for local dementia groups and Alzheimer's Society and is being held at Darlington Hippodrome on Tuesday 21 January.

Tickets are on sale now from Darlington Hippodrome box office, priced £15 each or £50 for a family (two adults with two children).

If you have any general enquiries please email [joanne.hendry@darlington.homeinstead.co.uk](mailto:joanne.hendry@darlington.homeinstead.co.uk) or call 07513 723302.

## 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](http://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](http://darlington.gov.uk/apprenticeships).

Learning & Skills



**CALL 01325 405601**

**EMAIL [I&s@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:I&s@darlington.gov.uk)**

**WEB [www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills)**

[@DarlingtonL\\_S](https://twitter.com/DarlingtonL_S)

[DarlingtonL\\_S](https://www.instagram.com/DarlingtonL_S)

[Learning & Skills](https://www.facebook.com/Learning%20%26%20Skills)

# Don't ignore your post!

## Some benefits are ending and are being replaced by Universal Credit.

If your benefits are going to be affected, you will receive a migration notice letter from the Department of Work and Pensions telling you the date you should claim Universal Credit by. If you don't make the claim in time, or you claim before you get the notice, your old benefit will stop and you could get less money on Universal Credit. If you claim in time, you will normally get extra money (called the transitional element) to ensure your benefits are kept at least at the same level.

Some people may be able to increase the level of their transitional element. If you are in one of the following groups please contact Citizens Advice in Darlington for advice on the transitional element:

- If your circumstances are going to change in the next three months
- If you have long term health problems or a disability, especially if you live alone
- If you receive your migration letter between 1 January and 6 April.

You may also get a migration notice if you receive one of these benefits:

- Tax credits: working tax credit and child tax credit
- Income support
- Income-based jobseeker's allowance (JSA)

- Income-related employment and support allowance (ESA)
- Housing benefit, unless you're in supported or temporary accommodation.

It is important that you open and read all letters that you receive so you don't miss your migration notice and you continue to receive all the money you are entitled to.

If you receive a letter and need help to understand it or to make a claim please contact the Citizens Advice Darlington's benefit entitlement action team (BEAT) as soon as possible - details below. If you receive a letter and you are unsure if it is genuine please don't bin it or ignore it - check with the BEAT team.

If you haven't received your migration letter yet, it's a good time to make sure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to so when the times comes you get the maximum amount of Universal Credit. Many people in Darlington, particularly those with a disability or health problems, are missing out on what they are entitled to. The BEAT team can check you are getting what you should. You can also use the online benefits calculator to check if you are getting the right income related benefits. Visit [www.gov.uk/benefits-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculator)

Please make sure friends and relatives who receive these benefits are also keeping an eye out for their letter so they don't miss the deadline!

# Don't trash your cash

## Some benefits are being replaced by Universal Credit.

If your benefits are affected, you will receive a migration notice letter from the Department of Work and Pensions.

The letter tells you what to do and by when so you can keep receiving the money you are entitled to.

If you don't understand your letter or need help to make a claim contact the benefit entitlement action team (BEAT).

Don't ignore or throw away your post!

Call 01325 266888, email [BEAT@citizensadvicerc.org.uk](mailto:BEAT@citizensadvicerc.org.uk) or pop in to the Citizens Advice office between 10am and noon Monday-Friday, The Core Building, Church Row (next to the Boot and Shoe), DL1 5QD.



citizens  
advice



# 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](http://www.darlington.gov.uk)

## Emailing councillors

To email your councillor, their email address is [firstname.lastname@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.lastname@darlington.gov.uk)

For example, if you want to email Stephen Harker, type [Stephen.harker@darlington.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto:Andrew.G.Anderson@darlington.gov.uk); **Helen Crumbie (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](mailto:Rebecca.E.Baker@darlington.gov.uk); **David Beckett (L)** Tel: 07982 847837. West Park Academy, Tuesday 14 January and 11 February, 5-6pm. **Scott Durham (C)** Tel: 07805 505156. The White Heifer that Travelled, Tuesday 4 March, 7-8pm; The Brinkburn, Tuesday 4 February, 7-8pm.

## COCKERTON

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

## COLLEGE

**Bryony Holroyd (G)** Tel: 07570 776553; **Matthew Snedker (G)** Tel: 07780 807059. Abbey Junior School, Monday 20 January and 17 February, 6-7pm.

## EASTBOURNE

**Joe Dillon (L)** Tel: 07939 221166. Pilmoor Green Community Centre, Tuesday 28 January and 25 February, 6-7pm. **Jonathan Dulston (C)** Tel: 07775 555251. Firthmoor Community Centre, Wednesday 5 March, 3-4pm; The Wheatsheaf, Yarm Road, Friday 7 February, 5-6pm. **Kevin Nicholson (I)** Tel: 07791 807629. Firthmoor Community Centre, Wednesday 15 January and 19 February, 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 February, 6-7pm; Elim Pentecostal Church, Monday 27 January and 24 February, 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 1 February and 1 March, 10-11am.

## HEIGHTON AND CONISCLIFFE

**Paul Crudass (C)** Tel: 374537; **Gerald Lee (C)** Tel: 314622. High Coniscliffe Church Hall, Saturday 1 February, 10-11am; Summerhouse Village Hall, Saturday 1 March, 10-11am.

## HUMMERSKNOTT

**Kate Mammolotti (G)** Tel: 07949 222733; **Thomas Robinson (I)** Tel: 07735 310357. Salutation Hall, Monday 27 January and 24 February, 6-7pm.

## HURWORTH

**Lorraine Tostevin (C)** Tel: 333382. **Paul Walters (C)** Tel: 722097. No venue, by appointment only. Tuesday 4 February and 4 March, 5.30-6.30pm.

## MOWDEN

**Pauline Culley (C)** Tel: 250482; **Alan Marshall (C)** Tel: 359138 or 07807 523106. Mowden Junior School, Monday 3 February and 3 March, 6.30-7.30pm.

## NORTHGATE

**Sajna Ali (L)** Tel: 405998; **Sonia Kane (L)** Tel: 486754.

## NORTH ROAD

**Hilary Allen (LD)** Tel: 480277; **Anne-Marie Curry (LD)** Tel: 07531 304050, [annemarie.curry@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:annemarie.curry@darlington.gov.uk). **James Coe (I)** Tel: 07828 178276; Morrisons café, Wednesday 12 February, 6-7pm; The Well, Wednesday 22 January and 26 February, 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 14 January, 11 February and 11 March, 1-2pm; Dolphin Centre, Thursday 13 February, 5.30-6.30pm; Skerne Park Community Centre, Tuesday 4 February and 4 March, 11am-noon.

## PARK WEST

**Bob Donoghue (C)** Tel: 07767 294194; **Heather Scott (C)** Tel: 468547. By Appointment only through Mayor 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 5 February and 5 March, 6-7pm.

## RED HALL AND LINGFIELD

**Mandy Porter (L)** Tel: 07962 363855; **Amanda Riley (L)** Tel: 07764 759554. Heathfield Primary School, Thursday 16 January and 20 February, 3.30-4.30pm; Red Hall Community Centre, Thursday 13 February, 5-6pm.

## SADBERGE AND MIDDLETON ST GEORGE

**Deborah Laing (C)** Tel: 07747 863297; Middleton St George Cricket Club, Tuesday 28 January and 25 February, 7-8pm. **Yvonne Renton (I)** Tel: 07486 617516; **Colin Pease (I)** Tel: 07738 422776. Bishopton Village Hall, Friday 7 February and 7 March, 10.30-11.30am.

## STEPHENSON

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

## WHINFIELD

**Jamie Barch (C)** Tel: 07716 680109; **Andy Keir (C)** Tel: 07597 297654. Asda Foyer, Saturday 25 January and 22 February, 11am-noon, also Saturday 15 February, 11am-1pm.

## MPs' SURGERIES:



### Lola McEvoy (Darlington MP)

can be contacted by email at [lola.mcevoy.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:lola.mcevoy.mp@parliament.uk)



### Matt Vickers (Stockton West MP)

can be contacted by email at [matt.vickers.mp@parliament.uk](mailto: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](mailto:mayor@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk)

# CLUBS AND COM

To feature your community group or club, email [editor@onedarlington.org.uk](mailto:editor@onedarlington.org.uk)



## Support for people with hearing problems

If you're struggling with hearing problems, there is help and support available. Donna Balmer from Durham Deafened Support (DDS) explains what's on offer.

"Deafness is the poor relation of disabilities, seen to be more of a nuisance than a disability but it's the most isolating. DDS encourages self-help and gives support to people who have a hearing loss and enables them and their families to cope with the changes to their lives.

"Sudden or gradual, slight or profound, hearing loss can have a traumatic affect. It becomes difficult to understand important conversations, let alone to enjoy the chit-chat of everyday life. Hard of hearing people may also find that they become excluded as decisions are made without them because it is quicker and easier to "just do it".

"We are delighted that, thanks to National Lottery funding, we can continue our Tai Chi, crafts and a new lip-reading group in Darlington. Our projects aim to help people regain confidence to live "a life after deaf", preventing isolation and health problems associated with this.

"We visit people at home to show them a range of hearing aid compatible equipment such as amplified phones, loop systems and personal listeners. We also host non-residential Dealing with Deafness (DWD) rehabilitation weeks."

For more details call 0191 5183358, email [admin@ddsupport.org.uk](mailto:admin@ddsupport.org.uk)

## Feethams Veterans Seniors Club

The group meets every Wednesday morning, 10-11.30am at Darlington Cricket Club where they enjoy a chat over tea and biscuits plus a light hearted team quiz.

Meetings are open to anyone, men and women, plus partner, who has served for any length of time in the Forces including the Merchant Navy. Get together are relaxed with time to chat and there are regular social outings.

The first meeting is free, after that it's £3 to cover rations. Pop along or call for more details.

Barbara Edwardson (ex WRAC) 01325 260768 or Councillor Colin Pease (ex RAF) 07738 422776.



**NCT Playgroup** runs on a Wednesday morning, 9.30-11.30am, at the Quaker Meeting House on Skinnergate. They are a charity led play group aimed at helping parents and grandparents through those early days and years.

They offer a relaxed but structured session for babies and young children. Each session includes play time, snack, song and story time with a weekly craft activity. Pop along and find out more.



**Darlington Hockey Club** hold three different sessions running on Monday evenings: beginners, juniors and seniors, aged from five to 16, boys and girls. The two youngest groups run from 6.15-7.15pm (ages 5-12) and seniors are 7.15-8.15pm (ages 13-16) at Carmel School astroturf, DL3 8RW. For more details, email [jasontmulroy@gmail.com](mailto:jasontmulroy@gmail.com) or call 07773242520.

## Darlington Dolphin Masters

An adult swimming club, open to anyone aged over 18 who wants to improve swimming fitness or return to competitive swimming. They train at the Dolphin Centre on Mondays and Thursdays 7.30-8.30pm and anyone can turn up just before this time in the foyer.

They cover a range of disciplines including open water, triathlons, cold water, water polo or pool swimming. Members have competed at local, regional, national and international levels, achieving medals at every stage. Ranging from ex-Olympians to those looking to compete for the first time, they have a unique mix of abilities.

Check out the club via Instagram or enquire at the Dolphin Centre.

## Darlington Flower Club

meets on the first Wednesday of the month, 2pm at Darlington Cricket Club. The first meeting of 2025 will be in February. The friendly club welcomes anyone who is keen to learn more about flower arranging and most meetings include a professional demonstration. Visitors pay £5 per session; for more details call 01325 374732.

## New Year – new you

If you've made a New Year resolution to become more active, then joining a club or a local class is an ideal way to get fitter and make new friends. Check out [www.darlington.gov.uk/healthydarlington](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/healthydarlington) for details of local classes and clubs.

## Do you run a sports club?

If you would like to be listed in the Healthy Darlington sports directory, simply email your club details to [movemore@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:movemore@darlington.gov.uk)

## Retrofit

Get fit through dance and enjoy socialising afterwards. For ladies of all ages who want to take a dance down memory lane with music from days gone by. A fun and friendly low impact class.

Classes are £6.50 each, pay as you go, at Sadberge Village Hall, Monday, 9.30-10.30am; Friday 9.15-10.15am and St Thomas Aquinas Church Hall, Wednesday 10-11am.

Call 07980124764 or search for Retrofit dance class on Facebook.

# Regenerating Darlington

A number of government-funded projects to regenerate the town centre are helping to ensure Darlington has a strong and sustainable local economy with opportunities for all.

These projects are overseen by Darlington Town Deal Board, which is made up of representatives from the council, local businesses, partner organisations, voluntary and community groups, and the local MP.

Take a look at what's been happening over the last year and what's coming up in 2025.



Members of Darlington Town Deal Board which oversees the projects

## The Northern Echo building

Work to transform the former Northern Echo building on Priestgate into an adult skills centre and serviced office accommodation has started. The project, led by workspace provider Adavo, which has extensive experience in developing prestigious, landmark buildings, will offer new classrooms and teaching spaces as well as business accommodation for more than 600 people. The adult skills centre is set to open in September 2025 with business workspace available the following year.

The project will create opportunities for businesses looking to start, grow or relocate in Darlington, as well as people seeking employment or looking to upskill, while bringing more people into the town centre.



## Coniscliffe Road

At the end of last year work started on a scheme to improve outdoor facilities for bars and restaurants on Coniscliffe Road. The scheme, which includes extending the existing pavements, realigning the carriageway and introducing a pocket park and additional planting is expected to be completed in Spring 2025 and will encourage people to spend more time in the area and the town centre.



## Skinnergate and the yards

The completion of works to upgrade the façade of The Quakerhouse pub in Mechanics Yard, marked the start of the next phase of work to breathe new life into Skinnergate and the yards as part of Project Darling. The project, which takes inspiration from The Lanes in Brighton, Neal's Yard in London, and The Shambles in York, was named the best in region at the North East Awards for Planning Excellence and is creating hidden gems in the heart of the town centre to surprise and delight visitors. Further businesses are expected to benefit from upgrades to the exterior of their properties throughout 2025.



## Victoria Road

Ambitious plans to create a fresh new look on the lead up to Darlington Station from Victoria Road are underway. A number of properties have signed up for support to make external improvements to their premises which include the installation of solid timber doors, entrance tiling and railings. The project aims to capitalise on the town's rail history; creating a sense of arrival for people entering the town from the west station exit.



## Northgate

This year will be a big one for Northgate as work to progress a number of projects take a step forward including plans to convert number 156 Northgate, which was home to the prominent Quaker Robson family, into high quality office space for small businesses. We are currently seeking a contractor for the project which should be completed by the end of 2025. This is a key development in our plans to promote social and economic growth in the area.



We are also looking to progress plans to tidy up and preserve the integrity of number 142 Northgate, part of Edward Pease House, while opportunities are considered for the development of the building as a whole.

Our efforts to agree the purchase of Northgate House will continue and plans have been submitted on how nearby Gladstone and Kendrew Street may be redeveloped to benefit the area.

Keep up to date with  
what's happening  
in Darlington at  
[www.darlington.gov.uk/regeneration](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/regeneration)



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

# Bridging the digital divide

**In the modern world, where opportunities and services are increasingly moving online, having an internet enabled device, access to the internet and good digital skills are basic needs.**

However, we know that some people experience a number of barriers which can stop, or make it harder, for them to do the things they need to online – this is called digital exclusion.

The extent to which people are digitally excluded can change throughout their life. For example, changing personal circumstances could mean that someone who has been competent doing things online, now has limited internet access which is restricting their ability to get online.

A number of services are available to help make sure you can do the things you need online.

Learning & Skills Darlington offers local adults free computer courses for beginners - the next one starts on 14 January. These courses cover the very basics of using a computer and the internet including how to use devices, accessing and browsing the internet, staying safe online and creating and using documents.

Learners who recently completed the course said:

- “It has given me an insight into what is available on the computer and how it can help you in everyday life.” - **Denise**
- “I have really enjoyed the course so far. It has really helped me and given me confidence to access the internet and to understand the risks.” - **Lynn**
- “This course has built my confidence using computers. I enjoyed it a lot.” – **Niharika**



Learning & Skills may also be able to help learners enrolled on their courses, to access a device if needed.

You can get in touch with them via telephone 01325 405601.

Local charities also offer a range of digital support. For example, Age UK Darlington hosts an IT drop-in session for older people every Monday (except bank holidays) at Bradbury House on Beaumont Street West, 2-4pm.

If you have a device and are confident using it, free Wifi is available in Darlington town centre and council-owned venues like the Dolphin Centre or the Hippodrome. If you do not have access to internet enabled equipment, you can use the public computers available in the town's libraries for free. Tablet-like devices called Hublets can also be checked out at our library on Crown Street.

People wanting to access the council's online services are also welcome to use the computers in our contact centre at the Town Hall.





**Rob Williams  
and Gary Yates  
(CCTV operators)**

# Keeping us safe for 30 years

**Our CCTV control room and its dedicated staff have been helping keep residents, businesses and visitors safe for 30 years.**

As we mark this special milestone, two of our eagle-eyed operators share their memories and why they love their job.

Rob Williams joined the team when the control room first opened in December 1994. He said: “We had 34 cameras to start with and stored images on 16 video recorders – there were lots of tapes to change – but that’s all gone now we’re digital.

“We also now provide a more diverse range of services, that most people probably don’t know we do. I love the fact we can help the public, make them feel safer and detect and deter crime. No two days are the same and being part of a closeknit team, working closely with other teams and partners is great.

“It can be hard sometimes, when you see a disturbing incident on the CCTV or you take a call from a Lifeline client in distress, but it’s rewarding when you’re able to get them the help they need.

“I remember the first arrest we were involved in was while we were still training before the service was active, it was so exciting to see the kind of impact we could have.”

Gary Yates, took up his post in July 2023, and says: “I’m really excited to be part of a team that plays such a vital role in the safety and wellbeing of the

community – that’s what drew me to the role. Each day presents unique challenges, which keeps things interesting.

“The most rewarding part is knowing I’m helping to make a difference in the lives of local people. However, the hardest part is perhaps not being able to directly intervene – it’s difficult not being able to jump through the screen to help, but I always try to ensure help is on the way, coordinating resources as needed.”

## CCTV facts & figures

- We started with 34 cameras but now monitor more than 280 across the borough
- We initially just covered car parks and Lifeline calls. Now the teams cover the CCTV network and monitor fire/intruder alarms for council buildings, and out of hours calls for housing, streetscene, highways and civic enforcement

### In an average month operators:

- Record **425** incidents
- Assist in **61** arrests
- Deal with **9,845** Lifeline calls
- Process **90** reports for civic enforcement
- Provide evidence to police for **68** incidents.

**To find out more visit [www.darlington.gov.uk/communitysafety](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/communitysafety) and click on CCTV.**

**TEES  
VALLEY**

# TREES ON TREES

Help us plant one million trees in Tees Valley

Trees on Tees is an exciting new programme to increase woodland creation in Tees Valley. Tree Week took place during the first week of December. That means we have free trees to help Darlington residents get planting and – as a Community Forest – funding is now available for landowners for woodland creation!

## Residents

From Tree Week until the end of March every winter, people in Darlington will be able to pick up a free tree from the Combined Authority offices at Teesside Airport.

It is now prime tree planting season and Trees on Tees can give you advice on how and where to plant, along with your very own tree! Simply register on the Trees on Tees sign-up page.

## Landowners

Funding is now available for landowner woodland creation, with Trees on Tees team available to offer free support to develop tree planting and woodland creation projects across Tees Valley.

## Schools & Community Groups

Get support and funding for your projects, including school forests and community orchards.

## Businesses

If you have land which you would like to plant trees on, contact Trees on Tees.

You can also donate directly to our Trees on Tees Community Fund. These donations will be used to fund our Residents Tree Giveaway and provide support where other forms of grants are not available. It may also be possible to match you directly with a community group or school which is looking for additional support with their planting schemes.

In partnership with



This is led by



To find out more, scan QR code, visit [TreesOnTees.com](https://TreesOnTees.com) or email [trees@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk](mailto:trees@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk)



**TEES  
VALLEY**



From left, LNER's Steve Wilson, Cllr Steve Harker, Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen and Network Rail's Luke Durston

# Darlington Station Gateway Concourse Now Complete

A major milestone has been reached in the £140million transformation of Darlington Station with the completed construction of the new Eastern Concourse building.

Construction of the new concourse building has been delivered on time and on budget by the Tees Valley Mayor and Tees Valley Combined Authority.

The building will now transfer to Network Rail, paving the way for the next phase of development, which will see it fitted out with shop units and amenities and ready to welcome passengers in late 2025.

It is the latest landmark in the massive redevelopment of Darlington Station which also includes the addition of two new platforms, a new multi-storey car park for more than 650 cars, a transport interchange and an improved Western entrance.

The new Eastern concourse will connect through to the historic station via a new elevated walkway.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said: "This transformative project will provide Darlington passengers with the station they deserve while helping to boost the number of services we're able to provide across our region and securing national rail links to and from Teesside, Darlington and Hartlepool."

The redevelopment of Darlington Station is being delivered in a partnership with the Tees Valley Mayor and Combined Authority, Network Rail, LNER and Darlington Borough Council.

The project seeks to unlock capacity constraints by reducing the need for trains - particularly local and southbound services - to cross over the East Coast

Main Line to enter the existing station, as well as encouraging and supporting economic growth in the area.

Work to construct the new concourse building was carried out on behalf of Tees Valley Combined Authority by Willmott Dixon. The Tees Valley Mayor and Combined Authority has contributed £43million to the overhaul while Network Rail and the Department for Transport have put £96million towards the project.

Cllr Steve Harker, Leader of Darlington Borough Council and Combined Authority Cabinet Member for Transport, said: "It's great to see the station transformation project coming to life. With the completion of the work next year when we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of passenger railways, it's a timely tribute to the events of 1825. I look forward to seeing the work continue to take shape."



Pupils using VR equipment



The Hive team: Chloe Harper, Simon Moore and Liz Harrison



Fabric Friends

# It's always buzzing in The Hive



**Have you ever dreamed of becoming the next great sewing bee, the Alan Turing of coding or Nick Park of animation? Then make a beeline for The Hive at Darlington Libraries.**

Created with the support of Arts Council England, it's a fantastic collaboration space bringing people together to enjoy crafts and technology with the latest, state-of-the-art equipment including 3D printers, laser cutters, Marty robots, sewing and embroidery machines, virtual reality and stop motion animation.

Simon Moore, digital engagement manager, leads the team bringing to life all The Hive has to offer, along with assistants Liz Harrison and Chloe Harper, and says it's been an enjoyable journey transforming the people's library to compete in a digital age.

"I started my working life as a medic in the army but wanted a change, so looked at IT and qualified as a web designer," explained Simon. "From there I joined Darlington Learning & Skills where I started tutoring ICT and when work started on creating The Hive I jumped at the chance.

"Through several months of visiting other libraries in the North-East, I felt comfortable I had equipped The Hive to become a modern, vibrant hub that would wow and amaze our visitors.

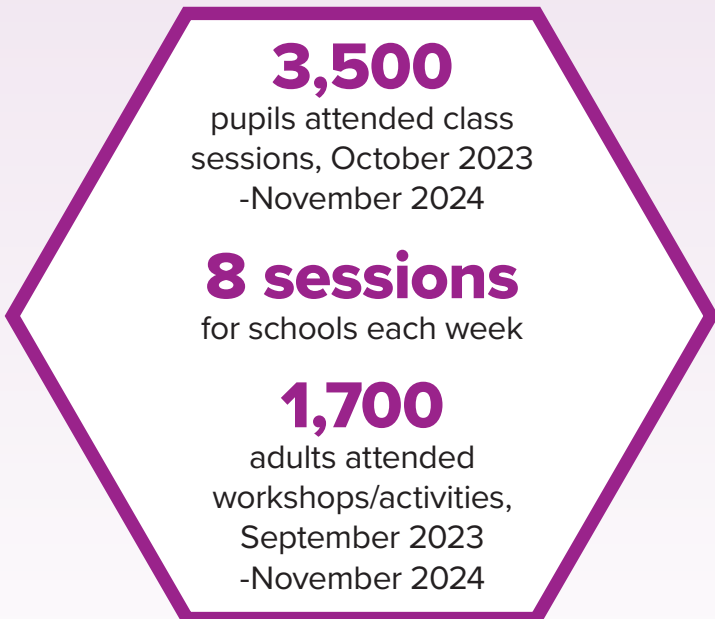
"I'd never used a sewing machine in my life, but I've learned, and it's great to be able to share all this with others, from complete novices to the more skilled.

"We've already increased the number of people coming into the library, including over 3,500 pupils who were taught coding, robotics and experienced virtual reality based on their curriculum. These regular STEM sessions leave the pupils 'buzzing' afterwards.

"So, if you've not been in recently, come and explore all we have to offer - it's about so much more than just books!"

The Hive hosts a wide range of bookable and drop-in sessions, workshops and social groups. You can find out more on the website at [www.darlington.gov.uk/library](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/library) or download the library app.

## The Hive in numbers





# Check them out before you eat out

**Whether you're going out for a meal, grabbing a bite on the go or ordering in, you can be confident that Darlington is a great place to get something to eat.**

Not only does the town boast a huge variety of restaurants, pubs, cafes, takeaways, food vans and stalls, more than 95% of all premises which serve food and drink demonstrate good or very good hygiene standards.

Every week, our environmental health officers visit venues in the town and surrounding villages, to inspect the cleanliness of their facilities and how food is handled, stored, prepared and managed.

Brian Whelan, environmental health manager, said: "The environmental health team is responsible for everything people, eat, drink, and even the air we breathe, while in Darlington.

"To help make sure people visiting food outlets are kept safe, we have a rolling programme of inspections which take place every six months to three years, depending on the risk rating of the business. At these inspections, we assess how hygienically food is handled, the physical condition of the business and the processes in place to keep food safe; before awarding an official hygiene rating between 0 (urgent improvement required)



and 5 (very good). In 2023/24, more than 500 inspections took place, resulting in 474 businesses receiving ratings of 4 or 5.

"Businesses which receive a lower rating (0-2) are required to make improvements to hygiene standards within a specified

time frame and in some cases will be closed until we are satisfied they do not pose a risk to public safety. Even if a business has made the required improvements, they may still retain the lower star rating. In extreme cases a business may be subject to legal proceedings.

"Most businesses will display their rating in their window, but if this is not visible you can check online at [www.ratings.food.gov.uk](http://www.ratings.food.gov.uk) or via the Food Standards Agency app.

"Although hygiene ratings are an excellent guide, we would encourage customers to remain vigilant and report any concerns, including suspected food poisoning or allergy incidents, to [environmentalhealth@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@darlington.gov.uk)"

Visit [www.enjoydarlington.co.uk](http://www.enjoydarlington.co.uk) to explore the borough's vast range of food and drink venues and get details of the offers available during Restaurant Week, which takes place in February.



All I want  
this year is  
for daddy to  
stop hitting  
mummy

Are you concerned about  
your behaviour towards your  
partner or your family?

Make a change, it's never too late.

For more information, visit [myharbour.org.uk](https://myharbour.org.uk)



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council



  
**harbour**  
working for safer communities



# Your questions about potholes answered!

## How can I report a pothole?

You can report a pothole online by visiting [www.darlington.gov.uk/reportit](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/reportit) or call 01325 405222.

You will be asked to provide:

- your contact details – in case we need more information
- a description of the pothole – what is its approximate size and where in the road is it?
- the location of the pothole – especially in rural areas, include as much detail as possible, such as identifiable landmarks.

## What happens when I report a pothole?

We will send someone out within 24 hours to determine how urgently it needs repairing. Once inspected, the pothole will be either repaired within 20 days or five weeks. The most dangerous potholes will be repaired within 24 hours. Our pothole filling team is out all day throughout the year.

## Do you inspect the roads for potholes?

As well as reacting to requests to fix potholes, we inspect the roads ourselves. Our team of inspectors work every day and inspect each urban road every three months, with rural roads and the town centre

inspected every 30 days. The most dangerous potholes will be repaired in 24 hours. We publish a list of all our highway schemes for the financial year, including pothole repairs, at [www.darlington.gov.uk/highwayschemes](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/highwayschemes)

## How do you decide which potholes are repaired?

If a pothole on a road is less than 40mm (1.6in) or less than 20mm (0.8in) on a footpath – it will not be repaired; however we will keep inspecting it to make sure it does not get worse.

## Which roads are you responsible for fixing?

We are responsible for the majority of roads and footpaths in Darlington - but not the A1 and the A66 (these are maintained by Highways England), private roads or shop car parks.

## Why haven't you filled all the potholes on my street?

We do not repair potholes on a street-by-street basis; we repair them according to the level of urgency. This means that we will repair the biggest and most urgent potholes in your street first and come back to repair the less urgent ones at a later date.

# Potect your pets – microchip your dogs and cats

**If you have a cat or a dog don't forget to get it microchipped or you could face a fine.**

By law, any dog over eight weeks and all cats over 20 weeks old (unless they are unowned such as feral or community cats) must be microchipped. You could be fined up to £500 if your pet is unchipped or your details are not up to date. Dog breeders are responsible for ensuring puppies are microchipped.

A vet can check if your pet is microchipped and some animal charities and organisations offer the service for free.

Your dog must also wear a collar and tag with your name and address on when in a public place. You can also add your phone number so you can be contacted if your dog is found.

Find out more at [www.darlington.gov.uk/communitysafety](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/communitysafety) - click on dog warden, then dogs and the law.



 HM Government

## Childcare support is expanding

**Have you checked  
what support your  
family may be  
entitled to?**

To find out more visit  
[ChildcareChoices.gov.uk](http://ChildcareChoices.gov.uk)

Childcare  
**Choices**

  
**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council





# Make a new year's resolution to foster!



## Could you start the new year by providing a loving and stable home to a child in Darlington?

Last year, ten new families joined our team of foster carers helping to provide a loving and stable homelife for children from the area. Our team provides ongoing support and help to all our foster families and is now looking for more people willing to start the New Year by opening their homes to help others.

Most of the children needing a home last year were teenagers and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children but there were occasions where younger children also needed a home.

New foster families are always needed to provide a home for children in need. Foster carers can be single, in a relationship, of any age and from any background. All you need is a spare room in your home and be willing to offer a supportive, loving home to a child or young person.

Our foster carers receive financial and emotional support to ensure they can offer the best possible homelife for the child in their care. This includes a buddy system where new foster carers have the support of a current foster carer; a supervising social worker who provides monthly support; online and in person training; regular coffee mornings and support groups.

If you have ever thought about fostering, want more information or to apply visit [www.darlington.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/fostering)



# More businesses in DEEP to tackle climate change

**The Darlington Employers Environmental Partnership (DEEP) is a bold attempt at a joined-up approach to sustainability and more local businesses are getting on board.**

DEEP was initially developed in early 2023 by Darlington Building Society for local businesses to come together to share good practice and develop links around net zero targets.

The first “network and learn” event was held at Cummins in Darlington with members getting an insight into how the global engine manufacturer is developing a greener strategy. After its successful launch, the management of DEEP was taken over by Darlington Cares which has recently introduced a pledge for members to sign.

A programme of events has seen businesses get together at Teesside International Airport, Teesside University and Hopetown Darlington, to share knowledge and experience of working towards net zero.

Darlington Cares director, Seth Pearson, said: “Businesses are increasingly judged on their sustainability credentials; being part of DEEP underlines that commitment to the environment. It sends the message that ‘not only do we take our responsibilities seriously internally, but we also look externally and work with others for the greater good’.”

DEEP has quickly become an important part of the council’s strategy towards not just becoming a net zero authority by 2040, but also its wider objectives for supporting sustainability across the borough.

Chris McEwan, the council's deputy leader and cabinet member for economy, said: “Back in 1825, Darlington did something that transformed the world, and it’s a source of pride again that the town is coming together to address the challenges, and realise the opportunities, that will emerge around net zero.”

DEEP’s next Network and Learn event will take place at Hopetown Darlington from 9-11am on Wednesday 29 January, with a site tour and presentation on the environmental considerations that went into the development.

There will be a marketplace event for small businesses from 10am-12noon on Friday 21 February at the Dolphin Centre.

To find out more about joining DEEP, and attending events, email: [Chelsea.Johnson@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:Chelsea.Johnson@darlington.gov.uk)

A new website has been developed and is now live at [www.deepnetzero.co.uk](http://www.deepnetzero.co.uk)

## The DEEP pledge

- Make sustainability a priority and aim to have a positive impact on the environment and society.
- Take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Set or work toward setting a target to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and reporting on our progress.

## DEEP Members include

Aldi  
 Amazon  
 BHP Law  
 Circo  
 Corstorphine and Wright  
 Cummins  
 Darlington Borough Council  
 Darlington Building Society  
 Darlington Business Club  
 Darlington College  
 Darlington Primary Care Network  
 EE  
 JBA Engineering  
 Lingfield Point, Newlands Group  
 North Star Housing  
 Point North  
 Resilient Business Systems  
 Student Loans Company  
 Teesside University  
 TEP Electrical Distributors  
 ZIGUP

**Information on sustainability in business is available online at [www.darlington.gov.uk/sustainable](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/sustainable)**

# Volunteer your time in 2025



We are delighted to welcome Darlington Cares' volunteering fair back to the Dolphin Centre, on Tuesday 4 February, 1-4pm.

Around 50 organisations are expected at the event which promises to offer a wealth of exciting opportunities for those looking to forge greater connections with their community and give something back.

Volunteering is a great way to improve your physical and mental health, and can help you develop new skills, gain valuable work experience, make new friends and increase in confidence.

Anyone over the age of 18, and sometimes those who are younger, can be volunteers.

This is a drop in event - no booking required. Pop in and see how you can make a difference!

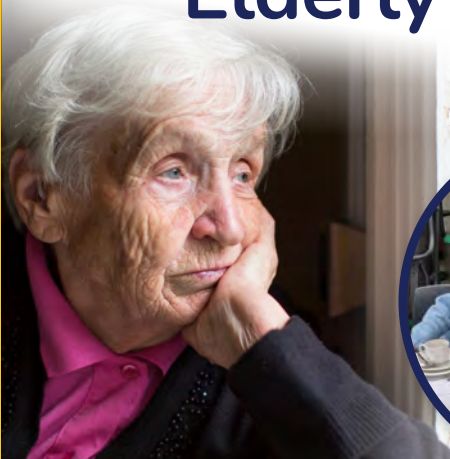


**DARLINGTONCARES**  
**VOLUNTEERING  
FAIR**  
Tuesday 4 February  
1-4pm  
The Dolphin Centre

Come along and see how  
you can make a difference in  
your community

**WE ARE BACK!** Meet organisations who need  
volunteers like you to continue their amazing  
work

## Our Volunteers Help to Change Elderly Lives in Darlington



**Apply Now and Make a Real Difference in 2025**

Kindly Sponsored by Seaton Leng



e. [marketing@darlingtontownmission.org.uk](mailto:marketing@darlingtontownmission.org.uk) t. 07825 586113  
f /Darlingtontownmission [www.darlingtontownmission.org.uk](http://www.darlingtontownmission.org.uk)

A local charity trusted since 1838

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



**Darlington  
Town  
Mission**  
Enriching Elderly Lives

## New play area

A consultation will soon be launched inviting residents' views on a new play area to be created as part of the housing developments on Neasham Road, which include 150 council homes to rent.

Work should start in the spring and be completed in time for the summer holidays. Look out for details of the consultation event to be held soon.

## Business waste changes

From Monday 31 March, by law all businesses and organisations (like hospitals and schools) with more than ten employees must have separate food waste and recycling collections.

Find out more at [www.darlington.gov.uk/businesswaste](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/businesswaste). Businesses with fewer than ten full-time employees have until 31 March 2027 to meet the new rules.



## Help to make your home warmer – and cut bills!



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

**We are working hard to improve the energy efficiency of our properties, but did you know we are also helping deliver support to homeowners and tenants in privately rented properties?**

With winter now upon us, and as bills look set to continue to rise, now is the perfect time to think about how you can make your home warmer and help keep your energy bills down.

There's a range of grant schemes offering financial support to cover measures such as new boilers, insulation, solar panels or double glazing and under the government's new Warm Homes: Local Grant scheme, due to start in April, all heating fuel types are eligible.

The funding is available for all private properties and will cover all the costs for owner occupiers. Where a property is privately rented, the scheme allows one eligible home to be fully-funded per landlord up to £30,000, with a 50 per cent cost contribution for any additional homes upgraded.

The scheme is for properties with an energy efficient rating of D-G, and you can qualify by postcode, if you're on means-tested benefits or your household's gross income is below £36,000.

Improvement measures covered by the scheme include cavity wall insulation, air source heat pump, flat roof insulation, hybrid heat pump, loft insulation, high retention storage heaters, heating controls, solar panels and thermal battery storage and energy efficient doors.

Details of the new scheme will be available soon, but in the meantime visit our website for more information on home energy saving schemes - [www.darlington.gov.uk/homeenergy](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/homeenergy)

# Our charity needs you in 2025!

**At County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, our NHS charity raises money to buy important things for our hospitals and services – like new, cutting edge equipment to help our clinical teams give patients the best possible care and experience.**

Our charity also supports projects to make the experience patients and their loved ones have in our care as good as it can be – funding murals in children’s and other areas for example and providing comfortable chairs for new parents spending long hours with babies in our neonatal units. The charity also considers requests from wards and departments for items they feel would make a real difference to patients and visitors.

The charity largely relies on the generosity of our local communities – you! As we settle in to 2025 maybe you’re looking for an opportunity to give something back to your local health services? Maybe there’s an activity you’ve always fancied giving a go and are looking for a charity to benefit from your efforts, maybe you or a loved one has had care from one of our teams and you would like to express your gratitude by raising some money specifically for them or you may wish to give us a little of your time by volunteering? Your support will be much appreciated and make a huge difference.



To find out how to get involved visit our charity website at [www.cddftcharity.co.uk/get-involved](http://www.cddftcharity.co.uk/get-involved)



# Pupils help to clear the air

**Reid Street pupils have been out in force to help clear the air outside their school and show they won't tolerate engine idling.**

They have put up a banner calling for people to switch their engine off while waiting outside the school and handed out leaflets to parents and carers.

Their hard work is part of our Care about your Air campaign aimed at encouraging motorists not to leave their engine idling whilst their vehicle is stationary. Schools and nurseries are engine idling hotspots along with other areas where people wait to collect passengers such as the train station, supermarkets, and car parks.

The engine idling campaign forms part of the council's first ever air quality strategy - a five-year plan detailing how we aim to improve air quality across the borough and protect public health and the environment.

Poor air quality has been found to contribute to up to 43,000 deaths every year in the UK with a total estimated healthcare cost to the NHS and social care of £157 million.

Air quality in Darlington is generally good. However, with increasing use of log burners, and road traffic for example, good air quality cannot be taken for granted. In addition, for some pollutants there is no safe level of exposure.

Burn Right is also part of the air quality strategy. It aims to advise people on smoke control area requirements and the correct fuel to use in log burners/stoves and how to maintain them safely.

The strategy, produced by environmental health, is online at:

[www.darlington.gov.uk/airqualitystrategy](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/airqualitystrategy)




## FREE ENGINE IDLING BANNERS FOR SCHOOLS

Help support the engine idling campaign and promote cleaner air outside our schools.

Schools can apply for a free banner and other support materials by emailing [communications@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:communications@darlington.gov.uk)



# Burn Right

-  Are you burning the right type of fuel in your log burner or stove?
-  Do you know if you live in a smoke control area?
-  Are you complying with the law?

Most of Darlington falls within a smoke control area and there are certain restrictions on the type of appliance or stove you can install and the type of fuel you can burn.



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

Learn what you can burn at

[www.darlington.gov.uk/burnright](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/burnright)

or scan this QR code



# ENJOY WHAT'S ON IN

**A New Year means a whole new programme of events to look forward to in Darlington.**

If you've got an event planned between March and July, that you'd like to include in the next edition, please email details to [communications@darlington.gov.uk](mailto: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.

## January

**Dementia's Got Talent** – Tuesday 21, 7pm, Darlington Hippodrome. £15.

**Nearly Noel Gallagher** – Saturday 25, 7.30pm, The Forum, Borough Road. £12.

**Giovanni Pernice – The Last Dance** – Wednesday 29, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £20.

**Jason Manford – A Manford All Seasons** – Thursday 30, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £17.

**Craft & Chat** – Thursday 30, 10-11.30am, Darlington Library. Cost varies depending on theme.

**Animal Farm** – Friday 31, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £15.

## February

**Hopetown Comic Con** – Saturday 1, 10.30am-3.30pm, Hopetown Darlington. £5 adult; £3 children and under-fives free.

**Movie Makers** – Saturday 1, 2-3.30pm, Darlington Library. £2.50.

**Fabric Friends** – Tuesday 4, 1-5pm, Darlington Library. 16+.



**Give Me The Night** – Wednesday 5, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £18.50.

**Carl Hutchinson: Today Years Old** – Friday 7, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £17.

**The Nutcracker** – Saturday 8, 2.30pm & 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £20.

**Nick Stapleton: How to Beat Scammers** – Friday 14, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £18.50.



**Creedence Clearwater Revival Revival** – Saturday 15, 7.30pm, The Forum, Borough Road. £12.

**Thank Abba for the Music** – Saturday Tuesday 18, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £18.



**Dial M For Mayhem** – Wednesday 19 – Saturday 22, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £15.

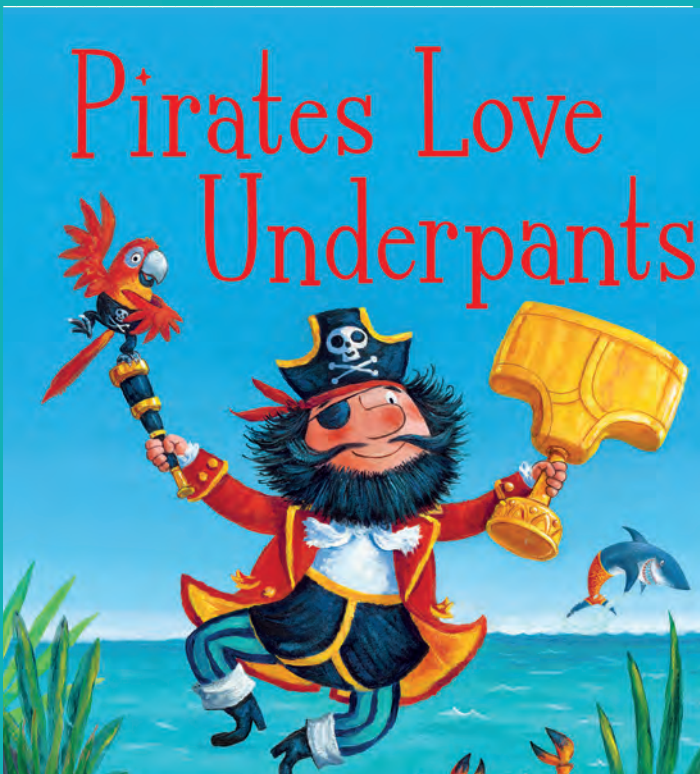
**Krafty Kids** – Thursday 20, 4-5.30pm, Darlington Library. 8+.

**Black Ice (AC/DC)** – Friday 21, 7.30pm, The Forum, Borough Road. £11.





**Chantel McGregor** – Saturday 22, 7.30pm, The Forum, Borough Road. £16.



**Pirates Love Underpants** – Tuesday 25 – Thursday 27, times vary, Darlington Hippodrome. From £12.

**Animal Encounters Workshop** – Wednesday 26, slots from 10.15am-3.45pm, Hopetown Darlington. Animal handling for 3-11-year-olds. £5.

**An Evening With Jeff Stelling** – Friday 28, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £17.

## March

**Creative crafts** – Tuesday 4, 10am – 12 noon, Learning & Skills at the Salvation Army. Free five week course.

**Storybook buddies** – Tuesday 4, 10-11am, Learning & Skills at Darlington Library. Free five-week course.

**Jasper Carrott & Alistair McGowan** – Wednesday 5, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £20.

**Golden Moments** – Wednesday 5, 10am-noon, Darlington Library. 65+. Paint, puzzles and chat. £3.50 suggested donation.

**BBC Big Band – The Sound of Cinema** – Thursday 6, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £16.

**NE Street Band** – Friday 7, 7.30pm, The Forum, Borough Road. £12.

**Sing The Musicals** – Friday 7, 7.30pm, Darlington Hippodrome. From £14.



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

**Cooking on a budget** – Wednesday 12, 9.15 – 11.15am, Learning & Skills Community Hub, Rydal Academy. Free five-week course.

**Creative writing** – Tuesday 18, 3.15 – 5.15pm, Learning & Skills at Darlington Library. Free seven-week course.

**Linkin Park tribute** – Friday 21, 7.30pm, The Forum, Borough Road. £12.

## 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

Business  
administration  
apprentices  
Millie and Ellie



# National Apprenticeship Week

## Monday 10 – Sunday 16 February

**Combining education with on-the-job training, apprenticeships are a great way to prepare people aged 16 and over for the labour market, or to help and encourage existing employees looking to progress in their roles.**

They offer people the chance to earn a wage while developing their knowledge, skills and experience, as well as supporting employers to build and retain a workforce that is specifically trained to meet their business needs.

In Darlington, further education and training provider, Learning & Skills, is working with more than 80 apprentices, and around 35 employers, across sectors including care, business, education, health and science, warehousing, manufacturing, hospitality and construction, to help people to upskill and get the job they want.

One such employer is Orchard Court Surgery, which has started four new business administration apprentices since 2022, two of which are now established, full-time staff members.

Deputy practice manager Rachel McMain said: “We originally took on an apprentice as an alternative to recruiting a permanent staff member. It was a cost-effective option, which gave us the opportunity to train someone up in our ways of working and see if they would be a good fit for our practice. It was the best thing we could've done.

“Apprentices bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the workplace and have helped us to gradually build

a skilled, well connected, competent and confident team. We have benefitted from the apprenticeship employer incentive grants for 16-18 year olds and, as we are considered a priority sector, we have been entitled to the Tees Valley Combined Authority apprenticeship grants.”

Ellie Bailie, business administration apprentice, said: “I did attend university but didn't feel an academic path was for me. Learning in a work environment has helped me develop skills and gain qualifications and experiences to support me in my chosen career - with the added bonus of being paid. All the tutors were so helpful throughout the learning and exam process which made my whole experience better.”

Millie Garbutt, business administration apprentice, said: “Overall I really enjoyed working and learning at the same time. I loved the course, and it helped me to improve my skills in my job role massively. I also liked the break it gave me from being in the work environment when I got to go to college.”

Employers interested in finding out more about apprenticeships with Learning & Skills can visit [www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills), email [graham.curry@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:graham.curry@darlington.gov.uk) or phone 01325 405217.

Apprenticeship vacancies at the council can be found on our website. If you want to find out more about local apprenticeship opportunities, come to the Darlington Jobs Fair on Thursday 13 February at the Dolphin Centre, 10am-2pm.



# Plans to open new centre at college

**Funding has been agreed to help build a pre-16 centre at Darlington College for young people who are disengaged from education.**

The purpose built, 50 place, pre-16 academy will be attached to the college but will have separate and secure access, recreation and break out spaces for its students.

The young people will work towards accredited qualifications, including maths and English, as well as learning hands-on skills such as construction, hair and beauty, health, social care and childcare. It is hoped the combination of subjects will engage those young people who have not flourished in mainstream school and encourage them to move into post-16 education by making them familiar with college life.

It will also allow more vulnerable or challenged young people who may not cope in mainstream college to access education.

The council's cabinet has agreed to give £2.6 million of Department of Education High Needs Capital Grant to the project. The grant from the Government was awarded to the council and can be used to develop provision for special educational needs or alternative provision.



T-Level health and social care student Charley Heseltine

The funding comes as a new healthcare hub has opened at the college. The hub includes a recreated hospital ward, nursing home and GP surgery, each occupied by hi-tech interactive artificial intelligence mannequins.

Mick O'Reilly, curriculum manager for health, childcare, public services and science, said: "It is a fantastic bespoke learning space for our lecturers and students where they can develop their practical and communications skills. We have tried to make it as accurate as we can with medical grade equipment and we are really proud of what we have achieved."



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

# Looking after your wellbeing

## **Gyms, parks, cycle routes - we have what you need to prioritise your wellbeing this year.**

The Dolphin Centre and Eastbourne Sports Complex are fantastic council-run leisure and sports facilities, offering a wealth of opportunities to help you move more. Dolphin Centre memberships are available from as little as £12 per month and include unlimited access to the gym, pool and fitness classes. Sports court hire is also available for £5 - why not try your hand at pickle ball, badminton or soft-tennis? If athletics is more your thing, Eastbourne Sports Complex offers an eight-lane, synthetic athletics track, with floodlighting and athletics equipment.

Sixteen parks and 10 nature reserves stretch right across the borough offering ample opportunities to get active in the outdoors. Visit Cocker Beck and enjoy a pleasant bike ride along the winding cycleway, have an ace time playing tennis in the Denes, go fishing at Red Hall local nature reserve or run, walk or jog the free 5k parkrun at South Park (Saturday, 9am). Search 'parks and green spaces' on our website for a full list of parks and facilities.



Cycling is a great way to enjoy fresh air whether it's as part of your commute or socially with friends or family. It only takes five-six minutes to cycle for one mile – so imagine how far you could go in half an hour!

Walking is a simple, free and easy way to get more active, lose weight and get healthier. A brisk 10-minute walk daily has lots of health benefits and counts towards your recommended 150 minutes of weekly exercise!

If you're looking for support, joining a club or a local class is also an ideal way to get fitter and make new friends - check out [www.darlington.gov.uk/healthydarlington](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/healthydarlington) for more information. You can also find information about Darlington Dolphin Masters swimming club and Darlington Hockey club on page 12-13.

Finally, smoking is the single biggest cause of cancer, ill health and early death. Quitting is the best thing you can do for your health.

Support is available from Darlington stop smoking hub - visit [www.darlingtonstopsmokinghub.org.uk](http://www.darlingtonstopsmokinghub.org.uk)

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ENGLAND**

# Peer mentors show they care

The peer mentor team at the Stronger Community Awards where they were shortlisted for the exceptional care award



## **A new project is providing a mentoring and befriending service for children and young people in care.**

The peer mentor scheme was launched in April last year to provide unique support to young people in the council's care. Eleven peer mentors are now working with 86 children and young people, of all ages, acting as role models and providing advice and guidance.

The peer mentors are all care experienced and use their skills and stories to help other young people with their emotional wellbeing; improve their sense of identity; build confidence and resilience and create and sustain stable, loving relationships.

Many children and young people in care have experienced rejection or lack positive relationships and being in care can create more instability and disruption. This can lead some of them to be vulnerable to exploitation and harm. The peer mentors help to raise the young people's aspirations, show them how to ask for help and make positive choices so they can build trusting relationships and support each other.

The mentors also support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, who have experienced multiple traumas and are trying to cope with separation from family and friends whilst navigating the complexities of the asylum process.

Faye Marsh, young people's involvement and opportunity worker, who runs the scheme said: "I am so immensely proud of each peer mentor and the impact their positive befriending relationships are having. We know that all young people are talented, but instability and severe disruptions at home makes it more challenging for young people in, or on the edge of the care system, to succeed.

"Having a peer mentor has many benefits for the child or young person who is mentored, whilst also being rewarding for the mentors, giving something back. Being a peer mentor is a rewarding relationship, the mentors are transferring their own childhood experiences to help others.

"The service is growing and growing, we are looking to appoint more peer mentors to provide the service to more children in our care."

## **What they say...**

Peer mentor Jordan has been working with a young girl in Sunderland. Jordan has been spending time with the girl and getting to know her. Jordan received a text after one visit from the girl's foster carer: "Thank you so much for today, I have never seen her laugh and smile so much."

One mum said: "My daughter, who can be difficult to engage, has really taken a shine to Robin (her mentor) and looks forward to her coming. I find Robin very approachable and easy to talk to."

A care leaver said: "Thank you for helping me see my brother more, being part of the project helps me have more time with my brother in group activities."

A social worker said: "This project is amazing, I have referred several young people, who are not the easiest of young people, but the mentors are dealing with the challenges and building positive relationships."

One peer mentor said: "I think this is a fantastic opportunity for children and young people in Darlington. As a young person, I always rebelled against my staff as they didn't always understand what I was going through."



**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.



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Borough Council



To join the team and to find out more visit  
[www.darlington.gov.uk/numberforty](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/numberforty) or  
email [safeststreets@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:safeststreets@darlington.gov.uk)

Thursday 13  
February  
2025

10am - 2pm

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