Photography competition  |  Budget  |  Fostering
Here to help make a difficult time a little easier

All types of funerals covered
Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Full facilities on site
Private Chapel of Rest
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Set in a tranquil location within Saltwell Park

You can depend on us to take care of your loved ones
Welcome from Leader of the Council
Martin Gannon

Welcome to the Spring issue of Council News.

We have faced an enormous challenge to set our budget. Further and deeper cuts from central government are continuing to impact on the everyday lives of local people and I have written about how we are fighting for a fair and adequate approach to local government funding. We have listened to the views of those who took part in our consultation and you can read about some of the changes we have made to our initial proposals.

We also want to hear from people on the subject of tackling air pollution. A legal order from the Government had demanded action from Gateshead, Newcastle and North Tyneside councils to improve air quality in certain areas in the shortest time possible and by 2021. The councils are now consulting on options to reduce the impact of emissions and I am encouraging people to give us their views.

We are delighted to announce a Council-owned dementia resource centre in Birtley has kept its ‘outstanding’ status following a recent inspection and we also have the results of our ‘Gateshead’s Great Outdoors’ photography competition. We had an overwhelming response and the quality of entries was really high, proving that Gateshead’s countryside really is great!

We also include our regular features including health matters, what’s on and much more, including local news and key activities taking place over Easter.

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Martin Gannon
**Gateshead trio to represent GB**

Good luck to our three Special Olympians as they represent Great Britain in the Special Olympics World Championships in the United Arab Emirates in March.

Sandra Armstrong (swimming), David Martin and Mark Proctor (powerlifting) will join 7,000 athletes from 170 countries to compete in 24 summer sports at the Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi.

David and Martin are involved with the Council through its Shared Lives service, which works with carers to support people with a disability. Sandra attends Phoenix Community Base in Gateshead Leisure Centre, which provides day services to disabled people.

**Inspiring Gateshead’s next generation**

Work Inspiration, a new careers provision being delivered by Gateshead Council and Gateshead College, has been launched. The programme aims to help local people understand the range of opportunities available to them and acquire the skills they need to succeed in the workplaces of the future.

Speaking at the launch, Cllr John Adams, Cabinet Member for the Economy said: “For too long the careers advice given to young people in this country has been pretty poor. If we want to create a stronger, fairer, Gateshead in which pupils from all backgrounds can realise their potential we need a thriving careers system that is accessible to everyone. To help achieve this, we’ve teamed up with Gateshead College and local businesses to do what we can to deliver the widest reach and contribute positively to social inclusion, diversity and equality through our Work Inspiration programme.”

The first Work Inspiration event, taking place in May, will involve pupils from Kingsmeadow Community School. Students will visit PROTO the Emerging Technology Centre and hear from a range of innovative companies who work there.

**Supporting carers together in Gateshead**

Gateshead Council and Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group are informing communities, carers, providers and professionals across health and social care on the outcome of the review and re-procurement of carers services in Gateshead.

**Services and support**

With affect from 1 May 2019, Carers Trust Tyne and Wear will be responsible for delivering services and support to young carers aged up to 18 years. They will also offer carers some time away from their caring role by providing personal and emotional support to any adults aged 18 years and over who they care for. Gateshead Carers Association will be responsible for delivering services and support to adult carers aged 18 years and over.

Carers Trust Tyne and Wear and Gateshead Carers Association are both well-established carers organisations in Gateshead. Gateshead Council and the Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group are confident that carers will continue to receive excellent services.

The successful organisations will be contacting carers in the coming weeks to explain any changes that may affect them and ensure a smooth transition to the new service so that no carers will be left without support.

**For further information about the organisations visit**: [www.carerstrusttw.org.uk](http://www.carerstrusttw.org.uk), 01207 549 780 and [www.gatesheadcarers.com](http://www.gatesheadcarers.com), 0191 490 0121.
Gateshead Council is calling on the Government to stop the rollout of Universal Credit as new research shows people moved on to the benefit are ‘fighting to survive’.

A study commissioned by the Council found that people claiming Universal Credit are being forced into debt, rent arrears and extreme hardship, with serious consequences for their health and wellbeing including thoughts of suicide.

Significant concern

The researchers led by Dr Mandy Cheetham from Teesside University spoke to 33 people in Gateshead and Newcastle receiving Universal Credit and 37 staff in Gateshead supporting people with their claims.

The research, conducted between April and October 2018, shows that people moving onto Universal Credit, especially those with disabilities, health problems or complicated lives, experience an average delay of seven and a half weeks before receiving their first payment. As well as this, once the payment is received, deductions for advance payments and rent arrears are leaving people without enough money to eat or pay bills.

“Universal Credit is a significant concern for public health,” says Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health at Gateshead Council. “The research makes deeply depressing reading, but I am proud that Gateshead Council has collaborated with Teesside and Newcastle Universities to highlight the shocking impact that Universal Credit is having on the lives of claimants. There needs to be immediate action in the form of a review, radical overhaul and quite possibly a halt.”

Catherine Donovan, Deputy Leader of Gateshead Council, said:

“This report confirms the significant hardship we have seen people and families in Gateshead endure for some time now. Austerity is not over. The roll out of Universal Credit means people are having to choose between eating and heating. It is appalling that people in this study talked about feeling so low, they had considered suicide. I’m calling on Government to scrap Universal Credit as a matter of urgency.”

Read the report, visit www.gateshead.gov.uk/UCReport

Don’t lose your vote!

Local elections will take place on Thursday 2 May but if you want to cast your vote, you must be registered by Friday 12 April.
Visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or call our elections team on 0191 433 7001.

Postal vote

• If you are already registered for a postal vote you’ll receive your postal vote pack from Wednesday 17 April. You can return your postal vote by post or hand it in to any Gateshead polling station on the day of the election.

• If you do not already have a postal vote and would like one you need to register with us by Monday 15 April. Find the form at www.gateshead.gov.uk or call 0191 433 7001. You will be sent your postal vote pack from Thursday 25 April.

• Ballot papers will be counted on Friday 3 May. Follow us on social media or visit www.gateshead.gov.uk/elections for the results.

For information about issues relating to voting, the electoral register etc, please contact the electoral registration team on 0191 433 7001 or go to www.gateshead.gov.uk/voting
More than 600 homes in Gateshead are benefiting from cheaper heating bills thanks to a pioneering project from Gateshead Council.

The Gateshead HEIGHTs project – which stands for High-rise Energy Infrastructure for Gateshead Housing Tenants - has installed low-carbon heat and power generation systems in seven high rise blocks in Gateshead town centre and Harlow Green to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs for residents.

Already, tenants in Regent, Ripley, Barford, Stretford, Willerby, Acomb and Bedale Courts are benefiting from savings of between 10-20% on their heating bills, as the Council replaces their old, costly electric storage heaters with the new modern systems. The Council has also installed new windows, facades and upgraded roof insulation, to also further reduce heat loss from all the homes.

The £22m project has been funded by the Council’s Housing Revenue Account, supported by a £4.5m grant from the European Regional Development Fund.

While residents have only had the new scheme for a few months, the impact is already being felt.

Harlow Green resident Ray Burns said: “It’s early days in terms of how much we have saved but I have been monitoring it and it’s probably as cheap to heat the whole home now as it was for two storage heaters. The flat is very comfortable and has improved the quality of life considerably.”

Council Leader Martin Gannon said: “The advantages of this scheme are clear – not only do our residents benefit from lower heating and electricity bills but a modernised heating system will contribute to the health and wellbeing of our tenants.

“The scheme also plays a crucial part in helping the Council achieve its commitment to reducing domestic carbon emissions in Gateshead.”

Help end period poverty

Gateshead Council has signed up to support The Red Box Project – helping ensure no girl misses school because of their period.

The project was set up in response to the realisation that young girls who are unable to afford sanitary products were missing school resulting in lower educational attainment.

The Red Box Project appeals for sanitary items, tights and underwear (pants) for girls aged 9 and upwards to a woman’s size 22, which will then be donated to schools across Gateshead for girls to use free of charge. The idea is these items are not just for emergency use but can be used for their whole period.

Deputy Council Leader Catherine Donovan said: “Because of austerity measures period poverty does exist and we know there are girls in Gateshead who are missing school because they cannot afford these essential items.

“We are appealing to Gateshead residents to help ensure period dignity and that no girl in Gateshead misses school because of their period.”

Boxes will be delivered to all secondary schools in Gateshead over the coming weeks which will be followed by a roll out to primary schools across Gateshead later this year.

If you would like to donate items, please visit one of the red box donation points:

- St Thomas’ Church, Wrekenton
- Rutherford Football Club, Lobley Hill
- Lobley Hill Community Centre
- Birtley Library
- Birtley Community Partnership
- Gateshead Civic Centre
- Kibblesworth Village Millennium Centre
- St Chad’s Community Project, Bensham

Any organisation that would like to become a donation point should contact Kay Robson at Gateshead Council on 0191 433 2042.

www.gateshead.gov.uk/redbox
Views to tackle air pollution wanted

We want to hear from you on proposals to tackle air pollution and improve public health.

A legal order from the Government had demanded action from Gateshead, Newcastle and North Tyneside councils to improve air quality in certain areas in the shortest time possible and by 2021.

The councils are now consulting on options to reduce the impact of emissions from all vehicles particularly those that run on diesel fuel and older models.

Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, Councillor John McElroy, said: “Poor air quality is linked to around 40,000 early deaths every year in the UK, including hundreds in our area.

“We are keen to ensure that any measures that are introduced not only improve air quality, helping to make the area cleaner and healthier for those living, working and visiting here; but also avoid a negative impact on the local economy, businesses and those on lower incomes.

The options people will be invited to comment on will include:

• a charging Clean Air Zone (CAZ) – which the Government has told the three councils they must consider
• tolls on the Tyne, Swing and Redheugh bridges
• a Low Emission Zone where lorries, buses and taxis that do not meet minimum emissions requirements could be banned from entering Newcastle City Centre at certain times.

Measures to support people and businesses affected by potential charges are also being considered. This could include financial support or scrappage schemes to help people upgrade their vehicles or help for people on lower incomes to switch to public transport.

The consultation is open to all residents, workers, students and businesses in and around the area until 17 May 2019. To take part visit: www.breathe-cleanair.com

Who will be our next ‘local heroes’?

Thank you to everyone who has nominated their suggestion of a local hero to be added to NewcastleGateshead’s ‘Walk of Fame’.

We currently have 33 bronze plaques positioned along NewcastleGateshead’s iconic Quayside Mile. The route goes from Baltic Square to the Swing Bridge, across the River Tyne, to Gateshead Millennium Bridge (on the Newcastle side of the water).

Last year’s heroes

Last year’s local heroes included Dr Hari Shukla CBE (Former Director of the Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council, Community Leader and Equality Champion), Dr Miriam Stoppard (Doctor, author, business woman and television presenter), Brian Burnie (Founder of Daft as a Brush Cancer Patient Care) and Connie Lewcock OBE (Suffragette, teacher and socialist).

The nominations will be looked at and four more names will be added to the walk.

For more information www.newcastlegateshead.com/localheroes

Vote now

The shortlist for the Gateshead Awards 2019 has been announced and you are invited to vote for your winners.

The annual award which are all supported by local organisations celebrate people who are demonstrating their local pride by going the extra mile to help their community to thrive.

Voting will close on Friday 17 May with the awards ceremony taking place on Wednesday 12 June.

Full details of the nominees are on our website or can be requested from the Mayor’s Secretary on 0191 433 2011.

To vote go to www.gateshead.gov.uk/gatesheadawards
**Project to connect Gateshead’s older people on track**

A Gateshead charity is well on the way to achieving its ambition that no resident over 50 is more than 10 minutes away from an exercise activity or social opportunity. Gateshead Older People’s Assembly (GOPA) launched the Assembly Ambassadors project last year with the help of almost £125,000 National Lottery funding. It aims to establish a weekly exercise class and a weekly social opportunity in each of the borough’s 22 wards.

In the first six months 19 new groups for over 50s have been created in 12 wards which include watercolour painting, Tai Chi, floristry skills, Iyengar Yoga and dancercise with more to come in the Spring.

The activities are initially funded by the charity for 10 weeks and as they become popular and residents feel the benefits they are asked to pay a small amount to keep it going.

Craig Bankhead, GOPA Chief Executive, said: “To help make the activities sustainable we will be looking for individuals who attend each group to act as an ambassador for the assembly to be trained in supporting those people in their community who are feeling lonely or isolated.

“One of the most important parts of this project comes at the end. If it goes according to plan each of the classes and social opportunities will continue to exist, each Assembly Ambassador will continue to provide support and each ward will have a network of older people looking out for each other – all self-sustaining after three years.”

For more information call 0191 438 1721 or visit www.gatesheadopa.org.uk

**Tackling hate crime at work**

More than 70 people are working across Gateshead to tackle hate crime in the workplace.

The Workplace Hate Crime Champions scheme was developed in response to agencies and organisations wanting to become more involved in raising awareness of hate crime.

A network of champions has been set up to act as the main point of contact in workplaces for colleagues who may want to discuss a hate crime or obtain advice. Champions also receive regular updates about what is being done to tackle hate crime across the Northumbria Police area and given key information to share and display.

Training has been provided to the designated champions and they also ensure that hate crime awareness training is provided to employees to increase the understanding of the impact it can have on victims and communities.

Cllr Linda Green, Cabinet Member for Communities and Volunteering which covers Community Safety, said: “We’re delighted that we now have 70 champions working across Gateshead who we keep up to date with the work being undertaken across Northumbria to tackle hate crime and support victims.

“This is an important step in raising awareness of the impact of hate crime and achieving the goal of eradicating it from our communities.”

Anyone who is interested in finding out more about the scheme can call Steven Kelly on 0191 433 2701 or visit www.gateshead.gov.uk/hatecrime

**Angel Adventures**

Last year more than 70 mini Angels of the North were knitted by Gateshead’s Knit ‘n Natter volunteers and have since been out and about with young people across the borough.

A group of children from South Street Primary School have been awarded a trip to Clip ‘n Climb in Gateshead Leisure Centre as Cuthbert, their Angel, has had a very exciting year.

Find out more about Cuthbert’s year at www.southstreetprimary.org/angel

**Iconic landmark reaches next milestone**

The Angel of the North, Britain’s most-viewed piece of public modern art, has reached its next significant milestone with people coming together once again to celebrate its 21st birthday.

To mark the occasion members of the Low Fell Community Choir and Art Diamonds project visited the Angel to sing a very special rendition of Happy Birthday. Councillor Angela Douglas, Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, said: “The Angel of the North is not just an icon for Gateshead and the North East, it’s an international landmark which has brought regeneration, jobs and pride to the area. It’s fantastic that so many people have got involved throughout the year to help celebrate Angel20.”

Find out more about Cuthbert’s year at www.southstreetprimary.org/angel
Council Leader’s budget update

“What we’re facing is an enormous challenge; further and deeper cuts from central government are continuing to impact on the everyday lives of local people. It’s a desperate situation moving forward. We’ve already had to reduce budgets by over £150 million and we faced a gap in our budget next year of another £29 million. This can only mean even further cuts, even more Council Tax rises, making it even harder to provide essential social care services to our elderly and young people.

“We now have at least £900 less to spend on each Gateshead household than we did in 2010. We’ve been hit harder than almost any other Council in the country by the years of austerity. It’s just not right and it makes me angry that the people of Gateshead are not being given a fair chance by this Government.

“In next year’s budget, Council Tax will rise by 2.99% as well as the Council proposing to approve the Government’s 1% precept for adult social care. The increase of 3.99% will put an extra 86p a week rise for Council Tax payers in the lowest Band A properties. The Council will continue to support those on a low income who need extra help through its Council Tax Support Scheme which helps more than 12,000 residents on a low income with a reduction in their Council Tax.

“We’re working with other councils to fight for a fair and adequate approach to local government funding but despite our strong arguments, the Government just isn’t listening. It’s impossible to plan for the future as after next year we don’t know how local government will be financed.

“Despite the huge financial challenge, the Council continues to focus on fighting for a better future for Gateshead and make sure the people who need our help the most get it. Huge government cuts mean we can’t do what we once did, but we’re committed to reinvigorating our local economy, helping boost opportunities for new jobs and better skills, developing good quality housing and encouraging and supporting new businesses while growing the Council’s income to help provide the services local people need.”

We’re listening

The Council carried out a wide-ranging consultation on its budget proposals from November to January. Over 1,000 people, businesses and local organisations took the opportunity to give their views. All views have been considered and the Council changed some of its initial proposals, using reserves, to help give more time to change the way we deliver some services; we’re also looking at ways the community can help support those services that are important to them.

Maintenance of bowling greens and football pitches – we are exploring options such as asset transfers, increases in fees and charges and rationalising the number of pitches and bowling greens.

Mental health services – we have made a commitment to work with mental health services in Gateshead to explore sustainable options for those who need help

Pest control – we are looking at an alternative approach to fund the service through increased income generation for 12 months.

Budget 2019/20 - at a glance

- £13.11 million budget cuts identified to close a £29 million funding gap
- Some fees and charges will increase, some above inflation
- 104 posts will be removed from the Council’s current structure, on top of more than 2,400 posts lost since 2010
- Council Tax (including the adult social care precept) will increase by 3.99%, 86p a week for Band A households, the majority of Council Tax payers
- £119 million will be invested to encourage economic and housing growth which will bring about new jobs, new homes and increase the skills of local people.

What next?

We’re already looking for more savings to help meet the estimated £13.56 million funding gap by 2021. We will keep you updated of any service changes in future issues of Council News.

For more information about Gateshead Council’s budget please go to our website www.gateshead.gov.uk/budget
Pension cold-calling was made illegal on 9 January 2019. Companies are no longer allowed to make unsolicited calls to people about their pensions.

This change to the law is attempting to tackle the explosion in pension scams and the vast amount of related unsolicited calls, amounting to nearly 11 million last year!

People who break the law could face enforcement action from the Information Commissioner and fines of up to £500,000. The ban covers cold-calling related to pensions, including those from legitimate firms but the real intention is to target those who intend to defraud. If you get cold-called about your pension you should regard the caller as illegitimate and hang up.

Under the new rules very few people are allowed to call you about your pension. In fact, a caller must have:

- Received your consent to receive calls from their organisation or have an existing relationship with you AND
- Be authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority or be the trustee or manager of a pension scheme.

There is some criticism that the law needed to have a wider scope. It doesn't cover e-mails or texts, though some think direct marketing messages of this type may be covered by earlier legislation. Equally, it does not tackle contact via social media or callers based abroad but Governments have limited ability to regulate these areas.

Irrespective of these limitations, the change in the law is a step forward. Pension scams are a real problem. Victims can lose huge amounts of money. Hopefully, this new law will bring a real improvement. However, take a safety-first mindset and do not entertain any unsolicited contact about a pension in whatever form it is received.

For more information call our Fair Trading Team on 0191 433 3987.

Gateshead Council’s school catering service has won yet another national award – and not for the first time.

For the third year running, Gateshead’s school catering service has been singled out by the Association of Public Service Excellence as the UK’s top performing school meals provider.

Gateshead was ranked first for quality, cost and productivity after being compared with 50 other UK school meals providers.

Cabinet member for Children and Young People, Councillor Gary Haley said: “This is an important award which is based purely on day-to-day performance, and it isn’t simply judged on a glossy brochure or a slick video presentation. This proves that we are doing something right, and continuing to do it right.”

Gateshead Council’s school catering currently provides more than 11,000 nutritionally-balanced meals every day in 80 primary and secondary schools across Gateshead and beyond. Its team of 350 staff are fully trained in nutrition, food safety, catering and cookery skills.

School meals are tops – again!

Find out more about this and what your child is tucking into this month at www.gateshead.gov.uk/schoolmeals

Warning against bogus refund calls

We have had reports that a company has been calling members of the public to say that they have overpaid their Council Tax and they are contacting them to arrange a refund. If you receive a call like this please be aware that this is a scam and all the company is trying to do is to get you to reveal your bank details so they can empty your account.

We would like to remind you that we would never negotiate overpaid Council Tax through a third party.

Any overpayment would either be refunded immediately, or we would advise you that you were due a credit.

It is vital that if anyone does receive a call that you should not give any personal details or give your bank details.

Anyone concerned about a possible overpayment, or with any other concerns about Council Tax should call 0191 433 3600 or email counciltax@gateshead.gov.uk

Need debt advice? Our Debt Advice Team can help. 0191 433 3174, housingadvice@gateshead.gov.uk
Are you missing out on benefits?

We know that lots of people across the borough aren’t claiming all the benefits they are entitled to.

Since October 2018 we’ve helped 135 people claim benefits they didn’t know they could get. This has given those people on average an extra £1,500 a year income per person!

Some of the people we have helped

**Jim** left hospital and moved into his own accommodation but wasn’t getting any benefits at all. We helped him apply for Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment. He was awarded benefits of £320 a week.

**Andrew** asked if we could help his father, Robert, who is suffering from dementia. We visited Robert at home and helped him claim Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance. He was awarded £52 a week in benefits and Andrew now knows his father can meet all his financial commitments.

What are the main benefits we’ve help people claim?

- **Pension Credit** – if you are of pension age and have a low income, even if you are getting your pension.
- **Universal Credit** – if you are of working age and have a low income.
- **Free school meals** – for those children whose parents are on a low income or in receipt of certain benefits.
- **Personal Independence Payment** – if you have mobility problems or need help with your daily living arrangements.
- **Council Tax Support** – help from the Council towards paying your Council Tax.
- **Housing benefit** – if you are pension age, or if you are working age and live in supported or temporary accommodation and on a low income - this helps towards your rent.
- **Discretionary Housing payment** – if you get Housing Benefit or Universal Credit but still have a shortfall between this and your rent.
- **Attendance Allowance** – if you are over 65 and physically or mentally disabled and need help with personal care or need supervision to keep you safe.

Contact us

We can provide advice either at the Civic Centre - Monday to Friday 9am - 4.30pm, over the phone on 0191 433 3677/3675, or in your home (if appropriate). Alternatively, email benefitenquiries@gateshead.gov.uk

We can:
- Check if you’re entitled to benefits, give you advice and explain the process.
- Help you to make a claim if you can’t do so yourself and have no one else to help you.
- Provide our computers for free to make a claim and give you a little help if you need it.
- Do a calculation to see how changing your circumstances or claiming a benefit might affect you.

Win your Wedding Ceremony

A wedding can seem like a huge expense these days, but it need not be especially if you win our competition to win your wedding ceremony.

For the chance to win, all you need to do is come along to our open day at Gateshead Register Office on Sunday 7 April between 11am-3pm and enter our competition.

We’d love to welcome you to our recently refurbished beautiful ceremony rooms, so you can find out more about how your wedding can be special and affordable.

The open day will give you, your family and friends the opportunity for a relaxed look round and we’ll also have Registrars on hand to answer any questions as well as give hints and tips on how to make your day special without breaking the bank.

* The prize is for a ceremony in the Tyne or Ravensworth Suites only and subject to availability. No other costs associated with a ceremony are covered as part of the prize.
* The entrant named on the entry card must be the same person who will be using the prize. The ceremony must take place before 31 March 2020. Full terms and conditions available at www.gateshead.gov.uk/winaweddingceremony
Sign up for garden waste collections

There’s still time to sign up for this year’s garden waste collections which begin in April. Prices have been frozen for the second year running and will be £33 to cover fortnightly collections until October.

Please note – late sign-ups will still receive fortnightly collections but may receive fewer than 15 due to the time it can take to process applications, issue collection packs and amend vehicle collection routes.

You can recycle the following in your garden waste bin:

- grass cuttings
- hedge trimmings
- leaves
- flowers and plants
- shrubs
- small branches (less than 5cm diameter) and twigs
- turf/soil - small quantities only

Please do not wrap or bag your garden waste before putting it in the bin. Make sure any loose garden waste is contained within the bin with the lid closed. We won’t be able to remove any extra waste left beside the bin.

To sign up visit www.gateshead.gov.uk/gardenwaste or call 0191 433 7000.

Help us stamp out fraud

Fraud within the public sector costs the taxpayer billions every year. Fraud is not a victimless crime and often the people who end up paying for it are you the taxpayer.

There are many types of fraud that are committed every day. This can include people claiming for things they’re not entitled to such as council tax reductions, free school meals, grants, social care, blue badges or compensation for accidents that did not happen or fraud committed by council tenants. Businesses can also commit fraud by claiming the incorrect level of business rates or declare that properties are empty when they’re not. These all take valuable money away from the Council, money that we should be spending on vital services.

Our corporate fraud team investigate allegations and where necessary we will look to prosecute offenders.

If you suspect someone is committing fraud against the Council report it online www.gateshead.gov.uk/fraud by email fraudreporting@gateshead.gov.uk, call 0191 433 2805 or write to us at Corporate Fraud Team, Internal Audit and Risk, Gateshead Council, Civic Centre, NE8 1HH.

Stop at the lollipop

We’re aware that in a few locations drivers are not stopping when the school crossing patrol officers raise their sign. This is not only dangerous for our staff, who do such a good job of keeping children safe, but failing to stop when signalled at a school crossing is an offence.

Every driver should remember that a raised stick at the side of the road means ‘prepare to stop’, and a school crossing patrol holding their stick with outstretched arms in the middle of the road means ‘stop’; this has the same force as a red light.

Drivers failing to stick to the rules may be reported to the police and may face penalties such as fines and points on your driving licence.
Fostering is the most rewarding job and support is always there for you

Foster carers are a vital part of the Council’s services to children and young people and we are committed to supporting them as much as possible to ensure they receive the help they need to become confident and skilled carers.

We offer:
- A high quality training and support package
- A weekly income and child allowance
- A dedicated supervising social worker
- Support from the child’s social worker
- Access to advice during evenings and weekends
- Support groups
- Career progression

What do you need to be a foster carer?
Foster carers come from all walks of life. Whatever your race, gender, sexuality, living arrangements or employment status we want to hear from you. Our first considerations are that you can offer a safe and secure environment and understand some of the feelings and worries that children have.

Next, you need to:
- Live within a 20 mile radius of Gateshead Council and be aged over 21
- Have the time and energy to care for a foster child or children
- Be willing to develop new skills and work as part of a team with other foster carers and social workers
- Have a spare room in your home
- Be patient, understanding, tolerant and able to provide a warm and secure home
- Be prepared for us to learn more about you and your family during the process to become a foster carer.

Support to thrive
We talk to one of our Foster Carers, Angela Dixon (pictured above), who tells us her story.

“I started fostering in September 2014, after an illness inspired me to re-evaluate my life and fulfil a need to give something back. Fostering was something I’d always thought of, and with my three sons being all grown up, I took the plunge! This was the best decision I’d ever made. It’s not without its challenges but it’s the most rewarding job seeing the children grow and flourish into confident happy individuals.

Last year I gained my Level 3 Diploma in Children and Young People’s Social Care, which was supported by Gateshead Council, and I was awarded Student of the Year Award (Children & Young People’s Social Care Category) in Gateshead College’s annual Edge Awards for Apprentices. I also completed three GCSE’s so I’ve been able to help the children in my care. One special young man in my care did his GCSE’s at the same time so I was able to help and understand the pressure he was under.

Gateshead Council has lots of training courses available for foster carers and also provide support groups and coffee mornings. I also have my supervising social worker who I meet regularly and can always ring for support and advice.”

If you want to know more about becoming a foster carer please get in touch. Call us on 0191 433 8333 or visit www.gateshead.gov.uk/fostering
Alternatively, pop along to one of our information evenings on 27 March or 22 May, 5.30pm at Bewicks (Gateshead Civic Centre)
Gateshead’s history gets funding boost

Gateshead Council has secured nearly £500,000 Heritage Lottery Funding to improve access to the unique local history collection held at Gateshead Central Library.

The funding will improve and extend visitor facilities, creating a new space to be known as Gateshead Archive. The significant collection of books, maps, newspapers and images will be made easier to browse and new touchscreens will give people the opportunity to delve further into the archive. The funding will make it easier for people to research their family tree or the history of their house, street or town.

The money will also create a new annual Community History Festival, happening in place of Local History Month each May. The first festival will be held in 2020 with an exciting new activity programme across Gateshead.

This year Local History Month will move to September - joining with Heritage Open Days - while building work is carried out across the summer at Central Library to create the new Gateshead Archive.

Tutor shortlisted for major award

LearningSkills tutor Sarah Richardson has been shortlisted for 'Maths Teacher of the Year' at the Skills Conference 2019.

Sarah teaches all levels of Functional Skills and GCSE and has outstanding results for her pupils. She was nominated by colleagues who say “she is an exceptional tutor who not only has a tremendous capacity for work; she also works hard to support the wider team. “She is very dedicated, and her learners often change their view on maths and claim to learn to enjoy the subject and the sessions because of how they are delivered. One of her key strengths is the ability to design and create effective, innovative and high-quality resources for her sessions that engage and motivate learners.”

The awards will be presented at The Skills Award Ceremony in Leicester on 12 March.

Make a healthy choice with Bewicks

Work in the centre of Gateshead and looking for a healthy option at lunchtime?

Bewicks restaurant at Gateshead Civic Centre is now offering a calorie and portion controlled healthy option every Monday. Enjoy dishes such as Mediterranean Vegetable Ratatouille, Vegetable Red Thai Curry and Lamb Stew with Green Beans all for less than 300 calories.

Alongside the Monday healthy special, you can find other healthy options at Bewicks including freshly made soups, salad pots and baked potatoes.

Even if you’re not counting calories, Bewicks uses alternative cooking methods to support healthier eating habits such as reducing the amount of fried options on our menus, monitoring portion sizes, cooking with vegetable oil and using low-fat mayonnaise.

Bewicks is open 11.30am - 2pm, Monday to Friday.

www.gateshead.gov.uk/bewicks

Learn to use your phone / tablet

If you are ‘new’ to technology and need some support in getting online or using your new tablet, computer or smart phone – your local library could help. Free half hour computer surgery sessions run at a number of local libraries across Gateshead. For locations, times and more pop into your local library for details. Or phone 0191 433 8420 for further details.
Kieran’s in the driving seat

Young people in Gateshead with special educational needs and disabilities are being helped to live more independently.

Bus Buddies, a successful project pioneered by Children North East has enabled 27 young people to use public transport in order to get to school, college, work or access leisure activities. Bus operator Go North East has also got on board by awarding free bus passes to some of those taking part and their support workers.

Kieran Lowery is a graduate of the Bus Buddies scheme. He was partnered with a Children North East ‘bus buddy’, a Children North East support worker, who helped Kieran feel confident about travelling the 12-mile round trip from his home in Sunniside to Hill Top Specialist Arts College.

Sixteen-year-old Kieran, who has autism, has to take two different buses and his bus buddy travelled the whole journey, then parts of the journey with him, until he felt comfortable doing the whole route by himself.

Kieran’s father, Wayne Lowery, said “I’ve been really impressed with the Bus Buddies scheme. I thought Kieran might struggle to travel by himself, but he’s fine and that’s all down to his bus buddy, Rachel Wright, who worked with him over three months.”

Sean Soulsby, Lead Practitioner at Children North East’s Young People’s Service added: “We’re very proud of our Bus Buddies project, supported by Gateshead Council and players of the People’s Postcode Lottery. Sixty seven per cent of those on the Bus Buddies programme are successfully travelling to and from school and it has improved the confidence if everyone who has taken part.”

Cllr Gary Haley, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said: “Bus Buddies gives young people the chance to travel independently for the first time to and from school, helps them gain independence, confidence and life skills, enabling them to have greater choice and access around future college, employment, training and social opportunities.”

Gateshead school goes for gold to respect children’s rights

A Gateshead school is striving to achieve an international award to demonstrate its commitment to children’s rights.

Furrowfield School is one of hundreds across the country supporting UNICEF by joining them in their Rights Respecting Schools Award.

Furrowfield achieved the silver award in 2017 and have now submitted their evidence for the gold award. A visit by two UNICEF ambassadors also gave staff and children the opportunity to showcase the development of their understanding of children’s rights and learning to speak out for the rights of other children.

Lea-Anne Palmer, Teacher and Rights Respecting Schools Award co-ordinator at Furrowfield School, said: “We were honoured to be the first Gateshead special and secondary school to achieve the silver award in 2017.

“The award is based on the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation and we are very proud to be on our journey towards the Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award.”

Primary and secondary school offers

Parents of children starting primary, infant or junior schools in September will receive an offer of a place in April.

Offer letters and emails will be sent on or around 16 April and parents have until 30 April to accept their place.

The School Admissions Team is unable to advise parents of their offer over the phone, you must wait for your letter/email.

Parents of children starting secondary school in September will have already received their offer letter or email and have until 15 March to accept their place.

For more information visit www.gateshead.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Check your bin collection date www.gateshead.gov.uk/binchecker or call 0191 433 7000
World Transplant Games 2019

The World Transplant Games are coming to NewcastleGateshead this summer and will raise awareness of organ donation and transplantation, showcasing the benefits of exercise post-transplant and celebrating a second chance of life.

There are 1,889 athletes already registered to participate in the Games with teams travelling from as far afield as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Team GB has been selected and there are many athletes competing from our region, including Louise McLellan, a heart transplant swimmer.

Louise was born with a complex congenital heart disorder and underwent a number of heart surgeries during her 20s and 30s. In 2013 she was entering multi organ failure and was put on the emergency heart transplant list – receiving the gift of life six weeks later. Since her transplant Louise has gone from hardly being able to walk half a mile to running, swimming and cycling. She took part in her first British Transplant Games in 2018 in Birmingham and is looking forward to representing her country in her first World Transplant Games on home soil.

Louise said: “I am truly grateful to my amazing donor (a man in his early 20s) who donated his organs and to his very brave family for allowing that to happen at such a dark time in their lives.”

Today in the UK there are almost 6,000 people, like Louise awaiting a transplant. You can sign up to the NHS Organ Donation Register www.organdonation.nhs.uk and be sure to discuss your decision and wishes with your family.

Find out more about the Games and see how you can get involved www.worldtransplантgames.org

An alternative future

Imagine that you make the rules and you invent the limits. What would your place (town, city, village, home, street, square…) be like in 100 years’ time? What would have changed? What would remain? Who would be in charge? What would matter? What would happen? What would your town look, smell, sound, taste, or feel like? How would you travel? Where would you live? What would you do?

Alternative Futures is a new participatory arts project that invites people from Gateshead, Newcastle and Sunderland to work with artists, musicians, writers and poets from the region to explore and design an alternative future.

The pieces created at workshops and with community groups will form part of a touring regional exhibition which will culminate in a celebratory event at Thought Foundation in Birtley in late Spring.

For more information about Alternative Futures and how you can get involved email: AlternativeFutures3000@outlook.com or follow Alternative Futures on Facebook.

Diamond ideas

People of retirement age are being encouraged to let their creative side flourish by joining Gateshead’s Arts Diamonds.

The three-year project taking place across libraries in Gateshead offers retired people a new way of trying their hand at different activities such as creative writing, photography, painting and making mini movies.

Supported by Arts Council England and the Baring Foundation and in conjunction with 64 Million artists and Gateshead Older People’s Assembly, the project hosts a wide variety of events including workshops, group meetings, weekly challenges and visits to venues across the North East.

To get involved or find out more email rachelhorton@gateshead.gov.uk or telephone 0191 433 3864.
UK’s first LGBT+ Business and Media Centre launches in Gateshead

A former North East television studio is getting a new lease of life as the UK’s first LGBT+ business and media centre. Stonehills, at Shields Road, Pelaw, was previously used by the BBC but has been empty for years. Now, thanks to the support of Gateshead Council, it has opened its doors once more as Pride Media Centre offering a range of opportunities and support to the LGBT+ community as well as their allies.

The complex is home of Pride Community Network (PCN), a not-for-profit organisation; and the new base for Pride Radio 89.2 fm.

The centre has TV and radio studios, recording booths and 16 offices which are available to businesses from both the LGBT+ community and their supporters.

“This is a really exciting venture and we’re delighted to be able to run the first dedicated LGBT+ business and media centre in the UK,” said Jonathan Morrell, chair of the Board of PCN.

“There is a real opportunity here for us to do something very special and give the LGBT+ community the chance to turn their business ideas into a reality with the full support of a strong network of experts.

“We are extremely grateful to Gateshead Council for being so forward-thinking in allowing us to launch this unique venture here in the North East.”

Councillor John Adams, Cabinet Member for the Economy said: “We’re delighted to have Pride Media Centre in Gateshead, because the complex promotes and embraces diversity. As a council this is something we are very much supportive of, and as a gay man is important to me personally. The Council has helped the company get started and we’re looking forward to hearing more from Pride Media Centre this year.”

Work is almost finished on transforming the building and office accommodation, with FREE parking, is available to rent now.

For more information contact sales@prideworldmedia.com

Looking to employ a young person?

If you’re looking to employ a young person for a part-time job in your business make sure you follow the legal guidelines.

Anyone you employ who is of school age must have a child work permit from the local authority where they will be employed. There are also a number of job roles where you can’t employ children and the number of hours a child can work varies depending on the age of the child. It is also against the law to employ a child under the age of 13. If you don’t comply legal action could be taken against you.

Further information and an application form for a free child work permit can be found at www.gateshead.gov.uk/childworkpermit

Voluntary and community groups! 

Check out help and resources available to you. www.gateshead.gov.uk/volunteering
Does your business need help with recruitment?

Recruiting people isn’t just about qualifications or the experience they bring with them. It’s about personality, talent and culture. It’s about getting the person who fits in exactly with your company’s values. We know that finding this person means time and money but that’s where we can help.

**Free service**

Gateshead Council offers a free, tailor made service to support new and existing employers in the borough to thrive.

Our bespoke service can offer you a co-ordinated recruitment and skills package including:

- Labour market information
- Advice and guidance on the recruitment process
- Pre-employment training
- Advertising of vacancies
- Pre-screening of applicants prior to submission
- Premises to conduct interviews
- Recruitment events
- Dedicated point of contact throughout recruitment process

**Experience**

We have a proven track record in delivering successful end to end recruitment from drawing up job descriptions and person specifications to interview questions and assessment techniques.

Our experienced recruitment lead can also broker in training provision and can also help futureproof your business with sourcing apprenticeships and work experience placements.

**In the past six months we’ve supported 42 businesses with their recruitment needs.**

We have advertised 106 opportunities and successfully filled 80% of those opportunities.

**For more information contact Claire Cook on 0191 433 3075 or email clairecook@gateshead.gov.uk**

Helping businesses save on energy bills

Businesses in Gateshead are being offered the chance to save money on their energy bills thanks to a new service.

The Business Energy Saving Team (BEST) is a new initiative set up to help small and medium-sized businesses cut their fuel bills by becoming more energy efficient.

Companies which take part can get a free energy efficiency audit which identifies ways to save energy in day-to-day operations by:

- upgrading lighting
- replacing equipment with more energy-efficient models
- suggesting new ways of working to save energy

It has been made possible with £670,000 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme for 2014-2020.

For more information about BEST and an eligibility check, visit www.best-ne.co.uk or contact adelekalow@gateshead.gov.uk

**Looking for work?**

In the past six months, our designated recruitment team has supported 85 people into employment.

If you are a Gateshead resident who’s unemployed and looking for work, please contact the Employment Services team on 0191 490 9480 to see if we can help.

For more information contact Claire Cook on 0191 433 3075 or email clairecook@gateshead.gov.uk
**£12 million office development on site**

Riga, a new Grade-A office block is currently under construction and on target to complete in February 2020. It's part of the Council’s Baltic Quarter development, already home to Northern Design Centre, Gateshead College and PROTO and is located next to the iconic NewcastleGateshead Quays.

Rising to a height of six storeys, and in a prominent position above Gateshead Quays, the high-quality office offers spectacular views across the Tyne.

Cllr Martin Gannon, Leader of Gateshead Council, said: “Baltic Quarter is at the heart of a vibrant waterside regeneration programme, creating an urban destination for business, living, learning and tourism. This new office block is well-connected to Gateshead town centre, the Quays, the River Tyne and Newcastle city centre. It’s an attractive option for growing businesses and most importantly could bring around 600 new jobs to Gateshead.”

www.rigagateshead.co.uk

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**Gateshead tech conference returns for its fifth instalment!**

XRTGO: Immersive Technology Conference and Expo returns for a milestone fifth year on Thursday 4 April at the iconic BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art on Gateshead Quayside with a great line-up of speakers, exhibitors and delegates.

This B2B event, formerly known as VRTGO, welcomes founders, developers, innovation managers and key-decision makers from technology and enterprises across the UK and beyond. The audience is a mix of people who are implementing immersive tech and pushing the boundaries of innovation as well as those who are looking to further explore the potential application of these technologies.

This year’s line-up of speakers includes:
- Oliver Kibblewhite, Head of Special Projects, Rewind
- Tom Beardsmore CEO, Coatsink,
- David Weir-McCall, Senior Designer, CallisonRTKL
- Sarah Ticho, Founder at Hatsumi VR
- and many more.

**Dates for your diary**

- **Newcastle Startup Week**
  13-17 May
  www.newcastlestartupweek.com

- **Thinking Digital 16 May**
  www.thinkingdigital.co.uk

- **Startup Safari Newcastle Gateshead 21-23 May**
  www.ne.startupsafari.com

- **Tech Talent 22 May**
  www.techdiary.co.uk/group/tech-talent

**For more information on schedule, speakers, exhibitors and more, visit**
www.xrtgo.com
Wednesday 13 March marks No Smoking Day – an annual challenge to smokers to make an attempt to stop.

With more than 400 residents in Gateshead dying from smoking related diseases each year this is an ideal time to give quitting a go. Even if you have tried before and not succeeded, you can come back again more determined and get the right support to help you quit.

Every cigarette you smoke is harmful and the benefits of quitting are huge including reducing your risk of a heart attack within a year and reducing your risk from cancer.

By accessing the Stop Smoking Service for expert advice, a range of stop smoking medications, support and encouragement, you are four times more likely to successfully quit.

If you’re struggling with other methods, it’s also worth considering switching completely to an e-cigarette, a significantly less harmful option than smoking.

So, do something amazing for your health, bank balance and loved ones and pledge to quit this month.

Visit www.gateshead.gov.uk/smokefreegateshead for free help and support to quit smoking this year.

If you have problems reading the newspaper or struggle making a cuppa and would like more information on equipment or support available to help you remain independent, contact Sight Service on 0191 478 5959 or email contactus@sightservice.co.uk

Give quitting a go on No Smoking Day

If you have problems reading the newspaper or struggle making a cuppa and would like more information on equipment or support available to help you remain independent, contact Sight Service on 0191 478 5959 or email contactus@sightservice.co.uk

Take the test

Latest figures show that in a year nearly 14,000 women in Gateshead didn’t attend a cervical screening yet this test prevents 75% of cervical cancers from development.

Most common in women aged 35 and under, every year in the UK around 3,000 women will be diagnosed.

It’s not thought to be hereditary – 99.7% of cases are caused by the HPV virus and around 80% of sexually active adults will be infected with some type of HPV in their lives. However, for the majority this does not lead to cervical cancer.

If you’ve received an invitation to have a test, don’t ignore it, take action and take the test. It’s really important for you to attend.

To find out more information visit www.jostrust.org.uk

Got a power cut?

Call 105 to get through to your local electricity network operator.
The role that today’s society plays in weight gain and obesity is the focus of Gateshead’s Director of Public Health in her annual report.

‘Obesity: Made in England’, is the third annual report by Director, Alice Wiseman. In it she says that the stigma faced by overweight people is significant and media headlines often place the blame firmly at the door of individuals.

However, while individual responsibility plays a part, Alice says humans are constantly being overwhelmed by the effects of an environment that encourages weight gain and obesity.

“An abundance of energy-packed food, clever marketing that disproportionately focuses on the promotion of these foods, reliance on car travel and sedentary lifestyles means that the vast majority of us are predisposed to gaining weight, says Alice. “Given all the external pressures, it is not a surprise that for the majority of people in the UK, body mass index (BMI) is now above that considered to be in the ‘healthy’ range.”

The report explores how changes to society over recent decades have increased our risk of obesity. Alice is calling for a whole system approach that places greater emphasis on action to address the wider environment and societal issues that contribute to increasing obesity levels. She points to the fact that:

- it is three times more expensive to get the energy we need from healthy foods than unhealthy foods
- it is harder to buy healthy foods in deprived parts of the UK and there is also a higher density of fast food outlets in these areas
- 1.2% of advertising spend each year goes on vegetables yet 22% is spent on confectionery, cakes, biscuits and ice cream.

Alice said: “We need to work together to create the conditions for healthy weight. The obesity epidemic is not inevitable. As a society, we have created many of the problems and therefore we are also the people who have the power to solve it.”

Councillor Mary Foy, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, said: “The Director of Public Health’s Annual Report highlights that obesity, like climate change, is a complex problem but that does not mean it’s unsolvable.

“Un Gateshead we have a real desire and opportunity to create an environment for change and we are determined to design a borough that allows its residents to thrive by supporting healthy weight and wellbeing. We will work with and for our communities and families to make the healthy choice the easy choice.”

Key facts from the report include:

- In Gateshead, two thirds of adults (69.4%) have excess weight. This is significantly worse that the England average of 64.8%.
- One in four adults in Gateshead is obese.
- In the most deprived areas of Gateshead the proportion of obese adults is almost double that in the least deprived.
- Over one in five children in Gateshead start school overweight or obese.
- By Year 6, over one in three children in Gateshead are overweight or obese.

The full report ‘Obesity: Made in England’ is available online at www.gateshead.gov.uk/health
Help us to help you

We want to help you to stay well, but we know that when people do get ill it’s important that they know where to go to get help. Your local pharmacist has a wealth of knowledge and can provide confidential advice conveniently, without an appointment.

Online GP access

Your GP practice is the main service for your ongoing health needs. You are now able to register for online access at your practice, which will allow you to see key information about your care, and in many practices you can order prescriptions and book appointments.

How to register

To register for online GP access, you need to take photo ID (passport or driving licence) and proof of address (such as a utility bill) to your practice and tell them you want to start using online services. You will need to complete a short registration form.

NHS 111

Anyone with an urgent need, which is not life-threatening but needs to be dealt with the same day, can call NHS 111. They will direct you to the most appropriate place for your condition e.g. your GP practice, urgent care and walk in centres.

Urgent issues

If you do have a more urgent issue and need to visit A&E at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or the Urgent Treatment Centre in Blaydon you can view their waiting times online at www.qegateshead.nhs.uk/livewaitingtimes.

You can also visit www.nhs.uk or www.patient.co.uk for information about local health services and advice on how to manage your conditions and care for yourself at home.

GP practices will always try to manage children with problems within the same day. You can also pick up a ‘Little Orange Book’ from reception which has helpful advice to manage common conditions in children. To download a copy, visit www.newcastlegatesheadccg.nhs.uk and search for ‘Little Orange Book’.

Pick up a copy of The Little Orange Book from your GP practice or download from: www.newcastlegatesheadccg.nhs.uk
Pharmacists

Pharmacists are highly trained experts and fully qualified to give advice on a range of health issues, including:

- Aches and pains
- Colds and flu
- Eye care
- Hay fever
- Skin or mouth problems
- Allergies
- Ear care
- Headaches
- Stomach aches
- Head lice

For your nearest pharmacy, visit www.nhs.uk

All our local pharmacies in Gateshead are part of ‘Think Pharmacy First’, and will provide free help and advice and recommend medicine if you need it.

If you don’t normally pay for your medicines, then you don’t need to pay with Think Pharmacy First – you can get them free over the counter from your local pharmacist without seeing your GP.

Helpful websites

www.nhs.co.uk – for local services and for information about managing conditions

www.patient.co.uk – a wealth of leaflets about how various conditions can be managed
IN YOUR AREA

News in brief

Starting your own business?
Have you ever wanted to start your own businesses or have an idea and just need some advice? Well you’re in luck because Gateshead Council in partnership with Project North East are hosting a FREE business start-up workshop in Chopwell Community Centre on 18 March from 11am-1.30pm. The session is informal and all children are welcome. Just come along.

Try Yoga in Swalwell
What do you get when you combine yoga, fitness training and pilates? For the answer, pop down to Swalwell Community Centre on Clavering Road to try out their yogatri classes, which are said to give your body and mind a workout like no other. For more information contact Lynne Kirso on 07872 591 570 or email or email k-kirsop@sky.com

Grove Tuesday
The Royal Voluntary Service have recently set up ‘Grove Tuesday’, a social club for older people in Bensham. Come along for a game of bingo, a team quiz, a cup of tea, a biscuit and a good chat. The group runs every Tuesday from 9.30am-11.30am at Bensham Grove Community Centre. For more information contact Jean on 07804 491839 or email jean828587@hotmail.com

A dog’s life
Children from St Albans Primary Catholic School in Pelaw joined residents from McErlane Square Sheltered Accommodation in their communal lounge to meet with guide dogs as an awareness raising activity for the children. Louise Thompson from Guide Dogs for the Blind introduced her working guide dog Milly to the children, while Maureen Southern, with trainee puppy Jade, spoke to the children and residents about visual impairment and how the dogs help. To find out more go to www.guidedogs.org.uk

Clover Hill is the Tops

A Whickham primary school has been celebrating after being declared one of the best primary schools in the country.

Clover Hill Primary School was ranked 7th in a league table of the Top 500 Schools in England published by The Sunday Times before Christmas. The rankings were based on SATs results for Key Stage 2 pupils.

The school had already been noted as a high SATs achiever after being ranked 4th in the same league tables the year before.

Head teacher Louise Easton is delighted with the school’s latest ranking but says the school’s ethic was not just about league tables.

“It’s a great achievement for the whole school, but this isn’t about fast-tracking or ‘hothousing’ children,” she says. “We believe in developing all of our pupils to achieve their very best in all areas of the curriculum as well as personal development. We have amazing children who love learning and we are extremely proud to have fantastic teachers, governors and parents.”

Communities to benefit from £100,000 funding

More than £100,000 has been awarded to community projects throughout the borough in the latest round of grants from the Gateshead Thrive Fund.

The fund supports new and existing groups and organisations based or working in Gateshead and delivering activities and services for the benefit of local people.

Thirteen applications were recommended for approval in round 2 of the 2018/19 fund totalling £109,157. A further £4,400 in sporting grants has been allocated to 19 individuals through the talented athlete scheme.

Councillor Linda Green, Cabinet Member for Communities and Volunteering, said: “Gateshead Council is committed to supporting and maintaining a vibrant voluntary and community sector in the borough. Through the Thrive Fund the Council is able to invest in and support the growth and development of these organisations.

“We have pledged to make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives and we’re delighted to recommend 13 organisations receive funding in this round and look forward to seeing how that money will benefit Gateshead residents in the future.”

Details on funding for the next financial year will be announced in early April.
Dementia centre still ‘Outstanding’

A Gateshead Council owned Dementia Resource Centre, Shadon House in Birtley, has kept its outstanding status following a recent inspection by the Care Quality Commission.

The CQC found that people were extremely well cared for, relaxed and comfortable and that care was provided with great patience and kindness. Everyone they spoke to complimented and praised the staff team and gave examples of the outstanding care that was delivered.

The report said that the service consistently strived to ensure that people had the best possible care, and that they were supported in a compassionate, dignified and safe way.

Shadon House provides short stay assessment and respite support to people with a dementia condition, or who have significant memory loss.

People can stay in the centre anywhere from an overnight stay up to six-weeks. While they are at Shadon House, they and their families can enjoy lots of facilities including a summer house, multi-sensory garden, cinema, dance hall and bar.

Councillor Michael McNestry, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care responded to the CQC’s report: “Shadon House received an outstanding rating in 2016 and we’re absolutely delighted that the CQC considers that those high standards have been maintained. It’s a tremendous achievement and is all thanks to the hard work, dedication and professionalism of the staff. It really is a service to be proud of.”

Parents urged to act on anti-social behaviour

Parents in the east of Gateshead are being urged to ask themselves – where are my children tonight? The call for parents to question where their children might be follows growing concern about anti-social behaviour, especially in East Gateshead.

Some local residents have reported being intimidated and threatened by large numbers of young people at night, with buses and property also being attacked by stone-throwing youths.

Northumbria Police have increased patrols in the areas to counter the problems, and are even deploying undercover Police officers so they can identify and arrest the main offenders.

However, parents are also being asked to play their part in preventing anti-social behaviour by ensuring they know where their children are at night – and ensuring they are not among those responsible.

Councillor Linda Green, Cabinet Member for Communities and Volunteering, says: “We have been aware of growing problems with anti-social behaviour in these areas for a while, and it’s something we take very seriously.

It’s important that people recognise they’re responsible for their children’s behaviour because having a child involved in large-scale public disorder could easily land them in court, and this can have serious repercussions for the whole family.”

Sometimes children don’t consider the consequences of their actions, so parents should ask them to think about whether they could be causing distress to others, damaging the environment or putting themselves in danger.

“‘We know local Police officers are working hard on the problem, but we can’t just leave it to the Police to sort out. After all, as parents we all have responsibility for ensuring that our children don’t cause harm or distress to others.’”

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Some local residents have reported being intimidated and threatened by large numbers of young people at night, with buses and property also being attacked by stone-throwing youths.

Northumbria Police have increased patrols in the areas to counter the problems, and are even deploying undercover Police officers so they can identify and arrest the main offenders.

However, parents are also being asked to play their part in preventing anti-social behaviour by ensuring they know where their children are at night – and ensuring they are not among those responsible.

Councillor Linda Green, Cabinet Member for Communities and Volunteering, says: “We have been aware of growing problems with anti-social behaviour in these areas for a while, and it’s something we take very seriously.

It’s important that people recognise they’re responsible for their children’s behaviour because having a child involved in large-scale public disorder could easily land them in court, and this can have serious repercussions for the whole family.”

Sometimes children don’t consider the consequences of their actions, so parents should ask them to think about whether they could be causing distress to others, damaging the environment or putting themselves in danger.

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More than 300 residents have clubbed together to buy a historic village green pub in Ryton Old Village in Gateshead. Following a year-long campaign, members of the community in Ryton have received the keys to village pub Ye Olde Cross, and are now raising funds to renovate and reopen the pub.

Over £150,000 was raised by current and former residents who bought community shares in a cooperative, Ryton Cross Community Society, set up by local residents in order to buy the pub.

North East brewery Firebrick have also supported fundraising efforts, and local MP Liz Twist - a shareholder in the pub - gave the campaign a mention in a recent representation in the House of Commons.

Former taxi driver and pub quiz organiser Colin Cheeseman, who started the campaign by posting flyers to his neighbours, said: “It meant so much to me to get this pub reopened, and I can’t believe how many people have come together to save it. I still feel quite emotional to actually have the keys and to be able to open up a pub that belongs to us.”

A further £40,000 is needed to refurbish Ye Olde Cross. Plans include reconstructing the seating areas around the bar, adding an accessible toilet and renovating outdoor spaces.

Alongside traditional pub services, Ryton Cross Community Society will look at ways of using the space to support the community, from tackling social isolation to providing work experience.

Anyone who is interested can become a shareholder in the pub, or can support the campaign by donating towards the refurbishment. Full details are available on their website https://yeoldecross.co.uk

Looking for foodie heaven?

Two successful local food markets are back following their success last year. The Low Fell Food Market is back for its third season and this year the beautiful Saltwell Park is the backdrop. Visitors can buy local produce alongside a selection of world street food plus a pop up bar and buskers. The market takes place on the first Saturday of the month April to September, 10.30am-3pm. Entry costs just 50p, free for under 14s.

Saturday 11 May will mark the first of five markets at Dunston Staiths running until September. The markets will play host to the usual mix of local artisan food producers and world street food plus exciting performances from a number of local performers. The market takes place on the 2nd Saturday of each month until September and is held on the lower deck of the Dunston Staiths, gates open 11am-3pm and entry costs just 50p, free for under 14s.
Fun things to do this Easter

How will you keep the kids entertained this Easter? GO Gateshead have some great ideas for keeping the boredom at bay, without costing the earth.

Perfect for adults and children alike Clip ‘n Climb is ideal for families to enjoy together. Watch on in admiration as your child scales any of the 25 unique climbing challenges at Gateshead Leisure Centre, or if you’re feeling adventurous, clip on a harness and show them how it’s done.

With a maximum of 25 climbers per session spaces are limited. For availability and to book go to www.gogateshead.com/clipnclimb

Flowrider

Gateshead may not have a coastline or sea breeze but we have unlimited waves with the Flowrider. Simulating an authentic wave the Flowrider is the ultimate white-water experience for the whole family. To check availability and to book go to www.gogateshead.com/flowrider

GO Bears Den soft play

For children up to 12 years, and with a dedicated baby and toddler area, the GO Bears Den is a huge four-tiered soft play facility featuring a wide variety of thrilling apparatus and challenging obstacles. Come rain or shine it’s perfect for playtime. For more information visit www.gogateshead.com/gobears

Holiday activities

Looking for some extra fun during the school holidays? From water-based fun with snorkelling, toys and floats, Water Walkers, and a water slide to dedicated football camps and multi-sports, check out what’s available during the Easter break at www.gogateshead.com/holidayactivities

You’ve got a friend offer

There are lots of benefits to being physically active but one of the best ways of making you stick to your exercise regime is to work out with a friend.

Now, GO Gateshead is offering an added benefit of training with a partner – refer a friend to the gym and when they take out a membership, we’ll give you a month free!

Send two friends our way, and you’ll get two months free. Three friends and, well, you get the idea.

With our state-of-the-art gyms, swimming pools and over 200 fitness classes each week, GO Gateshead has plenty for you and your training buddy to discover together.

Find out more at www.gogateshead.com/refer

GO Easy with GO Gateshead

Got out of the habit of exercising regularly? Not sure what type of exercise would benefit you? Look no further. Go Easy is a range of new exercise classes specifically designed to build your confidence as you build your fitness.

Available at all GO Gateshead leisure centres and delivered by qualified instructors, GO Easy can help those who have been inactive for some time as well as those with chronic health conditions. From aquafit to walking sports, light cycling to low impact aerobics there is something for everyone to try.

Take the classes at your own pace and participate as often as you feel comfortable. Our staff will support you to get the most from your experience.

To find out more about getting involved visit www.gogateshead.com/goeasy
The Land of Oak & Iron goes from strength to strength since opening

Gateshead’s newest attraction, The Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Centre has welcomed tens of thousands of visitors since it opened last autumn.

Located in Winlaton Mill, in the heart of Ambrose Crowley’s industrial empire, the heritage centre is accessible from the Derwent Walk, Red Kite Trail and the Coast to Coast Cycleway, as well as the main traffic route through the Derwent Valley.

Visitors can find out about the hidden history of the area before setting off on one of the beautiful nearby walks. A stop at the popular café shrub for a well-earned treat can round off your day.

March will see the opening of an exclusive Love Our Heritage exhibition sharing the hidden gems of our past. Heritage-themed workshops including oil painting on wood and a Bewick birds textile masterclass is also on offer. Visit over Easter and enjoy the family-friendly heritage Easter trail exploring Derwenthaugh Park.

The centre will be open every day from 9am to 5pm from March, with a new menu in café shrub, offering food perfect for every day or a special occasion. Look out for special heritage afternoon teas coming soon.

Find out more visit www.landofoakandiron.org.uk

Gateshead’s Great Outdoors photography competition

A big thank you to everyone who entered our ‘Gateshead’s Great Outdoors’ photography competition. We had an overwhelming response and the quality of photos submitted was really high, which made judging very difficult! Check out our winners below. Proof that Gateshead’s countryside really is great!

Landscape category: Thornley Woods by Brian Bolt

Enjoying the Outdoors category: Kibblesworth Bank by Vicki Thompson

Nature and Wildlife category: Otter in the River Derwent by Sarah Stanger

Youth category: Kingfisher at Clara Vale Nature Reserve by Katy Read
March

Thursday 14 March
The Bensham Fab Four
Gateshead Central Library, 7pm
Local author Chris Tait shares memories from his book “Upstairs on Fourth Street” featuring Gateshead vocal group The Tru Tones. The Tru Tones will be on hand to share their memories, answer any questions and if we are lucky they may even sing again. £2.
To book: 0191 433 8420 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

Friday 22 March
Creative Baby
Shipley Art Gallery, 10.30am-12 noon
Once a month, Shipley Art Gallery is transformed into an imaginative sensory play space. Explore dens, lights, mirrors, music and interesting objects, and relax amongst the exhibitions. The play space is different every time, so there are always new things to discover. Suitable for newborns to 18 months. £5 per child.

Saturday 23 March
Happy Hearts Paint Block Workshop
Gateshead Central Library, 10am-12.30pm
Join Bethan Laker to make, decorate and paint clay blocks with colourful mixed media to take home so you can smile all year round. This workshop is suitable for 8yrs+ and adults, £8. To book: 0191 433 8420 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

April

Monday 8 April
Humans That Rock The World: Dame Vivienne Westwood
Caedmon Hall, Gateshead Central Library, 9.30am-4.30pm
Young people aged 8-14 can join a Culture Camp to celebrate British designer Vivienne Westwood with a day full of creative and fun workshops. £20.
To book: 0191 433 8420 or visit www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

Friday 29 and Saturday 30 March
Chicken Licken: a TaleJam
Caedmon Hall, 1pm
Meet the birds and join the band. We'll tell the tale with a musical jam! A musical storytelling theatre show for all the family exploring an old fable in a new way with fun, fake news and feathers! £5.50.
To book: 0191 433 8420 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

Friday 6 – Sunday 8 April
Gateshead International Jazz Festival - Sage Gateshead
Headlining this year’s festival are Ruby Turner, Maceo Parker, Sun Ra Arkestra, Tony Allen, Norma Winstone, Portico Quartet, The Chris Barber Band and Georgie Fame with The Guy Barker Big Band alongside many other jazz, funk and soul artists from across Europe and beyond.
For more information or to book tickets visit www.sagegateshead.com
WHAT’S ON

Tuesday 9 April
I Weigh
The Gallery, Central Library
I Weigh is a brand new theatre show created by young people in response to the online ‘@i_weigh’ movement. A fun and poignant journey through what it’s like living in a world that can make you feel you aren’t always good enough. £3 per young person. £5 per adult. To book www.mortalfools.org.uk

Saturday 13 April
Paint and Sip Party
Shipley Art Gallery, 10.30am-noon
The latest craze from the USA arrives in the North East. Come and join the Shipley Art Gallery’s step by step art class. Choose from over 20 exciting new paintings, receive group tips and one to one advice from expert artists. 2.30-4.30pm. Also running on 18 May and 15 June. £12.95 per class.

Saturday 13 April
Low Fell Community Choir
Caedmon Hall, 1pm
Join the Low Fell Community Choir and Side by Side Arts. This year they will be performing all time classics spanning from the 70s through to the present. This is a pre-book, pay what you feel event. All donations go back into Low Fell Community Choir and other community events. To book: 0191 433 8420 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

Thursday 18 April
Easter Craft Activities
St Mary’s Heritage Centre, 10am-noon
Come along and make your very own Easter basket, complete with goodies and a mini chick! There will be colouring and sticky crafts for the younger ones, tea and coffee for the grown-ups and juice and biscuits for the kids. £2 - just drop in! For information: 0191 433 4699 or email: heritage@gateshead.gov.uk

Saturday 20 April
Spice Girls Dance Workshop
Angel View Inn, 10am-noon
Join professional dancer Hildy Harland, who will take you through some of the famous signature Spice Girls dance moves. So stop right now and say you’ll be there? £12. To book: 0191 433 8420 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

Tuesday 23 April
History Wardrobe presents
Good Night, Sweet Dreams
Caedmon Hall, 6.30pm
History Wardrobe will explore boudoir glamour, bedtime stories, the science of sleep and duvet days. So, snuggle up and enjoy the show! £7. To book: 0191 433 6965 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

Thursday 25 April
Grace Kelly – From a Hollywood princess to a real-life princess
Gateshead Central Library, 2.30pm
Find out more about the Hollywood icon who became Princess Grace of Monaco at this free talk by Jim Lynch. Adults only. To book: 0191 433 6965 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

Thursday 25 April
Claymation workshop: Art Diamonds
Gateshead Central Library, 10am
Create your own characters and learn about the basics of animation with artist Sheryl Jenkins. This workshop is for retired people over 55. To book: 0191 433 6965 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

Monday 29 April – Saturday 4 May
Little Women
Little Theatre, Saltwell View, 7.15pm
The tale of the lives of four sisters, while their father is away as an Army chaplain during the American Civil War, will be familiar to many. Relationships, friendships, and daily struggles with life make this a warm, feel-good play.

Saturday 18 May
Easter in Wonderland
Angel View Inn, 10am-noon
Come and join our Easter themed drop in! For information: 0191 433 4699 or email: heritage@gateshead.gov.uk

Friday 3 - Sunday 5 May
Gateshead Beer and Music Festival
Gateshead Rugby Club, Low Fell
Tickets from £10 and £35 for a weekend pass, available from www.gatesheadbeerfestival.co.uk
Ticket price includes free festival programme and souvenir glass. Follow on twitter@ Gateshead Ale or Facebook at Gateshead Beer & Music Festival.

Saturday 18 May
Still Life, Still Mind:
Drawing Workshop
Gateshead Central Library, 10am-12.30pm
To mark Mental Health Awareness Week join artist Zara Worth to explore positive mental health through drawing. Learn how to use observational drawing to calm and clear your mind. £12. To book: 0191 433 8420 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

Saturday 18 May - Sunday 6 October
Dippy on Tour:
The World of the Little Waster
Gateshead Rugby Club, Low Fell
‘the little waster’ Bobby Thompson. Bill Saunders takes a look at the life of ‘the little waster’ Bobby Thompson. £3. To book: 0191 433 4699 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

May

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Wednesday 21 May
The World of the Little Waster
St Mary’s Heritage Centre, 7pm
Bill Saunders takes a look at the life of ‘the little waster’ Bobby Thompson. £3. To book: 0191 433 4699 or visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson

For full listings or to book tickets at Sage Gateshead call 0191 443 4661 or visit www.sagegateshead.com
For latest exhibitions and events at Baltic visit www.balticmill.com
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This is just a taste of events across Gateshead. For more see www.gateshead.gov.uk/whatson
Bank Holiday Waste and Recycling Collections

This Easter, if your bin collection falls on Good Friday (19 April), it will be collected a day later on Saturday 20 April. Other collection dates are not affected.

Check your bin collection dates online: www.gateshead.gov.uk/binchecker

For any other waste and recycling enquiries visit: www.gateshead.gov.uk or phone 0191 433 7000

Ready for the Summer?

Don’t wait until it’s TOO LATE!

Sign up for Garden Waste Collections now!

www.gateshead.gov.uk/gardenwaste
0191 433 7000

Is fostering worth it?

Absolutely...

Fostering is caring for life... fostering is a career for life!

Find out more at our Information Evening, 27 March or 22 May, 5.30pm at Bewicks (Gateshead Civic Centre)
www.gateshead.gov.uk/ fostering
SIGN UP. JOIN IN. GET ON.

Pop along to our Enrolment Event and join the No.1 College in the North East.

- Find out more about our courses
- Get free and friendly careers advice
- Take a campus tour
- Apply for your 2019 place

Monday 29 April
4.30pm - 7pm
All campuses.

Visit [www.gateshead.ac.uk](http://www.gateshead.ac.uk) for more details.