

Whinstone Times

Community magazine for Embleton and
Christon Bank



January/February 2023

Edition No. 83

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Planning Applications

The Parish Council would like to make sure that all parishioners are aware of current planning applications in the Parish so that they are able review and comment on them. For

a list of current planning applications please visit

www.northumberlandparishes.uk/embleton

These lists are updated weekly, and all planning applications are discussed at the monthly Parish Council meetings.

Welcome to the 83rd edition of the Whinstone Times.

2022 has been a year of problems for many, especially the people of Ukraine. Here's hoping that 2023 is a better one, and the editors wish everyone a Happy New Year.

As everyone is only too aware, the cost of just about everything is going up, including the cost of printing. The production costs of the Church newsletter, the Net, has quadrupled since its inception around 20 years ago with at least two increases this year. The Whinstone Times is now about 40% more expensive to produce than it was two years ago. Currently, the Nets and WTs are delivered to every house in Christon Bank and Embleton. Many will be keenly awaited but inevitably some will be thrown away or not wanted. To reduce costs and waste, both the Net and the WT will, in future, be left for collection at several distribution points in the area. So far these include the shop, garage, doctors' surgery, Parish Room and Church in Embleton and Norma's porch in Christon Bank. The Net will also be available in Rock, Rennington, Craster and Newton. This may be difficult for some people, particularly those who find it difficult to get out and about, but we will try to make sure that anyone who would like a copy gets one. The Whinstone Times is also available to read on the Embleton website, under publications (embleton-northumberland.co.uk). The WT editors would very much like to thank Shelagh Coxon and her team of people who deliver the Net. Since its first edition fourteen years ago, Shelagh's team have also very kindly delivered the Whinstone Times, and we are very grateful to them.

Please send articles and any ideas for content or for fundraising to whinstone.times@gmail.com or telephone Jan Ainsley, 01665 576019 Please send any items for 'What's On' to Shelagh Coxon, tel 01665 576791 or gorshel1@outlook.com.

The deadline for material for the next edition is Monday 6th February

N.B. The editors reserve the right to alter or reject material and the views expressed within these covers are solely those of the contributors.

Parish Council Notes Oct/Nov 2022 Terry Howells

The Council is still concerned regarding the restricted views when exiting the new estate at Christon Bank and NCC's plans to remove the chicane situated near the entrance to the estate. A site meeting with NCC representatives is being sought at which the lack of a footpath will also be raised again. A list of footpaths in the parish which have missing, or inadequate, signage has been prepared and will be passed to NCC. After a review of the Council's Standing Orders certain modifications and additions have been agreed. After careful consideration the Council has agreed to set the precept at £12,500 for 2023 - 2024. Although this is a 25% increase on last year's figure it is still significantly less than in the pre Covid years. The Council agreed a detailed review of the precept should be published in the next edition of the Whinstone Times. The annual inspection of the playpark revealed a few areas where maintenance work was required and the Council is investigating ways of arranging an annual maintenance contract with some company, At Spitalford cemetery NCC have completed the make safe work on 32 memorials and the Burial Committee await a report from a memorial mason on 6 more make safes. In the quarry Nature Reserve the stabilisation of Quarry House has been completed but the external staircase is still to be restored by volunteers. A grant has been applied for to carry out landscaping work around the house and to recreate a sand martin nest side on the east side of the quarry.

Copies of the Parish Council, Joint Burial Committee and the Quarry Working Group minutes can be found on the Parish Council website – northumberlandparishes.co.uk/embleton/documents

Thank you!

Jane Mullen sent this note to the WT, after the fireworks on 5th November:-
I hope this reaches a person in Embleton to whom I can give my thanks for a delightful bonfire night on Saturday .

I would also like to contact the person who organised the actual fireworks. Can you help please?

County Councillor Wendy Pattison's report

E-mail:

wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel. 07779 983072

Facebook – Cllr Wendy Pattison



Council recommends appointment of new Chief Executive

Northumberland County Council is pleased to announce a recommended appointment for a new Chief Executive of the Council. Dr Helen Paterson is currently at Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, where she has been Chief Executive since 2017. Helen was Executive Director of Children's Services in Sunderland for five years before becoming Strategic Director for Transformation, leading the council's business



transformation, efficiency and improvement work. She joined Walsall after being Chief Executive at Wrexham County Borough Council for six years. Helen is currently Secretary of the Association of Black Country Authorities and Black Country Executive Joint Committee and Chair of West Midlands Metropolitan Chief Executives Group.

Retrofit programme accelerates Northumberland towards carbon neutral

Northumberland County Council is pioneering the installation of low carbon ground source heat pumps (GSHPs) in its non-domestic buildings to help reduce emissions in the county. To date, 20 GSHP projects have been undertaken by the council, including in fire stations, schools and office premises saving 1025.09 tons of CO2 emissions to date – the equivalent of a petrol car driving 2,544,484 miles around the county. The pumps are being supplied by British manufacturer and installation partner, Kensa and present the best value benefit against the carbon saved which will help accelerate Northumberland towards its carbon neutral goal by 2030. Especially as GSHPs have a typical lifespan of 20 years and become even more efficient as the grid continues to decarbonise.

Warm Hub at Parish Room Embleton

The Parish Room in Embleton is part of the Warm Hub Scheme, supported by CAN (Community Action Northumberland).



The idea behind the scheme is to provide a meeting place within our communities where people can come and enjoy the company of others in a safe and warm environment. The

Parish Room has been opening its doors to the village in the form of Mandell's every Wednesday for cakes, coffee and tea, but due to the approaching winter and the threat of rising energy bills, we thought it was important to provide something extra. The soup lunch started on Monday 31st October and is available to everyone, open every Monday 11 - 2. Not only is it cosy and warm, but you can sit and chat with friends, neighbours

and maybe strangers who are visiting or new to the area whilst enjoying a lovely bowl of hot



homemade soup with bread and butter. There is tea and coffee available as well. There is no charge for this, a donation bowl is available, but there is absolutely no obligation. You will always be guaranteed a warm welcome at the Parish Room, why not come along and join in.

Embleton Women's Club

Brenda Pilgrim

The Women's club began in Embleton in 1901, and although membership is a lot less now, a group of us still enjoy meeting up on the first Tuesday of the month. We average 14 members at the moment. I am in the process of drawing together our program for next year beginning on Tuesday January 3rd at 2pm at the Creighton Hall. We kick off with Denise Howe talking about Geordie Humour. We have a full program of speakers booked for the next six months - we don't knit or play cards, though we sometimes have a quiz with Mars Bar prizes!! The whole point of our club is to provide a pleasant and interesting afternoon for our ladies. Normally our speaker talks for about 45 minutes, then takes questions. Afterwards, we have a social get together (a natter catching up), over cake and tea. It's a happy atmosphere and all visitors are made welcome. We pay £15 annual subscription in January or if you join during the year it's pro rata and then each month we attend we pay £2 and that pays for the hire of the hall. And so why don't you start the new year off by joining us on January 3rd at 2pm in the Creighton Hall? You can ring me or e-mail me with any questions you might have. If you come along, I will look out for you and introduce you to everyone. Tel. 01665 571299, e-mail brendajoanp@aol.com.

Wanted!

Embleton Parish Council needs a Clerk/Financial Officer or a Clerk. This post is part time, 8 hrs per week working from home plus a two-hour evening meeting per month in the Creighton Hall. Pay will be approximately £11.50 per hour depending on experience. A dedicated laptop and printer will be provided. Duties of the Clerk include Administering meetings and producing minutes, ensuring the Council meets its statutory and other legal requirements, managing Council property, maintaining the Council's website,



implementing the Council's decisions, managing the Council's response to Planning Applications and ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act. The Financial Officer administers the Council's finances, including bookkeeping, financial management and relative matters and manages both internal and external audits. Ideally one person would fill both positions, but consideration will be given to appointing a clerk only. Training will be provided as necessary.

If you feel this might be a position that interests you, please send brief details to embletonpc@hotmail.co.uk before December 31st.

Nature Notes October/ November Peter Brown

- Of records, rarities and Richard.

Records continued to tumble: the warmest October and November on record; the driest October ('proper' rain only on 20th); little rain in November until 15th when it rained unusually for four days; latest lawn cut (12th November); butterflies and wasps until well into November; leaves still stubbornly on trees until the first days of December; no frost until 21st November, the first single figure (C) temperature day. Large flocks of sanderlings, wintering here, buzzed up and down the rising tide line at Football Hole, and vast flocks of geese (hard to identify exactly when far away) grazed in fields and set off south in massive formations, even travelling in the dark (to avoid the traffic?). The twitchers had a field-



day in these months and Newton seemed to be the place to be. On the 14th November three rarities were reported: a marbled duck (there are only about 50,000 in the world and they normally live in North Africa and Spain); a Bonaparte's gull (again North African); and a Hume's leaf warbler. This last yellowy little bird lives normally in the mountains of inner Asia and winters in India. What on earth



was it doing here? It must have got horribly lost. And it wasn't going anywhere fast because I met two birdwatchers beside The Ship on 29th November practically climbing over someone's garden wall as they had seen the warbler again and possibly a second one.

They were from Teesside and had been alerted by some birdwatchers' secret service. To my great satisfaction, they had never heard of the species before either. Why Hume? It is named after Allan Octavian Hume, a British civil servant who worked in India, founded the Indian National Congress (a platform for Indians in British India to discuss civil and political issues) and who was a keen ornithologist. Another rare sighting, this one widely reported, was the brief appearance over the Quarry of a pallid swift, ('apus': literally 'without feet' in Greek). They are quite common around the Mediterranean and the Canary Islands. So again, what adventures brought it to Northumberland? And Richard? Well, this is Richard's pipit seen by several people over a few days in mid- October.

It is a rare but regular vagrant to Western Europe from South East Asia,



about the size of a thrush, so much bigger than our native pipits, but speckled in the same way. I was convinced I had seen it too, but it was probably just a meadow pipit on closer inspection; you know how when you really want to see something, you will it and think you have seen it. And Richard himself? He was the French collector who first identified it in 1815, and 'about whom almost nothing is known'! Sorry! Mind you, to have a bird named after you, that really is something - Peter's petrel? Brown's brambling? Go on – try it for yourself!

We were pleased to have finished ploughing before the ground turned very wet. Ploughing does have its detractors nowadays, because of soil disturbance understandably, and it is also very expensive on fuel and machinery. However, as an organic farm we do not use glyphosate to kill off weeds or the previous crops, grass lays or vigorous rye grass. While we continue to look at alternatives, for the time being ploughing is an important tool to help a new crop get established. Also, our land is heavy clay ground which benefits from winter frost to break it down and help get a good seed bed in the spring. In particular a good seed bed helps the very small grass and clover seeds, which we will sow in the fields between Embleton and Christon Bank in April.

We sold the last of this year's lambs, which we are not keeping for breeding stock, at the Acklington mart recently. All the cattle on the farm, which belong to our neighbours, have gone back to winter inside in the sheds on Tughall Aerodrome. While some people can over-winter cattle on lighter ground, for example on the sand-dunes or up on the hills, it is not practical on our heavy ground which would simply turn to mud and suffer long-term damage.

In November we had to pause the tree harvesting operation because it was starting to make too much of a mess. We tried hard to get hold of contractors in the summer when everything was dry, but with the devastation across the region they were all over-committed. We did get a great team from Scotland, who in around six weeks, cut and processed 3500 trees, stacking them on the roadside ready for collection. That amounted to about 1500 tonnes. These trees had either been blown over, snapped or damaged by Storm Arwen.

Some of this wood we are keeping for our own biomass systems to heat all the houses at Brunton. A lot has gone to Woody Fuels at Rock for processing and onward delivery as chip to the Cramlington Power Station. The good quality timber has gone to various different sawmills in the area for fencing and construction timber. There are one or two large pieces of high quality oak which we are going to keep and hopefully, in the New Year, get a mobile saw bench to come and cut it into planks to store for our own use on the estate in future years.

A poem by Neil Doherty, a frequent visitor to Northumberland

Northumbrians faced hardship as a frontier land
Yet the folk are a cheerful and a gregarious band
But kindship with the Scots now flourish well
They are community spirited, you can tell

A rugged beauty depicted with blue skies
Yet, Northumberland a place that most pass by
An historic past with an iconic skyline here
There's much to enjoy that much is clear

There's a code of conduct that's honest and true
As visitors we see it, though we're passing through
It's the folks here that make this a special land
A place where you'll receive a welcoming hand.

A walk to Craster for breakfast, kippers to eat
And "Squids Ink" at the "Ship" comes with a seat
At Dunstanburgh we watched raven's soar
Northumberland leaves us coming back for more





Right now, the Northumberland Coast is supporting thousands of wading birds which rely on the shore for food and shelter. The habitats which make up the

stretch of coastline between Newton-by-the-Sea and Craster are vital for many different shorebird species, each adapted to finding food as easily as possible without having to expend too much energy.

Mud is a very valuable habitat for shorebirds as the sediment is nutrient rich, meaning it is bursting with small marine creatures. Our Wildlife Rangers often see several hundred waders using the muddy corner at the north end of Low Newton Beach, including redshank, turnstone and up to 100 purple sandpiper – an extremely significant number for this species.

We even spotted a purple sandpiper with a coded colour ring on its leg – ZX3. From this information we know that this bird was ringed as a chick in Svalbard in 2017, and has been spotted at Low Newton each winter for the past 5 years!

The Emblestones are also a very important site for shorebirds, as they provide an undisturbed offshore roost site when the tide is in. Several thousand golden plover can often be seen flying around the rocks in an almost murmuration-type flight as they look to find a place to settle.



Purple sandpiper

It is a crucial time of year for shorebirds as they must keep their energy levels high enough to survive the cold winter by feeding as much as they can and resting when the tide has covered their feeding grounds. Short winter days put extra pressure on shorebirds as the amount of daylight hours available to them for feeding is reduced, with a high tide in the middle of the day reducing this time even further.

We can all play a small part in helping to protect the shorebirds while they are with us in Northumberland by looking out for groups of feeding and roosting birds, and giving them space so they are not disturbed.



Embleton School News

On 24th November, the Bishop of Berwick officially reopened the school after its extension and refurbishment. Chairman of Governors, Sir Alan Craft welcomed everyone to the celebration and thanked all the staff for putting up with running the school in the temporary accommodation, kindly provided at the Creighton Hall, for many months when the work was being carried out. He said how grateful the school had been to Shelagh and Gordon Coxon for their help while there and he also mentioned the kindness of several local tradesmen who had helped out at no charge when problems arose. Pupil numbers have risen from 17 to 70 over the last six years, and children who had been there



for all of these six years described the changes they had experienced. Bishop Mark presented bibles to all the pupils who had recently joined the school. Tea and cake were enjoyed by all and tours of the school were ably conducted by some of the senior pupils



School 100 club

The winners of the October 100 Club draw were:

No. 73 Mirren Brown -£50. No35 Jean Lawrence £25.

and the November winners were:

No. 24 - Sara McGow – £50 No. 75 - Andrew Hogg – £25.

The super draw in December will be completed on 20th December.

Farming Dilemmas!

William Sutherland

The last issue of the WT carried a very positive article from Northern Real Farming, but we should be in no doubt that farming is now “on the front line” of the campaign for Net Zero. Farmers in the Netherlands, Canada and Sri Lanka are already under threat. One way or another, big changes must be made so farming helps our environment instead of threatening it. Modern farming is dominated by political decisions to keep food CHEAP. This leads to farming practices which reduce carbon (humus) in our soils and cause pollution from sprays, fuel and fertiliser. Here are some key figures on annual inputs which show present methods are totally unsustainable: UK farming uses 1 billion litres of diesel and 1.5 million tons of chemical fertilisers. Conventional farming reduces soil carbon by about 3 tons per acre per year. Numbers of birds, insects and pollinators continue a steady decline. Farming chemicals pollute rivers and lakes from nitrate and phosphate run-off. We spend £100 billion on food, total food output is around 55 million tons but 25 % is wasted (by households and supermarkets) and dumped in landfill. There are 216,000 farms in UK with 300,000 people working on them. Each year the government pays about £3 billion in subsidies. Basic income per farm averages at £46,000, of which £27,800 is government subsidy. 8 million acres are arable – diesel fuel use is about 60 litres per acre. Cereal output per arable acre is around 4 tons (compared to possible 20 tons from a veg garden). Most arable fields are sprayed at least 6 times each year with fungicides, herbicides and insecticides. 16 million acres are grazing (unsuitable for arable) – diesel fuel use is about 30 litres per acre. Less than 3% of UK land is farmed organically and this is decreasing. The government says soil health is the single most important factor for future domestic production but makes no effective attempt to measure this! Healthy soil contains up to 50 tons of carbon (humus) per acre – compared to 15 tons in the average arable field today. Each acre of grass or arable collects about 4 tons of carbon from the air each year – significantly more than a forest. Good farming could significantly reduce atmospheric CO₂ by effective rotation of crops and adding organic manures and compost to the soil.

What's On in January

3rd Embleton Womens Club Creighton Hall 2p.m. 'Geordie Humour' by Denise Howe.

5th Embleton Bowls restarts in the Creighton Hall 7p.m.

5th Craster W.I in the Memorial hall 2p.m. -'The Amble Poet.'

10th Embleton W.I 2p.m. Creighton Hall 'The History of Moot Hall by Terry Howells

14th Craster Film Club 7p.m. Memorial Hall

28th Embleton Flower Club Coffee Morning.10-Noon Creighton Hall.

What's On in February

2nd Craster W.I Annual Dinner details tbc.

3rd Craster Film Club 7p.m Memorial Hall

4th Burns Supper in Craster Memorial Hall 6.30 p.m. Tickets from Jackie 571007 or email Treasurer.cct@crastercommunity.org.uk

7th Embleton Womens Club Creighton Hall 2p.m.

14th Embleton W.I Creighton Hall 2p.m. Members afternoon of Indoor Games.

Ongoing

Monday Embleton Parish Room 11-2 Homemade soup, crusty bread and butter. Warm with friendly chat. Donation only -no charge. Contact Janet Murphy for information 07772347004

Tuesday

Crafts with Company 10a.m -midday Craster Memorial Hall

Midday Craster Memorial Hall Soup & Crusty bread. Donations

Wednesday

Mandells Coffee Pot in Embleton Parish Room 10a.m -noon. Coffee , Cake and a friendly chat

Craster Whist Club in the Memorial Hall Craster 1.15-3.15p.m. £3 per session. Contact Winnie Banks for details 07765832991

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NCC Councillor for Longhoughton Ward – Wendy Pattison	07779 983072
Alnwick Medical Group	01665 656000
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	0344 811 8111
Samaritans	0845 790 9090
Silverline (advice for older people)	0800 470 8090
Traveline	0871 200 2233
C.A.B. Northumberland Adviceline	03444 111 444

We are here to help

If you, your family, or neighbour need a bit of extra help, please get in touch we can connect you to support that's right for you:



Phone us on 01670 620015

9am - 6pm, 7 days a week

NCT@northumberland.gov.uk



Earlier editions of the WT are available on the internet and can be found on the Embleton community website.

Whinstone Times Advertising Rates

The cost per issue is **£15** for a quarter page, **£30** for a half page and **£50** for a full page. A discount of 5% is applied for 3 editions and 10% for 6

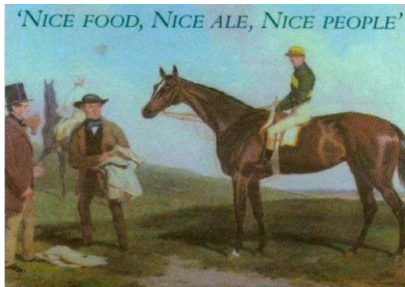
Carpet Bowls

John Wallis

The Carpet Bowls is up and running again on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in the village hall and since the end of September we have been able to play 4 friendly matches against our neighbouring villages beating Rennington 51-42 ,and Newton on the Moor 61-42, but losing to Bamburgh 37-42 and Lesbury 47-64.

We also have completed 2 members only competitions with the Ladies Trophy being won by Judith Hazelhurst with Grace Yewdale runner up and the Gents Trophy being won by Alan Wilson with Alan Foster being the runner up.

We are always pleased to see new faces and it does not matter if you have never bowls before, so why not pop in on a Tuesday or Thursday evening at 7p.m and see if you would enjoy the atmosphere and the game for a couple of hours which also includes a cup of tea or coffee and may be a biscuit.



Margaret & Michael would like to welcome you to

The Blink Bonny At Christon Bank, Alnwick

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(dog friendly)

Check out our monthly fun quiz - £1 entry per person.

All proceeds go to Charity

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