

Swarland Village Action Group Committee:

Chairman: Neil Mansfield, Secretary / Editor: Bryan Stanley.

Treasurer: Susan Richardson.

Committee Members: Robert & Sue Brotherton, John Richardson,
Suzanne Stanley, Caroline Thomas.

Write it Down Now

Please supply information to the Editor for
inclusion in the August issue by
Thursday 29th July 2021.

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The cost of production of this issue of
The Column has been met by
**Newton on the Moor
& Swarland Parish Council**
and
Swarland Club

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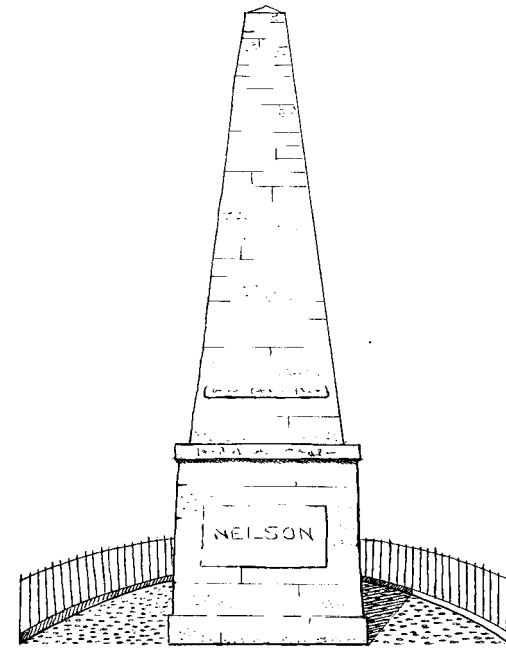
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SWARLAND VILLAGE WORKING MEN'S CLUB

Tel. 01670 787 825

Swarland Club is pleased to sponsor *The Column*.

The Column



June 2021

**Produced by
Swarland Village Action
Newsletter 113**

**Village Halls are hopefully getting
back into action.
See inside for details.**

Welcome to your latest issue of The Column and if you're new to the area, a special welcome to you. **To include something, however small, in the June issue, please supply it for inclusion by Thursday 29th July. Send it to: The Editor, Bryan Stanley, on 01670 787 916 or by email at maxitoby1@gmail.com .** With the continued Covid-19 situation, we are still unable to use our usual printer, Northumberland Community Enterprise Ltd (NCE Ltd) at Stobhill. But, once more, rather than just issuing The Column on-line, the NCC Communities Together Scheme is printing it for us. Thanks to Ruth Armstrong for organising this.

Mobile Library Dates

The NCC mobile library comes to our parish on some Wednesdays. It stops in **Swarland opposite The Square from 10.00 - 11.00am** and **Newton on the Moor from 11.10 - 11.30am**. If you miss either of these it's also in **Guyzance from 11.40am – 12.00 and Old Felton from 12.15 – 12.35pm**.

The next visits in our area on **23rd June, 21st July, and 18th August**. There are also some Libraries open for the 'select & collect' service and there'll soon be 'doorstep deliveries' for some customers. Some customers may also wish to use NCC's Digital Library Services which are available 24/7. You can check NCC's website for further library information at northumberland.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/msgtrn/wpac/home .

Support for Newton on the Moor and Swarland Residents

At the time of writing this item, the UK is still planning on lifting Covid restrictions on 21st June 2021 but an increase in infections due to the Indian Variant means this is not so certain now.

We had all hoped with vaccinations taking place that we were on our way out of this pandemic but it is becoming even more important now for everyone to get their jabs and remember that even if you've had your two jabs, you still have to comply with Government restrictions.

Support is still available from the 45 residents in the parish who volunteered to help their neighbours living within the parish during the Covid crisis. In our parish, with a population of well over 900, in around 440 houses, many residents are elderly and / or living alone. Volunteers are there to help you if you are vulnerable through ill health or age, and don't have anyone else to help you. The sort of support we can provide at the moment is as follows:

- Daily phone calls to check you are well and not needing help.
- Phone calls for a chat.
- Collection of prescriptions.
- Collection / delivery of food.

If you need help, email janandersonnpc@gmail.com or telephone 07775 060 430, during office hours preferably. The PC's website is being revised frequently with information relating to services available in our parish: <http://newtononthemoorandswarlandparishcouncil.org.uk/> . NCC has a very useful page of information including a daily update of infections in each ward. <https://northumberland.gov.uk> .

Best wishes, Jan Anderson (Parish Clerk)

Neighbourhood Watch Update – May 2021

Swarland / Newton on the Moor:

We have only received one piece of information from the police regarding criminal activity in our immediate area.

Friday 21st May: Suspicious activity Swarland.

Report at 23.05hrs on Thursday 20th May of suspected intruders at some outbuildings in Swarland near the B6345. A CCTV camera showed males with torches around the building. Police searched the area but no persons or vehicles located. No entry was gained to buildings. If you have any information regarding the above, please call 101 and quote incident no.1191200521, alternatively you can contact the police at www.northumbria.police.uk.

Of general interest:

Monday 26th April: Operation Checkpoint remains one of the largest rural policing operations of its kind in the country. The latest activity resulted in one driver being arrested on suspicion of drink driving, and a second one on suspicion of drug driving. Previous days of action have seen poachers arrested, stolen vehicles and goods seized and returned to their owners.

If residents have information on any crime, please report this via the following numbers: Emergency issues 999, non emergency issues Tel. 101. To contact Rothbury Police, phone 101 ext 61353, e-mail alnwick.npt.northumbria.pnn.police.uk , or call in at the office in the Coquetdale Centre, Church Street, Rothbury. If the office is unattended, please use the yellow phone on the wall and an officer will be able to assist with your enquiry.

*NW Co-ordinator, Harold Hinchliffe, 2 Nile Drive, Swarland.
Tel.01670 783 669 or Mob.07713 097 250*



Recycling, Wants & For Sale Corner

Why not recycle your unwanted items through The Column? Recipients of free items can make a donation towards this newsletter's running costs. Items for sale? – If successful, the seller can make a similar donation.

Help Needed: I would like to hear from anyone who could make me some small planters from my decking which was dismantled at the end of April. If you could ring me, we can discuss sizes and prices, etc. Thanks a lot, Annie Taylor. 01670 787 901 / 07786 424 406

**Deadline for items for the August issue of
The Column: Thursday 29th July 2021.**

Swarland Village Hall

The Hall, which is run as a community facility is open again and available for hire, bearing in mind that everyone must still follow any Government Covid-19 restrictions. The majority of activities can now be booked but some regular activities are taking place outside or will not recommence until the autumn. Please support this local facility.

Archery Practice: indoor sessions at **7pm on Monday evenings – starting in the autumn.** The Club can supply all equipment. For details contact **Steve** on **Family.Woolfrey@outlook.com** or **01670 787 883.**

Karate Classes on **Tuesdays 5.30 - 8.30pm.** Contact **Gary Davidson** on **07930 838 872.**

Qi Gong (Chinese Energy Exercise) Class on Wednesdays 10 - 11am – starting in the autumn. Waiting lists are currently full – for details contact Anne Raine on 07934 425 844.

Swarland Craft Group meets on Wednesdays, 1.30 – 3.30pm. Starting in the autumn. New members always welcome. For details ring **Margaret** on **01670 787 705.**

Swarland Carpet Bowls on Thursday evenings from 7pm, restarting in August. New members are always welcome. If you would like to give it a try, contact **Joan Nesbit** on **01670 783 140.**

Pilates Classes on Thursdays 9.30-10.30am. To join in contact **sandyturnbull6@gmail.com** . Possible Monday class soon as well.

During the various COVID lockdowns the Committee has carried out lots of work on the Hall, including further remodelling of the stage area, purchase of a portable stage and various electrical improvements. Whilst these changes may not be obvious to users, they are important to maintain the integrity and safety of this pre-war, 80-year-old wooden-framed, Grade II listed building. With our remaining funds we are hoping to redecorate the Hall soon, so if you have any views on colour scheme, please let us know.

You can help to support the Village Hall via **AmazonSmile**. Before you do any browsing or shopping via Amazon, you first need to select SVH charity (No 1058471) at **smile.amazon.co.uk**, then activate AmazonSmile on your Amazon shopping app on your IOS or Android phone. Whenever you buy anything via Amazon, it will donate 0.5% of the net price of eligible purchases to the charity at no cost to you. Every quarter Amazon makes its donation to SVH via an electronic funds transfer. Why not carry on with your shopping **AND** help Swarland Village Hall at the same time. We have just received our first quarterly support from Amazon - £13.32. **Thank you.**

If you wish to check on whether you can book the Hall for a future event, please contact Bryan Stanley (contact details elsewhere) or Steve Woolfrey (**stevewoolfrey.PC@outlook.com** or 01670 787 883).

NotM & Swarland Parish Council - June 2021

The law which enabled councils to hold decision-making meetings by video call, including Zoom, came to an end in early May. In order to continue with Covid-safe practices, we will continue to hold consultative video calls for all councillors and the public. Any necessary decisions can subsequently be made, either by brief and small face-to-face meetings by a quorum of councillors, or by authority delegated to an officer. These will continue to be advertised and minuted.

Elections

The May elections resulted in one minor change to the line-up of the Parish Council. Stuart Cutforth did not re-stand, and Swarland resident John Fallais has now joined us. David Francis continues as Chairman, with Liz Clark as Vice-Chairman.

Planning matters

We have continued to respond to consultations on planning applications. Many are uncontentious, which we have been happy to support either unreservedly, or with just a few suggested amendments. However, we continue to oppose the 60-caravan proposal for the former golf driving range at Percy Wood. It is quite clear that NCC has not handled this application well, having failed to consult (until reminded) key neighbours such as Forestry England, and also Highways England, who have previously voiced concerns to NCC about impact on the A1 junctions for Swarland. It is also baffling how NCC and Northumbrian Water have failed to pay heed to the concerns of local residents about the parlous state of the village's foul and surface water drainage systems. Just how bad to things have to get?

Road safety and speeding vehicles

Our Clerk, Jan, has held meetings with relevant NCC staff to discuss possible road safety measures at Swarland School and in NotM. We are currently awaiting further details, which we expect will be subject to community consultation.

Accounts and audit

At our Annual Meeting in May, we approved our end-of-year accounts, together with the other formal returns for the audit process. In addition to viewing these documents on-line, members of the public have a right to inspect (by prior appointment) all documentation, during the pre-audit process. To summarise, we raised about £27k and spent about £23k, mostly on our local community facilities, together with some charitable donations to local bodies. We have frozen our Council Tax precept of £22.7k for several years, and we have been able to replenish our Community Assets Fund, upon which we draw from time to time to support improvement projects undertaken mostly at Vyner Park or the two village halls.

Parish Clerk – Jan Anderson on 07775 060 430 or janandersonpc@gmail.com

Swarland Moor Local Heritage Group

Colm O'Brien presented our April talk. He is leading a project to investigate the historic landscape of an area in mid-Northumberland, between the rivers Coquet and Hart-Wansbeck. He explored many topics including woodland history, ancient woodlands, and ideas about the emergence of Brinkburn as a central place.

In May, Phil Huntley presented the past life of Alnwick Moor, sharing with us the different aspects to life on the Moor in the past, the toll road, horse racing, strawberry growing, tile works, quarries, coal working and public houses.

Both topics provided a fascinating insight into life in Northumberland in times gone by.

These were the last talks of the season. A full calendar of speakers has been planned for next year commencing on the 14th September, including an open night where anyone can bring photographs etc with stories of past events and people, a Christmas lunch at Nelson's, and a summer trip, venue still to be confirmed.

This year our AGM will be held by email, with a poll set up to allow people to vote, this approach has been chosen so that we can capture views of most members.

We are always looking for new members to join us and we are currently looking for volunteers to help run the group. Please email SwarlandMLHG@gmail.com for details of how to join us. Further information and updates can be found on our Facebook site.

Lesley Selfe

Coquet Concert Band

The Coquet Concert Band was formed in September 2019 and over the following few months, grew to a membership of approximately 30 players. We played in our first public concert in February 2020, with The Bridge Singers, to a packed Swarland Village Hall, where we rehearse.

With the onset of the Covid19 pandemic, we ceased rehearsing in March 2020. It is now coming to the time where the lifting of restrictions will allow us to resume and so, we are looking for players of all concert / wind band instruments (woodwind, brass and percussion), who are of Grade 5 standard or above to join us.

We have a rescheduled "Proms" concert planned in October. If you would like to find out more, please contact us at coquetconcertband@gmail.com.

Ted has been spotted and is looking well



Great News! Ted has been spotted on a regular basis on one of our cameras in Swarland Woods, he even has a friend visiting the feeder. We are so happy that he has settled into his new life and is looking very happy and healthy.

You can follow Ted's adventures on

our Facebook page 'Squirrels in Coquetdale'.

We've recently completed a four-week survey for Red Squirrels Northern England (RSNE). This is an annual survey to help monitor the population and location of Red Squirrels in Northern England. The data is also used to plot the distribution of Grey Squirrels and all of this information is used to help inform the strategy to protect the remaining indigenous Reds. All of the sightings on our webpage at www.lcreds.org.uk are fed into this too. We get a lot of sightings recorded on our website and we are extremely grateful for them. Please keep on reporting your Red and Grey sightings. This survey was how we managed to photograph Ted in the wild for the first time.

On other news we would like to put out a huge thank you to the response we got for our request of materials to build new squirrel feeders. We got a great response in the newly formed Swarland Residents Facebook group. PJR Blewitt really helped by offering a large amount of wood for our feeders and local resident Richard Stent volunteered to build them. With Richard's hard work and two of our other volunteers also building feeders, we now have a great supply of finished feeders and we are selling them to raise much needed funds for the group. You can buy one for £15, or if you have nowhere to put one you can sponsor a feeder and we will put your name on it and give it a good spot in the woods. Donations can be sent via our website. During the pandemic the group has not been able to access any funding, nor had any chance to take part in fundraising events. This means that funds have drastically reduced and we have still had to pay for insurance, cameras, food and many other supplies which most volunteers just pay for out of their own pocket. So any funding is greatly appreciated.

Thanks as always for all your support.

Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrel Group.

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Felton Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The Felton Surgery PPG has recommenced meetings after a break of some months. PPGs are set up to enable general practitioners to take soundings from their patients on an informal basis, to complement formal patient surveys which look at wider trends. The PPG supports partners' work in the community and is a channel for providing information to patients on a variety of non-medical issues.

Dr Yvonne Lees at the Felton surgery has worked jointly with the Widdrington GPs practice for some years and patients may have been treated by doctors from either practice, particularly during the pandemic when face to face consultations have not been possible. Dr Chris Waite has recently joined Dr Lees as an additional Felton partner, but some specialist services will continue to be offered either from Widdrington or by staff from Widdrington working at Felton.

You may be aware that permission has been granted to build a purpose-built surgery to serve patients living in our area and to offer a much wider range of services. The PPG has decided that it will meet monthly during the planning and building/commissioning process to collect and reflect patients' concerns and questions. Doctor Lees is very committed to ensuring that her patients have correct information about the development as it progresses and there are some issues about which she will want to seek patients' views.

At the April meeting, members asked about the vaccination programme. Dr Lees explained that surgery staff had found that some calls to arrange appointments for vaccinations had not been picked up because surgery calls show as "number withheld". Dr Lees urged patients to take these calls so they could be given their appointment details, and **to ensure that their phone details are up to date on the practice records**, otherwise there is a risk that they could be asked to attend for a jab out of area.

Members asked about the resumption of face-to-face consultations at Felton. The waiting area is not Covid-secure but Dr Lees said that the practice would see patients as soon as it is safe to do so.

Because of the moratorium on discussion of public issues before elections, progress on the new surgery will be addressed at the next meeting.

At present we have members from Felton, Newton on the Moor and Swarland, but would welcome a registered patient from Shilbottle, Longframlington or any other part of the practice who would like to be involved and can seek and represent the views of other patients.

If you would like to represent the views of patients in your area, and contribute to good communication as work on the new surgery begins, please contact FELTON SURGERY, for the attention of the Practice Manager, Jackie Smith.

Alison Gallico, PPG Secretary

Quote of the month: Holidays

Sometimes my mother, brother and I went to Saltburn, to stay in Auntie Mary's caravan. The weather was wet and windy. We endured days of torment in Pacamacs. The sea spray felt like a handful of stinging rice on your face. There were terrible shows at the end of the pier. I remember watching a pianist who literally played the piano with his nose on the keys. Arriving home to the dog, who was mad with joy at seeing us, was the best part of the holiday.

Craig Raine, 1944 -

Jubilee Hall, NotM June Pop-up Cake Stall.

On **Saturday 12th June at 12 noon – 2pm** we'll hold another of our very popular cake sales. This is likely to be the last sale before we resume our traditional coffee mornings in July and we would like to thank all our patrons very much for their custom. Your support has helped us to keep the hall afloat and do a lot of refurbishment work during this long period of closure.

The menu will be on our website as usual and those on our mailing list will receive an email menu & pricelist. For the full menu see northumberlandvillagehalls.org.uk/newton-on-the-moor-jubilee-hall or [facebook.com/notmyvillagehall](https://www.facebook.com/notmyvillagehall). Please pre-order by **12 noon on Wednesday 9th June** by email to Jentholiver@gmail.com or text/phone Alison Cowen on 07468 420 407.

Welcome back.....!

All being well, our coffee mornings will resume on Saturday 10th July at 10.00 – noon. Information on the website and Facebook as above.

The coffee morning will replace the monthly cake sale but as always there will be some cake available to take home with you. Unfortunately, we cannot take pre-orders for cakes and scones to be purchased at our coffee mornings – the spirit is willing, but the flesh just can't cope! However, our cakes will be just as delicious – or even better with a mug of fresh coffee or tea, so come early. We look forward very much to welcoming you back.

Acklington Women's Institute

Could you be interested in joining the WI? It's got lots to offer you. Acklington WI meets every second Tuesday at 7.15pm in Acklington Village Hall.

Just come along to the next meeting or give Jan Anderson a call or email on 01665-575 145 or janandersonpc@gmail.com.

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Percy Wood Caravan Park (planning application 19/01687/FUL)

The above application was not discussed at the full Planning Committee meeting in May as the meeting was cancelled. It was expected to come up at the June meeting. However, in a recent comment (27th May) on the NCC Planning Portal, Highways England has recommended that the application should not be decided before the 26th November 2021. They were not informed of the application initially and have only just been contacted by NCC (as a statutory consultee) on the 10th May. Highways England had concerns regarding the safety implications of additional traffic on the A1 junctions into Swarland in the 2017 planning application (which was withdrawn) and the same safety concerns remain in connection with the current application. This is only a recommendation, but it is likely NCC will have to observe it.

In addition, Forestry England (another statutory consultee) has submitted a recent objection (28th May) as they had also not been consulted as the owner of land neighbouring the proposed development. They have issues about access rights over their land, the detrimental effect on ecosystems and increased use of woodland areas.

Thanks to the 78 residents who sent in comments to the nomorecaravans email address – these have now been posted on the Planning Portal and also sent to Haley Marron, Case Officer, and Trevor Thorne.

Jackie and Richard Stent

Vyner Park News - May

I am pleased to report that with the help of volunteers the improvements to Vyner Park that I mentioned in March have started. The multi-use games area (MUGA) and tennis courts have been professionally cleaned ready for painting - by the time this article goes to press it is likely both areas will have been painted. We have also installed basketball posts in the MUGA and people are already using the facility.

The most notable change is, however, the bowling green! After being professionally cleaned, it has been changed from an area not up to playable standards, to something that looks as if has just been laid. We have also managed to get the bowling green cleaning machine working. The Charity has purchased some additional bowling sets and we have a group of individuals wanting to play. If you are interested in playing, email me and I can put you in touch with the Club.

For those of you who would like to exercise outdoors we are expecting the outdoor gym equipment to be installed sometime in June, next to the tennis courts and overlooking the football pitch.

There is still much to do, but we have made a lot of progress in the last few weeks. Please come and use the facilities, they are there for everyone to enjoy.

*Steve Woolfrey, Chairman of the Management Committee for Vyner Park Charity
01670 787 883 | steve.woolfrey@outlook.com*

Percy Wood Country Park update

At his request, I had a meeting with Billy Harrison of Harrison Leisure on 25th May, as he's aware that local residents are concerned about a number of issues. Briefly summarised, the outcome was as follows:

1) The soil heaps. The inadequate pitches on the area to the left of the main gate are being completely dug out and replaced. They're also having to install a new electricity supply cable. The soil and concrete that had been tipped in the woodland was to be removed by Friday 28th May. *[It has been.]*

2) Hot tubs and fencing. Owners have been notified that structures erected without permission have to be removed by 1st June and no further hot tubs can be installed. Existing hot tubs are now, it appears, plumbed into the drainage system which is controlled by holding tanks and released gradually.

3) Sub-letting. There is to be no further sub-letting.

4) Holiday-makers' behaviour / noise. Witnesses of Park visitors' rowdy behaviour affecting the community should contact the Park (01670 787 649), ideally while it's happening. I mentioned the complaints we had last summer about the loud music. He felt that providing music for two hours once a fortnight on a holiday park could be considered acceptable. *[Tolerance differs - residents will need to monitor it for themselves this year.]*

5) Driving range site. Billy acknowledges the concerns, but it is unused space and in business terms, not viable. The company was offered a substantial sum by two developers for this and the Club House site, but they did not want houses on the driving range site either for their own sakes or for the village. If the 60-caravan application goes through, there will be no letting or sub-letting. There will be a permanent barrier installed (with a key for site staff) so that only the Leamington Lane entrance can be used. *[See Jackie Stent's piece opposite for further news on this application.]*

6) Current use by cars of driving range track. I reported more recent incidents of cars using the track past the driving range, which is unsafe for Park residents (walkers and golf buggy drivers) and other users, and technically there is no vehicle access from Coast View. This is to be prevented immediately by a barrier. *[Village residents do need to remember that only the main track down through the site to the stile into the woods is a Public Right of Way. The driving range track and other roads on site are not.]*

7) Italian restaurant and splash park. These are still to go ahead in due course as per the approved application.

Suzanne Stanley NotM&S Parish Council

