

**Swarland Village Action Group Committee:**

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

Treasurer: Susan Richardson.

Committee Members: Robert & Sue Brotherton, Carmen Hubbard, John Richardson and Suzanne Stanley.

The cost of production of this issue of

The Column has been met by

**Newton on the Moor  
& Swarland Parish Council  
and  
Swarland Village Action**

**SWARLAND VILLAGE CLUB**

Sadly, The Club is no longer hosting the sale of newspapers, milk and eggs for the area.

**The Post Office is still available in  
the Club building,  
on Mondays and Thursdays  
from 8 - 10am.**

**Swarland Winefest – update**

The Winefest was held at the end of September and proved to a very enjoyable evening. Over 60 people attended and each person tasted at least 10 wines.

The Dingbats provided by Len Coates provided lots of entertainment, and also proved just how competitive folk can be! It was lovely to see both regular attendees and new people at the event.

The evening was rounded off with a pooled supper. Raffle prizes were donated by the Hall's User Groups, Nelson's, and several generous individuals. £526.33 was raised for Hall funds.

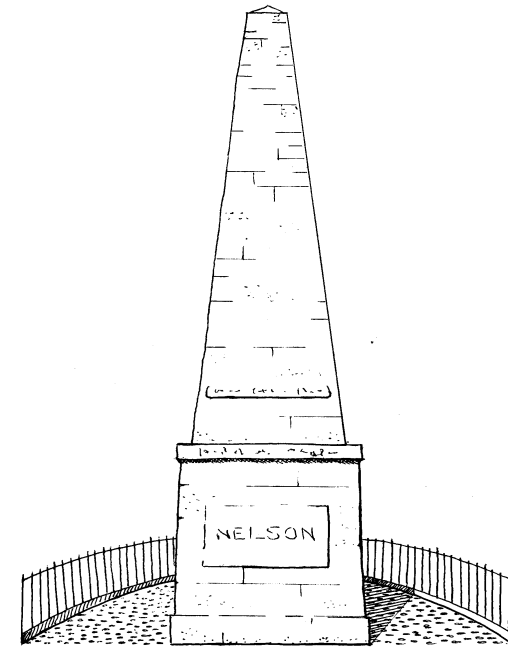
Thanks to everyone who came and helped make it make it such a fun evening. Many thanks to Nelson's for selling tickets and the volunteers helping with the Raffle and also those who helped to clear up after the event – much appreciated.

Looking forward to seeing you next year!

*Sheila Woolfrey*

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# The Column



**December 2023**

Produced by

**Swarland Village Action**

**Newsletter 128**

**Swarland Village Action  
wishes everyone a Merry  
Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

Welcome to this issue of The Column, and if you're new to the area, a special welcome to you. **To include something, however small, in the February issue, please supply it by Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Send it to: The Editor, Bryan Stanley, on 01670 787 916 or by email at maxitoby1@gmail.com .**

### **Swarland Village Hall**

The Hall, which is run as a community facility, is available for hire. **Please support this local amenity.** If you wish to check on whether you can book the Hall for a future event, please contact Bryan Stanley (contact details elsewhere in this issue) or Steve Woolfrey (on **01670 787 883** or **Family.Woolfrey@outlook.com**).

**Archery Practice: Mondays (indoors) at 7pm.** For information on extra outdoor sessions held throughout the summer contact **Steve Woolfrey as above.** The Club can supply all equipment.

**Coquet Concert Band: Wednesday evenings** for band practices, and extra sessions for rehearsal. For more details, please contact Andy Taylor (Conductor) 07832 249699, or Derek Belshaw (Band Secretary) 07891 245201 or email **coquetconcertband@gmail.com** .

**Crafty Friends: meet on 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday morning of each month.** For more information contact Linda on 07789 887424.

**Conversational French: Thursdays 7 – 8pm.** Contact David Murray on 07775 934847 for more details.

**Pilates: Tuesdays 6.30 – 7.30pm.** For details contact Alix on 07940 009150 or **alixwestgarth@hotmail.com**.

**Qi Gong (Chinese Energy Exercise) Class: Wednesdays, 10 – 11 and 11.15 – 12.15.** For details contact Anne Raine on **07934 425 844**.

**Swarland Choir: Wednesdays 5–6.30pm:** Details from 07506 036255.

**Swarland Craft Group: Wednesdays, 1.30 – 3.30pm.** New members are welcome. All enquiries to: **Margaret on 01670 787 705**.

**Swarland Carpet Bowls: Mondays 1.45 – 3.45.** Looking for new members. If you would like to give it a try, contact **Harold Hinchliffe** on **07713 097 250**.



**The Swarland Choir** will be singing a wide range of its repertoire of songs in Swarland Village Hall on **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7pm**.

They would love as many people as possible to come along, so please put the date on your calendar. Admission will be free but donations will be welcome.

### **Neighbourhood Watch Update – December 2023**

#### **Swarland / Newton on the Moor:**

Once again, I am happy to report that I have had no information from the police, regarding any criminal activity in our two areas.

However, here is some recent but belated news: On 18<sup>th</sup> February 2023, Victor Tuff, 62-year-old of Millcroft Court, Blyth was jailed for 5 years. He had pleaded guilty to nine offences, including possession of a firearm without certification, possession of ammunition and possession of a prohibited weapon. He was also made to forfeit all items and fined almost £200. He had previously raised suspicions when officers attended his Blyth address, following intelligence that he had attempted to import parts of a machine gun from Germany.

Sycamore Gap tree:

On Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023, the police arrested a further two men, both in their 30s, in connection with the act of vandalism at Sycamore Gap. The police are reminding us that this is an on-going investigation, and would welcome any relevant information the public can give.

#### **Of General Interest**

**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](mailto: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. 07713 097 250*

### **Support for Newton on the Moor & Swarland Residents**

This is just your monthly reminder that support is always there from the 45 residents in the Parish who first volunteered to help out their neighbours during the Coronavirus Emergency.

The sort of support the volunteers can provide is as follows;

- 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 (if possible) **janandersonpc@gmail.com** or telephone 07775 060430 preferably during office hours.

*Best wishes, Jan Anderson (Parish Clerk)*

## Jubilee Hall, Newton on the Moor

On **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December** the Jubilee Hall Fiddle Band has invited the Swarland Voices and Coquet Cabana for a joint musical evening to start the Festive Season. Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start, finishing around 9.30 pm. There will be a break for a cup of tea halfway. A donation of £5 at the door is requested with all monies going to the Jubilee Hall funds. There will be a bar and you are welcome to bring your own food/nibbles.

Our next coffee morning will be our popular Christmas event on **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December** where as well as our usual fare, we will be offering mulled wine. There will also be a Luxury Christmas Hamper raffle. **Please note** that there will not be a coffee morning in January, however we shall be back on 10<sup>th</sup> **February 2024** and serving our now traditional sausage or bacon butties, with vegetarian options available.

On **Christmas Eve at 5 pm** we shall be having a Service of Dressing of the Crib followed by carols. Children are encouraged to take part in this lovely service.

Both cash and card are accepted at all events within the Jubilee Hall. We have a number of regular clubs who meet in the hall including:

**Carpet Bowls** - Our carpet bowls team plays throughout the year with club nights on a Tuesday from 7pm. Matches are arranged with other local clubs, both home and away although not in a league. The dates of matches depend on commitments. For further information contact John on 07717 700 011.

**Alnwick Fiddle Group** – the Fiddle Club meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month during the afternoon. Contact Susan Clark 01665 711977. Fiddlers available for hire. New members are welcome.

**Alnwick Pipers Club** - Meets every first Sunday of the month, 2.00pm - 3.30pm. All welcome to play or listen. Cup of tea available. Contact Susan Clarke 01665 711977. Pipers available for hire.

The Jubilee Hall is run by a team of Trustees, who give up their time to manage this wonderful village and heritage asset. We're always looking for new Trustees and ideas of how to use the facilities. If you feel you could help or would like further information, please drop us a line at [notmjubilee@yaho.co.uk](mailto:notmjubilee@yaho.co.uk).

You can also keep up to date with our events or book the Hall by using our website. You can also research other village halls across the county and see what they have going on. Use the address below and click on the icon for the Jubilee Hall at [northumberlandvillagehalls.org.uk/](http://northumberlandvillagehalls.org.uk/) .

With all good wishes to everyone for Christmas and the New Year.

*Diane Williams*

**Deadline for items for the February issue of  
The Column: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

## NotM & Swarland Parish Council - September 2023

### **Finance**

We plan to finalise our budget and Council Tax precept for 2024-25 at our January meeting. However, even allowing for inflation, the indications are that we can probably freeze the precept at its present level (ie £22,000), having reduced it from £23,000 in the previous year. This equates to a Band D equivalent figure of about £40 per household per year.

This stability is in no small part due to the great efforts of our major asset, Vyner Park, to generate income, secure grant aid, and undertake a large amount of both routine maintenance and improvement works by involving volunteers.

Our budget will allow us to continue with a Community Assets Fund, to support capital improvements to the two village halls and Vyner Park Pavilion, as well as to our smaller assets such as the bus shelters and seats.

### **Casual vacancy**

We are seeking to fill a vacancy on our Parish Council. We therefore invite anyone who is interested, to write to us (up to 500 words) outlining why they would like to be considered. Currently, we are under-represented by: females; the area in and around Swarland; and younger people (ie under-60-year-olds!). For more details, please contact our Clerk, Jan.

### **New bus service**

Although the tendering process for our new bus service has so far attracted no bidders, the Parish Council and SNAC are working with NCC's public transport team to firm-up the details of the proposed route, and its signage. If all goes to plan, it will be a better service than we had originally assumed. The plan is to run a service between Alnwick and Morpeth (and back!) on both Tuesdays and Thursdays, in the off-peak period during the day. Bus stops would be outside the Cook and Barker, Jubilee Hall, Percy Wood caravan site, The Avenue (Nelson Drive road end), Swarland Square, Douglas Crescent and (if a safe stopping place can be found) Old Swarland. Continuing towards Morpeth, along the Longframlington - Felton road, the route would emerge onto the bottom of Main Street, Felton at the Running Fox, and thence on to Morpeth. Connections to Newcastle from Felton or Morpeth would also be possible.

### **Phones and TVs**

The switch-off of 'traditional' PBX phone services, and the transfer to services via broadband (VOIP- Voice Over the Internet Protocol) is due to take place between now and 2025. This has implications for households without broadband and for those with specialist phone-linked devices such as alarms and telecare, as well as for any household experiencing a power outage. NCC has prepared a brief leaflet outlining the issues, and giving advice about sources of help.

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Meanwhile, we have heard that further changes in communications services are happening soon. After March 2024, on satellite TV, the BBC will cease its SD (Standard-definition) transmissions, in favour of the newer HD. Also, during 2024 a number of mobile phone networks will be closing their 3G services, in favour of new 4G services. This will have implications for many mobile phone contracts. We understand that Vodafone, EE and O2 will continue to provide a 2G service for older phones, for calls and texts only.

**PC Clerk, Jan Anderson - [janandersonpc@gmail.com](mailto:janandersonpc@gmail.com) or 07775 060 430. PC website: [newtonswarlandpc.org.uk](http://newtonswarlandpc.org.uk).**

### **Swarland Moor Local Heritage Group (SMLHG)**

In October, June Watson gave a talk to the group about Lady Emma Tankerville who was a leading female botanist and scientist. June talked us through Emma's life and varied travels. June has a wonderful collection of drawings by Lady Emma which she brought for us to admire. The drawings supported her fascinating talk and demonstrated how talented Lady Emma was.

Due to circumstances beyond our control our November talk was changed at very short notice. Michael Thompson stepped into the breach and delivered an excellent talk on "The Hinterland". The talk provided an opportunity for us to understand the culture of Northumbria at the time of Hadrian's wall being built and the Roman invasion and how this impacted on what went on; this was probably not as we thought through the history, we have been previously taught.

There is no meeting in December, but we will be enjoying our Christmas Lunch at Nelson's on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December. For those joining us we will be meeting at 12 and eating at 12:30.

In 2024 we will recommence on the 13<sup>th</sup> February, when Tony Henfry will deliver a talk on "Biddlestone Chapel and the Selby family".

The Swarland Moor Local Heritage Group meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30 in Swarland Village Club. Everyone is welcome, members, new members and visitors please come and join us.

Further information and updates can be found on our Facebook site or by emailing: [swarlandmlhg@gmail.com](mailto:swarlandmlhg@gmail.com).

*Lesley Selfe*



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## **News from Swarland and Newton Action on Climate (SNAC)**

### **Ranting about Rivers**

Thanks to everyone who came along to hear Steve Lowe from the Rivers Trust talking about the state of our local rivers and particularly the Coquet. Rivers provide a rich ecosystem and support our wellbeing in many ways – from providing drinking water to boosting resilience to climate change and giving us space to enjoy nature. Yet no rivers in England are classed as in good overall health and as Steve explained the Coquet is no exception.

SNAC is hoping to be part of a collaborative citizen science project working with other local groups and the Rivers Trust to undertake additional water quality monitoring in the Coquet and some of its important tributaries. We hope to be able to share more details of this in the new year.

### **Bus Service**

Our mission to get a bus service continues to take a number of twists and turns. Our proposed service was finally put out to tender at the end of October – but unfortunately NCC didn't receive responses by the closing date of November 17<sup>th</sup>. However NCC is still upbeat about the service and are continuing to discuss it with a number of operators with the hope that it would be able to begin around the end of January 2024. We'll keep you posted....

### **Find out about SNAC**

Visit [www.snac.online](http://www.snac.online) or follow us on Facebook for all the latest local climate news and events or email [talktosnac@gmail.com](mailto:talktosnac@gmail.com) for more details.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm in Swarland Village Club. Everyone welcome.

*Liz Clark (on behalf of SNAC)*



### **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 will be on **20<sup>th</sup> December, 17<sup>th</sup> January and 14<sup>th</sup> February**.

You can check NCC's website for further library information at [northumberland.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/msgtrn/wpac/home](http://northumberland.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/msgtrn/wpac/home).

## Percy Wood Caravan Park – an update

In October, Harrison Leisure received full planning permission for the application for 14 houses on the Bari Bar site. As yet, it is unclear whether HL will sell the site to a house builder but, in a recent conversation between 2 village residents and the Percy Wood site manager, it seems likely that this will happen as HL need the revenue to finance the restaurant and splash park on their main site.

The site manager also said that the driving range shelter has to be rebuilt to its former state (stipulated by the insurance company) but HL is considering creating a dog run area and a space for football nets etc on the actual driving range itself. Building materials have appeared near the remains of the shelter but work has not yet started.

Residents may be aware that trees are being felled on the caravan park (to the left of the path which leads up to the site past the driving range) – chainsaws have been heard for 4 weeks now – and we have been informed that a large area of beech trees has been cleared. One of the Parish Councillors and I have contacted NCC Planning, NCC Enforcement and the Forestry Commission (they are responsible for the felling of trees) as a significant number of healthy trees have been removed.

At the time of writing this article, investigations are continuing, to establish whether this work is being carried out under an old planning permission and the Caravan Site Licence from the late 1980s/early 1990s, or whether a new application would be needed.

*Jackie Stent*

### Arthur's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday

I wish to thank Newton-on-the-Moor and Swarland Parish Council and Forestry England for providing the Sweet Chestnut Tree for me to plant on the occasion of my 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I would also like to thank all my family and friends from far and near for my many cards, gifts and good wishes.

You all made my birthday celebrations very memorable.

Thank you all and very best wishes,

*Arthur*

## Swarland & Newton on the Moor Show update

Wow, what a day **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2023** turned out to be. The Swarland and Newton on the Moor Show team want to thank each and every one who supported this annual event. It was an amazing day from start to finish and we could not have asked for better weather. The atmosphere on the field was fantastic. There were a few new attractions this year including the Time Bandits in period costume and some miniature steam engines. We also welcomed back several old favourites including Divide and Conquer laser quest, the Bowman of Rothbury, the Playhouse Band and of course the biggest attraction of all, the Barking Mad Dog Show.

The show tent continues to grow and hosted a colourful display of fruit, vegetables, and crafts together with some mouth-watering baking. Swarland Primary School pupils and other local children provided a bright backdrop of artwork based on the theme of the Coronation.

We try and use local businesses with Alnwick brewery providing the beer, and the burgers for the BBQ supplied by Greens the Butchers. The day was rounded off by the fun auction of produce hosted by Nick of Three Sixteen Productions. The staff in Nelsons worked tirelessly and donated their profits from the day directly to the Show with the directors working for free. We truly are a community event.

We will be making donations to Swarland Brownies, Swarland Primary School, The Vyner Park Charity and the village halls of both Swarland and Newton on the Moor.

If you are part of a village group and would like to take part next year or have an idea for an attraction, please get in touch.

We're already looking forward to next year's event on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August. We can be contacted via Facebook or email [swarlandvillageshow@gmail.com](mailto:swarlandvillageshow@gmail.com).

Our AGM is on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023, 7.30pm in Swarland Club, if you fancy joining our team or just want to find out a bit more about us.

*Kind regards, Alison*

## 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.

**Tapestry frames** and a **Gazebo**. Offers. All enquiries to 07375 247844.

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## Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrels (LCRS)

Forestry England (FE or old Forestry Commission) began felling operations in Swarland Wood on the 26<sup>th</sup> October. The works will pick up the fallen trees from Storm Arwen, clear fell a large area of the wood and thin out the remaining wood towards the North of the plantation. We're very concerned about the impact this will have on the Red Squirrel colony here. It is a small habitat area for them as it is, so with it being greatly reduced the chances of the Reds surviving after the forestry operations are likely to be very low.

Historically, FE hasn't engaged with Red Squirrel conservation efforts. Earlier this year, for the first time, it indicated that it was going to take an interest. Following our questioning of their staff about the survival of Reds in Swarland Wood, we were invited to identify and mark drey (nest) trees prior to the felling works. The dreys we marked were in the area to be thinned, the idea being that the marked trees will be left standing to give the Reds a chance of survival. We've also been feeding the Reds hazelnuts. They can cache these and we're hoping that they will provide them with important additional nutrition to help them survive. We have Reds on our trail camera videos, going back and forth collecting hazelnuts, so we are hopeful that it will help. Hazelnuts are extremely expensive, so we asked FE if it would like to help us buy them, but sadly got a negative response.

Many people believe that Reds prefer conifer woodland, but this isn't exactly true. Deciduous woodland, such as hazel, beech, oak etc. create large seeds and these provide a lot of food compared to the tiny seeds from a conifer. Both Reds and Greys prefer the best supply of food, but the American Greys are far bigger and bully the Reds out of these woods. Food is scarce in conifer plantations and so they are the last type of woodland that Greys take over, giving a last refuge for the Reds. Unfortunately, there is a lot of felling currently underway near us, such as Thrunton, Rimside Moor, Fram Gate and Edlingham, all of which have Red Squirrels populations.

*Ian Lakey, Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrels*

**SWARLAND VOICES**  
**Will be singing carols on**  
**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December**  
**at Swarland Village Hall**  
**6PM - 6.30pm**  
**ALL WELCOME**  
Free entry but donations welcome

## NotM and Swarland Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been continuing its hard work to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan for Newton on the Moor and Swarland Parish. The draft document is now emerging from all the work undertaken by the group. The Group and its professional advisors are still gathering information which will be incorporated into the final report.

There has been a drop-in event at both Jubilee Hall and Swarland Village Hall. These were arranged to ensure that you all had the opportunity to talk to the Steering Group and be involved in the process. Thank you to all those who attended; your views will, where possible, be reflected within the Neighbourhood Plan. In January, the Steering Group will be delivering a questionnaire to all households (and a copy will be available on the Parish Council website). The questions seek your views about the range of issues that can be dealt with in the Neighbourhood Plan.

This will be another opportunity for you all to have your say. Please take the time to complete and return the questionnaire so that your voice is heard. It will make a difference.

The Steering Group wishes you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

If you have any questions that you would like to ask the Steering Group, please contact Liz Simpson (Secretary to the Group) either by email: [SNSG23@outlook.com](mailto:SNSG23@outlook.com), marked "For the attention of Liz", or by phone: 07817 135932.

**Further updates from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group  
will appear in future copies of The Column.**

### **A GREAT XMAS GIFT**

#### **"SON OF A SETTLER"**

is a hand-written book with colourful paintings,  
written by George Nicholson  
(last of the original Swarland Settlers)  
about the early beginnings of Swarland as a village  
and his memories from childhood  
to teenager.

All proceeds to Charities:

Vyner Park Charity and Alzhiemers Society.

The book is on sale at Nelson's in the Park and costs £10.

Merry Christmas.

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