

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

Friendly Village Bar

Regular Events

Live Sports

Room Hire

Regular quiz nights and Music events.

Membership Benefits

Non-members Welcome

Well-behaved dogs allowed.

Post Office Services – see elsewhere.

For further information follow:

Facebook: **SwarlandVillageClubNEW**

Instagram: **@SwarlandVillageClub**

SWARLAND VOICES

Will be singing carols

on Wednesday 11th December 2024

at Swarland Village Hall 6pm - 7pm

Come Along And Enjoy A Minced Pie And Drink

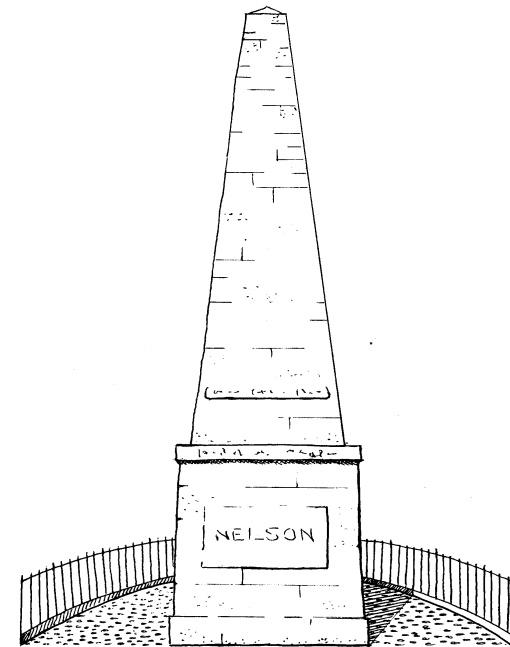
All Welcome

Free entry but donations welcome

**All donations will go to Swarland Village Hall
Charity No.1058471**

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The Column



December 2024

Produced by

Swarland Village Action

Newsletter 134

**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 23rd January 2025 to: The Editor, Bryan Stanley, on 01670 787 916 or by email at maxitoby1@gmail.com .**

Swarland Village Hall

The Hall is run as a community facility and is available for Hire: bookings can now be made online via our Hallmaster Booking System. Please visit www.swarlandvillagehall.com to get further information on activities and facilities available and to make a booking enquiry, or contact Anne, SVH Booking Secretary at anne.raine.svh@gmail.com.

SVH Regular User Groups

Monday:

Swarland Carpet Bowls – 1.30 - 3.30pm. If you would like to give it a try, please contact Harold on 07713 097250.

Archery Practice – 7pm - 9pm. The Club can supply all equipment. Contact Steve on 01670 787883 for more information.

Tuesday:

Yogalates: 5.30 -o 6.15pm. For details contact Alix on 07940 009150 or alixwestgarhtaylor@hotmail.com .

Adult Ballet: 7pm - 8.15pm. Interested in giving it a go? Then contact Alison Allen at alison@allensunlimited.net or **07703 154777**.

Wednesday:

Qigong for Health (Chinese Energy Exercise): **10am - 11am** (Class full) and **11.15am - 12.15pm** (waiting list for this class). For details contact Anne Raine on 07934 425844.

Swarland Craft Group: 1.30 - 3.30pm. New members welcome. All enquiries to Lesley on 01670 786140.

Swarland Voices: 5pm - 6.30pm. Our local choir; for more details, contact Donna on 07506 036255.

Coquet Concert Band: 7.30pm - 9.30pm. Band practice night, and extra sessions for rehearsal. For more details contact Andy Taylor (Conductor) 07832 249699 or Derek Belshaw (Band Secretary) 07891 245201 or email coquetconcertband@gmail.com .

Thursday:

Sound Healing Sessions: 10am - 11am. Starts 16th January 2025; for further information please contact Mary Mooney on 07572 693010 or email marysoundhealing5@gmail.com.

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

Saturday:

Crafty Friends: meets on 4th Saturday of each month – 1.30pm - 3.30pm. For more information, please contact Linda on 07789 887424.

Neighbourhood Watch Update – November 2024

Swarland / Newton on the Moor:

As of today Wednesday 21st November, I have received no information from the police regarding any criminal activity in our area.

I am however puzzled as to why this is the case, and has been for several months now. I received no information regarding the break-in at Nelson's, many months ago now. More recently a gentleman had his car vandalised in his driveway. He reported the incident to the police and received a crime number. Again, I received nothing from the police.

I have tried to contact the person in charge of the service but so far had no success.

Just a reminder of who to contact if you are suspicious about an incident or person. First of all, ring the police. By all means if you wish to do so let me know, but only after contacting the police.

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 , 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 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)

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.

Vyner Park Charity - Update

A lot has been happening at Vyner Park through the summer and Autumn, with the help of a dedicated group of volunteers. Since May, the Committee has continued to concentrate on improving the Bowling Green, with a shrub clearance session taking place in August. In the future, the east side of the Bowling Green could be planted with flowers and shrubs to provide a backdrop to those bowling and using Nelson's. The Charity does not have the resources to commission such work, but would be happy to assist a group of volunteers to prepare, plant and maintain the area. The Charity would be able to contribute to the cost of the plants. Are there any volunteers?

During August we upgraded the MUGA flood-lighting to LED and modernised the control system. Temporary repairs were also carried out to some of the Kick Boards – we are planning to replace all of them next year.

The Village had a very successful bonfire on 1st November, on a rather misty evening. This event has been going for many years and is supported by a group of very committed volunteers, as well as Nelson's. All of the profits made on the evening (including Nelson's) go to the Charity. A new leader for the Annual Fireworks Event is needed, so that it can continue. Please would anyone who is interested contact the Chairman (details below); full training and documentation will be provided. It would be a shame both for the Charity to lose one of its main fund-raising events, and for the Village to lose such an enjoyable family night out.

Swarland and Newton-on-the-Moor Show was, again, very successful, raising funds for a number of Village good causes as well as Vyner Park Charity. This event is a massive undertaking for the volunteers who run it and I would like to personally thank them for their enthusiasm and efforts.

Steve Woolfrey – steve.woolfrey@outlook.com
Chairman – Vyner Park Charity

Post Office Mobile Van in Swarland

From Thursday 10th October the Post Office Outreach van has been outside Swarland Club every Thursday, from 8.15 – 9am. Christine reminds us that this service is for ALL residents in the parish. Use it or lose it. Look out for updates on the venue.

**Deadline for items for the February issue of
The Column: Thursday 23rd January 2025**

NotM & Swarland Parish Council - November 2024

Guyzance crossroads

Following the announced cancellation of the additional A1 dualling in Northumberland, we have been in touch with our new MP and new regional Mayor about the need to upgrade the safety provisions at the Guyzance crossroads. We cited the response which we had received in August 2023 from National Highways that preliminary design funding had been secured to progress a safety scheme for that junction. The preferred option would be to install a nearside diverge lane for southbound A1 vehicles, and to bring the southbound offside diverge facility up to current standard. The scheme would also include improvements to the signing and road marking layout.

We have received the following response from David Smith MP: *“The A1's safety record must improve – we can all agree on this. Recent research from my office suggests that we have over 125 side road junctions on the A1 from Morpeth-Berwick, and these dangerous and stressful crossings and turnings are a main driver of the over 1500 casualties suffered on this stretch of road since 2005.*

Last week I met with the Minister for the Future of Roads to discuss how we can make the A1 less hazardous for local residents, and I raised the Guyzance junction as a specific example of where improvement is needed. I am encouraged that you have done the same, although, as you note, any action is conditional on RIS3 and a number of other financial factors.

I would appreciate if you could share with me the communication you have received from National Highways and/or Mr Hayes, especially regarding the specific designs you mentioned, as this will help me ensure I am advocating in a constructive and helpful way.

Do keep me updated if you receive further information from National Highways. I will continue to press for action to improve the A1 and make it safer for local residents.” We have received an equally supportive response from Mayor Kim McGuinness.

Finance

We will be finalising our budget and Council Tax precept for 2025-26 at our meeting in late-January. We are heading towards a deficit at the end of this current year of about £6k, due to our support for two new projects at the two village halls during 2024, together with some inflationary costs, which had not been included in our original budget. For next year, we wish to provide for a one-off £10k grant towards Swarland VH's improvement plans, plus a new recurring provision of £500pa to enable us to improve the condition of public rights of way and other opportunities. There will also be inflationary increases in our support for Vyner Park Charity, and the two village halls (NB we brought-forward the Jubilee Hall support to last May), and we are continuing our obligations to SNAC and to the shared Cemetery and War Memorial provision in Felton (but we are aiming to reduce the sizeable insurance costs on these properties).

Cont over

Cont

To fund this draft budget, we are planning a one-year significant rise in our precept, with it falling again in the following year. We estimate this could be a Band D equivalent (BDE) of £58 for the year, which compares with a national average parish BDE of about £85 (for comparison, current BDE is: £69 at Shilbottle and £82 at Felton). The current BDE of the NCC and Police precepts is about £2260.

Speed and heart safety

We will shortly be acquiring and installing interactive speed reduction signage, with the help of funding from the NCC Members' Small Schemes budget, deployed by our local county councillor. Precise details need first to be agreed by the Highways Authority, so we will report further in the next edition of The Column. In addition, we have at last secured the go-ahead to install an additional defibrillator in Swarland: in Studley Drive. It is being funded by the PC budget, together with a £750 grant from a highly-competitive Government scheme which was advertised in the NALC e-News.

Council vacancies

In May 2025 throughout Northumberland, all parish and town council seats will be open for election, along with all county council seats. In our parish, there will be 10 places to fill. We hope that we achieve a good 'mix' of members, in terms of age, gender, background, location etc. For more details about our council, please contact our Clerk, Jan. at janandersonpc@gmail.com or 07775 060 430. PC website: newtonswarlandpc@org.uk.

HO HO HO

Many thanks to those who came to the Swarland Craft Group's Christmas Fair on Saturday, 16th November.

Despite fewer attendees than in previous years, it was still a very successful event. We raised £302.50 for the Great North Air Ambulance, an excellent amount for a great cause.

We are on a Christmas break until our next meeting on **Wednesday, January 8th 2025**. We will return poorer and heavier after the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Anyone is very welcome to a Craft Group afternoon. We meet on Wednesdays from 1-30 - 3.30pm. Help is given to those who wish to learn a new craft. For any enquiries, contact Lesley Eastlake on 01670 786 140 or philydor@gmail.com.

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News from Swarland and Newton Action on Climate (SNAC)

Bus Service

The new bus timetable has been in place since the beginning of November and we've just heard that Northumberland County Council is intending to fund a further year when the current contract ends in March, which is very encouraging. Meanwhile please consider using the Saturday bus to get to Alnwick, Morpeth and Newcastle for your Christmas shopping and January sales! It's important to keep passengers' numbers up to ensure the long-term future of the service.

The North East Combined Authority is currently consulting on the development of public transport in the area and SNAC is urging people to respond – details can be found at:

www.northeast-ca.gov.uk/how-we-work/transport/transport-plan.

River Water Quality

At our November meeting, we had a talk about the work of the Coquet River Action Group. This umbrella organisation (of which SNAC is a member), was formed a year ago with the aim of measuring water quality in the Coquet and its tributaries.

Monitoring is now taking place from Thropton to the coast and will shortly extend into the upper Coquet as well. Locally, SNAC members are monitoring the Hazon Burn which is one of the few parts of the system to be rated as 'Poor' by the Environment Agency.

Further analysis of results will be carried out over the next few months, but encouragingly there were no raised levels of heavy metals in the Hazon Burn, although water quality has clearly declined over the years due to a number of factors.

And finally

We're always keen to welcome new members. There are lots of ways to get involved - whether that's coming along to meetings, getting involved in specific projects or signing up to receive our monthly updates. Find out more at www.snac.online.

The next SNAC meeting is on Tuesday 21st January at 6pm in Swarland Club.

Liz Clark (on behalf of SNAC)

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Need Digital Help? Swarland's Digital Champion is Here to Support You!

If you're looking to learn how to use a device, navigate the internet, or stay connected with family and friends online, Community Action Northumberland's Digital Champion is here to help you get started! As part of the Rural Digital Inclusion Project, your local Digital Champion provides free, one-on-one assistance to anyone in the community who wants to boost their digital skills.

Whether you're new to using tablets and smartphones, want to learn more about online shopping, or just need help with email and social media, your Digital Champion covering Swarland, Newton on the Moor and surrounding areas can provide friendly and patient support tailored to your needs. They'll guide you through the basics, help you use video calls, manage photos, or find online entertainment—all at a pace that's comfortable for you. The Rural Digital Inclusion Project is a partnership between Community Action Northumberland, iNorthumberland and NICRE; working with local volunteers and community organisations.

How to Get Started: If you, or someone you know would like to arrange a free session, simply contact us on the *WhatsApp* group **SwarlandDigitalChampions** or by email to **swarland.digital.champions@gmail.com** .

Don't miss this opportunity to explore the digital world with help from a trusted neighbour.
Roger Brunning

Swarland History



I have recently been cataloguing a series of photos of Swarland from the 1930s to - probably - 1950s. We think these came initially from Vera. I have now had them added to Bailiffgate Museum website -

you need to go onto the website at **bailiffgatecollections.co.uk** and search for Swarland in the search box.
John Verney

Christmas fun with 'Coffee and Chat'.

Join us at Nelson's on Monday 16th December at 1.30pm for a cosy "Coffee and Chat" gathering specifically aimed at getting us into the Christmas season! It's a wonderful opportunity to meet friends, new and old, share stories and enjoy a lovely hot tea or coffee and a Christmas treat in a festive atmosphere. Bring along your favourite Christmas jumper or hat, as we'll be awarding a prize for the best festive attire! Let's celebrate the joy of the season together while keeping warm and enjoying some lovely company, we can't wait to see you there!

If you need a lift to join us at Nelson's contact Gill on 07557 882616.

Neighbourhood Plan Update

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group received notice at the end of September that the technical support funding package had been approved. This package enables AECOM to make the necessary amendments to the Design Code. The funding took over five months to come through mainly due to the change of government.

The Steering Group has been working with AECOM since the end of September. In early October, a further visit was made to the Parish by two design consultants from AECOM, during which we had the opportunity to discuss all the issues with regard to the Design Code. Our contact at Northumberland County Council also came along and discussed the points raised by County about the Design Code. Our work with AECOM is ongoing and we hope that the Design Code will be in an agreed form by January 2025. Meanwhile, Northumberland County Council (NCC) has made further helpful comments and observations on the latest draft of the Neighbourhood Plan and we are having further discussions with them about these.

Once we have the revised Design Code and have worked with NCC to address the matters that it has raised, then we will commence consequent revisions to the draft Plan with a view to it being finalised, hopefully, in the first half of next year.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group takes this opportunity to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

If you have any questions that you would like to ask the Steering Group, please contact Liz Simpson (Secretary to the Steering Group) either by email: 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.

Donna Corbin for the Neighbourhood Plan Group

Cat Business!

There seems to be an increasing number of cats in our village, particularly in Chesterwell. There are at least 11 that we know of, in our road alone! Unfortunately, they like to do their business in our gardens which makes gardening most unpleasant!! We find it in the flower beds, on the lawn (try cleaning the lawn mower after discovering that!), the raised vegetable beds and recently in our newly planted bulb containers. Soil is scattered and bulbs on the ground.

This problem has been going on for a long time but it is getting worse. After all dog owners have to be responsible for their pets' mess, so why can't cat owners do the same?

Signed, FED UP!!

SWARLAND VILLAGE HALL 200 CLUB

To all who have joined the 200 Club. The money raised for the hall will be put to good use, so a big 'Thank You' to you all. The 8th draw took place at Nelsons on Monday 28th October. Numbers were drawn by 3 randomly selected customers / staff and the 3 lucky winners were:

1st prize – No 138, 2nd prize – No. 70, 3rd prize – No. 145 Hazel Beck.

The winners of the latest draw on 25th November were: 1st prize - No. 166, 2nd prize – No. 115, 3rd prize – 73.

Congratulations to you all. Come and join us.

You never know it could be your number next!!!

News from Swarland Primary School

It's been action packed since the children returned from their summer break! Our fabulous HSA raised funds to allow the purchase of 15 Chromebooks which the children have put to good use. The whole school enjoyed a trip to Alnwick Castle on the 21st October where the children took part in various workshops, had a tour of the castle and undertook the Dragon Quest! The HSA hosted a Halloween Bingo to raise funds for the school where a spooky (and fun!) time was had by all. The school raised money for Children in Need, selling Children in Need merchandise and having a non-uniform day.

For Armistice Day, the school created poppy wreaths which are displayed at Eshott Airfield by the Spitfire installation and our school council attended the memorial service at Swarland on the 11th November.

Our Years 3 and 4 children were invited to take part in an interschools skipping gala at Willowburn Leisure Centre which was a great experience.

The school has recently had an Ofsted inspection and we hope to be able to share their findings in the near future.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at Swarland Primary School!

Swarland Primary School

Christmas Fair, Sunday 8th December

Open 10 – 12 noon

Free Entry

Longframlington Village Hall

Christmas Café / Pocket Money Games / Festive Food / Shopping / Christmas Crafts / Raffle / Tombola.

Cash Only Event.

Swarland Village Hall Charity

A Big Thank You to Everyone who came and supported our recent fundraising events: Jazz in the Village on the 5th October and the WineFest on the 19th October. Together, both events raised over £800 for our major window replacement project.

The Jazz in the Village evening was a new venture for SVH and although a small audience, the mix of jazz classics and original pieces by Scottish duo Ian Millar on Saxophone and Dominic Spencer on Keyboard were well received and much appreciated. Many thanks to Linda, SVH Vice-Chair, for organising the whole evening and for bringing something a bit different to Swarland.

Once again our annual WineFest proved very popular with over 80 folk from near and far enjoying a merry evening tasting the selection of wines on offer! Thanks to Sheila for organising and running the event, to all the local businesses and SVH Regular User groups for providing the Raffle Prizes, and to the Village Club for providing the Bar.

October also saw SVH raise £120 from the sale of Ken W's old geology maps, and two local maps of interest have been donated by Ken for display in the Hall. However, as a number of people were interested in purchasing them, a price has been obtained for them to be scanned and copies made. Each copy would be no more than £30 and all monies will go to the Hall window replacement fund. Currently further info and photos can be found on Swarland Residents Facebook page and for non-users please check the Village Hall notice board. Thanks again to Ken. Future fundraising events will be advertised nearer the time via The Column, Village & SVH notice boards and Facebook pages - please keep a look out. Thanks again for your support!

Anne Raine (on behalf of the SVH Team)

Swarland Moor Local Heritage Group

We have had an excellent start to our 2024-5 season. September began with a fantastic talk about the history of Hazon House by Chris and Margaret Lendrum, who are the current owners. In October we had Tony Henfry talking about Biddlestone Chapel and the Selby family. The interior of the church was a real surprise. In November Beth Elliot from the Northumberland Archives talked about a research project that has taken place in Northumberland looking at the manor. The project explored the role and purpose of the manor in order to understand more about past life in Northumberland.

We have our annual Christmas lunch at Nelsons on the 10th December, meeting at 12.00 for lunch at 12.30.

We have a short break in January, recommencing on the 11th February when **Juliet Phipps** from English Heritage will join us to talk about **Brinkburn Priory**.

Further information and updates on our Facebook site or by emailing: **swarlandmlhg@gmail.com** . On behalf of SMLHG we wish everyone a Happy Christmas.

Lesley Selfe

