



Market Cross (with thanks to George Nasmyth)

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For your diary:

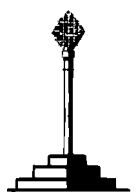
10th May: John Matthews and Jackie Salmon on the work of Northumberland and Newcastle Society. St James, Pottergate at 7:30 p.m.

19th July: Sue Wood from Northumberland Archives on experiences of the BBC "*A House Through Time*". St James, Pottergate at 7:30 p.m.

19th August: Summer outing to the new Ad Gefrin Anglo-Saxon Museum and Whisky Distillery in Wooler. Hold the date now. More details will follow.

1st September: Closing date for Civic Society Award nominations. See page 7.

November: Any Questions. Our annual discussion of topical local issues. Details will follow.



Alnwick's 20 minute neighbourhoods

The idea that people should be able to meet their daily needs within a short walk or cycle ride has recently been receiving considerable attention. Neighbourhoods where different facilities can easily be reached from home are described as "15 minute neighbourhoods" or "20 minute neighbourhoods" depending on local conditions.

Every community is different and different measures suit different places. For Alnwick we decided to map areas where different everyday needs can be met with a walk of ten minutes there and ten minutes back. By concentrating on walking we keep things simple, and for Alnwick a ten minute walk turns out to be a useful threshold. We wondered how many households in Alnwick are already reaping the promised benefits:

- Enabling people to be more active improves mental and physical health.
- Reducing traffic levels means less congestion, better air quality and contributes to climate action.
- A town's economy is stronger when local shops and businesses thrive.
- Higher values are placed on properties where people enjoy a better quality of life.
- Access to public transport and a decent infrastructure for walking and cycling mean that anyone without access to a car is less isolated.
- Communities are stronger where neighbours see more of each other.

Places of work near the town centre can be reached in a ten minute walk by roughly one Alnwick household in four. About half of households are within a 10 minute walk of one of the main employment locations and around 95% of Alnwick households are within a 20 minute walk of a workplace. Not everyone lives near their place of work, but many do travel to work on foot. At the time of the 2011 census almost 90% of workers in Alnwick were working outside their home, and 10% of them travelled on foot. The more recent 2021 census was taken during Covid lockdown, so the figures are unlikely to be typical. However, at the time around 80% were working away from home, and among them, 22% were travelling on foot.

Retail and services: The centre of our town has a compact struc-

ture that dates from a time when most journeys were made on foot. It is striking, for example, that every bank can be reached in a ten minute walk from almost any 19th century building in Alnwick, but almost all of Alnwick's 20th century housing (60% of households) is more than ten minutes walk from a bank.

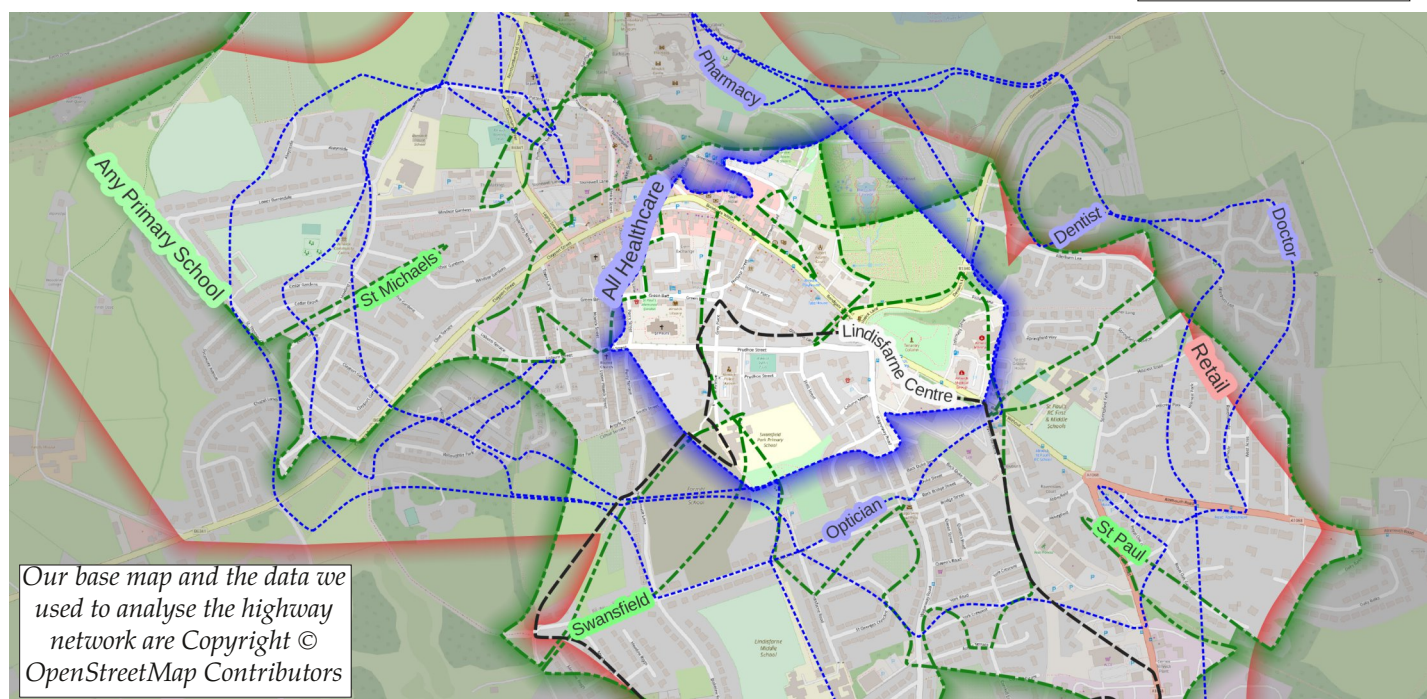
Two-thirds of households are within ten minutes walk of a post office. Specialist food retailers in the town centre are within a 10 minute walk of just one household in three. For ordinary daily needs 80% of Alnwick households are within a ten minute walk of at least a convenience store and when they need the wider range available in a supermarket 70% of households will find one within a ten minute walk. The Food Bank at Lindisfarne is within a 10 minute walk of about 30% of households. Women face longer walks than men to get their hair done. 54% of households are within a ten minute walk of a hairdresser, while 64% are within a ten minute walk of a barber.

Education: Primary Schools are well-distributed. 72% of households are within a ten minute walk, and almost all within a twenty minute walk of a primary school. However, the most recent census data suggests that households with young children tend to be somewhat further than average from a primary school, and we know that Secondary School pupils face longer journeys. Less than half of households are within a twenty minute walk of the High School, and parts of Barresdale and Chapel Lands are more than 30 mins walk away.

Healthcare: One in three households are within a ten minute walk of a Pharmacy, fewer for a Doctor, more for an Optician. Pharmacies and Opticians cover a similar area, crossing the centre of town and housing to the west. Doctors can be reached more easily from the eastern side of town. Dentists are distributed more widely so they can be reached in a short walk by two households in three.

Leisure: Children's Play Areas are well distributed: more than 90% of households have at least one within a ten minute walk, and one in three are able to reach the largest, in Swansfield Park, with a 10 minute walk. The play area on Barresdale is within a ten minute walk of one in three households.

Continued on Page 5



Northumberland Local Plan: Housing

The Northumberland Local Plan (alongside the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan) contains the planning policies used to assess and guide future development. The content is important but the complete document is over 400 pages long and it can appear daunting. We found it more accessible when we examined manageable chunks. So here we have extracted some introductory material on housing.

Spatial portrait

Currently there are approximately 152,000 dwellings across Northumberland. Many of these are in the larger settlements in the south-east, together with market towns across the County. However, there are also a significant number of dwellings in smaller villages and hamlets. While the majority of dwellings meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard, including all Council owned stock, maintaining and enhancing the quality of the existing stock remains a challenge, with much of it in private ownership. Given the rural nature of the County, some communities are not connected to the gas network, and rely on oil or electricity to heat their homes. Many rural homes are also more difficult to insulate, as a result of their age and type, adding to the cost of maintaining a home in these areas.

In addition to improving the existing stock, a key challenge is to ensure that there are sufficient homes, of the right type, of a high quality, in the right locations to meet the needs of Northumberland's current and future population. The provision of new homes not only will meet a need but also free up and allow better use of existing properties as people find accommodation better suited to their needs.

Given the size, and diverse nature of Northumberland different housing issues are apparent across the County. While housing delivery has been strong in recent years, there are parts of the County where few dwellings have been built. While homes that have been built have met the needs of some people, the availability and affordability of housing, to buy or to rent is a significant problem in parts of the County, and given the demographic profile of Northumberland, ensuring there are homes to meet the needs of older people now, and in the future remains a challenge.

North Northumberland Delivery Area

Large parts of the north of the County are subject to high house prices; by contrast the area has the lowest average gross incomes across the County primarily because of a higher than average reliance on employment in the agriculture and tourism sectors. Access to affordable housing, particularly within the rented sector, is an issue across the area. High house prices are a particularly acute problem in the Northumberland Coast AONB and its coastal villages, where there are especially high levels of second home and holiday accommodation. Development pressure in the AONB poses a threat to the conservation of its natural beauty but the sustainability of local communities by providing housing and employment opportunities is also considered to be integral to its protection and enhancement.

In terms of past housing delivery across the north of the County, the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed has under

provided in recent years despite an abundance of housing sites with planning permission. Delivery elsewhere in the former Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough has exceeded past policy, particularly in the coastal zone. Delivery in Alnwick reflects the current planning policy but Rothbury has experienced higher levels of delivery.

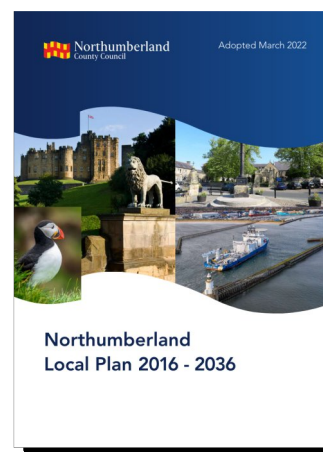
Strategic objectives and outcomes

To assist in the delivery of economic growth the Local Plan makes provision for at least 17,700 new homes in Northumberland over the plan period 2016-2036. It sets out a plan for an appropriate mix of types, sizes and tenures, to address both market and affordable housing needs. It will ensure a continuous supply of housing over the plan period that is aligned to job growth and infrastructure capacity.

Key outcomes:

- The focus of new housing development will have been in the Main Towns and Service Centres across Northumberland. Areas of new homes will have been planned and designed to respect local character and safeguard the significance of heritage assets;
- In smaller settlements a level of new housing development that is proportionate to the size of the settlement, and appropriate to its character, will have been delivered, meeting local needs wherever possible;
- Significant progress will have been made towards addressing the shortfall in affordable homes across Northumberland;
- An appropriate strategy will have been adopted to manage the proportion of holiday and second homes across Northumberland;
- Housing will have been provided by a variety of methods including by community land trusts and through self-build;
- A range of housing tenures, types, prices and sizes will have been provided in order to help meet local needs for different groups of the population, including meeting the needs of an ageing population;
- Housing design and location will allow older people and vulnerable groups to live as independent lives as possible;
- Lifetime neighbourhoods will have been developed in locations which have the greatest potential to support older people to remain independent as they age;
- New sites will have been provided for any additional identified need for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

The complete plan can be downloaded at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-policy/Plan.aspx>



Tennis in Alnwick

1873

A version of Real Tennis that could be played outdoors on a lawn was invented.

1877

First Gentleman's Singles Championships played. Champion – Spencer Gore.



May 1882

Decision taken to form a club and call it Alnwick Lawn Tennis Club. An offer of a field "in front of Dovecot Terrace at £10 per annum, to include cutting, rolling, marking and general supervision of two courts" was accepted.

ALNICK LAWN TENNIS CLUB.—At a meeting of a few gentlemen belonging Alnwick and the neighbourhood, held on Monday afternoon last, at the White Swan Hotel—Mr P. F. Hebeler in the chair—it was unanimously resolved that a club be formed, to be called "The Alnwick Lawn Tennis Club." Messrs J. Paynter and W. B. Pilkington were elected secretaries, and Mr F. P. Hebeler, treasurer. It was also agreed to accept Mr Luke's offer of a field in front of Dovecot Terrace, at an annual rent of £10, to include the cutting, rolling, marking, and general supervision of two courts.

August 1882

New Club held its first tournament.

ALNICK LAWN TENNIS CLUB.—The first tournament in connection with this Club was concluded on Tuesday, August 29th, with the following result:

1884

Wimbledon open to women. First Ladies' Champion was Maud Watson who defeated her older sister Lilian in the final. (The next time sisters would meet in the final of Wimbledon Ladies' Singles was 2002 when Serena Williams beat her sister Venus.)

March 1885

At an Annual General Meeting of Alnwick Cricket Club it was agreed that a Lawn Tennis Club be formed in connection with the Cricket Club.

LAWN TENNIS.
Mr C. Darling moved "that a Lawn Tennis Club be formed in connection with the Cricket Club."—Mr Bickerton seconded the motion, and after some discussion, it was carried unanimously, it being left to the committee to draw up a code of rules and regulations for this club.

May 1885

Report on the success of the club, which had over 30 members. Mention made of ladies playing.

August 1885

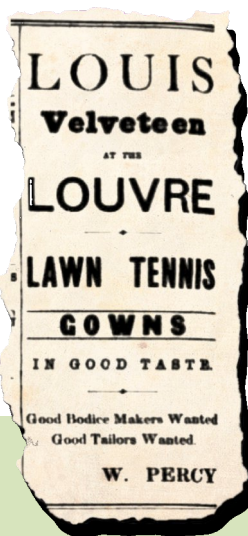


First tournament held by the lawn tennis club connected to Alnwick Cricket Club.

LAWN TENNIS TOURNAMENT.—In splendid weather on Wednesday afternoon last, at the beautiful cricket ground of Alnwick, was begun the first lawn tennis tournament held in connection with this enterprising club. Although the game in Alnwick is in its infancy, great interest was displayed by many lovers of the game, and upwards of 20 couples competed for the "laurel" on Wednesday. Considering the game young in this town, a successful and capital tournament ended in, as most games does, an exciting finish. The match between Miss

1899

The tennis playing ladies of Alnwick could purchase their 'lawn tennis gowns' from Mr William Percy of The Louvre, Bondgate Within, Alnwick.



1900

Davis Cup played for the first time.

1902

Newspapers reported that an effort was being made to revive Alnwick Lawn Tennis Club.



1907

Alnwick Lawn Tennis Club annual subscription to be raised to 10s 6d.

1908

New pavilion opened.

1909

Membership of Alnwick Lawn Tennis Club consists of 32 ladies and 28 gentlemen.

1916

Military Officers stationed in Alnwick are to join the Alnwick Lawn Tennis Club.

1918

It was reported that 30 members of the club were serving in World War I. In order to keep the club going, subscriptions were increased to 15/- and members had to supply their own tennis balls.

1919

At a time when most women played tennis in the same long skirts as they wore during the day, French tennis player, Suzanne Lenglen shocked the



Wimbledon crowd by wearing a low-neck dress with short sleeves and a calf length pleated skirt, silk stockings rolled down to just above her knees and a floppy hat to cover her cropped hair. The press at the time called her outfit "indecent". Ladies' tennis fashion changed forever.

1923

Part of a map of Alnwick, showing both the Cricket Club and the Lawn Tennis Club.



February 1928

It was announced that new lawn tennis courts were to be constructed on "glebe land on Prudhoe Road" and that hard courts would follow.

Alnwick Civic Society

Tennis in Alnwick (continued)

March 1928

Private company – “Alnwick Hard Courts Ltd”, registered with capital £1,500 in £1 shares. The object of the company was to “provide hard and other courts on land in Prudhoe Street”.

September 1928

The hard courts were formally opened by Mrs Hilton Philipson, M.P. for Berwick upon Tweed. In her remarks, Mrs Philipson said that many people were of the opinion that in the next 10 years, hard courts would entirely supersede grass courts. Mrs Hilton Philipson (Mrs Philipson was the third female member of the House of Commons).



1932

Aerial view of the Prudhoe Street tennis courts.



1934/5/6

Fred Perry won Wimbledon Gentleman's Singles Championship.

1937

First BBC television broadcast from Wimbledon.

1937

Alnwick Hotspur Lawn Tennis Club opened its season on the Coronation Day of King George VI, followed by a Coronation Tournament.

1939

Alnwick Hard Courts Tennis Club reported an increase in membership.

1950

Newspapers reported that the public courts, run by the Urban District Council, had made a loss the previous season. Part of the expenditure, which had contributed to the deficit, was the legal expenses and stamp duty involved in the 21-year lease, which had been granted by the Castle authorities.

1967

First Wimbledon broadcast in colour.



1968

The 'Open Era' began: professionals allowed to compete with amateurs.

1970

Although some form of a tie-break had been suggested in the early 1950s, it was officially introduced at the US Open. By 1973 it had also been adopted by Wimbledon, Australian Open and French Open.

1972

Yellow balls were introduced. Research had shown that they were more visible to television viewers. Wimbledon continued to use white balls until 1986.

2013

Andy Murray won the Wimbledon Gentleman's Singles Championship. He was the first British male to achieve this in 77 years.



20 minute neighbourhoods (continued)

More than 80% of Alnwick's households live within a ten minute walk of one of Alnwick's sports grounds, but the distance varies depending on the sport. The Tennis Courts are most widely accessible. They have more than one in three households within a ten minute walk. Hardly anyone lives within a ten minute walk of the Golf course. Other grounds are more accessible by people who live in the south of town. Finally, more than 75% of Alnwick households are within a ten minute walk of at least one pub, while visitors who stay in the town centre will discover a choice of around 15 pubs within a ten minute walk. Maybe it's just as well that anywhere in the town centre they should also be able to find a Public Convenience within a five minute walk.

How do our estimates compare with your experience?

Find more detail and discuss this topic on Substack

<https://alnwickeivicsociety.substack.com/p/20-minute-alnwick>

% Households	10 mins	15 mins	20 mins
A place of work	52%	75%	95%
Bank	39%	70%	90%
Post Office	63%	91%	100%
Retail (food)	78%	94%	100%
Doctor	29%	57%	84%
Pharmacy	35%	66%	88%
Dentist	69%	86%	98%
Optician	41%	72%	92%
Barber	64%	89%	99%
Hairdresser	54%	84%	95%
Primary School	72%	93%	100%
Secondary School	9%	27%	43%
Playground	94%	100%	100%
Sports ground	83%	96%	98%
Pub	77%	99%	100%

Reducing the risks to Bondgate Tower

For the last fifteen years Historic England has been warning that one of Alnwick's most significant buildings has been in bad condition with an immediate risk of further deterioration. In an important new initiative the key stakeholders have been working together to reduce the risk and secure the future of this important landmark.

Bondgate Tower, also known as the Hotspur Gateway is the east gate of Alnwick's former town wall. It was built around 1450 by the second Earl of Northumberland. The tower is historically significant and a prominent feature of the Alnwick Conservation Area, but for the last 15 years it has been regarded by Historic England as a Building at Risk. The main defects relate to damage from vehicles passing through the central portal. Further impact of a similar nature could cause a serious collapse.

The tower straddles the public highway. Up to a thousand vehicles an hour pass through the arch: some to access Alnwick's High Street, others travelling between the A1 and neighbouring towns and villages. Major strikes by vehicles are not common, but there is evidence of frequent minor impacts. Even a minor impact can dislodge a key component, cause instability, require careful inspection and possibly major repairs. The resulting closures cause significant economic and transport disruption. If a large volume of traffic is diverted along narrow residential streets it affects the quality of life for neighbours. So far, no major collapse has put public safety at risk, but that outcome is not inconceivable.

These issues are long-standing and well-known. If they could all be addressed by a simple one-off solution we would not have been debating the issue for more than a decade. But concerns about the condition of the tower and the potential consequences of an accident have been growing. So in 2021 a group of the key stakeholders got together to consider whether a different approach might be possible.

Northumberland Estates owns the tower. Northumberland County Council is responsible for the surrounding roads. Together with Heritage and Conservation specialists from Historic England and Northumberland County Council they considered a number of different ideas. They concluded that the most promising way forward would be based on a portfolio of initiatives, not a single, one-step solution. They needed to consider a variety of different approaches, and any potential solution had wider consequences, so NCC commissioned an independent study of different traffic management options.

Over time, repeated small strikes develop into more serious structural problems. There have been further strikes since this initiative began, including an attempt to squeeze a large coach through the gate. Northumberland Estates are responsible for the necessary repairs, and they have been taking this opportunity to make longer-term improvements to the structural integrity of the tower by addressing some of the deeper problems that have accumulated over time.

Meanwhile, NCC Highways have been preparing a plan to improve signage. The first phase of that work is now funded, and will be implemented during financial year 2023-4.

There are several elements. The existing warning signs at the tower will be replaced with mandatory signs which are enforceable, unambiguous and comply with current standards. In addition gaps have been identified in signage on some approaches. New and improved advance warning signs will be introduced that show the height restriction and propose alternative routes before it is too late.

The new signage should mean that it will be less likely that the driver of a high vehicle will unexpectedly find themselves at the tower. They will find comprehensive information on all approaches, along with reminders. Satellite Navigation Systems are more likely to take account of the new mandatory restrictions.



The next phase of work by NCC will involve some realignment and narrowing of kerbs at the tower. The structure and current road layout are not squarely aligned and this can mislead drivers who try to negotiate the highest part of the arch. Changing the existing kerb lines will narrow the gap, influence driver behaviour and help direct traffic centrally through the arch. The plan is to prepare a budget for this work in 2023-4, with a view to implementation in 2024-5.

Meanwhile, Northumberland Estates has carried out a detailed digital survey of the tower, that will be used as a baseline for regular structural monitoring. There may also be potential to introduce a CCTV system that will better capture and record all vehicle impacts.

There is no expectation that this mix of approaches will completely eliminate

the risk of vehicle damage. The key stakeholders plan to monitor progress and review the situation once the signage improvements are in place and following an initial "bedding in" period. At that point Historic England may be able to adjust their risk assessment.

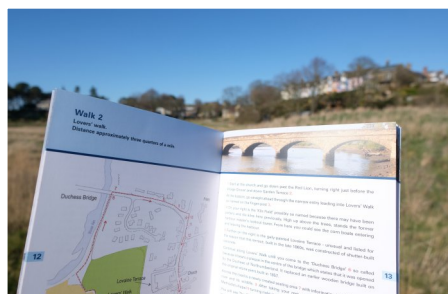
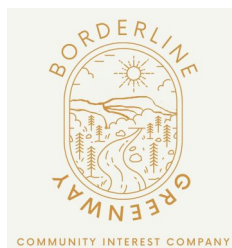
Further measures may be considered at a later stage. For example the possibility has not been ruled out of using lighting to enhance the tower; or introducing a vehicle height detection system, connected to advance warning signs.

There are no plans to demolish the tower, move it to Column Field, for either full or partial closure, or for placing physical restrictions such as decorative arches in front. Everyone involved recognises that progress is only going to be made with solutions that accommodate all the different constraints. The relevant specialists are satisfied that the current proposals are acceptable in terms of Heritage Conservation.

We are proud that the Civic Society has played a small part in bringing the different parties together and facilitating the initial discussion. We hope members will join us in welcoming this initiative and the evident spirit of cooperation between the two key stakeholders. Our hope is that the planned risk reduction measures prove sufficiently effective, but this is not the only issue affecting traffic management in Alnwick. If it turns out that further developments are necessary to reduce the risks to the tower then we would like to think that these can be considered in the context of wider concerns about traffic management in Alnwick, rather than by seeking solutions for each issue in isolation from the rest.

March 2nd 2023 marked the 70th anniversary of the closure of the Alnwick to Cornhill (Coldstream) Railway.

The Borderline Greenway Community Interest Company has been formed to reopen this beautiful line for the use of Walkers, Cyclists and Horse Riders. In March they held a briefing at St. James's Centre, as an opportunity to meet the folk behind the Greenway Plan, hear about what progress has been made and discuss the next steps. The level of interest was impressive.



Readers might want to look out for "Alnmouth on Foot" a guidebook produced by Alnmouth Parish Council, Alnmouth Walking Group and Alnmouth History Group. It describes eleven varied walks around the village and the surrounding area, and includes a brief history.

In "Alnwick, Pubs, Lanes and Alleyways" Tom Allen takes us on a walking tour around Alnwick that he hopes will awaken curiosity about pubs in the town and the history behind the lanes and alleyways that connect them. His book is priced at £5 with proceeds donated to HospiceCare North Northumberland.

Both guides will appeal to anyone keen to discover the area and either makes a natural companion to our own *Historical Map of Alnwick and Alnmouth*.

We understand that the Borderlands team were impressed with the number and quality of the Expressions of Interest that they received in March. These cover a broad range of proposals with potential for delivery over the next six years. The capital required to deliver all of them would be considerably in excess of the available budget.

So the next stage will be to evaluate the longlist, select suitable candidates that can be taken forward for feasibility studies and possible inclusion in the Borderlands Investment Plan.

Over the next twelve months or so a number of members will be working to refresh different aspects of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan. Different sub-groups are considering Housing, Economy and Employment, Town Centre and Retail, Community Facilities, Sustainable Travel, Environment, Heritage and Design.

With a mission to promote high standards of planning and architecture we have an interest that crosses several topics as well as the overall process.

Members of the society are playing a leading role on Heritage and Design, and we anticipate that this will lead to further opportunities for members to participate. Please let us know if you would be interested in working with consultants on Design Coding, developing a Local List of heritage that has special significance for the Alnwick Community, helping to revitalise the Conservation Area, or monitoring and dealing with Heritage at Risk. Meanwhile, look out for details of Public Consultation events.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires Planning Authorities to set out a positive strategy for heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. The Northumberland Local Plan includes a commitment that NCC will work with partners, including communities, to help identify heritage assets at risk, or vulnerable to becoming at risk, and may be able to help secure external funding. We have been working with the Town Council to explore ways of engaging the community in monitoring the condition of Alnwick's heritage and identify areas where we might contribute to follow-up action. These initial discussions have been promising. We reviewed almost 50 examples of issues that members of the society have identified, and agreed some first steps. It's too soon now, but by the next issue of this newsletter we hope we will be in a position to report some early success. Meanwhile, we anticipate a need for continuous monitoring and periodic review so if you are interested in helping to safeguard Alnwick's heritage for future generations please let us know.



Civic Society Awards

Have you made your nomination yet?

Alnwick is a special place and the 2023 Civic Society Awards will help to recognize and honour those who help to keep it that way. We want to spark a discussion about projects and initiatives that have made an outstanding contribution to the condition of our town. So we are inviting anyone to nominate candidates for an award.

...which developments are going to leave a lasting mark?

...who has been making a special effort to improve the condition of our town?

...which projects are setting a good example for others to follow?

Past Civic Society Awards have recognised excellence in heritage conservation and high standards in new development. They have also recognised the efforts and achievements of those who work to maintain the condition of our town, and those who have increased public awareness and improved understanding of our past. Past recipients have included major developers with projects that have gone on to gain national recognition, as well as individuals who secured the future for their own home, or made a difference to the appearance of their neighbourhood.

Have you submitted your nomination yet? Forms are widely available in town, or can be downloaded from the Civic Society web site. The closing date is 1st September 2023. An independent panel will then carry out the assessment and the awards will be made towards the end of the year.



Annual General Meeting

Our AGM was held on 8 March at St James's Church Centre. Around 30 people were present.

In the formal meeting, the Chair outlined the work of the society over the past year. One of the main objectives of the society is to promote high standards of planning and architecture, and to that end we scrutinise planning applications that might affect the character and heritage of the town. Representations on 19 applications had been made including 8 objections. A small advisory group is in place which any interested society member was welcome to join. Education and raising awareness of heritage is the second main purposes of the society. To that end, Heritage Open Days had been a major activity in 2022. More than 20 organisations had been brought together to showcase the town's heritage. Towards the third objective, some progress had been made on protection of buildings and other features of historic interest but this continued to be something of an uphill struggle. The society would be involved in the review of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan in the coming year and hopefully better progress would be made as a result.

The Chair expressed his appreciation to members of the society's executive committee for their support. In particular, he thanked Gill Parker who was to stand down as Treasurer after 17 years in post, but still planned to be active in the society. In her final Treasurer's Report Gill Parker had prepared a financial statement for the year. The balance of the ordinary account had increased from £2,726.88 at the beginning of the year to £5,800.19. Income from membership subscriptions, Gift Aid and transfer of funds from the society's Treasurer's account had totalled £4,425.70. Expenditure on the Treasurer's Account had included map purchases and Heritage Open Day expenses. The society had received subscriptions from 28 family members, 21 joint members and 4 business members in 2022.

At this point the society's president, Peter Ennor explained that the society, a registered charity, currently had four trustees - Mary Carter, Gill Parker, Sue Smith and Pete Reed. The constitution required that one of the trustees stand down at the AGM (although they could be re-elected). Pete offered to stand down and to be re-elected. This was agreed by the members present. Tim Smith offered to become a trustee and this was also agreed. Membership of the Executive Committee was open to any interested member.

No other business was raised, the formal AGM closed and was followed by an interesting talk by Marjorie Brown on the history of a major landmark, the Percy Tenantry Column.

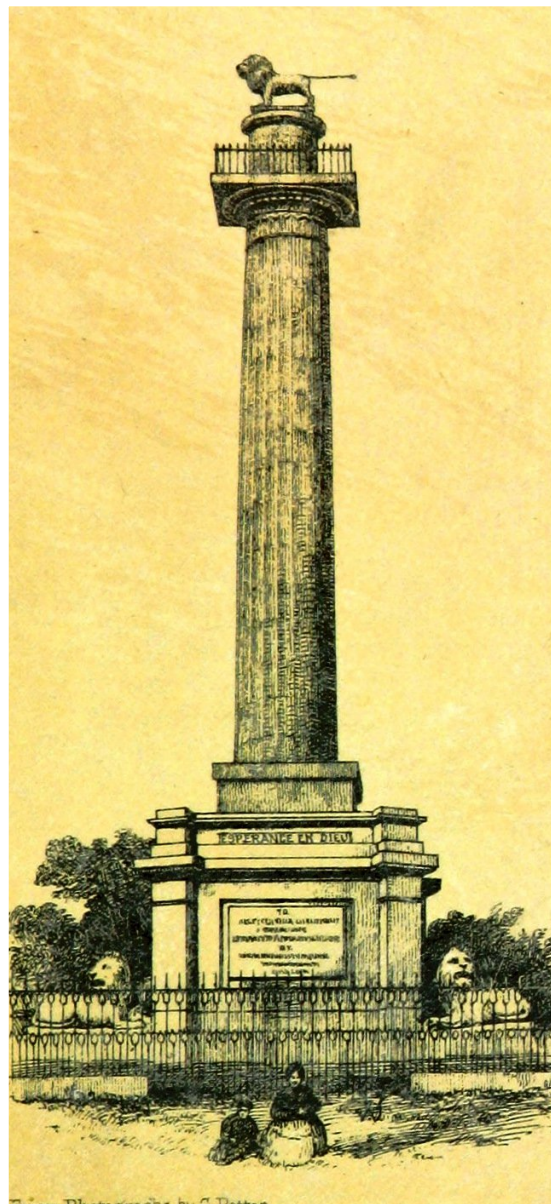
Marjorie brought with her various illustrations for examination and explained that the stone column was constructed in 1816 by the tenants of the 2nd Duke of Northumberland in recognition of his benevolence and generosity including a 25% reduction in the rents of tenant farmers. She advised that the Doric column is 83 feet high and the circumference at its base is 90 feet. There is a recumbent lion at each corner of the plinth at the base. It has an internal spiral staircase and a balcony with another lion on the top – the Percy lion.

Marjorie described the 2nd Duke as benevolent and liberal. A distinguished soldier, he had participated in the American war of independence. He set up and funded the Percy Tenantry Volunteers.

A committee had been established in 1815 to oversee the building of the column and £3,000.00 was raised in subscriptions. Various sites in the county were considered for the column, with the current site in Alnwick being chosen. A design by architect David Stephenson was selected and stone was sourced from a quarry at Denwick.

Twenty-one of the Duke's oldest tenants participated in the laying of the foundation stone and the names of 1,500 of the Volunteers were incorporated into a glass container set in a hole in the foundations. Celebratory festivities included a 21 gun salute, a procession and toasts, music and speeches at a dinner held in the White Swan. The 2nd Duke unfortunately died before the column was completed.

Marjorie disputed the story sometimes told that following the completion of the column, the farmers' rents were put up again.



You can strengthen our voice on the future of Alnwick

Did you know?

Last year there were 163 planning applications for developments in Alnwick and Denwick.

Our advisory group considered them all, but focussed on major developments that affect the whole community, concern built heritage or have an impact on the Conservation Area. We responded on nineteen. In two cases we expressed support and we objected to eight. Most of our comments drew attention to an aspect of the application that needed particularly careful consideration. For example:

- We objected when we felt the applicant had provided insufficient information for neighbours to assess proposals in the grounds of the former Duke's School.
- We objected to illuminated advertising on South Road because we had concerns about road safety and damage to the character of a major approach to the town.
- We didn't challenge professional advice on replacement of windows at the former Duchess's High School in Bailiffgate but we thought that a project with such a high-profile, by a prominent developer, on a building of national significance should follow best practice and we objected when we felt this wasn't the case.
- A proposal to expand retail space at Lidl while reducing car parking seemed inconsistent. We suggested that measures should be considered to encourage active travel.
- We objected to proposals for a new bypass North West of Denwick because we felt the community should be given a proper opportunity to assess the wider impact.

Town Plans of Alnwick

The Society has donated a set of 19th century town plans to Bailiffgate Museum. These are reproductions of the original Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Alnwick and Environs, which was surveyed in 1851. They have been produced by the National Library of Scotland from their collection of Historical Maps.

This particular edition was chosen because it shows Alnwick in considerable detail at a time of great change.

For example:

- The Cholera outbreak had occurred two years earlier, and at a scale of two feet to the mile there is enough detail here to appreciate the overcrowded conditions that lay at the heart of Alnwick's problems with sanitation.
- The map also shows the layout of Alnwick's original small Railway Station, which had opened the previous year. Not the larger replacement that we know today, which dates from 1887.
- The 4th Duke of Northumberland had inherited the title a few years before the map was surveyed, but Salvin's work on the Castle had not yet begun. The map shows the earlier layout of Alnwick Castle, so features such as Prudhoe Tower and the Guest Hall do not appear.
- By 1851 Alnwick had begun to spread beyond the medieval walls, and along the major roads, but it did not extend far into the countryside, and the map shows the

We don't always obtain the outcome we would like, but in a democratic system that's not the test that should apply. What we should expect is that the views of our members will be taken seriously. We think we have an effective way to make our voice heard. The more members we involve, the better informed and more considered our representations. And the more weight they should carry.

Most of our current advisory group had little or no background in planning when they joined. What all bring is local knowledge, a keen interest in the future of Alnwick, and a network of neighbours and friends who contribute a variety of different perspectives.

If you think that Alnwick residents should have no say in developments that affect the community then you probably haven't read this far. However:

- If you agree with the way we respond then you should get in touch. You have an interest in how Alnwick develops, and this is a good way to make your views heard.
- If you disagree with the way we respond, then you should also get in touch. We aim to represent the views of members. We need to take account of your views too.

If you join the group, then each month we will send you a summary of recent planning applications and invite your comments. You will see what others think. You can let others know whether or not you agree, and add your own perspective.

Can you think of a better way to make your voice heard?

Did you know?

96% of planning decisions in Northumberland are delegated to planning professionals. 4% are taken by elected members.

names of the fields where our houses would later be built. Who now lives on Bog Meadow, South Broad Close, or Far Middle Blackstone's Close?



- The former church that now houses Bailiffgate Museum is a building of national importance and the listing by Historic England states that it was built in 1856. Yet it appears on this map of 1851. Why? The original listing was mistaken. The church was built in 1836, so opened around 15 years before the map was surveyed.

In 2021 Alnwick Civic Society worked with the Historic Towns Trust and a number of local community groups, to develop and publish a historic map of Alnwick and Alnmouth showing the historical and geographical influences on the layout of each town. That map shows medieval and later buildings, the sites of lost buildings and both towns in detail in 1918. It is available from Bailiffgate Museum and local book shops.

The Civic Society and Bailiffgate Museum want to make these reproductions of original maps available to the community as part of the wider outreach from that project. Other initiatives have included work with local schools, and development of an Alnwick Heritage Web site as a research resource and a means of individuals engaging in the region's heritage.

Planning Matters

A number of neighbours have objected to a proposal for construction of detached dwelling house with integral garage on Land South West of Woodlands Lodge. This adds to recent developments around Greensfield Farm. Neighbours have raised a number of concerns about the impact of these developments. While we have some sympathy with their concerns over loss of amenity, we felt we had little to add. However, we did question the capacity of the road network to support the current level of development in this area.

Many members will know Grove House at the foot of Howick Street, and will be aware that it is on our list of significant heritage in Alnwick that we consider to be at risk, or vulnerable. Extensive work is now planned. In addition to its recorded significance as an early 19th century Grade-2 listed building, this has local importance as one of the few buildings in this part of the Conservation Area that pre-dates the early suburban expansion of Alnwick in the 1830s. We hope that the conservation team will take into account that these proposals will be widely welcomed in the town. The buildings are well known, and in poor repair.

Green Batt House on Green Batt is also well-known, but the work proposed is less ambitious and we decided no comment was necessary. Other work on listed buildings included work on a party wall between 12 and 14 Bondgate Without, and renewal of a roof and construction of new external staircase at the rear of 18 Narrowgate (Grannies). Again, we decided no comment was necessary.

The Tree Team have considered a couple of applications relating to work on protected trees, and removal of a hedgerow, but concluded that the proposals are reasonable.

Northumberland Estates sought consent to repair the stone wall behind Greenwell Road Car Park, including removal of rubbish and debris, filling the depression behind the wall and replacement of existing fencing with 2 metre high paladin fencing. Concerns have been raised over access to parking and disruption to business during construction, but the work on the wall itself was welcomed. However, the design of the fence was more controversial. For many visitors this is their arrival point in the town centre, and important in framing first impression of the town. The current condition of the wall and gully is an embarrassment, so we felt the proposed works should be regarded as essential and the results ought to be welcomed. We commented that reactions to the application demonstrated that the case for the fence design was unconvincing, and the level care given to the appearance of the Greenwell Road car park will depend on public support. So we hoped for a stronger justification for the design and some mitigation of the initial appearance of a bare wire fence. Officers acknowledged the concerns but felt that there was clear justification for the work and that the overall design was appropriate with no significant adverse impact on the Conservation Area. The proposal was approved, with some conditions relating to clearing vegetation and attaching the fence.

There is a proposal for extensive work at the rear of 48 Bondgate Within (NISA) to convert the existing building and create seven apartments.

Only the façade remains from the original building, but 48 Bondgate Within is Grade-2 listed, and at a prominent position in the Alnwick Conservation Area with ten more listed buildings in the immediate vicinity. Listed building consent will be required, but had not been submitted at the time we prepared our response. We support the principle of residential development, but have concerns about the design of the shopfront and new doors on Bondgate Within. Relevant guidance in the Alnwick Shopfront Design Guide reads *"Contemporary designs are sometimes acceptable if they are of high quality, use traditional scale and proportions, and respect the host building and the street scene. New frontages should represent locally distinctive characteristics in terms of design, scale, massing, height and materials"*. There is insufficient information in the current application to demonstrate how these matters have been addressed and to determine the impact on a listed building and its situation. We also question whether there are safety implications in providing access to the new flats at the rear through the warehouse delivery area.

Yet another application has been submitted to address the condition of windows on the former Duchess High School at 2 Bailiffgate. Our position is that such a prestigious project by a prominent developer on heritage of national significance should be a model of good practice and an example to others. We remain hopeful that the developer and Conservation Officers can reach agreement on an approach that follows recommended best practice for heritage conservation, complies with the relevant policies and brings this to a satisfactory conclusion.

National Highways asked for more information to assess any safety issues associated with a large advertising sign South West of The Hogs Head Inn. There are some outstanding views of the landscape surrounding Alnwick, but nobody would claim that views from here are in the same class. Nevertheless, even here, proposals are expected to avoid visual harm to the landscape character and setting of the town. We objected on that basis and on the safety implications of such a large sign: clearly intended to attract attention of drivers.



Quiz: X18 Bus Stops

The Arriva X18 bus follows a famously scenic route along the North Northumberland coast. How many of these stops do you recognise?

Various discounts and offers are currently available on this route. These will have been designed to encourage sustainable tourism and protect rural bus services. However, the authorities and the bus operators must know that by promoting these incentives they are also helping to raise awareness of an area of outstanding natural beauty, and exceptional built heritage.

The same discounts and offers might also help readers who want a high score on this picture quiz. Nobody is going to get accused of cheating, so we hope our members and supporters will be able to take advantage of them.



Diary dates

10th May: John Matthews and Jackie Salmon on the work of Northumberland and Newcastle Society.

19th July: Sue Wood from Northumberland Archives on experiences of the BBC "A House Through Time".

19th August: Summer outing - Ad Gefrin Anglo-Saxon Museum and Whisky Distillery. Hold the date and await further details.

1st September: Closing date for Civic Society Award nominations.

November: Any Questions Topical Debate. Details to follow.

Some notable anniversaries

6th May 1894: death of Architect Frederick Richard Wilson (1827-1894)

12th May 1849 death of John Lambert of Narrowgate House at the age of 65

21st May 1805 birth of George Tate (1805 – 1871) author of History of Alnwick.

21st May 1940 Henry George Alan Percy, 9th Duke of Northumberland (1912 – 1940) killed in action during retreat to Dunkirk. Commemorated by the Duke's Memorial Cottages

25th May 1585 Corporation take possession of a former brewhouse for use as a toll-booth, meeting place and guard house. Replaced by present town hall in 1728.

1st Jun 1854 first edition of Alnwick Mercury

2nd Jun 1537 Sir Thomas Percy (c. 1504-1537) hanged, drawn and quartered after conviction for treason

6th Jun 1877: meeting at the Dukes School resolves to form Alnwick Bowling Club.

8th Jun 1868 death of John Common, agricultural engineer(1778-1868)

9th Jun 1815 meeting in Alnwick Town Hall agrees to establish a dispensary for the benefit of the poor

23rd Jun 2011 Queen Elizabeth II and Duke of Edinburgh visit Alnwick and open Youth Hostel

1st Jul 1847 Newcastle and Berwick railway opens. The train left Newcastle at 7 o'clock and it arrived at Tweedmouth three hours later.

3rd Jul 1986 Alnwick District Council approve development of Supermarket, Bus Station & Car Parking on Fenkle St / Clayport

13th Jul 1174 Battle of Alnwick. Capture of William I of Scotland, also known as William the Lion

14th Jul 1921 Column Field opened as public park

18th Jul 1621 Ninth Earl of Northumberland is released from the Tower of London after 16 years

19th Jul 1748 John Wesley wrote "*We rode to Alnmouth, a small seaport town, famous for all kinds of wickedness*"

21st Jul 1403 Death of Harry Hotspur at Battle of Shrewsbury

27th Jul 1801 birth of Sir George Biddell Airy (1801-1892) Astronomer Royal from 1835 to 1881

About Alnwick Civic Society

Alnwick Civic Society was formed in 1974, following the defeat of proposals to re-develop the town centre with a modern shopping area, and amid growing concerns about the future of our town. Since then, we have sought to influence developments, especially in the town centre and conservation area, to ensure that proposals protect and enhance our heritage.

The Society pursues its objectives through a variety of activities. We provide a voice for members through dialogue with planning and conservation professionals and like-minded organisations. We offer advice, scrutinise and comment on development proposals; recognise excellence; and organise public meetings. Members were heavily involved in development of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, and we work with local partners to influence policy at a county level. We seek to influence national policy by co-operating with other bodies in the civic movement, and the Society was a founding member of Civic Voice.

All who share our aims can support the work of the society: by joining as an individual, family, student, or business member; by participating in activities, sharing ideas, raising areas of concern and pointing out examples of good practice. Or simply by demonstrating pride in our town, and spreading the word about the value of our work.



Who's Who?

President: Peter Ennor

Trustees: **Chair:** Peter Reed; **Membership:** Gill Parker;

Honorary Secretary: Sue Smith; **Treasurer:** Tim Smith; Mary Carter

Committee members: Allan Mann, Colin Watson.

Web: www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk

Email: contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk

Twitter: @AlnwickCivicSoc

Facebook: [AlnwickCivicSociety](https://www.facebook.com/AlnwickCivicSociety)

Instagram: [alnwickcivicsociety](https://www.instagram.com/alnwickcivicsociety)

Charity registration number: 1197235

Heritage at risk: report your concerns here:

<https://alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-at-risk/>

Quiz Answers

- A) Bamburgh, Front Street
- B) High Newton-by-the-sea, Village Green
- C) Lesbury, Village Centre
- D) Longhoughton, Lacey Street
- E) Alnwick Infirmary (South Rd, near Barter Books)
- F) Alnmouth Village, Methodist Church
- G) Warkworth, Market Place

