

Newsletter



Inside

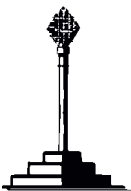
Heritage Open Days.....	2
Summer reading & listening.....	3
George Grieve (formerly Greive).....	4
Adopted roads.....	5
Narrowgate & Fenkle Street (1862)...	6
News in brief.....	7
Local plan scoping consultation.....	8
Planning Matters.....	10
Quiz: Coastal conveniences.....	11
About Alnwick Civic Society.....	12
Who's Who?.....	12
Diary dates.....	12
Quiz answers.....	12
250 years ago.....	12

For your diary:

- 11th - 20th Sept: Heritage Open Days.**
See the summary on page 2. For updates and more detail watch <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>.
- 30th Sept: Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings.**
With Jules Brown & Maria Carballeira from Historic England.
St James's Church. Doors open at 7:00 for 7:30 start.
- 14th Oct: Alnwick Playhouse: Adapting to a changing role in a landmark year.**
With Damian Cruden, Artistic Director.
St James's Church. Doors open at 7:00 for 7:30 start.
- November: Any Questions:**
Details will follow.

"We're only going as far as the defibrillator"

Our thanks to Glendale Local History Society for the fascinating tour of Wooler's history which we thoroughly enjoyed on July 11th. The thought and effort put in by their members was impressive and greatly appreciated..



Heritage Open Days

The theme for England's largest heritage festival this year is "Everyday Histories - exploring daily working life through the ages". Events are taking place across England from 11th - 20th Sept. In Alnwick, the Civic Society and Alnwick Community Enterprise (ACE) have come together to coordinate this year's programme. With support from Alnwick Town Council, the Lions Club of Alnwick and others this will be our most ambitious festival yet. Events run from Monday 14th Sept - Sunday 20th but the widest choice is on Saturday 19th Sept.

This is a summary of the activities we hope to see this year, but as we go to print several details have still to be confirmed. For up-to-date information please check <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk>.

 Events that require Pre-booking are marked with this symbol. For most of these, see <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk>

New this year:

Arcinova: tour will showcase research, development and manufacturing work that assists early-stage drug development. Includes the interior of the former Newbigin Chemist's Shop - rescued from Narrowgate and now forming the Boardroom.



William Hackett: a tour of the site, and talk on the 130 year history of this award-winning supplier of chain and lifting solutions to multiple sectors around the world.



Alnwick Garden: an opportunity for a unique visit to Alnwick Garden. The garden was first laid down in 1750, and most grand at the end of the 19th century. After growing food in the Second World War it fell into disrepair but was revived at the turn of the 21st century.



Lionheart Radio Studio Tour: our community radio station broadcasts from Fenkle Street. Awarded a Community Licence by Ofcom in 2005 it offers all ages the opportunity of getting involved in radio.

Alnwick Town Juniors Football Club: provides junior football and social activities for girls and boys with a safe and enjoyable environment for teams at all ages, both male and female players, as well as opportunities for players with disabilities.



Mechanics' Institute: Alnwick founded one of the world's first Mechanics' Institutes. As far as we know, this remarkable purpose-built institute from 1831 is the earliest to survive in close to its original form.



Another chance to see:

Bailiffgate Museum & Gallery: Bailiffgate is an award-winning museum, where stories of the past are told about the area. With work by local Artist, Kev Oldham, and displays from local students about the History of Northumberland Hall and the current museum.



Masonic Centre: Come and see a Masonic meeting room with displays of historic records of Masters of local Lodges and presentations about the building.

Alnwick Playhouse: We are invited to explore the theatre, with backstage tours and demonstrations.

Youth Hostel: The site of Alnwick's 19th century House of Correction House. Courthouse and prisoners' exercise yard with original wall and windows with bars.

St Paul's Roman Catholic Church: Originally constructed for the Church of England 180 years ago. This is a grade II listed building, and worth a visit for its splendid interior.

St Mary's Chantry House: A rare opportunity to view inside the ruins of Alnwick's first school.

St Michael's Church: Including the Graffiti exhibition and tours of the tower (pre-booking required for tower)



Narrowgate House: / General Lambert's House: Explore the building in its current condition, and see the plans to bring it back to life. Includes **Dickson, Archer, Thorp Memories:** Recollections of the solicitor's practice that once ran from Narrowgate House.

Aln Valley Railway is Northumberland's only standard gauge heritage steam railway, recreating the branchline between Alnwick and the east coast mainline at Alnmouth (20th Sept).

Alnwick Trades: Pick up a leaflet then explore the town centre to discover the stories behind some of our favourite high street businesses.

Pop-up Exhibitions

Everyday histories: a timeline of the historical events that shaped development of Alnwick's industries and economy



Duke's School Memories: Listen to the voices of former pupils as they remember their days at the Duke's School.

William Davison: an exhibition by Northumberland Archives based on the 4,500 printer's proofs they hold from William Davison's printing shop in Alnwick.



Guided Walks

Exploring Alnwick's built heritage: The fascinating stories behind Alnwick's Built Heritage (14th Sept).



Exploring Alnwick's Sporting Heritage: Three hour walk visiting the sites of Alnwick's pre 1918 sporting heritage (15th Sept).



Guided Walk: Alnwick's past industries: Passing today's buildings where industries and businesses once flourished. (16th Sept)



A tour of Alnwick's lost pubs: Alnwick's lost Beer Houses, Taverns and Inns, plus some interesting survivors (17th Sept).



Guided Tour - Borderline Greenway: A tour of a 3km stretch of the Alnwick Borderline Greenway, a repurposed rail track. Includes talks on aspects of the existing line, it's history and connection to the locality. Also plans to develop the greenway from Alnwick to Cornhill (18th Sept).



Alnwick Civic Society

Alnwick Civic Society

Summer reading and listening: diverse suggestions from members

How to run a country

Polly Mackenzie is a former political adviser who used to lead the cross-party think-tank Demos. She has an optimistic view of how policy can make change happen. A couple of her recent posts have addressed the vitality of town centres. In “*How do you solve a problem like the high street?*” Polly considers some of the economic factors that lie behind struggling high streets, and suggests different ways that these might be addressed by a “*Troubled Buildings Programme*”.

See <https://tinyurl.com/3ksfa7be>.

In “*High street government*” Polly challenges the assumptions that led to centralisation and consolidation of public services. Instead of waiting for shoppers to return to the high street she argues that public services should be dispersed to locations that are accessible by public transport and used to attract footfall. See <https://tinyurl.com/4u3jpma3>

House Burping

The term ‘House burping’ describes the practice of opening windows to exchange stale indoor air and fresh outdoor air. Interest exploded on social media when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency advised that opening windows can help reduce the concentration of volatile organic compounds. The practice may be a novelty in the U.S.A., but is well established in Europe. In Germany it is called *lüften*. Landlords there are responsible for mould removal, and sometimes require tenants to air their apartments daily, to reduce condensation. In this piece, architect Luke Jones discusses the practice in England, which he calls ‘*airing out*’. He argues that traditional English houses are designed to be cold and draughty and that the alternatives that are suggested will prove impractical. “*Consider returning to an older way of life. Unblock the chimney. Throw open the windows. Put on a padded dressing gown. Break down the Billy bookcase for kindling, sit and watch the chipboard resins deflagrating from the comfort of your high-backed chair. Allow the soul of the house to return*”.

See: <https://tinyurl.com/24nn2x6c>

SANT

The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne is the country’s oldest provincial antiquarian society. Their library of over 30,000 books and journals is on the second floor of the Great North Museum: Hancock, and is open to the public. Their archives are deposited at Northumberland Archives. Many of their publications are available online, including much of the Society’s journal - *Archaeologia Aeliana*.

See <https://newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk/> or find their talks on Youtube: <https://tinyurl.com/3dsreu9k>

How Local Government Works in France

The SLCC is the professional body for local council clerks and senior council employees. They equip members with the knowledge, training and skills to thrive within their role and support their



council and community. Their podcasts offer insights from sector experts, local council clerks, and guests. Richard Walden was formerly Town Clerk to Dunstable Town Council and now lives in rural France. In this episode he describes the structure of French communes, contrasts it with the system in England and considers whether similar approaches could be adopted here. <https://tinyurl.com/4de5dhfm>

Measures to Reduce Overheating

Most work on adapting historic buildings to climate change is concerned with reducing heat loss. In that vein, in September we have a talk by Jules Brown and Maria Carballeira from Historic England on Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings. But Historic England are also looking into other measures that are needed for adapting to a changing climate. This webinar explores architectural measures (such as awnings and shutters) that have been used to reduce solar gain and seasonal overheating. <https://tinyurl.com/dcbj7vmx>

Banning Beauty

The good news is that there is a way of creating new homes which is popular with the public, economically viable and resilient. It would allow us to meet our desperate housing needs on less land without creating bad places. It's the Georgian style terraced house. The bad news is that local planning guidance and national building regulations often make these difficult to build in ways that are both beautiful and viable. Create Streets explains how and what needs to change. <https://tinyurl.com/bddrrnf6>



Hefted!

‘*Hefted! Upland Farming Heritage in the Cheviots*’ features shepherds, farmers and land managers exploring how farming traditions have shaped (and continue to shape) the upland landscape of Northumberland. It shows how traditional knowledge and practices adapt to challenges like depopulation and climate change. An animation by Dennis Sisterson brings 8,000 years of Cheviot hill farming to life and the site also includes information displays and resource packs for schools and community groups.



See <https://www.cheviotsspreadingtheword.com/>

What could possibly go wrong?

If there was an emergency in Alnwick, how would we manage? And what about our friends and neighbours? This government web site is designed to help us prepare for emergencies and support our community: before, during and after an emergency. It covers an impressive range of risks. See: <https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/>



George Greive (Formerly Grieve) (1748 -1809) Political Rebel

George Grieve was born to a notable Alnwick family in the middle of the eighteenth century, and lived a remarkable life that had impacts far beyond his birthplace. There is no likeness of him readily available to show, and as indicated, he changed his family name later in life – his shadowy life story is evident only as a series of particular episodes that have been recorded and interpreted by historians. Of what we do know about him from a range of records and sources is a clear thread to his behaviours and actions which were by turns - disputatious, radical and violently directed against political power and privilege of one kind or another.

The trajectory of his radicalism can be traced through key events in which he participated.

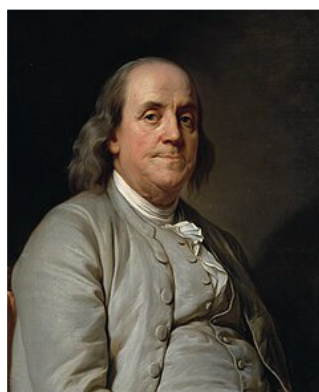
After completing an MA degree at Glasgow University George soon threw himself into local affairs – opposing the private enclosure of Freeman's land (a cause he later took up in Newcastle) and in 1774, opposing the Duke of Northumberland's favoured Parliamentary candidates. Moving to Newcastle he was again highly active in supporting the Wilkes reform cause which he continued after moving to London. Active in the rough and tumble of political agitation directed against aristocratic privilege and perceived corruption, had George Grieve writing and publishing barbed attacks on his enemies. It appears that his combative approach went too far, likely prompting a departure to the Netherlands in 1780 to avoid a libel action against him.

George's story takes on a more explicitly international and revolutionary dimension when having made contact with envoys of the American government, engaged in the revolutionary war to free themselves from British rule, he took up American citizenship and left to support the cause. In America he travelled widely and was acquainted with to Silas Dean, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

Returning to France in 1783 he was engaged in the translation of travel and political works. His political position during the French Revolution was to become a member of the Jacobin Club, and ally of Marat. During the bloodiest phase of the revolutionary period Grieve took it upon himself doggedly to pursue the arrest and fatal conviction of Madame Du Barry, mistress of Louis XV. He was ultimately successful in this and was ever after identified as the persecutor of Madame Du Barry. (A Wikipedia entry has it that he was "best-known" for this assumed vindictiveness).



John Wilkes



Benjamin Franklin

After the fall of Robespierre, he was himself arrested and imprisoned but the prosecution was dropped. Back in America he lived for some time in Virginia before returning to Europe and Brussels, where he died in 1809.

Such a colourful life path, and active participation in the two revolutionary movements of the era, both against British interests, naturally provoked decided judgments from some historians.

For example, writing in 1889 of - Englishmen In The French Revolution - John Goldworth Alger begins his chapter on The Terror "It is sad to find Englishmen among the Terrorists, even though foreign birth or long absence had made them English only in name. George Grieve, who hunted Madame Dubarry to death, was a hereditary agitator". (The reference to inheritance is relevant in that George Grieve's father, Richard, and grandfather, Ralph, both attorneys, were active in Alnwick affairs and willing to enter bitter legal disputes with the Freeman of Alnwick when they suspected illegality or corruption.) A further condemnatory charge was that George Grieve lived well on the back of a substantial family inheritance from his father and later an inheritance from his elder brother, Davidson Richard, a much more conventional local figure.

One-word summations of his life and political career can and have embraced distinctly differing interpretations – terrorist/revolutionary, radical/reformer, agitator/rebel – all mediated by the commentators and terms used at the time. Some last self-describing words may be left to Grieve himself. Ever the pamphleteer and arguer, George Grieve was not backward in stating his revolutionary record and credentials. He signed off a pamphlet justifying his pursuit of Madame Du Barry thus: "Grieve..... defender of the poor..... friend of Franklin and Marat, agitator and anarchist of the first order and disrupter of despotism in the two hemispheres for the last twenty years" (freely translated from the French).

(A more detailed account of his national and local political career can be gained from his entry in the Oxford National Directory of Biography, and for his doings in America and France, from American and French sources).

Our thanks to John March for this piece, and to Allan Mann for chasing down a wide variety of sources.



Jean-Paul Marat



Madame du Barry

Adopted and unadopted roads

By definition an unadopted road is not maintainable at public expense. The subject attracted our attention because several of Alnwick's historic lanes have never been adopted. These are some of the most characteristic parts of the Conservation Area. The highways authority has no responsibility for their maintenance. We were concerned that this meant their condition was at risk.

The House of Commons Library recently published a research briefing on private or unadopted roads. There is no recent data on the number of unadopted roads in England and Wales, but a survey in 1972 found approximately 4,000 miles of unadopted road. The cost of bringing all of these up to standard was estimated (in 2009) to be £3 billion.

Like those in the Alnwick Conservation Area, many of these unadopted roads have existed for a long time, often since the 19th century. The reasons why they were never adopted may be forgotten. However, this House of Commons briefing is not primarily about these historic examples. Their concern is with the transfer of responsibility for roads on a new development to the highway authority. No highway authority will want to take on responsibility until roads are made up to an acceptable standard.

There is a map here of roads maintainable at Public Expense in Northumberland:

<https://tinyurl.com/23bu2p2w>.

The Parliamentary research briefing covers the history, and legislative background. It summarises where responsibilities currently fall. It makes it clear that the underlying issues are essentially national in nature. There's no evidence that Alnwick is exceptional. However, in Alnwick we have examples of historical roads that have never been adopted as well as new developments where responsibility has not yet been transferred to the highways authority. So the story is potentially of interest to members across Alnwick.

Although the road network has long been called the 'Kings Highway' responsibility for maintenance was unclear until a 1555 Statute placed the obligation for upkeep of public highways on the parish. A subsequent act of 1691 for the better repairing and amending the Highways required each parish to appoint a Surveyor of Highways (or Waywarden) and placed them under the jurisdiction of the Justices and the County Quarter Sessions.

Under the Highways Act 1835 inhabitants only had a duty to repair a highway once it was formally adopted. This didn't change the underlying principle that responsibility for repair of highways remained with inhabitants, but it meant that roads could be created which nobody had to repair. This remained the case until the Highways Act of 1959.

The 1959 Highways Act superseded 60 or 70 earlier acts, as far as maintenance was concerned divided highways into three

main classes: (1) highways repairable at the public expense; (2) highways repairable by private individuals or corporate bodies; and (3) highways which no one is liable to repair. It also replaced the concept of highways repairable by the inhabitants of an area by that of highways maintainable at the public expense.

The current law in England and Wales is the Highways Act 1980. Most roads are now a public right of way, publicly owned and publicly maintained. They are referred to as "highways maintainable at public expense". Ownership rests with either the local highways authority (in our case Northumberland County Council), or, for trunk roads, with the Department for Transport (National Highways). Roads that are not

maintainable at public expense are referred to as private or 'unadopted' roads. These can still be a public right of way, but the public generally do not contribute to their upkeep.

Although the local highway authority is not responsible for maintaining a private or unadopted road it can intervene to repair it. Responsibility for maintenance rests with the *frontagers*. Frontagers are the owners of properties with frontages on such roads. This includes properties adjoining. The authorities

can order the frontagers to carry out repairs, and if the order is ignored they can carry out the work and recover the cost from the frontagers.

There is provision for *unadopted* roads to become "highways maintainable at public expense". This requires a formal adoption by a resolution of the local authority. The local highway authority will normally require

that the road is first made up to an acceptable standard. This has become an increasing issue as local authorities have faced cuts to their budgets and sought ways to ensure they are not taking on new liabilities.

On a new development the highways authority is not obliged to adopt an 'unfinished' road, or to bring it up to adoptable standard, unless they have made a prior agreement with a developer.

The Department for Transport has published an advice note on highways adoption, which is intended for planning authorities, local highway authorities, developers, people living in private streets, and people planning to purchase property. This provides general advice, and covers

private roads that were never intended to be adopted, adoption on residential developments, and the options when things go wrong, or when disputes arise.

The House of commons Library Briefing can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/4rsabykz> and the DfT advice note can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ynthvrc>

The duty of maintaining all the public highways within each Manor was cast, without remuneration or reward, upon the inhabitants of that Manor. Exactly on which inhabitants the duty fell, in what manner it was performed, and how far the Court Leet or other tribunal enforced it on defaulters, remains, prior to the Act of 1555, provokingly obscure. The story of the King's Highway. Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

...the free and easy Intercourse and Means of conveying and carrying Goods and Merchandizes from one Market-town to another, contributes very much to the Advancement of Trade, Increase of Wealth, and raising the Value of Lands, as well as to the Ease and Convenience of the Subject in general... Preamble to Act for the better repairing and amending the Highways, 1691.

Parishes should be formed into Districts, with a view to the employment of permanent and salaried Officers, of sufficient skill to superintend the Management of the Highways. Select Committee on County Rates (sub-committee on highways and public buildings) 1834.

Narrowgate and Fenkle Street: 1862

The following description of Narrowgate and Fenkle Street in 1862 is taken from an article on the sanitary condition of Alnwick, published in the trade magazine, "The Builder", on Feb 22nd 1862. The text box explains why they chose Alnwick.

Narrowgate: This is part of the great North road over which the mail coaches used to run. In its northward direction we see a newly-built shop, show-room, and dwelling-house of Mr. T.

Robertson, cabinetmaker, upholsterer, auctioneer, etc. remarkable for two square fronts to the shop, having large sheets of plate-glass, and lintels of solid stone, about 10 feet long, facing a large plain house, set back behind area railings, occupied by Dr. Easton; a few small shops and another good stone dwelling-house; and at the upper end, facing the approach to the castle, more small shops, with the house above them let out in rooms.

It was in one of the upstairs rooms in this narrow street that the terrible fever carried off the family of Mr. Howey Sharp, as before related. The exciting cause may be seen in the rear: the moisture from crowded middens and muddy yards soaking through the dwelling. In the other direction Narrowgate is more strictly commercial, and is a double line of shops; those

of Adam Robertson, house decorator; Ainsley, provision dealer; Trotter, watchmaker, mechanic, and photographer, of whom we procured the photograph from which our view of Alnwick Castle was engraved; Milne, baker; Finlay, spirit merchant, and others. Fenkel-street branches off from this in a forked direction, having for its apex an extremely ornate stone Gothic building, originally intended for a savings bank, but now occupied as Hunter's hair-cutting saloon. This is one of those expensive attempts at Gothic architecture which, about a quarter of a century since, did so much to bring Gothic architecture into disrepute, originating a general conviction that what was Gothic must be expensive. Built at a cost of nearly £2,000, it has been recently sold for a third of that sum. Ascending Fenkel-street we pass the tar, iron, seed, flour, and general grocery warehouses and



tobacco manufactory of E. Thew, merchant; the office of the local Journal; T. Buddie's large cabinet-maker's shop; the handsome bank premises of Messrs. Lambton, which was an elegant facade designed by Mr. Green, of Newcastle, architect, but a circular archway having been recently inserted in the north end of it, in place of a straight lintel, a lop-sided appearance has been given to it; the post-office, which is also the private residence of the postmaster, Mr. G. Tate, F.G.S.; the town-hall, erected about a century ago; the offices of Mr. W. Foster solicitor; of the coroner, Mr. W. Hardy; Miss Ooxon's first-class inn; the smaller "Nag's Head," where yet 150 horses at a time can be baited on fair days; a few good shops; H. Ver-

non's, telling railway time to the passers by; H. Fairbairn's; Thompson & Wright's; and the bright and well-stocked shops of Messrs. Landells, and of Messrs. Donkin, drapers, and we are at the end of this street, and at the foot of a wide open road lined with houses leading up to the moor called Clayport. We must add that the premises on the west side of Fenkel-street just traced, are traversed by passages leading to back premises, stables, inns, breweries, a candle factory, close rooms to let, in which, as shown by the black dots on the cholera plan of the town, several of the deaths from cholera occurred.

This rear district is now sewered and supplied with water; but is still lamentably behindhand in all secondary improvements; the paving, the scavenging, the removal of ash-pits and dung-middens, and piggeries, require looking after.

The duties of Boards of Health are scarcely understood. These bodies sometimes labour under the impression that, having called in an eminent engineer to consider the state of the town under their charge, and to carry out drainage and water-works, their duties are over - that their battle is fought; when, in point of fact, their duties may be considered to have commenced, or at all events the responsibilities connected with them to be unshared, from the day that these primary works were completed. Influenced by the latter consideration, we have surveyed Alnwick - a town which, nine years ago, was placed in the hands of Mr. Rawlinson, who laid down a comprehensive drainage and a water supply. Previously to this good work, in 1849, the town had been visited by cholera. As if to show the efficacy of the improvements, in 1857, when the fell disease again swept over the metropolis and large towns, with devastating effect, the shadow of its wings wrought no ill in Alnwick. But at the present writing an epidemic - scarlatina - is raging with virulence. As near as may be computed, 10 per cent of the population either are, or have been, visited with some form of this disease. The local Mercury records, among other cases, the deaths of four individuals in one family: - "On the 20th ult., the infant daughter; on the 23rd ult., aged 32, Sarah, the wife; 24th ult., aged 2, Mary Jane, the daughter; 28th ult., aged 9, William, the son; being four of the family of Mr. Howey Sharpe."

News in Brief

The Local Government Association sees smaller settlements outside metropolitan areas as vital to the social and economic fabric. They anchor rural economies, act as gateways to the natural environment, and sustain a unique way of life. But they face challenges from rising housing costs, struggling high streets, and pressures on funding and governance, all of which threaten their long-term sustainability. Housing-led regeneration has emerged as a key strategy to help address these challenges and is having a transformative effect. By leveraging housing development as a driver of investment and renewal, local leaders are meeting immediate housing needs while delivering broader economic and social benefits.

Recent research has identified the need for different growth models for town centres. Towns can no longer rely on retail as a means of ensuring vitality. Residential development is often cited as a suitable tool to promote renewal. There are different approaches: conversion of larger retail units, conversion of spaces above retail units, redevelopment of council assets, development on fringe sites. The report identifies a number of barriers and challenges, along with case studies that demonstrate how these can be overcome.

See <https://tinyurl.com/7a3hyf68>

In the past the fees for Planning Applications have been set nationally, despite local variations in cost. Under the Planning and Infrastructure Act Local Planning Authorities will be able to set their own fees. The Local Government Association Planning Advisory Service has been gathering intelligence on the extent to which current fees reflect the true costs. The types of planning application that represent the biggest challenge to cost recovery were:

- Removal or variation of a condition following grant of a major planning permission (Prioritised by 39%)
- Discharge of conditions (Prioritised by 35%)
- Outline applications, especially major (Prioritised by 32%)
- Householder applications (Prioritised by 23%).

See <https://tinyurl.com/bdfrh3u3>



Sam Fender was awarded the Mercury Prize last year for his critically acclaimed album 'People Watching'. He donated the £25,000 Prize Money to Music Venue Trust, in recognition of the vital role grassroots venues played in his early career. MVT represents hundreds of Grassroots Music Venues and Sam wanted to support its ongoing work protecting and securing the future of such venues across the country.



MVT are campaigning nationally for community ownership of Grassroots Music Venues as community hubs, incubators of talent, supporters of regeneration and the local economy, education and employment.

Could such a national community of interest attract investment to Alnwick?

<https://www.musicvenue trust.com>

Historic England have published their strategic plan for the next five years. It sets out how they will focus their expertise and resources to deliver the greatest public value. In the introduction co-chairs Claudia Kenyatta and Emma Squire describe three convictions at the heart of the plan: that heritage can contribute powerfully to help the country meet pressing societal issues – supporting places and communities and helping create good homes, good jobs and good growth. Aspects that are likely to be welcomed in Alnwick include the emphasis on creation of value through Heritage-led growth; capacity building, partnership working and creating places where people feel proud to live, work and belong. Find more here:

<https://tinyurl.com/27p3jxt2>

Historic England have published a minor revision to Advice note 18 on Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency. Mostly this includes minor clarifications. On Conservation Areas it now states that Local Planning Authorities should have prepared a conservation area appraisal analysing the sig-

nificance of the area. Accompanied by management plans, these can include policies relating to energy and carbon efficiency.

<https://tinyurl.com/2ckwhb7u>

With the Government setting an ambition for overseas visitor numbers to rise from 42.5 million in 2024 to 50 million by 2030, MPs have launched an inquiry into the future of the UK's tourism industry. The inquiry will consider whether its current policies are supporting the growth, international competitiveness and long-term resilience of the sector.

See <https://tinyurl.com/mrwtyum5>

Stan Beckensall's archive of over 1,500 panels of rock art in Northumberland is once more available online.

In 1966, Dr Stan Beckensall (1932-2025) encountered rock art at Old Bewick. This set in motion a remarkable journey, which included recording about 1,500 panels of rock art in

Northumberland and beyond. The archive was previously made accessible in the form of a database driven website

hosted by Newcastle University. This was taken down in 2015, but has now been reinstated. The new website features full access to the original archive with new search and other features. See:

<https://www.northumberlandrockart.com/>

Alnwick Town Council has now submitted the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan to Northumberland County Council. NCC are satisfied that the submission is complete and complies with legal requirements so it will now proceed to independent examination.

Recent Officer reports on planning applications suggest that they are taking the view that, in determining a planning application, the current version may be afforded little weight at this stage but it can be a material consideration.



Example from Old Bewick

Local Plan scoping consultation

Northumberland County Council proposes to prepare a new local plan for the county and is seeking views on what the plan should contain and how local communities and other stakeholders should be consulted. A 'Scoping Report' has been published which sets out the reasons for the start on a new plan. Changes to national planning policy is a significant reason, particularly a major increase in the new housebuilding requirements for the county.

The scoping document indicates that the Government's new housebuilding target for Northumberland is to deliver 34,000 new homes over the 20 year plan period. The new plan will need to identify where this new development will be accommodated. The scoping report does not identify possible sites but considers what the options for growth might be. In all scenarios, most settlements will see building. The development of greenfield sites and sites beyond existing towns and villages will be required. Some land in the Northumberland Green Belt (in the south and south east of the county) will need to be developed.

The scoping document identifies seven 'key priority themes' for the new plan:

- Meeting housing needs (in addition to identifying land for new homes the plan will address issues such as the need for affordable housing and second homes)
- A prosperous economy (to include the identification of enough land and support for town centres).
- Healthy and inclusive communities (to include such things as health promoting design, access to green infrastructure and healthy transport).
- Well-designed places (to include county wide design principles and site specific design requirements).
- Conserving and enhancing the environment (to include policies to protect important habitats, landscapes and the historic environment and policies to reduce the risk of flooding).
- Infrastructure (to include sustainable transport, community infrastructure, green infrastructure and so on).
- Using resources wisely (to include minerals and waste management related policies and policies for renewable energy development).

Development

Rank the four growth options and explain the reason for your choice: • Proportionate distribution of development • Development focused on the main settlements with additional growth in South East Northumberland • Development focused on sustainable transport • Development focused on sustainable transport with a new settlement or settlements. Do you have an idea for an alternative growth option?

Our response:

Development should be directed to places where it is needed and where there is market demand.

To sustain a vibrant community Alnwick needs to attract families of working age and offer a range of opportunity for young people. Our built and natural heritage is an important

part of the appeal to residents, visitors, and potential investors. To ensure that the environment is protected it is essential that development is carefully targeted and managed. None of the proposed high level options address that need.

A strategy for the distribution of development cannot reasonably be suggested before a comprehensive land availability assessment has been completed.

Most communities will expect the local plan to adopt a hybrid approach that balances the benefits and limitations of different options.

Housing

Please rank the priorities to show which are most important to you: • Sites for housing • Affordable homes • Specialist housing • Coastal and rural homes. Are there other important issues that the Local Plan should address?

Our response:

The refresh of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan highlighted issues with availability of affordable housing and the need for a choice of size, type and tenure adapted to the needs of a changing demographic. In that context all of these priorities are important.

Other concerns in the Neighbourhood Plan include improvements in respect of energy efficiency and the response to the climate emergency; developments that integrate with the landscape setting; respect for the living conditions of existing residents; connection with transport networks; effective residential use of existing stock; response to the growth in home working and encouraging permanent occupancy in the conservation area.

A prosperous economy

Please rank these priorities: • Employment sites to support economic growth • Policies to support town centre vitality • Policies to support the rural economy and manage tourism. Thinking about the economy are there other important issues?

Our response:

Alnwick already benefits from a successful independent retail sector, and from growth in Northumberland's tourism sector. Both will continue to make a substantial contribution to the local economy. However, in both cases, growth potential is limited and diversification will be required to address the ambitions outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan for a wider range of employment opportunities, wealth creation and the flexibility to meet potential change.

We can no longer rely on the retail economy alone to drive town centre vitality. The town centre is at the heart of the community and a positive approach needs to encompass residential development, and location of public services and community facilities.

Healthy and inclusive communities

Are the suggested determinants of health the right priorities. Please rank these determinants. • Healthy homes • Neighbourhood design • Enhanced community food infrastructure • Natural and sustainable



Local plan continued...

environments • Healthy transport. Thinking about healthy and inclusive communities. Are there other priorities?

Our response:

We are not qualified to prioritise policy solutions, but would draw attention to the increasing disparity in the ranking of health outcomes demonstrated by the most recent Indices of Deprivation published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Health rankings are improving in Alnwick's less deprived neighbourhoods but worsening in Alnwick's more deprived neighbourhoods.

Planning must take account of Alnwick's aging population. For example, the difficulties in accessing secondary care that are faced by those who rely on public transport.

Well-designed places

Other than for new housing, which types of development do you think could be improved by countywide design requirements? • Retail and leisure development • Commercial properties including industrial and office buildings • Community buildings and spaces, including public realm • Infill development • Extensions, conversions, and alterations • Other – please specify • None – I do not think we should include any countywide design requirements. Which broad categories of place types do you think could be improved by countywide design requirements? • Towns • Villages • Rural areas outside of towns and villages • Town centres • None – I do not think the Local Plan should include this type of design policy. Do you think there are other approaches for well-designed places that the new Northumberland Local Plan should consider?

Our response:

Refresh of the Alnwick Conservation Area Character Appraisal is overdue.

We would like to see Design Guidelines that take account of wider socio-economic context. For example, prioritizing the use of local materials does not only contribute to local character. It can also have wider implications for local skills, employment and sustainability.

Conserving and enhancing the environment

Please rank these priorities to show which are most important to you? • Biodiversity and nature recovery • Landscape • Historic environment • Flooding and coastal change • Agricultural land • Other. Thinking about the environment. Are there other important issues?

Our response:

These priorities cannot be ranked. All are essential for the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of our communities.

In the context of built heritage, we are concerned about the growing number of vulnerable heritage assets. Causes highlighted in evidence to Parliament's inquiry into built heritage include: rising costs for owners and operators of heritage, market failure in the way that heritage assets are



funded and maintained, a crisis in terms of skills and capacity, and risks to fabric posed by climate change. In this context a Local Plan can only offer a partial solution, but can make an important contribution.

We support the proposed detailed landscape character assessment for the county and urge that this should include historic landscape factors. Policy for the historic environment should emphasise the importance of conservation area appraisals and management plans.

Infrastructure

Please rank these priorities to show which are most important to you?

• Sustainable transport • Ensuring infrastructure is delivered with development • Utilities • Strategic transport improvements • Green Infrastructure • Other (please state below). Thinking of infrastructure. Are there other important issues?

Our response:

Now that the position on dualling of the A1 has been clarified there is a need to secure safety improvements to the existing road and to protect the option of dualling of the A1 in future.

Policies should protect existing green infrastructure as well as seeking new green spaces in new developments.

Using resources wisely

Please rank these priorities to show which are most important to you: • Sites for minerals extraction • Safeguarding mineral resources • Safeguarding minerals infrastructure • Waste facilities • Renewable energy • Other. Thinking about resources: Are there other important issues?

We have not commented on the basis that national policy already provides an appropriate level of protection on the issues that are of local concern: windfarms, solar farms and energy efficiency of traditional buildings.

Get involved

Do you have any comments on the draft Engagement Strategy?

Our response:

Northumberland's historic buildings and landscape make a significant contribution to the character of the county, the local economy and the well-being of residents and visitors. So it is surprising that there is no explicit reference to protecting our built and natural heritage in the current Local Plan Vision.

Lack of paragraph and question numbers has made it difficult to develop a response.

The suggested ranking of priorities for each 'key priority theme' is not helpful. In most cases the options presented are complementary and a balanced policy approach will clearly be required.

Members who would like to contribute to future consultations on the local plan are encouraged to get in touch.



Planning Matters

The planning application for improvements to layout, safety, accessibility and the quality of the public area at Alnwick bus station was approved on 20th April. We raised a number of points, and were supported by Alnwick Town Council. These related to the need for an ongoing maintenance plan; the scheduling of works to the bus station building and arrangements for management of the facility. The officer's report did not address our concerns: they felt that these issues could not be controlled through planning conditions.

These plans for the bus station are overdue and welcome. It is no surprise that the application has been approved. However, this does not mean that the need for maintenance, improvements to the building itself, or management of the facility should be ignored and we have since learned that the NCC Cabinet have agreed, in principle, for the Council to progress towards entering into a lease arrangement to enable delivery of the improvement scheme.

There is an application for erection of three cottages on the field south of Greensfield Farm that has attracted considerable comment. This field lies within the current settlement boundary. However, the First Review of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan redraws this part of the settlement boundary. The proposed development, and any further extension would then lie outside the settlement boundary and would be contrary to Policy ADNP S1 of the Submission Draft. The justification for redrawing this part of the settlement boundary is set out in section 6.9 of the Settlement Boundary Methodology and Background Paper which deals with Impacts on Landscape.

The land initially falls from the A1 before climbing steadily to Alnwick Moor so there is very little screening or softening

landscape. Adjusting the settlement boundary seems a reasonable approach to reduce the visual impact of development south of the town.

We also drew attention to the importance of retaining access to the neighbouring footpaths and the deteriorating condition of the unadopted access road.

We also objected to an application for Advertisement consent for a projecting sign on the Dirty Bottles (30, Narrowgate). The Alnwick Shopfront Design Guide states that "*Projecting signs should be painted timber or cast metal. Plastic is not acceptable*". The proposed hanging sign does not comply because it is proposed to cover it with a digitally printed vinyl. Alnwick Town Council agreed.

In April we objected to a proposal for replacement doors and uPVC windows on the Former Library in Green Batt. The Town Council and Conservation officers also objected and the application was subsequently rejected. A new application has now been submitted which proposes to replace the existing windows with a timber-framed, double glazed, alternative. In light of Historic England guidance on this issue Conservation Officers from Built Heritage and Design are comfortable with the principle of the replacement windows. They have, however, requested more detailed drawings to ensure that the proposed windows reflect the proportions, profile, detailing and finish of the existing windows as closely as possible.

In April there was an application for change of use from Use Class E to Use Class B8 for the building at the front of Sawmill Industrial Estate. Use Class E applies to Commercial, Business and Service premises such as shops, banks, restaurants, and offices. Use Class B8 covers air stor-

age, distribution, and warehousing. We did not comment, but took an interest because South Road is identified in the Neighbourhood Plan as one of the key approaches to the town and this is a prominent building on that approach.

Officers judged that since this proposal brings a site back into employment use it re-

ceives strong support from policies in the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. They did not think the development results in unacceptable adverse impacts on amenity.

The Local Plan also requires that development proposals should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. This proposal involves no change to the external appearance of the building. So a pedant might argue that it can hardly make a positive contribution. Nevertheless, permission has been granted and that seems an eminently sensible outcome.

An application at Butterworth Dental Practice (17, Bondgate Without) seeks Listed Building Consent for repair and conservation works to existing building fabric including Chimney flashing repairs, Repointing of roof upstand brickwork, Coping Stone Repairs and Internal chimney repointing. Conservation Officers from Built Heritage and Design support the proposal, as it is aimed at rectifying defective detailing and materials that are causing and exacerbating decay in the building. The application was subsequently approved, subject to some conditions on methods and materials.

At the Police Station they want to improve acoustic and thermal insulation and propose to replace 12 steel single glazed windows to the rear 2 story extension with new black UPVC double glazed windows, retaining existing profile and opening arrangements. The building is in the Conservation Area, but not listed and these windows are not visible from the road so we felt no comment was necessary.

There is a proposal for a new single storey detached house with detached garage on Land North East of the stables of Greensfield Farm. This is adjacent to a public right of way, but the Rights of way officer has no objection providing that Public Footpath is protected throughout. We have previously commented on applications in this area that they are close to the listed Greensfield Farm and the condition of the access road is of concern. Alnwick Town Council has objected. Conservation Officers are broadly comfortable with the proposals, but consider that the proposed garage would result in harm to the setting and recommend removal of this aspect of the proposals.



Existing settlement boundary



New, proposed boundary



Quiz: Coastal Conveniences

The Northumberland Coast Path opened twenty years ago and the King Charles III England Coast Path opened earlier this year. So this picture quiz is based on locations along the Northumberland Coast. All are within 20 miles of Alnwick.

In peak tourist season residents expect to be asked for help finding local facilities. We know that members of Alnwick Civic Society take their responsibilities seriously. So this is an opportunity to refresh our memories of some indispensable amenities. From how many of these locations could you confidently direct a visitor to the nearest Public Toilet?

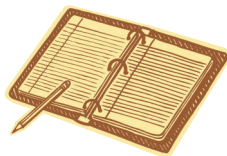
If you want hints, you might like to check this map of Public toilets in Northumberland. It has details of opening times and access restrictions: <https://tinyurl.com/3fbpkcph>.

Otherwise, you will find the answers on the back page.



For your diary

11th - 20th Sept: Heritage Open Days. See page 2, and <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/> for updates and further details.



30th Sept: Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings. With Jules Brown and Maria Carballeira from Historic England. St James's Church. Doors open at 7:00 for 7:30 start.

14th Oct: Alnwick Playhouse: Adapting to a changing role in a landmark year. With Damian Cruden, Artistic Director. St James's Church. Doors open at 7:00 for 7:30 start.

November: Any Questions: Further details to follow.

...and more

To 30th Aug: Ration Books to Moon Landings: Bailiffgate Museum. A thought-provoking in-house exhibition of life in the Alnwick area from 1950 to 1970, drawing upon the museum's extensive archives of items, written material and sound recordings.

19th - 20th Sept: Northumbrian Piping Weekend. Alnwick Castle welcomes a weekend long celebration of the history and music of the Northumbrian Pipes. With an archival exhibit, spotlight talks along with try-the-pipes sessions and dancing.

To 18th Oct: When Britain Stood Still: The General Strike at 100. Newcastle University, Philip Robinson Library. To mark the 100th anniversary of the British General Strike, this exhibition reveals how workers, politicians and trade unionists faced the challenge of the General Strike and how its opponents organised to resist it. Check details on library website: <https://tinyurl.com/464duy38>

17th Oct – 13th Feb 2027: Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Poetry: Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne. The first major exhibition to explore the connection between Pre-Raphaelite art and poetry in depth. This innovative exhibition will visually demonstrate the interconnections between fine and decorative art and the written word.

27th Oct: Alnwick Castle Book Talk with Dan Jones - Castles: A Fortified History of the World. See <https://tinyurl.com/mr44smuc>



250 years ago

On 27th August 1776 the Battle of Long Island was the first major battle to take place after the United States declared independence and the largest battle of the Revolutionary War. At the time Hugh Percy commanded the Fifth Regiment of Foot. The British defeated the Continental Army and gained access to the Port of New York, which they held for the rest of the war.

As the son of a Duke Hugh Percy was already styled Earl Percy. By 1777 he achieved the rank of Lieutenant General but fell out with his superior and resigned his command. In 1786, following the death of his father, he became the Second Duke of Northumberland. In 1816 the Percy Tenantry Column was erected in his honour. He died in 1817.

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: Brian Lamb

Trustees: Chair: Peter Reed; Membership: Gill Parker; Honorary Secretary: Sue Smith; Treasurer: Tim Smith.

Web: www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk

Email: contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk

Bluesky: [@alnwickcivicsoc.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/alnwickcivicsoc.bsky.social)

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

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

Substack: alnwickcivicsociety.substack.com

Charity registration number: 1197235

Heritage at risk: report your concerns here:

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



Quiz Answers

- A) Warkworth. There are toilets at corner of the castle car park, in Brewery Lane and next to the Warkworth Beach Car Park.
- B) Boulmer. The toilets are on the west side of the road, between the beach car park and the Fishing Boat Inn.
- C) Cresswell. The toilets are in the village centre, opposite Cresswell Ices and the path to the beach.
- D) Alnmouth. The toilets are at the bottom of Pease's Lane, near the Clubhouse of Alnmouth Village Golf Course.
- E) Amble Queen Street. There are toilets facing the Town Square and on the Quayside.
- F) Druridge Bay Country Park. The toilets are at the visitor centre / cafe, at the edge of Ladyburn Lake, next to the main car park.
- G) Craster. The toilets are near the entrance to the Quarry Car Park.