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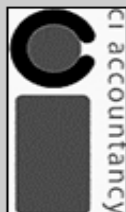
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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Our front cover image this month is called *Nurse 2020* and comes from local artist John Turner. John made the image to celebrate and acknowledge all those working in the NHS during the pandemic. The winged angel nurse carries a face shield and the clinical waste of Covid, denoting the huge effort and perils all our amazing NHS staff are facing every day in helping us through the crisis.

John made the image for NHS Charities Together, the umbrella organisation for the country's NHS charities, which all raise money to support the NHS. The Urgent Covid-19 Urgent Appeal has provided support for staff and volunteers working to battle the Covid crisis, and support for patients, such providing electronic-tablets so they could stay in contact with loved ones.

The Nurse 2020 image features on cards which will be available to buy from Hexham General Hospital via the Hexham Hospital League of Friends, with all monies raised going towards the Covid-19 Urgent Appeal.

John lives in Haydon Bridge, having started his career in the south east, graduating from Newcastle Polytechnic (now the Northumbria University) before moving into the advertising world in London, where his work could be seen on the London Underground and beyond.

'When making *Nurse 2020* I wanted to create an impactful image that provokes a response, reminding us all of everything our NHS staff are going through. My work is usually small and large abstract images, made with oils and acrylics, so this was a departure from that, but one I felt would reflect a post-Punk attitude to changing the world for the better, creating an image people would immediately have a reaction to.'

You can make a donation to NHS Charities Together at their website: www.nhscharitiestogether.co.uk/donate

Alex Kinsey, Editor.

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We try to have the March edition of The Haydon News printed and distributed early in the month. Please submit any articles for inclusion by the 12th of the previous month.

Thank you

All correspondence, contributions, adverts and crossword answers to:

editor@haydon-news.co.uk
or

Claire's Newsagents 11, Church Street.

Present : Cllrs J. Bates, I. Burrows, E. Charlton, E. Faulks (Chair), B. Howard, JA. Kirsopp, K. Richardson, A. Sharp, R. Snowdon, D. Thornhill and J. Thompson; C. McGivern (mins).

1.Apologies – none were received.

2.Declarations of interest – none were received.

3.Minutes of previous meeting – having been circulated, were agreed and signed.

4.Report from Northumberland County Council-

At Shaftoe First School the new kerb works have now been completed outside the school and Wise Academies have been in touch to say thank you for getting the work done. They feel it has improved safety for the children.

The flood team are still chasing up the issue of drainage at Elrington junction and Cllr Sharp hoped that progress will be made shortly on getting the drainage work done so that improvement works can be carried out on the junction.

Cllr Sharp has had discussions with Neil Snowdon about the old speed restriction sign coming from the west into the village. I checked this earlier in the week. The sign is now back on but it states 30mph, this needs to be changed to 20mph with the rest of village.

The works package for Ratcliffe Road has now been issued to the area office who programmed the work. Work will commence next Wednesday. Cllr Sharp was frustrated that the scheme had taken so long to start.

The road sweeper has not yet been down Land Ends Road and it will be coming back into the village next week to do this. They will also be asked to do any other areas in the village which require attention.

The LED light on Crook Hill has now been changed. Cllr Sharp still needs to resolve the issue of the light situated along the footpath at the front of the properties on Belmont Gardens.

Additional signage on the road beside the play area at the Showfield has now been done and 20mph signs have been put on the lampposts.

Cllr Sharp had been informed that the potholes between the Vauce Farm to Lough Green, Langley have been inspected but he needed to check if any work has yet been done.

Regarding the footpath and access problems beside the sports hall and around the high school the Enforcement Officer told Cllr Sharp *“I have now visited the above site, and the fencing and gates which lead into the school grounds from Belmont Gardens is not a public right of way, therefore no planning breach has been made”*. He will be discussing this matter further with the various interested parties.

The damaged fence behind the Community Centre has been reported to Karbon Homes to see if works can be done. They have inspected the fence but not yet replied to Cllr Sharp.

With regards to the Local Transport Plan Programme for next year, road improvements are going to be carried out in the following locations –

- A686 Langley Wood, phase 2
- Low Hall Farm to Haydon Bridge which will complete the road surfacing.
- The C287 Ridley Hall to Carts Bog.
- The U7066 Ridley Hall.
- The C284 Lowgate to A69.
- Elrington to Spa Well junction.
- Cllr Sharp has requested that NCC carry out a Speed survey on John Martin Street.

5.Highways-

a) Traffic issues on John Martin St had been reported to the Police and Inspector Garry Neill replied saying *“We have tasked our local officers to pay some attention to the area and assess how things are.”*

b) Tim Fish (NCC) replied to a request for improvements to the footpath between Station Road and the riverside picnic area saying *“I'll take a look next time I am in Haydon Bridge. It's unlikely that we will be able to carry out work this financial year now as our resources are largely committed on projects, but we may be able to put something together for the future if it is necessary.”*

c) Cllr Sharp said that Garry Neill was very keen to help

parishes and he suggested that he should be invited to a Parish Council meeting as soon as it was possible to meet in person.

d) Cllr Snowdon said that the road-sweeper had been in the Woodhall Mill area but had not cleaned out the gulleys.

6. Lighting –

a) Cllr Charlton confirmed that the old streetlight Crook Hill had now been replaced.

7. Planning applications – none had been received.

8. Accounts – as in budget.

Budget and precept

The draft budget was approved, as were the revised burial fees. The Clerk said that the Parish Council would be due a VAT refund of at least £1,000, and it was agreed to use this money to keep the precept to the same rate as last year at £46,000.

Cllr Kirsopp questioned why so many donations were paid year after year. It was agreed that the Clerk would request an account of how donations were spent in the parish. Cllr Thornhill said that he still found it extremely irritating that the PC had to pay NCC £2,000 to keep the public toilets open over the winter months.

9. Correspondence –

a) Alex Campbell of NCC had replied to the PC's queries about the new estate at Greenwich Gardens. This response had been circulated.

b) Deborah Bell had contacted the PC to report fire damage and littering at Geeswood. It was agreed that this would be reported to Garry Neill for the Neighbourhood Policing team to deal with.

c) Cllr Snowdon noted that a 3 piece suite had been dumped near the football field. This has been there for some time.

d) Martyn Smith had contacted the PC to inform them about the catering business he was setting up. This will be called The Bay Trees and will offer gourmet burgers and wraps, with an emphasis on local and sustainable. This was welcomed by the PC and they suggested that he should avoid Tues and Thurs

evenings when catering vans already visit the village. Cllr Thompson said that these businesses offered the village more choice and would draw in people for takeaway food, who might then take up the offer from existing businesses.

10. Parish projects –

a) **Development Trust** – Cllr Charlton said that the survey returns had been received and were now being collated. The team is busy analysing them. She went on to say the library had been very busy. Although closed to library users the back door had been blocked and a mouse had eaten through a pipe leading to a flood once the heating was turned back on.

11. Any other business –

a) Cllr Thornhill said that he was involved with West Tyne Junior Rugby. They were not able to train at present due to the restrictions, and unable to use the fields at the High School even when they are allowed to train again. They wondered if they needed to ask permission to use the field at Shaftoe Green. They would arrive with their own kit and leave it as they found it. Cllr Bates explained that the land was owned by the Langley Estate, but rented by Wise Academies. The area is not fenced and she did not think they would be refused. Cllr Thornhill will pass this on.

b) Cllr Thornhill said that Bernard Stone had offered the PC a load of wood-chippings. The PC had said they would like to use them to mulch the flower beds and he asked where they should be unloaded. It was agreed that they could be put on the grassed area the PC maintains near Hordley Acre House.

c) Cllr Thornhill had been in contact with a young man called Guy Bentley who is working on his Duke of Edinburgh award. He plans to carry out litter picking around the village and had asked which areas he should prioritise. The East and West approaches to the village were suggested.

d) Cllr Snowdon said that there had been an update on the High School's progress in the Hexham Courant. He felt it was a rather negative report. Cllr Howard suggested that the PC should not respond until the publication of the official Ofsted report. Cllr Sharp said that he would check the details of this latest visit with NCC.

Present : Cllrs, E. Charlton, E. Faulks (Chair), B. Howard, J. Keyte, A. Kirsopp, K. Richardson, A. Sharp, R. Snowdon, and J. Thompson; C. McGivern (mins).

1.Apologies were received from – Cllrs Bates, Burrows, and Thornhill.

2.Declarations of interest – none were received.

3.Minutes of previous meeting – having been circulated were agreed and signed, with the following amendment –

Cllr Charlton said that at the end of the November meeting she had raised the issue of the new labyby on the estate and resident's parking. Cllr Sharp said that he had spoken to Karbon Homes about this and they said they would deal with it. The parking is for the use of ALL residents. The Parish Council had written to both NCC and Karbon Homes about points that needed to be addressed in relation to the new houses, and they were still waiting for a response from KH.

4.Report from Northumberland County Council –

The drainage works at Elrington junction have now commenced by the Landowner and Cllr Sharp will press the County Council to get the work done on the junction as soon as this has been completed. Cllr Snowdon confirmed that two large ditches had been created and were now directing the water under the road. Cllr Sharp thanked Richard Snowdon for his help with this.

The new 20mph sign has been erected coming into the village from the west but the old speed restriction sign has not been replaced. It was agreed that the old flashing speed sign should be removed.

The works package for Ratcliffe Road has now been issued to the area office. The island at the end of Church Street has now been removed and this is definitely an improvement. The rest of the work is planned to take place between the 4 January 2021 and the 1 February 2021.

The road sweeper has now been down Land Ends Road and Ratcliffe Road has also been done. Cllr Sharp thanked Cllrs Howard and Thompson for their help in getting the road clear of parked cars.

The issue of the light situated along the footpath at the front of the properties on Belmont Gardens still needs

to be resolved.

Karbon Homes will replace the fence behind the Community Centre, early in 2021.

Road re-surfacing between Low Hall Farm and Haydon Bridge will start shortly and this will complete the outstanding work.

The number of Covid cases has increased in Haydon Bridge and Haltwhistle over the last two weeks. There are now testing stations at Hexham and at Haltwhistle and they will remain until the 21 December 2020. Cllr Sharp had been in touch with Haydon Bridge High School to confirm that it is up to the school whether they stay open.

NCC is keeping public toilets open to meet the demand for more hand washing, and this has so far saved the parish £800.

5.Highways – Nothing to report.

6.Lighting – Nothing to report.

7.Planning applications -

20/03978/FUL Single storey conservatory to side elevation of Red House North Bank Haydon Bridge – no objections.

Cllr Snowdon drew Cllrs attention to a couple of applications regarding trees on the planning portal. The Clerk explained that tree applications were not sent out to the PC. It was agreed that this should be queried.

8.Accounts – as in budget.

9.Correspondence-

Keith Roberts had responded to a request to investigate fire damage and littering at Geeswood. He said that the site had been checked and would be kept in mind for future visits. He suspected that a rough sleeper had been using the area under the bridge.

10.Parish projects –

a) Development Trust – Cllr Charlton said that they had recently held a zoom meeting. Peter Fletcher will attend the January PC meeting to report on the recent survey. There had been a very good response and the results are being collated. However, a lot of people had

been asking for things for children, particularly the older ones. They are looking for contacts for football groups, and she wondered whether Cllr Kirsopp would supply a list of contacts for the various groups. Cllr Kirsopp agreed. Cllr Charlton said that following the problems with mice, Ian Foster had replaced the insulation in the attic. With regards to the library the volunteers are waiting until the area comes out of Tier 3, as most people who visit the library want to browse

11. Any other business –

a) Cllr Faulks said that there were always two pages of village notes in the Hexham Courant each week, but none from Haydon Bridge in recent times. Cllr Charlton explained that previously Karen Lumsden used to compile the notes from a book in the library, where people entered events in the village. A replacement is needed and Cllr Howard suggested a note in the Haydon News.

b) Cllr Sharp said that the Community Chest committee would meet again in February. If any group needed capital funding they should get in touch. He wondered about the Community Centre and Cllr Richardson said she would contact them.

c) Cllr Kirsopp asked why Parish Cllrs contact details were not published in the Haydon News. The Clerk explained that in the past Dr Ford had produced a shortened version of the minutes and she suspected that they had been left out recently because the minutes are now printed in full. She said that she had discussed this with the new editor and would be providing him with up to-date details.

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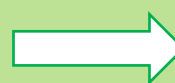
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Jo Thompson – (01434) 684376

CLIMATE CHANGE CORNER



From this



To this



Well, not quite, as the new 'No Dig' vegetable bed is made of our very first batch of homemade compost started in April 2020, and the first photo is the current heap with Christmas waste added!

When I discovered that not only could vegetable peelings be added, but also card, paper, tissue, coffee grounds, tea bags, spent brewing grain from my partners home brewing, shredded pruning's from trees (up to about a finger width) and weeds. I couldn't quite believe this would work! But due to the magic of fungi, which literally eat waste of many sorts, it really does. And not only do they break it all down, the resulting compost is vital for our soil. More on soil next month.

This month I'm thinking about waste. Composting so much of our waste has reduced massively what we put in our recycling bin. According to the Committee on Climate Change, (an independent statutory body that advises the Government on meeting its climate targets and monitoring progress towards these), emissions from waste are increasing, much from decomposing biodegradable waste in landfill. There are proposals in the pipeline, e.g. the new Environment Bill which is 'in progress' suggests separate collections of recyclable and compostable materials from households and businesses. And Defra's Waste and Resources Strategy aims to ban food waste from landfill by 2030 and other biodegradable waste (e.g. cardboard) by 2050.

However, there is little progress on this as yet, but much we can do ourselves. The best thing we can do is not produce so much waste to start with, especially as making and transporting products uses lots of energy in itself. According to the Soil Association, globally we waste a third of the food we produce. So have a think about what you put in your bin. How much food do you throw away and why? The Climate Assembly (2020) – where a range of people from across the spectrum of everyday life were randomly chosen to learn about and then discuss issues relating to climate change, recommend encouraging businesses that rent products, and also sharing of products, and increased recycling and upcycling. I wonder what initiatives could be (or are already being?) taken in the village? An upcycling business idea? A rail somewhere for unwanted clothes? A regular bring and buy sale? Let me know!

Siobhan Stephenson

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“Teaching is not a lost art, but the regard for it is a lost tradition.”

Jacques Barzun.

As the last of the summer rays faded into the chillier but golden shades of autumn, I began to settle into the steady but dominating routine of the school timetable. There was no traditional assembly to begin the day, except on a Friday morning when the entire school community used to gather in the cathedral. Begowned masters prowled the aisles, ready to berate any boy whose behaviour was deemed to be less than fitting, and I was allocated a position in the west transept. Once a month Holy Communion was celebrated and the occasion provided an amusing incident. The School Chaplain began the fairly lengthy process of blessing the sacrament, with frequent genuflections, accompanied by every single boy in perfect synchronisation with the celebrant! I tried to catch the eye of my more senior colleague on the other side of the transept for assistance and advice, only to catch him joining in with the communal obeisance; a clear case of, ‘If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em’, I guess. Not a single smirk was I able to discern and the whole operation was seamlessly staged. Incidentally, the very same gentleman of the cloth baptised my godson several years later and at one point almost dropped him; his other godfather was at the time a County cricketer and was able to react with amazing speed and agility to prevent a possible disaster, diving alongside the font and ending up supine at the feet of the chaplain, accompanied by much hilarity and a huge round of applause!

At the end of the service, I walked alongside another colleague and asked his opinion about the events we had witnessed and he taught me a very important lesson: avoid confrontation, particularly when you are at risk of losing face in front of a crowd. Sage words indeed, and advice to which I tried to adhere for the rest of my teaching career. We followed my Head of Department along the road back to our classroom block, still wearing gowns and, in his case, a mortar board. As a builders’ van passed him, the passenger stuck his head out of the window and shouted a most uncomplimentary expletive at him. As quick as a flash, my colleague remarked: “How on earth does he know?!”

The Head of Classics was certainly an oddball – most Classicists are – but ‘Flogger’ fulfilled all the requirements. Married but childless in his late forties, he lived in a small flat above his classroom, and possessed little in the way of management skills, communicating with me via notes left in my pigeon hole, never once did he come to sit in on one of

my lessons or instigate a departmental meeting, and steadfastly refused to let me know the code for the photocopier. At the time, all photocopying was charged to each department and Flogger was as tight with his budget as he was with his own money, claiming that low expenditure was one of his justifications for maintaining the viability of the Classics department. It was fairly well known that, in fact, the department spent nothing on photocopying as Flogger had, by hanging around the photocopier and making surreptitious a note of colleagues’ pin numbers, access to all departmental budgets and spread his expenditure equally. A creature of punctilious habit, he made the short journey along St Wilfred’s Street from his flat to the Common Room each evening at 9.00pm, smoke billowing from his pipe, to check his pigeon hole and make his immoral photocopies. Any worksheets I needed to produce were painstakingly created by hand on an ancient Banda machine, a spirit duplicator which had been dumped in an attic above the main school building. It was a filthy business and I invariably ended up besmattered with ink after using it for even the shortest run of copies.

Flogger’s dedication to inflected language stemmed solely from the academic disciplines involved and he steadfastly refused to include any aspect of ancient culture or history in his teaching; my attempts to introduce a programme of visits to museums, archaeological sites, talks by university lecturers and even an annual visit to Rome or Athens met with a resoundingly negative response. It was rumoured that had he won a scholarship to Cambridge on the strength of a photographic memory, justifying his sponsorship with a first class degree, an *avis rara* in the 1950s. He had visited neither Italy nor Greece, indeed he had never held a passport. He spend the first week of every August in a guest house in Filey, North Yorkshire, never accompanied by his wife, travelling by train as he had never learned to drive, and retired there when he finally hung up his gown and mortar board. He still resides in a nursing home there.

And the nickname, Flogger. One might assume that it stemmed from the days of regular and unrecorded corporal punishment, but I am assured that it came from the amount of work that he expected each boy to complete. For this reason, he was only interested in teaching the very brightest boys, with whom he formed rigorously intellectual but totally harmless relationships. Once, upon catching a boy whose attention had wandered, Flogger set him a large chunk of Vergil’s Aeneid to copy out by the following morning, accompanied by the immortal words: “And next time, boy, I’ll punish you!”

PLACES OF WORSHIP AND PAGES OF HISTORY

Part 2

(Continued from The Haydon News of December 2020)

This month, I continue my brief history of worship in the district. In Part 1 (December 2020) I recalled Haydon (Old) Church; Langley Chapel of St. Mary and St. Katherine; St. Cuthbert's Parish Church in Haydon Bridge; and St. John of Beverley Catholic Church. In this Part 2, I will take a closer look at the Non-Conformists and the first Haydon Bridge Methodist Churches.

I am aware that my history of worship in Haydon Bridge is necessarily brief and does not record a complete story; especially as accurate dates of early unofficial religious meetings are difficult to determine due to a disappointing lack of available evidence. I am, however, able to make some reasonable assumptions based on my knowledge of our social history. For example:

We know that Isabella Martin (nee Thompson), the mother of our famous Victorian artist John Martin, was from a family with a strong Protestant tradition and she held daily prayer meetings for friends and neighbours, between 1789 and 1803, at her Haydon Bridge homes at East Land Ends *(See below)*, Low Hall, and in a cottage on the north side of the river - next to today's Community Centre.



Two views of the Martins' Cottage at East Land Ends

(It was John Martin's early familiarity with the Old Testament that inspired his remarkable Biblical paintings and engravings.)

The first official Protestant meeting house in Haydon Bridge was registered on May 20th 1814, *(See over page)* but we can be sure that there were many whose faith and mission led to unrecorded meetings and assemblies in the Chapelry, both before and after that date.

James Smith, for example, lived at 'Beggar Bog' around 1850, having arrived there as a Christian missionary from Aberdeen. The Christian Witness Magazine of 1865 records that:

'James (Smith) had his attention specially directed to a very barren district called Beggar Bog, hard by the Roman Wall. Here he excited much interest, gathered a congregation and succeeded in erecting a neat chapel where the gospel is still preached to the rustic people.'

In the same district, it is also clear that by 1906, mission services were held regularly at Grindon School.

Further clues are contained in a wonderful 1909 publication by W.M. Patterson: 'Northern Primitive Methodism'. *(Ref. Chapter XIII ... 'The Heart of all England')*

According to W.M. Patterson, after 1824 and before chapels were built, non-conformist services were established in the villages east and west along the Tyne Valley, and among local preachers were Davison and Hutchinson of Dean Raw and Corbitt and Symm of Haydon Bridge.

Patterson continues:

'The valley of the Tyne was evangelised and nurtured by Godly men and women many of the old ministers *(Whom he interviewed before his publication of 1909)* speak in warm terms of the three brothers of the Lowes family, who were farmers of Cowburn and Galisharigg (sic), just under the Roman Wall.

Thomas Lowes' wife had three notable cousins: John Martin, the famous Victorian painter; his brother Jonathan, who set the York Minster on fire; and William, who claimed that he was the original designer of the High Level Bridge in Newcastle.

What an attractive past Haydon Bridge has had! What men it has had, and what men it still has.' *(Quote: circa 1909)*

The facilities for the early non-conformist services were often basic, however:

When John Snaith entered the circuit in the early 1860s, his first Sunday services were at a Haydon Bridge camp meeting and he was highly pleased with the members. But, he was shocked with the place of worship - 'a sort of barn, at the end of a yard, and the worshippers had to pass unsavoury stables and byres.'

Continuing with my history of Haydon Bridge's non-conformist worshippers, I'll take a closer look at our early Methodists:

Wesleyan Methodists:

It was towards the end of the eighteenth century that Thomas Pearson left his Haydon Bridge home to walk the 60 miles round trip to Morpeth to listen to that great preacher and the founder of Methodism, John Wesley.

Thomas was determined to spread the Methodist word in his home village of Haydon Bridge as one of John Wesley's assistants, and on May 20th, 1814 Thomas Pearson's home at Haydon Bridge was registered as a Protestant Meeting House.

The 1814 registration reads as follows:

'I John Scott of the Market Place Hexham, Minister of the Gospel do hereby certify that a certain dwelling house situated in the Chapelry of Haydon Bridge in the Parish of Warden and County of Northumberland now in the occupation of Thomas Pearson is intended forthwith to be used as a Place of Religious Worship by an assembly or congregation of Protestants and I do hereby require you to register the same according to the Provisions of an Act passed in the fifty second year of the reign of his Majesty King George the third entitled "an Act to repeal certain Acts, and amend other Acts relating to Religious Worship ... Assemblies, and persons teaching or preaching therein.'

Witness my hand, 20th Day of May One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fourteen. John Scott'

From that day in 1814, the kitchen of Thomas Pearson's home became the first official place of Wesleyan worship in Haydon Bridge.

When Thomas Pearson's kitchen became too small for the large congregation, it is said that the worship was held in a farmer's barn where tallow candles were held so that the

preacher could see to give out the hymns and the text. Subsequently, the Wesleyans worshipped in a small chapel on the south side of the street that was to be named 'Ratcliffe Road' and, in 1855, Whelan wrote in his Directory of Northumberland, of the Chapelry of Haydon: 'The Wesleyan reformers here have two chapels, one at Haydon Bridge and the other a small stone edifice near Langley Mill erected in 1849.' (*The Langley chapel was built specifically for workers at Greenwich Hospital's Langley Lead Mill and the adjacent Blagill Mill.*)



The workers' cottages at Langley Mills, where a Methodist Chapel was built for the employees.

Such was the zeal of the people in Haydon Bridge called Methodists, it wasn't long before a third place of worship was established on the south side of 'Ratcliffe Road'; for a 'reforming' group of Wesleyans called the United Free Methodists.

In August 1873, the foundation stone was laid for a new Wesleyan Chapel on the north side of 'Ratcliffe Road', and when it was opened on June 10th, 1874, the original congregation of Wesleyans were welcomed into an up to date and permanent place of worship in Haydon Bridge.

In its early years, Haydon Bridge's new Wesleyan Chapel (*On the site of today's Community Centre*) attracted congregations of 250 village people and their children. Around 1923, however, discussions considering co-operation with other Methodists in Haydon Bridge were taking place and on June 3rd, 1945 the Wesleyan and the Primitive Methodists merged and, following a series of meetings, it was agreed the united congregations of Wesleyans and Primitives would be best served by using the existing Primitive Methodist Chapel on Church Street as their home. The chapel of the breakaway group of 'United Free (Wesleyan) Methodists', on the south side of Ratcliffe Road, (*See above*) had closed some time before.

... to be continued next month.

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St. Cuthbert's Church in February

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At the point of writing public worship is paused in our Church buildings. At this time we are maintaining daily Morning and Evening Prayer at 9am and 6pm on our Facebook page and offer a fuller service with hymns and reflection at 9am on Sunday morning.

St Cuthbert's Haydon Bridge remains open for private prayer each Sunday at 10.30am and on Wednesdays at 2pm.

As the situation develops we will communicate any changes through out Facebook page and our website.

WHO AND WHERE

The names and phone numbers of the Clergy who minister in Haydon Bridge

Rev. Dr. Benjamin Carter,
St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church
The Vicarage, Station Yard.
Tel. 01434 688196

Deacon Anne Taylor, (with the Methodist Church)
Woodville' Redesmouth Road, Bellingham NE48 2EH,
Tel: 01434 220283

Father Christopher Warren, (With St John's Catholic Church)
c/o St. Mary's, Hexham.
Tel. 01434 603119

Methodist Church during January-February 2021

Following District Guidelines, the Methodist Churches in the whole of the Tynedale Circuit will remain closed during the current lockdown period. However, the weekly 'Worship at Home' Service Sheets continue to be circulated to all our members and friends both in and around the village and also throughout the North Tyne area. Various online Circuit Resources for joining a service on Zoom or on a Phone Line as well as links to various Bible Studies and other activities are available during this time, please contact Church Secretary Kathleen Armstrong for details.
katharmstrong50@yahoo.co.uk

May God continue to guide and bless you all
Deacon Anne Taylor

St John of Beverley Catholic Church



Father Jim Dunne who joined the Heavenfield Partnership and moved into St. Oswald's Presbytery Bellingham in September 2020 to assist our Parish Priest, Father Chris Warren, introduced himself to readers in the November issue of the Haydon News. Unfortunately, Father Jim suffered a health scare later that month and whilst much better now, he is not allowed to drive until given all clear.

In the meantime, Father Chris will celebrate Mass on Sunday mornings at Haydon Bridge at **9.00am** and on Thursday mornings at Haltwhistle **9.30am**.

At the time of writing this public Mass is still allowed but as the situation changes by the day due to COVID-19, all up to date information can be found on St. Mary's Catholic Church, Hexham Web Site.

St Mary's also produce a weekly Newsletter covering all our churches news which can also be found the website.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER- March 5th, 2021.

We are encouraged by the National Committee to go ahead with this if not now maybe later in the year – The Methodist Church in Haydon Bridge will be this year's hosts, again, we will be governed by the situation we find ourselves in.

HANDS – FACE – SPACE AND WHEN YOU ARE IN CHURCH, WEAR A NICE WARM COAT AS WINDOWS AND DOORS MUST BE LEFT OPEN!

I wonder how many e-mails we have sent over Christmas and New Year. What on earth did we used to do before they filled every corner of our lives – and then along came Zoom!! No need to send letters up the chimney to Santa, just invite him to a Zoom meeting and tell the guy face to face what you want!! but misunderstandings still happen. Like the lad who had had to send a slightly difficult e-mail to his Gran thanking her for the three socks which she had knitted for him because his mother had informed her by e-mail that he had grown another foot.

One notable absentee from the month of **November** was the usual spell of cold weather in the first or second week. On the whole this was a relatively warm and dry, but very windy, month and the first of the winter frosts didn't put in an appearance until the 28th. Unsettled cyclonic weather continued from late October and the 1st/2nd were very windy and wet, the former being the wettest day of the month(12.0 mm). As pressure rose in a ridge of high pressure, most of the cloud cover cleared away causing night temperatures to fall. However, as the wind veered to easterly the weather became very dull with low cloud and frequent fog. Between the 6th and 9th the fog lingered all day in places.

Less settled conditions associated with a complex area of low pressure returned after the 10th bringing much milder, but windy and wet, weather. Very mild air visited briefly behind a warm frontal system between the 16th and 18th, reaching 15 deg C on the 17th. Although pressure increased, weather patterns were dominated by visiting frontal systems so remained variable. Night temperatures fell when clouds cleared but they remained above freezing except at the ground surface in sheltered locations where there were isolated frosts..

Polar air arrived from the north-west from the 26th onwards which brought about a drastic fall in temperature and the first air frosts. Snow was beginning to threaten by St Andrews Day.

The absence of any meaningful cold weather during November led, not unexpectedly, to a more substantial

cold spell over Christmas and New Year. **December** was dominated by complex cyclonic weather systems characterised by changeability, and frequent rainfall. Winds were, however, quite light.

The month opened with a declining anticyclone in charge, but as pressure fell, frontal systems brought in a heavy cloud cover with decreasing temperatures and heavy precipitation over the 3rd and 4th (28.0 mm), some of which fell as sleet, the first of the winter ahead. This unsettled feel to the weather continued for the two weeks with rain registered every day. With the air arriving from a relatively warm Atlantic, frost was not a problem but conditions were very murky at times. Air temperatures were well above the seasonal average over the 14th to 19th (exceptional 13.7deg C on the 18th). While much of the rain fell from gloomy grey skies, some fell during heavier showers in fresher breezes.

A transient ridge of high pressure saw the arrival of a cold polar airstream and consequently lower temperatures. Night frosts arrived on the 21st and persisted until the end of the year. With the lower temperatures came sleet and snow, and the presence of storm "Bella" from the 26th meant that the weather over the festive season offered a cocktail of strong winds, drifting snow, and flooding. (on Christmas Day we experienced an official "White Christmas", and Boxing Day 20.1 mm of rainfall in a very strong wind).

And finally, Gladys tells me of a WWII veteran in her village who had been awarded a prestigious medal during the North Africa Campaign. During the course of a talk to the local Women's Institute about his wartime experiences he had recently 'come clean' with the reason why he received the award. During a routine desert patrol he had sent a message back to base which he coded inaccurately. What should have read "Camel Ruptured" arrived at its destination as "Rommel Captured".

Monthly Weather Summary
(Haydon Bridge : Height 162m asl)

Month	Average Max. Temp (Daytime) deg C	Relative to long-term average degC	Average Min Temp (Night-time) deg C	Relative to long-term average degC	Rainfall mm	Percentage of long-term average
November	10.1	+1.4	5.2	+1.7	40.1	49%
December	6.1	+0.1	2.1	+0.9	90.8	104%

Max/Min Air Temperatures and Rainfall Totals

Weather Highlights during 2020. February probably provided the greatest amount of weather interest. There were three named storms of which brought strong winds and rain. There was widespread flooding across the UK and the South Tyne recorded several very high flows. By the end of the month the average early-morning windspeed was an exceptional 16.9mph and the total rainfall was 163.2 mm (6.4 inches). In total contrast, March saw the start of a spell of exceptionally dry weather. Between March 21st and April 28th there were only 3.9 mm of rain. Although there was a little rain during May, the first substantial rainfall did not arrive until June 4th (15 mm)), by which time there were signs of extreme dryness in vegetation and in water courses. Under a clear night sky and in a

cold easterly airflow the air temperature fell to -1.6 degC early on May 6th which resulted in a damaging frost, which set back the start of the growing season for many gardeners. In contrast, a forest fire occurred on Haydon Fell on May 31st. There were some spells of exceptionally warm weather across the southern half of the British Isles during the summer months with air temperatures reaching the upper 30s deg C. The highest temperature reached in Haydon Bridge was 29.1 degC on June 24th. Although there were some sunny and warm days during August, two more cyclonic storms brought 67 mm of rain between the 23rd and 27th and the South Tyne ran high. As a final weather farewell to 2020, snow arrived in Haydon Bridge on Christmas Day and we experienced an official "White Christmas".

JOBS FOR YOUR GARDEN IN FEBRUARY

Adam 07585115000

heritagecountrygardening@gmail.com

February is turning into one of the coldest months of our winter so there's not a great deal of growing going on in the Tyne Valley! This just means that now is a great time to get on with preparation for the spring and summer with any landscaping or repair projects.

Pruning and Mulching-

Focus for February is around pruning and getting the ground ready for summer, especially around any perennials that were left long for winter interest.

- Cut back any deciduous grasses left long over winter
- Prune any summer flowering deciduous shrubs such as Buddleja davidii, Hydrangea paniculata, hardy fuschias etc. but delay pruning any spring flowering shrubs until after they have fully flowered or you may lose this seasons blooms.
- Type 3 clematis can be cut back to the lowest pair of strong buds.
- Cut back any ornamental vines, ivy, Virginia creeper and Boston ivy now if they need containing.
- Prune Wisteria by taking the side shoots back by 2 or 3 buds, but avoid cutting off flower buds.
- This is the last chance to prune apples and pears as the sap will start flowing again in March onwards. If you have any autumn fruiting raspberries and blackcurrants you can cut these down to the ground now to stimulate new canes.

Planting and Weeding-

- Any spring hard pruning shrubs such as Buddleja can be trimmed by half to prevent wind damage.
- If you notice the leaves on potted Cyclamen turn yellow you may be overwatering them.
- Plant Lily bulbs in pots for flowers in the summer.

February might not be the most rewarding or pretty month in your garden, but there's still plenty to keep your gardener busy to make sure that you have the longest display season later in the year. If you need help with any of the above, or more specific advice on any of the points, please feel free to get in touch.



THE HAYDON NEWS CROSSWORD

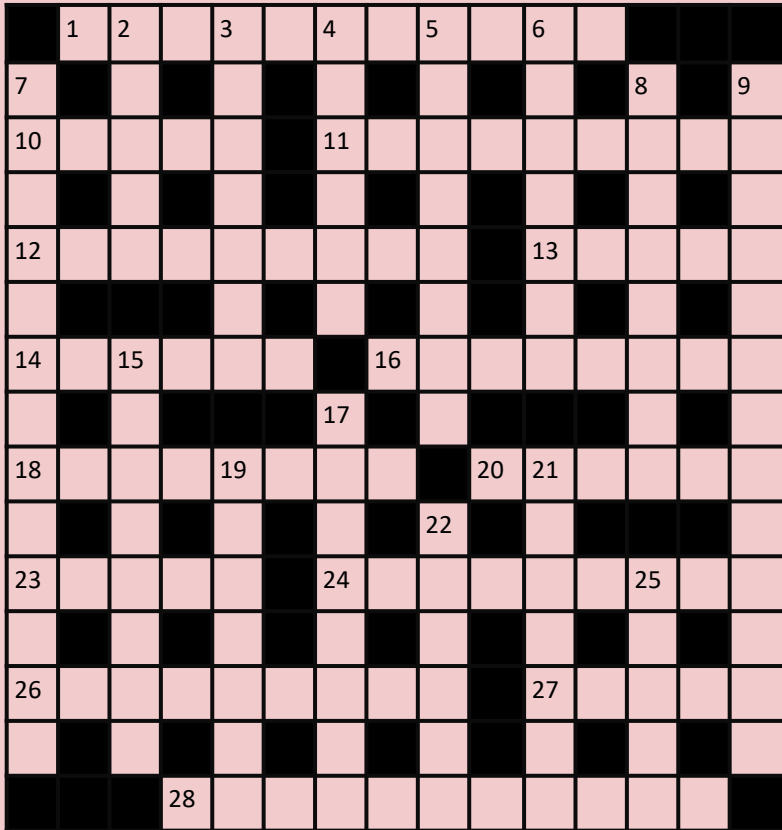
February 2021

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Please drop answers off at Claire's by 12th February
There were no correct entries to December's crossword

NAME

ADDRESS



ACROSS

1. School hall parliament (11)
10. Opera held dear by Ventnor maestro (5)
11. Surname of film star, a friend of dancer? (9)
12. Final point of last corporation (9)
13. Disallow loud noise in Alberta (5)
14. Cold that is easily managed (6)
16. Change ogre not right to be very close friend (5,3)
18. Painter of broken-winded horse (8)
20. Wolseley's buzzer (6)
23. After publicity politician can extemporise (2,3)
24. A bean which can be blown (9)
26. Yob holding cricket winnings goes on spending spree (6,3)
27. Don Juan round after European city (5)
28. Hang on programme (4,1,6)

DOWN

2. Bird up in washing powder without hollow (5)
3. Alter millimetres to impede (7)
4. At home, French quick to attract (6)
5. Every other Esk oil terminal eyed spills seriously (8)
6. Make a count and be left with none anyway (7)
7. A French place quilt filling can be gripping (13)
8. Heard part of leg make a show of Republican party (4,4)
9. Dupe the van of headless people in opposition (13)
15. Wonder who is posh but not too bright (8)
17. Nets cover hairdo on the esplanade? (8)
19. Bleat about gold on picture (7)
21. Infested across chickens' enclosure (7)
22. Worker involved in hoax or a feathered boxer (6)
23. Edge of Long Island American college (5)

December crossword answers:

ACROSS

1. LIQUID ASSETS
9. NEIGH
10. INTROVERT
11. INTERNAL
12. OSSIFY
13. GESTURED
15. WELDED
17. HAEMIC
18. BREUGHEL
20. WITTER
21. BRIGHTON
24. BRASSERIE
25. COMET
26. BLOODTHIRSTY

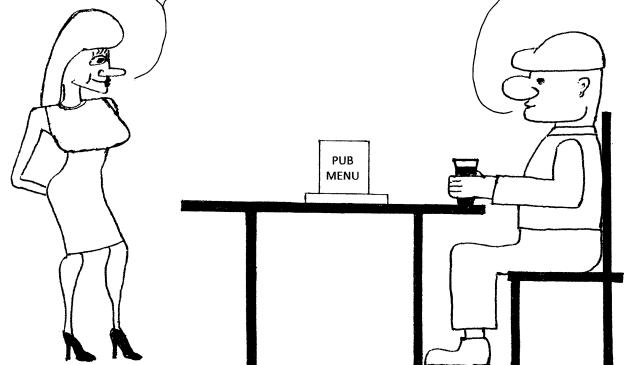
DOWN

1. LANDING
2. QUINTESSENTIAL
3. ICHOR
4. ANIMATED
5. SETH
6. TROUSSEAU
7. BEHIND THE TIMES
8. STAYED
14. UNIVERSAL
16. PRURIENT
17. HAWNBY
19. LENGTHY
22. GUCCI
23. OGRE

RAYDON FRIDGE and DUSTY BINN

I've been shopping, Raydon, I bought baby carrots, baby broccoli, baby beetroot, baby courgettes, baby beans and baby corncobs.

You're not expecting, Dusty, are you?



A spray of fumes; a bold stroke of colour. With every inhale a sharp chemical scent made the vibrant splashes and duller tones of the wall blend together in a mirage of unfinished faces. I stepped back, taking some deep breaths of the bitter evening air to clear my head. I couldn't make any mistakes. This had to be perfect: I owed her that. I switched to black now, getting started on the flowing midnight curls that was her hair. Looking down at the photo of her in my hand, I studied those beautiful locks. All I focused on was the spray of the paint, replicating and immortalising every tumble and curl of her hair in a painted mural. I had been commissioned to paint a tribute to two car crash victims on the side of a warehouse wall. They had been a young couple, engaged, and had been killed in a hit and run right in front of this building. The police had never found the culprit; it was a quiet, industrial part of the city and there was little traffic and few working security cameras. The owner of the warehouse had wanted a tribute made for such a tragic loss of these young lives and when I saw the advertisement, I just couldn't seem to refuse it. With a final sweeping stroke, I completed her hair. I looked back at the photo, checking that I'd got it perfect. I ignored looking at the person next to her in the photo. I carefully avoided looking at their eyes.

Their bodies were mostly complete now. All that was left to paint for her was her eyes. I had been up since dawn in this lonely part of the city, slaving away to make her perfect. Spending hours on her delicate arms and legs, putting part of my soul into every stroke of rose colour until I had perfectly replicated her favourite red dress. I had immaculately sculpted her neck and face and hair with each sharp spray of chemicals and colour onto the melancholy wall until she had practically come to life. The man I had also painted well, although with less accuracy. He was just wearing the jeans and t-shirt he was wearing in the photo and his face had gone a bit misshapen. I did feel guilty, but I did not care to correct the error. It was getting dark, the fatigue catching up to me. My head was spinning from the fumes from the paint, as well as spinning from the thoughts I had pushed down deep that were now creeping up on me. I didn't think I could do this anymore, but I knew I had too. I had both their eyes to complete and I couldn't let my feelings get in the way. I was going to do this for her. I looked back at the photograph. I looked at her eyes.

Her deep brown eyes felt like they were boring into my mind. Like they were reading the thoughts and memories I was pushing down below the surface of my guilt. She always seemed to know what I was thinking. Always seemed to know what I needed and how I was feeling. Her kind words and thoughtful smiles would always make me feel better, no matter what the situation. She was such a wonderful, beautiful person - her eyes bright and lovely. But her eyes were not bright in this photograph. They were piercing and accusing, as though she could tell through a barrier of paper and time who was looking at her image. As though they were demanding, "Who are you to come here? Who are you to paint us here? Who are you to still look at my face and the face of the man I love?" She was holding hands with the man in the picture. Hands twined; their bodies comfortably close: I felt a surge of jealousy. I immediately felt guilt flood me and I squashed that feeling quickly. I shouldn't feel jealous of a dead man. But I couldn't help it. I still couldn't help it even after everything. His eyes in the photo looked lovingly at her, as her eyes looked accusingly at me. My ex-fiancé Eleanor and the man she had loved. The man who she left me for. The man who, despite everything I'd done, I still hated.

The hate. I still remember the hatred I felt the first time I saw them walking together down the street, hand on hand. She had left me for him just one month prior; she'd said she just didn't feel the same anymore. That she'd found someone she loved. That she had only stayed the last few months because she didn't want to hurt my feelings. The strange thing was that I never felt very angry at her. I wanted her to be happy. But I hated him. I hated him and his face that I seemed to see everywhere; in the crowd, in my dreams, in my paintings. After I heard the news that they had gotten engaged just eight short months after she left me, I just saw him more and more. Oddly, I rarely thought about her anymore. I still loved her, but it was as if something had taken over my mind and all I could think about was how much I hated him. Every time I painted on a wall it was as if the paint and its scent would seep into my head and make my thoughts hazy and rage filled. Most of my work was around this area and every time I completed one it was as though a fraction of an idea had been solidified in my head. I felt almost compelled to keep coming back to these streets; bringing it to life with colours and faces.

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Two residents of Haydon Bridge are enjoying an unusual January treat – while helping residents recycle their Christmas trees. Neville Longbottom and Luna Lovegood – named after Harry Potter characters – are two young goats and have been delighted to provide their recycling service while the snow has fallen this year.

Janice Cumberland and her daughter Lucy have kept the goats on their land near Haydon Bridge since the summer. Janice explained; 'There's not much food on the bushes for them at this time of year and I'd read about another person with goats who said that they love eating Christmas trees.'

'I thought I'd give it a try and put a request on Haydon Bridge Matters Facebook page. We've had a huge response from local residents and have collected thirty trees so far, which is keeping the two of them very happy!'

Neville and Luna were an eighteenth birthday present for Lucy and the family have been surprised at how fun the goats have become. 'They're cheeky and inquisitive; we weren't expecting them to be quite the characters they are. They're eager to play and explore, although they aren't too keen on rain and snow!'

The trees are providing great grazing for the two youngsters, while also giving Janice and Lucy an opportunity to meet lots of new people. 'We only recently moved to the area, so it's been lovely to meet and talk to people while collecting the trees during lockdown. It seems some of the people nearby had been watching the goats each morning, so it's been nice to hear that they're making more people smile.'



MARY BEST : 1929-2020

It is always sad to learn of the death of former Haydon Parish residents who have left the area, but kept in touch through The Haydon News.

Mary Best moved to Haydon Bridge with Tony her husband, in 1972, and lived at 'St. Aidans' on Belmont Gardens. Haydon Bridge was convenient for Tony's employment as manager of the National Westminster Bank at Hexham. Originally from Glasgow, Mary met Tony Best through a mutual friend in the R.A.F. and they were married and lived in Chesterfield where Tony was born in 1923. Moving around the north of England with the Nat West, Mary and Tony found their favourite place when they moved to Haydon Bridge and St. Aidans. Mary and Tony made many good friends in the area, particularly on Belmont Gardens; George and Agnes Scott being, probably, the closest although now both now sadly gone.

Mary was a volunteer at Oxfam in Hexham for many years and when she suffered complete loss of hearing in her sixties, continued to work there behind the scenes. The Best family attended nature and local history rambles in the parish, led by Billy Tait, Charlie Coombes and others; of

which their son Andrew expresses the fondest of memories. After Tony's retirement, Tony and Mary travelled a lot, and delighted in inviting friends back to Haydon Bridge to show them the sights of Northumberland, of which they were incredibly proud.

Tony Best died in 2007 aged 84 years, at home after a short illness, and he was buried in Haydon Bridge. Following Tony's death, Mary with her deafness and mobility issues was unable to stay on her own at St. Aidans and moved to Gloucester to live, first with her daughter Carolyn and then to a nursing home where she died just a month short of her 91st birthday. Mary Best was cremated on December 7th, 2020 with a COVID-19 friendly ceremony for close family and friends, and when the pandemic has eased and the Australian branch of the family can travel, in line with Mary's wishes she will be interred at Haydon Bridge with Tony.

The Best family were very much part of our village: Tony and Mary's son David and his Australian wife Lee also lived here on Alexandra Terrace; anyone who frequented the Anchor Hotel in the 70's and early 80's will remember them well. And also, our thanks are due to their son Andrew and his wife Lisa (nee Scudamore) for this short memory.

Dennis Telford

Despite the restrictions due to Covid19, the Steering Group has continued to make progress on work to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. Once approved by the community and county council the plan will become a formal part of planning policy for our Parish and will be used to make decisions on planning applications. It will also include a set of community actions that will sit alongside the policies.

The following key pieces of work have been completed:

- Housing needs assessment which provides an assessment of the future housing needs for the parish, this includes the need for affordable housing;
- Availability of community services and facilities across the parish;
- Mobility and transport, which looks at car parking, public transport, rights of way and cycling issues;
- Household and business surveys.

There is more information about all of this important work on the parish website, as well as the other work that has been undertaken to inform the preparation of the plan. For more information visit: <http://www.haydon-bridge.co.uk/community-plan.php>

The parish council is delighted with the level of response received to the household and business surveys. We received 173 responses (17%) to the household survey and 28 responses to the business survey. The full survey results are available on the parish website.

Here is a summary of the key findings from the two surveys.

Household survey-

86% of respondents live in Haydon Bridge and 14% in other parts of the Parish. Although those responding were slightly skewed to older age groups there was still a wide age spread of respondents - 44% of respondents were aged 65+ and the remaining 56% aged from 16-64.

Living and working in the parish-

The top 5 things people value about living in the parish are:

- Lovely countryside and wildlife
- Local shops and services
- Green spaces and walks close to the village

- Access to major routes/transport links
- Village/community unity of spirit

Generally people feel that Haydon Parish is a great place to live. Nobody said that Haydon Parish is not a good place to live.

By far the biggest area for improvement relates to more and better parking, damaged roads, traffic speed and better road signage. Other areas for improvement relate to: shops and services (in particular a café/coffee shop); better community provision for younger and older people; better access to high school facilities out of hours; and improving the general appearance of the village.

The kind of place residents would like Haydon Bridge to be in 10 years' time, is: friendly; safe; attractive; affordable; tranquil; and accessible.

94% use the internet for social contact; followed by 43% working from home – speed of broadband was a limiting factor for one third of respondents (same level in business survey).

In terms of employment: 51% are retired; 26% in full-time and 16% in part-time employment. 14% of people in work are self employed. Just over a quarter of people in employment work in the parish, highlighting the importance of the local economy.

There is a high level of support (nearly 71%) for the Neighbourhood Plan seeking to allocate land for different types of business use (similar level of support in the business survey).

Sustainability and the Natural Environment-

As a Parish we are very reliant on fossil fuel (more than 70% of households - 66% on oil and 13% on liquid gas. There is a very positive attitude to developing renewable energy, but a big knowledge gap about renewable energy options e.g. air source heat pumps.

There is strong support for other environmental initiatives, including: community tree planting scheme (including help with planting, and gifting/loaning land) and community orchard; small-holdings and habitat creation projects (e.g. wildlife ponds); and enhancing wildlife corridors.

The riverside area is the most valued area to residents from both wildlife and landscape points of view. Other areas are valued too including Haresby Lonnen; Tony's Patch and Springwood/Threepwood.

Community facilities and services-

All community facilities and services are viewed as important to protect. The top ones selected are: newsagents; GP surgery; pharmacy; post office; garage; community centre/village halls; supermarket; pubs/clubs/restaurants; schools; butchers; library; churches.

By far the biggest gap identified is a café/coffee shop, followed by facilities and services for young people, a Saturday market, an indoor gym (also support for outdoor gym facilities), community learning, and facilities for older people.

Mobility and transport-

Over two-thirds of residents like Haydon Bridge's good transport systems/links to major routes. The main issues for improvement are: lack of and unsuitable parking; dualling the A69; better cycling routes within the parish and cycling routes to other centres (e.g. Hexham); better train services. 41% said they would like Haydon Bridge to be more accessible – easier for people with limited mobility to get around.

Other initiatives people would like to see are: electric charging points; car sharing; active travel routes (to school/work/service hubs); and better maintenance and accessibility of footpaths, including an 'adopt a footpath scheme'.

Business survey-

The 28 responses covered a wide range of businesses (some based outside the parish), with: 70% working from home; and 20% having separate business premises. About half are single person businesses; others have between 2 and 10 employees. The customer base is mainly local or regional, but there is a proportion of national and international as well.

There are a range of challenges faced by local businesses including: premises (1 in 5 will new or additional premises in the next 5 years); parking; external factors such as Brexit and Covid; sustainability and funding; and lack of time to market and scale up.

The main ways in which the Parish Council can support

business retention are: promotion of a business forum (businesses indicated interested in talking and working with each other); and developing planning policies that support different types of business development in the parish, including allocating land for business use.

Next steps-

The key task over the couple of months is to use all of the evidence gathered and community feedback to prepare a draft neighbourhood plan. This will include both planning policies which will guide future development and also community actions for other things that do not require planning permission. The parish council hopes to consult on a draft plan in the spring.

...Continued from page 17

Each completed image brought me satisfaction alongside the fury and confusion. It was as though the paint was trying to tell me something I did not understand. Something I did not see through the haze.

I was jolted out of my thoughts by the sound of a car going past. It was the first car I had heard in hours. Not many cars come past this industrial area. But I came here though, didn't I? I looked up at my painting. Their eyes looked back at me. When had I given them eyes? I couldn't remember. I couldn't look away from their eyes, from their unsmiling faces. Had I painted them with smiles? Their accusatory eyes locked me in their gaze. I couldn't remember what her eyes had been like that night, in front of the warehouse. I only saw his. Through the haze in my head and the window of my car I had seen him. He had turned and saw me. I saw his eyes widen; I think I blacked out. I didn't even really know after it happened whether it had been an accident or not. And I didn't realise until I got out of the car that he hadn't been the only one outside of the building.

The gaze of their paintings still locked me. The chemical fumes of them seeped into my mind and seemed to hold me there like an anchor. Dimly, I heard an engine rev up behind me. Lights illuminated my completed portraits.

We hope you've enjoyed reading Annabel's short stories. If you would like to write something for our next issue, please email editor@haydon-news.co.uk

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Every year, the members of staff at Haydon View and Lowgate Care Homes work tirelessly to ensure their residents have an absolutely amazing Christmas, with as much fun as possible. Unfortunately, 2020 was to be a very different year. Many residents had not seen their families since March: there would be no carol singers from the local schools, no visits from Santa Claus and the staff were completely overwhelmed with the extra work Covid-19 had caused in order to keep their residents safe.

Staff from both care homes mentioned to our group that they were upset that they might not be able to provide the Christmas they wanted to for the elderly people in their care. We decided that it was only right that the community of Haydon Bridge step in to provide as much Christmas Cheer as we could so that the care homes could concentrate on their essential work of looking after residents.

We started to plan to provide a card and a present to every resident, but the people of Haydon Bridge and beyond were not having that. One present? One card? The community decided that Santa was delivering more than that on Christmas Day!

Suddenly, it became a little overwhelming to say the least, as it was much more than was planned. However, Katie Murray (whom I now count as a friend), rode to the rescue. In her own words:

“My Nan is currently in a care home, with us unable to visit. I remember sending her 1kg of jelly beans (she requested jelly beans) and how happy she was with them when I rang and how much joy it brought such a small thing and I wanted to help Hayley bring joy to other people in same situations as her. After sending a message to ask what she would like me to donate, we got talking and I offered to help with the organisation side. I was luckily enough to be off on maternity leave with a lot of free time. It was brilliant project to be part of, seeing pictures of how happy the residents were on Christmas Day and seeing how the community pulled together, having messages every hour with someone new offering a donation and people dropping donations and how generous everyone was at such a hard time financially for many. It really showed what an amazing community we live in and how many helping hands are out there.”

Without Katie and her amazing organisational (and wrapping) skills, this project just could not have happened. Huge thanks also need to go to Pauline and John Wallis, with whom the deliveries to the care homes would not have happened and the support throughout from them was amazing. We also contacted Shaftoe School, Queen Elizabeth High Schools, the local scouts and cubs in Haydon bridge to ask if they could ask their students to write a

Christmas Card for the 65 residents. Between the two schools and the scouts/cubs, there were over 700 cards written, a lot of them with the most amazing personal messages. In total, over 1,000 cards were received by the staff and residents of the care homes.

Cheryl Hutchinson, one of the Group’s volunteers said; ‘My Mum went into the home in October and it was our first Christmas not being all together so we wanted her to have a good one. I think the Covid group does an awesome job helping everyone in the village and if I can help in any way I’ll always try to do that’

Another volunteer, Caroline Thompson said; “I felt it was especially important to let those in care homes know they haven't been forgotten just because we can't get to visit them....we are all feeling the effects of not being able to have as much human contact as we would like, so any small gesture of friendship I'm sure will warm someone's heart

Haydon View Care Home were delighted with all the efforts that were made; “It took our staff all day to help the residents open their presents! Thank you to everyone at the Covid Group for taking the time to gather all of the donations for the residents and staff. They were beautifully wrapped and greatly appreciated.”

Lowgate Care Home commented; “I have seen first-hand how strong our elderly are. They are missing their loved ones terribly but just keep passing one day at a time, knowing the restrictions we are under now, will pass. In the lead up to Christmas we were inundated with lovely cards and pictures, from schools, youth groups and other individuals who wanted to be part of something very special.

In the end we had 84 bags of presents delivered by the Group! The gifts were so thoughtful and each one was gifted with the individual in mind. There was even a Christmas card signed by the Sunderland team for our avid life-long supporter!

What Hayley and her team did was amazing. The residents enjoyed the sentiment behind it and had a wonderful Christmas. We all feel very privileged that they chose to get involved with us.”

As well as local businesses donating to the cause, we received the most heart-warming gifts from the local community. So many people were involved in helping with this, I’d like to thank Cheryl Hutchinson, Clare Walton, Melanie Robson, Diane Larkin, Caroline Thompson, Jackie Stothard for all their hard work.

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