

SEDGEFIELD NEWS

Produced by volunteers for the people of Sedgefield, Bradbury, Mordon and Fishburn

February 2021

Deadline for March: Monday 15th February

Carols in the Car Park: top of Sedgefield's Christmas 2020 hit parade!

Brought to us by Sedgefield Area Churches Together

Many events have been cancelled in the last several months. Taking inspiration from Bishop Auckland, SACT organised Carols in the Car Park - a drive-in carol service, to replace the traditional gathering around the Christmas tree on the green. Sainsbury's enthusiastically agreed to host the event, which was fully booked.

Fishburn Band were keen to play their usual role and singers from the Lyric Singers and Lirica led the singing, while attendees sang to their hearts' content within their vehicles. The service was led by Revd. Elizabeth Bland, Team Vicar of the Parish of the Upper Skerne. Readings were given by participants from Sainsbury's, Bishop Middleham CofE church, Sedgefield Methodist Church and New Generation Church. A short and engaging message was delivered by Ciarán Kelly of NGC. Gary Philipson of BBC Radio Tees introduced the event, and broadcast a piece on it in his mid-morning show the following day.

Volunteer stewards from SACT, Sainsbury's, Sedgefield Harriers and the Sedgefield COVID Support Group enabled smooth management of vehicles. In total, about 50 volunteers helped to make this event happen with good nature and great team spirit – a testament to the generous community spirit which characterises Sedgefield and the surrounding area. Heartfelt thanks to you all.

Thanks also to County Durham Community Fund; PLW Event Management for PA and stewarding supervision; and of course, to all who came along to make it such a friendly, festive, community occasion. Here are just a few examples of the feedback:

"A lovely festive event! Thank you to everyone who enabled it to happen and to all the volunteers."

"Thanks to all involved, it was a really uplifting night. Whatever happens, hope you do it again next year in the same venue! Really special."

"Excellent! Thank you all for such a well organised event."



FOLLOW THAT! SACT is already considering how!



Covid-19 Vaccinations

An important message from Skerne Medical Group

We must ask that you only contact the surgery for an appointment if it is urgent, as we are deploying staff to the Covid vaccination programme and will only a limited number of appointments will be available.

Many of you are understandably anxious to know when you will receive your vaccination, but we must ask you not to call the surgery to ask. Everyone registered to this practice will be contacted with an appointment to be vaccinated as soon as your priority group allows.

Sadly, due to the ongoing coronavirus situation Sedgefield Ball Game will not be held this year.

Leading local residents, including those who have been prominent participants in the past, are urging members of the public **not to gather** on Shrove Tuesday.

The Ball Game will return in years to come, with all of its history, energy and excitement, but this year, **PLEASE STAY AT HOME.**

Durham Police fully support this message.

Laptops for Kids

Laptops for Kids is a charitable organisation that facilitates the donation, secure erasure and distribution of used digital devices, enabling children from disadvantaged backgrounds to have access to the technology they need to participate in remote learning. If you would like to help by donating a laptop which you no longer need, please visit www.ltfk.co.uk/northeast

Our thanks to Mike Roberts, who asked us to research this topic.

DNAs are a serious problem for the NHS

Within Skerne Medical Group, between 1st November and mid-December, DNAs (Did Not Attends) equated to 80 hours of wasted appointments.

Patients not arriving for Face to Face Appointments or being unavailable for a Booked Telephone Consultation are hugely costly in both time and money. We understand that things can change very quickly, but if you are unable to make your scheduled appointment, PLEASE let us know as soon as possible. Call the main surgery number and select Option 1. Remember, every DNA reduces the number of appointments available for other patients.

Verbal abuse

Most patients appreciate those who treat them, but a minority of people are abusive or violent towards staff and the NHS has taken a zero tolerance approach to this problem since 1999. Sadly, at this practice we have seen a noted increase in verbal aggression by patients during visits or telephone consultations. We recognise that there can be contributory reasons for difficult or challenging behaviour, but where this tips over into aggression or violence, we will adopt a zero tolerance approach.

We wish to reassure our patients that all staff try their very best to meet requests appropriately and hope you understand that while the pandemic situation continues, there may sometimes be unforeseen and unavoidable delays in meeting your requests.

The Ellen Timney Foundation

Thanks for your generosity at Christmas

We support local sick and disadvantaged children with anything from clothing and beds, through to specialist medical equipment which is unavailable on the NHS. A few months ago, I was worried that we would not be able to hold our Christmas Gift Appeal this year due to lack of fundraising, but Lesley Dexter approached me and suggested holding a gift donation at Durham Holiday Lets in Sedgefield.

The Ellen Timney Foundation is always grateful for anything that we receive and I thought it would be amazing even if we only received a few gifts, as so many people are struggling right now.

Without our support more than 500 children may have woken up to nothing from Santa. I wish that I could thank you all individually; you may never know the difference you have made! My goodness, the kindness shown has totally overwhelmed me! The thought that went into the gifts is wonderful. We received games, scooters, toys, baby gifts, pyjamas, dressing gowns, hand knitted hats and gloves, toiletries, make up, clothing, the list is endless! Private donations have flooded in too, and they will be used in the New Year for children suffering hardship.

Our requests for help come from local schools, social workers and other small charities. We have worked closely with these people over a number of years now and know that every single case is genuine. The cases seem sadder every year, with many children living in absolute poverty, some having had to leave their family home due to child protection issues, while others have witnessed domestic violence in the home. COVID-19 has caused more families to struggle with everyday living.

The word thank you just does not seem enough! If my mam was still here the Ellen Timney Foundation probably would not be here! I know she is up there smiling down on you all and her heart will be overflowing with love and thanks to each and every one of you!

Jane (Ellen's daughter)

Usually, at the first sign of Spring, we look forward to the **Snowdrop Walk** in aid of Child Bereavement UK at Hardwick Park. It is a lovely opportunity for families to enjoy a walk in beautiful surroundings and plant snowdrops in memory of someone important to them. But Covid restrictions mean that we are unable to host the event this year, so instead, we are offering a **Snowdrop Walk Remembrance Pack**. It can be downloaded at www.childbereavementuk.org/Appeal/snowdrop

It features expert advice from Child Bereavement UK's Patron Alan Titchmarsh on planting your own snowdrops at home, with ideas on other ways in which to remember someone special to you. We hope to see you on the last Sunday in February 2022. Best wishes David and Julie Kilpatrick



Back to school

From the moment we stepped foot back into school in January, some things had changed dramatically. From books to iPads, SATs exams getting cancelled and going from a whole class to a quarter of our year group in one bubble, it has been a shock to the system!

However, with the support and resilience shown by everyone in our school community, we feel like we have all come so far.

Classroom calls have kept us close and connected to our classmates and friends at home, making us feel like they are still with us and with the thorough routines that have been put in place, we are able to feel safe during every school day.

We can't wait for the day when we can reunite with our classmates and things can finally return to some form of normality but until then we will continue to work hard, flourish, stay positive and support our community. "Adjusting to this new way of life recently, has been challenging but we are so proud to be part of the Sedgefield Hardwick Community and we will all stay strong together!" explained a Year 6 pupil.

However, as one pupil pointed out, lockdown does have some advantages...

"Lockdown life is different, as I'm not getting to see my friends and family as much, but I do like that I get up a bit later than when I go to school!"

Amazing generosity

The Friends of St Edmund's Church send thanks to the many people who have continued to support them during the past few months.

Chairman, Dr Alistair Irving says, "As many charities have found, fundraising has not been easy recently because of the restrictions imposed by the coronavirus, but we have still received over £4,000 – an amazing amount at this very challenging time."

Most of the income results from sales of the Friends' 2021 Sedgefield Calendar and Christmas cards and donations to the appeal for repairs to the church clock. The large sum reveals the high regard in which St Edmunds church is held.

The committee wishes to thank everyone for such goodwill, and hope the coming year will be happier and healthier for us all.



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ARTS UPDATE with Geoff Millichap

email: sedgefieldartsandevents@outlook.com

Bishop Auckland Music Society: 2021 season

BAMS is delighted to showcase its new season, which is to be launched on **Friday 9th April** with Katherine Bryer (oboe) and Irena Radic (piano) in a concert which includes work by Schumann and Rachmaninoff. Since studying at the Royal Academy of Music, Katherine has appeared with many orchestras, including the BBC Symphony, Philharmonia and London Orchestras.

On **Friday 7th May**, Trio Anima will perform works by Faure, Telemann and Debussy, amongst others. The Trio, which formed at the Guildhall School of Music, have delighted audiences for over a decade with their distinctive combination of harp, flute and viola.

Pianist Florian Mitrea gave his debut recital at the Bozar Centre in Brussels together with his first solo tour with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in 2020. Our summer concert on **Friday 11th June**, includes piano works by Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt.

On **Friday 16th July** Jamal Alijev (cello) and Maksim Stsura (piano) will delight with their performance of works by Tchaikovsky and Cesar Franck.

On **Friday 3rd September** the season culminates with The Meraki Duo. Formed in 2013, the Duo enjoys exploring the diverse repertoire available to flute-guitar pairings, but also contribute their own arrangements. The two musicians share a passion for chamber music, including jazz, Latin American and European folk music.

All BAMS concerts are held in the warmth and comfort of Bishop Auckland Methodist Church - DL14 6EN, opposite to Bishop Auckland Hospital. Non-alcoholic light refreshments are available to purchase during the interval.

Season Tickets (£58), which include all five concerts for approximately the cost of four, and individual concert tickets, £14 in advance, £16 on the door, are available from Treasurer Brian Varley (01388 606075)

Individual tickets are also available from Brotherton's Music shop (opposite Morrison's car park.)

NB. Concert goers may apply to have ticket cost refunded should concerts have to be cancelled due to the Covid epidemic. See the BAMS website for details.



The Meraki Duo

Winter Lockdown Poetry

Mr Snowman by Richard Fearnside

Mr Snowman, in my cold garden
you bask,
You're the first I've seen wearing
a mask.
Hopefully, next year you'll have
a carrot nose,
A smiley mouth made of rubber
garden hose.
You'll start to melt, with no trace
to be seen.
I hope the same happens to
COVID 19



Please send Diary & Event details to
diary.sedgefieldnews@gmail.com

SEDGEFIELD LIBRARY

Tel: 0300 026 9521

Sedgefield Library remains closed, and the 'Pick and Collect' service has stopped for the time being due to the current lockdown.

Fines will not be charged while this is in place, and all books that are currently out on loan will have their return date extended.

If you are a library member, you can borrow a huge range of e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines, e-newspapers and e-comics free of charge. All you need to access these is your library card and an internet connection.

For more information visit
www.durham.gov.uk/ebooks

Blue Plaques: can you help?

Durham County Council's blue plaques appraisal panel is carrying out an audit of plaques, blue or otherwise, which commemorate places or people of interest in County Durham.

The scheme in its current form has been operating for a couple of years and DCC is now establishing a website to include interesting local history marked by plaques, and in some cases, stories of people or places which are of interest and significance but do not fit the criteria for the current scheme.

They also want to include plaques awarded under other schemes, for instance, the old district councils, heritage associations, etc.

To identify plaques in your area, they need the following details: what the plaque commemorates, its precise location, the scheme it was awarded under, the story behind the award and if possible, a photograph. But if you don't have all of the information, they say anything is better than nothing, so don't hold back!

If you can provide any of the details requested above (no matter how comprehensive) please send them to Jane Hedges, Culture Durham, the County Durham Cultural Partnership, Ushaw, Durham, DH7 9RH.

Tel 07584 703801 or preferably, email jane.hedges@durham.gov.uk

Your Letters: Pet Hates

Dog fouling in the village is getting worse. Could pet owners kindly pick up after their dogs and make it a nicer place for people to exercise, especially during lockdown.

Don't forget to cover your nose and mouth with your mask.

Let's stop the spread. Thank you.

Name & address supplied

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SEDFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

We want to hear from you

Back in January 2019 we carried out the first NHW Resident Survey which involved distributing 2500 leaflets. Two years ago, your concerns were as follows:



- Resolving/controlling anti-social behaviour
- Speeding through the village
- Inconsiderate and illegal parking
- Burglaries
- Drug use
- Littering and dog fouling

What has changed and what are the priorities now? Join our Facebook page (there are currently 247 members in our Group) and voice your opinion on what concerns you most and what we should prioritise at Neighbourhood Watch. We do want to hear from you!

Vaccine fraud

Criminals are using the COVID-19 vaccine as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing looking text messages letting people know they are eligible for the vaccine or phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS, or local pharmacy.

The NHS will

NEVER ask for payment - the vaccine is free.

NEVER ask for your bank details

NEVER arrive at your house unannounced to administer the vaccine

NEVER ask you to prove your identity by sending personal documents such as your passport

If you think you've been a victim of fraud or identity theft, report it to Action Fraud online at actionfraud.police.uk or call them on 0300 123 2040.

Police Report

Police recently attended and issued orders to disperse, when more than 100 youths gathered in the centre of Sedgefield. This appears to have been organised on social media and it amounts, basically, to encouraging people to break the law, as well as putting lives at risk through COVID infection.

Please note that the Government has asked Police to get tough on those that actively flout the current restrictions, so be prepared to receive a fine and, potentially, a criminal record which can affect you for the rest of your life.

Police Community Support Officer Recruitment

You know how the saying goes...New Year, new me. Maybe it's time for a change? Well, Durham Constabulary have kicked off January with a huge PCSO recruitment campaign. Interested? Visit <https://www.durham.police.uk/Join-us/Pages/Recruitment.aspx>

To report anything suspicious in your area call Durham Constabulary on 101, or 999 in an emergency.

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GREENER SEDGEFIELD

During the first lockdown many people discovered their green fingers and turned to gardening as never before. For some it might have become a new hobby, but admittedly not everyone might be able or willing to keep up the work. Lack of time, knowledge or ability can dampen the budding gardener in us and turn us to low maintenance gardening. But can we have a garden which is both low maintenance and "green"?

Paving is one preferred option for low maintenance garden. No mowing or grass maintenance, rarely any weeding and it can be livened up with potted plants and flowers. But the downside is not only depriving the wildlife of their natural habitat and further threatening the already declining bee population, but on a paved area there's nowhere for excess rainwater to drain. You may not notice it normally, but during heavy downpours, rainwater will accumulate, being unable to soak into the ground. The ageing sewage system was not designed to accommodate the increasing levels of surface water it is now expected to carry, and can quickly become overwhelmed. Flooding is inevitable in some areas.

Artificial grass may offer better drainage solutions, as long as the soil below does not get badly compacted, but it still steals habitat from wildlife - no critters can dwell in the polyethylene that artificial grass is made of. Over time the quality of manmade grass has become safer for humans and pets, and is longer lasting, but the environmental impact has changed little. The rubber filling, made from tyres and often used as infill on plastic lawns and football pitches, is the main culprit when it comes to health concerns. Also, rubber granules and polyethylene grass are big contributors to micro plastic pollution.

Artificial grass doesn't cool the environment as natural turf does - in fact, in hot weather it makes the surrounding area even hotter. Neither does it filter air and water pollutants, as does natural turf. So, how to have a low maintenance garden which does not cripple the environment? Happily, the traditional "perfect" lawn now has a very worthy competitor - the wildflower meadow. It ticks many boxes. It's pretty to look at and it carries huge benefits for wildlife. You feel closer to nature, the children can learn about mini beasts and plants, and it doesn't need constant work! No-one is going to judge you for not cutting your front lawn, and you might be surprised by how many would give you a (distanced) pat on the back!

STEVE'S NATURE DIARY FEBRUARY 2021

I know this is a little late for New Year's resolutions, but people often ask me what can they do to help the environment. I always say "join your local wildlife trust" followed by suggestions about the usual green activities: refuse, repair, reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink your waste; reduce your carbon footprint; cut down your travel; and environmentally friendly gardening - something we can all do.

One issue that "The Wildlife Trusts" advocate strongly for is the reduction in the use of peat based compost. At present we use around 2 million cubic metres of peat every year. There has been a reduction, but only 1 in 20 bags of peat on sale is peat free and an average bag of peat based compost contains 40% peat. Why does it matter? Peat has been a major ingredient of compost sold for gardening for many years.

Peat is dug out of wild places, damaging some of our last remaining peatlands here in the UK and overseas in places like eastern Europe. It destroys habitats which have taken thousands of years to form. Peatlands are amazingly wild places, home to birds, insects and unusual plants that aren't found anywhere else. This process also releases carbon into the atmosphere, accelerating climate change. They are the world's best carbon sinks, they lock away more carbon than the rest of the planet's vegetation combined. Digging up the peat to use in gardens releases the carbon into the air again. The stored carbon combines with oxygen in the air and releases as carbon dioxide with harmful effects on the climate. Peat degradation in the lowland bogs of England alone releases 11 million tonnes of greenhouse gases per year - that is equivalent to around three coal fired power stations.

The Wildlife Trust and other environmental charities are calling for a ban on using peat by 2025. Garden celebrities are supporting it as well. Monty Don said "There is no garden, however beautiful, that justifies the scale of environmental damage or contribution to climate change that peat use causes. The extraction of peat for horticultural use is an act of environmental vandalism. It causes irreparable environmental damage. The fact that it also significantly contributes to the release of CO2 and aggravates the effects of climate change adds salt to a grievous wound". Peat free compost is available - if everyone used it our peatlands would be safe from this type of damaging practice. It's often not the first compost you see, or necessarily the cheapest, but if you ask most stores do stock it. By buying peat free you're helping our precious peatlands and sending a message to manufacturers that people want peat free products. Both are really important. So why not make it a New Year's resolution to only buy peat free compost and if your supplier doesn't have it ask why!

Sedgefield in Bloom

We are very grateful to those who supported our Christmas tree recycling project. Collected in early January, your trees were loaded up and taken to the new woodland beside NETPark, to be put to good use by Woodland & Wildlife project volunteers. Chopped and chipped, the trees will provide valuable wildlife habitats and mulch.

Stalwart Bloomers Doug Etherington, Ian Milne, Gary Hetherington, Alice Hobson and her husband, Neil were joined by new volunteer Phil Stewart. Phil is a Jet 2 pilot who is part time furloughed. He has helped out a lot this winter with leaf collection and heavier tasks - and has also reduced the average age of the Bloom team considerably!

As well as bringing in valuable funds, this project has highlighted recycling and community, two very important aspects of the Bloom ethos. We were delighted to be able to work in collaboration with W & W volunteers and hope to repeat this very successful project next Christmas.

Funds raised will be devoted to the purchase of spring planting. Alongside the work council gardeners, we'll keep Sedgefield blooming beautifully throughout the year.



SEDGEFIELD DEVELOPMENT TRUST PROJECT NEWS

Championing sustainability

Are you confused by the idea of sustainability? When you hear the words, climate change, climate emergency or zero carbon, does it sound like gobbledegook? If you are reading this, you probably do want to live more sustainably, to support others to do the same and to make a difference.

Well, Sedgefield Development Trust may be able to help. We have been looking at how to support activities which help meet our present needs, without compromising those of future generations - a very big ambition, but every journey starts with small steps!

We are looking for enthusiastic people to take part in a local sustainability course which starts with positive changes we can make in our daily lives. You don't need a degree in physics, or to have read the latest academic reports. You just need to be willing to learn and to make changes in your life.

At this stage we would just like to know if you are interested, so if you are, please send your contact details (name, email and phone number) to news@sedgefielddevelopmenttrust.co.uk We'll be in touch with you soon.

Energy Switch

Registration for the next auction closes on 8th February. If you are already part of the scheme, wish to continue and your existing energy contract comes to an end before the end of April 2021, you need to register for this auction. Register at www.sedgefieldweb.co.uk/energy-switch. If you can't go online, contact our helpline on **07980 134 594**. We can complete registration for you.

Farmers Market is on Sunday 6th February, with every possible precaution against the spread of Covid-19. We look forward to seeing you.

Homework Help is running internet-based sessions at present.

If you would like regular or one-off help, or if you could offer support, please look for us on Facebook or email homework@sedgefielddevelopmenttrust.co.uk.



Above: Jan 9th.

"A few of the socially distanced volunteers this morning at the Woodland & Wildlife site starting to recycle the Christmas trees collected & dropped off by Sedgefield in Bloom volunteers and others." Tim Dredge

Below: Jan 16th.

"Another lovely morning on site. We've had about 80 trees. Still some to deal with, but lots of mulch and habitats have been created. Well done and thank you everyone!" Melissa Hinton



Sedgefield Development Trust

Registered Office: 7 Melgrove Way,
Sedgefield, Stockton-on-Tees,
TS21 2JN Tel: 01740 621431

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The meeting will take place via Zoom on Monday 22nd February at 7.15pm

Any special or general resolutions proposed must be with the Company at its registered office, no later than 12 noon on Friday 19th February.

All nominations for Directors must be with the Company Secretary no later than 12 noon Friday 19th February.

Sedgefield Development Trust is a company limited by guarantee; Company Number: 4312745 and is a registered charity; Charity Number: 1100806

NB: If you wish to attend but do not regularly receive a zoom invitation to our monthly meetings, please email secretary@sedgefielddevelopmenttrust.co.uk

Ceddesfeld Hall Home of 
Sedgefield Community Association
Happy New Year from SCA

SCA would like to wish all members and friends very best wishes for the coming year. Ceddesfeld Hall remains closed during the current lock down, but hope to open the doors as soon as we can, possibly in the late spring, if the vaccination programme rolls out well.

We look forward with optimism to getting back to a full programme of events, as well as to welcoming back the regular activities of the various sections and groups.

Before Christmas, the tier 4 restrictions and latest lock down, the Pop In club for elderly residents was able to arrange an outdoor, distanced and safe 'meet up', which took place over two days in the car park, for members. Home cooked 'Festive Plates' were prepared by Wendy Rowley and her team, for everyone to take away. Around 60 people came along over the two days. All who were able to attend, appreciated the opportunity to 'see and chat' to each other in person, albeit at distance. It meant a lot! Several members of the group have already had the Coronavirus vaccine and look forward to getting together again, if regulations allow, perhaps at a similar event during Easter time. The annual SCA Christmas Quiz, did go ahead over Zoom. 26 teams took part in answering Christmas trivia type questions and much fun was had. Katie and Pete McGuinness were the worthy winners!

Mediaeval Fayre 2021, scheduled for May, has been cancelled, but we hope to begin to be able to plan for larger events later in the year. World Forces Day is a national celebration due to take place in late June and local groups and organisations, including SCA have been invited to get involved. Smaller, outdoor events (family games & picnic, open air concerts etc) on the lawns may be allowed by June/July and SCA will work towards planning such activities if allowed.

There remains much uncertainty, but we do look forward with a hopeful spirit, to brighter days when we can socialise freely again. If you are interested in volunteering for any planned events and activities, or in working on the bar when it re-opens, please do get in touch.

A list of SCA sections & activities is on the website. For more information on Ceddesfeld Hall events, regular activities, room hire and bar opening times, contact Wendy on 01740 620206, Pat on 01740 620607, John on 620042, Sarah on 01740 622185 or visit sedgefieldsca.org.uk our