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APR/MAY 23

# inside ORPETH



**KING HONOURS  
MORPETH SOLDIER**

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WORK FOR THE  
GOOD OF TOWN**

**Morpeth's £21m leisure centre  
opens and it is truly stunning!**



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# inside MORPETH

**It has been eagerly awaited during an oh-so-visible construction period, but at last the people of Morpeth have got the chance to look around - and begin to use - their fantastic new state-of-the-art leisure centre which has just opened its doors for the very first time.**

The development of the centre represents a huge investment by Northumberland County Council in the future of the town - £21million to be precise. Replacing the old Riverside Leisure Centre which, to put in mildly was past its sell-by date, the new centre puts Morpeth on a par with the very best sporting and recreational facilities to be found anywhere in the North East.

It has got the lot so far as facilities are concerned to keep the people of Morpeth fit, active and healthy no matter what age they are, and what is even better is that a new library, customer care centre and a learning facility that will benefit and support school leavers and those looking to improve their chances of finding worthwhile and sustainable jobs, can all be found under one roof just a stone's throw from the very centre of town.

The very young will be able to enjoy themselves and run off all their boundless energy in the centre's soft play area, while Mums and Dads - and other users of course - can have a coffee and a snack in its café.

Right across Northumberland, the County Council has been steadily improving sporting, leisure and recreational opportunities for residents through the provision of new or upgraded facilities with the Morpeth Centre the very latest to come on stream.

Having been privileged to have a preview look around the centre before it opened to the public, we can say with some confidence, that the people of Morpeth are going to love it and enjoy using it for many years to come. Morpeth people deserve the best and now they have got it!

*Ian Leech*

*Editor of Inside Morpeth*

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**Front cover:** Zach (10) and Arabella (9), had the honour of being first members of Morpeth Swimming Club to use the new pool. Photo by Helen Smith

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# David honoured by King Charles

**Morpeth soldier David Sanderson has been honoured by King Charles III for the role he played in being one of eight pallbearers who carried the Monarch's late mother's coffin during her funeral service last September.**

David, along with his seven colleagues from the Queen's Company, 1st Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, has been awarded the Royal Victorian Medal which is given at the personal discretion of the Monarch. The honour was first established in 1896 by Queen Victoria for recipients who had loyally served her during her long reign.

The King has honoured a succession of Royal aides, military personnel and civil servants for the exceptional service they gave during the funeral of her late Majesty.

As millions watched on either in London or on television sets around the world, David and his colleagues carried the Queen's lead-lined coffin out of Westminster Hall where it had lain



Guardsman David Sanderson honoured by King Charles

in state and on into Westminster Abbey for the funeral service.

Later they would also carry the coffin up the steep-steps of St George's Chapel in Windsor Abbey to the Queen's final resting place alongside her late husband the Duke of Edinburgh.

Throughout, 19-year-old David was at the forefront of attention being one of the two guardsmen leading the other six pallbearers, and the faultless and exemplary way they all performed their duty that day was universally praised both at home and abroad.

The Army would later say that 'only the best of the best' had been chosen to make up the pallbearer's party.

David had joined the Army after leaving King Edward's VI School in Morpeth at the age of 16, first training at the Army Foundation College in Harrogate before joining his first regiment, the 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards Nimegen Company. Later, he transferred to the Queen's Company 1st Battalion.

When we first reported the story of David Sanderson proudly doing his duty for Queen and Country, his Mum Carolyn told us how proud she and his father Peter, younger brother Daniel and all his family and friends were that he had been singled out for a duty that he would remember for the rest of his life. "As a family we could not be more proud of David," she said.



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Wansbeck MP Ian Lavery meets pupils from St Robert's First School

# Pupils fighting back against plastic pollution

The pollution of the world's oceans, rivers, countryside, and urban environments is an issue that is of rapidly growing global concern. Verified figures show that 12 million tonnes of plastic are finding their way into the oceans and rivers of the world each year, destroying habits and killing wildlife, while closer to home millions of discarded plastic bottles add to littering around Britain every single day.

But what can be done about this rapidly growing problem? Environmentalists from Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) which believes the world is drowning in a toxic tide of plastic waste, are a group tackling the problem head-on and one way they are doing that is by running a Plastic Free Schools' campaign.

Which is exactly what the pupils and staff from one Morpeth school are determined to become!

St Robert's Catholic First School in Oldgate has been working towards this goal for a while now and indeed, is close to achieving the SAS accreditation.

The aim of Plastic Free Schools is to encourage the next generation to look at ways of ridding their communities

of plastic waste and to find better alternatives to single-use plastic commodities and containers.

Teacher Alice Butler said that already the school has switched to paper straws rather than plastic, while children are taking in re-usable drinks' containers rather than plastic bottles.

Once a month, older pupils from the school also set out on a supervised litter-picking exercise in Carlisle Park collecting plastic bottles, take-away containers, sachets and food packaging among other waste. They are also looking at other ways to reduce plastic waste in the school by cutting back on plastic bin bags and the lamination of documents and reports.

The SAS campaign also encourages

children from its participating schools to make their voices heard from their playgrounds to Parliament, by lobbying their MPs which the St Robert's children did when they invited Wansbeck's Ian Lavery to join them for the morning to see for himself the work they are putting in to become a Plastic Free School.

"It was heart-warming and so encouraging to see the enthusiasm and commitment shown by the St Robert's youngsters to get involved at a very local level in the fight against plastic waste and pollution," he said. "They will certainly have my full support both locally and in the House of Commons for what they are doing because they are setting a marvellous example for their older generations to follow."





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# Trust us to do our best for Morpeth... GMDT!

Report by Inside Morpeth Editor **Ian Leech**

**For close on two decades an inspirational and aspirational community-led organisation has been at the very forefront of ensuring Morpeth proudly retains the status it has enjoyed for literally hundreds of years, as one of the premier market towns in the North of England, and that going forward it will continue to be a unique and desirable place to live, work and visit.**

The Greater Morpeth Development Trust has been behind so many of the wonderful things that have happened in the town since it came into being in 2006. At that time, it was set up to help deliver what was known as the Castles, Woods and Water project the former Castle Morpeth District Council had secured government funding for, with the aim of safeguarding and improving historic buildings, ancient woodlands and picturesque riverside walks along a five-mile corridor of the River Wansbeck running through Morpeth from the villages of Mitford to Bothal.

What the Trust has achieved in the intervening 17 years from its inception to the present day, has, however, far exceeded those original aspirations and objectives and, in fact, has been little short of remarkable!

There have been some spectacular successes project-led by the Trust including the transformation of two of Morpeth's iconic buildings which were both given new leases of life that made them fit for the 21st Century whilst retaining their original charm and splendour – namely the 300-year-old Town Hall designed by Sir John Vanburgh of Blenheim Palace

and Castle Howard fame, and the wonderful Victorian railway station first opened in 1846 at the start of the pioneering days of rail travel.

GMDT also played a leading role in helping attract the necessary funding to restore the 14th Century Pele Tower at Cresswell so that it could be opened as a community asset and visitor attraction, at the same time as securing its withdrawal from Historic England's register of ancient properties considered to be most at risk of being beyond salvation.

Ten years ago, the Trust was a central player in organising events to mark the centenary of the death of local suffragette campaigner Emily Wilding Davison, after earlier securing the funding to restore her grave in Morpeth's St Mary's Churchyard from its neglected state, as a fitting tribute to someone who fought – and died – to give the women of Britain the right to vote.

If those are the Trust's stand-out achievements, there have been so many others that have impacted on the life of local people. Sticking to its original brief, the Trust has inspired the restoration of riverside and woodland footpaths notably through the picturesque Bluebell Woods, and also commissioning

informative signage to assist walkers to enjoy the wildlife, flora and fauna they encounter on their walks, as well as supporting volunteer clean-ups and litter-picks around town.

GMDT has managed local Heritage Open Days as part of a nationwide initiative to allow people to enjoy history on their doorsteps; brought the cinema back to Morpeth through monthly screenings of top movies in the town; published the works of local authors such as Bridget Gubbins who has written a series of books about life in Morpeth over the past 1,000 years; and co-organised the town's first book festival.

Once a year at the start of summer the Trust also organises Picnic in the Park, an afternoon of fun and games in Carlisle Park, freely enjoyed by many, many Morpeth families.

Much of what the Trust has achieved or been involved with in partnerships with other organisations, the public and private sector, voluntary groups and volunteers, would simply not have been possible without the expertise it built up over many years to secure financial support from a range of funders such as the National Lottery, the Railway Heritage Trust,

local authorities and other partners.

Since its inception GMDT has brought into Morpeth more than £12 million in funding that has added so much value to projects it has invested in, to make Morpeth a better place to live, work and visit. Its projects have been delivered through a hard-working and dedicated board of volunteer directors, a small staff team and supportive volunteers, and when I was asked to write a foreword to a book chronicling what the Trust has achieved I said it had constantly punched above its weight on behalf of Morpeth and the people of the town and that's its work had often slipped under the radar and not attracted the credit it has deserved.

Recently, the Trust has been going through a period of change and re-organisation with new board members and chairman, who remain totally committed to ensuring that GMDT will continue its sterling work going forward into the future and do its best for the town.

Very shortly, Dai Richards, best known as the Keep Britain Tidy Ambassador for Morpeth, will take over as chairman from Mike Willis, who had done the job for two years. The Trust will continue





Circus-style entertainer Nat Lunatrick at Picnic in the Park



Dai Richards, soon to take over as Greater Morpeth Development Trust chairman

to work through a series of sector headings such as Arts & Culture, Community, Recreation & Leisure, Well-being & Upkeep that sub-divide into smaller, individual projects some of which are existing and some of which will be new.

“We are going through a time of change but what will not change is the commitment and determination of everyone involved with the Trust, to improve the town and surrounding countryside for public benefit, the economic and social well-being of people living in and around Morpeth,” Dai told me.

“We will continue to work with partners of all shapes and sizes, for the good of Morpeth and we would love to open up that approach to many more local people in particular.”

In that regard Dai issued an invitation for more people to join the Trust as volunteers making use of whatever skills and expertise they can individually bring to a whole range of projects it is involved with.

“It may be, for example, that someone who has DIY skills and a little time to spare, could help maintain the signage we have placed in

woods and walks, or they could assist us to staff and man events such as Picnic in the Park, our Community Cinema, the Morpeth Gathering or even become involved in tree planting, litter picking or maintaining landscaping areas around the station.

“There are so many rewarding ways that people could volunteer to join in with the work of the Trust, and, at the same time, we would be delighted to hear any new ideas about what we could become involved with in the future, for the benefit of Morpeth.”

One potentially major project GMDT is currently involved in, is talking about creating and developing an arts and cultural centre in Morpeth, with a theatre capacity for musical and concert events.

“There are so many chances for local people to help us ensure our town continues to develop and be a wonderful place to live, work and visit,” added Dai. “Greater Morpeth Development Trust has done so much to make that happen over many years, and we are determined we will continue to do that over the years ahead.”

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**HOUSE OF HEARING**

# Fantastic Fair Day funding news

Substantial funding has been secured to guarantee that the popular Morpeth Fair can be held for the next two years starting this June, reports Inside Morpeth Editor **Ian Leech**.

The support of the North of Tyne Combined Authority through its £1m Events Scale Up fund, means that not only has the future of the fair being secured, but that it will be bigger and better than ever. Morpeth is just one of two events being supported in Northumberland through the fund, the other being the Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival. The remaining three events are in Whitley Bay, Tynemouth and Newcastle.

Started more than 30 years ago by the Morpeth Chamber of Trade to help raise funds for the town's dazzling Christmas Lights' display, the fair will for the first time be extended to a two-day event in the centre of town.

Northumberland County Councillor John Beynon who has played a key role in every single fair day, said that the event is being supported with matched funding to the tune of up to £94,000 over the next two years by the North of Tyne Combined Authority. "It is fantastic news and a real coup for Morpeth," he told me.

Fair Day has annually drawn an estimated 30,000 visitors into the town on one single Sunday in June, every year since it first began. "People love Fair Day – not just local residents but the many, many thousands who have been attracted to Morpeth to enjoy the event and the good thing is that we know many of our outside visitors have kept coming back because they have had such a great day out in the town," said Councillor Beynon.

Three years ago, the future of Morpeth Fair was looking bleak after it twice had to be cancelled in successive years because of the Covid pandemic lock-down. It was re-started last year by Councillor Beynon and a number of colleagues, after the Chamber of Trade said it could no longer be involved in the event.

"I was determined that Fair Day should not fold because it has been such a popular event for so long," said Councillor Beynon. "In its heyday the event was raising around £12,000 a year which we were able to re-invest in promoting tourism in Morpeth and the town's Christmas Lights which are always some



Morpeth Fair organisers John Beynon (left) and Pat Elton

of the best in the region.

"However, finding sufficient funding to support the fair has always been a worry – until now."

After being alerted to the potential North of Tyne Combined Authority funds Councillor Beynon and his colleagues – Brett Turner, Pat Elton and Mark Wilson – set about compiling their application which he admits was 'a huge task' but well worth it to secure the funding which will guarantee the event takes place this year and next.

"It will also allow us to take the Fair to a new level over two days"

**John Beynon**

On Saturday June 10th the organisers are planning a mini-food and drinks' festival in Morpeth Market Place, while as many as six top local and regional brass bands will be taking part in the festival of music outside the Pavilion Café in Carlisle Park.

As always, the Sunday of the weekend will see the main fair activities taking place when the stage at the Pavilion will host music by Morpeth Pipe Band and three popular local groups – Andy Rayner, Work in Progress and Understudies.

There'll be stalls along Bridge Street and around the Market Place; food from all around the world at the Oldgate Food

Court, while on the Stanners there will be kiddies rides, pony rides, a dog show, folk music, the Army climbing wall and a recruitment display and a line-up of veteran and vintage cars and motor cycles.

The usual parade of old cars and bikes will pass through the town centre and anyone owning an old vehicle wanting to take part can contact [norman.rickard@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:norman.rickard@hotmail.co.uk)

As always there will be show rides, swings and roundabouts in the New Market car park on both days.

The organisers are delighted to announce that a new logo for Morpeth Fair is being designed by pupils from the town's Collingwood School who will also be filming and photographing events over the two days.

"We are over the moon that the future of Morpeth Fair has been guaranteed for the next two years," said John Beynon. "It has been a fixture in Morpeth's social calendar for more than three decades and an event some of us were determined should continue to be enjoyed going forward by the people of Morpeth and the thousands of people it brings into the town, for many years to come."

"Now that we know we have the funding, we will be going flat out to make the 2024 event even bigger and better than it has ever been!"





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# Leave a thoughtful *Legacy*

**There are few more confusing – or unpopular – taxes than Inheritance Tax (IHT). If you're unsure of the details, or you'd like more of your inheritance to go to your family and less to the taxman or on care fees, we can help.**

Leaving loved ones to incur up to a 40% reduction due to tax on their inheritance is a hard ask. Yet despite many children and grandchildren being ill-equipped to grapple with IHT, more and more families are having to deal with it.

It's a situation that is set to continue, with the Office of Budget Responsibility forecasting that IHT revenues will reach £8.4 billion by 2026/2027.



***Once thought of as a tax on the truly affluent, IHT now affects more families than ever***



In better news for your family, there's been a staged increase in the residence nil-rate band threshold, which is now set at £175,000 for those who qualify when passing their main residence to direct lineal dependents. This goes some way to reflect surges in property prices, as well as other asset values recovering, which together have dragged more households into the IHT net.

Nevertheless, it can come as a shock to discover that a large proportion of your wealth, which includes the family home, investments such as Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs), life assurance plans not in trust and even old family heirlooms, might have to be sold to meet tax bills when you die.

## Get in the know

So what exactly could your family be liable for? We've already discussed the residence nil-rate band threshold of £175,000. Then you can factor in that the first £325,000 of your estate is likely to be exempt from IHT. This means that, subject to various conditions, if you're married or in a civil partnership, you could have a tax-free estate worth £1,000,000.

Yet the simple fact is that IHT could be considered a voluntary tax. The Treasury relies on our inertia and reluctance to confront the issues of death and inheritance. To make things worse, the Treasury's coffers are boosted at the exact time your loved ones least need the added hassle.

## Help your family now

There are many perfectly legitimate ways to mitigate IHT through foresight and careful financial planning. You don't need high-powered tax planning, just a willingness to discuss the issue, act and make use of the many options available. These include establishing trusts (they won't be regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority) and making use of annual exemptions such as gifting.



***With a little planning, more of your wealth can be passed on to future generations***



Bear in mind that if you're domiciled, or resident, in the UK, IHT rules are complex. Certain transfers are deemed exempt from the tax if they pass between a husband and wife or civil partners.

The levels and bases of taxation, and reliefs from taxation, can change at any time. The value of any tax relief depends on individual circumstances.

Trusts are not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

## Get in touch

If you're after a little help to guide you through the IHT maze, give us a call. We're here to make a difference to your family's future.

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SJP12204a BI (03/22)



Morpeth Rugby Club's Under 15s in their new Maximize Education kit

# Giving sport a try is important for young people's well-being

By Maximize Education Founder Christine Jamieson

**Generations of parents, coaches and indeed young people, have known it for a very long time – sport can be good for you especially if played in a team setting.**

In a long list of potential sporting benefits, the first and perhaps most obvious, is that playing sport enhances your physical health, fitness and general well-being.

But there are many more beneficial side-effects of enjoying sports, particularly as part of a team which can help young people develop the sort of good habits that will stay with them for a lifetime.

Playing in a team helps young people develop respect for their team-mates and opponents alike; instils in them a sense of discipline; builds their confidence and

self-esteem; and creates an understanding of sportsmanship and manners through learning how to be both a gracious winner and a good loser!

Plus playing sport can offer young people important and invaluable time to take a break from their studies, their books or sitting in front of a computer screen.

All of which were good reasons we believe for us at Maximize Education to decide to support a local junior team from Morpeth Rugby Club. So – as pictured – we have sponsored the club's Under 15 team with a new set of match strips.

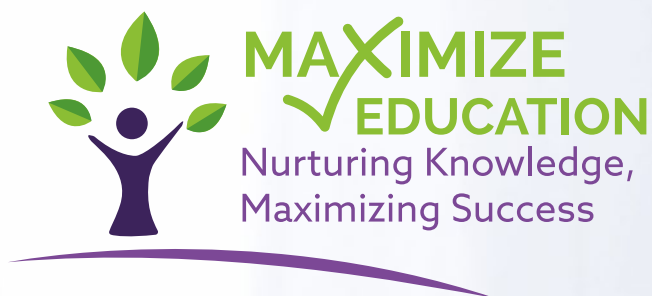
We chose to support the team because we have a number of students who play for it, and we have seen at first hand, how much they enjoy playing rugby and the many benefits it brings them.

It is important for young people to strike the right balance at an early age in their lives – just as it will be as they grow older – between recreation and their studies or work which can be important in countering the undoubted academic stresses they can so often be faced with.

All young people need a break from their studies whether that be sport, music, dancing or whatever pastimes they choose to follow because it is vital for their mental well-being, all the more so if that can be done by following healthy and active pursuits.


Hopefully, the boys who are playing for the Under 15's team will continue to enjoy playing the game as they grow older and go on to achieve sporting success on the pitch and academic achievements off it!





# LET'S GET LEARNING TOGETHER

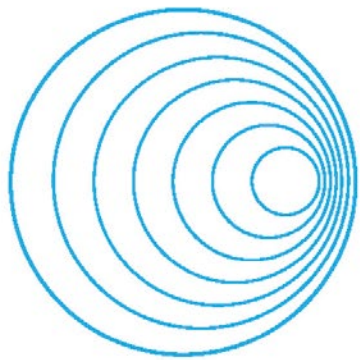
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# TOWN CRYER!

The latest News from Morpeth Town Council

## Fund-raising promise fulfilled during a very busy mayoral year

**Spring has finally sprung with handing out the traditional Easter Oranges in Carlisle Park on Easter Monday, followed by Boolin' and Japin' and other children's games.**

There was also a free 'Spring into Easter' activities programme for nine to 14-year-olds from Easter Monday, 10th April to 12th April, run by young people's charity Barnabas Safe & Sound and LASP Outdoor Adventures which we hope will continue during the next half term and Summer holidays.

I have the honour of opening the 2023 Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering over the weekend of 14th - 16th April and Deputy Mayor Jade and I will be in attendance in the historic Mayor's Parlour and Council Chamber in the Town Hall on Sunday 16th April at 1pm – your chance to see the Town Treasures, including the town hutch, bull rope and scolds' bridle!

Finally, just before the Mayor making ceremony, we will be celebrating the Coronation of our new King Charles III, with a Garden Party on the Stanners on Sunday 7th May from 11am to 5pm, in conjunction with the organisers of

Morpeth Fair Day, including music, food, entertainment and the Coronation Cup under 8's and under 9's football tournament organised by Morpeth Town Juniors. #NlandCoro

To round off a historic weekend, I will then be attending Traditional Sung Evensong, celebrating the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III with the choir, at St Mary's Church at 6pm.

This will be my last Mayor's Address in my third term as Mayor of Morpeth. The last year has been a busy but wonderful time and it is always a pleasure and a privilege to be Mayor of such an attractive and successful town, with its great history, heritage and most of all, active community life.

This year, as social life returned to normal again following the Covid-19 pandemic, I promised to raise at least £1000 each for half a dozen small, local charities: Ellington Colliery Band (now based in Morpeth), Stobhill Link, The 4th Morpeth Scout hut extension, Wansbeck Valley Food Bank, Friends of Morpeth's Floral Clock and Northumberland Mountain Rescue.

Among many other enjoyable visits and events, we have had an Italian Night at Lollo Rosso, Curry night at Tandoor Mahal, the Deputy Mayor's Burns



Night at the Pavilion and two Chinese New Year meals at Mulan (as the first was sold out!) We have also enjoyed a terrific St Patrick's themed Civic Ball at PTMY which will probably be the last fundraising event of my term.

Although my final total won't be announced until the Mayor making ceremony on Wednesday 10th May at 6pm in the Town Hall (all welcome), I am delighted to say that, with the generous support of the people of Morpeth, I have more than kept my promise. I look forward to offering my help and support to the next Mayor of Morpeth.

I would like to end with a sincere thank you to our wonderful Town Council staff, fellow councillors and all those who have worked with me and supported me over the past year.

**Councillor Alison Byard**  
Mayor of Morpeth

## Mayor-making evening

**The customary Mayor Making Ceremony will take place on Wednesday 10th May at 6pm in the Ballroom of Morpeth Town Hall as part of the Annual Meeting of Morpeth Town Council.**

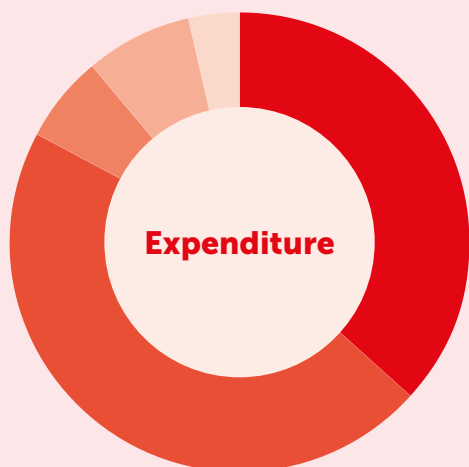
Part of the meeting's traditions involves passing around between Councillors a silver snuffbox and 'Emily's Dish' filled with chocolates and a speech by the outgoing Mayor, including their fund-raising activities.

Members of the public are welcome to attend.



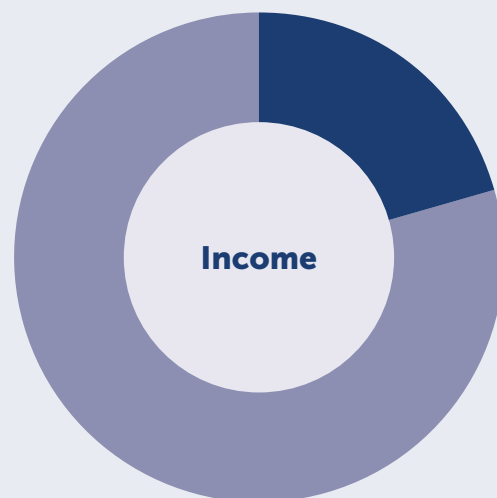
Morpeth Town Council, Morpeth Town Hall, Market Place, Morpeth NE61 1LZ  
Call 01670 514314 email [joanne.wilson@morpeth-tc.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.wilson@morpeth-tc.gov.uk) or [mayor@morpeth-tc.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@morpeth-tc.gov.uk) or visit [www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk](http://www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk)

# New civic year budget



Management & Support	314,548
Recreation & Leisure Services	392,601
Environmental Services	52,500
Cemeteries	0
Tourism, Grants & Subsidies	62,771
Other Services	30,340

**Total Gross Expenditure 852,760**



Fees and Charges	176,851
Council Tax	675,909
From Balances	0

**Total Income 852,760**

## Park pool re-opening for summer paddling

The paddling pool will open over the last weekend in May, through to the first weekend in September. Whilst we endeavour to keep the paddling pool open at all times, Health & Safety is our priority so the pool may need to be taken out of use and closed for emergency maintenance at short notice.

Please check the Town Council website and Facebook page for updates and confirmed opening times to avoid any disappointment.

The paddling pool and adjacent play areas, along with the skate park, located within Carlisle Park, are free facilities provided by Morpeth Town Council. There is also the MUGA court which can be hired for sports and outdoor activities, please contact Morpeth Town Council for further information.

Play areas also maintained by the Town Council can be found at Stobhillgate, Stobhill Manor, Church Walk, Boundary Drive and Montrose Gardens.

We want to ensure that all children have fun and are safe as they play. All our play areas, parks and the paddling pool are well looked after and inspected on a regular basis. Please help us to maintain the standard by ensuring you take all your litter with you or use the bins provided.

Wishing you all a fantastic summer, let's hope the weather is as glorious as last year!

  
 Northumberland  
County Council

## Coronation Garden Party

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Sunday 7th May









**Funfair, music,  
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- Planning Conditions (Discharge, Removal of & Variations)
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Northumberland County Councillor Jeff Watson Cabinet member for Healthy Lives, Glen Sanderson Leader of Northumberland County Council cutting the ribbon to open the centre with Mark Warnes Chief Executive of Active Northumberland.

# Brilliant new leisure centre for Morpeth... Glen Sanderson

Morpeth's super new sports and leisure centre has opened with a ringing endorsement of the way it will transform the provision of indoor recreation in the town, reports **Inside Morpeth Editor Ian Leech**.

Built at a cost of £21 million by Northumberland County Council, the new centre in Gas House Lane, will be operated and managed by Active Northumberland.

As Councillor Glen Sanderson (Leader of Northumberland County Council) told me after cutting a ribbon to formally open the new centre: "This is certainly a 'Red Letter' day for Morpeth and indeed, the whole surrounding area.

"We have provided a brilliant new centre at a time when a lot of councils across the country are actually closing leisure centres and swimming pools or not investing in new facilities such as this, while we as a county council have put leisure at the top of the list for expenditure.

"In Northumberland we have invested very heavily in leisure and recreation in recent years – in brand-new centres in Berwick, Ponteland and now Morpeth,

at the same time as upgrading existing facilities in Hexham, Newbiggin, Blyth and Cramlington and we have done that because we think leisure is so very important for people's health, their well-being and enjoyment.

"Leisure makes people feel happier and better about themselves in terms of mental health and other health issues, and because exercise is invaluable to them.

"We are hugely proud of this Morpeth centre, just as we are of our new or upgraded other centres around the county," added Councillor Sanderson. "We made a conscious decision to create a capital programme over the next five years bound into the key fundamental priorities of education and the development of new schools, sport and leisure and the provision of excellent customers services. We are very clear about where our priorities lie – one is to provide value for money for council

taxpayers; the second is to encourage and safeguard the provision of jobs and employment; And thirdly to do all we can to tackle inequality."

The creation of the new Morpeth centre, Councillor Sanderson said, embodies all three priorities. "Here we are providing value for money, creating new jobs and tackling inequality because people with lower incomes can come and enjoy using our facilities through our concessions," he said.

David Bawn, a former Mayor of the town, described the opening of the centre to me as a 'real game-changer for Morpeth.'

"Top-notch facilities have been provided across the board at the centre that will bring real benefits to the town," he said. "What also pleases me is that while this is a very modern building, it also gives a nod to the historical architecture of the town centre of Morpeth. It will become one of the future iconic buildings of the town."





Young members of Morpeth Amateur Swimming Club enjoying their first time in the new pool

# New Morpeth leisure centre will be a real game-changer

**Primarily, of course, the centre in the heart of the town, will provide the very best indoor sport and leisure facilities for local residents to enjoy. But it will also house a brand-new Morpeth library, council customer services centre, and a base for a learning skills centre that could help school leavers and job-seekers with the sort of information and support that could open up lifetime career opportunities for them – all under the same roof!**

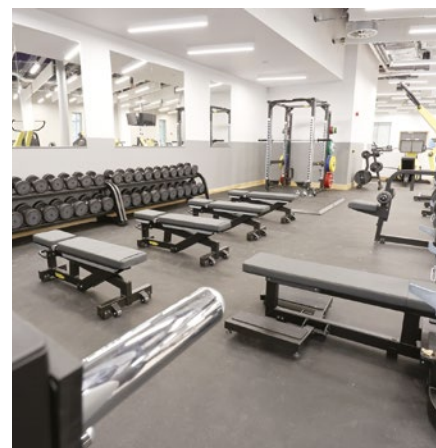
The new Morpeth Sports and Leisure Centre was designed by GT3 Architects and built by Willmott Dixon. Advance Northumberland has overseen the project management.

Users can either pay-as-they-go when visiting the centre or become an Active member which Mark Warnes (Chief Executive of Active Northumberland), said provided incredible value-for-money by enabling them to use any of its other facilities across the county. “We have something that is a little bit different in all of them,” he said. “At Morpeth we have this wonderful spa facility, cycling fitness studio, soft play area and Hive

cafe, in addition we have a comfortable outdoor seating area to take advantage of the wonderful riverside location which customers have been enjoying on our opening day.”

Mr Warnes, said the centre was an amazing new addition to Morpeth, its amenities and facilities to be enjoyed by townspeople and those living in its surrounding areas. “We are looking forward to welcoming new members and customers for the very first time, and our team will work with people of all ages by being ready to support and help them achieve their own personal fitness or well-being goals,” he said.





## Here's a taste of what is on offer:

1. Enjoy working out in the state-of-the-art gym with Technogym equipment, cardio and strength zones
2. Enjoy a lane swim in the 6 lane 25m swimming pool
3. The studio pool has an adjustable floor and is great for aquafit and learning to swim
4. Soothe away your stress in the Tranquillity Spa with sauna, steam room, heated benches and spa pool
5. Enjoy all your favourite classes including Les Mills and Zumba
6. Pedal it out in a dedicated cycling studio with Technogym bikes
7. Enjoy racquet sports, basketball and 5 aside football in the sports hall
8. Be king or queen of the castle in the two-storey softplay
9. The new HIVE cafe serves delicious food and drink. Grab a bite to eat after your workout or enjoy a refreshing drink while the kids enjoy the softplay
10. There are accessible changing areas and a pod to help access into the pool for those who are less able.

## Become a member or pay as you go

You can pay-as-you go when you visit the centre, but there are a range of memberships on offer which work out cheaper for regular users and which have many additional benefits.

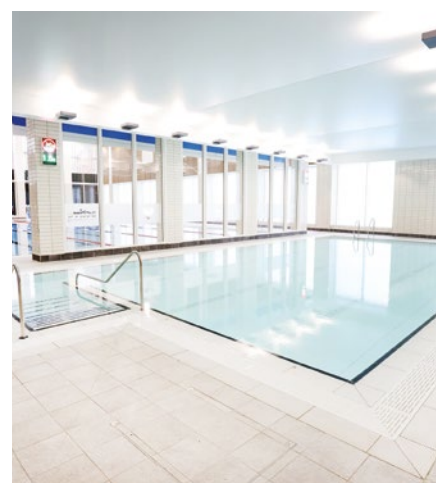
### Members are entitled to:

- Unlimited access to all Active Northumberland gyms, fitness classes and swimming pools
- Expert one-on-one support and guidance through the specially tailored Elevate programme, for your personal fitness journey.
- A free health check.
- Access to advance bookings on classes.

**To join or find out more about the new Morpeth Sports & Leisure Centre go to:**  
[www.activenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.activenorthumberland.org.uk)

**Book Activities to avoid disappointment.**

**Members and pay-as-you-go customers are advised to book fitness classes and activities via the Active Northumberland app, or by calling 01670 620200**







Sarah Jane Kennedy-Robson (Library Supervisor), Senior Librarian Julie Scott and Library Assistant Julie Brown.



# More than 24,000 books to choose from in new library

**At a time when many libraries across the country are actually being closed, the creation of an extensive library in the new Morpeth Sports and Leisure Centre, will be welcomed by readers in the town.**

There, they will be able to choose from more than 24,000 books on its shelves covering fiction, non-fiction and reference books, for adults and young readers.

The library has relocated to the site in Gas House Lane, from what was its temporary home in Manchester Street, where it had been moved to at the start of the construction phase of the new centre.

There are dedicated seating areas for adults and children to enjoy reading whilst in the new library which looks out over the River Wansbeck at the rear of the building.

All of which prompted Councillor Jeff Watson, County Council Cabinet member for Healthy Lives, to tell Inside Morpeth: "Without a shadow of a doubt it will be one of the best libraries in the whole of the region."

Ebooks and emagazines plus eAudiobooks can be downloaded for free, while there is also a charged-for print or photography download service. Every Wednesday morning there'll be a half-hour Children's Storytime session from 10.30am; a pop in

for a 'natter and a cuppa' Social Friday Group from 10am until Noon; and a Weekend Children's Craft Club for an hour on Saturday mornings from 10.30am.

It's FREE to join – call in, or join online at [mylibrary.co.uk](http://mylibrary.co.uk)

- 24,000 books
- Public access computers
- Increased study areas

## Library Opening Hours

Mon and Fri 9am – 6pm  
Tues, Weds, Thurs 9am – 5pm  
Saturdays 9.30am – 12.30pm

## Classrooms with a view

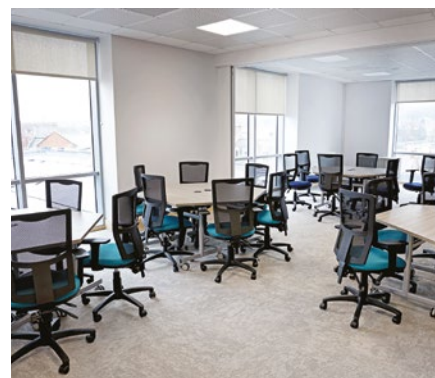
**The whole second floor of the new Morpeth Leisure Centre is dedicated to learning, delivered on behalf of the council by Northumberland Skills.**

From creative writing and other leisure courses to English, maths and digital qualifications, plus professional development and apprenticeships in areas such as business, leadership and management, there are learning

opportunities for everyone.

Northumberland Skills supports the local community to upskill, boost confidence and gain or progress in employment.

With full-time study programmes for 16-18 year olds leaving school and a wide range of part-time courses for adults too, check out the latest course guides at [northumberlandskills.co.uk](http://northumberlandskills.co.uk)







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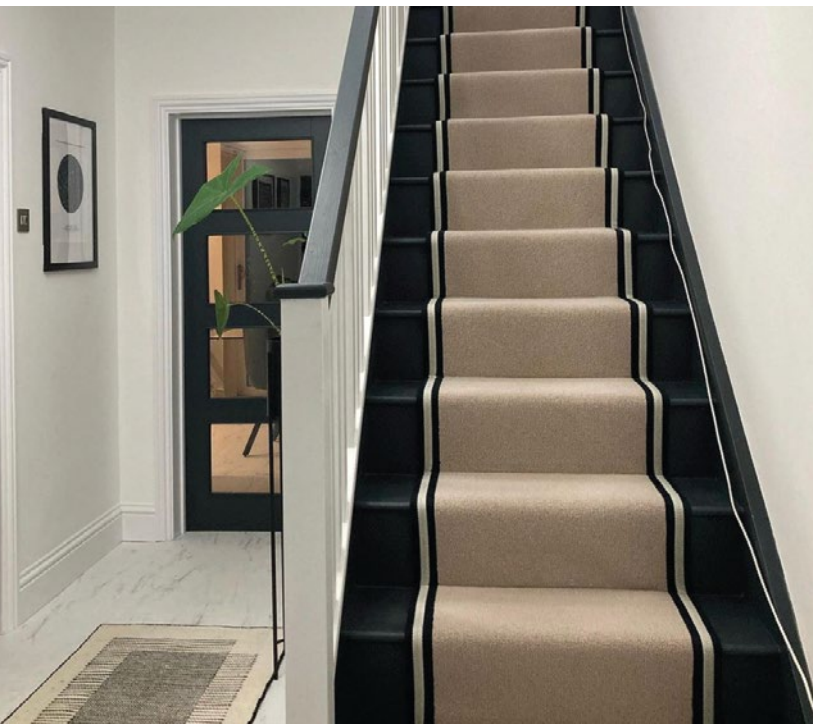
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Closed Sunday



# Wingrove Motors - a family business for five generations

**Back in 1925 in the days of mudguards and running boards, semaphore indicators and when the colour of a new car meant a choice of black or black, little did John Myers Dalkin know that the business he had just founded with his son John, would go on to become one of the North's leading independent motoring groups over the next century!**

Fast forward those hundred years and – five generations of his family later – the Wingrove Motor Company is still the respected and trusted name it was when he took what turned out to be an inspired decision to switch from auctioning cattle to selling and repairing motor cars.

From humble beginnings in the West End of Newcastle, the company now employs more than 80 members of staff working over two sales dealership sites at Silverlink and the West Road in Newcastle, selling the full ranges of Citroen, Peugeot and DS Experience cars and commercial vehicles, in addition to having as many as 200 quality pre-owned vehicles in stock for customers to choose from.

At the helm of the company these days following in the footsteps of his great-great grandfather as Wingrove Managing Director, is 27-year-old Josh Parker. He took over as MD from his mother Louise Parker who in turn had followed her father Peter Dalkin, and his father John Jnr, into the role.

“From an early age I was always involved with the business, first as a Saturday-job car cleaner,” he said. After leaving school, however, Josh studied fine art photography at Bournemouth University before, after a discussion with his grandfather and mother about the future of Wingrove Motors, he chose to join the business full-time. “I decided it was a great opportunity to carry on the legacy of the generations of my family before me,” said Josh.

For many years the North East car trade was dominated by a number of high-



Josh Parker pictured with his mother Louise and brother Jake.

profile family businesses before they became part of larger, nationwide groups. But, as Josh said, his family never had any desire to take Wingrove Motors down that route. “We have an extremely strong heritage and I like to think we are good at what we do, so why change!

“We have a tried-and-tested reputation for excellent customer service; we have a lot of long-standing members of staff with more than 40 per cent of our workforce having been with us for more than 15 years; we look after our staff well and they look after our customers well too.”

As a family business Wingrove has a reputation for giving something back to the communities in which it works. “We are in a fortunate position where we can do that and will carry on doing so in the future,” said Josh.

“As a business we are in a strong place and looking to grow and develop from there. We have good locations and we have a few plans for the future so we will see which ones come to fruition.”

With the motor trade heading towards electrification, Wingrove is in a strong position to meet that challenge head-on and already it believes it has the largest choice of electric or hybrid vehicles on any one site in the North East. “An incredible range of new cars will be coming along and we expect to have two or three new vehicles from our manufacturers every year for the next five years,” said Josh.

Exciting times are ahead then for Wingrove Motor Company!



# G&G on Tour on planes, trains, and replacement bus services!

By Inside Morpeth wine expert **Mark Stephenson**

The first few months of the year are always a bit quiet in our industry. However, rather than twiddling our thumbs and dusting the shelves for the fifteenth time, at G&G it is always a chance for myself, Bryce, and Paddy to get out there and explore ways in which we can improve our range.

We have been putting in the miles visiting trade shows, meeting suppliers and producers, and yep, tasting a lot of wine (and before you ask, we spit it out! Well... most of them anyway). Believe it or not, it is hard work! No one believes me when I say that, and you do end up knackered at the end of the day. So how does one relax after a day of tasting wines...well, by having a beer of course!

To be honest, we've all had "proper jobs" that were stressful and demanding. Because of that, we know how lucky we are and appreciate what we do. We don't

do it for the money, because there's no money in this game. We do it because we have a passion for wine, a desire to learn more, and truly believe in the products we sell. All we want to do is share that with you all and give you the enjoyment we get from these bottles full of loveliness. We like to think that is what separates us from the rest.

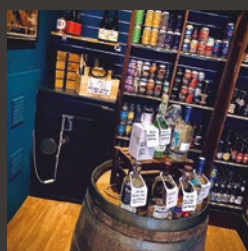
So, what has stood out for us on our travels? Well, South Africa excites and we can't wait to introduce to you some of the wines we discovered from there. Reyneke Cornerstone (£21.75) represents everything that is good with South Africa at the moment. Organically produced, this wine is full, fruity, and floral, with a touch of tobacco. All working well together and beautifully balanced. Portugal is just incredible and is hugely underrepresented in the supermarkets- that's where we step

in. New to Portuguese wine? Look no further than the Rola range we have in stock from Douro. The Rola Red (£16.25) is a great example of the indigenous grape variety Touriga Nacional. Soft, fruity, and incredibly approachable. Also, New Zealand has a lot more to offer than Sauv Blanc...even though the Sauv Blanc is pretty good. The Te Mata Estate Chardonnay (£20.00) is simply sunshine in a bottle. Tropical in style, with just the faintest touch of oak in the background. If you've turned your back on Chardonnay, give this one a go!

Big changes are ahead for our range, but we will always make sure that we keep it interesting for you guys. We look forward to sharing with you the new arrivals in the weeks and months ahead! Keep an eye out on our website and social media channels for the latest news and some exclusive tasting events we have in store for the rest of the year...

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## Classic looks - playful new options

**As we move into the warmer months, it's time to start thinking about refreshing our wardrobes for the spring and summer seasons. At Rutherfords we have stylish and versatile collections from Fynch Hatton, Colours & Sons and Farah.**

Fynch Hatton offers a range of classic and timeless pieces that are perfect for the spring and summer seasons. The brand's collection includes casual shirts, shorts, and trousers in a variety of colours and

patterns. The brand's signature style is the combination of traditional patterns and modern colours, which makes their pieces stand out from the crowd. The quality of the materials used in their pieces is exceptional, ensuring that they are both comfortable and long-lasting.

Colours & Sons offers a range of stylish menswear options for the warmer months. Their collection includes a variety of shirts, shorts, and trousers that are perfect for casual and dressier occasions. The brand's use of bold colours and patterns adds a fun and playful element to their pieces, making them

perfect for those who want to make a statement with their fashion choices.

Farah has been around for over 100 years and has become synonymous with classic and timeless style. Their SS23 collections include a range of versatile pieces that are perfect for dressing up or down. The brand's use of neutral colours makes their pieces easy to mix and match, making them a great addition to any wardrobe.

Whether you're looking for classic and timeless pieces or bold and playful options, we have something for everyone at Rutherfords.



# spring summer 23



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# Why we use the 'Mum test'

By **Guy Kirk** Managing Director Home Instead South East Northumberland

**Anyone who has met me will know that I care deeply about the quality of the care we provide to our clients.**

Whatever support we are providing whether it is companionship, home help, dementia care, personal care or any type of care - we aim to maintain high standards. So, all of us at Home Instead ask ourselves "Is the care we are providing good enough for my Mum?". This is a guiding principle for us... but there is a bit more to it than that which I'll illustrate by telling you a bit about my own Mum.

My Mum needed support in the last period of her life and in the last few days just wanted to know we (her children and partner) were there for her and that she was comfortable, clean and looking her best - even in the very last hours of her life. Everyone involved tried to get things 'just right' for her. For example, getting her hospital bed outside through a very

narrow opening in her last days at the hospice so she could experience some fresh air, and then, after five minutes, getting it back in because she'd had enough(!) was a challenge - but it was what she wanted and so we did it - and of course we would.

At Home Instead we aim to reach the same high standards our own parents would have wanted for all our clients; thoughtful, kindly delivered and creative where necessary. We always work hard to get things 'just right'.

However, we remind ourselves that whilst 'the Mum test' is important, we should bear in mind that each client is an individual and we must ensure their care is provided in the way that they prefer and is most comfortable for them. We don't want to inadvertently impose our own idea of what is right for a client; we are all so different and have our own ideas of what is right for us.

We know that what our own Mother

might want may not be what someone else would want. Her standards and expectations are not yours or mine, but hers alone.

So, this is an important point and why I think we manage to provide such outstanding care. The Mum test is a good starting point - because we all love our Mum - but we are alert to the possibility that providing care is not about us, or our particular ways of doing things, or what we see as the 'right way to do things'. Instead, so long as it is safe and practical, good care is about doing things the way that each [and every] client wants.

It's why our new team mission statement reads as below:

With passion, kindness and thoughtfully delivered care, we enable people to live their best lives.

**Do you or a loved one have any care needs or are just wanting some advice? Please give us a call on 01670 338542 - we are always happy to advise.**

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# WHAT'S ON?

## MORPETH MUSIC SOCIETY

French-born violinist Charlotte Saluste-Bridoux (pictured) will be the guest soloist performing with Joseph Havlat (piano) at the Society's final concert of the season on Thursday April 20th at 7.30pm at Morpeth Methodist Church.

Charlotte has already performed at the Wigmore Hall and in the BBC Proms and has just released her debut recording. She is a current Young Classical Artists Trust musician and is also a member of the Countess of Munster Trust Recital Scheme.

As well as her solo work, Charlotte performs with the prize-winning Quator Confluence quartet and the 12 Ensemble. The programme for the evening will be as follows:- H.I. Franz von Biber – Passacaglia in C minor for violin solo; Schubert Fantasy in C D934; Enescu Impromptu Concertant in G flat



for violin and piano; Clara Schumann – Three Romances for violin and piano Op 22; Stravinsky & Samuel Dushkin – Divertimento, transcription for violin and piano (after The Fairy's Kiss).

Tickets are £16 (students aged 18 and under free) and are available from Morpeth Methodist Church; the Society's Secretary (telephone 01670 512075); Morpeth TIC at The Chantry; or online from the website.



## CORONATION CELEBRATION

**Soroptimists International Northern England will be holding a pre-coronation celebration, on Wednesday May 4th from Noon until 3pm at Stannington Village Hall, just a few days before King Charles III is crowned at Westminster Abbey.**

The event is in aid of the charity 500 Miles whose founder Olivia Giles will be the guest speaker.

Tickets are £18 in advance for a two-course lunch and are available from [pturner27@btinternet.com](mailto:pturner27@btinternet.com)

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**HYUNDAI**



Fuel Consumption figures for the Hyundai Tucson 1.6 TGD SE Connect 5dr 2WD: 42mpg, 150 bhp, 151 CO2 g/km. Fuel Consumption figures for the Hyundai Bayon 1.0 TGD 48V MHEV SE Connect 5dr: 53 Mpg, 100 Bhp, 120 CO2 g/km. Fuel Consumption figures for the Hyundai i20 1.0T GDI 48V MHD 120 N Line 5dr: 53 mpg, 119 CO2 g/km, 120 bhp. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO2 figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

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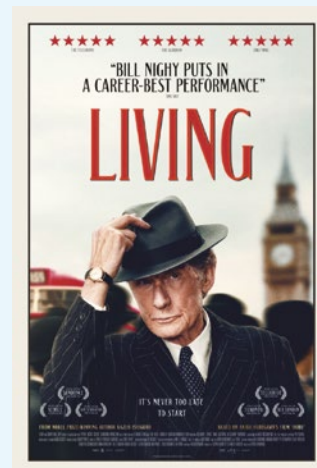
## NEXT CINEMA SCREENING

**On Friday May 5th – 7pm at St James Centre, Wellway, Morpeth – it will be 'Living' in which actor Bill Nighy is credited by The Telegraph film critic as giving the 'finest performance of his career.'**

In the film he plays a lonely widower who was a senior local government officer in London in the 1950s who resolves to make a difference to his own life and that of the public he serves, after a shattering visit to his doctor.

With a script by Nobel Prize-winning screenwriter Ishiguro Kazuo, a gorgeous score and authentic costumes, 'Living' – which is a re-interpretation of the famous Japanese film *Ikiru* – has won acclaim from critics and audiences alike, and also won Nighy nominations for both an Oscar and BAFTA.

Tickets for the Morpeth screening at £6.50 are on sale at Ticketsource or from The Chantry (card only).



## BERWICK ORCHESTRA CONCERT

**Once again, the Morpeth-based orchestra will present a charity concert on Saturday May 13th at 7.30pm at the town's St James' Church, this time in aid of the Alzheimer's Society.**

Soloist for the evening will be flautist Rachel Jeffers (pictured) from Callerton, who since training at the Royal Academy of Music has freelanced with many professional orchestras in London including the Philharmonia, the BBC Concert and the Royal Philharmonic.

She has also taught for many years at Newcastle University where she was recently appointed as Head of Woodwind Studies. Rachel also teaches at Northumbria and Durham Universities as well as privately and in Ponteland schools.

During the concert the audience



can enjoy two well-known works by Mozart and Schubert, a flute concert by Gluck featuring Rachel as soloist, and 'Seascape', a work for 10 wind instruments by Ruth Gipps one of the most important female composers of her generation.

Conducting the Bewick Orchestra for the evening will be Dave Tompson. Tickets are £10 (children and students free) and are available from The Chantry TIC or at the door.

## LOCAL HISTORY LECTURES

**Organised by Morpeth Antiquarian Society, three lectures have been lined-up for the next three months starting on April 28th with a talk during the annual general meeting, by Keith Cooper entitled 'Reading the Landscape.'**

Then on May 26th Roger Hawkins will speak about the Morpeth Dispensary followed on June 30th by Joan Howard talking about 'Morpeth Characters.'

The meetings will all be held at the St James' Centre in Morpeth's Wellway starting at 7.15pm (doors open 6.45pm). Cash donations are suggested at the door - £1 for members, £3 for visitors. Visitors and new members are also welcome and further information is available by calling (01670) 594161.

## BRIDGET'S NEW BOOK LAUNCH

**Morpeth author Bridget Gubbins will launch her latest book 'Cold War, Warm Hearts' on Friday April 21st at 7pm at the new town's newly-opened leisure centre.**

She says the launch event will be a light-hearted dramatisation of the stories in her new book and will feature an officer from the fictional Morpeth branch of the UK's security service, which will be very relevant because they all relate to the time she spent wandering the highways and byways of countries behind the Iron Curtain in 1966 at a time when most

of her friends were settling into new jobs or married life.

Travelling across Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany as it was then, with virtually no money, was, she says, not only a problem but an opportunity that also gave her a rare and deep insight into the lives and experiences of people living behind the Iron Curtain.

Bookings for the evening can be made through Eventbrite or by contacting Bridget on her website [bridgetgubbins@btinternet.com](mailto:bridgetgubbins@btinternet.com)

## MORPETH BEER FESTIVAL

**Now in its ninth year the Festival takes place at the Mitford Road ground of Morpeth Rugby Club on Friday and Saturday April 28th and 29th.**

The club is promising that 30 beers and ciders, gin, fizz and Pimms plus Marlish mixer drinks will be available plus food and entertainment including live bands and singers on both days starting from 6pm.

On the Friday evening – again starting at 6pm – a VetsFest Rugby tournament will take place.

The cost is £12.50 for a weekend pass including a Festival glass, two beer tokens and programme which can be bought in advance from the Club or Grape and Grain in Bridge Street.

# Double celebrations for Morpeth RFC Colts

**Morpeth RFC Colts play their rugby in the historically renowned Border Semi-Junior League which they officially joined in the 2019/20 season.**

This season they finished a respectable second in the league. Narrowly losing out to a very strong, eventual league winning side Peebles RFC Colts at the Gytes in a thrilling end to end, high scoring game 52 - 34.

After the disappointment in the league, nothing less than a win would suffice in the Borders Semi-Junior League Cup.

On Sunday 19th March, Morpeth RFC Colts achieved a well deserved win, beating Kelso Quins 31-10 in a fiercely contested final played at Volunteer Park in Hawick.

This was the first time Morpeth have won the prestigious Borders Cup.

Try's from Mackenzie Bannister, Sean McLaughlin, Chris Johnstone (C), Tom McKenna and Jack Loughnane. Conversions from Harvie Gille.

The following weekend, Sunday 26th March, Morpeth RFC Colts added to their trophy cabinet by winning the



Morpeth Rugby Club's Colts after their win in the Northumberland County Cup.

Northumberland County Cup Final against Alnwick RFC Colts, winning convincingly 46 - 10 to seal the Double. Played at Northern Ruby Club.

With try's from Chris Johnstone (C), Sean McLaughlin, Sam Parker, George Liddle, Tom McKenna and a hatrick from Nathan Arkle. Conversions by Tom McKenna and Harvie Gillie.

As well as winning the County Cup they also retained the Stratstone Cup, a long contested trophy with local rivals Alnwick RFC Colts to finish off a remarkable season.



Captain Chris Johnstone, Tom McKenna and Olly Crooks with the Cups

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MORPETH RFC presents the

TMP | WEALTH MANAGEMENT

# 9th Morpeth Beer Festival

**28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at Morpeth Rugby Club**

**Grange House Field, Mitford Road, Morpeth, NE61 1RJ**



**30 Beers & Ciders and**



**“Gin ,Fizz & Pimms @ Marlish Mixer Bar”,  
Entertainment, Food and Club Bar**

**(non-alcohol enthusiasts are welcome but a cover charge of £5 will apply)**

Weekend passes can be bought in advance from  
Morpeth Rugby Club or Grape & Grain Morpeth or  
online – please visit;

<https://www.facebook.com/morpethbeerfestival/>

**Day 1 – Live Band & Rugby**

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 6pm to 11.30pm**

**Indie Band – Redwings - 8:45pm to 11pm**

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/RedwingsMusic/>

**Rugby Tournament**

**Northumberland RU VetFest Tournament – 6pm start**

**£12.50 Weekend  
Pass - includes  
festival glass, 2  
beer tokens &  
programme**

-----  
**Day 2 – Live Bands, Singers & Rugby**

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2pm to 11:30pm**

**Teddy King Big Band – 2.30pm to 4pm**

**Lou Coel & Local Musicians- 4.30pm to 8pm**

**Rock Band : Siren - 8:45pm to 11pm**

**Rugby Game TBC - 2pm kick-off**

Simply bring your  
festival glass along  
on the second day as  
“proof of admission”.





Lining up for the camera are Team Honda Morpeth members (left to right) Jay Fairbairn-Wood (Apprentice Technician); John Swinney (Master Technician); Sales Advisor Jessie Whiting; Service Advisor Sophie Valentine; Andrew Davis (Sales Executive) and Sales Manager Mark Spring.

# Team Honda at your service in Morpeth

**For the past seven years the sales and service team at the Vertu Honda Morpeth, has been looking after the motoring needs of new car buyers and existing owners at the Honda dealership on the town's Coopies Lane Industrial Estate.**



**HONDA**

In that time the Morpeth team has supplied and serviced literally hundreds of vehicles owned by local people – and indeed from further afield – and it is proud of the fact that it can display in its showroom accreditation stating that 100 per cent of its customers have been satisfied with the way they and their cars, have been looked after.

What the team is also proud of is the way existing and potential new customers, are welcomed into the dealership in the warmest and friendliest of manners.

As a main dealer belonging to a nationwide chain of dealerships, the Morpeth team not only has access to Honda's very latest new car offerings, but also to thousands of quality pre-owned dealerships any one of which can be made available to local would-be owners.

"We pride ourselves on people feeling freely able to pop into our dealership in a very informal way, and talk to us over a cup of coffee, about their car or perhaps a new vehicle they are looking to purchase," said Vertu Honda Morpeth Sales Manager Mark Spring.

"What we are also confident about is that if they tell us what sort of vehicle they are looking for – a small, medium or large car, or SUV – we will be able to find it for them."

As a main dealer, Vertu Honda Morpeth can offer motorists full servicing and maintenance of their cars, MOTs, the fitting of new tyres or carrying out diagnostic checks on their vehicles.

All the work is carried out by trained, experienced and highly qualified Honda technicians while the sales team is also fully versed in the company's extensive range of cars.

And, as Mark Spring told Inside Morpeth, an exciting few months lie ahead for Honda owners with new and upgraded cars starting to appear in their showroom including the Jazz and CRV models.

"We are eagerly awaiting some super new cars coming to us throughout the year, and we would extend an open invitation to the people of Morpeth call in to see us to talk about them," said Mark.





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Cars shown are a HR-V 1.5 i-MMD e:HEV Hybrid Advance in Premium Sunlight White Pearl and Advance Style in two tone Meteoroid Grey Metallic with Crystal Black Pearl – Economy & Emissions figures, HR-V: (WLTP) Range 4.1-7.1 (l/100km), CO<sub>2</sub> 94-162 (g/km). Figures, sourced from EU regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes, and may not reflect real-life driving experiences.

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# Morpeth Tandoori

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*2023 marks 40 years since Abdul Muhit first opened his Morpeth Tandoori take-away in the town's Chantry Place. In that time not only has the delicious, classic Indian cuisine Abdul daily serves up become such a firm favourite with his many customers, but he has become very much part of the community of his adopted home town*

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[www.morpethtandoori.co.uk](http://www.morpethtandoori.co.uk)

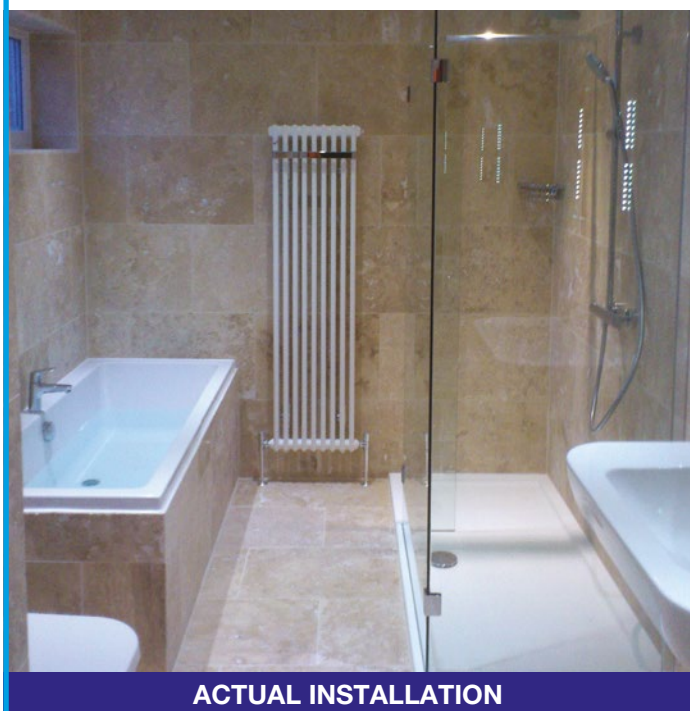


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# How your garden can grow with a little help from Robson & Cowan

Spring has sprung which means, of course, that now is the time to get into the garden at the start of the new growing season and there's no better place to go for all you need to keep it looking at its best than the Robson & Cowan Country Store at Scots' Gap just a few miles west of Morpeth.

The store has a fantastic range of lawnmowers and garden machinery, from leading manufacturers Husqvarna, Honda and Stihl including the time-saving robotic Husqvarna Automower® which can work day and night, rain or shine, giving great results whatever the weather.

Of course, whatever plants and vegetables you put into your garden, need a helping hand to grow and in that respect the store has the widest choice of composts, vegetable planters, top soil, farmyard manure, decorative bark and border boosters from suppliers such as Levingtons, Durstons and Miracle Gro.

Also in stock, the store has all the lawn and plant care products you may need, as well as a wide range of tools and wheelbarrows.

If it's sharp sand, play sand or gravel you are after Robson & Cowan can supply what you need, and offers a home delivery service for the heavy bags – including composts and feeds – that you may not want to lift into the back of your car.

When it comes to planting, Robson & Cowan has plenty of seed potatoes and onion sets to choose from as well as Thompson & Morgan seeds to grow the finest flowers and vegetables.

Most people love to see birds in their gardens and to help attract a variety of species the store has some sturdy bird tables, nest boxes and feeders as well as wild bird seeds and nuts to keep your feathered visitors safe and well fed as they rear their young.



Husqvarna Automower®

And, of course, there are plenty of knowledgeable and helpful members of staff on hand at Robson & Cowan, to help with whatever your gardening needs are this spring and summer.



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# Changing of the seasons a garden time to savour

Our gardening expert **Ross Pearson** looks ahead to the new year in the garden

**There is a temporary preciousness to late spring where gardens appear to change on a daily basis; blink and you miss it.**

From trees with their boughs at breaking point, laden with cherry blossom to the way the changing light plays with colour revealing subtleties in tone and depth, April and May are exciting months to savour. The days are getting longer and just in the nick of time too as the gardeners 'to do' list grows as fast as the tender green shoots from herbaceous perennials in the borders. Get on top of the jobs now, however and gardeners' time can be better spent enjoying the garden in summer with a tippie in hand rather than a trowel!

## Reduce watering

One of my favourite summer jobs is the half an hour spent watering at the end of the day and taking stock of the garden; a luxury that is not always possible daily. Mulching your borders now will ensure water retention and nourish the soil for healthier plants. Water the soil well

before spreading a thick layer of garden compost or well rotted manure up to but not over the plants. Bulk buying compost is always cheaper but even if you can't mulch the whole garden, work on one area this year and move along to the next.

## Sweet pea heaven

Nothing smells better than a vase of freshly cut sweet peas from the garden. Plant them out now in containers supported by canes and tie in initially until their tendrils latch on. Sweet peas are hungry and thirsty plants so for the best flowering crop, use good quality compost and well rotted manure at the bottom of the pot. Nip out the tips of any leggy plants for bushier growth.

## Direct sowing

If you are limited on indoor sowing space, wait until the soil warms up and direct sow the seeds of vegetables including peas, beans, carrot, parsnip, beetroot, sweetcorn, spinach and chard. Sow in shallow drills, watering the drill before planting so as not to disturb the seed. The key to healthy veg is to thin out the seedlings as they grow. Leave courgettes

until late May as they germinate quickly and require warmer temperatures.

## Hardening off

It is important to harden off any indoor-sown plants before planting outdoors to acclimatise them to the change in temperature. A cold frame is ideal but if you don't have the space, move the tender plants to a sunny but sheltered spot in the morning and bring indoors at night for around two weeks. In the second week, they can be left outdoors overnight but cover with fleece to keep them protected.

## Chelsea chop

Traditionally carried out around the week of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, hence the name, the 'Chelsea chop' is a technique to encourage stockier herbaceous perennials and a longer flowering period. Cut back tall plants such as helenium, echinacea and aster to around half their height to stop them flopping over in summer. To prolong flowering, only cut back half of the plant to encourage later successional blooms.



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