



HEAR ABOUTS

MARCH 2021

Cover by Ian Smith

The Free Community Magazine for Eglington Parish
North Charlton | South Charlton | Eglington | & Everywhere Between

From the Editor

No time to write much this month, too busy reading landscape reports ...and flying my DRONE! You can't escape me now!! Mwhahahah...

Btw, did you know what the cover image last month was? A frozen puddle!

Andy

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Next Issue:
Early April

All content must be recieved by the 20th of March

www.eglingham.info

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Hear Abouts is all about you the reader within our Parish. It is written by yourselves (or by those just beyond our borders) and without those submissions there would be no Hear Abouts. Just a few things to note while submitting content to us which helps us out though.

Please **email** all content to the email address hearabouts@outlook.com and no other. There is less chance of it getting lost and forgotten about then. written content or content on paper will not be accepted. Please send content typed in an attached document file (eg Word). Please name the file with the article title, or be descriptive in it. It gets a little confusing when you have 4 files all called hear_abouts_artcle.docx. Pictures make things pretty! If you have an image to accompany the article great! Pictures tell a thousand words! A good size image helps us deliver a quality print. So ideally images should be around 2000 pixels on the longest edge. Please remember to own or have permission to use the picture you send. Even as a non-profit we are liable to claims of using copyrighted images, even within our small print run.

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Also please be aware that Hear Abouts is made available online digitally at www.eglingham.info and is searchable worldwide, so any information you provide will be published "beyond our borders".

Retiring Farmers

Waves of relief swept through the livestock farming community as Saint (!) Boris managed to negotiate a tariff free deal (or what we believe to be to date - the fishing industry does spook us). I know there has been unprecedented use of the adjective unprecedented in the last twelve months, but fat lambs have reached unprecedented prices in the last two weeks, as we can access our European markets. Not many fat lambs are left unfortunately, because: a. sheep thrived well last year and got fat quickly and b. the understandable concerns about Brexit caused many farmers to offload prior to the bewitching date. Fat and store cattle are returning very acceptable figures too.

So, everything in the fields, apart from the unprecedented wet, (almost as unprecedented as last year's) is peachy? Well not quite. Now that we have 'taken back control', Whitehall for England, Hollyrood for Scotland, Cardiff for Wales and Stormont for N.Ireland (all different schemes and rates) are going to be in charge of disseminating 'public money for public good' to each Nation, if - Rishy's going to have any money left after the pandemic has been bailed out. The beneficent EU from Brussels, in 2019 doled out £93.88 per acre on lowland farms and £25.66 per acre on moorland to every qualifying (which was most of them) farming business in the UK. The average payment was £27,800 with some of the biggest businesses receiving in excess of six figure sums. Most non farmers would look askance at this and think they must be making a fortune and should all be driving Range Rovers. These payments were intended to compensate for the poor commodity returns, i.e. keep food prices down. Despite this significant figure gracing their accounts the average hourly rate a farmer earned in 2019/20 was £9.88 an hour - barely the minimum wage.

Franklin Roosevelt, 100 years ago, described a farmer as a businessman 'who bought retail, sold wholesale and paid the carriage both ways. When all trades buying from and selling to farmers are aware the farmer has a guaranteed payment (and pro rata, each farmer has the same figure) coming to them before they even knock on his door, they know they have a good start. It could be argued that EU, or in fact any, subsidies, have benefited the supermarkets, seed merchants, fertiliser, spray, machinery and drug manufacturers way more than the focus of their trades - i.e. the multinational agricultural conglomerates and retailers who's power has grown exponentially over the last 100 years. You may think Mark Zuckerberg has a canny business but it's nowt compared to Cargills the Chicago based international grain trader.

So as stated the exchequer is going to take over Rural Payments which are going to be targeted to environmental improvements. All area payments will be phased out by 2027, indeed the biggest recipients will take a 25% hit next year. Public money is tangible figure (it will be X million) - public good is much harder to define and quantify. Who and how is this to be judged? I can see some big arguments ahead.

We have serious environmental issues in many areas: probably the most depleted bird population in Europe; worrying soil health particularly on the monocultural swathes of eastern England; chronic flooding issues in the West. Mind, all this is nothing like as bad as the mid-west of the United States. So how did we get here?

James Rebanks (the Lakeland Shepherd) explains very eloquently in his recent book *English Pastoral* (also recently serialised on Radio 4 - recommended reading) how since the advent of nitrogen fixing artificial fertiliser developed in Germany in 1909 and the subsequent development of herbicides and pesticides, that the productivity of farmers has (like the multinationals) developed exponentially. We have fed an increasing world population ever more cheaply in real terms. But at what cost to the planet? This has been a 100 year experiment where science has cajoled farmers into some very questionable practices. Farmers are very little to blame because if they didn't keep up they'd be out of business. The depletion of our countryside because of this 100 year experiment is becoming very apparent. Get rid of the pesky insects because they're attacking the crops and suddenly there's no thrushes or skylarks. Grow monocultural winter wheat and there's no winter stubble for grey partridge. Straighten out water courses and there's no water voles for the owls. What I definitely do not want is the odious Chris Packham preaching to us, but it has become obvious to all of us that Nature is a wholistic thing and we tinker (or maybe we've bludgeoned) it at our peril.

In Britain we are going to have to revert to practices of rotational farming, livestock muck based fertilising (take note vegetarians) and break crops as our grandfathers did but using modern 'smart' farming techniques. And other farmers farming all over the world will have to do the same, appropriate to their climate. Productivity will probably not be as great so we'll see food prices rise, they currently are (as per my introductory paragraph) and hopefully farming businesses will no longer be so dependent on their Single Farm Payment.

For the British Countryside we are entering a period of unparalleled change where we will need a new generation of smart farmers to adopt the smart farming practices. Let's hope that the new UK based Farm Payments, which if (and that is a big if) our politicians get it right, will incentivise our farmers to go in the direction we as an industry, all know we should.



Machinery ready for sale in March

The average age of a British Farmer is nearly 60. Only 37% are under 35. These alien concepts will cause many older farmers to throw in the towel, at last, to make way for some cute thinking young blood. I see lots of farm sales on the horizon, older farmers cashing in when commodity and hardware prices are good. When we're all vaccinated and this tiresome pandemic is kicked into touch - exciting times!

James R. Logan.

December 2021 !!

The memories of dark December evenings are still fairly fresh in our minds. One of the things that brightened up the gloom of the end of 2020 was the Christmas lights that George and Mary put up outside The Tankerville.

I'm not sure if anyone else saw the Christmas lights at Bamburgh but I thought that they were really impressive. The picture doesn't actually do them justice but it does give an idea of what the display looked like.

If there was enough support, I was wondering about whether we could put on our own Christmas display here in gardens close to the pub, to compliment the Tankerville lights, with lights akin to those that were at Bamburgh ie bright white ones.

I have broached the possibility with a number of neighbours and so far there are several who would be happy to support the proposal, which is encouraging.

Further thought would obviously need to be given to various aspects including how physically to get the lights put up and taken down. Also to decide which trees/shrubs would be best placed to hang the lights etc. My thoughts are that perhaps 10-12 sets of lights in all? If these, as I say, were concentrated in close proximity to the pub then I think that they would produce the most impressive display.

Clearly it is very early(!) to be thinking about the end of this year already but it may now be a good time to buy Christmas lights.

This December will hopefully be a brighter one than the last one!

Morrison



Compost

60 litre bags
Clover Compost
£4.50 per bag

Call Bob on 579317

All profit goes to Brownieside and
South Charlton Leek Club

Winter at Little Acorns Pre-school

Where the children have been able to play with friends and together explore and appreciate winter nature during this special magical time of the year. It brings joy to hear the children's delight in their voices as they excitedly appreciate the beauty around us.....noticing our regular friend the Robin, pausing with their play as they stop to listen..... And see numerous geese high in the sky. Using fantastic descriptive language to explain their findings as we listen to the rain on the Tipi! And a perfect present this year..... to have some snow and a very precious opportunity to be able to play with friends together in the snow.

We have been so privileged to have been able to stay open and welcome the children throughout these challenging and difficult months and being outdoors almost 100% of the time has been incredibly valuable not only for the children's health and wellbeing but ours too.

There have been endless opportunities for play and learning, the children have used all their senses to explore and make observations. They have learnt to identify animals by their footprints in the snow, recognise the different species of bird flying to and from the feeding stations and have constructed miniature fences to protect the snowdrops in the woods. In the coming weeks we will be providing further opportunities for the children to care for nature, planting seeds, watering plants and picking up rubbish. We will watch the birds build their nests and look out for our resident hedgehogs as they come out of hibernation. We hope that experiences such as these help to build lifelong skills and give children a connection that may in the future support caring for their environment, as well as each other.

Something we all need a little of at the moment.



Taking a closer look at the frost and ice

Bird spotting from a distance, then from our hide.



Bird Survey

Bird survey from 17th February 2021 on a farm within the parish.

Greylag goose, Teal, Pheasant, Red-legged partridge, Buzzard, Lapwing, Woodcock, Snipe, Common gull, Herring gull, Wood pigeon, Jay, Jackdaw, Carrion crow, Rook, Great spotted woodpecker, Skylark, Kestrel, Blue tit, Coal tit, Great tit, Long-tailed tit, Goldcrest, Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Mistle thrush, Song thrush, Blackbird, Fieldfare, Redwing, Robin, Dunnock, Wren, Starling, Pied wagtail, Meadow pipit, House Sparrow, Tree sparrow, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Bullfinch, Goldfinch, Linnet, Siskin, Lesser redpoll, Reed bunting, Yellow hammer and Dipper.

What other species do we have in the parish?

Scam Alert from Northumbria Police

We're aware of a number of scams doing the rounds at the moment where fraudsters are claiming to be police, HMRC, Amazon, Sky and other organisations.

We've received a number of reports today from people who've been cold-called by con-artists asking for personal information such as address, bank details and National Insurance numbers - and threatened they'll be arrested if they don't comply.

This is a scam – please keep your personal info safe.

If you receive a call like this, hang up and report immediately to Action Fraud via their website or by calling 0300 123 2040

NEVER download apps or click on attachments sent via unsolicited emails or by strangers.

Challenge cold-callers, ALWAYS take your time, and if in doubt HANG UP.

For more info visit <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

Census 2021

Census 2021 will be the first run predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

Census day will be on March 21, but households will soon receive letters with online codes explaining how they can take part. The census will include questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size and ethnicity. And, for the first time, there will be a question asking people whether they have served in the armed forces, as well as voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity.

“No-one should miss out. Everyone can complete on online with a new search-as-you-type ability and paper forms for those who need them.”

Results will be available within 12 months, although personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations.

A Story in 300 Words

Thanks so much for contributing to this new feature, you are REALLY excelling yourselves! The beginning line for the next issue is at the end of the piece.

The snow had been falling all night and there were footprints leading into the field... I rubbed my eyes, pulled my zip up to my chin, and pondered. They were up early then, maybe before six. I knew this because the blizzard didn't abate until five, yet spindrift already half-filled the oversized prints, leaving them barely visible. I stifled a shudder as the wind wriggled under my coat. Only one set of prints: the smaller dents were gone, obliterated as though they'd never existed, but I knew they were there. The two of them had left, partners in crime. Soon all evidence of their departure would be lost. But I knew, because I, too, was up early.

A tardy owl broke the hush as it sought one last morsel in the wasteland of white. Soon it would head home and seek rest before the next storm. I should follow its example. I should turn my back on the fast-disappearing trail, turn my back on the pair of them. But I knew I would not.

I made my own prints in the powder snow, feet sinking deep, shoes unsuitable. The bite of ice was intense and my toes were stone, but I didn't stop. This time I would catch them, this time the surprise would be mine. The torrent of my emotions needed an outlet - maybe I should keep a lid on it, compartmentalise.

But I couldn't be alone any longer.

Forging on despite my lack of sleep or boots or common sense, I crested the hill as a pale sun poked above the horizon. Marshmallow pink glazed the snow with a sugar coating and I caught my breath.

Below, two figures, one large, one small, climbed the slope, hands clasped. They stopped in stunned silence for a whole second before melting into movement and voice. My tears shimmered in the morning light, blinding me.

But then my son was in my arms, my husband sandwiching him. My chill slipped away like the sledge, buried in the drifts at the bottom of the slope, my weeks of isolation over, my shifts done for now.

I was home.

Frances Buckingham

The snow had been falling all night and there were foot prints leading into the field. I followed them, curiously wondering who had ventured out in such weather. As I walked, I thought I heard a murmur of sound in my ear, or was it deep in my head. I paused and listened carefully, slowly but becoming more clear I heard the following chant.

'I am a stealthy footprint creeping through the night. Stepping carefully where I go, first the left and then the right. Making not a sound as I step on snow and soil. Light as a feather pressing into frozen grass, then let the blades uncoil.

But who is treading carefully so that no person now can hear. Tis my master and my lord sole of shoe who passes quietly here. And he is ruled by mighty foot whose weight I feel in passing. Shouldering legs so tall their architecture quite surpassing.

And on to heights I cannot guess I've heard tell of belly, chest and head. But if they exist I know it not I only know it's said. That one day soon my tread will cease and I'll be

hidden deep. Buried in the mud without a sole, alone to grieve and weep. My marker will be no headstone my imprint will be enough. To mark my passage through this world in meadows and the rough. And when my print has passed you by drifting into ice and mist. Don't linger long on things that were, it's now that can't be missed....'

As suddenly as it had arisen the chant faded from my hearing. I felt quite alone and a tremor passed through me. Some unquiet spirit had left their mark in this snowy meadow and I had chanced to hear its passing. Chilled I quickly turned and made my way home.

Pete Ridgway

The snow had been falling all night and there were footprints leading into the field, from back door across the lawn, and down the gentle slope towards the burn.

Emerging from morning ablutions, getting no reply calling out 'Dad', a chill of anxiety crept into consciousness. Finding your duffel coat on the rack and boots untouched, the concern escalated. When I saw the prints matched slippers I knew I had to move fast.

A call to Tom and Mary two doors away, kettle rapidly boiling for thermos and hottie while I grabbed a bagful of warm clothing. Snow was gently tumbling like sieved icing sugar, and we knew prints would soon be obscured by the pristine blanket if we didn't hurry.

For years a curtain of change had eroded the clarity of former years. Lost names and myriad micromemories by which days turn, slowly were clogging up the mechanics of life. And now you

had set off into winter's chill embrace while I looked at my face for five minutes.

Crunching crust, following faintest imprints of your wanderings, what scene might we encounter? Mercifully, beyond trees, we came where you'd chosen. Kneeling in pyjamas, fingers purple raw sausages, you'd fashioned snowman like 70 years before. Oblivious to cold, content in activity, you were untroubled by danger or mortality, wishing to complete your creation.

We, by comparison, personified worry. Wrapping you with blanket, thrusting tea into your chilled body, we cajoled you home with the offer of welcome fire, boiled eggs, toast soldiers, the promise to return with carrot and chestnuts to complete your handiwork.

Another day in life's journey, adventure and vulnerability, unconsciously blended by your restless roaming, and my love and guilt both magnified by your reckless needs. Where it leads I know not, but my footprints will join yours if you'll allow, and we'll build snowmen together as in years gone by.

Ian Smith



The snow had been falling all night and there were footprints leading into the field. “Oh no!” I started down the steps and yelled, “Maddie, come back. This isn’t funny, come back right now.” To no avail, I could almost hear the laughter as she ran on, ignoring me with that selective hearing that three-year olds possess.

My daughter was working from home during lockdown, and asked me if I would watch the little one for a few hours as she had two Zoom calls to conduct. I have a vague understanding of what this entails; something to do with 20 colleagues talking at once on their tablets.

As I frantically donned my outdoor clothes, I was still wondering how this happened. We were just about to leave for an afternoon walk and I opened the front door to see the state of the weather. This morning we had played together in the snow quite happily; I had amused her by throwing snow balls. However, this afternoon she was keen to go for a walk in the snow, and somehow slipped out of the front door when I opened it.

The field was safe enough, but beyond it the river was in spate. Having neglected to bring my trusty walking stick, it was slow going.

There was no sign of her along the river bank, so I decided to return home for help. When I rounded the corner of the house, there to my huge relief was Maddie sitting on the top step. My racing heart began to return to normal again. “You gave Grandpa such a fright running off like that.”

I couldn’t be cross for long seeing that toothy grin. Soon I was fondling silky black ears as she snuggled into my chest; long bushy, tail wagging uncontrollably.

Vanessa Braidwood

Next months opening line is... “It had been a year since I was last here—”

Letters to the Editor...

Dear editor

I refer to Di Lemmas letter to you last month on the subject of the councils new service for people suffering with Indecision Syndrome. I have for many years been a sufferer from this debilitating condition, although in my case it seems to have been exacerbated this year by my attempts to faithfully follow the advice of the government during the various periods of lockdown. Many of your readers will, I am sure, agree that Boris and his esteemed colleagues in the Cabinet clearly all suffer from extreme forms of IS. I wondered whether Di Lemma and the NCC Indecision Service might offer their services to the Cabinet office. I’m sure we would all feel a lot safer in our beds if we knew the Prime Minister and his colleagues were getting the treatment they needed.

Yours faithfully

A relieved voter

Dear Sir,

'A Brief History of Beanley' lecture evening

As a keen amateur historian I have spent the past twenty-five years delving into the incredible history of Beanley, and I was hoping you might be able to promote a talk I am planning to give on the subject.

My presentation will cover the entire sweep of Beanley's rich and fascinating past, starting with the Neolithic era. At that time the site of the current hamlet was, of course, home to a vast array of interconnected and transposable henges which were moved around every night so they aligned with the stars. Each henge was at least three times the size of Stonehenge and constructed from huge slabs of granite that had been brought from the high Andes by a caravan of yaks. They were approached via procession routes that would have been visible from space and we know that pilgrims travelled to the complex from as far away as modern-day Lesotho. Sadly, however, the henges were dismantled at the turn of the second century and the monoliths broken up to be sold off as bags of decorative garden gravel.

Around that period, Beanley - or Beanumium as it was known in Roman times - was a bustling city with a forum located where the old phone box used to stand. It had been built as a direct replacement for Pompeii which was destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79AD, and as a holiday resort for the rich and powerful it boasted public baths, gymnasiums, colonnades, a large amphitheatre, a world-famous library and lots of brothels. Its population at that time was likely in excess of 20,000 people.

Inevitably, Beanley's fortunes declined with the fall of the Roman Empire, but its status as an important metropolis was restored four centuries later when the Vikings invaded and within just a few months announced it as the capital of their new realm. Back then the place would have seemed very different to how it does today, with impressive long houses, palaces, several great halls, lavish timber theatres for the reading of dreary epic sagas, bull baiting pits and a thriving beard-plaiting industry.

During the 16th century Pope Clement VII actually considered abandoning Rome and pronouncing Beanley the new centre of the Catholic church, but apparently Henry VIII held a long and bitter grudge against the village (something to do with a dispute over fishing rights on a stretch of the Breamish), and deliberately scuppered the move by establishing the Church of England.

Since then Beanley's global standing has slowly yet steadily dwindled, but more about how and why that has happened in my talk - including insights into the village's failed attempt to declare itself an independent state, its notorious role in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, its unsuccessful bid to host the 1952 Winter Olympics and, more recently, its controversial sponsorship of the Japanese whaling fleet.

Kind regards,
Icarus G Helm.

Eglingham Parish Tree Planting Scheme

Eglingham Parish Council are keen to do what it can to help in addressing climate change. To this end the Parish Council have decided to promote a programme of tree planting across the Parish. A small working group has been established to assess the viability of this idea and to generate ideas for planting.

Initially, the first area we would propose is that which is in the ownership of the Parish Council--the community field in Eglingham village.

We are considering planting a part of this field with trees. The area we would want to plant is to the east of the tennis court and the composting toilet up to near to the rear boundaries of the properties on the south side of the field. This would be an



area of approximately 20 metres by 36 metres as shown on the photograph below.

The mix of trees to be planted would be drawn from native broad leaf trees. An example of a mix for wetter soil areas would be Hazel, Crab Apple, Downy Birch, Hawthorn and Goat Willow. This selection of trees would not only thrive where there was wet soil but would also provide colour and variety during spring, summer and autumn enhancing an otherwise uninteresting area. It would also provide food and shelter for wildlife.

The planting would not encroach on the land currently used for the 'Festival on the Field' nor would it limit people from playing football on the open area of the field or inhibit access to the tennis court.

Should you have any views on this proposal then the Parish Council would like to hear from you. Please send any comments to eglinghampc@gmail.com

Eglingham Parish Council

Eglingham Parish Council

Clerk Lesley Long, 5 Meadow Riggs, Alnwick NE66 1AP
Email: eglinghamclerk@gmail.com

Minutes of the electronic meeting of Eglingham Parish Council held on Wednesday January 13th, 2021

Present: Chair - Cllr D Alston (DA), Cllrs D Biesterfield (DB), A Gray (AG), G Leishman (GL), A Blackmore (AB).

In attendance: County Cllr W Pattison (WP). Clerk Lesley Long.

These minutes are edited for brevity, for full minutes always read them on the website

Matters Arising

Installation of traffic speed sign in Eglingham. Cllr WP confirmed that the order for the equipment had been placed and it would be installed at the start of February.

Response from Robin McCartney – re excess signage in South Charlton. The elderly people crossing sign is to be removed. A decision on the passing place signage is awaited.

Response from NCC Highways for Alternative Options for Eglingham village signage. The Parish Council AGREED to a simple black and white sign.

Middlemoor Community Woodland Planting Project – AB reported he had been exploring the possibility of the Parish Council working in collaboration with the Cheviot Valley Trail Stewardship, a not-for-profit organisation working to maintain and create new trails that are low impact and ecologically sound. An association between EPC and the organisation could be of mutual benefit as the not-for-profit group has support from DEFRA and the National Lottery.

After discussion, it was agreed that as the two initiatives are separate, AB would engage with Cheviot Valley Trails to understand how the two projects could be integrated to benefit the Woodland Planning project.

Consideration of the Co-Option of a Parish Councillor. The Parish Council formally AGREED that Jane Hamilton be co-opted as a parish councillor.

Neighbourhood Plan Update - DB reported that a Zoom meeting would take place shortly to discuss settlement boundaries and the designation of green spaces. Good progress has been made with the landscape study and the Steering Group will start work on draft policies soon.

Tree Planting on the Community Field - DA reported that a response from the Eglingham Community Association stated that for several reasons they were not keen on the idea. After discussion, it was agreed that Parish Council would consult with the wider community and that an item would be placed in Hear Abouts inviting residents' views.

County Councillors Report. The report for January was circulated prior to the

meeting. The following points were discussed:

The pavement in South Charlton has been resurfaced.

The Eglington speed sign will be installed in early February.

Councillors confirmed that elderly and vulnerable residents were starting to receive the Covid vaccination.

In response to a question from AG, WP stated that the hedge at Rock Lodge which is obstructing the view on the bend on B6347 leading from the A1 to South Charlton, is a matter for Rennington Parish Council. The Clerk will inform Rennington Parish Council that it poses a road safety hazard.

Planning Matters

20/01422/FUL – Land East of St James Church. The parish council is waiting for an invitation to participate in a Zoom meeting with Barry Spall of Northumberland Estates to finalise the few remaining issues of difference.

20/03675/REM Land South of Yarrow Cottage. EPC further representations have been submitted.

To NOTE – 18/02990/FUL – VARYCO Farm Cottage, Charlton Hall - GRANTED

To NOTE – 20/03274/FUL - Middlemoor, Chathill. Hard standing for farm – GRANTED

Highway Matters / Village Maintenance

Hedge Cutting at Rock Lodge

Consultation on South Charlton village gateway signage. AG reported that responses from residents had been in favour of the proposed gateway signage.

Any Other Urgent Business

GL advised councillors that the next meeting of the Middlemoor Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund to award grants would be on March 10th, 2021. Applications need to be submitted before then.

Date and Time of Next Meeting – Wednesday 24th February 2021, via ZOOM at 7.30pm

Revised Meeting Dates for 2021 to be held via Zoom until further notice.

April 7th at 7.30pm

May 12th at 7.30pm

July 7th at 7.30pm

September 1st at 7.30pm

October 6th at 7.30pm

November 24th at 7.30pm

Remember full minutes are posted on the website <https://eglington.info> shortly after a meeting.

Not another one...

Thank you, Brenda from Bristol. Yes, I'm called Bailey and no, I'm not the Bailey who wrote to you before Christmas. I don't mean to be grumpy, it's really not in my nature, but there are quite literally thousands of suitable names for dogs. We get dozens of Marleys, scores of Baileys and every second Dalmatian is called Pongo (would you call one of those bald human babies "Stinker" on its birth certificate?) We don't have to be named after canine film stars, other options are available. As you can see I have an interesting mixture of collie colouring and temperament with short Staffy hair and gym-bunny muscles; apparently I am "a dream to walk" but I don't know what that means.



Last month's poster girl, Molly, has had the little operation and moved out to live with her new people in Pegswood. There have been a few more adoptions but those hard-working NCC Dog Wardens keep turning up with new hairy chaps and chapesses in need of care and accommodation. The problem with new arrivals is that they need a lot of trips to the vet; our more observant readers will have noticed that the little white van (with the handsome dogs painted on the outside) has disappeared, bitten the dust, become an ex-mode of dog transport. Replacing it will have to be our next big fundraising drive (arf, arf) so if you know of a business that is replacing their van please point them in our direction or point us in theirs.

Speaking of transport there are a lot more vehicles going past our kennels here at Charlton Mires so we hope that Lockdown 3.0 is nearly over – we love the staff but it's nice to see the different volunteers and it helps us work out what day of the week it is. Paws crossed there should be an announcement about life getting back to normal very soon, if there is then please check our Facebook page **Alexa's Animals North East Charity** for details about the opening plan for our shop in Wooler. Once we are open we will welcome both customers and donations of merchandise with frantic wagging and woofing... and that's just the Trustees!

If there's room for a Bailey in your life then I'm ready and waiting, if there are multiple applicants then the tie-breaker will be to identify the church behind me.

Tackling loneliness and mental health through the power of reading

Northumberland Libraries has received funding from The Reading Agency to help tackle loneliness and promote wellbeing.

Northumberland libraries will be delivering two strands of Reading Friends Initiatives:

- Mum's the Word Reading Friends Groups will meet weekly on Zoom to reach out to expectant and new mothers who may be experiencing isolation and loneliness
- Reading Friends Telephone Friends will build on our existing Befrienders programme to match participants with a friendly member of library staff for a weekly chat about books, life and everything in between.

Northumberland Libraries will enjoy a significant boost to their digital and physical library collections as The Reading Agency will also move forward with a very significant national library and health sector rollout of Reading Well mental health schemes for children, young people and adults, along with supporting book collections. Substantial investment in evaluation of the impact of the Reading Well scheme will also run alongside during this time period. Every library in England will be gifted these Reading Well book collections. The Reading Agency is partnering with publishers and e-lending partners to offer titles in e-book and e-audio format to ensure this opportunity is as inclusive and accessible as possible.

If you know a family member, friend or neighbour who might benefit from becoming involved with Reading Friends, please contact readingfriends@northumberland.gov.uk

Free Employability webinars for Unemployed Northumberland residents

CAN is running six Employability Webinars to help unemployed Northumberland residents to develop their job-seeking skills and find work.

Who will benefit from the course?

This series of webinars is suitable for both those who have recently been made redundant and those who have been out of work for some time.

What will I get from attending?

Unemployment can be a lonely and daunting experience at any time and the pandemic hasn't helped. You are not alone! We can offer both emotional support and help with the practicalities of looking for a job.

Taking part will help you to:

- build new skills
- plan the way ahead
- demonstrate your commitment to finding work to the job-centre and potential employers/training agencies
- build your confidence
- cope with the emotional and practical impacts of unemployment
- give you access to ongoing support on a one to one basis from CAN's employment hubs if desired.

List of webinars

These will take place every Monday at 10am and will cover the following subjects:

1st March Coping with Unemployment & Redundancy; 8th March Searching for Work; 15th March Applying for Jobs; 22nd March Preparing for Interviews; 29th March Interview skills; 12th April Retraining and changing career

To book a place on any of these webinars, please click on the links above, email: juliaplinston@canorth.org.uk or tel: 07340 082571.

Doggerel Corner

definition of doggerel: trivial or comic verse composed in an irregular rhythm

Thoughts of better times just before Lockdown 1, but there was someone out to get me...

*Someone's out to get me, or that's the way it seems
We're going on a special holiday, it's been one of our dreams
To see South East Asia, the temples and the sights
We are going upmarket to try and avoid the frights
We planned for my condition, my hearts just not the best
They've shocked my AF into rhythm, I know I've had the test
So what could go wrong, I'm sure there's not a thing
But life's not like that, it has its store of troubles to bring.
Which started with a slipped disc, which knackered my right arm
My heart then fell out of rhythm and I really lost my calm
I then developed cystitis from who or god knows where
And my right eye got swollen, it really didn't seem fair
I'm treating all my ailments and keeping everything crossed
But that sod whose out to get me, doesn't think he's lost
There's still one day to go and lots that could go wrong
The route to the plane still feels as though it's ever so long
I'm eating extremely carefully I really mustn't dare
Develop a bug which might prevent me getting up that stair
Into the aircraft to relax and sink into my seat
Now what the hell is wrong, I can't seem to feel my feet.
We'll probably get hijacked or just fall into the sea
I'm sure they are out to get me, but I'm paranoid see.*

We did actually enjoy the holiday in November 2019. The following year was not what we expected.

Pete Ridgway

Coronacoaster

noun: the ups and downs of a pandemic. One day you're loving your bubble, doing work outs, baking banana bread and going for long walks and the next you're crying, drinking gin for breakfast and missing people you don't even like.

Dog's Own Country

*I always knew that living here there'd be so many dogs
The Huntin' Shootin' Farming folk would have those working stocks
Of Labs, and Collies, Spaniels, Borders
All of them trained to obey their orders;
Kept out in kennels on beds of straw,
Not beanbags and blankets but life in the raw.
Many others we have here, and such a variety too
Boxers, Spaniels, and Cockerpoos.*

*Pups born in the village often stay close by,
Or are kept with the mother, goodness knows why.
Many of these pups don't go far
Across the road, up the hill, we know where they are!
We can trace them back like villagers of yore,
'Just look at that one you know who's the sire
He's a dead ringer for Bruce* - and I'm no liar'.
Many a Stud can be found close to home
Not a wayward Lothario who has had to roam
The hills and the dales to find some Nookie,
But the friend of a friend who says: 'Lookie
I know a lass who's ready to whelp
I'll give you a nod, he won't need any help! Or will he?*

*A certain Pug whose name I forget (!)
Good natured and handsome, in his prime and yet
When put to a bitch well in season no doubt
Just played with her toys and fuffed about!
He didn't even try to get in place
Had to be removed, and sent home in disgrace!*

*'Overlapping' is a trend and to my surprise
A pup is brought in before the old one dies,
But often when this happens they stay alive!
Many in the village have more than one
Which makes the head count a tidy sum;
Almost fifty dogs live within our walls,
I swear to you I have counted them all.
Some may pass away, but replaced they will be,
We cannot live without our doggies you see.
And not a bed of straw in sight!*

Margaret B.

(Disclaimer) *I don't know of any dog called Bruce in Eglington. Just Poetic License.

My Best Friend

*My Best Friend Is What You Are,
Your Love Is Like A Shining Star,
I Chose You All Those Years Ago,
Because Your Eyes Said Love Me So,
And I Have Loved You With All My Heart,
But Now Its Time For Us To Part,
Into God's Hands You Go My Friend,
And I have Loved You Until The End,
Thoughts Of You Will Leave Me Never,
Memories Of You I Will Always Treasure.*



In Memory of our Gorgeous Boy Ozzie who died 15/1/2

Bev Hope

(We are now currently looking for a young rescue dog)

Thanks to Ian Smith for his many photos from the recent snowy spell, he submitted. Here you can see clearing the Beanley road underway



Fantasy Premier League Hear Abouts Championship

After Gameweek 25, your top 3 are...

1st - Andy Gray - 1500 pts

2nd - Clair Leishman - 1326 pts

3rd - Gordon Leishman - 1230 pts



Residents @ Email List

A resident of the Parish? Then if you haven't already... Sign up for our community email list!

Our very successful email list is open to any resident within our boundaries, just send an email to david@eglingham.org.uk and you will get added.

Next Issue:

Early April

Please submit content by 20th of March

www.eglingham.info

DISCLAIMER

Just a reminder for the easily offended or argumentative. Please note that the views expressed within are those of the named contributors not the Hear Abouts team. Thank you. Feel free to write in with a reply to anything to be published though!

Also please be aware that Hear Abouts is made available online digitally at www.eglingham.info and is searchable worldwide, so any information you provide will be published "beyond our borders".

Covid-19 Help and assistance

Should you find yourself in a position where you may require some additional assistance - this might include a chat on the phone, help with shopping, collection of medication or general advice please in the first instance contact any of the people listed below for your community who will either be able to offer direct assistance or signpost you to someone who can:

Eglingham area:

Jane Hamilton - 01668 217179 mob: 07546 487121 jane.hamilton99@sky.com

Jess Angus - 07912 625195 jess.angus101@hotmail.co.uk

Brenda Robertson - 01665 579337 brobertson2852@gmail.com

South Charlton area

Sue Courty - 01665 579295 thecourtys@gmail.com,

Lorna Turner - 01665 579212 gavin@middlecroft.co.uk,

Sue Jackson - 01665 579470 susan.jackson@green-synergy.co.uk

North Charlton:

Terry Carrington Wathey - 07963 366898 terry1ra@hotmail.com

Or contact representatives of the WI, Eglingham Church, Eglingham Community Association or the Parish Council whose contact details are on the last page of HearAbouts and are also listed on the Eglingham.info website.