

THE WITTON WORD

ISSUE 124, JUNE 2025

In this edition

**New Book Celebrates
Women of Witton le Wear**

**New Parish
Council Elected**



The newsletter of Witton le Wear Parish Council

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Welcome to the latest issue of The Witton Word

Hannah Murray-Leslie
Parish Council Chair

Welcome to the new design
Witton Word!

We know how much residents and those with connections to the village value this newsletter.

The new design has been created with the help of volunteers, Tim Cole and Sarah Moorhead, along with South West Durham News, to allow us to share colour pictures of village groups and events and improve our online presence.

With better print quality we hope to generate some income towards publication costs and have new guidance for those wanting to contribute articles or adverts - contact clerk.wittonlewearpc@gmail.com or Laura L-W for more info.

May's elections brought change for the Parish Council as a few members stood down at the end of their term.

Thanks to Olive Wilson (who I believe holds the record for the longest serving member), Paul Parson and Sarah Moorehead for all the years of work they have done on behalf of the village.

At the AGM I was re-elected Chair and we co-opted Linda Bentley and Laura Langstaff-Wood. This means we still have two places available, so please do get in touch if you're interested in

getting involved. We meet as a full council every two months for around an hour and a half, and Cllrs organise additional meetings where needed to work on projects like road safety.

If you have ideas about how we could improve things in the village we'd love to hear from you.

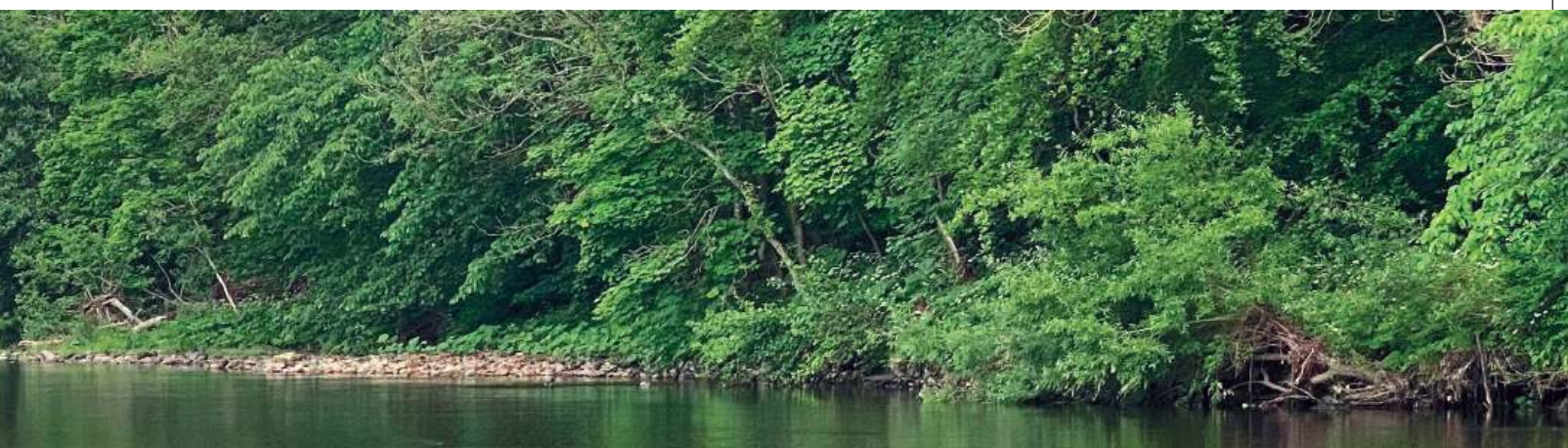
We're also starting to use the Parish Council Facebook page more actively, so please keep an eye out and tag us if there are things you'd like us to share.

We've already had some fab events in the village this year: The WI Easter event, complete with an Egg Jarping competition (I nearly won but was bested by Lucas Hall); another storming Village Show Plant Sale and VE Day celebrations up at the school.

Without the wonderful Community Association keeping the Community Centre open, much of our village activity wouldn't be possible, so please also consider whether you can help them out this year.

And finally, thanks to Doug Hill and the Youth Club for planting up the hanging baskets again this year, and thanks in advance to volunteers who feed and water them.

What a great start to Spring and Summer 2025!



Around the village

News from around and about



Jewels in OUR Crown is a new book telling the stories of twenty women who came from Witton le Wear, writes the book's author, *Anne C Yuill*.

A labour of love, the book begins with the Amundeville lady in the 12th century and tells stories of women up to recent times.

During many years of researching the parish's local history, women's stories have often been told, but they have not been written down collectively.

Women are less commonly portrayed in history than men, and this book opens a window on how they lived their lives in our village.

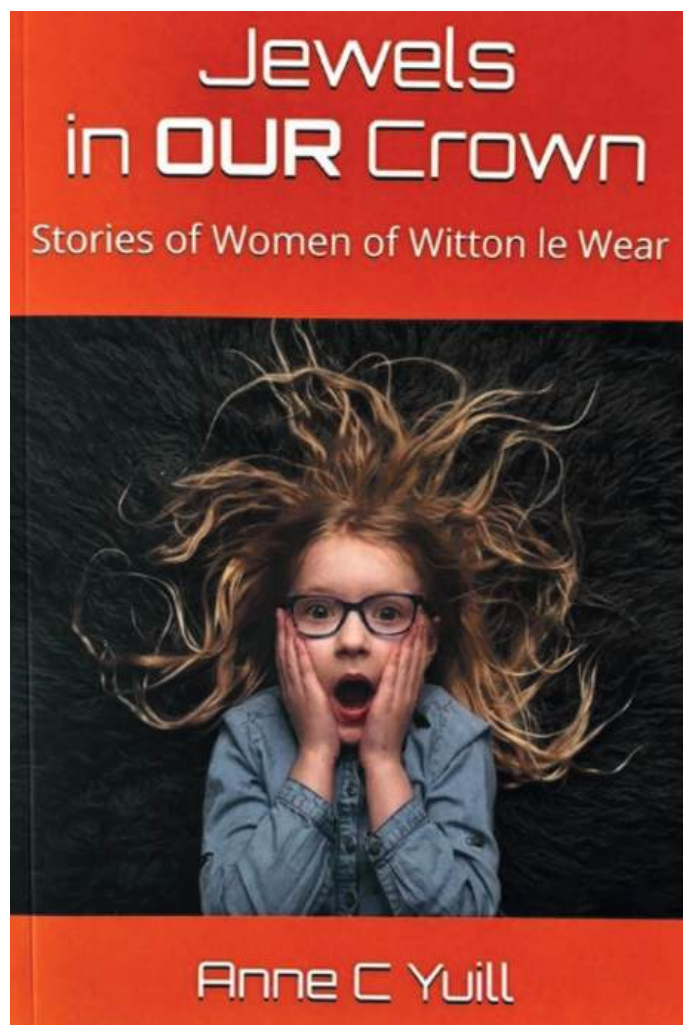
The majority of them would have found it amusing that their stories were interesting enough to be read by modern day women, but they were very similar to us with health, money, relationship and family problems to deal with.

The stories cover the full spectre of women's emotions and experiences from cradle to grave, and are very relatable to the modern reader.

It is available on Amazon as a paperback or as an ebook. If you subscribe to Kindle Unlimited it can be read for free.

As the author, I have copies of the paperback book which can be purchased from me at £8 a copy. I can be contacted by email at kanda98@sky.com or on 07717 707934.

I will also have the books at the village Arts and Crafts Exhibition on 21st and 22nd June in the church. (See page 9 for more information.)



Village Voices

Singing for health and happiness



As we write, we are enjoying wonderful sunny, warm weather and hopefully, when *Witton Word* comes out, we will still be getting sunshine.

It does encourage Village Voices to sing!

We have been practicing for our summer concert which we are pleased to announce will be on:

FRIDAY 18TH JULY, from 7.30pm in ST. PHILIP & ST. JAMES CHURCH, WITTON-LE-WEAR.

Some of the songs will have an environmental theme. They'll also be sung with our usual enthusiasm and a bit of swing.

As always we are hoping to be joined by some of our very talented friends. We look forward to seeing you there.

There will be our legendary refreshments afterwards, giving you the opportunity to have a chat.

Around the village

News from around and about



A 50-strong volunteer army has rolled up its sleeves, donned hi-vis vests and armed itself with litter pickers to clear an incredible 200 bags of litter along the Weardale Railway's scenic 18-mile line, as part of the 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway celebrations.

The clean-up, stretching from Bishop Auckland through Witton le Wear to the end of the line at Stanhope, uncovered everything from abandoned chairs and shopping trolleys to electrical goods and scrap metal – and even an unopened bottle of vintage prosecco.

Among the volunteers were members of the local community, Lanchester Boys' Brigade and Weardale Railway staff. Frosterley Angling Club, Wear Rivers Trust and Durham Wildlife Trust also attended – key partners given the proximity of the line to the River Wear.

Equipment including litter pickers, bags and protective gloves were provided by Durham County Council's Civic Pride Team, which help residents, community groups, schools and businesses across the region take action to make their neighbourhoods a cleaner and greener place to live.

Claire Gibbons, General Manager at Weardale Railway, said: "The day was an absolute success.

The sun was shining, and even more people turned up than we expected. It was heartening to see so many people of all ages come together with such enthusiasm and pride in their community".

Niccy Hallifax, S&DR Bicentenary Festival Director, said: "We're thrilled to have Weardale Railway and The Auckland Project on board for S&DR200 and to see them lead such a meaningful event.

"This community clean-up goes far beyond tidying the tracks, it's about reconnecting people with the heritage on their doorstep and showing how the legacy of the railway continues to inspire action today".

The clean-up is just one part of Weardale Railway's wider commitment to the S&DR200 celebrations, the 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, which includes planting 200 bulbs at each station and 200 native trees and shrubs along the route.

The Weardale Railway is part of The Auckland Project, a regeneration charity transforming Bishop Auckland into a leading visitor destination through its unique collection of heritage attractions, galleries, and gardens.

Find out more at <https://aucklandproject.org/bishops-key/> and <https://www.weardale-railway.org.uk/>



Participants of Weardale Railway's 'Big Spring Clean'

Community Centre

Call Lorraine Preston on 07805 517938 or email: trustees@wittonlewear.com



<u>Activity</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Time</u>
Mondays		
Carpet Bowls	Contact Kate Atkins: 01388 488626	6.45pm - 9.45pm
Tuesdays		
Chair Exercise	Gentle exercise with coach, Jack Desmond. Free.	9.30am - 10.30am
Sewing Group	Anne Yuill: 01388 488376	1pm - 4pm
Yoga	Mark Aspinall: 01388 710658	7pm - 8.30pm
Wednesdays		
Badminton	Ursula Jones: 01388 488697 or 07717 707934	1.30pm - 3pm
Youth Club	Derek Bradley: 07808 480029	6.30pm - 8.30pm
Thursdays		
Coffee Morning	Every 1 st Tuesday of the month. Christina: 07714 200254	10am - 12pm
Clubbercise	No session 1 st Thursday of the month: Vikki Mitchell (see below).	7pm - 8pm

We very much hope everyone has had the opportunity to enjoy the lovely weather that we have had over the past six weeks and hopefully we can all look forward to a great summer!

Use the Community Centre for your events and celebrations

The centre is a great location for parties or celebrations and is, in addition, very affordable at only £20 per hour! (A minimum of three hours booking is required). Please contact one of the trustees should you want to discuss your event further.

Recruitment Drive

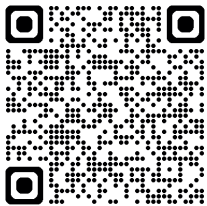
We are actively seeking new trustees to support the Centre and be in a position to develop the offering to the Community. If you would like further information on what is involved or indeed want to become a trustee then we would be delighted to hear from you. The current trustees are Cheryl Barker, Phil Cowan, John Preston and Lorraine Preston.

Friendship Lunch

We have regular friendship lunch days. Next date is: Friday 4 July. For more information, see page 8.

More Information

For more information about the centre's activities, visit our Facebook page by scanning the QR code, right.



clubbercise[®]
BRINGING A NIGHT OUT TO YOUR WORKOUT

Witton-le-wear Community centre, School Street, Bishop Auckland, DL14 OAS

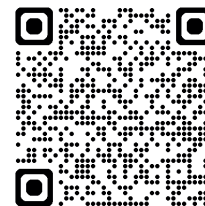
Thursday 7-8pm (*Note classes will not run on the 1st Thursday of each month)

Come and join us, Clubbercise is a night out without the hangover! It consists of easy to follow routines in a darkened room with disco lights!

Call Vikki on 07503191919 Or message me on Facebook 'club with Vikki' See you soon!

Pew News

St Philip and St James Parish Church: 01388 768898



Apologies that the Pew News which should have appeared in the last *Witton Word* was omitted.

We wanted to talk about our services at St Philip and St James Parish Church which are varied to accommodate differing church practices.

Obviously the 1st and 3rd Sundays are Holy Communion Sundays at 11am. At present Rev. Claire Gibbs, our vicar to the Escomb Group of churches, presides over this service and since last June has been joined by our deacon, Rev. Mel Campbell who will be priested in late June. It has been lovely to see our priests stall being occupied.

We also now sing the *Peruvian Gloria* which is loved by the congregation in spite of more traditional *Glorias*.

On the 2nd Sunday of the month at 10.30am, we hold Cafe Church – a Fresh Expressions of Church service where the laity take the service following either the Gospel for the day or a theme they chose to celebrate. This is a very relaxed event with coffee and biscuits at the start and everyone sitting at tables face to face, with the opportunity to talk and explore their faith or views in a safe environment during Table Talk time. If you have never been to a service like this do try it out rather than dismissing it as ‘something I don’t do’. You don’t know what you are missing!

On the 4th Sunday of the month at 9.15am the laity Early Birds team run a family event to which baptism children are invited to come, along with anyone with children who wish to uphold their Baptism Promises with their families.

It is not just for families but for anyone who would like to come to a different Fresh Expressions of Church event. This is where the other half of the church come to worship at ‘their church’. This is always a learning time for all ages and follows a theme and an activity where adults and children alike get crafty with whatever the craft is.

Children who come celebrate after the event and after biscuits and juice to play together with ages from 1 –9 using the building as a playground, while we adults get to know each other better whilst keeping an eye on the exuberance of the younger generation. Again, don’t dismiss it without experiencing it.

Fresh Expressions can conjure up all sorts of thoughts but basically it is worshipping in new ways and becomes church for that group of people, who may not come to a Holy Communion service.

Rev. Mel has introduced us to Sanctuary@6 on a Wednesday evening – a haven of quiet worship based on the Celtic pattern of music, reflections and peace. The half hour soon passes and we all feel reluctant to leave the serenity of this service to go back into the world outside!

We are at present going through the process of applying for a faculty – needed before any work can be done to the fabric of the church.

We wish to shorten the back pew in front of the organ, to allow a safe and easier access to the organ loft which will make Mary, our organist, and any visiting organists an easier way into the loft without doing an assault course over wide pews.

We need to apply for a Faculty to do this which stops people changing the church building without the Chancellor’s permission. Hopefully this will be completed and the work carried out.

Our thanks to John Metcalfe for putting up the flags and bunting for our VE Day celebrations. His use of fishing rods mean they are flexible enough in high winds to move and not snap, so many thanks, John.

Marriages

John and Linda Stanley were married on Saturday 26th April. Many congratulations to them.

Confirmation

Rev. Claire is about to prepare people for Confirmation in October and if anyone would like to join the preparation, either as a refresher course or because they would like to become full members of the church, they are most welcome.

Young people who might also like to be Confirmed and make the promises for themselves, which were made for them at Baptism by parents and Godparents, would be welcome and could have their own time of preparation too.

The APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) will have taken place by the time you read this.

It is a time to look back over the past year and ahead to next year, so there are short reports by the officers of the church at present – Church Warden, Secretary, and Treasurer with other reports on Safeguarding, Children’s Ministry, Fabric of the Church, Electoral Role Etc.

Copies will be available at the back of the church if you are interested.

Website

You can visit our website by scanning the QR code above or at www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13569

Women's Institute News

Inspiring the women of Witton le Wear



Welcome to the latest edition of Witton le Wear WI News Bulletin, writes secretary, *Barbara Coia*.

The spring weather has a definite warmth to it now, people already bronzed with sun tans, and the long sunny days fill us with hope of a prolonged hot summer ahead.

The good weather makes everyone feel good about themselves – and the Women's Institute are no exception.

Since our last report, we have enjoyed an "in-house" evening whereby, amongst other games, we played the classic TV Game Show oldie *Higher or Lower*.

We had an excellent evening and prizes were awarded to the winning team.

Our guest speakers for May were two lovely gentlemen, Rob and John from the Redcar Branch of the RNLI.

We had our Meeting in the church due to voting taking place in the community centre, and what a wonderful evening we had.

Our two guest speakers brought home to us just what a thoroughly vital job the RNLI do – they literally rescue anyone and anything. Such a worthwhile charity and one we never know if or when we will ever need.

Our next meeting will have taken place as this new issue of Witton Word goes to press, with Valerie Moody our guest speaker, talking about 'Show People'. We will tell you all about it in the next issue.

Meanwhile the July meeting, will take place, as usual, on the first Thursday of the month in the community centre, so long as there are no official events taking place, like an election.

New Members are always welcome. Members gather from 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

Monthly Coffee Mornings

Please come along and join us for cakes, coffee or tea, juice for children and a chance to catch up with friends and neighbours.

Any donations made will be given to support Community Centre funds.

Donations for the food bank will be accepted.

The coffee mornings will be held from **10.15am – 11.45am**

in the Community Centre on Tuesday 1st July and Tuesday 5th August

If transport is a problem, we can arrange for a car to come and collect you and take you home again.

Please contact Anne (01388 488376) or Edith (01388 488136)



Friendship Lunch *Don't be a stranger*

The Summer lunch will be on Friday 4th July

The lunches are organised for anyone in our community who wants some companionship and who would enjoy meeting friends, neighbours or strangers who will soon become friends for a light lunch.

We offer a choice of three soups and three puddings.

We ask for a donation of £5 towards costs of the day. There may be a glass or two of wine.

It starts at 12 midday in the Community Centre, and usually finishes around 1.30pm.

Transport can be arranged and if you have attended before, we will automatically send you information.

If you have not been before or would like to come along, please make contact with Anne (01388 488376) or Pippa (01388 488099).

Everyone is welcome



LOCAL ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION

**St Philip and St James Parish Church
Witton le Wear**

Saturday 21st June and Sunday 22nd June 2025;

1pm -5pm

We are holding an exhibition of Arts and Crafts made by local people in the Parish Church to showcase the wonderful talent we have in our community. Entry is free but we will have donation boxes for Parkinsons UK and for Alzheimer's Society, both conditions which have a presence in our village.

Refreshments will also be available on a donation basis for the church funds.

This fun event will include: art works, quilts, crochet, cross stitch, loom weaving, a Women's Institute table, pottery, wood turning and whittling, children's crafts from the school, model trains, model ships, historic photographs of the village, flower arranging and other things of interest including a crafting activity for children.

Everyone Welcome

**Further details contact Anne on 07717 707 934
or email kanda98@sky.com.**



North East Theatre Organ Association

Registered Charity No. 1169463



Yorkshire's 'Mr. Entertainment':

KEVIN GRUNILL

at the Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ

Sunday, 22nd JUNE 2025

at 2.30 p.m.



Kevin Grunill is a very entertaining musician and would be the ideal choice for a first visit to a Wurlitzer concert.

We're just over the hill in Howden-le-Wear, so come along for a warm welcome and great music on a world class instrument played by a world class organist.

Check Kevin's playing by searching him on You Tube. It's like Blackpool Tower on your doorstep! Tickets £12 each (children free when accompanied) from www.netoa.org.uk

**New Victoria Centre
High Street
Howden le Wear
Crook
Co. Durham
DL15 8EZ**

Tickets: £12.00

Order From: 0333 666 3366 Or

Online at: www.netoa.org.uk

(Booking Fee Applies)

Directory

Useful telephone numbers and information

Police, non-emergency 101
 NHS, non-emergency. 111

HOSPITALS

Bishop Auckland 01388 455 000
 North Durham. 0191 333 2333
 Darlington Memorial 01325 380 100

SURGERIES

North House, Crook. 01388 762 945
 Repeat Prescriptions 01388 762 718
 Auckland Medical, Toft Hill 01388 433 060
 Auckland Medical, St Helen Auck . . . 01388 604 163
 Auckland Medical, Bishop Auck . . . 01388 602 728

SCHOOL

Witton le Wear Primary. 01388 488 350

UTILITIES EMERGENCIES

Northern Powergrid. 0800 668 877
 Northumbrian Water
 Leaks 0800 393 084
 Sewerage 0800 328 7648
 National Gas 0800 111999

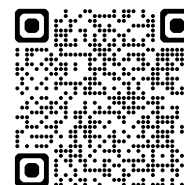


Mobile Post Office

Parks on High Street outside
 St Phillip and St James Church

Every Tuesday 11.45 – 12.15

- Cash Withdrawals
- Cash Deposits
- Cheque Deposits
- Parcel Force Express Service
- Vehicle Tax



Scan the QR Code, above, for more information.

Mobile Library

Parks on High Street outside
 St Phillip and St James Church

Tue 17 Jun: 14.55-15.10
 Tue 08 Jul: 14.55-15.10



Scan the QR Code for more.



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- Prepaid funeral plans • Memorial Masonry
- International Repatriation

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Branches in Bishop Auckland, Crook
 and Shildon

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 **Funeral Partners**



Parish Council News

Delivering quality services and information to Witton le Wear and surrounding areas



Following our AGM on 12th May the following Councillors have been re-elected, writes Parish Clerk, *Michael McLaren*.

Hannah Hurray-Leslie (Chair), Caroline Cook, Lynn Docherty and Melanie Campbell.

Laura Langstaff-Wood and Lynda Bentley were both co-opted as Parish Councillors.

The following Councillors have decided to stand down and the Parish Council wishes to thank them for their many years of service: Olive Wilson, Paul Parsons and Sarah Morehead.

We have two vacancies for Parish Councillors. Please contact the Parish Clerk for more information on clerk.wittonlewearpc@gmail.com, or the *Witton Word*.

Your Parish Councillors and Officers



Michael McLaren
Parish Clerk

t. 07976 400604



Hannah Murray-Leslie
Chair

t. 07920 557324



Caroline Cook
Councillor

t. 07760 193417



Mel Campbell
Councillor

t. via Parish Clerk

Witton le Wear Parish Council		
Receipts and Payments for the Period Ended 31st March 2025		
Receipts	£	
Bank Balance as of 1st April 2024 B/Fwd	£7,189.03	
Precept	£7,887.74	
Grants	£0.00	
VAT Refund	£742.84	
Durham County council Environmental	£2,640.00	
Payments	£	
Insurance	£264.00	
Clerk Salary (incl tax paid to HMRC)	£2,295.00	
Training Costs (CDALC)	£111.86	
DCC	£248.39	
Village Planting (D Hill)	£185.10	
Memorial Garden	£95.00	
Repairs and Renewals	£3,550.00	
Defibrillator (Batteries and Consumables)	£238.80	
NHS Ambulance (Defib Training)	£360.00	
Path clearing	£2,640.00	
Electricity	£247.65	
Witton Word (Eli Press)	£1,293.75	
ICO	£35.00	
Sundry Expenses (Batteries, fixings, paint etc all covered by receipts)	£124.65	
WLW Community Centre	£35.00	
Bank Charges	£71.40	
Balance Sheet		
Incoming	£18,459.61	
Outgoing	£11,795.60	
Balance from this sheet	£6,664.01	
Balance at 31/3/25 at Bank	£6,664.01	
Signed: <i>H Murray-Leslie</i>	Date: 12/5/25	Chair
Signed: <i>M McLaren</i>	Date: 12/5/25	Clerk



Lynn Docherty
Councillor

t. 07765 807589



Laura Langstaff-Wood
Councillor

t. 07765 142350



Lynda Bentley
Councillor

t. 01388 488940

Parish Council News

www.wittonlewear.org.uk | clerk.wittonlewearpc@gmail.com



New Bank

The Parish Council has taken a decision to move our banking to Unity Bank, who support organisations that address social, economic and environmental needs.



Unity releases an Impact Report every year which measures the impact the bank and its customers deliver during the year.

The latest Impact Report, for 2024, shows how they have supported organisations that address social, economic and environmental needs.

“We were delighted to receive the King’s Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development in recognition of this,” says the report.

It goes on: “In 2024, Unity committed £137 million lending to 117 organisations delivering positive outcomes to their customers and communities.

“We now have over £1 billion of lending, supporting businesses helping deliver impact. We continued our commitment to create a better society through safe growth, with:

- 50.5% of new lending going to organisations delivering services in high deprivation areas across the UK.

- Unity’s ‘Retrofit Transition Initiative’ committing £50 million towards lending for housing associations decarbonising existing homes. We supported over 900 homes in 2024 through the initiative.
- Establishing Unity’s ‘Banking on Sustainability’ action plan and setting Unity’s Net Zero Commitment for 2045.
- Launching Unity’s first ever ‘Unity Impact Grants’ programme. This provided £5,000 grants to six customers across the UK delivering in local communities.
- 2024 was Unity’s 40th anniversary. Unity was created to serve the common good and continues to be committed to delivering positive change in society. We’d like to thank you for your contribution.

Minutes of Meetings

With apologies, we have found ourselves out of sync with the Parish Council minutes of meeting that have been approved and are available to be printed.

The minutes from the 2025 AGM and May meeting will appear in the next release of the *Witton Word* and on the Parish Council Website.

Next Meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Monday 14th July from 6.15pm at the Witton le Wear Community Centre.



SOUND BATH SESSION

With Amy Bellamy (Sound Therapy Intuitive Diploma)



**Next Session: Sunday 22nd June, 4.30-5.30pm
Witton Le Wear Community Centre**

**Sound baths produce frequencies with
instruments which affect our Chakras and
bring our minds into a deeply relaxed state**

Equipment - Please bring along a yoga mat, blanket, pillow, and an eye mask.

Note - Please discuss any health conditions with your health practitioner before booking. Contact me for a list of contraindications.

Contact: Amy Bellamy 07974 887435 for further information.

Cricket Report

Witton le Wear Cricket Club



Hello sports fans!! Here's a quick round up of our season so far, writes *Richard Hanlon*.

The weather has been great, driest start to the season I can recall, the ground is looking fantastic, and local support in the form of match ball sponsorship has been tremendous.

Some of our cricket could also be described using those adjectives, but you'd have to include some others as well, ranging from average to horrific!

The W's Currently sit in 7th place in the Darlington & District A Division, having won 3 and lost 3 of our league games, with one rained off. This already matches last season's win tally!!

Cup games not so good. Played 2 and lost them both, it would not be a stretch to say both were thrown away by Witton.

Outstanding performers so far this season, on the batting front there have been 3 half centuries from Mr Reliable, Tim Smalley. Andy Corcoran, Phil Dunn,

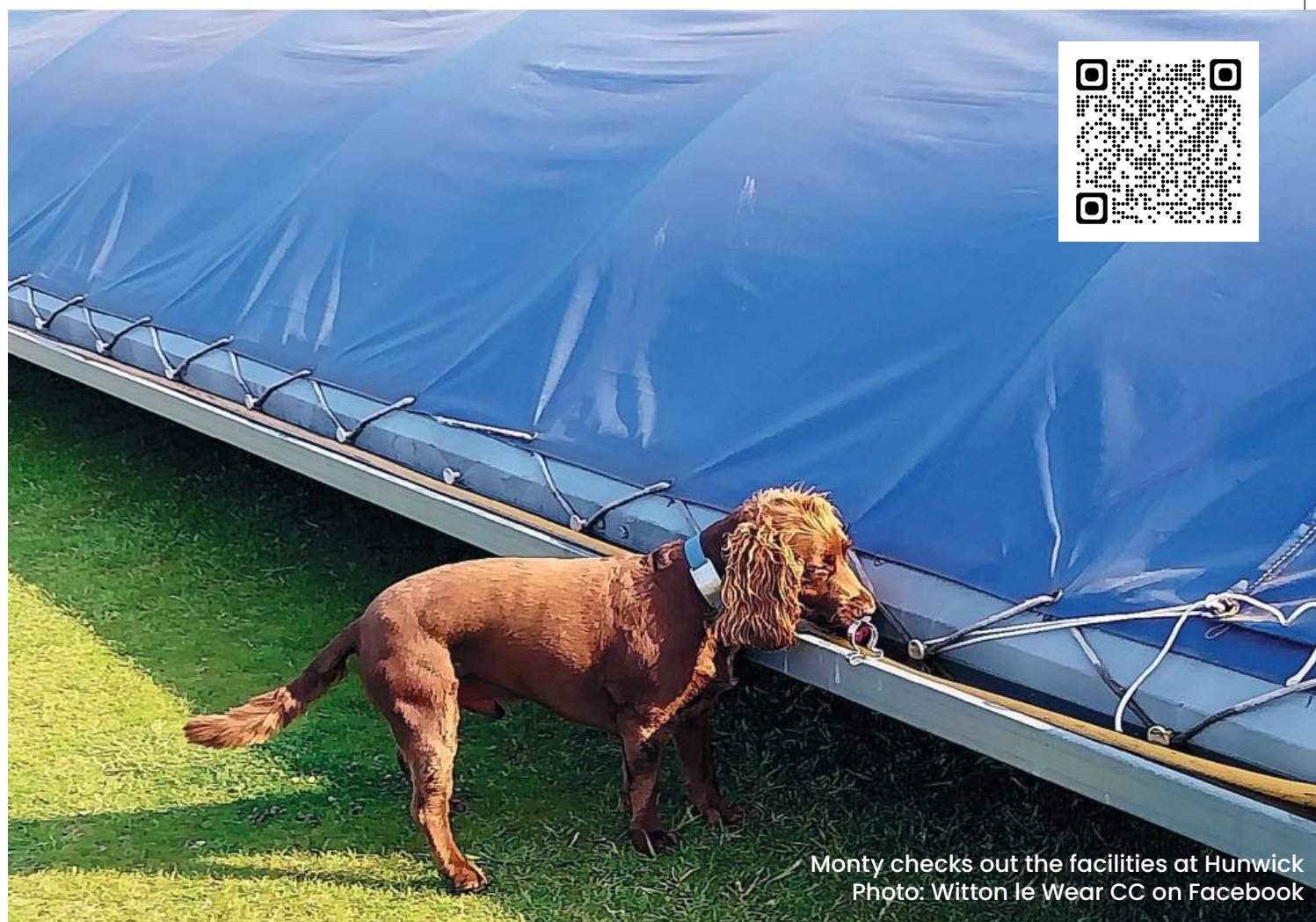
Adam Nelson have made one fifty each. We also have a centurion in our ranks, Steve Miller made a maiden ton, 103 not out in our 10 wicket win over Cockerton.

Quick kick up the backside for the club Chairman, Ripper Raine, who as things stand is bottom of the batting averages having failed to get off the mark in his 3 innings to date!!

The pick of the bowlers so far, our skipper George, is leading the way with 17 dismissals (including a 5 wicket haul), followed by Miller on 14 and Matty Phelps on 7.

For information on fixtures, practice, in depth match reports (!!) and events, have a look at our Facebook page (see QR code below).

Any residents interested in sponsoring a match ball, or the club in any way, please see George in the Vic.



Monty checks out the facilities at Hunwick
Photo: Witton le Wear CC on Facebook



Do you enjoy singing?

Come and give us a try, just drop in.

Village Voices

“Singing for Health & Happiness”

We are a Community Choir which meets in
St Philip and St James Parish Church,
Witton le Wear
on a Tuesday evening from 7.30pm – 9pm.

We sing a variety of music and enjoy ourselves.
It doesn't matter how well you can sing because
together we make great music.

If you are interested contact

Liz: 01388 488195, Mike: 01388 488136

Denise: 01388 488661