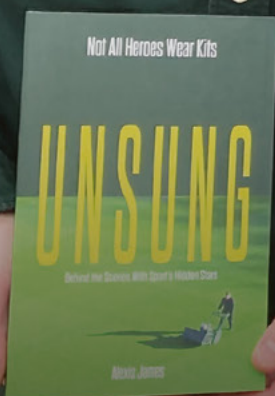


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inside MORPETH



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inside MORPETH

This edition is all about three major events that between them in their own ways, truly help put Morpeth on the map by bringing thousands of people into the town as well as providing something really special for local residents to enjoy.

They are, of course, the Morpeth Book Festival, the annual Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering and Morpeth Fair Day. The latter two, as we report, have been going for more than 50 and 40 years respectively. Very different in style and content, they nevertheless demonstrate in their own special ways, all that's best about Morpeth as a place to live, work and visit.

The Gathering celebrates the uniqueness of Northumbrian culture and traditions spanning the ages, through its music, dance, words, dialect and crafts. Fair Day, on the other hand, is brash, bright and breezy wrapped up in a family fun day that's pretty well unrivalled anywhere else in the region. Between them the two weekends will be enjoyed by perhaps as many as 50,000 people – a quite astonishing number!

The new kid on the block so to speak and the first event in the calendar year is Morpeth Book Festival. It has only been going for three years now, but is steadily building a reputation as one of the foremost small literary events of its kind across the region. The evidence of that can be gauged from a glance at the stellar list of top authors who will be speaking at the festival this month. Rubbing shoulders with those big names from the literary world, however will be some aspiring local authors, which in a way speaks volumes for the determination of the festival organisers to give them a chance to be seen and heard at their home town festival.

While the three events are all very different what they share in common is the fact that they are all entirely volunteer-led and organised by Morpeth folk without whose efforts they simply would not happen.

All they ask in return is that people turn out to enjoy the Book Festival, the Gathering or Fair Day and that will be more than enough reward to justify all their hard work helping stage three tremendous Morpeth events. Readers can find details of all three events inside this edition of our magazine.

Jan Leech
Editor of Inside Morpeth

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Front cover: Local authors appearing at the book festival Alexis James, Bridget Gubbins and Colin Green. Picture by Ian Leech

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Young footballers – boys and girls – of all ages, enjoying the game at Morpeth Town Juniors



New top team needed to lead Morpeth's junior footballers

Volunteers are being sought to take over the leadership of the thriving Morpeth Town Juniors' football club which is now giving more than 500 youngsters the chance each week to enjoy the game as well as playing a good standard of competitive matches, writes **Inside Morpeth Editor Ian Leech**.





Chairman Paul Barwick, Shaun Johnson (Committee member) and Ted Cromar (Secretary) receiving the club's FA funding cheque from Luke Collins and Helen Beales from Northumberland FA



Paul Barwick (Chairman), Ted Cromar (Secretary), Sean Douglas (Lead Child Welfare Officer) and Kevin O'Connor (Treasurer) have between them given a combined total of nearly 40 years' service to the club. It is now accredited with FA Three Star status (the highest achievable) and has around 40 squads of young footballers aged from four to 18 years old – both boys and girls. All four have now given notice that they will be stepping down from the roles in 18 months' time because – as Paul told me – “None of us have children or grandchildren at the club now and for different personal reasons, we need to hand the reigns over to new volunteers. But the club is in a strong position and it represents a great opportunity for a new management team to take it forward to its next level of progression and development. By giving long-term notice, it will allow us to manage the transition and make the handover as seamless as possible.”

The club, which was formed 30 years ago, merged with another junior side to play as Morpeth Sporting Club before reverting to Morpeth Town Juniors in 2015 which turned out to be a timely move as it coincided with the senior squad lifting the FA Vase trophy at the Wembley stadium home of English football, by beating Hereford Town by four goals to one in front of some ecstatic 4,000 fans who had travelled down to London for the final.

That Wembley success sparked an interest from more local youngsters to join the Juniors, while the success of the England women's team – the Lionesses – which won the Euro's at Wembley three years ago and then reached the World Cup final in 2023, encouraged more and more girls to also want to play the game.

Since then the connection between the seniors and juniors has been strengthened by the laying of an artificial pitch at Craik Park which opened the way for the ground to become the 'home' of Morpeth Town Juniors. “Until then we had led something of a nomadic existence with our teams playing at a number of different venues in and even outside the town, such as Chantry, Newminster and Abbeyfields schools, Swinney's Field and

Pegswood Welfare,” said Paul.

The Juniors have also secured a 10-year licence for use at Morpeth Common from Northumberland County Council, where there are now five pitches used by the teams that play home and away games, while the older teams – play at the adjoining Craik Park. The teams all play in black-and-amber strips like Morpeth's first team, and the club's youngsters are often mascots for Morpeth Town's home games. The two clubs also work on several joint initiatives including school holiday football camps and ‘Coached by the Coaches’ sessions led by the first team managers.

Recently, the club also secured grants of over £150,000 from the Football Foundation to help pay for new equipment, including a mini-tractor and machinery to cut the grass on the pitches and towards other proactive pitch maintenance over the next six years.

“We are now an integral part of Morpeth Town and its future,” said Paul. “Our strong ethos and vision is to be regarded as a distinct and respected, local community club. We don't claim to recruit the best junior footballers from across Northumberland and Tyneside, but seek to provide opportunities for young people from Morpeth and the surrounding area to play the game.

“As far as we are concerned it is not all about winning, but giving our youngsters the chance to enjoy the game, develop as footballers and as individuals, and to proudly be part of Morpeth Town Football Club.”

Paul first became involved with the club 20 years ago when his son Pierce started playing as an eight-year-old, and for the past 18 years he has held a variety of roles on the committee and has been chairman for the last 8 years. As he told me: “We could not survive without the wonderful support from our volunteers - parents, grandparents and friends - who do so much each week at our training sessions and on match days to ensure our youngsters can enjoy their football. Our role on the committee is to oversee the management of the club as a whole

and to implement the club's five-year Development Plan created in January 2023.”

Now, he says, along with Ted, Sean and Kevin, they have decided it is time to hand on the baton to others to build on what has been achieved at the club over the past few years. A new committee structure has been drawn up with tasks broken down into what Paul called ‘bite-sized pieces’ to give family and friends of the young people, the opportunity to commit to whatever time they can spare to help out for example, with training and coaching, pitch maintenance, assisting with fund-raising or helping man the newly-opened Far Post Kitchen that provides both home and away supporters with refreshments on match-days. But primarily, the need for a new chairperson, club secretary (and assistant) and a strengthening of the club's Child Welfare team are priorities.

“The reward for anyone willing to support the Juniors whether that is as a club official, committee member or just generally helping out in so many different ways, is to be able to see so many young people aged from four-years-old upwards, really enjoying the game of football in a friendly and welcoming club atmosphere,” said Paul.

“We take our safeguarding and welfare responsibilities very seriously for the benefit of all young players and the club has grown to the stage where we believe it is now such a wonderful amenity and asset for the young people of Morpeth. We want to see that continually progress and develop over the years ahead.”

Anyone interested in finding out more about the opportunities for becoming a supporter of Morpeth Town Juniors, can contact Paul Barwick by emailing chairman@morpethtownjuniors.co.uk or by logging on via the QR code for more information on the roles available.





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Farewell to a Morpeth legend

So many people and organisations in and around Morpeth have lost a dear friend and valued colleague with the sad passing of **Alex Swailes MBE** at the age of 92, writes **Inside Morpeth Editor Ian Leech**.

A man of many talents and interests, in 1997 Alex became the face of Morpeth's unique Northumbrian Gathering which, as we report in this edition of Inside Morpeth is now in its 57th year, when he took on the figurehead role of The Gadgy to publicly lead a weekend of celebrations of all that's best in the area's cultural and heritage traditions.

Three years ago, when I talked to Alex on his 90th birthday, I took the liberty of writing it was perhaps a role someone who was so passionate about keeping alive those traditions of music, dance, story-telling, dialect and crafts of Northumbria, had been in rehearsals for all his life!

From its very earliest days, Alex had been a huge supporter of The Gathering and he told me he felt so honoured and privileged to have been asked to take over the role of The Gadgy, which is a Romany word for a man, and its historic connections with Morpeth. They are thought to date back to around 1388 when it was reported that the Town Bailiff had welcomed back to Morpeth Lord Greystoke and what remained of his army which had been defeated by the Scots at the Battle of Otterburn.

A more romantic myth told in a dialect poem by Janet Brown, is that The Gadgy was one of the two small stone figures that stand atop of the Clock Tower in Oldgate, who on the first weekend after Easter comes alive and climbs down from the tower to be part of the pageant welcoming Lord Greystoke back to Morpeth. So, when Roland Bibby organised the first Gathering in 1968 he chose Gadgy Clarence as its figurehead.

But Alex as The Gadgy resplendent in his three-cornered hat, smart coat, Northumberland 'tartan' waistcoat, and carrying his mahogany staff, was also invited to attend other notable events in Morpeth, including the opening of Sanderson Arcade 15 years ago by actress Joanna Lumley.

Whatever the truth behind the origins of The Gadgy it was a role Alex Swailes played with gusto. As current Director Kim Bibby-Wilson admits, she would run out of adjectives when describing his approach to the role in Gathering promotional literature! Ebullient,

Alex Swailes relishing his role as the Morpeth Gadgy. Picture by Trevor Walker.



effervescent, indefatigable, enthusiastic, inimitable, incorrigible – are some of the words Kim has used in a very personal tribute to Morpeth's longest-standing Gadgy.

And she added, that former St George's United Reformed Church minister Ron Forster who had agreed to take over the role before Alex's death was announced, will be leading the tributes to him at this year's event.

"Alex meant so much to so many organisations and cultural life throughout the town, regionally, nationally and internationally through his involvement with groups such as Morpeth Operatic Society, Rotary International, Rothbury amateur dramatic and musical societies, the dialect activities of the Northumbrian Language Society and the National Dialect Festival," said Kim.

Alex enjoyed a distinguished career as an educationalist, guiding pupils at the schools wherever he taught, with

dedication, care and compassion. In his younger days he loved sport being a keen footballer, cricketer, tennis and badminton player, but perhaps he will best be remembered – aside from his role as The Gadgy - for his love of music, singing, acting in or producing amateur dramatic shows often with his wife Anne taking the leading role in their productions.

This year's Gathering will no doubt be an emotional send-off to someone who has been so much a part of the event for nearly 30 years, but in true show-business tradition, I have no doubt that Alex Swailes would be the first to have said 'the show must go on' because his abiding wish was that the event would continue for many more years to keep alive the heritage and traditions of his beloved Northumberland.

Like the rest of the town, we at Inside Morpeth send our heartfelt condolences to Anne, Christine and Peter, and all Alex's family and friends.

Face-to-face financial planning advice

TMP Wealth Management has been working with individuals and businesses in the Morpeth area and beyond for almost 20 years.

What started off originally as The Morpeth Practice, founded by James Richfield and Peter Grieves, now has a team of twenty-eight. This encompasses a mixture of Financial Advisers and Practice Support Staff entrusted with managing over £450,000,000 on behalf of our clients.

TMP Wealth Management provides face-to-face financial planning advice for families, individuals and businesses.

Helping people reach their financial goals through life-changing advice is what drives the team. Nurturing long-lasting client relationships and working closely together during the highs and challenges that life can throw, is what makes the relationship meaningful for all clients they work with.

“We are proud and humbled when clients choose and trust us to help them with their finances. We make the time to get to know them, listening intimately and learning about their lifestyle, what matters to them together with the financial goals they want to achieve”, says Peter Grieves, Managing Director and Chartered Financial Planner.

He continues: “When James and I set up the Practice in 2005, we had one vision in mind, to deliver bespoke financial planning in the Morpeth Community and



Peter Grieves, Managing Director and Chartered Financial Planner

‘We are proud and humbled when clients choose and trust us to help them with their finances...’ Peter Grieves

beyond whilst ensuring our clients have a positive and memorable experience at every stage of their financial planning journey.

“Now, almost 20 years on, we are proud to be working with business, families and individuals across the North East. Morpeth is where we

started our business and we work closely with the community, which is still fundamentally important to us”.

TMP Wealth Management are currently proud sponsors of Morpeth Golf Club and Morpeth Rugby Club. Through the work they do with these clubs, they are able to support future generations within the community.

For example, the rugby club alone has 14 youth teams across the various age groups. These are a combination of mixed as well as single sex teams, including three all-girls teams.

The Practice will celebrate its 20th year in business in October this year and Peter and the rest of the team are already beginning to plan for this fantastic achievement. Peter says: “2025 is going to be a very special year for us, as we head towards our 20th Anniversary.

“We couldn’t have achieved this without the support from our clients and the dedication of our Team, most of whom have been with us for many years. Our Team operate as a unit – a family, not just colleagues and that is what makes us different and why our clients enjoy working with us. Watch this space for more to come from TMP Wealth Management in 2025”.

Visit our website at tmpwealthmanagement.co.uk or call us on **01670 505333**

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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 HMRC 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 dependants. This goes some way to reflect the growth in property prices, as well as other asset values, 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 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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An evening with some extraordinary women!

Just over a year ago Morpeth welcomed the Scandi-inspired Fika Gallery, an expansive and expressive gallery of art in which to have a relaxing coffee and a treat, right next to the historic Oldgate Clock Tower.

The intention of the Fika owners was to grow a community space which also offers a variety of workshops including pottery, painting, jewellery making and 'paint-and-sip sessions.' The gallery showcases a carefully curated selection of artisan work from both North East and further afield artists including Ruth Bond, Tom Maley, Lawrie Hutchinson and gallery owner Jonathan Antony

Now, building on those 'hands on' workshops, Fika is bringing 'something somewhat different into the mix.'

Shy Bairns Get Nowt: Women of Wit, Wisdom and Wonder' on Thursday April 3rd, promises to be a lively, interactive evening exploring the lives of extraordinary women.

Morpeth resident Penni Blythe will weave a kaleidoscope of her own extraordinary life with stories collected over more than 15 years from nearly 70 women including some from South Africa, Continental Europe, India and the USA. She will involve, engage and inspire lively conversation as well as revealing fascinating stories whilst encouraging participants to reflect on the women who have touched and inspired their own lives.

Anyone going along on the evening is asked by Penni, to take a piece of material that reminds them of a woman important to them, that will be sewn onto her maternal Grandmother's own Durham quilt which she only discovered in 1997.

Discovering in her early twenties, that both her blood grandmothers had been put into 'lunatic asylums' – the language of the time – was shocking for Penni. Then, in 1999, aged 48 on seeing her first photograph of her paternal grandmother, she learnt that she had only died that year after being in an 'asylum' for decades, before being moved to a Convent Nursing Home in the mid-1990s.

In Penni's own words: "That was such



Penni Blythe reminiscing about some extraordinary lives. Picture by Nigel Jenkins.

a physical shock because I had long been told she was dead. This was rapidly followed by grief and fury. My grandmothers had their lives and stories stolen – and they were not alone in that!"

The revelation built on Penni's already deep and active concern for women's lives and how often they were lost in history.

"I wanted to change that," Penni told Inside Morpeth. "Knowing how particular women had inspired me - literally saved my life at times - I became curious to interview women, asking who were the women who had inspired them; in what way; and if a girl-child was born as we were speaking and you were the elder, wise woman, shaman or fairy-godmother...what gift, quality or characteristic would you whisper in her ear to carry her through life?"

These interviews rapidly became incredible conversations evolving alongside Penni's own, at times extremely challenged, life. As she said: "Totally unexpected and bizarre opportunities opened up and landed me in places beyond my wildest imaginings including with one of the Liberian Peace Women; Britain's second black MP; a group of Gugus (grannies) in Khayelitsha Township in Cape Town; the first women Under-Secretary General at the UN; a 90-year-old is 'still marching' in Northumberland; a sex-traded young woman in India; and refugees in County Durham."

Shy Bairns Get Nowt: Women of Wit, Wisdom & Wonder, takes place on Thursday April 3rd from 6pm to 8pm. Tickets are £35 and are available from the Fika Gallery, Oldgate, Morpeth, or www.fikagallerymorpeth.co.uk



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Could equity release help me make the most of my retirement?

A Guide to Modern Equity Release by **Joanne Manghan**, North East Equity Release

First, let me introduce myself. I've been a mortgage advisor for over 30 years and have always lived in Morpeth. As the owner of North East Equity Release, I'm passionate about helping people make informed decisions about their later life finances.

Equity Release isn't right for everyone, but for some, it can be a valuable way to unlock financial freedom while staying in the home they love. I'll walk you through the key facts, benefits and safeguards of modern equity release to help you decide if it's the right choice for you.

As we journey through life, our homes become more than just places to live, they embody our memories, achievements, and financial security. For homeowners aged 55 and over, particularly those seeking financial flexibility in retirement, Equity Release offers a pathway to access the wealth tied up in your property without the need to sell or relocate.

Understanding Equity Release

Equity Release allows you to unlock tax-free cash from your home, providing funds that can be used for various purposes, be it supplementing your retirement income, funding home improvements, assisting family members or helping with the cost of independent living at home.

The most prevalent form of Equity Release is the Lifetime Mortgage, where you retain full ownership of your home and receive money from a loan secured against it. This loan, along with any accrued interest, is typically repaid when you pass away or move into longterm care.

Modern Innovations in Equity Release

Gone are the days of rigid Equity Release plans with unfavourable terms. Today's Lifetime Mortgages are among the most innovative financial products available, offering flexible options tailored to your needs.

Most lenders encourage customers to service the interest each month to prevent the effects of compound interest by offering lower interest rates for those who do.

This ensures that the loan amount remains manageable and helps preserve the value of your estate for your beneficiaries.

A Trusted Partner in Your Financial Journey

Making decisions about releasing equity are significant and deeply personal. It's essential to have a trustworthy advisor who understands the weight of this choice and is committed to guiding you with honesty and care.

As a member of the Equity Release Council, I adhere to the highest standards of conduct and practice, ensuring your interests are always prioritized.

Personalised Advice Tailored to You

It is important to understand that Equity Release isn't suitable for everyone. My approach involves a comprehensive assessment of your unique circumstances, exploring all possible alternatives to determine the best course of action.

Whether it's through telephone consultations, email correspondence, postal communication, or face-to-face meetings in the comfort of your home, I'm here to support you every step of the way. I always encourage you to invite trusted family members or friends to your meetings to ensure you feel supported and provide additional perspectives.

Real Stories, Real Trust

The trust my clients place in me is reflected in their feedback. With over 100 5-star Google Reviews, my clients have shared their experiences and confidence in my knowledge and dedication to finding the right solutions for their needs.

Take the Next Step with Confidence

Embarking on the equity release journey doesn't have to be daunting. With the right guidance, you can make informed decisions that align with your financial goals and personal circumstances.



Could equity release be the missing piece of your retirement plan...



A Lifetime Mortgage could help fill the gap in your finances, allowing you the comfortable retirement you deserve.

To understand more about accessing the wealth tied up in your home, contact us for qualified and impartial advice.

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Joanne Manghan

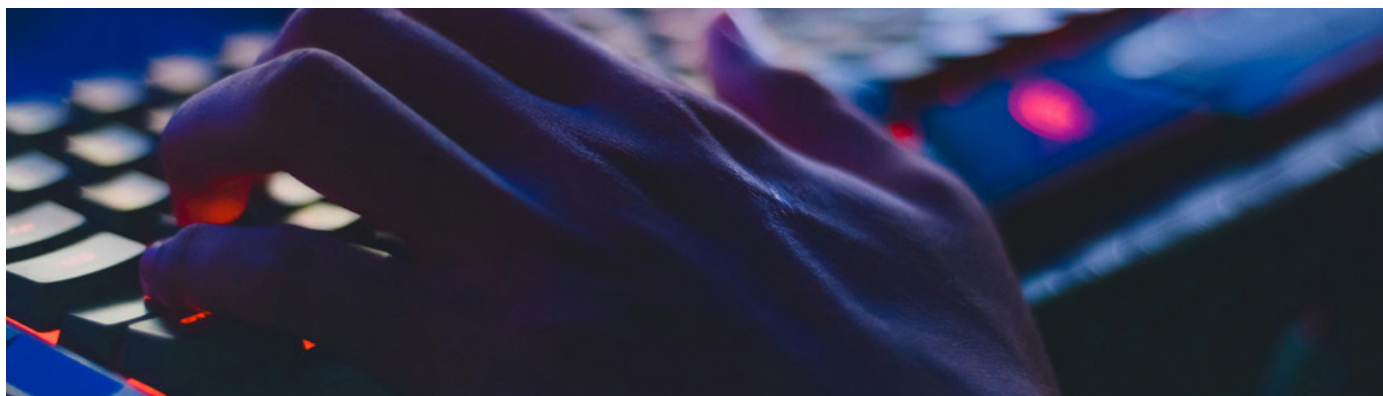
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Combating scams and keeping older people safe

Sunny Singh, Managing Director of Home Instead South East Northumberland, with some wise words of advice on how to protect older people from the increasing risk of being scammed.

It's easy to assume we are savvy when it comes to fraud and scams and expect that we'll never be caught out and can spot a scam a mile off. Sadly, scammers are becoming increasingly more sophisticated, employing new tactics and methods to gain our trust.

Our older loved ones are particularly at risk, as scammers can seek them out. Unfamiliarity with the online world can play a part too.

If families club together and talk older loved ones through what to look out for, they can protect them from becoming victim. It all lies in knowing the signs to spot.

Types of fraud and scams to look out for:

Fraud and scams are continuously developing, so it's important to stay alert and vigilant.

Some of these can include:

1. Impersonation Scams

Scammers pretend to be trusted figures, such as family members or officials, to steal personal information or money. Always verify identities before sharing details.

2. Purchase Scams

Fake online listings trick victims into paying for non-existent products. Research sellers and use secure payment methods to avoid losses.

3. Investment Scams

Fraudsters promote fake investment opportunities with promises of high returns. Always consult a financial advisor before investing.

4. Romance Scams

Scammers build online relationships and ask for money for emergencies. Be cautious of anyone you haven't met in person who requests funds.

5. Doorstep Scams

Fraudsters visit homes pretending to be tradespeople or charity workers. Verify their identity before engaging and don't feel pressured.

6. Courier Fraud

Scammers claim to be from banks or police and ask for cash withdrawals, often sending a courier to collect it. Legitimate organisations won't request cash.

3. Contact Organisations Directly

Use official contact information to confirm any suspicious communications. If somebody rings you and you have doubts over whether they are who they say they are, call them back using the organisation's official phone number. Use another phone, if possible, in case they have tapped into and have control over your phone.

4. Challenge Unexpected Requests

Trust your instincts—if something seems off, verify before acting.

5. Check your bank statements regularly

Keep an eye on your bank accounts and credit cards for any suspicious activity

6. Talk to someone you trust

If you are unsure whether an offer or message is a scam, talk to a trusted friend, family member or carer

7. Report Scams

Report any suspicious activity to local authorities or organisations like Action Fraud to help protect others. You can do so here: www.actionfraud.police.uk/

Sadly, many scams go unreported due to the victim's fear of embarrassment. But by being open and honest about scams with your older loved ones, they will feel more compelled to check with you if they ever have any suspicions.

If there is anything we can do to offer help or support please reach out to us on info.blyth@homeinsteadsenorth.co.uk

How Can You Protect Yourself from Fraud and Scams?

1. Avoid Disclosing Security Details

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Captain Sam McGorie and her Morpeth U16 girl's rugby team, proudly wear their new Maximize Education strips

Girls' rugby teams smartly kitted out

Three junior girl's squads from Morpeth Rugby Club will be playing in the smart new kit provided by Maximize Education on their biggest day of the season this coming Good Friday.

Twelve teams from across the region will converge on the club's Mitford Road ground for the biggest girl's-only tournament of its kind in the region.

Turning out in their new kit will be Morpeth's age-group Under 12s, 14s and 16s teams all wearing their new Maximize Education logoed strips.

Amy Smith, one of the senior girl's coaches at the club, said they were delighted when the Morpeth private

tuition company chose to support the girls with their new strips. "They are so smart and the girls feel proud to wear them to represent not just our club, but the town of Morpeth," she said.

At the moment the three teams only play friendly games, but as they progress to the Under 18s team they will start to play league matches across the north of England and Cumbria.'

Women's rugby in general has steadily grown in popularity over recent years, perhaps because the England international squad is enjoying considerable success including twice winning the World Cup. Last time England lost in the final but will be hoping to go one better when the tournament is played in this country over this August and September. The very

first game will be played at Sunderland's Stadium of Light and Amy said they will be taking their girls to the match.

"We now have around 40 girls regularly training and playing for our teams, and they really love the game."

Morpeth-based Maximize Education's founder and Chief Executive Christine Jamieson, "The benefits of taking part in sport and particularly a team sport, are well known, so while our focus is on preparing our students for their academic challenges we also like to support the local sporting achievements of our young people through team and individual sponsorship.

"The new shirts supplied for the Morpeth girl's rugby teams look great, and we are proud to be part of their sponsorship team."

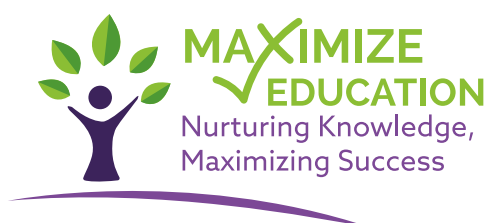
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Rugby Tournament

Northumberland RU VetFest Tournament – 6pm start

Wooden Spoon Raffle

Day 2 – Live Bands, Singers & Rugby

Saturday 3rd May 2pm to 11:30pm

Teddy King Big Band – 2pm to 4pm

Lou Coel & Local Musicians- 4.30pm to 8pm

The Andy Rayner Band - 8:45pm to 11pm

https://www.facebook.com/theandyraynerband/?_rdr

Rugby Game - Marauders v TBC - 2pm kick-off

Wooden Spoon Raffle

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Mari Hannah

Book festival to be proud of - Mari Hannah

Morpeth Book Festival patron and award-winning crime writer Mari Hannah sums up the forthcoming event in her own inimitable way when she says: "Whatever your taste in books the festival has you covered, delivering a packed schedule and a line-up to be proud of. Don't miss it!" **Ian Leech reports.**



Gervase Phinn

Over two days – Saturday and Sunday March 22nd and 23rd – the organising committee will present a 'Weekend of Words' that promises to be the best yet in its short history. As Festival Director Frank Rescigno told us: "This will be our third festival and we are delighted to say that the calibre of writers taking part is a reflection not just of its growing popularity but of the reputation we are building as a premiere literary event in Northumberland."

Mari, who writes across three crime series featuring DCI Kate Daniels, Stone and Oliver, and Ryan and O'Neil, will kick-off the festival in conversation with Gerry Foley, talking about her newly published novel 'Her Sister's Killer.'

She will be followed by author, broadcaster and born raconteur Gervase Phinn affectionately dubbed Yorkshire's 'James Herriott of schools'; BBC News legend James Naughtie who presented Today on Radio 4 for 25 years as well as being the writer of books on politics, music and his travels around the world, and highly acclaimed novels including his espionage thriller 'The Spy Across the Water'; and B A Paris, the New York Times and Sunday Times best-selling author of seven novels.

As we report on the following pages former MP, justice campaigner, novelist and

diarist Chris Mullin who fought long and hard on behalf of the Birmingham Six bombers, will talk about his life and times in Parliament as a minister in Tony Blair's government; while High Court Judge Sara Cockerill will outline the lives of two Medieval Queens of England who were said to be the power behind the thrones of monarchs Henry II and Edward I.

The festival is not just about bringing top authors to the town, but about giving a chance to local writers such as Bridget Gubbins, Alexis James, Colin Green and Geordie playwright Ed Waugh, to speak about their work to home-town audience.

There will also be sessions for young people including Kjartan Poskitt doing what amounts almost to a hilarious stand-up routine to present maths in a fun way; Jodie James running a craft and story-telling session based on her book 'The Dandy Lion'; plus, much, much more.

Book festival sessions will take place in Morpeth Library and St George's United Reformed Church, with tickets for all events – the full programme is printed on the outside back cover of this edition of Inside Morpeth – from www.ticketsource.co.uk/morpeth-book-festival; The Chantry, Morpeth; or www.gmdt.net



Chris Mullin

Ed's plays sell out around the world!

Book festivals by and large, do exactly what they say on the tin which is to celebrate the use of words, mostly – but not always exclusively – in the printed page form, and that, of course, is just what the forthcoming ‘Weekend of Words’ will be doing in Morpeth. For one special guest at the Morpeth Book Festival, however, his focus is more on the spoken rather than the written word!

Over the past two decades Northumberland-born playwright Ed Waugh has penned a succession of smash-hit plays – eleven in collaboration with his good friend Trevor Wood – which have enthralled sell-out audiences not just in his native North East but across the rest of the country, in Ireland and as far afield as Australia and New Zealand.

His stage plays are loosely based around the tales of local working-class heroes ranging from Grace Darling to 19th Century rowing word champion Harry Clasper; Blyth footballer ‘Wor’ Bella Reay said to be the Alan Shearer of her day around the time of World War I because of her phenomenal goalscoring records; to the exploits of a group of dodgy Roman soldiers building Hadrian’s Wall; and the amateurs of West Auckland football club who went to Italy to beat the mighty Juventus in their own backyard to win the first-ever soccer World Cup.

Then there was the controversial ‘Maggie’s End’ written to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the 1982 miners’ strike, about the sense of outrage in mining communities that the former PM might be given a state funeral. But, perhaps the most successful was ‘Dirty Dusting’ which told the story of three mature cleaning ladies who set up a



Jamie Brown in the lead role of ‘Hadaway’
Harry Clasper

telephone sex chat line in the face of losing their jobs. Nearly 10 years on from its premiere the play still attracts sell-out audiences as well as enjoying widespread success on the amateur theatre circuit. ‘Alloa, Alloa’ actress Vikki Michelle has played one of the lead roles in one tour of the play.

Whilst still remaining firm friends, Ed and Trevor have embarked on solo writing careers with Trevor now concentrating on writing crime novels. Since then, Ed’s own critically acclaimed plays have included ‘Dracula: Die Laughing’ which premiered at the Whitby Goth Festival; ‘The Accidental Activist’, ‘Mr Corvan’s Musical Hall’, ‘The Great Joe Wilson’, ‘Carrying David’ about boxing world champion Glenn McCrory, and ‘Wor Bella’.

Ed’s latest play which enjoyed a hugely successful northern tour at the back end of last year, is ‘The Cramlington Train Wreckers’ about a group of local miners who inadvertently derailed the Flying Scotsman train shortly after it passed through Morpeth railway station on its journey south to London. The men had meant to disrupt a coal train rather than the passenger express. No one was killed or even seriously injured, but eight of the

men were jailed for a total of 48 years for what was seen a national outrage at the start of the 1926 national strike.

Most recently Ed’s play ‘Hadaway Harry’ about Tyneside rower Harry Clasper’s attempts with his three brothers, to take the World Championship title from four Thames oarsmen, has just finished a 10th anniversary tour, which included as intense a few moments of drama likely to be seen on any stage, as actor Jamie Smith in the solo title role, battles to cajole his brothers to be first over the finishing line!

Ed’s plays have been acted out before audiences of 1,800 people and played to standing ovations and they have left behind a legacy of five Blue Plaques at the homes of some of his characters. Ed says he takes his inspiration for his plays from many different sources.

“It could be something I hear on the radio, or sometimes people tell you snippets of stories that give me an ‘in’ to what I want to say,” he said. “It’s all about telling exciting and relevant stories!”

“My characters are working-class people, some ordinary people doing extraordinary things and I love the immediacy of theatre, seeing people and hearing their responses. It’s also an incredible feeling when something that was swirling around your ‘itchy’ brain becomes clear on the page, while seeing your characters come to life and speaking your words is a real buzz. But that can’t happen without a director, actors, technicians and all the backroom people. It really is a team effort and I love that aspect of a production.”

Ed will be talking about his plays and his career as a successful playwright – he holds a record five plays by a northern playwright to be staged at Newcastle’s Theatre Royal – at Morpeth Book Festival on Sunday March 23rd at 4pm at St George’s United Reformed Church.

Fun trip through Morpeth’s past

Book festival regular Bridget Gubbins will be leading her audience on an adventurous expedition through Morpeth’s history books. Bridget is the author of six well researched books about different aspects of Morpeth’s 1,000-year history, so she will be delving into their pages for her festival stories.

As she says she will be inviting her audience to metaphorically sneak through Morpeth’s unique yards and alleyways that

stretch out from the centre of town; spot the kilted Highland drover eyeing up the girls in Newgate Street; discover the long-lost Merlay village in Normandy; share a meal at Morpeth’s workhouse; and sail with Ada on her way to marry Roger de Merlay II.

“Morpeth has such a fascinating history which will be new to many people, so I want to take my audience on a journey into the town’s past as it has never been told before,” Bridget said.

Bridget Gubbins will be delving into Morpeth’s past at 11am on Sunday March 23rd at Morpeth Library.

Colin's still hunting down the criminals

Former police chief turned crime writer Colin Green is delighted to be one of the authors taking part in his home town Morpeth Book Festival later this month.

A former pupil at King Edward VI Grammar School, where Colin admits studies were probably secondary to his love of the school sports of rugby and cricket, he moved on after A Levels to study at a teacher training college in London specialising in physical education.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Education degree, Colin taught at a school in Epsom for five years before, moving back north to take a job at Cramlington High School.

In 1985, however, he opted for a complete career change to join Northumbria Police and as he told Inside Morpeth: "I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a police officer, serving in numerous departments in several different roles, before retiring



with the rank of Chief Inspector."

Married to Ruth and with three children, four grandchildren and two more on the way, Colin said: "Sport has always played a major role in my life. I played rugby at Wasps, Richmond and Morpeth RFC representing both Middlesex and Northumberland along the way. I am still actively involved with Morpeth, writing match reports under the pseudonym of 'Scoop.' During the summer months I played cricket for Ponteland, Cheam, Benwell Hill and Morpeth, and I now play regular 'poor' golf at Morpeth!"

Colin says he has always enjoyed writing and admits: "School written work would always be lengthy, but never contained the relevant details!" So, after retiring from the police force, he undertook a creative writing course which led to him self-publishing his first novel Trust.

Two more books – Proof and Resolve – followed and his fourth novel Gun should be published in time for Morpeth Book Festival.

As Colin explained: "The books are part of a series that features retired DCI Geoff Sutton, who as a civilian employee finds himself involved in some high profile, fast moving policing operations. On a domestic front, Sutton regularly meets with his lifelong mates, plays golf and as a group they are regular spectators at the local amateur rugby club."

Sound familiar?

Colin Green will talk about and read from his novels, on Saturday March 22nd at 11am at Morpeth Library.

Morpeth author reveals untold stories and unsung stars behind the scenes of sport

What links the great Usain Bolt to Morpeth's King Edward VI school? Here's a hint: it involves a gun.

Alan Bell may not be a name familiar to many, but the international athletics starter has fired the gun at every major event in athletics. In 2009, he had the best seat in the house as Usain Bolt broke the 100m world record that still stands today. Then, two years later, Alan dared to disqualify the world's fastest man for a false start in the World Championships final.

The Cumbrian's jet-setting career as a volunteer official also comprises local meets, which is how he came to oversee the junior athletics one summer's afternoon at Morpeth's KEVI high school. There to shadow him for the day was Morpeth author Alexis James.

Alexis' book *Unsung: Not All Heroes Wear Kits* shines a rare spotlight on the integral men and women in the shadows of elite sport. Along with Alan's remarkable tales, *Unsung* features little-known stories from



Formula One mechanics, anti-doping officials, football grounds staff, sports chaplains, and Winter Olympic snowmakers.

Other local heroes featured include Newcastle Falcons doctor Rachel Scurfield, World Cup-winning kit designer Craig Buglass, and the secretive performance chef responsible for refuelling Newcastle United footballers.

The book has since inspired an award-nominated podcast series written and hosted by Alexis, and he'll be recording a live episode at the Morpeth Book Festival

in March during a talk about his work on sport's unheralded heroes.

"I can't wait to tell these stories in person for the first time at the Morpeth Book Festival," he told Inside Morpeth. "Any sports fans interested in untold stories about their favourite sports should come along." His talk at Morpeth Library is on Saturday 22nd March at 12:45pm. As well as discussing his sports writing career and how he came up with the idea behind *Unsung*, Alexis will unveil a brand-new book available to buy at the festival.

"My new publication, *Off-Field*, is a photo-rich anthology that spans the globe to unearth sport's rich subcultures, hidden legends, and passionate communities. From camel racing in Dubai and swimrunning in Sweden, to the Englishman who spent 40 years photographing the Tour de France, I've dug out the sporting stories you won't find anywhere else. I look forward to sharing them on my home turf!"

For tickets to the Morpeth Book Festival: ticketsource.co.uk/morpeth-book-festival

To buy a signed copy of *Unsung*, head to unsungbook.com

The power behind the thrones of two Medieval English Kings

What promises to be a fascinating Morpeth Book Festival talk by High Court Judge Dame Sara Cockerill, will present a revealing insight into the lives of two Queens who were thought by many to be the powers behind the thrones of their English monarch husbands.

Sara has penned two meticulously and authoritatively researched histories of French-born Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122 – 1204) and Spanish noblewoman Eleanor of Castile (1241 – 1290) who respectively became the wives of Kings Henry II and Edward I in 1152 and 1254.

Their arranged marriages which at the time were a common way of forging alliances between Royal households and subsequently neighbouring countries, gave these two highly educated and powerful women, huge sway over their husbands and therefore their courts.

Twice married before she wed Henry – once to the King of France – Eleanor of



Aquitaine inherited vast wealth on the death her father which gave her a unique basis for exercising her power because she owned so much land, far more indeed than the Kings of France.

As Sara told Inside Morpeth: “By the time she comes into power properly she also has huge power based simply on longevity and knowledge. She had seen it all and combined with how she dealt with the King who trusted her, and he would have been mad not to utilise her as his alter ego as ruler.”

By contrast, Eleanor of Castile got her power from her husband’s affection and his honest recognition of her abilities, her

energy and interests. “She was a woman who was trained to be exceptional in the most intellectual court of the time and was far better trained than Edward ever was,” said Sara. “Again, the king appreciated that he would have been insane not to deploy her.”

As Sara said: “In both cases they were women you could not keep down. I also find the way in which they managed to fight for the kind of life they wanted, as well as knowing what was their duty, deeply inspiring. They both led fascinating lives, did so much, went to so many places and endured so much loss. Both lost their parents and siblings when they were very young and both also lost children again and again.

“Both were actually imprisoned and were knocked back repeatedly by life, but they got right back up again and held on to their dreams to the very, very end.”

Sara Cockerill will give what promises to be a riveting talk about two exception women who became such influential Queens of England, at 6pm on Saturday March 22 at St George’s United Reformed Church.

From Paris a string of best-sellers!

The book festival is delighted to welcome to Morpeth another leading lady author whose seven novels to date have sold seven million copies which have been translated into 41 languages with two also being adapted for the big screen.

Franco-Irish author B A Paris, is known around the world as the New York Times and Sunday Times best-selling author of the novels *Behind Closed Doors* and *The Guest*.

She has lived in France most of her life but currently writes from a cottage deep in the Hampshire countryside or a converted farmhouse in the Dordogne. Before becoming an author, she worked in France as a trader before retraining as an English teacher and it was only after she turned 50 that she began her writing career.

As she says: “As a writer of psychological thrillers and domestic suspense, I am inspired by things that happen day-to-day, by people I have known and met. My imagination then goes into overdrive, and before I know it, a story comes to life on the page.”

Her novel *The Breakdown* has been adapted for film under the title *Blackwater Lane*,

and her thriller *The Therapist* is also in development for the big screen. B A Paris will be in conversation with Gerry Foley at 2.30pm on Saturday March 22nd at St George’s United Reformed Church.

The same day glass artist turned author Jessica Irena Smith, will be talking about her work at 2pm in Morpeth Library. While training and working as a glass artist, Jessica had been writing a children’s book which when she could not get it published decided to switch to adult fiction novel with her debut novel *The Summer She Vanished*. It proved so popular that her second novel *The Night of the Crash* was published last October.

Jessica is described as an exciting new talent on the Northern literary scene and she says her dream is to become a full-time writer. “Writing has given me so much and I will always be grateful for that,” she says.

B A Paris



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Effortless, elegant, vibrant and luxurious - that's fashion 2025

Spring/Summer 2025 clothing trends are all about effortless elegance with breezy silhouettes, vibrant hues, and luxurious textures. Lightweight and airy fabrics like cotton, linen, and silk are perfect for the warmer months. Here at Rutherfords you'll find beautifully designed pieces from much loved labels such as Soyaconcept, Fransa, Part Two, Orientique and Lily & Me.

Soyconcept focuses on sustainable and eco-friendly fashion. They use natural materials such as organic cotton and linen, and employ sustainable production methods to reduce waste and minimize their environmental impact. Soyconcept's clothing is stylish, comfortable and versatile, making it the perfect choice for women who want to look good while also doing their bit for the planet.

Fransa contributes to Rutherfords' spring-summer lineup with its distinctive designs. Known for its attention to detail and quality, Fransa offers a selection that resonates with the modern woman's desire for chic and versatile pieces. From casual wear to more formal ensembles, Fransa provides options that effortlessly transition from day to night.

Part Two is a Danish clothing brand that offers a range of contemporary and minimalist style clothing, as well as its use of high-quality materials and its commitment to sustainability. Part Two's



clothing is perfect for those who value quality, style and comfort, and who want to make a statement with their fashion choices.

Orientique celebrates effortless style with vibrant prints, breathable natural

fabrics, and relaxed silhouettes. Inspired by global artistry, the collection features hand-drawn patterns, soft cottons, and flowing linens, perfect for warm-weather dressing. Every piece blends comfort with elegance, capturing the essence of summer escapism and timeless femininity.

Lily & Me blends timeless style with modern femininity, offering beautifully crafted clothing inspired by nature. With a focus on sustainable fabrics, unique prints, and effortless silhouettes, each collection is designed for comfort and versatility. From breezy dresses to relaxed separates, Lily & Me captures a fresh, wearable elegance for every season.

Comfort remains a top priority, with brands offering relaxed fits and breathable fabrics. Whether you prefer a bohemian vibe or a more polished look, there's something for everyone this spring summer season at Rutherfords.

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Seal of approval for new Morpeth rescue centre

At first glance Morpeth is not a place where you would normally expect to find a seal rescue centre **writes Inside Morpeth's Jack Brodie**. Thanks to a joint partnership initiative between British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) and the Robson & Prescott veterinary practice, however, the site of its animal hospital on the outskirts of the town is now 'home' to a brand-new North East Seal Triage centre (NEST).

BDMLR Northumberland Co-ordinator Debbie Harrison along with her colleague Darren Martin from adjoining Tyne and Wear, has worked with practice Clinical Director Sam Prescott who has given them free use of space at the Whorral Bank hospital, to develop NEST with the generous help of local tradesmen and building suppliers.

An amazing £15,000 grant donation from the Joanne Toole Foundation - a charity set up in memory of young marine biologist Joanne - has also enabled a kit-form stable block to be purchased and volunteer-built, to house the triage centre. Joanne was one of 157 passengers and crew who died when Flight ET302 from Addis Ababa to Nairobi, crashed shortly after take-off in March 2029. Since then the foundation set up in her name, has supported the development of animal welfare schemes, and NEST was one of just 12 applicants to benefit in 2024 from a grant.

Commenting on the support given to NEST by Joanne's foundation, Alan Knight (BDMLR chairman) said the donation had made the project possible and he added: "The collaboration with Robson & Prescott Vets not only strengthens our rescue capabilities, but also our commitment to the welfare of marine mammals in Northumberland. Together, we can make a significant difference to the lives of vulnerable seal pups."

Once fully operational, NEST will have space to care for six seals at a time. Much like an NHS hospital triage unit, it will allow seals rescued from beaches along the Northumberland coast, to be taken there for initial assessment and treatment before either returning them to the sea, transferring them on to the seal hospital behind Tynemouth Aquarium or further afield to Hesselhead in Scotland where there is a specialist marine wildlife rehabilitation centre.

BDMLR was set up as a charity in 1988 by



Debbie Harrison and Darren Martin who lead the seal rescue teams along the North East coastline

like-minded divers concerned about the mass mortality of seals around the coasts of Britain.

Locally the BDMLR teams work round-the-clock with Debbie looking after the coastline from Berwick upon Tweed to Cambois, before Darren takes over to co-ordinate rescues from Blyth down the North East coast to Teesside. Come rain, shine or storm, volunteers will go out in all weathers to rescue injured or trapped seals along the length of the coastline.

As Debbie explained to me, during times of harsh weather or severe storms, an already bad situation deepens considerably, and storms have been almost relentless with five being large enough to be named, having being logged already this winter. The latest just a few weeks ago was Storm Eowyn and before that Storm Darragh lashed Britain just before Christmas, and, perhaps not surprisingly, there's always a rush of seal pups that need looking after in the aftermath of a storm.

As Debbie told me: 'During Storm Arwen in 2021 we were literally working 24/7 with our volunteers going out around-the-

clock in all weathers to save countless seal pups."

Debbie has the support of 51 trained BDMLR medics and last year they carried out 366 rescues of seals along the Northumberland coast.

She says the new Morpeth facility has been much needed for a long time because of the lack of short-term options available in the area. More frequent storms and higher tides are putting the young seals at risk of being separated from their mothers too early.

"Often they cannot survive on their own and we are certain our new triage unit will save countless lives," she said. "It is going to make a real difference."

Like all the other work carried out by BDMLR, the new unit will rely heavily on volunteers to staff it and care for young seals taken there. Information about how anyone can become a volunteer, perhaps train as a Marine Mammal Medic, become a supporter, donate towards the running costs of NEST, or help organise fund-raising events, can be found by logging on to bdmlr.org.uk



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Honoured to represent Northumberland

The 'best experience' of his long local government career is how **Morpeth Councillor John Beynon** sums up his 12 months as the civic chair of Northumberland County Council, **writes Ian Leech.**

John will hand over the chain of office to Northumberland's new chair in just a few weeks' time after what he says has not only been a great honour for him, but a most wonderful opportunity to represent the county not just locally but across the Northern Region.

He has been a local councillor for some 25 years, first with Castle Morpeth and then Northumberland County Council where he represents the people of the Stobhill Ward.

As a local businessman he has also been an active member of the Morpeth Chamber of Trade and for a number of years was also involved with the Morpeth Town Team set up to promote the town not just among residents but also to its many visitors.

Last May he was elected as chair of Northumberland County Council by his fellow colleagues, a role which combines the authority's civic responsibilities and also chairing its monthly meetings.



John Beynon – a proud year as Northumberland's civic head

Since then he has carried out many engagements both within Northumberland and further afield among neighbouring Northern Region local authorities across Durham, Tyne & Wear, Teesside and down into North Yorkshire.

As he told me, he has travelled to civic engagements right across Northumberland from Berwick and the Borders, across to Kielder and down to Blyth and Seaton Delaval at its southern boundary with Tyne and Wear.

During that time, he has welcomed Prince Edward the Duke of Edinburgh, to the Army Cadets HQ at Cramlington; watched the cycle racing at Stamfordham; and ridden on the first train out of Newcastle Central Station to Ashington on the recently restored rail service which in the first month it was open carried 50,000 passengers.

As he told me, however: "It would be impossible to say which event I have attended stands out as the most memorable because each one has been just as good as the last. I have met so many people wonderful people of all ages.

"Having been given the opportunity to represent Northumberland as its local authority chair has been an honour that will stay with me for the rest of my life."

How to tackle the biggest threat to your wealth: inflation

By David Lamb CFP™ MCSI

I have seen many investors with a portfolio that has no real relevance to their lifestyle and ambitions.

Often they have some lower risk investments in deposit accounts and then longer-term investments to provide the best returns they can get, or an income to supplement their pension.

I see an awful lot of people taking more risk than they need to take with their investments, but almost as common as taking too much risk is taking too little risk.

People fear investing money in the stock market so they keep all their hard-earned wealth in deposit accounts, safe in the knowledge that this time next year they will have the same amount plus interest. Unfortunately, they forget about inflation - probably the biggest threat to your wealth.

If you have £1,000 in the bank this year and earn 1% interest, next year you will have £1,010. Unfortunately, if inflation

is 3% as at present, the buying power of that £1,010 is only £979.

Their money is actually decreasing in value but the investor does not see that; however they do see the cost of living increasing.

To counter inflation risk, over the longer term you may need to take a little more market risk, but over the longer-term history shows you will maintain the real value of your money.

Don't take unnecessary risks to get more money than you need; it may go the other way. Instead, reduce your level of risk to just enough to match - or slightly beat - inflation.

It is also important to consider how your income requirements change throughout your life.

In retirement you will probably want

to spend more in the earlier stages ('active' retirement) than the later stages ('traditional' retirement) but many people are advised to take a level income throughout retirement. This often means they don't have enough money when they want to spend it and too much money when they can't spend it!

Cashflow modelling can help with this.

The main purpose of wealth is to support our lifestyles. As our lifestyle changes, our wealth needs to be able to adapt to those changes. If you do not know how much is enough, you do not have a financial plan.



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TOWN CRYER!

The latest News from Morpeth Town Council

Oswin Project Mayor's chosen charity appeal stands at almost £8,000



I would like to start by wishing everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.

I can't believe that I am now three quarters of the way through my Mayoral year and have been able to participate in important events in the town.

These have included the dedication to Admiral Lord Collingwood on Trafalgar day, celebrating 15 years since the opening of Sanderson arcade and 10 years for the Rotary Tree of Life.

It was an honour to lead the Remembrance Day parade this year which was attended by a record number of people. This was followed by a more intimate Remembrance ceremony at St. Mary's churchyard to remember all the Polish airmen and their families who gave their lives in the Second World War and lived in a camp on the common.



Morpeth's Mayor Councillor Betty Bawn

Our Christmas events this year surpassed last year. The crowds at the Christmas lights switch on were impressive. It was lovely to see so many families around to enjoy all the free activities on the day. I was delighted to switch on the lights along

with Santa and the winner of our Christmas card competition. The tipi was again a big hit in Carlisle Park. It was disappointing that our ice skating and Christmas fair had to be curtailed due to adverse weather conditions, but fingers crossed for the coming year.

My fundraising for my chosen charity the Oswin Project has continued with a very successful Halloween Themed Ball, a Curry night and a Burns Supper. The total raised now stands at almost £8,000. My thanks to everyone who has supported me by attending these events or by donating raffle prizes. It really is appreciated. The next event will be a St. Patrick's Day meal at the Sun Inn on 17th March. Tickets available from Morpeth Town Council.

Best wishes,

Betty Bawn
Mayor of Morpeth

Notice of Annual Assembly for Morpeth

All Parish and Town Councils throughout England are required by law to hold an Annual Parish Meeting or Annual Assembly which must take place between 1st March and the 1st June.

This is an open meeting, chaired by the Mayor of Morpeth, for all local government electors of the Parish. It is not a meeting of the Town Council.

The Annual Assembly gives all residents the opportunity to hear

about what has been going on in the town, ask questions of the Council and discuss current issues. It also gives local residents the opportunity to meet their Town Councillor.

This year the Annual Assembly of Morpeth Town Council will be held on Wednesday 19th March at 6pm in Morpeth Town Hall.

The Annual Report of Morpeth Town Council will also be available, so come along and see what your Town Council has done for you in the past 12 months.



Morpeth Town Council, Morpeth Town Hall, Market Place, Morpeth NE61 1LZ
Call 01670 514314 email joanne.wilson@morpeth-tc.gov.uk or mayor@morpeth-tc.gov.uk or visit www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk

Community Grants and Subsidies

A Parish Council is empowered to make a grant payment to a voluntary body where it will benefit any part of its area or its inhabitants.

Morpeth Town Council welcomes applications from organisations for a Community Grant, the organisations must operate or live within the Morpeth boundary, be voluntary or non profit making and will need to demonstrate the need for financial assistance.

Morpeth Town Council approved and paid the following organisations in the 2024/25 financial period:

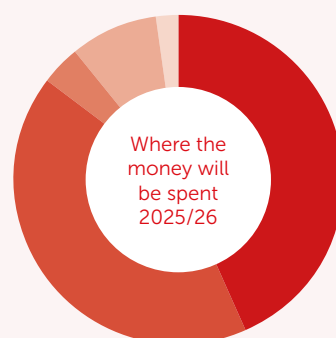
- 4th Morpeth Guides £200.00 for litter picking equipment.
- Stobhill Link £1,687.00 for training, room hire and refreshments.
- Old Bakehouse Millenium Green Trust £650.00 towards the cost to replace noticeboards, pruning of trees and repairs to the mosaics.
- Morpeth Clock Tower Bellringers Society a laptop
- Barnabas Safe and Sound £1,007.78 towards its Warm Spaces project, including training for food hygiene and barista skills.
- Bedlington and District Red Squirrel Group £200.00 towards the cost of a camera.
- The South East Northumberland Rail User Group £1,730.00 to launch an informative website and production of newsletters.

Morpeth Town Council previously provided subsidies to groups in the town, these were awarded for up to a three-year period. This stream of funding is no longer available.

The following subsidies were awarded in 2024/25:

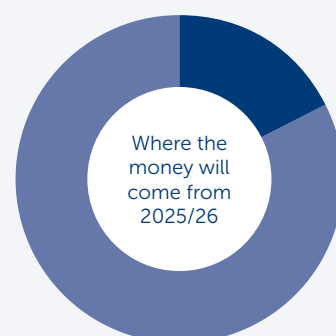
- Citizens Advice Bureau £750.00
- Ellington Colliery Band £1,000.00
- Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service £750.00
- Contact Mental Health £750.00
- Greater Morpeth Development Trust £750.00
- Morpeth Antiquarian Society use of Town Hall for events
- Northumbrian Gathering use of Town Hall for events

The next round of grant applications closes on 31st May 2025, for more information visit our website - www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk/communitygrants/ where you will find the policy and procedures and the application form for completion.



Expenditure

■ Management and Support	408,964
■ Recreation and Leisure Services	394,567
■ Environmental Services	37,500
□ Cemeteries	0
■ Tourism, Grants and Subsidies	81,676
■ Other Services	18,780
Total Gross Expenditure	941,487



Income

■ Fees and Charges	-166,377
■ Council Tax	-775,110
□ From Balances	0
Total Income	-941,487

COUNCIL MEETING TIMETABLE

SEE NOTICEBOARDS AND WEBSITE

Meeting Timetable for March and April 2025. All meetings will be held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall, unless otherwise stated on the agenda. All Committee meetings commence at 6:30 pm, unless otherwise stated on the posters or website.

Planning and Transport Committee

12th March 2025 and 9th April 2025

Finance and General Purposes Committee

5th March 2025 and 2nd April 2025

Allotment plots available

Morpeth Town Council has a range of vacant allotment plots available for rent at present.

Early spring is an ideal time to start cultivation of a new vegetable plot. Get fit, learn new skills and meet like-minded growers. Go organic, grow your own pesticide free vegetables and flowers. Small, medium and large plots are now released for rent.

To apply, complete the application form which can be found on the Town Council website, it only takes a few minutes: www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2021/10/Allotment-Application-Form-Editable.pdf

You are not alone!

By **Mark Stephenson** - Inside Morpeth's wine columnist

I've noticed with this column that it reads more like the diary of a small business owner. Maybe because owning your own business can be very lonely at times.

Writing this column is a chance to get those thoughts down on paper and can act as a form of therapy for me. In my position you can spend a lot of time at work on your own with no one to confide in.

During those periods of isolation, thoughts can start emerging and eventually start swirling around one's head like a whirlwind. Recurring themes tend to be around what can I do to improve the business?

How can I develop and improve our range of wines and spirits going forward? What can I do to get more people through the door? With those thoughts also come frustrations at what you want to do but can't do.

Many businesses have their limits, and we're no different at all. I am pretty sure I speak for others when I say this; but the worry that one day that everything that you worked hard to build will be no more lingers almost as an ever-present in the background.

That worry can be used in a positive way and prevent reckless decisions being made. But there are times when it can really affect you and give you a feeling of helplessness in an industry that contains some big players. Sadly, those worries are becoming reality for more small-to-medium sized businesses these days.

It is very easy to lose sight of the reason why most of us decide to come into this game. For me, and many others, it is our

passion for wine! So, despite the challenges out there, I've decided it's time to focus on the good things. In my opinion, wine is one of those and needs to be celebrated. Therefore, the remainder of this article is going to be dedicated to that.

In January and February, we spent a lot of time on the road visiting trade tastings and searching out new wines. Attending such events is not only a privilege and a lot of fun, but produces real results for us. For example, last year we attended a trade show in London where we first met an importer who is now our biggest supplier.

They give us the chance to try new vintages, as well as the ability to re-visit wines we currently sell. They can also provide a boost to morale in what are traditional challenging months of the year business-wise.

There are opportunities to meet winemakers and organised tastings for the year ahead (which we will be announcing on our socials and through our email newsletter very soon). It is one of the perks of the job and I love to take advantage of them to the fullest.

Oh, and before you ask: yes, I do spit the wine out. If I didn't, I think the best term to describe the outcome would be "messy" and I would most likely not be invited back!

Countries that stood out were South Africa, Greece, and Australia. As well as some hidden gems from lesser-known regions of

Italy - including Calabria and Lazio.

Very importantly, we were able to try some wines that would sell in the £10-£12 range. Excellent quality at a good price. These included an Aussie Shiraz, NZ Pinot Gris, Southern French Red Blend, and a South African Chenin Blanc. Hopefully, when you're reading this article, they will be sitting nicely on our shelves and available to buy.

A few standouts from our current range of wines include Wente Morning Fog Chardonnay from California (£20.50). A beautifully balanced wine with a touch of oak, bright tropical fruit, and nice acidity on the finish to freshen the palate. Any ABC-ers out there (Anything But Chardonnay), please give this a try.

I am pretty confident it will change your views on that particular grape. Miguel Torres Andica Carmenere (£13.00) from Chile was another highlight. Alluring, rich, and complex with blackcurrant, dark cherry fruit, and hint of balsamic on the finish. Great wine for the price! And lastly, Yalumba Samuel Collection Eden Valley Viognier (£19.00), Australia.

Quite simply, nobody does Viognier like these guys. Peach, honey, and sweet spice. A legendary wine from a legendary producer. Gorgeous!

Oh, and there's another advantage of attending these trade events. You get to meet other people who own businesses who are in the same boat as you. Okay, some are in a better position, and some are worse off. But we all share the same hopes and fears. In the words of the Michael Jackson song that heads this article, it makes you realise that 'you are not alone'.

Mission complete!

A six-strong team from Morpeth journeyed to Africa to fulfil one man's dream to improve the lives of some 300 children living near Uganda's largest city of Kampala.

For more than a decade Eric Tolman has been determined to raise the £25,000 needed to build a mission house at the school to house visiting volunteers carrying out repairs, maintenance and security work to keep the children safe and out of harm's way of intruders trying to snatch them and put them to work on the city's street.

Five friends from Morpeth – Leonie Bell, Sue Nock, Darleen Turner, Clare Anderson and Rachel Lamb – joined Eric on the trip to paint the finished mission house he helped build and finally get it ready for use. Not only that the children – 100 of whom are orphans and live at the school – now also have clean water and an electricity supply to rely on.

Volunteers who visit the school will now pay £20 a night to stay in the mission house while they help carry out desperately needed repair work on the school. Eric said he was so proud of the work done by the volunteers not only to raise the necessary funds but to give up their time to travel to Uganda their own expense, for the benefit of so many children.



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What's on?

NORTHUMBRIA AT ITS VERY BEST

Morpeth will once again play host to an annual gathering of all that's best in Northumbrian traditions – its music, songs, dance, dialect, concerts, barn dancing, story-telling, street shows, competitions, indoor and outdoor fun family events.

Over three days from Friday 25th to Sunday 27th April, the streets around the town centre will again be taken over by the marvellously unique Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering – the 57th time the event will have been held to celebrate the past and present heritage and folklore of the region.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of people like Gathering Director Kim Bibby-Wilson and her wonderfully dedicated band of volunteers, the event presents Morpeth residents with the chance to enjoy past traditions which it is so important to keep alive, as well as bringing thousands of visitors into the town from all over the north of England and the Scottish Borders, to revel in the weekend.

As Kim said, this year's event promises an extra-special cast-list of musicians, dancers, and singers taking part. They include the re-united guitarists and singers Bob Fox and Stu Luckley (ex-Hedgehog Pie) who specialise in traditional and contemporary songs of the North East, in particular its mining communities. Their first album was voted Folk Album of the Year.

Also appearing at the Gathering will be renowned story-tellers Taffy Thomas and Shonaleigh; the Ran Tanners who play traditional music from Georgian and Victorian England on fiddles, bagpipes and squeezeboxes; Lincolnshire's Megan Wisdom and Mossy Christian; Durham singer-songwriter Jez Lowe; David Faulkner from Devon who plays the Border Pipes; the Northumbrian Ranters; the Storytellers Street Band; the Reel to Reel Ceilidh Band; Jim Grant, Jim Eldon and the Time Bandits' re-enactors.

Other contributors to the weekend's entertainment will be the now Morpeth-based Ellington Colliery Band, and local choirs Voice Male and Werca's Folk and as always there will be competitions for children and adults, dance and music workshops with events spread around the centre of town including the Town Hall, the Market Place, St James' Church and

Centre, Morpeth Library, the Millennium Green and local pubs.

Before the actual Gathering weekend, a fund-raising Northumbrian Concert of traditional music, songs and dialect, will take place on Saturday March 14th starting at 7.30pm in the Town Hall Ballroom. Featured on the evening will be Alistair Anderson, Graham Bell and Anne Lamb, the Border Directors, Miggins Fiddle, Sophie Fraser and James Tait with the new Morpeth Gadgy Ron Forster compering the concert.

Tickets costing £15 (children £6) are available from Morpeth Chantry (623455) or Kim Bibby-Wilson (513308). Full details of all the full Gathering weekend programme can be found by logging on to www.northumbriana.org.uk

OUTSTANDING ORCHESTRA CONCERT

The next Bewick Orchestra concert which will be in aid of Marie Curie North East, is promising an evening guaranteed to entertain, inform and delight its audience! Not only will there be two works given their first performance in the region, but one will involve two outstanding local musicians.

The concerto by Max Bruch for clarinet and viola is unjustly rarely heard, but is full of Bruch's romantic melodies and balances the two instruments wonderfully.

Soloists Jonathan Caudle and Mike Gerrard are both well-known to Morpeth audiences. Local GP Jonathan regularly performs with the New Tyneside and European Doctors' orchestras, while Mike leads the violas in the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

Their programme includes the overture to *Così fan tutte* by Mozart as well as a symphony by recently 'rediscovered' French composer Louise Farrenc, whose music has unjustly lain unknown since the 19th Century. Her third symphony, which will be the final item on the evening's programme, is said to be an amazingly energetic work equal to anything written by Beethoven or Mozart.

The Bewick Orchestra concert will be held in St James' Church, Morpeth, on Saturday May 17th at 7.30pm. Tickets are £10 (children free) and are available from the Morpeth Chantry TIC (01670 623455) or at the door.

MORPETH MUSIC SOCIETY

The final concert of the Society's current season on Thursday April 10th, will feature the baroque 'superstars' the Red Priest ensemble, and the audience can look forward to an evening of both classics of the baroque era such as the Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 with less familiar works, all performed in the group's inimitable style.

The four musicians – Piers Adams (recorders), Julia Bishop (violin), Angela East (cello) and David Wright (harpsichord) – are renowned for delivering an exciting, full-on musical experience. Together, they say, if your only experience of recording playing is from primary school, the performance will change your opinion!

As the BBC Music Magazine says: "For sheer technical wizardry, charismatic showmanship and expressive devilment, Red Priest is in a class of its own."

The programme for the concert is:-

Vivaldi – Concerto in A minor RV580 from *L'Estro Armonico*; Bach – Adagio in Bb (theme from 'Truly Madly Deeply'); Handel – Trio Sonata in F Major Op. 2 No. 4; Bach – Brandenburg Concerto No 5; Telemann – Largo and Gypsy Rondo; Handel – Aria Amorooso; Corelli – La Folia (Madness); alongside a colourful array of works by lesser known baroque masters.

The concert takes place at Morpeth Methodist Church in Howard Terrace starting at 7.30pm. Tickets are £18 adults (children free with an adult), from the website www.morpeth-musoc.org.uk, Morpeth Methodist Church or The Chantry TIC.

ROAD RACE RETURNS

The Morpeth 10k road race which proved so popular on its debut last year, will be back again on Sunday June 15th. Starting and finishing alongside the Clock Tower, the race will take runners through the heart of the town and surrounding area.

The race is being organised by RunThrough – the UK's and Europe's fastest-growing running events' company – in collaboration with Morpeth Harriers.

"We are excited to be bringing back the Morpeth 10K," said Matt Wood, Co-founder of RunThrough. "The event has quickly become a stand-out addition to the Northumberland racing calendar, providing a welcoming and challenging race for elite athletes and casual runners alike."

Registration for the race is now open. For more information log on to runthrough.co.uk/event/morpeth-10k-june-2025

Forty Fair Day years

The popular Morpeth Fair which has grown from humble beginnings to become one of the biggest and most successful events of its kind in the northern region, will this summer mark 40 years since it was first staged in the town writes **Ian Leech**.

Since that very first event the Fair has attracted hundreds of thousands of people into Morpeth on the second Sunday of June, and raised around £250,000 to help fund the local Christmas Lights' displays as well as promoting and boosting tourism and visitor numbers in the town.

The very first year the Fair was held it was a small Sunday afternoon event with just a few stalls and attractions at Morpeth rugby ground along Mitford Road, which raised a modest – but very welcome – £1,000 towards the cost of putting on a Christmas Lights' display in the centre of town. Morpeth traders worked together through the town's Chamber of Trade which was chaired at the time by local businessman Stan Robson, to organise the event – and that is how the Fair continued to be staged for more than 30 years.

A committee of traders and businesspeople met throughout the year to plan the event supported on Fair Day by dozens of volunteers to make sure everything ran like clockwork, starting around 4am and going on until late in the evening to clear up after the crowds had gone home, and backed with some sponsorship from local companies.

County councillor John Beynon who represents Morpeth's Stobhill ward, has been involved with every single Fair Day over the past 40 years, and, as he told me, no one ever imagined on that first Fair Day, that it would go on to become the event it now is, drawing somewhere in the region of 30,000 visitors each June into the town from as far away as the Borders and Edinburgh in the north, across to Carlisle and Cumbria in the west and as far south as Teesside and North Yorkshire.

"Over the years the Fair has grown like Topsy and truly put Morpeth on the map as an event of its kind," said John. "Not only does it attract huge crowds on the day, but it brings back people who were perhaps visiting Morpeth for the first time, who choose to return when the town is not so busy to spend time - and money - in Morpeth."

A few years ago, when the Chamber of Trade said it no longer had the resources to stage Fair Day, John and his friend Pat Elton stepped in to form a not-for-profit company, to keep the event going. "We really did not want to see what is such a popular event in Morpeth and indeed the region, come to end," he said. Despite missing two consecutive years because of the Covid pandemic, Fair Day has continued since then to go from strength to strength and, for the past two years, it has attracted support from a North of Tyne Combined Authority fund to help promote major events across the region.

That support helps provide a purpose-built entertainment stage rather than the back of a lorry in the Market Place that was used for many years; attract more bands and musical acts and entertainers; and extend the Fair to cover two days.

The funding also allows John and Pat's company to help stage other events throughout the year including on Early May Bank Holiday Monday (May 5th); a summer festival on August Bank Holiday



Fair organisers John Beynon and Pat Elton

Monday (August 25th); and the switch-on of Morpeth's spectacular Christmas Lights in November.

After its first year, Fair Day was moved by the Chamber to the centre of town, so now there is entertainment in the Market Place; Turner's Fairground in the New Market; a junior road race around town; a Brass Does Rock event in Carlisle Park; a food court in Oldgate; shows, rides, a dog show, and climbing wall along High Stanners.

One of the Fair highlights, of course, is always the parade of vintage cars and motor bikes that stretches the length of Bridge Street as drivers and riders make their way to the Stanners where fairgoers can get a close-up look at their vehicles. Last year there were than 150 cars and predominantly Harley Davidson motor bikes in the parade. Another highlight is stalls selling crafts, artisan gifts and locally grown and produced food along Bridge Street and the Market Place. Last year there were more than 100 stalls in Bridge Street.

"Fair Day is such a great event and has been for such a long time," said John. "This year will be no exception."

This Fair Day is on Sunday June 8th with events and the fairground also taking place the day before – Saturday June 7th.

Businesses interested in taking a stall on Morpeth Fair Day can find out more by contacting **dawn@nemarkets.com**

Companies interested in becoming a Morpeth Fair day sponsor can contact **pat_elton@hotmail.co.uk**



... And all that JAZZ

Unveiling the New Honda Jazz: Style meets versatility

Honda nailed it with the launch of the hugely popular Honda Jazz. It quickly won-over drivers by offering exactly what urban motorists were looking for- a compact, stylish car that delivers a smooth, efficient ride and a flexible, practical design.

One of the Jazz's stand-out features is its advanced hybrid technology, which provides impressive fuel efficiency and eco-friendly performance. Safety is also a top priority, as every model is equipped with Honda SENSING, a suite of intelligent safety features including Lane Keeping Assist and Adaptive Cruise Control.

Simply put, the Honda Jazz is perfect for those seeking a practical, stylish, and tech-savvy vehicle, making it ideal for urban commuting and more.

Honda recently gave the Jazz and its rugged sibling, the Jazz Crosstar, a fresh

update. The Crosstar adds a touch of adventure with 4x4-inspired styling cues, while the overall design of this 4th-generation model remains mostly unchanged - because customers loved it as it was. If it isn't broken, why fix it?

Under the hood, all models are powered by a 1.5-litre hybrid petrol engine paired with two electric motors and a self-charging battery, managed by a smooth CVT automatic gearbox. It does 0-60 mph in 9.4 seconds with a top speed of 108 mph, and if you drive conservatively, you can achieve over 60 mpg. Honda estimates a range of up to 550 miles on a full tank - impressive, to say the least.

The Jazz is available in three trims: Elegance, Advance, and Advance Sport. The Crosstar comes in the well-equipped Advance trim. Most drivers will find the entry-level Elegance trim more than sufficient, offering features like front and rear parking sensors, a rear view camera, air conditioning, adaptive cruise control, LED headlights, powered and heated mirrors, DAB radio, automatic lights and wipers, alloy wheels, and the intuitive

Honda Connect 9-inch display with built-in navigation.

For around £800 more, you can get extras like heated front seats, a heated steering wheel, keyless entry and start, and larger alloy wheels.

If you're looking for a Jazz with a bit more personality, the Crosstar is the way to go. It stands out with water-repellent upholstery, roof rails, front fog lights, and unique exterior trim.

Whichever version you choose, the Honda Jazz remains one of the best small suburban cars on the market. It handles rough road surfaces with ease and is a breeze to park.

Overall, this is one of our favorite compact cars. If you want a high-quality, roomy, and well-equipped vehicle that offers reliable and highly economical driving, the Honda Jazz should be at the top of your list.

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Economy & Emissions figures for the Honda HR-V: (WLTP) Range 4.1-7.1 (l/100km), CO₂ 94-162 (g/km); (NEDC) 3.1-4.8 (l/100km), 72-110 (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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Spring's a timely tonic for a well-being boost

By **Ross Pearson**, Inside Morpeth's gardening columnist

The term 'well-being' has woven itself into our vernacular; it's usually related to achieving a good work/life balance. Gardening is very often mentioned in the same sentence as well-being and for good reason. Gardening connects us to something that is bigger than ourselves. It connects us to the ebb and flow of the seasons and forces us to slow down to nature's pace rather than our own.

It serves as a reminder that life is made of cycles that constantly change. A garden never pauses, even during winter and soon enough, days lengthen, temperatures rise, and visible life is renewed once more.

Knowledge of that cycle gives us hope when reflecting on our own personal circumstances. Tough periods inevitably come our way, but in their own time they also make way for happier times full of hope.

Nothing serves more as a reminder of that hope than spring. Embracing that sense of hope and vitality through gardening invigorates and energises us in a way few other things can. With the arrival of spring, now is the perfect time to set aside a bit of time for our own well-being and venture out into the garden.

Preparation pruning

February and March are the perfect months to prune your roses to encourage healthy growth and blooms in summer. Don't be afraid to be bold with your cuts – trust the process! Cut back to an outward-facing bud to open the centre of the plant. Remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches to improve airflow. For bush roses, aim for a goblet shape to help prevent disease.

Summer bulbs

Bring a burst of colour to your summer garden by planting bulbs such as gladioli, lilies, and alliums. These bulbs thrive if planted early in the year and will reward you with a splash of vibrant colour come



Ross Pearson – looking forward to spring!

summer. Plant gladioli in groups of five or more for impact. Alliums are great for pollinators and make excellent indoors displays when dried out. Lilies work very well in both borders or pots adding height and strong splashes of colour.

Veggie patch

Even though the soil may still be a bit chilly, you can start sowing hardy vegetables such as broad beans, peas, onions, and spinach in raised beds or pots. You can also start chitting potatoes indoors. Wherever possible, resist the urge to dig over your veggie patch and instead add a thick layer of organic compost or well-rotted manure to enrich the soil to suppress weeds. Individually remove weeds as they appear to eradicate larger specimens. Sow early crops directly into the ground or start them in seed trays indoors. If you don't have a vegetable

plot, give it a go anyway in pots or raised planters. Growing your own food is satisfying and you'll be amazed at how much you can produce from even the smallest of space.

Make more plants

Larger clumps of perennials such as hostas, daylilies, geraniums, sedums and heleniums can now be lifted, split and replanted. Dividing them will help to promote healthier growth and bulk out your displays, creating symmetry throughout the garden. Use a spade or garden fork to gently lift the plant with its full root ball. Split it into smaller sections with back-to-back forks or an old bread knife. Replant the divisions where needed and water well. You're essentially multiplying your plants for free - what's not to love?

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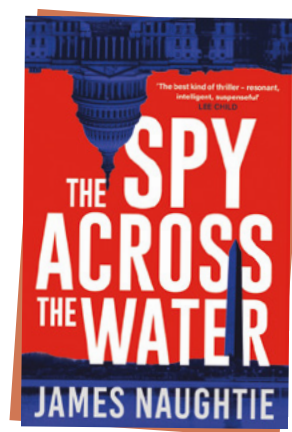
SATURDAY 22 MARCH

St George's United Reformed Church

- 11.00 - 12.00** Marie Hannah in Conversation with Gerry Foley
- 12.45 - 13.45** Gervase Phinn - The School Inspector Calls
- 14.30 - 15.30** B A Paris in Conversation with Gerry Foley
- 16.15 - 17.15** James Naughtie Presents...
- 18.00 - 17.00** Sara Cockerill - The Queens Who Made History

Morpeth Library

- 11.00 - 12.00** Colin Green - Trust, Proof, Resolve & Gun
- 11.00 - 12.00** Jodie James - The Dandy Lion (A Story & Craft Workshop for Children)
- 12.45 - 13.45** Alexis James - Unsung (Not All Heroes Wear Kilts)
- 14.00 - 15.00** Kjartan Poskitt - Murderous Maths
- 14.00 - 15.00** Jessica Irena Smith - Night of the Crash
- 15.30 - 16.30** David Willem - Ancient Relics & Lost Treasures
- 15.30 - 16.30** Louise Dodd - Hoot for Happiness



SUNDAY 23 MARCH

St George's United Reformed Church

- 14.30 - 15.30** Chris Mullin - Didn't You Use To Be Chris Mullin?
- 16.00 - 17.50** Ed Waugh - The stories behind his plays
- 17.30 - 18.30** Guy Morpuss - A Trial in Three Act

Morpeth Library

- 11.00 - 12.00** Bridget Gubbins - Morpeth's Hidden History
- 13.00 - 14.00** Jean Laurie & Guests
- 15.00 - 16.00** Harry Gallagher - there is an england

Authors will follow their session with book signs with their books on sale at the venue