



COUNTY DURHAM IS CITY OF CULTURE 2025 FINALIST

COUNTY DURHAM is a step closer to being named UK City of Culture 2025.

Last Friday the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced that County Durham was one of just four locations shortlisted for the prestigious title out of twenty that originally applied.

The other three areas shortlisted are Bradford, Southampton and Wrexham Borough.

The social and economic impact of securing UK City of Culture 2025 cannot be overestimated, not only for Durham as a whole, but for Bishop Auckland in particular with Kynren being at the forefront of the bid.

As well as creating thousands of jobs and boosting the county's creative and visitor economies by millions of pounds, City of Culture status would empower residents and help to improve community wellbeing.

Bid organisers calculate that the benefits would spread beyond County Durham to the wider region and act as a catalyst for further

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Jonathan Ruffer is now 'mulling over' the future funding of The Auckland Project.

FUTURE OF BISHOP AUCKLAND REGENERATION PUT INTO DOUBT

A HIGH-PROFILE row with Durham County Council has left philanthropist and founder of The Auckland Project and Kynren, Jonathan Ruffer "angry and frustrated".

Since Mr Ruffer arrived

in Bishop Auckland back in 2012, he has invested the equivalent of £50,000 a day into the town.

However, he is now 'mulling over' the future funding of The Auckland Project (TAP) and his

other regeneration projects.

Following several meetings and discussions, Mr Ruffer accused Durham County Council of failing to collaborate with stakeholders in spending the

£53m allocated to Bishop Auckland from the Government's special Levelling Up Funds.

In a letter sent to the Levelling Up Minister,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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The scheme is supported by Spennymoor and Bishop Auckland & Shildon Area Action Partnerships, elected members from Bishop Auckland, Shildon and Spennymoor and Community Led Local Development.

NEW SCHEME AIMS TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES TO BOUNCE BACK FOLLOWING PANDEMIC

A BRAND-NEW scheme is underway in Bishop Auckland, Shildon and Spennymoor, aimed at supporting businesses bounce back from the effects of the pandemic.

The Pandemic Business Recovery Grant, managed by South Durham Enterprise Agency and supported by the Local Area Action Partnerships and Elected Members, gives businesses the chance to apply for 60% grant to fund their project.

This project is funded through South Durham Community Led Local Development Programme as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020.

The pandemic is continuing to have wide reaching implications on communities, giving businesses unique challenges around accessing markets, keeping staff and customers safe, or responding to new and emerging trends in con-

sumer behaviour.

The grant, which can fund new equipment, tools, machinery, capital works and consultancy projects, is designed to help businesses deal with these new challenges.

Giving them the tools, they need to create stronger businesses in the local area.

Sarah Merryweather, Grant Advisor working on the project said: "The interest generated to date has been overwhelming."

"Businesses quite clearly need support to cope with a world that's changed rapidly over the last two years."

"The grant is a brilliant way for businesses to cement their recovery or grab that new opportunity with both hands."

Grant advisors from South Durham Enterprise Agency are available to support and guide applicants through the process, making the application a detailed, but issue-free process.

People who live in the

communities mentioned can also take advantage of a unique start up grant, aimed at helping them get their new business idea off the ground.

Ms Merryweather added: "Despite the difficult time we've all experienced, there are new opportunities out there and we've been really pleased with the number of people thinking about taking on new business challenge."

"Starting up a new business is never easy, and the offer of grant support

can make that difference between getting something going or leaving a brilliant idea on the shelf.

The grant and wider scheme received support from the Spennymoor and Bishop Auckland & Shildon AAPs, elected members from both Bishop Auckland & Shildon and Spennymoor and Community Led Local Development.

Businesses or individuals who are interested should call 01388 776688 or email sarah@theenterprisecy.co.uk



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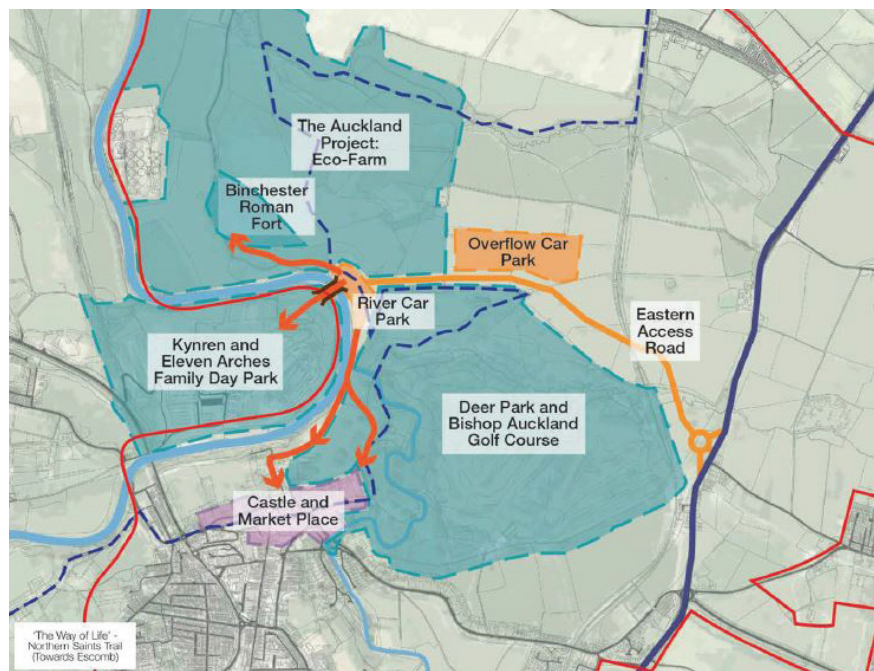
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The Stronger Towns Board's proposed eastern access road from the A688 near Coundon.

FUTURE TOWN PLANS IN DOUBT

FROM PAGE 1

Michael Gove, Mr Ruffer insisted his stance was not an idle threat and suggested that sometimes the best way to help a community was to "stop helping it".

He wrote: "Durham County Council is forcing me to a decision which I never thought I would face: to suspend all future payments from The Auckland Project until the situation is resolved.

"If it is not resolved, then the project will end.

"As a result of my money, Bishop Auckland has been awarded, exceptionally, no less than £53m through the Government's Future High Street Fund and the Stronger Towns Fund.

"Money from the latter is given to a Town Board, made up of local people whose duty is to represent the town in the spending of the money on its behalf."

Durham County Council have said it could not hand over control of public funds to Mr Ruffer but that they were keen on "collaborating" further with the philanthropist in the future.

Leader of the county council, Cllr Amanda Hopgood, said: "We are disappointed to hear that Mr Ruffer is considering his future and we

know we have an exceptional opportunity for Bishop Auckland and we have achieved the scale of investment we have received so far together.

"We cannot always comply with specific demands that are made in respect of public money.

"We understand that Mr Ruffer is requesting more direct control of central government funding that is allocated to the county council for investment in Bishop Auckland in consultation with communities.

"We remain keen to work with Mr Ruffer and his team, and hope that we can find a collaborative solution of working together for the benefit of our communities."

However, Mr Ruffer has accused the county council of failing to live up to its words and of breaking rules about how decisions on where the money is spent are taken.

He wrote: "Durham County Council has taken it upon itself to make the executive decisions on this, and has done so secretly and with a high hand notwithstanding clear rules as to where these responsibilities lie: with the Town Board and not with the council."

Within the £53m investment around £15.7m of the money has been allocated to an eastern access road from

the A688 near Coundon which will take the anticipated 1.5m visitors a year away from the centre of the town.

Mr Ruffer said: "The proposed road will take the gridlock out of Bishop Auckland town centre but we have been kept in the dark about it.

"We were working on it going from one place and then we find out after six months, the council has been working on it going from another place.

"It is that attitude that is not appropriate, particularly when they talk of openness and partnership.

"I have no problem with that, that's exactly the way the relationship should work, but now the council is making it clear that it will do what it wants with that money and not the board, the board is being squeezed out."

Mr Ruffer added: "This is a sign that is simply to say what you [the council] are doing is not proper behaviour and when you return to proper behaviour then no-one will be happier than I to switch the taps back on.

"I am not turning my back on the town.

"I'm doing exactly the reverse.

"I am bringing DCC into partnership for the benefit of the town."

Letters, page 5.



Win a giant chocolate egg by taking part in the Easter Egg Hunt.

TOWN TEAM EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA RETURNS

THE BISHOP Auckland Town Team's Easter Eggstavanza is back for 2022.

As part of the event you have a chance of winning a giant chocolate Easter Egg by taking part in the The Easter Egg Hunt.

Simply wander around the town and find the ten egg baskets in the shop windows and write down the colour of the eggs.

The list of shops are on the town team website and on social media.

Once completed bring your form to the Newgate Shopping Centre by no later than 2pm on Saturday 16th April

and the winners will be announced just after 2pm.

At 12 noon there will be some fantastic entertainment from 'Flash', so make sure you don't miss this great one hour interactive family show.

Bishop The Boar and the Easter Bunny will be making special guest appearances, try your luck on the grand tombola and there's free face painting for the children, all happening inside the Newgate Shopping Centre from 10am until 2pm.

For more information visit bishopaucklandtownteam.org

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Bishop Auckland Town Councillors Michael Siddle, Lesley Zair, Jamie Blackburn and Sam Zair.

TOWN COUNCIL UKRAINE APPEAL

BISHOP AUCKLAND Town Council is appealing for donations of non-prescription medication for refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.

Town councillors are appealing for donations of non-prescription medication, personal hygiene and baby products.

Cllr Jamie Blackburn, Deputy Mayor of Bishop Auckland said: "It's devastating what's happening to Ukraine and like our whole community, we want to do something to help."

"We understand that they are in need of non-prescription medication and personal care items to support the refugees arriving in Poland and the UK."

"We've set up a drop off point in our office at Kingsway and all donations will be gratefully received."

Items can be dropped at the reception of the Town Council Offices, 54 Kingsway, Monday to Friday between 10am – 3pm.

For more information call 01388 207110.



Around 140 traders will be part of this year's Bishop Auckland Food Festival.

TRADERS ANNOUNCED FOR BISHOP AUCKLAND FOOD FESTIVAL

FROM DELICIOUSLY- decorated donuts to flavourful street food, traders from County Durham and beyond are preparing to show off their specialties at this year's Bishop Auckland Food Festival.

Organisers of the festival, which will be taking place in Bishop Auckland Town Centre on Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 April, have now announced the extensive list of food retailers attending over the weekend.

Around 140 traders are looking forward to joining the festival, with many tasty new delights from businesses who are appearing for the first time and traders local to the county.

Visitors can look forward to tasting a variety of street food dishes, from Cuban, Armenian and Lebanese delicacies, to burgers, loaded fries and, for a different take on a traditional favourite, Yorkshire pudding wraps.

For a sweet treat, foodies can explore an assortment of expertly crafted desserts, from cakes and brownies, donuts to churros, crepes and more.

There will also be options for four-legged festivalgoers with pupcakes, woofins, and handmade dog biscuits available to buy.

For the full list of traders visit the festival website at bishopaucklandfoodfestival.co.uk.

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Notice is hereby given that Durham County Council proposes to grant a grazing licence, a licence for construction access and to dispose of:

- 25615.05m² or thereabouts of land to the north of Gibson Street, Bishop Auckland

A plan showing the area concerned may be inspected at the offices of Corporate Property and Land, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UL.

By virtue of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the County Council is required to give formal notice of its intention to grant a licence/dispose of Open Space and consider any objections to the licence/disposal.

Any representations or objections to the licences/disposal should be made in writing to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services at the address below or by emailing highways.orders@durham.gov.uk before the 23rd April 2022 and should state the grounds for objection.

DATED this 26th March 2022



Helen Lynch
Head of Legal & Democratic Services
County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

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£500 grants are available for Jubilee events from believe housing.

GRANTS FOR JUBILEE EVENTS

COMMUNITY GROUPS wanting to get people together to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee could receive hundreds of pounds towards their event from believe housing.

The County Durham-based housing association is inviting not-for-profit organisations and community groups to apply for grants

of up to £500 to host a one-off Jubilee event or activity.

Damian Pearson, Community Investment Performance Team Leader for believe housing, said: "If your organisation wants to bring people together to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June but needs helping funding it, we would love to hear from you."

"believe housing could help towards costs such as equipment, venue hire, food or entertainment through our community grant scheme, which is there to support projects that make a real difference to people's lives and wellbeing."

Applications can be done online at www.believehousing.co.uk or call 0300 1311 999.

Letters to the Editor...

Email: bishop@swd.news stating 'Letter' in the subject line. Write to: Letters, Bishop Press, 3-4 First Floor Offices, Shildon Town Council, Shildon DL4 1AH. All letters (including emails) must include the writer's name, address, postal code and contact number and may be edited. The maximum length for letters is 200 words.

Disaster for Bishop Auckland

I write in response to the article on your website regarding the possible withdrawal of the £50,000 per day funding for the town by Mr Jonathan Ruffer.

If this were to happen it would be an absolute disaster for Bishop Auckland. It would probably mean the closure of all that Mr Ruffer and The Auckland Project have built in the last eleven years, all of which just would not be here at all. Not to mention the wonderful Kynren show.

All of the money that is in dispute would be used wisely by Mr Ruffer and The Auckland Project for the benefit of the town and its population and the hosts of visitors that will come. The County Council seems bent on destroying all that has been achieved so far.

Mr Ruffer is without doubt the best thing to have happened to Bishop Auckland and indeed County Durham and the wider North East in many a long year, so I say 'give him the money', forget about bureaucracy in County Hall and let him get on with it before we lose him.

Yours in hope of a sensible conclusion to this,

Chris Walkinshaw, by email.

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY MEETING

THE BISHOP Auckland Astronomical Society's first meeting since Covid will take place on Friday 1st April starting at 7pm.

Meetings take place at Bishop Auckland Community Fire Station.

The fee is £1 for members and £2.50 for visitors.

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Our newest paperboy, Robert Farns, will be 88 next month.

IS ROBERT THE OLDEST PAPERBOY IN THE WORLD?

COULD ROBERT Farns be the oldest paperboy in the country, or maybe even the world?

Robert was born in Tudhoe Lane in April 1934, making him 88 years old next month.

Last week, he started his first ever paper round, delivering our sister paper *Spenny-moor News* to readers in Middlestone Moor.

A report in the Independent newspaper in 2020 claimed Britain's oldest paperboy at the time was aged 84, so Robert would beat him by two years.

Robert attended Croxdale County School and left when he was 15.

After he left school, he started working with his father Robert Hutchinson (called Bob) who was a painter and decorator.

In 1955 he was conscripted into the RAF at the age of 21.

He married Rita Knaggs from Spennymoor in November 1955.

When he was demobbed, he had various painting and decorating jobs until May 65 when he gained a job with Durham County Council also as a painter

and decorator.

Eventually he became a chargehand, then area foreman and finally the county supervisor, working from County Hall in charge of all painting and decorating, where he stayed until he retired.

Robert is the oldest of eight; four boys and four girls. He has two children, a son Robert Graham, and a daughter Rosamond, five grand children and eight great grand children.

He lost his wife Rita in June 2019 after 64 years of marriage.

In earlier times Robert was a Youth Leader and ran the U18 football team at Spennymoor Youth Club.

He was presented with a tankard for over 35 continuous years of service in football from Durham Football Association.

He still likes walking with his brother David, gardening, and reading.

Every Friday he volunteers at St Paul's Centre foodbank and says all food donations are very welcome.

It just goes to show you're never too old to get a paper round!



The Long Dining Room inside Auckland Castle is back open to the public.

THE AUCKLAND PROJECT REOPENS

THE AUCKLAND Project is inviting visitors to explore and discover Bishop Auckland's history and many treasures as it reopens its doors for a busy year ahead.

The magnificent Auckland Castle with its stunning gardens and grounds, Auckland Tower and the Mining Art Gallery - complete with a new exhibition - are now open.

Alongside the Spanish Gallery which opened in 2021 and the 200-acre Deer Park, visitors are being encouraged to make a full day of it with The Auckland Project when planning a trip to the historic market town in County Durham.

Visitors can take in the historic splendour of Auckland Castle and its extensive surrounding curtilage, including the North Terrace with beautiful long views through the Deer Park and beyond into the Wear Valley.

They can also take in the grandeur of the Throne Room and the warm elegance of the Long Dining Room in the Castle, home to Francisco de Zurbarán's impressive series of paintings *Jacob and his Twelve Sons*.

These laid the foundations for The Auckland Project back in 2012 and served as inspiration for

the Spanish Gallery.

The Spanish Gallery, in the Market Place, is the first gallery in the UK dedicated to the art, history and culture of Spain.

Focusing on the Spanish Golden Age, the Gallery explores the development of art, politics and religion throughout the period with devotional art, portraiture and still lifes on display from key figures such as El Greco, Zurbarán, Velázquez and Murillo.

Tickets for Auckland Castle and The Spanish Gallery are priced at £14 per venue for adults, £7 for children and family tickets for two adults and up to four children are £35.

The Bishop's Kitchen will be open in the Castle with a tempting menu of hot drinks, freshly made sandwiches and cakes.

For more information, opening hours and to book tickets, visit www.aucklandproject.org

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COUNTY INTO LAST FOUR OF CITY OF CULTURE 2025 BID

FROM PAGE 1

government and private sector investment across the North East.

Following the announcement, Durham County Council, Durham University and Culture Durham – the partners spearheading the campaign – expressed their thanks to the thousands of individuals, businesses and organisations that have not only backed the campaign, but helped to shape the bid itself.

They also issued a rallying cry to the entire region, urging people to continue to support the campaign as it moves into the crucial final stage.

Cllr Amanda Hopgood, Leader of Durham County Council, said: "We are absolutely thrilled County Durham has been shortlisted for UK City of Culture 2025.

"Our success at making it this far is of course testament to our coun-



The Bishop Auckland open air spectacular show, Kynren featured in the UK City of Culture 2025 bid.

ty's incredible heritage, landscapes and vibrant cultural offer.

"It would attract more visitors, boost our economy and strengthen our reputation nationally and internationally as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

"County Durham's bid recognises all of this," she added, "and we are proud it incorporates the ideas and ambitions of hundreds of residents, creative practitioners and cultural organisations.

"It is thanks to them

that we have made it this far and I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has backed the Durham 2025 campaign.

"Together, we can bring this title home to County Durham."

The council submitted the bid with principal

partner Durham University last month on behalf of Culture Durham, a partnership of more than 20 cultural organisations from across the county.

The shortlisted locations will be visited by the judging panel in May ahead of the winner announcement later that month.

At the heart of the bid is a year-long programme of arts, culture, sport, science and economics, including spectacular opening and closing events; an international celebration of the bicentenary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway with events at Locomotion and other locations across the region and a travelling fair that asks big questions about the local economy.

And with the county's profile and appeal raised nationally, the benefits would be felt for years to follow.

To find out more visit www.durham2025.co.uk.

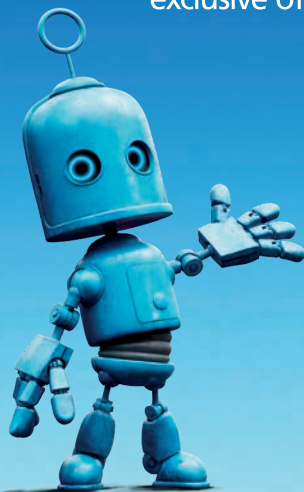
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Sport

Local leagues, competitions and events...



WIN FREE TICKETS TO PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL

THE BREWERY Field, home of Spennymoor Football Club will host England Schoolboys Under 18s game against Scotland on Friday 1 April.

England's first match in the SAFIB Centenary Shield 2022 will be away to Northern Ireland on 25 March with the fixture being played at Wolff Welders FC.

The squad will then host Scotland at the Brewery Field on Friday 1 April before travelling south to host the Republic of Ireland at Eastleigh FC on Friday 8 April.

They will then round off their Centenary Shield campaign with a trip to Llansawel FC to face the Welsh on Thursday 14 April.

Tony Wilson, Managing Director of Spennymoor Town FC, said: "A monumental amount of work has gone in from our team off the pitch over the last year to improve our infrastructure, facilities and matchday offering.



For how to win two FREE tickets to the match, see below.

"I'm thrilled to say that this is now bearing fruit with this wonderful international occasion for a

non league football club. "England Schoolboys' football conjures images of some of our country's

most famous players, including the likes of Michael Owen.

"With the importance

we put on our academy of more than 600 young people of all ages, abilities and genders, hosting this prominent fixture is a massive deal.

"This isn't just for the football club or Spennymoor, we're working hard to put County Durham on the map for football.

"Having these big organisations of international importance in Durham brings a boost to the whole region.

"We're working on our relationships with all of the country's footballing bodies and hope to be involved in more national football going forwards.

"Make no mistake, we've done plenty of squad building and physical building over the last few years at our club.

"We're now building the club's reputation in other ways. Coupled with the visit of the Austrian National side during the European Championships and the Lionesses, this is the latest milestone that the club can be proud of."

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EMPHATIC U12 KINGS CROWNED LEAGUE CHAMPIONS



Champions! The Under 12 Kings secured the league title with a 5-1 win against Normanby. A double from Tom and further goals from Jack, Liam and Haideen made sure the celebrations could begin long before the final whistle.

ST MARY'S U7 Aces had a great win against Billingham Synthonia with Thomas scoring four goals and Theo five.

U7 Kings won against North Ormsbey with goals from Rouben (2), Jack (3) and Jace.

U8 Kings lost out to Seaton Carew with Mason and Zac Grant scoring.

The U8 Bishop won a top of the table clash against Northallerton Blacks with Oliver and

Charlie scoring.

U9 Kings won 6-0 in a friendly at Hartlepool St Francis Yellows with Finlay scoring four.

The U10 Kings lost 3-0 to Stockton Town while U11 Kings drew 1-1 with Hartlepool with Theo scoring.

The U13 Kings won 6-0 away at Billingham Synthonia while the U14s lost at home to Fishburn Park with Tyler scoring the side's two goals.

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