

ROYALS VISIT BISHOP AUCKLAND TO OFFICIALLY OPEN SPANISH GALLERY

THE UK'S first gallery dedicated to the art of the Spanish Golden Age received the Royal seal of approval this week, on Tuesday, 5 April, as Her Majesty Queen Letizia of Spain, accompanied by HRH The Prince of Wales, officially opened the Spanish Gallery.

The Queen of Spain and The Prince of Wales met at Auckland Castle, where they were greeted by The Auckland Project's Co-founder Jane Ruffer and Chief Executive David Maddan, to learn of the major conservation works completed in 2019, which established it as one of the best-preserved bishops' palaces in Europe.

During the tour of the Castle, Her Majesty and His Royal Highness met with celebrated Spanish artist, José María Cano for a preview of *Saint Marcus* - the first in a series of paintings of the Four Evangelists he has been commissioned to produce by Founder of The Auckland Project, Jonathan Ruffer.

Director of the National Gallery and friend of The Auckland Project, Gabriele Finaldi, then



Her Majesty The Queen of Spain and HRH The Prince of Wales unveil a plaque commemorating their visit. Photo: House of Hues.

presented *Jacob and His Twelve Sons*; thirteen life-sized figures painted by Francisco de Zurbarán, which were brought to the Castle by Bishop Trevor in 1756 and have hung in its impressive Long Dining Room ever since.

The Queen of Spain and The Prince of Wales then

travelled together to the Spanish Gallery, which takes its inspiration from Zurbarán's series of masterpieces and their 250-year association with the town, and is situated in the market place.

A civic delegation including the High Sheriff, Shona Harper

Wilkes, Chair of Durham County Council (DCC), Cllr Watts Sterling, Chief Executive DCC, John Hewitt and the Mayor of Bishop Auckland, Katie Hewitt were all in attendance to welcome the Royal guests, who would later unveil a commemorative plaque to officially

open the venue.

After signing the guest book, Her Majesty and His Royal Highness were presented with specially produced leather-bound Spanish Gallery catalogues by Otheay Wil-son, aged 8, and Kadie

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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Advertising:
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Artist impression of the exterior of Dorset Place Community Centre on Henknowle Estate.

COMMUNITY CENTRE ON HENKNOWLE TO BE TRANSFORMED

A FORMER community centre near the heart of Bishop Auckland is being transformed into a social enterprise and creativity hub that supports adults with learning disabilities and autism.

Dorset Place Community Centre, located on Henknowle Estate, is in the process of transformation with over £260,000 investment by Bridge Creative.

In November 2021, believe housing transferred ownership of the building to provide a base for Bridge Creative and bring the building back into a community use.

Bridge Creative was founded in April 2018

and are a community interest company (CIC) who have been searching for a home in the area for three years.

The organisation already supports around 160 people in County Durham, the new premises will allow them to increase their offer in the south of the county.

Bridge Creative secured a total of £261,245 funding for the refurbishment of the centre with money from South Durham CLLD through the European Structural Investment Fund Programme 2014-2020, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), The Gaunless Gateway Big

Local Partnership, The Screwfix Foundation, Power to Change Bright Idea's Fund and The School for Social Entrepreneurs.

Once completed, the new centre will provide a permanent base for Bridge Creative to continue its employment support for adults with learning disabilities and autism, offering work experience opportunities and supporting people into paid employment in the events, arts and creative industries.

In their new home Bridge Creative will support 10 young adults with learning disabilities and or autism to complete a traineeship as part of the refurbishment, working alongside contractors and tradespeople to renovate the building, gaining real work experience and a nationally-recognised qualification.

The centre will also include five affordable spaces for local social enterprises, charitable organisations, and creative businesses, as well as a commercial kitchen, and co-working space with individual pods.

Ben Tinkler, Managing

Director of Bridge Creative said: "We're very excited that we now have the keys and work started on our new building in January.

"It'll be great for the local area and for the people we support and will provide many opportunities for people with learning disabilities and autism to access meaningful paid employment.

"Homeworking is also expected to continue beyond the pandemic so we think the co-working space will be particularly popular with people wanting to work from somewhere other than their bedroom. It's taken almost two years to get to this stage so we just can't wait to get started."

Physical works have already started and will include accessibility improvements including widened doors for wheelchair users and the installation of a lift to make the first floor accessible.

The aim is to offer affordable and flexible space that will benefit the local community and provide opportunities for the people Bridge Creative supports.

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Her Majesty The Queen of Spain and HRH The Prince of Wales view the Zurburán paintings, Jacob and his Twelve Sons, at Auckland Castle.. Photo: House of Hues.

ROYALS VISIT BISHOP AUCKLAND

FROM PAGE 1

Searle, 11 – both from St Wilfred's RCVA Primary School and their Deputy Head Teacher, Brigit Kinsey.

The Queen of Spain and The Prince of Wales then left the Gallery and were greeted by around 250 local schoolchildren and people from local business in the town who had gathered to give them a warm farewell, cheering and waving British and Spanish flags.

KS2 pupils from Prince Bishops, Witton le Wear, Copeland Road and St Wilfrid's RCVA primary schools were invited to play a part in the special occasion, an opportunity to gather together in celebration after the pan-

demic.

Jonathan Ruffer, Founder of The Auckland Project, said: "The creation of an Old Master Gallery from nothing is something that has not been attempted since the war.

"It requires a strong team, a beady and acquisitive eye for the Permanent Collection, and appropriate buildings in which to house them; it unites the spirit of Spain with the soil of England.

"It is therefore a wonderful moment to have The Queen of Spain, and HRH the Prince of Wales together to celebrate and mark this occasion – they will, I am sure, be the first of many people to enjoy the fusion of our two great cultures."

Jane Ruffer, Co-founder of The Auckland Project, said: "Everyone at The Auckland Project was excited and delighted to welcome Her Majesty Queen Letizia of Spain and His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales to Auckland Castle and the Spanish Gallery.

"It was particularly lovely to introduce members of staff from across the organisation, including our new apprentices and those directly involved in the vital work The Auckland Project delivers within communities in and around Bishop Auckland.

"We also loved seeing so many schoolchildren at this special occasion who gave our Royal visitors a rousing send off."



CSI: Crime Scene Improvisation: No one knows who the killer is, not even the cast!

BISHOP BACCANALIA FESTIVAL

BISHOP AUCKLAND'S inaugural entertainment festival, with something for everyone, is set to launch later this month.

Baccanalia has been founded for the people of Bishop Auckland by experienced festival programme curator, Thomas Wales, who originally hails from Coundon but has worked at the Edinburgh Fringe and in London's West End.

The festival is set to bring exceptional talent to the town on Bank Holiday Weekend, Saturday 30th April and Sunday 1st May for a weekend of comedy, cabaret, theatre, party events, family shows and creative workshops.

Events will take place from 11am until late each day.

"We have such an exciting opportunity right on our doorstep here to see some amazing stuff that we don't often get the chance to enjoy in our area," said Thomas.

"I'm a big believer that arts and culture should

be for everyone, but also understand that those words can turn people off. Essentially, this is an entertainment festival.

"You won't find any three-hour operas at this festival. We've got an improvised musical made up on the spot from audience suggestions, complete with spontaneous rhyming and choreography.

"We have a murder mystery where the audience decides the killer and not even the cast know who it is!

"We have a rip roaring cabaret featuring the best of North Eastern drag which later turns into a silent disco - lights, smoke machines, headphones - the full shebang.

"All of this is in our very own Town Hall in a way we've not really seen it before."

Also starring will be Paul Sinha of *The Chase* fame with his new comedy show as well as loads of fun for young ones.

Find out more and book up at baccanalia.co.uk.

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TOWN COUNCILLOR GUILTY OF DEFRAUDING NHS AND UNION

A BISHOP Auckland Town Councillor has been found guilty of defrauding the NHS and Unison the union of tens of thousands of pounds.

Cllr Tanya Tucker, of Walker Drive, Bishop Auckland is facing a potential prison sentence after being convicted of fraud totalling almost £67,000 last month.

The former Durham County Councillor, stood for, and was elected, as a town councillor last September while preparing to face the charges at Durham Crown Court.

Two of the offences were committed as an employee of the North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS) of the NHS, and six as an official of Unison's Northern Regional Health Commissioning Branch.

When she was questioned by Unison she claimed a box containing all her receipts and vouchers had gone missing from a cupboard at her office.

She was suspended in November 2018 and dismissed following disciplinary proceedings in October 2019.

The 57-year-old denied all eight counts, but, following a fortnight-long trial, she was found guilty



Tanya Tucker was found guilty of fraud at Durham Crown Court.

by the jury on seven of the eight charges.

The money defrauded from Unison was said to have helped pay for her honeymoon, a car, hotel stays, shopping and restaurant bills.

Tucker gave "no comment" replies to police questions, which she said was on legal advice and maintained her innocence throughout the trial.

Following the jury verdicts, Judge James Adkin adjourned sentencing to allow preparation of background reports by the Probation Service.

He bailed Tucker to return to court for sentencing this week.

Bishop Press will publish the sentencing details on our website at swd.news when announced.



The bike is able to carry a wheelchair, giving users the chance to experience what it feels like to ride a bike.

AAP FUNDING PROVIDES SPECIALIST BIKE FOR EVERGREEN PUPILS

A WHEELCHAIR accessible bike for youngsters at Evergreen Primary School in Bishop Auckland has been provided thanks to a grant from Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership (AAP).

After previously buying an adapted cycle for children with disabilities, the specialist school wanted to build on this provision by purchasing a bike to help youngsters who are unable to transfer from their chairs.

The AAP gave £4,300 from the neighbourhood budget of Cllr Sam Zair towards buying the bike.

The adapted bike carries a wheelchair on the front, enabling those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to

experience what it is like to ride on a bike and take part in cycling activities.

Twenty children at the school will now benefit from its use and enjoy the experience.

The school is for children aged two to 11 years of age who have severe, profound, or multiple learning difficulties, while some also have an Autistic Spectrum Condition.

Some pupils also have additional medical, physical, sensory, linguistic or behavioural difficulties, while many are immobile and require daily physio and input from occupational therapy.

Judith Benson, head of school at Evergreen Primary School, said: "We're delighted to be given funding towards the bike

as it will make a big difference to the lives of our pupils.

"The bike allows for inclusivity and now all of the children attending the school can take part in a cycling activity."

Andrew Walker, Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP co-ordinator, said: "It is fantastic to see funding from AAP neighbourhood budgets helping to provide equipment which is so important to our children.

"This is what AAP funding is all about, allocating money that goes towards changing the lives of our residents for the better."

For more information about Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP go to www.durham.gov.uk/bishopandshildonaap

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DON'T PANIC - ALL WILL BE REVEALED ON GOOD FRIDAY

AFTER MORE than four years in the planning, two lockdowns and numerous cast changes, the Passion Play for Bishop Auckland is ready to be revealed this Good Friday, 15 April, in Bishop Auckland Market Place.

A cast of more than 50 and a backstage team of more than 30 drawn from Bishop Auckland and surrounding areas will perform *Don't Panic, All will be revealed!* - the true story of Easter in two performances at 12 noon and 3pm on Good Friday, April 15th.

Originally conceived as an idea in 2017 following a visit to the *Wintershall* production in Trafalgar Square, Passion Play Bishop Auckland (PPBA) became part of the *Wintershall* group of passion plays performed nationally on Good Friday under the umbrella name *One Good Friday* and planned its first performance in 2020.

That performance had to be shelved due to the pandemic and was rescheduled for the following year. Sadly that too fell victim to a pandemic lockdown.

Due to the massive commitment of the performance team and support from across the region, the team is looking forward to performing the passion play twice on this Good Friday.

Performance Producer, Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop said: "In an attempt to recognise the struggles we have faced during the pandemic and to celebrate the true revealing nature of the Easter story, the 2022 performance has been titled: *Don't Panic - All Will Be Revealed!*.

"The name derives from the idea of Jesus' tomb being revealed to be empty on Easter Sunday and Jesus revealing himself to Mary and the Disciples.

"It also refers to revealing the true story of Easter as for many, Easter is more about chocolate and Easter bunnies!

"Supported by the Bishop Auckland Fellowship of Christian



Jesus (Michael Taphouse) rehearses the crucifixion in Bishop Auckland Market Place with Rev Canon Eileen Harrop (left), Performance Director Sam Bradshaw (centre), Rachael Masters (right) and members of the cast and crew. Photo: Keith Blundy.

Churches, The Auckland Project and the Auckland Castle Trust, this year's performance reflects a new sense of hope for the community and for the region as a whole."

The first performance at 12 noon will be opened by the Lord Lieutenant of County Durham, Mrs Sue Snowdon and will be closed by the Rt Revd Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham, whilst the second performance at 3 pm will have Bishop Auckland MP Dehenna Davidson and will be closed by Canon Father Dennis Tindall of St Mary & St

Winifrid, Bishop Auckland.

Along with a town in the South of England, the Bishop Auckland Performance will be the only passion play in the North of England being performed under the *One Good Friday* umbrella in 2022.

Chair of PPBA and originator of the idea, Rachael Masters said: "The cast and performance team is drawn from the whole community, not just Churches.

"It represents a community effort and as such is in the spirit of bring-

ing new life and vitality to Bishop Auckland as it goes through its own regeneration and reveal.

"All members of the team are volunteers, giving their time and skills freely to realise the performance.

"They work mainly through other volunteers, but where additional resources are needed, they use a small group of local businesses to supplement their already formidable talents.

"An example of this spirit of collaboration is demonstrated by the performance standing out

from others by having its own original music score composed by local musician, Stephen Johnson.

"Stephen was commissioned to compose and produce a musical score passion play as a symphonic depiction of the crucifixion of Christ.

"He used his work on the score as part of his degree, earning himself a First for the magnificent work.

"We really hope that everyone is able to get involved by coming along. Tickets are free of charge and can be reserved from our website."

NEW HOURS FOR RECYCLING

HOUSEHOLD WASTE Recycling Centres in County Durham, including Romanway, in Bishop Auckland, have extended their opening times for the upcoming summer months.

Most sites, including Romanway, are now open from 9am to 6pm.

Those who are planning to use a site can check the council's online interactive map, which is updated every hour and

gives details on whether a site is open and its estimated waiting times.

For larger items, such as furniture or white goods, residents are reminded to book a collection for bulky waste. This can be done at www.durham.gov.uk/bulkywaste or by calling customer services on 03000 260 000.

Information about sites, including the interactive map can be found at durham.gov.uk/hwrc.

APRIL AT ST CUTHBERT'S

WITH EASTER on the horizon, it's a busy month at St Cuthbert's Church in Etherley.

On Tuesday 12 April, from 3.15pm to 5pm there will be a Messy Church.

Go along for fun, games, storytelling and food. Children and parents or guardians are welcome.

On Good Friday, 15 April, there will be a *Walk of Witness*. Meet opposite the Sportsman pub

at 9.30am for a walk to Low Etherley. Everyone is welcome.

Every Friday (except Good Friday), there is a Lunch Club for Older People from 11.30am until 2pm.

Enjoy food in pleasant company with a main course and pudding. Tea and coffee will also be served.

For more information, visit the website at www.stcuthbertsetherley.co.uk.



Funding is available for activities for children young people and families during the Summer and Christmas holidays.

FUNDING FOR SUMMER ACTIVITIES AND HEALTHY EATING

FUNDING IS available for activities for children young people and families during the Summer holidays in 2022.

The scheme aims to support local community groups and organisations based in the Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership area to deliver enriching holiday activities during the Summer Holidays, including healthy food.

However the funding is not for individuals or profit making organisations.

Applicants can apply for amounts over £500 and delivery must take place during the school holidays.

Applicants can now apply for multiple holidays for both Summer and Christmas 2022.

Applicants must provide a healthy snack, breakfast, lunch or tea as part of the activity that aims to meet Food Safety Requirements.

All fully completed applications and supporting documents must be received by no later than 12 noon on Wednesday 27 April.

For more information or an application form can be requested from Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP by calling 03000 268 075 or emailing bishopshildonaap@durham.gov.uk



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Staff and volunteers from Woodhouse Close Church and Community Centre.

60 YEARS OF WOODHOUSE CLOSE CHURCH

LAST MONTH marked the 60th anniversary of the opening of Woodhouse Close Church in Bishop Auckland.

The church is situated in the centre of a former Local Authority housing estate built at the same time, which has been identified by government statistics as in the top 2% of areas of social deprivation in the country.

The building was built by the Methodist Church and opened on 24 March 1962 by Rev. Hector Staford.

Three Local Methodist Churches closed to fund the new church and weekly donations were also collected around the streets on the estate from people who had come to live in the new houses.

In 1971 a local ecumenical partnership was formed between the two denominations.

Tindale Crescent Methodist Church closed, and members and youth groups joined the new church.

In September 2020, Rev. David Payne took up the appointment as Methodist Minister with pastoral responsibility for Woodhouse Close Church when he became Superintendent Minister of the Bishop Auckland & Shildon Methodist Circuit.

Adjacent to the church is the vibrant and busy Community Centre which was formally set up in 2006.

The Community Centre team is led by Anne Ramshaw and activities include the Tuesday and Thursday Day Club, Meals on Wheels and the new Bereavement Support Group.

One of most used services is the foodbank and crisis intervention programme which over the last few years, and in particular from the start of this year, has seen a marked increase and indications are that this is to get a lot worse due to world developments and increase in fuel prices.

Donations are always most welcome, especially food and toiletries. To this end, this year the team are embarking on a major project to extend the premises to provide firstly a dedicated confidential office area, enlarging its very

small existing vestry and creating a purpose-built storage area for the large amount of food donations they receive weekly.

The expected cost to extend the premises is around £150,000 and to date around £95,000 has been pledged from various sources.

Peter Hall said: "It's been an incredible 60 years and we give thanks for those who had the vision to build a new Church back in the early 1960s.

"Many of you will remember our disco nights in the 80's and 90's – very, very challenging but enjoyed by all.

"The staff, volunteers and church members now oversee most of the weekly activities responding to local needs especially crisis response and food support.

"Please feel free to call in during the week, if you need help in any way, or to join one of our many activities."

For more information about the Church or Community Centre visit their website at woodhousechurchandcommunitycentre.co.uk.



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A good turnout at the special coffee morning raised £1,400 for the people of Ukraine.

WITTON PARK COFFEE MORNING SUCCESS

WITTON PARK Methodist Chapel's special coffee morning in March proved a very successful day,

raising £1,400 for the people of Ukraine. "People were so generous and so happy to be

there helping in whatever way they could," said church volunteer, Evelyn Swinbank.



Kathryn, Noah and Adam soak up the match atmosphere.

TICKET WINNERS ADAM AND NOAH CELEBRATE ENGLAND VICTORY

BISHOP AUCKLAND brothers, Adam and Noah Dragffy-Brown, along with mam, Kathryn, were able to celebrate England's resounding 4-0 win in the prestigious Schoolboy International at Spennymoor Town FC's home ground last Friday after winning free tickets to the game, courtesy of the *Bishop Press*.

It was Adam and Noah's mam, Kathryn, who entered the free competition on their behalf, saying: "I would take my

football mad autistic son Adam who is too young for Facebook."

Noah, who is also autistic, went along too.

Afterwards, Kathryn said: "We really enjoyed the match and we got to meet some of the players from both teams at the end of the game."

A Josh Stones hat-trick, along with a goal from Alfie Dean was enough to see England comfortably beat their Scottish opponents in front of a crowd of 2,006 spectators.



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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 9th April 2022



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

Sport

Local leagues, competitions and events...



Adam Burnicle scores against his former side to give Bishops a vital win in West Auckland.

BISHOPS PICK UP VITAL POINTS IN FIGHT FOR LEAGUE SURVIVAL

FIVE POINTS from the last nine, including a memorable away win in the Auckland derby, have provided Bishop Auckland FC with a Northern League Division One lifeline.

A first half goal from Adam Burnicle, coupled with a missed second half penalty by Jordan Blinco for the hosts, gave Bishops a precious three points in West Auckland.

Sandwiched between two draws, the results do not quite leave their destiny in their own hands - and the FA may still rescue the Two Blues from automatic relegation - but anything less would have all but sealed their fate.

"With three games left, including two at home against Seaham Red Star and Guisbrough and an away game at Crook, the lads need as much support as possible to help the team out," said chairman, Steve Coulthard.

Bishops host Red Star in the first of the fate-defining sequence this Saturday at 3pm at the Voenus Stadium.

Meanwhile, at St Mary's Juniors, the U9 Kings managed their first win of the season in their final game with a magnificent performance against Darlington TSC with the whole squad starring.

U8 Bishops won away to Stockton Blues, coming from 2-1 down with 10 minutes to go before finishing strongly with goals from Jack, Charlie (2) and Oliver (2).

U7 Aces won away at Marton FC Royals with Theo scoring three goals and Thomas scoring four.

U7 Kings won against Tibs Blues with Lockey (3) and Falls scoring.

U9 Aces won at home against Guisborough. Oliver (3), Freddie (2), Bobby and Zack scored.

U10 Kings lost 4-1 away at Seaton Carew with Albie scoring.

U12 Kings lost 2-1 away to Thirsk in their final game with Tom scoring for the Kings.

U13 Aces had a cracking win against top of the table East Durham who haven't lost a game all season.

A superb performance saw the Aces win 3-1 with a double from Leon and Charlie with the other. Another game where the whole team starred.

The U14s recorded a high scoring 3-3 draw against Tibs Yellows with two goals from Tyler and Max with the other.

Arron also contributed between the sticks with a great penalty save.

BAFC U23 Reserves lost out 3-5 to Gateshead Rutherford in the League Cup. Jack Cooper with a double and Regan Nixon contributed the goals.

BISHOP WIN COLLEGE'S LEAGUE



Bishop Auckland College is joint-coached by Andrew Dixon (back, second from right) and Shildon AFC captain, Ben Trotter, left.

BISHOP AUCKLAND College is celebrating after winning the North-East footballing equivalent of University Challenge.

A 6-2 away win at Darlington Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form secured the North-East Colleges' League title for the second time in six seasons.

The league also includes teams from Gateshead College, New College Durham, East Durham College and Tyne Metropolitan College.

The 16-man squad, which is coached by tutors Andrew Dixon and Ben Trotter, was presented with the league trophy after the match at Darlington QE.

Ben is also club captain of Shildon AFC.

The key game which decided the destination of the league title was the 5-2 home win against

league runners-up Gateshead College in March.

Andrew, Head of Sport at the college, said: "This has been a fantastic season for the squad.

"They have really worked hard and have fully deserved their success this season.

"The older, more experienced players have mentored and helped the younger players, which has been nice to see."

Top scorer this season, with 14 goals, was former Bishop Auckland FC striker Regan Nixon, 17, currently playing for Esh Winning in the second division of the Northern League.

Team-mate and club captain, Robert McFadden added: "The whole squad has contributed to the success of the team this year - everyone works for the team."

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