

FESTIVE WISHES FROM THE BISHOP PRESS

AS WE reach the end of another eventful year, we would like to pass on our heartfelt gratitude to all our supporters in these difficult times: thank you to our contributors, our loyal readers, local businesses who support us financially and of course our new members.

We were delighted earlier this year to add Elaine to our team, who has joined us as a full time Production and Editorial Assistant.

We have also been busy implementing our new Membership Scheme, which is open to all, and we are very encouraged by the uptake so far.

The scheme, which costs from as little as £2 per month, will allow us pay local journalists for stories in your community and we encourage anyone wishing to support us to join the scheme.

We also invite anyone wishing to join our team of local journalists to get in touch.

We have big plans to grow our digital content next year and would be delighted to work on innovative local journalism with you.

Until then, we wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.



An artist's impression of the new bar area at the refurbished Park Head Hotel.

PARK HEAD REOPENING CONFIRMED

THE AUCKLAND Project has announced the much-anticipated reopening date for the Park Head Hotel and Restaurant in Bishop Auckland.

The regeneration charity, which works to bring about positive and lasting change for those living, working and visiting

Bishop Auckland, purchased the hotel and restaurant in May 2021.

With an extensive top-down refurbishment well underway, bookings for overnight stays and enquiries for functions and events are now being taken from Wednesday 1 February.

General Manager, Andrew Hogg, said: "We are delighted to be able to announce the opening date for the newly refurbished Park Head Hotel and Restaurant.

"The hotel has been at the heart of the local community for many years, and we are excited

to welcome guests from near and far to both the hotel and restaurant in the New Year."

Offering 38 en-suite bedrooms, the Park Head Hotel will give a welcome boost to the overnight stay options for those vis-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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South West Durham News CIC
3-4 First Floor Offices
Shildon Town Council building
Civic Hall Square
Shildon DL4 1AH

Editorial:
01388 775896

Advertising:
07909 992731

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Some of the students who have benefitted from work experience alongside the care home residents able to enjoy their work.

TRADES4CARE LOOK BACK ON 2022

LOCAL COMMUNITY

Interest Company Trades-4Care (T4C) have enjoyed a successful year working with local tradesmen and young people to upgrade community, care and educational buildings around the area.

During 2022, T4C have worked with around thirty young people and carried out professional projects at a wide range of venues, including Auckland Youth and Community Centre (AYCC), Copley, Winston, Ingleton and Stainton Village Halls, the Raby Estate, Durham University's Botanic Gardens and local care homes.

They have also recently been able to complete jobs for people in their own homes who are in need of support through illness or disability.

T4C's biggest project this year was at Bridge Creative's new centre at Henknowle which supports young adults with learning difficulties and autism.

Supporting the T4C team on this project were 12 young adults who now attend the centre with their support workers.

The work delivered was a huge success and what the young adults achieved with the sup-

port from all involved was amazing, including colourful feature walls designed by the participants.

The new centre, named COSE, is now in full operation with social spaces and offices for hire which will support the running costs of the building.

Young participants on the T4C holistic programme, which includes at least one work placement on a professional project, sessions and workshops on preparing for work, and personalised coaching, benefit from a number of partnerships with organisations.

These include Bishop Auckland College, Catch 22, Durham Enable, and Bridge Creative.

Trades4Care also now work closely with the Dulux community repaint scheme on all large projects using fully recycled paint, which is great for the environment and a big cost saving for clients.

T4C are very proud of their two full time apprentices who joined after they had completed one of the T4C entry level programmes.

Cameron and Alex have had a great year, attending heritage skills

courses, first aid and scaffolding training and Cameron even won an award for the quality of her college work.

Both are hoping to sit their end point assessment in September next year, which would mean they will complete their apprenticeships in two years instead of three.

This would be an amazing achievement for both of them.

They already take responsibility for mentoring participants coming onto the programmes, and are very much part of the T4C team.

Charlie Wright, co-founder of T4C said: "What all the young adults who have worked with us have achieved in our communities this year is amazing.

"They have grown in confidence and technical skills while gaining new life skills and helping other organisations that do so much for people in need.

"We would just like to thank everyone who has been out to visit us on projects, who've supported our work, and who have had so many kind words for the young people on our program.

"We're also really grate-

ful for the amazing support we've had from Barbara and everyone at the Gaunless Gateway Big Local Partnership."

Looking forward to 2023, Charlie said: "We already have projects lined up at the People's Museum and the Baptist Church in Bishop Auckland, the Methodist Church in Barnard Castle and Whorlton Village Hall, and there are more in the pipe-line. We're really excited about working with more young people to increase their skills and give them an opportunity to explore whether they would like to aim at a career in trades."

In the coming year, T4C is looking to raise some funds to lease a van with a crew-cab to get more young people to projects, and to provide more bursaries so that young people who are keen to do more work experience can be supported to return.

Anybody interested in hiring T4C to deliver work in a care or community venue, sponsoring a programme, or helping in any other way, can find out more about T4C and how to get in touch through their website at www.trades4care.co.uk.

A Christmas Message from the Mayor



This year has continued to be a challenge for so many people. Recovering from the worst of the pandemic to a time of hardship. The continued increase in prices of everyday essential food products and the rise in energy prices means the challenges we face are not yet over.

In Bishop Auckland a number of organisations have worked hard to help the people of the town manage these basic human needs. Warm hubs are situated around the town and food banks are available to those in need of extra support. We encourage people who need extra support to reach out, whether it be emotional, psychological or social well-being, from just a low mood or hearing things to reliance on drugs and alcohol or pulling away from family and friends.

Since becoming Mayor, I have been inspired by the sense of community when the Town Council have hosted events such as the free three-day Queen's Jubilee Platinum Party and were the key partner in the three-day Christmas Town Party.

The Market Place, Fore Bondgate and beyond were inundated with families and friends who had come together to celebrate and have fun. This includes community led events at Woodhouse Close and Henknowle. The support that

was given to local businesses by purchases or stopping for refreshments highlights what a hidden gem Bishop Auckland is. I hope that people continue to shop locally to help small businesses and protect jobs.

The year also saw the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II. All of us were affected and grieved in our own way to come to terms with someone who had reigned our nation all our lives. It was wonderful to see how St Anne's Church and the Town Council came together and held a commemorative service at St Andrew's, followed by prayers at St Anne's, giving everyone the opportunity to pay their respects. The Remembrance Service on 13th Nov was also very well attended; a time to reflect and honour those who have fallen.

It is also great to see the success Bishop Auckland Cricket Team had this year, winning three trophies. Our football and rugby teams in both ladies and men's categories are playing well and could see them land trophies in 2023.

As the year draws to a close, I remain hopeful for 2023. We have lots to look forward to including the Coronation of King Charles III, the regeneration work within the town from the multi million-pound Future High Street Fund and Stronger Towns Fund, the opening of the new Park Head Hotel and the developments at Tindale and the continued strengthening of partnerships with all our community groups.

On behalf of Bishop Auckland Town Council, my fellow Councillors and Town Council Officers, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and above all, a healthy 2023.

Cllr Michael Siddle, Mayor of Bishop Auckland

ST JOHN'S WIN SPANISH CHALLENGE NEW SPAR OPENS DOORS

SCHOOL PUPILS recently encouraged Spanish tourists to visit County Durham.

The Spanish Apprenticeship challenge saw teams of pupils from seven schools complete language-based tasks to persuade Spanish people to visit Bishop Auckland.

The challenge saw pupils in Years 9 and 10 supported by Durham University undergraduates.

The challenge involved 13 teams from seven schools competing: Bishop Barrington Academy, King James I Academy and St John's Catholic School and Sixth Form in the town, as well as Biddick Academy, in Washington, Castle View Enterprise Academy, in Sunderland, St Hild's CofE School, in Hartlepool, and Kings Priory School, in Tynemouth.

Each team presented a pitch to the Hon Spanish Consul for the region, Santiago Fouz-Hernandez, who took on the role of a Spanish tour operator for the day, with the aim to encourage a Spanish tour company to include Bishop Auckland on a tour of the United Kingdom.

A team from St John's Catholic School and Sixth Form won the challenge.

A NEW SPAR store opened its doors to the public on Tuesday 13 December.

Located on the old Aclet Pub site, the convenience store features a Clayton Park Deli, serving a range of hot foods and freshly made-to-order food to go from both hot and cold counters.

Graham Eyes Butcher's will also be on offer, serving quality self-serve meat.

Plenty of refreshment services are also available, including a Tango Ice Blast machine, Cheeky Coffee and F'Real Smoothies and Milkshakes.

Town Mayor, Cllr Michael Siddle opened the store, with the first fifty customers receiving their 'tea for free'.

Free Cheeky Coffee cards will also be available for two weeks.

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An artist's impression of a double bedroom at the Park Head Hotel.

PARK HEAD HOTEL TO REOPEN

FROM PAGE 1

iting Bishop Auckland – encouraging people from outside the area to make the most of their time in County Durham.

Meanwhile the 80-cover Oak Room Restaurant and Bar will ensure local people and visitors to the town are well catered for thanks to a range of tempting menus, brimming with local produce including fruit and vegetables grown in the Walled Garden at Auckland Castle.

Bookings for dining experiences will be opening soon.

From daily breakfasts and light lunchtime options to generous Sunday lunches, the Oak Room kitchen team are promising 'timeless classics with a twist'.

It's not only the interior of the Park Head Hotel which is being transformed.

Guests will also be invited to enjoy the newly-landscaped outdoor spaces during their time there.

Design consultant, Sarah Fortin Townsend who has been overseeing the refurbishment from the start, said: "While we want to provide visitors with quality accommodation, beautifully wholesome food and a warm welcome, making sure the Park Head continues to be an important place for local residents of Bishop Auckland has remained paramount throughout the project.

"It will be wonderful to see the Park Head come to life again in the new year."

THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DURHAM ADELAIDE STREET, BISHOP AUCKLAND (TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE) ORDER 2022

The Council on 12/12/22 made the above Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984 as amended, Section 14 (1) to prohibit all vehicular traffic from proceeding on the full length of Adelaide Street between its junction with Princes Street roundabout and Newgate Street, Bishop Auckland to enable gas main renewal works to be undertaken. Alternative route from north western side of the closure from A689 Princes Street roundabout southerly and westerly on Bob Hardisty Drive and north on Newgate Street to the south eastern side of the closure. The maximum duration of the Order is 18 months. The proposed works are to commence on 9/1/23 and are anticipated to be completed in 12 days. On occasions, alternative dates for closure may be necessary and these will be signed accordingly.

DATED: 17th December 2022



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

NEWTON CAP VIADUCT UPDATE

NEWTON CAP Viaduct near Bishop Auckland sees frequent suicide attempts, writes Bishop Auckland Durham County Councillor, Andy Jackson.

It's because of this, that preventions are finally to be put in place.

The viaduct was opened to road and pedestrian users in 1995.

By this point, it was already necessary to have prevention measures in place to help protect people from themselves, and those who live underneath the bridge.

For many years, people have protested, demanded, asked and hoped for measures to be taken to help protect those who may make a choice in a fleeting moment that could end their lives.

For all that time, we have been told that it was not possible or feasible.

This has now changed. In February 2023, at a best estimate, the council will see new lighting installed.

In March 2023 (best estimate) there will be a

CCTV system added.

In April 2023 (best estimate) there will be suicide prevention railings installed. These are measures I have pushed for since my election.

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Christmas services update



Bin collections – Bins will be emptied as normal up to and including Friday 23 December. Over Christmas and New Year, the following changes will apply:

Normal collection day	Revised collection days
Tuesday	Wednesday 28 December
Wednesday	Thursday 29 December
Thursday	Friday 30 December
Friday	Saturday 31 December

Normal collections will resume from Tuesday 3 January 2023

You can also find collections dates online by entering your house number and postcode into the 'My Durham' section of our website: www.durham.gov.uk

Bulky waste collections

There will be no large waste (bulky) collections between Christmas Eve and Monday 2 January.

Recycling centres will be open as normal over the holidays, except for Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Find locations and opening hours at www.durham.gov.uk/hwrc

Leisure centres will be open throughout the festive period except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Visit www.durham.gov.uk/leisurecentres for opening hours at your local centre.

Library opening times may vary. Call into your local library or check for opening times at www.durham.gov.uk/libraries

One Point family centres will close or offer restricted opening times over the Christmas period. Call into your local centre before Christmas to see when it will be open or call 03000 261 111.

Customer Access Points will close at 12.45pm on Friday 23 December and reopen on Tuesday 3 January.

Register offices will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and all bank holidays. Bishop Auckland and Durham register offices will open for appointments only on Wednesday 28, Thursday 29 and Friday 30 December but opening times will vary. Call 03000 26 6000 to book an appointment. Normal opening hours will resume on Tuesday 3 January.

Day centres for adults will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Payments line
Make a debit or credit card payment 24/7 on 0300 456 2771.

In an emergency – Call our out-of-hours number: 03000 26 0000.

Real Christmas tree collections

Book a free collection online at www.durham.gov.uk/christmastreecollections or call 03000 26 0000 between Monday 12 December and Friday 6 January, for a collection in the New Year. You can also take your real Christmas tree to a household waste recycling centre. Visit www.durham.gov.uk/hwrc for locations and opening times.



A Christmas Message from Bishop Auckland Methodist Church

As I write, the sun is shining this morning but we've had some wonderful icy days and nights.

A blackbird in the garden was trying desperately to get water from the bird bath.

I helped out but it took a lot of effort to break through over an inch of solid ice.

Christmas is spectacular but it comes at the coldest and darkest time of the year.

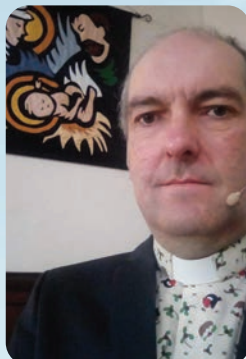
Sometimes it is too cold; there is a coldness that comes from lack of food or the ability to pay the heating bills.

Sometimes there is a coldness that comes from family breakdown and the end of relationships and the loneliness of no one to share Christmas Day with.

Sometimes it is the coldness within our heart and soul as we give up on ourselves. But the warmth of the Son of God is stronger than the warmth of the winter sun.

Jesus came into this world to offer the warmth of God's love to each of us, to bring healing and strength and peace.

May you be cosy in the warmth of God's love this Christmas, you and all whom you love and care for.



John



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Georgia Atkinson doing her Bible reading.

ROTARY CLUB CAROL SERVICE

SUNDAY, 11 December saw Bishop Auckland Rotary Club hold its Carol Service with readings at St Cuthbert's Church, Etherley.

The service was led by Rev'd Linda Dodds and organised by Rotarians John Yeomans and David Aimer.

A spokesperson said: "Thanks must go to church wardens Barrie Kirton and Elizabeth Jude as well as Sheila Mulgrew and other members of the church for ensuring that a warm friendly service was enjoyed by the more than fifty congregation."

"Highlights of the evening included a reading by 7-year-old Georgia Atkinson, granddaughter of Rotarian Treasurer, Graham Barsby, a splendid recovery of balance by Rotarian Joe Ward and the melodious tenor voice of Rotarian Neville

Fairclough."

After the Carol Service and a short Christingle Service, Rotary President, Tony Sanderson and Inner Wheel President, Pat Sanderson were invited to open Santa's Grotto.

Rotary Club members will be collecting around the Christmas Tree outside the Newgate Centre on Thursday 22 until Saturday 24 December.

The charities to benefit this year will be the Great North Air Ambulance Service and Dementia UK, as well as a variety of other B/A Rotary Club charities.

Rotary's motto is *Service above self*.

Anyone interested in finding out more about Bishop Auckland Rotary can visit rotary-ribi.org and select the club or contact Secretary Dave Fletcher-Smith at 49johnboyfs@gmail.com.



It's a Wonderful Life will be shown on Wednesday 21 December at the Town Hall.

TOWN HALL'S FESTIVE LINE UP

IT'S BEGINNING to look at lot like Christmas at Bishop Auckland Town Hall with a classic pantomime, festive award-winning folk music and screenings of a festive favourite this December.

Starting Wednesday 14 December, Talegate Theatre returns to Bishop Auckland Town Hall with its spectacular pantomime, *Dick Whittington*.

With performances at 11am and 2pm until Sunday 18 December, audiences can join hero *Dick Whittington* on an adventure to London where the streets are paved with gold.

Packed with songs, slapstick, silliness, audience participation and all the fairytale magic of a traditional pantomime, this fun-filled extravaganza is guaranteed to delight the whole family.

Tickets are priced at £10

(£8 concessions), with a family ticket for two adults and two children also available at £32.

Award-winning songwriter Jez Lowe is also making his return to Bishop Auckland Town Hall with his intrepid touring band on Monday, 19 December with his latest show, *That Snow Joke*.

Part folk concert, part music-hall revue, audiences can expect a musical feast of guitar, cittern, fretless bass, fiddle, melodeon, piano, whistles and trademark harmony vocals.

Jez and his band will be joined by special guest, actor and balladeer Benny Graham, to share the music, merriment and mirth of Christmas in the North East.

Audiences are invited to sing along, laugh along and drive the cold winter away with tickets priced

at £12 (£10 concession).

Completing the festive line-up is Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* with a matinee and evening screening on Wednesday 21 December.

Starring James Stewart, Donna Reed and Lionel Barrymore, tickets for the venue's screenings of this quintessential classic cost just £5.

Lizzie Glazier, Durham County Council's culture venues and programme manager, said: "We are delighted to be hosting such a varied line-up this December here at Bishop Auckland Town Hall and we hope audiences will enjoy the festive programme."

For more information and to book tickets, contact Bishop Auckland Town Hall box office on 03000 269 524 or book online at bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk



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Woodhouse Close Church

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Angel Trust
1pm - 3pm

Are you or someone you know struggling with budgeting your finances, claiming benefits, filling in forms or documents, getting in touch with other services or experiencing tenancy issues with your current or previous tenancy? Support is available during these financially uncertain times.

Home Group run weekly drop-ins at Woodhouse Close Church in Bishop Auckland every Monday between 10am and 12 noon and also between 1pm and 3pm at The Angel Trust, Belvedere House, Kingsway, Bishop Auckland.

Our friendly advisors are available to provide free confidential advice. If you are unable to attend our drop in at Woodhouse Close Church, then please feel free to contact our staff on our support line on 0191 371 1470.

CYBERCRIME EVENT NEXT MONTH

THE WEAR Valley Community Action Group are hosting a Cybercrime event on Tuesday, 10 January in Henknowle Com-

munity Centre, Cumbria Place, Henknowle.

Claire Turnbull from Durham Constabulary will be giving the talk entitled *Do*

you know who is watching?

The event will take place from 9.30am until 12 noon, with a buffet lunch provided.



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Help build a stronger community for us all





St Anne's CE Primary and Nursery School pupils enjoyed their visit to see Santa in the Newgate Centre.

SANTA VISITS THE NEWGATE CENTRE

ON TUESDAY 13 December, 105 pupils from St Anne's CE Primary and Nursery School were invited along to the Newgate Shopping Centre for a special visit to meet Santa.

The first group of children happily sang some Christmas songs while

awaiting his arrival. Both groups had the chance to ask Santa some questions before each of the children were given selection boxes.

A spokesperson for the school said: "We were delighted to be invited along today. While walking here, the children

spotted some of the landmarks that are on their displayed artwork.

"We would like to thank everyone involved who have made this event possible for the children, and look forward to working alongside Newgate Centre and the wider community in the future."

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Representative example	Duration of Device Plan	Upfront cost	Monthly device payment	Credit amount	Total amount payable for device	Interest rate (fixed)	Representative APR	Cash price (to buy outright)	Airtime Plan, today to Mar 2023	Airtime Plan, Apr 2023 to Mar 2024	Airtime Plan, Apr 2024 to Mar 2025
Samsung Galaxy Tab A7 Lite	36 months	£0	£3.99	£143.50	£143.50	0%	0%	£143.50	£28	£1 + RPI announced in Feb 2023 = Price A	Price A + RPI announced in Feb 2024

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News & Sport

Local leagues, competitions and events...



THREAT TO LOCAL FREEVIEW ACCESS

DURHAM COMMUNITY Foundation is backing a campaign to protect TV and radio services in Bishop Auckland from the threat of closure.

Many people are not aware that on current plans, TV received through an aerial (Freeview) and broadcast radio are not guaranteed long term.

Durham Community Foundation has backed a campaign to protect these services, currently provided to the area from masts at Bilsdale and Pontop Pike.

Broadcast 2040+ is a new campaign, which aims to protect vital TV and radio services for everyone – including the elderly and vulnerable people that rely on them the most – until 2040 and beyond.

Next year, an international conference will decide whether to safeguard the radiofrequency spectrum used to deliver these services.

The campaign calls on

the UK Government to ensure that the international decision does not negatively impact the services relied on by the people of Bishop Auckland.

New polling, conducted on behalf of the campaign, shows 77% people in Bishop Auckland constituency support the continued provision of free TV and radio services and want their local MP, Dehenna Davison to back it too.

Freeview TV is especially important for older and vulnerable people, many of whom don't understand or can't afford services like Sky, Virgin or Netflix.

Broadcast 2040+ is a coalition of organisations across the UK, including Age UK, Silver Voices, the Rural Services Network and broadcast infrastructure company, Arqiva.

Durham Community Foundation has spoken out about the importance of Freeview TV to people in the area.

Michelle Cooper, CEO of County Durham Community Foundation, said: "There are a huge number of older and isolated people in our communities living off next to nothing, for whom Freeview TV and radio services bring a lot of company and entertainment without further straining the budget.

"It's the way of the world to monetise almost everything these days, but I strongly support the protection of services that are free at the point of use. I know from my role at the Foundation that people living in merciless hardship year after year will be the ones to miss these services.

"Let's not strip every bit of good out of our communities, just because we can't stick a price tag on it."

Other backers of the campaign nationally include Children's Media Foundation, British Broadcasting Challenge and Voice of the Listener and Viewer.



Jonas Railton celebrates winning the National title.

JONAS TAKES BRITISH TITLE

LAST WEEKEND, Bishop Auckland Boxer, Jonas Railton took part in the NABGC Championship finals, held in Bridlington.

Jonas boxed in the 54-57kg category and won against Michael Varey from Trowbridge on a 4-1 split decision.

Seconds Out Boxing Club travelled down to Bridlington with some of Jonas' close friends and family to support him.

Jonas was overwhelmed and very grateful to all those who came along to cheer him on.

He was delighted when his hand was raised to confirm his second national title win.

At the beginning of the year, Jonas fell short in the quarter finals of the England Boxing Championships and was determined to get gold again.

He has trained hard throughout the year and had high hopes to win the NABGC Championships to end the year on a high.

He is now having a well-deserved break over the Christmas period and will return to the gym in 2023 to start training and enter the England Boxing Championships, which will be his final year as a Junior, with his eyes set on winning a third national title.

Jonas would also like to take this opportunity to thank his sponsors for their yearly sponsorship, as without them, a lot of this would not be possible. Thanks go to: MTS Auto & Recovery Cash 4 Cars, Hewitts Solicitors, McNeal Plumbing and Heating, Rannice Fashion and Gary Thompson Racking Solutions.

COUNTY'S WARM SPACE NETWORK

MORE THAN 100 Warm Spaces have been created across County Durham.

Durham County Council, which is working alongside the County Durham Community Foundation (the Foundation), has so far awarded funding to 95 organisations in the voluntary and community sector to create Warm Spaces.

A total of £200,000 has

been made available for venues offering safe, trusted spaces that happen to be warm, with the project aiming to support residents throughout the winter following an increase in energy costs.

Residents can find their nearest Warm Space by visiting Locate, an online directory allowing residents to connect with local services in their community, at www.durhamlocate.org.uk

www.durhamlocate.org.uk

Those wishing to apply for funding can find an online application form set up by the Foundation, which is carrying out due diligence checks on all applicants. This is available at www.cdcf.org.uk/grants-for-groups/warm-spaces-fund/

For more information on Warm Spaces, visit www.durham.gov.uk/warmspaces.

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