



OPEN EVENING

Tuesday 26th September, 5-8pm

Headteacher welcome sessions: 5.30pm and 6.30pm

MASTERCHEF KICKSTARTS BISHOP RESTAURANT

BISHOP AUCKLAND based chef and former BBC Masterchef contestant Mike Bartley has launched a crowdfunding campaign to bring his fine dining concept to the masses.

Having appeared on Masterchef in 2021, earning a coveted apron and receiving high praise from former Masterchef champions and regular judges John Torode and Gregg Wallace, Mike packed in his day job to pursue a career as a private chef.

After two years cooking for clients in their homes and holiday lets across the country, Mike has announced plans to open 'Restaurant Jörd', a 40-seater tasting menu restaurant, in Bishop Auckland next year.

"It was always the dream to have my own restaurant," said Mike. "That was the main drive for me when applying for Masterchef.

"I wanted to turn my passion for cooking from



Mike Bartlett is set to open his own restaurant on Newgate Street in Bishop Auckland.

a hobby to a career and the show is the ideal springboard to make that happen. When I appeared on the show, the hospitality industry was still feeling the effects of the Covid pandemic, so it didn't make sense to jump straight into a restaurant.

"I decided to become a

private chef to satisfy the desire to cook for other people, and spent some time interning in Michelin Starred restaurants to gain experience."

The restaurant will be located on Newgate Street and will be part of the £12m transformation of Kingsway Square, which will also include

luxury tourist accommodation and a new car park.

"I have loved being a private chef over the past two years," added Mike. "It is far more intimate than a restaurant setting, and it is so nice to be able to connect with guests while you're cooking for them.

"But a restaurant has always been in the back of my mind and when I heard about this opportunity, I knew it was the right time to take the leap."

Jörd (pronounced 'you-rd') is the old Norse goddess of the Earth and literally translates to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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The spectacular light show, which includes the tallest Christmas tree in the North, will light up Auckland Castle and Park this festive season.

AUCKLAND CASTLE TO COME AGLOW

A BRAND-NEW Christ-
mas light trail, AGLOW,
will dazzle visitors to
Auckland Castle this fes-
tive season, with the tall-
est Christmas tree in the
North, the longest out-
door light tunnel in the
country, as well as seven-
teen other breath-taking
light installations, mak-
ing it one of the largest
light trails in England.

Taking place from 22
November to 31 Decem-
ber, excluding Christmas
Day, AGLOW is a glittering
one-and-a-half-mile long
trail through the ancient
Castle grounds, taking
in the Deer Park, River
Gaunless and a specially
created Santa's Village,
complete with a perfor-
mance stage.

The scenery of the cas-
tle and grounds have
been utilised to their full
extent, making every
twist and turn of the 1.5
hour-long illuminated
route a Christmas experi-
ence like no other.

Whilst exploring

AGLOW, visitors will
see Auckland Castle in
a whole new light, with
stunning projections
on the castle walls and
glowing rainbow-hued
spheres of light covering
the bowling green.

A sparkling 100 metre-
long tunnel of 100,000
stars leads into the park-
land where large-scale
illuminations with lasers,
neon ropes, mirror balls,
LED vines and starburst
trees will dazzle and
delight.

Life-size illuminated
deer graze amongst silk
flower lanterns at the
Deer House, while danc-
ing water fountains make
the River Gaunless spring
to life and daring illumi-
nations featuring real
fire make for after-dark
drama.

Along the trail, visitors
can take in the sights
over a mulled wine or
hot chocolate and enjoy
toasting marshmallows
over the open firepit.

Towering over Santa's

Village is a giant red-
wood or Wellingtonia
tree beside the river, fes-
tooned with almost one
kilometre of colourful
lights - at 32 metres, or
104 feet high, the tree
claims the title of tall-
est Christmas tree in the
North.

In front of this spectac-
ular backdrop, the pic-
turesque wooden cabins
of Santa's Village offer a
further choice of festive
food and drinks.

On the stage, Santa and
his mischievous elves will
entertain children and
adults alike with a live
show performed regularly
throughout the evening.

For some interactive fun
there are bubble instal-
lations and musical tree
stumps, as well as vintage
fairground rides, includ-
ing a 1934 children's train
with carriages named
after towns in North East
England, a 1950s Chair-
o-plane and a popular
Hook-a-Duck stall offer-
ing prizes every time.

James Cundall, organ-
iser of AGLOW, said: "The
incredible landscape at
Auckland Castle lends
itself brilliantly to a light
trail of this scale."

The castle and parkland
provide a perfect palette
for AGLOW and will give
families and friends an
unforgettable festive
experience."

Entry times for the trail
are at 30-minute intervals
from 4:30pm - 8:30pm
each day. Allow at least
90 minutes to complete
the trail.

Tickets are £21.50 for
adults, £14.50 for chil-
dren or £66.50 for fam-
ilies (consisting of one
adult and three children,
or two adults and two
children.) Children aged
2 and under enter for free.

The Auckland Project
Annual Pass Holders
receive 20% discount on
the ticket prices.

Tickets can be booked
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MASTERCHEF TO OPEN RESTAURANT

FROM PAGE 1

'land' or 'soil' in Scandinavian languages.

The name has been chosen to highlight the connection between Mike's cooking style and the land around the restaurant, using ingredients that are foraged and locally grown.

Mike describes his food as modern British/European, but with ideas and ingredients borrowed from other cultures.

"A strong connection to the land is so important for me," he said. "Not only are ingredients at their freshest when they are harvested on the same day that they are served, but the quality is far superior to supermarket produce."

"My food waste is turned into compost, which feeds the next

batch of crops and creates a perpetual cycle of sustainability.

"I try to steer away from the term 'fine dining' when describing my food because I think it evokes notions of inaccessibility and opulence.

"I'd like to think my food is elevated in flavour and appearance, but in a way that can be enjoyed by everyone."

Mike has launched a crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter at <http://kck.st/3Pi7de> to raise additional funds towards to cost of opening the restaurant.

The online platform lets a business project set a funding goal and a deadline to raise the funds. As a backer, there are a number of pledges that can be made. Each pledge comes with a promise - something that you get

in return. Mike's project must reach the funding goal by the 27 October deadline. If the goal is not achieved, the project is unsuccessful, and backers are not charged.

Pledges start at £10 and include a tasting menu experience for 2, 4 or 6 guests at a pre-opening offer price of just £45pp.

"My aim is for Jörd to be a place where you would feel comfortable and trust us with your most special occasions, and the quality of the fit-out needs to reflect this.

"All money raised will go towards maximising the potential of the restaurant in addition to my existing capital."

Follow Mike's journey on Instagram at @chef-mikebartley / @jordbish-opauckland or on Facebook at 'Mike Bartley - Masterchef 2021'.

POLICE APPEAL FOR WITNESSES AFTER FATAL COLLISION



George Florin Holburn, a husband and father, sadly died in the collision.

THE FAMILY of a 'much-loved husband and father' have paid tribute to him following a fatal collision.

George Florin Holburn, 35, was sadly pronounced dead following the collision on the A688 in Bishop Auckland, just before 8am on Tuesday 5 September.

In a statement his family said: "It is with deepest regret that we announce the death of George Florin Holburn who was involved in a tragic road traffic collision on the A688.

"He was a much-loved husband and father to three gorgeous children and will be sadly missed.

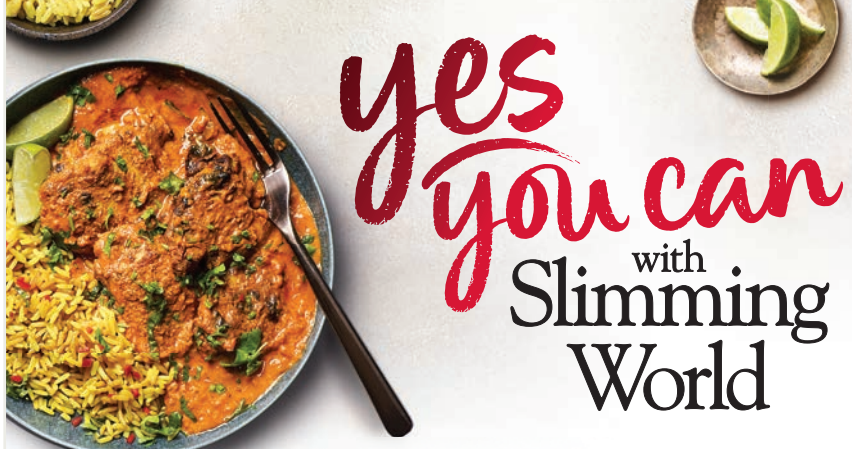
"We wish to thank everyone for their support and ask to be left so that we can grieve in peace."

An investigation has been launched and officers are appealing for anyone with information or dashcam footage to come forward.

The incident involved Mr Holburn's Nissan Juke and a Saab car. The vehicles were travelling in opposite directions when they collided.

The driver of the Saab - a man in his 20s - was taken to hospital as a precaution.

If you have any information, call 101 quoting incident reference number 72 of September 5.



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The tapestry, woven with silk, gold and silver, was commissioned by Henry VIII in 1534.

CAMPAIGN SEEKS TO BRING HENRY VIII TAPESTRY TO BISHOP AUCKLAND

THE AUCKLAND Project is leading a campaign to buy a £4.2m tapestry and house it in Bishop Auckland's new Faith Museum.

The charity is seeking to raise £1m through a public appeal, which will demonstrate widespread support for saving this national treasure.

More than £370,000 has already been raised, and a JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/campaign/tapestry has been set up for people to pledge their support.

The tapestry was commissioned by Henry VIII in 1534, at the time he broke from Rome and became Supreme Head of the Church of England.

Lost for 200 years, it reappeared in the 1970s and found its way to Spain.

It was finally identified as the missing work of art just a few years ago.

Now it is up for sale, but an export ban means that it cannot leave Spain – unless an appropriate British institution can acquire it.

If so, through the goodwill of the Spanish Ministry of Culture, the import ban can be lifted.

The brand new Faith Museum at Auckland Castle is the perfect place, and high profile figures, businesses, community representatives, trusts and supporters have rallied to the cause.

The castle saw extensive building work during the Tudor era, and the Prince Bishops of Durham included Henry VIII's advisors Thomas Wolsey and Cuthbert Tunstall.



Dominic Doutney and Hannah Condliffe will perform at the final BAMS concert of the 2023 summer season.

FINAL SUMMER BAMS CONCERT

BISHOP AUCKLAND Music Society (BAMS) holds the final concert of its 2023 series on Friday 15th September.

The venue as usual in the Bishop Auckland Methodist Church on Cockton Hill Road at 7.30pm.

This time they present Hannah Condliffe, oboist, accompanied by Dominic Doutney, piano.

Their programme includes pieces by Telemann, Ravel, Britten, Debussy and Polenc. A blues number by Jeffrey Agrell is also in the mix!

Hannah Condliffe is a first class graduate of the Royal Academy of Music.

She was the recipient of the University of London, Nicholas Blake Memorial Prize Scholarship, and was awarded the prestigious Munster Trust Neil Black Prize in 2019.

She is a Munster Trust Recital Artist, giving recitals across the UK.

She has performed as a concerto soloist with the European Union Chamber Orchestra and performs with many others, includ-

ing the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Philharmonia Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra.

She was principal oboist of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain in 2015.

Dominic Doutney is a recent graduate of the Royal College of Music and was awarded the Tagare Gold Medal at that event.

Since then he has won several European awards, including recently, first prizes at the 25th Mauro Paolo Monopoli International Competition in Barletta, Italy, and Semana Internacional de Piano de Obidaria, Portugal.

Tickets are £16 in advance from Brother-ton's Music Shop, Newgate Street, or from Brian Varley on 07415 092040.

Tickets are £18 on the door, however, young people aged 18 or under are free of charge, subject to availability, but it is still necessary to book a ticket



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Cllr John Shuttleworth (centre) is pictured in Henknowle with (left to right) Durham County Council's senior area action partnership co-ordinator, Andrew Walker, strategic highways manager, Paul Anderson, community development project officer, and Peter Henderson, and believe housing's major works manager, Sean Cairns.

RESIDENTS ENJOY IMPROVEMENTS

RESIDENTS OF Henknowle estate are benefiting from £233,000 worth of improvements including new kerbs, footpaths and landscaped areas.

Durham County Council and believe housing have worked together to deliver the improvements.

Steps have been repaired or upgraded, new handrails have been installed, and new landscaped areas created, while a number of walls have been removed or rebuilt.

The works were drawn-up following a

public consultation held last year, during which views were sought from local residents and businesses.

Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership (AAP) allocated £75,000 towards the scheme from its Towns and Villages Fund.

That was backed by a £95,000 contribution from the council and a further £63,000 from believe housing.

Cllr John Shuttleworth, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for highways, rural communities and community safety,

said: "We've delivered these improvements in response to a number of concerns raised by residents and early feedback has been very positive.

"For example, one of the things people raised was youths throwing stones and debris from damaged walls, so we've taken out some walls and rebuilt others.

"It's been a real partnership effort driven by the council, AAP, local councillors and believe housing. We're hopeful the changes we've made will restore some pride in the neighbourhood."



The ticket office is not affected by the closure announcement.

BISHOP AUCKLAND TICKET OFFICE TO REMAIN OPEN

FOLLOWING THE recent announcement by the rail industry and the Government of the intention to close nearly 1,000 railway ticket offices throughout the UK, independent ticket office operator Bishop Trains can confirm that the National Rail travel centre at Bishop Auckland station is not affected by this announcement and will remain open.

Bishop Auckland is one of only a handful of stations around the UK where the ticket office is operated by an independent operator, and as staff are not directly employed by train companies then the proposed changes do not apply.

David Million, CEO of Bishop Trains, said: "We are very pleased, and relieved, to have received confirmation that Bishop Trains will be unaffected by any of the changes that are being proposed, so it's business as usual at Bishop Auckland station".

Bishop Trains was established in 2012 operating under an arrangement with Northern Trains and can deal with rail ticket sales to and from all UK stations, over the counter and by phone, 6 days a week.

A new booking service using WhatsApp was recently launched by Bishop Trains, which is a first in the rail industry.

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9.30AM – 11.00AM

For more information contact:

Nicola Wigmore

Access to HE Lecturer
Bishop Auckland College Group
Woodhouse Lane Campus
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Team Solan's coffee mornings are open for all to enjoy in a warm, friendly, social environment.

TEAM SOLAN TO HOLD FIRST BISHOP AUCKLAND COFFEE MORNING

TEAM SOLAN is proud to announce that it will hold its first free weekly coffee morning, at Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre on Wednesday, 6 September, from 10am to 12 noon and weekly thereafter, reports *Ian Machin*.

This event is being made possible by support from the Centre and the team based there, the Gaunless Gateway Big Local Team and a small team of local supporters who have volunteered to run the coffee mornings. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The Team Solan coffee mornings are open for everyone to enjoy refreshments in a warm, friendly, safe, social environment.

In addition to the social activity afforded by coffee mornings to meet and chat, we plan to raise awareness of the services and support that Team Solan and others in the centre can provide to anyone dealing with a cancer diagnosis or a cancer related bereavement.

If residents need help or just want to better understand what Team Solan or others in the Centre do, then please come along for a chat.

Team Solan is based in Spennymoor, supports families across the North East and our mission is to help improve the quality of life of families affected by any cancer

diagnosis or a cancer related bereavement.

We welcome the opportunity being provided by these coffee mornings to raise awareness of the Team Solan charity, the help that it can provide and also facilitate support from Warriors amongst themselves.

Whilst our focus is help and support to families, we recognise that everyone's needs can be different. We can provide practical, emotional and informed support and advice to those in need.

This ranges from a taxi to get to the doctors and/or hospital, to support services or equipment in the home, to emotional support and counselling.

With minimal red tape, a strong caring ethos, flexibility and focus, we start with the view that we can and will help, then quickly work out how.

Help can be providing emotional support and reassurance that people can and do beat their cancer diagnosis.

The need for warm

spaces like the Centre has been recognised by many organisations in County Durham and Team Solan are supportive of this initiative and keen to play a part.

In summary, warm spaces, are described as warm welcome spaces that are free to enter, are heated as needed and able to provide basic refreshments such as tea and coffee, are inclusive, non-judgmental spaces where everyone can expect a warm welcome from staff and volunteers, and every organisation setting up a warm welcoming space will abide by their usual safeguarding policies and hygiene rules.

Organisations will make basic signposting information available to people who need further support and help.

Our Bishop Auckland Wednesday coffee mornings will meet these criteria and we look forward to meeting, helping and supporting many residents in the coming weeks.

NEXT CIVIC SOCIETY MEETING

THE NEXT public meeting of Bishop Auckland Civic Society will take place in Bishop Auckland Town Hall on Monday, 25 September at 7.30pm.

Amina Wright, Senior Curator of the Faith Museum, will introduce the Faith Museum, which opens to the public on

Saturday, 7th October.

With over 250 art works and historical artefacts on display, the museum promises to involve visitors in 6,000 years of religious belief, encompassing all major faiths from across the world.

The talk is free to members and £2 to visitors.



Mica, Nigel Bryson, Mayor Sam Zair, Bob McManners, Stefa McManners and Claire, Newcastle Building Society's Community Co-ordinator. Photo: Christine Percival.

CORONATION GARDENS OPEN

DEPUTY LORD Lieutenant Dr Robert McManners QBE formally opened the Coronation Garden at Bishop Auckland Railway Station last month.

Bishop Auckland and Coundon in Bloom Steering Group member, Stefa McManners took the lead in co-ordinating the project.

In less than ten days, the former wasteland was transformed from an overgrown mess, into a welcoming, colourful garden.

Volunteers from the Cultivate4Life and the Station Volunteers cleared the land and planted the flowers; The Auckland Project staff laid the path and the 'Welcome to Bishop Auckland' sign was made by Bishop Auckland based Cre8tive Graphics. On the day, the Carousel Catering Co donated food and drink.

Deputy lord Lieutenant McManners said: "Whilst this is a relatively small project, it is of particular significance because of

its location - at the very gateway - the entry point to our town by rail.

"First impressions are lasting impressions, and the transformation from a piece of seemingly unloved dereliction to its present status as the Coronation Garden in such a short time is quite remarkable.

"Whilst clearly this is a work in progress, the project has already brought together many organisations, businesses and individuals through a sense of civic pride."

Bishop Auckland and Coundon in Bloom Secretary Nigel Bryson welcomed the opening of the Coronation Garden: "This is the first stage of the development of the garden," he said. "By the 200th Anniversary of the opening of the railways in 2025, the area will be landscaped into a railway themed garden.

"This first step is testament to what people in a community can achieve, when they work together."

THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DURHAM CLEVELAND AVENUE, BISHOP AUCKLAND (TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE) ORDER 2023

The Council proposes to make an Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984 as amended, Section 14 (1) to prohibit all vehicular traffic from proceeding on a 46 metre length of Cleveland Avenue, Bishop Auckland from junction with Cockton Hill Road at eastern side of closure in a westerly direction to adjacent Zubaran House to enable main repair works to be undertaken. Throughout the period of closure, a diversion will be available to vehicular traffic from west side of closure in a westerly direction on Cleveland Avenue then south on Byron Avenue then east on Northumberland Avenue/Bowser Street to eastern end of closure and vice versa. The maximum duration of the Order is 18 months. The proposed works are to commence from 9am on 20/9/23 and are anticipated to be completed in 1 day. On occasions, alternative dates for closure may be necessary and these will be signed on site accordingly.

DATED: 9 September 2023



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

HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Bishop Auckland

10:00 - 16:00

23 SEPTEMBER 2023

BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN HALL

HERITAGE FESTIVAL RETURNS TO BISHOP

BISHOP AUCKLAND Heritage Festival returns on Saturday 23 September from 10am to 4pm promising a remarkable journey through time, uncovering the rich history and heritage that has shaped the community.

This year's festival includes an exciting line-up of activities, exhibitions, and events that will captivate all ages.

With an emphasis on community engagement and storytelling, the festival invites everyone to share their stories and memories of the town and its people.

The programme includes heritage talks and walking tours with expert speakers and authors unveiling the fascinating stories and architectural treasures that make Bishop Auckland special.

Car enthusiasts can enjoy the Vintage Car Show while families can

look forward to the Puppet Show, a whimsical experience filled with live music and puppetry, ensuring laughter and creativity for all ages.

For those with green fingers, the Bishop Auckland Horticulture Show will be a highlight, allowing you to immerse yourself in the area's rich gardening heritage.

The tranquil castle gardens will offer a peaceful retreat amid the historical splendour of Auckland Castle.

If you can't attend the full day, you can tune in to Bishop FM on 105.9 FM to catch live broadcasts and interviews from the event.

The entire festival programme has been funded by Historic England and Durham County Council, allowing all attendees to enjoy the events free of charge.

While most events are drop-in, some require

pre-booking, which can be done at bacchanalia.co.uk.

Dr Robert McManners OBE DL, Chair of Bishop Auckland Civic Society and Conservation Area Partnership, said: "We inherit our history, but history shapes the future we can build."

"Bishop Auckland is a town steeped in history dating back to pre-Roman times.

"That history has determined the town's reinvention of its role on many occasions – from a Roman garrison town to an Anglo-Saxon walled village; from the seat of a Norman bishopric to a medieval market town; from a Victorian industrial centre to a heritage tourist destination.

"Our very heritage itself is now forging our destiny. Join us at the Heritage Festival to relive and enjoy our history to help us all shape that future."

THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DURHAM OAKLEY GREEN, WEST AUCKLAND (TEMPORARY FOOTPATH CLOSURE) ORDER 2023

The Council proposes to make an Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984 as amended, Section 14 (1) to prohibit all pedestrian traffic from proceeding on a 15 metre length of Oakley Green, West Auckland to the rear of no.74 -76 Oakley Green to enable cleansing & lining works to be undertaken. Throughout the period of closure, a diversion will be available to pedestrian traffic to the front of no. 74-76 Oakley Green. The maximum duration of the Order is 6 months. The proposed works are to commence on 21/9/23 and are anticipated to be completed in 2 days between 8.30am to 5pm daily. On occasions, alternative dates for closure may be necessary and these will be signed on site accordingly.

DATED: 9 September 2023



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

THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF DURHAM MELROSE DRIVE, RIVER WALK, MEADOW VIEW & OAKLEY GREEN, WEST AUCKLAND (TEMPORARY FOOTPATH CLOSURE) ORDER 2023

The Council proposes to make an Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984 as amended, Section 14 (1) to prohibit all pedestrian traffic from proceeding on the following lengths of footpath: **Melrose Drive** – a 26 metre length of footpath to the front of no.35-39; a 35 metre length of footpath to the front of no.41-49; and a 41 metre length of footpath to the front of no.50-60 **River Walk** – a 31 metre length of footpath to the front of no.1-6; a 27 metre length of footpath to the side of no.6 & 7; a 45 metre length of footpath to the front of no.7-15; a 20 metre length of footpath to the front of no.19-22; a 57 metre length of footpath to the side of no.22 & front of no.23-29; and a 54 metre length of footpath to the front of no.30-36 **Meadow View** – a 23 metre length of footpath to the side no.1 River Walk; a 49 metre length of footpath to the front of no.25-33; and a 36 metre length of footpath to the side of no.24 & 25 **Oakley Green** – a 14 metre length of footpath to the side of no.83; a 76 metre length of footway to the front of no.74-83; a 20 metre length of footway to the side of no.74; a 46 metre length of footpath to the rear of no.74-79; a 29 metre length of footpath to the rear of no.54-58; a 40 metre length of footpath to the front of no.59-65; a 48 metre length of footpath to the front of no.43-50; a 26 metre length of footpath to the side of no.43; a 20 metre length of footpath to the side of no.30 & 31 East Green; a 24 metre length of footpath to the front of no.27-30 East Green; a 46 metre length of footway to the front of no.51-58; a 52 metre length of footway to the side of no.33 & 34; a 54 metre length of footpath to the front of no.34-41; a 66 metre length of footway to the rear of no.35 East Green & rear of no.27-33 Oakley Green; a 36 metre length of footway to the rear of no.21-26; a 49 metre length of footway to the side of no.20 & 21; a 41 metre length of footpath to the front of no.14-20; a 46 metre length of footway to the side of no.6 & 7; a 36 metre length of footpath to the front of no.7-14; and a 38 metre length of footpath to the front of no.1-6 to enable gas pipe replacement works to be undertaken. Throughout the period of closure, alternative routes, where available, will be signed on site. The maximum duration of the Order is 6 months. The proposed works are to commence under a rolling closure, from 8am on 25/9/23 and are anticipated to be completed in 11 weeks. On occasions, alternative dates for closure may be necessary and these will be signed on site accordingly.

DATED: 9 September 2023



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

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Sport

Local leagues, competitions and events...



Bishop Auckland Golf Club celebrate regaining the league title before going on to win the Clark Cup.

GOLF CLUB ARE DOUBLE WINNERS

AFTER BEING league champions in 2019, 2020 and 2021, long term rivals Eaglescliffe brought our reign as champions to a close in 2022, writes team manager, Mark Walker.

This season didn't get off to the greatest of starts off the course with the passing of three members of the club who had a close bond and affinity with the team.

However, on the course the players of Bishop Auckland hit the ground running.

After 14 weeks of playing home and away, we once again became league champions setting a new league record of 224 points in the process.

The general observation is if you can win your seven home games, avoid any big defeats away and get around the 200 points total you'll most likely than not win the league.

Still, the season's play has been nothing short of incredible seeing the guys win nine games on

the spin and only losing two matches in 14 weeks.

In 2021, when we amassed 217 points, I said that would never be beaten, but to get 224 is obscene, so huge thanks and well done to all the players and supporters for making it such a memorable season.

Four league titles in five seasons is an incredible achievement and we look forward to going again in 2024.

All the team would like to dedicate this league title to John Wren, David Oughton and Dick Longstaff, who's presence has been sorely missed.

Meanwhile, last weekend, the club completed the double when they added the Durham County Clark Cup to the trophy cabinet.

Our final opponents were, of course, Eaglescliffe, with the event taking place at Chester Le Street Golf Club on a sunny afternoon packed with plenty of supporters from both clubs.

An amazing day's play saw Eaglescliffe race off to a 0.5 v 4.5 lead by mid-afternoon, but somehow the team pulled it back and sensationally took the title when Kevin Hamilton came back from one down on the 15th tee to win the next three holes and secure the Clark Cup for Bishop Auckland with a wonderful two putt from off the green on the 17th hole.

Thanks to all eight players used throughout the campaign, all the supporters and caddies, and Eaglescliffe for their top level of sportsmanship shown after the game. We wish them well in the national teams championship later this month.

Finally, I've had many a conversations with Dick Longstaff over the years and knew how much the Clark Cup meant to him.

I always wanted to win it, but sadly he couldn't be there to see it, but I know he's been looking over us all season and that one was for you Dick.

TWO BLUES CLAIM CUP WIN AFTER DERBY DOUBLE-HEADER

BISHOP AUCKLAND Football Club are through to the next round of the FA Cup, where they will face South Shields, after a replay win at West Auckland.

With Saturday's home game resulting in a no-score draw, the clubs went head-to-head again in a midweek replay, and it was Bishops, who were reduced to ten men with half an hour to play, who held on for a 1-2 win.

Joe Bartliff opened the scoring for the Two Blues on the half hour before Liam Hegarty drew the sides level from the penalty spot in the 51st minute.

But the home side's celebrations lasted just two minutes before Bishops regained the lead through Louis Johnson.

The visitors were reduced to ten men when Dean Thexton received a second yellow for simulation in the 65th minute, but Bishops held on to claim an epic win.

This weekend it's briefly back to league action as Northallerton Town visit Heritage Park before that trip to South Shields for the Second Qualifying Round on 16 September, followed the next weekend by a trip to Yorkshire Amateur for the same round of the FA Vase.

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