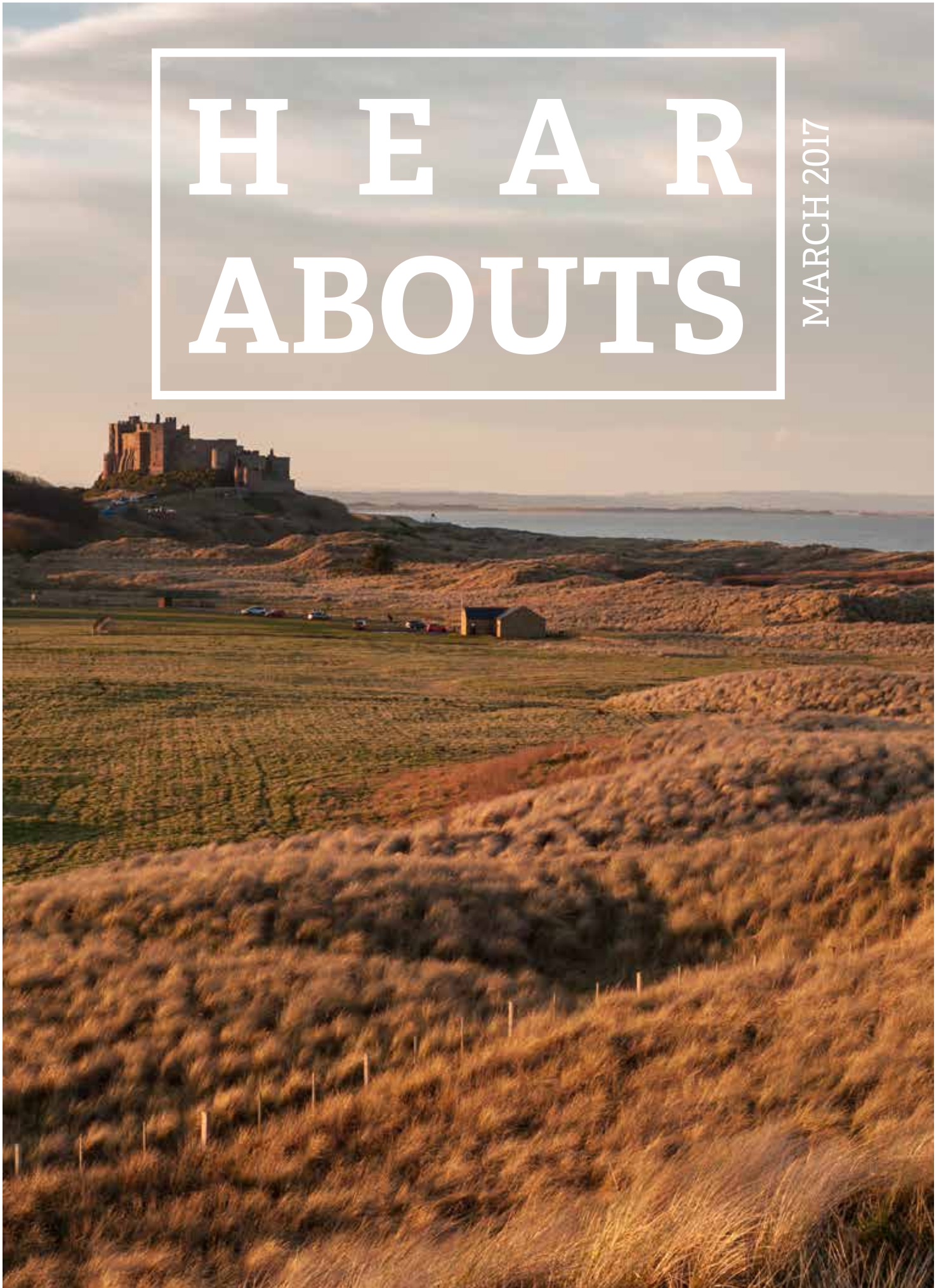


# HEAR ABOUTS

MARCH 2017



The Free Community Magazine for Eglington Parish  
North Charlton | South Charlton | Eglington | & Everywhere Between

## From the Editor

How can it be March already?! Surely Christmas was just a fortnight ago? Maybe its my advancing years kicking in? 40 is "old" right? No, its just time passing as it always does, and with time passing those we know and love also pass by. This past month saw two funerals for life long residents, one of which was my uncle, Donald Gray. With him being the last of that generation of Gray's not only is there sorrow at his passing but also a realisation that there will be no more tales about the family before I arrived and no one to ask about family history. Someone who was an always present part of our previous lives, now sadly just memories. Make the most of time with family, write down tales you are told, ask them about as much as you can. One day that chance will be gone.

Andy

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NE66 2NA

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## Eglingham Village Hall 100 Club Draws

### February

1st Gwen Bateman  
2nd Ian Smith  
3rd John Hunter

### March

1st John Redden  
2nd Andy Scott  
3rd Sue and Ray Brown

Remember to visit the Parish website, as more and more information is being added - like information on transport in the Parish, which we didn't have space to print here this month.

[www.eglingham.info](http://www.eglingham.info)

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Hear Abouts is all about you the reader within our Parish. It is written by yourselves (or by those just beyond our borders) and without those submissions there would be no Hear Abouts. Just a few things to note while submitting content to us which helps us out though.

Please email all content to the email address [hearabouts@outlook.com](mailto:hearabouts@outlook.com) and no other. There is less chance of it getting lost and forgotten about then. Please send content typed in an attached document file (eg Word). Please name the file with the article title, or be descriptive in it. It gets a little confusing when you have 4 files all called hear\_abouts\_artcle.docx

Pictures make things pretty! If you have an image to accompany the article great! Pictures tell a thousand words! A good size image helps us deliver a quality print. So ideally images should be around 2000 pixels on the longest edge. Please remember to own or have permission to use the picture you send. Even as a non-profit we are liable to claims of using copyrighted images, even within our small print run.

### DISCLAIMER

Just a reminder for the easily offended or argumentative. Please note that the views expressed within are those of the named contributors not the Hear Abouts team. Thank you. Feel free to write in with a reply to anything to be published though!

Also please be aware that Hear Abouts is made available online digitally at [www.eglingham.info](http://www.eglingham.info) and is searchable worldwide, so any information you provide will be published "beyond our borders".

## Parish Elections 2017

I understand there may be several people stepping down from the Parish Council when the elections come around in May. With this in mind, I would like to encourage as many people as possible to consider being nominated for the election to become a Parish Councillor.

The position of a councillor is becoming more and more important as the County Council divests ever more of its responsibilities and duties to the Parish Councils, so it is vitally important to have a full quota of councillors with a diverse range of abilities and experiences to ensure the Parish can get the maximum benefit from all the opportunities that arise.

The Parish Council is also in the fairly unique position of having some influence in how Windfarm Benefit money is spent and invested in the Community, with potential funding for the next two decades. I would personally be delighted to see some of the younger members of the community put themselves forward for the Parish Council, ensuring the community can make the most of all the opportunities in the future.

Being a member of the Parish Council doesn't need to involve a huge time commitment as meetings are on average every 6 weeks but it is still a vital function in the community.

Please contact our Parish Clerk Amy Smith at - [amycartmell@googlemail.com](mailto:amycartmell@googlemail.com) for a "Briefing notes for Candidates" information Pack which gives all the information required. The Nomination period is from **Tuesday 21st March to Tuesday 4th April 2017**.

*Bill Purvis*

## Brownieside & South Charlton Leek Club

March 15th – Quiz Night with supper

Please contact Bob on 579317 for entries for

**Giant Cabbage and Tattie in a bucket** competitions ASAP

## Lunch Club

South Charlton Village Hall

**Wednesday, 15th March  
at 12 noon**

Join us for  
Soup and Pudding followed by a Cuppa

**All welcome!**



## Thanksgiving Service for Fiona Robson

In February Eglingham lost Fiona Robson, a loved and respected friend and neighbour who was born and bred in the village. Fiona lived, both as a child and a mother, in Rose Cottage; many of her formative years were at Craig's House Farm.

A packed Thanksgiving Service for Fiona was held at St Maurice's church, literally standing room only. The service was conducted by Reverends Marion Penfold and Judy Glover. In the eulogies the portrait emerged of a great mother, dedicated friend, efficient business woman and active community member. All of these aspects of her life were represented amongst the large congregation.



Her university friends told of Fiona's active student life but also of her need to escape the city and return to her beloved Northumberland. The congregation heard of her professionalism as an accountant and the support she gave to new businesses setting up in the Alnwick area. Fiona had also been an active supporter of village activities, over the years she had been a member of the Women's Institute, Craft Group, Church Treasurer and a Parish Councillor.

The picture of a devoted mother shone through; her loving care for Claire and Craig always being to the fore. Friends reminisced happily of camping holidays and family trips. Clearly the large number of people at the Thanksgiving Service was fitting testimony to the standing in which she was held and how much she will be missed.

## Eglingham Parish Photo Club - Photo of the Month



This month's winner is Mark Popely  
Taken at sunset from the Eglingham to Beanley road.

## Birdwatch time

The RSPB's annual Big Garden Birdwatch took place over the last weekend in January and if, as was the case last year, more than half a million people took part, then it's hardly surprising that the results are still being calculated.

My contribution to the survey took place early on a bright Sunday morning when most of the birds were busy feeding from the peanuts and sunflower hearts in my garden.

During the hour I was watching, the largest number of any species I spotted at one time was a total of six chaffinches. Next came blackbirds while in joint third place were wood pigeons, coal tits, blue tits, goldfinches and siskins. Other visitors to my garden included house sparrows, great tits, and one great spotted woodpecker, a dunnock and a crow.

Regular visitors that were missing during my survey hour included greenfinches, apparently in decline across the country, nuthatches and wrens, but maybe they were spotted elsewhere in the locality. No doubt there will have been different sightings in other parts of the parish.

It will be interesting to see how my results compare with the national and regional figures. Over the last two years, the house sparrow has topped the list with starlings in second place. Neither of those are common sightings in my garden, starlings only very occasional visitors. Over the UK as a whole, the chaffinch was ranked seventh last year but in Scotland it was the second most spotted bird and it came third in Northern Ireland so the fact that it topped my list may suggest it is more commonly found in northern areas of the UK.

The one bird on my list that has not previously featured among the top ten in any region of the country is the siskin, yellowish green in colour and similar in appearance to the greenfinch, but much smaller, more the size of a blue tit. Perhaps, like the great spotted woodpecker and collared dove it is increasing in numbers or maybe it is the sunflower hearts that attract these birds to my garden, as they will sit for long periods nibbling away on the feeder.

Less frequent visitors over the past month have included small flocks of long tailed tits, and the occasional pheasant and red legged partridge that have survived the shooting season.

An early sign of spring in the mild weather was a rook collecting twigs for its nest high in the trees near the churchyard. It's probably the last good opportunity to prune shrubs and cut



hedges before the nesting season gets underway.

Next month the Big Garden Birdwatch results will be out. Will the house sparrow retain its place at number one? Will there be evidence of a marked increase or decline in any bird species? We'll have some of the answers here next month.

*On the wing*

## From Your County Councillor...

### **Cattle grid at East Ditchburn**

As I mentioned in the previous edition, I am concerned about the condition of the cattle grid in East Ditchburn. Approval has now been given for allocation of £2000 of my Member's Fund towards a new grid. This is taking place at the time of writing and should be complete by the end of the week, Friday 24th February.



### **Speed Limit in South Charlton**

I have approached officers at NCC about a 20 mph speed limit in South Charlton but have been told there is no plan for this. A request has been made for a reduced speed limit to be added to the Council's Directory of Requests for consideration in future Local Transport Plan programmes. I will keep raising this issue to ensure that it can be adopted at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **Road Closure**

From 18 to 19 March, there will be roadworks on the B6346 Alnwick to Eglingham to allow for refurbishment works to Whitehouse North Bridge.



### **New Ellingham A1 bus shelter**

After concerns from residents over the very shabby bus shelter on the A1 I have contributed some of my members fund to speed up its replacement. A new shelter is now in situ. We chose one that gives a better view of oncoming traffic so the bus can be seen approaching without leaving the shelter. I have already had news of an appreciative local resident who is making regular use of it.



### **Parking near schools**

NCC has produced a video to highlight how the parking behaviours of parents and carers impact on the safety of children at school drop off and pick up times. This Go Smarter initiative is aimed at helping parents understand the benefits of parking responsibly in order to help keep children safe. You can access the video using the following link [https://youtu.be/\\_rjsdW4khSQ](https://youtu.be/_rjsdW4khSQ). It will be promoted through the Go Smarter team and through social media channels.

## **Eglingham W.I.**

Due to the refurbishment works at Eglingham village hall, our February meeting was held at South Charlton village hall. The meeting was opened by our President Brenda Robertson, who asked for a minute's silence in memory of Fiona Robson, who will be greatly missed.

A warm welcome was given to our visitor, Lorna Turner, who is hopefully going to become a permanent member of our group.

Once the business formalities were dealt with by Brenda and our Secretary, Gill Rollings, we then had a talk by one of our members, Jean Findlay. Her subject was 'sugar' which was extremely interesting. Jean had done much research into this subject and her talk covered many areas ranging from the statistics of world consumption to the amount of sugar in everyday foods. There were also slides showing the mansions and slave markets of the wealthy sugar plantation owners. A vote of thanks was given by Jill Archer.

Our usual pooled supper was followed by the raffle, which was won by Gill Rollings.

Our next meeting, on 9 March, will again be at South Charlton. The speaker will be Ros Tinlin who will be talking about chocolates.

*Pat Ives*

# Blood on the Road!

I have to confess – I have taken a life! It was not intentional, I did not set out that morning to kill. I had no weapons with me: no gun, no noose, no bow and arrow, no gas cannisters, no ropes, no snares, no traps, no bait nor swag bags...but I was in my car.



How many of us travel regularly on that road from Eglington to Alnwick? How many of us slow down (or not!) when we approach The Great Wall? Pheasant Alley, the Suicide Side Show?

That fateful morning I had avoided two separate day-dreaming pheasants as they wandered aimlessly in front of my car, 'daft bird brains' I thought, with something close to affection: 'They are safe on my watch. I am such a considerate driver.'

And then it happened! I was just picking up speed, only a little M'lud, and the fateful pair of cock pheasants, one behind the other, strutted out from the verge to my right, and across the road in front of me. Beautiful they were, their exquisite plumage glowing in the rays of the sun, iridescent greens, warm burnished browns, the white collar and vivid scarlet head, their magnificent long striped tail feathers carried proudly behind them.

I braked! I slowed down! I held my breath! It all happened so quickly. Death was swift. The second bird bounced off my radiator with a sickening thud, and lay flapping on the other side of the road! I only had a split second to take it all in, but I knew it must be dead. Chickens flap when they are dead don't they?

I gritted my teeth and drove on trying to pretend it was just one of those things, 'survival of the fittest,' 'the law of the jungle', etc.etc. Also, what's my problem? It was an accident. I had already saved the lives of two strolling idiot birds, and zillions of others on that road over the months. Besides I do actually enjoy eating fowl. I have even eaten Pheasant - heck, I am already a beast, a carnivore. Why was the death of an innocent bird bothering me so much? The Huntin' Shootin' Fishin' Fraternity will probably roll their eyes heavenwards as they read this. 'What's wrong with that woman?' I hear them cry!

To rationalise this, I am bound to recall the diverse suicide tendencies of the Duke's Birds, for I assume they are his in Law? In my defence, here is a classification of habits I have observed:

- Firstly there are those who sit stock still, frozen in time like Decoy Ducks, on the top of the wall. Are they settled there or have they plans to move any second now? The surprise element.
- There are those already on the road: the Faff then Fly birds who disappear before the car gets too close. These are the clever ones. May they live to procreate in their hundreds!
- Then there are the Adrenaline Junkies, leaving the safety of the wall almost simultaneously as you pass. They swoop just clear of your windscreen, about level with the rear view mirror, and flap into the field. I have received a glancing blow on my car roof from one such idiot. He may have lived long enough to regret his behaviour, or not?
- The Mysterious Meanderers dodge about in the long grass on the verges, a slight distraction, and almost invisible. They have a tendency to suddenly break cover, and run parallel to the road. They remain visible just long enough to spook the driver, but safe from the Jaws of Death. Often they are the speckled ones. Obviously the survival instinct is still present in the female of the species!!
- The Promenading Cocky Cocks can be seen strolling across, and looking majestic.



They can also arrive in two's, just out having a great time together, weaving about, and often stopping to admire the scenery. These males do not concentrate on what is going on around them, and can often make fatal moves into slow or fast moving traffic. (One such bird was the recipient of that fateful blow.) We've seen it all before boys! Not advisable!

- The scattiest of all is the Road Runner. He is on his own; he does not have a clue where he is, where he wants to go, and appears totally confused by his habitat. He darts this way, then that way, trying to run away from the car. He seems to have forgotten that he has the capacity to fly and just keeps on running flat out. He will eventually shoot off into the undergrowth, heart fluttering, chortling: 'OMG! OMG! OMG!'

- The Pheasant Philosopher stands near the centre of the road, immobile, contemplating the Meaning of Life. It may be difficult to decide whether he will stay where he is, while he works out what that familiar noise is in the distance, or whether he will casually stroll on to a verge on your side, crossing perilously close to your wheels. He may even have forgotten why he was there in the first place, and return to the Wall, running the risk of being hit by a vehicle coming the other way!

When I returned that day, the corpse was already mutilated and barely recognisable. The next time, carrion crows were feeding on it. Finally, within a few days, all evidence of my crime had disappeared. Gone but not forgotten. Soon, other corpses begin to litter the road. Which one of the above did not make it?

Margaret Bell (from the Slippery Slope)

## The Revd. Marion Penfold assumes her new role

On Sunday 26th February in a moving service, held at the Church of the Holy Cross in Chatton, Revd. Marion was inducted into her new role as Vicar of South Glendale. In an historic twist, as incumbent of the newly formed benefice she was being licenced by the newly re-established role of Bishop of Berwick. In his sermon The Right Reverend Mark Tanner, the first Bishop of Berwick for 400 years, explained that in many ways Revd. Marion's installation represents the start of a new era.

Following the re-organisation of the Glendale Team Ministry two groups of churches have been created, currently being called North and South. Marion now has responsibility for Chatton with Chillingham, Eglingham with Old Bewick, Ingram and South Charlton. The post of Vicar of North Glendale is currently being advertised and it is hoped that an appointment will be made in the summer. Revd. Marion has been carrying the bulk of the work for the whole area for some months and so we look forward to her having a colleague to share the responsibilities.

Church Wardens and congregation from all the churches of the old Glendale Group were present at the service which was conducted jointly by the Archdeacon Revd. Judy Glover, and the Area Dean Revd. Peter Robinson. In an age old tradition the Archdeacon laid Revd. Marion's hand on the church door and the churchwarden presented her with the keys, a map of the parish and a copy of the electoral role to signify her responsibility for the church and people within the community.

The congregation at the service gave Revd. Marion a rousing round of applause to welcome her into her new role, which I am sure is echoed by the many people who appreciate the support and guidance she provides within our local communities.

Helen Osmond - Deputy Chair Eglingham PCC



## Grass Park Letting

Thank goodness the days are getting longer and getting out of bed before seven is definitely more doable. March is my Grass Park Letting month. Grass Parks, or more correctly named Temporary Grazings are fields that farmers, who have more grassland than they need for the Summer, look for offers to allow other farmers to graze their stock on those fields for the period between the beginning of April and the end of November. Within the Let the owner undertakes to 'look' the stock, that is view the grazier's sheep and cattle daily and let him know if anything is amiss - lame sheep, maggoty lambs, wormy cattle - there's plenty to go wrong! In reality a number of owners do this annually and make a bit of a business of it. It's a practice that has gone on for hundreds of years where Grass Parks used to be auctioned on a specific day in early March at most of the Auction Marts around the country. But as is the way with many things now it is done on 'tinternet. About 20 years ago I developed a way of collating the fields on our website allowing farmers looking for grazing to tender and owners to select who they'd prefer to graze their ground. (This method allowed the owner to select from the tenderers who he'd prefer to graze his fields and side step any dodgy farmers with scabby sheep who he'd rather not have on his farm - an option the owner would not have had in an auction where he'd be obliged to take the highest bidder - ie this way he doesn't necessarily have to take the highest tender, just the character he'd prefer to work with over the summer at that chap's tender bid). We now do about 3000 acres and the average field makes about £70 per acre. This is less than it's been - like much in agricultural, or at least the commodity end of it things are deflating.



Back in the day taking a Grass Park was a great way for a youth to get into farming. I used to do it myself. You'd take a Park, go to the bank, borrow some money, buy some ewes with lambs at foot, or ewe hogs (yearling females) to bring out as gimmers (to be bought by another farmer to go into his flock in September), or buy some 'raggy' young cattle to grow over the summer - a great way to spend your Summer evenings after work and weekends being a farmer. By being shrewd, working hard and taking advice from the older and wiser farmers and stockmen, you could build up a bit of capital and maybe become a real farmer. But bank managers in market towns who could recognise the 'cut of your jib' have vanished, movement and tagging restrictions and the Single Farm Payment system have made this time honoured route into farming has all but gone. Shame.

March is also the month we sell lots of yearling store cattle. Cattle, unlike sheep are in relatively short supply and are selling readily – not deflating in value! It's not a very big or well bred beast under £800. Because we're internet and now Facebook (another story I'll go into another month) based we tend to sell a farmers whole crops of calves i.e. all the calves they bred last Spring, usually 35 plus. I'm off to meet a Yorkshire farmer in the morning to hopefully sell 25 Limousin X heifers on a local farm. Here's some pictures of them. I'll let you know how I get on.

*James Logan*

## Broadband update

It's nearly four years since the Parish Council set up a taskforce with the aim of getting superfast broadband to every part of the parish. It's been a frustrating process, but most people in the Parish do now have a good Internet connection. Most, but not all. There are still a lot of properties with little or no broadband service. Mine is one of them so I understand the frustrations.

The basic problem is that we are a sparsely populated area. There are few properties and long distances between them. It means that commercial providers aren't prepared to put in expensive infrastructure because there won't be enough customers to give them a return on their investment. In some parts of the country wireless links have been the answer, but apparently not for us. We have talked to several wireless suppliers but they haven't been able to propose a scheme. In any case, fibre is a much better option in the long term.

Fortunately, things are now looking more promising. Towards the end of last year, BT/Openreach became more interested in 'community fibre' projects where they would put in the fibre infrastructure if the local community would subsidise the cost. As well as making a financial contribution the community can help by putting in the ducts for the fibre. It's usually a lot cheaper for local farmers to mole-plough a duct across their land than for Openreach to work in the road verge.

BT's main fibre trunk runs up the A1 so it was sensible to start on the eastern side of the Parish. We have been discussing two schemes with BT/Openreach. The first was to extend fibre from South Charlton village to South Charlton Farm and then on to the 'Shipleys'. This is a large and complicated project which will require several miles of new ducting. The interested parties have discussed potential routes and they are now waiting for BT to meet them on site to carry out a detailed survey. The other project was to extend fibre from North Charlton. That was much simpler because suitable duct already existed. BT has priced a scheme, a grant application has gone in to the Wind Farm Fund, and it will be decided later this month.

If we can get those projects started it will be time to look at other parts of the parish that have not yet been connected. The Ditchburns are one. The North Charlton extension will go quite close, so that may provide an opportunity. We know that there a few properties in and around Eglingham village which are not connected, and all the properties on the Wooperton exchange have a problem. There may be some we don't know about. If you are in a property which can't get a decent broadband connection, email me with your full address, plus the land line telephone number because that's the easiest way for BT to identify properties.

*David* ([david@eglingham.org.uk](mailto:david@eglingham.org.uk))



## Useful Contacts

Local Councillor - Kate Cairns: 07769304310 [Kate.Cairns@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Kate.Cairns@northumberland.gov.uk)

Clerk to the Parish Council - Amy Smith: 01665 603755

Vicar - Rev. Marion Penfold: 01665 578250

South Charlton Village Hall (bookings) - Andy Gray: 07730 559223

Eglingham Village Hall (bookings) - Julian Tyley: 01665 578460

Northumberland County Council:

Main Switchboard - 0345 6006400

Alt. Number - 01665 660733

[www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

Health:

NHS Direct - 111

Consulting Rooms - 01665 602388

Bondgate Surgery - 01665 510888

## PhotoClub

Our next evening is FMarch 27th at South Charlton at 7:30pm.

## Coffee & Chats

10-12noon first Saturday of each Month

Held at South Charlton Village Hall until further notice

## R e s i d e n t s @ Email List

A resident of the Parish? Then if you haven't already... Sign up for our community email list!

Our very successful email list is open to any resident within our boundaries, just send an email to [david@eglingham.org.uk](mailto:david@eglingham.org.uk) and you will get added.

Next Issue:

Early April 2017

Content Must be submitted by 20th March