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Issue No. 21



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PUBLIC CONSULTATION TO BE HELD ON BRIDGE CLOSURE

A week-long public exhibition will provide information on an essential scheme to repair a busy road bridge in Bishop Auckland.

Cockton Hill Railway Bridge will be closed to vehicles for up to five weeks while Durham County Council replaces the decking.

However, Cockton Hill Railway Bridge will be closed for several weeks later this year preparatory work

will begin next month, with a temporary footbridge being constructed alongside the bridge during the weekend of Saturday, 16th and Sunday, 17th January.

The footbridge will initially be used to transfer public utility services before the start of work on the main bridge. It will then provide access for pedestrians.

The road will be closed from

Monday, March 29th, but a diversion along Escomb Road will be clearly signposted.

Rail services will be suspended from Friday, April 2nd to Wednesday, April 14th, with trains terminating at Shildon. However, a shuttle bus will be in operation between Shildon and Bishop Auckland while the line is not in operation.

On-street parking will also be prohibited along the eastern

end of Escomb Road in order to allow diverted traffic to pass through safely.

An exhibition detailing the scheme will be on display at the Methodist Church on Cockton Hill Road, and the Town Hall Library in Market Place, from Wednesday, January 13th to Wednesday, January 20th during normal opening hours.

Staff from Durham County Council will also be on hand to answer questions at the following times:

- Town Hall Library, Thursday, January 14th, 6.00pm to 7.00pm and Saturday, January 16th, 10.00am to 12 noon.
- Methodist Church, Monday, January 18th, 10.00am to 12 noon.

Steve Keetley, Head of Technical Services, said, "This is a very busy bridge and its deteriorating condition has meant we have already had to introduce a weight restriction.

"However, these major improvement works, which should be completed by the end of April, should ensure its future.

"In the meantime, we will be working closely with Network Rail, Northern Trains and Arriva to ensure that any disruption to travellers and residents is



FREE LIFE SKILLS COURSE

People in Bishop Auckland are being offered the chance to join in free basic skills classes to help them get the most out of life.

Anyone can sign up for the half-day courses and go home with a piece of furniture they built themselves.

The courses have been held regularly for the past year by housing management company Dale & Valley Homes and have proved popular with those who have signed up.

The first part of the session will be aimed at financial awareness, delivered by the company's own expert. There will then be a break for afternoon tea before the second

part of the session, which will involve a DIY lesson, where experts from Gentoo will show participants how to build flat-pack furniture.

Course co-ordinator, Damian Pearson, said, "We have had a really positive response from the people who have done our course so far.

"It is aimed at anyone in the area and participants get to keep what they build."

The next course will take place at Woodhouse Close community centre on Tuesday, January 12th.

Anyone interested should contact Jackie Hall or Dawn Patterson on 0800 0830 333 or 0300 2000 194.

BUTTERWICK TREE SUCCESS

The Butterwick Hospice at Bishop Auckland has expressed its thanks to everyone who visited the Trees of Remembrance in the Newgate Centre this Christmas, helping to raise a staggering £2291.

"The support from local people is marvellous," commented a spokesperson, "Also many thanks to all our wonderful volunteers who braved the cold and kept the trees manned during December".

COCKTON HILL WMC

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BURNS NIGHT EVENT

Bishop Auckland Town Hall is to hold a Burns Night event on Wednesday, January 20th. Scottish singer, Isla St Clair will perform and she will be supported by the Candlelite Band. Traditional Scots food will be served. Tickets cost £8. For further information call 01388 602610.

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If you prefer, you can also leave your classified advert at the Library in the Town Hall or the Library on Woodhouse Lane. Simply pop it in an envelope addressed to The Bishop Press and we will pick it up.

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You can even place them over the phone on 01388 775896, or by email at bishoppress@yahoo.co.uk.

TRAIN STATION SET FOR REVAMP THANKS TO LOCAL RESIDENTS

Four friends from Bishop Auckland are hoping to re-vamp Bishop Auckland train station.

Michael and Kelly O'Neill, and friends Benjamin Key and Jill Ellison are proposing that a voluntary group, provisionally named Bishop Auckland Station Trust, help with upgrading the somewhat aged, lacklustre facilities which currently serve the town.

As well as wanting to beautify the station, the organisers of the group hope to re-open the waiting room, install vending machines, open public WC's and a public telephone.

Mr O'Neill said, "This is a community project, and our aims and objectives are to benefit the people in the town. "We feel that Bishop Auckland station is lacking in modern facilities.

"The railway station is a great asset to the town, but it is undervalued at the moment.



Bishop Auckland Train Station.

"The creation of this trust will hopefully maximise the station's potential, and put it at the forefront of Bishop Auckland's green transport plans."

The group has invited local businesses and individuals to become involved and support the trust. It is also reported to have the support of Northern Rail and Network Rail, as well as Bishop Auckland MP, Helen Goodman.

Representatives of Weardale Railway expressed an interest in working alongside the

group. Gerry Mudd, Trust director, said, "We would like to join forces with this proposed trust, and harness their energy to give Bishop Auckland a station it can be proud of, and offer an improved service of trains towards Darlington."

The news comes only a month before two scheduled charter trains are due to run to Weardale, from London and Crewe, respectively.

For further information or to become involved, e-mail michael.meo@hotmail.com.

ON THIS DAY... JANUARY 9TH

1493 - Columbus mistook manatees for mermaids.

1718: France declared war on Spain.

1768 - Philip Astley staged the first modern circus in London.

1799 - British Prime Minister, William Pitt, introduced income tax to raise funds for the war against Napoleon.

1806 - Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson received a state funeral and was interred in St Paul's Cathedral.

1816 - Sir Humphry Davy

tested the Davy lamp for miners at Hebburn Colliery.

1894 - The first movie was copyrighted.

1913 - Richard Nixon, Former (37th) US President, was born.

1916 - World War I: The Battle of Gallipoli concluded with an Ottoman Empire victory when the last Allied forces were evacuated from the peninsula.

1947 - Elizabeth 'Betty' Short, the Black Dahlia, was last seen alive.

1957 - Sir Anthony Eden, the British Prime Minister, announced his resignation over his ill-fated Suez policy. Harold Macmillan succeeded as Prime Minister.

1969 - The supersonic airliner, Concorde, made its first test flight.

1972 - 280,000 British miners walked out at midnight in their first national strike for almost 50 years. They were looking for an increase of up to £9 a week - on an average take-home wage of £25.



CLASSIFIED FORM

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OCCASION: (Please tick)

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birthday | <input type="checkbox"/> Obituary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anniversary | <input type="checkbox"/> For Sale / To Let |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth | <input type="checkbox"/> Birthday Memories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congratulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Services Offered |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Memoriam | |

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COMMUNITY EVENTS GROUP HELP LOCAL ORGANISATIONS



Representatives from the four community groups receiving their cheques from B.A.C.E.

Four community projects involving young people have received £200 each from the newly-formed Bishop Auckland Community Events group. The money was raised at a shopping and dining event, held at Wynyard Hall in Tees

Valley; the first such event organised by the B.A.C.E. group. A grand total of £4,976 was raised, with £800 being divided between the four local groups, which were The Shildon Tearaways Youth Theatre Group, The 2nd

Bishop Auckland Scouts, The Sunday's Cool group from St Anne's Community Church and Riding for the Disabled group at Escomb. The remainder of the money raised was donated to the Bishop Auckland branch of The Butterwick Hospice.

MP PROMISES COLD WEATHER PAYMENTS

Bishop Auckland MP and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work & Pensions, Helen Goodman sought to reassure local people that those most in need will receive automatic cold weather payments. Helen said, "In this cold weather, it is very important that people put their health first. This is why the Government is making automatic cold weather payments to people who receive Pension Credit or if they receive Income Support, and also have children under five, or receive a disability or pensioner premium. In the North, cold weather payments have been triggered three times

already, and in September the Government decided to increase payments from £8.50 per week to £25. The money is paid within two weeks of being triggered, and should arrive before people receive their fuel bills, so people should not hesitate to turn up their heating." Mrs Goodman added that the government was pursuing various long-term measures to cut fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency, stating that the Warm Front scheme had already benefitted over 6,000 Bishop Auckland constituents. To obtain further details on cold weather payments, visit www.direct.gov.uk or contact www.dwp.gov.uk.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO IMPROVE YOUR COMPUTING SKILLS?

Durham County Council is organising a free Computing course with Maths or English at Bishop Auckland Library. The course will cover basic computing, word processing and basic internet. The course also offers a chance for those studying to improve

their maths or English, and gain a nationally recognised qualification. The classes will be held on Wednesdays between 10.00am and 12noon from Wednesday, January 13th. For further details, call LEAP on 01833 690281 or ask in the library.

CHRISTMAS DINGBATS

Everyone here at the Crier would like to thank everyone who entered our Christmas Dingbats competition. We had a huge response and were glad to hear that people enjoyed doing the quiz as much as we enjoyed making it! All quizzes with the correct answers were places into a hat, and the winner selected at random. Congratulations go to Maureen Lanceley of Dorset Place, Bishop Auckland, who receives a £10 voucher for her

winning entry. For those of you who didn't get them all, here are the answers;
 1: White Christmas
 2: I wish it could be Christmas everyday
 3: Rockin Robin
 4: I saw three ships (come sailing in)
 5: Oh Christmas Tree
 6: While shepherds watched their flocks
 7: I saw Mommy kissing Santa Claus
 8: Mistletoe & Wine
 9: All I want for Christmas is

my two front teeth
 10: Santa Baby
 11: Away in a manger
 12: Little drummer boy
 13: Little donkey
 14: When Santa got stuck up the chimney
 15: Last Christmas
 16: Rockin' around the Christmas tree
 17: Driving home for Christmas
 18: The Holly & the ivy
 19: Stop the cavalry
 20: Chestnuts roasting on an open fire (The Christmas

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RAILWAY ART ON DISPLAY



Just one of the Steven Fox paintings on display at the Town Hall.

An exhibition of original steam railway artwork in mixed media, developed by Steven Fox, is to be displayed in Bishop Auckland Town Hall this month.

His interest and enthusiasm from years of practice is

demonstrated in the highly-technical skills generated in the exhibition.

Admission is free, and the McGuinness Gallery is open Monday to Friday, from 10.00am to 4.00pm and from 9.00am to 4.00pm on

Saturdays. For further details ring 01388 602610.

Due to adverse weather conditions, a Private View, which was due to take place on Friday, January 8th, has had to be postponed until Friday, January 29th.

REFUSE COLLECTIONS SUSPENDED

The current severe weather resulted in the temporary suspension of all refuse collections across County Durham on Wednesday, January 6th.

Durham County Council's Head of Direct Services, Oliver Sherratt, explained, "The decision to suspend

was not taken lightly, but the safety of residents and staff are our highest priority.

"The heavy snow means we will not be able to make collections today (Jan 6th) throughout the County and we will be reviewing this on a day by day, and area by area basis.

"We recognise that this is an inconvenience, but we do ask people to understand and bear with us.

"With the temporary suspension of collections, refuse collection staff today joined our other teams in helping to clear footpaths.

"What I can say is the minute it is safe to do so we will lay on additional crews and vehicles to collect the backlog of refuse and recycling and we will also

remove additional bags which have understandably piled up for many residents, as soon as it is safe to do so."

Councillor Brian Stephens, Cabinet Member for Streetscene, said, "When we experience this sort of extended period of poor weather it is clearly going to have a significant affect on everyone.

"I would just like to say we really appreciate your continuing patience and we will do everything within our power to deal with the refuse collection situation as quickly as we can."

If you are concerned about which day your refuse will be collected, contact Durham County Council on 01388 816 166.

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It is our policy to not print letters that do not provide a name, address and phone number so please include these in your letter.

If you prefer to remain anonymous, we can withhold your details at your request.

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LOCAL YOUTH HAVE BEAUTY ON THEIR SIDE

When the curtain rises on The Tearaways Youth Theatre Group's pantomime, 'Beauty and the Beast' later this month, the stars of the show will include a lot of talented youngsters from The Bishop Auckland area.

These include Abi and Sarah Reese as the idiot duo, Muck and Bubbles, and Emma Burnett as Mrs Bear. Laura Smart is one of seven talented young choreographers, while Charlotte and Eleanor Murphy, Bethany Ridley, Emma Brookes, Stephanie Chapman and Megan Smart form part of the dance troupes.

Annie Raine, Stephanie Robertson and Ryan Robertson, along with sixteen other singers, will be lending their vocals to the foot-tapping

music in the show, while young Joshua Holmes helps supply some of the comedy during the two-hour panto, along with Rebecca Quinn, who plays 'Bossy', Beauty's sister.

The four performances of the show will take place at Shildon's Civic Hall on Thursday 21st, Friday 22nd January at 7.30pm, and Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th at 2.00pm.

Tickets are priced at £4 for adults and £2.50 for children and concessions and must be pre-booked by calling 01388 774838 or 07747826324.

For more information regarding The Tearaways Youth Theatre Group, visit www.tearaways-shildon.co.uk.

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BOOK BUDDIES

Children aged 8 to 12 years-old are invited to join a friendly reading group, The Book Buddies, which is held at Bishop Auckland Town Hall. The group is free to attend and new members are always

made welcome. Meetings take place fortnightly, on Thursdays in term time between 5.00pm and 6.00pm. For further information on the group, call the Town Hall on 01388 602610.

LITTERERS WARNED AFTER FINES

Durham County Council has warned residents about the dangers of littering, after 3 residents were fined recently. At Bishop Auckland Magistrates Court on Monday, January 4th, Carol Newton of Douthwaite Road, Bishop Auckland, Amanda Maddison of Meadow View, West Auckland, and Gary Bloggs, of Teesdale Walk, Bishop Auckland, were all fined £80 with a victim surcharge of £15 for the offence of littering in their absence. Oliver Sherratt, Head of Direct Services for Durham County Council, said, "Environmental crime is a blight on our neighbourhoods and is unacceptable to residents. "Whilst prosecutions are a last resort, it is important to realise that, on behalf of local communities, we will not tolerate those that willfully spoil our environment."

CAN YOU PROVIDE A LOVING HOME FOR CAESER & JASPER?

Kayshill Animal Sanctuary at Bildershaw are hoping to find new homes for two of its residents.

Jasper and Caesar have lived at the centre for over a year, after their previous owner was forced to give them up due to health reasons.

A spokesperson for the sanctuary said, " At the moment, like all animal sanctuaries, we are at breaking point in the cattery. I would especially like to try and rehome the two cats who have been in the longest.

"Caeser and Jasper have lived all their lives together. They are big, laid back cats and they do have their moments of madness and play together. Jasper is a big cat who likes affection and Caesar is the more quieter of the two, but also likes being made a fuss



Jasper, the bigger of the two cats who likes affection.

of. "We would like them to be rehomed together if possible as they have lived with each other since they were kittens." If you think you can give these two cats a loving home and would like more information, call 07817880770 or visit the sanctuary at Stone House Chapel, Bildershaw, West Auckland.

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MAKE A RESOLUTION TO BECOME A LIFESAVER THIS NEW YEAR

The National Blood Service (NBS) is encouraging Ferryhill and Chilton residents to part with a pint this New Year, if they are eligible to do so, and become local lifesavers.

The need for blood is constant and every year many regular donors have to stop for health reasons so new donors are always needed. The process is simple, most people find it painless and it should take around an hour.

The NBS needs 7,000 donations across the country every day to

maintain healthy blood stocks. Donated blood is used for a wide range of treatments and conditions, including accidents and emergencies, general surgery and for those patients undergoing chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

A single donation can be broken into three component parts (red cells, plasma and platelets) which means one donation can help save or improve the lives of up to three people. You may be able to give to blood if you are aged

between 17 and 65, weigh over 7st 12lb (50kg) and are in good health. There is no upper age limit for blood donation if you have donated over the last two years.

The next local blood drive will take place on Thursday, January 14th, from 2.30pm to 4.00pm, and again from 4.30pm to 7.00pm at Bishop Auckland Scout Centre on Kingsway. For more information or to book an appointment, visit www.blood.co.uk or phone 0300 123 23 23.

POLICE SEEK HELP FINDING EAR BITE ATTACKER

Police are appealing for witnesses after a young man from Coronation was assaulted in a Bishop Auckland bar. Between 12.30am and 1am on December 24th, during festive Christmas celebrations in Monaco Public House, an alleged unprovoked assault upon a teenage male occurred

by a second male. Such was the gravity of the assault that the victim had his ear bitten to the stage whereby it was cut clean through the skin, and he was also punched repeatedly in the face. The victim was assisted by two female revellers. The identity of these two female

witnesses, and any other person who may have seen the incident occur, is urgently sought by police in the course of this ongoing investigation. Anyone with information is asked to contact PC 2299 Yolland of Bishop Auckland Police by calling 0345 60 60 365.



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TAKING THE CREDIT



Sid Rooke (left) signs up Peter Chaffer as a member of Durham County Credit Union

Staff at Dale & Valley Homes have been signing up as regular savers to encourage more people to join their local credit union.

More than a dozen people joined up at a special promotion day held in the company offices in South Church which was part of a campaign to encourage customers to save regularly.

Durham County Credit Union, which has around 400 members, is working in partnership with Dale &

Valley Homes as part of a campaign to encourage good financial management among its customers.

Credit union chairman Sid Rooke said, "We want to promote a habit of saving and to give low cost, affordable loans, as opposed to doorstep lending, which can have interest rates in excess of 200 per cent APR. The credit union charges 12.6 per cent APR.

"If you borrow £100 over 12 months you pay back a total of £106.50."

Peter Chaffer, chief executive of Dale & Valley Homes, added, "Regular saving is something we really want to encourage because it gives people a financial cushion against unexpected bills or helps them plan for big expenses such as holidays or Christmas.

"The credit union is also an excellent source of loans. We know door step lenders and loan sharks operate in Wear Valley and borrowing money in this way can cause more problems than it solves."

Credit union members can pay money in by standing order, through PayPoint and at weekly sessions at Woodhouse Close church community centre from 10am to noon each Thursday.

For more information on the credit union go to www.durhamcountycu.co.uk or phone 0191 375 7677.

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD

Bishop Auckland Theatre Society is presenting its production of The Adventures of Robin Hood.

The play promises plenty of laughs; a spokesperson for B.A.T.S. said, "Hilarious characters, witches' potions, evil plans and pantomime

slapstick, makes this a truly unmissable performance."

Performances of Robin Hood take place at the Eden Theatre at Bishop Auckland Town Hall, from Wednesday the 13th to Saturday the 16th of January. Telephone bookings can be made on 01388 604351.

APPEAL FOR BOXING DAY ASSAULT

Local police are appealing for witnesses after a man was assaulted in a town centre bar on Boxing Day.

The incident occurred in Innfusion public house in the Market Place, between the hours of 10.30pm and 11.40pm, when an unknown female smashed a bottle over

the victim's head causing him injury. Anyone who has any information relating the identity of the female, or anyone who witnessed the assault, is asked to call Bishop Auckland Police Station on 0345 60 60 365, for the attention of the investigating officer, PC 2553 Marshall.

ALPHA COURSE

West Auckland Community Church is inviting residents to take part in an Alpha Course, which will start with a taster session on Monday, January 11th from 7.00pm.

The session, which will allow

those taking part to explore the Christian faith, will be followed by ten weekly classes in the Memorial Hall on Darlington Road.

For more information, call 01388 833295.

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BISHOP AUCKLAND USEFUL NUMBERS

- Bishop Auckland Police Station - 0345 60 60 365
- Connexions Youth Services (Help & Advice for 13-19 year-olds) - (01388) 603468
- Domestic Violence Helpline - 0800 2000247
- Bishop Auckland General Hospital - (01388) 455000
- Citizens Advice Bureau, Bishop Auckland - (01388) 606661
- Action for Carers Bishop Auckland - (01388) 451400
- Relate North East, Bishop Auckland & Darlington - 0800 980 5907
- Bishop Auckland Library / Town Hall - (01388) 602610
- Woodhouse Close Library - (01388) 604612
- Sedgefield Borough Volunteer Centre - (01388) 811115
- Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex - (01388) 761634
- The Bishop Press - 01388 775896

LOCAL PACT MEETINGS

Durham Constabulary is holding several PACT meetings in Bishop Auckland and its environs over the upcoming fortnight.

The Woodhouse Close Estate, Greenfields and Etherley Dene meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 13th from 5.30pm at Woodhouse Close Community Church, Proudfoot Drive, Woodhouse Close Estate.

Residents from the Henknowle, South Church and Cockton Hill area are invited to share their views on policing and priorities at the

Community Centre, Cumbria Place, Bishop Auckland, from 6.00pm on Wednesday, January 13th.

The meeting of Bishop Auckland Town Centre and Toronto will take place at the Four Clocks Centre on Newgate Street, on Tuesday, January 19th, from 7.00pm.

The meetings will be attended by representatives from local neighbourhood policing teams and will be specific to the area. Individual neighbourhood priorities will be discussed. All members of the community are encouraged to attend.

OPEN EVENING

An Apprenticeship Open Evening is to take place next month at Bishop Auckland College's Skills and Employment Centre in Merrington Lane, Spennymoor.

The event will take place from 4.30pm to 7.00pm on Thursday, February 25th.

For more information, or to book a place, call 01388 443000.

STOMA CARE MEETING

The next meeting of the Bishop Auckland Stoma Care Group for former cancer patients, is

to take place at Escomb Road Health Centre at 1.00pm on Thursday, January 21st.

MODEL RAILWAY MEETING

Shildon Model Railway Club is to hold its annual meeting at the Lightfoot Institute on

Kingsway, Bishop Auckland, on Saturday, January 9th from 10.00am.

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FREIGHT SERVICE COULD LINK BISHOP TO WEARDALE

Weardale Railway has been given a boost by a proposed rail freight service.

UK Coal is hoping to use the line to transport over a thousand tonnes of coal from the Park Wall North opencast mine in Sunnyside.

The coal would be transported from the opencast mine to a coal depot, which will be on the former steelworks site in Wolsingham, in 77 lorry loads.

From the Wolsingham coal depot, UK Coal would be able to deliver coal and useful by-products to most of the country.

Steve Raine, of Weardale Railway, said, "It would give a significant boost to the railway

and, in particular, it would help us set up a community rail service providing a regular link to Bishop Auckland."

Currently, the line only runs its heritage rail service.

The plan faces opposition from some residents of Attwood Terrace, who believe that lorries on their way to the nearby depot would disrupt their lives, with some lorries travelling only 15ft from their back doors. However, it is reported that surveys contend that alternative routes could cause disruption to more houses, and measures to reduce the impact will also be undertaken; barriers will be erected to reduce noise and

dust levels will be measured and controlled.

Speaking of the environmental benefits of the scheme, Mr Raine said that using the Wolsingham depot rail freight option would reduce carbon emissions by 4,200 tonnes when compared with the other options available.

If the scheme goes ahead, UK Coal and the railway's operators would commence a four year contract; for the duration of the contract the coal depot would receive lorries from 7.00am to 7.00pm on weekdays and from 7.00am to 1.00pm on Saturdays.

The proposed scheme is currently at consultation stage, with plans yet to be submitted.

COUNCIL IMPOSE GRITTING RESTRICTIONS

Durham County Council is advising the public that, due to current under supply and future uncertainty regarding the supply of salt, that they are to prioritise gritting to all A roads and B roads throughout the county. This covers the vast majority of bus routes.

The Council also state that every effort will also be made to maintain main thoroughfares where there are significant gradients.

The Council will continue to plough all priority 1 and 2 routes but only A and B category roads will be treated with salt as of Thursday, January 7th.

The Council will continue to keep the situation under review and as soon as more salt becomes available they will reprioritise.

A spokesperson for the Council said, "It is important that everyone understands we are managing very difficult ongoing winter conditions with restricted supplies.

"So far we have spread more than 30,000 tonnes and have spent in excess of £3 million maintaining the highway network and priority footpaths. Through Streetscene we have also had up to 200 of our staff clearing footpaths and town centres each day from the middle of December.

"Since the cold weather began, the Council has received significantly less salt than ordered.

"The Council continues to do everything it can to maintain the highway network and to keep footpaths clear, although we are reliant on having sufficient supplies of salt to enable us to do so."

Durham County Council were

also keen to stress that while salt is very good at preventing ice formation just below 0 degrees (freezing point) however, the effectiveness reduces quite considerably as temperatures decrease below -5 degrees. At present overnight temperatures are reaching -8 degrees and are not rising above freezing point during the day. To be effective, the salt also needs reasonable traffic levels to grind it into any lying snow. This explains why even well-gritted roads are taking time to clear.

The cold spell has affected the whole country over a prolonged period and as a result, there are concerns

about salt stocks nationally. Local authorities rely on salt stock being topped up by fresh deliveries over the winter period and, at present, accessing additional supplies is difficult because of the high demand nationally.

The Council Spokesperson went on to say, "In County Durham we made sure that all of our salt barns were filled at the start of the winter. Even so, the continued use of salt in keeping our roads open has meant that we have a difficult situation to manage. We must be prudent in our salt use in order to conserve stocks. Hence routine gritting is being restricted to the A and B roads."

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ST MARY'S TO HOLD SPORTSMAN'S DINNER



St Mary's Angels FC, who were recently crowned League champions.

Bishop Auckland St. Mary's Juniors F.C. is holding its second sportsman's night of the season on Friday, January 29th, with guest speaker

Lee Sharpe (ex-Manchester United), and comedian Jed Stone. Tickets are priced at £20 each, including a pie and pea supper

at Cockton Hill Workingmen's Club. For tickets, or for more information, contact Steve Coulthard on 07968 426817.

APOLOGY FOR 999 DELAY

The ambulance service has apologised to a 90 year-old woman, after taking almost 45 minutes to arrive after she fell just a few hundred yards from Bishop Auckland Hospital. Human error was blamed for the delay, which resulted in the elderly lady lying on the snow-covered road for around 43 minutes. The woman was injured when she slipped opening

the door of a Cable's taxi on Cockton Hill Road. The driver of the cab called 999, as did a passing police officer. It is thought that a nearby ambulance crew in the town were on their break, and another, dispatched from Newton Aycliffe, were diverted to a more urgent call. The woman was eventually taken to Darlington Memorial

Hospital, where she underwent an operation.

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Bishop Auckland FC Upcoming Fixtures

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Saturday 16th January	Home to West Auckland
Saturday 23rd January	Home to Chester-le-Street
Saturday 30th January	Home to Billingham Synthonia
Saturday 6th February	Away to Tow Law Town
Tuesday 9th February	Home to West Allotment Celtic (League Cup)
Saturday 13th February	Home to Shildon
Saturday 27th February	Home to West Allotment Celtic

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