

No 17  
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# The Alnmouth Village Newsletter

www.alnmouth.info

## Alnmouth Parish Councillors

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This newsletter is  
published by  
Alnmouth Parish  
Council and edited by  
Terry Collinson.  
Comments and  
contributions are  
welcomed.

## The Burgage Holders

Their name is displayed prominently on the Beach Car Park board. But who are the Alnmouth Burgage Holders and what do they do?

See inside for answers to these questions and more.



## Seabank Blaze - Update

The three flats which were badly damaged in an alleged arson attack are due to undergo repairs starting 5 April. The work is expected to take around 2-3 weeks. The two males, aged 16 and 18, who were charged with a number of offences in connection with the incident are due to appear at Newcastle Crown Court during the second week in May.

## Dog Fouling – 2 New Campaigns

The Northumberland Coast AONB Partnership (which has representatives from local authorities, statutory organisations, interest groups and the local community) has launched a campaign to ensure that the Northumberland Coast remains the special place it is and that is not spoilt by inconsiderate dog-owners. They have issued a new leaflet containing 5 key guidelines which include dog-fouling and when to keep dogs on leads. The Parish Council will be working closely with the Partnership and will be using some of the publicity material they have produced in an attempt to eliminate Alnmouth's dog fouling problem.

Readers will also have seen the recent Gazette front page which highlighted dog fouling in Alnmouth but also mentioned Alnmouth. The paper is encouraging people to report dog-owners who fail to clean up after their dogs. They are asked to note the type of dog and a description of the owner, the time, location and frequency of the offence, before contacting the NCC customer service line on 0845 6006400.

*We wish both campaigns every success.*

## Police Community Forum Meeting

There was a record turn-out for the recent meeting which, due to illness, took place without the Police. Nevertheless a number of issues which concerned residents were discussed in some detail and these have been passed to the Police so they can be addressed at the re-arranged meeting. We will publish details here in the Newsletter and on Notice Boards as soon as the new date is known.

## The 2011 Annual Parish Council Meeting

This will be held on Monday, 16 May at 7pm in the Hindmarsh Hall. Further information will appear in the May Newsletter and on the Parish Council Notice Board.

## Ancient Rights and a Modern Role

The area may have been inhabited before but, like Milton Keynes and Peterlee, Alnmouth started life as a New Town, although a 12<sup>th</sup> century rather than a 20<sup>th</sup> century one. Strips of land, or burgage plots, were marked out each side of the main street for the burgage holders to cultivate and live on, in addition to which they had certain privileges, one of which was the right to use the town's common land. Today the owners of some properties in Alnmouth still have rights over the Common, but these days it is the right to charge for using it as a car park or a golf course rather than for grazing cows. Likewise, the role of the Burgage Holders has evolved into one of protecting and maintaining the Common for the enjoyment of all the village and our visitors as well as supporting financially a wide range of local activities and organizations. We hope these pages will give you a flavour of some of the things the Burgage Holders are doing these days in Alnmouth.

## The Wetlands

The area of marsh gives a real opportunity to increase the diversity of wildlife habitats on the common, so the Burgage Holders embarked on an ambitious programme of restoration and development, guided by ecological advice from the Northumberland 4Shores Project team. Left to itself the marsh would eventually turn into wet woodland, but reed-fringed open fresh water is not common in this area so the decision was taken to keep it open by excavating the marsh and building islands to provide secure nesting sites for wildfowl. The work was done over two years to minimize disturbance and this year we will see how attractive it will be and how popular with the ducks and swans.



The Restored Marsh

## Tree Planting by the Beach Car Park



In 2010 hundreds of trees and shrubs were planted in the rough grass between the golf course and the car park (see photo, left). Varieties were chosen to suit the conditions, including wild roses and sea buckthorn which already grow by the beach, and they will eventually develop into a sheltering screen and wildlife haven.

The surface of the car park gets leveled out every year or so and the drains maintained, but a major project in 2010 was to widen and resurface the path from the Golf Club to the beach car park, making it more accessible to wheelchair users (photo, right).



# Burgage Holders

## The Shoreline



Erosion by the sea is a constant problem as the sands move around the beach. Not only does the bank have to be occasionally reinforced and rebuilt, but steps down to the beach have to be constructed and maintained (photos, left). A major project was building the wooden ramp down onto the beach from the path, again to improve disabled access, but this winter's storms and high tides washed so much sand away from the end of the ramp that it ended up looking like a small wooden pier! All this had to be put right ready for visitors to our beach (photo, top left).



Last year's high autumn tides coincided with strong winds and washed over the bank by the boathouses, flooding both the road and the Large Boathouse. You will notice that the bank has been built up there, with a paved path over it onto the beach for pushchairs and prams, and hopefully the problem is now solved (photo, top right).

Beach cleaning, jointly with the Parish Council, is done in the summer to remove litter and other rubbish from our beach.

## Bracken Hill

You would not be able to walk on Bracken Hill and look at the view unless the paths were mown and the seats kept accessible and in good repair, but that is not all which goes on up there. Trees have been planted and areas within the bracken and willowherb are kept mown to provide hunting spots for owls and hawks (photo, right). This is all part of the policy of maintaining a diversity of habitats for wildlife. Similarly, the Nightfold Field, which is the only enclosed part of the Common, is now subjected to conservation grazing by Shetland sheep, who are clearing the weeds and scrub which invaded the field following years of horse grazing.



## Looking Ahead

Not only are we very fortunate in this village to have such a major asset as the Common under local control, we have, in the Burgage Holders, a body which has the resources and the determination to protect and maintain it. Other coastal communities are not so fortunate; Seahouses, Bamburgh and Newton by the Sea have large visitor car parks but all the income goes to the County Council and there is little evidence that it directly benefits those communities. Our Common is in a much stronger position to survive the inevitable cuts in NCC services to the rural communities.

## Organisations and Activities

### Alnmouth Parish Council

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in HH

### St John the Baptist Church

Services 9.15am. (Fourth Sunday at 10am)  
(Isabel Chalmers 830362)

### Alnmouth Women's Institute

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Monday.  
(Pam Muggleton 830315)  
[www.alnmouthwi.co.uk](http://www.alnmouthwi.co.uk)

### Alnmouth Autumn Club

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday.  
(Alistair Sinton 830784 or Audrey McKane 830809)

### Alnmouth Camera Group

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday.  
(Barbara Aitchison 830107)

### Alnmouth Local History Group

(Fred Bettess 830638)

### Alnmouth Village Golf Club

Full and Social  
Membership available.  
(Clubhouse 830370)

### Brownies

Meets Tuesdays in HH.  
(Sue Jackson 830142)

### Yoga and Yoga Bugs

(Claire Lang 581434)

### Chapel Art Group

Every Thurs morning in the Old Methodist Chapel.

### Alnmouth Youth Club

Meets Fridays from 5 - 7pm in the Old Methodist Chapel. Ages 8 - 12.

### River Aln Boat Club

(George Ternent 830444)

### Alnmouth Football Club

[www.alnmouthfc.com](http://www.alnmouthfc.com)

### Exercise, Movement & Dance for 50+

Weds at 9.30-10.30am in HH.  
(Emma Dunn 833780)

## Question Time



The panel informed and entertained us, discussion continued over very tasty WI canapés and wine and as a result of everyone's efforts the sum of £350 was sent to the Great North Air Ambulance.

## Music Hall at The Schooner

Saturday, 12 March saw a full house of some 80 Alnmouth residents and friends in the function room of the Schooner Hotel. Many of the audience dressed in period costume and helped create an atmosphere of jovial enthusiasm which was much appreciated by the performers. A complimentary concert was given in the afternoon to an audience made up of residents from 6 local care homes and this was well received (see photo below).

A cheque for £376.58 has been sent to the "Ian Edwards Cancer Break Fund". The accounts for the Musical Hall event may be viewed on the Hindmarsh Hall notice board.



## Found – One Yacht, Called Tarka



Members of the River Aln Boat Club have recovered a yacht which had broken free from its moorings.

However, no-one knows who owns the boat, which is called Tarka.

If you can help please contact the Club (830444)

## Christmas Lights Quiz

The recent quiz raised £190 – many thanks to all concerned.

## Arts Festival Update

Preparations are well under way for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Arts Festival with many artists and craftspeople already having booked their places. Find out more at:

[www.alnmouthartsfestival.com](http://www.alnmouthartsfestival.com)

## APRIL

(all events in HH unless otherwise stated)

### Alnmouth WI

Annual Meeting  
Mon, 4 April at 7pm.

### Barn Dance

Tuesdays, 12 and 26 April  
at 7.30pm.  
Entry £2 to include refreshments.

### Alnmouth Autumn Club

Tues, 12 April at 2.30pm.  
"The Widdringtons of Widdrington" with Karenza Storey.

### Alnmouth Camera Group

Tues, 12 April at 7pm in the Hope & Anchor. Theme, "Mechanical"

### Aln Valley Railway Soc

Thurs, 21 April at 7pm for 7.30pm, Alnwick Station.  
"Railwaymen and Steam" with Michael Carrier.

### Western Front Assoc

Monday, 25 April at 7.30 for 8pm in Alnmouth Ex-Servicemen's Club.  
Members' Night

## Looking Ahead

### 2011 Annual Parish Council Meeting

Mon, 16 May at 7pm.

### Alnmouth Arts Festival

Sat-Sun, 25 and 26 June.

### Murder Mystery Evening

Fri, 11 November  
(note change of date from 28 October)

### Promote Your Event Here (It's free!)

Email  
[alnmouthnews@fsmail.net](mailto:alnmouthnews@fsmail.net)

To book the Hindmarsh Hall,  
contact Jean Cullen  
(830501)