

Welcome to the Billingham Community Newspaper!

Community spirit seems to be high in Billingham at the moment with the recent sunshine and it was good to see so many streets get the bunting out for the Royal Wedding in April. We gatecrashed a few of the street parties and got a collection of fantastic photographs that are on pages 6 and 7.

In this issue, we also have some great pages packed with sports stories, including the Easter Monday derby match between Billingham's two football clubs – Synners and Town. The football season may be just about over but it looks like being a good summer for sport for the rest of the town's clubs. If you're involved in any clubs, please get in touch to let us know what's going on.

As always, we are immensely grateful to our sponsors. The Billingham Community Newspaper Group is a not-for-profit committee-run group that believes your local newspaper should be full of stories. Without the support of our sponsors, this wouldn't be possible. If your organisation would like to become a sponsor of the Billingham Community Newspaper, and spread your news to every home in the town, please call us on 01642 367934. We'd love to work with you!

Best wishes from the whole team.

Val Scollen, Chair, Billingham Community Newspaper Group

The committee would like to extend grateful thanks to:

Billingham Town Council supports the town and works hard to develop the services that people need. For more information, visit www.billinghamtowncouncil.co.uk

Know How North East (KHNE) is helping people make significant changes in their life through work at the Clarences Community Resource Centre and the Low Grange Community Centre. For more information, call 01642 607592.

Five Lamps is a non-profit making organisation which is helping to deliver Stockton Enterprise Gateway. Call 01642 608316 for information.

Inspector Andy Fox, Head of the **Neighbourhood Policing Team** joins the newspaper with a great new regular column. Contact the Neighbourhood Policing Team on 01642 302930.

The **schools in the Billingham area** are supporting a great new spread to bring all the school news together.

Ken Charlton and Bernard Mclean of the A19NAG measuring the noise of traffic at 94dB



A19NAG road noise pleas ignored

RESIDENTS in Billingham West are disappointed that their pleas for action to resurface an area of the A19 have been ignored, despite the submission of a petition signed by more than a thousand local residents with the support of MP Alex Cunningham.

Excessive noise due to traffic roaring along a concrete section of the Billingham Bypass dual carriageway adjacent to homes has been a recognised problem for a long time. However a commitment by the Highways Agency in 2002 to replace the concrete surface by 2011 was overturned, without consultation, in 2009 when residents were informed that the road would only be resurfaced when maintenance is required, in up to 20 years time. Recent correspondence from the Department of Transport has confirmed that Billingham is not a first priority site for investigation and action.

However, members of the A19 Noise Action Group are concerned that the health of residents is at risk as the noise has been recorded at levels well above that desirable for general wellbeing, according to organisations such as the European Union Environment Agency and the World Health Organisation.

Bernard Mclean, Chairman of the A19NAG, said: "The health issues have been forgotten due to budget issues. This problem has been ignored from the point of view of its effects

on people's lives. We can't sleep at night with our windows open because of the noise. We can't use our gardens because the noise is unbearable. The stress of the constant noise is a real health issue."

One of the problems is that changes have been made to the criteria for prioritising locations to be included in the resurfacing programmes. The previous criteria, based upon traffic volumes and dwellings affected per

locations for remedial action is 76dB, which is twice as loud as 70dB.

The World Health Organisation states that daytime noise levels less than 55dB are desirable to prevent community annoyance and recommends less than 30dB to preserve the restorative process of sleep.

Ken Charlton, an active member of the A19NAG, said: "Throughout each year we have prevailing westerly

winds which exceed the qualifying speed of 11mph set by the government. Such high winds heighten the effect of the noise but that isn't taken into account under the new guidelines."

Traffic on this stretch of the A19 can reach volumes of 72,000 vehicles each day, and with the proposals for a hospital at Wynyard and a second Tyne Tunnel, this is bound to increase.

Ken added: "This is the last remaining stretch of concrete on the A19. If there was a different surface on the road, the noise could be reduced drastically."

The A19NAG is committed to its aim to make the A19 Billingham By-pass a first priority for noise mitigation measures. The group holds monthly meetings, and welcomes involvement from any resident. Should any resident wish to attend a meeting contact Howard Gill on 01642 565410. The website at www.a19nag.com is regularly updated and contains further background information.

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kilometre, placed the Wolviston Court estate near to the top of the priority list. Noise maps, drawn up to help identify priority locations, have proved to be less than totally accurate in the Teesside area, and further investigations are being carried out by the Highways Agency during this year.

Average noise levels within the Wolviston Court estate have been recorded in excess of 70dB – which is equivalent to the noise from a vacuum cleaner at 3m. The new noise level criterion used by the Highways Agency to determine first priority

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USEFUL NUMBERS

Local Government

- Billingham Town Council – 01642 551171
- Stockton Borough Council – 01642 393939

Community

- Billingham Environmental Link Programme – 01642 559115
- Billingham Carnival and Garden Show – 01642 559115
- Billingham International Folklore Festival – 01642 553220
- Stockton and District Advice and Information Service (CAB) – 01642 607445
- Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association – 01642 733902

Libraries

- Billingham Library, Bedale Avenue – 01642 527895
- Roseberry Library, The Causeway – 01642 528084

Woodland Parks

- Billingham Beck Valley Countryside Park – 01642 360376
- Cowpen Bewley Countryside Park – 01642 371633
- Wynyard Woodland Park – 01740 630011

Employment and Business

- Know How NE – 01642 607592
- Five Lamps – 0800 4580 120
- HMRC – 0845 0109000
- NECC – 0300 303 6322

Emergency Services

- Cleveland Fire Brigade HQ, Hartlepool – 01429 872311 or in an emergency 999
- Billingham Fire Station, Seaton Carew Road – 01642 546000
- Cleveland Police – 01642 326326 or in an emergency 999
- Billingham Police Station, New Town Centre – 01642 302930
- Billingham Neighbourhood Enforcement Team – 07747 033429
- Ambulance Service – 01904 666000
- James Cook University Hospital – 01642 850850
- University Hospital of North Tees – 01642 617617
- NHS Direct – 0845 46 47

GP Practices

- Kingsway Medical Centre – 01642 554967
- Marsh House Medical Centre – 01642 561282
- Melrose Surgery – 01642 553055

Chemists

- Davidson Pharmacy, 3 Station Road – 01642 360145
- Billchem Ltd, Billingham Health Centre Pharmacy – 01642 553846
- Boots, 25 Queensway – 01642 553263
- Harry Hill Chemists, Kenilworth Road – 01642 553184
- Rowlands Pharmacy, 39 Queensway – 01642 554416

**HAVE YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?
OUR LETTERS PAGE NEEDS YOUR INPUT...
SO GET WRITING!**

We're looking for letters on local issues, residents' concerns and problems that need addressing. All letters must include contact details but these do not need to be published.

Please email your letters to: news@billinghamcommunitynewspaper.co.uk