

COUNTY COUNCILLOR WENDY PATTISON

EMBLETON PARISH

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT



COUNTY COUNCILLOR WENDY PATTISON

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EMBLETON PARISH



BEACHES RE-OPEN AFTER PALM OIL CLEARED AWAY

Beaches in Northumberland which were closed over the weekend after an unknown substance was washed up have re-opened.

Newton and Embleton beaches were closed after reports of a substance, believed to be palm oil, was found on the beach.

Dog owners should remain vigilant as there may be more washed up in the coming days.

Palm oil can get into the marine environment when it is legally released at sea by ships when vessels wash out their tanks.

The resulting substances are often mixed with other chemicals such as diesel, making it extremely harmful if ingested.

Washed up onto the beach, palm oil is white or yellow and waxy in appearance and can range in a variety of sizes from pebble sized, semi-solid lumps to larger blocks and can smell unpleasant.

Cllr Stewart added: "Dog owners should be cautious when walking their pets on the beach. If they suspect their dog has eaten any of the substance they should consider taking it to the vets immediately."

If anyone spots any palm oil washed up on a beach they should report it via the council website (as littering>other) using our Fix My Street feature and the GPS on their phone and we'll arrange with the appropriate landowner for its removal.

Alternatively people can call 0345 600 6400 and ideally have an app like what3words to help staff pinpoint the location of the pollution.

HOUSEHOLD COSTS AND BILLS

Government schemes which are available to help individuals with the cost of living.

COST OF LIVING PAYMENTS 2023 TO 2024

Guidance on getting extra payments to help with the cost of living if you're entitled to certain benefits or tax credits. You may be able to get up to 5 payments to help with the cost of living if you're getting certain benefits or tax credits.

You do not need to apply. If you're eligible, you'll be paid automatically in the same way you usually get your benefit or tax credits. This includes if you're found to be eligible at a later date. These payments are not taxable and will not affect the benefits or tax credits you get.

BEWARE OF SCAMS

The Household Support Fund scheme **does not** require banking details to provide support and we will never request this information over the telephone. If you receive any calls requesting this information, claiming to be from a local council, please be vigilant and follow the advice below:

- Report the call to [Action Fraud](#).
- Contact Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 1133** for advice if you need it.
- Alert your bank if you have already given out your bank details.

WHAT COST-OF-LIVING PAYMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE?

Some people will receive payments to help with higher bills, including:

- £900 in total in three instalments (£301, £300, £299) in spring 2023, autumn 2023 and spring 2024 to households on means-tested benefits
- £300 for pensioner households in the winter
- £150 to people on certain disability benefits, paid in the summer 2023

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE £900?

The payment, in three instalments, is available to households who receive the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- working tax credit
- child tax credit
- pension credit

For further information [visit the Gov.uk Cost of Living Payments 2023 to 2024 guidance page](#).

GET IN TOUCH

You can contact the Northumberland Community Together response hub if you are unsure about any information and want to talk to a friendly person. **Phone the community response hub on [01670 620015](tel:01670620015) from 9am to 6pm 7 days a week or email NCT@northumberland.gov.uk.**

DISABILITY COST OF LIVING PAYMENT

You may be entitled to a Disability Cost of Living Payment of £150 if you get any of the following benefits on a certain date:

- Attendance Allowance
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance for adults
- Disability Living Allowance for children
- Personal Independence Payment
- Adult Disability Payment (in Scotland)
- Child Disability Payment (in Scotland)
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- War Pension Mobility Supplement

WHEN YOU'LL BE PAID

You must have received a payment (or later receive a payment) of one of these benefits for 1 April 2023 to get the Disability Cost of Living Payment.

If you were getting a qualifying benefit from the Ministry of Defence and a qualifying benefit from DWP, you will get a Disability Cost of Living Payment from DWP only.

If you receive a Disability Cost of Living Payment, but we later find that you were not eligible for it, you may have to pay it back.

PENSIONER COST OF LIVING PAYMENT

If you're entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2023 to 2024, you will get an extra £150 or £300 paid with your normal payment from November 2023.

The full amount of Winter Fuel Payment (including the Pensioner Cost of Living Payment) you will get for winter 2023 to 2024 depends on when you were born and your circumstances during the qualifying dates.

You can get a Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2023 to 2024 if you were born before 25 September 1957.

This guidance will be updated with the qualifying dates for the payment when they are published.

You will be sent a letter in October or November telling you how much Winter Fuel Payment you'll get if you're eligible.

Pension Tax Credit An estimated 850,000 pensioner households in the UK **do not claim pension credit**, which is a gateway to these extra payments. Other **eligibility details are outlined here**.

BENEFITS ADVICE

You can get benefits and other financial support if you're eligible. If you're caring for someone, are disabled or have a health condition, if you're looking for work or on a low income or temporarily unable to work you may be able to claim.

If you would like to make sure you're getting the **[right benefits try our benefits calculator and budgeting tool](#)** or speak to **Northumberland Communities Together** on **[01670 620015](tel:01670620015)** - 9am to 6pm, 7 days a week. **[Click here for more information about cost of living payments](#)**.

WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND, NEIGHBOUR OR FAMILY MEMBER

If you are worried about an elderly or vulnerable person, or a neighbour and they don't have family or friends nearby we can connect and support. Please contact Northumberland Communities Together on **[01670 620015](tel:01670620015)** from 9am to 6pm 7 days a week or email **NCT@northumberland.gov.uk**.

ONECALL

Onecall is one number for all adult social care, children's services and community health enquiries in Northumberland, helping the most vulnerable people to keep safe and well 24-7. If you are worried about the immediate welfare (health or well-being) of an elderly or vulnerable person, contact **Onecall**:

- **Phone:** **[01670 536400](tel:01670536400)** (24/7, 365 days a year)
- **Email:** **onecall@northumberland.gov.uk**
- If you have speech or hearing difficulties, you can use Relay UK to contact us by dialling 018001 01670 536400. You can find more information about **Relay UK here**.

DRIVING IN WINTER

Check your vehicle is in good running order before you set out and consider regular servicing to help minimise the risk.

POWDERY checklist for safe winter driving

Use this POWDERY checklist as a good reminder:

- **P**etrol (or diesel): have you got enough? Do you know where to fill up?
- **O**il: check levels once a month.
- **W**ater: check radiator and screen wash once a month.
- **D**amage: check wipers, lights etc. for signs of wear and tear or damage.
- **E**lectrics: check lights, indicators and controls are working properly.
- **R**ubber tyres: are they well inflated, legal, with good tread and free from damage?
- **Y**ourself: are you fit to drive? Have you slept well? Are you taking any medication(s) that could make it unsafe for you to drive?

If you are planning to travel with pets, ensure animals are safe and secure and will not be a distraction to people travelling in your vehicle.

TYRE SAFETY

Find out how you can make your tyres safe in poor conditions.

How to keep your tyres safe in winter

Cold temperatures, damp roads, snow and ice all reduce a tyre's ability to grip the road properly, leading to longer stopping distances and a higher risk of accident.

The safest option is to fit winter weather tyres, which are specifically designed to provide extra grip and improved levels of safety at temperatures lower than 7°C.

Tread depth should be checked to ensure it is well above the legal minimum of 1.6m. TyreSafe has developed the 20p test for a simple and quick way to [test your tyres' tread depth](#).

Tyre pressures should be checked every two weeks and before a long journey. Pressures should be checked when the tyres have travelled less than two miles against the vehicle manufacturer's recommended levels.

When checking tyre pressure, give the rest of the tyre a thorough visual inspection for signs of damage. Look for any cuts, cracks, bulges or embedded objects. If you are in any doubt, speak to a professional.