

COUNTY COUNCILLOR WENDY PATTISON

EMBLETON PARISH

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT



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A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE



The Christmas season is with us once again – for many, a busy but joyous time, filled with family, friends, fun and festive magic.

It is a time to look back on the events of the past year, and to look forward with excitement and hope to a New Year.

There is tremendous community spirit throughout the Longhoughton Division and I am sure that this will flourish even more at Christmas when people gather together to share in the festivities.

This spirit is evident in the way that our volunteers and local groups work so hard and give so willingly to help others. It is evident in the way that our people cope so admirably

with the challenges of rural life and in the vibrancy of our communities. I would like to thank them all for the way they contribute to making all of our villages a wonderful place to live, work and visit – not just at Christmas but all year round.

The holiday season can be difficult for many people, and my thoughts are with them, along with my sincere wishes for a time of peace and hope for the year that lies ahead.

As 2023 draws to an end, and the dawn of 2024 approaches, I wish for everyone a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

County Councillor Wendy Pattison

COUNCIL WELCOMES EXTRA GOVERNMENT ROAD MAINTENANCE FUNDING

The County Council has welcomed millions in extra funding to improve the condition of the county's road network.

It comes after the Prime Minister announced last month plans to scrap part of the HS2 high-speed rail line and instead spend the savings on other projects.

The Government has now confirmed an extra £8.3bn funding will go to England's local councils over the next 11 years for road maintenance, with the area including the North East and Northumberland securing £3.3bn.

The Department for Transport said local authorities in England would get an extra £150m for road repairs this year, and the same amount for 2024 and 2025. The rest of the funding will be allocated over the next decade.

In Northumberland, an extra £2.768m will be coming to the county each year for the next two years, with a total uplift of over £184M over the next ten years - and Council Leader Glen Sanderson pledged it would be put to good use.

He said: "Extra investment to improve our highways is very welcome so this is fantastic news.

"Looking after roads in Northumberland is a key priority for this Council. But with a network covering over 3,100 miles it does bring challenges - so every extra pound we can plough into additional maintenance works will benefit road users up and down the county."

Councillor John Riddle, Cabinet Member for Improving Roads and Highways, added: "The Council's main funding for highway maintenance comes from Department for

Transport and is around £21m per year. In addition to this the Council has put in a further £17.5m in its own capital to improve road maintenance over the last three years.

“We are continually investing in our services to improve highway maintenance - whether for helping reporting, improving our management systems or improving plant and materials for repair.

“We’re now looking to plan in detail how best to use this extra money to get the best outcomes for residents across the county.”

WORLD-CHANGING SCIENTIST AND INVENTOR'S NOTEBOOKS GOES ON SHOW

A scientist and chemist whose inventions revolutionised life for generations to come is being celebrated in an exhibition of items stored by Northumberland County Council's Archive.

Probably best known for his invention of 'the Davy Lamp,' a safety lamp used by coal miners, Sir Humphry Davy also discovered several chemical elements, including sodium, calcium magnesium and boron.

His work in many fields was of global significance. He was one of the first to use electrolysis, is also responsible for one of the first arc lights – and the creation of 'laughing gas' which he named himself.

His links to the North East and Northumberland area came with his work on the Davy Safety Lamp. He was approached by The Society for The Prevention of Accidents in Coal Mines after the Felling Colliery Disaster in 1812 that killed 92 men and boys.

A giant Davy Lamp stands outside of the Stadium of Light, Sunderland, in recognition of local mining heritage and the importance of Davy's safety lamp to the mining industry.

Considered a genius, he was awarded a baronetcy in 1818, the first time such an honour had been bestowed on a scientist. And, since 1877, the Royal Society of London has awarded the Davy Medal for “outstandingly important recent discovery in chemistry.

The exhibition of notebooks belonging to Sir Humphry Davy (1778-1829) will be on display at County Hall, Morpeth, until January 12, 2024

Also a poet of note Northumberland Libraries will host a Poetry Reading Workshop at Morpeth Library with Prof Sharon Ruston on Thursday, January 11 from 2-4pm when some of Davy's poetry will be read and discussed. Book on Eventbrite: nlandlibs.eventbrite.co.uk/or at Morpeth Library - 01670 620391

Winter Services

Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 imposes a duty on highway authorities to maintain highways maintainable at public expense. In particular, Section 41 (1A) imposes a duty on highway authorities “to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.” 2.2 Under Section 150(1) of the Highways Act 1980, “if an obstruction arises in a highway from accumulation of snow” “the highway authority shall remove the obstruction” and Section 150(3) of the Act states that the following factors should be taken into account: a) “The character of the highway” “and the nature and amount of the traffic by which it is ordinarily used.” b) “The nature and extent of the obstruction.” c) “The resources of manpower, vehicles and equipment for the time being available to the highway authority for work on highways and the extent to which those resources are being, or need to be, employed elsewhere by that authority on such work.” Thus recognising that it would not be practicable for a Highway Authority to treat all roads and footways in the event that ice forms or snow falls.

We grit the roads when temperatures are expected to fall to zero or below. Rock salt is spread to lower the freezing point of the surface and it takes about three hours to cover Northumberland. We aim to grit all the routine roads by 8am each day, although gritting becomes less effective the further the temperature drops.

We use specialised weather reports from the Met Office, insight from our road condition sensors, which monitor road temperature, and a wealth of local knowledge to decide on the right time to grit.

In extreme conditions, like freezing rain, no treatment will prevent ice from forming, although these kinds of conditions are very rare and usually short-lived.

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Highways/Winter.aspx>

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Freedom of Information Act (2000) became fully effective from 1 January 2005, giving you the right to request information from the council.

A great deal of information is already available and you do have a right of access to information retained.

However, we may refuse access in certain circumstances. These are covered in the act and protect against the disclosure of information that would harm commercial interests, information provided in confidence, personal information and other important interests for the council.

Requests for information should be directed to the Information Governance Team.

HOW TO MAKE A FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

All requests should be in writing and contain as much information as possible to enable us to supply you with the precise details needed. If you have any difficulty with this, please call 0345 600 6400.

Written requests can be made to:

Information Governance Team
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

Email: Informationgovernance@northumberland.gov.uk