

GATESHEAD MATTERS

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE HOPE NOT HATE CAMPAIGN

HOPE
HATE

A NEW GATESHEAD IS ON ITS WAY

GATESHEAD IS changing for the better. With major investment in our town centre, thousands of new homes for local people and more funding for our local community, things are on the up! Find out more in this edition of Gateshead Matters.

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GATESHEAD MATTERS

A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

WELCOME TO the latest edition of Gateshead Matters, delivered to you by the Gateshead HOPE not hate team of volunteers.

Times are tough. The spiralling cost of living, exacerbated by foreign wars and a host of other issues, is causing families to struggle and making this a difficult and challenging time for many of us.

Over the last year we've also seen tensions rise within communities, driven by groups that seek to divide us and talk Gateshead down. They are using our struggles to spread fear, hate and disinformation, but we know there is another way.

In the faces of these challenges, we see communities come together time and time again. People working with each other to improve their local area, get a better deal for each other at work, or spread HOPE in their neighbourhoods.

Recently, we polled 45,000 people from all walks of life across the UK. The results were clear – people are in a much better position than the media would have you believe.

- 65% believe that their community is “peaceful and friendly” – just 11% disagree
- 79% like mixing with people of other ethnicities, religions and backgrounds
- 67% believe the government should do more to promote community cohesion – just 5% disagree

Gateshead has a lot to be proud of – not just in our history, but in our communities right now. This paper highlights the great work being done across Gateshead, and is written by Gateshead residents and supporters of *HOPE not hate*.

Email us:

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THE BEST START FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN GATESHEAD



WE ALL want the best start for our children. Families are doing their best, but a little help from the government has been welcomed by parents and by those working with children across the borough.

This spring, families will start to feel the benefits of a bold new wave of family first policies – and parents are calling it the biggest boost they've had in years.

The removal of the two-child benefit cap will change lives for children across Gateshead, lifting 3,400 kids out of poverty in the Gateshead Central & Whickham constituency alone. Across Britain, that's around half a million children lifted out of poverty – the biggest cut to child poverty in any Parliament in history.

Families who've spent years stretched to breaking point say the shift brings a sense of hope. Beth Farhat, Chair of the North East Child Poverty Commission said, “The two-child limit has been the single biggest driver of rising child poverty, both here in the North East and across the country, over the last decade. The legislation to end it therefore marks the beginning of the end of one of the worst policies imposed on children in modern times.

“Scrapping this policy, in full, from April will immediately lift tens of thousands of children out of poverty across our region, and will mean tens of thousands more experiencing less deep hardship. This is

absolutely critical if we are to improve life chances and break down barriers to opportunity – and we should all want to do this for every baby, child and young person growing up here in the North East.

Investment in new breakfast clubs locally is giving children a healthy start to the day and freeing parents from the morning cost-crunch. Add in the expansion of free school meals, and suddenly thousands of families are seeing their weekly food bills fall and their children thrive.

And just in time for the next school year, cuts to uniform costs mean parents can finally wave goodbye to the dread of the September price tag. Affordable, good-quality uniforms are becoming standard.

Families across Gateshead are looking forward to the changes which are going to make a big difference and make sure that every child gets the best start in life.

Here in Gateshead, we have been one of the trailblazers for opening new hubs where families can get support on everything, including advice on things like breastfeeding and a child's early development and language. The hub's aim is simple: to give families a place to play, learn, chat and feel supported.

Your nearest hub is Teams Family Hub:

Teams Family Hub,
Rose Street,
Gateshead NE8 2LS
familyhubs@gateshead.gov.uk
0191 433 5579

Opening hours

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm
Opening times may vary

Breakfast clubs are coming to Kelvin Grove Primary School, Larkspur Primary School, South Street Primary School

COMMUNITY NEWS

SANDOWN ALLOTMENTS: GROWING COMMUNITY IN GATESHEAD

SANDOWN ALLOTMENTS in Bensham continues to be one of Gateshead's most valued community spaces, a place where neighbours from all walks of life come together to grow food, share skills, and build friendships across generations.

Throughout the year, volunteers and plot holders work side by side, supporting newcomers, offering gardening advice, and keeping the site welcoming for everyone. It's a space that brings people together as much as it grows fresh produce.

The highlight of the calendar is the annual Harvest Festival Weekend, marking the end of the growing season with a lively celebration of local growing, open to the whole community. Last October, visitors enjoyed colourful produce displays, children's nature trails, craft activities, and cooking demonstrations showing how allotment-grown ingredients can be turned into simple, delicious meals. The ever-popular vegetable show brought friendly competition, from

giant pumpkins to quirky-shaped veggies that raise a smile.

Music from local performers added to the festival atmosphere, while the community feast, a long-standing tradition, brought everyone together to share herbal teas, homemade soups, pies, chutneys, and cakes.

More than a celebration of harvest, the weekend reflected what Sandown represents year-round: a welcoming, supportive community rooted in shared effort, local pride, and the joy of growing things together.

Chris, a local resident who attended the Harvest, said, "Sandown allotments show our community at its very best, with local people working side by side to produce an amazing crop of food and flowers. It is a warm and welcoming environment for everyone, and we learn from each other's experience and traditions. The Chinese herbal tea, with ingredients grown on site, was really delicious, and the cakes were to die for. I'm so proud of our diverse community – everyone is welcome here."



ST CHAD'S MARKET OPENS IN BENSHAM – THE NEW HOME FOR AFFORDABLE FOOD

THERE'S A real buzz in Bensham. After months of planning, St Chad's Market officially opened its doors last autumn, at St Chad's Community Project on Liddell Terrace. And their membership has just hit 1,000.

The new market is part of the charity's long-standing mission to support local families, reduce food insecurity, and strengthen community wellbeing across Gateshead.

The market was opened in response to the cost-of-living pressure many households are facing. By working with

regional suppliers such as supermarkets, St Chad's ensures surplus food doesn't go to waste. They offer fresh bread, fruit and veg, store-cupboard essentials, and household items at prices that help keep weekly shopping costs down.

Customers get five items with a green sticker for the first pound they spend every week and everything in the market is kept at an affordable, low cost. It's another great example of what we do so well here in Gateshead when we work together and look out for each other.



St Chad's Market is open each week at the following times:

- Monday 11am-5pm
- Tuesday 11am-6pm
- Wednesday 11am-6pm
- Thursday 11am-5pm
- Friday 11am-5pm

How to join:

Just turn up! Registration only takes a minute. You don't need any ID or proof of income.

Who can join:

Anyone living in Bensham, Saltwell, or the surrounding area.

Visit www.stchadscommunityproject.org or search "St Chad's Community Project" on social-media pages for more information.

GATESHEAD IS ON THE UP

Ravensworth Road in Dunston has already seen positive transformation, with new family homes for local people, a GP and pharmacy, retirement homes and a flagship Aldi replacing the old “Dunston Rocket” and maisonettes.



landmark and surrounding car parks into a lively mix of homes, cafés, bars, restaurants and social spaces. The Victorian building, the only one of its kind left in Tyne and Wear, will be fully restored as part of the plans, with the Manchester-based developer Capital&Centric preparing detailed designs and gearing up to consult locals in the coming months. Gateshead has such a rich history and heritage, and the old town hall will be the beating heart of the new town centre.

The North East Mayor has also announced £24 million investment for the vacant site adjacent to the Glasshouse International Centre for Music, earmarked for a new arena. The cash injection will ready the site for future investment, putting Gateshead on par with cities like Manchester, Glasgow and London as a venue for the best live acts.

The regeneration of Gateshead will bring with it a supply of construction jobs for young people over the decades ahead, and local businesses are set to benefit from thousands of new residents living on the doorstep. The future is looking very bright indeed!

THOUSANDS OF new homes and more jobs on the way – town centre ready to roar back to life!

Gateshead is gearing up for its biggest transformation in decades as bold plans for the town centre, the Railway Quarter, the Quays and the Old Town Hall promise to turn the borough into one of the North East’s most exciting places to live, work and play.

At the centre of the shake-up is the demolition of the Gateshead flyover. Work is now under way to demolish the flyover, creating opportunities for more homes for local people, open spaces and an improved highway network in the years ahead. Locals have called the flyover a concrete barrier dividing the town for years – and now it’s coming down for good.

A short walk away, the Railway Quarter is shaping up as a bustling gateway into the town, with its unique range of pubs and shops drawing customers from all over the North East.

Gateshead is set for thousands of new homes, and the iconic Old Town Hall is set for a dramatic comeback after securing a £3.4m

funding boost to kick-start its transformation into a vibrant new neighbourhood.

The cash, announced by North East Mayor Kim McGuinness, will help transform the Grade II-listed

The Staiths, built on former industrial land, has provided hundreds of beautiful new homes for local people. Regeneration plans for the old Clasper Village site are inspired by the Staiths modern design, and will see more affordable homes built for local people.



LOCAL BUSINESSES MAKING GATESHEAD THEIR HOME

COATSWORTH ROAD BAKERY SCOOPS NATIONAL AWARD



COATSWORTH ROAD is a real treat for foodies, with a menu of world foods with their roots in the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia on offer. From shawarmas to pasties, there's something for everyone.

And locals can't get enough of it. Savour, the artisan bakery and patisserie founded by local lad

Joshua Freudiger, has become one of the hottest spots in Gateshead since opening its doors at 205B Coatsworth Road.

When Savour first launched queues formed along the street, with customers lining up for its glossy pastries, artisan breads and picture-perfect patisserie that wouldn't look

out of place in Paris. From flaky croissants to towering tarts and indulgent desserts, the bakery's creations have become the talk of the town.

And it's not just locals singing its praises. Savour has scooped a Craft Bakers Association Award, placing it among the top-rated bakeries worldwide thanks to a flood of glowing customer reviews. With near-perfect ratings and queues out the door on weekends, it's clear the hype is real.

Joshua said, "We have been genuinely amazed by the success and the incredible love we have received from our loyal customers. Seeing people come together every day for great coffee, pastries and cakes has created a real sense of community and we are truly grateful for the support we have had."

"We are excited about the future, always open to new opportunities, and there are some very exciting developments on the horizon. This is only the beginning."

AXIS LEADS A NEW WAVE OF INDEPENDENT ENERGY IN GATESHEAD'S RAILWAY QUARTER

GATESHEAD'S RAILWAY Quarter is steadily reinventing itself, and at the centre of that momentum is Axis, the independent bar that has quickly become one of the area's defining success stories.

Known for its stripped-back industrial style and its commitment to showcasing the best of North-East brewing, Axis has created a space that feels both contemporary and rooted in local character.

Its rotating taps, small-batch collaborations, and relaxed atmosphere have made it a favourite for after-work drinks, weekend meet-ups, and the growing creative community working nearby.

Axis sits alongside a cluster of other independents who are helping the Quarter flourish.

Microbus continues to draw craft-beer fans with its intimate setting, live music and ever-changing line-up of cans and kegs.

Victor Indigo November (VIN) brings a different flavour, championing small-producer wines and hosting informal tastings that have built a loyal following. Meanwhile, long-established venues like The Central Bar and Station East remain anchors of the neighbourhood, blending heritage with a renewed sense of purpose as footfall grows. Together, these businesses



are proving that the Railway Quarter's revival is being driven from the ground up. Their success shows what can happen when independent owners invest in place, community, and the kind of character you can't manufacture.

VISIT TYNE DERWENT WAY – GATESHEAD'S GREEN GETAWAY



THE TYNE Derwent Way is a celebration of Gateshead's green getaway – a nine-mile route for residents and visitors to enjoy, linking many attractions along the rivers Tyne and Derwent.

From Gateshead Quays to Gibside, the route threads together rivers, woodlands and the stories of the people who lived beside them.

A total of £1.5 million in government funding is being invested in the route, to encourage more people to explore our area.



Derwent Bridge near Rowlands Gill.
Photo: Russel Wills

Improvements to pathways, signage and artwork have opened up access to key nature, culture and heritage areas, with members of the community getting involved in shaping the project's future.

Local volunteers have been planting up wildflowers, and children have been welcomed to forest school sessions, learning to spot birds and build dens. Cyclists can now glide along the improved paths to the Metrocentre, while walkers pause on Dunston Staiths to watch the river breathe.

Why not walk, run or cycle part of the Tyne Derwent Way this spring? Visit www.tynederwentway.co.uk for more information

ART FOR EVERYONE IN GATESHEAD



THE NORTH East has a proud history, when it comes to working-class artists. Pitmen Painters like Norman Cornish and the Ashington Group are well-celebrated. But the story of Charlie Rogers, a less-known artist from Gateshead and friend of Cornish, has finally been brought to life.

Following the successful “Pursued by Bulldozers” exhibition at Gateshead Central Library last summer, a new Charlie Rogers installation has found its home in Saltwell Towers.

Rogers, a self-taught artist who lived near Saltwell Park, spent decades documenting the region’s changing streets and working communities, capturing everyday life across Tyneside, through sketches and paintings.

Rogers’ work is now on display at the heart of Saltwell Park, with information boards about the incredible life of this local lad, who lived on the avenues, a stone’s throw away.

With children’s activities and talks for groups, the broad range of work depicting our local community has something to offer everyone. And plans are afoot for a future art trail.

Brian Rankin, who curated the exhibitions and published a book on Rogers in 2025 said, “Charlie captured the changing social, economic and industrial landscape of North East England. Many of the scenes he depicted no longer exist. The paintings offer current and future generations a glimpse

into the lives of ordinary people. Thank you to the Friends of Saltwell Park for your support.”

This tribute to Charlie Rogers has been provided by Michael Timmins of Onesign & Digital and Brian Rankin of Come View My Art Gallery.

A fresh wave of public art has transformed the former G Scott Cars site, where seven railway arches now display bold, community created murals celebrating Gateshead’s heritage. The installation formed part of the council’s plan to turn the disused forecourt into a lively space for pop up food, performances, workshops and year round events, supported by funding from North East Mayor Kim McGuinness to boost the Railway Quarter and local business.

Mural and graffiti artist Mark One87, Creative Director of Elements Arts, spent months leading workshops with Gateshead College students, the Gateshead Recovery Partnership, Orbis Community and local businesses to shape each design. “My approach is always to embed local ideas into the art. Giving people the chance to influence the design builds connection to place,” he said.

The completed murals now provide a striking backdrop for events and strengthen the Railway Quarter’s growing reputation as a vibrant place to eat, drink and relax.

OUR WEEKEND OF HOPE



LAST OCTOBER thousands of people signed up to spread a message of HOPE in their communities as part of our Weekend of HOPE. Across Britain, people joined friends and neighbours to take a stand for the kind of friendly and united society they believe we can be.

This included many people in Gateshead, who spread the word that we are not as divided as it often feels. It was a great weekend and local people told us that they were pleased to receive something that felt hopeful through their doors!

A WIN FOR WORKERS IN THE NORTH EAST

HERE IN the North East we have a rich tradition of working people coming together to fight for each other's pay and conditions at work. That's what happened recently when members of UNISON, working in neighbouring Durham and Darlington NHS Trust, fought for the pay that they deserved and secured a win.

They secured long-awaited back pay worth up to £5,500. The payments mark a major victory for staff and the end of a determined, years-long campaign to secure fair recognition for the vital clinical duties healthcare assistants have carried out day in, day out.

For years, staff routinely performed tasks such as taking blood, carrying out tests and inserting cannulas – responsibilities that should have been paid at a higher rate.

In 2024, following sustained pressure from UNISON, the trust accepted that healthcare assistants had been working above their grade and moved them to a higher salary band.

But the level of back pay owed remained unresolved for months.

A deal reached in September 2025 was then held up while the trust sought additional approval from NHS England – a delay that left

many staff disappointed when the money didn't arrive in time for Christmas.

Now, with this pay packet, healthcare assistants will at last receive the money they are owed, drawing a line under the dispute.

The payments also mark the successful conclusion of UNISON's Pay Fair for Patient Care campaign across the North East.

Seven health trusts in the region have now re-banded their healthcare assistants, securing fair pay for thousands of predominantly female, low-paid staff who have kept hospital services going under immense pressure.

UNISON Northern regional secretary Clare Williams said: "At long last, hardworking healthcare assistants are receiving the recognition and compensation they deserve.

"These dedicated staff have gone above and beyond for years, delivering vital clinical care without the proper reward.

"It should never have taken this long, and no one should have been forced to wait for money they were rightfully owed. But today brings long-awaited justice, marking a fitting and deserved end to a major regional campaign.

"Healthcare assistants across

the North East can now continue caring for patients knowing that

their vital contribution is finally valued."

■ This is just one example of the wins for workers that trade unions are achieving across the North East. If you would like to join a trade union, you can find which one would be most suitable in your line of work here: www.tuc.org.uk/join-a-union

NEW LAWS SET TO IMPROVE YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

Stories like this are why we are celebrating the new Employment Rights Act, which means you'll soon see stronger protections at work.

The government has recently brought in changes to employment rights such as:

- Banning unfair zero-hours contracts.
- Better protections for workers, with the right to sick pay from day one of sickness.
- A right to parental leave from day one of employment.

There is a lot of support for these measures:

- 3 in 4 (73%) voters support stronger protections against unfair dismissal.
- 3 in 4 (74%) voters support giving all workers the right to statutory sick pay, and ensuring it is paid from the first day.
- Banning zero-hours contracts by giving workers a contract that reflects their regular hours: more than 7 in 10 (72%) of UK voters support a ban on zero-hours contracts.

At HOPE not hate we think this is good news for British workers. But not all MPs agreed. All of the Reform MPs in Parliament at the time this bill was being debated voted against it at some point.

When their candidates come round asking for your vote this May, why don't you ask them why they don't support stronger rights for working people?

NEW HOMES COMING TO TOWN

PLANS FOR 440 NEW HOMES WILL TRANSFORM GATESHEAD'S FORGOTTEN CORNERS

FOUR LONG-neglected patches of land across Gateshead are finally getting a new lease of life, with plans now submitted for 440 brand-new homes aimed at tackling the borough's housing shortage head-on.

The sites – Beacon Lough East, Elisabethville in Birtley, Dixon Street in Dunston & Teams, and Brandling in Felling – have sat empty for years, attracting fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. Now they're set to become vibrant new neighbourhoods, offering everything from one-bed flats to family-sized four-bed houses.

The project is being delivered by Gateshead Regeneration Partnership, a

team-up between Gateshead Council, housebuilder Vistry, and affordable housing provider Home Group.

Importantly, the developments will include more affordable homes than usual, giving local people a better chance of staying in the communities they love. If approved, work could start later this year. All homes will meet the latest energy-saving standards, and the project promises new training and job opportunities for residents too.

This comes in addition to thousands of new homes for local people on sites including Freight Village, Clasper Village, Askew Road, Town Hall and Chandless Estate.



BE HEARD IN GATESHEAD



YOUR VOTE MATTERS IN GATESHEAD and it has never been more important to have your voice heard at this May's local elections on Thursday 7th May.

This year all seats in Gateshead are up for election, which means that you have an important say in who will be running the council in May. Some seats might be decided by just a handful of votes.

So every vote really does count.

To make sure of yours, register to vote now. You can do so online by scanning the QR code – you'll need your National Insurance number.

And if you usually vote by post, make sure you are still registered to do so. The rules were changed in 2023, meaning you will have to re-apply for your postal vote every 3 years. That means if you applied for your postal vote in or before 2023, you need to re-apply this year.

For any queries about voting contact the council on 0191 433 7001

