



Building a better Bishop Auckland for everyone

issue



A busy market town bursting with opportunity.



Our partners

Bishop Auckland Heritage Action Zone
The Auckland Project
Eleven Arches
The Zurbaran Trust
Bishop Auckland Town Council
Bishop Auckland College

It's been a very busy few months since the last edition of our newsletter and you may have spotted a lot more construction work going on throughout the town.

This includes the start of work on a new and modern bus station. We have now closed the old site and have begun preparatory works for the new facility, which will ensure the town has a transport hub fit to serve generations to come.

Find out on page 3 why this development is essential for the future of Bishop Auckland.

And, on page 5, we chat to Mike Bartley and find out more about his exciting plans to bring fine dining to the town.

The town has been bustling with cultural events over the summer, with thousands flocking to watch the internationally renowned Kynren, as well as the monthly Full Moon Markets, which have been proving very popular.

But don't fear, even as we head towards the colder months, there is still a lot to look forward to. At the end of November, Christmas Town is back. On page 7 you can find out more about the festive fun our partners have got planned for this year.

As you can see, the Bishop Auckland Masterplan is well underway and visible progress is now being made.

Here's to more exciting times ahead!

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Transforming travel in our town

Bishop Auckland has become a centre for entertainment and cultural events across the year, attracting thousands of visitors to the town and surrounding areas in the rural west of the county.

It is important to ensure that modern transport facilities suitable for this increase in visitors are available.

For this reason, earlier this year, Durham County Council asked for your views on proposed designs for a new bus station and car park on the current bus station site.

Following the feedback received, work has now begun work on transforming the current site on Saddler Street to provide our community with up-to-date facilities and a safe and welcoming environment for all passengers travelling to and from the town.

The new project, along with new off-street parking is being funded by £11.8m from the Future High Street Fund and £3.6m match funding from Durham County Council, which was allocated to improve Bishop Auckland's transport and parking facilities.



Bus station

The new bus station will improve journey quality and increase visitor numbers and trade in the town. It will include:

- new, modern facilities that accessible to all users
- a transport hub that is safe and welcoming
- an improved waiting area with seating for all, including wheelchair-users
- a shop
- toilet facilities, including separate baby changing facilities, an accessible toilet and a Changing Places toilet for severely disabled people
- a talking screen to provide passenger information for those with visual impairment and a textured floor to help people move around the station
- a green roof supporting biodiversity, reducing CO2 emissions and improving the energy efficiency of the building

Car park

The proposed car park will enable higher visitor numbers due to increased attractions and cultural events in the town centre. It will include:

- 124 parking bays which will be longer and wider than current standards
- parking for electric vehicle (EV) charging
- wheelchair accessible (WAV) parking bays
- accessible parking bays for Blue Badge holders
- parking for motorcycles
- bicycle parking on the east side of the bus station



Getting from the car park and bus station into the town

To improve the route from the bus station and car park to attractions and retail areas, we are going to:

- improve public spaces with paving and lighting
- plant trees to reduce noise, enhance biodiversity, reduce CO2 emissions and provide shade
- improve surface drainage to prevent flooding
- improve those public spaces that link the bus station and car park to the town centre

Where to catch your bus

Bus services no longer run to and from the bus station site. Instead, temporary bus stops on currently in operation on Tenters Street, Newgate Street and Market Place. These stops will remain in operation while work on the site is ongoing.

Further information on what bus services in the town centre can be found at www.durham.gov.uk/bishopaucklandbusstation



New leisure centre plans



Plans for a modern new leisure centre for Bishop Auckland have been submitted for approval.

Durham County Council has submitted a planning application to create a new-build leisure centre for the Bishop Auckland community on the site of the current Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex.

The proposed new centre would bring together leisure, library and children's services all under one roof, creating a modern and sustainable wellbeing and community hub for the town.

Fitness facilities would include two swimming pools and a modern gym offering the state-of-the-art equipment boasting the latest technology.

There would also be a new library, which would replace the existing Woodhouse Close Library, and a brand new Move Hub to provide wellbeing services which would support the whole community.

By bringing together these services in a single, new build site, it is hoped that the new centre will also help support the ongoing regeneration of Bishop Auckland.

As well as supporting the county council's vision to

enable residents to live long and independent lives through greater access to better quality health and wellbeing facilities, the new facility would also help to provide a range of employment opportunities as the centre expands its offer and range of products and services.

Furthermore, it would mean the creation of a lower emission building, with carbon-saving measures incorporated into the design supporting the council's commitment to tackle climate change.

Woodhouse Close has been popular with residents since it opened. However, after serving the community for more than 50 years, the building is no longer fit for purpose.

The council has worked with residents to develop the plans for the new centre.

If approved, the planning and design process will be carefully arranged to minimise disruption to the current centre's services wherever possible.

Fine dining coming soon with Jord

Bishop Auckland-born MasterChef contestant Mike Bartley has revealed his plans to open his first restaurant in the town after his Kickstarter project gained significant support.

Mike's proposals will see derelict buildings at 69 and 71 Newgate Street transformed into a state-of-the-art restaurant and bar, which will form part of the proposed Kingsway Square development (more info page 6) and bring more jobs to the area.

Jörd (pronounced 'you-rd') will offer a relaxed yet refined tasting menu in the evening, and an elevated brunch offering during the day, along with wines and cocktails. Mike, who featured as a contestant on MasterChef in 2021, hopes to use as many foraged and locally grown ingredients as possible.

When asked why he wanted to open his first restaurant in Bishop he said: **"Bishop is my hometown and since I started as a private chef two years ago, the people of Bishop have been so supportive. This town is where I have built my reputation and it's where most of my customers are from. It just makes sense to start here in Bishop Auckland."**

Mike has been overwhelmed by the support he has received from local people after his Kickstarter exceeded its goal within just a few days of its launch. **"The Kickstarter is a huge testament to the amount of support that is out there and the appetite for change,"** he said.



"The town centre has been a massive bone of contention for quite a long time, especially on Newgate Street where there wasn't much happening for a while. I think that has really been a driving force for people getting behind it, people just want to see something happening. I think people are glad to see a local person doing it as well."

There's a lot of happening on Newgate Street at the moment, as construction starts on the new STACK development and Caps Off brewery and taproom, but Mike isn't worried about potential competition.

"There are lots of plans for new bars and restaurants and accommodation, which are really going to bring people to the area," he said. **"We're not necessarily going to be competing against each other, we're going work together to attract people in."**

"I'm looking forward to bringing my passion for locally-sourced and foraged produce to the area and can't wait to see you there."

Mike will be working alongside Graham Thomas, of BEK Developments, which is leading on the redevelopment.



Image by Cellar Door Architecture

Do you think you could bring an empty property back into use? By reducing vacancy rates and bringing buildings back into use with a more diverse and modern retail, hospitality and accommodation offer, the **Property Reuse Fund** is helping to bring significant economic benefits to the town, attracting visitors who will want to stay longer, leading to higher levels of spend during visits.

Businesses can apply for the fund by emailing propertyreusefund@durham.gov.uk

Project updates



Kingsway Quarter

Plans have now been approved for the development of Kingsway Quarter which will transform around 3,000m² of derelict land and disused buildings into a new vibrant public square and car park.

Located between Newgate Street and Kingsway, it will provide increased footfall via a new attractive entry point to the high street with shops and restaurants. In total, it brings together a retail and residential development representing multi-million pound investments, including private, DCC and Future High Street Funds.

Surrounded by buildings of historical significance, it will revitalise and repurpose the area as a place for people to visit, live, work, dine and shop. The outcome will be a mixed-use community in the heart of Bishop Auckland.

Linking Fore Bondgate and North Bondgate Future High Streets

We have now demolished the former amusement arcade located at 58-59 Fore and North Bondgate to provide a better link between the two streets.

Following the demolition, a new public space will be established with seating areas and greenery to create a safe and welcoming environment. As well as removing a rundown building from the town centre, the project will improve connectivity between the two streets, making it easier for visitors to access the range of independent shops and businesses in both areas.

We are expecting to finish the project early next year.



Bishop What's On

You can keep up to date with progress on all of the projects and more at www.bishopaucklandregeneration.com

Achieving the vision

There is so much happening across Bishop Auckland. The below diagram shows how all the projects underway in the town link together to achieve the vision we have set out to achieve by 2035.

Bishop Auckland Investment Plan Vision 2035



Thursday 16 to Friday 19 November

Lumiere in Bishop Auckland

For the first time, Bishop Auckland will be part of the spectacular Lumiere festival. Spanish artist **Daniel Canogar** will reveal the treasures held inside The Spanish Gallery, with Amalgama Spanish Gallery (2023). Auckland Tower will be transformed with The Drop (2023), a beacon of light and sound by UK lighting designer **Phil Supple**. On the ground, **Illumaphonium** will entertain families with an interactive, multi-sensory musical sculpture. Accompanying it all will be Flowers and Chandeliers, a series of hanging installations created by young people.

www.lumiere-festival.com

Wednesday 22 November to Sunday 31 December (closed Christmas Day)

AGLOW at Auckland Castle

With 17 incredible illuminations and some of the largest light installations in the country, AGLOW promises to be one of the most spectacular Christmas light trails in the North East.

Begin your journey at Auckland Castle and embark on a glittering 1.5-mile trail through Auckland Castle's gardens and grounds, with surprises around every corner. www.aucklandproject.org

Friday 24 to Sunday 26 November

Bishop Auckland Christmas Town

A spectacular weekend of festive fun for the whole community, taking place in and around Bishop Auckland's marketplace. The event is organised by Baccanalia and Bridge Creative in partnership with other local organisations.

www.bishopaucklandschristmastown.co.uk



What's next?

Investment is already happening in Bishop Auckland, with significant work taking place to develop initial plans, appoint contractors and prepare for work to begin on the ground.

Some projects, such as the bus station, additional parking and major road and junction improvements, will take several years to complete, but work has started over the past year or so. The Eastern Sustainable Access Corridor will take the longest time to deliver, with a timescale of three years from start to finish, with a project end date of March 2026.

