



**Building a better  
Bishop Auckland  
for everyone**

issue

**6**



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# A busy market town bursting with opportunity.



## Welcome to Issue 6 of the Bishop newsletter.

And what a few months it's been for Bishop Auckland.

Since the last issue of the newsletter there has been much activity in the town, with visible progress being made on the ground for a lot of exciting projects.

On pages 4 and 5 we talk to another business making use of the Property Reuse Fund. Our cover star, Natalie Lowe, tells us all about how the funding has helped her to open her first business, hair and beauty salon Halo, and bring more diversity to the high street.

In this issue we also have an update on STACK. Demolition work started on the former WH Smith and Mothercare units earlier this year and it is hoped construction work will begin this spring. Find out more on page 6.

Meanwhile, our partners at The Auckland Project have been making good progress on Kingsway Square with work beginning on site.

And, on page 7 we have a sneak peak at some of the fantastic events happening in the town over the next few months. Bishop Auckland Food Festival is back, and it promises to be better than ever with some of your favourite traders and celebrity chefs cooking up a storm.

## Here's to exciting times ahead!



### Our partners

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

## WIN!

We want to know what you think of the Bishop newsletter.

Fill in our online survey and you could be in with a chance of winning two tickets to the Hilarity Bites Comedy Club at Bishop Auckland Town Hall, on Wednesday 17 April.

You can find a link to the survey at

[www.bishopaucklandregeneration.com](http://www.bishopaucklandregeneration.com)

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# Sneak peek of new mural



**Designs have been unveiled for a bright and colourful mural which will soon be painted in an area connecting North and Fore Bondgate.**

Last year, Durham County Council began work to create the new public space by demolishing a derelict amusement arcade located at 58–59 Fore and North Bondgate.

With the demolition work now complete, a new public space is being established which we can now reveal will be adorned with a mural tribute to the town's history of horticulture.

The theme has been developed by local gallery Pineapple Studio with artists Jackie Stonehouse and Lewis Hobson.

The artists took inspiration from the annual flower show held within the grounds of Auckland Castle in the mid 19th century, which attracted up to 30,000 visitors in its heyday. The brightly coloured mural will feature flowers, bumble bees and butterflies.

As well as creating a welcoming space, 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.



Where the mural will be painted

**The development is a key project within the Future High Streets Fund programme.**





# Welcoming Halo to the town centre



**“There is so much to look forward to in Bishop Auckland at the minute. Seeing all the work being done for all the new businesses opening, like the new restaurant and STACK up the street is exciting.”**

## A once empty property on Newgate Street is now a modern and chic hair and beauty salon after undergoing a major revamp.

At the end of last year, Natalie Lowe opened her first business Halo after receiving support from Durham County Council through the Property Reuse Fund.

Ever since she was a little girl Natalie has dreamed of owning her own salon and now, aged 21, the dream has become a reality.

Bishop Auckland born Natalie works alongside beautician Lauren Jiwan and hairdresser Chloe-Marie Ballan at 140 Newgate Street. The trio specialise in hair and beauty and carry out treatments such as hair extensions and eyebrow waxing.

The grant they received paid for the entire refit of the shop, including a new shop front, rewiring, flooring and redecorating.

Natalie said: **“I am excited, although a little nervous, for the future. At 21 owning my own business was a bit of a shock to the system, the salon has been so busy already.**



**“There is so much to look forward to in Bishop Auckland at the minute. Seeing all the work being done for all the new businesses opening, like the new restaurant and STACK up the street is exciting.**

**“Bishop has really needed this investment and I am excited to see them open soon.”**

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 set to bring significant economic benefits to Bishop Auckland.

The goal is to attract visitors who will want to stay longer, leading to higher levels of spend during visits.

Cllr Elizabeth Scott, the council’s Cabinet member for economy and partnerships, said: **“Residents in Bishop Auckland frequently express concerns regarding the number of vacant properties, particularly on Newgate Street. We hope that stories such as Natalie’s show that working together we can regenerate and bring new life to the town centre.**

**“Once a vacant unit is brought back into viable use, whether that be as a retail or hospitality space or overnight accommodation, it will create numerous job opportunities and enhance the offer available in the town centre, increasing footfall and in turn generating income.”**



Follow Natalie and the team on Instagram  
[@\\_salonhalo](https://www.instagram.com/_salonhalo)



# Project updates

## Kingsway Square

Work has now begun to transform a large area of derelict land in the centre of the town.

Kingsway Square will be an attractive gateway to Bishop Auckland's existing retailers, businesses and attractions. With car parking, electric vehicle charging, cycle storage and retail-fronted access directly into Newgate Street, Kingsway Square will be a contemporary retail and residential development.

Surrounded by buildings of historical importance, such as the Mechanics Institute and the Masonic Hall, the 3,000m<sup>2</sup> site is being transformed in order to encourage footfall into the town centre, whilst also preserving the surrounding architecture.

Kingsway Square, and its surrounding mixed-use private developments, are a £12 million joint initiative between The Auckland Project; Durham County Council and private sector developers. It has been made possible by



the Future High Streets Fund and Stronger Towns Fund, which aims to renew and reshape town centres and high streets to drive growth, improve experience and ensure future sustainability.

### New restaurant/bar

The work at Kingsway Square follows the recent announcement of plans to create a new bar, restaurant and apartments on Newgate Street. A former shoe shop and pub will be transformed into a ground floor café/ bar and restaurant, with five residential apartments for short-term let on the first and second floors.

## 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 deliver the vision we have set out to achieve by 2035.



# Bishop What's On

**You can keep up to date with progress  
on all of the projects and more at  
[www.bishopaucklandregeneration.com](http://www.bishopaucklandregeneration.com)**

## STACK Bishop Auckland

Demolition began on site for STACK Bishop Auckland in January. Plans were unveiled last year for the creation of a purpose-built, two-storey facility with a roof terrace on Newgate Street.

Specialist contractors were brought in to demolish the former WH Smith and Mothercare units, mainly by hand where possible, which was seen as the best option to bring the structures down in the safest manner.

This allowed for many of the materials to be salvaged so that they could be effectively recycled and reused, as well as minimising the disruption to surrounding businesses and to the public.

Once completed, STACK Bishop Auckland will offer a range of independent food traders and bars, along with a stage which will be used for live entertainment.

The project is being supported Durham County Council through the Future High Streets Fund.



## Friday 22 March

### Hilarity Bites Comedy Club

The wonderful Steve Day comes to Bishop Auckland Town Hall in March, hot on the heels of supporting Gary Delaney on his huge national tour. Joining Steve is Alex Hylton who won the Best Show award at the 2020 Leicester Comedy Festival. Another local act Elaine Robertson is in the middle spot, and Lee Kyle returns as host. [bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk](http://bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk)

## Friday 29 March

### Street Food Market

The Street Food Market returns every Friday evening in the Market Place from 4pm to 9pm. With delicious dishes on offer, family activities and late night entertainment, it is not to be missed.

[www.facebook.com/bastreetfoodmarket](https://www.facebook.com/bastreetfoodmarket)

## Thursday 11 April

### Wembley's Greatest Final

An exhibition match between youth sides from Bishop Auckland and Crook Town will honour the 70th Anniversary of the record breaking, and legendary, 1954 Amateur FA Cup Final and its two replays. Local footballing heroes will be in attendance. [www.thedaft.org.uk/](http://www.thedaft.org.uk/)

## Saturday 21 to Sunday 22 April

### Bishop Auckland Food Festival

The popular food festival will return to the town this year, bringing celebrity chefs, street food traders, live entertainment and fun family activities. A weekend of delicious food and fantastic entertainment is in store, with some well-known faces giving cookery demonstrations throughout. [bishopaucklandfoodfestival.co.uk](http://bishopaucklandfoodfestival.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.

2023

2024

2025

Future  
High  
Streets  
Fund  
projects

£1m Property re-use fund to help owners bring empty buildings back to life

£3.79m Food, drink and work units at 9-11 Newgate Street

£105k Spanish Gallery public space

£695k Enhancing junctions to improve traffic flow to September 2024

£15.4m Bus station and additional parking to December 2024

£2.3m Improved pedestrian access and public spaces around the town

£2.3m Kingsway car park and public square

Stronger  
Towns  
Fund  
projects

£7.5m South Church Workspace: 40,000sqft of units

£3m Improved walking and cycling routes

£1.3m Springboard to Employment: 1,500 additional qualifications delivered by Bishop Auckland College

£4.5m Improve infrastructure in and around the retail park at Tindale Crescent

£3.1m Property re-use fund

£900k Artist Hub, starts May 23, opens September

£2.3m Improved pedestrian access and public spaces around the town

£20.7k Eastern Sustainable Access Corridor improvements

Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter

Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter