



**Building a better
Bishop Auckland
for everyone**

A busy market town bursting with opportunity.



The Bishop Auckland Food Festival provided us with another example of the power of events to pull in a crowd, though the quality of the food and drink on offer most definitely had something to do with it!

As it happens, there's a strong food and drink theme throughout this issue of BISHOP newsletter. But before we get to that, thanks to everyone who responded to our survey seeking your views on the newsletter. All of your feedback and comments are being taken on board.

A new training restaurant and kitchen is on its way to the iconic Grade II listed McIntyre's building in Newgate Street. It'll be run by Bishop Auckland College and accompanied by a retail space selling locally produced artisan food and drink, as well as some new training and employment services upstairs. You'll find the full story on page 3.

On pages 4 and 5 we bring you the story of another old favourite enjoying a new lease of life. Yes, the Sportsman's Inn is back in business after its closure last year. It's had a full renovation, with support from the Property Reuse Fund. We've been chatting with manageress and lifelong Bishop Auckland resident, Lisa Dowson, about how it's going.

You'll find an update on the town's new bus station on page 6 and a taste of things to do this summer on page 7 (warning: one of the activities listed involves a scary sea monster!).

Well, we hope that's given you enough of a flavour of what to expect. Read on, and have a great summer!



Our partners

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

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**LEVELLING
— UP —**

McIntyre's transformation nearly there!

The transformation of an iconic town centre building is nearing completion, with a new restaurant, food retail space, and training facilities on the way.

The Grade II listed three-storey McIntyre's building on Newgate Street is in the final stages of a full renovation led by Bishop Auckland College.

The exterior, with its curved glass windows, has been restored to its former glory with funding from the Conservation Area Grant Scheme.

The McIntyre boots and leather signage has been retained too.

Inside, a marble entrance awaits and will be revealed in a grand opening planned for September.

On completion, the building will be a base for the town's Springboard to Employment scheme, run by the college and supported by the Stronger Towns Fund.

The ground floor will be home to a restaurant and kitchen, providing training to people seeking careers in the hospitality and tourism sector.

There'll also be a retail space selling artisan food and drink produced by small businesses in the area.

Upstairs will be two digital suites with open access for local people, with an IT trainer on hand to help them develop digital skills.

There'll also be a job matching service, where trained staff will help local people access job vacancies in the area.

Judith Layfield, vice principal at Bishop Auckland College, said: **"McIntyre's is a brand synonymous with Bishop Auckland and its iconic building has been at the heart of the community for more than 150 years. It is a real privilege that we are in this position to give it a new lease of life.**



"We're delighted to be leading this project, which is all about the people of Bishop Auckland and supporting them to develop skills for the jobs that are emerging as various new ventures and visitor attractions open in the area."

Believed to have been built in the early 19th century, the building's first known resident was Robert Longstaff, a boot and shoe maker.

Leather merchants and shoe makers James McIntyre and Son followed sometime between 1891 and 1894, giving the shop its iconic name and shopfront.



The original shopfront.

The Conservation Area Grant Scheme is jointly funded by Historic England and Durham County Council.



Popular pub makes a comeback



“It’s still early days but I’d like to see if we can get local bands and singers on – we’re really keen to support local talent.”

Manageress, Lisa Dowson

A pub in the heart of the town centre is back in business and “doing well” after reopening at the turn of the year.

The Sportsmans Inn, in the town’s Market Place, closed last summer but was snapped up by local company, Barton Leisure.

And with the help of a grant from Durham County Council’s Property Reuse Fund, they have brought the venue back into use following a full refurbishment.



There’s a new bar, dance floor and log burner, as well as refurbished toilets, electricals and a new heating system.

“We reopened just before Christmas and it’s all going well,” said manageress, Lisa Dowson, a lifelong Bishop Auckland resident. “I love the history of the place. The regulars tell me all about what it was like before and what was where.

“I used to come in here myself when I was 18 or 19. It’s always been the place to be, especially at the end of a night out so it was a huge deal when it closed but it’s back now and there are lots of things I’d like to do.

“It’s still early days but I’d like to see if we can get local bands and singers on – we’re really keen to support local talent. I’ve got some great young staff who are looking to stay in the trade and the pubs around us have been great with us too with help and advice.”

The Property Reuse Fund is one of the projects being run by the council using money it secured from the Future High Streets Fund.

The fund was launched to help individuals and business owners bring unused spaces in the town back into use.

Cllr Elizabeth Scott, the council’s Cabinet member for economy and partnerships, said: “This is just one of a number of buildings we’ve helped fill – the list includes holiday lets, a salon, restaurant, bar, and a home accessories store with coffee shop.

“If it wasn’t for our Property Reuse Fund a number of these properties would still be standing empty. Instead, they are being put to good use, creating job opportunities while offering goods and services to people and attracting footfall into town.

“We’re seeing very clearly that there are people who want to make something of these buildings and invest their own time and money in making a success of them. We’re delighted to be supporting them.”



Project updates

Linking Fore Bondgate and North Bondgate



Before

Paving has been installed in the newly created link between Fore and North Bondgate in a project supported by the Future High Streets Fund.

Seating is set to follow and a colourful mural paying tribute to the town's history of horticulture adorns one side of the link.

The new area provides a welcoming space while making it easier for visitors to access the range of independent shops and businesses in both streets.



After



Bus station and car park

Site enabling works are nearing completion ahead of the construction of the town's new bus station and car park.

The new station, being built by Esh Construction, will offer modern and accessible facilities to passengers, with eight stands and improved passenger information.

There'll also be a retail kiosk, CCTV, and more toilet facilities including an accessible toilet, changing places unit, and a parent and child facility.

Alongside it will be a new 124 space car park, with high quality paving, street lighting, landscaping and cycle stands.

The new bus station and parking facilities are funded by £11.8 million from the Future High Streets Fund and £3.6 million from Durham County Council.



Market Place seating

New bespoke circular seating has been installed outside the Spanish Gallery, using funding from the Future High Streets Fund.

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 diagram below 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

Every Saturday from 27 July to 14 September Kynren

Watch the epic tale of England come to life with this live action, outdoor spectacular performed in the shadow of Auckland Castle. Running every Saturday evening throughout the summer, this 90-minute show is a unique experience not available anywhere else in the UK. Tickets available from www.11arches.com



Until Saturday 31 August Carboniferous Monsters

Step back to the Carboniferous period, 100 million years before the dinosaurs. Visit tropical forests and swamps teeming with bizarre and ferocious ancient monsters, some of which had larger teeth than T. Rex! Suitable for prehistoric monster fans of all ages. www.bishopaucklandtownhall.org.uk

Friday 26 July Street Food Market

The Street Food Market returns to the Market Place on the last Friday evening of the month, running 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

Wednesday 7 August to Sunday 18 August Knight School

Back by popular demand! Learn the joust, swordplay, and archery to graduate through the ranks and be knighted on the steps of Auckland Castle! Recommended for ages 5 to 11. www.aucklandproject.org/knight-school

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 major road and junction improvements, will take several years to complete. 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 October 2026.

