

Wylam Whispers

The newsletter from Wylam Institute Community Association

OCTOBER 2026

Welcome to our Newsletter for everyone involved and interested in all things related to Wylam Institute and the community. This is our second edition and now online only, although we will print a small number to be picked up from the Institute foyer.

In this edition we share some of the insights from the results of our Institute Future survey in the spring, look back at summer highlights and let you know what's on between now and the end of the year.

If you would like to receive future issues and sign up to our mailing list, please let the Institute know your name and email address and we'll add you to the list. We'll email you occasionally with a newsletter and updates. Email: wylaminstitute2@gmail.com

Updates in brief

In the last few months we've made improvements by replacing lighting in the Munro Hall, replacing the upstairs boiler and painting the fire escape steps.

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service carried out a fire inspection of the building in July and we've made some procedural changes as a result.

The lift is coming to the end of its life, and we are advised to have a major refurbishment. Apologies for intermittent problems while we find a solution.



The Institute was delighted to be the nominated charity for the craft fair on 23 August, and we thank everyone for their generous donations which helped raise £303.

Wylam Institute: charity and trustees

We were thrilled to welcome five new trustees to the Institute at the AGM on 10 June: Anne Francis, Denise Gillie, Karl Harms, Julie Hardy and Marian Stromsoy. All bring a wealth of skills, knowledge and expertise to add to the experience of our existing trustees.

With over 40 years' experience as an Institute trustee, it was a well-deserved retirement for longstanding trustee Roger Turner. We wish him well.

The AGM approved the constitution to create a new charity at the Institute which will set up a formal organisation for employing people and contractors and provide more protection for trustees. We'll say more about this in our next newsletter.

Institute Future

With the loss of two key income streams and occupancy at an all time low at 15%, the Institute must change to survive. Our first step was to ask residents what they wanted to see improve, and how the Institute should be used in the future.

We ran a survey from February to May 2026 with all Wylam households receiving a questionnaire which was also available online.

The key results and themes from the results are in the box opposite. Respondents gave trustees a clear mandate for reviewing the purpose of the Institute, and for moving ahead to operate the Institute as a community hub.

We were delighted with the scale of ideas for activities and community hub services that could be offered. We'll be considering every single suggestion as we move forward.

The trustees will now begin to identify and prioritise the work to make the Institute a welcoming and thriving venue for the whole community. We'll keep you updated with progress in this newsletter and on our website.

What's on October to December

See the availability calendar on our website for all our regular classes, groups and other activities.

Sunday 18 October and Sunday 6 December:
Not Just Plum Jam Craft Fair 11am-4pm

Saturdays 17 Oct, 21 Nov and 5 Dec:
Wylam Community Cinema 7pm

Saturday and Sunday 31 Oct and 1 Nov:
Bulb planting in the garden – all welcome

Saturday 12 December: live music with Maestro and the Sinners. Doors open 7pm.



Institute survey: the results

- Over three quarters (78%) of respondents favoured the Institute becoming a designated community hub for Wylam. Once operational it is envisaged that this would offer new services, activities and events.
- There were more than 170 suggestions for usage focussing mainly on opportunities for social interaction, arts and crafts (e.g. books, drama, second-hand exchanges etc) and wellbeing activities.
- Relating to the fabric of the building, five main areas were recommended for refurbishment:
    - Lighting
    - Painting and decoration
    - Technology and IT facilities
    - Furniture and small items
    - Redesign of room spaces.
- Other general comments highlighted the importance of working with existing village organisations and external organisations. Respondents asked us to avoid duplicating existing services and activities within the village.

Wylam Institute Community Association
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