SUNDERLAND MAGAZINE

DIGITAL EDITION
May 2026

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On the cover: Chris Eynon Confirmed as New Leader of Sunderland City Council, page 10. Photo supplied by Sunderland City Council.

This is a look-back edition, put together in November 2026 from stories that appeared online in May 2026. Sunderland Magazine's first digital edition was published in November 2026.

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SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Celebrates Huge Success of BBC Radio 1's Big Weekend Festival

It was a landmark weekend for Sunderland as BBC Radio 1's Big Weekend brought more than 100 internationally renowned artists to the city for three unforgettable days of live music.

Twenty-one years after the festival was last held in Sunderland, Herrington Country Park was transformed as around 100,000 music fans gathered beneath the iconic backdrop of Penshaw Monument to enjoy the event.

The epic event saw global headliners Olivia Dean, Zara Larsson, Fatboy Slim, Lola Young, Fisher, MK, Sonny Fodera, CMAT, Dermott Kennedy, Ellie Goulding, Kehlani, Louis Tomlinson and Niall Horan performing on the main stage over the festival weekend.

Sunderland City Council Leader, Councillor Chris Eynon, said:

"It's been an unforgettable weekend for people across our city and region, with three amazing days of world-class music on our doorstep. "It's also been a fantastic celebration of our wonderful home-grown talent, with 11 North East artists getting the chance to perform in front of tens of thousands of festival-goers on the BBC Introducing stage, reflecting our thriving music scene. "Events like this aren't just great for everyone who gets the chance to go along. They also generate a multi-million pound boost to our economy from increased

visitor numbers and spend in local restaurants, cafes, hotels and bars. “Once again, we’ve seen Sunderland shine on the international stage, proving our credentials as a city with an excellent track record for hosting major world class events. “But this weekend has also been very much about making sure the wider community gets to join in the excitement of the Big Weekend coming to the city, even if they haven’t got a ticket for the main event. “That’s why we held our own free ‘One Big Summer’ celebration in Keel Square giving residents the chance to enjoy free live entertainment jam-packed with music, culture and community, across all three days of the Big Weekend. So there really has been something for everyone.”

Councillor Ciera Hudspith, Sunderland City Council’s Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Heritage, added:

“It’s been great to see so many people joining in our free One Big Summer event in Keel Square, kicking off a summer long programme of music and cultural events across the city. “This has been a real celebration of community, with groups and organisations from across our city helping deliver three fantastic days of live entertainment and family activities in a packed programme which has seen everything from live music celebrating our city’s creative talent, to circus skills, family craft zones and Samba drumming. “We also saw the brilliant Northern Daughters’ flash-mob, filmed for the official video of their Open Arms anthem for Sunderland, bringing people together in a shared moment for the city and it’s been a great weekend all round.”

Sunderland City Council worked alongside the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority to ensure that the Big Weekend was one of the major events of the summer and a fantastic experience for everyone attending.

Funding from the North East Mayor has helped the Big Weekend and accompanying fringe activities to achieve maximum reach and exposure, at the same time as strengthening the North East’s position as a world class major event host.

North East Mayor, Kim McGuinness said:

“Mam, do you remember Big Weekend Sunderland 2026? “The North East has proven time and time again that we know how to throw a party. Sun, good vibes and great music: this BBC Big Weekend will go down as a moment to remember. A moment in time that will become woven into the fabric of our cultural legacy, just like Sam Fender homecoming gigs playing St James’ Park. “For me, events like this are a fantastic opportunity for our homegrown artists to perform on stage in front of huge crowds and gain the recognition they deserve. I want our creatives to succeed in the North East without needing to go to the capital, and we need to carry the momentum of Big Weekend to create more opportunities for local people to experience local music. That’s why we’re investing in recording studios, venues and events. “For Sunderland, we’re building on the legacy of Big Weekend, with One Big Summer of free events. That’s more chances for local artists and creators to grow, and more opportunities for you and your family to take part, try something new, and feel proud of where you live.”

By Sunderland Magazine Online 27 May 2026
Read more: **sunderlandmagazine.com**

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Robert Hutchinson and Glenda Hall Begin New Roles as Sunderland Mayor and Mayoress



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Photo supplied by Sunderland City Council

Sunderland has officially welcomed a new Mayor, Councillor Robert Hutchinson, alongside new Mayoress Councillor Glenda Hall.

Councillor Hutchinson, who represents the Farringdon and Silksworth ward, was formally sworn in as Mayor during a full council meeting held on Wednesday 20 May, with Councillor Hall serving alongside him as Mayoress.

During the meeting, Cllr Hutchinson took over the ceremonial chains of office from the former Mayor, Cllr Ehthesham Haque.

Sunderland's new Mayor Cllr Robert Hutchinson was 17 years old when he started his first business, Optic Innovation, and 58 years later it is still going strong.

He worked closely with the late Geoff Docherty, who brought many high profile bands to Sunderland in the 1960's and 70's.

Cllr Hutchinson has a keen interest in the city's history and is a member of the of the Sunderland Antiquarian Society. He was elected to Sunderland City Council earlier this month.

Mayor of Sunderland Cllr Hutchinson said:

"In Sunderland we have a beautiful coastline, great heritage, and above all, the friendliest people in the world. Being Mayor is the honour of my life and I will not let you down."

Mayoress Cllr Hall was also elected to the city council this month and represents the Tunstall and Humbledon Ward.

Also sworn in by full Council as Deputy Mayor and Deputy Consort for 2026-2027 was Southwick ward member Cllr Jannine Morrow, who will serve alongside her husband Mr George Morrow.

She is a retired Customer Services Officer and previously worked for Durham County Council.

The Mayor and Consort will be choosing Wearside charities to support during his year in office.

The outgoing Mayor, Cllr Ehthesham Haque, said:

By Sunderland Magazine Online 24 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/robert-hutchinson-and-glenda-hall-begin-new-roles-as-sunderland-mayor-and-mayoress**

SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Launches One Big Summer with Huge Free City Centre Festival



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Residents are being encouraged to take part in a huge weekend of music, culture and community celebrations as Sunderland officially launches One Big Summer, a city-wide programme of events running throughout the summer months.

The celebrations will begin with a three-day festival across Keel Square and High Street West to mark the arrival of BBC Radio 1's Big Weekend in the city.

From Friday 22 to Sunday 24 May, Keel Square will host a packed schedule of free live entertainment, performances, activities and community events designed to bring people together and showcase the very best of Sunderland.

Friday's launch event in Keel Square will feature an afternoon and evening of live music celebrating Sunderland's creative talent, starting from 4pm. The Bunker will open the programme, followed by a set delivered by Sunderland College. Northern Academy of Music Education (NAME) will then take over the stage with a long set showcasing emerging local artists, before Isabel Maria headlines to close the first night. The programme highlights the journey from grassroots talent to college and university performers, through to artists now stepping into their professional careers. This will offer them a valuable opportunity to perform on a fully produced stage in the heart of the city.

By Zoe Online 21 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-launches-one-big-summer-with-huge-free-city-centre-festival**

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SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Eye Hospital Appeal Receives £220,000 Boost from Royal Voluntary Service



8

Profits from coffees and café favourites will help fund additional support for patient care through a new charity appeal launched to benefit the North East's newest hospital.

STS Charity, the dedicated charity for South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, has launched the Vision Appeal as part of its ongoing efforts to raise funds that enhance patient care, facilities and overall experience.

The appeal will support the new Eye Hospital, which is due to open in Sunderland city centre this summer.

STS Charity is now celebrating a major fundraising milestone after Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) donated £220,000 to the appeal, raised through its volunteer-led retail sites.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 8 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-eye-hospital-appeal-receives-220000-boost-from-royal-voluntary-service**

SUNDERLAND

Seaside Awards and Blue Flag Honour for Sunderland's Beaches



8

Sunderland's coastline has once again been recognised among the best in the country after Keep Britain Tidy awarded Roker Beach and Seaburn Beach prestigious Seaside Awards for 2026.

The beaches were recognised for their high standards of quality, cleanliness and overall management.

Roker beach has also been awarded a prestigious Blue Flag award for summer 2026, a symbol of the highest standards in water quality, cleanliness, and visitor facilities.

Sunderland City Council's Director of City Services, Marc Morley, said:

By Sunderland Magazine Online 19 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/seaside-awards-and-blue-flag-honour-for-sunderlands-beaches**

SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Appoints Community Chairs to Lead £40m Pride in Place Investment



Photo supplied by Sunderland City Council

Plans to invest £40 million into two areas of Sunderland have moved a step closer following the appointment of two new chairs to help lead community-driven improvements.

Hendon, Docks and East End and Thorney Close, Plains Farm and Springwell were selected as part of the national Pride in Place initiative in September 2025, with each area set to receive £20 million over the next decade to support local communities and deliver long-term regeneration projects.

By Zoe Online 18 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-appoints-community-chairs-to-lead-40m-pride-in-place-investment**

SUNDERLAND

Filipino Nurses Celebrate 25 Years of Service with Sunderland and South Tyneside NHS Trust



South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust is marking International Nurses Day by celebrating a remarkable milestone, as more than 40 Filipino nurses reach 25 years of service with the Trust.

The nurses came to the United Kingdom in 2001 as part of an overseas recruitment programme. Since then, they have built strong and lasting careers. Many now work in senior roles, such as ward managers, deputy managers, charge nurses, educators and clinical specialists.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 11 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/filipino-nurses-celebrate-25-years-of-service-with-sunderland-and-south-tyneside-nhs-trust**

In brief



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Photo supplied by Sunderland City Council

SUNDERLAND

Chris Eynon Confirmed as New Leader of Sunderland City Council

Chris Eynon has officially become the new Leader of Sunderland City Council.

By Zoe Online 23 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/chris-eynon-confirmed-as-new-leader-of-sunderland-city-council**



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SUNDERLAND

Free Bike Rides and Maintenance Sessions Coming to Sunderland This Summer

Residents will have more opportunities to get out and enjoy cycling this summer thanks to a new programme of fully funded sessions launching across the city.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 6 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/free-bike-rides-and-maintenance-sessions-coming-to-sunderland-this-summer**



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SUNDERLAND

Sunderland and Newcastle Young People Secure Leisure Careers Through King's Trust Programme

A group of 13 young people from the North East successfully completed the three-week placement programme, taking on a variety of roles including concierge, general assistant, catering assistant, and supporting activities in gyms and the trampoline park.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 13 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-and-newcastle-young-people-secure-leisure-careers-through-kings-trust-programme**



10

SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Community Champions Rewarded Following Beat the Street Challenge

The leading teams and participants from the recent Beat the Street Hendon and Grangetown competition were recognised this week during a prize presentation ceremony held at the Raich Carter Centre.

By Zoe Online 26 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-community-champions-rewarded-following-beat-the-street-challenge**

In brief



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SUNDERLAND

New Sunderland Clothing Recycling Scheme to Support Foundation of Light

A new fundraising initiative aimed at giving unwanted clothing a second life is set to launch across Wearside.

By Zoe Online 13 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/new-sunderland-clothing-recycling-scheme-to-support-foundation-of-light**



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SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Food and Drink Festival Reveals Packed Weekend of Live Music

Sunderland's Food and Drink Festival is set to serve up not only flavours from around the world, but also an impressive lineup of live music and entertainment.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 20 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-food-and-drink-festival-reveals-packed-weekend-of-live-music**



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SUNDERLAND

University of Sunderland Exhibition Celebrates 25 Years of Emerging Glass and Ceramics Talent

For more than 25 years, Dry Run has represented a significant milestone in the creative journey of second-year BA Artist Designer Maker students specialising in Glass and Ceramics at the University of Sunderland.

By Zoe Online 12 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/university-of-sunderland-exhibition-celebrates-25-years-of-emerging-glass-and-ceramics-talent**



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SUNDERLAND

New Sunderland Supported Housing Scheme Helping Residents Live More Independently

A new supported housing development in Sunderland is already having a positive impact on local families, providing homes designed to help people with physical and learning disabilities live more independently while accessing the care and support they need.

By Zoe Online 15 May 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/new-sunderland-supported-housing-scheme-helping-residents-live-more-independently**

In brief



NEWCASTLE

Mayor Kim McGuinness Awards £225k to Support Older People Across the North East

Dementia-friendly music sessions, community lunch clubs and fuel poverty prevention schemes are among the projects benefiting from the latest round of Kim McGuinness's £1 million Mayor's Opportunity Fund.

By Zoe Eastman Online 14 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/mayor-kim-mcguinness-awards-225k-to-support-older-people-across-the-north-east**



NEWCASTLE

New Newcastle Mural Celebrates Community Spirit Across Generations

New art mural by inter-generational community groups unveiled to celebrate caring spirit of Galafield Family Hub.

Joint initiative between Action for Children and Newcastle City Council Arts Development programme.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 12 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/new-newcastle-mural-celebrates-community-spirit-across-generations**



Photo: Steve Brock

NEWCASTLE

Music to Return to The People's Kitchen Thanks to Expert Piano Tuner

The People's Kitchen is set to be filled with music once again, thanks to a local piano tuner who has stepped in to restore an ageing instrument that had long since fallen silent.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 28 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/music-to-return-to-the-peoples-kitchen-thanks-to-expert-piano-tuner**



Photo: Pawel Gajek, The Bigger Picture Agency

NEWCASTLE

Maritime Volunteer Service to Host Newcastle Quayside Open Day

Maritime Volunteer Service will welcome members of the public to a special open day at Newcastle Quayside on Saturday 6 June from 10am until 1pm.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 30 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/maritime-volunteer-service-to-host-newcastle-quayside-open-day**

In brief



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NEWCASTLE

Newcastle Volunteer Honoured at Buckingham Palace Garden Party

A charity volunteer from Newcastle upon Tyne who dedicated her free time to supporting local families while studying at university was honoured to attend this week's Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 14 May 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/newcastle-volunteer-honoured-at-buckingham-palace-garden-party**



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DURHAM

Rare First World War Ledger Returns to County Durham Archive

A rare handwritten ledger recording the names of hundreds of North East men who volunteered to serve during the First World War has been brought back to the region.

By Zoe Online 6 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/rare-first-world-war-ledger-returns-to-county-durham-archive**



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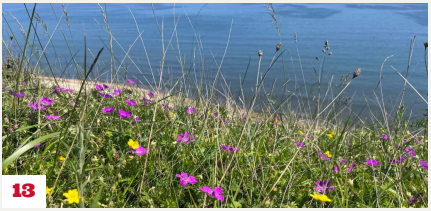
Photo: Peter Haygarth

DURHAM

Bishop Auckland Photographer Showcases Stunning African Wildlife Images at Gallerina

Peter Haygarth's beautiful photographs have been published in newspapers around the world and in the National History Museums in Paris and London.

By Durham Magazine Online 31 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/bishop-auckland-photographer-showcases-stunning-african-wildlife-images-at-gallerina**



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DURHAM

£1 Million Project Restores Rare Coastal Grasslands Along Durham Heritage Coast

A major project to restore coastal grasslands along the Durham Heritage Coast has now been successfully completed.

By Durham Magazine Online 23 May 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/1-million-project-restores-rare-coastal-grasslands-along-durham-heritage-coast**

In brief



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DURHAM

Thousands of Peg Dolls to Go on Display for Stockton and Darlington Railway Celebrations

More than 10,000 decorated peg dolls created to celebrate 200 years since the world's first passenger railway journey began in County Durham are set to go on public display next week.

Online 21 May 2026

Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/thousands-of-peg-dolls-to-go-on-display-for-stockton-and-darlington-railway-celebrations**

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