



The Ambler

Amble's Community Newspaper

Issue 53 October / November 2008

Cheviot Foods is hopeful of buyer

Administrators have been called in to help find a buyer for Cheviot Foods, Amble's single biggest employer. Nick O'Reilly of administrators Vantis told *The Ambler* "We had to make a small number of staff redundant, but the majority - over 185 - are still employed."

Nick was upbeat about the possibility of new owners being found.

"We're hopeful we can sell the business as a going concern. We have work up until Christmas. There are a number of interested parties; the workforce is good, the product is good and our customers are supporting us."

The company was placed into administration due to cash flow pressures, resulting from unprecedented inflation of raw materials and energy prices.

Braid options

Readers may be aware that a recent Public Inquiry report recommended that the Braid should be granted village green status, which would mean that no development could take place.

A Northumberland Estates' spokesman told *The Ambler*, "We will be asking the Council to determine [our] planning application and hope it will be approved while the three parties, (Northumberland Estates, Alnwick Council and Northumberland County Council) consider their position on the village green inquiry. A number of options remain open including judicial review of the village green issue, and we are aware that the majority of people would still like the scheme to proceed. We remain committed to the scheme and are optimistic that it will proceed despite the current delay."

Harbour life goes on



A crane positions bags of "rock armour" in front of the damaged area of the harbour. The cracks and subsidence required an emergency operation to empty out the oil store (centre).

Warkworth Harbour Commissioners are breathing a sigh of relief with the results of their investigations into the subsiding harbour. Initial fears that the harbour wall would collapse into the river have abated, but the repair task is a huge undertaking.

Harbour Commissioner Paul Morrison told *The Ambler* that a fifty metre section of the harbour wall was scoured out by the torrential floods of early September. This resulted in a huge hole and giant cracks appearing along the harbour itself and led to the emergency services, Environment Agency and Harbour Commissioners instigating an emergency operation to keep the public and boats safe and to empty the 18,000 litre oil tank situated on the harbour.

"The front of the harbour wall is constructed by steel piling which goes down into the bedrock" explained Paul. "That's the case for most of the harbour. But in one fifty metre section, the piling doesn't reach the bedrock. This is where the problem occurred. And unfortunately that's exactly where the oil tank is situated.

"There is a bed of silt in the harbour which counterbalances the backfill behind the harbour wall. When normal dredging takes place, there's always some silt left to stop material escaping from behind the harbour. The storm swept away all the silt along the whole harbour wall, but that section where there's a gap allowed some of the infill to escape. Hence the subsidence.

"Fortunately there's a row of retaining steel bars (tie bars) which hold the outer harbour wall in place. We got there in time."

Rock armour in bags is being placed into the river to block up the gap. This should bed in and stop any further leaching of the infill.

"There would have been a major catastrophe if it had all fallen into the river" said Paul. "Happily, the Harbour Commissioners have put out a Notice to Mariners advising skippers that the harbour is open, but they must keep 20 metres away from the section that has subsided. We've taken on an engineer to see how we go about the repair. We still need to remove the oil tank and put in a temporary tank. But the ice plant is back in business and harbour life goes on."