

Downpatrick residents left in the dark - PAGE 3



Ballynahinch principal retires after 37 years - PAGE 15



Kilkeel reader Sandra Johnston, from Corcreaghan Road, submitted this picture of Ben Johnston (8), Lucy (7) and Bradley (3), playing in their 'igloo' following the sudden snowfall on Sunday. More photos on page 10.

Council does a U-turn on car parking charges

DOWN District Council has backtracked on its plans to introduce car parking charges in Newcastle and Castlewellan.

After a public outcry over the proposals, the local authority did an about-turn during a meeting on Monday night and instead decided to explore better ways of managing car parking in both towns.

The Council first began exploring the possibility of charging at three Newcastle car parks and at Upper Square in Castlewellan last autumn, following a pilot scheme trialled at Castle Park in Newcastle over Halloween.

The plans, which the Council had envisaged would bring an income in of around £40,000 per annum, were resisted by business people and members of the public alike.

The opposition was so intense that a number of meetings also took place, both in public and privately, the latest of which took place just last week in Castlewellan.

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Family demand an apology

By Lisa Ramsden

A NEWCASTLE woman has demanded an apology from a local housing association after it sent a letter requesting notification of the termination of tenancy at her mother's apartment - less than 24 hours after she passed away.

Sheila Barbour was still coming to

terms with her mother's death and was in the process of holding a wake when a letter from the Oaklee Housing Association was hand-delivered to her home.

Oaklee runs the Craignagore complex at King Street in the town, where Mrs Barbour's mother, Mrs Margaret Seaton, had lived since May 1999.

Mrs Seaton, who was 82 years of age, passed away on 6 November, with the letter dropped through Mrs Barbour's front door the following day.

Describing Oaklee's handling of the in-

cident as "disgusting" Mrs Barbour said she, her relatives and friends are appalled by what happened and despite making several approaches to the organisation were still without an apology.

"The company's website records that they pride themselves on putting their tenants and residents at the heart of all their action, and that respect and dignity are amongst their core values, but this flies in the face of what happened to us," she said.

Mrs Barbour, her mother's next of kin, (to page 34)

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