

Profit does not have to be a dirty word

THE letter from Mike Williams (*Courant*, August 23) comparing an NHS rowing team versus a Japanese one reminded me of a saying told to me once that bureaucrats begot bureaucrats. Something to do with pay grades being guided by the number of staff they have responsibility for. Perhaps that is why the percentage of non-medical staff employed are greater in the NHS than those involved in the direct care of patients.

Having worked in the commercial environment at global, international, national and local levels where contracts and customers have to be won and then retained in a competitive environment, this keeps a focus on initiatives to be innovative and efficient. Regrettably, some of those businesses have failed. When the going gets tough efficiencies translate to rationalisation, austerity and redundancies. There is no room for bureaucratic largesse.

Profit may be a dirty word for some, but it is that that keeps people employed in the commercial world.

Fat Cat capitalism rightly comes in for criticism, but these are usually companies that benefit from government contracts or government schemes where government is seen as a cash cow. Unfortunately, so it seems, does the public sector.

Private hospitals are efficiently run. That is because they have to offer an environment and service that people are willing to pay for.

Their competitor is the NHS which has the financial

tion scheme, extending northwards to Bywell, but they have also been happy to colonise the grouse moors upstream from Derwent Reservoir, around Whitfield Moor and in the East Allen. Some of the birds on the moors may come from another re-introduction scheme at Grizedale, in Cumbria.

Since my study is restricted to south Northumberland bounded on the north side by the Tyne and South Tyne valleys, the figure of 30 pairs is a minimum: it is likely that some birds are breeding further north still.

Red kite started to occupy Northumberland in 2006. Early success in 2008 was a false dawn as the species struggled to gain a foothold with some poisoning incidents receiving prominent attention in the press. It took a decade from 2006-2016 for the colonisation to be secure. There may be a lesson here for Lynx UK.

While the ecological benefits of the re-introduction are very clear, such a scheme is fraught with difficulties in the early stages because of the inexperience of the animals in their new habitat and of the landowners in understanding their habits.

Some further time for consultation, and acceptance on the ground, may be the difference between the success of the Lynx in Kielder and its failure.

NICK ROSSITER
Hexham

underestimate the true red kite population in the Derwent Valley and County Durham.

Finally, for your readers' information, should anyone come across a grounded red kite, alive or dead, please feel free to contact us on 07790 085659.

HAROLD DOBSON (SECRETARY)
Friends of Red Kites in the North East of England

Credit for garden

WITH reference to your piece about developments at No. 28 in the *Hexham Courant* of August 23, Edible Hexham cannot take credit for the garden at No.28.

The garden is looked after (and enthusiastically harvested) by the local residents many of whom have also "adopted" spare strawberry plants!

ELIZABETH LEONARD
(EDIBLE HEXHAM)
Hexham

RAFA still here

I would just like to announce that Hexham Royal Air Force Association branch and club are still open and operating in the Hexham area. People who are currently serving or have served in the RAF ACO or ROC can become a full member.

There is a welfare service available to these members if it is needed. Alternatively there is an associate membership available. Hexham



This photograph of the famous sycamore on Hadrian's Wall was popular on the *Courant's* Instagram feed this month. The sapling and the circular stone wall surrounding it, which stood in front of the tree, have both been removed.

*Photo: HX361882

