

Update

WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL'S NEWSLETTER



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Free family festival

Don't miss this year's free family festival on 7th June at 20 Acres.

Best of Bedlington Awards

Get your nominations in to celebrate West Bedlington's unsung heroes.

Let's talk about the town

We'd love you to come to our Annual Meeting of the Town on 10th April.

SPRING 2025



Hello and welcome



Welcome to our spring issue of Update; a great place to look back at how we ended 2024 and delve into our plans for 2025.

You'll find all sorts of useful information in this issue, from events and competitions, to details about our soon-to-be-published Neighbourhood Plan consultation and the forthcoming local elections. We hope you find it an enjoyable and informative read.

As we approach the end of this current Council, we thought we'd look back at what we have achieved over the last four years.

We have produced our first ever Strategic Plan, and from this, we have put in place measures to improve areas of our provision. As part of this, we have increased our very limited workforce to help fill in some of the shortfalls. The reintroduction of this newsletter to improve community engagement is an example of the type of changes we are implementing to make a positive difference.

We have improved our service provision with the installation of new bus shelters

and bins in West Bedlington as well as continually maintaining our existing ones. We have also kept the Front Street looking its best with gorgeous floral displays. This summer, we plan to replace some of the old planters with new ones, which will be filled with a variety of flowers to provide a year-round display of colour. The old planters that we are retaining will all be given a fresh coat of paint, so they are looking like new.

In the Market Place, we refurbished the public seating to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth II, and around the War Memorial, we refurbished both the public seating and the decorative handrail.

What's more, we have continued to provide a variety of events throughout the year for the whole town to enjoy. Last year's Christmas events were very well supported, and after the issue with 2023's

Christmas tree, and with the help of some local suppliers, we made sure everything was perfect for 2024.

We have upped our game with our summer activities for young residents too, and have included several coach trips for families, such as excursions to Blackpool, Lilidorei and Edinburgh Zoo to name just a few. For this type of trip, we covered admission and lunch costs for children, while adults paid their own way.

In addition, we have provided all sorts of free events in the Easter and summer holidays for children, from pottery classes and sessions with Animal Antics, to den building with Footprints on the Moon, and so much more.

Last year, our festival on 20 Acres was attended by over 3,000 people. Headliner, The Overtones, were supported by so many fantastic acts, with The Greatest Showman ending the weekend on a high.

We also held a D-Day celebration which was attended by over one hundred senior citizens, including over twenty veterans, which was amazing. Also, specifically for yesterday's youngsters, we have provided Easter and Christmas events, including a cinema showing of It's a Wonderful Life and 2024's Magic of Christmas event. It's VE Day 80 on 8th May 2025 and we are planning celebratory events on 9th May - see page 16 for details.

Bedlington turned out in force again for our Remembrance Sunday event on 10th November. The number of people attending increases every year and it's particularly heartwarming to see our emergency services alongside so many young people and civic groups showing their respects to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Our Act of Remembrance on Monday 11th November (with a small group of school children, teachers and their families), attracted a BBC News team. The short piece was broadcast that evening and showed Bedlington and its community in a very good light, and particularly,

highlighted how fantastic the children were and how important it is for future generations to continue to show their respects.

After some significant delays, our draft Neighbourhood Plan is now approaching its final stages, and we will soon be ready to formally consult with residents on the draft Plan. Before the Plan can be adopted, there must be support from the local community, via a referendum. We, therefore, will need your views to inform the final draft. The consultation document will be advertised and widely available, both online and offline, and we would encourage as many residents as possible to submit comments.

Looking forward to May and the local elections, there is a possibility that it could be all change here at West Bedlington Town Council. On 1st May 2025, residents will go to the polls to vote for both county and town councillors. If you are interested in volunteering to become a councillor for West Bedlington Town Council, please email electionstaff@northumberland.gov.uk and take the time to read our article on page 18, although the timeframe to submit a nomination is very tight.

Irrespective of councillor changes, we will have a number of events which are going ahead in the coming months, including some fabulous Easter holiday activities for the whole family and an afternoon tea for our senior residents, including an Easter bonnet competition. Our summer festival on 20 Acres is on 7th June this year, so don't miss it. This is now a one-day event to enable us to provide a street fayre on 23rd August as well as 'It's a Knockout' style event later this summer, too.

Make sure you're following West Bedlington Town Council on Facebook for updates about everything that's new, and if it's specially events that you're interested in, give West Bedlington Town Council Events a follow too, as we have a separate dedicated team who manage that side of our offering.

Finally, from all the team at West Bedlington Town Council, we wish you all the best for spring and summer. Let's hope it's a sunny one!

West Bedlington Town Council

Working to safeguard Bedlington's past, present and future

Always transparent with our budget and spending

Accountability and transparency are essential in everything we do, so we follow a strict legal framework to ensure public money is safeguarded, used economically and effectively, and properly accounted for.

Our budget-setting process begins in November with a draft proposal and is formally approved in January. Quite simply, our budget is our best estimate of spending for the next financial year.

Like all town and parish councils, we receive most of our income from a precept, which is an annual sum of money collected by Northumberland County Council via Council Tax bills. Details of our budget for the financial year 2025/26 are included below:

	Budget 2025/26
Administration	
Staff Salaries	60,296
NI Employer's Contribution	6,562
Pension Employer's Contribution	11,540
Clerks' Training + SLCC	600
Payroll Charge by NCC	200
Travel / Subsistence	100
Sub Total Administration	79,298

Office Costs	
Office Rent	8,500
Room Hire	250
Telephone	620
Internet Hosting	210
Computer Software	550
Postage	20
Printing	200
Stationery	200
Sub Total Office Costs	10,550

Fees & Charges	
Audit - Internal	490
Audit - External	670
Legal / Professional Fees	200
Subscriptions NALC	1,750
Subscriptions General	200
.GOV Emails	600
Sub Total Fees and Charges	3,910

Members' Expenses	
Councillor Training	500
Annual Meeting of the Town	400
Sub Total Members' Expenses	900

Grants & Donations	
Community Chest	3,500
Pupils' Fund	6,000
Sub Total Grants & Donations	9,500

Services	
Play Area Inspections SLA	2,540
Play Area Repairs + Maintenance	1,500
Play Area Replacement Provision	8,000
Bus Shelters SLA	2,070
Bus Shelters Repair + Maintenance	2,000

	Budget 2025/26
Bus Shelter Replacement Provision	4,000
Bedding Plants	18,830
War Memorial	50
Litter Bins Repair + Replacement	4,000
Public Seating Repair + Maintenance	400
Environmental	5,000
Meadowdale Gates SLA	4,530
Atlee Park Bank Path	500
School Art in Bus Shelters	1,000
Insurance	6,030
Newsletter	4,500
Defibrillator	5,000
CCTV	15,450
Road Speed Signs	5,000
Sub Total Services	90,400

Events	
Remembrance Day	500
Christmas Tree	3,000
Existing Christmas Lights	13,500
Christmas Event (inc road closure)	9,000
Santa Giveaways	1,000
Selection Boxes For Schools	1,500
Family Fun Day (Street Fair)	20,000
Event - Halloween	3,450
Event - Summer Live Music Event	30,000
Easter Eggs For Schools	1,200
Easter Holidays Events	1,800
Whit Half Term Events	2,600
Summer Holiday Events	4,000
Blackpool Event	4,000
Additional Day Trips	9,000
Lovely Afternoon	4,000
Pantomime	3,000
Magic of Xmas Event	4,000
Event Booking System	150
Sub Total Events	115,700

Total Budget	310,258
Less Met From Reserves and Income	£12,000
Precept	£298,258

Ever wondered what happens at a Town Council meeting?

West Bedlington Town Council meetings usually take place on the second Thursday of the month and members of the public are welcome to attend and contribute within the open forum.

At the start of each meeting, there is a fifteen-minute open session where the meeting's Chair will invite members of the public to ask questions directly to the Town Council. We're always interested in hearing your views and comments, but once the meeting commences, the public are politely requested just to observe so the Town Council can conduct its business, unless specifically requested by the Chair to speak.

Mobile phones must be switched

off during the meeting, and if the meeting is disrupted in any way, the person/people causing the disruption will be asked to stop, and if they refuse, asked to leave.

Written questions received in advance of the meeting are encouraged, but not essential. If provided in advance, it's easier for an answer to be prepared for the meeting. The Town Council will not enter into any substantive discussion on a question raised if we are unable to answer a question directly. If members of the public are unsure whether a question is within the remit of the Town Council, the Clerk or Assistant Clerk will be able to answer this.

Please note, West Bedlington Town Council can only make decisions on topics that are publicised on the agenda,

except items delegated to the Clerk. Agenda items may be suggested via email – clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk – no later than ten days before each meeting, otherwise the item will be included on a future meeting agenda (if it's a matter that we are responsible for).

You can view meeting agendas and minutes on our website, westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk, and they will also be displayed on the notice board in front of Bedlington Community Centre. If you would like these emailing, please get in touch and we'll add you to our mailing list.

All meetings are subject to approval, however provisional dates for the next six months are as follows: 10th April; 15th May; 12th June; 10th July; 14th August; 11th September 2025.

Would you like to come to the Annual Meeting of the Town?

Every year, we hold an informal meeting for members of the public to chat about the town and everyone is welcome to come along. This meeting is not a Town Council meeting, but it will take place after our monthly meeting on 10th April 2025, just to make life easier for those wanting to attend both.

At the Annual Meeting of the Town, there will be a short presentation from Northumbria Police, an

update on West Bedlington's Neighbourhood Plan from Jo-Anne Garrick, and an open, informal space for residents to discuss issues and make suggestions about any matters relating to the town.

Annual Meeting of the Town, Bedlington Community Centre, Thursday 10th April, 7pm. Free refreshments available afterwards.

Although you can attend without letting us know beforehand, it would be great if you could drop us a quick email to let us know you'll be attending – clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk. We'd hate to run out of biscuits!



Free family festival

See you on 7th June

It's almost that time of year again, when 20 Acres playing field is transformed into a sensational family festival for the whole community. Bring your picnic blankets, your chairs, and your dancing shoes as this year's line-up is looking amazing. As always, there will be food vendors, toilets, rides, and non-stop bands to keep the whole family entertained.

This year, instead of the festival happening over two days, it's a one-day event, so make sure you keep 7th June free.

Enter your pooch in our competition

This year's festival will open at 1pm with a super-cute dog competition. You can pick up an entry form at our office, or visit the news section of our website to download a form. Please email your entry before 15th May to clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk or return your form to West Bedlington Town Council, Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street West, Bedlington, NE22 5TT.

We can't wait to see who is crowned 'the prettiest girl', 'most handsome boy' and 'waggiest tail' to mention just a few of the categories you can enter your four-legged friend into.

Free face painting, henna tattoos and glitter bar

No tickets are required to attend this fantastic festival. What's more, we will also be providing a free glitter bar (age 10+), henna tattoos (age 10+) and face painting for ages three and over.

Take a look at the line-up for who's on, and when, and let's make 7th June 2025 a day to remember.

2pm: Jake Mason
Getting you festival ready

3pm: Harriet Louise Performing Arts Kids' Display
Local theatre school showcase their talent

3.30pm: I am Meghan
Celebrating the music of Meghan Trainor

4.15pm: DJ Cam Stubs
Club classics and sing-along anthems

4.45pm: Glen Townsend
Not just your host, Glen will sing some of your faves

5pm: The Ultimate Girl Band
The UK's best, from Britney and Shania to Pussycat Dolls and more

5.45pm: Liberty X
Michelle, Jessica and Kelli bring more than 'Just a Little' noughties' nostalgia

6.30pm: Crowd Karaoke with Crazy Annie and Glen
Get ready to sing your hearts out together

6.45pm: One Night in Nashville
Boot scootin' fun with the ultimate Nashville experience

7.45pm: \$ax Return
New this year, this hot duo will bring good-time vibes from all the major festivals

8.15pm: DJ Lea Lea
Closing this year's festival, she'll have you singing all the way home

Hop along to some cracking events this Easter

We've got three brilliant events planned for Easter, for residents of West Bedlington, whatever your age.

Please note, the way you book an event has changed. Instead of booking via the events page on our website, all event bookings will now be taken over the phone on a set date and time, so our dedicated event organisers can book you in, manage cancellations and call you back if a space becomes available.

We put so much into making our events enjoyable for the whole community, so if you do book up and can't attend, please text the booking line to let us know as soon as possible so we can offer your space to someone else.



Easter Family Fun Night

Saturday 12th April
7pm to 10.30pm
Bedlington Community Centre

The whole family will enjoy a fun-filled evening of music, games and live entertainment. There will be free chicken nuggets and chips for the kids, too.

Kids' Pottery Class

For ages 4+
Wednesday 16th April
2pm to 4pm
Bedlington Community Centre

Children will have the chance to get creative and learn new skills with this hands-on pottery class; perfect to keep your little chicks entertained this Easter.

Easter Afternoon Tea

Monday 14th April
2pm to 4.30pm
Bedlington Community Centre

Join us for a delightful afternoon tea, bingo and live entertainment. There will also be an Easter bonnet competition with prizes to be won.

Look out for ticket release dates on West Bedlington Town Council Events Facebook page, and once the tickets are available, call **07434 659221** to book.

Our Neighbourhood Plan is almost ready

West Bedlington Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan; an important planning policy document which is led by the community.

The Plan will define what's important to local people to help get the right developments in the right places.

Since the consultation on our draft Neighbourhood Plan, Northumberland County Council adopted the Northumberland Local Plan. As a result, there was a need to review and update the draft

Neighbourhood Plan, which also required further work around design, green spaces and heritage.

A further consultation on a revised draft Neighbourhood Plan will be launched very soon, before it's submitted for independent examination. Residents within West Bedlington who are registered to vote, will then be asked if they want the policies within the Plan to be used to consider planning applications against, in a referendum.

Watch this space for the updated draft Neighbourhood Plan, which we hope will be available to share in the very near future.

We ho-ho-hope you enjoyed the festivities

Christmas is now long gone, but we hope the events that West Bedlington Town Council provided in winter 2024 created lots of lovely memories for you and your family.

Our Christmas lights switch-on event on Saturday 30th November was an amazing success, with hundreds of people coming down to enjoy the festivities. As well as our super-popular ice rink, we also provided rides for the little ones, entertainment, face painting and gifts from Santa – all of which, were free of charge. It was fantastic to see so many people coming to the Market Place to enjoy this wonderful festive event and to support the local food and craft stalls we had there too.

We also provided a free Christmas event specifically for yesterday's youngsters on 9th December at Bedlington Community Centre. This included



afternoon tea, bingo, a festive show, and not forgetting, a good old-fashioned sing-along. By all accounts, a magical afternoon was had by all.

And finally, to end the year on a high, Aladdin and Princess Jasmine flew into town on their magic carpet on 27th December 2024 to entertain hundreds,



morning 'til night, with the panto of all pantos at Bedlington Social Club. Oh, yes they did!

We're already planning this year's events, but April is way too early to be chatting Christmas, so make sure you pick up a copy of Update later in the year to see what exciting things you can look forward to.



A blooming marvellous competition

We would love as many residents and businesses as possible to enter our gardening competition, so West Bedlington is a blaze of colour for summer.

You don't have to have a huge, fancy garden to enter, and you don't need to be an expert gardener either. The kids can get involved too, if they'd like to show off a pot or a trough they've grown. Take a look at the categories in the entry form opposite to see which category or categories would suit you best.

It's free to take part and you can either enter by filling out the entry form and dropping it off at our office, or by emailing your submission over – all of the details are on the form.

You have until Friday 4th July to enter, but if you know you're going to be around the last week

of July when the judging will take place, and you plan on taking part, we'd love to receive your entry now.

We can't wait to see how gorgeous your gardens look. The very best of luck.

New flower planters planned for the Front Street

Not only will your gardens and commercial premises be looking fabulous this summer, but we are also installing new planters along the Front Street and sprucing up some of the existing ones in June, so West Bedlington will be looking its best for residents, people who work here, and those passing through.



Fingers crossed it's a blooming marvellous summer – we've ordered the sun.

Get your nominations in for the Best of Bedlington Awards

We're sure most of you will be familiar with the Pride of Britain Awards; an annual event celebrating the nation's unsung heroes who go above and beyond to make a difference to the lives of others.

Well, just like the Pride of Britain, we are planning our very own version – Best of Bedlington – and we need your entries to recognise local people who live or work in West Bedlington that go above and beyond.

If you know someone, or a group, who deserve special recognition, please email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk with your name, the nominee's name, and a short paragraph

explaining why you're putting them forward.

We would also like to recognise working animals, as we have a number of guide and hearing dogs within our town.

We are planning to hold an awards evening on Friday 12th September at Bedlington Community Centre with a presentation of prizes, so get your thinking caps on and nominate

someone in West Bedlington who you think is making a big difference in our community.





Garden Competition

Entry Form

- Our summer garden competition is free to enter and open to all residents of West Bedlington
- The closing date for entries is Friday 4th July 2025
- Gardens must be available for judging during the final week of July 2025
- Competition judging will be carried out by a panel of local residents and councillors
- Judging criteria: condition of plants, variety of colour and interest, any special features and overall visual impact
- Presentation of prizes will take place on Friday 12th September at Bedlington Community Centre
- Please return your form to West Bedlington Town Council, Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street West, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5TT during our standard office opening hours (Monday, Thursday and Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm) or email your entry to clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk.



Name _____

Address of garden to be judged _____

Postcode _____

Contact telephone number _____

Email _____

Please tick the competition category you would like to enter (you can enter more than one):

☐ Large Garden

☐ Small Garden

☐ Best Hanging Basket

☐ Best Child's Flower Pot or Trough

☐ Best Business Display

“So, can you build us a swimming pool?” we hear you ask

Here at West Bedlington Town Council, we work hard to safeguard Bedlington's past, present and future to ensure the town continues to be a great place to live, work and visit, whilst preserving Bedlington's rich heritage.

For some of our residents, you will know exactly what West Bedlington Town Council is responsible for, and for others, there might be some grey areas. And that's fine – we all lead busy lives and it's our job to help you understand our service offering to the best of our ability.

So, just to clarify, we are not responsible for emptying bins (refuse or litter), planning applications, street lighting, fly tipping, the provision of speed cameras and other traffic restrictions, council tax, housing benefit, or housing in general. Northumberland County Council is the place to contact for those 'bigger' services. Think of us at your first tier of local

government. We provide litter bins, but we can't empty them. We provide public seating and bus shelters, but not the bus stops.

A common misconception is that West Bedlington Town Council is a big organisation with hundreds of staff, bags of resources and lots of money to provide services. The reality is, we only have two part-time members of staff who work hard to support residents and voluntary, unpaid councillors.

We rely on the support and commitment of a few dedicated residents who give up their own time to help the best they can, including our fantastic defibrillator guardians. These volunteers carry out regular, simple cabinet and defibrillator

inspections which are completed and returned to the Ambulance Service via the Town Council's office to keep our seven public-access defibs operational, should anyone in West Bedlington ever need access to these amazing life-savers.

Quite simply, West Bedlington Town Council's budget is limited and remains one of the cheapest parish Council Tax charges in South East Northumberland. We're the people to contact for the smaller things such as play-park maintenance, public seating, community events, defibrillators, Remembrance Day, and so on, not the bigger things such as parking issues, planning, or building a leisure centre.

Our services – the things we can help with

West Bedlington Town Council's services include the provision of:

- Bus shelters
- Children's play areas (not Doctor Pit Park)
- Events for the whole community, including school-holiday activities, music festival on 20 Acres, and Bedlington's Christmas lights switch-on event
- Remembrance Sunday event
- Community grants
- Grants for schools
- Community CCTV
- Community defibrillators
- Litter bins (not the emptying of them)
- Public seating
- War memorial upkeep and flagpole
- Christmas tree and Christmas lights
- Christmas and Easter gifts for primary schools
- Planters and flowers on the Front Street (not the bedding plants)
- Notice board provision and maintenance
- Town gateway features

(for example, the train sign at Atlee Park and the Bedlington terrier sign on Hartford Road East)

- Road speed-awareness signs (maintenance only, not their provision)
- Sun dial in Market Place

All other local council services, for example, housing, refuse collection, Council Tax and housing benefits are the responsibility of Northumberland County Council. You can report all sorts of issues, from fly tipping to street lighting at fix. northumberland.gov.uk or by calling **0345 600 6400**.

Free access to books is just the beginning of the story

Some people might not be aware of our fabulous library right here in West Bedlington, and others may have forgotten, so we thought we'd give them a little shout-out because the library is such an important part of our community.

Bedlington Library is free to join, and once you're a member, it's free to take out books and access ebooks and audiobooks. Whether you're looking for books to ignite your child's passion for reading, fancy dabbling in a new craft, or simply want to try out a new author, there's a world of possibilities inside.

What's more, it's free to use their computers and access the internet for an allocated amount of time. You can also receive free newspapers and magazines through Press Reader and research your family tree with free access to Find My Past and Ancestry.

In the summer holidays, the

library is a hive of activity as they run a super-popular Summer Reading Challenge, organised by The Reading Agency, where primary-aged children are awarded stickers, a certificate and a medal to encourage a love of books and stem the 'summer holiday dip' in children's reading achievements.

They also run clubs for children and adults alike, host various events in the school holidays, and are visited by well-known authors from time to time. So, if you're not a member but want to join, or just want to dust off your library card and visit once again, their contact details are as follows, so why not pop down and support your local library?

Library opening times

Monday	9am – 12:30pm, 1 – 4pm	Friday	Closed
Tuesday	9am – 12:30pm, 1 – 4pm	Saturday	9am – 12pm
Wednesday	9am – 12:30pm, 1 – 4pm	Sunday	Closed
Thursday	9am – 1pm		

Contact details

Call 01670 622202

Email bedlington.library@northumberland.gov.uk

Visit Glebe Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6JX



Giving back to the community

Supporting our community is really important to us at West Bedlington Town Council. You might know about the events we put on, or some of the services we provide, but not a lot of people know about the funding we provide to support voluntary groups and not-for-profit organisations in West Bedlington.

Many organisations have benefited from our Community Chest scheme over the years, so we thought it would be a good idea to start sharing this information, so you can see how the funding directly benefits the town and those who live here. We hope this article raises a little awareness about some of the great work we do behind the scenes, and we also hope it shines a light on some of the fabulous groups who have benefited from our support.

For the financial year 2024/25, West Bedlington Town Council has provided funding for the following local voluntary groups and organisations.

Organisation	Reason for funding	Date granted	Awarded
Cygnus Support	Room hire - community workshops	11.04.2024	£500
Toys, Snacks and Chats Playgroup	Weekly running costs	11.04.2024	£500
Bedlington Salvation Army	Summer activities for children	20.06.2024	£500
SENUG	Advertising and awareness publicity	08.08.2024	£500
Ashington & District Male Voice Choir	Membership publicity	10.10.2024	£300
Wag and Co. NE	Friendship-dogs grant	14.11.2024	£200
Bedlington Imagination Library	Children's book service	12.02.2025	£500

But a table doesn't tell the full story, does it? So, here's a little more about the organisations we have helped, which in turn, will continue to help our community right here in West Bedlington.

Wag and Company

This wonderful charity enables professionally-assessed volunteers and their special dogs to safely befriend and regularly visit elderly dog lovers across the North East.

For an hour or two most weeks, the volunteers and their pet dogs provide elderly people – often in poor health, bereaved and isolated - with something to look forward to, some human company, and a cuddle with a much-missed furry friend.

The funding provided will help Wag and Company to continue their great work in homes right here in Bedlington. Visit wagandcompany.co.uk to find out more about the charity.



Bedlington resident, Gladys, enjoying some quality time with four-legged friend, Jasper.



Ashington & District Male Voice Choir performing at St Cuthbert's Church, Bedlington.

Male Voice Choir

Despite its name, Ashington & District Male Voice Choir has performed many times in Bedlington over the years, including at our Remembrance 2024 service, and at their sell-out Christmas concert at St Cuthbert's Church in December.

The funding provided by West Bedlington Town Council will be used to increase community engagement in the area and attract new members.

Not only can being part of a choir be a rewarding pastime, but singing has also been proven to have positive health benefits, too. Visit ashingtonmalevoicechoir.org.uk to find out more.



The fabulous Lunch Club team at The Salvation Army in Bedlington.

Bedlington Salvation Army

The Salvation Army in Bedlington does so much to support the local community. Their services include cinema club, messy church, baby and toddler groups, food donations, ladies' and men's fellowship, lunch for the over 60s, and Thankful Fridays, where you can drop in for a coffee and a toasted teacake most weeks.

The funding from West Bedlington Town Council will be used to directly benefit residents by offering activities for local families in the school holidays. To find out more about the wonderful work The Salvation Army does in the community, visit salvationarmy.org.uk/ Bedlington, follow their Facebook page (Bedlington Salvation Army) or call 01670 829356.

Their standard opening hours are as follows, however it's always best to call or email before arriving so someone is there to greet you.

- Monday to Wednesday 8am to 3pm (8am to 12pm for the food bank)
- Friday 8am to 12pm.

Bedlington Imagination Library

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book-gifting programme devoted to inspiring a love of reading in the hearts of children everywhere. Each month, they post a high quality, age-appropriate book to children from birth to age five for them to keep forever.

The Bedlington Imagination Library is the first Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in the North East. The funding provided by West Bedlington Town Council will help the organisation to fund a year's worth of books for up to 60 children.

The overall aim of the Bedlington Imagination Library



is to create a community of children and adults who read more often, as reading to children from birth has incredible benefits, such as building secure attachments and raising academic attainment.

Toys, Snacks and Chats Playgroup

Having a safe, engaging environment for little ones to play while grown-ups can chat is such an important part of the week for many parents, grandparents and carers.

The parent and child playgroup – Toys, Snack and Chats – runs from 9.30am to 11.30am every Thursday in term time at Bedlington Community Centre, and the funding provided will help with the weekly costs associated with running such a brilliant group. To find out more, call Julia Masters on 07759481781.

Parent & Child Group

Toys, Snacks & Chats

Thursday 9.30—11.30am
(term-time only)

Bedlington Community Centre
60 W End Front St, Bedlington NE22 5TT

£2.50 for first child—additional children £1.50 each
(0-9 mths free/ 9 -12mths £1.50)

For more information please contact:
Julia Masters : 07759481781

Funded by

Cygnus Support

Cygnus Support is a team of social prescribing link workers, employed by Cygnus, a local counselling charity, who formed a partnership with Wansbeck Primary Care Network in 2021. The team support patients of Guidepost, Bedlingtonshire, Gables and Seaton Park Medical Groups.

Often, it's a non-medical issue that may be affecting someone's wellbeing, and the team can offer general advice and link them into voluntary and community groups and services to get the practical, emotional and social support needed to help. They also run groups and activities that the wider community can join in with. One of those is an adult Lego group, ran weekly by link workers, Graham and Marcelle on a



Some of the group with link worker, Graham, (middle), enjoying their trip to the Hancock Museum.

Thursday at Bedlington Library from 1pm until 3pm.

The funding provided by West Bedlington Town Council helped the group to purchase some new Lego kits and enabled them to go on a trip to the Hancock Museum.



SENUG

SENUG – South East Northumberland Rail User Group – is a voluntary organisation that promotes rail travel and campaigns for better rail services in, within, to, from and through South East and East Northumberland.

The funding West Bedlington Town Council provided will go towards their website and newsletter printing costs to help promote what they do. Visit senrug.co.uk to find out more.

How to apply for funding

Our Community Chest scheme offers local voluntary groups and not-for-profit organisations the chance to bid for funding. To qualify, you must be able to clearly demonstrate that any funding will benefit West Bedlington and/or its residents.

Applications will be considered to help with the following:

- To purchase equipment or materials, full or in part
- To purchase services, such as venue hire or transport that will enable group members to partake in trips regardless of their income
- For running costs (but not wages) of a viable group that is experiencing a period of hardship
- For the provision of recreational activities and facilities
- For activities that raise the profile of the area

Visit westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/community-grants to find out more and to download an application form.

Celebrating the 80th anniversary of VE Day



On 8 May 2025, we mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, and people throughout the UK and beyond will come together to celebrate 80 years of peace since the end of World War II in Europe.

VE Day 80 is not only a tribute to those who fought for freedom, but also a powerful reminder of the resilience and unity that have defined our country ever since.

West Bedlington Town Council is planning to adorn the Front Street with red, white and blue bunting to mark the occasion. We will also be refreshing twelve bus shelters in the town

which will feature brand-new VE 80 themed artwork from St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Meadowdale Primary Academy, West End Primary School and Whitley Memorial C of E Primary School. We thought VE 80 was the perfect occasion to demonstrate the unquestionable artistic talent we have within our schools and bring a splash of

colour and joy to the town.

To celebrate VE Day 80, we're throwing two three-course wartime meals with entertainment – one in the afternoon, and one on the evening of Friday 9th May. Make sure you're following West Bedlington Town Council Events on Facebook for booking information.



Spreading a little joy was our primary focus

It was our pleasure to visit our four primary schools back in December with chocolate selection boxes for all pupils and sweets for those with allergies.

It was fabulous to see pupils' faces light up when we delivered the goodies. St Bede's Catholic Primary School even presented West Bedlington Town Council with a special Community Award to say thank you, which we were delighted to receive.

More yummy treats planned for Easter

It's important for us to shop local, so we will be liaising with Steven Wyeth – Store Manager at Morrisons in Bedlington – to purchase 950 Easter eggs and sweet treats for pupils again this April.

So, if you know any cute little bunnies that go to St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Meadowdale Primary Academy, West End Primary School or Whitley Memorial C of E Primary School, we hope they enjoy their little treat from West Bedlington Town Council and have an egg-cellent Easter break.



Making steps to improve our community



The Neighbourhood Policing Team is continuing to be present in West Bedlington and is making steps to improve our community by listening to what residents want.

This has included an increase in speed-van deployments to catch those ignoring speed limits and putting residents at risk. The area has also seen a 25% reduction in anti-social behaviour in recent months. This could not be achieved if members of the community did not report incidents, so the team would like to encourage residents to continue to use the 999/101 service to keep them in the loop.

For non-urgent matters, please email **Bedlington.NPT@northumbria.police.uk** and watch this space for updates.

Your vote matters

Make sure you're registered

Parish or town council elections are held every four years in Northumberland, with the next one taking place on 1st May 2025.

Please make sure you're registered to vote because your opinion matters. You can register to vote online at gov.uk/register-to-vote (you will need your National Insurance Number to hand).

You can register to vote if you are 16 years old or over and a British citizen or an Irish, qualifying Commonwealth or European Union citizen who is resident in the UK. If you are 16 or 17, you can apply to be added to the register in advance, however you can't vote until you are 18 years old.

DON'T FORGET YOUR PHOTO ID – YOU CAN'T VOTE WITHOUT IT.

Since May 2023, voters in England now need to show an accredited form of photographic identification in order to receive their ballot paper(s) to cast their vote at a polling station for local elections, referendums, recall petitions, Police and Crime Commissioner elections and UK Parliamentary General Elections. Please note, these new requirements will not affect electors who vote by post.

Electors who do not hold any of the accredited forms of photo ID are able to apply (if required) for a free Voter Authority Certificate. Visit gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate to apply.

YOUR POLLING STATION MAY HAVE CHANGED, SO PLEASE CHECK YOUR POLLING CARD BEFORE YOU VOTE.

Interested in becoming a councillor for West Bedlington?

The best way to find out what it's like to be a town councillor is to talk to someone who's doing it now. Feel free to pop along to our monthly meetings (you'll find dates, times and location on page 5) or email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk for more information.

As a councillor for West Bedlington Town Council, you will have shared responsibility for:

- Improving the quality of life of residents and the environment of the local area

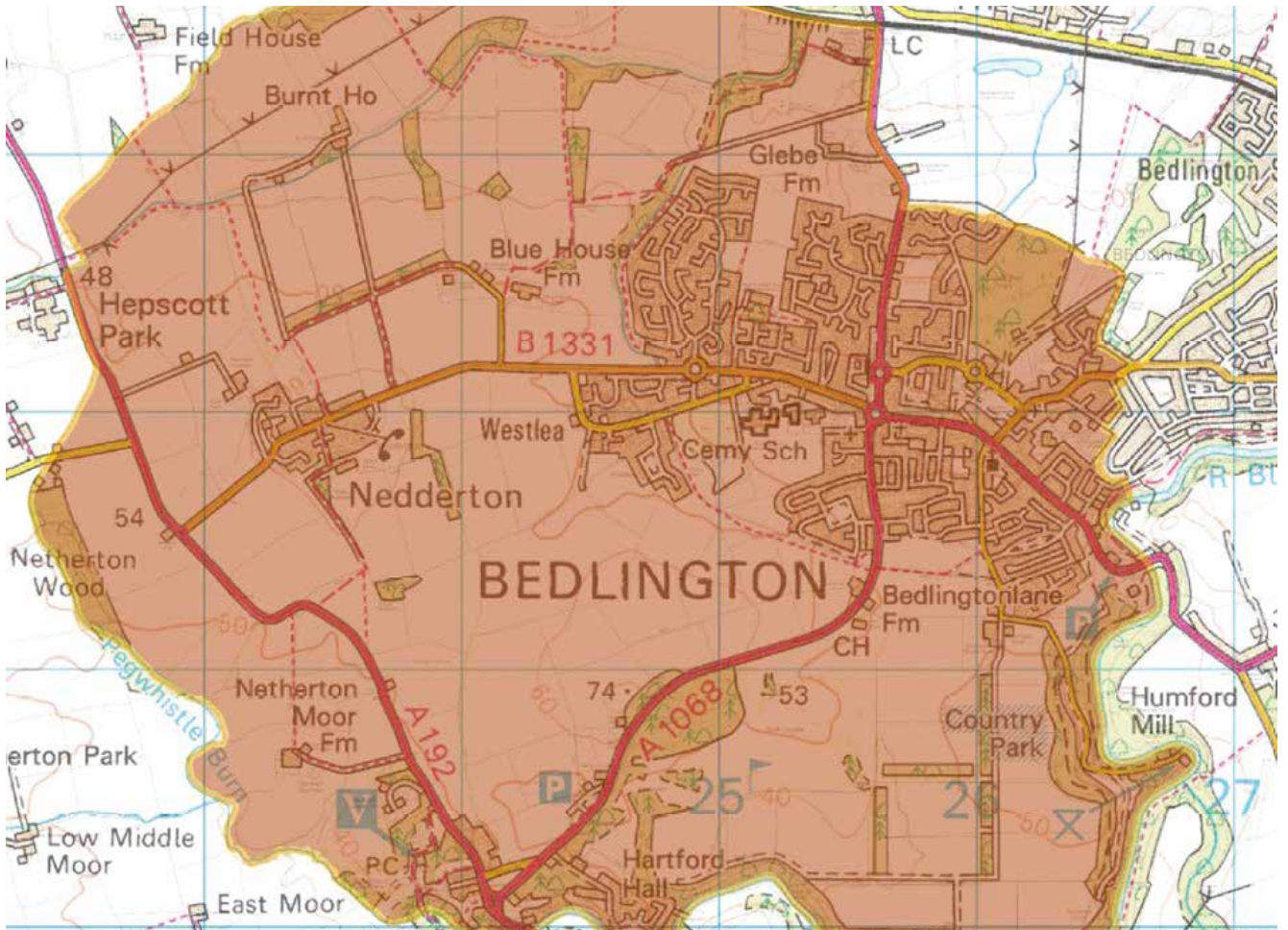
- Helping to decide how much to raise through Council Tax in order to deliver local services
- Influencing and shaping the long-term development policy for the area and commenting on planning applications
- Identifying issues which are important to the lives of the residents you represent
- Working to bring about improvements through local projects

Once elected, you can stay in the council position for a maximum of four years. If, after four years, you want to stay in the post, you can stand for re-election. This does not mean that you have to stay for four years. If you find it's not for you, or you can no longer meet the commitment, you can stand down.

To be qualified to be elected as a member of the Town Council, you must be at least 18 years old, and a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights.

To stand for election, candidates must submit nomination papers, available from electionstaff@northumberland.gov.uk. This paper must be signed by you – the candidate – and also by two subscribers (proposer and seconder) who are electors of the relevant parish or ward. Papers must be submitted to the Returning Officer. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure their papers are received in time. The nomination period for the May 2025 elections is a short window of time from Friday 21st March at 10am to Wednesday 2nd April at 4pm.

All of the 'seats' on parish councils will become vacant in May 2025. If there are more candidates than seats available, the election will proceed to a poll. If not, the Returning Officer will declare the candidates as duly elected, unopposed. Local councillors take up their positions four days after the elections, usually the Monday following the elections, although for 2025, as this is a bank holiday, it will be Tuesday 6th May. Visit electoralcommission.org.uk for more information.



It's photography competition time

We're looking for fantastic photos of our town and who better to ask than the good folk of Bedlington.

If you'd like to enter your image into our photography competition, please email your entry to clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk before the deadline on Friday 8th August 2025.

The winning image will feature in a future issue of Update and go on our website and social-media channels. If we use your photograph, we'll fully credit your name, so you'll get all of the fame. The image on the front cover is from Bedlington resident, John Fox. Thanks so much John.



Your photograph must be of West Bedlington, so take a look at the map to make sure it's not of an area outside of our boundary lines as it'll be such a shame if we can't use it.

Competition judging will be carried out by a panel of local residents and councillors on 11th August and prizes will be received at an awards evening at Bedlington Community Centre on Friday 12th September.

Whether it's a frosty morning at Atlee Park or sunrise on the Front Street, we can't wait to see your photographs of our town. Day, night, close-up, landscape, abstract, classic – we're happy to consider all styles, even art and illustration, so let your creativity flow.



It's always great to hear from you

Whether you'd prefer to call, email, or pop in during office hours, here are the contact details you need. You can also find lots of useful information on our website, from meeting agendas to news about our latest projects and so much more.

Email: clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Please note, our email address has changed. Emails to our old email address will still be received and answered for a limited time, however, please use our new one moving forwards. Thank you.

Website: westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Phone: **01670 457070** (office hours only)

Address: **West Bedlington Town Council
Bedlington Community Centre
Front Street West
Bedlington
Northumberland
NE22 5TT**

Office opening hours (subject to change):

- Monday 9.30am to 1.00pm
- Thursday 9.30am to 1.00pm
- Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Proud to have one of the lowest Council Tax charges in the area

West Bedlington Town Council has a proud history of setting one of the lowest Council Tax charges in the area and is committed to continue to keep this as low as possible.

South East Northumberland Parish / Town Council	2025-26 Parish Precept	2025-26 Parish Only Council Tax (Band D) Charge*
	£	£
Ashington	958,605	115.94
Blyth Town Council	1,490,046	135.44
Choppington	462,435	175.15
Cramlington	1,179,000	125.09
East Bedlington	300,549	142.39
Ellington & Linton	65,000	63.54
Lynemouth	32,000	81.03
Newbiggin	305,586	198.51
Seaton Valley	651,350	132.37
West Bedlington	298,258	86.69

* Parish Only (Band D) Council Tax Charge – the Council Tax charge of a Band D (mid-range property band) dwelling for 2025-2026 for the parish element of your Council Tax bill. This does not include any charges made by Northumberland County Council and Police and Crime Commissioners for Northumbria.

