

An Events Strategy for West Bedlington



A multi-year plan for events within Bedlington from 2026 to 2030 inclusive

Introduction

Events are acknowledged as an important part of social, cultural and economic life, having the potential to enrich the lives of the community whilst promoting the area to visitors. Events are part of the wider programme of engagement with communities, groups and individuals.

The aim of this Event Strategy is to provide a framework for the Council and partner organisations to work together to develop the reputation of Bedlington celebrating the area's unique culture, heritage and landscape.

Vision

Our vision is of a Bedlington that is ambitious, highly skilled, creative, caring and able to make and take advantage of opportunities. We not only want to help each individual achieve what is best for him or her, but also to improve our environment, health, services, products and infrastructure. Our vision sees Bedlington's profile raised. This Strategy will work to ensure the provision of a varied and attractive calendar of well organised and promoted events to positively enhance the quality of life, impact on the local economy and promote community.

Context

Within the context of the Council's Strategic Plan, the Events Strategy will emphasise;

- Promoting a strong sense of identity and community delivering a range of high-quality events that support and lift the community.
- The importance of leadership and vision to make the most of Bedlington's strengths and opportunities. This applies also to the promotion of Bedlington in terms of its heritage and tourism.
- To support local businesses to maximise their full potential within the town.
- Making the most of Bedlington's inherent assets and town centre to support the contribution of tourism to the local economy
- Focusing on developing community and active participation in creating strong and thriving communities.

Events Service Plan

The Events Service Plan include the following events specific objectives.

High Quality, Best Value Services

- To continue to develop partnerships with trustees of Bedlington Community Centre and other community groups to ensure the development and delivery of co-ordinated services and the most efficient use of resources.

Business Development

- To stage more and larger events to promote the area and draw in income that supports and promote local businesses.

Tourism

- To encourage greater numbers of tourists and visitors to the area by staging an annual street fair.

Promoting Social Inclusion - a Caring Society

- To ensure that the Events are economically accessible to all sectors of the community and provide services and events that are of value to and are enjoyed by the community. In addition, we request that the sports and cultural organisations that receive community grants offer a number of free places for attendees during the summer break, this can benefit them and also gives back to the community who has supported them.

Community Planning

Community Planning brings together key West Bedlington organisations with the communities they serve to deliver a shared vision for improving the quality of life in West Bedlington. This commits all partners and local businesses working together to ensure that our activities are co-ordinated to achieve our aims of best value.

Bedlington Community Centre Trustees, local events suppliers and local businesses are the main organisations that West Bedlington Town Council will work with.

Background

There is a growing acceptance of the positive impact that events can have on the area in social, cultural, economic and financial terms.

Events are an integral part of the overall service delivery in West Bedlington and are important in attracting inward investment to West Bedlington through tourism and in widening the appeal of the area as a destination to grow or locate a business and as a place to live and raise a family. Events are part of a wider programme of involvement with communities, groups and individuals and many very valuable events are organised by the Council.

The development of the Events Strategy will entail dialogue and consultation with Community Planning Partners and local businesses.

The Way Forward

Organisational Framework

It is essential that the strategic approach to the provision of events through West Bedlington Town Council enhances current delivery and builds on the high level of work previously carried out. To this end this strategy and its supporting multi-year plan will be the defacto strategy for all events supported by West Bedlington Town Council. Those organising events should see West Bedlington's Events Strategy as strengthening their role as organisers and not in any way inhibiting initiative.

However, all events funded in whole or part are subject to approval by West Bedlington Town Council.

Council Events

It is recognised that the expertise in organising events is ideally suited to the use of external events organisations who will be appointed by the council to through a multi-year program. There is a need however to ensure consistency and cohesion in the assignment of and delivery on specialist tasks e.g. preparation of licences, traffic management planning, promotion planning etc. The events supplier would be

expected to ensure that all aspects of an event are delivered in conjunction with the events workgroup.

- Ensure wherever possible that every effort is made to maximise opportunities to secure external sources of funding and build relationships with the commercial sector and provide additional resources which add extra value to an event.
- Maximise every opportunity to promote and market the event through local media
- Ensure events are part of the wider programmes driving community in line with the Strategic Plan of West Bedlington Town Council and are not simply events for their own sake.

Promotion

Successful promotion of events can showcase the environment and its characteristics, promote an area, strengthen the economy and increase community cohesion and quality of life.

Event Planning Calendar

Promoting the product

The Event Calendar is promoted by three main routes. The first is the Newsletter brochure for delivery to visitor and community focal points e.g. libraries, TIC's, shops, community centres, events etc. The second route is through the Council's website. A corporate "banner" for events, as well as a strapline/mission statement, should be devised to present all events under the same Council corporate brand. The third route will be in line with council's social media policy using such platforms as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and X.

Elected Members/Officers Events Strategy Group

The Events Strategy Group, chaired by an elected official, will advise on the development of West Bedlington's Events Strategy.

Events Co-ordination

West Bedlington Town Council will make use of an events supplier and in partnership with West Bedlington Town Council, Bedlington Community Centre Trustees and local businesses will ensure this strategy and supporting plans are delivered with full transparency.

Financial Framework

Existing funds for events organised through West Bedlington should show a strong support of the principles of this Events Strategy and a sound financial framework should be established endeavouring to include;

Attracting and Developing New Events

Financial resource to provide the opportunity to maximise opportunities for attracting and investing in new events to West Bedlington with support from relevant businesses.

Growing and Developing Existing Events

Investment to grow existing events, be this through developing site infrastructure, access, promotion of the event or providing additional support.

Raising the Profile of Bedlington

Externally arranged events attract a wide audience to Bedlington and therefore provide valuable promotion of the area. West Bedlington Town Council and the Community Planning Partners will use these opportunities more pro-actively to enhance its image through improved marketing resources.

Delivering Value for Money

West Bedlington Town Council will define an annual events budget that events will be delivered from and while there is financial volatility we would expect that this budget would be subject to no more than a 5% risk variance.

Event Assessment Framework

Each event should be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Social/Cultural Benefits: Extent to which the event will contribute to the social and cultural landscape of West Bedlington and advance the wellbeing of its community and visitors to the area
2. Economic Benefits: Extent to which the event will generate a positive economic impact for West Bedlington. This will depend on factors such as the duration of the event and the extent to which it will attract additional visitors.
3. Financial Disbenefit: Extent to which the event will have a negative financial impact on the Council's accounts
4. Image: Extent to which the event can make a positive contribution to the overall image of West Bedlington.
5. Infrastructure: Extent to which the required infrastructure (facilities, venue, staff etc) is already in place.
6. Consistency with Events Strategy: Extent to which the event demonstrates the ability to meet the objectives in the Events Strategy.