

FREE
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Update

WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL'S NEWSLETTER

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**Best of
Bedlington**

Who will you nominate for this year's awards?

**We'd love
your views**

Help to shape the future of town councils.

**PlayZone open
for bookings**

All-weather sports facility, now open for bookings.

SPRING 2026



WEST BEDLINGTON
TOWN COUNCIL

Hello spring (we've missed you)

In this issue of Update, you can find out about our latest events, competitions and what's new at West Bedlington Town Council.



Back again for the second-year running is the Best of Bedlington Awards, and new this year, we're on the lookout for Bedlington's Photographer of the Year and Bedlington's Young Photographer of the Year. Our gardening competition is open too, so be sure to get your entries in now ready for judging in the summer.

You'll also find a new feature in this issue, Service Spotlight, where we delve into different areas of our service offering to help you better understand what we do – and what we don't do – at West Bedlington Town Council. This is to help signpost you to the right people, if and when you need assistance.



What's more, you can learn more about Bedlington Playzone (Westlea) – a new and inclusive all-weather facility where the community can connect, stay fit, and enjoy the benefits of sport and activity come rain or shine (more shine please!).

Inside, you'll also find information about pop-up Police stations, how to have your say about the future of town and parish councils, and much more.

So, pop the kettle on, take five, and find out what's new at West Bedlington Town Council this spring.



Big thanks to Simon Williams for providing the front cover photo, as well as the cherry blossom and daffodil images on this page. The lovely floral photo was taken by Haly Nomm – thank you.

Looking back at the season of sparkle

Autumn and winter are long gone, but hopefully your memories of our Magic of Christmas event, visit from Santa, traditional carols in the Market Place, and our pantomime will have created lots of fantastic memories for you and your loved ones.

It was so disappointing that the wet, windy weather forced us to cancel the Christmas lights switch-on event in November, but we hope you managed to come along to Bedlington Community Centre in December to see Santa, who had a small gift for the children who visited him.

Once again, West Bedlington Town Council gifted selection boxes to all pupils at St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Meadowdale Primary Academy, West End Primary School and Whitley Memorial C of E Primary School. We hope the chocolates (and non-dairy sweets for those with allergies) were well received by the little ones.

On 8th December, it was our free Magic of Christmas event at Bedlington Community Centre with afternoon tea, bingo, a festive show, visit from Santa, and a good old-fashioned sing-along. Thank you to everyone who provided feedback. By all accounts, a magical afternoon was had by all.

On the evening of 23rd December, it was our traditional Christmas carols event in Bedlington Market Place with the brilliant Salvation Army band and choir.

Afterwards, we provided free refreshments in the Community Centre and all children who came along also received a festive story book. If you attended, we're sure you'll agree, it was a lovely event with a real sense of Christmas spirit and togetherness.

And finally, we provided a free pantomime on the morning, afternoon and evening of 28th December for big and small kids alike to end the year on a high. Cinderella and the whole cast were truly outstanding, so if you attended, we hope you had a blast.

We're already planning this year's events, but March is too early to be talking about Christmas, so make sure you pick up a future issue of Update to see what exciting things you can look forward to later in the year. If you'd like to receive the next issue via email or in the post, email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk and don't forget to follow West Bedlington Town Council Events on Facebook to stay in the loop about events throughout the year.



Help to shape the future

of town and parish councils

Northumberland County Council is conducting a county-wide Community Governance Review. The purpose of the Review is to enable them to consider what changes are needed surrounding parish electoral arrangements.

Stage one of the public consultation runs until 30th April 2026. During this consultation, Northumberland County Council will seek views and/or proposals about existing parish boundaries, how many councillors a town or parish council has, if any new parishes should be created, or if any existing parishes should be abolished or merged.

How can you get involved?

Visit northumberland.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/community-governance-review-2026 to complete the online questionnaire. In that section, you will also find answers to your questions and details about parish boundaries. If you'd like to see the boundaries for West Bedlington, the map is on the back page of this newsletter and our website, westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk.

All views and comments that are received during the consultation period will be considered. You can also provide comments by emailing cgr@northumberland.gov.uk or sending a letter to Elections Office, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF. Your opinion is important and will help shape their proposals, so if you're interested, be sure to have your say.

Police drop-in sessions for everyone

Bedlington's Neighbourhood Policing Team will be holding regular pop-up Police station events in Bedlington town centre throughout 2026.

At these events you can meet with an officer from the team to discuss any concerns in your neighbourhood, get the latest crime-prevention advice and find out more about the work they're doing to make Bedlington a safer place to live, work and visit.

If you'd like updates on anything you've previously reported, please bring photographic ID to confirm your identity before discussing the matter.

The next pop-up event will be on Saturday 28th March, 9am-10am at Greggs, Market Place, Bedlington.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team will be at the same location, at the same time, every four weeks thereafter, and everyone is welcome to pop along.



Save the dates

Bedlington Festival – 29th and 30th August 2026

Bedlington Festival is back this summer and it's a two-day event, so we wanted to share the dates with you now, so you can pop it in your diary. It's on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th August on 20 Acres, and the headliner this year is the north east's favourite folk rock band, Lindisfarne.

We have so many exciting plans and we can't wait to share these with you in the next issue of Update which will be out in summer. Our dedicated events organiser will provide updates too, so make sure you're following West Bedlington Town Council Events on Facebook to find out more.



Service Spotlight: litter bins



WEST BEDLINGTON
TOWN COUNCIL

We know litter bins are not the most exciting topic in the world to read about, but our brand-new Service Spotlight section is designed to help you understand what we do here at West Bedlington Town Council in a bit more detail.

We often get emails and calls about missed bin collections, overflowing litter bins, and so on. Quite simply, we don't empty any bins. We're a small team, consisting of two part-time members of staff and nine voluntary, unpaid councillors. It's Northumberland County Council who empty the litter bins we provide in West Bedlington, and the Town Council has nothing to do with wheelie bins for your household either – we don't provide these bins, nor do we empty them.

We currently have 177 litter bins in West Bedlington and we are responsible for their maintenance – replacing them when they have reached the end of their life and repairing them if they are damaged.

You can also request a new litter bin by emailing clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk and this will be added to an agenda for discussion at the next relevant Town Council meeting. If the request is approved, we will order the bin and arrange for a contractor to install it.

For missed-bin collections or litter-removal issues, you need to contact Northumberland County Council, which you can do at fix.northumberland.gov.uk or by calling 0345 600 6400.

In a discussion at our Residents' Panel meeting in autumn last year, it was suggested that it might be helpful to go into more detail about each area of our service offering, so as a result, Service Spotlight will be a new, regular feature in Update. We know this is not the most riveting read ever, but hopefully, you'll now know who to contact if you ever need a bin or rubbish-collection issue resolving in future.



Nominate someone who's making a difference in our community

Last year's first-ever Best of Bedlington Awards were fantastic, so we're doing it all again this year and we need your nominations to recognise people who live or work in West Bedlington that go above and beyond.

There will be an award for the best individual, best young person (under 16 years old), and the best group, so get your thinking caps on.

Judges will be looking at the impact an individual or group has on the town, the effect they have on others, and ways in which they go above and beyond to make a difference to our community as a whole.

If you know someone, or a group, who deserve special recognition, please drop us an email at clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk with your name, the nominee's name, and a short paragraph explaining what makes them stand out.

We're planning on holding an awards evening in November with a presentation of prizes, so we'd love you to nominate someone who you think is making a big difference in our community.

Last year's winners

The 2025 Best of Bedlington prizes and awards were presented at a small celebration event before our Town Council meeting on 11th September at Bedlington Community Centre. The winners were Ashleigh Donnelly and the team at Paramount Health and Fitness Centre in Bedlington (incorporating Fitness Freaks); Derek Ions; Kim Jackson and Julia Ricaton; John Laws; and Angela Clark. We can't wait to see the entries for this year's awards.

Email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk to nominate someone you think deserves a Best of Bedlington Award for 2026.

Last year, Derek Ions won a Best of Bedlington Award for raising over £140,000 for Air Ambulance by making and selling shepherds' hook style walking sticks. We said all profits went to charity, but in actual fact, it was all proceeds. Once again, well done Derek on this fabulous achievement.



Your little chicks will love this competition

West Bedlington Town Council is running a fun little competition to find the best egg cress heads designed and grown by pupils in our four fabulous primary schools in West Bedlington.

If your little chick(s) attend St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Meadowdale Primary Academy, West End Primary School or Whitley Memorial C of E Primary School, they will get their free seeds on Tuesday 17th March, then they can grow and decorate their egg cress heads at home.

To make a cress head, decorate an old eggshell with a face, fill it with damp cotton wool, sprinkle lots of cress seeds on top, and keep it in a sunny spot, watering daily so the cotton wool stays moist. Then – and this is the hardest part – you'll need an 'eggstra' sprinkle of patience. Wait and watch as the 'hair' grows in about a week, ready for sandwiches or to add to scrambled eggs on toast. Yummy!

You can add googly eyes, costumes and colour to your eggs, or just draw a simple face – it's your cress head, so do it your way and let your creativity flow.



Once your egg's 'hair' has grown and you're ready to enter, send your photograph (of the egg only) to clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk, alongside the name of your child and the school they attend. All four primary schools in West Bedlington will be taking part, so please remember to pop your school's name in your email.

Closing date for entries is 30th March. Judging will take place on 2nd April. Good luck everyone and happy growing.

Easter eggs for every-bunny

Once again this year, we will be gifting all pupils in St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Meadowdale Primary Academy, West End Primary School and Whitley Memorial C of E Primary School with a chocolate egg or sweets for those with allergies. We hope they enjoy their little treat and have a lovely Easter break.



A cracking event for yesterday's youngsters

And it's not just about the little chicks this Easter. West Bedlington Town Council has an afternoon of fun and laughter planned for yesterday's youngsters on Monday 30th March, 1pm until 3.30pm at Bedlington Community Centre. There will be afternoon tea, bingo and live entertainment from Harriet and the fabulous Crissy Rock with her hilarious comedy show. There will also be an Easter bonnet competition with prizes to be won.

Easter disco for the whole family

Join us on Friday 10th April, 6pm to 9.30pm at Bedlington Community Centre for a fabulous evening of music, games and fun. There will be an Easter fancy-dress parade and K-Pop Demon Hunters inspired disco – don't miss it, it's gonna be 'Golden'.

For more information and to book, visit [West Bedlington Town Council Events on Facebook](#).



Who will scoop an award this summer?

Get your watering cans, gloves and trowels ready because West Bedlington Town Council's gardening competition is back for 2026 and we'd love as many residents as possible to enter.

It's free to take part and you can enter by filling out the entry form on page 10 and dropping it off at our office, or by emailing your details over to clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk before the closing date on 24th July.

There will be a small prize for first, second and third-place winners. For each garden entered, judges will consider overall design and layout, variety and condition of plants, year-round content, features, edibles, fragrance, use of space and more. It doesn't matter if you're an expert gardener or a newbie; have a small garden or a large space – we're happy to receive entries from any green-fingered residents in West Bedlington.

Gardens will be judged on Thursday 20th August and there will be an event in November to present prizes. We can't wait to see how colourful, vibrant and beautiful your gardens look. Fingers crossed for lots of sunshine.

Pick up a flowerpot for the little ones to grow

If you would like to enter a flowerpot that a child (under 11) has grown, please collect a free, empty pot from our office from 15th June, plant at home, and then bring the little one's fully-grown flowerpots to Bedlington Festival, 20 Acres, on Saturday 29th August to be judged. Simply come along to the stage area at 2pm, where the judges will be waiting to see all budding young gardeners' creations and choose a winner. Our contact details and office opening hours are on page 18.



Gardening competition entry form

-  Our summer garden competition is free to enter for residents of West Bedlington only
-  The closing date for entries is Friday 24th July 2026
-  Gardens must be available for judging on Thursday 20th August 2026
-  Competition judging will be carried out by a panel of local gardening experts and councillors
-  Judging criteria includes (but is not exhaustive of) condition of plants, variety of colour and interest, use of space, special features, and overall visual impact
-  Presentation of prizes will take place in November 2026



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 _____



Everyone's welcome to attend our regular monthly meetings, where councillors get together to make informed decisions about projects and spending, as well as discussing general Town Council business. It's ok if you're washing your hair that night, but if you're interested in popping along, you are very welcome to attend.

In May every year, a schedule of annual meeting dates is agreed by councillors, which is usually the second Thursday of the month at 6.30pm in Bedlington Community Centre. Visit the 'Meetings' section of our website, westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk, to find our next scheduled meeting date.

At the start of each meeting, there's a fifteen-minute open session where the Chair will invite members of the public to ask agenda-related questions directly to West Bedlington Town Council. We're always interested in hearing your views and comments, but once the question-and-answer session ends and the Town Council meeting commences, the public are politely requested just to observe so we can conduct our business, unless specifically requested by the Chair to speak. There is an opportunity to ask questions which are not related to the agenda at the end of the meeting too.

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.

We 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 agenda (if it's a matter that we're 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 our meeting agendas emailed once a month, please get in touch and we'll add you to our mailing list.

We hope to see you at a Town Council meeting or event in the not-too-distant future.

You're invited to the Annual Meeting of the Town

Every year we hold an informal meeting for residents to chat about the town. This meeting is not a Town Council meeting, but it will take place after our monthly meeting on Thursday 9th April 2026, just to make life easier for those wanting to attend both.

The Annual Meeting of the Town is an open, informal space for residents to discuss issues and make suggestions about any matters relating to the town. 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 if you plan on coming so we've got an idea of numbers (and know how many biscuits to get in).

Annual Meeting of the Town
Thursday 9th April, 7pm
Bedlington Community Centre
Free refreshments afterwards

Want to pop along?
Please email us at:
clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk



Two competitions, one goal:

to capture Bedlington in its best light



Last year we were blown away by the photography competition entries we received, and this year, we want to develop this further still.

In 2026, we're running two competitions, but with one clear goal – to showcase Bedlington in its best possible light.

The hunt is on for:

- Bedlington's Photographer of the Year
- Bedlington's Junior Photographer of the Year

Let's get into the details:

- Photographs must be taken in 2026
- Photographs must be taken in Bedlington (no sneaky holiday pictures from Hawaii)
- The subject of your photograph can include buildings, nature, animals and art
- Bedlington's Junior Photographer of the Year – entrants must be 16 years or under
- Bedlington's Photographer of the Year – entrants must be 17 or over
- The deadline for both competitions is 18th September 2026
- Competition judging will be carried out by a panel of local residents and councillors on 25th September 2026
- Prizes will be received at an awards evening in November (details to come later in the year)

Enter now – great exposure for budding photographers

If you'd like to enter your image(s) into either photography competition, please email your entry to clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk before the deadline on 18th September. When you send your email, please:

- Make sure your subject line is either 'Junior Photographer of the Year' or 'Photographer of the Year' so we know which competition you're entering
- Tell us where your photograph was taken in Bedlington

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.

Whether it's a close-up of a deer at Humford Woods, or sunrise on the high street, we can't wait to see your photographs of our town. Happy snapping.

Bedlington PlayZone now open for bookings

The brand-new, state-of-the-art Bedlington PlayZone (Westlea) is your go-to outdoor sports and activity space, designed to bring people of all ages and abilities together.

Whether you're looking for a friendly kickabout, a structured sports session, or just want to stay active, look no further than this all-weather sports facility which is open to everyone.

There are allocated times throughout the day that the PlayZone is free to use, meaning it cannot be booked at those times (other than special requests) and anyone wanting to use the facility during the dedicated hours is welcome to do so. This may mean sharing the court with other users/groups, so please be considerate and courteous when using the space.



The PlayZone is now available for private bookings, with specific free-access hours too.

To make a booking, visit book.footballfoundation.org.uk/BedlingtonPlayzone

Free-access hours

Monday – Friday
8am – 9am &
3pm – 6pm

Saturday & Sunday
Free access at all times

Brand-new, all-weather sports facility

Bedlington Playzone free-to-use hours are 8am to 9am, and 3pm to 6pm, Monday to Friday in term time. It's also free to use on Saturday and Sunday, and throughout the school holidays, unless there is a special booking.

To make a booking, visit book.footballfoundation.org.uk/BedlingtonPlayzone, choose your preferred date and time, then secure your slot. On the website, you'll see a calendar with the date and time slots which are available to book (up to 14 days in advance) and you'll also see the open-access times. To make a booking, simply choose your preferred date and time, then secure your slot. Once your booking is confirmed, you'll receive a four-digit PIN, which you'll need to enter the facility.

For any regular-booking requests before 1st April 2026, please email SportsDevelopment@northumberland.gov.uk. The management of bookings will transfer to West Bedlington Town Council on 1st April 2026. From that date, please contact clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk and we'll get back to you within three working days.

Haven't seen the new Bedlington PlayZone yet? You'll find this fantastic new facility at Westlea Park, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6DX. It's an inclusive, safe, fun environment where the community can connect, stay fit, and enjoy the benefits of sport and activity. What's more, with its durable surface and floodlighting, you'll have the perfect space to play, train, or celebrate, whatever the weather.



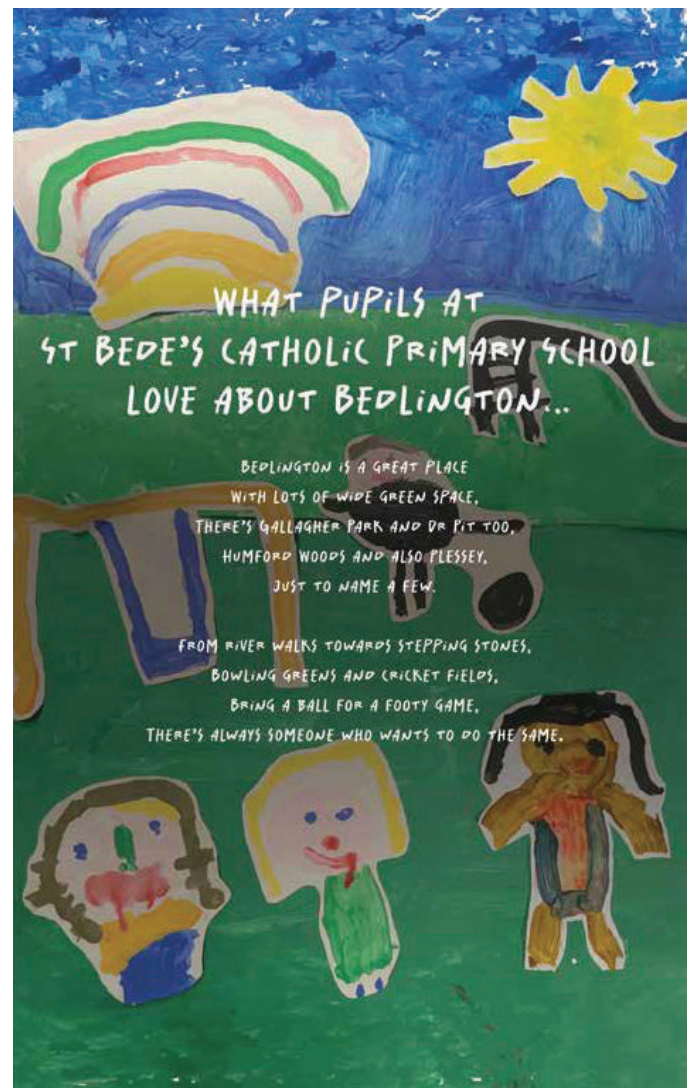
We hope you love the new bus-shelter artwork

West Bedlington Town Council has refreshed eight bus shelters in the town this March with gorgeous poems and drawings from pupils at our four fabulous primary schools. We gave the children free rein to sketch or write about whatever they loved about Bedlington, and the work we got back was delightful to see.

As always, the collaboration and support from St Bede's Primary School, Meadowdale Primary Academy, West End Primary School and Whitley Memorial C of E Primary School was outstanding. As well as a big thanks to the teachers and staff for making this project possible, we would also like to thank the children for sharing their creative ideas to really bring the theme to life.

So, whether you're waiting for a bus in Bedlington this spring, or just passing by, we hope the new artwork brightens your day.

What pupils at Whitley Memorial C of E Primary School love about Bedlington...



Your town council, here for you

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.

West Bedlington Town Council employs two part-time members of staff to support residents and councillors (we aren't a huge team like Northumberland County Council). We have nine voluntary, unpaid councillors, representing two electoral wards – Bedlington Central and Bedlington West – who help to inform decisions about local services and contribute to the overall wellbeing of our community.

Our services include the provision of:

- Children's play areas (Meadowdale, 20 Acres, Westlea – not Doctor Pit Park)
 - Bus shelters
 - Litter bins (we provide the bins, but Northumberland County Council empty them)
 - Public seating
 - Events for the whole community
- (for example, school-holiday activities, Bedlington Festival, Christmas lights switch-on event and Remembrance)
- Community grants
 - Grants for primary schools
 - Community CCTV
 - Community defibrillators
 - Planters and flowers on the Front Street (not the bedding plants)
 - War memorial and flagpole maintenance
 - Christmas tree and lights
 - Christmas and Easter gifts for primary schools
 - 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 the 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.

For everything Town Council related, you can get in touch with us via email or telephone, or feel free to pop in and see us during our office opening hours.

Email: clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Phone: 01670 457070

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

Office opening hours:

- Monday 9.30am to 1pm
- Thursday 9.30am to 1pm
- Friday 9.30am to 1pm



Scan QR code to
visit our website

westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

West Bedlington Town Council

Working to safeguard Bedlington's past, present and future

Meet your councillors



Brian Denny, Mayor

Central Ward

As an avid traveller and photographer, I stood as a councillor so I could do the best for the town I know and love, bringing new ideas from my travels.

brian.denny@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk
07407690897



Trevor Austin

Central Ward

Bedlington has been home to my family for over twenty five years. Now I feel it's time to give something back. I want to use the experience I've gained over a lifetime of work to make a meaningful contribution to our community.

trevor.austin@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk
07407 787026



Dave Chapple

West Ward

After growing up in Bedlington Station and completing a full career in the Army, I chose to make Bedlington my permanent home. I care deeply about our town and want to do my best for its residents.

lawrence.chapple@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

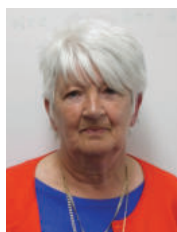


Sian Denny

West Ward

I am really honoured to have been elected on to our Council and will endeavour to do my very best for our great town and its community.

sian.denny@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk



Catherine Henderson

West Ward

catherine.henderson@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk



Adam Hogg

West Ward

I have lived in Bedlington all my life and have been a Town Councillor since 2013. I have a particular interest in planning and have raised residents' views at public meetings.

adam.hogg@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk



Al Roberts

West Ward

al.roberts@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk
07760818525



Christine Taylor

Central Ward

christine.taylor@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk
07591621238



Victoria Thompson

Central Ward

victoria.thompson@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

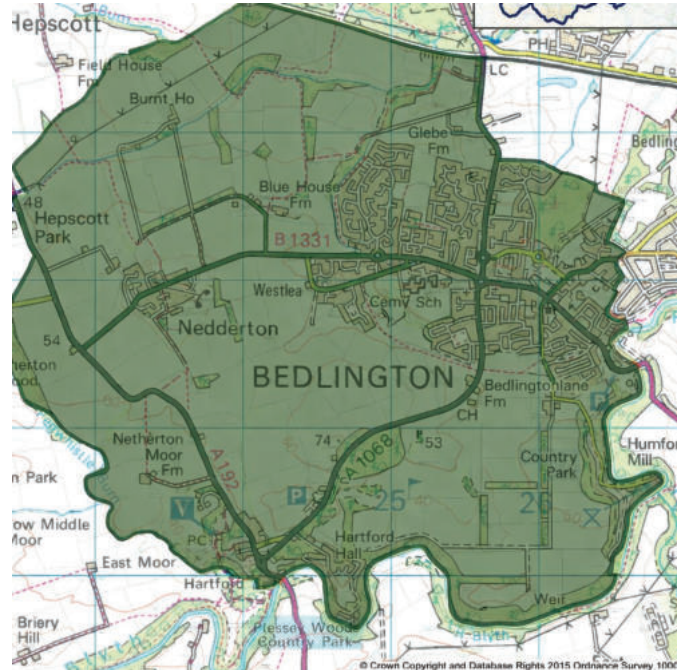


**WEST BEDLINGTON
TOWN COUNCIL**

Safeguarding Bedlington's past, present and future

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

Some residents tell us they aren't exactly sure which part of Bedlington is east and which part is west. West Bedlington Town Council represents two thirds of Bedlington, including the town centre and the villages of Nedderton and Hartford Bridge to the west. The map on this page shows the boundary line, and if you'd like to view an interactive map in more detail, visit our website and zoom away.



Website: westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Email: clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

Phone: 01670 457070



Scan QR code to
visit our website

westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

