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Update

WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL'S NEWSLETTER

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say festival?**

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SUMMER 2026



**WEST BEDLINGTON
TOWN COUNCIL**

Let's make it a summer to remember



Warmer days, longer nights and ice creams galore – there's a whole lot to love about the summer, and this year, West Bedlington Town Council has a range of fantastic events to make this season even more memorable.

From a roller disco and outdoor cinema to our two-day family festival on 20 Acres, it's certainly heating up to be a summer to remember. Check out pages 6 and 7 for details of all events and don't forget to follow West Bedlington Town Council Events on Facebook to stay in the loop.

Our competitions are still open to enter too, so don't miss out on the fun. There's the Best of Bedlington Awards once again this year, so get your thinking caps on for an individual, group or young person you think would be a worthy winner.

We're also looking for entries for our gardening and photography competitions, so be sure to get your entries in as soon as possible. There will be an awards night in November to celebrate the achievements and present the prizes for all competitions, so check out pages 3, 4 and 5 for more information.

In this issue of Update, we're talking about electronic road-speed signs in our Service Spotlight section on page 8, and you'll find a detailed section about our budget-setting process and Council Tax on pages 14 to 17. You can also find out more about a new community-minded fruit/veg/plant swap on page 12 and read an update about our Neighbourhood Plan on page 13.

What's more, on page 10, you can learn more about how to book Bedlington Playzone (Westlea) – an all-weather facility where the community can connect, stay fit, and enjoy the benefits of sport and activity, whatever the weather. Jump to page 11 to see a cracking selection of egg cress-head entries from primary-school children, and find out more about a fun flowerpot competition for the little ones this summer on page 12.

So, if you have five minutes to spare, why not grab a comfy chair, a glass of something cold, and get up to speed with what's new at West Bedlington Town Council this summer.

Hurry, our competitions are closing soon

This November, West Bedlington Town Council is holding an awards ceremony for the winners of our 2026 competitions and their families. But don't wait until later in the year – all of our competitions are open now and free to enter, so get your entries in now before it's too late.

Best of Bedlington

Last year's first-ever Best of Bedlington Awards were outstanding, 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 deserves 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.

The winner of each category will receive a £50 Amazon voucher. What's more, all nominees in the Best of Bedlington young person category, regardless of whether they win or not, will receive a certificate of achievement too.



Gardening Competition

West Bedlington Town Council's gardening competition is free to take part and you can enter by filling out the entry form on page 5 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 £70 Amazon voucher for the first-place winner, £50 for second place, and a £30 voucher for third place.

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. We can't wait to see how colourful, vibrant and beautiful your gardens look.



Bedlington's Photographer of the Year

Last year we were blown away by the photography competition entries we received, and this year, we want to develop this further still. Let's get into the detail:

- 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
- Entrants must be 17 or over
- The deadline is 18th September 2026
- Competition judging will be carried out by a panel of local residents and councillors on 25th September
- Prizes will be received at an awards evening in November (£100 Amazon voucher for first place, £30 for second place, and £20 for third place)

If you'd like to enter, please email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk before the deadline on 18th September. When you send your email, please use 'Photographer of the Year' in the subject line and 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.



Bedlington's Junior Photographer of the Year

We are running a brand-new competition this year for budding young photographers. Here are the details:

- Entrants must be 16 years or under
- 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
- The deadline is 18th September 2026
- Competition judging will be carried out by a panel of local residents and councillors on 25th September
- Prizes will be received at an awards evening in November (£100 Amazon voucher for first place, £30 for second place, and £20 for third place)

If you'd like to enter, please email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk before the deadline on 18th September. When you send your email, please use 'Junior Photographer of the Year' in the subject line and tell us where your photograph was taken in Bedlington.

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.





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 _____

Our two-day family festival is back this summer

On Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th August, our free family festival is back on 20 Acres, and we can't wait to welcome you.

What's free?

Not only are the musicians and performers free to watch, but there will also be free face painting, a gorgeous glitter bar, henna tattoos, pottery classes, a giant games screen and balloon modelling. The allocated parking on 20 Acres is also free, but please be mindful of residents' houses and do not park on the nearby streets.



What's new?

For summer 2026, there will be some local businesses at this event, including Tropic Skincare, a tombola, a memory tree stall with some freebies, knitted toys, dog treats and bandanas, wooden toys, a bake sale, and much more.

What else?

There will be reasonably-priced festival food and drinks available, and a brilliant selection of rides for big and little kids alike.

Although camping overnight is not permitted, feel free to bring along your gazebos, big umbrellas, chairs, blankets, wind breakers and picnics. We hope there's no need for the umbrellas and blankets though – we've ordered the sun.

We have no intention of changing the line up, but management reserves the right to make changes to the acts without prior notice. Additionally, as it's a family festival, management has the right to ask anyone to leave, if they feel it is necessary.

And finally, please dispose of your rubbish responsibly to keep 20 Acres looking spick and span, and be respectful of nearby residents when leaving the field. Thanks so much for your cooperation and understanding. If we all follow these simple rules, it's set to be an amazing weekend, as always.

Saturday's line-up – 29th August

- 2.00pm: Festival opened by a member of West Bedlington Town Council
- 2.05pm: Meet your host, Jason Jones, and resident DJ, Cam Stubbs
- 2.45pm: Echo Park Band
- 3.45pm: Dance display from Harriet Louise Performing Arts
- 4.00pm: K-Pop Universe
- 4.30pm: Glen Townsend
- 5.15pm: Luke Combs Tribute Band
- 6.20pm: Laura Scott
- 7.00pm: Boy Band 3
- 7.45pm: Line dancing
- 8.00pm: Miss Nashville
- 8.45pm: Foam party – prepare to get wet!

Sunday's line-up – 30th August

- 2.00pm: Glen Townsend and DJ Cam Stubbs
- 2.15pm: Will Gordon
- 2.30hrs Reflex Band
- 3.30pm: Beatlemania
- 4.45pm: Teddy Sings Tribute to Teddy Swims
- 5.45pm: The Lindisfarne Story Band featuring Billy Mitchell and Ray Laidlaw
- 6.45pm: DJ Cam Stubbs
- 7.30pm: Festival closes

Bring your picnics, your camping chairs, and your best singing voices, and let's enjoy a weekend of music and fun together, whatever the weather.

Sizzling summer events, whatever the weather

This July, we have a range of amazing free events for the whole family, from a school's-out disco with Sweet Sabrina to start the holidays in style, fab pottery classes, and a thrill-seeking excursion to Lightwater Valley.

In August, we're continuing the fun with a mad hatter's tea party, roller disco, outdoor cinema, it's-a-knockout event with archery and foam party, and a trip to the awe-inspiring Centre for Life.

And, of course, it's our super-popular two-day summer festival on 20 Acres on the 29th and 30th August. This year's headliner is Newcastle's favourite folk rock band, Lindisfarne, back by popular demand.



As always, our dedicated events organiser will provide updates, so make sure you're following West Bedlington Town Council Events on Facebook to find out more about all things events. We hope you all have the best summer ever.



Service Spotlight: speed-awareness signs

In this issue of Update, the spotlight is on electronic speed-awareness signs, so you can learn more about what West Bedlington Town Council is responsible for, and what's outside of our remit.

Electronic speed-awareness signs in West Bedlington are provided and installed by Northumberland County Council. West Bedlington Town Council can't decide to install speed-awareness signs and can't choose their location either. What's more, we have nothing to do with managing the signs' readings, roadworks, speeding or traffic management.



West Bedlington Town Council do, however, look after the maintenance and repair of ten speed-awareness signs in West Bedlington. So, we can clean them and fix them when they aren't working – we have a service-level contract in place for this.

Speed-awareness sign location	Type of sign
A192 Shields Road (12067)	Your Speed Is
A1068 Hartford Road at (golf course entrance), NE22 6AA	Your Speed Is
B1331 near Oakdale, Nedderton, NE22 6AT	Your Speed Is
B1331 near Hallwood Close, Nedderton	Your Speed Is
A1068 Hartford Road south bound, NE22 6AE	Vehicle Activated
A1068 Hartford Road, NE22 6AE	Vehicle Activated
Church Lane, south of Towers Close, NE22 5EL	Vehicle Activated
Church Lane, opposite Millfield junction, NE22 5EA	Vehicle Activated
Bedlington Country Park (1)	Vehicle Activated
Bedlington Country Park (2)	Vehicle Activated

These signs are installed at key locations to encourage driver compliance; recording speed data and displaying visual feedback, such as a green smiley face or flashing speeds when motorists exceed the limit.

Northumberland County Council has rules on where they will install signs.

They can fit signs:

- On the highway verge or street furniture owned by Northumberland County Council
- Where drivers have clear sight of a sign - 60-100m before they reach it
- On roads with street lighting or where they can fit a solar panel – no trailing cables
- On roads with speed limits, not on private roads or car parks

They can't fit signs:

- Right next to junctions or bends where the sign would be hidden
- Too close to existing signs
- On private land without landowner's permission
- On A-roads or trunk roads – that's National Highways' responsibility, not Northumberland County Council

So, if you ever have a speed-awareness sign enquiry regarding maintenance, it's West Bedlington Town Council you need to contact (clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk) and for anything else, it's Northumberland County Council.

Our spring events and giveaways were a big hit

Once again at Easter, West Bedlington Town Council gifted all pupils at 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 also hosted a fun-filled afternoon for yesterday's youngsters on Monday 30th March at Bedlington Community Centre and a brilliant K-Pop Demon Hunters inspired disco on Friday 10th April. If you attended either events and have any feedback or photos you'd like to share, please email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk – it's always great to hear from you. For future events, visit West Bedlington Town Council Events on Facebook to stay in the loop.



Book a session at Bedlington's all-weather sports facility

Whether you're looking for a friendly kickabout, a structured sports session, or just want to stay active, look no further than Bedlington PlayZone (Westlea).

The PlayZone is free to use between 8am and 9am, and 3pm and 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. Anyone wanting to use the facility during the dedicated free hours is welcome to do so, however, this may mean sharing the court with others, so please be considerate and courteous when using the space.



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 available to book (up to 14 days in advance) and you'll also see the open-access times when it's free to use. 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, email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk and we'll aim to get back to you within three working days.

Bedlington PlayZone is located 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.

Brand-new community defibrillator on site

Of course, we hope that no one ever needs to use it, but it's good to know there's a brand-new defibrillator at Bedlington PlayZone (Westlea).

A defibrillator is a device that gives a high-energy electric shock to the heart through the chest wall to someone who is in cardiac arrest. This high-energy shock is called defibrillation and it's an essential life-saving step in the chain of survival.

West Bedlington Town Council is responsible for the provision and management of six defibrillators which are all on the outside walls of the following places:

- Bedlington PlayZone (Westlea)
- Bedlington Masonic Hall, Hartford Road
- Synergy Healthcare, Front Street East
- Bedlingtonshire Golf Club, Hartford Road
- Netherton Social Club, 1A Netherton Lane
- Willow Vale, 69 Glebe Road



There is also a defibrillator in Bedlington Community Centre which is available to use when the centre is open, and the one at Plessey Woods will be back in action when the new café is finished and open to the public.

Would you like to join a steering group?

If you would like to join a brand-new steering group to support the continued community engagement of the PlayZone, please email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk to register your interest and we'll pass your details on. Thank you.

Eggcellent cress-head entries from primary-school pupils

We were thrilled with the response we had from our fun little cress-heads competition. The judges had the hard job of anonymously picking one winner from each of the four primary schools in West Bedlington, but they picked the entries that stood out for their creativity and good 'hair' growing skills. Cracking job everyone!

We had some fabulous comments about this competition from parents and carers, including, "Can I please feed back that this is such a lovely idea and we loved doing it!" and "This was such a great activity which brought my son tonnes of excitement each morning, thank you!"

Unfortunately, we couldn't fit every entry in this summer issue of Update, but we've included a diverse selection to give you an idea of the brilliant entries we received. Every submission is available to view on our website, so head on over to westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk to see them all.



Get the kids interested in gardening with a competition of their very own

Do you have a little one under 11 years old who would like to grow their own flowers and/or vegetables in a plant pot we've provided, for a chance to win a small prize?

Yes? Then please pop along to West Bedlington Town Council's office in Bedlington Community Centre to collect a free plant pot. Our standard opening hours are 9.30am until 1pm Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, and our full contact details are on page 18, should you need to call or email us.

Once your child has their plant pot, they'll need to add soil and get to work growing and looking after their flowers and/or veg at home.

To enter the competition, bring the little one's fully-grown flowerpots to Bedlington Community Centre between 10am and 12pm on Thursday 27th August to be judged. The winner will be notified on Friday 28th August. If you can't come along on the 27th, please email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk to arrange an alternative date.

Judges will consider overall visual interest, variety of flowers, colour, and plant/veg health. The kids can also decorate their plant pots to add even more colour and creativity to their entry. We hope this competition inspires a love of gardening and the kids enjoy taking part.



Fruit/veg/plant swap in the community, for the community

This August, there will be a table outside of Bedlington Community Centre where green-fingered residents can leave any extra produce they've grown, from tomatoes and leeks, to blackberries and rhubarb, or even cuttings from plants.

It's a new community-minded idea where items will be free to take, so pop along from Monday 3rd August until Friday 28th August to contribute to, or take from the table.

Take what you need, leave what you can

ACCEPTED:

- ✓ Homegrown fruit, vegetables and plants only
- ✓ Whole and uncut produce only

NOT ACCEPTED:

- ✓ Cooked food, preserves, eggs, meat
- ✓ Shop-bought produce



Please note, produce is not inspected by West Bedlington Town Council, so take at your own risk and for personal use only. For a full set of rules, visit westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk or email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk to request a copy.

An update on our Neighbourhood Plan



West Bedlington Town Council has prepared a draft Neighbourhood Plan which has been informed by feedback from residents, community groups and statutory consultees. The consultation ended on 3rd November 2025, and West Bedlington Town Council is currently considering the responses.

We need to revise the Plan following feedback before we formally submit it to Northumberland County Council, who will organise another consultation (for at least six weeks) and appoint an independent examiner to assess it. Northumberland County Council will then make the recommended changes and organise the referendum, which is expected to happen in autumn/winter 2026.

Our vision

Our Neighbourhood Plan has a clear vision; to create a sustainable and cohesive community.

By 2040, improvements will have been made to the local environment, employment opportunities, services and facilities. Communities will be well connected via sustainable transport routes to enhance employment opportunities as well as having access to more services and facilities further afield.

There will be an appreciation of the importance of the heritage of the area, which will give local communities a sense of belonging.

Our objectives

We have four main objectives to help us to achieve our vision.

- **Quality of life**

Ensuring new development is sustainable, contributing positively to the built, historic and natural environment of the Plan area. New development will be managed to ensure that important green spaces are protected.

- **Community wellbeing**

Building on the strong sense of community across the Plan area and recognising the diverse needs of existing and future residents, by; supporting the provision of different types of housing that people can afford and meet identified needs, including those of an ageing population; and ensuring the local community has access to the services and facilities they need.

- **Local economy**

Supporting both existing and the creation of new employment opportunities across the Plan area. Protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre as an important source of local employment and service centre.

- **Accessibility**

Promoting access to sustainable modes of transport which connect local communities to employment as well as the services and facilities which they require. Ensuring that the environmental quality of the Plan area is protected by effectively managing traffic.

Visit our website, westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk or email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk to find out more.

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 18th July, 9am-10am, 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.

Can't make that date or location? There will be pop-up Police sessions at East Bedlington Community Centre on Friday 10th July, 10am-11am; and at Dickson's, The Square, Guide Post on Sunday 19th July, 10am-11am.



How our budget is calculated and spent

In a Residents' Panel meeting in May, we talked about Council Tax as well as West Bedlington Town Council's budget. After the chat, the Panel had a better understanding of the process and they thought it would be useful to provide residents with an explanation too, which we thought was a great idea.

So, in this section, you'll find details about how our budget is calculated and spent, and some statistics and charts so you can see how we compare to neighbouring towns. We appreciate this article may not be on your summer must-read list, but in the nature of honesty and transparency, we wanted to share it with you, and hope you find it useful and informative.

How much do you know about local government finance?

Take a look at the following twelve statements about our budget, precept and Council Tax in general to learn more about local government finance.

1. Council Tax is a charge, decided locally, which contributes to services in your area. It does not pay for everything.
2. Council Tax is made up of several charges from different organisations, but the billing authority (Northumberland County Council) is responsible for billing Council Tax payers and collecting the money.
3. You don't get a bill from each organisation. Instead, these organisations raise a precept to the billing authority. This is paid to the organisations to contribute towards the services they provide. The chart on page 15 illustrates the types of organisations that could raise a precept through Council Tax bills.
4. Precepts are amounts other local bodies ask the billing authority to collect on your behalf. They usually appear as separate lines on your Council Tax bill.
5. Depending on where you live, there could be precepts from a different number of organisations.

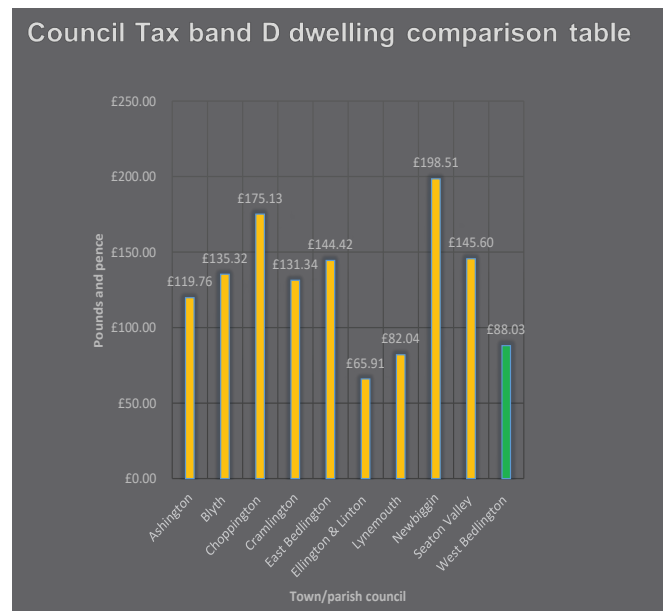
Body	Where it applies	What it funds	Typical share of bill	2025/26 increase cap (without referendum)
Unitary county council	All two-tier council areas	Social care, education, highways, libraries, waste disposal	Largest share, around 65-75%	2.99% core, plus 2% adult social care
Police and Crime Commissioner	All areas	Local policing	Around 10-15%	£14 per year for band D properties
Fire and Rescue authority	All areas	Fire and Rescue services	Around 3-5%	£5 per year for band D properties
Parish/town council	Only in areas with a parish or town council	Local events, litter bins, play areas, bus shelters, community CCTV, community defibrillators	0-5%, varies a lot by area	No cap
Combined authority	Metropolitan major areas and London	Transport, housing, regeneration, skills	Around 2-5%	Varies by area
Environment Agency / internal drainage boards	Areas with flood risk or drainage boards	Flood defence, water management	Less than 1%	Set by the authority

6. Taxpayers who live in an area with a local town or parish council usually (but not always) contribute towards the town or parish council's precept.

7. Typically, your Council Tax bill will show the annual amounts you pay together with any annual increase or reduction for each organisation as separate lines on your bill. Usually, they can be found towards the middle right-hand side of your Council Tax bill.

8. Here in West Bedlington, taxpayers contribute towards the following organisations, which you can see on your Council Tax bill:

- ✓ Northumberland County Council
- ✓ Northumberland County Council Adult Social Care
- ✓ Police and Crime Commissioner / Police Authority
- ✓ West Bedlington Town Council



9. If West Bedlington Town Council puts up the budget by 5%, your total bill goes up by 5% of that share only, not 5% of the whole bill. That's why two neighbouring streets in different parishes can have different bills, even if they're in the same Council Tax valuation band. The chart above illustrates the different levels of Council Tax charges for all of South East Northumberland town and parish councils.

10. West Bedlington Town Council is proud of its history of keeping Council Tax payments as low as possible. The chart above confirms we continue to have one of lowest parish/town council charges in South East Northumberland and the lowest of the town councils.

11. Increases in Council Tax charges are restricted by legislation. The government sets annual referendum limits. If a precepting body wants to raise council tax above that limit, they have to hold a local referendum.

12. In its endeavour to restrict year-on-year Council Tax increases, West Bedlington Town Council has kept annual increases below the prevailing level of inflation. The chart on page 16 shows a comparison.

Year	Precept	Band D charge	Annual band D % increase	Annual inflation, average
2020/21	250,250	78.63	0.00%	0.85%
2021/22	251,775	78.63	0.00%	2.59%
2022/23	270,310	8279	7.36%	9.07%
2023/24	272,850	82.79	0.00%	6.79%
2024/25	286,494	85.39	3.13%	3.27%
2025/26	298,258	86.69	1.53%	3.50%
2026/27	313,284	88.03	1.53%	3.30%

Our budget-setting process

West Bedlington Town Council's precept is calculated by determining the net budget needed for the local services we provide. Essentially, this is spending minus income.

To begin the process, which typically starts in November each year, the Town Council calculates its anticipated expenditure for the upcoming financial year, for example, maintenance and replacement of assets, staff salaries, projects, legal compliance, community events and estimates of inflation. In making our estimate of anticipated expenditure, the Town Council seeks firstly to ensure all essential criteria are met, specifically anything that is a statutory obligation. Secondly, councillors will look at all the other current expenditure and consider what savings (if any) can be made to existing services. The focus throughout is to ensure expenditure is kept as low as possible and that committed spending provides value for money.

Next, all projected known income (for example, any grants) are subtracted from the total anticipated expenditure.

After subtracting the income from the expenditure, the remaining amount is the amount needed as the precept. At this stage, councillors will examine the impact the resulting precept would have on Council Tax charges for residents. We consider the increase in terms of monetary value (how much more Council Tax payers would pay) and the estimated annual increase percentage. Can the increase be justified? Have new projects or services been identified to be delivered? Can an expenditure increase be identified and communicated to residents in a transparent way? How does any increase compare with current inflation figures? Setting increases below inflation rates year on year will impact detrimentally on the Town Council's financial wellbeing and ability to keep up to date with its liabilities in the future.

Finally, the Town Council reviews its current reserves (savings) and determines if any of the reserves that are not set aside for current or planned future projects can be released to offset the precept increase. However, we all know that living off our savings (if we are fortunate enough to have any) is unsustainable, so this is not a decision that can be taken without careful consideration for the current and future years.

There will be a point in time when the Town Council will have to match precept increases to its own increased expenditure, because not to do so would result in the Council accruing debt year on year.

Uniquely, for a diverse political organisation, all councillors join together with a shared common goal of making sure that Council Tax payments are the lowest they possibly can be without jeopardising the Council's financial wellbeing. It's a fine balance of ensuring ongoing liabilities and commitments are met without over burdening local Council Tax payers. Also, councillors endeavour to ensure that future councils and councillors have a financially-sound organisation to inherit, so they can fulfil their own aspirations for the Town Council. Without doubt, it is the most important and difficult decision councillors make each year, but they remain aligned, collaborative and determined to fulfil this mutual aim.

Services we provide for our allocated budget

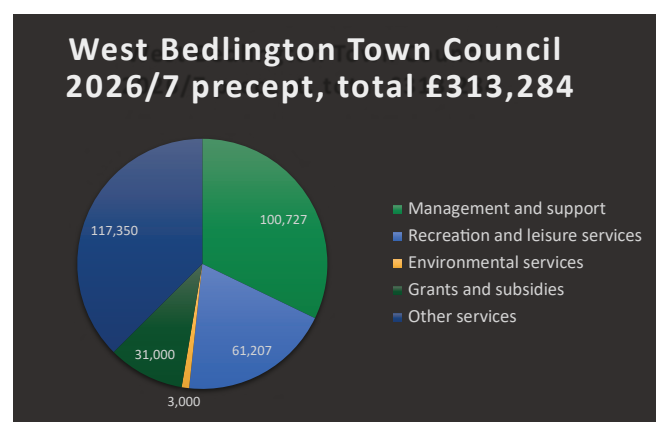
The following table shows West Bedlington Town Council's budget for the current financial year and identifies specific estimates of spending against all areas of the Town Council's spending.

Management and support	£	Recreation and leisure services	£	Other services	£
Administration		Services		Services	
Staff salaries	60,296	Allotments	0	Bus shelter cleansing	2,200
NI employer contribution	7,537	Play area safety inspections	2,700	Bus shelter repair and maintenance	2,000
Pension contributions	10,914	Play area repair and maintenance	1,000	Bus shelter school artwork	1,500
Staff training + SLCC	1,150	Asset replacement provision	8,000	War Memorial maintenance	50
Payroll charge	210	Bedding plants	19,750	Insurance	7,000
DBS checks	50	Front Street flower pots	3,000	Newsletter	4,500
Administration total	80,157	Meadowdale gates lock-up	7,622	Community defibrillators	5,850
		Services total	42,072	CCTV	16,000
Office Costs				Road speed signs repair and maintenance	2,300
Office rent	12,000	Events		Services total	41,400
Telephone and internet	700	Christmas Lights	19,135		
Computer software	825	Events Total	19,135	Events	
Accounting software	1,000			Remembrance	650
Email bunker software	375	Recreation and leisure services total	61,207	Christmas lights switch-on event	13,000
.gov emails	700			Easter eggs for schools	1,200
Postage	0	Environmental services		Best of Bedlington awards	2,600
Printing	250			Halloween event	2,000
Stationery	200	Litter bin provision	3,000	Family fun day event	35,000
Office Costs Total	16,050			Selection boxes for schools	1,500
		Environmental services total	3,000	Summer school holiday events	10,000
Fees and charges				Bollywood event	2,000
Internal audit	520	Cemeteries		Events for seniors	3,000
External audit	700	No service	0	Event organiser	5,000
Legal professional fees	200	Cemeteries total	0	Events total	75,950
NALC subscription	1,800				
Advertising publicity	500	Grants and subsidies		Other services total	117,350
Bank charges	100	Grants and donations			
Fees and charges total	3,820	Bedlington Community Centre	20,000		
		Community Chest fund	5,000		
Democracy costs		Pupils Fund	6,000		
Councillor training	500	Grants and subsidies total	31,000		
Annual Meeting of Town	200				
Democracy total	700				
Management and support total	100,727			2026- 2027 total budget	313,284

The budget summary for this year, and previous years, are always available on westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk. Additionally, every town or parish council that precepts an amount greater than £140,000 is required by law to provide a breakdown of its precept requirement (to accompany Council Tax bills). The breakdown of spending areas is the same for all councils, and we have provided the chart opposite for you to see the balance of spending at a glance.

We're always interested to hear your views, so please let us know how you feel about the budget and how we spend your money by emailing clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk.

As always, we'll endeavour to take on board any suggestions but can't necessarily promise to act upon them directly.



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



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
07721 692020



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
07407 690897

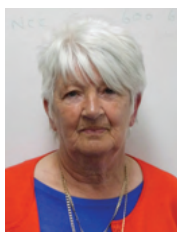


Sian Denny

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
07760 818525



Christine Taylor

Central Ward

christine.taylor@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk
07591 621238



Victoria Thompson

Central Ward

victoria.thompson@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk



WEST BEDLINGTON
TOWN COUNCIL

Working to safeguard Bedlington's past, present and future

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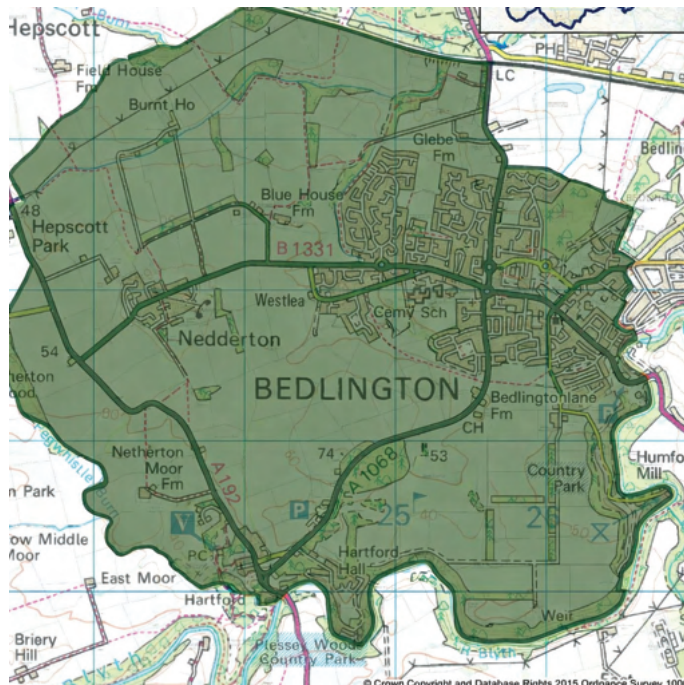
Some residents tell us they aren't exactly sure which part of Bedlington is east and which part is west. West Bedlington Town Council represents two thirds of Bedlington, including the town centre and the villages of Nedderton and Hartford Bridge to the west. The map on this page shows the boundary line,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

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