

## Council Grants

Please don't forget that we have a grant scheme which supports local initiatives! Let us know what you are planning and we may be able to help you. We have a form you can complete online but if you are unsure about what you can ask for, give us a ring on 01289 302391 or visit us in the Marygate office where we can also provide paper copies if easier.

We welcome projects that promote the economic growth of the area, encourage people to visit and help to maintain the environment. To apply you need to be an independent organisation based here or active in the local area. You can apply for up to £2500 towards the cost of your project. There are a few more do's and don'ts, the full guidelines and form are available on our website.

## Contact the Town Council

You can email us at [info@berwick-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@berwick-tc.gov.uk) or telephone us on 01289 302391. Website: [www.berwick-tc.gov.uk](http://www.berwick-tc.gov.uk)  
Or you can pop into our office on Marygate. Our current opening hours are Tuesday to Thursday 10-12pm & 2-4pm

## Contact Northumberland County Council (NCC)

If you have a question about NCC services you can speak to someone in person in the Library on Walkergate on Tuesday and Friday 10-1pm or telephone NCC on 0345 600 6400  
Website: [www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

## Fix My Street



If you have a pothole, or other problem on your street that needs to be sorted, you can report it quickly and easily at [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com). This is a site for reporting local problems like fly-tipping, blocked drains, broken paving slabs, graffiti, etc. and you receive updates when repairs take place. It shows reports that have already been created, plus any planned roadworks, which saves time and avoids multiple reporting.

Fix My Street works on smartphones, tablets and desktop computers and is monitored by the local town and county councils.





**BRIDGE STREET**  
SHOPS RESTAURANTS  
CAFÉS BARS GALLERIES

The Old Bridge may be closed but Bridge Street is still open for business!

And on the other side of the Old Bridge, Main Street in Tweedmouth is also trading as usual!



**MAIN STREET**  
TWEEDMOUTH  
SHOPS GALLERY FLORIST  
CAFÉ SALONS HOT FOOD

## Upcoming Meetings

- Monday 3rd March: Communities and Local Services
  - Monday 10th March: Budget and Administration
  - Monday 17th March: Planning
  - Tuesday 18th March: Staffing
  - Monday 31st March: Council
- Meetings are at our Office on Marygate 6pm.  
Meetings are open to the public, please come along.

Get a copy of our e-newsletter regularly by joining our mailing list. Simply email [info@berwick-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@berwick-tc.gov.uk) and ask to be added. The newsletter will arrive into your inbox every 4-6 weeks.

Hella **MARCH**  
an evening of  
*Music to lift your spirits*

raising funds for the Mayor's charity:  
HospiceCare North Northumberland

- DATE: 7 MARCH 2025
- TIME: 7 FOR 7.30PM
- AT: BERWICK GUILDHALL

WELCOME GLASS OF FIZZ & BUFFET INCLUDED  
SILENT AUCTION  
CASH BAR

Baroque-a-ceilidh-capella featuring...  
Berwick Baroque Tribe a Capella  
Glendale Ceilidh Band

TICKETS IN ADVANCE: £18  
IN PERSON: [TD15@ROBERTSONS.COM](mailto:TD15@ROBERTSONS.COM), WEST STREET OR TWEED & THREADS, 59 MARYGATE  
ONLINE: [TICKETTAILOR.COM/EVENTS/HOSPICECARENORTHNORTHUMBRLAND/1538036](http://TICKETTAILOR.COM/EVENTS/HOSPICECARENORTHNORTHUMBRLAND/1538036)  
EVENT ORGANISER: JOE LANG & JACKIE KAINES LANG. 07958 203486  
[JAK@KAINESLANG.COM](mailto:JAK@KAINESLANG.COM)/[JOE@KAINESLANG.COM](http://JOE@KAINESLANG.COM)





# Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council

# NEWSLETTER

February 2025





## Message from the Mayor



I hope you all had a good festive period and Happy New Year. In this issue we will be looking at the precept amount for this financial year – the precept requirement is the difference between the Town Council's estimated income and its anticipated spending requirements for the financial year (its budget). We also talk about becoming a Town Councillor. Being a councillor can be a very rewarding role, but you do need realistic expectations. If you are concerned about a lack of play equipment in your area, the need for more benches/bins or bus shelters, or even an idea about a poorly maintained green space, then you could have the satisfaction of seeing your efforts come to fruition. This is not to say that we are not concerned about the bigger issues, such as the number of empty shop units on Marygate, but a lack of financial resources means that whilst we can provide the smaller things, such as new planters/bins and shop window graphics, we can only influence those with bigger pockets, such as County or the new North East Mayor.



If your ambitions are at that more strategic level, you may want to consider standing as a County Councillor instead. I always say that you should join the council with at least one project in mind. For me, it was being involved from the beginning in the Parks Project (Castle Vale and Coronation Park). As a Berwicker, I was acutely aware of the gradual demise of both parks and I will always be grateful to the partnership which delivered a £1 million restoration project which continues to thrive, due to the ongoing efforts of Friends of Castle Vale Park and our local County Neighbourhood Team.  
John Robertson - Mayor of Berwick-upon-Tweed



## Hello from new Chief Officer

Dear Residents of Berwick-upon-Tweed,  
I am delighted to introduce myself as the new Chief Officer of Berwick Town Council. Having recently moved from the South of England, I am honoured to join this historic and vibrant community. Berwick is a town rich in heritage, natural beauty and strong community spirit. As I settle into my new role, I am keen to listen, learn and work alongside residents, businesses and community groups to ensure the town continues to thrive. My priorities are set by the Councillors and I am committed to delivering on their vision for the town. I welcome your ideas, feedback and involvement in shaping the future of Berwick. I look forward to meeting many of you in the coming weeks and working together to make Berwick an even better place to live work and visit.

Best wishes, Iain McCready – Chief Officer



## Precept for 2025/26

On Monday 27th January we agreed on our budget for 2025/26. This year the precept will be rising by 5% - this is an extra 10p a week on a Band D Home, which means we continue to have the lowest precept of any market town in Northumberland. We have endeavoured to keep the increase to a minimum as we are, as ever, very aware of the current economic situation in our town. However, we are also aware of the need to repair, replace and recycle our current assets.

Added to this is our desire to deliver improvements to our allotments at Five Arches, create a woodland walk in Shielfield Terrace, site a new trim trail at Five Arches and take over and redevelop the Charter Market on Marygate from Northumberland County Council.



## What We Do

Berwick Town Council looks after seven play areas, over 300 benches and dozens of litter bins across the three communities of Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal. We purchase and erect Christmas lights throughout the town and organise the town's civic events like Remembrance Sunday. Our wardens repair benches, bins and bus shelters, keep the play parks and the splash park in good order as well as plant and water the town's flower beds, baskets and tree planters. As a Town Council, we have legal and administrative obligations which cannot be avoided so our officers do need to spend time getting those right. These help to ensure the council operates with transparency and accountability.



With both funding and expertise, we support events that celebrate our history and contribute to tourism in Berwick. Some of these are the Riding of the Bounds, the Tweed Salmon Queen festivities, and the various festivals and events that continue Berwick's tradition as the most Scottish of English towns. In an increasingly complex world, we work hard to build partnerships at both a local and regional level to enable the Town Council to have a voice in Berwick's future. We are responsible for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and act as a consultee on planning applications within the town. Our budget process begins in September and finishes at the end of January. We set a budget that enables Council to deliver on its priorities, as outlined in our Strategic Plan. We aim to make Berwick a greener, more attractive place to live in, work in and visit.



This year costs have gone up for the council, just as they have for households like yours. That's why we've chosen as a council to cut costs wherever we can, to reorganise our staffing structure to concentrate resources on delivering projects whilst maintaining statutory administrative duties. Our precept is only a small portion of your council tax bill, but we think we should do everything we can to manage our impact on your outgoings.

It's been a busy couple of years for our play parks with extra benches and picnic benches provided at Spittal; replacement trampoline and seesaw installed at Flagstaff Park; and our team taking over the management of the playpark at the Leisure Centre. We're still looking to develop new propositions for leisure and play for older children, for adults and for skateboard fans. Get in touch if you have ideas at [info@berwick-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@berwick-tc.gov.uk)

## Local Transport Plan

This week Berwick-upon-Tweed Council sent their response to the NECA Local Transport Plan Consultation. Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council (BTC) encourages the use of active travel as well as the use of public transport. A staggering 30% of Berwick households do not have access to a car and the current level of public transport and safe active travel routes is poor. Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council believes this does not give our residents and those in our surrounding communities the same opportunity of outcome as others have throughout the North East region. We have broken our submission down into 4 main areas which are available to read in the news section of our website.

## Local Services Update

Since our last issue the wardens have been very busy! There has been extensive work carried out within the workshop consisting of bench repairs, maintenance, and timber preparation. Some lovely work has been completed on our memorial benches near St Helen's Terrace including the installation of some new commemorative plaques - what a view!



Our broken seesaw in Flagstaff playpark has been replaced with a newer, upgraded version from Kompan which is part of their inclusive range and a new bus stop was installed last week on Cornhill Road by Craig and his team at Fabvent - many thanks to both of them!



There have been some bin updates in town, we have replaced bins at the Barracks, Hide Hill and the top of Askew Walk (near the Plantation) and some dog bins on Springhill and Castle Terrace have been replaced with the standard ones (below left). Do remember that these standard sized bins can take dog waste, you haven't lost anything, check for the symbol on the bin. There is a brand new bin on Westfield and the team will be renovating two of the older metal bins which were replaced on the high street with the wooden effect ones.



Sadly we had more damage to a bench last month opposite Pets at Home (above right). It had just been renovated before Christmas so that was doubly annoying, but the wardens are getting on with it as usual!

Many thanks again to Steven Monks, Jack Aitchison and their respective staff, who took down all our Christmas Lights in freezing temperatures last month. The wardens have been busy sorting, testing and putting away all the lights safe and sound for next year.



## Becoming a Town Councillor

Berwick Town Council currently has vacancies for new members to join our team and share their skills and enthusiasm with the community. We are looking for members who have a passion for our town and are willing to help by creating or supporting local projects and initiatives.

### Will it take up all my time?

No, all of our members are volunteers and there will be 13 Town Council meetings next year to run through Council business and make decisions. These are supported by the Chief Officer who delivers much of the day-to-day business for the council such as preparing the paperwork and agenda for each meeting, acting as the responsible financial officer and providing advice to the members as necessary. For those who are interested in specific issues, we have sub-committees for Budget, Administration & Grants; Planning, Environment & Transport; and Staffing.

### How can I find out more?

If you'd like to find out more about being a Councillor, please contact us at [info@berwick-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@berwick-tc.gov.uk). We can also put you in touch with current Town Councillors if you would like an informal chat about the role.

Please note: In order to apply, you must be at least 18 and qualify by meeting one of the following criteria:

- you are on the register of electors
- you are an owner or tenant of land or property within the Council's area
- your main or only place of work during the preceding 12 months has been in the Council's area; or
- you have resided in the Council's area for at least 12 months or within three miles of it.

If you are interested in being a Councillor, come along to the next council meeting on 31st March, or one of our sub-committees (details on the back page and on our website).

