

WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL



WEST BEDLINGTON  
TOWN COUNCIL

# RESIDENTS NEWSLETTER

Autumn/Winter 2016 Issue



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Trotter Memorial



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## Forward by the Mayor

Well another 6 months in the life of West Bedlington Town Council this time categorised by the hard work needed to deliver our agreed projects on time and on (or under) budget! We set ourselves pretty ambitious targets in our financial planning this year and after conducting a six month review we are well on track to deliver what we set out to do.

As well as all the work needed to turn this council around it should be clear to everyone we have supported our young people to the best of our ability too. We still have one of two surprises to come and look out for our Xmas light switch on which this year should be the best ever

As this is our last newsletter this year let me be the first to wish everyone a somewhat premature

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

*Malcolm Robinson*

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## Play Area equipment replacements:

One of the services the Town Council have taken on is the provision of play equipment in the children's play parks in our area. The parks we are responsible for are at West Lea and Meadowdale. Other parks and play equipment within our boundary are the responsibility of NCC.

After years of inadequate financial planning and just replacing bits and pieces because of failure or damage and the fact that the lifespan of all of this equipment comes to an end this year this Council looked to respond to the challenge of renewing this equipment in the most cost effective way possible for residents, and not forgetting to make it exciting for the most important people, the young users!

After talking to various manufacturers and suppliers a suitable ballpark figure was put into this year's budget setting process which actually took place last November! This enabled us to look to change all of the equipment if we could get the right elements and pricing structure correct.

We then went out with questionnaires about the sort of activities which people wanted in their play areas. (Many thanks to our Youth Council, or Youth Voice, for helping distribute the questionnaires amongst their peers and amass the replies.) We then set about writing up a commission

or tender document using the very replies we had received as the principle guidelines. Other guidelines were included of course and a scoring system introduced.

Several manufacturers and suppliers answered our call for estimates and we then had to go through each response after an appropriate closing date and score each of the estimates.

Next we put on a public consultation listing the two top options and gave the public vote a scoring too. 73% of the votes cast by the public were in favour of the eventual contract winner. This time a public consultation in Bedlington did have a very definite result!

Finally the two top companies were invited in to present in person to the council working group and a recommendation from that group ensued that was approved by the Council at its October meeting.

Once all the scoring was done and assessed the contract was awarded with one of the most important

elements, the timeline. We hope that both parks can be done this side of the New Year but ending in January at the latest. Of course this will depend on the weather and we have said we will take a sensible view on any resulting overruns.

This whole project is the biggest spend this council has ever undertaken and we have been extremely careful to have adequate supervision for each step in the process. This in turn allows us to say we have come up with the best option for residents available to us.

As long as future councils budget responsibly, we should be able to see a sensible periodic replacement of this expensive equipment without the need to raise precepts unduly. A lot of the equipment carries up to a 30yr guarantee but if we tuck about 10% of this cost away each year, in ten years we can give the next generation their new play equipment, as we have done for our young people this year.

WBTC making no excuses for giving our young people the very best we can.

# Meadowdale Play Area

## West Bedlington Town Council



Please note this is an artist's impression. Final equipment specifications and positions to be confirmed with client. Please refer to CAD plan for exact layout.



**HUGE NEXUS ALTITUDE CLIMBING UNIT!**



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# Westlea Play Area

## West Bedlington Town Council



Please note this is an artist's impression. Final equipment specifications and positions to be confirmed with client. Please refer to CAD plan for exact layout.



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# Bedlington in Bloom

Formed in 2013, Bedlington in Bloom's membership is made up of volunteer's who are all local residents in the Bedlington area. Over the last three years they have achieved and maintained a Silver Gilt award standard in the Northumbria in Bloom competition.

With financial support from West Bedlington Town Council the group are responsible for all the tubs, troughs and hanging baskets as well as the two tower planters located in the market place which make the town look that extra bit colourful during the spring, summer and winter months. An addition to the group's facilities this year has been the development of its own allotment, there has been a lot of hard work clearing this out and building, greenhouses and raised beds but I'm sure the benefits will be realised in the coming year.

As part of its activities and to try to gather interest from local residents the group organised a scarecrow competition, some of the entrants and winners are below:

Volunteers are always welcome either to be part of the group or just for odd days to assist with planting, watering and/or weeding and for anyone who would be willing to look after a trough, planter or pot please contact the group, either by email [BIB@BEDLINGTON.CO.UK](mailto:BIB@BEDLINGTON.CO.UK) or phone 07444344592





# Northumberland Association of Local Councils

**West Bedlington Town Council (WBTC) is a member of Northumberland ALC, a County organisation made up of Northumberland Town and Parish Councils.**

There are 156 Town and Parish Councils (T/PC's) in Northumberland and Newcastle of which 150 are a member of Northumberland ALC. Each member of the T/PC's Councils has a representative who attends Northumberland ALC meetings every two months. The delegated representative for WBTC is Councillor Keith Dalton.

Hard to believe but Councillors do not know everything about Local Government issues and

occasionally require professional advice and support on complex matters. Northumberland ALC is the organisation that the Council is able to call upon for such advice and support. For those services WBTC pay an annual subscription.

Northumberland ALC deals mainly with regional items such as liaison with Northumberland County Council, legislation enquiries, financial advice and training for P/TC's. The regional association Northumberland ALC is part of a larger national association The National ALC based in London which deals with more national issues. Effectively the Council can call upon either the local or national association for help and support on any issues or matters of concern.

Northumberland ALC is based at Pegswood and works in conjunction with Community Action Northumberland sharing the same premises.

The Council has been a member of Northumberland ALC since the Council was first established in 2009 and we hope that this brief insight into the function of Northumberland ALC, helps residents understand why we feel it is important for The Council to continue to remain a member for the foreseeable future.



**Vera Baird QC (Police & Crime Commissioner) has extended an offer to visit any Town and Parish Councils who would like to extend an invitation to her to discuss any crime issues.**

West Bedlington Town Council, would consider taking the Commissioner up on her offer if we thought we could generate enough interest.

If you have any questions you would like to raise on issues of crime, levels of policing, speeding, dangerous driving, anti-social behaviours or abuse please get in touch with us at West Bedlington Town Council and if there is enough interest we will extend an invitation to the Police Commissioner.

## The Annual Meeting of the Town 2016

**The Annual Meeting of the town takes place usually in May, normally just after the AGM for the Town Council.**

What makes this meeting so special is that it should be the residents of the Parish who run it not the Council.

Hopefully residents will now claim this meeting for themselves and use it to lobby for specific development and assess the performance of WBTC over the coming years.

As I said in my forward after many months of asking people to come forward to undertake running this meeting the council ultimately had to do it again.

This time we asked everyone who ran a community group within Bedlington to come along and tell everyone else who they were and what they were offering.



In the event over 30 organisations were represented and it really was standing room only in the large upstairs room at the community centre.

Hopefully everyone learnt what other organisations are delivering within our Town and some good networking opportunities were established.

I know council now have a much better understanding of how our community ticks.

# Remembrance Day Service and Parade

Always an evocative and fantastically attended event this year's Remembrance Day Service and Parade will take place on Sunday 13th November 2016.

West Bedlington Town Council in partnership with "Bedlington Churches Together" is proud to support the event.

As in previous years the parade will leave from The Salvation Army Hartford Road Bedlington at 2.15pm with the Service of Remembrance for 2.30pm at the War Memorial on Front Street West Bedlington.

Local dignitaries and representatives of local community groups and schools will be in attendance to lay wreaths of remembrance, but everyone is welcome to come long.

***They shall grow not old,  
As we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them,  
Nor the years condemn.  
We will remember them.***

From "For the fall" - Laurence Binyon

***When you go home  
Tell them of us and say,  
For your tomorrow  
We gave our today.***

John Maxwell Edmond



## Poppy appeal

Your local Poppy Appeal Organiser is Mr Sydney Graham who can be contacted on 01670 731196 or by email at [sydney@graham3065.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:sydney@graham3065.freeserve.co.uk)

A full range of poppies, car poppies, stickers, metal pin badges, wreaths and other remembrance items is available for immediate delivery. Special wreaths for your organisation can be obtained within seven days.

Support our Armed Forces, those who are serving and those who have served.





## The Chain of Survival

When someone suffers an out of hospital Cardiac arrest, if certain things happen in a certain order, their chances of survival are hugely increased. This concept is known as the 'Chain of Survival'.

The Chain of Survival is made up of four links, the first three of which can be performed by members of the public who have learnt basic life saving.

- 1. Early access & recognition:** being able to recognise someone is in cardiac arrest and getting assistance is the first step to helping them.
- 2. Early CPR:** performing chest compressions can keep their heart going until a defibrillator arrives. Research has shown that CPR can double a person's chances of survival.
- 3. Early defibrillation:** for every minute the patient doesn't have a defibrillator attached to their chest, their chances of survival reduce by 10%. We now know that early defibrillation can triple a person's chances of survival.
- 4. Early advanced care:** delivered by the Paramedics who arrive shortly after. If you start CPR within 2 minutes, place a defibrillator on their chest in four minutes and a paramedic arrives in 8, they have a 40% chance of survival.



## Bedlington Public Defibrillators

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 lifesaving step in the chain of survival.

If you come across someone who has had a cardiac arrest, it's vital to call 999 and if you are able to start CPR (see text box). Then you should find out if there is a defibrillator nearby.

These defibrillators are often known as public access defibrillators (PAD) as anyone can use them in an emergency. You shouldn't be afraid of using a defibrillator if someone has had a cardiac arrest.

In Bedlington we are fortunate to already have in place 2 Public Access

Defibrillators and a 3rd is to be installed very soon. Through the generosity of Bedlington Masonics, Alcyone Healthcare and West Bedlington Town Council 3 defibrillators have been purchase. The defibrillators at The Masonics Hall Hartford Road Bedlington and Synergy Healthcare Front Street East Bedlington have already been installed and the 3rd is to be installed at the Alcyone healthcare home on Bedlington Front Street West once construction of the nursing home has been completed.

The Council recently held a successful public awareness and training session delivered by Northumbria Ambulance Service where the use of the defibrillators were demonstrated together with some lifesaving steps.

The Council is now seeking volunteers to undertake the role of "Guardians" (see text box). If you would be interest becoming a "Guardian" in the first instance contact The Town Clerk who will be able to provide some additional information about the role if required.

## CPR

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, commonly known as CPR, is an emergency procedure that combines chest compression often with artificial ventilation in an effort to manually preserve intact brain function until further measures are taken to restore spontaneous blood circulation and breathing in a person who is in cardiac arrest. It is indicated in those who are unresponsive with no breathing or abnormal breathing.





## Become one of the Defibrillator Guardians

A guardian is a loyal, responsible person who volunteers to carry out a regular cabinet and defibrillator inspection. A simple questionnaire is completed and returned to the Ambulance Service via the Town Council office and this confirms to the Ambulance Service whether or not a defibrillator is operational.

Thousands of guardians carry out regular checks. It is possible to have more than 1 guardian per cabinet to share the responsibility. This provides information ensuring high levels of governance are maintained and the Ambulance Service continue to offer instructions when a member of the public reports an emergency. Without the support of loyal guardians, many Public Access Defibrillator sites and initiatives would not be possible to operate.

If you wish to help in your community as a guardian and help ensure this valuable piece of emergency equipment is available at all times please contact The Town Clerk.

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## West Bedlington Town Council Supported Events in 2016.

Although not an event promoter or organiser itself, West Bedlington Town Council supports a number of community events throughout the year.

Details of some of this year's events can be found throughout this newsletter.

The Council has just ahead of publication of this newsletter agreed a date and format for a Christmas Lights Switch on Event and Christmas Fair on 2nd December 2016 - look out locally for further details.

The Council would like to place on record its sincere thanks to those residents who have attended and supported past events and invites all residents to come along and enjoy its future planned events.

More so, for without their skill, commitment, professionalism and endeavour these events would never take place the Council wishes to thank those who have organised and promoted the events, namely Northumberland County Council, Community Works and Carnival Rides, Bedlington Churches Together, Entertainment Unlimited, Bedlington Salvation Army and local resident Victoria Thompson.

The Council in particular would like to single out Victoria for taking on the "Bedlington Picnic Event" this year and making it such a wonderful event to attend, without Victoria's commitment and the full support of her husband Glen, this event would never have taken place.



## CCTV In Bedlington

Thanks to a Northumberland County Council initiative Bedlington Front Street is about to be covered by CCTV cameras.

These cameras are state of the art and bang up to date. At nil costs to residents West Bedlington Town Council accepted the offer and gave suggestions where they needed to be installed for maximum coverage.

Council Chair Malcolm Robinson said of the initiative "Personally I do have a problem with CCTV monitoring but that's purely from a libertarian viewpoint, but I'm realistic enough to see this technology is fulfilling a requirement in today's society and until that requirement is no longer needed then this sort of technological application is".

"I would like to remind everyone that West Bedlington Town Council have a 'Zero Tolerance' policy towards anyone damaging our assets. If you see anyone damaging "your assets" please report the matter to the local police or the Town Clerk.

Two examples of recent damage to the newly installed bus shelters are shown above. It's important to note that it is public funding that provides and repairs these damaged assets.

Cooper, Welshy you have been warned!



# Bedlington Xmas Lights Switch On Event and Indoor Xmas Fair

***Come and give Bedlington a real Community Christmas Celebration***

Live Entertainment - Santa - Indoor Christmas Fair - Kids Fun Fair - Arts and Crafts

**FRIDAY 2ND DECEMBER 2016**

**3pm - 7pm**

***(Lights Switch On 6pm)***

Bedlington Market Place and Bedlington Community Centre.  
Look out for more details locally and on the Councils website soon.

**STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS**

## New Christmas lights for Front Street

As part of the Councils continued commitment to make Bedlington a better place to live, work, study and play we are pleased to announce our most recent purchase - 13 new lamp mounted Christmas Light motifs.

The new lights will be fitted along Front Street West, Bedlington, where the existing Christmas lights will be relocated to Glebe Bank Bedlington.

We have also purchased new lights for your Christmas tree to replace those lost last year through willful vandalism. (Look out for details of your Christmas Lights Switch on Event and Christmas Fair elsewhere in this newsletter). And finally on the theme of festive lights, The Council is also committed to

replacing all of the string lights located within trees along the whole of Front Street ahead of Christmas 2017.



# The Trotter Memorial



**Our intention is to see if we can move the Trotter Memorial back to where it came from.**

Most Towns in Northumberland were 'given' gateway features, you have probably seen lots of them as you drive around, the Bedlington one is the planting in the Top End roundabout which is in the shape of a St Cuthberts Cross.

Well that's fine but do we really need to have to be in a helicopter directly overhead to see it?

Most 'gateway' features are easily seen as you travel into the places, ours should be no different that's why we commissioned our own, which should be in place on the 4 main roadways into the town very soon.

As shown in our last newsletter we have used a Heritage theme for our new gateway features and relocating the Trotter Memorial back to where it came from, which is now the roundabout, would augment that initiative. It's all about promoting this Town on the back of its long and illustrious heritage, something other local Towns can only dream of!

## A moment in history..

On July 1st, 1916, whistles blew along the front line trenches and thousands of British and Allied troops scrambled out into "No-man's Land". So began the Battle of the Somme, which was to last until November 1916. July 1st would go down as "the worst day in the history of the British army", with 57 470 casualties, including 9 240 killed. Among the British combatants were many men from across Bedlingtonshire, including those who were in the Tyneside Scottish Regiment.

One hundred years have now passed since that dreadful Summer, and feelings were that it was fitting that the 100th anniversary of the

outbreak of the First War should be commemorated for all those from Bedlington who fought for our freedom in this momentous battle - those who survived and those who gave their lives on our behalf.

St Cuthbert's Church hosted the event which was attended by civic representatives, representatives of local organisations, students from the town's schools, representatives from the armed forces, members of the Royal British Legion, members of the Tyneside Scottish Association and, of course, ordinary people from Bedlington. With pipe bands, flags and uniformed contingents, the whole event was a colourful and memorable



spectacle, and a fitting tribute to all those from this area who gave so much for our freedom. I was privileged and humbled to be asked to place a cross during the remembrances service, a fitting and moving tribute was made to all.



# HELP US TO MAKE WEST BEDLINGTON A PLACE TO BE PROUD OF!

## ***A letter from Christine Healey:***

Having become very unhappy with the state of the town and its parks, littered with garbage and dog faeces, my husband and I started to pick up the litter on our walks.

However, we seemed to make little impact even though I found out that we were not the only ones trying to tidy up the town.

Following talks with Malcolm Robinson I decided to try and rally support for a regular litter pick initially once a month on the third Monday of the month. Malcolm very kindly provided all the safety equipment. Unfortunately, even though I advertise on several local websites and initially in the letter page of the Leader the response has been very poor.

Indeed, last month only two of us turned up to clean the main street. It would be really great if more people would join me.

It was decided to change the night from Monday to a Wednesday to see if that would help people to get out there with us.

Therefore the next litter pick will be Wednesday, 16th November at 6pm meeting at the Community Centre on the main street and I hope that more of you can join me on a regular basis to tidy up the town.

## **BANNERS AND POSTERS**

Please help us by not placing illegal banners and posters on railings or in the bus shelters - The Red Lion Roundabout is a particular hot spot for this type of activity but other areas of the town are also susceptible to this activity.

The hanging of posters and banners on the railings not only makes the town look unsightly but it is illegal without the owner's permission.

The Council has adopted a zero tolerance policy with regard to this activity and will make arrangements to have any offending banners and posters removed and destroyed without any notice.

If you see any illegal banners or posters please report them to the Council so that we can make arrangements to have them removed.

## **LITTER**

Please help us by not discarding any litter carelessly. Please use the litter bins provided by the Council or if there is not a conveniently located litter bin please take your litter home.

A substantial amount of money is spent on the provision of litter bins, their emptying and the picking up of litter from paths and open areas. Money that could perhaps be directed elsewhere?

You can also help by supporting our conscientious resident litter pickers who meet regularly to collect discarded litter. Bags, Gloves Litter Pickers and Hi Vis Jackets are provided.

The Council is indebted to the group for their selflessness to help make Bedlington a place to be proud.

The Council would like to place on record its sincere thanks to each and every member of the group for their continued support and dedication.

If you would like to find out more about the group and when they litter pick please contact Christine Healey on Tel 07711 904 352.



# Bedlington Picnic

By Victoria Thompson.

## ***Thanks to everyone for supporting the Bedlington Picnic!***

The 7th of July was a cloudy, wet Saturday, the kind where most people would consider staying at home, watching a box set and eating something sweet. However, in Bedlington we're made of sterner stuff than that!

Down at Attlee Park 52 organisations represented themselves to display, perform or demonstrate how much talent and generosity we have going on in our town! Opening with Hunter Theatre Arts cheerleaders and the town's own Arieanne Masters, and with performances from the Bedlington Ukulele Band, Bedlington Choir, John Campbell, Jason Verre with Growing Robots and finishing with The Last Spectacular, it was incredible to see so much home-grown talent entertaining the crowds. Stalls were varied and to

name a few, included vintage attire, crafts and proggy mat making from ReDress to an incredible Pirate themed offering from Whitley Memorial PTA... Ahar!

Bedlington Juniors provided some amazing footballing fun on the toughest pitch of the season while our friends at Morrisons not only brought up food for a Teddy Bear's Picnic but also brought a vintage van up for day - and it even managed to get over the bumpy terrain.

The spiritual needs of the town were met with St Cuthberts, Hope Church and the Salvation Army all demonstrating their amazing work in the town, while Bedlington Community Centre and Bedlington in Bloom showed off all their fantastic work throughout the year.

We all know there are some crafty people about and we had some of the best, with the wonderful Sarah- Louise Nicholson, Bedlington

Creatives, Wendy Reed and Confetti demonstrating some of their fantastic talents... Of course there was also Christine Headland with her drumming and singing, Heather Dixon keeping us fit with her Red Warrior and even messy play with Jemma from Moo Music! Bedlington Terriers in fancy dress for the dog show mingled with WI members, Air Cadets and people who like to Make a Noise, while all chewing down on Lynns Pies... only in Bedlington!

Thanks to everyone who got involved in the day and in helping create this new experience for the Bedlington calendar! On a personal level, it's been a big task to take on and it would be great to move on to next year with a bigger team to make the event an even bigger success and to showcase even more of our talent!

If you like a good party and think you would like to get involved, please get in touch at [bedlingtonpicnic@gmail.com](mailto:bedlingtonpicnic@gmail.com)

# A review from The Mayor

## Councillor Malcolm Robinson

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Well another 6 months in the life of West Bedlington Town Council this time categorised by the hard work needed to deliver our agreed projects on time and on or under budget!

I made such a focal point about our budget in our last newsletter because that is the most fundamental issue any council has to understand and get under control.

I have spoken to many people about our last newsletter and more importantly about the direction we are taking and the financial controls we have imposed. Everyone has said they are content with what we are doing because they can at least see the physical changes we have brought in. Just to reiterate what I said in my last forward we are renewing all of the assets we have responsibility for not just to give our residents the best infrastructure we possibly can but it also sets this council on a proper fiscal course from here on in.

In effect this year is year Zero and as long as proper budgeting is carried forward then we should now be able to see a renewal programme spread over many years which doesn't require any single year large increases in what residents are charged.

That's isn't to say there are not problems and challenges ahead and probably the most important for us is the way Northumberland County Council manage their budgets. With cuts in their budgets for the foreseeable future it won't surprise anyone if I forecast considerable pressure on our Council to maintain any valued service provision. That means if we value a service NCC cut then we have to pay for it if we still want it. This whole question is being considered at the moment, as any prudent council should, but the underlying line in the sand or unequivocal boundary for us is that it has to show value for money for Council Tax payers. With that principle in mind the way we seek to address

the issue could very well be vastly different to the way other councils address the same issue in their Parishes. Please be aware of this, I think it will become a major facet of WBTC life in the years ahead!

On a lighter note what has happened over the last few months.

In May we saw the 'AGM' for this council. I was particularly honoured to be re-elected as chair of the council or Mayor for another 12 months. Shortly after that meeting we held the Annual Meeting of the Town and this year I wanted people to understand it was essentially their meeting.

It's the community who can set the agenda for this meeting if they so wish. After asking at several Town Council meetings for residents input but sadly receiving none back I felt the best way forward would be to invite all the community groups which operate within our area to come along and tell people who they were and what they were offering in Bedlington.

On the night over 30 groups were represented and each was given the opportunity to stand up and tell everyone about themselves.



I also had the honour to give some of our young people awards Council felt appropriate. So the Bedlington Town Vipers who had travelled

down to Filey and won two national tournaments were each given prizes and the team was given a full sized chocolate football, which I believe was demolished almost as soon as it left the building. Good for them!

The second lot of awards I presented that night was to our Youth Council members for their hard work and efforts especially helping us to understand what these young people and their peers want to see by way of development in the Town. They were each given a certificate for community involvement and a golden Queens Birthday Medal.

With the 'fun' over it was straight back to work and the beginning of almost endless meetings trying to get all the permits and permissions in place we needed to fulfil our intentions. This was and still is something which has become a real problem, more on this later.

Our first project and one which we had already pre-emptively started in our last year's budget with some of that years underspend was the bus shelter renewal programme. Using all of our negotiating skills to get the best possible prices we managed not only to replace all of our bus shelters, which had seen better days, we also managed to put a couple of new ones in where residents had requested. Again all in our 'corporate' colours and more importantly the whole project came in under budget! Likewise the railings have been painted in our green and gold colours to give a sense of identity to our Town. This is something which we intend to use for other fixed assets and you might have noticed we have just repainted all the 'heritage' bins in the conservation area.

Speaking of bins, I can now update

everyone on our bin replacement project as the funding has been agreed! We had received lots of complaints about the post mounted bins, the fact that they had been reattached too high up because of the new lamp post style and because they were small but had to carry all waste now, including dog waste, some were pretty smelly between emptying times.



This was unacceptable so I asked Councillor Johnson if he would fund bin replacement in his west ward out of the Smalls scheme NCC give each councillor to spend in their respective wards.

He agreed so all post mounted bins are being replaced in the West of Bedlington but that still left others in other wards which needed to be done. I had met with NCC street lightening managers and they agreed these new posts meant bins were mounted too high so they said they would put posts in alongside and mount the bins at a more appropriate height. I asked if they would maintain that financial commitment but allow us to supplement the costs so we got the larger floor mounting bins instead. They agreed. We have since also negotiated funding for them so the intention is to replace all the small post mounted bins in our parish area with the larger floor standing bins.

Again WBTC are replacing and renewing all of these assets which fall under our remit and we also hope to satisfy residents who have requested new bins in their areas too. This at little or no cost to WBTC residents!

Another one of our 'projects' this year is to replace all of the play equipment in both of the play parks we have responsibility for, West Lea and Meadowdale. We wanted to consider what our young people really wanted and would use in our parks before ordering anything so we went out with questionnaires aimed at giving us that basic information.

What came back was a blueprint for

the types of activities you wanted and we built those fundamental principles into the commissioning document we put out. This is a major expense for council but again one which needs to be done so we can get this council on a proper footing for this equipment replacement in the years ahead.

The commissioning documents went out and four submissions came back, each one from extremely reputable UK play equipment suppliers and manufacturers.

A lengthy marking process ensued which resulted in the top two suppliers being able to come in and make commercial presentations to members. We also set out a public consultation and this one was given its own marks to be awarded so every vote counted!

Once all the markings have been done we can then see which supplier actually gets the contract!

The above are the sorts of processes we can utilise when we have complete control over the project but I'm afraid I do have to report that is not always the case. We have several projects which need additional permissions to enable us to proceed and all involve various departments within NCC.

I have met with the appropriate managers and they seem to understand the projects and what is needed by way of permission etc. yet time after time we hear nothing back after the initial meetings. Once would be irritating but month after month is quite something else and it is compromising our ability to work for our residents benefit!

I now have a meeting with senior directors of NCC to try and get to the bottom of these problems and resolve them. My view is that it is unacceptable for any 'customer' to be treated in such a manner and in most cases we are essentially customers of NCC Ltd!

Just to give a flavour of the types of issues we have reported and requested permission for, the misplaced lamp posts, lamp posts not finished or fitted correctly, our intention to have 'Welcome to Bedlington' lamp post banners up along Front Street for the fair (yes last August!), all lamp posts painted in our Town colours within the conservation area and outwards towards our new gateway features

once they get installed. Permission off NCC technical services so we can get on with installing our new heritage based gateway features, the possibility of bollards around our Market Place to stop cars using it as a car park, double yellows around the Nail because right at that pinch point they don't have double yellow lines, trip hazards, a price for the relocation of the Trotter Memorial, a robust response to anyone fly posting on the roundabout, being able to move the market, no public toilet provision in Bedlington, being able to commission properly for the likes of new paths, why was the old Church Hall wall deemed dangerous when it was in private hands yet it seems OK now NCC or Arch own it, ...to name but a few!



Hopefully we have turned that corner now and our concerns have gone back and we are promised they are being dealt with!

To close this council has undertaken a very ambitious program this year, albeit not very glamorous, but one which needed to be done. Getting everything into the best condition possible and having it all paid for within a single year means we can now budget responsibly with the knowledge of when the future replacements will be needed.

I would like to thank all the councillors who have put in huge efforts in their own time to make sure we achieved what we set out to do and especially our clerk who is equally as committed and is the day to day face of our council.

# Have your say on Bedlington Market

By the Mayor Councillor Malcolm Robinson

For quite some time WBTC have been trying to influence how our Thursday market operates. Now following a strategic review of all markets in Northumberland by NCC we have been asked to come on board and see if we can make the market sustainable. Last time I went to NCC with our suggestions we were turned down flat, this time it seems we might actually be allowed to have a worthwhile opinion!

WBTC have always taken the position that the money spent on the Townscape Heritage Initiative (the shops and marketplace historical improvements) should be backed up by commitment to the rules as laid down at the time. First and foremost the new flagstones which were laid in the marketplace are of such a size and quality they are almost irreplaceable and that's the reason why vehicles were prohibited from driving onto that area. Fast forward just a few years and



we now see broken and discoloured flags due to traffic. Also the recessed lighting has been broken due to the same thing. WBTC are actively pursuing banning vehicles from this area.

With that in mind and the general appearance of the market we suggested moving the market to the top car park opposite the library, behind TSB. Not only to move the bona fide market operators but also include car boot sellers to a spot adjacent.

We also asked for niche retailers to be invited in on a periodic basis so we would get some variation in the market offer. Also bringing in some sort of entertainment and even considering

changing the times to suit people's modern lifestyles better.

For our part we were offering to help with all those changes and do our bit to advertise the new revamped 'Bedlington Market'. All this was turned down because we were not allowed to use the top end car parks?

So the question is over to our residents now.

Do you value the market, do you want the market to continue, do you want different products offered and if so such as what, would you support moving the market, do the times suit today's lifestyle?

We need you to contact us with your thoughts and ideas please get in touch

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## World Challenge Project

Last October WBTC were asked to support one of our young people, Ross Lively, as he undertook the World Challenge Project. This year the project included flying to Morocco with the aim of improving the sanitation and living standards of those living in extreme poverty in the North West of Africa. The project helped construct new educational and housing facilities for those in a rural village.

A very worthy cause and WBTC were delighted to award Ross a funding donation to help towards his costs; costs which he had to raise himself, this was no freebee jaunt!

Ross reported,

"Over the course of the project stage of our trip we were involved with



helping to reconstruct some of the worn down facilities in the local school. This school contained over 1000 students between the ages of 5 and 18.

We particularly focused upon the sanitation of the school, aiming to improve the state of the toilets and cleaning stations that had long fallen into disrepair. Girls in particular had poor attendance at the school as they felt ashamed to use the facilities located on site, as a result they often



went home and didn't return for the rest of the day.

This obviously has a negative long term impact on the quality of their education. By installing new modernised toilets and establishing new water irrigation system the overall quality of the facilities has drastically improved."

Well done to him and the other young people who take part in all schemes such as this one.



# COMMUNITY GRANTS

**West Bedlington Town Council has a 'Community Chest' scheme which gives local voluntary groups and organisations a chance to bid for funding. This might be to help establish a new group or to carry out extra activities that they wouldn't otherwise be able to do - e.g. sporting activities, arts, music or craft group, new equipment for a youth club - but these ideas will be coming from the community themselves.**

To qualify for an award the applicant must be able to demonstrate clearly that any funding from West Bedlington Town Council will benefit the Town, or residents of the Town.

Grant applications will be dealt with by the Full Council. In determining the validity of an application, the Council will refer to the following guidelines:

Applications will be considered for the following purposes: -

1. For the purpose of purchasing equipment or materials either in part or in full.
2. For the purchase of services e.g. venue hire or transport that will enable group members to partake in a group trip or outing regardless of their incomes.

3. For running costs (but not wages) of a viable group that is experiencing a period of hardship.
4. For the provision of recreational activities and facilities.
5. For activities that raise the profile of the area.

There is £5,000 available for community grants in the current financial year. Application forms are available from the Council's web page or from the Councils Office



## **The Institution of The Reverend Ian James Hennebry as the incumbent of Bedlington, Cambois and Sleekburn**

By Deputy Mayor Councillor Christine Taylor

The arrival of a new priest is always a really important event for the ministry and members of the congregation and although I'm not a deeply religious person I was delighted to be invited to the induction ceremony of Reverend Ian Hennebry as the vicar for St Cuthbert's church here in Bedlington, also covering Cambois and Sleekburn.

On my arrival I could see a number of familiar faces and the church was beautifully decorated with some stunning floral arrangements. Opening welcomes by the area Dean the Reverend Philip Hughes, were followed by hymns and readings from members of the congregation Carol Brinton and Mary Cummings.

The sermon was given by The Right Reverend Frank White, Assistant Bishop of Newcastle, which was light hearted and humorous in parts, in keeping with the occasion and which made me smile. This was followed by the presentation of Ian and his declaration of assent, oath of allegiance and finally his induction and installation.

I felt honoured and very privileged to be invited and take part in the ceremony which was a truly joyous occasion from beginning to end, when we were all invited for refreshments by the church wardens and parochial church council, a real treat.

I took the opportunity on behalf of West Bedlington Town



Council to offer our congratulations and best wishes to Ian and his family and to extend a standing invitation to attend any of our council meetings in the future and I hope to see him there.

For anyone not aware St Cuthbert's is one of the most important surviving historic buildings in the country, reputed to have been dedicated to St Cuthbert in 1069, a magnificent building and graveyard is well worth a visit.



## West Bedlington Town Council are proud to sponsor the Children's University for children in our area through Leading Link

**What is Children's University? The Children's University is a national organisation that provides 7 to 14 year olds (and 5 and 6 year olds with their families) with access to exciting and innovation learning activities and experiences outside of the normal school day. These activities are known as Learning Destinations.**

They celebrate achievement and reward participation through the

award of National Certificates. Raising children's aspirations is important and they aim to develop the understanding that learning can be a system to better places in life.

On becoming members of the Children's University, children are issued with a Passport to Learning where they can take part in learning activities and experiences. For every hour they take part, they are working

towards National Children's University Awards, presented at our Graduation Ceremony each year in partnership with the University.

The Mayor and deputy Mayoress were privileged to be invited to go to St James's Park and see and support the Children's University Graduations.

Here's hoping the next time they put their Mortar Boards on they are picking up their BAs!

## WBTC Litter bin replacement initiative



**Having received so many complaints about the lamp post mounted litter bins WBTC looked for a solution to the problem. First of all we asked the officer responsible for the lamp post renewal why these bins were being attached too high up and some not even reattached at all.**

Seems it is all to do with the design of the lamppost which means the bins have to be reached higher up than was the case with the old lampposts. He did agree this was a problem however

and the solution offered was that all the ones deemed too high up would be replaced by fixing a post adjacent to carry the bin. We asked if he would maintain that financial commitment and allow us to supplement the cost and put in the larger floor mounted bins. This was eventually agreed. That was the problem ones sorted however we really wanted a wholesale solution to the other reported problems associated with these lamppost bins.

We asked NCC Councillor Johnson if he would donate some of his NCC Smalls Scheme monies to help change all the lamppost bins in his

ward. He agreed so we looked at all the bins not just in his ward but across our whole area and agreed a full scale replacement programme with NCC Neighbourhood Services who empty the bins. Once we had the extra funding needed in place we were able to start our bin replacement programme. This means that this wholesale bin replacement project has cost residents very little or probably nothing at all!

Once again WBTC investing in renewed infrastructure to give our residents the best outcome and all done in the most cost effective way possible.

# TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

You can attend Town Council meetings (usually the second Thursday of the month at Bedlington Community Centre at 6:30pm)

Before each Town Council meeting there will be a 15 minute open Session. The Chair will invite members of the public present to put questions to, or draw relevant matters to the attention of the Council prior to commencement

of business. In order to give every member of the public a fair chance of asking a question, each person will be limited to two questions at each session and each question is limited to 3 minutes per person

## Council and Committee Meeting Diary

All meeting dates are subject to Council approval. Provisional dates for 2016/2017 are shown in the table below.



WEST BEDLINGTON  
TOWN COUNCIL

Year	Month	Full Council 6.30PM	Services Committee 6.00PM
2016	November	10	24
2016	December	8	22
2017	January	12	26
2017	February	9	23
2017	March	9	2
2017	April	6	27

## Contact details for the Council Office



Town Clerk, Steven Young

You can contact Steven at the Town Council office:

Telephone: **(01670) 457070**

E-mail: **westbedlingtontowncouncil@gmail.com**

Post: **Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street West, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5TT.**

Office Opening times:

**The office is generally open Monday Wednesday and Friday (9.00am - 5.00pm)**

However and regrettably due to staffing levels we cannot guarantee any fixed opening times.

We would advise that in the first instance you contact us via telephone or email and we will endeavour to answer your query or if you prefer we can arrange an appointment at the office.

# WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

## COUNCILLOR CONTACT DETAILS



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## OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Allotments
- Bus Shelters
- Children's Play Areas
- Grit Bins - if the County Council won't supply the Town Council may supply
- Litter Bins
- Public Seating
- War Memorials
- Christmas Lights
- Christmas Tree
- Notice board Provision
- Flower beds and bulb planting
- Town gateway features
- Additional grass cuts - The County Council does not cut grass in April and October so we may pay for additional grass cuts in those months
- Any entry into the Northumbria in Bloom completion
- Support of Community Events.

All other local Council Services (e.g. Housing, Refuse Collection, Council Tax and Housing Benefits) are the responsibility of Northumberland County Council.

[www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)  
or call **0345 600 6400**