



Berwick Town Council

Newsletter



August 2023 edition

FREE



A Message from the Mayor

Welcome to our August newsletter. Berwick is very fortunate to have such a wealth of volunteers who give of their time and expertise. The events, organisations, charities and clubs which happen throughout the year and impact, one way or another, on our daily lives, could not survive without this dedicated band of volunteers.

However, post-Pandemic, a number of these vital organisations are struggling to operate due to a marked decline in volunteers. I urge you to consider giving up some of your free time to ensure that they survive. As a community we have always looked out for each other, probably due to our rural location far removed from the opportunities available in larger towns and cities.

Whether you're able to help with weeding, setting up a marquee, or just offering a sympathetic ear, I'm sure that your contribution will be greatly appreciated.

Berwick Needs You!
Cllr John Robertson



Tweed Salmon Queen 2023

A huge congratulations to the 2023 Salmon Queen, Mae Morton, to her attendants and to everyone involved with the Tweed Salmon Queen procession and ceremony on 20th July. Mae's attendants are Brooklyn Girdwood and Mayley Mitchell from Prior Park First School and Anna Nicoll and Adele Pringle from Tweed Middle School. The Town Council is proud to support such a fantastic local event!

Photo by Margaret Shaw

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Berwick Charities Fair

There was a really positive response to the Volunteer Fair that was held on 22nd July at the Guild Hall. 18 local and regional organisations were represented who used the event to talk to members of the public, fundraise and recruit new volunteers.

There were many different good causes enthusiastically supported, ranging from health, environment and community through to friendship and social support. Being taught how to play backgammon by the U3A team was an unexpected bonus, and the RNLI showed many visitors how to stay safe on the beach and in the sea. The wildlife charity stands were impressive, with swans featuring strongly, as you would expect in Berwick, through to local public gardening groups. There were local, regional and national stalls supporting the key areas of health including heart, brain, cancer and mental challenges. The Mayor's Charity (Berwick Cancer Cars) was well supported by a tombola stall, and there was superb baking provided for the event by Margaret Shaw.

Organised by the Town Council and Chamber of Trade, it is hoped that this event becomes an annual affair, reaching out to a wider group of good causes, both locally and nationally. Berwick has a wonderful team of local people who do so much good for our community and are always ready to help when needed. A big thank you to all these groups and all the others who couldn't join us on the day.



A New Playpark for Tweedmouth

We're delighted to be starting working with Active Northumberland this month at the Berwick Leisure Centre. Active Northumberland have installed a lovely new play park at the centre and the Town Council have agreed to take on the day-to-day inspection and care of the park as part of its

portfolio of playparks. This new site will be launched officially later in the month but access to the site will be made available next week.



Grove Gardens South Play Park

As you may know, we've reluctantly decided to lock and erect barrier fencing around Grove Gardens South play park. It's always been a challenging site to manage because it's not easily supervised. In recent weeks the amount of vandalism has escalated, with some individuals tearing up the safety surfaces and throwing them at neighbouring houses.

This is totally unacceptable, and it means the play park isn't currently safe for use. The levels of anti-social behaviour from the people misusing this area are unfair on local residents. It's not a new problem, and it always gets worse during the summer months and the long nights. We know that when we ask around, people will tell us all the people involved are from outside the area, and that local people shouldn't lose a facility, but we have to respect our neighbours and protect them.

With almost nightly damage to the safety surfaces, we can't guarantee that the play area will be safe to use the next day. It simply isn't feasible to inspect this park on a daily basis, and some of the repairs that are already required need specialist contractors. We're proud of our record of providing play areas for young people in Berwick, and we're always disappointed when vandalism spoils it or kids who just want somewhere safe to play, but there's a limit to how much we can tolerate anti social behaviour.

Town Council goes Electric

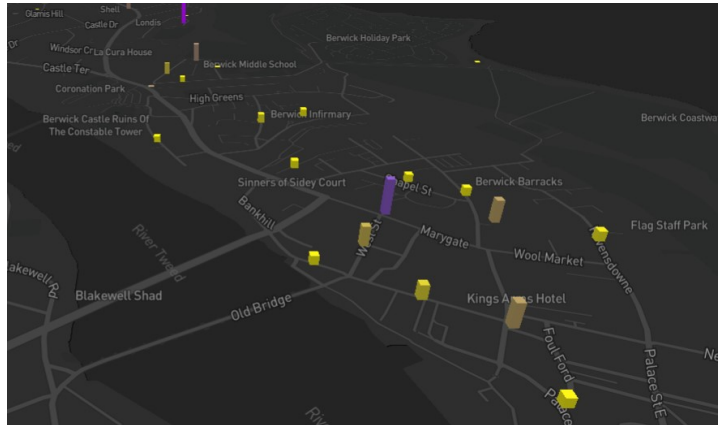
It has been a very productive and busy month for the warden team! They have been battling with the elements (so much rain!) but as well as play park grass cutting, weeding and deep cleaning there has been a lot of bench maintenance. There are 300 benches in Berwick that need looking after and they are making their way through the mammoth task of mending and painting them.

The damaged skate park shelter at Highcliffe was removed by a private contractor and we salvaged the benches inside to renovate and repurpose in one of the playparks. The multi-unit equipment at Greenses Haven play park has now been fixed as well as the disabled swing chair at Flagstaff park just in time for the holidays. Various planters have been spruced up and painted and there are now 4 of the large 3 tier planters at Spittal which are looking lovely and bright near the play park.

Probably the highlight of the month was the delivery of our new electric van, a Maxus eDeliver 3 Dropside. The vehicle replaces our rented van and is better suited to our needs as well as of course helping the Council's drive towards carbon neutrality.



Berwick's Crime Rate



As part of the ongoing discussion about CCTV we've been investigating the relevant stats on crime. We've been using a relatively new tool (to us) called crimerate.co.uk, which provides maps of reported crime offences over the last 12 months.

Reported crime is always a difficult topic, both because under-reporting is a reality that has been the subject of much debate over the last 20 years and because the incidence of crime is imperfectly related to the emotional drivers of individuals reactions to crime, and is often affected by external factors such as age. What's relevant for us however is that the police recorded crime statistics suffer the same issues across different places, so we can at least say that if shoplifting is 14 times more likely to be reported in Blyth Town Centre than in Berwick Town Centre, we're comparing like with like.

Some obvious highlights spring out from looking at the crimerate.co.uk data for the last 12 months. Berwick's crime rate (68.99) is lower than the Northumberland average of 78.34 and lower than the rate for Alnwick (80.97), Morpeth (96.43) and Cramlington (82.88). We'd recommend crimerate.co.uk for its ease of accessibility and of access to a clear overview.



MEET THE TOWN COUNCIL

Have a chat with Members of the Council at our informal monthly meet and greet, outside the Council offices on Marygate.

15th August 10:30 to noon

Spittal's New Telescope

We're really pleased to have organised the planning permission and installation of the new telescope on Spittal promenade. The telescope will help fund beach wheelchairs at Spittal, a project we're working on in conjunction with Berwick Community Trust.

The wheelchairs will be housed in the new container unit you may have seen installed in our Spittal playpark and will be available for use soon.



Berwick's Green Map

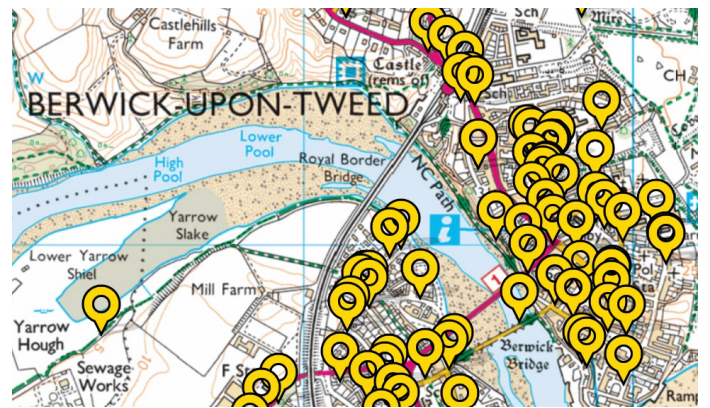


Part of our role as a Town Council is to support other groups or organisations who are working to make Berwick a better place. From major conservation organizations to local gardening groups, we try to be the glue that holds them all together.

One of the largest areas in which we can make an impact is by enabling groups to identify who might be working on similar projects. It's all about information sharing and we're delighted that we'll shortly be able to launch a new community database to help with this.

We've come across another tool that has great potential; it's called Green Map. It's an open source mapping tool based on free to use data that will let us plot places as well as groups. Would you like to be part of a partnership dedicated to mapping all the projects in Berwick dedicated to improving sustainability?

We'd like to get everyone together sometime during August to talk about this - email projectsadmin@berwick-tc.gov.uk if you'd like to be part of this.



Noticed a streetlight that's not working? Report local problems (like fly-tipping, blocked drains, broken paving slabs, graffiti, etc.) at Fix My Street and 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 Streets works on smartphones, tablets and desktop computers. Use this QR code or use this link to find out more: nland.cc/fix



Contact the Town Council

info@berwick-tc.gov.uk / tel 01289 302391

or pop into our office on Marygate, open to the public 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday.

Contact Northumberland County Council

You can speak to someone in person in the Library on Walkergate on Tuesday and Friday mornings or telephone 0345 600 6400.