



Berwick Town Council

Newsletter



September 2023

A Message from the Mayor



Welcome to September's newsletter, a busy month for the Council as we prepare for autumn. It has been a bustling summer in town and I hope you have been able to take advantage of the warm sunny weather, however brief it may have been! We have seen some new shops and businesses open on Marygate and West Street recently which are already being well

patronised, and we hope to see more businesses take interest in our town in the months ahead.

It is also a good time to reflect on the Warden's team first year of operation. We've done a lot through the year and we've learned a lot on the way. Overall, we believe we've offered a better service to our residents and one that is steadily improving as we better understand the requirements of our town.

Finally, a date for your diary. The Sheriff and the Sheriff's Lady are hosting an Open Garden at their home at 30 West Street on Sunday 3rd September from 1-4pm. It is £5 entry which includes tea/coffee and cake and all proceeds go to Berwick Cancer Cars.

Cllr John Robertson

The First Year



It's a year since our new team of town wardens started work, as part of our plan to improve Berwick's local environment.

Over the next few months we'll be working on a value for money comparison, which will be hard, because the new team are taking on tasks that weren't possible under the old agreement with Northumberland County Council.

A key part of our planning for the team's work next year is our ambition to get Berwick's planting and floral displays back to the standard they were at pre-pandemic. It isn't just a matter of going back to the old plan. We had a tough summer this year for growing, and we're keen to learn all the lessons from that.

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A key supplier has gone out of business, and we relied on volunteers to add value to much of our work pre-pandemic, which impacted so many important social connections.

Planting has to be environmentally sensitive, and there's a demand for new and more usable green spaces. We'd like to work with all our community on those plans, and those ambitions.

We'd like to get back to that place, where Berwick was good enough to be nominated for the Britain in Bloom scheme, but that requires asking the question. Would you like to volunteer to help improve our green spaces? Would you like to be part of our initiative to create micro-parks around the town? If you would, or if you've any other thoughts, please drop us a line, and we'll look forward to getting more done.

Flood Warnings

We have had communication from the Environmental Agency regarding expected Spring Tides on the dates of the 2nd September, 1st October and on the 29th/30th October. We generally see tides of these levels at least once a year – the risk this year is that we have three high tides in a period of eight weeks and if coupled with heavy rainfall could possibly cause some flooding.

The Agency will be monitoring the weather and river levels 24/7 and are ready to issue Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings if necessary. There is a free Flood Warning Service that the public can sign up to, which uses telemetry to provide flood warnings to at risk properties when river/sea levels start to rise. Link is below (or scan the QR code): www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings



Castlegate Toilets

As you are no doubt aware, the toilets next to B&M in the Castlegate car park are currently being refurbished by NCC. They have provided temporary loos including disabled facilities further down the car park but we understand that this is not ideal and we will keep you updated with information regarding completion. Any problems with these portaloos let us know and we will inform the relevant NCC staff.

Alternatively, you can contact NCC directly on 0345 600 6400 or report any issues you may have on their website at www.northumberland.gov.uk

Cleaning Up



We're delighted with our new pressure washing rig we've had installed on the back of our flatbed. This has greatly speeded up our cleaning and allows us to tackle jobs we were previously unable to. With a range of nozzles and cleaning heads we can wash our benches and bus shelters efficiently now and the set up allows the wardens to reach high by using the flatbed as a platform to stand on. The system is so flexible that we can even use it to water our flowerbeds and planters with a separate pump.

We've listened to our residents too and invested in a pavement cleaning attachment so that we can help support the efforts of NCC in keeping Marygate clean. We all appreciate that the Gull mess can quickly become unsightly after a few days without rain and so we can help by doing extra washes at these times.

Our new attachment for scrubbing pavements will also allow us to clean without any splashback so we can use it when the street is busy without fear of soaking people. We even have a turbo nozzle attachment to remove chewing gum.

Reporting Dead Wild Birds

We are regularly contacted by residents with concerns about dead seabirds on our beaches and so here is a reminder of how to go about reporting birds and requesting their removal.

Reporting dead wild birds Do not touch or pick up any dead or visibly sick birds that you find. You should report to Defra (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs,) online at www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds or call the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77).

Things to look out for:

- one or more dead bird of prey, gull, swan, goose or duck in the same place
- 5 or more dead wild birds of any species in the same place

Defra will then collect some of these birds and test them. Calls to the Defra helpline about birds are triaged and not all birds will be collected. Providing good location information for a dead or diseased bird is particularly important and location apps such as 'what3words' references can be very helpful.

Wild birds are susceptible to a range of diseases and injuries and not all dead birds will have been infected with avian influenza. If the birds are on private land and Defra do not need to collect for testing, then double bag and place in your regular waste bin.

To report dead wild birds for removal on public land call the Northumberland County council customer services on 0345 600 6400. They will respond to arrange collection from public land or where appropriate, their teams will inform the landowner to arrange removal when dead birds are located on private land. Landowners should also seek advice about their obligation to arrange compliant collection and disposal of dead birds affected by Avian Influenza. For more information go to: www.nland.cc/bird



A New Home For Planters

You will probably have noticed that our green 3 tier planters that were originally on Marygate are now blue and have found a home at the end of Spittal Promenade. Originally made and donated by Allan Brothers, the planters have exceeded their expected life and, with a bit of fixing up by the Wardens, are good to go for a few more years yet.

They are a good example of the Town Council working with local groups to improve our town. We're very grateful to Spittal Gardening Group who have adopted the planters and are taking on their care and watering.

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 0345 600 6400 or visit us in the Marygate office.

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.

Beach Wheelchairs



We have been working with Berwick Community Trust on the Beach Wheelchair project in Spittal and we're delighted to report that this month the project will go live. Phase one was the installation of the telescope on the promenade, which provides an income to keep the project running, and the second phase has been kitting out the container sited in Spittal playpark.

We are waiting the hoist being delivered and a few other bits before we can be fully operational but the first users have already used the facility. The final step will be some landscaping and information about the project being installed on site.



Our van is now wrapped in the Berwick Place Brand artwork we use so you'll see the wardens out and about. We hope you agree it looks distinctive without being too over the top. We have our telephone number on the back and the doors and our info@berwick-tc.gov.uk email address on the back.

Council Meetings



All September meetings are held in our Offices on Marygate and you are welcome to attend, please come along!

Monday 4th	Communities & Local Services	6.00pm
Monday 11th	Planning	6.00pm
Tuesday 12th	Budget and Administration	6.00pm
Monday 25th	Council	6.00pm

IN AID OF THE MAYOR'S CHARITY
ALL PROCEEDS TO
THE BERWICK & DISTRICT CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

OPEN GARDEN

SUNDAY
3RD SEPTEMBER
1-4pm

OUR SHERIFF AND SHERIFF'S LADY INVITE YOU TO VISIT THEIR WALLED GARDEN AT 30 WEST STREET BERWICK UPON TWEED

TICKETS £5 TO INCLUDE TEA/COFFEE AND CAKE
ALSO TOMBOLA AND POTTERY STALL

Media with Postcard & Well.com

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 (NCC)

You can speak to someone in person in the Library on Walkergate on Tuesday and Friday 10:00am-1:00pm or telephone NCC on 0345 600 6400.