



Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council NEWSLETTER

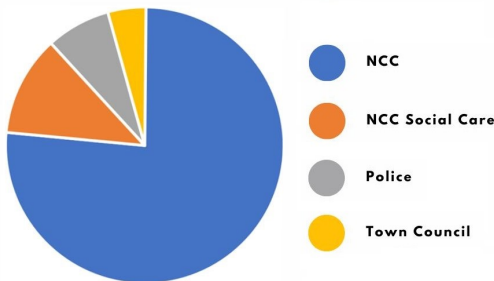
April 2024

Council Tax And The Town Council

The Town Council receives a portion of your Council Tax. Our main article this month sets out how we use this money to contribute to the well-being and development of our town. It also offers you the opportunity to help guide how we spend the tax in future.

Who gets the Council Tax?

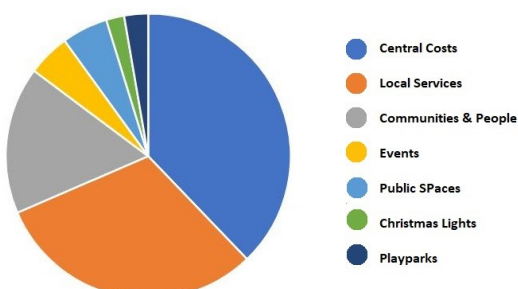
Your Council Tax is divided between Northumberland County Council (NCC), the police, NCC social care and ourselves.



The Town Council's share of each household's council tax bill is the smallest portion, less than 5% of the total amount you pay. (Example: in 2023-24, a Band D home in Berwick paid £2254.08 in council tax, of which £99.94 came to the Town Council).

What we spend the 5% on

These are the areas and activities we spend our share of the council tax on, on the right is a description of each of these budget headings.



Central Costs these are the costs to run a small council; from office costs to insurance, telecoms, rates, auditing and employing staff to do the work.

Local Services employing wardens and providing the equipment and the depot needed for them to do their job.

Communities and People the work we do with local organisations and community groups to help them achieve their aims. Everything from litter picking equipment to helping community groups develop and grow. It also includes the development costs of our strategic plan which sets out what the Council intends to focus on until 2025 (the next Local Government elections) and what will help it to continue with its achievements in a structured way.

Events this includes the events we organise, like Remembrance Sunday and the grants we give to support events in the town like the Heritage Open Days, the Repair Café and the Bridge 400 Celebrations.

Public Spaces our work in and around the streets like planting and keeping benches, bins and other street furniture in good order.

Christmas Lights we purchase the Christmas lights (including those on the New Bridge) for the town. We also install and take down the lights each year.

Play Parks we make weekly inspections and organise appropriate repairs and refurbishment for all of our play parks and also water testing for Spittal splash park.

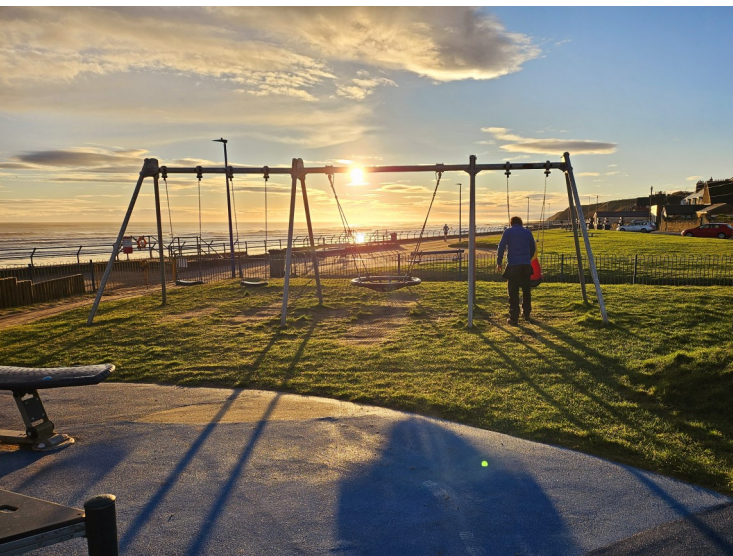
Council Tax—Have Your Say



Berwick Town Council looks after seven play areas, 300 benches and dozens of litter bins across the three communities of Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal. We purchase Christmas lights for the town and organise the town's civic events like Remembrance Sunday. Our wardens repair benches and bins, keep the play parks and the splash park in good order and plant and water the town's flower beds, baskets and tree planters.

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 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 in 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. We aim to make Berwick a greener, more prosperous place.

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. 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. E.g. we recently installed a mezzanine floor at our depot so we can store the town's Christmas lights without having to pay rent on storage containers throughout the year.

It's been a busy couple of years for our play parks with Spittal fully up and running, and our team taking over the management of the playpark at the Leisure Centre. We're still looking to develop 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

What do you think?

Have we got the balance right or is there anything you think we should be doing? Have your say in how we focus spending by completing a short survey. Use the link forms.office.com/e/dP5XPFiSvq or follow the QR code.

Alternatively, you can pick up a paper copy of the survey in our office on Marygate. We're open to the public Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm.



Planting in Town



The new polytunnels on our Ramparts site are filling with young plants and there are more to come. We're really pleased with how our site is starting to shape up and how it is already producing results. Once the young plants are strong enough they will be planted out around the town and will add some much needed colour to our streets, ready for summer!

Riding of the Bounds



Come and see the Riding of the Bounds on the 4th May!

At 10.30am the Cavalcade will leave the Barracks and proceed, via Walkergate, to the Guildhall, where the Chief Marshal will arrive at the Guildhall to seek permission from the Mayor to ride the Boundaries.

The Riding of the Bounds, supported by the Town Council, is a hugely popular and long-standing annual tradition here, dating back over 400 years and refers to the Bounds of the Liberties of Berwick-upon-Tweed, the land between the present-day Border and the River Tweed. These land divisions were first regularly inspected by the town's garrison, but in 1609 the first civic "Riding of the Bounds" began and many of the customs from the early days are still observed, including the decorating of the horses with ribbons, a race at Canty's Bridge and a meal afterwards for the participants.

The 15 mile ride attracts many riders, often over 100, and is attended by thousands of spectators every year. It is organised by the Berwick Riders Association who fund-raise every year to make this event happen and it is supported by many local groups and businesses - do come and support them!

For more details on all the activities the Berwick Riders organise around this event see their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/BRABounds

Clarification Corner

This new section of the Residents' Newsletter is set up to respond to, or refute any inaccuracies printed in the most recent edition of 'The Bridge.'

The March/April edition alleged that the Town Council had used public funds to pay for private health care for one of its staff and that the full council had not been made aware of this.

We wish to make it clear that we paid a fee for staff coaching and that this decision was made quite legitimately by the Council's Staffing Committee. We would add that as a good employer we are fully entitled to pay for services such as coaching and training if we deem it to be appropriate. We accept that one of the invoices was mistakenly referred to as 'counselling.'

Mayor's Award 2024



Berwick Town Council held its annual Mayor's Awards ceremony on Friday 15th March to recognise outstanding individuals and organisations for their exemplary contributions to the community. The awards celebrate the dedication and commitment of those who tirelessly work towards making our town a better place and those from Berwick who have achieved eminence nationally and internationally. The recipients for the Mayor's Awards 2024 were:

The residents of Roddam Court, Tweedmouth who raise funds for charity every Christmas by installing a spectacular display of lights around their homes and gardens.

The staff of Cubs & Kits Daycare Nursery and Pre-School in Tweedmouth who, despite no budget, created an outdoor play area for their children made from recycled materials.

Gordon Campbell, who is one of Britain's leading trombone players. Berwick born Gordon is recognised for his many years teaching and inspiring young players.

Stephen Young, Professor of International Business at the University of Strathclyde. A posthumous award was made to Professor Young who, through his distinguished international career and passion to create a better world, never forgot his Berwick roots.



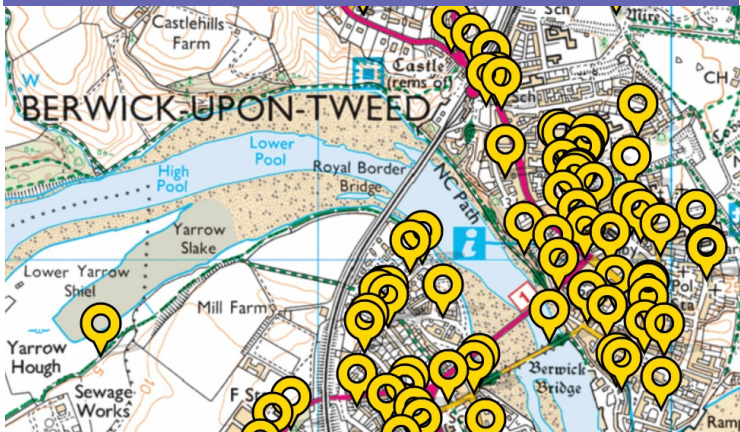
BRIDGE STREET

SHOPS RESTAURANTS
CAFÉS BARS GALLERIES

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



Fix My Street



If you have a pothole on your street that needs to be filled you can report it on 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 town and county councils.



Make sure you get a copy of our newsletter every month by joining our mailing list. Simply email info@berwick-tc.gov.uk and ask to be added. Next month's newsletter will turn up in your inbox at the beginning of the month.



Contact the Town Council

You can email us at info@berwick-tc.gov.uk or telephone us on 01289 302391.

Or you can pop into our office on Marygate. We're open to the public 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday.

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 10:00am-1:00pm or telephone NCC on 0345 600 6400.

Upcoming Council Meetings

Planning Committee: Monday 8th April, 6:00pm

Council Meeting: Monday 22nd April, 6:00pm

Meetings in our Marygate office are open to all and you have the opportunity to have your say on local issues you care about.