

Local Services Update

It has been a very busy couple of months! The wardens have been planting, weeding, deadheading and watering to create and maintain our lovely baskets and troughs. Balmy hot days along with stormy spells have been a blessing and a challenge to the planting this summer – there was amazing growth on our flowers and then Storm Floris gave them quite a thrashing – luckily most have recovered enough to last out the season!



As well as installing the monoliths in town, the wardens have been working on placing new frames for timetables in the bus stops and various asset maintenance work has been carried out. This has included repairing part of a picnic bench at Spittal playpark which had been vandalised, a swing seat replacement at Newfields playpark and benches in Spittal have been given a new coat of paint.



We had a number of residents request a more level path for disabled access at Newfields playpark so our wardens and Operations Manager hired some equipment and got the job done! The path is now completed and we hope it will enable more people to enjoy the park – what a view you have from there too!



As you will see in this issue, we have been busy with annual and special events in town and the wardens have been invaluable in the set up for these—we couldn't have done it without them! All this work has been completed alongside the regular playpark checks and splash park checks, maintenance and mowing so we look forward to a slightly calmer time over the Autumn, fingers crossed!



Summer Flowers

The Town Council has been delighted and genuinely surprised by the wonderful response to this year's floral displays across Berwick! Under the new guidance of our Chief Officer – whose experience includes over 30 RHS Gold Medals – we've taken a fresh approach this year, and it's clearly made an impact. From hanging baskets to vibrant planters, the town has bloomed beautifully thanks to thoughtful planning and a passion for horticulture. Many residents and visitors have commented on how stunning the displays are – and we want to keep that going. If your business would like to take part in next year's displays, please get in touch – plant orders are being placed now. If you would like a hanging basket, please ensure you have a bracket available on your building to hang it from or contact your landlord to see if they will fit one. You pay for the basket and flowers and we maintain them for you, it's a great deal and helps to keep the town looking colourful through the summer months - let's keep Berwick blooming!



On a related and annoying note, there have been some instances of vandalism on some of our planters on Castlegate—flowers ripped out and left on the pavement. This is really disappointing as our wardens work really hard to make these displays. Please let us know if you see any displays that have been damaged and we will try our best to fix them.



Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council

NEWSLETTER



September 2025





Chief Officer Update

Dear Residents,

It's been a busy and joyful couple of months across Berwick, Tweedmouth, and Spittal, with special events such as VE Day, VJ Day, and of course the crowning of our Salmon Queen. You can read more about these celebrations inside this month's newsletter.



Looking ahead, Council meetings start up again in September, with Planning Committee on Thursday 4th September and Full Council on Monday 22nd September. We are looking at making these meetings more accessible online so it is easier than ever to keep up with what's happening—we will update on social media when available.



Work is continuing on the Neighbourhood Plan, and there will be opportunities for everyone to get involved through public consultations in the coming months. This is your chance to share ideas and help shape the future of our Town. Together, we can keep Berwick, Tweedmouth, and Spittal thriving and full of community spirit—we look forward to seeing you at the events ahead. And while we're enjoying the wonderful summer floral displays around Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal, officers are already thinking ahead to spring—ordering bulbs and flowers to make sure next year is just as colourful and welcoming.

A huge thank you goes to all the volunteers, community groups, and residents who give up their time and energy to help make our Town look its best whilst bringing people together.

High Street Cleaning

As you may know, Northumberland County Council are responsible for the maintenance and cleaning of our roads and pavements. Our resident seagull population can make this job challenging and this has led to public dissatisfaction with the look of the High Street. So last month the Town Council decided to trial supplementing the work of NCC with a regular pressure wash of high footfall areas - this has proved to be effective and has resulted in positive feedback from residents and visitors and more people are enjoying the seating areas. We will endeavour to continue finding a solution to the maintenance of these areas and thank you for your support.

New on the High Street

You may have noticed some new additions to the town centre – the monoliths! These have been installed to add some visitor information in our busy areas, including a map and various highlights and were put in place following consultation with Northumberland County Council. The locations are on Marygate, near the train station, at the Parade car park and on the Quayside. Many thanks to NCC for helping to make this happen.



Get a copy of our e-newsletter regularly by joining our mailing list. Simply email info@berwick-tc.gov.uk and ask to be added. The newsletter will arrive into your inbox every 6 weeks or so, dependent on events.

Tweed Salmon Queen

The annual Salmon Queen event took place on the 17th July and what a great evening it was - we are so grateful for your support. The Town Council took on the responsibility of organising the event this year and it was so important to us that such an important and popular tradition in our town was celebrated in style. We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Salmon Queen event such a wonderful success.



To the residents and visitors who turned out to support the parade and festivities – your presence and enthusiasm made the atmosphere electric. A special thank you goes to the Lord Lieutenant and Civic Party for attending, and to our outgoing Salmon Queen Darcy and her court, who have represented the town with such dignity and pride over the past year. We warmly welcomed our new Queen, Kate, and her court, and look forward to their year ahead.



It was a pleasure to host the outgoing Eyemouth Herring Queen – your presence added to the sense of tradition and shared celebration. We are also incredibly grateful for the generous support from Viridor, NECA, Northumberland County Council, and Create Berwick, whose funding made the day possible. So many individuals and groups helped bring the event to life – from Chloe Sayers, whose beautifully crafted sashes and banners were a real highlight, to Greenwoods Auto Services providing the trailer, Martyn Ord pulling the Coble and Clean Wheels for ensuring it looked its best. Berwick Riders Association and RNLI volunteers played a key part in marshalling the parade, and the Coastguard was, as ever, a reassuring presence.



We were proud to see the Scouts, Cubs, Guides and Brownies forming a fantastic guard of honour along with Berwick Rangers Juniors. The Berwick Pipe Band provided the perfect soundtrack to the procession, which was headed up by the Principals and Mascot from the Berwick Riders Association. The Maltings' salmon lanterns brought colour and creativity, and the entertainment from Northstar Shindiggers, Nancy's Dancers, Hardly Original, Salmon City Blues Band, and Sunbelly kept the crowds smiling and dancing throughout the evening.



Thanks also to Hiccup, U've Pulled, Marshall's Cafe, Fortes Ice Cream, and our marshals for providing excellent refreshments and support, and to Slaters for the ever-popular rides. The Face Painting Lady worked her magic, PFL Audio did a brilliant job with staging and sound, and Tweedmouth Bowling Club's hospitality was much appreciated. A big thank you to the local businesses who donated fantastic raffle prizes – too many to name, but you know who you are! – and to everyone who bought tickets and supported the event in that way. Jim Gibson Photography captured the day beautifully, and we're so grateful to everyone who helped make the event happen – on stage, on the street, and behind the scenes. Most importantly, this event reminded us what community means – shared effort, shared joy, and a real sense of pride in our town. Thank you, Berwick. Here's to keeping this wonderful local tradition alive for many years to come!

Upcoming Meetings/Events

Thursday 4th September: Planning Committee

Monday 22nd September: Full Council

Meetings are at our Office on Marygate at 6pm.

Meetings are open to the public, please come along.

VJ Day 80th Anniversary

As you will know, this year is the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. VE day was commemorated back in May and we marked the occasion of VJ day along with the rest of the country on 15th August. The day Began with the Proclamation and flag raising at the Castlegate war memorial after which the parade made its way to St Andrew's Wallace Green for a moving memorial service which included stories of local people whose lives were deeply changed by events overseas and on the home front.



Following the service, The Town Council hosted a tea party for various military associations, veterans and local groups on the Parade in the Food Festival tent, accompanied by the excellent Berwick Brass Quintet. There were moving speeches on the conflict from the Lord Lieutenant and a narrative on the 9th Battalion of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers who were profoundly affected by the war in the Far East. In the afternoon St Andrew's Wallace Green hosted an exhibition, 'North Northumberland's Contribution to the Far East Campaign' which included the names of those men who died and survived that conflict. The Maltings Cinema screened the film 'The Railway Man', about the experiences of Eric Lomax, a former British army officer and POW who lived in Berwick.



The day ended with the lighting of the beacon on Windmill Bastion accompanied by a blessing and the bagpipes. It was a busy day and very many thanks to all who helped make the day a success - the Fusiliers Club, the Berwick Tri-Services Club, The British Legion, the KOSB, Cadets, Berwick Archives, St Andrews Church, Berwick Parish Church, the Maltings, Visit Berwick and The Berwick Brass Quintet - we are really grateful. Big thanks to Millie and Ray for agreeing to put their big marquee up a day early so we could host the tea there and congratulations on another fabulous Food and Drink Festival – one of the best weekends of the year!



Setting the Record

How Your Council Works.....

At Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council, we're committed to working in a way that is both effective and transparent. Local democracy thrives when residents are well-informed and confident that decisions are made openly and accountably. Recently, some concerns have been raised suggesting that the Council is holding "secret meetings" through its use of working groups instead of committees. We want to take this opportunity to set the record straight.

No Decisions Are Made in Private!

Let us be absolutely clear: all formal decisions are made in public meetings of the Full Council. These meetings are publicly advertised, open to all, and fully minuted. Any action the Council takes must be agreed at a Full Council meeting – and nowhere else.

Why We Use Working Groups?

Working groups are used by many town and parish councils to allow more in-depth discussion of specific topics or projects. They do not have the power to make decisions – instead, they explore issues, develop ideas, and make recommendations. This approach helps councillors debate freely and thoroughly without the time constraints or formality of a public meeting. It leads to more thoughtful and better-informed decision-making.

Transparency Is Built In

Although working groups don't make decisions, their work is not hidden. In fact, notes and recommendations from all working group meetings are included in the Full Council agenda, which is published in advance and made available to the public. This means you can see exactly what's been discussed and what is being recommended – and, crucially, you can watch or attend the meeting where those recommendations are debated and decided.

Open Government, Stronger Outcomes

The Town Council uses working groups to improve how we work for the people of Berwick, not to avoid scrutiny. We remain fully committed to openness and accountability in everything we do. If you have any questions about how the Council works, or about the topics being discussed, please contact us – we're here to help.

