



# Barnard Castle Town Council

## Annual Report 2012-13

### Forward:

This has been an eventful year with some exciting new things and some sad farewells.

By nature, this report looks back, but we have brought together our services under the new committees that will be responsible for them from now on, to give a flavour of the services, which the Town Council provides, and the ways in which money is spent on these. The summaries in this Annual Report set out some of the highlights and successes of the past twelve months: a year with some significant events and partnership working throughout the town.

Geoff Bosworth, Town Clerk since 2001, retired in October. He worked tirelessly to support the Town Council and to bring professional rigour to its services. The terms of office of two councillors, Newton Wood and Sylvia Bailes ended in May. Both have served the town in a range of capacities and the Town Council is very grateful for their dedication and service.

The year also brought some sadness. In January, the death was announced of Cllr Margaret Hamilton, a Town Councillor from 1997, Town Mayor from 2001-2003 and again from 2006-07. The town also said farewell to former Councillor and Honorary Freeman of the Town, Mr Alan Wilkinson. The loss of both these energetic and committed public figures will continue to be felt.

But now, we look forward to a new year, with a newly elected Town Council, a unique, new mini golf course as part of a refurbished Scar Top and more public events to support residents, businesses and tourism in Barnard Castle.

**Councillor Frank Harrison,**  
*Town Mayor 2012-13*

### Services:

- *Allotments*
- *Castle Floodlights*
- *Floral Displays*
- *Market Place Public Toilets*
- *Memorial and Blue Plaques*
- *Mini Golf*
- *Open Spaces*
- *Play Areas*
- *Public Seats and Pavement Furniture*
- *War Memorials*
- *Environmental matters*

During the year, three **Allotment** plots were re-tenanted and eight new applications received. The waiting list stands at an average of approximately 2 years (longer for the popular sites).

The main footpaths on the Raby Avenue site were completely rebuilt and there were long-awaited tree works to the boundary, funded through the Council's 'Allotment Improvements Holding Account,' which was set up last year.

Rents, which are set a year in advance, were held at £40 for 2014-15.

The **Castle Floodlights**, revamped in 2010 in partnership with English Heritage, Durham County Council and the Barnard Castle Vision, allow different coloured programs to be selected for significant events or themes. The Town Council meets the electricity costs of the new LED lights; making significant savings.

The 2012 **Floral Displays** were red, white and blue to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the 2012 London Olympics with newly installed ownership signs. A local company will be watering the displays from 2013 following retendering of this service.

The **Market Place Public Toilets** are operated by Durham County Council, with the Town Council paying half the annual running costs.

**Memorial and Blue Plaques** are considered as and when requests are received. During 2012, the Council agreed to replace the existing blue plaque on The Witham, to be installed towards the end of its renovation.

**Mini Golf** is a self-supporting service. The income generated each season covers the expenditure needed to run the course. During 2012, despite poor weather and the course showing signs of age, around 4,000 rounds of golf were played. With funding from the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership, North Pennine Dales Leader, County Councillor Barbara Harrison's Neighbourhood Budget and a contribution from the Town Council, the construction of a new 'competition standard' 9-hole course depicting 'A Journey through Teesdale' commenced on 14 January 2013 with completion expected by late May 2013.

**Open Spaces** – the long awaited Garden of Remembrance Improvement Project commenced as funding was secured from the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership.

A Galgate Greens Improvement Project and a Castle Walls Bulb Planting Scheme have been devised and are now awaiting the outcome of funding applications from the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership Community Initiatives Fund.

The Upper Demesnes Hay Meadow project continues to develop and flower.

This Council's five **Play Areas** were adopted as 'Queen Elizabeth II Fields' to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The completion of the Dawson Road Multi Use Games Area was celebrated with a launch event in July. The Big Tree Plant took place on an area at Green Lane that's prone to waterlogging and will benefit from the planting of appropriate tree species, which will, in time, create a natural adventure play area.

As part of the Garden of Remembrance improvement project, the **Public Seats** in the Garden have been restored. Following a request from a local resident for a memorial bench to be sited in the town, this prompted the Council to develop a scheme whereby local residents/sponsors can pay for the costs of a bench to be restored, rather than paying for a new bench, which are usually more costly. This scheme will be progressed during 2013.

The Town Council has responsibility for three **War Memorials**. The Main Town Memorial within the grounds of The Bowes Museum, the South African Boer War Memorial in upper Galgate and the Durham Light Infantry Memorial, also situated within The Bowes Museum grounds.

During 2012, funding was secured through the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership to redevelop the Garden of Remembrance in upper Galgate and which surrounds the South African Boer War Memorial. An allocation from the Town Council also went towards this project.

Following public consultation during 2012, an additional plaque, in respect of local people who have died in conflicts since 1945, has been commissioned for the Boer War Memorial and this will be mounted and unveiled once the Garden of Remembrance Project is complete.

**Environmental matters** – a Working Group was set up to help tackle dog fouling, starting with a successful bid included in the 2013-14 budget. This amount has subsequently been match-funded through Teesdale Action Partnership's Natural & Built Environment Small Grant's Scheme. The Group is currently working on the logistics of Barnard Castle Town Council's 'Poop Scoop Swoop' scheme.

The Town Council agreed to promote and take part in the 2013 Big Spring Clean, which took place on the Demesnes and Scar Top.

## Partnership:

- *Christmas Lighting*
- *Community Events*
- *Grants to Other Bodies*
- *Poppy Appeal*
- *Remembrance Sunday.*

The 2012 **Christmas Lighting** display (Market Cross windows, the lamppost motifs and the Town's crib) provided the town with its traditional colourful glow.

At the Christmas Festival Event, there was the customary arrival of Father Christmas who lit the town's Christmas tree in lower Galgate, then he settled into his grotto in the Methodist Church where more than 150 children visited him. There was an added extra to the 2012 Christmas festivities as the Town Council worked with 'Dickens In Teesdale' to present the Christmas spectacular *Son et Lumière*, on Scar Top. Launched with a spooky diorama, the light show told the story of Charles Dickens' visit to Teesdale. The show, expertly devised by Alan Hillary Events, was topped off with a magnificent firework display. The Town Council is grateful to everyone who contributed to making the event such a memorable occasion.

A number of other **Community Events** took place. Who can forget the once-in-a-lifetime event of the Olympic Torch Relay coming through town? The Council bought official 2012 London Olympics hand waving flags and distributed them to crowds waiting to see the torch.

During July, despite appalling weather and a drop in entry levels, the Dickensian themed **Garden Competition** and Show Day went ahead.

Small financial **Grants to Other Bodies** are considered by the Council in line with the Financial Donations Policy (available on the Town Council's website).

For 2012-13, the budget available was £1,500 and was awarded to organisations and activities which contributed constructively to the life and wellbeing of Barnard Castle and benefitted some or all of the people of the Town.

The 2011 **Poppy Appeal** closed at the end of September 2012 and it was confirmed that the net total raised for our area was £11,137.56. This is the highest total raised locally so far.

In October 2012, the 2012 Appeal was launched and this will run through until 30 September 2013. An interim report received from The Royal British Legion recently indicates that a total in excess of £10,000 has been raised so far. There is still a chance that this total may increase as donations can be accepted up to 29 September 2013.

The town's **Remembrance Sunday** event was organised once again in conjunction with St Mary's Parish Church, the Service at both the Church and at the town's main cenotaph was well attended.

## Planning:

- *Consultee on planning applications.*
- *All other planning matters.*
- *highways and transport issues.*

The Planning Committee (acting under delegated powers) has considered 41 planning applications this year. This is a 52% drop from the number of applications considered in 2011-12.

Full Council has considered two significant applications. These are Amen Corner improvement works and the outline planning application for the residential development at land south of Deerbolt.

## Resources:

- *Budgets and finance*
- *Personnel and development*
- *Premises and capital assets*
- *Performance - including programmes for the development and improvement of the Town Council's performance*
- *Monitoring and overseeing Corporate Governance arrangements including monitoring complaints*
- *Honorary Freeman Scheme*
- *Supporting the Town Council in fulfilling its statutory duties.*

The annual **Budget and Finance** cycle takes around three months, when all aspects of the Council's financial requirements are considered. A Precept request is then served on Durham County Council for the required amount (total revenue budget less income generated).

The total Revenue Budget for 2012-13 was £162,917 and details of how this was apportioned can be found under the 'Abbreviated Accounts' section (below).

Information is also available on the use of the Council's Earmarked Reserves. The Council's finances are internally audited every 6 months and externally audited annually.

The **Corporate Governance** arrangements were fully revised, following appointment of a new Town Clerk in September 2012. The Council will now operate with four principal committees: Partnership, Services, Resources and Planning, with a revised scheme of delegation and new ways of working.

## Abbreviated Accounts

EXPENDITURE	2012-13 Budget (£)	Outturn 31 Mar 13 (£)	INCOME	2012-13 Budget (£)	Outturn 31 Mar 13 (£)
Mayoral Allowance (£700 & £100)	800	800	Allotments	3,320	3,550
Training	1,000	330	Mini Golf	4,300	3,540
Audit Fees	1,735	1,300	Christmas Festival	-	800
Insurance	1,860	1,854	Bank Interest	2,000	1,484
Society of Local Council Clerks	200	203	Rent (Ten Fields)	60	60
Co. Durham Association	600	599	Grants	-	43,532
Travel Allowance	100	89	Donations	-	2,496
Chairs of Office	100	110	Cumulative Fund	-	-
Office and Associated Costs	10,019	8,839	Precept	136,025	148,642
Salaries and Associated Costs	99,578	98,383	Double Taxation	4,311	4,311
Advertising	150	112	Play Areas	14	13
Public Noticeboard	140	68	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>150,030</b>	<b>208,428</b>
Allotments	3,590	2,326	<b>GRANTS</b>		
Mini Golf	4,300	4,139	Income		
Christmas Festival	9,000	9,000	Remembrance Garden Project -		
Play Areas	6,335	5,828	Heart of Teesdale		7,930
Ten Fields	60	60	Replacement Mini Golf Project		
Red Well	550	350	Cllr B Harrison - Neighbourhood Budget		5,000
Bede Road Bus Shelter	200	164	Heart of Teesdale		10,109
Donations	1,500	1,500	North Pennine Dales Leader		20,492
Floral and Open Spaces	5,000	4,624			
Castle Floodlights	350	210	<b>Total Grants Income</b>		<b>43,532</b>
War Memorials	150	0	Expenditure		
Events*	4,000	4,339	Remembrance Garden Project		7,790
Contingencies	1,500	476	Replacement Mini Golf Project		34,211
Replacement Mini Golf Course	5,000	0	<b>Total Grants Expenditure</b>		<b>42,001</b>
Barnard Castle Meet	5,000	5,000	<b>RESERVES EXPENDITURE</b>		
Wayfinding Units	100	384	During the year over £20,000 of the Council's Reserves has		
Balance Carried Forward		11,830	been spent on the following Projects		
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>162,917</b>	<b>162,917</b>	Allotment Improvements		
			Christmas Lights		
			2012 Christmas Festival Event		
			Bouch Way Play Area		
			Dawson Road Play Area		
			Market Place Public Toilets		

• (To include Annual Floral Competition, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas Festival)

## More information and contact details:

Further details of all the Services mentioned in this annual report can be obtained by visiting the Town Council's website [www.barnardcastletowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.barnardcastletowncouncil.gov.uk) or from our Facebook /[BarneyCouncil](#) and Twitter @[BarneyCouncil](#) profiles.

Our office: **44b Galgate, Barnard Castle, DL12 8BH** is open 10:00 to 4:00, Monday to Friday.

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