



# Barnard Castle Town Council

## Annual Report 2017/18

### Forward

It has been an honour and a privilege to represent Barnard Castle as Town Mayor for 2017/18. The council works hard to manage its financial responsibilities to residents but is also endeavouring to take over responsibility for areas of the town such as Scar Top and the Demesnes from Durham County Council.

This year started with elections to the town council. The new councillors have contributed greatly to the council and, alongside the longer serving colleagues, have formed a strong team of forward thinking members working for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

Woodleigh is a vibrant community asset for the council, for the charities with office accommodation within and for local groups and organisations who frequently use the public facility of the Dawson Room. The windows needed considerable attention and

these have recently been updated and newly painted by Durham County Council. This enhances the building and build on the work the town council has already done to return Woodleigh to a proper condition.

The council continues to work with partners to promote the interests of and influence delivery of effective local services. Barnard Castle Christmas Lights, has become a CIC and has entered into a contract with the Council for the next three years. The lights continue to delight and impress us all and the group must be thanked for its dedication and commitment. The council's Christmas event, with its traditional evening centred on Santa, had a new dimension this year. Councillors came together to write, direct and act in a 'panto' - something akin to Cinderella but with a local slant, while reindeer and magical lighting graced Scar Top

During the year there are many unnoticed as well as obvious

jobs carried out including magnificent floral displays. A lot of this work is carried out by a band of volunteers and in March, I hosted a Council event to celebrate and thank the "Town Team" for its considerable efforts – the volunteers received town crest badges and certificates of appreciation. There are close to 100 people involved in supporting the Town Council.

Plans are in hand for the third, annual 1940s weekend. Volunteers make this possible too, alongside local sponsors. Also coming for a third year is the Durham Jugglers' Convention, where it is hoped that the town will be involved in October. This spring, we supported a new initiative from Music at the Heart of Teesdale with refreshments and use of the Dawson room for over 40 young people, teachers and supporters in a town display of Longsword Dancing, an ancient pastime. A first in the UK, held in Barnard Castle was four teams of dancers all participating at once! On the same day we welcomed the Black Sheep Morris dancers and other groups to the town.

Two significant mayoral events showcased what Barnard Castle and its surrounding area has to offer visitors. One was a private behind-the-scenes tour of Raby Castle with a medieval dinner

and the other was a classic coach tour to a remote farm and Rokeby Park. These were both well attended especially by local civic dignitaries from Scarborough to Gateshead, all of whom took away a very favourable impression of our area.

Another highlight was the visit of HRH the Prince of Wales to Barnard Castle in February, where I was able to welcome HRH on behalf of the town.

Following the decision of the Council to elect four new Honorary Freeman of the town, it was, as Town Mayor, my greatest honour to bestow that title on Marie Yarker, John Hinchcliffe BEM, John Watson and Rev. John Moore at a ceremony at Barnard Castle School and Chapel in the presence of The Lord Lieutenant, High Sheriff and other guests.

On a sad note, I attended the memorial service to our former Town Clerk, Geoff Bosworth, who died after a long illness this year. He worked hard for the town council and set a benchmark for us all to follow. That work continues, so my final thanks must go to colleagues on the council and the staff for all their persistent hard work and commitment to the town.

**Cllr Mrs Sandra Moorhouse**

*Town Mayor 2017/18*

14 May 2018

## Services

### Allotments

During the season, ten gardens were re-tenanted and sixteen new applications received.

The allotment rental remained at £45.00 notwithstanding the rising costs of utilities, grounds maintenance and the Allotment Improvement Action Plan.

Rental will increase to £47.00 for 2018/2019. The allotment service is self-funding and does not form part of the precept.

To comply with changing legislation rodent control training was undertaken and allotment management software purchased. Further path improvements were undertaken on the Raby Avenue site and The Demesnes site now plays host to a small number of bee hives.

### Wednesday Market

The town council continues to manage the town's weekly Wednesday Market. The Market is being actively promoted to create a vibrant, thriving town for locals and visitors.

### Floral Displays

The town's floral displays continue to be enhanced with colourful summer and winter displays. A hanging basket sponsorship scheme provided additional colour outside the town post office. Volunteers

actively weed, plant and tidy floral beds to keep the town looking colourful and attractive.

### Open Spaces

Management of the Upper Demesnes continues with traditional scything of the wild flower hay meadow. Trees were planted on the Upper Demesnes by Trees for Teesdale.

The creation of a wildflower belt either side of the path on the Lower Demesnes was funded via a donation from Teesdale & District Lions Club.

Lease transfers from Durham County Council continue. Woodleigh Grounds lease is due for completion, including licenced use of the performance area, to be managed by the town council.

The town council successfully applied for planning and advertising consent to site a banner frame on Scar Top, procured by Durham County Council. The town council manages use of the banner frame, with priority given to voluntary and community groups to advertise events.

A collaborative project involving the town council, neighbourhood policing team, Durham County Council and Durham Constabulary, examined and consulted on potential landscape solutions to

## Abbreviated Accounts 2017/18 (unaudited figures)

EXPENDITURE	2017/18 Budget (£)	Outturn 31 Mar 18 (£)	INCOME	2017/18 Budget (£)	Outturn 31 Mar 18 (£)
Mayoral & Deputy Allowance	1,200	1,200	Fees and Charges	23,711	24,101
Training	750	576	Rental Income	12,750	12,723
Audit Fees	1,460	1,300	Bank Interest	800	498
Bank Charges	800	578	Grants		
Insurance	2,000	2,153	Donations		746
Society of Local Council Clerks	225	233	Sponsorship		1,703
Co Durham Association	715	734	Miscellaneous		2,440
Accounts Software Support	240	260	Cumulative Fund		
Travel Allowance	300	273	Precept	175,511	175,511
Chains of Office	50	13	LCTSG	6,348	6,348
Salaries & Associated Costs	116,463	116,764	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>219,120</b>	<b>224,070</b>
Office & Associated Costs	26,067	26,415			
Employee Eye Test	25	50			
Communication	400	0			
Wayfinding Units	100	0			
Allotments	4,090	3,676			

Mini Golf	10,000	10,098
Christmas Lights	5,500	5,703
Play Areas	11,500	10,653
Bede Road Bus Shelter	50	15
Dog Fouling	300	172
Civic Fund	500	558
Floral and Open Spaces	11,700	7,437
Castle Floodlights	700	0
War Memorials	710	0
Public Seats	0	0
Community Events	9,000	7,452
Contingencies	0	0
Market Place Public Toilets	4,924	4,924
Replacement IT & Software	850	66
Miscellaneous Expenditure	0	0
Election Expenses	5,000	2244
Honorary Freeman	0	520
Blue Plaque	0	0
Youth Project	500	0
Wednesday Market	3,000	2,109
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>219,120</b>	<b>206,176</b>

## RESERVES EXPENDITURE

During the year £3,883 of the council's reserves has been spent on the following projects:

- Public Seats
- Bouch Way Play Area
- Floral & Open Spaces
- Allotments
- Christmas Event
- Galgate Greens
- 1940s Event

Over the same period, £22,235 has been transferred to Earmarked Reserves, resulting in a net increase in Earmarked Reserves of £18,352, bringing the earmarked reserves total to £69,184.

The council's overall balances and reserves figure (including the above) at the end of 2017/18 stands at £137,225 as of 31 March 2018.

exclude vehicles from parts of the Demesnes experiencing unacceptable car use.

### **Play Areas**

The council took on ownership and management of an additional play area (Scar Top) from Durham County Council, adding to the existing five play areas already managed. Development and funding of a trainee cycle track at Green Lane Play Area continues.

### **Public Seats**

The memorial bench sponsorship scheme continues. Due to the success of the project, there remain only a few benches in need of refurbishment, however, ongoing maintenance and repairs are still necessary to keep the town's benches in good condition.

### **Environmental Matters**

Anti-dog fouling initiatives continue alongside Durham County Council. Free poop bags are available at Woodleigh and the police station. The town council supported the introduction of a Public Space Protection Order for dog control at all fenced off play areas. A community event was held in conjunction with the Dogs Trust in May.

The town council supported the town weeding project in June,

alongside the Influence Church, and the Big Spring Clean in March, together with numerous volunteers.

An environmental project in the town is being supported with Durham Wildlife Trust.

### **War Memorials**

Four war memorials are inspected and maintained; two in the grounds of The Bowes Museum and two on the Galgate Greens. Repair works to the Town War Memorial are scheduled in advance of Remembrance 2018.

### **Market Place Public Toilets**

The Market Place Public Toilets continue to be operated by Durham County Council, with half of the annual running costs funded by the town council.

### **Mini Golf**

The service continues to be a popular attraction. The 2017 season saw an average of 46 visitors per day during the 119 operating days. Prior to the 2018 season, electrical power was installed to the kiosk to enable a cash register to be installed, together with heating and light for attendants.

## **Partnership**

### **Community Events**

The town council held its second **1940s Weekend** in June, working with the local

community. Vintage vehicles, re-enactment groups, music, traditional games, vintage stalls, displays, *Dig for Victory* and fashion show attracted locals and visitors. The highlight was an RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

A festive pantomime, written, narrated and starring councillors, provided much amusement and entertained crowds at the annual **Christmas Tree Lights Switch-on** event with the added attraction of a live reindeer display, as well as the arrival of Santa, traditional grotto and family workshops.

The town council has developed a working relationship with **English Heritage**, welcoming the proposed redevelopment of the garden in the Castle into a community orchard and wildflower meadow.

### **Christmas Lighting**

The council extended Christmas lighting further along Galgate, working in partnership with Barnard Castle Christmas Lights. For the next three seasons, 2018 to 2021, the town's Christmas lighting displays will be provided via a service level agreement between the town council and Barnard Castle Christmas Lights.

**St. Mary's Parish Church Christmas Tree festival** was

supported with a tree themed on 'the natural environment.'

### **Floodlights**

The town council manages the coloured floodlights illuminating the castle and the external floodlighting to the Market Cross.

### **Poppy Appeal**

The end of September saw the close of the 2016 Poppy Appeal, followed by the launch of the 2017 Appeal at the end of October.

The local 2016 appeal raised a total of £15,312.79 generated by activities over the two-week period of Remembrancetide along with a number of generous donations, church collections and proceeds from a collection which took place during the council's 1940s weekend in June.

So far, the 2017 appeal has raised £16,018.24 and there is still a chance that this total may increase by the close of the appeal at the end of September 2018.

### **Remembrance Sunday**

Remembrance Sunday took place on 12 November 2017, organised with St Mary's Parish Church with assistance from Barnard Castle School staff and cadets from the school's Combined Cadet Force.

The church service was well attended across the community, including the

presence of the Town Mayor and Deputy Lord Lieutenant.

The Freemasons Masonic Hall in Newgate opened its doors for refreshments after the event.

## Planning

The Planning Committee (acting under delegated powers) considered 67 planning applications and one licensing application; a 24% increase on the number of planning applications considered in 2016/17.

Responses were made on consultations surrounding A67 road safety measures, alterations to bus stop markings on The Bank and disability access issues.

A tree preservation order was successfully granted on the site of the old police station at Bede Kirk. The town council then made an application to register the site as a village green. This was approved by Durham County Council on 11 May, after a well-supported local campaign.

## Resources

As well as supporting Durham's consultation on the A67, the town council hosted consultations, on management of the Demesnes and the future of health services in the town, with the Friends of the Richardson Hospital.

### Budget and Finance

Resources Committee prepared the budget, prior to Full Council approval. The annual budgetary cycle takes around three months when all aspects of the council's financial requirements are considered.

The total Gross Revenue Budget for 2017/18 was £219,120 and details of how this was apportioned are in the centre of this report. Information is also available on the use of the council's reserves.

The council's finances are internally audited every six months and externally audited annually.

## More information and contact details

Further details are on 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: **Woodleigh, Flatts Road, Barnard Castle, DL12 8AA**

Open 10:00 to 4:00, Monday to Friday.

Tel: **01833 690970** email: [clerk@barnardcastletowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@barnardcastletowncouncil.gov.uk)