



Sedgefield Town Council



CONTENTS

1	CONTACT DETAILS.....	2
2	MESSAGE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL.....	3
3	MAYOR'S REPORT.....	3
4	INTRODUCTION.....	4
5	BACKGROUND.....	4
6	REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR.....	5
6.1	Parish Hall Refurbishment	5
6.2	Hire of the Parish Hall	5
6.3	Holiday Park	5
6.4	Projects	5
6.5	Open Spaces	5
6.6	Allotments	6
7	PUBLICITY / COMMUNICATION.....	6
8	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.....	7
9	ENVIRONMENT.....	8
10	PLANNING REPORT.....	8
11	MAYORS EVENTS.....	8
12	FINANCE.....	9
12.1	Town Council Grants for local groups.....	
13	AND NEXT YEAR.....	10
13.1	Anti – Social behaviour	10
13.2	One Stop Shop and new public toilet	10
13.3	Wish List	10



The Town Meeting is to be held on
Monday May 12th 7.30 pm
in the Parish Hall

Refreshments are available from 7pm when an exhibition of Council projects / current schemes will be on display.

1 Contact Details

Cllr.	A.	Blakemore	32 Beacon Avenue	621820
Cllr.	H.	Clifford-Brown	42 Whitehouse Drive	621686
Cllr.	D.	Brown	West End	622894
Cllr.	M.	Brown	11 Naylor Rd	621986
Cllr.	N.	Dunn	4 North Park Rd	623175
Cllr.	M.	Garood	3 Claremont Grove	621194
Cllr.	L.	Goddard	8 Cherry Tree Drive	623528
Cllr.	S.V.	Hannan	30 The Lane	629549
Cllr.	T.	Jeanes	Barrington Lodge	623456
Cllr.	J.	Robinson	28 White House Drive	620042
Cllr.	M.	Robinson	28 White House Drive	620042
Cllr.	I.G.N	Sutherland	8 East Parade	622532
Cllr.	S.	Sutherland	8 East Parade	622532
Cllr.	R.L.	Taylor	Westview , Morden	620023
Cllr.	D.	Waters	45 The Meadows	620607
Town Clerk:		Lesley Swinbank	lesley.swinbank@sedgefield.net	621273
Comm. Dev. Worker		Angela Simpson	angela.simpson@sedgefield.net	621774
Admin Worker		Jane Young	jane@sedgefield.net	621273
Receptionist		Julia Rowsby	julia@sedgefield.net	621273

Sedgefield Borough Councillors

Cllr.	D.	Brown	Town Farm, West End	622894
Cllr.	J.	Robinson	28 White House Drive	620042

Shadow Unitary Councillors

2 Message from the Leader of the Council



It has been usual practice to include a message from the Leader of the Town Council within the Annual Report.

As most will know, Cllr Jim Wayman who had been the Leader since the elections in May died in January. He is sadly missed by all.

3 Mayor's Report

This past year has been both challenging and rewarding.

A new town council was elected last May with first time Councillors - Alan Blakemore, Helen Clifford-Brown, Norman Dunn, Maire Garood and Sheila Sutherland. Following the death of Cllr. Jim Wayman May Brown was co-opted in March.

One of the most significant changes within local government in the area is now taking place. Government confirmed that the County must now change to a 'Unitary' system and as a result Sedgefield Borough and Durham County Councils will no longer exist and be replaced by the new County Durham Unitary Authority next April. This will have direct implications for Sedgefield Town Council and our services – and we have been in direct discussions in regard of devolving powers and services when the new authority takes over.

In order to ensure the Town Council – Members and staff are 'qualified' to take advantage of the new arrangements the Town Council has now implemented a proper training strategy and will also seek reaccreditation of Quality Status in the next couple of months.

Coming nearer to home – the Council have been involved with various issues including the application for a Holiday Park on land adjacent to Hardwick Country Park – this was turned down by Sedgefield Borough Council (despite officer recommendation for approval). The appeal is due to be held in July. Members are working with the Residents Forum, our planning consultant and a Barrister to ensure maximum representation at the Inquiry.

The Town Council has continued to organize / support a wide number of community events including the Firework Display, NYE Dance and fireworks, Christmas Farmers' Market, and a wide variety of fundraising functions for the Mayor's Charity. In December we added to these with a very popular Snowman Parade as part of the turning on of the new Christmas Lights.

Sedgefield now has a Youth Council. Elections were held for local young people to elect who they wanted and the council now meets on a monthly basis.

Whilst the Town Council has continued with a wide variety of projects the last three months have been dominated by the long awaited refurbishment of the Parish Hall. We were delighted to be successful in attracting £117,000 from the Borough Council Local Improvement Programmed, – this together with the £93,000 borrowed from PWLB and monies from the SBC local members Neighbourhood Enhancement Programme has ensured that much more can be done than was originally planned. We hope that everyone agrees it has been well worth the wait!

Dudley Waters

4 Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Town Report 2008.

Once again we have made this report available prior to our Annual Town Meeting (as requested at a previous Annual Assembly) in order that it can be discussed at our town meeting. The full agenda for the Town Assembly is posted on the Town Council notice board in front of the library and available from the Council Offices. The full report is also available on the web-site at www.sedgefield.net, and at the Council Offices

This is the second year that – the Annual Town Meeting is to be held and the Annual Report published in May. The purpose of this is two-fold: firstly the Annual Town Meeting in May is providing an ideal opportunity for the outgoing Mayor to give a report on the Civic Year and present cheques to the Charities and secondly the unaudited draft accounts can be available.

Our aim continues to be to give residents information about the Town Council and the services which we provide, how we are rising to the challenges ahead, and how we will focus on community needs and quality services for the next year. The report should also assist in highlighting potential for development in the new financial year and beyond as well as making recommendations as to how this may best be achieved.

It is to be hoped that it will also stimulate constructive debate and ensure the Town Council continues to stride forward as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This report is target orientated; again this is to enable all stakeholders to see where the

Council wishes to progress over the next 12 months and for us all to monitor our progress.

This helps to ensure that the Council continues to be focussed, responsible and answerable to the electorate. It is anticipated also that this report will act as a catalyst to ensure that the high standards achieved by the Town Council are maintained and built upon.

5 Background

The Town Council looks after and serves the town of Sedgefield and incorporates the hamlet of Thorpe Larches and Winterton Park. This is a total population of over six thousand or four thousand on the electoral roll. We are the first tier of local government and have 15 elected Councillors.

The Councillors annually elect the Mayor who is Chair of the Council. (A complete list with details is included in this document.)

Meetings are held monthly on the second Monday of each month (except August) whilst the 3 main Committees also meet on a monthly basis. Copies of the Agenda for all meetings are available 5 days before the meeting at the Council Offices and posted on the Council Notice board.

Our council meetings are open to all; everyone is very welcome to come along and are able to give their views and comments each month during 'Public Participation' on what we are doing and what we are trying to achieve for Sedgefield.



Did you know?

The Town Council offices are now open 9 – 4 Weekdays) and evening appointments

We also operate a 24 hour answerphone service.

You can contact the council offices by e mail on Julia@sedgefield.net – we aim to respond within 2 working days to all such communications. You can also register on our residents e mail database and receive frequent communications /information from us in regard of planning applications, crime watch early network etc.

Contact jane@sedgefield.net to register.



In addition to matters which the Town Council deals with we are also able to give information on village events, pass on queries/ complaints to both Sedgefield Borough and Durham County Councils and in general help in any way we can.

Council surgeries are held at 6.30 pm on the second Monday of each month – except August in the Council Offices and provide an opportunity to talk directly to a Councillor.

6 Review of the Past Year

6.1 Parish Hall Refurbishment

The hall closed on January 2nd with the expected reopening in March. The works to the exterior of the building had already been undertaken in November / December. Major

problems were encountered with Asbestos and unexpected plumbing and electrical obstacles. The successful funding from the Local Improvement Programme (£117,000), funding from the local members Neighbourhood Enhancement Programme and £6,000 from Sedgefield Charities ensured that many additional works and enhancements could be implemented and result in a new, modern community facility for the benefit of all.

6.2 Hire of the Parish Hall

Usage was already increasing for the Hall – however the limit of ‘music’ functions has now been lifted – following the acoustic works - and it is expected that the hall will achieve over 90% bookings within the next year – and hopefully more after that!

6.3 Holiday Park

The Town Council opposed the application for the Holiday Park on land adjacent to Hardwick Country Park and for the first time engaged a planning consultant to act on their behalf – both at the Planning Committee meeting at SBC and also at the forthcoming appeal in July. A decision has also been taken to employ a Barrister to represent the Town Council and Residents Forum.

6.4 Projects

Both the Peoples’ Millions scheme for works in Ceddesfeld Park and the St. Edmunds Churchyard project have now been completed. Both have provided additional lighting and footpath resurfacing for the benefit of everyone.

6.5 Open Spaces

The Town Council replaced the bus shelter on Stockton Road and also now uses their contractor to ensure the approach grassed

verges are cut more frequently and to a higher standard.

6.6 Allotments

Having an allotment is now proving to be extremely popular – and for the first time in many years we now have a substantial waiting list. A new allotment group has been established who are working together with the Town council and have recently been successful in their grant application for £10,000. In addition we are still awaiting the final hand over of land near Winterton Cottages for additional allotments.

None of these schemes would have been possible without the help of our Community Development Officer – Mrs. Angela Simpson. Angela is now working with other groups such as the Veterans and Sedgefield Harriers to help them obtain funding.



7 Publicity / Communication

The Sedgefield Extra is now in its 29th year, quite a national record for a town council! A decision was taken last year to have the Extra printed in colour – this has proved to be very popular and we have received requests for copies from as far away as Australia.

The Notice board is now in situ on the green outside the library and gives details of all Council meetings and information etc. The Residents Forum also displays their notices and information.

We are looking to continually improve the Town Council website which holds information on Council matters and other Community events and news.



In addition we continue to expand the Residents database which we use to email all those registered with are able to email information as we receive it. This is proving to be popular and includes not only information on the Residents Forum meetings (which are held on the first Monday of each month) but also early crime warnings, village events and current planning application details.



Anyone can join by emailing Jane on jane@sedgefield.net that will be very happy to add your name and contact details.

8 Community Development

The Community Development committee has again been busy over the past year.

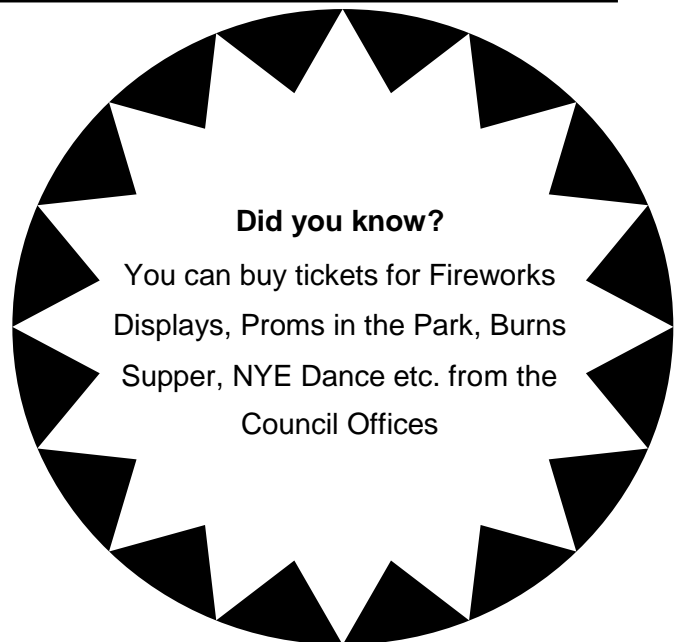
This committee instigated the coach trips in 2004 and last year visits to Skipton in July and Leeds in December were arranged. The next visit is to Wetherby market and Knaresborough in July.



Details are always given in the Sedgefield Extra however, places are limited and early booking is always advisable.

Once again the Round Table erected the Christmas tree on the village green. This year it was provided by DCC and our grateful thanks to them. The Town Council purchased new lights and a special 'Switch on' was held in conjunction with a Snowman Parade. It proved to be extremely popular.

The Town Council continues to work with Sedgefield Community Association over the year to provide various events. Last year saw the second Music Festival in the town and the Town council is working with SCA and local groups to build on the success of last year.



The Firework Display has been ongoing for many years and the Town Council is very grateful to Mr. Richy Parry and his helpers, the SCA and Round Table who continue to give full help and support to provide the event for all our residents.

The fireworks on the Green on New Years Eve on New Year's Eve continue to go from strength to strength and this year we had nearly 1000 on the village green at midnight to welcome 2008.

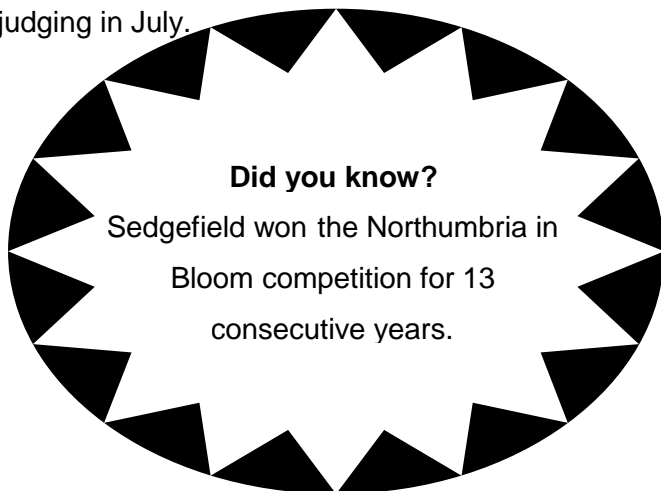
The Town Council has very much welcomed our Neighbourhood warden – Mr. Tim Spearey. Not only has he helped out with all of our events but he is also able and has issued fixed penalty tickets for litter, dog fouling etc.

Another success story continues to be the Farmers Market. This year we worked with the Sedgefield Harriers to provide a Fun Run, as well as our usual Festivities at the Christmas Market. Once again complimentary mulled wine and mince pies were provided by the Town Council with chocolates for the children and the Round Table provided Santa Claus with the St

Edmunds Junior Church providing entertainment.

9 Environment

We are once again entering the Northumbria in Bloom competition in 2008. The judges visited us in April and are returning for the summer judging in July.



The Sedgefield in Bloom committee is coordinating our entry and if you are interested in gardening or helping in any way then we would love to hear from you.

We have continued to have our annual tub planting with the local schools and young peoples' organizations. It is always a very popular event – especially when the sun shines!

10 Planning Report

Planning applications are considered by the Town Council at their Monthly meetings.

The breakdown of applications is as shown:

House extensions	26
Conservatories/garages	16
New buildings	11
Change of use	6
Trees	3
Other	28
(includes Holiday Park))	

A public meeting attended by over 300 people was held in July to discuss the application by Theakston estates to develop a Holiday park on land adjacent to the Hardwick Country Park. The overwhelming objections to this application resulted in the Town Council employing a planning consultant to represent the Council at the planning meeting at SBC and also at the forthcoming appeal in July.

The Town Council continues to meet and discuss applications with SBC as and when necessary. Net Park is now becoming more established and the Town Council continues to support all applications for development of the site as the prestige centre it was intended.

11 Mayors Events

Over the past civic year Councillor Dudley Waters has been the Mayor of Sedgefield.

The Mayor attends many events both inside and outside Sedgefield and this year has raised over £5,000.

Monies raised to date

Quiz Ceddesfeld	261
Carol service Collection	140
Raffle Wine and Cheese	152
Quiz racecourse	159
Maisonnaires	403
Mayors Dance	1519
J.Nicholls - Fun Run	205
Raffle Macbeth	81
Young at Heart	228
Daffodils	71
Various Donations	1452
Music Evening April	331

This year the Mayor's Charities have been Marie Curie and local groups.

Cheques will be presented at the Annual Meeting to:-

- Marie Curie Cancer Care
- Sedfeild Youth FC

- Sedgefield Harriers
- Scouts & Guides
- SCA : Easter Egg Hunt

Our thanks to all who help in any way and for those who buy tickets and contribute to the raffles and tombola, and in particular to Peter Hinde and Maxine Robinson who gives their time freely to help with many of the events.



12 Finance

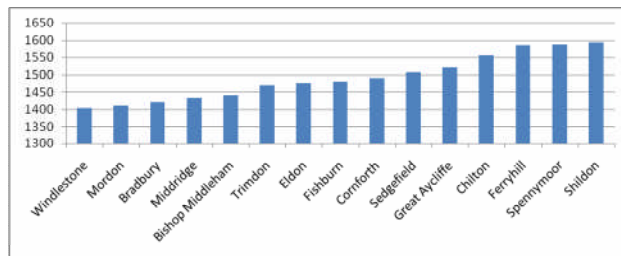
The opening balances for 2007 / 2008 were £53, 57.

Major costs for the year have been:

Christmas Lighting	£5,600
CCTV	£10,000
Cemetery Lodge - rewire / decor	£4,400
Litter Bins	£900
Bus Shelter	£2,200

In additional £225,000 has been spent to date on the refurbishment of the Parish Hall.

The P&R Committee met in January to discuss the estimates and precepts for the next financial year and it was unanimously agreed to raise the Council Tax by 3%. This will result in an income of £218,000 from the Borough Council with a further £44,000 being raised from other sources including the rent from the SCA at Ceddesfeld Hall, Citizens Advice Office, Parish Hall and Cemetery Lodge.



Graph:

Comparison of Precepts

It should be noted that the Town Council receives no contribution from the business rate or other contributions from central government unlike both the County and Borough Councils.

12.1 Town Council Grants for local groups

Grants are made available each year to local voluntary organizations via the Town Council. To qualify relevant information including a set of accounts and a supporting statement as to how the grant will be used are requested.

Grants given over the past year.

Scouts	£50
Butter wick hospice	£50
Sedgefield Youth FC	£50
Learning Library	£25
Tommy baby Charity	£25
Durham Fire	£50
SASY	£50
Residents Forum	£50
Rose Soc	£25
Anne Frank Exhibition	£50
Walking to health	£50
Sedgefield twinning	£400
Mediaeval Fayre	£125
Crimewatch	£75
	£1075



13 And Next Year.....

13.1 Anti – Social behaviour

This is an ongoing and increasing problem for the entire town. We are hoping to work with various partners including – the Police, Tim Spearey (our Neighbourhood Warden), Pubs Partnership, the Youth Forum and Residents Forum to bring forwards ideas and proposals to tackle what is a national problem.

13.2 One Stop Shop and new public toilet

We are looking to enhance the existing services available from the Council Offices. In addition to general and tourist information, ticket selling, general enquiries and passing on information to both Borough and District councils we are exploring the possibilities of direct IT links with both whereby their services/ information can be more easily. In addition a new public loo will be incorporated in the building.

We are hoping to submit an application to the Local Improvement Programme for the necessary funding.

13.3 Wish List

Council Offices

To provide One Stop Shop with public toilet, advice and information, tourist information, heritage centre etc.

Young people

Youth Services/Youth Clubs

Environment

Village entrances need improving

Allotments at Winterton

Improved footpaths

Station Road Field – wildlife area

Survey of all Trees

Cemetery

Improve areas

Community Development

Extend/improve the Christmas lights

Christmas light/lantern parade expansion

Expand farmers market

Additional Notice Boards