



EXTRA SEDGEFIELD

PUBLISHED BY SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

No. 115 FEB 2021

FESTIVE CELEBRATION 2020

At the end of 2020, we held an online alternative to our traditional Snow Party event by hosting competitions and activities on our website and, with thanks to Sedgefield Development Trust, a livestream on the Sedgefield News Facebook page. We are delighted with the success of this virtual celebration and we hope to carry some elements of the online activities into future events. We'd like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you once again to the community groups that put together festive recommendations, the businesses that took part in our window display competition, and to David Jasper for putting in a good word with his pal Santa.

Christmas Craft Competition

This competition was very well received, with entries from residents of all ages. However, there could only be one winner and although it was tough, the Mayor of Sedgefield, Cllr Leo McCormack, chose Rita Grieves for her matching garland and tree decorations (the little snowmen were our favourite!). Rita received an annual family pass to Beamish for her hard work!

Christmas Costume Competition

As if his work wasn't already cut out, the mayor had to judge a second competition! The costume competition showcased some traditional and completely unique designs but ultimately, it was Lara Salt (Year 5) who was awarded a family pass to Raby Castle for becoming a human Christmas tree. It's a big responsibility, but we'd like to think she held that pose throughout all of December! Congratulations once again.

Best Dressed Festive

Business Window Competition

We received an impressive 179 votes for the window display competition. Congratulations go to the winners... Meikles! The staff at Meikles were awarded with a chocolate hamper and a certificate. Thank you to all of the businesses that agreed to take part (and to those businesses that didn't officially participate but still lit up their windows throughout December) for making our town feel so wonderfully festive during such difficult times. We are thrilled with the interest that this competition spurred and hope to run it again in 2021.



COVID-19 LATEST UPDATES

At the time of going to print, we have all found ourselves in another national lockdown as part of the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the earlier lockdown and subsequent restrictions, a concise Sedgefield Extra was produced on a monthly basis to disseminate information. From this edition of the Extra, we are reverting back to our traditional four-page format and publications will be issued in February, June, September and November. In the intervening times, we will issue any other updates and information via our website's news page www.sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk/category/council-news, our Twitter account @SedgefieldTC and our residents' database email group. If you would like your email address to be added to our residents' database please contact jane@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

We are continuing to monitor government guidance as it is released in relation to community events. As previously reported, there will be no Mayor's Civic Ball taking place in March of this year. At this moment in time, we are unable to provide any information regarding our other traditional events such as the summer coach trip, but hope to be able to give you more information in the forthcoming editions of the Sedgefield Extra.

PARISH HALL & DOG BAGS

Due to the national lockdown, our Parish Hall remains closed. Once restrictions are eased and it is deemed safe for community halls to re-open, we will begin working with our regular users to slowly re-introduce the bookings and social events that are so important to our community. All of the measures and assessments undertaken during the first lockdown, which have been reviewed continuously throughout 2020, remain in place to ensure that you can feel safe and comfortable returning to the hall when the time comes.

Dog bags will not be sold during the current national lockdown. When we are able to resume this service, we will let you know.

ALLOTMENTS

Our allotment rules and regulations were relaxed throughout 2020 to accommodate the change in circumstances for many of our tenants. We will continue with this approach for the time being and endeavour to help our tenants manage their plots where possible. We ask that our plot holders follow government rules at all times while on site and continue to follow the guidance provided by the National Allotment Society which can be found online at www.nsalg.org.uk/news/covid19-information.

Our allotment waiting list has grown considerably during the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore we envisage that any newcomers to the list will face a minimum of a two year wait to be allocated a plot. We encourage anyone who thinks that they may want an allotment garden after that timescale to apply now.

We would also like to take this moment to share our condolences with the friends and family of Barry Stephenson, judge of our allotment challenge, who passed away at the end of last year. Barry provided valuable insight, knowledge and experience that was greatly appreciated by all of us.

2021/22 COUNCIL MEETINGS

Since March 2020, all council staff and councillors have adapted to a new way of remote working. This has, since June 2020, included holding all monthly and Policy & Resources Committee meetings which members of the public can attend virtually via Microsoft Teams. These virtual meetings will continue until it is deemed safe and appropriate for in-person meetings to resume. Unless stated otherwise, these will commence at 7:00pm on the second Monday of the month, starting with the monthly meeting and followed by the Policy & Resources Committee.

As always, our virtual committee meetings can be attended by members of the public on any device connected to the internet. The link to join the meeting will be included in the agenda document for that month, which can be found on the 'Minutes & Agendas' page of our website and will be shared on our Twitter account @SedgefieldTC prior to the day. Further information on how to join the meetings and our full virtual meeting protocol can be found on our website at www.sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk/procedures.

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2019 & 2020

The Citizen of the Year Award, which is traditionally presented jointly by Sedgefield Town Council, Sedgefield Development Trust and the Rotary Club of Sedgefield at the Annual Town Meeting in May, had to be delayed this year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with our fantastic festive programme, it was agreed that there was no better time to re-open the award for further nominations and announce the winner than at the close of our festive event in December 2020.

As always, there was a very strong line up of candidates last year. We are very fortunate in Sedgefield to have so many people who contribute an awful lot to community life and choosing a winner in any given year is always extremely tough. The judges agreed a set of criteria and then assessed the nominees in detail – as ever, there were some very deserving individuals and the final result was very close.

However, there has to be one winner, and the Sedgefield Citizen of the Year 2019/2020 is Howard Smith.



Howard is a familiar figure in our community. As chair of Sedgefield in Bloom, he deals with a lot of the group's work behind the scenes, but he's most often seen out and about (usually with his wife Barbara) tending to the various displays in Sedgefield that the Bloom volunteers brilliantly maintain. Despite the usual Northumbria in Bloom and Britain in Bloom competitions being cancelled last year, Howard and the Bloomers, along with town council gardeners Stephen and Ben, continued to make sure that our town looked as beautiful as ever. Howard's Sedgefield Citizen of the Year Award 2019/2020 recognises that recent work, but also reflects his many years of hard work as a dedicated volunteer. Congratulations!

COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT

Over recent years, there have been significant changes in local government funding which has culminated in the removal of grant funding for this council, though this is offset to some extent by new housing. It is anticipated that further change will also be seen in the coming years. Every year, each town and parish council sets a precept which is a charge that is determined locally and is added to, and collected along with, Council Tax. This precept money is then used to provide services and amenities within the parish. For Sedgefield Town Council to continue to deliver its current services, as well as complete refurbishment work of the offices, extend Butterwick Road Cemetery and protect areas of village green, it has been necessary to increase the precept for 2021/22. This equates to an increase of 5.4%, or £8.62p per Band D household per annum.

CONGRATULATIONS

Now for something a little more positive... after several pandemic postponements and with two days' notice, our very own Projects & Media Co-ordinator Natalie finally managed to tie the knot with her partner Chris, six months later than originally planned on 4th November 2020 in a beautiful, intimate ceremony with close family.

Speaking of family, Natalie will shortly be heading off on maternity leave to welcome their first child into the world. From all of us here, congratulations to both of you, we wish you all the best as your little family grows!



CONTACTING SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL COUNCILLORS:

	<i>Addresses (all Sedgefield)</i>	<i>Tel. no.</i>
Cllr Allan Blakemore	32 Beacon Avenue TS21 3AB	01740 621820
Cllr David Brown	Town Farm House, 3 West End TS21 3BW	01740 622894
Cllr Mark Cant	Mordon Moor Farm TS21 2HN	07818 243774
Cllr Vanessa Carmichael	47 Cunningham Court TS21 3BP	07889 219195
Cllr Ann Carr	3 The Square TS21 2AB	01740 629070
Cllr Melvyn Carr	3 The Square TS21 2AB	629070 / 07530 315331
Cllr Chris Lines	41 White House Drive TS21 3BX	623090 / 07971 868329
Cllr Leo McCormack	30 St Luke's Crescent TS21 3NL	01740 621037
Cllr Julie Towler	6 Mitford Court TS21 2JE	07979 376997
Cllr Alf Walton	New Dawn, Low Hardwick Farm TS21 2EH	07452 939238
Cllr Fiona Warrant	14 Hawthorn Road, TS21 3DA	07452 939238
Cllr Mavis Wayman	32 White House Drive TS21 3BX	01740 620337
Cllr Gloria Wills	Hare Hills Lodge TS21 2EG	01740 622447
Cllr Stephen Winter	3 Milliner Court TS21 2JF	01740 629408

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr David Brown	Town Farm House, 3 West End TS21 3BW	01740 622894
Cllr John Robinson	28 Whitehouse Drive TS21 3BX	01740 620042

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Paul Howell MP	paul.howell.mp@parliament.uk	07435 328153
-----------------------	------------------------------	--------------

TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

Front Street, Sedgefield TS21 3AT, 01740 621273

Town Clerk:	Dr. Jane Ayre	town.clerk@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk
Admin. Officer:	Jane Young	jane@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk
Financial Asst. / Receptionist:	Julia Rowsby	julia@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk
Projects & Media Coordinator:	Natalie Chowns-Traynor	natalie@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk

At this moment in time, the council office remains closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All council staff are working from home and therefore the best way to raise a concern or query with us is via the following (using the contact information found to the left):

Cemetery / Village Green / Parish Hall – Julia / Jane Young

Allotments – Natalie

Donations / Funding for your local group – Community Chest via the Town Clerk

Concerns about a planning application that the town council are undertaking – Town Clerk

Regular info regarding community matters and planning applications – Join our residents' database email group, by emailing Jane Young

CONTACTING DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CONCERN	WHO TO CONTACT	CONTACT INFORMATION
General Enquiries	Customer Services	03000 26 0000
Refuse / street lights / pest control / dog fouling / stray dogs / grass cutting / litter / graffiti / roads and footpaths	Highways / Streetscene	03000 26 1000
Planning Applications	Planning	03000 26 1060 / www.durham.gov.uk/planning
Benefits	Revenues & Benefits	03000 26 2000
Council Tax	Council Tax	03000 26 4000
Apply / Renew Bus Pass	Sustainable Transport	03000 26 8667
Apply / Renew Blue Badge	Blue Badge Scheme	03000 26 9425
Council Housing	Living	0845 50 55 500

Alternatively, Durham County Council concerns can be placed via text on 07786 027280 starting with the word INFO or the online complaints portal www.doitonline.gov.uk. It is very important that you register your views with Durham County Council. Your voice matters and could make a difference for all local residents!