



EXTRA SEDFIELD

PUBLISHED BY SEDGFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

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Sedgefield Town Council's Sedgefield Extra is normally published four times a year and provides you with an update on the work of the council, as well as giving details of our community events, our services and future plans. The current pandemic situation has impacted all aspects of life and at the moment it is very uncertain what is going to happen over the coming weeks and months. While Sedgefield Town Council continues to function, the COVID-19 outbreak has understandably disrupted the council's plans and programme of events as well as use of the Parish Hall. As the situation is fast changing, the town council has decided that during the pandemic, it will issue a shorter, monthly Extra starting with this issue. We will use each edition to share the latest updates that we have about our own activities and services, along with other material that we believe will be of interest and use. The situation with official COVID-19 guidelines from national and local government sometimes moves at a rapid pace and we cannot predict when new information is made available. We strongly advise you to monitor trusted local and national news channels, and keep an eye on <http://www.durham.gov.uk/coronavirus>, where the latest updates will be posted. We will also do our best to update you quickly on www.sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk, through the residents' database and on Twitter (follow @SedgefieldTC). If you would like your email address adding to the residents' database mailing list, please send a message to jane@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk.

These are worrying times for everyone, but Sedgefield has an amazing community spirit and that is continuing to shine through in many ways at the moment. We would like to offer our thanks to all of you for adhering to Government guidelines. One day, we will emerge from this really difficult situation, but for now, please continue to follow the official advice, to stay healthy and safe.

**Cllr Mel Carr,
Chair of Sedgefield Town Council**

SEDFIELD TOWN COUNCIL UPDATE

Thanks to very robust contingency plans, the town council has continued to operate throughout the pandemic and is very well placed to quickly adapt those plans as necessary over the coming weeks as Government instruction changes. Staff are working from home and making use of technology such as Microsoft Teams to keep in touch with colleagues and councillors. Several office-based staff are, on occasion, on-site in Sedgefield in order to perform essential work (though the offices remain closed to the public for the time being). Our Parish Hall Security Officer has worked throughout, ensuring the security of our buildings. At the time of writing this update, our Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent and Parish Hall Caretaker & Cleaner have also returned to work and are working in accordance with the latest government advice and adhering to social distancing.

Sedgefield Parish Hall closed shortly before the nationwide lockdown commenced, with all bookings suspended until further notice. We are constantly monitoring and following Government guidelines regarding public buildings and gatherings and will only reopen the building when it is deemed safe to do so. The building is undergoing a full deep clean and professional disinfection treatment will take place before reopening. We will update Parish Hall users on its status when bookings are able to resume.

Our Annual Town Meeting, which had been scheduled to be held in the Parish Hall on Tuesday 5th May 2020, was cancelled in accordance with new coronavirus emergency legislation. Traditionally, our Annual Town Meeting is followed by the Mayor of Sedgefield presenting cheques to their chosen charities and then the council, Sedgefield Development Trust and Rotary Club of Sedgefield announcing the winners of the Young Citizen of the Year and Citizen of the Year awards. Arrangements will be made for a suitable time in the future for our mayor, Councillor Leo McCormack, to present cheques to his chosen charities. We would like to thank all of you who have taken the time to submit a Citizen of the Year or Young Citizen of the Year nomination for 2019. Please be assured that these awards will be presented when it is safe to do so. Sedgefield Town Council will still be producing its Annual Report for 2019/20 and we will publish this in June 2020 via our website, our Twitter feed and the residents' database.

The town council's own AGM would have taken place on Monday 11th May 2020, at which appointments would have been made for positions within the council, most notably the Chair of the Council, Vice Chair of the Council and Mayor of Sedgefield. In accordance with new coronavirus emergency legislation, this year's AGM will not take place and existing position holders will continue in their role until May 2021. The new emergency legislation also permits local authorities to hold virtual meetings and we are now working with all councillors to put arrangements in place for these.

In normal circumstances, the town council delivers a busy programme of community events. Unfortunately, these events will be affected by the pandemic. To date, our summer coach trip and tub planting events have been cancelled, along with the town's plans for the 75th anniversary commemorations of VE Day. We will follow Government advice in relation to other events scheduled for later in the year including our fireworks display and Snow Party.

The council's allotment sites at Winterton and Butterwick Road continue to operate as normal. Guidance issued by The National Allotment Society and the Government is shared on our Twitter page and on our website as it is released. All of our allotment holders have been asked to follow the Government's safety guidelines while working on their plot as part of their daily exercise, and we have relaxed our inspections and some of our cultivation rules to accommodate those tenants who are unable to tend to their plot during this time. Applications to the waiting list can still be submitted by emailing natalie@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk and requesting an application form.

In 2019/20 the town council purchased land as part of its long-term project to expand Butterwick Road Cemetery and over recent weeks tree works have been taking place in the land behind the existing cemetery. This work has nothing to do with the current COVID-19 pandemic but represents the start of our longstanding project to expand the cemetery.

Finally, the town council is expecting to take delivery of its seasonal bedding order in mid-June and our gardening staff will be working hard to strip out beds and tubs in order to re-plant and ensure that the town looks as stunning as always. We hope that you will enjoy the displays as you take your recommended daily exercise while observing social distancing.

SEDFIELD YOUTH CLUB UPDATE

Sedgefield Youth Club is currently closed in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Our usual sessions may not be running at the moment (and we miss you all so much!) but we are delighted to be able to provide an update on the progress of the Co-op Local Community Fund. We have now received the first donation of £520.23 as a local cause and we're overwhelmed with the amount of support shown by the community in the last six months, particularly from Sedgefield Village Veterans and Sedgefield Blues Club who both donated to the club earlier this year. These donations will have a huge impact on our club when sessions resume, and we can't wait to make up for the lost time.

We hope you're all keeping safe and taking care of each other.

If you need a chat about anything, you can reach out to us any time at sedgefielddyouthclub@hotmail.com.

COVID-19 RESOURCES

There is a wide range of online local and national resources that residents can access during the ongoing crisis, some of which we've listed below.

- COVID-19 support group specifically for Sedgefield (help with collecting prescriptions, shopping, chats on the phone) (<https://www.facebook.com/SedgefieldCovidSupport/> / 07940 464529)
- Wider County Durham support network - www.durhamlocate.org.uk
- NHS Volunteer Responder service - <https://volunteering.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/nhs-volunteer-responders-portal> (for volunteers and those needing assistance)
- Durham County Council Homestay Service - <https://www.facebook.com/County-Durham-Homestay-Service-102879284708829>
- Citizens Advice service - call 07736 910350 and leave a message - you will receive a call back
- Kooth, a web based confidential support service available to young people aged 10 to 18 years, providing a safe and secure means of accessing mental health and wellbeing support – www.kooth.com