

Sedgefield
Town Council

Annual Report 2025/26



WELCOME TO SEDFIELD TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

The purpose of this report is to explain how Sedgfield Town Council has operated during 2025/26 and the work it has undertaken during this time.

Within this document, you can read reports written by our Committee Chairs recapping on the work of each committee over the last 12 months relating to key events, services and activities as well as financial accounts.

The publication of this Annual Report will coincide with our Annual Town Meeting held on Tuesday 5th May 2026 at 7pm in Sedgfield Parish Hall. This meeting will be an opportunity for the Council to not only present this report but also to answer any questions from the public.

This report, along with all up-to-date information relating to our services, events, and latest Council news, can be viewed on our website sedgfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk.

SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

Sedgefield Town Council serves Sedgefield Parish which includes the town itself plus Thorpe Larches, Foxton and Embleton. The Council comprises of 15 elected Councillors. Each year in May at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) the Council elects a Chair and a Mayor.

In May 2025, Councillor Mel Carr was elected as Chair of the Council and Councillor Peter Hinde as the Mayor of Sedgefield.

The Council conducts its business through a Committee system as follows:

Committee:	Meetings Held:
Monthly Meeting	2 nd Monday of each month
Policy & Resources	After each monthly meeting
Environment	After each P&R meeting
Community Development & Engagement	After each Environment meeting
Personnel	As required
Sedgefield Extra	As required
Community Chest	As required

Please note: In some instances dates are changed because of Bank Holidays. No Committee meetings are held in August. An annual meetings’ calendar is displayed in the Council Offices, town noticeboard and on the Council’s website.

In addition to the Committees are a series of Working Groups which undertake research and investigation to propose recommendations for consideration by all Councillors at the relevant Committee. During 2025/26, the Council had Working Groups covering Estates, Finance, Fireworks, Policy & Records Management and Butterwick Road Cemetery.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

The Town Council operates from the Town Council Offices on Front Street, Sedgfield and is open to the public the following hours (note: the office is closed on Bank Holidays):

Monday	9am – 12 noon
Tuesday	9am – 12 noon
Wednesday	9am – 1pm
Thursday	9am – 12 noon
Friday	9am – 12 noon

Enquiries can be made via the following methods:

Tel: 01740 621273 (24 hour answerphone service available)

Email (Town Clerk):
town.clerk@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk

Post: Town Council Offices, 13 Front Street, Sedgfield TS21 3AT

We aim to respond to all enquiries within 5 working days.



SEDGEFIELD TOWN COUNCILLORS

Information about all current Councillors can be found on our website at sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk/town-council-councillors.

During 2025/26 the following Councillors held office:

Allan Blakemore

32 Beacon Avenue
Sedgefield
01740 621820

Ciaran Butterworth

Contact via the Town
Council Office
07837 647158

Mark Cant

Mordon Moor Farm
Sedgefield
07818 243774

Ann Carr

(Dispensation
requested 13/10/25)

Mel Carr

3 The Square
Sedgefield
01740 629070

Helen Cunningham

5 Eden Drive, Sedgefield
07932 074981
(elected May 2025)

Kelly Dickerson

30 Beaumont Court
Sedgefield
07788 163746

John Finlayson

5 Pine Ridge Avenue
Sedgefield
01740 622313

Jenny Haworth

27 Station Road
Sedgefield
07946 569178

Peter Hinde

44 West End
Sedgefield
01740 621709

Dave Jasper

The Mews, 1 Rosedale
Close, Sedgefield
07791 030886

Myles Mantripp

15 Mitford Court,
Sedgefield
07593 326925
(elected May 2025)

Tony Stubbs

31 Cragside, Sedgefield
07710092139
(Co-opted July 2025)

Julie Towler

6 Mitford Court
Sedgefield
07979 376997

Mavis Wayman

32 White House Drive
Sedgefield
01740 620337

Councillors David Brown, Elizabeth Flanagan and Catherine Hart stepped down at the local elections in May 2026.



Councillor Mel Carr

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It has been a privilege to have been the Chairman of Sedgfield Town Council once again.

The Town Council continues to represent and help residents with their concerns and issues in Sedgfield and work with Durham County Council where appropriate. Two large-scale housing planning applications have been considered over the last year and are being opposed. The Town Council has promoted these applications widely to the public so they are aware and encouraged all to submit their views to Durham County Council as the Local Planning Authority. These matters will continue into 2026/27.

This report includes a Mayor's report, review of the past year by the Town Clerk and reports from some Committee Chairs.

I am pleased to report that with a lot of hard work by the Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group and our contractors, the Butterwick Road Cemetery expansion is nearing completion.



The 2024 Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the Year awards, organized jointly by Sedgfield Town Council, Sedgfield Development Trust, and the Rotary Club were presented to Tony Guest and Iona Darnton for their outstanding contributions to Sedgfield's community and their positive and inspiring mindsets.

I would like to thank my fellow Town Councillors for their hard work and support during 2025/26 as well as the Town Clerk and all Council staff. I look forward to continuing to work with you all.



Councillor Peter Hinde

MAYOR'S REPORT



As you read this, I am completing my second year as your Mayor, with my wife Jaime as my Consort and biggest supporter. What an honour it is to be the Mayor of such an amazing community like Sedgefield.



As in our first year, we again committed to raising funds for all the local groups that contribute to making Sedgefield and the surrounding area such a warm, friendly and diverse community that it is. The money that I have raised will be handed out to my chosen causes during the Annual Town Meeting.



We have organized many coffee mornings where, with the help of both Smile Time ukulele band and the children's choir so well directed by Sarah Guest, we have endeavoured to provide an extra level of entertainment and joy alongside the delicious cakes, drinks and treats provided. Thank you to our small but mighty team of helpers that have been the backbone of my fundraising events, from manning the tombola to the magical kitchen team. Thank you all. We would also like to say how much we appreciated all the donations/gifts we received for our raffles and tombolas.

This year we ran two music nights showcasing the fantastic John Wrightson band and also the Pitlington Brass Band. We also organised two amazing ceilidhs, a few fun quizzes, and a New Year's Eve dance where Mamma Said welcomed in 2026!

Councillor Peter Hinde

MAYOR'S REPORT CONTINUED

During the course of the year, we have engaged with the primary schools often, took part in our annual Tub Planting event on the village green and ran the school craft activity where pupils made decorations for my tree at St Edmund's Church Christmas Tree Festival.

We were delighted to be involved in judging the pumpkins at the fireworks display, leading the switching on our own fantastic Christmas lights at Sedgefield Snow Party, as well as being involved and invited to various other Christmas events in the town.

We received support from many Mayors from the surrounding area and were proud to host them and showcase what Sedgefield has to offer. Our local businesses, organisations and clubs have been a real joy to get to know and spend time with, discovering the impact they all have on our wonderful town.

We'd like to thank all of my fellow Councillors, and our two ward County Councillors who all give up their time to help our community.

Finally, a big thanks to the Town Council staff who have done so much to support us, give advice and facilitate our ideas for events and activities.

We both continue to support the community via volunteering at Ceddesfeld Hall, helping to run the Med Fayre, running my Monday night Quiz at the Dun Cow and many, many more opportunities ahead of us.

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you all for your support and friendship, and encourage everyone to get involved with our thriving and vast community now.





Councillor Allan Blakemore

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE (P&R)

Sedgefield Town Council's P&R Committee oversees the financial and procedural undertakings of the Council. Local authorities work within statutory constraints and we have both internal and external auditors to ensure compliance.

Our internal auditor has given us "Full Assurance" rating, citing that Sedgefield Town Council is fully compliant with all requirements. During the course of 2025/26 there have been significant changes in governing requirements, creating work for staff in order to ensure the Town Council remains compliant. This has meant a complete review of all of the data held by the Council and each Councillor now has an individual .gov.uk email address. All staff and members have undergone training sessions to reflect these changes.

Our new website goes from strength to strength and has had significant increase in usage during the course of the year. As a Town Council this is the main course of communication with residents and members of the public and along with the quarterly issue of the Sedgefield Extra, our residents' database and X, as well as noticeboards.

Our long-term project to expand Butterwick Road Cemetery is nearly complete. Other works that I mentioned in 2024/25 related to Sedgefield Parish Hall. There has now been a new reclaimed floor laid in the main hall, a new platform lift installed, new stage curtains and a refurbishment of the bar area thanks to grant funding.

You will find more details and images of the above projects later in the report.

During the course of this year, we have enlisted the aid of a professional Planning Consultant. We have done this in order to ensure the Town Council objections to the present planning applications for large scale housing, on the edge of the town, are presented as well as possible.

All of Sedgefield Town Council's Committee meetings take place in Sedgefield Parish Hall typically on the second Monday of the month commencing at 7pm. Dates for our future meetings can be found on our website sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk/meetings/ and are displayed in the Town noticeboard in front of the library. Members of the public are always warmly welcomed and there is the opportunity for you to speak if you wish. Please consider whether you would like to attend and find out more about the work being undertaken by the P&R Committee and all other Committees, on your behalf.



Councillor Allan Blakemore

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Over the course of this year, Sedgefield Town Council has had two changes within the staffing structure.

Adam Heath, our office Receptionist and Parish Hall Security Officer left us in January to move to the U.S.A to be with his wife, Michelle. We wish them both every success and happiness in their new life together.

Stephen Young, who has been a long-term employee as Head Gardener and Cemetery Superintendent has now retired. Best wishes to Stephen for a long and happy retirement.

Over the last few months our Gardener Kate Graney has been on her own and Acting Head Gardener and Cemetery Superintendent alongside completing a qualification at college. Kate has done a sterling job, but this has meant some limitations in what we have been able to achieve. That has been offset by assistance from Sedgefield in Bloom who deserve a big thank you for their assistance.

Recruitment is underway to fill our current staff vacancies.



Councillor Julie Towler

COMMUNITY CHEST

Several years ago, Sedgefield Town Council introduced the Community Chest fund, awarding small grants to good causes, local groups and organisations that add value or benefit to Sedgefield and its residents. This fund is supported by a ringfenced amount each financial year and in April 2025 we increased the amount from £500 to £750, with up to £100 awarded per successful applicant.

From April 2026 onwards, this pot will increase to £3,000, with donations of up to £250 considered, allowing many more community groups and causes to access small grants.

If you feel like your group could benefit from a small grant, you can find the new, simple application form and all applicant criteria on our website.

In 2025/26 we awarded grants to the following groups:

Pop In Club, Sedgefield Memory Café, Sedgefield Players, Sew Easy, St Edmund's Church (Christmas Tree Festival) and The Ecclesiastic Parish of The Upper Skerne.



Councillor Julie Towler

Sedgefield Youth Club formed in 2017, operated by a Management Committee, with staffing and room hire funded by Sedgefield Town Council. The club runs every Monday evening during term time in Sedgefield Parish Hall and where possible, funding is sought for non-term sessions and activities.

At our weekly sessions we let our members take the lead either playing games, baking/cooking, doing crafts or generally chilling to music and hanging with friends. For holidays and special occasions, we also hold discos and parties. Outside of our weekly schedule, we participate in community events and hold fundraising coffee mornings throughout the year. This year, we sold spooky sweet treats at the Fireworks Display and ran a festive bake sale at Sedgefield Snow Party.

During 2025/26, we've been very lucky to receive donations from local groups and businesses. These donations make a huge impact on the facilities our young people have access to and can even make the difference to whether any sessions can be held during school holidays. A heartfelt thank you to the Mayor of Sedgefield, SDUSG, DIDO, Sedgefield WI and Identitag for your kind donations, plus to all who support our fundraising efforts.

In May 2025, we were delighted when one of our young helpers won Young Citizen of the Year. Iona Darnton has been an active, valued member of the youth club and our Management Committee for some time. She is a fantastic role model for our members and all young people in Sedgefield.

Our Management Committee are actively promoting the youth club by doing leaflet drops and displaying posters in shop windows.

We are always happy to see new faces attending our weekly sessions and would like to encourage more young people to use this facility. Although we work hard and have a great time during our Monday evenings, this provision can only continue to run if there is evidence of need, with an increase of attendees.

You can view our dedicated web pages on the Town Council's website for news updates, committee information and more.

BUTTERWICK ROAD CEMETERY EXPANSION PROJECT

Over recent years, we have been working on a significant project to expand Butterwick Road Cemetery into land north of the existing footprint. This work is nearing completion. Below are a series of images showing the scale of this project to prepare the land, create a new access road for funeral vehicles and join the two cemetery areas together. Thank you to Paul Heasman for documenting this project from start to finish with aerial photography. More images can be found on our website.



6th February 2025

Extensive planning work has taken place, mapping out and designing the new cemetery area and how it can best be connected to the existing area and accessed easily for funerals.

2nd April 2025
Pathways have been sprayed and marked out ready for groundworks to begin.



23rd May 2025

Groundworks are now underway with both the internal pathways and access road taking shape.

2nd April 2026
The access road, new road junction and internal pathways are complete. Minor landscaping and decorative work remain.



BUTTERWICK AND WINTERTON ALLOTMENTS

Sedgefield Town Council oversees 44 plots spanning across two sites: Winterton and Butterwick Road. Winterton is currently home to 22 plots, a mixture of full and half plots. Butterwick Road holds 21 full plots and 1 half plot.

While both sites have a very different feel, and each location has benefits and challenges, the general standard of cultivation and presentation by our hard-working tenants is a joy to see.

In recent years, the number of plots that are abandoned or given up in a poor state at the end of a tenancy has increased. This makes the process of letting the allotment out to a new tenant lengthy and difficult, with additional staff or external contractor resources required. In order to try and prevent this, we have increased the returnable deposit paid at the start of a tenancy to £100. This deposit is returned on the basis that all materials and rubbish are removed, weeds are minimal and the plot is generally deemed to be in an acceptable state for a new tenant to take on.

Throughout 2025, Butterwick Allotment holders used an alternative access gate while the expansion work at Butterwick Cemetery took place. Access has now been restored via the original gate. Thank you to all of our allotment holders at Butterwick for your patience.

During the pandemic, we experienced a much higher rate of applications to our waiting list, with the list reaching a peak of nearly 30 names. Since 2023, this number has been decreasing rapidly, as many who joined the list during the pandemic faced different circumstances at the time of receiving an offer and were no longer able to take a plot on. We are now back to a low but steady number on the waiting list of around 8 people on the list at any time. Joining the allotment waiting list now is likely to result in a wait of 6-18 months. Visit our website sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk/allotments to see the Rules & Regulations and fill in the digital application form to join the waiting list.



SEDFIELD PARISH HALL IMPROVEMENTS

Sedgefield Town Council have been lucky to receive grant funding for a number of projects in Sedgefield Parish Hall over the last year, from two funding schemes in the local area.

With assistance from Sedgefield Players, we received a grant from our Local Network, formerly known as East Durham Rural Corridor Area Action Partnership. This money allowed us to replace the old, heavy stage curtains with new wine-coloured curtains and more suitable theatre curtain tracks, as well as make improvements to the bar area with the installation of energy efficient coolers, automatic shutters and repainting to modernise the space. These upgrades have made a significant impact to the facilities. Thank you to the Local Networks team for their support.

We also received a large grant from Ashcourt Durham & Tees Valley Community Fund through Grantscape, which has allowed us to replace the old, platform lift with a new, streamlined wheelchair lift down into the main hall and replace our dancefloor, which had reached the end of its life, with reclaimed beech wood. Both facilities are an essential part of the building and will allow all visitors to continue accessing and utilising the main hall for a wide range of events. We are very grateful to Ashcourt for enabling this project.



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

We re-launched our website in September 2023 and are pleased to say that all who use it (behind the scenes and as public viewers) find it to be much easier to navigate, with all information clear and well presented. We're glad that the improvements to the website have had a positive change on site visitors and we are committed to continuously improving the content, keeping everything up-to-date and regularly reviewing the accessibility. In 2025, we added a new page 'Becoming a Councillor' to help residents and prospective councillors understand the role clearly ahead of the May 2025 local elections and have continued to make small changes to pages to reflect the way the website is used.

Here are some key facts and figures from 1st April 2025-31st March 2026:

UNIQUE VISITORS

11.3k ↗ 14%

TOTAL VISITS

12k ↗ 11%

TOTAL PAGEVIEWS

28.6k ↗ 29%

Most visited pages*:

1. What's On
2. Councillors, Committees & Working Groups
3. Parish Hall Community
4. Minutes & Agendas
5. Hiring the Hall

*excluding home page

Most visited news posts:

1. Sedgfield Fireworks Display 2025
2. Public Concern over Potential Housing on Land North of Beacon Lane, Sedgfield
3. Planning Application Update – Anaerobic Digestion Plant, Sprucely Farm



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Welcome to the official website of
Sedgfield Town Council



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS CONTINUED



SEDFIELD EXTRA

During 2025/26, we have continued to publish four colour editions of Sedgefield Extra, our quarterly newsletter, all of which are inserted into the corresponding issue of Sedgefield News and delivered to every household in Sedgefield. We are always appreciative of Sedgefield Development Trust and its volunteers, who have delivered the Extra on our behalf for many years now.

The publication of Sedgefield Extra complements the other communications activity undertaken by the Town Council and each edition of the Extra, as well as being printed, is posted to our online archive and shared on social media.

RESIDENTS' DATABASE

We operate an email group which we cascade an array of information including events, environmental matters, planning updates, road & footpath closures and more. We aim to move this to Mailchimp in the early part of 2026 but in the meantime, if you would like to register with this database, please contact jane@sedgefieldtowncouncil.gov.uk.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We also share a lot of information about council activities, meeting reminders and useful updates about local life, projects and consultations via our X (formerly Twitter) account @SedgefieldTC. Consider following us for quick and convenient updates on local issues.

SEDFIELD NEWS

We are extremely grateful to our colleagues at Sedgefield News who, when there are items of urgency, allow us to place articles or inserts into their publication. During 2025/26 we were able to produce an information insert inside the News regarding one of the large scale planning applications to ensure the content reached as big an audience as possible, as quickly as possible. Thank you!



Sedgefield Town Council

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Remember, your Town Councillors are available at all times and enjoy hearing from you!

Dr Jane Ayre, Town Clerk

REVIEW OF THE LAST YEAR

2025/26 has been an exceptionally busy year for the Town Council with lots of projects coming to fruition, growing demand for our services and a seemingly unrelenting series of challenges across a wide range of issues.

We welcomed over 2000 visitors through the Town Council Offices door and answered just under 800 phone calls on the Town Council's reception line alone while continuing to deal with several thousands of emails plus an ever-growing number of enquiries via our website. In over 250 instances these enquires related to matters handled by Durham County Council. I would like to thank our local County Councillors Chris Lines and Ian Catchpole for their support during 2025/26.

For many years the Town Council has been working hard to fulfil its commitment to expand Butterwick Road Cemetery to ensure there is a burial facility in the town for generations to come. Page 12 of this report shows some of the images that have been taken throughout the project, as this capital project nears completion.

The expansion project is the largest capital project ever undertaken by Sedgfield Town Council and has been very carefully managed and scrutinised throughout. At the time of writing this review some additional works remain to be completed on-site including the placement of the large hedge between the existing and new areas of the cemetery which has an aphid disease, the thinning out of trees and shrubs around the existing walkway into the cemetery so as to allow this area to be lighter and nature to flourish more, the installation of new public watering points, new noticeboards and bollards to ensure no vehicles enter the existing area of the cemetery. The Town Council will keep you updated via articles in the Sedgfield Extra, including when the new area will come into use and when pre-purchasing of burial plots can resume.

Over the last 12 months our floral displays have continued to bring joy to many and ensure the town centre looks stunning throughout the various stages of the growing season. I would like to thank the Town Council's Gardener, Kate Graney, for all her hard work and dedication. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to members of the Sedgfield In Bloom who also play a vital role in tending and maintaining our town's floral displays and open spaces. The relationship between Town Council gardening staff and the Bloom volunteers benefits the town enormously. The Town Council continues to take great pride in our open spaces and, within continuing budgetary constraints, maintains our land, floral beds and tubs to a high standard. During the last 12 months we have introduced a number of initiatives to try to reduce our fuel and watering costs without detriment to the floral displays as well as increase our efforts to try to recycle and compost where possible. Our appointed grass cutting contractor has continued to provide a high level of service. A competitive grass cutting tendering exercise was held during 2025/26 and we have now awarded our contract for 2026/27 and 2027/28. We would also like to thank all of those businesses who border onto the village green and have entered into legal licences for the use of such so as to ensure the areas are maintained.

REVIEW OF THE LAST YEAR CONTINUED

The cost of living is acutely felt by all and the Town Council is not exempt from having to deal with careful budgeting. During 2025/26 we have been extremely successful in applying for grant funding which has allowed us to undertake several major renovations to Sedgefield Parish Hall, renovations that would not have been possible otherwise. This funding has enabled us to replace the curtains on the stage in the main hall along with the dance floor, getting a new platform lift and refurbishing the bar area in the lobby. As reported in our 2024/25 Annual Report, the town has already benefitted by the Town Council joining with Durham County Council and the local BATS group (part of the Sedgefield Development Trust) to form an Active Travel Group and successfully identifying local issues and obtaining funding for an array of projects. The group's work continues and we hope in the future to be able to replace the two heritage boards in the town centre which are very important in raising awareness of the rich and diverse history of the town as people walk around.

2025/26 saw another busy programme of community events being organised and delivered. These started with community tub planting on the village green where it was clear to see that we have some very young and keen gardeners! Our three coach trips to Keswick, Knaresborough & Wetherby and York were thoroughly enjoyed by those who attended. Our Fireworks Display in the grounds of Ceddesfeld Hall was impressive. The town's Remembrance Sunday Service was very poignant and once again was attended by all ages as everyone came together to pay their respects. Our Snow Party kicked off the festive season with children seeing Santa in his grotto, enjoying the free activities in Sedgefield Parish Hall, the craft fayre at Ceddesfeld Hall, a carol service in St Edmund's Church and then the switching on of the festive lights. These activities ran alongside St Edmund's Christmas Tree Festival. Our events will continue to be promoted in the save the date section of the Sedgefield Extra

Sedgefield Parish Hall was a very busy venue in 2025/26 as we continue to see its usage grow and welcome returning and new hirers for activities ranging from coffee mornings to exercise classes, birthday parties, youth club sessions, musical performance and so much more! The hall is a fantastic asset to Sedgefield and the Town Council has a duty to ensure that it remains a viable venue for as long as possible. Considerable work took place in 2024/25 to review the hall's running costs and income. As a result of this work a three year hire fees structure was agreed with the first year coming into effect for 2025/26 on 1st April 2025. The Town Council will continue to strive to identify and make efficiency savings to keep future price reductions as reasonable as possible whilst balancing the difficulty of achieving that with an old building that regularly throws up surprises. If you are unfamiliar with the Parish Hall please take a look at the hall's pages on our website to find out more about its facilities and how to hire.

2025/26 has been a year when Sedgefield has once again had to deal with a number of complex planning issues. There are currently two planning applications for large-scale housing developments in the town (DM/25/01625/FPA for the erection of 176 dwellings on land East of Beacon Avenue, Sedgefield and DM/26/00456/FPA for the erection of 48 plus 2 dwellings on land to the West of A689 junction/Stockton Road, Sedgefield). The Town Council has robustly considered these and undertaken considerable work to raise residents' awareness of these applications and encouraged all to submit their comments to Durham County Council as the Local Planning Authority. The Town Council will ensure that it is represented and speaks when these go before the County Council's Planning Committees.

REVIEW OF THE LAST YEAR CONTINUED

During 2025/26 the Town Council worked closely with neighbouring Parish Councils at Bishop Middleham and Fishburn as well as local Division County Councillors to strongly object to the Planning Inspectorate Appeal regarding a proposed anaerobic digester on land at Sprucely Farm (APP/X1355/W/25/3365616), an application which was ultimately refused by the Inspectorate. We believe that considering and responding to planning applications will be an ongoing matter in 2026/27. It is important that everyone takes their opportunity to ensure their voice is heard.

Over the years the Town Council has developed a range of communications channels to inform the public about our work and to encourage feedback. Pages 15-16 of this report details those channels in more detail. It is pleasing to note that we continue to have an increasing number of visitors and followers to all communications channels.

The Town Council offices just behind Front Street are open to the public Mondays to Fridays 9am – 12 noon (1pm on Wednesdays) with telephones manned until 4pm each day if you have an enquiry or issue that you want to progress. Staff are always available to help and can deal with a huge range of issues. In addition to progressing an enquiry you can also purchase our not-for-profit dog bags and access our photocopying service.

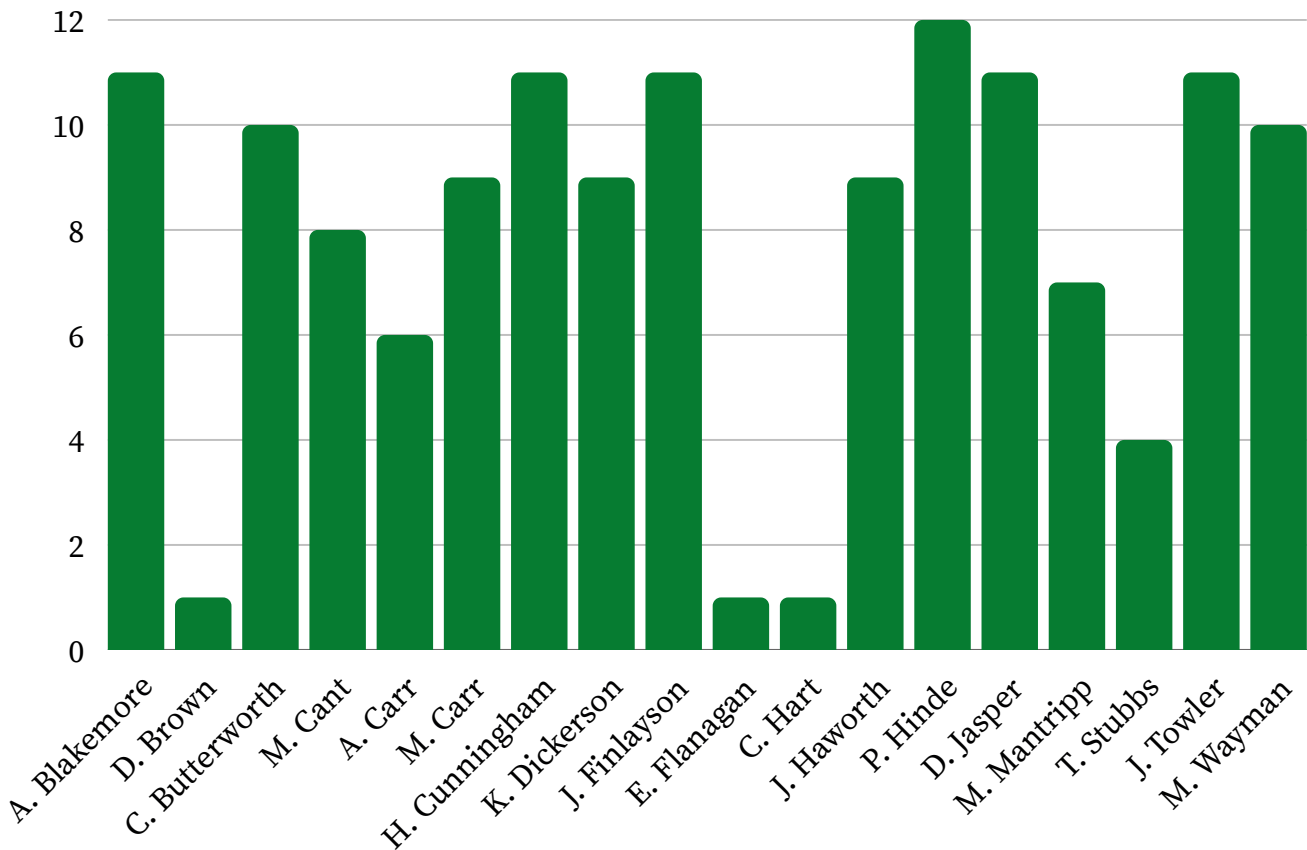
Several decisions have been made during 2025/26 which will impact upon work that takes place in 2026/27. The Town Council has already commissioned independent tree inspections will be taking place in 2026/27 on every tree on Town Council owned land. The bus shelters near the Community Hospital and Pine Ridge will be replaced with new shelters. Joint discussions are ongoing with ecology colleagues in Durham County Council as we look to see what potential works could take place to the two ponds in and near Ceddesfeld Hall grounds in order that funding opportunities can then be explored.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a very big thank you to all Town Council staff – Julia Rowsby, Jane Tate, Natalie Chowns-Traynor, Kate Lawson, Joyce Stephenson and Helen Reeder – who continue to work tirelessly and with the utmost professionalism on behalf of you all. Without their goodwill and dedication many aspects of Town Council work and community events would not happen.

I would like to thank all returning, new and co-opted Councillors for their work and support over the last year. The Town Council has had a very smooth transition following the local Council elections held on 1st May 2025.

I would like to close by taking the time to say some farewells. We were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Councillor Ann Carr and former Councillor Leo McCormack during 2025/26. Both held the honour of being Mayor of Sedgfield at different times and both took enormous pride in representing the town. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Ann's and Leo's families. On a happier note, we said farewell to Adam Heath our former Receptionist & Parish Hall Support Assistant as he emigrated to America to join his wife, Michelle. Finally, we send our very best wishes to Stephen Young, our Head Gardener & Cemetery Superintendent, who has retired after many, many years of loyal service during which time we cannot begin to calculate the number of plants and bulbs he planted around the town and created so many wonderful floral displays that were enjoyed by so many. Go with our very best wishes Adam and Stephen!

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS



Please see page 5 for details on dates councillors joined/resigned over the last year.

Above are the attendance figures for the Council’s Monthly Meetings, Annual General Meeting and Annual Town Meeting (Total 13) for 2025/26. These figures do not include attendance at Special meetings, Committee meetings, working group meetings and other meetings.

Precept 2026/27

The P&R Committee met in January 2026 to consider the Town Council’s precept request for 2026/27 which equated to a 5% increase on a Band D rating.

Councillor Allowance

In accordance with legislation, it is a statutory requirement to publish allowances received by Councillors. The agreed allowance per month for Sedgfield Town Councillors is £25.75. This was claimed over the past civic year by:

Mel Carr, Mark Cant, Ciaran Butterworth, Ann Carr, Helen Cunningham, Jenny Haworth, Dave Jasper, Mavis Wayman, John Finlayson and Julie Towler plus David Brown and Elizabeth Flanagan, who both stood down at the local Council elections in May 2025.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

		Unaudited
31/03/2025		31/03/2026
£	<u>Income</u>	£
15,883.04	Bank Interest	11,434.54
0.00	Parish Hall - Ashcourt Community Fund	19,916.00
3,975.25	Mayor's Charity	5,695.40
3,299.00	Ceddesfeld Hall	3,299.00
465,234.54	Precept	506,024.02
32,094.54	Parish Hall Hire	39,948.44
1,408.70	Community Services	1,820.00
13,173.00	Parish Hall Grant – Lighting Project	0.00
120.00	Open Spaces	170.00
7,518.58	Cemetery Lodge	5,289.64
8,263.00	Cemetery	90,031.37
6,462.99	Events	5,205.37
5,525.25	Environment	4,902.24
169.35	Income Misc	137.98
563,127.24	TOTAL INCOME	693,873.72
	<u>Expenditure</u>	
28,008.11	Council Offices	10,310.41
0.00	Capital Expenditure	3,495.00
27,918.26	Community Development	26,335.49
28,237.54	Environment	25,705.08
33,942.94	General Administration	33,580.48
500.00	Grants	600.00
13,751.19	Mayor's Charity	3,505.84
45,784.07	Parish Hall	54,378.76
285,319.80	Personnel	297,035.09
269.64	Civic Hospitality	164.30
1,182.84	Cemetery Lodge	7,501.30
36,978.91	Cemetery	310,534.56
501,893.30	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	773,146.31
211,395.09	Balance as at 01/04/25	232,622.92
563,127.24	Add Total Income	693,873.72
774,522.33		926,496.64
501,893.30	Deduct Total Expenditure	773,146.31
0.00	Stock Adjustment	0.00
-40,006.11	Transfer to/from reserves	100,174.67
232,622.92	Balance as at 31/03/26	253,525.00

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

31/03/2025		Unaudited 31/03/2026
£	Long Term Assets	£
0.00	LONG TERM Investment Accounts	0.00
0.00	TOTAL LONG TERM ASSETS	0.00
	Current assets	
0.00	Investments	0.00
10,596.73	VAT Recoverable	20,389.19
767.00	Debtors	2,450.45
6,322.55	Payment in Advance	7,856.81
691,227.30	Cash in Hand & at Bank	573,525.73
708,913.58	TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	604,222.18
708,913.58	TOTAL ASSETS	604,222.18
	Current liabilities	
0.00	Loans Received	0.00
0.00	Temporary Borrowing	0.00
0.00	VAT Payable	0.00
29,034.95	Creditors	4,265.94
1,809.80	Receipts in Advance	1,160.00
30,844.75	TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	5,425.94
678,068.83	TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	598,796.24
0.00	Deferred Liabilities	0.00
0.00	Deferred Credits	0.00
0.00		0.00
678,068.83	NET ASSETS REPRESENTED BY	598,796.24
	Represented by	
232,622.92	General Fund	253,525.00
10,481.56	Parish Hall Refurbishment	10,481.56
22,500.00	T Hill—Sedgefield Bowls Club	22,500.00
8,601.46	Mayor's Charity	8,601.46
202.95	Sedgefield 700+	202.95
402,406.17	Butterwick Cemetery Expansion	287,081.50
0.00	Community Chest	150.00
980.77	Refurbishment of Festive Lighting	5,980.77
0.00	Cemetery Lodge Refurbishment	10,000.00
273.00	Sedgefield Sowers and Growers Group	273.00
0.00	LONG TERM Investment Accounts	0.00
0.00	Liability Reserves e.g. deposits	0.00
678,068.83		598,796.24

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF



Dr Jane Ayre
Town Clerk and
Responsible Financial Officer



Julia Rowsby
Financial Assistant



Jane Tate
Admin Assistant /
Mayor's Secretary



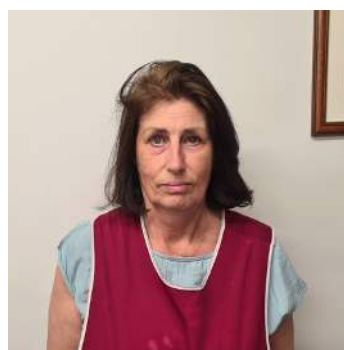
Natalie Chowns-Traynor
Projects & Media
Co-ordinator



Kate Graney
Gardener



Joyce Stephenson
Parish Hall Caretaker &
Cleaner



Helen Reeder
Parish Hall Weekend
Relief Officer