

Annual Report – 2023-2024



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Introduction

At the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday, 8th May, Councillor Fiona Rowley was elected by the Council to be Chairman and Mayor of Newbiggin by the Sea. Also elected at the meeting was Councillor Tom Roll to the office of Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor. This leadership change marks the beginning of a new chapter for our town, promising continued growth and community engagement.



Councillor Fiona Rowley was co-opted as North Ward Councillor in 2021. Born by the sea and a Northumberland local, Fiona has made significant contributions to our town through various roles, including Director of the Newbiggin Amateur Pantomime Society and Secretary of the Newbiggin Allotment Association. Her heartfelt connection to Newbiggin is evident in her active participation in the “Choir by the Sea” and her management of the local business, “Gifted by the Sea.” Fiona’s deep understanding and passion for supporting local independent businesses shine through in her vision for the town.

“I am delighted to have been nominated by my fellow councillors for this role. I love the town and its people. These are the sentiments I expressed on joining the Town Council and remain true in accepting the role of Chair,” Fiona remarked. She also extended her gratitude to Alison Sutherland, the departing Chair, for her hard work and dedication over the past year. Alison’s active civic term, representing Newbiggin on numerous occasions, has set a high standard for community leadership.

Achievements and Future Outlook

Reflecting on the past year, the Town Council has been exceptionally busy. This Annual Report provides a snapshot of Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council’s activities and offers some insights into the year ahead. The Town Council aims to encourage Newbiggin by the Sea to continue to thrive as a desirable destination for residents, tourists, and visitors alike. Despite today’s challenges, Fiona sees a bright future full of opportunities for Newbiggin, aiming to keep it a “jewel in the crown of Northumberland.”

In partnership with her colleagues and the Council Officers, Fiona is committed to fostering a vibrant community where everyone feels welcome and valued. The focus will be on supporting local businesses, enhancing community events, and ensuring the town remains a beautiful and inviting place for all. With a blend of tradition and innovation, the Council looks forward to another year of progress and prosperity for Newbiggin by the Sea.

Conservation Action Focus



This year, we had the privilege of meeting with Luke Douglas-Home, the renowned Coastline Runner, who has been tirelessly advocating against plastic pollution on British foreshores. His latest endeavour took him from Newbiggin by the Sea to Alnmouth, a stretch along the picturesque coast that is unfortunately also plagued by plastic debris. This initiative was part of a broader campaign aligned with the 30 x 30 theme, which aims to protect 30% of our planet's lands, waters, and oceans by the year 2030.

Luke Douglas-Home began by collecting 30 pieces of plastic pollution, setting an example for the community. He was joined by local councillors, school pupils from Grace Darling, and staff from the Newbiggin Maritime Centre, all coming together to make a tangible impact. Their collective effort underscored the importance of community involvement in environmental conservation and demonstrated that small actions can lead to significant change.

In his powerful message, Luke Douglas-Home emphasised the simplicity and necessity of proper waste disposal. "This is something we can and should all do something about," he stated. "Put rubbish in the bin, not leave it on the beach. It is as simple as that. Leave only your footprints." His words resonate with the core mission of our 30 x 30 campaign, inspiring individuals to take personal responsibility for maintaining clean and healthy environments.

Sustainable Future



We were thrilled to announce our successful funding bid to the Sea Changes Coastal Fountain Fund, through which we have secured a generous donation of £2,500 back in May last year. This funding was directed towards the purchase and installation of a water bottle refill station on the Promenade. The initiative aligns with our commitment to environmental sustainability and our ongoing efforts to enhance community facilities.

The Sea Changes Coastal Fountain Fund aims to mitigate the environmental impact of single-use plastic water bottles on coastal habitats. By funding the acquisition and installation of public water drinking fountains, the fund supports communities in reducing plastic waste in busy and ecologically significant areas. The refill station is located on the Promenade, strategically positioned between Cafe Bertorelli and The Coble. This location is also adjacent to the finish line for the Newbiggin by the Sea Parkrun, ensuring that it will be a valuable resource for Park runners and other visitors alike.

This project will not only provide a convenient service but will also foster a culture of sustainability within our community. We have already seen the positive impact of this installation for both the local environment and the well-being of our residents and visitors.

Coastal Walking Expedition: A Success for Dukes DofE Programme



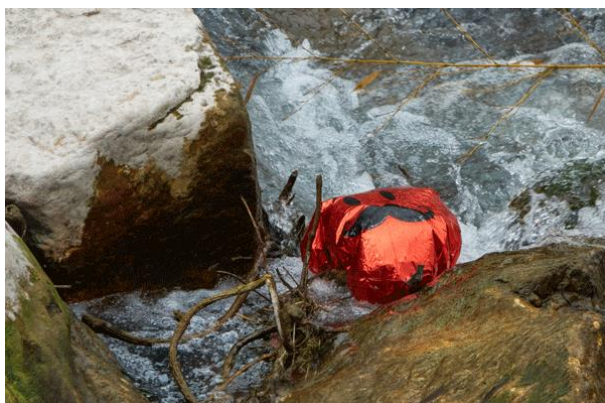
As part of the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award Programme at Dukes Secondary School, students embarked on an adventurous walking expedition along the beautiful coastline. Despite starting their journey on a rainy morning, their spirits remained high as they tackled both the physical and mental challenges of the trek.

In addition to completing their expedition requirements, the students made a significant contribution to the community by participating in a coastline clean-up. Their efforts were instrumental in helping Newbiggin-by-the-Sea maintain its pristine beauty, ensuring the area stayed litter-free.

This initiative not only exemplified their commitment to the DofE Programme but also highlighted their dedication to environmental stewardship.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the participants for their hard work and perseverance. Your dedication has made a lasting impact on both the local environment and the community. Well done, Dukes Secondary students, for your outstanding achievement in this year's DofE Programme!

Say No to Balloon Releases



We would like to highlight a significant environmental concern we addressed last year. We were informed about a planned balloon release at the Sandy Bay holiday resort, managed by Parkdean Resorts. Recognizing the potential environmental hazards associated with such activities, we promptly reached out to Parkdean Resorts to remind them of their corporate commitment to environmental responsibility. We urged them to cancel the balloon release to prevent the harmful impacts on wildlife and the environment.

Once released, balloons often fall back to the ground, where their fragments can be ingested by marine life or entangle other animals, causing injury, illness, and significant suffering. Our coastline is home to a rich diversity of marine wildlife and shorebirds, all of which require our collective efforts to protect.

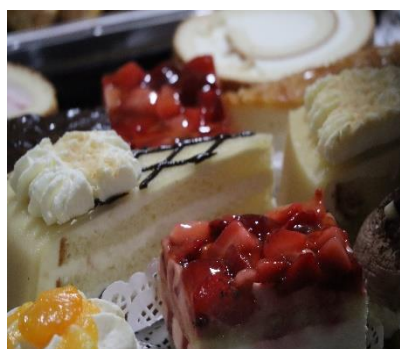
We encouraged alternative, environmentally friendly ways to honour loved ones, such as planting trees, creating flower beds, using jam jar lights, or organizing memorial walks for charity. This initiative aligns with our ongoing efforts to safeguard our natural environment and promote sustainable practices within our community.

Newbiggin Community and Garden Awards 2023: A Blossoming Success



The Newbiggin Community and Garden Awards 2023 marked the second year of celebrating the green-fingered talents of our residents, and it proved that we are going from strength to strength. This year, the awards once again showcased the exceptional gardens and the dedicated individuals who contribute to the beauty and community spirit of Newbiggin. The enthusiasm and participation from our residents have been heartwarming, and the stunning displays have demonstrated the love and hard work poured into each garden.

One of the highlights was the **Good Garden Award**, which recognised gardens that can be admired without stepping onto the property. Councillors shortlisted a selection of these visually appealing gardens, and they were judged by our esteemed guest judge, the Planataria Manager from Wansbeck Garden Centre. Each ward had its own winner, making it a true community-wide celebration of horticultural excellence.



The **Community Planting Award** was a testament to the collaborative spirit of Newbiggin's residents. This award, chosen by the residents themselves, highlighted the best floral arrangements, most improved sites, or simply those who showed fabulous commitment to their gardens. Meanwhile, the **Secret Garden Award** revealed hidden gems that the public often cannot see. These magnificent displays, which required many hours of dedication, could be entered or nominated by residents.

Additionally, the **Allotment Award** recognised the best allotment at each site, judged by The Newbiggin Allotment Association Committee. The awards didn't stop there; we also celebrated our **Community Champions, Sports Champions**, and honoured an outstanding individual with the **Honorary Freedom of the Town** award. These recognitions underscore the vibrant, supportive, and thriving community that is Newbiggin, and we look forward to even more growth and participation in the coming years.



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The Honorary Freedom of the Town Award

Newbiggin Town Council presented The Honorary Freedom of the Town Award on the Newbiggin Community and Garden Awards night in September 2023. This is the highest honour that can be bestowed to an individual by Newbiggin Town Council.

The award is a great honour and is typically reserved for individuals who have made a lasting impact on the community through their service, leadership, and dedication. It is a recognition of the hard work and commitment that these individuals have shown and is a testament to the important role that they have played in the life of the town or city.



The commitment and dedication of **Madena Hedley**, Scouts leader to the 3rd Newbiggin Scouts for over 54 years is truly remarkable. With a passion for engaging and supporting young people in their personal development journey, she has empowered them to make a positive contribution to society. Over the course of her continued tenure, she has helped countless young people gain many skills that will serve them well throughout their lives.

What's even more impressive is that she has been involved in at least three generations, watching young people grow into adults and then seeing their children follow in their footsteps.

Her impact on the community is immeasurable, and her dedication to the Scouts is a true inspiration to all. It's leaders like Madena who make a significant difference in the world, and we should all strive to follow in her footsteps.

Love Parks Week: A Community Triumph in Newbiggin by the Sea

In July last year, Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council, in partnership with the Newbiggin Climate Action Network, proudly participated in the @Keep Britain Tidy Campaign's Love Parks Week. This collaboration showcased our community's shared commitment to environmental stewardship and our collective effort to preserve the beauty and cleanliness of our cherished local parks.



Throughout the week-long event, we visited five parks in Newbiggin, dedicating ourselves to the task of litter picking. Each day, regardless of the weather conditions, our dedicated volunteers gathered at the designated parks to tackle litter and promote a cleaner, greener environment. It was heartwarming to see the community come together, with residents of all ages joining in to make a tangible difference. The spirit of camaraderie was palpable as everyone worked towards a common goal: to keep our parks beautiful and welcoming for all. The success of Love Parks Week in Newbiggin by the Sea is a testament to what can be achieved when a community unites

with a shared purpose. Our efforts not only led to visibly cleaner parks but also raised awareness about the importance of maintaining public spaces. We are incredibly grateful to all the volunteers and participants who contributed their time and energy. Moving forward, we aim to build on this momentum and continue fostering a culture of environmental responsibility in Newbiggin by the Sea. Together, we can ensure our parks remain pristine havens for generations to come.

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Community-Led Climate Action in Newbiggin

Last year, a significant step was taken in Newbiggin's journey towards a sustainable future. Following an insightful presentation by the Climate Change Officer from Northumberland County Council, a spark of inspiration was ignited among our residents. This pivotal moment led to the formation of a dedicated working group, determined to address climate change, and protect our community for both present and future generations.

The newly established working group has since embarked on a mission to identify and implement practical and feasible solutions to combat the effects of climate change. Discussing initiatives such as increasing green spaces, promoting renewable energy sources, and enhancing recycling programs. These efforts not only aim to reduce our carbon footprint but also to foster a sense of collective responsibility and resilience among Newbiggin's residents.

As we reflect on the past year's achievements, we recognize that our journey is far from complete and only just begun. The working group is continually seeking new members who are passionate about making a difference. If you are interested in joining this vital community effort, we warmly invite you to get involved. Your participation and ideas are crucial to our ongoing success. For more information or to express your interest, please contact us at Ask@newbiggintowncouncil.gov.uk. Together, we can ensure a sustainable and thriving future for Newbiggin.

Addressing Community Concerns: Enhancing Safety and Visibility with New Bus Shelter



In response to the concerns raised by residents regarding the stone bus shelter located in front of Holmcroft in East Lea, Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council has taken decisive action to address the issue. The residents had reported that the stone shelter was being used for antisocial behaviour, which undermined the safety and cleanliness of the area. Acknowledging these valid concerns, the Town Council acted promptly and, in July 2023, removed the stone shelter. It has been replaced with a modern, black steel mesh Arun shelter, complete with a seating area.

The design of the new Arun shelter aims to discourage antisocial behaviour through its transparency. The steel mesh construction ensures that anyone using the shelter remains visible to residents, bus drivers, and the police, thereby increasing passive surveillance and reducing the likelihood of inappropriate activities. This strategic move is expected to foster a safer and more welcoming environment for all community members who rely on public transportation.

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Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council holds the responsibility for the provision and maintenance of all bus shelters within the town. Our commitment to maintaining these essential facilities is reflected in our weekly cleaning schedules, regular inspections, and timely repairs. To further deter vandalism, we have also implemented the practice of replacing Perspex with perforated steel in our shelters. Through these ongoing efforts, we aim to ensure that our bus shelters remain functional, clean, and safe for everyone who uses them.

Promenade's 'Happy Bench' Initiative



In a Town Council meeting held in June 2023, a heartwarming decision was made to designate an existing bench on the Promenade as a 'Happy Bench'. This innovative initiative is aimed at fostering a sense of community and encouraging meaningful connections among residents. The 'Happy Bench' invites people to take a seat if they don't mind others saying 'hi' and starting a conversation. It's a simple yet profound effort to ease isolation and loneliness, promoting mental well-being and social interaction.

The importance of community connections cannot be overstated, especially in today's fast-paced world where digital interactions often overshadow face-to-face communication. The 'Happy Bench' serves as a gentle reminder of the value of personal interactions and the positive impact they can have on our mental health. By creating a designated space for spontaneous conversations, the Town Council hopes to bring residents closer together, fostering a more inclusive and supportive community.

We encourage all residents to take a moment to sit on the 'Happy Bench' and embrace the opportunity to meet new people. Whether you're a long-time resident or new to the area, the bench offers a unique chance to share stories, experiences, and perhaps even make lasting friendships. Don't forget to tag us in your social media posts with #HappyBenchPromenade to share your experiences and spread the word about this wonderful initiative. Together, let's create a more connected and caring community, one conversation at a time.

Donation request to Holiday Lets

In Newbiggin by the Sea, the rise of Holiday Lets and Air B&Bs has prompted the Town Council to seek voluntary donations from property owners to fund local services. Following successful initiatives in neighbouring areas, property owners are asked to contribute based on the Band D equivalent of Council Tax, with a suggested donation of £175. The aim is to generate around £12,000 to enhance local services for residents and visitors. The Town Council sent out letters in September 2023 encouraging owners to contribute to maximize the positive impact on the community.

Enhancing Waste Management on the Promenade

In August 2023, we took a significant step towards improving waste management on the Promenade by installing the state-of-the-art Smart 770L Wheelie Bin Housing Units. This initiative was a part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining a clean and attractive environment for both residents and visitors.



These add a touch of local charm thanks to the bespoke artwork designed by the talented local artist, Ron Todd. His depiction of Newbiggin by the Sea has transformed the bins from mere functional objects into vibrant pieces of public art, celebrating our community's unique seaside heritage.

Understanding that accessibility is key, we have not entirely phased out the smaller 120L bins. By retaining these smaller units, we ensure that waste disposal remains convenient for all members of the public, including those who may find the larger bins less accessible. This dual approach of combining larger capacity bins with smaller ones reflects our dedication to inclusivity and practicality, making sure that everyone can contribute to keeping our Promenade clean and inviting.

These efforts are just one part of our broader environmental strategy. By integrating functionality with aesthetic appeal and accessibility, we are fostering a sense of community pride and responsibility.

Revitalizing Horseshoe Steps: A Blossoming Transformation

In a significant move to enhance the natural beauty and sustainability of our community spaces, the Horseshoe Steps area has undergone a remarkable transformation. For years, the area had been plagued by rotting timber and an overgrowth of deeply rooted weeds. Recognising the need for a complete overhaul, we initiated a comprehensive replacement landscaping project to rejuvenate this beloved spot.

The first step in this revitalization involved replacing the decayed timber with treated hardwood, carefully chosen to mirror the existing design and ensure longevity. This choice not only restored the structural integrity of the landscape but also maintained the aesthetic continuity that residents and visitors have long cherished. The use of treated hardwood promises durability, even in the face of challenging weather conditions, ensuring that the steps remain safe and visually appealing for years to come.

To elevate the horticultural standard of the area, we collaborated with local award-winning landscape designer Sean Murray. His expertise was instrumental in creating an all-year-round colourful, low-maintenance, perennial planting scheme. This thoughtful design is not only visually stunning but also environmentally friendly, attracting butterflies and bees, thus promoting biodiversity. The vibrant array of plants ensures that Horseshoe Steps is a place of beauty and interest in every season. This project stands as a testament to our dedication to enhancing public spaces and fostering a connection with nature..

Strengthening Ties with Remscheid

In September 2023, Councillors Alison Sutherland, Fiona Rowley and the Town Clerk, embarked on a significant visit to Remscheid, Germany. This visit was organised following an invitation from the Ober Burgermeister (Lord Mayor) of Remscheid, reflecting the enduring and deep-rooted relationship between our towns. The visit underscored our commitment to the long-standing Town Twinning arrangement that has been in place since 1952. This initiative was originally established to foster reconciliation and friendship between our nations in the aftermath of World War II.



The bond between Ashington, Newbiggin by the Sea, and the City of Remscheid is one of the most enduring examples of Town Twinning globally. Over the decades, this relationship has flourished, symbolizing a bridge of cultural exchange, mutual support, and shared history. A poignant example of this friendship was in December 1984, when the people of Remscheid generously donated £2,734 towards the Miners Hardship Fund. This contribution was instrumental in providing food vouchers to support families in the Wansbeck Area during challenging times. Such acts of kindness have cemented the bond between our communities, highlighting the true spirit of solidarity and compassion.

The visit reinforced the importance of these personal and cultural exchanges, reminding us of the value of maintaining and nurturing these international friendships. As we look to the future, the ties with Remscheid will continue to be a cornerstone of our community's global relationships, promoting peace, mutual understanding, and shared prosperity.

New Feature in Central Park Play Area

The completion of the new Toddler to Primary age feature area within our beloved Central Park Play Area was completed in November 2023. This project was undertaken by Wicksteed Leisure, a company renowned for their expertise in crafting high-quality, imaginative play environments for children. The new feature area was designed to cater to the youngest members of our community, providing them with a safe and engaging space to play, learn, and grow.



This project was supported by Ashington Leisure Partnership with a financial contribution of £20,000.

One of the most charming aspects of the new play area is its train design, which harkens back to the nostalgic memories of the Newbiggin Railway line. Completed in November 2023, the train-themed structure not only provides a fun and dynamic play environment but also serves as a historical reminder of our town's rich heritage. This thoughtful design choice has been met with enthusiastic approval from both children and parents alike. We are proud to have created a space where our children can play, explore, and connect with their community's history. We continue to maintain the following play areas in Newbiggin which can be quite costly due to general wear and tear as well as occasional extensive vandalism: -

- Newbiggin Skatepark & Multiuse Games Area
- Long Park Multi-use Games Area
- Attlee Terrace
- Central Park
- Milburn Park

Remembrance Service



The Newbiggin Town Council extends heartfelt gratitude to all the organizations, groups, and individuals who joined us in paying our respects to the fallen on Remembrance Sunday at the Colliery Memorial and Newbiggin Memorial Park in November 2023. Special thanks are extended to our Town Council staff and the Newbiggin Veterans for their exceptional efforts in organizing and delivering the event. We also appreciate Father Anthony for leading the Service and the Jayess Newbiggin Brass Band for providing the stirring musical accompaniment.

The Last Post and Reveille were rendered beautifully by Sara James, Principal Cornet Player of the Jayess Newbiggin Brass Band. A military trench whistle marked the commencement and conclusion of the two-minute silence, observed with profound respect by all in attendance.

The event was graced by the presence of distinguished guests, including Deputy Lord Lieutenant Keith Green, Councillor Alison Sutherland, Mayor of Newbiggin by the Sea, and County Councillors Liz Simpson and Jim Lang. Additionally, representatives from a wide array of community and service organizations attended, including the Royal British Legion, Newbiggin Veterans Association, Royal Air Force, Fusiliers Association, and many local groups and associations. Following the wreath-laying ceremony, Reverend O'Grady led a touching service, guiding attendees through hymns, prayers, and the National Anthem, thereby bringing the community together in reflection and reverence for those who sacrificed so much.

New Town Councillor for Newbiggin North Ward

We introduced and welcomed Jan Casey as the new Town Councillor for Newbiggin North Ward, a role she assumed in November of last year. Jan was co-opted onto the Council at the meeting held on the 8th of November 2023, bringing with her a wealth of experience and a strong dedication to community service. Her appointment marks a significant addition to our team, and we are confident that her contributions will greatly benefit our town.

Jan is retired but brings an extensive background in public service to her new role. She has previously served as the Secretary to the Lord Mayor of Newcastle and as a Personal Assistant to a Member of Parliament. Her professional experience equips her with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the intricacies of local governance effectively. Beyond her professional life, Jan is deeply involved in volunteer work, dedicating her time to the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH) and the Newbiggin Arts Centre. Her volunteerism underscores her commitment to the well-being and cultural enrichment of our community.



In her personal life, Jan enjoys walking with her dog and engaging in various crafting activities. These hobbies have not only provided her with relaxation and enjoyment but also opportunities to connect with new friends and stay attuned to local affairs. Jan is particularly interested in giving back to the local community and has expressed a keen focus on the need for improved tourism infrastructure. Her vision and passion for community enhancement are sure to drive positive changes in Newbiggin North Ward.

Newbiggin by the Sea Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Result

On Thursday 23rd November 2023 a referendum was held on whether to adopt the Newbiggin by the Sea Neighbourhood Plan. The result was a 'yes' vote (72 percent of votes cast compared to 28 percent voting 'no') by the Newbiggin electorate of whom 14 percent came out to vote.

This 'yes' vote means that the plan would be adopted and Northumberland County Council, as the planning authority, will use the Newbiggin by the Sea Neighbourhood Plan to help it to decide planning applications within the Newbiggin Parish area. It will also be used by the Town Council when making comments on planning applications.

The Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the Development Plan. In practical terms this means that decisions on planning applications in the town will be made using both the Northumberland Local Plan and the Newbiggin by the Sea Neighbourhood Plan, and any other material considerations.

Community Resilience and Partnership

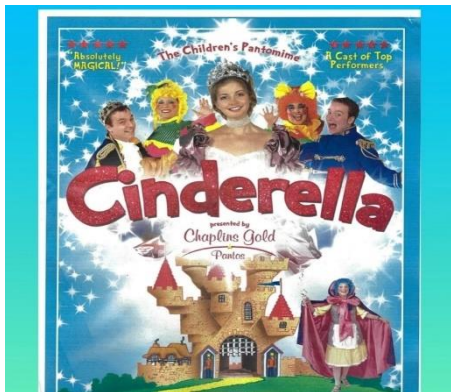


In December, Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council faced an unexpected challenge when their cherished Christmas tree developed a significant 10ft crack in its main trunk. This structural weakness rendered the tree unsafe, necessitating its removal and shredding. Similarly, West Bedlington Town Council encountered a health and safety concern with their Christmas tree. Damage to the base caused the tree to list dangerously, prompting its removal. The prospect of losing our towns festive centrepieces left both communities disheartened.

However, in the spirit of resilience and cooperation, both town councils reached out to each other and devised a collaborative solution. Their quick thinking and mutual support led to the involvement of two local businesses in Bedlington: WL Straughan and Windmill Farm Christmas Trees. These businesses stepped up to provide crucial assistance at very short notice, ensuring that the communities would not be without their Christmas trees.

WL Straughan removed the tree from Bedlington Market Place and installed it at Newbiggin Quay Wall Piazza, while also addressing the base issue in Bedlington. This made it possible to house and install a smaller tree in Bedlington. Meanwhile, Windmill Farm Christmas Trees came through with a generous donation of a tree for West Bedlington Town Council. The swift and effective actions of these businesses, along with the support from Northumberland County Council and the wider community, restored the Christmas spirit in both towns. The gratitude of both councils towards these efforts serves as a testament to the power of community and cooperation during challenging times.

Spreading Festive Cheer in Newbiggin by the Sea



In December 2023, Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council took a heartwarming initiative to spread festive cheer among its residents through the Community Resilience Fund. Recognising the importance of community spirit and togetherness, especially during the holiday season, the Council purchased 20 tickets, to be given away to lucky residents. This gesture was aimed at bringing joy and celebration to the local community, reinforcing the values of sharing and caring that are so integral to the holiday spirit. To engage the residents and foster a sense of community, the Council launched a delightful social media campaign.

Residents were invited to like the Council's page and share their favourite thing about Christmas in Newbiggin by the Sea. The response was overwhelming, with residents eagerly sharing cherished memories and traditions that make the town's Christmas celebrations unique. From the twinkling lights adorning the streets to the comforting aroma of festive treats, the stories painted a vivid picture of the town's warm and welcoming holiday atmosphere.

The winners of the tickets were selected in a fun and transparent manner using the Wheel of Names, an online random name picker.

Community Unites to Plant Trees for a Greener Future



Just before Christmas 2023, Newbiggin Town Council, in collaboration with a Woodland Officer from Northumberland County Council, Grace Darling C of E Primary School, and Dukes Secondary School, undertook a heartwarming community initiative to plant 150 tree saplings. This event not only brought together various segments of the community but also underscored the importance of environmental sustainability and the need for active participation in caring for our planet. A special mention goes to Mrs. R McCready of Dukes Secondary School, who generously donated 30 of the saplings, showcasing a spirit of giving that perfectly embodied the festive season.



The saplings planted included Rowan, Wild Cherry, Hawthorn, and Silver Birch, each chosen for their unique benefits to the local ecosystem. These trees will play a crucial role in improving air quality by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen, thereby creating a healthier environment for the community. Furthermore, the roots of these trees will help reduce soil erosion, maintaining the integrity of the local landscape. Perhaps most importantly, the new trees will provide essential habitats for wildlife, promoting biodiversity and supporting various species that are integral to the ecosystem.

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This tree-planting event was particularly significant as it involved children from both Grace Darling C of E Primary School and Dukes Secondary School, instilling in them a sense of responsibility towards environmental conservation. By participating in the planting process, these young students learned firsthand the importance of trees and the positive impact they can have on the environment. The initiative aimed to inspire these future custodians of the planet to continue engaging in activities that promote sustainability and environmental stewardship. In uniting the community for this cause, the event served as a powerful reminder of how collective action can lead to meaningful change, ensuring a greener, healthier future for generations to come.

CCTV

We have implemented a town-wide CCTV system to provide a safe and secure environment for the benefit of those who might live, visit, or work in the area. The system will not be used to invade the privacy of any individual, except when carried out in accordance with the law.

Phase 2 - Suggestions were sought from Northumbria Police for placement. An addition of 9 cameras to the town is near completion.

Public Seats, Bus Shelters and Litter Bins

We continue to provide and maintain over 97 seats in the town.

We provide and maintains 17 bus shelters throughout the Town. The majority are provided with seats and clear visibility panels for the benefit of the bus passengers. We have had damage/graffiti to some, and this has been dealt with immediately wherever possible. Please remember to report any issues to Newbiggin Town Council.

There are over 200 bins throughout the town, which are supplied, installed, and maintained by the Town Council although the emptying is carried out by Northumberland County Council. We use a mapping tool and we review this regularly.

Nipper

The Newbiggin Nipper community transport service continues and has now extended its service into Ashington and is now 3 days per week instead of the 2 days it was initially.

Vehicle activated speed signs

Newbiggin Town Council continue to maintain the vehicle activated speed signs on A197 (Woodhorn) and B1334 (Spital) and A197 (near STB Autos). The vehicle activated speed signs at Woodhorn and Spital have been converted to capture data on speeding vehicles which we can pass to Northumbria Police and Northumberland County Council.

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our Councillors:

South Ward



Tom Roll

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Jill Woodman

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North Ward



Jan Casey

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Fiona Rowley

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West Ward



Gwen Woodman

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Louise Spratt

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East Ward



Ami Wootton

Cllr.Wootton@newbiggintowncouncil.gov.uk



Alison Sutherland

Cllr.Sutherland@newbiggintowncouncil.gov.uk

Financials

Five years ago was the last time the residents of Newbiggin by the Sea saw a change in the amount they pay per household towards the Town Council precept, when we reduced it by 1%. In the four years since this change (since 2020/21) we have kept the amount payable by households towards the Town Council precept frozen at £115.59 for Band A and £173.38 for Band D properties, respectively.

It should be noted that NO money comes to the Town Council through business rates.

Below is an extract from a Band A Council Tax bill comparing what you paid in 2020/21 to 2023/24.

HOW THE TAX IS ARRIVED AT FOR BAND A	2020/21 £	% Change from 2019/20
Northumberland County Council*	1070.97	2.0
Adult Social Care**	103.00	2.0
Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria	91.33	2.0
Newbiggin Town Council	115.59	-1.0
TOTAL COUNCIL TAX FOR 2020/21	1380.89	3.3

HOW THE TAX IS ARRIVED AT FOR BAND A	2023/24 £	% change from 2022/23
Northumberland County Council*	1147.33	3.0
Adult Social Care**	176.20	2.0
Newbiggin Town Council	115.59	0.0
Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria	112.56	9.8
TOTAL COUNCIL TAX FOR 2023/24	1551.68	4.6

During this time your Council Tax has continued to rise because all other authorities that your Council Tax money goes towards have requested more funding. The total increases over this four-year period are shown below.

Total increases over the last four years	Amount
Northumberland County Council	£76.36
Adult Social Care	£73.20
Police and Crime Commissioner	£21.23
Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council	£0.00

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From all the authorities listed on your Council Tax bill, the Town Council is the only authority where the money stays 100% in Newbiggin by the Sea. We are transparent about how this money is spent by providing a detailed budget and publishing details of all payments that are made; this can be found on our website. We've managed to keep this frozen despite rises in costs and inflation by using money that we have in General Reserves, but our reserves are now depleted and it is not sustainable for us to continue to do this as we should be building reserves for planned asset replacement in the future, and other contingencies.

In January 2023 we made a commitment to look at generating income from alternative sources to supplement our work to allow us to keep our costs low and we were successful in attracting over £102,000 of external funding – this was great news. Details are listed below.

External funders and reason	Amount
NCC –Milburn Park	£50,000
Ashington Leisure Partnership – Central Park	£20,000
Sea-Changers Coast Fountain Fund	£2,500
Newbiggin Heritage Partnership Coastal Fountain	£1,500
Scottish Power Renewables – Coastal Fountain	£6,000
Scottish Power Renewables - Horse Shoe Steps	£20,000
NCC – Coronation	£480
NCC -Bandstand painting	£945.82
Holiday lets – voluntary donations	£875
Other donations	£628.97
Total	£102,929.79

All of our Town Councillors and staff are passionate about Newbiggin by the Sea. We work hard to ensure Newbiggin by the Sea is a pleasant place to live, visit, and work with a safer and cleaner environment and to provide opportunities for the town and community to thrive.

The Town Council is conscious that many households are struggling with the cost-of-living increases, so we have made a commitment for 2024/25 to focus on our core service delivery, with the aim of in the future reaching a point where the precept at a minimum covers our core services. This will allow us to focus on improving the maintenance of what we already have in place (assets and services). The only project we have planned within our budget for 2024/25 is the restoration of Newbiggin Memorial Park which will be 100 years old this year.

Any other projects that we consider pursuing will be reliant on the ability to secure external funding.

At a meeting held 10th January 2024, the Town Council agreed to set a budget of £302,089 and request a precept of £275,590.

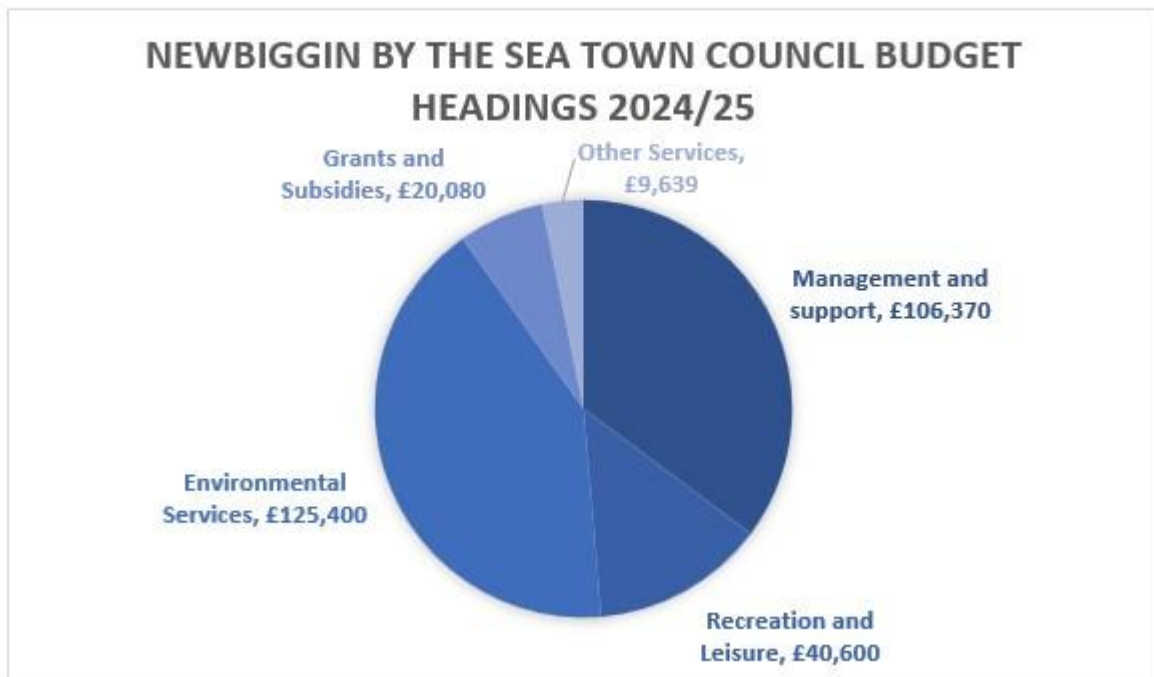
This new precept will equate to £123.68 for Band A (£8.09 increase – 15p per week) and £185.52 for Band D (£12.14 increase – 23p per week). This is our first increase in five years.

Annual Report – 2023-2024

This information is broken down into the following budget headings and submitted with our precept request to Northumberland County Council.

A

Budget Headings	2023/24	2024/25
Management & Support	£96,440	£106,370
Recreation and Leisure Services	£49,600	£40,600
Environmental Services	£132,980	£125,400
Grants and Subsidies	£22,850	£20,080
Other Services	£4,600	£9,639
Total	£306,200	£302,089
Contribution from reserves	£52,000	£26,580
Precept	£254.200	£275.509





Detailed breakdown of our budget is available on our website or via request to Ask@Newbiggintowncouncil.gov.uk.

Annual Report – 2023-2024



A non-exhaustive list of services we provide is available here, it also details the services of Northumberland County Council.

Your Local Council Responsibilities

 Tel: 01670 851833	 Northumberland County Council Tel: 0345 6006400
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of allotment land for Newbiggin residents – managed by Newbiggin Allotment Association • Play Areas at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attlee Terrace, Milburn Park, Central Park • Skate Park and Muga (soon to be PlayZone) • Muga at Long Park • Provision and maintenance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus shelters, Notice board, Litter bins, public seats. • Dedication garden (trees outside Health Centre) • Newbiggin Nipper bus service (with NCC) • CCTV • Floral displays, including the Horseshoe Steps • Newbiggin by the Sea Neighbourhood Plan • Consultee for all Planning matters • Water bottle refill station • School holiday sports and leisure programme • Community and Garden Awards • Honorary Freedom of the Town • Remembrance and Armistice Services • Civic events • Christmas Lighting and Tree • War Memorials • Campaigning for the wellbeing of Newbiggin by the Sea residents • Working to make Newbiggin by the Sea more sustainable. • Representing residents on local issues • Partnership working with groups and charities. • Community Grants • The Bandstand • The Bungalow – rental property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads, transport, potholes, public rights of way, footpaths, cycling routes, street lighting, on street parking, traffic management, and reporting and problems on the above • Fire and Rescue • Social care, blue badges, health care • Libraries • Recycling centres, fly tipping, and graffiti. • Household waste, garden waste and recycling collections • Emptying of litter bins • Birth and death registrations • Business support and Economic Development • Child protections and adoption, Education, school admissions, Early Years and education and health care plans • Trading Standards • Concessionary Bus passes • Maintenance of Play area at Spital Estate • Council tax rates, collection, and business rates • Planning Applications and Building Controls, Northumberland Local Plan • Dog controls including dog mess. • Car parks • Environmental Health • Sports Centre • Public Toilets • Licensing • Electoral Registration • Weedkilling and grass cutting. • Community Chest funding <p>Newbiggin specific – Newbiggin Promenade, Beach Management, Sea Defences, Colliery woodland, Central Park fields and paths, Welfare fields and paths, Milburn Park, Needles Eye, Church Point, maintenance of St. Bartholomew's Churchyard.</p>
Contact Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council Website: www.newbiggintowncouncil.gov.uk email@ ask@newbiggintowncouncil.gov.uk Tel: 01670 851833 Address: 76 Front Street, Newbiggin by the Sea NE64 6QD	Contact Northumberland County Council Website: www.northumberland.gov.uk Tel: 0345 600 6400 Address: County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF

Projects we look forward to in the future include:

- A restoration of Newbiggin Memorial Park ahead of the Centenary of the Unveiling which will be in November 2024
- Further Improvement to Milburn Park
- Improvements throughout the town.

The Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was approved at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 8th May 2024 and has been submitted to the External Auditor. The AGAR will be made available one the Council website and the period for the public to exercise their rights to inspect the accounts will be from 10th June to 19th July.

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Officers



Leanne Lawson

TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

Council contact details:

Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council

76 Front Street, Newbiggin by the Sea NE64 6QD

Tel: 01670 851 833

Email: ask@newbiggintowncouncil.gov.uk

Website www.newbiggintowncouncil.gov.uk

To keep up to date on the Council's activities follow us on

