



Morpeth
Town
Council

ANNUAL REPORT 20/21

Introduction Mayor of Morpeth



After the gradual revival over the summer, Morpeth has been locked down again by regional restrictions followed in the New Year by the third national lockdown.

However the overwhelming success of the vaccine programme holds out significant hope that the easing will begin again and this time it may be permanent.

Despite the lockdown restrictions, the Town Council has continued to operate, meeting regularly by video-conference and supervising the maintenance of Council services.

Notable achievements during this difficult period has been the completion of the substantial renovation works at the St James' Community Centre and at the park the revamped Pavilion and café is completed and eager to open.

I have to congratulate and celebrate the hard work of the Town Council staff both in the Town Hall and out and about in the Community for achieving and completing these major projects on budget and despite the restrictions.

I am definitely looking forward to the formal opening of these new facilities which will be wonderful new community spaces for the Town.

I look forward to being able to organise some events to raise further funds for my chosen charity Contact Mental Health as soon as restrictions permit and would like to thank all those who have contributed so far.

Review of the Year 20/21

The Town Council manages a wide variety of services and events which take place throughout the year, unfortunately these have been significantly reduced over the past year due to the global pandemic. The Town Council's staff have continued to work throughout the pandemic, continuing to provide a service to the Morpeth community.

While no events have taken place, the workforce has continued to ensure that the buildings, assets and open spaces are maintained to the highest standards. The Government has set out its roadmap to recovery, slowly allowing life to return to normal let us hope this continues on track and the public events return to normal later in the year.

Services

The Town Council provides and maintains:

- 23 bus shelters throughout the Town
- Over 200 bins
- 130 dedicated seats
- Noticeboards
- 6 play areas at Stobhill, Montrose Garden, Stobhill Manor, Church Walk, Boundary Drive and Carlisle Park
- Paddling pool
- Public toilets
- 5 allotment sites at Middle Greens, Duncan Gardens, Abbots Way, Wellwood Gardens, St Mary's Field. Tommy's Field is owned by the Council but managed by Tommy's Field Allotment Association.

Morpeth Inbloom

The Town Council is the primary sponsor and organiser of Morpeth's entry in the Northumbria in Bloom competitions. Working closely with partners Morpeth and District Chamber of Trade, Sanderson Arcade, Heighley Gate Garden Centre, Northumberland County Council and many voluntary organisations and individuals, we have become a formidable challenge regionally and nationally.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic no competition took place in 2020. The Council did work in partnership with Heighley Gate to plant the formal beds throughout the town as usual. Tribute was paid to the NHS in the main floral bed on Deuchar Park which was well received.



The quantity and quality of planters, hanging baskets and extended sustainable planting ensure the town is beautiful from early spring to late autumn, and our continued commitment to Climate Change remains as dedicated as ever. The number of planters placed on the public highway was reduced to comply with Government guidance on social distancing.

The Town Council was approached by the Rotary Club to plant crocuses to provide a field of hope at Deuchar Park in recognition of all the key workers who have kept our communities going and heroically provided care, services or support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The crocuses will bloom every spring and remind everyone of the sacrifices made by many.

The bulbs were planted by volunteers from the Rotary Club along with MTC and NCC staff. MTC and St James Place Wealth Management paid for the bulbs.



The 2021 competition will go ahead but applications will be virtual and no physical judging will take place.

Morpeth NEAT Team

The Council employ a dedicated team who are responsible for carrying out a grounds maintenance service to Council owned land at regular intervals throughout the year. The team have continued to work throughout the pandemic ensuring that all of the Council's responsibilities have been met. This includes mowing grass within boundaries of the play areas during the growing season; maintaining and strimming verges, cutting hedges, applying herbicide to remove weeds and moss from all play areas as well as maintaining fencing and pathways.

The Morpeth NEAT team also carry out any other additional maintenance/repairs as and when required. Below is some of the work carried out this year.

- Plays areas maintenance/repairs highlighted from Insurance and ROSPA reports;
- Clearing vacant allotment sites;
- Installation of litter bins;
- Maintenance at the Cenotaph;
- Repair and paint walls at Terrace car park toilets;
- General maintenance/repairs at Community centres;
- Installation of seats;
- General maintenance/repairs to Council assets;
- Graffiti removal;
- Cleaning all street furniture;
- Preparation of In Bloom i.e. Planting, weeding, removal of rubbish etc.

- Regular river inspections including monitoring the wildlife any river and other river issues, working closely with the Environment Agency and other relevant organisations.

The team have also taken over the maintenance of the bowling greens and surrounding areas as Carlisle Pavilion became the property of the Town Council on 9th March 2020 following a Community Asset transfer from NCC.

Community Asset Transfer

Storey Park and St James Community Centres are community assets located near the centre of Morpeth, which were leased to Morpeth Town Council. The Bowls Pavilion and surrounding outdoor space in Carlisle Park was managed by Active Northumberland.

All these buildings were owned by NCC, the Town Council has been successful in acquiring the freehold ownership of the Centres, pavilion and the surrounding playing field and outdoor space through a Community Asset Transfer which was completed on the 9th March 2020.

St James Community Centre.

St James Community Centre was in need of substantial remedial building works to bring the building up to standard.

Work commenced in June 2020 to modernised the centre this included the removal of the stage and the backstage storage area, turning it into an additional meeting / community area with interconnecting doors which can be pulled back to expand the overall space. The centre has been totally redeveloped throughout with the installation of new heating, electrics, kitchen, damp proofing and insulation which will help to save energy and reduce the running costs of the building.

A new state of the art sound and vision system has been installed to maximise the potential of the building for the whole community. Work was completed in September 2020, and initial feedback on the refurbishment has been excellent however, the building is currently closed due to the ongoing restrictions.



Main Hall Before



Main Hall Before



Main Hall After



Main Hall After



Main door before



Main door after



Kitchen Before



Kitchen After

Pavilion

The Bowling Pavilion in Carlisle Park was severely underutilised; the only regular visitors were the bowling club for a very limited time in the summer months. The building was dated and required significant refurbishment to bring it up to modern day standards. This was highlighted by Castle Morpeth Borough Council through their Castles, Woods and Water report (circa 2004) which outlined that the facilities needed significant investment over 17 years ago.

The Council's ambition was to have the building remodelled and extended to make use of the riverside views and incorporating a café which would be open all year round. A separate meeting room will be retained, which will be used for a number of different activities. It will also be available for hire to generate income to sustain the building.

The external area will also be upgraded to make the most of the currently underused space. This involves extending the café outside so families and dog walkers can enjoy the facilities

year round. The Council's planning application for the redevelopment was approved on the 10th February 2020.

Work began on the Pavilion in September 2020 after the completion of St James Community Centre. The work has been extensive and has included installing a new roof, heating system, electrics, extending to include a café and external dining area, redesigning and extending changing and toilet facilities as well as adding much needed office and storage space.

The final touches will be added over the coming weeks and the building will be opened once Government restrictions allow.

An application for an alcohol licence in the café has been submitted to NCC and is currently under consideration. This has been possible due to the covenant on the property being removed by the descendants of the Countess of Carlisle who generously gifted the park in 1916 to the Borough of Morpeth.



Before



During



Completed



Before completion



Finished



Before



After

MORPETH TOWN COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR INFORMATION

Morpeth Town Council comprises of fifteen elected members who cover North, Kirkhill and Stobhill wards. The next full Council Elections will take place on 6th May 2021 when all fifteen seats will become available. All information on the election process can be found at <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/elections.aspx>

NORTH WARD



Green Party

Dr Nic Best
57 Olympia Gardens
Morpeth NE61 1JQ
Tel: 01670 517915



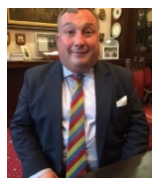
Liberal Democrat

Les Cassie
12 Cottingwood Lane
Morpeth NE61 1DU
Tel: 01670 516424



Liberal Democrat

Richard Thompson
58 Wansdyke
Morpeth NE61 3RA
Tel: 01670 510287



Conservative

David Bawn
31 The Villas, St Mary's
Morpeth NE61 6AT
Mob: 07947248220



Conservative

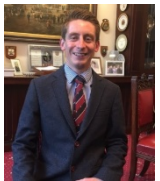
Rachael Hogg
4 Cordwainers
Morpeth NE61 2ZN

KIRKHILL WARD



Conservative

Richard Wearmouth
Barmoor Farmhouse, Barmoor
Morpeth NE61 6LB
Mob: 07808804345



Conservative

Jack Gebhard
1 Sylvan Close
Morpeth NE61 2XU
Mob: 07375646734



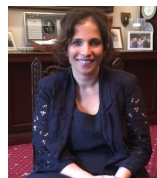
Liberal Democrat

Andrew Tebbutt
15 The Kylins
Morpeth NE61 2DJ
Tel: 01670 511631



Liberal Democrat

Joan Tebbutt
15 The Kylins
Morpeth NE61 2DJ
Tel: 01670 511631



Conservative

Kate Holmes
4 Postern Crescent
Morpeth NE61 2JN
Mob: 07757978518

STOBHILL WARD



Liberal Democrat

Alison Byard
42 Crookham Grove
Morpeth NE61 2XF
Tel: 01670 515391



Conservative

Dave Herne
20 Whiteacres
Morpeth NE61 2UT



Conservative

Johnny Wearmouth
Rose Cottage, Barmoor
Morpeth NE61 6LB
Mob: 07956429942



Conservative

Joao Parreira (known as JP)
33 Green Lane
Morpeth NE61 2HB
Mob: 07930211121



Conservative

Nicola Bawn
31 The Villas, St Mary's
Morpeth NE61 6AT
Mob: 07950580204

Council Attendance 2020/21

During the year, Morpeth Town Council meets regularly. The schedule of meetings is displayed on the Town Hall notice board, the Town Council website and the various notice boards around the town.

Please note that the Councillor Attendance runs from the new Mayoral year in May 2020 through to April 2021. The Table below is up to and including 10th March 2021.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic a number of scheduled meeting did not take place until the Government changed the law to allow Council to meet virtually using technology rather than in person.

All Committees	Full Council	F&GP	P&T	Total No. of Meetings	Meetings Attended	%
	4	8	7			
D Bawn	4	8	4	19	16	84
N Bawn	4		3	11	7	64
N Best	4	7	7	19	18	95
A Byard	4	8	7	19	19	100
L Cassie	1	3		12	4	33
J Gebhard	4		3	11	7	64
D Herne	1	1		12	2	17
R Hogg	4	7		12	11	92
K Holmes	1	1		12	2	17
J Parreira	3			4	3	75
A Tebbutt	3	5	6	19	14	74
J Tebbutt	3		4	11	7	64
R Thompson	1	1		12	2	17
J Wearmouth	2		5	11	7	64
R Wearmouth	4	5		12	9	75

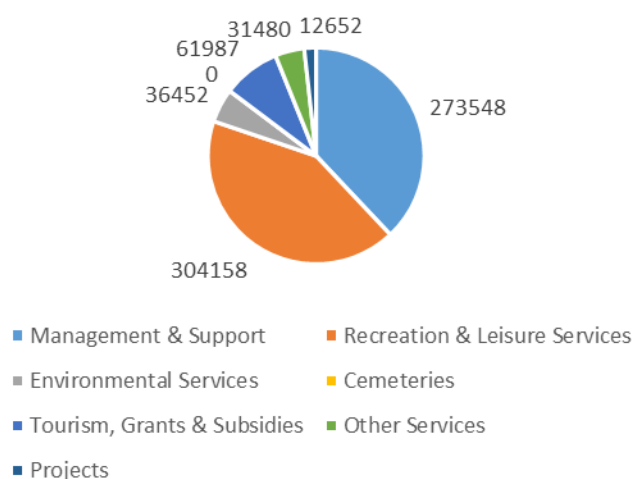
F&GP – Finance and General Purposes, P&T – Planning and Transport

Finance

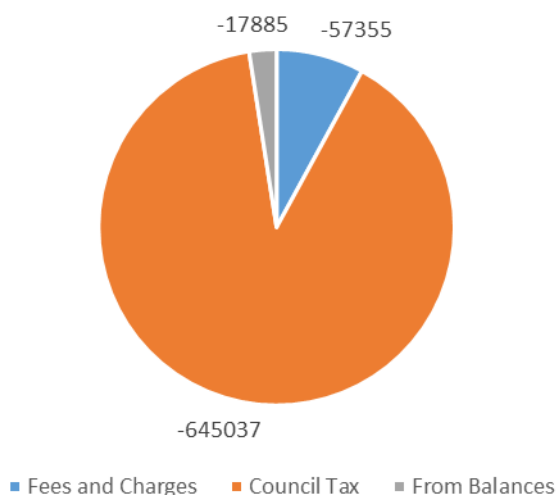
Accounts 2019/20

The Government appointed auditors PKF Littlejohn, carried out the Audit of Accounts, for the year ending 31st March 2020 and issued the Town Council with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit under the Audit Commission Act. This can be found at <https://www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk/town-council-finances/>

Where the money will be spent 2020/21



Where the money will come from in 2020/21



The Town Council Precept which is collected by Northumberland County Council via the Council Tax was £645,037 for 2020/21 equating to £120.32 per year or £2.31 per week for a band D property. The Council precept for 2021/21 will increase to £660,371 which equates to £122.73 per year for a band D property.