



ANNUAL REPORT

2024/2025

CHAIRMAN – Councillor Helen Atkinson

TOWN CLERK/RFO – Miss Dee Smith

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2024/2025 Annual Report of Billingham Town Council which provides a flavour of the many activities, events, achievements, and actions organised or undertaken by Billingham Town Council during 2024/2025. It also gives information about the Town Council and a financial summary report.

Billingham Town Council was established in 2007 and is run by an elected body of fifteen Councillors representing the five electoral wards of the town. The next local elections take place in May 2027. All Town Councillors serve in a voluntary capacity and are elected for a four-year term of office. They are from a variety of backgrounds, sharing their skills and serving on the Council committees to ensure projects are delivered successfully. The Chairman of the Council is elected annually in May at the Annual Meeting of the Council. Details of the electoral wards and individual members for 2024/2025 can be found on page 13 of this report.

A Town Council is the first tier of local Government. Billingham Town Council provides additional services to those provided by Stockton on Tees Borough Council. Billingham Town Council represents the people of the town and assists residents and many more to deal with local issues that affect them. We also work in partnership with Stockton on Tees Borough Council, many local organisations, and groups to deliver services for our residents.

The Town Council is subject to an annual internal and external audit of its finances. The internal audit is currently carried out by Bells Audit Service and the external audit by Mazars. Details and information of audits can be found on the Town Council website.

The Town Council has its own website www.billingham-tc.gov.uk which provides details of meeting dates and times, details of upcoming events and recent publications, there is also a section for agendas and minutes of meetings. Information and links are also available for other Billingham organisations and community associations. The Town Council continues to use Facebook and various noticeboards around the town as a means of reaching the community.

www.facebook.com/BillinghamTownCouncil

<https://www.facebook.com/JWPHUB>

<https://www.facebook.com/LGCommunityCentre>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheBillinghamShow>

PROJECTS, SERVICES & EVENTS FOR 2024/2025

The Town Council collaborates with local community and voluntary groups to host a vibrant array of events and activities that delight both residents and visitors throughout the year.

D-Day 80th Anniversary Commemoration in Billingham - A Day of Remembrance

On Thursday, June 6th, Billingham came together to mark the 80th Anniversary of D-Day with a series of poignant ceremonies across the town. The day began at 8:00am outside Billingham Library & Customer Service Centre, where the Town Crier delivered the official D-Day 80 Proclamation at the flagpole. This was followed at 9:00am by a solemn ceremony where Billingham Town Council joined communities nationwide in raising the 'Flag of Peace' and laying a commemorative wreath.

As evening fell, John Whitehead Park hosted a special performance by the Billingham Silver Band from 8:00pm to 8:45pm, filling the air with music of remembrance and reflection. The day's events culminated at 9:15pm with the D-Day 80th Anniversary Beacon Lighting Ceremony, where Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Durham, Mr. Mark White CBE, had the honour of lighting the beacon while The International Tribute was conducted.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this important day of remembrance, honouring the sacrifice and courage shown 80 years ago on the beaches of Normandy.



Funday Fridays

Funday Fridays have become a beloved summer tradition at Cafe in the Park since their launch in 2022. These community gatherings bring our community together for free family entertainment throughout the summer holidays. The 2024 season continued this successful tradition, offering an exciting array of activities including bouncy castles, arts and crafts, treasure hunts, outdoor games, and much more – all completely free for families to enjoy!.



Billingham Show 2024

The Billingham Show returned for 2024, continuing its tradition as one of the area's premier community events. This beloved annual gathering brought together local residents and visitors for a weekend filled with attractions, entertainment, and activities for all ages.



Halloween at Café In the Park



Café in the Park hosted a spooktacular Halloween celebration that brought the community together in seasonal spirit. Families embraced the tradition, arriving in creative costumes while being greeted by the café's haunting decorations. Visitors

enjoyed an array of complimentary activities designed for all ages, making for a memorable and festive experience filled with tricks, treats, and plenty of Halloween cheer.

Billingham Remembrance Sunday 2024

Billingham Town Council worked in partnership with the Royal British Legion to deliver the annual Remembrance Parade and Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph on Station Road for Remembrance Sunday. This year's solemn observance took place on Sunday, 10th November.

The parade assembled in the car park of the Salutation Public House on West Road from 10am, before setting off at 10:30am. Participants marched to the Cenotaph on Station Road where a service began at 10:50am, followed by the laying of wreaths. The parade then proceeded back to the Salutation, concluding at approximately 11:30am.

Later that day, a short service was held at the Port Clarence Road Cenotaph at 1:30pm, which was also followed by the laying of wreaths.

The day provided an opportunity for the Billingham community to come together to remember and honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country.



Christmas 2024

Our annual Christmas Tree Lights Switch On event in the Town Centre took place on Saturday, November 30th, 3pm to 5pm.

The talented trio from Hartlepool-based band Pink Lemonade provided live music. And Billingham's beloved Town Crier was on hand for the perfect photo opportunity.

The wonderful Singing Sue's Vocal Academy Official filled the air with festive songs around the Christmas tree. And special guests from this year's panto at Billingham Forum made an appearance!



Ve Day – 80th Anniversary 8 May 2025



On Thursday 8th May 2025, the Town Council will be joining in the nationwide VE Day 80 celebrations.

The festivities begin outside Billingham Library where the Town Crier will read the VE Day Proclamation just before 9am and the VE Day flag will be raised.

Later in the day, from 6pm, entertainment and activities will take place in John Whitehead Park, culminating in the lighting of the commemorative beacon at 9.30pm.

OYEZ OYEZ OYEZ

It's been another busy year for the Town Crier, who has proudly represented the Council and our town at numerous community events. Highlights included speaking at Wolviston Village Hall for the Wolviston Women's Institute, participating in The Billingham Show, supporting the Poppy Appeal Launch, attending Remembrance Sunday ceremonies, and the festive Christmas lights switch-on. Looking ahead to 2025, the Town Crier has a full calendar of engagements including the VE Day Anniversary, Folklore Festival, VJ Day Anniversary celebrations, and many more community gatherings.

The Town Crier is a member of The Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers.

To find out what the Town Crier has been up follow Joe's blog: **billinghamtowncrier.com**



If you would like to book the Town Crier for any events in Billingham, please contact the Town Council office.



Café in the Park & Community Hub

From Monday, 14th April, we'll be open from 9.30am to 4pm Monday to Friday. Located in John Whitehead Park, Billingham. Our expanded hours mean more time to enjoy fresh, made-to-order food and delicious treats, hot and cold drinks, and a delightful afternoon tea (advance booking required). Our dog-friendly venue features a children's play area and a selection of books, magazines, and puzzles for your enjoyment. We're more than just a café – we're a vibrant community hub hosting local support and interest groups, including well-being support, games club, art groups, walking groups, and carers support. As part of the 'Chatty Cafe' scheme, we're dedicated to reducing loneliness and bringing people together. Our friendly team welcomes everyone – so come enjoy a cuppa, meet new friends, or simply relax and make yourself at home!

Community Hub

Our Community Hub is a vibrant gathering space hosting a diverse range of local groups that meet weekly, including:

- Pantry in the Park
- Art Club
- Teacups & Toddlers
- Well Being Group
- Bored Games Club

These community organisations bring life, connection, and support to our local residents, creating opportunities for social interaction, creativity, and mutual support.



Pantry in the Park



The pantry is open every Monday between 9.30am to 11.30pm and offers ten nonperishable items, including toiletries for £2.00. Free fresh fruit and vegetables are offered. Attendees of the pantry also receive a complimentary soup and sandwich to takeaway.

Low Grange Community Centre, Billingham

On August 12th, 2024, Billingham Town Council proudly assumed day-to-day management of Low Grange Community Centre. We're



thrilled to embark on this new chapter in service to our community. Low Grange Community Centre offers a wealth of resources and opportunities for Billingham residents, including versatile spaces available for hire to accommodate a wide range of needs. For complete details on room bookings and services, please visit the Billingham Town Council website:

www.billingham-tc.gov.uk/council-services/low-grange-community-centre/



ASPIRE
JUDO

Saturday Sessions
Low Grange Community Centre,
Billingham, TS23 3PF


9.15am - Age 4-7 years


10am - Age 8-10 years

10.45am - Age 10 & over

Start your journey with a complimentary first lesson. Upon enrollment, you'll also receive a free judo kit to kickstart your training!





FOLLOW US 

FITNESS, MOVEMENT & DANCE CLASS

EVERY MONDAY
FROM 1PM to 2PM

£4 PER SESSION

JUST TURN UP

LOW GRANGE COMMUNITY CENTRE, BILLINGHAM TS23 3PF

TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Full Council

Chairman: Cllr Helen Atkinson

Vice Chairman: Michelle Bendelow

Decisions about Town Council business are taken at formal meetings of the Council. The Town Council has Standing Orders which act as the written rules of the Council and set out the Council's internal organisation, administrative procedures and procedural matters for meetings.



Business discussed at Town Council Meetings is primarily of local importance but sometimes can include discussions on issues which are regional or national importance. Whilst some responsibilities are outside the jurisdiction of the Town Council, the Council closely monitors and discusses the activities of Stockton on Tees Borough Council and highlight issues and concerns on behalf of local residents.

Meetings are open to the public and press who are entitled to report on anything said in open debate.

Full Town Council meetings are usually held bi-monthly except Summer Recess in August.

Meeting dates are set at the beginning of each calendar year and can be found on the Town Council website.

In addition to full Council meetings, some of the work of the Town Council is delegated to committees. During 2024/2025 the Town Council has the following committees that meet monthly:

Services & Engagement Committee

Chairman: Cllr Mick Stoker

Vice Chairman: Cllr Gareth Hedley

This committee monitors the operation of Town Council services and amenities, projects and community activities, ensuring a high standard of provision. It considers their further development and the development of other facilities to improve the overall wellbeing of the residents of Billingham and reduce current health inequalities.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Chairman: Cllr Jim Scollen

Vice Chairman: Cllr Guy Snead

This committee is responsible for the overall financial security of the Council, setting the precept, creating and monitoring the annual budget.

In addition, this committee reviews business contracts and service level agreements, allocates grant funding and ensures that the Town Council's strategies, policies and procedures are undertaken in accordance with statutory and legislative requirements.

Furthermore, there are various Sub Committees such as Staffing, which meet when required.

The Town Council is a consultee on all planning applications submitted to Stockton on Tees Borough Council for Billingham. This means that the Town Council has the opportunity to support or object to any application submitted from within the Town. During 2024/2025 there were 122 applications considered by the Town Council.

GRANTS, SUBSIDIES & SPONSORSHIP

Billingham Town Council is committed to supporting and strengthening the many networks and community groups that help to make a positive difference to the local area. Through its annual grant, subsidies and sponsorship schemes, the Town Council was able to support a number of local organisations and projects during 2024/2025.

Grants Awarded 2024/2025

Billingham Town Football Club
Art 4 Fun/Wellbeing Group
Mums in Recovery Support Group
Billingham The Station Veterans Football Club
Billingham Town Association Football Club
Iron Guidance
Time for Thomas
Tees Active Ltd

Subsidies Awarded 2024-2027

BCT Aspire
Billingham Boxing Academy
Purple Door Studio CIC

Sponsorship Awarded 2024/2025

Elite Strongman Promotions – £3000
Billingham Synthonia Cricket Club – £5000
Billingham Stars/Billingham Ice Hockey – £10000
Billingham Boxing Academy – £4000
Volunteering Matters - £4000

The Council looks forward to receiving applications from community organisations which are able to demonstrate a clear need for financial support and which contribute towards improving the lives of local residents. Further information regarding the grant, subsidies and sponsorship schemes and application forms can be found on the website:

www.billingham-tc.gov.uk/the-council/

COUNCILLOR INFORMATION

The last full Council election was held in May 2023 and the following Councillors were elected or have since been co-opted to represent one of the five wards for Billingham for the 2023/2027 term of office:

Ward	Name	Email
Billingham Central	Gareth Hedley	gareth.hedley@billingham-tc.gov.uk
	Gina McCall	gina.mccall@ billingham-tc.gov.uk
	Ann McCoy	ann.mccoy@ billingham-tc.gov.uk
Billingham East	Michelle Bendelow	michelle.bendelow@ billingham-tc.gov.uk
	Daniel Forrest	daniel.forrest@ billingham-tc.gov.uk
	Mick Stoker	mick.stoker@ billingham-tc.gov.uk
Billingham North	Clare Besford	clare.besford@ billingham-tc.gov.uk
	Colin Leckonby	colin.leckonby@ billingham-tc.gov.uk
	Marc Besford	marc.besford@ billingham-tc.gov.uk
Billingham South	Adam Gilburt	adam.gilburt@billingham-tc.gov.uk
	Jim Scollen	jim.scollen@billingham-tc.gov.uk
	Maria Lacey	maria.lacey@ billingham-tc.gov.uk
	Janet Atkin	janet.atkin@billingham-tc.gov.uk
Billingham West	Helen Atkinson	helen.atkinson@billingham-tc.gov.uk
	Guy Snead	guy.snead@ billingham-tc.gov.uk

Meet Your Billingham Town Councillor

An opportunity for you to connect with your Billingham Town Councillors.

Each month, they will be available for discussions at Billingham Library & Customer Service Centre on the last Thursday, from 11am to 1pm.

This is a great chance to ask questions, share your thoughts, and engage with local issues that matter to you.

Whether you have specific concerns or just want to learn more about what the Town Council is doing, your councillors are eager to hear from you.

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE 2025/2026

During the year, Billingham Town Council meet regularly. The schedule of meetings is available on the Town Council website and various noticeboards around the town.

Please note that councillor attendance runs from May through to April.

COUNCILLOR	TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS	MEETINGS ATTENDED	OVERALL %
J ATKIN	2	2	100
H ATKINSON	27	27	100
M BENDELOW	20	17	85
M BESFORD	15	10	67
D FORREST	16	4	25
C BESFORD	15	9	60
A GILBURT	15	15	100
G HEDLEY	16	9	56
M LACEY	16	9	56
C LECKONBY	15	12	80
G MCCALL	15	11	73
A MCCOY	15	11	73
J SCOLLEN	19	11	58
M SHOTTON	8	1	12
G SNEAD	15	11	73
M STOKER	16	14	88

Attendance is not an indication of performance.

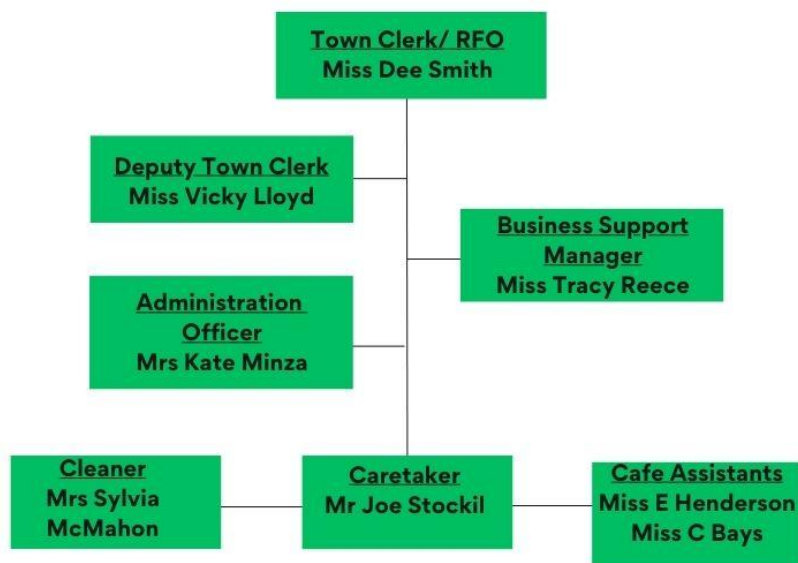
STAFFING

Town Council Staff

The Town Councils affairs are administered by an appointed Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer, who is supported by the Deputy Town Clerk, Business Support Manager, and Administration Officer. The Town Council also employs a Caretaker, Cleaner (at Low Grange Community Centre) and two Café Assistants at the Café in the Park.

The Town Clerk is an advisor to the Council on matters of strategy and policy and is responsible for supporting the Council to fulfil its legal, statutory and financial obligations.

The Town Clerk reports to the Council on a regular basis and ensures that the instructions of the Council, in connection with its functions, are carried out. The Town Clerk is accountable to the Council for the effective management of its assets, services and human resources.



FINANCE

The financial year of Billingham Town Council begins on 1st April and ends on 31st March the following year. Each November, the Town Council plans ahead and sets a budget to determine the sum it needs to provide services and deliver projects and events for the next financial year.

The tax is collected on our behalf from the residential properties within the town wards by Stockton on Tees Borough Council as part of Council Tax. This money is known as the Precept. There is no other form of statutory income for the Town Council.

In addition to the annual precept, the Town Council also pursues grant funding and sponsorship opportunities to fund some aspects of its work.

The Council's precept for the financial year 2024/2025 was £357,710.00, which was equivalent to £37.32 on the average Band D property.

Expenditure 2025/2026

The Town Council delivers a wide range of services and community projects for the benefit of local residents. The Council's total expenditure for 2024/2025 was £348,354.00 however some of the projects outlined in this report extend over more than one financial year, therefore some costs will be reflected in the financial accounts for other years.

Reserves

The Town Council holds ring-fenced funds for specific future projects known as 'Earmarked Reserves,' and these are reviewed regularly to ensure adequate provisions are in place. The Town Council held Earmarked Reserves of £157,292.03 at the end of 2024/2025.

It is good practice for a Town Council to hold general reserves of between 3-12 months operating costs. The Joint Panel on Accountability & Governance (JPAG) (March 2020 edition) advises "The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a Smaller Authority's General Reserves is that this should be maintained at between three & twelve months net revenue expenditure".

CONTACT BILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL



We would like to hear from you.

Billingham Town Council welcomes views from local residents and people working within the wards, on any aspect of life in the area.

If you would like to discuss this report or raise any concerns or suggestions, please contact your local Town Councillor or the Town Clerk at:

**Billingham Town Council
Billingham Library & Customer Service Centre
Billingham
TS23 2LN**

Office opening hours are 9am-4pm (Monday to Friday)

Telephone Number: 01642 551171

Email address: info@billingham-tc.gov.uk

Website: www.billingham-tc.gov.uk

Keep up to date with Council Business

Did you know that residents can attend Town Council meetings as they happen? Members of the public also have an opportunity to ask questions at a Full Town Council meeting.

Agendas for meetings are available at least three clear working days before a meeting and minutes of meetings are published regularly.