

Spennymoor Town Council

Annual Report 2022/23



Town Mayor, Cllr Dean Ranyard

It has been an honour and a privilege to represent Spennymoor and the Town Council within our fantastic communities and further afield as your Mayor for the 2022/23 civic year.

The role enabled me to visit communities, residents, schools and all kinds of organisations; not to mention represent Spennymoor and tell everyone how great our town is at civic events from Northumberland to Teesside and everywhere in between.

The year brought history-defining moments like the Platinum Jubilee, followed by Her Majesty's passing in September. Delivering the proclamation in Jubilee Park, announcing the passing of the only monarch most of us ever knew and the accession of the new King was a poignant and emotional moment that will stay with me forever.

It has been joyous to see Town Council events come back following the pandemic. All were hugely successful and well-attended, from Party in the Park to the Fireworks display, culminating in the big picnic in the park to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

These events are valuable with many finding it difficult in the cost of living crisis. I'm proud the Council provides grants for local groups. Indeed, for the first time operating a "Warm Hub", with grants available for other town hubs, as people cope with rising energy bills.

High costs are affecting us all, but the Council works to keep its precept increase well below the rate of inflation, while maintaining its range of community services.

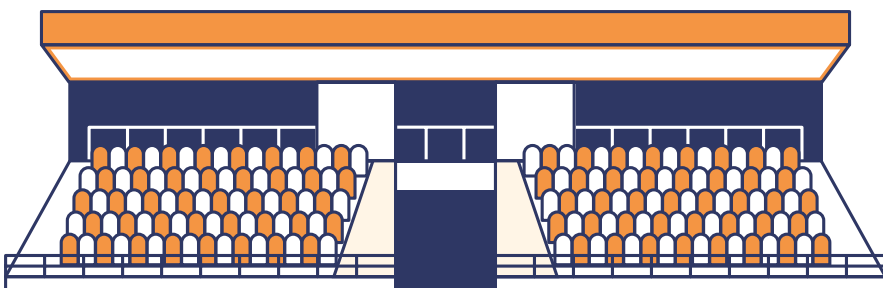


A huge thanks to everyone who supported the Mayor's Charity Appeal at events and fundraisers. It was amazing working alongside ManHealth and Moors in the Community, promoting their causes and watching their development. The final amount raised is £9,118.74, which we'll split equally between the causes to further their work in our area.

I'd like to thank the Mayoress, Cllr Beckie Calder, for her enormous support to me during the civic year. Thanks also to the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Ian Geldard, for his ongoing encouragement and for stepping in on occasions where I was unavailable.

I hope the next Mayor finds the role as fulfilling and rewarding as I have.

Cllr Dean Ranyard
Spennymoor Town Mayor 22/23



FINANCE

Spennymoor Town Council makes a priority of delivering events and services, along with protecting, supporting, and enhancing community facilities and open spaces.

We create policies and services that enhance the lives and wellbeing of residents and visitors, achieving this through direct delivery and stakeholder/partner engagement across our wide range of facilities.

The Council values the commitment of voluntary groups and others who support and enhance our communities. To support this outstanding work, we provide community grants, enabling people to make a difference, and ad-hoc grants to support things like the Queen's Jubilee and Warm Rooms.

The Town Council requires an appropriate budget to operate effectively. The past two financial years have been challenging for households, businesses, and local authorities, and we anticipate this will continue, creating financial pressures for us all in the coming year.

As such, we delivered a budget, minimising cost to the taxpayer, while enabling you to receive the quality services you deserve.

PRECEPT

Despite the economic climate, the Council kept the precept to a well below inflation 4.5% increase.

Where does the majority of the Council's budget come from?

- **£1,488,159.06** – Annual Precept
- **£171,250** – Income from Durham Crematorium

(Council investment in Durham Crematorium ensures an annual dividend.)

WHAT YOU RECEIVE

The Town Council provides community facilities at the lowest cost possible, or even free, while providing facilities and services that communities want and value. Our aim is to ensure that through community activity and engagement we bring people closer, help increase participation and reduce isolation, improving health and wellbeing and having as little impact as possible on you financially.

For example, events like Fireworks Display, Party in the Park, Armed Forces Day, and Santa (with a gift for each child) are all free. Facilities in Jubilee Park are free during school holidays, as are pitches used by local football teams. Residents pay half the cost for cemetery fees, and we continue to support Spennymoor Town Band and Durham Mining Museum with free accommodation.



EVENTS

Following the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, 22/23 marked the return of several much-loved and valued community events, including:

- Town Quiz
- Beacon Lighting
- Armed Forces Day
- Mayor at Home
- Party in the Park
- Town Show Benching
- Town Show
- Civic Service
- War Memorial Centenary Exhibition
- Fireworks
- Armistice Day
- Remembrance Service
- Christmas Tree Lights Switch on
- Civic Dinner
- Carol Service
- Young People's Awards



COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Council provides several community grants to support groups and charities, help aid participation in sporting and cultural events and, this year, to help people stay warm.

The Council has a Community Grants Policy. In 2022/23 these are some of the grants that were awarded:

- £500 – Friends of St Peter’s Church, Byers Green
- £200 – William Burleigh, Chi Taekwondo
- £500 – Byers Green Community Leek Club
- £400 – Spennymoor Town Walking Club
- £500 – Kirk Merrington Primary School
- £200 – Poppy Wickens, Chi Taekwondo
- £500 – Spennymoor Town Ladies FC
- £200 – O’Hehir School of Irish Dance
- £14,500 – Spennymoor Town Gala Committee

Warm Room Grants:

- £400 – Solan Connor Fawcett
- £400 – Spennymoor Community Youth Association
- £400 – Tudhoe Community Centre
- £400 – St Paul’s Centre
- £400 – Moors in the Community
- £400 – Spennymoor Workingmen’s Club

Annually awarded grants – no application required:

- £1,000 – Spennymoor Town Band
- £1,000 – Star Fundraising, Carlisle trip
- £1,000 – Kirk Merrington Aged People’s Fund
- £1,000 – Byers Green Community Event
- £2,000 – Spennymoor/Tudhoe Senior Citizens trip



PROJECTS

Spennymoor Town Council works hard to continually drive improvements, to ourselves, our services and our town.

In the past year, we have developed a new Allotment Strategy and Tenancy Agreement. This will drive improvements across the allotment sites and ensure consistency from a monitoring and inspection perspective. This was done following significant consultation with users and stakeholders.

The Spennymoor War Memorial in the Town Centre has been refurbished as we marked its 100th Anniversary. The monument was cleaned, stonework repaired, and its metal railings refurbished and painted.



Queen's Jubilee Trees was planted in Jubilee Park to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

We also undertook significant emergency repair work at Tudhoe Cricket Club, fixing stanchion stands and completing netting works.

The Council agreed to fund feasibility study for future solar projects on council buildings. We also committed to enhancing and promoting our many open spaces, as we strive to deliver the Council's Environmental Agenda.

A play area "surfaces review" was undertaken across the parish. The "wetpour" surface areas of some of our play areas, which provide a soft covering in playgrounds, were renewed and our play areas continue to be regularly inspected and assessed to ensure the safety of our youngsters.

All Town Council buildings have undertaken a fixed electrical testing inspection, which is now in place for the next five years to ensure compliance.

Work continues with Spennymoor Cricket Club with much-anticipated completion of the new community pavilion for the start of the new season. The old pavilion was destroyed in an arson attack, but Spennymoor Town Council and Sport England and other stakeholders have helped fund the construction of the new building.

The Council has approved work and appointed specialists to undertake essential repairs and maintenance to the Town Hall Clocktower.



We are also supporting improvements to a public right of way through the Cow Plantation Nature Reserve, helping open-up this fantastic natural resource to our communities.

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

Spennymoor Town Council is proud to recognise those community heroes, talented individuals and downright good eggs who make such a difference.

As such, we issued a number of scrolls of honour to community champions for their amazing contribution to the town.

We also welcomed the return of the Young People's Awards 2023 – a chance to celebrate the achievements and contributions of youngsters across the parish who are dedicated to their arts, sports, communities, and schools.



BOB ABLEY ART GALLERY

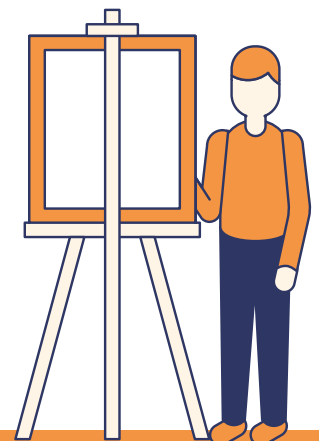
It has been a fantastic year for the gallery, which continues to attract art lovers and inspire new generations of Norman Cornish enthusiasts.



The gallery continues to display, promote, and champion social history, modern and contemporary art through regional magazines and our own digital channels.

The number of school visits doubled in 22/23, with youngsters now studying mining as part of their history lessons in school and covering the work by Norman Cornish as part of the school art curriculum. Resulting in more young people than ever before experiencing the fantastic art on display in the Town Hall.

Another three volunteers have joined us, bolstering gallery's roster, and one of our committed volunteers, Cesar Lengua, has delivered an incredible study into data from the many visitors books the gallery has had over the years. He collected, complied and analysed comments on the work of Norman Cornish, examining the perceptions and emotional reactions to his work overtime, and charting the many nationalities of people who have come through the gallery doors.



COMMS

COMMS STRATEGY

Spennymoor Town Council has adopted a new Comms Strategy to help us tell people across our communities and outside the town why Spennymoor is such a great place to live, work and visit.

While we know we are not perfect, we are working hard to improve the quality and regularity of our social media content, issue media releases about the successes and achievements in the parish and better champion our community heroes.

WEBSITE

The Council has delivered a new website, that is not only easier to navigate, but also enhances accessibility, with browsers able to change the colour, font size, language and even hear what is on the page.

The site is a “live document”, so it is constantly being updated and enhanced with the aim of becoming the digital hub of Spennymoor Town Council activity.

