

Sedgefield Town Council - Action Plan 2024/25



Sedgefield
Town Council

During the financial year 2024/25, Sedgefield Town Council will undertake the following actions:

Administrative	AD
Open Spaces/Environment	OS/E
Community Services	CS
Community Engagement	CE

Key	Action	Timescale	Notes
AD	Meet as Full Council 11 times per year	Ongoing	
AD	To consider all planning applications which fall within, and impact upon, the Parish of Sedgefield	Ongoing	Planning considered at Monthly Meetings.
AD	To operate an effective and efficient Committee System to deal with issues relating to Policy & Resources, Community Development & Engagement, Environment and Personnel	Ongoing	
OS/E	To maintain the areas of open space for which it is responsible including village greens	Ongoing	Village Green Policy adopted on June 2024. Displayed on website. Due for review June 2026.
CS/OS	To maintain and operate Sedgefield Cemetery	Ongoing	Butterwick Road Cemetery Rules and Regulations adopted in March 2024. Displayed on website. Due for review in February 2025. Headstone safety testing completed in November/December 2024 and findings to be reported to Council in February 2025.
CS	To maintain and operate Sedgefield Parish Hall	Ongoing	Parish Hall User Policy adopted in March 2024. Displayed on website. Policy reviewed in January 2025

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			and to be published on 1 st April 2025 with 2025/26 fees. Next Parish Hall User Forum meeting due February 2025.
AD	To continuously review the effective use of all Council assets	Ongoing	Next Ceddesfeld Hall rent review due in accordance with lease on 1 st April 2026. All Licences for village green usage up to date.
CE	To ensure the Town Council is represented on the various Committees/Groups within the Parish as requested as well as of those of a wider County Durham and national perspective	Ongoing	Roles to be reviewed at next AGM in May 2025 then website updated.
CE/AD	To listen, investigate and respond to issues identified by the parishioners of Sedgfield and, if appropriate, to signpost to the correct person/organisation for resolution/further progress	Ongoing	
OS/E	To project manage the next phase of the expansion of Butterwick Rd Cemetery as work begins on site.	Spring 2025	Contractors appointed. Financial governance procedures to be agreed in February 2025. Work on-site scheduled to commence 17 th March 2025 for 18 weeks. Monthly Butterwick Road Cemetery Working Group meetings scheduled from February 2025. Reports as required to be presented to P&R Committee until completion on site. Internal Audit for Phase 2 work to be scheduled.
CE	To deliver a varied programme of community events	Ongoing	Annual events include Tub Planting, Fireworks Display, Snow Party, Remembrance Sunday, Mayor's Carol Service, Mayor's Quiz and Coach Trips. Additional events may be hosted by the Mayor of Sedgfield.
AD	To review the running costs of Sedgfield Parish Hall	Ongoing	Scrutiny work undertaken by Town Clerk and the Finance Working Group to review running costs for the hall plus benchmark current hire fees. Options identified and explored. Recommendations prepared

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			for P&R Committee and approved in January 2025 for future hire fees, the introduction of additional fees and the revision of existing processes e.g. creating a new hire fee structure and no longer absorbing PRS/PPL music license costs for Parish Hall users. Promotion work to commence February 2025 for new fees including Parish Hall Users Forum meeting. On-going monitoring of hall income and expenditure.
AD	Ensuring the council has the required, fit for purpose procedures and policies	Ongoing	Policies reviewed systematically by Town Clerk and relevant Working Group/Committees. All non-personnel policies are displayed on the Town Council's website for public viewing. All personnel policies available on Councillor and staff-only password protected area of Town Council website for access 24/7.
AD	To seek Foundation accreditation for the Local Council Award Scheme	Summer 2025	Initial application submitted in October 2024 with revisions and additional supporting material to be submitted when feedback received.
CE	Creation of 'Becoming a Councillor' page	February/March 2025	Website page to be created and promoted prior to local election submissions
CE	Produce 4 editions of Sedgefield Extra per year	Ongoing	2024/25 dates agreed with Sedgefield News and The Print Factory. Proof produced in-house. Content produced by staff with input from Councillors.
AD	Staff Training	Ongoing	To encourage all staff to undertake training relevant to their position. Specific training needs identified during appraisals held in January and throughout year when the Town Clerk is made aware of training opportunities.
CE	Supporting Young People in Sedgefield Parish	Ongoing	Renewal of SLA between STC and SYACA to fund the staffing of Sedgefield Youth Club in Sedgefield Parish Hall, room provided free of charge by STC during term time. To continue to aid in funding applications and

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			provision of non-term time activities. Promote the youth club sessions and achievements through town council's social media.
CS	Festive Lighting Programme	October - January	Christmas light programme in 2023 was a success. New lighting installed in November 2023 ensuring correct supply and compliance with legislation, all working fine. Agreement made at conclusion of 2023 festive lighting programme to switch on the lights between the hours of 3pm and 11pm. 2024 switch on event planned for Saturday 30 th November 2024. Lights to be switched off by no later than 6 th January.
CS	Improving the accessibility of Sedgefield Parish Hall	Ongoing	Work underway to install a new wheelchair lift to the main hall with a contract for annual maintenance. Work to begin in Feb 2025 to increase compatibility of microphones to main hall hearing loop. Full review of accessibility throughout the building in summer 2025. Ongoing dialogue with Parish Hall regular users via the Parish Hall User Forum.
OS/E	Maintain programme of litter picking in Ceddesfeld Grounds and promoting cleanliness in the town.		Donation of new litter picking equipment to Sedgefield Ploggers in February 2025 as a thank you for continued support with post-community event litter picking. To ask if Ploggers litter picks be scheduled after Fireworks and Snow Party and promote their good work in the event publicity. Supplements weekly litter picking work by Town Council staff. Sedgefield In Bloom continue to maintain various areas around the Town and keep them free from litter.
AD	Review The Sedgefield Plan	Ongoing	The Sedgefield Plan (the local neighbourhood plan) was formally made in October 2019 following a public referendum. The Town Council reference this Plan when considering planning applications. The Plan will be

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			reviewed when the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is reviewed.
AD	Strengthen communication with allotment tenants	Ongoing	Continuously seeking and consider feedback from allotment tenants on inspections, evictions and warning procedures.
AD/CS	Work towards easier access to Parish Hall diary and bookings for the public through an online Parish Hall diary system	Autumn 2025	Work to begin to identify suitable third-party websites/software to digitise Parish Hall diary and display availability information on website. This will be the first step towards providing a full online booking system in the future.
CE	Improve engagement opportunities with the community	Ongoing	Seek responses on potential ideas and projects through Sedgefield Extra. Utilise polls and surveys for both casual and official consultation. Council to create and trial a Facebook page in 2025.
CE	To expand social media presence through Facebook	May 2025	Facebook page to be prepared then launched in time for the Town Council's programme of community events starting with tub planting in Summer 2025, using the site to promote events, statements and strengthen communication with the community.
AD/CE	Review of Sedgefield Town Council website – ensure the website is accessible, compliant and up-to-date.	October 2025 for formal review / informal review on-going	Commence annual review of council website through Personnel Committee. Annual analytics report to be presented to council. Website update timetable and goals/actions created. To undertake accessibility checks and subsequent improvements to site.
AD	Complete internal and external audit requirements	Ongoing	2023/24 internal audit programme now complete and has been received by council. AGAR and external audit report received. All 2023/24 accounts documentation including conclusion of audit clearly displayed on website. Internal Auditor appointed on a three year contract. Internal Audit programme agreed at the start

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			of each financial year with inspections and work areas identified.
CE	Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the Year community awards event	January – May	Awards to be presented following the Annual Town Meeting on 13 th May 2025. Award nomination forms amended and distributed in partnership with Sedgefield Development Trust through Sedgefield News. Publicity to begin Feb 2025. Nominations open 17 th February 2025 and close on 28 th March 2025. Judging Panel in April 2025. Certificates and awards to be obtained.
OS/E	Summer bedding programme	December	Town council owned beds and tubs detailed in town council's in-house procedural document. Budget approved for summer bedding. Gardening staff creating bedding plans and liaising with suppliers.
OS/E	Winter bedding programme	July	Town council owned beds and tubs detailed in town council's in-house procedural document. Budget approved for winter bedding. Gardening staff creating bedding plans and liaising with suppliers.
CE/CS	Improve promotion of Sedgefield Parish Hall	Ongoing	Leaflet created and distributed through January 25 edition of Sedgefield News to all residents. Review of Parish Hall User Policy underway to separate rules from promotion and create separate Parish Hall brochure for enquires and online use in 2025. Regular tweets scheduled via X account focussing upon different aspects of the Hall's facilities. Parish Hall Champions appointed by the Town Council.
OS/CE	Promote Active Travel and transport in the town.	Ongoing	Active membership in a multi-agency working group led by DCC to oversee specific projects for Sedgefield to alleviate problems and issues.
CS	Support the sustainability and success of community groups through 'Community Chest' fund	Ongoing	Terms and conditions review and agreed. Fund allowance to be increased from 1 st April 2025. Meetings

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			to be scheduled when multiple donation requests received.
AD	Maximise grant opportunities for council buildings and projects	Ongoing	Member of staff increased working hours in 2024 and taken on funding role.
AD	Modernise and improve efficiency of headstone safety testing and Epataph record keeping	November - December	Investment made in InspectEDGE module of Epataph software. Dedicated compatible tablet used to record headstone safety testing findings then uploaded to system. Findings analysed through software.
OS/CE	Explore opportunities for recycling, promoting sustainability and efficient energy management usage.	Ongoing	Improved usage of recycling bays in cemetery compound to maximise opportunities for composting and chipping materials to be used in cemetery/allotments. Exploring usage of eco-friendly cleaning materials in Town Council offices and Parish Hall. Continuous review of energy management usage via SLA with DCC's Energy Management section. Installation of new LED lighting in the Parish Hall. Loft insulation to be installed in the Town Council offices.

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