

# THE POINT

A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust  
Issue 95



July 2021

## EDITOR'S NOTES

This issue contains a separate piece which are the true reflections of a boy who grew up in Spittal. He wants to remain anonymous, so that's why we have called him *Mr Anonymous*.

**The deadline for consideration of any items for the August issue is Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July.**

## NEWS FROM THE TRUST

This started out as the May newsletter, then June and now it is the July issue. Why have we waited so long to send this issue out? As we explained in the April issue, we gave an update on where we are with trying to save the Berwick United Reformed Church, known to most of us as St Paul's Church, for what we hope will become the 'Spittal Community Centre'. In the update we said that we could not proceed with moving forward with this until we had secured the consent from NCC for the 'Change of Use' of the building. We finally received this at the end of June, but not until the intervention by Georgina Hill, our local NCC Councillor.

We will not be in the position of being able to buy the building outright at this moment, so the Church Synod have kindly agreed to letting us have a lease in which we have the right to buy. This is now being dealt with by our respective legal teams.

We had tried to get the ball rolling to raise the purchase price by submitting the first stage of an application to the National Lottery's Community Fund and we were hoping to be accepted to go on to the final application stage. We hoped too soon! It would appear, although it was not mentioned on their website, that every County has an allocated sum for applications and that Northumberland's had already been allocated. Their money had been taken up by community groups who were already directly supporting those individuals and families that are suffering with the outcomes of the Covid-19 virus. We obviously do not disagree with that, and it has not deterred us from continuing with our efforts.

The previous users of the building, in particular the user groups of the Hall as many of them

have been in there for years, have been waiting patiently for news as to when they can get back in. We keep telling them 'soon' but there is always something that holds us up from getting the keys to open the door for them to get back in. We hope their patience does not run out!

The task of operating the Community Centre is a daunting one for us, but once we have agreed the lease and can open for business, we will be taking our time to adjust to this new venture. We will be looking for more potential users and developing what will be on offer to make the Community Centre a success. We have had some interest already but it is frustrating to keep saying that word 'soon' when asked when they might be able to join our existing user groups.

Spittal Improvement Trust have the prospect of teaming up with the 'November Club' from Morpeth to hold an event on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> August in the park. Who are the November Club you might well ask? They are an award-winning performing arts charity who engage with local communities to create original performances that tell unexpected stories about people and places. They are doing a walking tour entitled 'Walk in Your Shoes', which will be starting on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July in Hexham and ending on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> August with us here in Spittal. They will be bringing together many people and groups in the Berwick area to collate information and stories, which will come together on August 15<sup>th</sup>. More on this will be revealed in the next issue of the newsletter as the project finally takes shape.

*Mike Greener – Secretary SIT*

## GARDENING GROUP

We recently had our second face to face meeting which we held in the park, all socially distanced of course! It was a beautiful afternoon and the park looked glorious and this has not gone unnoticed by many of you, so thank you for all of your kind comments. The gardening teams have been hard at it since getting out to tackle a new gardening year. Members have been sowing seeds at home for



use in the public gardens, annuals bought this year will be mainly geraniums as they are both colourful and need little watering.

The shrubbery in the Middle/West Street garden is slowly taking shape with care taken not to disturb the nesting birds. The rose beds in this garden are looking better but more roses are needed, and the soil needed improving as it was of poor quality. We had to order compost with a soil improver, 4 tons of it, and this was donated by NCC's Tweedmouth Yard. We have decided to restart our monthly gardening get togethers at the shrubbery in Middle Street from Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September and to continue every second Saturday of each month for as long as possible. Confirmation of this will be in the next issue.

The project we undertook on the corner of West Street and Billendean has been completed and has been greatly admired by passers-by. Thanks go to all those that took part and to those that donated to the project, in particular County Councillor Georgina Hill and to Berwick Town Council.

At our two meetings, we were informed that the regional 'Northumbria in Bloom' competition was going ahead this year, with restrictions. We had to submit our information and photos to be included in the submission by the 'Berwick in Bloom' team. In fact one of our members has been asked to take the photos for all of the other areas in Berwick. The judges will be visiting Berwick on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> July.

We have decided to also go ahead again with the Spittal Floral Competition this year. It was very well received last year so we will be sticking to the same format, with a first prize of a £30 Garden Voucher and certificates for deserving participants. Judging will be for the gardens, pots and hanging baskets that are visible to the public, i.e. not back gardens, and it will take place at the end of July.

Lastly, we have decided not to go ahead with this year's 'Afternoon Tea in the Park' in July as it was still uncertain on how things will stand with the Covid virus and our ability to cope with distancing rules. Instead, we will be taking part in the event on Sunday August 15<sup>th</sup> with the November Club as stated in the previous piece from the Trust. There will be various stalls, tombola, and a raffle. Tickets for the raffle are available in the Spittal Food Store.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy the warm weather and the rest of the summer to come.

*Mau Watkins (Chair) - 07748 076527*

## SECRET SPITAL BOOK - WEST 1



Following on from the remarkable success of the 'Secret Spittal East' book, which had covered the east side of Main Street and is still available to purchase, the second book in the series is now available, which is called 'Secret Spittal Book – West 1'. The book is available in the Spittal Food Store and Grieves the Stationers in Berwick. Prices may vary though. If you are living away from Berwick, 'West 1' is available to purchase online at our website [www.spittalisgreat.co.uk](http://www.spittalisgreat.co.uk). Why 'West 1'? Well, it was thought that there would not be enough information for the west side of Main Street as there had been for the east side. Although there were just as many shops etc on the west side, the east side also had the industrial part of Spittal in it. However, so many residents have come forward with information for the west side of the village that it will now be in two books, starting with 'West 1'. Please note though that 'West 2' will not be available for at least a couple of months.

## 1921 CENSUS

The 1921 census, to be released in January 2022, will be the most informative yet for family historians. It was taken on 19 June 1921 and records information on almost 38 million individuals. With the interest that we have had with the 'Secret Spittal' books, we thought it would be a good idea to see how things have changed in Spittal over the past 100 years.

The census is a survey that happens every 10yrs and it gives a picture of the people and households in England and Wales. The last one was conducted in March of this year, but it will not be available for public viewing until 2121. Answers to the 2021 census questions will help local organisations make decisions on planning, transport, education, and healthcare.

To do our own survey, we are asking all current households in Lower Spittal to put the following down on paper:

- The number of adults.
- The occupations, unemployed or retired.
- The number of children.

Note: We do not need any names or addresses.

Please put your answers through the door of 17 Main Street. We will then be able to make a comparison of how Lower Spittal has changed once the 1921 census has been released.

## HERITAGE OPEN DAYS (HOD's)



In 2021 we celebrate 30yrs since our first 'Doors Open' day on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1991, a forerunner to HODS. We were the first town in England to be involved, another first for Berwick!

Building on the success of Berwick's online events last year, we are hoping to run a blended event in 2021, a mixture of online and in person. The online events, talks, quizzes and much more, will run from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, whilst the in-person ones will be held from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September. Any in-person events will be dependent on what Coronavirus regulations are in place at the time. There will be something for all ages and over the next few weeks, we will keep you updated on our plans.

We will be looking for volunteers to help out at the in-person events, especially for the Fishing Shiel here in Spittal. You can contact us via the website or message us through our Facebook page - [www.facebook.com/hodsberwick](http://www.facebook.com/hodsberwick).

Follow us on social media, join our mailing list or visit the website at [www.berwickhods.org.uk](http://www.berwickhods.org.uk). So, save the dates and hopefully we will get to meet some of you in Berwick in September.

*Linda Bankier*

## LOCAL ELECTIONS

Just going back to the elections in May for a moment, I had been standing in as a co-opted Councillor on Berwick Town Councillor after the sudden death of Ivor Dixon. This was only supposed to be a short-term measure, but I decided to stand again, and as there were no other contenders at that time, I automatically became a Councillor for Lower Spittal. There are two positions for Councillor in our Ward, so the second place has been awarded to Janice Bowden, a local resident, who has now been co-opted onto the Council.

Georgina Hill was re-elected in May as the Northumberland County Councillor for Berwick East. Georgina has been very supportive of everything we do here in Spittal, and we look forward to continuing our relationship with her.

Hazel Bettison decided to stand down as our Town Councillor at May's election after fulling that role for 22yrs, both on the old Borough Council and the present Town Council. Hazel also served twice as the Mayor of Berwick. Since May's election, I have been honoured by becoming the Deputy Mayor of Berwick.

*Mike Greener*

## LITTER

We would like to take this opportunity of thanking Cllr Lesley Stephenson for organising to get the litter bin on the corner of the dunes in Sandstell Road car park. Lesley has a particular interest in the environment and has helped with other litter issues that affect wildlife and make a pleasant environment for residents and visitors in the Berwick area.

The number of litter volunteers is slowly growing. Longridge Towers School recently completed a beach clean at Spittal. Local volunteer individuals clean up whilst walking the dog or out for a stroll. The biggest problems in this area are drinks cans, polystyrene takeaway boxes, and items flushed down the loo that should have been binned. Heavy rain causes the sewers to spill into the river and sea bringing wipes, sanitary items and discarded hypodermic needles. Northumbrian Water - "Only toilet paper, pee & poo go down the loo".

If you would like to be a litter volunteer and need gloves and a picker, please contact Raine at email: [letstalkrubbish2@gmail.com](mailto:letstalkrubbish2@gmail.com).

## SPITTAL WAR MEMORIAL

Our War Memorial celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July and to mark the occasion there was a short service of rededication to celebrate this, which was attended by the Mayor of Berwick, Cllr Alan Bowlas, the present Sheriff of Berwick, Canon Alan Hughes, and the Civic Head of Northumberland County Council, Cllr James Ian Hutchinson. The service was conducted by Reverend Rachel Hudson and the piper was Laura Robertson. We could not advertise it too widely due the Covid restrictions at that time, but at least the weather on the day was kind to us.



Back in 1921 the memorial was unveiled by Brigadier R.W. Riddell, O.B.E, attending was the Mayor of Berwick of that time, Alderman Theodore Bolus. The Tweedmouth War Memorial was unveiled in 1920, followed by the one in Spittal in 1921, but the main War Memorial in Berwick was not unveiled until 11<sup>th</sup> November 1923, by Earl Haig.

There are 37 names listed on the memorial for those were lost in World War 1 and just a plaque for those lost in World War 2.

## ST JOHN'S CHURCH

So, the wedding season is under way and on 10<sup>th</sup> July was my first marriage service in the Benefice since arriving as Vicar. Weddings are one of life's great celebrations, with a good meal ( hopefully) and a lot of talking, sharing of memories, and hopes.

Coming to church post lockdown?

You will be very welcome but please continue to wear a mask (unless you are exempt) and maintain social distancing. Some of our congregation are carers for people who are extremely clinical vulnerable, and we want to show our care for them. Once we get to August, we will be able to sing again - wearing our masks.

New – We now have 'Teatime Church' at 4pm every Sunday, outside if possible, for families to worship and grow together.

Anyone is welcome at any of our services, whether you live locally, are a newcomer to the area or are a visitor.

Rev Linda will be taking over many of the services in the next few weeks, and she is available for any other pastoral needs. Rev. Linda's contact details are:  
01289 307466 and [rev.linda@btinternet.com](mailto:rev.linda@btinternet.com)

Every blessing

Rachel

Rev Rachel Hudson

Vicar of Scremerston, Spittal & Tweedmouth.



### A VIEW FROM THE PROM

Talking of seasons, the holiday summer holiday season is well under way now and the beach and Prom are overflowing with visitors who are enjoying

the current spell of good warm weather.

And they are not only the things that are overflowing! It is often said that visitors to our beach do not clean up after their visit and put their rubbish in the refuse bins. In general they do, but as there are not enough bins along the Prom it doesn't take long for the seagulls to distribute the rubbish about the public areas.

This matter has been brought up with NCC and they have now started to make two bin emptying collections a day. So, hopefully that will help to solve the problem, and the seagulls can look elsewhere for their food!

*Beachcomber*

## Berwick Autumn Festivals 2021

**Berwick Food Festival**

4 – 5 September 2021

[berwickfoodandbeerfestival.co.uk](http://berwickfoodandbeerfestival.co.uk)

**Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival**

9 – 12 September 2021

[bfmaf.org](http://bfmaf.org)

**Berwick Heritage Open Days**

17 – 19 September 2021

[berwickhods.org.uk/home](http://berwickhods.org.uk/home)

**Berwick Literary Festival**

14 – 17 October 2021

[berwickliteraryfestival.com](http://berwickliteraryfestival.com)

### And finally....

An iceberg's summer holiday....

A couple of icebergs in Antarctica are best friends. They grew up together and have known each other since they were ice cubes.

One iceberg decides he's tired of all the cold weather, he tells his best friend he's going on a summer holiday for a couple weeks. A couple weeks pass by, and he returns to Antarctica. His best friend immediately takes notice of the amount of weight his friend has lost whilst on holiday.

He says "*You look amazing my friend, you have really slimmed down! Was the holiday everything you thawed it would be?*"

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