

this is **Redcar & Cleveland**

the council magazine for the local community

Issue 60 | Spring 2026



Dive in!

Eston Pool
reopens,
pages 4&5



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SIGN UP FOR YOUR GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION SUBSCRIPTION

www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/garden-waste



- Yes please** ✓
- ✓ Grass cuttings
 - ✓ Hedge clippings
 - ✓ Leaves and twigs
 - ✓ Plants and weeds
 - ✓ Cut flowers

- No thank you** ✗
- ✗ Turf or soil
 - ✗ Large branches / tree trunks
 - ✗ Plastic bags
 - ✗ Food waste

Welcome...

...to the spring edition of the **this is Redcar & Cleveland** magazine



I WOULD like to pay tribute to an amazing achievement by everyone involved in our Children and Families service. It is brilliant news that work to support and protect vulnerable children in our borough was rated as GOOD by Ofsted inspectors for the very first time. So much hard work has gone into this achievement, and my thanks go to all those involved, from Cabinet member for Children, Cllr Bill Suthers, to all the fantastic staff in our Children and Families service. We are legally obliged to provide social care, but doing so accounts for around 65% of the council's total budget. It is

vital that we give children in need the best possible start in life, and I am so pleased that the Ofsted inspectors agreed we are delivering on this. It is fantastic to see major regeneration projects which will improve families' quality of life come to fruition. The new swimming pool in Eston is now open – a superb new facility which offers the main pool, a learner pool and extensive features to make it as inclusive as possible for all residents. Regeneration works on the High Street are nearing completion and a building which will house a new family entertainment attraction and state-of-the-

art library is developing at a pace. Work will also start in Guisborough and on Eston Precinct in the coming months, again providing improved facilities for local communities. We are looking forward to a programme of great events this year and I am delighted that the Festival of Thrift will return to our borough in July. Our events team are also hard at work planning this year's Kite Festival, which attracted around 30,000 visitors to Redcar last year.

Cllr Alec Brown
Leader of the Council

MAKING WAVES:
Celebrations at the official opening of Eston Swimming Pool.
p4&5

Festival of Thrift:
The much-loved festival is returning to the borough this summer.
p13

Mamazing: Meet the new mums campaigning for breastfeeding.
p22&23

Volunteer heroes:
Find out how volunteers are making a difference.
p24&25

this is Redcar & Cleveland is free to residents and if you, or someone you know, doesn't receive a copy please email communications@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk. Also contact the team if you are visually impaired and want the magazine in a different type size. The magazine is printed by Continuous Data Print UK on part-recycled paper and is recyclable. ♻️



OVERJOYED: Maisie Summers-Newton MBE with members of Eston Swimming Club

Family pride

THE family of the very first swimmer at the old Eston Pool received a special photo at the opening event of the new pool.

Norman Spencer, 95, is believed to be the first person to swim at the now demolished previous Eston Pool when it opened in 1960.

Earlier last year he signed a steel beam before it was placed in the structure of the new pool. A framed photograph of that moment was given to his family at the opening ceremony and Norman was described as "a much-loved dad, granddad and friend to many."



Making waves!

Community celebrates as pool opens and swimming returns

A BRAND-NEW chapter for Eston has begun as the community celebrates the long awaited opening of its modern swimming pool.

Residents gathered last month to mark the official unveiling of the new pool at Eston Leisure Centre.

Celebrations included a ribbon cutting ceremony, the burial of time capsules and the first official swim made by Paralympic gold-medallist Maisie Summers-Newton MBE alongside members of Eston Swimming Club.

The swimming pool was funded by the Government, council, and Tees Valley Combined Authority, with Everyone Active appointed as operator.

The modern and fully inclusive swimming facility includes a 25-metre, six-lane pool, a learner pool with sensory lighting and a 150-seat spectator gallery.



GOLD: Maisie Summers-Newton MBE with her Paralympic medals and pictured left with Mayor of Redcar and Cleveland Cllr Ian Hart



WELCOME BACK: Members of Eston Swimming Club enjoying the new facilities



PRIDE: Norman Spencer's family receiving the photo



Eston Precinct

Residents will also soon see real progress at Eston Precinct, with the steel framework for seven brand new retail units coming next.



To book a swimming session, please visit: www.everyoneactive.com/

The changes transforming your borough

Find out about big projects rejuvenating our area

Guisborough

WORK is progressing on major projects designed to make Guisborough more accessible and vibrant.

New route linking Guisborough Town Centre and Guisborough Forest Visitor Centre

THIS project, which started in February, will deliver a new accessible route for walking, cycling, scooting and wheelchair use. Funded by Government, this improved connection will make sustainable travel in and around Guisborough easier for everyone by providing a safer travel route for children to and from school, safer junctions and crossings, and a

better-connected cycle route. In partnership with Tees Valley Combined Authority, the route will later be extended to link through to Nunthorpe, creating a stronger network making it easier for people to get around.



NEW ROUTE: You can walk, cycle, scoot and wheelchair

Guisborough Forest and Walkway Visitor Centre

THE transformation of the Guisborough Forest Visitor Centre is well under way, creating a larger, enhanced café experience, modernised toilet facilities and eco-friendly improvements including air source heat

pumps and solar panels.

This project is all about making people's visit even better, supporting local business, and ensuring this beautiful green space is accessible to everyone. These upgrades will be carried out by contractor Meldrum Group and are funded by Government.

ARTIST IMPRESSION: How the Visitor Centre will look once complete



Town Centre enhancements

WORK by Esh Construction to enhance the town centre is scheduled to start in March. The improvements include:

- Upgraded pavements including a wider pavement on the south side of Westgate
- Fresh street furniture to enhance the town's character
- A new pedestrian crossing near New Road for improved access
- Feature lighting, including tasteful lighting displays and replacing the tree lights, to create a vibrant atmosphere by night

The council is also working with local businesses to support shop frontage improvements in line with heritage standards.



UPGRADE: Goddess Beauty Boutique after grant support



Redcar

The Lookout building

THE Lookout, located on the site of the former Marks and Spencer and Goodwins buildings, will introduce new family activities, cultural spaces and entertainment, and food and drink into the heart of Redcar, alongside a state-of-the-art library and the creation of an attractive new public space. This landmark project, funded by Redcar Town Deal and Tees Valley Combined Authority, will draw people into the town centre year-round. By increasing footfall and providing high-quality indoor attractions, it will strengthen Redcar's visitor economy and support surrounding shops, cafés and local businesses.

The building will also include an internal street linking the Esplanade to a new public square designed for small events, pop-up stalls, workshops, and outdoor performances. Thanks to the creativity of pupils from five local primary schools, it now has a name: The Lookout. The name pays tribute to Redcar's historic Old Lookout on South Terrace, a fisherman's vantage point dating back to 1854.

High Street

GREAT progress continues on Redcar High Street, which has also been funded via Redcar Town Deal and Tees Valley Combined Authority. New planters and trees have been installed as well as larger bins. Some temporary surfaces and minor defects will be put right over the coming weeks, but a full clean is scheduled in March to give its finishing look.

Redcar Central Station

REDCAR Central Station has been brought back to life and is now entering its final stages of restoration.

The council is currently seeking interest from local, independent and community-focused businesses who would like to take space within the regenerated building.

The Grade-II listed station has undergone major conservation work to protect its historic character while preparing it for new uses and the project aims to introduce new leisure and hospitality facilities within the station, creating increased footfall and supporting nearby town centre businesses.

Interest from potential tenants has already begun to grow. The council's priority is to attract local businesses that contribute to the community.

Inside, the building offers flexible, modernised units suitable for a variety of uses. The improvements will help create a more active, welcoming and commercially viable environment.

Local business owners who wish to enquire about available space or submit an offer can contact harland.deer@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



PROGRESS: Redcar High Street

SAVED: Redcar Central Station





FAMILY TIME: John spending some quality time with his grandson

Homes for children

VULNERABLE children and young people will be given the best possible care in new 'family' homes in your borough.

The council is planning to develop the homes for children and young people who are in our care.

The children living in these homes need loving care and support, just like our children who live with foster carers receive. They will receive this from a dedicated team of carers in each home.

It will mean our children live in an area they are familiar with – close to friends and their school.

The principle of caring for a small number of children in a 'family' home has already proven successful at Church View in Kirkleatham. Inspectors from the regulatory body Ofsted praised council staff for building trust with children and keeping them secure and safe.

Other houses suitable for family living have now been identified and council staff have started to meet with neighbours to explain how they will look after the children.

Danielle Swainston, Executive Director for Children and Families at the council, said: "The homes will mirror family life and will be for between one and four children. The feedback from neighbours of homes we have proposed so far has been positive – they appreciate our efforts to replicate family life and that we are prioritising the care of our children. Children who need to be cared for by the council have had a very tough start in life, but with initiatives like this, they flourish."

From survivor to campaigner

A FORMER smoker who suffered a sudden heart attack at the age of just 48 is joining calls across the region encouraging people to quit.

John Stephenson, 50, a father and grandfather, was at work in February 2023 when he suffered chest pains. He was rushed to hospital and told he was having a massive heart attack. John underwent surgery to have three stents fitted and afterwards the doctors told him it had been touch and go.

John, who works in public health in Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough helping people to quit smoking, explained: "On the day it happened I kept getting terrible chest pains and the doctor came in and said you're having a massive heart attack. Smoking was making every organ, including my heart, work much harder."

"I remember saying to him, 'am I going to be all right?' He just looked at me and said, 'I can't say, I can't promise you that'. When my wife and mam came in to see me, the colour drained from them, and it was like I was watching them being told I was already dead."

"All I could imagine was the impact it was going to have on my kids and grandkids. I needed to be around for my family and I knew I had to quit smoking to live for them."

"I have now been smoke-free for two years and the difference is incredible. I feel healthier and enjoy life again – I'm able to play on the beach with my grandkids."

"My advice for anyone trying to quit smoking is if you don't succeed, treat it as a blip, not a failure. Each time is different, and you can try something else. Try again and you will get there."

South Tees Stop Smoking service: Phone: 01642727579
Email: StopSmoking@middlesbrough.gov.uk
Find out more: Additional advice and useful tips can also be found at www.freshquit.co.uk/

Foster family open up their home and hearts

A DAD and daughter have shared their experiences of offering a loving home to a foster child.

Rob Smaling explains he and his wife Laura have fostered for six years while also juggling busy working lives and raising two teenage daughters.

"Fostering was something Laura and I had always discussed and when we had our own family we decided to take the plunge," says Rob, a shift worker, sitting beside his 16-year-old daughter, Megan. "It can be a struggle sometimes juggling the demands of work and running around after the children. But it's the smallest things that make the biggest difference. The children slowly transform in front of you day-by-day. You

Get in touch

If you think you can make a difference to the life of a young person please contact the fostering team:

Phone: 0800 917 7771 or contact@fosterwithnortheast.org.uk
Find out more: www.fosterwithnortheast.org.uk

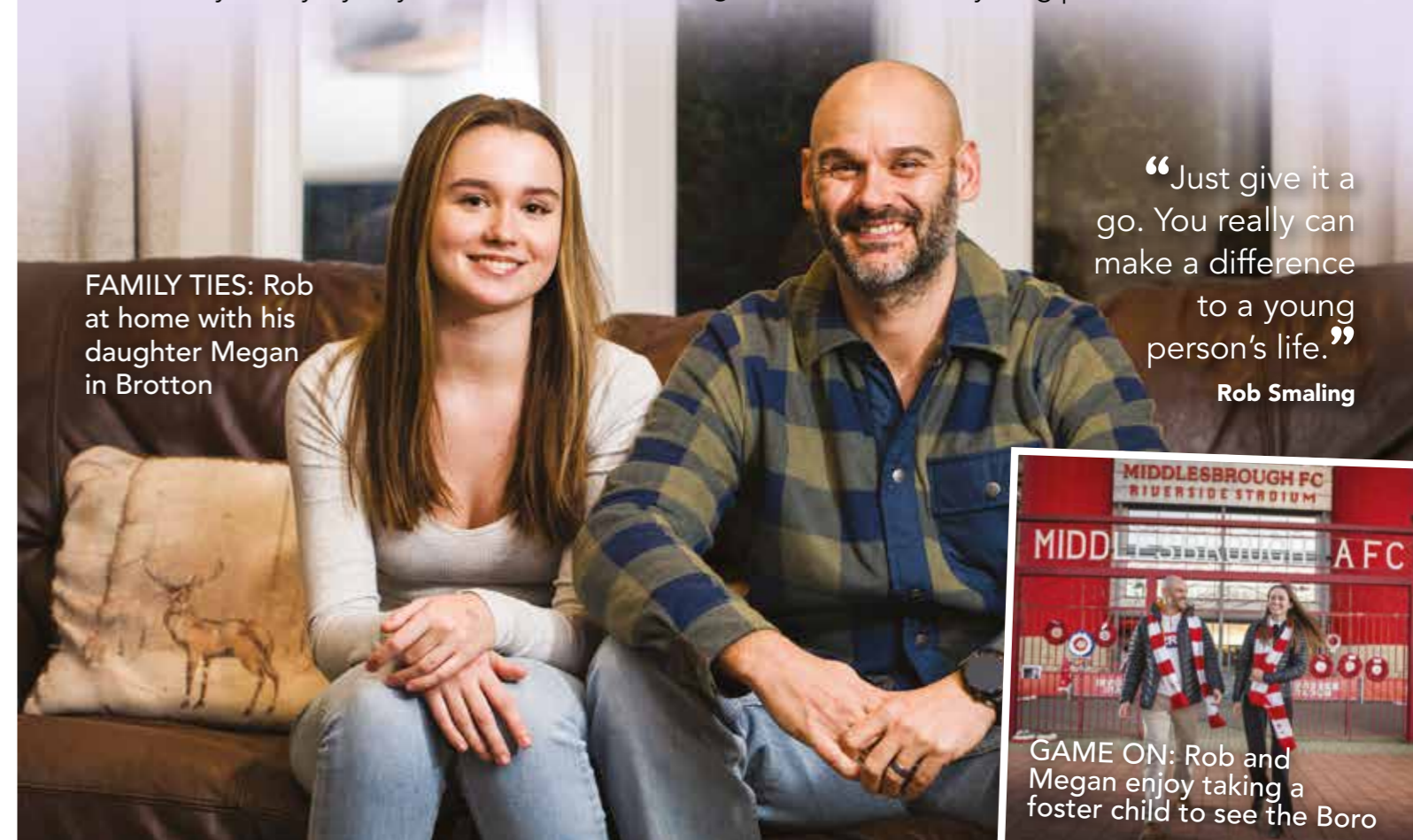
Foster with
NORTH EAST

don't always notice it yourself, but when someone else tells you how much they have developed and improved, it's incredibly rewarding. Sometimes we can feel a bit isolated, but when things get tough you need to take a step back and remind yourself why you are doing it."

For Megan, fostering has been a positive experience. "I really like it," she says, adding that she enjoys going to Middlesbrough FC matches

with one of the fostered children and her dad. "They appreciate you more than you think, and it makes my days better having them around. I enjoy seeing the children we foster slowly develop and become part of the family. Their faces get happier."

When asked what advice he'd give to someone thinking about becoming a foster carer, Rob is clear: "Just give it a go. You really can make a difference to a young person's life."



FAMILY TIES: Rob at home with his daughter Megan in Brotton

"Just give it a go. You really can make a difference to a young person's life."

Rob Smaling

GAME ON: Rob and Megan enjoy taking a foster child to see the Boro

Your new food waste recycling collection service

As part of government plans to improve recycling and lower greenhouse gases, all councils in England must offer a weekly food waste collection service from all households.

Over the coming weeks we will deliver two new containers to your home with instructions on how to use them. All you need to do is empty any food waste, such as plate scrapings, peelings and teabags into the new kitchen caddy. When your caddy is full, empty it into your new outside food waste container ready for collection.

Recycling your food waste will help to increase the amount of waste that is recycled by the residents of Redcar and Cleveland.

Start of the service

Rollout and collections will be staggered from the end of March until the beginning of June, find out your specific dates here: www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/food-waste We will collect your food waste weekly, usually on the same day as we collect your other waste and recycling.



What we will provide:

To enable you to recycle your food waste easily we will provide you with:



5L kitchen caddy



A roll of compostable liners to line the caddy



A 23L outside food waste recycling container which we will empty weekly



Top tip

For tips and recipes to help you waste less food and save money, visit lovefoodhatewaste.com

New food waste vehicles

Before they could hit the roads to collect food waste across the borough, our new food waste vehicles paid visits to some of

our schools, giving pupils the chance to have a look inside, see it in action and ask about food waste.



SCHOOL VISIT: Year 1 pupils from Errington Primary School in front of a food waste vehicle.

What foods can I recycle?

✓ Yes please



food waste

✓ All uneaten food and plate scrapings



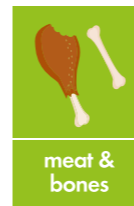
dairy

✓ Dairy products
✓ Cheese
✓ Eggs



bread & pastries

✓ Bread
✓ Cakes
✓ Pastries



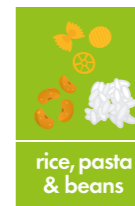
meat & bones

✓ Raw meat
✓ Cooked meat
✓ Bones



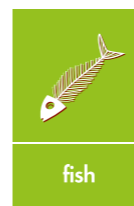
tea & coffee grounds

✓ Tea bags
✓ Coffee grounds



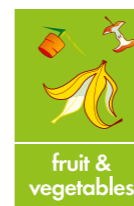
rice, pasta & beans

✓ Rice
✓ Pasta
✓ Beans



fish

✓ Fish
✓ Cooked fish
✓ Bones

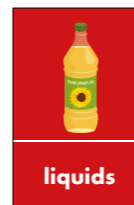


fruit & vegetables

✓ Cooked vegetables
✓ Raw vegetables
✓ Whole fruit
✓ Peelings

Remember to recycle your mouldy and out of date food, including ready meals removed from their packaging

✗ No thanks



liquids

✗ Cooking oil
✗ Liquid fat
✗ Milk
✗ Juice



non-food waste

✗ Clothes
✗ Nappies
✗ Pet waste
✗ Garden waste



packaging

✗ Crisp and sweet packets
✗ Ready meal packaging
✗ Plastic bags

Why recycle your food waste?

RECYCLED food waste can be turned into something useful. Your food waste will be taken to an anaerobic digestion processing facility where it can be used to generate natural forms of energy, such as biogas which can be used to produce gas and electricity, fertiliser used in farming, and fuel.

- Over a third of the waste in the average household's rubbish bin is food.
- Weekly food waste collections mean you'll have less in your household refuse bin, and it'll be cleaner.
- Recycling your food waste is better for the environment.
- Food waste is estimated to contribute 8-10% of global man-made greenhouse gas emissions.



For any queries about this new collection please contact us:

Call: 01642 774774 Email: contactus@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/food-waste

@Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

@redcar.cleveland @RedcarCleveland

Strong voices and safe places

“BARRY must be the busiest man in Redcar.” Carolyn Granthier, manager of charity Skills for People Teesside (“the boss lady”, as Barry says), smiles when she says this. But she’s only half joking.

To say Barry takes an active role within Skills for People - the organisation which provides a strong voice for people with learning difficulties - would be a huge understatement.

“Let’s see,” says Carolyn over a tea in the Footprints Café on Redcar High Street – a ‘safe place’ for vulnerable people, “what are you involved with at present, Barry?”

This takes some time. Barry is chair of the charity’s vital Independent Voices group and liaises with organisations including the council, police and Healthwatch. The group run workshops on subjects including diabetes, personal hygiene and good friendships which they deliver to other people with a learning disability and create training videos – and much more. Barry has also been chair of the charity’s Men’s Group, Walking Group and Employment Steering Group.

“I got bored watching TV,” says Barry, 51, who first got involved eight years ago. “I didn’t do much before all this... but I’ve come to life now.”

As we talk, Carolyn mentions the happy, friendly atmosphere in the Footprints Café, one of the charity’s approved Safe Place venues found in every community in our borough.



CHAT: Barry at Redcar's Footprints Café

“It’s low-level help – but it’s help that makes a big difference”

Carolyn Granthier, Skills for People, describes Safe Places

“Our Safe Places could be a café, library or pharmacy,” says Carolyn, who explains Skills for Life is contracted by the council. “Every one has clearly displayed stickers and once a year we go into each venue, unannounced, and just see how they interact. It’s often low-level support they offer. One venue in Marske noticed a confused lady wandering around outside and helped and another enabled a homeless man to make a phone call. It’s low-level help - but it’s help that can make a big difference.”

Find a list of Safe Spaces here at www.tsab.org.uk and more about Skills for People at skillsforpeople.org.uk



SAFE PLACES: Supporting the charity’s Safe Places scheme

July 4 & 5

It's back! Festival of Thrift to return to the borough



MARCHING ON: A marching band at a previous Festival of Thrift

THE Festival of Thrift will return to Kirkleatham Museum and Grounds this year with a free two-day family event which will attract visitors from across the country.

The council has secured the nationally recognised festival to stage the event for this year and next.

The festival took place previously at Kirkleatham between 2016 and 2022, attracting tens of thousands of residents and visitors to each of the events.

Now the festival will return on Saturday, July 4 and Sunday, July 5 with its distinctive free weekend of arts, craft, performance, fashion, food, traders, workshops and sustainability.

Each year, the festival attracts between 25,000 and 40,000 visitors from all over the UK, creating a significant positive impact on the local economy and providing a vibrant platform for local traders, makers, food producers, artists and organisations.

In addition to festivals in 2026 and 2027, the two-year deal will also give festival organisers the opportunity to work more closely with local people, businesses, artists and communities across Redcar and Cleveland.

Alongside the annual summer celebration, the team will be developing playful, creative activities and projects throughout the year, all based on imagining a greener, fairer and more joyful future together.



www.festivalofthrift.co.uk/

Spring events

Here are just some of the biggest events organised by your council this spring and early summer. But there are lots more exciting and fun activities planned, including many privately organised events. Keep up to date at www.redcarcleveland.gov.uk/enjoy

Now on!

Exhibition is sew amazing!

TWO new exhibitions at Kirkleatham Museum are proving to be a big hit with visitors.

Our Textile Heritage: Tapestry of the North, features work by northern members of the British Tapestry Group.

And it is a hit with one Redcar boy, Hudson Dawson-Blyth, who, aged three, might not be expected to be the target audience. "He loves coming here – I take him every week," said Hudson's grandfather, Kell Maurice. "Hudson likes all the displays as well as the chance to play."

There is an opportunity for you to vote for your favourite piece and a chance to take part in a workshop or enjoy demos, watch videos and later in the year attend a meet the makers event. The exhibition will be on show until June 16. To find out more go to thebritishtapestrygroup.co.uk and click 'exhibitions'.

Another exhibition, called Redcar: A Seaside Town, features the work of renowned local photographer, Ian Macdonald. Born in Teesside in 1945, Ian Macdonald has over 50 years of experience photographing Redcar and Cleveland. The photographs focus on the restoration of Redcar Seafront in 2014.

The museum is closed on Mondays. Find out more by calling 01642 479500 or emailing museumenquiries@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



East Cleveland Classic

Sun 12 April

THE races for men and women will once again be part of this year's British Cycling Open National Road Series.



Starting and finishing in Saltburn (near the bandstand) the circuit will also include Skelton, Guisborough, Charltons, Boosbeck, Lingdale and Brotton.

There will be entertainment for all the family. Racing starts at 9am.

Majuba Sunset Markets

Fri 1 May, Fri 5 June and Fri 3 July, 4pm to 9pm
Majuba beach, Redcar

LOVERS of street food, good music and cocktails are expected to flock to the sunset markets on Redcar seafront.

It's hoped the markets will attract people and families of all ages looking for a laid-back, chilled experience with live music and busy food stalls this summer.

Armed Forces Day

Sun June 28. Redar High Street. 10.30am to 3.30pm

A CHANCE to show your appreciation of our Armed Forces. There will be a military parade, entertainment and displays and a military aircraft fly-past.



Roar-some fun at Kirkleatham Museum

FAMILIES are invited to journey into deep time at a new interactive exhibition called Dinosaurs, Monsters and Lost Worlds at Kirkleatham Museum.

Presented by Expedition Dinosaur, the exhibition opens on Tuesday 24 March and brings the past to life with finds from the American Wild West to our ancient oceans. Come face-to-face with life-

sized dinosaur skulls - from the ferocious Tyrannosaurus Rex to the sail-backed Spinosaurus - touch real fossils, discover weird ocean monsters and see giant claws and teeth revealed through modern CT scans.

The museum is closed on Mondays. Find out more by calling 01642 479500 or emailing museumenquiries@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Kite Festival to soar again

THOUSANDS of fun-seekers are once again expected at the free Redcar Kite Festival which will return on Saturday 6 June and Sunday 7 June.

Last year an incredible 30,000 enjoyed the festival on Majuba Beach, and this time there will be even more kites, live entertainment, walkabout characters and activities.

The weekend will kick off on Friday 5 June with a welcome return of Majuba Street Food Market on the seafront between 4pm and 9pm where there will be street food and music.

Coming soon!

Summer drama

A PACKED season of outdoor theatre will be performed in the scenic grounds of Kirkleatham Museum from July to August.

The outdoor shows include: Oddsocks presentation of Romeo & Juliet by William Shakespeare on Thu 9 July and Fri 10 July.

Quantum Theatre's Treasure Island on Fri 24 July, 2026 3pm.

Illyria's As You Like It by William Shakespeare on Sun 26 July.

Quantum Theatre's The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny by Beatrix Potter on Sat 29 August.

Between the Tides

Sat 22 and Sun 23 August

SAVE the date! Between the Tides, the award-winning outdoor festival for children, young people and families, is back this summer.

A free weekend of adventure and exploration for children and their grown-ups, this year's festival will once again take place at Kirkleatham with the bonus of an extra day on Redcar High Street for teens in the week running up to the festival. The main event at Kirkleatham will feature theatre, puppetry, circus, dance, storytelling and live music. Follow @betweenthetidesfestival on Facebook and Instagram to keep up to date.



Between the Tides Sat 22 & Sun 23 August

Review of 2025

THE next four pages are dedicated to a review of the year with statistics about how your council has worked to serve residents and businesses.

People attending our events



101,500



Total spend by the council with local suppliers

£79m



Number of weddings by registration team

394



Number of homes adapted for vulnerable adults



3,325

Potholes repaired



9,535



Businesses supported



1,044

Vulnerable children and young people supported by our children's social care teams

3,273



Successful property closure orders to protect residents

12



Bin collections



3,570,736



Value of external grant funding spent by the council on regeneration projects

£36.78m



Review of 2025

Customer enquiries:


140,000

resident enquiries answered via phone, live chat and email and 40,000 helped through online 'self-service' systems



Adults supported

6,785



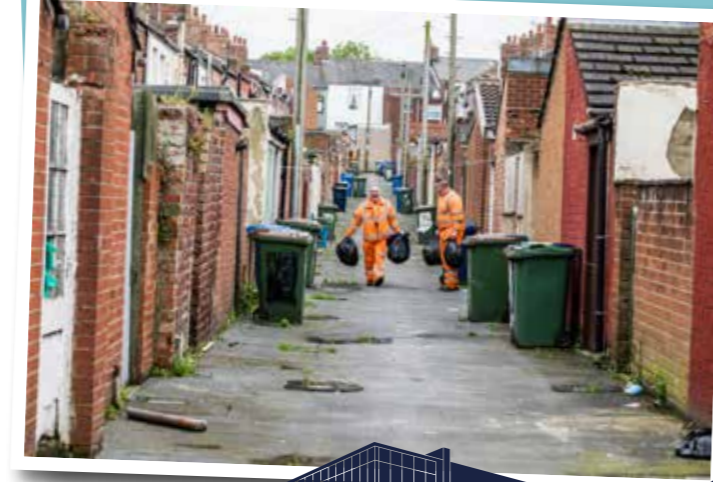
Number of retail food hygiene inspections completed

468



Tonnes of waste collected

60,639

2.65m Visits to the council website



Planning applications decided

812



27 Number of apprenticeships




Number of children and young people who accessed support through the council's Family Hubs/ Early Help teams

3,287




Fly tipping collections

4,722



Licensing applications processed

1,328



Noise complaints

634






GOOD NEWS: Officers celebrate the positive inspection report

Positive news for children's services

THE council's services for children and families have been rated as good by Ofsted inspectors.

The inspectors found services had improved since a previous inspection visit in 2022 and praised the work of staff who ensure vulnerable children and young people are kept safe and supported to achieve their best possible start in life.

The inspectors found: "There are lots of great services in Redcar and Cleveland that help children when difficulties arise. This means when families have small problems, they get help quickly so that they do not become big ones."

"This means that more children can continue to live safely and happily at home with their families. When children are at risk of serious harm, social workers act very quickly to make sure they are kept as safe as possible."

"By working together, social workers and families work out the best way to help children and improve their lives. This support is usually successful, and most children's lives improve."

"When it is not safe for children to remain living with their parents, social workers work hard to find a family member or friend who can look after them and keep them safe. If this is not possible, leaders make efforts to identify foster carers or children's homes."

"There's a real commitment to make sure children and young people have the best opportunities in life."

Ofsted inspectors



GOOD RATING: Executive Director of Children and Families, Danielle Swainston, discusses the report

The inspectors said they had heard 'lots of examples' of children succeeding in life and that young people leaving care say their workers helped them 'a lot'.

They added: "When senior leaders see anything that isn't working properly, they are quick to do something about it. There is a real commitment in children's services to make sure children and young people have the best opportunities in life."

A second life for Oksana

It's four years since Russia invaded Ukraine and the first of 177 refugees started to arrive in our borough. Here is the story of just one of them.

"I LEFT hospital in my city, Mariupol, on crutches," says Oksana Halchenko. "By luck, I made it to a small town, but it was still under the Russian occupation. I had no documents. I was seeing fear in people's eyes, people escaping the bombs. A woman gave me a small soup, tea and bread. I was very hungry. But I couldn't eat. I was crying. I saw myself in a new way: 'I am a homeless person.' I had had a vivid life. Now I was like nothing. And it was not a fact that I would rise again."

The story of Oksana's experiences of surviving in a Russian-occupied hospital where she had become ill following treatment to a broken foot before eventually escaping to flee Ukraine has been written about elsewhere.

She aimed to get to England because an English friend had tracked her down online and told

her our country was accepting refugees. After a long wait as the Russians advanced, she was eventually flown into Newcastle Airport in October 2022. There, she was picked up and driven to Marske - a place she had never heard of. The next day, she met Andrew Parker, an officer in the council's Housing Standards team who continues to take a leading role in the authority's Homes for Ukraine Scheme. "He has been heroic to me and others," she says. She then lived with two hosts

during her first year in Marske. "They opened their doors to a stranger,

an amazing thing to do," says Oksana. "But after so interesting and successful a life in Mariupol where I was an Assistant Director at the Palace of Culture for 18 years, it was hard. Now I had nothing."

Soon she started to build her new life, making good friends in the English community. Eventually, she obtained recognition of her Ukrainian degree in International Economics and went on to study English, maths and IT at Redcar and Cleveland College. With these qualifications, she could work for Redcar and Cleveland Voluntary Development Agency. Now, after even more perseverance, she has found full-time employment

"I feel happy here. I have a second life. Now I want to give back"

Oksana Helchenko

as an apprentice Business Administrator at Rediscover Redcar, a resource which liaises with local businesses, investors and residents to help attract investment.

Now she has her own home in East Cleveland. "I was not that homeless person any more," she says, explaining she hopes to stay. "I feel as if I have a second life here. I want to be helpful to this area and to see it prosper."



Mamazing mams campaign for breastfeeding

NEW mothers are once again spreading the word to fellow mams about the benefits of breastfeeding. The second phase of the 'mamazing' campaign – which is led by breastfeeding ambassador mothers in their own towns and villages across the borough – got under way last month. Despite the positive impact of the first phase of the campaign last year, our borough still has far fewer mothers breastfeeding at six months (38.6%) compared to the national average (55.6%). Two of our ambassadors tell their stories:

ANNE-MARIE O'Donnell-Roberts was undecided about breastfeeding until one, special moment made up her mind forever.

"I'd had a really horrible, traumatic birth," she recalled, "but then there was this moment when he turned his head and was rooting for a feed. Something clicked in my head. I thought, 'here is this brand-new person, just minutes old, and the only thing he's done is try to feed with me, his mother.'"

Not that it has been at all easy. "I really struggled," said Anne-Marie, 37, of Nunthorpe. "Everything that could go wrong, did go wrong. He wouldn't latch and I wasn't producing enough milk. The truth is, I kept

giving up and we did feed from bottles. So, I understand and support mothers who do give up altogether. But, for me, I kept thinking what a nurse had told me: 'It's a skill you – and baby – have to learn. Don't give up, it will come right.'"

"Something clicked and I thought, 'here is this brand new person who wants to feed with me, his mother.' It made me determined." Anne-Marie



OH BABY: Anne-Marie O'Donnell-Roberts and baby Conor



"You learn that breastfeeding is amazing, it's magic for your baby."

Timmi Duncan



FAMILY: Timmi and Sam Duncan and baby Enid

TIMMI Duncan was already a passionate supporter of the campaign before bringing home her newborn, Enid, for the first time last month.

Enid is Timmi's third child and, although she has breastfed all of them, the Redcar mother said it hasn't been easy.

"It is hard work and was tough at first," says Timmi, parent with husband Sam to Ida-Mae, five, and Maevis, two, "but you learn that it really is amazing, magic stuff for baby. If your baby is sick your body often 'knows' through your baby's saliva – that's how in tune you

are with your child – and the milk will change to contain more antibodies. It's the same if it's very hot – your milk will sometimes increase water content a little to hydrate the baby."

For Timmi, originally from London, a key day-to-day benefit is being able to soothe her child and bond. "That's why it was really hard when my milk stopped for Maevis about four months ago when she was 16 months and I was about halfway through my pregnancy. She couldn't understand why I stopped feeding her. That's been the hardest thing about breastfeeding – stopping."

Timmi, like most new mums, had to persevere with breastfeeding, especially with her first. She is aware that many others also struggle and advises mums-to-be to start researching breastfeeding

while pregnant.

"For me, the struggle when I started hasn't been the main thing about breastfeeding. Instead, it's the opposite - the easiness of it, the convenience. None of that faff with bottles. And it really calms your child when they're upset. The crying often just stops - again, like magic."



NEW MUM: Timmi and her newborn



Find out more about the benefits of breastfeeding, your local Family Hub and support available.

redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/family-hubs/infant-feeding-services or emailing breastfeedingwelcome@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk or calling 01642 444011

Volunteers bring us together

Could you volunteer with the council?
Email: volunteer@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



A Nite Light for dark times

"I'VE grown up and lived in Middlesbrough and homelessness has always been an issue - I wanted to help."

These are words of Nadia Gibany, 44, explaining why she founded the Nite Light Community Interest Company.

What began as a simple community project, handing out hygiene packs to homeless people, grew and soon food and household essentials were added. Nite Light then secured premises in South Bank offering shower, washing machine and dryer facilities. They now have a second hub in Middlesbrough but run projects Tees Valley wide.

"We've gone from helping only people who are homeless to anyone struggling," said Nadia. "Those who are

homeless have access to our products and facilities for free, whilst others struggling can use the market stalls for free and the facilities for a small charge."

"Everyone should have access to basic essentials." Nadia

The group has 72 volunteers, and six members of staff. "We couldn't do this without them," Nadia says. "Our youngest volunteer is 16 and our eldest 67. Some are in work, or studying, or looking to upskill."

Community events are a big part of their work, and everyone is welcome to attend. "It's great to see people coming together breaking boundaries and stigmas and increasing community spirit and resilience."

Find out more about their services and how you can help at www.nitelightcic.co.uk

Growing together

THE Community Resilience Orchard and Garden is being created by volunteers to help the environment and people with social isolation.

Chris Gallacher, 74, from South Bank, chair of the Nhub Community Group, which is developing the orchard in Teesville, explained the green space supports people across Greater Eston as a 'four-in-one sanctuary,' blending a veterans and community orchard, a wellbeing garden, a wildlife heaven and, thanks to support from the Thirteen Group, a therapeutic apiary.

"We introduced beekeeping because it can help with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which affects many veterans," added Chris, a veteran himself. The group also runs a free veterans' breakfast and a knit and natter group.

Volunteer Barbara Greenmon, 76, from Normanby urged others to get involved. She said: "It's a place to relax, talk to people and get some light exercise."

Find NHub Connecting Community on Facebook and get in touch.



GROWING: Chris Gallacher, Barbara Greenmon and John Wood

Warm place for fun times



THRIVING: James Hopper, Harry Bliwert-Allan and Sara Noel

"CARING became part of my life," says James Hopper, founder of TeesstrHive CIC. For 20 years he's been working with children, young people and adults both within his job as a care worker and as a volunteer. During the pandemic, he began running online gardening, cooking, music and art sessions to support youngsters with isolation.

"It's the perfect opportunity for people to build up their skills and experience." James Hopper

After lockdown, James, 52, began running face-to-face activities in Saltburn. Soon after, the Saltburn Arts and Community Centre board invited him to use their building. James later became a trustee and is now chairing the board.

Today, the centre is home to a wide range of activities exploring art, music and nature. They also run groups for refugee children,

children in care and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), welcoming participants from across Teesside.

Volunteers play a vital role. "We need more young people to join us," James says. "It's the perfect opportunity for people to build up their skills and experience."

Thanks to National Lottery funding, they are going to expand their programme, adding more outdoor activities, workshops and mentoring and bringing in more paid staff and volunteers. "The best thing for me is to see the kids doing so well and growing up into incredible adults."

Find out more at www.teesstrhivecic.co.uk



Family Hub Challenge



NEW mother Sarah Gladders is the first winner of the Family Hub Challenge – could you be next?

Sarah, of Redcar, is mum to six-month-old Freya and completed all the tasks to qualify for the first challenge draw and has chosen a spa day as her prize.

There are more draws to come and all you have to do to get your name in the hat to win a £250 experience is to complete some simple challenges (find out more online - see link below). Sarah, who attends Baby Buddies at Dormanstown Family Hub and is married to Eddy, said the challenges improved her parenting knowledge and will be enjoying a spa day and treating her child to trips out with the voucher.

The Family Hub Challenge is ongoing with the final draw on Tuesday 31 March. For more information visit: www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/family-hubs-challenge



A Path to Work.
Support to Stay.
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More than just job search. **Connect to Work** gives you:

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All built around you.



SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE



Money problems? Help is available

IF you're struggling with financial problems, here's where you can find support.

Cost-of-living support

This service is provided by the council and partners and aims to ensure that you have access to financial information, advice and support covering benefit entitlement and disputes, dealing with debt, affordable housing, improving digital skills, accessing community banking, planning for retirement, budgeting support and help with utilities. Visit the council's website and search 'cost of living support.'

Pension Credit

Pension credit is a retirement benefit that can top up low income for pensioners and can be worth as much as £4,300 per year. To find out more visit www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim or phone 0800 991234

Public transport

Discounted rail passes are available to different groups, details of which can be accessed on the National Rail website www.nationalrail.co.uk For those who travel by bus, it is possible to access discounted tickets for students and others via the Arriva website. Information on how to apply for a free local bus travel for pensioners and disabled people can be accessed at the council website (type 'bus passes').

Council Tax support

You may qualify for a reduction in your Council Tax if you are on Universal Credit, Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit or working and on low pay (including people who are self-employed). To check your eligibility scan the QR code above or visit www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk and click on the 'benefits and council tax support' link on the front page.



Further advice is available: Money Helper

Free and impartial help with money matters, backed by government. www.moneyhelper.org

Redcar Citizens Advice
enquiries@rccitizensadvice.co.uk 01642 030000

Credit Unions:

South Tees Community Bank
www.southteescommunitybank.org.uk/ or call 0191 2767963 or email admin@moneywise.org.uk
South Bank Credit Union info@southbanksavingcu.co.uk or 01642 463700

Heating

If you're struggling to heat your home, here are organisations that may be able to help:

Warm Home Discounts

www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme

South Tees Affordable Warmth Partnership

warmhomes@menvcity.org.uk
0800 304 7084

Housing problems?

If you have housing issues, the below Housing Associations may be able to offer support.

Beyond Housing

rent.income@beyondhousing.co.uk
01642 771326

Thirteen Housing

customerservices@thirteengroup.co.uk
0300 111 1000



Make the switch!

SWITCH Together Energy, formerly known as the Big Community Switch, is a chance to save money on energy bills. The council is working together with iChoors to bring this scheme to Redcar and Cleveland and help residents save on their gas and electric bills.

- All tariffs backed by 100% renewable electricity
- No obligation to switch
- Free, simple registration

You can get in touch with iChoors's helpdesk, find out more about the scheme and register at <https://switchtogether.co.uk/energy/redcar-and-cleveland/home> or by calling 0800 048 8285.

Membership

With 2026 playing memberships from as little as £425, and Junior Memberships from just £80, there's a lot to love at **Saltburn Golf Club!**

With on-line tee booking, WHS Handicap Management, Discounted prices in the Clubhouse and Driving Range, plus family and friends rates, why not call into the club or Pro Shop to find out more?



Big lift for Tramway

CARRIAGES on the Grade II-listed Saltburn Cliff Tramway are being replaced as part of a major upgrade.

The two carriages were removed earlier in January after more than 15 years of service transporting an estimated 2.5 million passengers. The new carriages – complete with bigger stained glass windows – will be built off-site and installed ahead of the tourist season.

The Tramway is an award-winning attraction which links Saltburn with the only remaining pleasure pier on the North east and Yorkshire coast.

A new hydraulic brake system and buffer system will also be installed as part of the upgrade. General servicing and maintenance work - as well as rigorous testing - is being completed.

Keep up to date at enjoyredcarcleveland.co.uk or follow facebook.com/SaltburnCliffTramway

COUNCIL DIARY

Times of meetings may change from time to time. Please check at www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

March

- Tuesday 10, 10am **Cabinet**
- Thursday 12, 10am **Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny**
- Wednesday 18, 9am **Employment, Health & Safety**
- Thursday 19, 10am **Regulatory**
- Thursday 26, 2pm **Borough Council**

April

- Thursday 16, 10am **Regulatory**
- Monday 20, 10am **Adults, Wellbeing & Health Scrutiny and Improvement**
- Monday 20, 5pm **Climate & Environment Scrutiny and Improvement**
- Tuesday 21, 9.30am **Children and Families Scrutiny and Improvement**
- Wednesday 22, 6pm **Corporate Resources & Governance Scrutiny & Improvement**
- Thursday 23, 5pm **Growth Scrutiny & Improvement**
- Monday 27, 10am **Governance**
- Tuesday 28, 10am **Cabinet**

May

- Monday 11, 9.30am **Corporate Parenting Board**
- Wednesday 13, 10am **Regulatory**
- Thursday 14, 2pm **Borough Council**
- Thursday 21, 10am **AGM, Borough Council**
- Tuesday 26, 10am **Governance**

June

- Monday 1, 10am **Adults, Wellbeing & Health Scrutiny and Improvement**
- Monday 1, 5pm **Climate & Environment Scrutiny and Improvement**
- Tuesday 2, 9.30am **Children & Families Scrutiny & Improvement**
- Wednesday 3, 6pm **Corporate Resources & Governance & Improvement**
- Thursday 4, 5pm **Growth Scrutiny & Improvement**
- Tuesday 9, 10am **Cabinet**
- Thursday 11, 10am **Regulatory Committee**
- Wednesday 17, 9am **Employment, Health & Safety**
- Thursday 25, 2pm **Borough Council**

Function Room hire

Planning a special event? You don't need to be a member to book!

Celebrate in style with stunning views over our golf course.

With seating for up to 100 guests, our function room is perfect for weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, or farewells, with delicious in-house catering, easy access, and plenty of parking.

Get in touch with us at the club to start planning!



SALTBURN-BY-THE-SEA
GOLF CLUB
FOUNDED 1894

Driving Range

Our Driving Range and Short Game Area are located just across the road from the Golf Course and Clubhouse and they're open to everyone, all year round!

New for 2026, enjoy floodlit practice along with 6 covered bays, 5 outdoor bays with Huxley's premier tee turf, premium two-piece range balls, target greens, and a short game area with bunkers.

With secure gated access and great Range Card Memberships and discounts available, come and sharpen your game with us!

Ladies Get into Golf

3 month programme for just £60

Launching with **Prosecco & Putting** session on Thursday 23rd April @ 2pm or Sunday 26th April @ 3pm

Followed by,

6 weekly lessons with a PGA Professional

Then, **4 on-course sessions**

No experience necessary

All equipment provided

Contact us for further details.



Making Every Contact Count

THE council is promoting a health and wellbeing website designed to improve access to information and support.

Called Making Every Contact Count the online tool is also about making the most of health and wellbeing conversations as well as providing effective 'signposting' to relevant health and wellbeing information, activities and services open to people living in Redcar and Cleveland and across the North East, with the ability to text, email and print the information.

SCAN HERE:



For those who are not online, Redcar and Cleveland libraries provide access to a paper copy of the health and wellbeing signposting information. Find out more via the code or go to meccgateway.co.uk/nenc



The 59 men and women representing 24 wards

Find details about your councillor at:
rcbc.moderngov.co.uk/mgFindMember

■ BELMONT



Peter Berry (Independent)

07970 427727

peter.berry@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Carolyn Curr (Conservative)

07966 625185

carolyn.curr@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ BROTTON



Graham Cutler (Independent)

07970 420251

graham.cutler@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Martin Fletcher (Independent)

07970 427406

martin.fletcher@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Barry Hunt (Independent)

07557 540629

barry.hunt@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ COATHAM



Carl Quartermain (Labour)

07796 485836

carl.quartermain@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Lynne Rynn (Labour)

07976 865277

lynne.rynn@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ DORMANSTOWN



Ceri Cawley (Labour)

07775 411478

ceri.cawley@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Deborah Powlay (Independent)

07970 427738

deborah.powlay@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ ESTON



Stephen Martin (Conservative)

07966 185991

stephen.martin@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Christopher Massey (Labour)

07557 540627

christopher.massey@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



David Taylor (Conservative)

07891 412282

david.taylor@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ GRANGETOWN



Adam Brook (Labour)

07970 427593

adam.brook@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Lynn Pallister (Labour)

07712 618490

lynn.pallister@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR

■ GUISBOROUGH



Bill Clarke (Independent)

07825 116999

bill.clarke@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Lisa Robson (Labour)

07966 897170

lisa.robson@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Bill Suthers (Labour)

07789 922822

bill.suthers@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ HUTTON



Julie Hart (Conservative)

07733 313236

julie.hart@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Graham Jeffery (Liberal Democrat)

07973 898383

graham.jeffery@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Jemma Joy (Liberal Democrat)

07970 420331

jemma.joy@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ KIRKLEATHAM



Alec Brown (Labour)

07796 486205

alec.brown@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Marian Fairley (Labour)

07796 485385

marian.fairley@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Peter Grogan (Conservative)

07970 427404

peter.grogan@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ LOCKWOOD



Steve Kay (East Cleveland Independent)

07771 345348

steve.kay@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ LOFTUS



Wayne Davies (Independent)

07557 540625

wayne.davies@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Linda White (Labour)

07970 420296

linda.white@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Tim Gray (Independent)

07970 420149

tim.gray@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ LONGBECK



Stephen Crane (Conservative)

07970 420533

stephen.crane@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Vera Rider (Conservative)

07826 535346

vera.rider@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ NEWCOMEN



Janine Craven (Labour)

07970 420114

janine.craven@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Carrie Richardson (Labour)

07970 419883

carrie.richardson@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ NORMANBY



Paul McInnes (Conservative)

07970 427730

paul.mcinnnes@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Curt Pugh (Conservative)

07557 847957

curt.pugh@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Paul Salvin (Conservative)

07970 427576

paul.salvin@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ ORMESBY



Ian Hart (Liberal Democrat)

07733 124054

ian.hart@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Carole Morgan (Liberal Democrat)

07717 423757

carole.morgan@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Glyn Nightingale (Liberal Democrat)

01642 315565

glyn.eos@btinternet.com

■ SALT BURN



Craig Hannaway (Independent)

07561 467168

craig.hannaway@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Stuart Smith (Independent)

07557 540628

stuart.smith@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Philip Thomson (Independent)

07747 044858

philip.thomson@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ SKELTON EAST



Craig Holmes (Reform)

craig.holmes@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

07970420690



Justin Thompson (Conservative)

07811 244064

justin.thompson@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ SKELTON WEST



Ursula Earl (Labour)

07500 606859

ursula.earl@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



John McCue (Labour)

07584 703060

john.mccue@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ SOUTH BANK



Neil Bendelow (Labour)

07970 420311

neil.bendelow@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Sue Jeffrey (Labour)

07484 035678

sue.jeffrey@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ ST GERMAIN'S



Kendra Evans (Independent)

07866 853647

kendra.evans@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Karen King (Liberal Democrat)

07500 606894

karen.king@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Tristan Learoyd (Independent)

07966 886832

tristan.learoyd@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ TEESVILLE



Peter Chaney (Labour)

07970 420285

peter.chaney@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Robert Clark (Labour)

07970 420410

robert.clark@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Margaret O'Donoghue (Labour)

07890 588632

margaret.o'donoghue@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

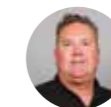
■ WEST DYKE



Malcolm Head (Liberal Democrat)

07970 427624

malcolm.head@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Chris Jones (Liberal Democrat)

07825 228006

chris.jones@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Mary Ovens (Liberal Democrat)

01642 507104

mary.ovens@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ WHEATLANDS



Niall Hargreaves (Conservative)

07970 420083

niall.hargreaves@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Jack Symon (Conservative)

07970 427697

jack.symon@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

■ ZETLAND



Jade Lavan (Independent)

07747 762789

jade.lavan@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk



Alison Barnes (Liberal Democrat)

alison.barnes@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

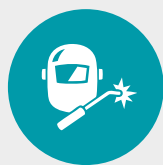
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Levels 1 and 2



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