



westpark
Levy Trust



news

YOUR 2025 NEWSLETTER FROM WESTPARK LEVY TRUST



Unveiling our 20 year history

**Contacts
and useful
numbers**
PAGE 2

**Green Flag
Award...we've
done it again!**
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**The Westpark
2025 calendar
competition!**
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**Voices of our
community at
Westpark**
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Contacts & useful numbers

Westpark Levy Trust

Website: www.friendsofwestpark.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Westparklevytrust

Email: info@westparklevytrust.org.uk

Kingston Open Spaces

Telephone: 0330 123 1133 (Mon-Fri: 9.00am-1.00pm)

Email: mail@kingstonopenspaces.co.uk

Website: www.kingstonopenspaces.co.uk

Issues within the park

Darlington Borough Council

Customer Service: 01325 405 111

Email: customerservices@darlington.gov.uk

Pippa Smaling, Park Ranger

Telephone: 01325 406 719

Email: countryside@darlington.gov.uk

Darlington Neighbourhood Policing Team

Cockerton, Mowden, Blackwell and Coniscliffe

In an Emergency 999

Non- Emergency Telephone 101

Get involved

If you would like to explore volunteering, partnership or supplier opportunities with the WestPark Levy Trust please get in touch

Email info@westparklevytrust.org.uk

Friends of Westpark meeting dates for your 2025 diary

Saturday 8th February 10.00am - 11.30am

Thursday 22nd May 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Thursday 4th September 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Saturday 22nd November 10.00am - 11.30am

At West Park Academy




westpark
Levy Trust

A warm Westpark welcome to our readers, levy payers and Friends of Westpark community members. A special welcome to everyone who has joined our community in the last year - those who have moved into the new homes in the latest phase of the garden village and those who have moved into the established phase of the village.

2025 marks 20 years since the beginning of Westpark, a special blend of a community that cares for the local environment. A community that comes together and shares high quality green spaces. A community that dares to invest in itself for both the present and the future.

We want to reflect on our village's beginning and ask you to help plan its future. We, the Westpark Levy Trust, will be the continuity that supports the garden village as it grows as a community, and helping the green spaces mature as it develops.

In this year's newsletter, you will see how both the village and the green space site was developed in the beginning from a derelict brownfield industrial area, to a multi-year award winning Green Flag park, bustling with nature nestled alongside high quality homes. With Westpark being 20 years old the Trust commissioned an ecology survey to document in detail what wildlife and fauna the park is home to and where we can support its continued growth in a responsibly managed way.

In the last 20 years we have seen over 700 homes built and occupied by a diverse range of neighbours and friends. Over the next decade we will see even more join us, alongside the creation of more high quality green space. In 2024 we delivered a range of events which were well received and appreciated. In 2025 we want to continue bringing people together. This will only be sustainable in the long term if community members are able to volunteer to share their skills, time and passions.

The Trustees are committed to bringing a community facility to the garden village, continuing to invest in both the new and existing green spaces alongside supporting community groups and initiatives. 2025 and 20 years of experience gives us a great foundation to see what has gone before and how we make the next 20 years work for both residents and nature. Please share your thoughts with us in our Community Survey 2025.

Westpark Levy Trustees

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Trustees

WHO WE ARE



PAUL BLACK:TRUSTEE

“ I have been deeply interested in the Garden City movement, garden villages and planned communities, for a number of years. When seeking a place to retire to after working on Discover Brightwater, Westpark Garden Village was a no brainer. I also like the concept of the Westpark Levy. A relatively modest annual payment goes to reinvest in the quality of the park and community. I'm happy to bring my project management experience to the Trust.

ANDREW BUCKINGHAM:TRUSTEE

“ Back in 2009 I was moving to Darlington, and chose Westpark solely on the location. A year later and I'd come to realise how special it is. I joined the Friends group, bringing my IT skills so we could save the website costs. I've seen that fledgling group of passionate people grow into a full charitable trust. Our green space and community enrichment is such a gift; and the Trust has agency to ensure that's always true. I'm proud to be part of it.



NEIL BRIMER: CHAIR // TRUSTEE

“ I was excited to move to Westpark in 2008 where the community would have a real say and access to funding through the Levy. As a qualified community and youth worker I can share my skills and experience in bringing the community together through events and look forward to bringing a community facility to Westpark. Together, we can create a thriving community where every act of Caring, Sharing and Daring makes a world of difference.



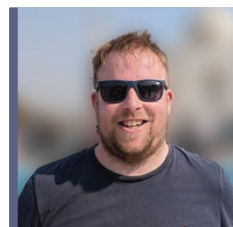
TONY COOPER:TRUSTEE

“ I saw potential in the Westpark site, not just to build houses, but to create a place where people can have a good life and feel connected to their community. I'm here to help ensure the Levy is used wisely to maintain and enhance our green spaces, facilities, and amenities. By staying involved, I can help keep Westpark a great place to live, learn what residents care about, and build on the legacy of what we've built together.



We are currently looking to recruit a number of new Trustees. Visit our website www.friendsofwestpark.com/wplt for information.

JOSEPH GARDNER:TRUSTEE



“ I moved to Westpark from Manchester a year ago and was really impressed with Westpark and it's community. I am also involved in various voluntary organisations including a local Scout Group and the Civic Society in my hometown of Wakefield. I am keen to make a difference where I live and after studying Urban Design to Masters level I know how important people and place is. I am excited to be a part of this vastly experienced and varied team.

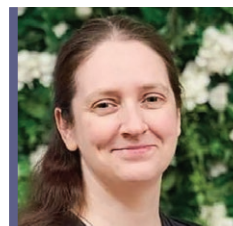
ROB GEORGE:TRUSTEE

“ I've been involved with Westpark since its inception. I was employed by Darlington Council as the Parks and Countryside Senior Manager and although this gave me a professional interest in the park, I always had an interest in helping it become the fabulous place it is today. I have stayed involved, bringing with me my knowledge and expertise in balancing the needs of people, nature and landscape in what is a key piece of Darlington's green infrastructure.



GEMMA GILL:TRUSTEE

“ I became a trustee in 2024 because I am a resident of 'phase 2' and I'm interested in how the phase is going to develop over the coming years. I work in finance with lots of data and I'd like to bring those skills to see how the trust can better use its data to help the residents. I'm also keen on improving the diversity of the trustees to better represent views of the residents, I'm still the only female trustee and I'd love to see more women join.



BILL HERBERT:TRUSTEE

“ Originally from Dundee in the East of Scotland, I now live in a lighthouse in North Shields. I have had the pleasure of being lead artist for the Westpark Garden Village arts strategy since the development began 20 years ago and thoroughly enjoy my role as a Trustee to this fabulous community project. My work as a poet has been published by Bloodaxe Books, and I am an emeritus professor of Newcastle University. Photograph © David Konečný.



MARTYN HUNTER:TRUSTEE

“ I moved to Westpark in 2012. Living in a newly built cul-de-sac allowed me to help establish our street's community by hosting annual summer parties to allow everyone to get to know one another. In 2021 I became a Trustee to help bring together the wider community. I am currently working in IT for a large public sector organization, and I am keen on applying the skills I have to help make a real difference to the residents of Westpark.





Award Winning Green Spaces

The Westpark Levy Trust through its Caring Sharing Daring objectives recognises the benefits of being able to bench mark progress of the green spaces against an approved framework.



The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces around the world. Westpark is the Town's second Green Flag Award holder since 2015 alongside South Park and 56 green spaces in the North East of England.

The benefits of winning a Green Flag Award

Winning a Green Flag Award brings with it a wealth of benefits, from the status of being affiliated with a prestigious awards programme through to tangible benefits.

Enhanced pride and reputation

As the international standard for parks and green spaces, holding a Green Flag Award brings with it a vast amount of prestige. It is also an excellent example of civic achievement and provides communities with a great sense of civic pride.

Improvement

Winning a Green Flag Award visibly demonstrates to the local community that a clear improvement has been made to a site.

Regeneration

Improving facilities at a park/green space and engaging more with the local community can have a knock on effect to the regeneration of an area.

Upgrading a site to achieve Green Flag status can, for example, bring about improvements to health and education, reduce crime and improve the general cleanliness of an area,

The Green Flag Award is managed by Keep Britain Tidy under license from the UK Government Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

Every new site is assessed by experienced judges, who make an appointment to inspect the site and meet staff and volunteers. In subsequent years, judging alternates between a full assessment as described below and an unannounced "Mystery Shop" assessment.

Purpose & aims of the Green Flag Award

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.
- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
- To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sector.
- To establish standards of good management.
- To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers.

Stage One: Desk Assessment

Judges assess the site-specific management plan and associated documentation, and any response to the judges' feedback from the previous year. This section is worth 30 out of 100 points. At least 15 points are required to achieve the accreditation.

Stage Two: Site Assessment

Judges assess whether the management plan is in practice on the site, and how well the Green Flag Award criteria have been met. This is determined by observation and by questioning staff, volunteers and visitors. This section is worth 70 out of 100 points. At least 42 points are required to achieve the accreditation. A total pass mark of 66 is needed to gain the accreditation.



The Judging is separated into 8 categories.

- A Welcoming Place
- Healthy, Safe and Secure
- Well Maintained and Clean
- Environmental Management
- Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Marketing and Communication
- Management

Judges Comments

2024: Incorporating local history with poetry in the entrance ways and structures is inspiring

2023: This is an excellent community country park and shows the way forward for integrated high quality urban living.

2022: This is a popular and well-designed site that uses its heritage background well and contributes well to biodiversity.

Table of Park and Wildlife Corridor investments by Westpark Levy Trust

2024 enhancements and improvements	
Bridge painting	£5,203.00
Bench replacements and additional benches	£15,403.00
Wild flower seeding	£1,728.44
Biodiversity study of Westpark	£1,800.00
Westpark Management Plan Enhancements and improvements for 2024-25	£13,500.00
2024 Events	£41,642.82

Cow Green Playpark

COW GREEN PROPOSALS

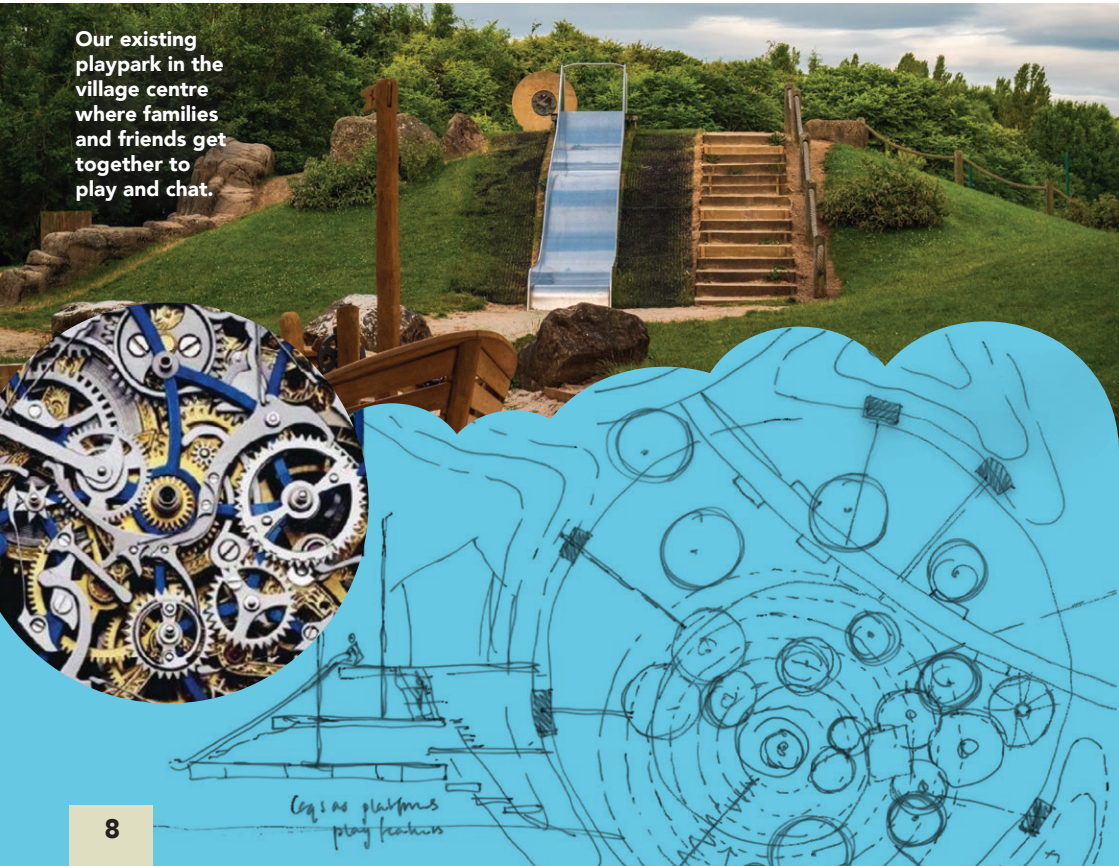
The open space is located to the west of Edward Pease Way. An entrance feature is proposed off this route to mark the space, with self-binding paths continuing to meander along the multi-functional corridors which will contain wildflowers and will be defined by linear hedgerows and trees.

The space to the south east of these water corridors was identified in the Westpark Garden Village Landscape, Art and Biodiversity Strategy as a key location for community events and play. These proposals have been developed further and three zones are identified within the space, defined by mounding and tree

planting. The space to the north is an open area for larger scale events or informal recreation, the central larger area contains a tor feature with linked play features, whilst the smaller area is defined by negative contours with slopes containing natural and interactive play elements.

The final design of the play equipment and potential features in each area will be guided by the Art Strategy. The design of features will reference elements of Cow Green reservoir, such as water, wetland, and landforms - peaks, slopes and basins. Features will also echo the use of landform, materials and words as evidenced throughout Westpark - creating a space to awaken the imagination.

Our existing playpark in the village centre where families and friends get together to play and chat.



Cogs as platforms play features

Our time

Based on the 1763 sundial from Stag House Farm, the theme of the playpark is Time. As in the existing playpark, where the image of the Westpark Jabberwock was divided into three parts and placed around the site, so here the image of the sundial will also be divided into three. Each part will be accompanied by one part of a riddle, and elsewhere in the playpark will be hidden the three answers.

So there will be six pieces in total, again cast in a manner that enables rubbings to be taken which can be reassembled into a larger image.

While the text and artwork here is based around the sundial, the paths and spiral motifs on the planned mound etc. would maintain the Time theme by referring visually to the coils and springs of watchmaking.

Can you solve this timely three-part riddle?

What happens every day
in exactly the same way
that you've never heard before
but soon will see no more?
Time's a riddle you'll allow,
my answer rhymes with 'how'...

What's knitted by all clocks
that unraveled all the locks
slipped out all the doors
but sleeps below all floors?
Time's a riddle past our ken;
my answer rhymes with 'pen'...

What you cannot know
will shortly be on show:
what is it that's so vast
but will not ever last?
Time's a riddle leaves us vexed,
my answer rhymes with 'text'...



Westpark is an unusual development in that we have a very strong Arts Strategy which informs much of what we do. Bill Herbert, an internationally renowned poet based at Newcastle University, is a Trustee and leads on our strategy. The riddle below, will be built into the design of the new play park at Cow Green.



Westpark Arts Strategy

It is intended that Phase 2 of Westpark continues to build on the concepts and materials established in Phase 1, extending these to devise governing principles for the new development. We are also reinterpreting the idea of the park itself, in order to develop new projects based on the key identifying features of the Victorian park (typified by, for instance, South Park). These aims

and projects will be explored in a new Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Newcastle University (see below), which is intended not only to foster civic values and a strong sense of local identity in the new development itself, but also to suggest a model of how to support these values and that identity to a national audience of civic bodies, developers, businesses, charities, and government.

Here are some of the areas of focus in Phase 2



BANDSTAND

An area has been identified at the end of one of the water corridors between Dodgson Drive and Lewis Carroll Close. At present, a circular space for performers and a small audience can be indicated by gravel and other ground markings, pending renewed discussion with Cockerton Silver Band and other partners including Newcastle University and local schools. In the medium to long term it is intended that this space be redesigned and developed further.

GROTTO

The Grotto will incorporate large stones recovered across this phase of Westpark gathered into groupings of threes and ones according to the design by Southern Green. Text will be edited into a form to be either inscribed or embedded in a main stone with a view across the ponds to the arch.



MAZE

The location of the maze is dependent on the current phase of development: it needs to be both accessible and visible, preferably from the path along the Bund. As the intention remains to represent the path through the maze by planting flowers, the design can alter on an annual basis, settling on a final form to be fixed more formally by gravel paths as the site develops. The flowers can be seasonal - snowdrop, crocus, daffodil - meaning the maze is usually a Spring phenomenon.

PLAYPARK

Based on the 1763 sundial from Stag House Farm, the theme of the Phase 2 playpark is Time. As in the Phase 1 playpark, where the image of the Westpark Jabberwock was divided into three parts and placed around the site, so here the image of the sundial will be divided into three. Each part will be accompanied by one part of the riddle, and elsewhere in the playpark will be hidden the three answers. So there will be six pieces in total, again cast in a manner that enables rubbings to be taken which can be reassembled into a larger image.

SIGNAGE AND THE ZERO POINT

Following on from the four Leaf pieces commissioned from Differentia to contextualise themes in Phase 1, it is expected that Phase 2's complementary themes will be explored according to the same design brief, which should also extend to finger posts and street furniture. It is important to align these with the Zero Point in terms of measuring and recording distances. Distance to and from the Zero Point and between the Leaves and other features as listed above will become increasingly useful to runners, cyclists, and walkers, and so this element will need to be incorporated into their design.

THE WESTPARK WIKI

Over the 20-plus years since Westpark was first conceived, it has built up an archive of images and texts which describe not only its own history, but the historical subjects and resources upon which it has drawn for design, materials, and the arts strategy. The Westpark Wiki is intended to provide a fully coordinated and easily accessible digital resource through which residents, visitors, developers, academics, and all interested parties can explore the history of the site and the geological, archaeological, ecological, and historical basis on which its streets are named and its main features are designed.

SCULPTURES (WATER AND SOUND)

1. Januarius Discussions have begun with the main sculptor from Phase 1, David Paton, to construct a large scale sculpture to be set in the new ponds, based on a fragment of Roman pottery now in the Bowes Museum and the earliest name recorded in the area, Januarius - found on a piece of pottery in Faverdale.
2. Sound Mirror A sculpture to be situated on the Bund as a 'listening post', reconceptualising the sound of the AI as a part of the soundscape of the park.

THE ALPHABET OF TREES

20 tree varieties have been identified as symbolic of the area, including species from the Teesdale Assemblage and the many species introduced by the Peases and Backhouses on their estates and nurseries. These are aligned with existing species on site identified by survey as significant and worthy of preservation, or historically associated with the farm orchards on site, and the ancient Celtic alphabet of trees, to create a new alphabet of 20 trees. Key specimens will be identified, new trees will be planted where most appropriate, if possible in the Nature Reserve, and the Alphabet will be located and interpreted via signage and the Westpark Wiki.

STREET SIGNS, COUPLETS, & MAP

Finally, as part of the ongoing work to name streets and provide text for street signs throughout Phase 2, a map of Westpark Garden Village has recently been produced, describing the three main areas in this phase and indicating their thematic origins in the industry, agriculture, arts, archaeology, and ecology of the area. Streets still to be named will continue to draw on imagery from the Teesdale Assemblage and to explore the rich archaeological record of the Roman period.

New Trustees



Westpark Levy Trust is a charity run by volunteers comprising of Levy payers and local interested people

to help ensure that the group is diverse and can represent the make-up of the community, particularly as we welcome new neighbours.

No experience is necessary and full training will be offered. This is a great opportunity to develop your decision making and communication skills, learn about project management and help make Westpark an even better place to be. If you have an events production or communication and publicity background we would love to have a chat with you.

who share their skills and experience and share their passion for the area. Trustees meet four times a year to direct the charity in meeting its charitable aims, ensuring prudent finances and to take responsibility on how best to spend the Levy. We are currently looking to recruit new Trustees who love our park and want to see it develop, helping to grow its range of community activities and facilities while improving the environment. We are particularly looking for local people who want to share and develop their skills



Interested?

If you would like to find our more or have a chat with one of the trustees, please get in touch and visit our website www.friendsofwestpark.com/wplt.

If you haven't been a trustee before, the Charity Commission have some great introductions.

Search : *Charity Trustee : What's Involved?* to find out more about the role.



Update on what we've been collecting, doing and spending

Each year the Trustees oversee the collection of the Levy payments by Kingston Open spaces and then following the quarterly Friends of Westpark community meetings decide how best to use the money which has been collected. You can find our full accounts both on our website: www.friendsofwestpark.com/wplt or by searching for us on the Charity Commissioners' website, who we report to each year.



2024 saw a mini rebrand carefully crafted for the Westpark Levy Trust by local creative Paul Wick. This helps us keep in touch with the seasons and helps us keep a sense of place in our communication with the community. If you have any thoughts on enhancements and improvements do get in touch or complete our 2025 community survey. It will help us engage better while being both professional and keeping a focus on nature and the community throughout 2025.

2024 saw the return of community events hosted in the park. We would like to thank Stellar Creates for curating and events programme which culminated in the return of Music on the Hill. The report from Stellar said that the community should consider its own capacity at running events in Spring, Autumn and Winter, while it still requires specialist support for a sizable community event in the Summer. To that end we will purchase equipment to support the community to deliver events for ourselves and encourage community members to become event volunteers and leads.

2025 brings the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Park. As our community has grown, we are committed to developing a more community led activity programme, while finding a more sustainable way of delivering Music on the Hill.

If you would like to volunteer, or are a business who offers services which you think the Trust could benefit from, please get in touch.

We're always wanting to know what you would like us to focus on and last year over 100 residents and friends completed our survey.

You can find the full results at friendsofwestpark.com/community-consultation.



You can join in the conversation by following us on social media via Facebook and X @westparklevytrust



Westpark rebrand

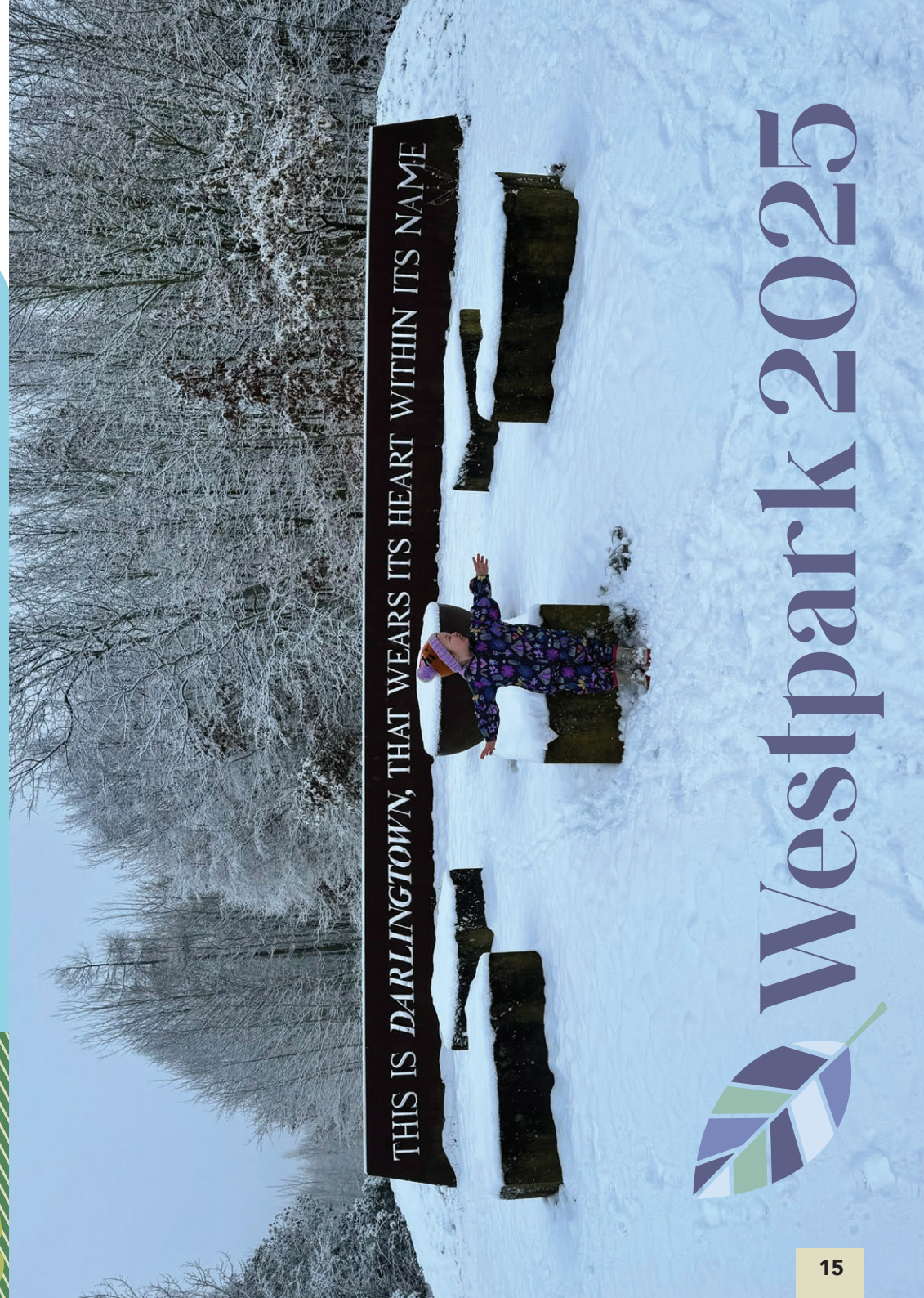


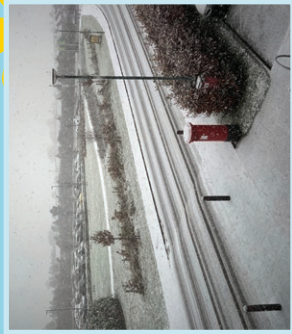
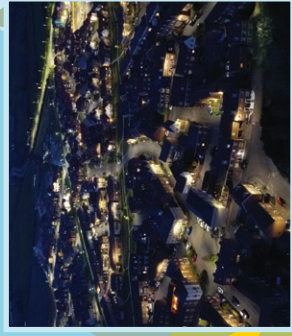
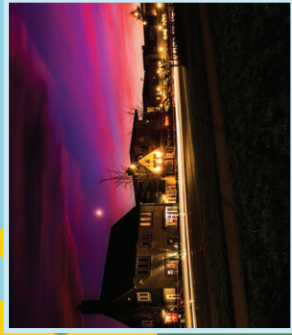
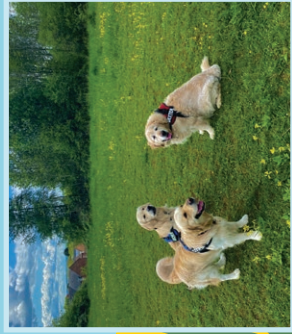
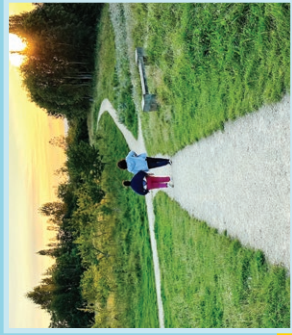
2024 saw a mini rebrand carefully crafted for the Westpark Levy Trust. This helps us keep in touch with the seasons and helps us keep a sense of place in our communication with the community. The rebrand will help us engage better while being both professional and keeping a focus on nature and the community throughout 2025.



The rebrand provides a seasonal platform for everything from advertising and social media through to maps for our events and community gatherings.

It follows our Caring, Sharing, Daring theme for 2025 and is a bright and colourful reminder of the beauty of Westpark, taking inspiration from its surrounding green spaces and wildlife.





01

2025 JANUARY

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02

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04

2025 APRIL

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06

2025 JUNE

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07

2025 JULY

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08

2025 AUGUST

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09

2025 SEPTEMBER

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10

2025 OCTOBER

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11

2025 NOVEMBER

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12

2025 DECEMBER

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🍃 = Friends of Westpark Meeting Dates

CALENDAR COMPETITION

Our 2025 Calendar is made up of the fantastic images we received through the photography competition we ran throughout 2024. It's a shame we could only pick 12 for our calendar as there were many more beautiful shots of the park. Congratulations to the photographers of the images we used and huge thanks to everyone who entered.

JANUARY
OVERALL WINNER
 Photographer: CHRISTOPHER HOOPER
 Title: In the heart of Westpark
 Category: A photo representing caring

FEBRUARY
CATEGORY WINNER
 Photographer: COLIN BARKER
 Title: Enjoying the sunset on the park
 Category: A photo representing daring

MARCH
 Photographer: COLIN BARKER
 Title: Flowers at sunset up on the park.
 Category: Representing Spring Season

APRIL
CATEGORY WINNER
 Photographer: MARK BOWMAN
 Title: Caring for the environment
 Category: A photo representing caring

MAY
CATEGORY WINNER
 Photographer: LOUISE FISH
 Title: Fledgling long tailed tit spring
 Category: Representing Spring Season

JUNE
CATEGORY WINNER
 Photographer: JOAQUIM DE ARAUJO
 Title: Walking in the park
 Category: A photo representing sharing

JULY
CATEGORY WINNER
 Photographer: COLIN BARKER
 Title: Duke enjoying the park
 Category: Pet photo taken in the park

AUGUST
CATEGORY WINNER
 Photographer: SUSAN BARKER
 Title: Wild orchid
 Category: People Photograph

SEPTEMBER
 Photographer: LORAIN DODDS
 Title: Just woofing around
 Category: Pet photo taken in the park

OCTOBER
 Photographer: COLIN BARKER
 Title: Westpark Village
 Category: People Photograph

NOVEMBER
CATEGORY WINNER
 Photographer: ANDREW MCINTYRE
 Title: Night life beyond the park
 Category: People Photograph

DECEMBER
CATEGORY WINNER
 Photographer: CHARLOTTE WALLACE
 Title: Letters to Santa
 Category: Representing Winter Season

2026 Calendar COMPETITION

2025 brings another chance to snap a great picture in the park or capture community life in Westpark. Send it to us and we'll choose the best to form our 2026 Westpark Calendar.

The Trustees were excited to receive the quantity and variety of photos we received this year. We had enough pet pictures to create a totally separate calendar. Thanks to everyone who took the time to share their memories with us. You can find your own mini Calendar within the Newsletter and a digital version on our website. We would like to capture both the park and community as it grows and matures each year. We would encourage you to capture those changes throughout 2025 for a 2026 Westpark Calendar. You don't need to be a professional photographer to get involved, a mobile phone camera shot is fine.

The categories below will continue to act as a guide of what to capture, but any submission will be considered:

- Each of the four Seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter
- A photo representing either: Caring, Sharing, Daring
- A photo highlighting: Nature or People
- Best pet or wildlife photo taken in the park
- Best photo overall of Westpark Garden Village
- Best photo taken by someone under 18 years old

Email Address for entries:
photos@westparklevytrust.org.uk

COMPETITION TERMS
 The intellectual copyright remains with the photographer and shall be credited. The Photographer grants Westpark Levy Trust a perpetual, irrevocable, royalty free, license to enable Westpark Levy Trust to make or authorise to be made any photograph or digital or moving image of the project, and to include or authorise the inclusion of any such photograph or digital or moving image in any publication, exhibition, film, video, television broadcast or other electronic transmission for any purposes reasonably determined by Westpark Levy Trust.

PRIZES TO BE WON

...so get snapping!

Deadline for entries is midnight on 22nd November 2025



CHRISTOPHER HOOPER
 In the heart of Westpark

2025 WINNER
 BEST OVERALL PHOTO OF WESTPARK VILLAGE

PRIZES

£100 Voucher

from the winner's chosen Westpark Levy paying business (not transferable) for the Best Photo Overall - Westpark Garden Village.

12 x £25 Vouchers

from each winner's chosen Westpark Levy paying business (not transferable) for each of the Categories listed.

Businesses of Westpark



The White Heifer that Travelled

Come explore the brilliant menu at The White Heifer That Travelled in Westpark! A warm, welcoming, family-friendly pub in a farmhouse-style building, perfectly located. We look forward to welcoming you.



Smile @ Westpark

A small, independent private practice established in 2007. We provide the highest quality dental care and offer affordable plans.



Cactus Café

A proudly independent, licensed dog friendly neighbourhood cafe. Open for brunch, lunch and everything in between.



Coop

We're one of the world's largest consumer co-operatives, owned by millions of members. We're a recognised leader for our social goals and community-led programmes.



Cooplands Bakery

Every single product in our vast range is made with the same care and attention

to detail. We bake each and every day to ensure the freshest quality products reach our shops to meet the needs of all our customers, and make sure we have their favourites too!



Welcome to **PLW Fitness**, our brand new fitness and health haven at Westpark where we teach local people how to connect their mind and body to achieve lasting change.

Westpark has a great selection of independent, regional and national businesses who pay into the Westpark Levy like the residents.

If you are fortunate enough to win one of the great prizes on offer from the Westpark Levy Trust, you can choose vouchers from a business below that offers them.



Aldi

Every customer has their own reasons to like Aldi, but with things like our commitment to everyday low prices and fantastic quality for all, amazing support for British farmers, and our famous Special buys on the Aisle of Aldi, you're sure to find your own reasons to like us.



M&S Food

Indulge in some high-quality food and wine from our tempting collection. Our food is known for its quality, freshness, and innovation. M&S Food sells sustainability sourced products of exceptional quality and value.



Railway Housing Association

Providing quality housing for over 100 years and owns over 1,561 rented homes.



Halo Hair

Experience a new level of hair salon and client care at our brand-new Darlington salon at Westpark.



Busy Bees could be the perfect day nursery setting for your child. Kids 1st offers a secure and spacious environment with access to lots of amazing facilities, all aimed at supporting children during an important developmental time in their lives delivered through our Bee Curious curriculum.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

West Park Academy for hosting our Friends of Westpark community meetings.

Darlington Street Champions for supporting the community litter picks and keeping the community tidy throughout the year.

Bussey and Armstrong Homes for providing facilities and project support throughout 2024.



WESTPARK LEVY INFORMATION (Phase 1)

1. WHAT IS THE WPL?

The WPL is a perpetual yearly estate charge. There is a legal obligation for each homeowner to pay the WPL as contained in the legal transfer of the property. When buying, selling, or remortgaging a property in Westpark, your mortgage provider or conveyancing specialist may need further information about the WPL and its status regarding your property.

The WPL has specific aims and objectives. These are:

- Support the provision of non-statutory environmental improvements such as landscaping and enhanced maintenance
- Interpretation and management facilities, community and voluntary projects and education and arts initiatives in the Westpark locality and surrounding areas.

The WPL place these objectives into their wider plan of

- Caring for the environment in and around the Westpark Garden Village
- Sharing great green spaces with the community, while building and supporting a creative and inclusive community.
- Daring in what we do to make a positive difference. This can be seen through innovation and delivery of solutions to challenges through effective spending of the levy and generating external funding.

2. WHAT PROPERTIES ARE SUBJECT TO THE WPL?

Properties paying the WPL are generally shown on the Westpark Street map.

3. WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF THE OPEN SPACE LAND COVERED BY THE WPL?

This comprises of land transferred to and owned by Darlington Borough Council under a Transfer dated 9 June 2005 and a Transfer dated 1 April 2019 and as shown EDGED IN RED on the Westpark Street map. Any other 'Open Space' both within or adjoining the Westpark development is not covered by the WPL. Such land could include highway verges and privately owned garden space.

4. MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF THE WPL

Prior to 2019, the Westpark Levy was collected and funds managed by the County Durham Community Foundation (now named Point North). Today the WPL is managed by a Charitable Incorporated Organisation named Westpark Levy Trust, Charity Number 1186861 (the Trust). The Trust's objective is to promote, for the benefit of the inhabitants of Westpark and the surrounding area, the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who can benefit from such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

Volunteer Trustees are the people responsible for controlling the work, management and administration of the charity, the majority of which are Westpark Levy Payers. The Trustees meet quarterly. Any member of the community can apply to be a Trustee if they feel they have specific skills and knowledge needed by the Trust. Community meetings are held quarterly to engage with users regarding the WPL and its management.

Interested parties can see where funding has been spent on the Trust's website www.friendsofwestpark.com and in the annual newsletter. There are also published Annual reports including audited accounts and minutes of meetings available on the website.

5. WHAT IS THE ANNUAL CHARGE IN RESPECT OF THE WPL?

The current charge is based on £100 per annum RPI indexed linked from February 2003 collected annually for the period from and including the 1st February to the 31st January in each year.

6. WILL THE ANNUAL CHARGE INCREASE?

Yes. The annual charge will increase each year in accordance with the legal transfer agreement. The increase is calculated in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) and as shown by the formula set out below:

Example
Levy payable = $\frac{\text{£A} \times (\text{£100})}{\text{B}}$

A = All items index figure of the index of Retail Prices published by the Department of Employment ("the index") for the month preceding the 1st February in the relevant year

B = All items index figure of the Index published for February 2003

A discount of 50% was allowed for payment of the levy by DD. At the Westpark Levy Trust's discretion this discount can also be allowed if the levy is paid in full and by the due dates as demanded.

7. WHO COLLECTS THE WPL NOW?

Kingston Property Services have collected the levy on behalf of the WPLT since 2019. Levy demands are sent out annually in January of each year accompanied by the Trust's annual newsletter. The collection agreement is reviewed annually in September.

8. WHO MANAGES THE WPL?

The Trust are responsible for the day-to-day management of the levy funds.

9. WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T PAY.

The levy is due following the demand notice to be sent out each January. Should payment not be received by the due date, Kingston will make effort to contact you with a follow up notice, after which outstanding payments will be recovered using their standard debt recovery mechanism.

10. WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I AM UNCLEAR OF MY LEGAL OBLIGATIONS?

You should contact the Solicitor who handled the conveyance of your home and who should have advised you of your obligations at the time of purchase.

11. WILL THE WPL HOLD UP THE SALE OF MY HOME?

Depending on your funders or own requirements, the process could take a number of weeks, so please inform your conveyancing team about the WPL so that work can get started as soon as possible. You must make sure that your account in respect of the WPL is paid in full prior to completion of your sale as it will be unable to be transferred until payments are up to date.

A deed of covenant will need to be entered into by the buyer of your home and a certificate issued by the Trust. You can contact Kingston Property Services who are authorised on behalf of Westpark Levy to assist with this and you can find contact information on their website

www.kingstonpropertyservices.co.uk

Kingston Property Services currently charge a fee of £132 inc VAT to deal with post completion matters including the issuing of the required compliance certificate. (Price correct until September 2025).

If a deed of variation is required for a property in Phase 1 then our solicitors BHP Law will charge £325 plus VAT.

(Price correct until September 2025).

NB. Information and plans may be subject to change. Please access www.friendsofwestpark.com for up to date information.



Phase 1

Westpark levy maps are for illustrative purposes only and may be subject to change. For precise boundary positions please refer to land registry title plan.



Westpark Levy Plan

WESTPARK GARDEN VILLAGE LEVY INFORMATION (Phase 2)

1. WHAT IS THE WPGVL?

The WPGVL is a perpetual yearly estate charge. There is a legal obligation for each homeowner to pay the WPGVL as contained in the legal transfer of the property. When buying, selling, or remortgaging a property in Westpark, your mortgage provider or conveyancing specialist may need further information about the Westpark Garden Village Levy and its status regarding your property.

The WPGVL has specific aims and objectives. These are:

- Support the provision of non-statutory environmental improvements such as landscaping and enhanced maintenance
- Interpretation and management facilities, community and voluntary projects and education and arts initiatives in the Westpark locality and surrounding areas.

The WPGVL place these objectives into their wider plan of

- Caring for the environment in and around the Westpark Garden Village
- Sharing great green spaces with the community, while building and supporting a creative and inclusive community.
- Daring in what we do to make a positive difference. This can be seen through innovation and delivery of solutions to challenges through effective spending of the levy and generating external funding.

2. WHAT PROPERTIES ARE SUBJECT TO THE WPGVL?

Properties paying the WPGVL are generally shown on the Open Space Plan (coloured beige) with street names shown where allocated. Properties on the Stag House Farm development (developed by Esh, Barratts & David Wilson Homes are NOT included in this Levy).

3. WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF THE OPEN SPACE LAND COVERED BY THE WPGVL?

The **Open Space Plan shown on page 24** shows the following areas (coloured light green on the Open Space Plan) of the anticipated open space. The areas and anticipated dates of delivery (as shown on the Open Space Plan) are indicative and subject to change as the development progresses.

Water Corridor

This open space, which extends to around 0.6 hectare, is the continuation of the existing open space at Westpark to which it connects from Edward Pease Way, through Mortimer Wheeler Drive to end at Newton Lane. From Newton Lane, the open space links to the existing open space at the adjoining Stag House development site. This section of open space is planned for completion following the adjoining housing development phases from 2026.

The Bund

This is the largest area of open space running along the AIM and is designed to provide protection from noise and air pollution. It intends to be around 4.50 hectares and incorporates a series of open spaces linked by paths to the adjoining green infrastructure. As the bund will use topsoil and subsoils arising from the development, its completion will follow the housing phases.

The Haven

This area adjoins the Bund and links through to Black Poplar Avenue via drainage ponds for the development providing a further area of open space of around 2.1 hectares. Some of this open space is already accessible and further areas will be completed as the development progresses to completion.

Cow Green Children's Play Park

This is located on Edward Pease Way and comprises around 1.5 hectare of land (coloured dark green on the Open Space Plan) to be transferred to Darlington Borough Council for a new play park. The funds for developing the play park are included in the Section 106 planning obligations (ref: 15/00450/OUT) and have been paid by the developers to Darlington Borough Council. Presently expected to open in 2025.

Art Strategy: Yielding Wielding Shielding

Each area of open space will include art features, the concept for which are derived from the three surrounding medieval villages of Archdeacon Newton, Whessoe and Cockerton.

4. WPGVL MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE

The WPGVL is managed by a Charitable Incorporated Organisation named Westpark Levy Trust Charity Number 1186861 (the Trust). The Trust's objective is to promote, for the benefit of the inhabitants of Westpark and the surrounding area, the provision

of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who can benefit from such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

Volunteer Trustees are the people responsible for controlling the work, management and administration of the charity, the majority of which are WPGVL. The Trustees meet quarterly. Any member of the community can apply to be a Trustee if they feel they have specific skills and knowledge needed by the Trust. Community meetings are held quarterly to engage with users regarding the levy and its management.

Interested parties can see where funding has been spent on the Trust's website www.friendsofwestpark.com and in the annual newsletter. There are also published Annual reports including audited accounts and minutes of meetings available on the website.

5. WHAT IS THE ANNUAL CHARGE IN RESPECT OF THE WPGVL?

The current charge is based on £150 per annum RPI indexed linked from 2019 collected annually for the period from and including the 1st February to the 31st January in each year.

6. WILL THE ANNUAL CHARGE INCREASE?

Yes. The annual charge will increase each year in accordance with the legal transfer agreement. The increase is calculated in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) and as shown by the formula set out below:

Example
Levy payable = $\frac{A \times (\text{£}150)}{B}$

A = All items index figure of the index of Retail Prices published by the Department of Employment ("the index") for the month preceding the 1st February in the relevant year

B = All items index figure of the Index published for February 2019

NB. Information and plans may be subject to change. Please access www.friendsofwestpark.com for up to date information.

7. WHO COLLECTS THE WPGVL NOW?

Kingston Property Services have collected the levy on behalf of the WPLT since 2019. Levy demands are sent out annually in January of each year accompanied by the Trust's annual newsletter. The collection agreement is reviewed annually in September.

8. WHO MANAGES THE WPGVL?

The Trust is responsible for the day-to-day management of the levy funds.

9. WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T PAY.

The WPGVL is due following the demand notice to be sent out each January. Should payment not be received by the due date, Kingston will make effort to contact you with a follow up notice, after which outstanding payments will be recovered using their standard debt recovery mechanism.

10. WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I AM UNCLEAR OF MY LEGAL OBLIGATIONS?

You should contact the Solicitor who handled the conveyance of your home and who should have advised you of your obligations at the time of purchase.

11. WILL THE WPGVL HOLD UP THE SALE OF MY HOME?

Depending on your funders or own requirement the process could take a number of weeks, so please inform your conveyancing team about the WPGVL so that work can get started as soon as possible. You must make sure that your account in respect of the WPGVL is paid in full prior to completion of your sale as it will be unable to be transferred until payments are up to date.

A deed of covenant will need to be entered into by the buyer of your home and a certificate issued by the Westpark Levy Trust. You can contact Kingston Property Services who are authorised on behalf of Westpark Levy to assist with this and you can find contact information on their website www.kingstonpropertyservices.co.uk.

Kingston Property Services currently charge a fee of £132 incl VAT to deal with post completion matters including the issuing of the required compliance certificate. (Price correct until September 2025)

If a deed of variation is required for a property in Phase 1 then our solicitors BHP Law will charge £325 plus VAT (Price correct until September 2025).



Whatever Next?

2025 brings some new changes. The Friends of Westpark Community Meetings are going to be on Saturday mornings in the Winter months and on Thursday evenings during the lighter nights. We hope this will make accessibility easier for busy families who want to be more involved but couldn't make it due to the timing. Thanks to the Administration team at West Park Academy who have been working with us to find a workable solution to enable this to go ahead.

We are eager for even more members of the community to join us to share their skills, volunteering as and when they can without the responsibility of becoming a trustee.



West Park Academy

SPORTS FACILITIES HIRE

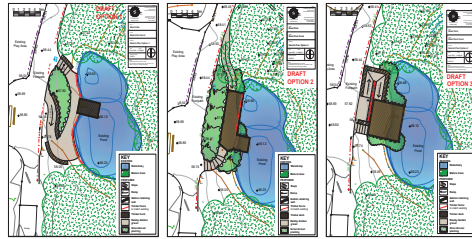
We are keen to open our sports facilities for community use when the school is closed. We have:

- HALL WITH A SPRUNG FLOOR,
- FLOODLIT MULTI-USE GAMES AREA
- PLAYING FIELDS

If you are interested in hiring these facilities or know a sporting organisation that would, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

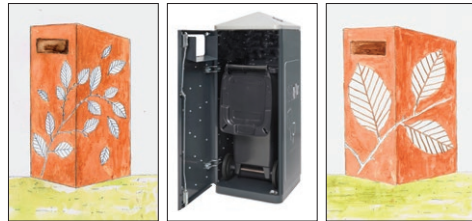
E: admin@westparkacademy.org.uk
Telephone: 01325 380792

We look forward to seeing the first strategic greenspace in Phase 2 at Cow Green. We would love to hear from you about what further enhancements could be incorporated into the designs at the earliest opportunity. Be bold, think about what great things you have seen in other green spaces in towns and cities you have visited, which we might be able to incorporate.



POND UPGRADE

2025 will see more community consultation and final proofs of enhancements and improvements around litter bins across the site and a significant habitat and community improvement around the pond area opposite the play area.



BIN ENCLOSURE OPTIONS

We will keep an eye on development opportunities to progress a community facility near Mortimer Wheeler Drive.

We will develop an action plan based on the Ecologists' findings from their survey in 2024 to increase Biodiversity in the medium term.

We look forward to seeing bigger and better bins to reduce litter and abandoned dog waste. Along with new signage and notice boards to link the phases.

Join in celebrating 20 years of Westpark by volunteering or attending our 2025 events.

If you don't want to miss out on things going on in the community then please sign up to our mailing list and if your able join us at a Friends of Westpark Community meeting.

Voices of Westpark

Resident's Perspective

"As a parent, I can't say enough good things about the park here. The playground is always clean and safe, and my kids love spending time there. It's a great place for them to run around and play, and I don't have to worry. I know the levy might seem like just another bill, but when you see how well the park is looked after, it's clear it's worth it. It's a small price to pay to have such a great place for our kids to enjoy."

— Paul, Resident and Parent

Estate Agent's Perspective

"I've seen firsthand how the quality of open spaces impacts property value. High-quality, well-maintained parkland like Westpark adds genuine value to homes. Buyers today are willing to pay a premium for properties that offer easy access to clean, safe green spaces, especially those with family-friendly amenities and community involvement. The Westpark Levy plays a crucial role in maintaining these spaces, ensuring they remain vibrant, welcoming, and secure. This levy enhances both property desirability and value, making it a sound investment for homeowners. Selling points like these give homeowners a definite advantage."

— Ray Minto, Estate Agent, Savills Newcastle

Head Teacher's Perspective

"Having Westpark right next door is a huge benefit for our pupils. The park provides a space for outdoor learning, from nature walks to science observations, making lessons more engaging. Access to green spaces also supports our pupils' mental wellness, giving them a place to explore, play, and relax. It's a joy to see the positive impact that this wonderful park has on their learning and happiness every day."

— Sam Hirst, Principal, Westpark Academy

Green Flag Award® Perspective

"Westpark earned high praise for its well-maintained facilities, clean environment, and inspiring artwork. Litter is managed effectively, and the landscaping—including beautiful wildflower areas—adds a natural touch. The park also excels in community engagement, with event notices and positive feedback from visitors. Clear signage, accessible paths, and CCTV help make the park safe and welcoming for all."

— Green Flag 'Mystery Shopper' Assessor

Resident's Perspective

"Westpark's facilities have been a godsend for us older residents. The park is always clean and feels safe, thanks in part to the CCTV cameras that have been installed. It's reassuring to know that there's an extra layer of security when we're out for a walk or meeting friends. I often think back to when we were young, and there was very little in terms of community spaces. Nowadays, community activities are fading everywhere, but not here. Thanks to the levy, we have a space that brings people together and makes our neighbourhood feel like a real community. It's more than just a park—it's a lifeline for staying active and engaged."

— Susan, Resident

Architect's Perspective

"As an architect, I understand how crucial the surrounding environment is to the overall experience of living in a home. Green spaces like Westpark aren't just decorative—they contribute to a sense of well-being and community. These areas create a connection to nature, offering residents a peaceful escape and a place to gather. Without a levy like Westpark's, maintaining these high-quality, thoughtfully designed spaces would be impossible. The levy ensures that the park remains an integral part of the development, providing a valuable amenity for everyone, from families with young children to those seeking quiet moments of reflection. Most modern developments require such levies to create and maintain quality spaces, and without them, open spaces would be non-existent or of poor quality."

— Michael Chou, Architect

Councils Perspective

"The council funds basic upkeep for parks through Council Tax, but the Westpark Levy lets the community go further. This levy gives residents a direct say in improving and enhancing our park beyond the essentials, creating a space that reflects our community's values. It's an opportunity for people to shape the future of their neighbourhood, and those who volunteer their time deserve our full support. This democratic approach not only maintains but elevates our local environment, ensuring Westpark is a place we can all take pride in."

— Pippa, Park Ranger, Darlington Borough Council



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION 2025

The Trust wants to hear again from the community about the direction of the Trust. We love to hear about what's great about Westpark, what needs to be improved and enhanced and the direction the community wants to travel along. This year's focus is on green spaces and what enhancements and improvements we should be looking at developing and delivering. You can take part in this year's survey by visiting our website friendsofwestpark.com/community-consultation.

Or Scan the QR code



Have
your say &
WIN
up to
£100

The Westpark Levy Trust and Darlington Borough Council meet each year to update and agree the Park's Management, Maintenance and Partnership Plan which is submitted as part of the park's Green Flag application.

The plan sets out what planned maintenance the council commits to do as part of its plan to manage green

spaces across the Borough. Such things as Health and Safety inspections, repairs, emptying the litter bins, cutting the grass and managing the perennial wildflowers while maintaining a biodiversity record and organising community litter picks. The partnership plan helps show where the Trust will use the Levy to expand and improve the basic maintenance and projects provided by the Council to save cost and time such as the expansion of the community orchard and the additional wild flower areas. It also shows where the Trust expects to lead on enhancements and improvements brought to us via community and Green Flag Judge feedback. We look at the best value and methods that can be achieved, while constantly considering if we can be daring to go the extra mile to make them the best they can be for the community and long lasting.

You can view the current plans at <https://friendsofwestpark.com/green-flag-award>

**Help your
community!**

The 2025 Community Survey will take you through the green flag judging criteria, and we are asking you to judge our park to see how the community interacts with our green spaces and what enhancement and improvements we should be looking at developing and delivering.

Users of the park and residents are experts in your lived experiences of using the park and by sharing these with us we can understand themes and common issues which we can look to address.

We can also see where there is community consensus on potential enhancements and improvement projects.

