

# 2014 2015

ANNUAL REPORT

**2014/2015 was a busy year which saw changes to some Council services.**

Firstly, a partnership with Northumberland County Council was established which has resulted in an improvement of local services with the addition of the extra five full-time staff and two apprentices who work solely across Seaton Valley.

Grass cutting started slightly later than expected due to the training of the Partnership team, which led to the first few cuts leaving a lot of laying grass. Over the season this diminished to present a high quality grass cut on an average of every 8-9 days.

Weed spraying was completed twice throughout the season, with problematic areas being treated by further manual spraying.

During the winter work programme all villages had the majority of hedges and edge work completed, any areas that were not serviced will be dealt with during wet weather or during the early weeks of 2015 winter works.

The bus shelter cleaning programme has made a significant improvement to the appearance of our shelters and enhances the experience of waiting for public transport.

The Community Champions group and the development of the postcard reporting system has assisted in highlighting through residents' observations how services have improved or where we need to concentrate on other areas. The number of concerns throughout 2014 has decreased across all services down from 49 queries in June 2014 to only 1 query in March 2015.

Seaton Valley Community Council has been supporting the In Bloom group since 2011, our continued involvement was reflected in Northumbria in Bloom Competition 2014 awards. During 2014, we changed the service providers for our floral planting, resulting in beautiful displays of spring bedding. The old rose beds on Beresford Road, Seaton Sluice and the A190 in Seghill have been transformed by reworking to floral bedding.

Three new bus shelters have been installed during 2014, four more have been ordered and we are awaiting installation. The new bus shelter replacement programme has been completed and agreed at Council. By 2020/21, all of the metal bus shelters within Seaton Valley will have been replaced and will have a life expectancy of 20 years. The brick and stone bus shelters that have been repaired and are due to be painted during early summer this year, will be reviewed on an annual basis.

All Seaton Valley playgrounds have had essential work, in accordance with 2014 ROSPA reports. Hallington Drive Park in Seaton Delaval has been reinstated with new equipment purchased by Section 106 monies and County Council Members' Local improvement Schemes.

Seaton Valley is responsible for 11 allotment sites, of which one is now successfully running as a self-managed allotment association. During 2014, we held several open days to help reduce the waiting list, allocating plots to 31 residents in Seaton Valley. The waiting list now holds a manageable 74 people. The development of a 5 year plan for the allotments has begun by the production of an Allotment Letting and Management Policy and the plan to let all available plots by August 2015. Internal hedges along the main paths have been cut down to encourage plot holders to take responsibility for the appearance of their site as a whole, not just their own plot. Another site has asked SVC to consider an application for becoming a self-managed site, which is at present being looked at.





A new staffing team was put in place in September. Lorraine Fox was appointed as Services Officer and Graham Bone is the Engagement and Development Officer.

For the first time, each village had its own Christmas tree switch-on event. We will be working with the community to enhance these events which last year included music, roast chestnuts and food, carol singing and the traditional children's Christmas light design competition.

It is important that the Council communicate its work and services to residents more effectively; we produced our first newsletter and in future we will issue a newsletter four times per year.

The Council continued to work in partnership with Active Northumberland to provide a range of leisure activities for those young and not so young including events during the holidays. We continued to work with Northumberland Youth Service to support an additional youth worker based in Seghill, and to

support youth clubs and detached youth work across Seaton Valley.

We continued to support the annual Village Fairs and Galas and other community- led events in all the villages.

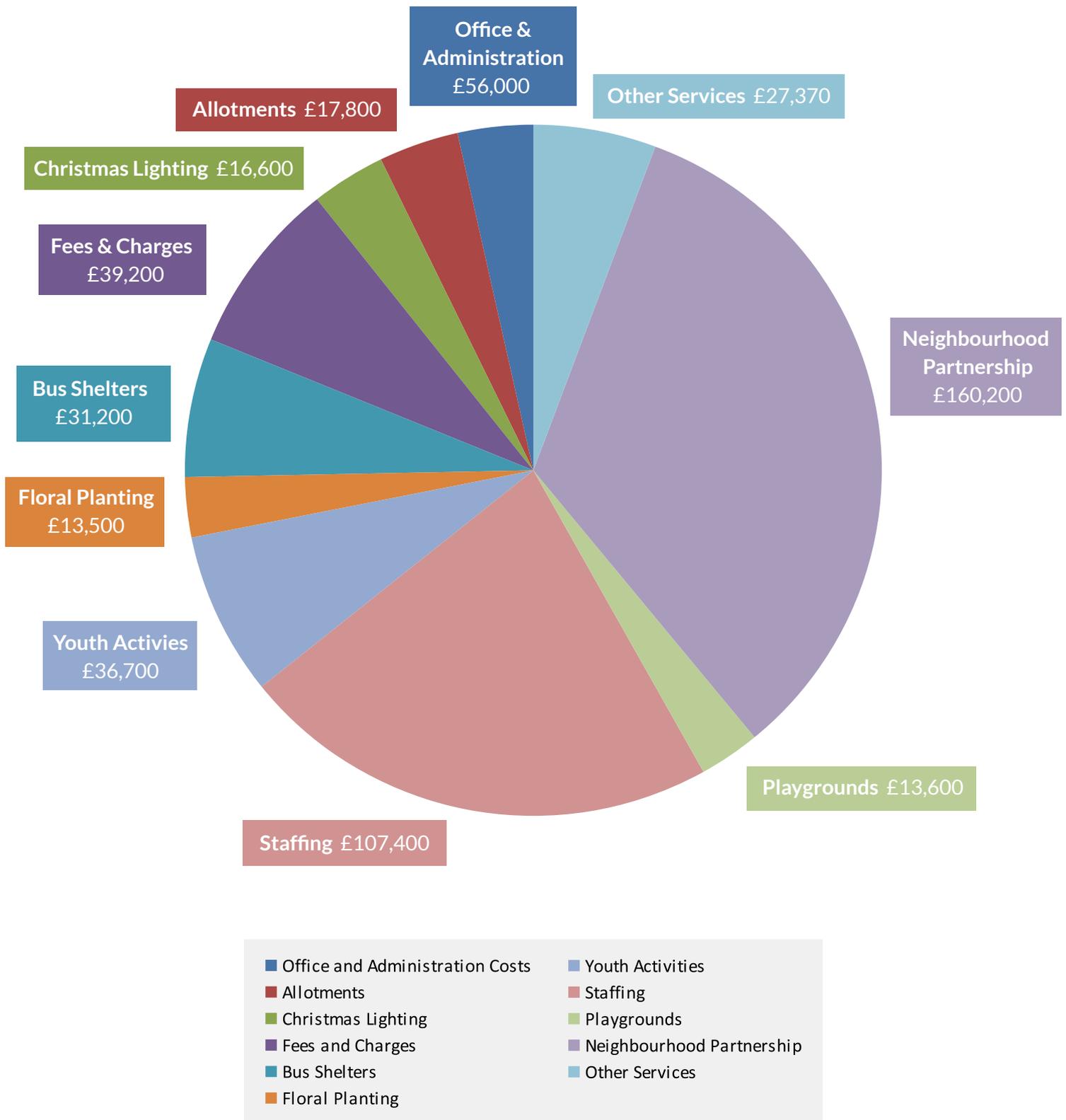
### Where Does Our Money Come From?

Approximately 96% of the Council's income comes from its annual precept which it serves on Northumberland County Council. In 2014/15 the Council's precept was £474,020 which is collected via residents Council Tax bills. Seaton Valley Community Councils Band D equivalent Council Tax for 2014/15 was £109.67, which equates to approximately £2.11 per week.

In addition to precept income the Council collects rent on both the two flats it owns above its offices and on the ten allotment sites it manages throughout the 'Valley'. In total this income amounted to £20,600 in 2014/15.

## Where Do We Spend Our Money?

In 2014/15 the Council spent £480,370 on a range of services, salaries and running costs. These costs are summarised in the Pie Chart shown below.



Should you require any further information relating to the Income and Expenditure of the Council then please contact the Clerk, Simon Potts via telephone on 0191 2379870 or via email at [clerk@seatonvalleycommunitycouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@seatonvalleycommunitycouncil.gov.uk)