

news

YOUR 2026 NEWSLETTER FROM WESTPARK LEVY TRUST



Westpark: Where Nature, Heritage and Community join together

**Contacts
and useful
numbers.
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Award...we've
done it again!
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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

PCSO 30263 Tyler Mellor

Email: Tyler.Mellor@durham.police.uk

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 Community Meeting dates for your 2026 diary

Monday 16th February 2026

Meeting & Cow Green Consultation 4.30 - 7.00pm

Thursday June 4th 2026 5.30 - 7.00pm

Thursday September 3rd 2026 5.30 -7.00pm

Saturday 7th November 2026 10.00 - 11.30am

At West Park Academy

Through New Eyes



A warm Westpark welcome to all our readers, neighbours, and friends — and especially to those of you joining us for the first time.

Maybe you've just moved in, or you've lived here for years and still find new footpaths you hadn't noticed before. Either way, this newsletter is for you — a look at where Westpark came from, where it's today, and where we're going next.

2025 marked 20 years since the first stones were laid and the first trees planted. Back then, this was just a bold plan to transform a brownfield site into something greener, more liveable, and more imaginative. Today it's home to over 700 households, a Green Flag-awarded park, and a community that still believes in caring, sharing, and daring. If you're new here, welcome to that legacy. If you've been here a while, we hope you'll see it again with fresh eyes.

In this year's newsletter, you'll find updates on infrastructure improvements, new habitat areas, and long-term ambitions — from ecology to events, signage to strategy. You'll read how community feedback helped shape popular events like Music on the Hill, and how local volunteers are keeping Westpark active and inclusive. You'll see how the Trust is continuing to invest in newly transferred green spaces in Phase 2. Plans for a permanent community facility remain delayed, but we aren't deterred.

We've also included findings from the recent ecology survey, which maps how wildlife has flourished across the park. These insights will guide how we plant, manage and protect the landscape as it continues to evolve. Everything we do is built on the principle that Westpark isn't finished — it's growing, and that growth only works if people like you take part and get involved in any way you can. So whether you're just settling in or already feel rooted here, we hope you'll get involved. Share your thoughts in the Community Survey, drop in to a Friends meeting or send an email, join us at an event or on a guided walk.

You'll see how the Trust is continuing to invest in newly transferred green spaces from Phase 2, even as plans for a permanent community facility remain delayed.

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.



JOSEPH GARDNER: TRUSTEE

“ I moved to Westpark from Manchester a year ago and was really impressed with Westpark and its 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.

New Trustees

Westpark Levy Trust is a charity run by volunteers committed to the local community, comprising Levy payers and local people who share their skills, experience and share their passion for the area.

Trustees meet four times a year to lead the charity in meeting its charitable aims, ensuring prudent finances and to take responsibility for how best to spend the Levy. We are looking to recruit new

Trustees who love our green space and community and want to see it develop, helping to grow its range of activities and facilities while improving the environment. We are particularly looking for local people who want to share their skills and energy to help ensure that the group is diverse and can represent the make-up of the community, particularly as our community grows.

Visit our website www.friendsofwestpark.com/wplt for information.



Westpark: Flying the Green Flag of Excellence for a decade

The Green Flag Award is the international benchmark for well-managed parks and green spaces. It celebrates places that provide safe, welcoming, and environmentally sustainable areas for everyone to enjoy.

Westpark has consistently achieved the prestigious Green Flag Award, a mark of quality for parks and green spaces across the UK since 2015. Here's why our community loves it – and why you should visit and get involved.

A Welcoming, Safe Space

- The park feels very safe with good sight lines and a strong community feel.
- Entranceways with stone sculptures are all well-maintained.
- Paths are in very good condition and accessible to all.
- A really nice, unique site to walk around.



Beautiful Natural Environment

- The wildflower meadows are very impressive. Wet areas and small ponds increase biodiversity.
- Large areas of meadow and new woodlands offer significant nature conservation opportunities.
- The community orchard area is a great idea and will add to the character of the Park over time.



Explore your park

Discover a park that's safe, beautiful, and full of life. Explore for walks, events, and volunteering opportunities – your community park is waiting for you!

Heritage and Art

- Heritage is very well represented with the sculptures that are on site.
- The art and poetry features located throughout the site make reference to both wildlife and industrial heritage.
- A lot of thought has gone into the sculptures, recognising the past history of the site.



Community at the Heart

- There is very good community involvement.
- Active Friends group involved in forward planning for the site.
- Good use of the site for community events and with local schools.
- The partnership approach to site management and the involvement of the Friends group is very impressive and will ensure the longer-term success of this park.



Clean, Well-Maintained & Sustainable

- Very little sign of litter and dog litter issues are managed. Fences and paths are in good order.
- Management operations require very low to zero chemical input into the site, and no peat is used.
- Thinned wood waste is used to create habitat piles within the plantations.



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.

Consultation event plan for the Friends Group meeting on Monday 16th February 2026 at West Park Academy 4.30pm



CATCASTLE STONE AND COR-TEN STEEL COGS

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 West 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 parts. Each part will be accompanied by one part of a riddle, and elsewhere in the playpark will be hidden the three answers.

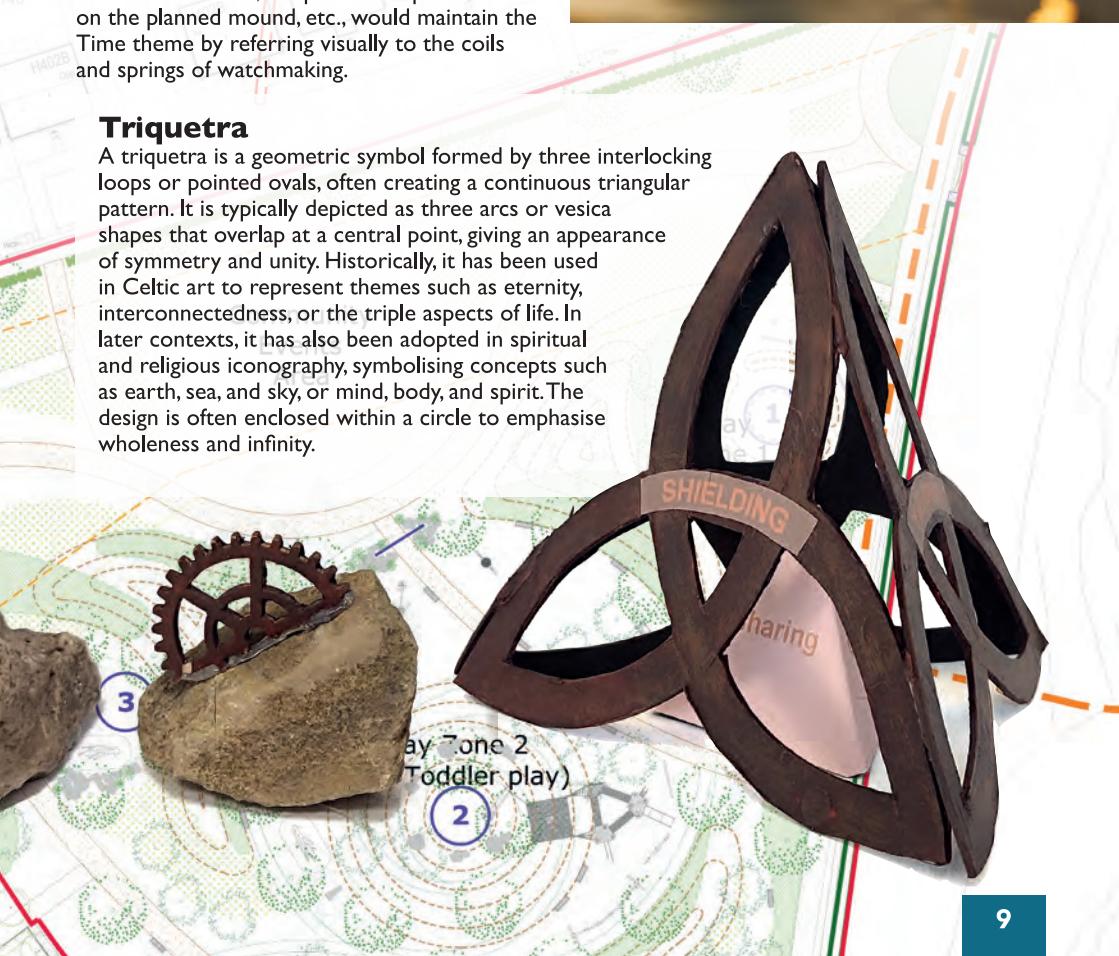
So there will be six pieces in total, again cast in a manner that enables rubbings to be taken, which can be reassembled into a larger image. While the text and artwork here are based around the sundial, the paths and spiral motifs on the planned mound, etc., would maintain the Time theme by referring visually to the coils and springs of watchmaking.

Triquetra

A triquetra is a geometric symbol formed by three interlocking loops or pointed ovals, often creating a continuous triangular pattern. It is typically depicted as three arcs or vesica shapes that overlap at a central point, giving an appearance of symmetry and unity. Historically, it has been used in Celtic art to represent themes such as eternity, interconnectedness, or the triple aspects of life. In later contexts, it has also been adopted in spiritual and religious iconography, symbolising concepts such as earth, sea, and sky, or mind, body, and spirit. The design is often enclosed within a circle to emphasise wholeness and infinity.



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.



Westpark Arts Strategy

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 further, 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.



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 parts. 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, Phase 2's complementary themes are being 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 also 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)

During 2025, the Trustees visited 'The Story' in Durham and viewed several local archeological finds on which the sculptures will be based.

1. Januarius Discussions have begun to construct large-scale sculptures 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.

2. Sound Mirror A sculpture to be situated on the Bund as a 'listening post', reconceptualising the sound of the A1 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

Teesdale's Special Flora

Places, plants and people



Margaret E. Bradshaw



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.

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 such as 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 be altered 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.

Investing in Nature, Community, and Creativity

This year's spending of over £86,000 reflects our commitment to protecting the environment, supporting local people, and daring to innovate. Every pound contributes to a greener, stronger, and more vibrant community. You can see the exact figures on our website, friendsofwestpark.com/ Caring for the Environment



Water Corridor Tree Renewal

Restores natural habitats, improves air quality, and strengthens local biodiversity.

Westpark Management Plan Enhancements

Long-term investment in maintaining and improving green spaces for wildlife and residents.

Additional Wildflower Planting

Expands pollinator-friendly areas, bringing colour and life to our community spaces.

Bins and Noticeboards

Encourages responsible waste disposal and provides clear information, helping keep parks clean and welcoming.

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



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/



Strengthening Community Life

Community Meetings

Creates opportunities for residents to share ideas and shape decisions locally.

20th Anniversary Summer Event

Brings families together, promotes outdoor activity, and builds pride in our shared spaces.

Event and Volunteer Insurance

Ensures events and facilities are safe, reliable, and accessible for everyone.



Festive Celebrations

Choirs, bands, and tree lighting bring joy, tradition, and togetherness during the winter season.

Daring to Try New Things

Gazebos

Flexible infrastructure for outdoor events, rain or shine, supporting creativity in how gatherings are hosted.



Web Domain & Hosting

Expands our digital presence, making information accessible and modernising communication.



Woollen Post Box Topper

A playful, creative touch that celebrates local identity and sparks community pride. Thanks to Haughton Ladies Who Knit.

Annual Accounts

Transparent reporting ensures trust and accountability in how funds are used.

Looking Ahead: Spending Focus for 2026

In 2026, our focus is on projects that bring lasting benefits to families, nature, and community life.

Cow Green Play Park

With developer contributions and support from the Westpark Levy Trust, we'll add enhancements to create a flexible, year-round play and community space at the heart of Phase 2 of the Garden Village.

Westpark Pond Decking

A new decking project will improve access and enjoyment of the play area pond for both the community and nature. The main contractor will be appointed in early 2026, with completion expected later in the year.

Nature & Green Spaces

Guided by the Biodiversity Net Gain report and Green Flag judge feedback, we'll continue to invest in improvements that protect wildlife and make our park and green spaces even more welcoming.

Community Events

While overall spending will be scaled back, a healthy budget remains to support volunteers in leading vibrant events that bring people together throughout 2026.

These plans reflect our commitment to community-friendly spaces, environmental care, and community spirit—ensuring Westpark continues to grow as a place where nature thrives, and people feel proud to belong.

Bringing the Community Together

20 Years of Westpark: Making a Song and Dance About It

In 2025, we marked Westpark's 20th anniversary by doing what the community asked for – bringing people together through music. Over two summers, Music on the Hill turned the park into a festival space, full of life, sound, and connection. It was about more than entertainment – it gave neighbours a reason to meet, families a place to relax, and everyone a chance to feel part of something shared.

There were live bands, tribute acts, roaming dinosaurs, craft stalls, food vendors, and free activities for all ages. Kids played. Grown-ups danced. And the sun even made an appearance (mostly).

Behind the scenes, the festival took planning, support, and over £26,000 in 2025 alone, funded by the Levy. If we want to keep it going, we'll need more time to plan and more people to help make it happen.

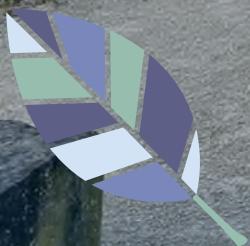
These events prove what's possible when we work together. If you'd like to get involved – with ideas, time, or a helping hand – we'd love to hear from you.

email: events@westparklevytrust.org.uk



ITS NAME

THIS IS *LOCOMO*



Westpark 2026



01

JANUARY 2026

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02

FEBRUARY 2026

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03

MARCH 2026

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04

APRIL 2026

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MAY 2026

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06

JUNE 2026

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07

JULY 2026

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08

AUGUST 2026

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09

SEPTEMBER 2026

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10

OCTOBER 2026

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11

NOVEMBER 2026

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12

DECEMBER 2026

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= Friends of Westpark Meeting Dates

CALENDAR COMPETITION

Our 2026 Calendar is made up of the fantastic images we received through the photography competition we ran throughout 2025. 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

Photographer:
CHRIS HOOPER

Title:
A Winter Wander in Westpark

MAY

Photographer:
LAURA COVERDALE
Title:
Nature

SEPTEMBER

Photographer:
CHELSEY PEART
Title:
Highlighting Nature

FEBRUARY & WINNER

Photographer:
DIANE WILSON

Title:
Morning Meanders

JUNE

Photographer:
MARK BOWMAN
Title:
Luna loves the daffs

OCTOBER

Photographer:
ROHAN KERR
Title:
Highlighting Nature

MARCH

Photographer:
STACEY BRADLEY

Title:
Among the Daffodils

JULY

Photographer:
MARK BOWMAN
Title:
Bee's buzzing in the beds

NOVEMBER

Photographer:
ROHAN KERR
Title:
Highlighting Nature

APRIL

Photographer:
DAMIEN HUGHF
Title:
In the park

AUGUST

Photographer:
JANE SNELL
Title:
Colourful Blooms

DECEMBER

Photographer:
MARK BOWMAN
Title:
Last Christmas

2027 Calendar COMPETITION

2026 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 2027 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 2026 for a 2027 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

PRIZES
TO BE
WON
...so get
snapping!

Deadline
for entries is
midnight
on 30th
November
2026



DIANE WILSON

**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.

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.

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.



Cooplards 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.



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.



leader for our social goals and community-led programmes.



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 sustainably sourced products of exceptional quality and value.

Westpark has a great selection of independent, regional, and national businesses that 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.



Railway Housing Association

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

Kids.1st

Kids 1st 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 2025.





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

Westpark Levy Information (Phase 1)

I. 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

Example

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

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.

below:

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.



**KINGSTON
OPEN SPACES**

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 £120 plus VAT to deal with post completion matters including the issuing of the required compliance certificate. (Price correct until September 2026).

If a deed of variation is required for a property in Phase I then our solicitors BHP Law will charge £350 plus VAT.

(Price correct until September 2026).

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

Phase 1



Westpark Levy Plan



Westpark Garden Village Levy Information (Phase 2)

I. 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 Peaseway 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, Whesoe 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

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

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.



**KINGSTON
OPEN SPACES**

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?

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9. WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T PAY?

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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.

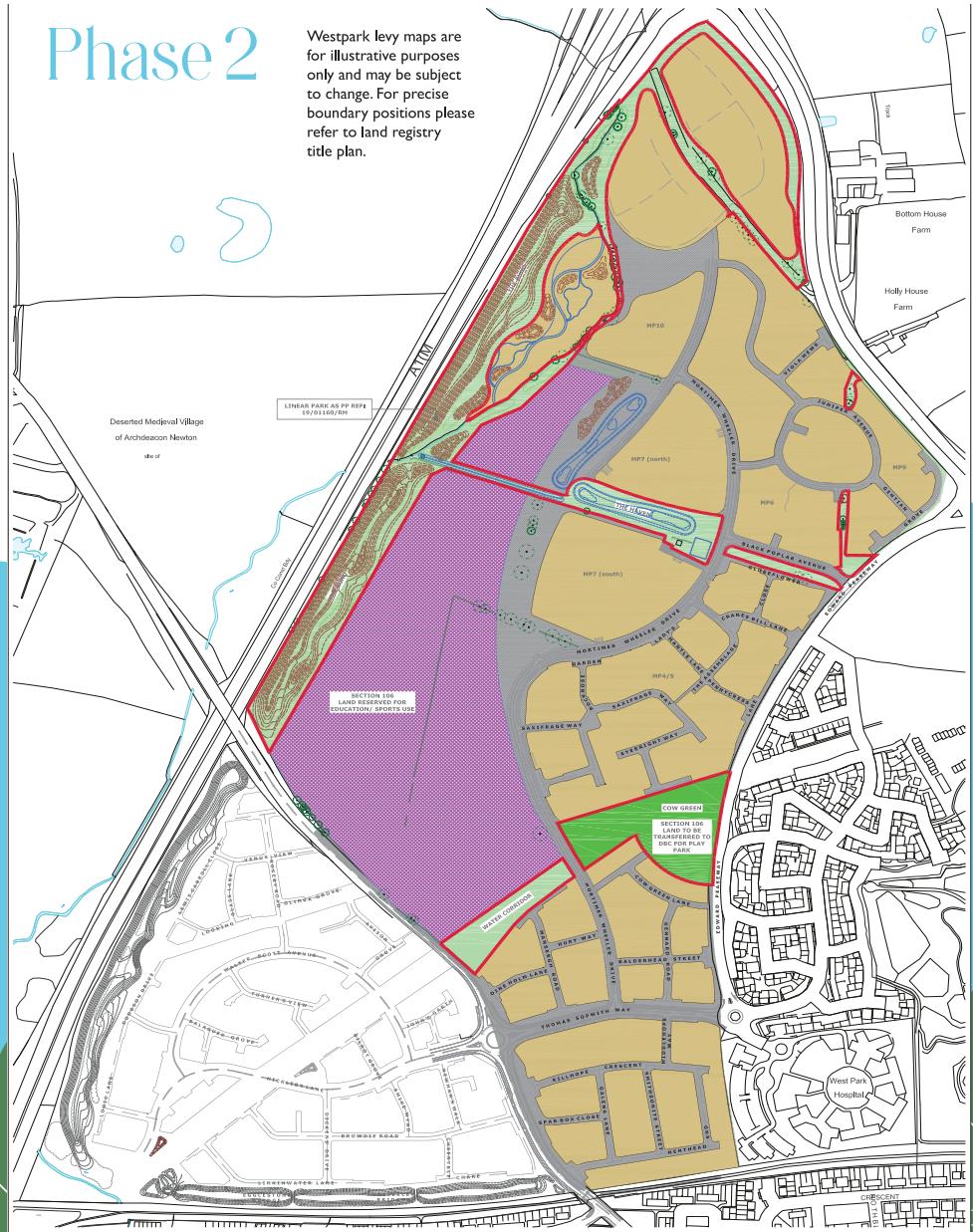
Kingston Property Services currently charge a fee of £120 plus VAT to deal with post completion matters including the issuing of the required compliance certificate. (Price correct until September 2026)

If a deed of variation is required for a property in Phase I then our solicitors BHP Law will charge £350 plus VAT (Price correct until September 2026).

Westpark Garden Village Open Space Plan

Phase 2

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 through the years

2025



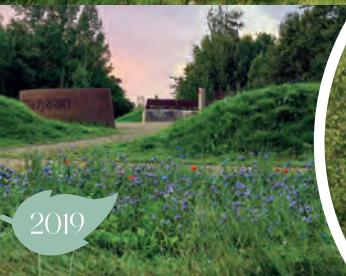
2023



2022



2019



2018



2009



2003



1930s



Developer Update

Bussey & Armstrong Homes

ESTABLISHED: 1902

2025 marked 20 years since Westpark first opened – Darlington's first new park in nearly a century. Take a look at the aerial photos on our website. Hard to believe how far we've come.

We've planted over 46,000 trees, and they've done more than just survive – they've made the landscape their own. The play park has been redeveloped, with further improvements to the West Beck pond now signed off. A new water corridor links the village centre to the latest homes, strengthening green connections.

The community is thriving with a village centre that includes shops, a café, a pub, a nursery, and a Primary School.

The Westpark Garden Village phase has delivered a new link road to Newton Lane and into the wider countryside. Plans are in place for a new Doctors' Surgery and additional community facilities, set within a linear park that will thread back to the village centre through the green corridors.

Looking ahead, future street names will explore even more of Teesdale and Weardale's cultural, artistic, industrial, and ecological past.



2025 also marked the 200th anniversary of the first railway journey between Darlington and Stockton. We proudly supported the celebrations, and plans are underway for sculptures in the park to honour Westpark's close ties to the town's railway legacy.

A lot's changed since we laid the first stone here – but it's the people that make it. And if we've done it right, Westpark feels like somewhere you'd want to stay, put down roots, and belong.

We hope, together, we've made something people feel inspired to call home.



For more about Westpark's story and what's next, visit: www.busseyarmstrong.co.uk.

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

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

Help your
community!

The 2026 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 enhancements and improvements we should be looking at developing and delivering.

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

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

Biodiversity update 2026

Westpark Biodiversity Net Gain Study & Darlington Borough Council Climate Change & Nature Strategy

Westpark is where Darlington's Climate & Nature Strategy takes root—literally.

Together, we can make it a beacon of resilience, biodiversity, and community pride.

Why It Matters

- Westpark is a living example of Darlington's climate and nature goals.
- Shows how big policies can translate into local action.
- Creates spaces that are healthier, safer, and more connected for everyone.

What is BNG?

- Ensures nature is left better off after development.
- Focuses on habitat creation, restoration, and connectivity.
- Builds resilience for both wildlife and people.

How It Links to Darlington's Climate & Nature Strategy

- Nature Restoration Emergency

Key Findings for Westpark

- Baseline surveys: current habitats mapped, strengths & pressures identified.
- Targets: new meadows, hedgerows, ponds, and woodland planting.
- Connectivity: link Westpark to wider green corridors across Darlington.
- Community benefits: greener, cooler spaces, flood resilience, and wellbeing.
- Monitoring: long-term stewardship to protect gains.

Westpark delivers habitat connectivity & biodiversity recovery.

- Climate Adaptation

Trees & Sustainable urban drainage, reduce flood risk and heat stress.

- Community Engagement

Residents, schools, and groups can take part in planting & care.

- Economic & Social Value

Local green jobs, healthier neighbourhoods, and pride in place.

