

How Local Government Works in England

This is only a brief guide, further details on what is a very broad subject can be found here: [insert link]

There are differing structures across England and not all counties are organised in the same way. At the higher levels there are “Principal Authorities”, which are usually County and District Councils although in some areas there are no district councils. These Principal Authorities (which for Middleham re North Yorkshire County Council ‘NYCC’ and Richmondshire District Council ‘RDC’) have certain statutory responsibilities to provide facilities and amenities that the public and businesses rely upon. Such services are set out in the second table below “Services provided by other levels of local government”

Beneath the larger authorities are parish or town councils, which are essentially the same although the chairman of a town council is called Mayor. As with all other town and parish councils, Middleham Town Council, has relatively few statutory duties, the main ones being:

- Raising income by levying a local tax known as a ‘precept’ which is a component of the Council Tax bill paid by Town residents.
- Holding an annual meeting and at least 3 other meetings each year (MTC holds 10), all of which the public may attend
- Preparing annual accounts that are internally audited and available for inspection
- To do what it can reasonably do to reduce crime and disorder and reoffending in its area

Town Councils have wide discretionary powers enabled by various Acts of Parliament (such as the Local Government Act, 1972) to carry out a broad range of activity that is separate or incidental to the services provided by the County or District Councils. Councillors are elected to serve by residents and can choose which discretionary power they exercise, for the benefit of the community; it must not however provide any services or amenities that are the responsibility of the Principal authorities, even if local residents would like, say, additional refuse collections or improved educational facilities. It would be illegal or ultra vires for the Town Council to do that.

What MTC Does?

Acts as the sole trustee to the Charity For The Benefit Of Inhabitant Householders of Parish of Middleham (registered charity 506048) which owns land and collects rent to supplement income from the precept. Details of these land holdings are shown here [insert link]
Supervises land maintenance on behalf of the Charity, including cutting grass on the Buses and other verges within the town; maintains cobbles; looks after older trees (engaging a tree specialist), weed control on the cobbles
Owns, but does not run activities, at the Playing fields – the playing fields including the cricket ground, the pavilion and the skate park are run by the Middleham Sports and Community Wellbeing Association known as MSCWA [insert link to web page].
Issues fishing permits for Middleham residents on River Ure. If you are interested, please apply to the Town Clerk.
Grants permissions to site skips and scaffolding to be placed upon MTC land. If you wish to do so, please apply to the Town Clerk.
The Town Council is a statutory consultee for planning applications dealt within its area that from either by RDC or the Yorkshire Dales National Park.
Is building a civic burial ground on land it owns, adjacent to the Church burial ground which is now full.
Represents Middleham’s interests when consulted by other government agencies e.g., local plans, trialling charges for public toilets, changes to the health service, rural transport
Ongoing liaison with other agencies e.g. RDC, police on any of the below matters and to raise

residents' concerns on any issue, particularly where residents have not received a timely or satisfactory response.
Responds to resident's views; in recent years the Council has convened public meetings to gauge opinion on matters such as major planning applications, changes to the provision of health services at the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton, the future of the Town's playing fields. A copy of the Mayor's report to the annual town meeting in May 2018 is available here [insert link] and outlines some of the previous year's activity.
At Christmas, purchases a tree for the market square and switches on Middleham's Christmas lights [insert image?]
The Town Council has one employee, the Clerk who works 21 hours each week, normally on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, of which one day is worked from home. The Clerk provides advice and guidance on procedural matters to Councillors and provides administrative support to the Council and Charity. He may be contacted by phone 01969 625225 or email middleham-council@btconnect.com
Publishes and distributes a newsletter called 'The Middleham Herald'.

Services provided by other levels of local government

Social Housing	Richmondshire District Council. NB to apply for social housing you will need to register with RDC
Council Tax and benefits	Richmondshire District Council
Planning Applications and Middleham's Conservation Area	Richmondshire District Council
Tree preservation orders	Richmondshire District Council
Dog-related issues, such as the warden, dealing with reports of dog fouling.	Richmondshire District Council
Refuse and recycling collections (except for holiday properties), street scene (includes litter bins, dog mess)	Richmondshire District Council
Education	Middleham Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Aided school run by NYCC
Highways maintenance and traffic signs	North Yorkshire County Council
Street lighting	North Yorkshire County Council and NYCC (each has lights in Middleham – details are shown here [insert link])
Street Trading and markets	Richmondshire District Council
Public toilets (opening hours, cleanliness, damage)	Richmondshire District Council
Licensing (of premises and special events)	Richmondshire District Council
Footpaths	Richmondshire District Council A definitive map of footpaths is available here [insert link]; there is an extract available in the Clerk's office
Environmental Health	Richmondshire District Council
Parking enforcement	Scarborough Town Council [insert link]. SBC provides the enforcing team to manage parking issues in North Yorkshire. Should the residents of the town experience parking problems we have a contact number 01723 232323 Monday – Friday 08:30 – 5:00 and out of hours 01723 383640 to report illegally parked vehicles or the police 101 number for vehicles obstructing."

Water leaks	Yorkshire Water. Water companies are obliged to respond within certain timescales and residents might find it quicker to report a leak themselves
Maintenance and use of our Town's community centre. The Middleham Key Centre.	The Trustees [insert link]