



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held at 6.00pm on Thursday 26 February 2026 in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House, Quay Road, NE24 2AS.

Present:

Councillors: D Johnson (Chair), J Woods (Vice Chair), RA Baker, D Carr, A Cartie, BW Elliott, C Jones, D Nicholson, M Nicholson, K Nisbet MBE, N Rolls, and D Swinhoe.

Also Present:

Officers: M Wilkinson (Town Clerk), E Brown (Deputy Clerk), H Jenner (Principal Officer), E Mullen (Democratic Services Officer),

Invited Guests: 1 Members of the Public: 4

Cllr M Peart was also present for part of the meeting.

Allotment Holder question time:

An allotment holder asked the following question in advance of the meeting:

'The minutes from the October meeting appeared to read that wildlife ponds on allotments would be allowed if they met the safety criteria. The notice on the notice boards states No ponds allowed. Can you confirm the situation please. Also, what brought about the subject of ponds in the first place.'

The Principal Officer delivered the following response: *'The draft allotment wildlife ponds policy was recommended by the Environment Committee at a meeting held 27 May 2025 and subsequently considered at the meeting of the Full Council held 17 July 2025. At that Full Council meeting, it was resolved to withdraw the policy pending further research, and discussions with the Allotment Associations. Following the Full Council meeting on Thursday 16 October 2025 a decision was made that wildlife ponds are not permitted on any of the allotment sites belonging to Blyth Town Council. Safety was one of the criteria considered, alongside others such as the minimum cultivation requirements on plots, resource dedicated to monitoring ponds etc.'*

The allotment holder who submitted the question was present at the meeting; they followed with a supplementary question asking what prompted the need for a wildlife pond policy. The Town Clerk explained that there was no official policy in place, and discussions for wildlife ponds came from draft policies circulated. Officers agreed to check the signage at allotment sites to clarify whether the notice specifies 'no new ponds'.

The following question was submitted by an allotment holder in advance of the meeting:

'New taps have been installed at 10th Avenue allotments. How much did they cost. Are they value for money. Why were they installed. Were they necessary. How are we meant to attach hoses as there is no connector on the end of the short hose.'

The Principal Officer delivered the following response: *'Existing standpipes at both Beatrice sites and 10th Avenue were replaced to bring them up to the standard required by Northumbrian Water (in-line return valves, stopcocks etc). These taps are not newly installed taps, but upgrades to existing taps. The cost for 21 standpipes across 3 sites was £14,850 plus VAT. The contract was obtained through the proper processes for a contract of below £25,000 (multiple quotes obtained, with value for money considered alongside other aspects). There is a female connector on the standpipe.'*

One allotment holder based at 10th Avenue asked why allotment holders had not been consulted on various matters, requesting improvements be made in engagement. A particular concern related to consultation on allotment fires. The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that a consultation had been shared with the Allotment Association, all Council tenants and residences bordering allotment sites. A report of the consultation results was available on the Town Council website. A log of all complaints was made during the trial period. The allotment holder requested details on the number of complaints relating to 10th Avenue. This would be forwarded after the meeting.

An allotment holder asked if it would be possible to get more skips and/or communal compost bins to help dispose of waste and avoid fly tipping, as fires were used as a waste disposal method. This was something the Council would review, in consultation with the Allotment Associations.

An allotment holder asked why it had taken such a long time for their skip request to be granted. They also queried the communication methods informing of the skip arrival. The Town Clerk explained the Council decision to reduce the number of skips from 2 down to 1, but if the demand is present, there could be potential for review. The Town Clerk

also explained that the reason for an email rather than a notice was that skip was not being used for its intended purpose and was being filled with household waste rather than garden waste and the email was intended to reduce the misuse of skips. Officers will investigate the reason for the long wait for the skip.

Minute No	
1	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies were received and noted from Councillor D Campbell</p>
2	<p>Disclosure of Interests Grant of Dispensations</p> <p>Councillor BW Elliott declared an interest following Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 that he will be taking part in this meeting but will not be voting.</p>
3	<p>Enhanced Enforcement Provision</p> <p>A presentation was delivered by Stephen Wardle, the Neighbourhood Services Divisional Manager from Northumberland County Council.</p> <p>He provided information to Members outlining proposals for enhanced enforcement provisions for 2026/2027, including an Enhanced Officer with a policing background, enhanced capacity and provisions for preventative work, and early intervention. Members were happy with the revised proactive approach.</p>
4	<p>Minutes of the previous Environment Committee</p> <p>The minutes of the previous Environment Committee meeting held 9 December 2025 were agreed at the meeting of Full Council on 15 January 2026.</p>
5	<p>Actions arising from the Previous Minutes</p> <p>The Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk provided a verbal update of the following items from the previous minutes:</p> <p><u>Bus Stops</u> Officers submitted an application to Northumberland County Council who were acting as the accountable body for £100,000 to improve bus shelters in the area; this was granted and</p>

	<p>discussions about how it is used in the town have taken place, including a living bus shelter. The Town Clerk updated Members that there has been no confirmation from the County that the Town Council are able to go to tender for bus shelter improvements. The commitment is that that for every £10,000 of funding the Town Council would contribute £1000 and there was sufficient underspend on the bus shelter budget to go into reserves for 2026/27 budget.</p> <p><u>Inclusive Play Area</u> Officers are liaising with the Northumberland Parent & Carer Forum, who are going to be drafting and running an eight week consultation (March to May) for an inclusive play area in Blyth the Forum will also be undertaking direct engagement work during this time; proposing to working directly with The Dales School, attending the Easter event at Ridley Park and organising a parent panel for parents to directly ask questions, and share lived experiences with the Council. Northumberland Parent & Carer Forum will handle the raw data and will deliver a final report of their findings and recommendations following the consultation. Officers will be in touch with Members regarding participation on the parent panel. The Deputy Town Clerk explained there is currently £130,000 in the play areas budget for 2026/27, and that even though it is difficult to cost a play area until it is known exactly what equipment is needed in the play area and its location, the cost for this project is likely to be over budget. Upon research, one Council paid around £400,000 for their inclusive playground. It is anticipated that any work done on this project will not be done until 2027, and hope that with the level of consultation being carried out that the Council may be able to apply for external funding.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Committee Budget Monitoring Report</p> <p>The Town Clerk presented an overview of the Environment Committee Budget. The Town Clerk responded to members queries regarding CCTV and welcomes any further questions regarding the committee budget outside of the meeting.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Community Access Defibrillator Policy</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk introduced the Community Access Defibrillator Policy following Member request. The policy outlines how the Council might respond to community requests for defibrillators and how we might consider future requests.</p>

	Members requested that an amendment made for the policy to be reviewed every 2 years rather than every 5 years due to advances in technology. The Policy would be recommended to Full Council for approval.
8	Allotment Standpipes The Council noted the Town Clerk's report, that the Council carry out a review of all allotment sites regarding the provision of Council standpipes.
9	Delegated Actions There were no delegated actions to consider.
10	Date and Time of Next Meeting. The next meeting of the Environment Committee will be held on the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House on Thursday 21 May 2026 . Allotment holder question time will begin at 6.00pm and the Committee will commence directly following.

The meeting closed at 7:28pm

Members of the Environment Committee

D Johnson (Chair)	C Jones
J Woods (Vice Chair)	D Nicholson
R A Baker	M Nicholson
D Campbell	K Nisbet MBE
D Carr	N Rolls
A Cartie	D Swinhoe
B W Elliott	