



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL (Full Council) meeting held at 6:00 pm on Thursday 17 July 2025, in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House, Blyth, NE24 2AS.

Present:

Councillors: D Swinhoe (Mayor), R A Baker (Deputy Mayor), D Campbell, D Carr, A Cartie, B W Elliott, T E Elliott, B Erskine, D Johnson, C Jones, D Nicholson, K Nisbet MBE, M Peart, N Rolls, J Woods

Officers:

M Wilkinson (Town Clerk), E Brown (Deputy Town Clerk), E Mullen (Democratic Services Officer)

Also Present: Ian Stevenson (Service Improvement Lead NCC), *part*.

Members of the Public: 7

Questions from the public:

A member of the public was made aware through a post on social media that one community group did not get their community grant approved through the Council. The individual asked about the process for grant requests and why there is no transparency on monies granted for groups who don't get their grant, particularly as decisions on this sub-committee are made under Part 2.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the reason for the decisions being made under Part 2 is due to information from groups is given to the Council in confidence. The Town Council website explicitly outlines how much organisations request, and the amount that is granted is published. A spreadsheet of this is updated and published with the agenda and minutes after every meeting.

It was reiterated by the Deputy Town Clerk that when the minutes are published, the Council abide by the Transparency Code 2015 publishing all the monies that are granted to community groups. Officers contact all

groups regardless of whether they receive their funding or not; those who do not receive funding are provided with an explanation as to why their application was not supported.

The same member of the public wanted to discuss the Market Pavillion planning, as the seating area that has been built wasn't representative of the initial plans which were proposed.

The Town Clerk advised that the question is one which is outside the remit of Blyth Town Council and that it is a County Council matter.

Councillor K Nisbet MBE advised the member of the public to send their question in writing to NCC.

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1	Apologies for absence Apologies received and were accepted from Councillors W Ploszaj.
2	Disclosure of Interests and Grant of Dispensations None.
3	Mayor's Announcements The Mayor reflected on a busy and rewarding three months, attending various community events including performances, business openings, and the unveiling of the new Cottingwood Green play park. Appreciation was expressed to the Rotary Club, local volunteers, and Council staff. The Mayor shared a positive change of opinion following a site visit to the Market Place Pavilion and new cinema, praising its modern facilities and community potential. The Mayor welcomed suggestions for the Markets. Future plans include reviewing park accessibility and promoting upcoming <i>Blyth Celebrates</i> events. Gratitude was extended to residents for their continued support, and to the Deputy Mayor for covering engagement he was unable to attend.
4	Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 13 May 2025 for approval.

	<p>Proposed: D Campbell</p> <p>Seconded: K Nisbet MBE</p> <p>RESOLVED: The minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 13 May 2025 were agreed and subsequently signed by the Chair as a true record.</p>
4.1	<p>Actions outstanding from previous minutes</p> <p>Cllr D Carr asked about the future of Councillor surgeries. The Democratic Services Officer explained that it is on her remit to take a lead on these moving forward, and the next Councillor Drop In will take place on Saturday 26 July 10am – 12noon at Blyth Community Hub.</p>
5	<p>Minutes of previous Council and Committee meetings for approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment Committee 27 May 2025 - Community Funding Sub Committee 10 June 2025 - Community Development Committee 26 June 2025 - Governance Committee 10 July 2025 <p>The minutes of the Committee meetings held 27 May, 10 June, 26 June & 10 July were agreed and subsequently signed by the respective Chair as a true record.</p>
6.1	<p>Recommendations from Committees</p> <p>To adopt the Allotment Wildlife Ponds Policy as recommended by the Environment Committee on 27 May 2025.</p> <p>D Johnson raised concerns about not having representation from the Allotments Association and felt that the Council were unable to give an informed response to this item as the Allotment Association had environmental concerns.</p> <p>D Campbell raised concerns about the maintenance required for keeping a pond.</p> <p><i>C Jones, D Carr & B Erskine left the meeting. The Chair called a recess at 18:41.</i></p>

	<p><i>The meeting resumed at 18:48. C Jones, D Carr & B Erskine returned to the meeting.</i></p> <p>Proposed: D Campbell</p> <p>Seconded: D Johnson</p> <p>RESOLVED: To withdraw the item and do further research if the Council wants ponds in the future, discussing with the Allotment Association, and to the opinions of raised ponds going forward.</p>
6.2	<p>Recommendations from Committees</p> <p>To adopt a local policy for DBS checks and the draft children and vulnerable adult safeguarding policy, as recommended by the Governance Committee on 10 July 2025.</p> <p>The Deputy Clerk clarified that those who are NCC Councillors do not need to go through the DBS process again, and that this was a voluntary check.</p> <p><i>B Erskine left the meeting at 18:59.</i></p> <p>Proposed: R A Baker</p> <p>Seconded: C Jones</p> <p>RESOLVED: It was agreed to adopt a local policy for DBS checks, and the draft children and vulnerable adults and safeguarding policy.</p> <p><i>B Erskine did not participate in voting on this item as he left the meeting. B Erskine returned to the meeting at 1902.</i></p>
6.3	<p>Recommendations from Committees</p> <p>To adopt a change in policy that provides the insurance of all external assets under the management and responsibility of the Council, as recommended by the Governance Committee on 10 July 2025.</p> <p>It was requested that this item was recorded as a named vote.</p> <p>Proposed: B W Elliott</p> <p>Seconded: B Erskine</p>

	<p>RESOLVED: To adopt a change in policy that moves from self-insurance of all assets to purchasing an insurance policy that covers all external assets under the management and responsibility of the Council.</p> <p>Councillors in favour of item: D Campbell, D Carr, B Erskine, B W Elliott, T E Elliott, C Jones, K Nisbet MBE, D Nicholson, M Peart, N Rolls, D Swinhoe, J Woods</p> <p>Councillors against this item: R A Baker, A Cartie, D Johnson</p>
7.1	<p>Decision Report – Performance Management</p> <p>M Peart gave a short presentation on the benefits of performance management to support Officer staff.</p> <p>It was recommended to set up a task-finish working group, from members of the Staff Sub Committee to support the implementation of this item.</p> <p><i>D Nicholson left the meeting at 19:26.</i></p> <p>Proposed: M Peart</p> <p>Seconded: C Jones</p> <p>RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to set up a politically proportioned task-finish working group to support the implementation of performance management for Blyth Town Council Officers.</p> <p><i>D Nicholson did not participate in voting on this item as she left the meeting.</i></p>
7.2	<p>Decision Report – Financial Information Requests</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk gave an overview of the report.</p> <p><i>D Nicholson returned to the meeting at the beginning of this overview.</i></p> <p>Proposed: C Jones</p> <p>Seconded: D Johnson</p> <p>RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to create a politically proportioned task-finish working group for the review of financial records that were requested.</p>

7.3	<p>Decision Report – Planning Committee representation (deferred from Community Development Committee)</p> <p>It was unanimously RESOLVED that, as per recommendation of the report, that B W Elliott is replaced by T E Elliott on the Planning & Development Sub Committee due to B W Elliott’s dual-hatted role at Northumberland County Council.</p> <p>It is also noted that D Swinhoe is Chair of this Sub Committee, and T E Elliott is Vice-Chair.</p> <p>The Chair exercised Standing Orders to extend the meeting by half an hour which was unanimously agreed by Councillors.</p>
8	<p>Delegated Decision Report</p> <p>There were none.</p>
9	<p>The next meeting date</p> <p>The Full Council meeting will be held on Thursday 16 October 2025 in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytyn House. Public Question Time starts at 6:00pm and Council will commence directly afterwards.</p>
10	<p>Part II</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, that the press and public be excluded, and they were instructed to withdraw.</p> <p>The Chair exercised Standing Orders to extend the meeting by half an hour which was unanimously agreed by Councillors.</p>
11	<p>Decision Report – Project Shield</p> <p>To further consider how Council can support this initiative.</p> <p>Ian Stevenson from Northumberland County Council gave an overview of Project Shield, what the Council can do to support the project and to consider a contribution of £20,000 towards the continuation of the programme in Blyth for the rest of the financial year.</p> <p>It was requested that this item was recorded as a named vote.</p>

	<p>It is noted that those who declared an interest as a Northumberland County Councillor were not able to vote on this item.</p> <p>Proposed: B Erskine</p> <p>Seconded: T E Elliot</p> <p>RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed that the item should be deferred until Northumbria Police are able to provide further information about how the project is impacting the Town since it began in May 2025.</p> <p>Councillors in favour of item: A Cartie, D Campbell, T E Elliott, B Erskine, C Jones, K Nisbet MBE, J Woods</p> <p>Councillors against this item: None</p> <p>Councillors not able to vote: R A Baker, D Carr, B W Elliott, D Johnson, D Nicholson, M, Peart, N Rolls, D Swinhoe</p>
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The meeting closed at 20:16 pm

Members of the Council:

D Swinhoe (Mayor)
 R A Baker (Deputy Mayor)
 D Campbell
 A Cartie
 D Carr
 B W Elliott
 T E Elliott
 B Erskine
 D Johnson
 C Jones
 D Nicholson
 K Nisbet MBE
 M Peart
 W Ploszaj
 N Rolls
 J Woods