BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL held at 6.00pm on Thursday 14 May 2026 in the Council Chamber, Arms Evertyne House, Blyth, NE24 2AS.

Present:

Councillors: D Swinhoe (Mayor), RA Baker (Deputy Mayor), D Campbell, D Carr, A Cartie, BW Elliott, TE Elliott, B Erskine, D Johnson, C Jones, D Nicholson, M Nicholson, K Nisbet MBE, M Peart, N Rolls, and J Woods.

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

Members of the Public: 16

Questions from the public:

A resident queried the boulders which have been placed at Isabella field, asking when the decision was made to place them. The Mayor informed the resident that this was a County Council matter and encouraged the resident to direct the question to Northumberland County Council.

A resident asked how many Enforcement Officers the town has, how much they cost and if they bring any income to the town. The Town Clerk clarified that Northumberland County Council has 1 core officer which is funded by the County Council, Blyth Town Council fund another enforcement officer at the cost of £55,000 which is a set figure as part of our service level agreement with the County Council. The resident asked a supplementary question; how many enforcement notices had been issued by the officer over the past year. The Town Clerk answered that the Council couldn’t give an answer at this time but it could be looked into, and reminded the public that if they had detailed questions it was helpful to submit them in advance. The Town Clerk clarified the role of the Enforcement Officer and how they take a proactive approach within the town, and that the role does not bring income to the town.

A resident asked if there was any further information for the public about if the Town Council will be moving premises. The Mayor confirmed that this is an ongoing process and there is a working group looking at the feasibility of this.

The Mayor gave a speech thanking all members and officers of Blyth Town Council for their support during his term as Mayor. The Mayor thanked his Deputy Mayor, Cllr Baker for support during his term.

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1	**Election of Mayor** Councillor Swinhoe invited nominations for Mayor of Blyth Town Council. Councillor TE Elliott proposed Councillor Peart for Mayor. This was seconded by Councillor Rolls. Councillor RA Baker proposed Councillor Swinhoe For Mayor. This was seconded by Councillor Carr. Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Carr for Mayor. This was seconded by Councillor Nisbet. Councillors spoke on their proposals. The proposal was put to the vote: Councillor Peart – 8 votes Councillor Swinhoe – 3 votes Councillor Carr – 5 votes Councillor Swinhoe falls out of the election. The proposal was put to the vote again: Councillor Peart – 8 votes Councillor Carr – 6 votes Abstentions – 2 votes Councillor Peart was duly elected as Mayor.
2	**Receive the Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office** Councillor Peart signed the declaration of acceptance of office, which was witnessed by the Town Clerk. Councillor Peart as Mayor took over the chairing of the meeting. The Mayor thanked members for his election.

3	**Election of Deputy Mayor** Councillor TE Elliott proposed Councillor D Nicholson as Deputy Mayor. This was seconded by Councillor Rolls. Councillor Swinhoe proposed Councillor Baker as Deputy Mayor. This was seconded by Councillor Carr. The proposal was put to the vote: Councillor D Nicholson – 8 votes Councillor Baker – 8 votes The Mayor exercised his right to a casting vote in support of Councillor D Nicholson. Councillor D Nicholson was duly elected as Deputy Mayor.
4	**Appointment of Mayoral Cadet** The Mayor gave a speech appointing FltSgt Owen Miller-Hall from 1000 Blyth Squadron ATC as Blyth's first Mayoral Cadet for the 2026-27 term. The Mayor offered his congratulations on behalf of the Council. FltSgt Owen Miller-Hall was presented with his badge of office and a letter of appointment.
5	**Apologies for absence** None.
6	**Disclosure of Interests and the Grant of any Dispensations** None.
7	**To appoint representatives of Outside Bodies** • **Northumberland Association of Local Councils** (NALC) Councillor Swinhoe proposed Councillor Baker. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson. Councillor Carr proposed Councillor Erskine. This was seconded by Councillor Jones. Councillor Baker was voted to be the Town Council representative for NALC with 10 votes. • **Friends of Ridley Park**

	Councillor Nisbet proposed Councillor Cartie. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson and agreed. • **Cultural Advisory Group** Councillor Johnson proposed Councillor Baker. This was second by Councillor Carr and agreed. • **Town Forum** x 4 Non-County Councillors Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Nisbet for one of the seats. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson. Councillor Erskine proposed Councillor Jones for one of the seats. This was seconded by Councillor Swinhoe. Councillor Swinhoe proposed Councillor TE Elliott for one of the seats. This was seconded by Councillor Baker. Councillor D Nicholson proposed Councillor Woods for one of the seats. This was seconded by Councillor Baker. The four seats were agreed unanimously. • **Pride in Place Board** x2 Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Nisbet. This was seconded by Councillor Carr. Councillor D Nicholson proposed Councillor Peart. This was seconded by Councillor Rolls. Councillor TE Elliott proposed Councillor D Nicholson. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson. The proposals were put to the vote: Councillor Nisbet – 6 votes Councillor Peart – 10 votes Councillor D Nicholson – 10 votes Councillors Peart and D Nicholson were appointed. • **Blyth Valley Enterprise Limited (BVEL)** x 2 Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Carr. This was seconded by Councillor Nisbet. Councillor Jones proposed Councillor TE Elliott. This was seconded by Councillor Erskine. Councillors Carr and TE Elliott were appointed. • **Blue Flag User Group** x 2 Councillor Jones proposed Councillors TE Elliott and Carr. This was seconded by Councillor Baker. Councillor TE Elliott proposed Councillor Woods. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson.

	Councill TE Elliott withdrew from the nominations. Councillors Carr and Woods were appointed. • **Community Rail Partnership** x 2 Councillor Swinhoe proposed Councillor BW Elliott. This was seconded by Rolls. Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Carr. This was seconded by Councillor Erskine. Councillor Rolls proposed Councillor D Nicholson. This was seconded by Councillor Jones. The proposals were put to the vote: Councillor B Elliott – 10 votes Councillor Carr – 9 votes Councillor D Nicholson – 12 votes Councillors BW Elliott and D Nicholson were appointed. • **Blyth Trust for Youth** x 5 Councillor Jones proposed proportionality for this body with one Conservative, one Labour and three Reform. This was seconded by Councillor Carr. This was agreed by all. Councillor Johnson proposed Councillor Swinhoe. This was seconded by Councillor Baker. Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Erskine. This was seconded by Councillor Carr. Councillor Nisbet proposed Councillor Cartie. This was seconded by Councillor Erskine. Councillor TE Elliott proposed Councillor Peart. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson. Councillor D Nicholson proposed Councillor Rolls. This was seconded by Councillor TE Elliott. Councillors Swinhoe, Erskine, Cartie, Peart and Rolls were appointed.
8	**To appoint members to the Committees for the next Municipal Year** The paperwork outlining members for this agenda item was previously submitted to the Deputy Town Clerk in advance of the meeting and agreed.

Standing Committee	Total	Reform UK	Conservative	Labour
Environment (includes Allotments/Partnership etc)	13			
Community Development (includes Planning/Community Grants/Community Events etc)	13			
Governance (includes Strategic Priorities/Budgets/Staff/Complaints etc)	13			
Total	**39**	**25**	**7**	**7**
Proportion % Reform – 10 members Conservatives – 3 members Labour – 3 mmbers	100 %	24.375 %	7.3125 %	7.3125 %
Sub Committees				
Complaints & Grievance (Governance)	10			
Planning (Community Development)	10			
Staff (Governance)	10			
Community Funding (Community Development)	10			
Total Proportion % Reform – 10 members Conservatives – 3 members Labour – 3 mmbers	**40**	**26**	**7**	**7**
Partnership Board - 5x Reform, 1 Conservative. 1 Labour Total 7 members **Working Groups e.g., Events -**All members can attend working groups (any recommendations of a working group need appropriate Standing Committee Approval). **Neighbourhood Planning -** All members can attend. Chaired by the Mayor.				

Please see attached for Terms of Reference for Committees

9	**The following provision shall apply to all committees and sub-committees** *"Where any member of the Committee is unable to attend a scheduled meeting of that body, for a reasonable reason, then a representative of that political group (if any), to which that member belongs, may, by written notice to the proper officer at any time before the day of the meeting in question, authorise the proper officer to make a change to the standing appointments of the committee to substitute an alternative member for the duration of that meeting."* It was clarified with Members that the Proper Officer is the Town Clerk. The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that 5pm the previous working day would be the deadline for written notice before a meeting.
10	*NB Councillors appointed to Committees shall so act until the next Annual Meeting of the Council or until they cease to be a Town Councillor or they are removed by a resolution of the Council.* The Council then stood adjourned for a short period to enable the Committees to elect their respective Chairs and Vice-Chairs.
11	**Community Development Committee Meeting to be held after Agenda Item 10 to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair** Councillor Rolls proposed Councillor Peart as Chair of the Community Development Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson. This was agreed. Councillor TE Elliott proposed Councillor D Nicholson as Vice-Chair of the Community Development Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Rolls. This was agreed. Other members as provided by each group: Reform: Cllrs Baker, BW Elliott, Johnson, M Nicholson, Rolls and Swinhoe Conservative: Cllrs Erskine and Jones Labour: Cllrs Campbell, Cartie and Nisbet

12	**Environment Committee Meeting to be held at the rising of the Community Development Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair** Councillor Swinhoe proposed Councillor Johnson as Chair of the Environment Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Baker. Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Nisbet as Chair of the Environment Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Carr. Councillor Johnson was voted in as Chair with a majority of 10 votes. Councillor Rolls proposed Councillor Woods as Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee. This was seconded by Councillor TE Elliott. Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Nisbet as Chair of the Environment Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Campbell. Councillor Woods was voted in as Vice Chair with a majority of 10 votes. Other members as provided by each group: Reform: Cllrs Baker, BW Elliott, D Nicholson, M Nicholson, Rolls, and Swinhoe. Conservative: Cllrs Carr, Erskine and Jones. Labour: Cllrs Campbell and Nisbett
13	**Governance Committee Meeting to be held at the rising of the Environment Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair** Councillor Nisbet proposed Councillor Cartie as Chair of the Governance Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Jones. Councillor Rolls proposed Councillor BW Elliott as Chair. This was seconded by Councillor TE Elliott. Councillor BW Elliott was voted in as Chair with a majority of 10 votes. Councillor Nisbet proposed Councillor Carr as Vice-Chair of the Governance Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Erskine. Councillor Rolls proposed Councillor Peart as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor BW Elliott. Councillor Peart was voted in as Vice Chair with a majority of 10 votes. Other members as provided by each group:

	Reform: Cllrs Baker, TE Elliott, Johnson, D Nicholson, M Nicholson, Rolls and Swinhoe Conservative: Cllrs Carr and Erskine Labour: Cllrs Campbell and Cartie
14	**Community Funding Sub Committee to be held at rising of the Governance Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair** Councillor Rolls proposed Councillor Peart as Chair of the Community Funding Sub-Committee. This was seconded by Councillor TE Elliott. This was agreed. Councillor D Nicholson proposed Councillor Rolls as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Woods. This was agreed. Other members as provided by each group: Reform: Cllrs B Elliott, Johnson, D Nicholson, M Nicholson and Swinhoe. Conservative: Cllr Jones. Labour: Cllrs Campbell and Nisbett
15	**Complaints and Grievance Sub Committee Meeting to be held at rising of the Community Funding Sub Committee Meeting to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair** Councillor BW Elliott proposed Councillor Peart as Chair of the Complaints and Grievance Sub-Committee. This was seconded by Councillor TE Elliott. Councillor Nisbet proposed Councillor Jones as Chair of the Complaints and Grievance Sub-Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Erskine. Councillor Peart was voted in as Chair with a majority of 9 votes. Councillor D Nicholson proposed Councillor TE Elliott as Vice-Chair of the Complaints and Grievance Sub-Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Rolls. This was agreed. Other members as provided by each group: Reform: Cllrs BW Elliott, Rolls, Swinhoe Conservative: Cllrs Carr, Erskine and Jones Labour: Cllrs Campbell and Cartie

16	**Planning & Development Sub Committee Meeting to be held at rising of the Complaints and Grievance Sub Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair** Councillor Rolls proposed Councillor Swinhoe as Chair of the Planning and Development Sub-Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Baker. This was agreed. Councillor Rolls proposed Councillor TE Elliott as Vice-Chair of the Planning and Development Sub-Committee. This was seconded by Councillor BW Elliott. This was agreed. Other members as provided by each group: Reform: Cllrs Baker, Johnson, D Nicholson, Peart, Rolls Conservative: Cllr Erskine Labour: Cllrs Campbell and Cartie
17	**Staff Sub Committee Meeting to be held at rising of the Planning & Development Sub Committee to elect the Chair and Vice- Chair** Councillor BW Elliott proposed Councillor Rolls as Chair of the Staff Sub-Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson. This was agreed. Councillor D Nicholson proposed Councillor TE Elliott as Vice-Chair of the Staff Sub-Committee. This was seconded by Councillor BW Elliott. This was agreed. Other members as provided by each group: Reform: Cllrs Baker, B Elliott, D Nicholson, M Nicholson, M Peart Conservative: Cllrs Carr and Jones Labour: Cllr Campbell
18	**Working Groups –** the following Working Groups need to allocate a Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair of any other working groups (once they are determined) will be decided by the Standing Committee. **Events Working Group** Councillor D Nicholson proposed Councillor Rolls as Chair of the Events Working Group. This was seconded by Councillor TE Elliott. This was agreed

	Councillor Carr proposed Councillor Jones as Vice-Chair of the Events Working Group. This was seconded by Councillor Erskine. This was agreed. The Town Clerk clarified that the Office Accommodation Working Group is chaired under the Mayor. All members are invited to participate in working groups.
19	**Partnership Board** The Partnership Board is a meeting that is not open to the public. Membership is agreed as provided by each group: Reform: Cllrs BW Elliott, Johnson, D Nicholson, Rolls, Swinhoe Conservative: Cllr Jones Labour: Cllr Cartie
20	**The Council Resumed** **The Council RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 23 April 2026 were agreed and subsequently signed by the Chair as a true record.**
21	**The Council RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings were agreed and subsequently signed by their respective Chairs as a true record:** 1. Governance Committee, 23 April 2026 2. Staffing-Sub Committee, 26 March 2026 3. Environment Committee, 26 March 2026 4. Community Funding Sub Committee, 10 February 2026
22	**Matters arising from previous Council meeting:** Governance Committee, 23 April 2026 1. The Council RESOLVED to change the Accounting Statements as highlighted to Governance Committee regarding the investment income in the draft accounts. 2. The Council agreed the recommendation to approve: i. Annual Internal Audit Report for 2025/26 ii. Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26 iii. Accounting Statements for 2025/2026 3. The Council AGREED the recommendation for the appointment of the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2026/27.

23	**Dog Park** Councillor Erskine introduced his proposal. The Council AGREED to pursue the feasibility of creating an enclosed dog park. It was AGREED to delegate Officers to: - Open a public consultation to measure demand, need, and possible suitable locations, - Liaise with landowners regarding locations, - Cost a scheme and identify and external funding, and bring a report back to a future Environment Committee meeting for consideration
24	**Notice Board** Councillor Erskine introduced his proposal for a notice board near St Benedict's Church. Councillor Baker also highlighted that he was pursuing a notice board for the Cowpen area using his small schemes funding, but progress on this had stalled. It was AGREED that, as Cowpen ward Councillors, Councillor Erskine and Councillor Baker would work together using their small schemes funding to fund 2 notice boards for the Cowpen area.
25	**Wildflower Meadow** Councillor Erskine introduced his proposal. The Town Clerk clarified that this pilot could not be incorporated into the current Partnership Agreement with Northumberland County Council. Councillor D Nicholson suggested to approach Northumberland County Council under their biodiversity fund. It was unanimously AGREED to move, in principle, a 12-month pilot wildflower meadow at Brierly Road Field/Devonworth Place. It was AGREED to delegate Officers to: - Undertake public consultation - Secure land owner consent - Bring full details of the above, including accurate costing for accessible walkways, seating, shrub, and tree planting to Environment Committee for approval.
26	**Enhanced Tactical Drone**

	This item was withdrawn from the agenda and will be deferred to a future meeting.
27	**Register of Interests** The Mayor reminded Councillors of the need to complete and return to the office the Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests and to keep them under review.
28	**Date and Time of Next Meeting** The next meeting of the Full Council is on Thursday 16 July 2026 in the Council Chamber, Arms Evertyne House. Public Question Time starts at 6.00 pm with Full Council commencing directly afterwards.
29	**PART II** Pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.
30	**National Armed Forces Day 2027 Bid** The Deputy Town Clerk introduced the bid and thanked Officers involved for their work on it. Members offered their thanks to all staff involved in preparing the bid. Allowing for some small updates, the Council APPROVED submission of the bid for hosting National Armed Forces Day 2027. The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that the bid would be submitted on 15 May 2026, with the winning bid due to be announced at the 2026 National Armed Forces Day event in Aldershot at the end of June.

Meeting close at 20:10