



## **BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL held at 6.00pm on Tuesday 13 May 2025 in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House, Blyth, NE24 2AS.**

### **Present:**

**Councillors:** A Barrass (Mayor), R A Baker, 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 (part), N Rolls (part), D Swinhoe, and J Woods.

### **Officers:**

M Wilkinson      Town Clerk  
E Brown            Deputy Town Clerk  
S Humphrey      Principal Officer

### **Members of the Public: 18**

A Barrass, Mayor welcomed all to the meeting, informing that the meeting will be recorded and inviting questions from the public gallery.

A resident queried the Reform UK policies for Blyth. The mayor invited a response from the Reform party. Cllr B Elliott informed that newly elected members were still going through the induction process and once they were settled in, they would be in a better position to answer this question in the future.

A resident noted national speculation of Reform Party plans for cuts and asked if there were any plans to cut the events of Blyth Town Council. Councillor Swinhoe confirmed there were no plans to cut the Blyth Town Council events.

A South Blyth resident informed that he had received no correspondence during the election campaign. Cllr Carr apologised if no leaflet was received, offering to arrange to meet and discuss any issues in the future. Cllr T E Elliott also apologised, confirming she would be interested in looking into this further.

A resident congratulated the newly elected Reform UK Members and asked if restrictions would still be in place for public question time.

Councillor Johnson informed the Reform members want to work with the people.

Councillor Carr informed that as well as public questions time at Council meetings, the previous administration held regular surgeries attended by all councillors and he hoped this would continue.

It was also noted that the Council can be contacted by telephone or email on any working day.

A resident asked whether the Energy Learning Institute would still be proceeding.

The Town Clerk informed that this was a decision of Northumberland County Council.

Councillor B W Elliott informed that it was a plan of the Reform members to look at the governance arrangements behind the decision and the Town Deal Board.

A resident enquired about the transparency of the expenditure of the Town Council, the Town Clerk confirmed that details of expenditure is available on the website and budget monitoring takes place at every committee meeting.

<b>Min No</b>	
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Election of Mayor</b></p> <p>Councillor Barrass, the retiring Mayor, congratulated all those elected. She thanked the previous Council administration for their help and support during her term. She talked briefly of the wonderful experience she has had. Acknowledging particularly the help from Cllr Nisbet, the retiring Mayor presented her with a bouquet of flowers.</p> <p>Councillor Barrass invited nominations for Mayor of Blyth Town Council.</p> <p>Councillor Carr proposed Councillor Campbell for the position of Mayor of Blyth Town Council. This was seconded by Councillor Nisbet MBE.</p>

	<p>Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillor Swinhoe for the position of Mayor of Blyth Town Council. This was seconded by Councillor T E Elliott.</p> <p>The proposal was put to the vote:  Councillor Campbell – 6 votes  Councillor Swinhoe – 9 votes</p> <p>Councillor Swinhoe was duly elected as Mayor.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Receive the Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office</b></p> <p>Councillor Swinhoe signed the declaration of acceptance office, which was witnessed by the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Councillor Swinhoe as Mayor took over the chairing of the meeting, thanking the retiring Mayor Barrass for her work over the last year. He thanked all for the position which was important to his and his personal heritage.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Election of Deputy Mayor</b></p> <p>Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillor Baker as Deputy Mayor. This was seconded by Councillor T E Elliott.</p> <p>Councillor Carr proposed Councillor B Erskine as Deputy Mayor. This was seconded by Councillor Nisbet MBE.</p> <p>The proposal was put to the vote:  Councillor Baker – 9 votes  Councillor Erskine – 6 votes</p> <p>Councillor Baker was duly elected as Deputy Mayor.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Councillors: W Ploszaj. The apologies were accepted.</p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Disclosure of Interests and the Grant of any Dispensations</b></p> <p>Cllr Carr declared an interest as an elected member of Northumberland County Council.</p>

	<p>Cllr B W Elliott declared an interest as an elected member of Northumberland County Council as well as noting the other Reform County Councillors.</p>
<b>6 a</b>	<p><b>To appoint representatives of Outside Bodies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC)</b> Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillor Rolls. This was seconded by Councillor Elliott and agreed.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Friends of Ridley Park</b> Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Cartie. This was second by Councillor Nisbet MBE. Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillor Johnson. This was seconded by Councillor T E Elliott. Councillor Johnson was voted to be the Town Council representative for Friends of Ridley Park with 7 votes to 6 votes to Councillor Cartie.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Town Forum x 4 Councillors</b> It was noted that all County Councillors have seats on the Forum. Councillor Carr proposed Councillors Jones and Nisbet for two of the four seats. This was seconded by Councillor Campbell. Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillors T E Elliott and Woods for the remaining two seats. This was seconded by Councillor Peart. The four seats were agreed unanimously.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Town Deal Board x2</b> Councillor Rolls proposed Councillors B W Elliott and Swinhoe. This was seconded by Councillor Nicholson. Councillors Jones proposed Councillors Nisbet and Erskine. This was seconded by Councillor Campbell. The proposals were put to the vote: Councillor B W Elliott – 7 votes Councillor Swinhoe – 7 votes Councillor Nisbet MBE – 5 votes Councillor Erskine – 6 votes</p> <p>Councillors B W Elliott and Swinhoe were appointed.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Blyth Valley Enterprise Limited (BVEL) x 2</b> Councillor Nisbet MBE proposed Councillor Carr. This was seconded by Councillor Jones.</p> </li> </ul>

	<p>Councillor Rolls proposed Councillors B W Elliott and T E Elliott. This was seconded by Councillor Swinhoe. The proposals were put to the vote: Councillor B W Elliott – 8 votes Councillor T E Elliott – 7 votes Councillor Carr– 6 votes</p> <p>Councillors B W Elliott and T E Elliott were appointed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Blue Flag User Group</b> Councillor Jones proposed Councillors Carr and T Elliott. This was seconded by Councillor Erskine. Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillors T E Elliott and Johnson. The proposals were put to the vote: Councillor Carr– 6 votes Councillor T E Elliott – 13 votes Councillor Johnson –7 votes</p> <p>Councillors T E Elliott and Johnson were appointed.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Community Rail Partnership</b> Councillor Rolls proposed Councillors B W Elliott and Nicholson. This was seconded by T E Elliott. Councillor Jones proposed Councillors Carr and Nicholson. This was seconded by Councillor Erskine. The proposals were put to the vote: Councillor B W Elliott – 9 votes Councillor Nicholson –11 votes Councillor Carr– 6 votes</p> <p>Councillors B W Elliott and Nicholson were appointed.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Blyth Trust for Youth</b> Councillor Carr Proposed Councillors Erskine and Jones. This was seconded by Councillor Cartie. Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillors Swinhoe, Rolls, Baker, Peart, and Woods. This was seconded by Councillor T E Elliott.</p> <p>The proposals were put to the vote: Councillor Jones – 6 votes Councillor Erskine – 6 votes Councillor Swinhoe – 8 votes Councillor Rolls –8 votes. Councillor Baker– 9 votes</p> </li> </ul>
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	<p>Councillor Peart – 8 votes Councillor Woods – 9 votes</p> <p>Councillors Swinhoe, Rolls, Baker, Peart, and Woods were appointed.</p>		
	NALC	Natalie Rolls	
	Friends of Ridely Park	David Johnson	
	Town Forum	Caitlin Jones	Kath Nisbet MBE
	Town Forum	Tracey E Elliott	John Woods
	Town Deal	Barry W Elliott	David Swinhoe
	BVEL	Barry W Elliott	Tracey E Elliott
	Blue Flag User Group	Tracey E Elliott	David Johnson
	Community Rail Partnership	Barry W Elliott	Denise Nicholson
	Blyth Trust for Youth	David Swinhoe	Natalie Rolls
		Rick A Baker	Mark Peart
		John Woods	
<b>7</b>	<b>To appoint members to the Committees for the next Municipal Year</b>		

<b>Standing Committee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Reform UK</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>
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			
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
Proportion %  Reform to allocate to Committees – 22 members. Conservatives to allocate to Committees - 10 Labour to allocate to Committees – 7	100 %	57 %	25 %	18 %
<b>Sub Committees</b>				
Complaints & Grievance (Governance)	10			
Planning (Community Development)	10			
Staff (Governance)	10			
Community Funding (Community Development)	10			
Total Proportion % Reform to allocate – 23 members. Conservative to allocate – 10 members. Labour to allocate – 7 members.	<b>40</b> 100	<b>23</b> 57.5	<b>10</b> 25	<b>7</b> 17.5
<b>Partnership Board</b> -4 x Reform, 2 Conservative. 1 Labour Total 7 <b>Working Groups e.g., Events</b> -All members can attend working groups (any recommendations of a working group need appropriate Standing Committee Approval). <b>Neighbourhood Planning</b> - All members can attend. Chaired by the Mayor.				

**Please see attached for Terms of Reference for Committees**

<b>8</b>	<p><b>The following provision shall only apply to the Complaints and Grievance Panel</b></p> <p><i>"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."</i></p>
<b>9</b>	<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>The Council then stood adjourned for a brief period to enable the Committees to elect their respective Chairs and Vice-Chairs. Councillor Swinhoe moved.</p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Community Development Committee Meeting to be held after Agenda Item 9 to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p> <p>Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillor Peart as Chair of the Community Development Committee and Councillor Nicholson as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor T E Elliott.</p> <p>Councillor Carr proposed Councillor Jones as Chair and Councillor Campbell as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Erskine.</p> <p>Councillor Peart was voted in as Chair with a majority of 9 votes. Councillor Nicholson was voted in as Vice Chair with a majority of 9 votes.</p> <p>Other members as provided by each group: Reform: Cllrs Baker, B W Elliott, Johnson, Rolls and Swinhoe Conservative: Cllrs Carr, Erskine, Jones, and Ploszaj Labour: Cllrs Campbell and Nisbet MBE</p>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Environment Committee Meeting to be held at the rising of the Community Development Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p>



	<p>Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillor Johnson as Chair of the Environment Committee and Councillor Woods as the Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Nicholson.</p> <p>Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Nisbet MBE as Chair of the Environment Committee and Councillor Carr as the Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Nisbet MBE.</p> <p>Councillor Johnson was voted in as Chair with a majority of 9 votes. Councillor Woods was voted in as Vice Chair with a majority of 9 votes.</p> <p>Other members as provided by each group:  Reform: Cllrs Baker, B W Elliott, Nicholson, Rolls, and Swinhoe.  Conservative: Cllrs Carr, Erskine, and Jones.  Labour: Cllrs Campbell, Cartie and Nisbet MBE</p>
<b>12</b>	<p><b>Governance Committee Meeting to be held at the rising of the Environment Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p> <p>Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Ploszaj as Chair of the Governance Committee and Councillor Erskine as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Campbell.</p> <p>Councillor Nicholson proposed Councillor B W Elliott as Chair and Councillor Peart as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Councillor T E Elliott.</p> <p>Councillor B W Elliott was voted in as Chair with a majority of 9 votes.  Councillor Peart was voted in as Vice Chair with a majority of 9 votes.</p> <p>Other members as provided by each group:  Reform: Cllrs Baker, T E Elliott, Johnson, Nicholson, Rolls and Swinhoe  Conservative: Cllrs Carr, Jones, and Ploszaj  Labour: Cllrs Campbell and Nisbet MBE</p>
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Community Funding Sub Committee to be held at rising of the Governance Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p> <p>Councillor Carr proposed Councillor Jones as Chair of the Community Funding Sub- Committee and Councillor Campbell as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Erskine.</p>

	<p>Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillor Swinhoe as Chair and Councillor Rolls as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Nicholson.</p> <p>Councillor Swinhoe was voted in as Chair with a majority of 8 votes. Councillor Rolls was voted in as Vice Chair with a majority of 7 votes.</p> <p>Other members as provided by each group:  Reform: Cllrs B W Elliott, Johnson, Nicholson, and Peart  Conservative: Cllrs Carr and Jones.  Labour: Cllrs Campbell and Nisbet MBE</p>
<b>14</b>	<p><b>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</b></p> <p>Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillor Baker as Chair of the Complaints and Grievance Sub- Committee and Councillor T E Elliott as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Nicholson.</p> <p>Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Ploszaj as Chair and Councillor Cartie as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Campbell.</p> <p>Councillor Baker was voted in as Chair with a majority of 7 votes. Councillor T E Elliott was voted in as Vice Chair with a majority of 7 votes.</p> <p>Cllrs Peart and Rolls gave apologies and left the meeting.</p> <p>Other members as provided by each group:  Reform: Cllrs B W Elliott, Nicholson, Peart, Rolls, Swinhoe  Conservative: Cllrs Carr and Jones  Labour: Cllrs Campbell and Nisbet MBE</p>
<b>15</b>	<p><b>Planning &amp; Development Sub Committee Meeting to be held at rising of the Complaints and Grievance Sub Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p> <p>Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Nisbet as Chair of the Planning and Development Sub- Committee and Councillor Erskine as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Campbell.</p> <p>Councillor Nicholson proposed Councillor B W Elliott as Chair and Councillor Swinhoe as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Baker.</p>

	<p>Councillor B W Elliott was voted in as Chair with a majority of 7 votes. Councillor Swinhoe was voted in as Vice Chair with a majority of 7 votes.</p> <p>Other members as provided by each group: Reform: Cllrs Baker, Johnson, Nicholson, Peart, and Rolls Conservative: Cllrs B Erskine, C Jones Labour: Cllrs Cartie</p>
<b>16</b>	<p><b>Staff Sub Committee Meeting to be held at rising of the Planning &amp; Development Sub Committee to elect the Chair and Vice- Chair</b></p> <p>Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillor Rolls as Chair of the Staff Sub- Committee and Councillor Woods as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor T E Elliott.</p> <p>Councillor Jones proposed Councillor Carr as Chair and Councillor Cartie as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Campbell.</p> <p>Councillor Rolls was voted in as Chair with a majority of 7 votes. Councillor Woods was voted in as Vice Chair with a majority of 7 votes.</p> <p>Other members as provided by each group: Reform: Cllrs B W Elliott, M Peart Conservative: Cllrs Carr, Erskine, Jones, and Ploszaj Labour: Cllrs Cartie and Nisbet MBE</p>
<b>17</b>	<p><b>Working Groups</b> – 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.</p> <p><b>Events Working Group</b></p> <p>Councillor Carr proposed Councillor Jones as Chair of the Events Working Group and Councillor Campbell as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Cartie.</p> <p>Councillor B W Elliott proposed Councillor Rolls as Chair and Councillor T E Elliott as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Woods.</p> <p>Councillor Rolls was voted in as Chair with a majority of 7 votes. Councillor T E Elliott was voted in as Vice Chair with a majority of 7 votes.</p>

	All members are invited to participate in working groups.
<b>18</b>	<p><b>Partnership Board</b></p> <p>The Partnership Board is a meeting that is not open to the public. It would consist of 4 x Reform Councillors, 2 x Conservative Councillors and 1 x Labour Councillor. Each party would confirm these details, and the Chairman would be elected at the first meeting.</p>
<b>19</b>	<p><b>The Council Resumed</b></p> <p><b>Council RESOLVED that the minutes of the following Council Meetings as a true record on the proposal of Councillor Nisbet and seconded by Councillor Jones on a vote of 6 in favour, 7 abstentions.</b></p> <p>Special Full Council held on 24 April 2025</p>
<b>20</b>	<p><b>The following minutes of the Governance Committee and Environment Committee were agreed as a true record on the proposal of Councillor Nisbet and seconded by Councillor Carr:</b></p> <p>a) Governance Committee held on 24 April 2025 b) Environment Committee held 27 February 2025</p>
<b>21</b>	<p><b>Matters arising from previous Council meeting:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Councillor B W Elliott requested in regard to agenda item 5 of the Special Council meeting held on 24 April, that the submission to Northumberland County Council of the draft Blyth Neighbourhood Plan be paused to allow newly elected Councillors to be brought up to speed on neighbourhood planning and the policies within the draft plan. The Neighbourhood Planning Consultant and the NCC Neighbourhood Planning manager would be invited to a future meeting to provide a briefing. This was seconded by Councillor Johnson and voted on with 7 in favour and 6 against.</li> <li>2. The Town Clerk informed, regarding the Environment Committee meeting held 27 February, that a contractor had</li> </ol>

	been appointed for the refurbishment of the Cottingwood Green Play area.
<b>22</b>	<b>Register of Interests</b>  The Chairman reminded of the need to complete and return to the office the Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests within 28 days and keep them under review.
<b>27</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>  The next meeting of the Council is on Thursday 17 July 2025. Public Question Time commences 6.00 pm at Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House with Full Council starting immediately following.
<b>28</b>	<b>PART II</b> There were no Part II items. The meeting closed at 19.29.

#### **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