



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held at 6.00pm on Thursday 21 May 2026 in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House, Quay Road, NE24 2AS.

Present:

Councillors: D Johnson (Chair), D Campbell, D Carr, B Erskine, C Jones, D Nicholson, M Nicholson, K Nisbet MBE, and N Rolls.

Also Present: Liam Howley (Environmental Enforcement Manager), Northumberland County Council

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

Members of the Public: 7

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

Allotment Holder question time:

Three questions were asked in advance of the meeting regarding allotment skips.

- 1) I'd like to submit a question regarding skips for the allotment site. In the contract there is a clause that says we will be provided with one in the year. There is a mountain of rubbish that is being dumped onsite and it's getting bigger and bigger and attracting pests. The association side has had a skip and when asked, said the council side provided for us. I have heard from other plot holders that we haven't had a skip for years (if ever!)
- 2) I have a plot on Beatrice Avenue (new) and have since they opened 11 years ago. At that time we were told to put any waste outside our gardens and the contractors would come and remove it. They never did and we were never told about a budget for skips. So majority of us had to remove the stuff ourselves. There are two areas that are totally overgrown and are being used as dumping grounds. Can I request they are cleared and a skip brought in to save it being reused as a dumping ground? A yearly skip will

considerably cut down on fly tipping, more so if it is placed at the far end of the plots, making it harder for public or others filling it

- 3) During discussions with various council members regarding the provisions of skips to Beatrice allotments. I have been told there is problems with the supply, what plan is in place for the interim until the provision of skips can be restored as per tenancy agreements as communal areas are deteriorating?

Answers:

"Your questions have prompted a review of the skip provision, so I hope you'll be able to stay and listen in full or on the recording as we can go into a lot more detail then. But a brief response to the points raised:

Tenants are expected to remove waste from their plots themselves, and also not let it accumulate. Council decision was taken on 26 May 2020 to budget for 1 skip per site annually, and this is on a request basis not at set times of the year. (It's not in the tenancy agreement). Skips haven't been provided in some years as there have been no requests. Skip budget was reduced from 2 to 1 per site at that meeting as they weren't required that often. We are conscious tenants might not be aware of the request system, so we'll get out some communications on that. We are not aware of any agreement about putting waste outside plots for collection. No issue with supply. 10th Avenue has a smaller access point, but a smaller skip can be found. Bebside is on a public footpath so that is a consideration.

Fly-tipping a slightly different issue: if plot holders are fly-tipping on the site and are identified, their tenancy may be at risk. We know there have been some instances of tipping being done from outside the site, which is a matter for enforcement. If any fly-tipping occurs in the lanes, which the council have responsibility for maintaining, we will resolve this. If we got a skip in, we would probably allow for general site access at that point. We would not want to see a skip being used in response to fly-tipping – we would rather tackle the cause, which is unnecessary waste accruing on plots. One question holder acknowledges the issue of skips themselves being targets for fly-tipping and being used as a dump, which is an issue. Fundamentally, the council are discussing this provision tonight and may move to a different system of provision."

A question from the gallery was raised regarding allocated budget to skips for association sites, going back to 2021. The Town Clerk clarified that the previous administration agreed to reduce the number of skips

from 2 to 1 for Council run sites, and that it was deemed that the management fee that the associations got would cover the provision of a skip if they needed one. The Town Clerk clarified that the budget code wasn't detailed as such and that the skip allocation was always for a Council run site. The Chair clarified that allotment skips will be discussed as part of this meeting agenda.

One member of the public brought up the point that when new tenants inherit a site, they also inherit the rubbish that has been left from the previous tenant.

Minute No	
1	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received and noted from Councillors J Woods (Vice-Chair), RA Baker, BW Elliott, and D Swinhoe
2	Disclosure of Interests Grant of Dispensations None.
3	Enhanced Enforcement Provision A presentation was delivered by Liam Howley, Environmental Enforcement Manager at Northumberland County Council outlining the background of NCC's core and enhanced services, and the change in staffing structure. Members were given the opportunity to ask Liam questions about the enhanced service provision. David Hoy, one of the Enforcement Officers, will be doing patrols of all wards where all Members are encouraged to join him. Members thanked Liam for his comprehensive presentation.
4	Minutes of the previous Environment Committee The minutes of the previous Environment Committee meeting held 26 February 2026 were agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 14 May 2026.
5	Actions arising from the Previous Minutes None.
6	Committee Budget Monitoring Report

	The Town Clerk presented an overview of the Environment Committee Budget, explaining that the budget has increased from the non-spend in 2025-26 financial year. The Town Clerk responded to member's queries regarding bus shelters, play areas, defibrillators and litter bins, and welcomes any further questions regarding the committee budget outside of the meeting.
7	Decision Report – Allotment Skip Policy After lots of discussion and ideas for allotment improvement, it was agreed to continue the current policy of allocating one skip per Council run site on a demand basis. It was noted that when new tenants inherit a plot, they also inherit any rubbish that has been left from the previous tenant upon termination of their agreement. How this can be managed will be discussed at a future meeting. The Chair exercised Standing Orders to extend the meeting which was unanimously agreed by Councillors.
8	Decision Report – Site Visits to Allotments The Council RESOLVED to arrange site visit to particular allotment sites under Blyth Town Council ownership for members with officers. The Council RESOLVED to arrange a Special Meeting of the Environment Committee to consider any feedback following the completion of site visits.
9	Decision Report – Out of Area Allotment Tenants The Principal Officer introduced the report. After discussion, the consensus was that Members felt 1 mile out of Parish is too small an area for consideration. It was agreed to defer this item to a future meeting for further research.
10	Decision Report – Inclusive Play The Deputy Town Clerk introduced the report. The consultation ran by Northumberland Parent Carer Forum closed on 17th May, Officers are now awaiting feedback from the consultation. It was highlighted that Ridley Park is in need of capital investment.

	<i>Councillors Campbell and Nisbet left the meeting.</i> Councillors RESOLVED to proceed with the Ridley Park play areas as the preferred location for the improved inclusive play area. Councillors RESOLVED to delegate Officers to progress the license agreement with Northumberland County Council, investigate design concepts based on consultation feedback, and investigate external funding opportunities.
11	Delegated Actions There were no delegated actions to consider.
12	Date and Time of Next Meeting. The next meeting of the Environment Committee will be held on the Council Chamber, Arms Everyne House on Thursday 17 September 2026. Allotment holder question time will begin at 6.00pm and the Committee will commence directly following. The Chair may request an earlier meeting following discussions taken place at this meeting.

The meeting closed at 8:13pm