BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held at 6.00pm on Thursday 17 September 2026 in the Council Chamber, Arms Evertyne House, Quay Road, NE24 2AS.

Present:

Councillors: D Johnson (Chair), J Woods (Vice-Chair), RA Baker, D Campbell, D Carr, BW Elliott, B Erskine, K Nisbet MBE, N Rolls and D Swinhoe

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:

Allotment Holder question time:

6 questions were asked in advance of the meeting where answers were provided directly via email. These are available to view on the Town Council website as a separate document.

The Chair invited questions from the gallery.

A member of the public asked about the possibility of putting wildflowers along the grass verge at the entrance of Princess Louise Road (near Gilbert Ward Academy) coming off Second Avenue. Officers have said that they will look into the feasibility of this, and the upkeep which will be required. The member of the public who asked the question said that they would be willing to volunteer to help with the upkeep.

A member of the public asked about trees overhanging the perimeter fence of Bolam Allotments; the trees are causing damage to sheds.. Officers explained that the tree belong to Northumberland County Council, this will be investigated and that they will liaise with the Tree Officer at NCC.

Minute No	
1	**Apologies for Absence** Apologies were received and noted from Councillors D

	Nicholson, M Nicholson and C Jones.
2	**Disclosure of Interests Grant of Dispensations** None.
3	**Minutes of the previous Environment Committee** The minutes of the previous Environment Committee meeting held 21 May 2026 were agreed at the Full Council meeting held on 16 July 2026.
4	**Actions arising from the Previous Minutes** None.
5	**Committee Budget Monitoring Report** The Town Clerk presented an overview of the Environment Committee Budget. The Town Clerk and the General Services Assistant responded to member's queries relating to expenditure regarding bus shelters, play areas, notice boards, Blyth in Bloom, and the partnership agreement with Northumberland County Council. Officers will clarify repair costs to sites specified by Members in the meeting, which were noted by the General Services Assistant. Cllr Nisbet raised a query about the wooden fence being down at Lindsay Avenue playground. Officers confirmed that this fence is Northumberland County Council's property and will be reported to their Officers for repair. Cllr Campbell raised a query about the possibility of installing a bench next to the fence by Spartans Field against the fence by the football ground. Cllr Campbell also noted the sap on from the trees on the bus shelters and benches next to the Broadway. Cllr Nisbet asked about a bench opposite SureStart. These requests were noted and are being progressed by Officers. Cllr Erskine queried the budget for war memorials that are the responsibility of the Town Council. The Town Clerk confirmed that that a local company clean the war memorials every year in the lead up to Remembrance Sunday, Cllr Erskine asked if

	cleaning on a more regular basis could be considered, this would be budget dependent. Cllr Woods asked about the spend at Isabella Skate Park, the General Services Assistant confirmed that this was for a hinge for the gate to the skate park. Since this meeting, the General Services Assistant confirmed the following costs:£185 spent at South Beach Play Area was for wet pour repair and a new gate stop. £11.30 spent at Laverock Place Play Area was for shingle and soil to repair a hole which was dug. £1,360 spent at Mulberry Close for a new fence £140 spent at Briardale Road Cowpen Park for wet pour repair.
6	**Information Report** Officers presented the information report to Members. <u>Inclusive Play Provision</u> The Deputy Town Clerk noted that 170 responses were received for the inclusive play consultation, and that the feedback report is being shared with Members as a Part II of this meeting. It was noted that the indicative capital costs for the project are estimated to be in the region of £500k - £750k. Funding sources are being investigated, however funding cannot be formally secured until the Council is in a position to submit official quotations for the work required. The Deputy Town Clerk advised the committee that the next steps will include progressing the tender documentation and identifying capital and revenue funding for the project, however this may not be possible until after 2027. The project will also be discussed as part of the Council's strategic objective planning workshops. <u>Virement of Funds</u> The Town Clerk advised members that officers, and some members, have noted areas within allotment sites which are in need for improvement which require additional budget. There have been budget savings within the staffing area of Governance committee which have been identified. The Responsible Financial Officer will be requesting the virement of 13k from the Governance committee to the Environment Committee which will require approval from Full Council. The Town Clerk advised that a report will be presented to Special Full Council on 24 September to discuss this matter.

	<u>Newsham & New Delaval Community Garden</u> The Principal Officer advised members that the Newsham and New Delaval Allotment Association have agreed thought their formal processes to develop a community garden on their Beatrice site. Representatives of Newsham & New Delaval Allotment Association were present at the meeting, and the Chair invited them to speak more about the project where they highlighted the community action which is already taking place because of the project. Members praised the project and the allotment association were encouraged to contact members directly if they wished to request the use of Members' small schemes funding to support the project.
7	**Decision Report – Dog Park Consultation and Future Actions** The Deputy Town Clerk presented the report which outlined the results of the dog park consultation. It was advised that while 80.6% of respondents supported the creation of a dog park, this would be conditional to other elements which would increase the costs. While the consultation was underway, Officers were informed of a private provision that is planned near the town and also the existing facility at Briardale House, which raised the question if a Council-owned facility is required. It was RESOLVED to pause this project while officers assess both the existing and private provision, identifying whether a genuine unmet need remains; and, only if an unmet need is identified, progress indicative costing and requirements, locations and external funding opportunities for a council-supported facility. This project will also be considered in line with the development of strategic objectives.
8	**Decision Report – Bus Shelter Improvement Plan Funding** The Principal Officer introduced the report, and highlighted the funding the Town Council have received £105,000 from the North East Mayoral Strategic Authority's Bus Service Improvement Plan funding scheme. Since the original application in January 2025, a revised list of bus shelters for consideration was presented to Members with new sites suggested for refurbishment. *The Chair exercised Standing Orders to extend the meeting*

	which was unanimously agreed by Councillors. Following discussion, members RESOLVED to agree that the list of bus shelters for replacement and timeline for project delivery follow recommendation of the Officer's report.
9	**Decision Report – Request for Self-Funded Standpipes** The Principal Officer introduced the report. It was RESOLVED to agree that Blyth Town Council, as the landowner, will not permit or support self-funded standpipes to be added to allotment sites.
10	**Decision Report – Permitting Cockerels on Allotment Sites** The Principal Officer introduced the report and provided a verbal update to accompany the report, explaining that Newsham and New Delaval Allotment Association has not received any reports of disturbance from cockerels. *Cllr Carr left the meeting at 20:00.* Following discussion, members wished to keep the same arrangements across all sites for cockerels. In maintaining custom and practice, it was proposed by Cllr Erskine to amend the lease agreement and tenancy agreement to allow all allotment sites to permit cockerels across all allotment sites until 9 August 2030, mirroring the same current agreement as Bolam allotments. This was seconded by Cllr Rolls and agreed by members. There will be a report brought to a future Environment Committee to set out guidelines and welfare arrangements to manage any noise mitigation, looking at the interests of residents. Officers will also work with the Associations to develop a robust system for managing this arrangement. Cllr Erskine suggested the idea of the Council having a separate allotments committee so more time can be dedicated specifically to allotment issues. Officers noted this suggestion for further exploration.
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 Evertyne House on **Tuesday 8 December 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.
13	**Part II** Pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was RESOLVED that it was in the public interest that the press and public be excluded, and they were instructed to withdraw.
14	**Inclusive Play Report** Members noted the inclusive play report which was presented for information only. Any questions regarding this report should be directed to the Deputy Town Clerk.

The meeting closed at 8:09pm.