



## BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held at 6.00pm on Tuesday 9 December 2025 in the Council Chamber, Arms Everyne House, Quay Road, NE24 2AS.**

**Present:**

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

**Also Present:**

**Officers:** E Brown (Deputy Clerk), H Jenner (Principal Officer), E Mullen (Democratic Services Officer), D Clough (General Services Officer)

**Invited Guests:** 0

**Members of the Public:** 2

**Allotment Holder question time:**

The Chairman and Secretary of the Bolam Small Holdings and Allotment Association were present; their first query was about the Council decision to revert to the original fire policy and the trial not being given enough time.

The Committee Chair explained that Council had received complaints throughout the allotment fires trial and conducted a consultation. The consultation feedback was considered at the meeting of Full Council on 16 October 2025 where it was agreed policy would revert to allowing fires between October to March. The Chair explained that he would consider the subject further over the coming months. Cllr B W Elliott referred to the Governance arrangements for the association run sites, stating that the Bolam Avenue allotments were self-governing apart from a couple compliant with Blyth Town Council conditions, and Cllr B Erskine suggested formal active working partnership meetings with the allotment association stakeholders and the Council on a quarterly basis.

Their second query was about the keeping of cockerels on allotments. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that she had corresponded with the allotment association directly regarding the legislation on keeping hens and rabbits with reference to cockerels and the process for managing potential noise complaints.

It was explained that to mitigate the potential of creating a statutory nuisance, the Council will be working with Blyth Small Holdings Allotment Association, and Newsham and New Delaval Allotment Association to work out the number of cockerels across all the sites, and looking at what measures are in place to mitigate noise.

*The members of the public left after Question Time at 18:28.*

<b>Minute No</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>  Apologies were received and noted from Councillors A Cartie & D Nicholson.  Apologies were received from Town Clerk, Malcolm Wilkinson.
<b>2</b>	<b>Disclosure of Interests Grant of Dispensations</b>  Councillor BW Elliott declared an interest following Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 that he will be taking part in this meeting but will not be voting.
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous Environment Committee</b> The minutes of the previous Environment Committee meeting held 18 September 2025 were agreed at the meeting of Full Council on 16 October 2025.
<b>4</b>	<b>Actions arising from the Previous Minutes</b>  The Deputy Town Clerk provided a verbal update of the following items from the previous minutes:  <u>Defibrillator request for Portland Wynd</u> Officers contacted the British Heart Foundation to see what service they provide for supplying and maintaining defibrillators. This is not a service they provide, but they are able to provide details of contractors who can provide this service at a cost. It was also suggested to look at alternative means of funding including NCC Section 106 funding, however this was not possible. Officers are continuing work on creating a defibrillator policy which will be presented at the next Environment Committee meeting.  <u>Inclusive Play Area</u>

	Officers are liaising with the Family Hub, Northumberland Parent & Carer Forum, and residents to do a consultation on inclusive play area provision, with documents already prepared with a view for them to be reviewed by someone who works within SEND. There is also scope to host drop-in consultation events in the new year. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Committee Budget Monitoring Report</b></p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk presented an overview of the Environment Committee Budget. The Deputy Town Clerk and General Services Officer responded to queries from members about the budget.</p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Decision Report – Bee Bus Shelters</b></p> <p>Following discussions; a motion was proposed that 3 or 4 bus shelters, in more than one ward, are used as a trial for this scheme. This motion was not supported.</p> <p>A motion was put forward that 1 bus shelter was used as a trial for this scheme. This was seconded.</p> <p>An amendment was proposed for this motion to ensure that the bus shelter included a signage board to explain the scheme to the public. This was seconded. The amendment was accepted.</p> <p>A further amendment was proposed for this motion, for the location which the bus shelter to be considered delegated to Officers on the proviso that it was not near schools and was in an area of full sun. This was seconded. The amendment was accepted.</p> <p>The motion was carried, it was RESOLVED to use 1 bus shelter in Blyth as a trial for this scheme, with signage explaining the scheme, and the bus shelter chosen to be delegated to Officers.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Environment Committee Budget 2026/27</b></p> <p><i>Cllr B Erskine left the meeting at 19:09</i></p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk gave an update on the proposed Environment Budget for 2026/27, noting that this was based on rolling over existing services and looking at budgets to</p>

reflect savings where possible without having a material effect on service. The unspent partnership contingency as highlighted within the report would also be carried over as earmarked funds to develop the civic pride projects.

Funding had been included for a capital project to the value of £130k on inclusive play, noting that external funding would also be required, and 20k towards civic pride projects with local community groups.

The budget did not include additional weed management which had been quoted at a further £17k. Members highlighted their desire to include the additional weed management without increasing the partnership budget. The Partnership Board would need to consider where any saving could be made.

A motion was proposed to increase the notice boards budget (for repairs) from £0 to £5000.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the addition of £5,000 would increase the overall Committee Budget for 2026/27 by £8,000 in comparison to the 2025/26.

It was RESOLVED to accept the recommendations of the report and to further recommend the Environment Committee Budget of £589,990 for 2026/27 to Governance Committee at their next meeting on 6 January 2026.

## **8 Delegated Actions**

There were no delegated actions to consider.

## **9 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 26 February 2025**. Allotment holder question time starts at 6.00pm and the Committee will commence directly following.

**The meeting closed at 7:28pm**

## **Members of the Environment Committee**

D Johnson (Chair)	B Erskine
J Woods (Vice Chair)	C Jones
R A Baker	D Nicholson
D Campbell	K Nisbet MBE

D Carr	N Rolls
A Cartie	D Swinhoe
B W Elliott	