Decision Report

Meeting: Community Development Committee

Date of Meeting: 24 November 2026

Subject: Blue Heritage Plaque Nomination

Recommendation

To consider the nomination of The Buffalo to receive a Blue Heritage Plaque and RESOLVE to agree the award of Blue Heritage status.

Ward

Croft

Risk Management

A blue plaque and installation costs approx. £600, there is budget provision for this.

The Buffalo Community Centre have sought permission from Northumberland County Council to attach the plaque to the building. It has been suggested that the plaque is attached either on their door or to the side of the door at the front of their building.

Crime Prevention

None

Public Sector Equality Duty

Accessibility will be considered when installing the plaque at its location.

Objective

To recognise the historical, architectural and community significance of The Buffalo and its contribution to Blyth’s heritage.

Report

Blyth Town Council has received a nomination from The Buffalo Community Centre for The Buffalo, located at 55 Regent Street, Blyth, to be recognised through the Council's Blue Plaque Scheme.

The origins of The Buffalo can be traced back to an old coaching inn known as the Red Bull, situated on Keelman's Row, part of the historic main road to Blyth town centre that later became Regent Street. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the premises had become known as the Buffalo Inn, serving the growing population of Cowpen Quay as Blyth expanded through its port, railways, coal trade and shipbuilding industries.

In approximately 1898, the premises were acquired by Thomas Gray, who proposed replacing the older inn with a larger hotel. The original building was demolished and, by the end of 1899, the new Buffalo Hotel had opened. This is substantially the building that remains today.

The Buffalo's tradition of bringing people together continues through its present use as the Buffalo Community Centre. Cowpen Quay Community Association was established in 1974, when a small group of local mothers founded a youth club in St John's Hall. The organisation developed into a well-established charity serving Cowpen Quay, Croft and the surrounding Blyth area, celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 2024. The Centre continues to accommodate a wide variety of people and organisations, supporting generations of local residents while adapting to the needs of the community.

Awarding a Blue Plaque would recognise the building's journey from the Red Bull and Buffalo Inn, through its rebuilding as the Buffalo Hotel in 1899, to its present-day role as the Buffalo Community Centre and home of Cowpen Quay Community Association. It would celebrate both the Buffalo's place in Blyth's history and its continuing contribution to the town and its community.

Blue Plaque Suggested Wording

The Buffalo
Historic site of the Red Bull and Buffalo Inn.
Rebuilt in 1899 as the Buffalo Hotel.
Home of Cowpen Quay Community Association Charity
serving the people of Blyth since 1974.

Elisa Mullen
Democratic Service Officer
29 October 2026