

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Environment Committee

17 September 2026

Self-funded Standpipes

Recommendation

The Committee RESOLVE to agree that:

- Blyth Town Council as the landowner will not permit or support self-funded standpipes to be added to allotment sites.

Ward

All (except Plessey, no allotments in this ward).

Risk Management

This decision prevents the need for a budget around the maintenance of additional standpipes, including repairs. It also prevents the need for a budget around additional water rate charges. There is no budget currently for this above and beyond the current level of provision.

There are risks involved in the provision of standpipes overall; contamination, leaks and the risk of installation not in line with industry standard.

The administration of an additional scheme (approvals, checks) would have an impact on officer time.

Objective

Promoting the environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of the town and its community.

Crime Prevention

None

Public Sector Equality Duty

Allotment sites are already well-provided for in terms of standpipes.

Report

This has been prompted by the recent upgrades to existing BTC-managed standpipes across a number of allotment sites and a recent change to the constitution of Newsham and New Delaval Allotment Association which allows them to apply to external funding.

As a result, there have been questions from the Associations and allotment tenants about whether it is possible for them to self-fund the

installation of additional standpipes at allotment sites. They would offer to pay the costs of installation to the correct standard. The purpose of this would be for additional resource generally across a site, and lessening the distance to a tap (individual tenants would likely look to place one outside their own allotment).

As Blyth Town Council is the landowner, water rates payer and responsible for ongoing costs, the decision rests with Council.

On balance, Officers do not recommend permitting self-funded standpipes.

- The Council would become responsible for revenue costs (maintenance, repair, future upgrades) for each additional tap, bringing costs back to the Council. There is no budget for this, above and beyond the current level of standpipe provision.
- The Council would become responsible for additional water charges. There is no budget for this, above and beyond the current level of standpipe provision.
- Each additional tap brings additional risk to the whole system through leaks, contamination, misuse and vandalism.
- It sets a precedent for an unlimited number of requests by individuals with no process for determining valid or invalid requests.
- The maximum distance to a standpipe across communal land is 25 meters, and the majority of tenants have much less distance to travel. This is felt to be reasonable provision.
- Installation of standpipes requires significant disruption to the lanes and public areas.
- Water is a precious resource and the advice from the National Allotment Society focuses on reducing the need to water and sustainable water collection.

BTC and Associations should focus on support and information, and funding when available, towards alternatives such as IBCs (intermediate bulk container: a large water container) and other water harvesting techniques.

The exception would be for a community group plot which supported vulnerable people with access needs. This could be assessed on a case-by-case basis. These are developed and managed with the knowledge of BTC and water options can be discussed at that point.

Hannah Jenner
Principal Officer

3 September 2026