



BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held in Studio 25, Market Pavilion, Market Street, Blyth, on Thursday 28 May 2026 at 6.00 pm

Present:

M Peart (Mayor)

Apologies

None.

Officers in Attendance

Malcolm Wilkinson, Town Clerk
Elaine Brown, Deputy Town Clerk
Hannah Gregory, Community Engagement Assistant

Also, in Attendance

Members of the public: 96

The meeting was preceded by the opportunity to meet community groups and learn more about their activities from 5pm.

Meeting

The Mayor welcomed all in attendance. He opened the meeting by expressing his pride and gratitude at being elected to serve Blyth. Noting that he is committed to representing all residents, listening to community concerns, and encouraging greater public engagement. The Mayor also highlighted the importance of supporting local organisations, celebrating community achievements, and working with councillors, businesses, volunteers, and local groups to help Blyth continue to grow and thrive. He thanked residents for their trust and pledged to serve with enthusiasm, integrity, and pride.

The Mayor presented the following Civic Awards assisted by the Mayoral Cadet:

- Bobby Neal – for his tireless work keeping Blyth clean and his bravery during an incident in 2025
- Paul Newton – for transforming neglected areas across Blyth over the past six years
- Claire Young – for her long-standing support of local groups and community projects
- Roy Marsh – for his daily litter-picking and recycling efforts across the town

Posthumous Freedom of the Town was awarded to WO2 RQMS Rob Aldcroft for 43 years of service with the Northumbria Army Cadet Force, the award was presented to his children.

The Minutes the Annual Town Meeting held 29 May 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

The Mayor summarised the pre- submitted questions:

A resident raised concerns regarding the proposed cycle lane plans for Regent Street and King Street, noting opposition from 15 local businesses and members of the public. The resident requested reassurance and guidance on the matter.

The Mayor advised that the scheme is a Northumberland County Council (NCC) project and that any comments or concerns should be submitted directly to NCC. In his capacity as County Councillor for Croft Ward, he also offered to facilitate a meeting between affected businesses and NCC officers.

A resident requested an update on proposals to relocate the Town Council offices to a more central location within Blyth town centre and asked for supporting data.

The Mayor explained that a proposal had been submitted to the Council to relocate the offices and establish a civic hub. The proposal was still being costed. Current rental figures are available on the Town Council website, and a public consultation was expected to commence shortly.

The Mayor invited further questions and comments from attendees.

A resident commended the Town Council on the success of the meeting.

A resident queried the lack of enforcement action regarding several residential properties that had been the subject of complaints over a number of years. They asked why the Town Council's enforcement officer could not address these matters.

The Town Clerk explained the distinction between Environmental Enforcement and Planning Enforcement. The Town Council funds a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for Environmental Enforcement but does not have responsibility for Planning Enforcement.

The Mayor advised that the matter was progressing through Building Control and Planning Enforcement legal processes. The resident urged the Town Council to continue pressing for action regarding the properties concerned.

A resident praised the Town Council for improvements in service provision but expressed concern about the condition of some town centre retail units, stating that further improvements were needed, the Mayor acknowledged that this was not Town Council responsibility although it was hoped improvements would be made through the Pride in Place Programme funding.

A resident congratulated the Council on the strong attendance at the meeting, noting it was the highest turnout in nine years. They asked whether future Full Council meetings could be held at the Market Pavilion.

The Town Clerk confirmed that this could be explored, subject to compliance with legislative and governance requirements.

A market trader raised concerns about the operation of the market and the need to make it more vibrant. They highlighted difficulties with a request to trade on Market Street adjacent to the Market Pavilion, which had been refused due to fire exit requirements.

The Mayor noted that responsibility for the market rests with Northumberland County Council and that these issues would need to be discussed further with the NCC Market Manager, with whom he has tried to arrange a meeting.

Residents commented that they had visited successful markets elsewhere in Northumberland traders expressed a desire to return to Blyth. A request was made for the Town Council to explore opportunities to bring the market back, with residents describing it as the "heart and soul" of the town.

Concerns were also raised regarding the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on Market Street, and the Town Council was asked to investigate the matter.

It was noted that the Market Pavilion had made a positive contribution to the town centre night-time economy and had helped reduce levels of anti-social behaviour.

A resident raised an issue with rubbish at the beach near Meggies Burn, noting it was a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a request for it to be cleared.; this was noted.

Residents were reminded that the Town Councillor surgery would be taking place between 10 and 12 noon on Saturday at Market Pavilion with refreshments provided.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 7:20pm and again thanked all for attending and being so engaging.

Signed

DRAFT