

To ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

You are hereby summonsed to attend the meeting of **WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL** to be held at **Bedlington Community Centre**, Front Street West, Bedlington. On Thursday 14th May 2026 at 6.30pm.

The agenda for the meeting is set out below
Steven Young – Town Clerk
6th May 2026



MEETING AGENDA

14th May 2026, 6.30PM

PRESENTATIONS

- Representatives from Bedlingtonshire Golf Club, St. Bedes Park Run, Bedlington Community Allotment and Bedlington Brass have been invited to attend the meeting to support their Community Chest applications (Agenda Item Part B 1o).

ELECTION OF CHAIR (MAYOR) FOR THE YEAR 2026/27

1.	Election of Chair (Mayor) for the year 2026/27
2.	To receive the Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office
3.	Election of Deputy Mayor for the year 2026/27 <i>It is at the Council's discretion whether to elect a Deputy Mayor or not</i>
4.	To Receive the Deputy Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The meeting will be suspended by the Chair to allow public questions to the Council.

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

- The Chair will invite members of the public to ask the Council any questions in relation to the **current meeting agenda**. (There will be an opportunity at the end of the meeting to ask any questions not related to agenda items).
- This question time will last for a period of up to 15 minutes (this can be extended at the discretion of the Chair).
- To give every member of the public a fair chance of asking a question, the number of questions asked by any individual person may be limited at the Chair's discretion. The above covers both verbal and written submissions.
- Any member of the public who speaks, should first state their name and address.

PART A – ATTENDANCE AND MINUTES

a.	Apologies for absence i. To NOTE any apologies for absence from councillors. ii. To APPROVE any dispensations for absent councillors.
b.	Declaration of interest i. To RECEIVE and NOTE any disclosures of interest. ii. To APPROVE any requests for dispensations.
c.	Meeting minutes To AGREE and SIGN as a correct record the minutes of West Bedlington Town Council's meeting on 12th March 2026. * NB: There was no April 2026 meeting.
d.	Annual Meeting Of The Town 2026 To NOTE the draft minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town held on 9 th April 2026. *

PART B – MATTERS FOR DECISION

1. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

Matters for Discussion / Decision	
a.	<p>Schedule of Council meetings for the year To APPROVE the DRAFT schedule of meeting dates for the forthcoming year. * <i>Note: Standing Order 3.2. Meetings will take place on the second Thursday of each month (unless the date is prohibited by law), or it is resolved otherwise by a meeting of the Council.</i></p>
b.	<p>Council committees / working groups <i>Note: Standing Order 10.2. Any committee/task-and-finish group established will remain in place for the duration of each Council term (the period between elections) unless otherwise resolved by a meeting of the Council or until the task is completed and signed off. Committees meet in public and may have powers to spend and make decisions (in line with any terms of reference) and follow a published agenda. Working/support groups meet privately – at the discretion of the group members and make recommendations to the full Council. All formal decisions and spending must be made at a full Council meeting.</i></p> <p>The Council is asked to APPROVE the continuation of the following current working/support groups or committees.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Services Working Group 2) Community Events Organiser Support Working Group 3) Neighbourhood Plan Working Group 4) Finance and Governance Working Group 5) Planning Working Group 6) Communications Working Group <p>Additionally:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7). The Council is asked to APPROVE the creation of a Staffing Committee to deal with employment related matters.
c.	<p>Committee / working-group terms of reference The Council is requested, after review, to APPROVE the terms of reference. *</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Community Events Organiser Support Working Group 2) All other working groups 3) Staffing Committee
d.	<p>Committee / working-group membership The Council is requested to AGREE (considering any agreed terms of reference in part B, c) the membership of each working group and committee.</p>
e.	<p>Council representation to other bodies The Council is requested to APPROVE the elected representation (and nominated reserve) on external committees/bodies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) ii. Town / Parish Council Town Liaison Committee – usually Council Chair iii. Borderlands Initiative iv. Westlea Playzone Steering Group (see agenda item p.) v. Any other bodies determined by members
f.	<p>Internal audit</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Council is requested to APPROVE the reappointment of Mr Malcolm Wilkinson as the Council’s Internal Auditor for the financial year 2026/27. ii. The Council is asked (in accordance with the Internal Audit Terms of Reference) * to NOTE and ACCEPT the Internal Auditor’s competence when making the appointment.

g.	<p>Annual Return of Accounts 2025/26 – Annual Internal Audit Report In accordance with The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To NOTE and APPROVE The Annual Internal Audit Summary and Report of 2025/26. * ii. To CONSIDER and AGREE to any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor. (There were no actions provided in the report).
h.	<p>Annual Return of Accounts 2025/26 – Annual Governance Statement In accordance with The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. To APPROVE The Annual Governance Statement 2025-26 (Section 1 Annual Return of Accounts) in advance of considering the Approval of Accounts for 2025-26 (agenda item i). *</p>
i.	<p>Annual Return of Accounts 2025/26 – Accounting Statements In accordance with The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. And ONLY AFTER approval of The Annual Governance Statement 2025-26 (agenda item B, h). To APPROVE the 2025-26 Accounting Statements (Section 2 Annual Return of Accounts). * As already signed by the Council’s Responsible Finance Officer.</p>
j.	<p>Annual Return of Accounts 2025/26 – Year-on-Year Variances To NOTE the explanation of year-on-year variances provided by the Council’s Responsible Finance Officer to the External Auditor. *</p>
k.	<p>Setting the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights (2025/26)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To NOTE the dates (Friday 5th June 2026 to Thursday 16th July 2026 inclusive) chosen for the period for the exercise of public rights. The inspection period must include the first ten (10) working days of July. ii. To NOTE the date (Thursday 4th June 2026) of publishing the relevant notice * advertising the dates which public rights may be exercised.
l.	<p>Potential Errors in Annual Return – Qualification To AGREE a preferred option.</p> <p>The external auditors have suggested that ahead of submitting the Annual Return, it is “good practice” for councils to consider how any minor errors (if any) are to be dealt with. The options are:</p> <p>(a) Asking the Auditor to return the AGAR for the clerk / RFO to correct, initial the amendment and return so the final, published return is materially correct, and we can consider an unqualified opinion in the report we give at AGAR Section 3. If this option is taken, the Auditor will comment on the amended error as an ‘other matter’ and recommend the Authority ensures it is not repeated in future years. There will be a small charge for this option;</p> <p>or</p> <p>(b) Accepting a qualification of the Auditors opinion at AGAR section 3. This will avoid the costs and delay associated with correction but mean that the final published return is materially incorrect, and care will be needed in 2026/27 to ensure that the 2025/26 figures are restated to avoid the error carrying over.</p>
m.	<p>Finance and reserves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Reserves - Review and (if appropriate) update the ACTUAL “Reserves Provision” as of 31st March 2026. * ii. Reserves - Review and update (if appropriate) Policy No. 20 Policy for Financial Reserves. * iii. Quarterly Finance Report – Fourth Quarter (End of Year Report) - Review and NOTE the previous year’s expenditure against its budget up to the end of March 2026. (Areas of over and underspend are highlighted together with an explanation). *
n.	<p>Governance - review of existing policies After review, (suggested updates highlighted), APPROVE the following existing policies. *</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Policy No 8. Media Policy ii. Policy No.34 Pension Discretions iii. Policy No 35. Discretionary Pension and Flexible Retirement Policy iv. Policy No. 36. Flexible Working and Time Off in Lieu Policy v. Policy No. 39. Member Officer Protocol vi. Policy No. 40 Conflicting Situations Policy

o.	<p>Community Chest / Funding Requests</p> <p>The Council is asked to APPROVE following funding applications / requests: *</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A Community Chest Application from Bedlingtonshire Golf Club ii. A Community Chest Application from St Bedes Park Run iii. A Community Chest Application from Bedlington Community Allotment iv. A Community Chest Application from Bedlington Brass Community Trust v. A donation and membership application from North East War Memorials project 												
p.	<p>Westlea Playzone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Minute 26/29 from February 2026 meeting approved a REVIEW for this meeting of the existing “free access periods”. * ii. APPROVE the PlayZones Activation Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Northumberland County Council and West Bedlington Town Council. (The financial contribution for this has already been met via a successful Sport England Movement Fund Application). iii. APPROVE a request to financially support a “launch event” or “open day” to encourage take up of paid use and to also financially support “sponsored” free access hours. (This would be at the discretion and cost of West Bedlington Town Council). iv. NOTE the Westlea Playzone Steering Group – Terms of Reference template. 												
q	<p>Consultation – proposed parking restrictions – St. Benet Biscop Catholic Academy, Bedlington</p> <p>AGREE any response to Northumberland County Council’s Highways Improvements Teams consultation (suggested relocation of Keep Clear Road Markings).</p>												
r.	<p>Planning</p> <p>i. Planning applications – where comments have been requested.</p> <p>The Council is asked to discuss and decide if it wishes to make any comments in relation to the planning applications received for comment.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="245 920 1473 1283"> <thead> <tr> <th>Reference</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Response date*</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>26/01262/COU</td> <td>Change of use from C3 residential to C2 to provide a home for children in care. 23 Nottingham Court, Hazelmere, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6PE.</td> <td>30th April 2026</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26/01278/VARYCO</td> <td>Variation of condition 1 (approved plans) on approved application 25/04362/VARYCO in order for the stable block to be less obtrusive. Land to south of Hartford Drive, Hartford Drive, Hartford Bridge, Northumberland, NE22 6AJ.</td> <td>1st May 2026</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26/01311/FUL</td> <td>Erection of a single-storey detached garden room in the rear garden. 10 Vicarage Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5DR.</td> <td>19th May 2026</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Where the response date is before the date of the meeting, an extension has been agreed to allow consideration of the application at the meeting and an opportunity to submit comments. Note: recent notified planning decisions and other planning applications (where comments have not been requested) are shown in PART C for information only).</p>	Reference	Description	Response date*	26/01262/COU	Change of use from C3 residential to C2 to provide a home for children in care. 23 Nottingham Court, Hazelmere, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6PE.	30th April 2026	26/01278/VARYCO	Variation of condition 1 (approved plans) on approved application 25/04362/VARYCO in order for the stable block to be less obtrusive. Land to south of Hartford Drive, Hartford Drive, Hartford Bridge, Northumberland, NE22 6AJ.	1st May 2026	26/01311/FUL	Erection of a single-storey detached garden room in the rear garden. 10 Vicarage Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5DR.	19th May 2026
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s.	<p>Bank reconciliation</p> <p>The Council is asked to NOTE a checked bank reconciliation * as of 30th April 2026 for a current account balance of £15,706. 82, a deposit account balance of £10,013.62 and a CCLA account balance of £400,000.</p>												

MEETING PART C – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

a.	<p>Chair’s update and external invitations/consultations</p> <p>To NOTE any announcements from the Chair, and to discuss invitations, consultations and external meeting feedback since the last Council meeting.</p>																																																																																																											
b.	<p>Schedule of payments and receipts</p> <p>Details of payments and (receipts) to be noted since last Council update. All payments gross of VAT. NB - March 2026 detailed below. April details in Appendix A provided by our online accounting system.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 45%;">Payee</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Amount (£)</th> <th style="width: 40%;">Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Amazon</td><td style="text-align: right;">197.99</td><td>Cress seeds for schools</td></tr> <tr><td>Amazon</td><td style="text-align: right;">39.60</td><td>Cress seeds competition winner prizes</td></tr> <tr><td>Widescope Web Design</td><td style="text-align: right;">192.10</td><td>Software Annual Subscriptions</td></tr> <tr><td>Smart Office Systems Ltd</td><td style="text-align: right;">4.86</td><td>Printer Costs</td></tr> <tr><td>Widescope Web Design</td><td style="text-align: right;">74.29</td><td>.gov emails</td></tr> <tr><td>CCLA Deposit Fund</td><td style="text-align: right;">-952.80</td><td>Interest From Savings</td></tr> <tr><td>Wm Morrisons Supermarkets Ltd</td><td 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c.	Other planning applications		
	Where comments have not been requested.		
	Ref.	Description	
		Non for this meeting	
d.	Planning decisions notified to West Bedlington Town Council by Northumberland County Council		
	Ref.	Description	Decision
	26/00596/VARYCO	Variation of conditions 8 (lighting) and 10 (noise) on approved application 23/02640/CCD to vary submission timescale for lighting verification, and vary noise management to a compliance condition (amended 17.04.2026). Westlea Playing Fields, Football Pitch, Netherton Lane, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6DX.	GRANTED
	26/00748/FUL	Replace all external doors. Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street, West Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5TT.	GRANTED
	26/00717/FUL	Change of five (5) windows and doors from timber frame to aluminium. Added Juliet balcony. The Drey, Penny Lane, Hartford Hall Estate, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6HD.	GRANTED
	25/03827/FUL	Demolish redundant dilapidated workshop and replace with detached two-storey dwelling house. Workshop, North West of 6 Bells Place, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5AQ.	REFUSED
e.	Police report		
	No Police report for this meeting. The next scheduled report is for the June 2026 meeting.		
f.	Matters for information only		
	To NOTE any matters pertaining to the Council, that members would like to bring to the attention of other members and residents. For Information only, no proposals or voting on these matters.		
	i. Councillor – any matters for information only.		
	ii. Town Clerk – any matters for information only.		
g.	Date of next meeting		
	To NOTE the next scheduled meeting of the Council will be on Thursday 11th June 2026 at 6.30pm in Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street West, Bedlington. The agenda for this meeting to be issued on Wednesday 3rd June 2026.		

MEETING PART D – EXEMPT BUSINESS

That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

	Matters for Discussion / Decision / Information
	Non for this meeting

WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL - COUNCILLORS:

Trevor Austin, Lawrence Chapple, Brian Denny, Sian Denny, Cath Henderson, Adam Hogg, Allyn Rhys Roberts, Christine Taylor, Victoria Thompson.

* Supporting documentation distributed to members before the meeting.