

**Minutes of the West Bedlington Town Council Meeting held at Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street West, Bedlington.
On Thursday 13th March at 6.30pm.**



PRESENTATIONS

- Apologies from Northumbria Police who will now present their report at the next scheduled meeting on 10th April 2025.
- Bedlington and Districts Red Squirrel Group have been invited to support their Community Chest Application (Agenda item Part B 2f. Community Chest/funding requests).

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

- Question time started at 6.41pm – no questions were asked.

PART A - ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Min ref		Attendance / apologies and declarations of interest	Determination
25/45		In attendance	Councillors Crosby, Hedley, Henderson, Hogg, Taylor (Chair), Todd, D Wallace, R Wallace and Thompson. Town Clerk S Young, and Assistant Town Clerk, M McTeer. Six (6) members of the public.
25/46	a.	Apologies for absence i. To receive and note any apologies for absence from councillors. ii. To consider and determine any dispensations for absent councillors.	i. Not applicable - all members present. ii. There were no dispensations for absence for this meeting.
25/47	b.	Declaration of interest i. Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest, (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest), they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 12th July 2012. ii. To consider any requests for dispensations.	i. No declarations were declared. ii. No dispensations for this meeting.

PART B – MATTERS FOR DECISION

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS / SUMMARY OF DELEGATED DECISIONS

		Details of meeting or delegated decisions	Determination
25/48	a.	To agree and sign as a correct record the minutes of West Bedlington Town Council Meeting held on 13 th February 2025.	RESOLVED that the minutes of the West Bedlington Town Council Meeting held on 13 th February are APPROVED as a true record.

25/49	b.	To discuss any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting that are not included as agenda items.	There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 13 th February.
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2. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

		Matters for discussion / decision	Determination
25/50	a.	<p>Review of current policies</p> <p>The Town Council is asked to review the following existing policies. (Current policy distributed to members with suggested amendments highlighted). i. Policy 8 – Media Policy. ii. Policy 16 – Social media Policy. iii. Policy 17 – Sickness Absence Policy. iv. Policy 28 – Equalities Policy.</p>	Members DEFERRED and agreed to set up a working group and agree/amend policies at a future meeting. Members of this working group include councillors Hedley, Henderson, Taylor, Todd, D Wallace, and Thompson.
25/51	b.	<p>New policies for adoption</p> <p>The Town Council is asked to APPROVE after consideration the following DRAFT policies. (Draft policies distributed to members)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Draft Pension Discretions Policy ii. Draft Pensions and Flexible Retirement Policy iii. Draft Flexible Working Policy iv. Draft Bereavement Policy v. Draft Employees Code of Conduct vi. Draft Member Officer Protocol vii. Draft Conflicting Situations Policy 	Members DEFERRED and agreed to set up a working group and agree/amend policies in the next meeting on April 10 th 2025. Members of this working group include councillors Hedley, Henderson, Taylor, Todd, D Wallace, and Thompson.
25/52	c.	<p>Civility and Respect Pledge</p> <p>The Town Council is requested to consider signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), and One Voice Wales (OVW), believe now is the time to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector. By West Bedlington Town Council signing up to the civility and respect pledge we are demonstrating that our council is committed to treating councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role. (The statements that the Town Council must agree ahead of making the pledge are distributed to members for their attention).</p>	Members DEFERRED the Civility and Respect Pledge.
25/53	d.	<p>Update on current projects</p> <p>After consideration of the background information provided, the Town Council is asked to review and if appropriate update its current projects.</p> <p>1. Flower troughs and planting – Front Street</p> <p>The Council is asked to discuss and decide upon quotes received for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The removal and disposal of existing plant pots and troughs. ii. The supply and installation of new plant pots and troughs. iii. The planting up of all new plant pots and troughs (biannually). iv. Purchase of new planters. <p>Quotes distributed to members.</p> <p>2. New play area – deferred indefinitely.</p>	<p>1. Members reviewed quotes and AGREED to choose Bagnalls for repainting, Blyth Star for removal, Orangutang for installation, and Orangutang for biannual planting.</p> <p>2, 3, and 4 – Members NOTED all updates.</p>

		<p>3. New skatepark – deferred until after the completion of Northumberland County Council’s “Play Zone” at the same location.</p> <p>4. Railing around Dr Trotter Memorial Currently awaiting details from Northumberland County Council about any required permissions, together with a non-adoption agreement for the actual memorial before referring back to the Council. County Councillor Taylor has already provided £3000 of funding towards the project from her Members’ Small Scheme Funding. Thanks to County Councillor Taylor from West Bedlington Town Council.</p>							
25/54	e.	<p>Finance</p> <p>1. Finance report and reserves The Council is asked to review and note: i. Report of current year spending against budget - estimated year end projections (distributed to members) ii. Reserves provision - estimated year end projection (distributed to members)</p> <p>2. Internal audit i. The Council is asked to note the latest Internal Audit report (distributed to members). There are no areas of concern reported. ii. The Council is requested to approve (after review) the Internal Audit terms of reference for 2025-26. (Draft distributed to members with updates highlighted).</p>	1 and 2 – reviewed and NOTED by members.						
25/55	f.	<p>Community Chest / funding requests The Council is asked to discuss and decide upon a Community Chest Application from Bedlington and Districts Red Squirrel Group (Application and Fund Summary distributed to members).</p>	Members AGREED to approve £500 of funding.						
25/56	g.	<p>Audio video recording of Council meetings The Council is requested to approve the purchase of video / audio equipment (Owl Lab equipment and software) together with associated setting up costs to facilitate the video / audio recording of Council meetings. Estimated costs to be IRO £1,500.</p>	Members APPROVED to purchase equipment.						
25/57	h.	<p>Request for a civic reception The Council is asked to decide upon a request from Bedlington Salvation Army to provide a “civic reception” for the Canadian Staff Songsters of The Salvation Army on 8th July 2025 and to also for Town Council representation at their concert held on the same date. (Request distributed to members).</p>	Members APPROVED to provide £500 of funding from 2025/26’s Community Chest scheme, and to host the event at the Community Centre.						
25/58	i.	<p>Planning i. Planning applications – where comments have been requested</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="288 1503 1225 1975"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>25/00517/COU</td> <td>Change of use of hot food takeaway (Sui Generis) to hair/ beauty salon (Use Class E). Location: 46 Front Street East, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5AB. Response due date: 13th March 2025</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25/00556/COU</td> <td>Retrospective: Change of use of flat 2 on ground floor to office meeting space for R21. Location: 2 Old Barrington Arms, Vulcan Place, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5DL. Response due date: 14th March 2025</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ref	Description	25/00517/COU	Change of use of hot food takeaway (Sui Generis) to hair/ beauty salon (Use Class E). Location: 46 Front Street East, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5AB. Response due date: 13th March 2025	25/00556/COU	Retrospective: Change of use of flat 2 on ground floor to office meeting space for R21. Location: 2 Old Barrington Arms, Vulcan Place, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5DL. Response due date: 14th March 2025	No additional comments were made.
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		<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> <p>ii. To note - Planning Consultation 24/04112/OUTES Land at Former Power Station Site on Northern Side of Cambois, Cambois, Northumberland – Strategic Planning Committee - Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth NE61 2EF at 4pm on 4 March 2025. (The Council has submitted its SUPPORT to the application previously).</p>	
25/59	j.	<p>Working groups / committees (items for decision or discussion)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any recommendations from working groups for decision by the full Council. None for this meeting. 2. Any other Items from working groups – the Working Group Chair will feed back to the Council about any other items discussed, any ongoing and future matters by the working group. <p>Events working group – confirmation that 1000m of bunting for VE80 events has been ordered. Currently awaiting quotes from Northumberland County Council in relation to hanging the bunting between lamp columns on Front Street, Bedlington.</p>	The events working group said Easter events are all booked in and this year there is a family evening planned.
26/60	k.	<p>Bank reconciliation</p> <p>The Council is asked to APPROVE a checked bank reconciliation of £10,122.34 as of 28th February 2025 for current account, a Deposit Account Balance of £ 327,405.33 as of 28th February 2025, and a CCLA account balance of £25,000.</p>	The bank reconciliations were APPROVED by members.

PART C – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION OR TO BE NOTED

Matters for information or to be noted									
25/61		<p>RESOLVED to NOTE Sections a, b, and c. Note section f is not part of the agenda and is included for information only.</p>							
	a.	<p>Chair's update and any reports from external meetings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Chair will make any relevant announcements and provide updates to members. ii. To receive feedback from councillors from any external meetings since the date of the last Council meeting. 	Nothing for this meeting.						
25/62	b.	<p>Consultations (not requiring a response from the Town Council)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>From</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Response details</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Northumberland County Council – Planning Policy Team.</td> <td> <p>Northumberland Open Space Assessment - Draft Document for Consultation.</p> <p>The consultation is taking the form of a short online survey, and an interactive map. You can access the survey and map, and find further information via the following web link https://open-space-assessment-northumberland.hub.arcgis.com/ The consultation will end at 5pm on 14 March 2025.</p> </td> <td>NOTED.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		From	Description	Response details	Northumberland County Council – Planning Policy Team.	<p>Northumberland Open Space Assessment - Draft Document for Consultation.</p> <p>The consultation is taking the form of a short online survey, and an interactive map. You can access the survey and map, and find further information via the following web link https://open-space-assessment-northumberland.hub.arcgis.com/ The consultation will end at 5pm on 14 March 2025.</p>	NOTED.
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Northumberland County Council – Planning Policy Team.	<p>Northumberland Open Space Assessment - Draft Document for Consultation.</p> <p>The consultation is taking the form of a short online survey, and an interactive map. You can access the survey and map, and find further information via the following web link https://open-space-assessment-northumberland.hub.arcgis.com/ The consultation will end at 5pm on 14 March 2025.</p>	NOTED.							

25/63	c.	Invitations		
		From	Event	Response details
		County Chairman of the Northumbria Royal British Legion	North East England Field of Remembrance, Saltwell Park. Gateshead. Invitation to contribute an item for the opening event.	NOTED
		Rural Services Network	RMTG Meeting which will be held on Monday, 24 th March 2025, 16.30-17.30pm Online via Zoom – all welcome.	NOTED
		Newcastle Hospitals Charity	Shaping the Future of Paediatric Care at The Great North Children’s Hospital. Date: Wednesday 19 March 2025. Time: 5:30pm – 7pm (5:30pm – 6pm for light refreshments, 6pm - 7pm for the discussion). Venue: CRB Lecture Theatre, Royal Victoria Infirmary Open to all.	NOTED
		Northumbria Police	Multi Agency Week of Action 16 th 17 th 18 th April 2025. Directly to Susan Mccallum 4173 PCSO Neighbourhood Northumberland directly.	NOTED
25/64	d.	Schedule of payments and receipts		
		Details of payments and (receipts) to be noted since last Council update. All payments gross of VAT.		
		Payee	Amount £. p	Description Notes
		CCLA Deposit Fund Interest	-100.14	Interest Received ALL NOTED
		Talk Talk Business	59.42	Telephone + Internet
		W.L Straughan & Son Ltd	240.00	Christmas Tree
		Reay Security	83.04	CCTV Cemetery Gates
		Widescope Web Design	432.00	Website Hosting and Backup
		Smart Office Systems Ltd	6.59	Printer Costs
		Reay Security	83.04	CCTV Church Lane play Area
		Bedlington Imagination Library	500.00	Community Chest Funding
		Widescope Web Design	94.69	.gov email subscription costs
		NALC	10.00	Cost of 2 x Training Courses
		Reay Security	809.64	CCTV Bedlington

		Reay Security	446.40	Meadowdale Play Area Gates	
		Northumberland County Council	-3,000.00	Northumberland County Councillor Taylor – Funding contribution (Trotter Memorial).	
		Defib Machines Ltd	1,176.00	2 x replacement defibrillators	
		Defib Machines Ltd	876.00	2 x replacement defibrillator cabinets	
		Transfer In from Deposit Account	-20,000.00	Internal Account Transfer	
		Northumberland County Council	21,282.00	Cost of Christmas Lights	
		Amazon	10.48	Cable for projector	
		Amazon	9.49	Cable for projector	
		Wireless Logic Limited	539.14	SIM Card fees for CCTV	
		Northumberland County Council	5829.12	February Payroll Costs	
		Forvis Mazars LLP	756.00	External Audit Fee	
25/65	e.	Other planning applications Where comments have not been requested. None for this meeting.			
25/66	f.	Planning decisions notified to West Bedlington Town Council by Northumberland County Council Members – NOTED ALL.			
		Ref.	Description	Decision	
		24/03891/VARYCO	Variation of condition 3 (Noise and Odour) on approved application 23/00369/FUL. Location: Confetti, 64 Front Street East, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5AB.	WITHDRAWN	
		24/03953/PRUTPO	Tree Preservation Order Application to: G1 Sycamore prune, Ash fell, T2 Willow prune overhanging branches by 2-3m, T3 Pine fell and T4 Oak prune overhanging branches by 2-3m. Location: Rear Of Byre Dene House, Penny Lane, Hartford Hall Estate, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6HD.	REFUSED	
		24/03607/FUL	Work to refurbish and extend the cafe and kitchen of the visitor centre and to refurbish the adjacent public toilets Location: Visitors' Centre, Plessey Woods Country Park, Shields Road, Hartford Bridge, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6AN.	GRANTED	
		25/00030/VARYCO	Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on approved application 24/01508/FUL in order to alter the garage to an office/room. Location: 18 Hartford Road East, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6HZ.	GRANTED	
25/67	g.	Police report No Police report for this meeting. The next scheduled regular report is for the 10th of April 2025. The Police will also make a short presentation at the Annual Meeting of The Town, also scheduled for 10th April 2025.			
25/68	h.	Matters for information only 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. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Councillors – any matters for information only. Town Clerk – Neighbourhood Plan update. The Town Clerk will be on annual leave Thursday 17th April to Friday 25th April 2025. The Town Council office will be open as usual other than Bank Holidays Friday 18th and Monday 21 st April 2025.			

25/69	i.	<p>Date of next meeting The next scheduled meeting of the Council will be on Thursday 10th April 2025 at 6.30pm in Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street West, Bedlington. The agenda for this meeting to be issued on Wednesday 2nd April 2025.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the Council meeting (but not before 7pm) on 10 April 2025 will be the 2025 Annual Meeting of The Town. Everyone welcome.</p>
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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	
25/43	There is no exempt business for this meeting.	

25/44	<p>Close of meeting The Chair closed the meeting at 19.31.</p>
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WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL - COUNCILLORS:

Bill Crosby, Paul Hedley, Cath Henderson, Adam Hogg, Christine Taylor, Victoria Thompson, Jayne Todd, Diane Wallace, and Russ Wallace.

Signed by Chair

Date