

14th May 2026

MEETING MINUTES

WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
 Bedlington Community Centre
 Front Street West
 Bedlington
 NE22 5TT



PRESENTATIONS

Agenda item part B, item O - a representative from Bedlington Community Allotment provided a short presentation to support their funding application.

ELECTION OF CHAIR (MAYOR) FOR 2026/27

Min ref		Elections of Chair (Mayor) and Deputy Mayor	
26/65	1.	Election of Chair (Mayor) for the year 2026/27	Councillor B. Denny was elected as Mayor of West Bedlington Town Council for the year 2026/27
26/66	2.	To receive the Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.	Councillor B. Denny signed the Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office
26/67	3.	Election of Deputy Mayor for the year 2026/27. <i>It is at the Council's discretion whether to elect a Deputy Mayor</i>	Deferred to the June 2026 meeting. (The Town Clerk provided advise) ⁱ
26/68	4.	To receive the Deputy Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Deferred to the June 2026 meeting.

AGENDA-RELATED QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS

- There were no agenda-related questions for this meeting.

PART A - ATTENDANCE AND MINUTES

Min ref		Attendance/declarations/last meeting's minutes	Determination
26/69	a.	Attendance	Councillors Chapple, B. Denny (Chair), S. Denny, Henderson, Hogg, Roberts, Taylor and Thompson. Town Clerk, S. Young, Assistant Town Clerk, M McTeer, seven (7) members of the public, plus one (1) speaker (to support Agenda item part B, item O).
26/70	b.	Apologies for absence	
		i. To receive and note any apologies for absence from councillors.	i. Apologies for absence from councillor Austin were NOTED.

		ii. To consider and determine any dispensations for absent councillors.	ii. None for this meeting.
26/71	c.	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>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.</p> <p>ii. To consider any requests for dispensations.</p>	<p>i. None for this meeting.</p> <p>i. No requests for dispensation.</p>
26/72	d.	<p>Meeting minutes</p> <p>To agree and sign as a correct record the minutes of West Bedlington Town Council Meeting held on 12th March 2026. (There was no meeting in April 2026.)</p>	RESOLVED that the minutes of the West Bedlington Town Council Meeting held on 12 th March 2026 are APPROVED as a true record.
26/73	e.	<p>Meeting minutes of Annual Meeting of the Town</p> <p>To NOTE the draft minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town held on 9th April 2026. (Draft minutes distributed to members).</p>	NOTED. Minutes will be approved as a true record at the next Annual Meeting of the Town in 2027 (date to be confirmed).

PART B – MATTERS FOR DECISION

Min ref		Matters for discussion / decision	Determination
26/74	a.	<p>Schedule of Council meetings for the year</p> <p>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>	APPROVED
26/75	b.	<p>Council committees / working groups</p> <p><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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. APPROVED 2. APPROVED and renamed

		<p>4) Finance and Governance Working Group 5) Planning Working Group 6) Communications Working Group</p> <p>Additionally: 7). The Council is asked to APPROVE the creation of a Staffing Committee to deal with employment-related matters.</p>	<p>to Events Working Group</p> <p>3. APPROVED 4. APPROVED 5. APPROVED 6. REMOVED 7. APPROVED</p>
26/76	c.	<p>Committee / working-group terms of reference</p> <p>The Council is requested, after review, to APPROVE the terms of reference.*</p> <p>1) Community Events Organiser Support Working Group 2) All other working groups 3) Staffing Committee</p>	<p>1. APPROVED (Updated name: Events Working Group) 2. APPROVED 3. APPROVED</p> <p>Agreed to have more regular written updates in full Council meetings from all working groups.</p>
26/77	d.	<p>Committee / working-group membership</p> <p>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>	Member list AGREED
26/78	e.	<p>Council representation to other bodies</p> <p>The Council is requested to APPROVE the elected representation (and nominated reserve) on external committees/bodies.</p> <p>1. Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC) 2. Town / Parish Council Town Liaison Committee – usually Council Chair 3. Borderlands Initiative 4. Westlea Playzone Steering Group (see agenda item P.) 5. Any other bodies determined by members</p>	<p>1. Members agreed and APPROVED 2. Members agreed and APPROVED 3. Members agreed and APPROVED 4. DEFERRED 5. None</p>
26/79	f.	<p>Internal audit</p> <p>1. The Council is requested to APPROVE the reappointment of Mr Malcolm Wilkinson as the Council’s Internal Auditor for the financial year 2026/27. 2. 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.</p>	<p>1. APPROVED 2. APPROVED</p>
26/80	g.	<p>Annual Return of Accounts 2025/26 – Annual Internal Audit Report</p> <p>In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.</p> <p>1. To NOTE and APPROVE the Annual Internal Audit Summary and Report of 2025/26.* 2. To CONSIDER and AGREE to any actions arising from the report of the internal auditor. (There were no actions provided in the report).</p>	<p>1. NOTED and APPROVED 2. NOTED</p>

26/81	h.	<p>Annual Return of Accounts 2025/26 – Annual Governance Statement</p> <p>In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.</p> <p>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>	APPROVED
26/82	i.	<p>Annual Return of Accounts 2025/26 – Accounting Statements</p> <p>In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and ONLY AFTER approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2025-26 (agenda item B, h).</p> <p>To APPROVE the 2025-26 Accounting Statements (Section 2 Annual Return of Accounts).* As already signed by the Council’s Responsible Finance Officer.</p>	APPROVED
26/83	j.	<p>Annual Return of Accounts 2025/26 – Year-on-Year Variances</p> <p>To NOTE the explanation of year-on-year variances provided by the Council’s Responsible Finance Officer to the External Auditor. *</p>	NOTED
26/84	k.	<p>Setting the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights (2025/26)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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. 2. To NOTE the date (Thursday 4th June 2026) of publishing the relevant notice* advertising the dates which public rights may be exercised. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NOTED 2. NOTED
26/85	l.	<p>Potential Errors in Annual Return – Qualification</p> <p>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; 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>	AGREED to choose option B.
26/86	m.	<p>Finance and reserves</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reserves - Review and (if appropriate) update the ACTUAL “Reserves Provision” as of 31st March 2026.* 2. Reserves - Review and update (if appropriate) Policy No. 20 Policy for Financial Reserves.* 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviewed and NOTED 2. Reviewed and NOTED

		3. 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).*	3. Reviewed and NOTED
26/87	n.	<p>Governance - review of existing policies</p> <p>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 	All policies APPROVED with small amendment to the media policy
26/88	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. Community Chest application from Bedlingtonshire Golf Club ii. Community Chest application from St Bede’s Park Run iii. Community Chest application from Bedlington Community Allotment iv. Community Chest application from Bedlington Brass Community Trust v. A donation and membership application from North East War Memorials project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. DECLINED ii. DEFERRED iii. APPROVED iv. APPROVED v. APPROVED to donate £100 under the subscription budget as a one-off cost, not Community Chest budget
26/89	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 PlayZone’s 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. No changes made ii. APPROVED iii. REJECTED iv. NOTED
26/90	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>	AGREED to add a comment saying that, if discriminate parking on the main road has been considered, then we support this.

26/91	r.	<p>Planning</p> <p>Planning applications – where comments have been requested. 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="304 338 1203 801"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="304 338 443 376">Ref.</th> <th data-bbox="443 338 995 376">Description</th> <th data-bbox="995 338 1203 376">Response date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 376 443 506">26/01262 /COU</td> <td data-bbox="443 376 995 506">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 data-bbox="995 376 1203 506">30th April 2026</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 506 443 672">26/01278 /VARYCO</td> <td data-bbox="443 506 995 672">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 data-bbox="995 506 1203 672">1st May 2026</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="304 672 443 801">26/01311 /FUL</td> <td data-bbox="443 672 995 801">Erection of a single-storey detached garden room in the rear garden. 10 Vicarage Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5DR.</td> <td data-bbox="995 672 1203 801">19th May 2026</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Please note, 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.</p>	Ref.	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	<p>No comments</p> <p>No comments</p> <p>No comments</p>
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26/92	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>	<p>NOTED</p>												

PART C – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

RESOLVED to **NOTE** part A to G. Section D is not part of the agenda and is included for information only.

26/93	a.	<p>Chair's update and external invitations/consultations</p> <p>NOTE any announcements from the Chair, and to discuss invitations, consultations and external meeting feedback since the last Council meeting.</p>	<p>Nothing for this meeting</p>						
26/94	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.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="304 1883 1190 1986"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="304 1883 608 1986">Payee</th> <th data-bbox="608 1883 826 1986">Amount (£)</th> <th data-bbox="826 1883 1190 1986">Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Payee	Amount (£)	Description				<p>NOTED</p>
Payee	Amount (£)	Description							

	Amazon	197.99	Cress seeds for schools
			Cress seeds competition winner prizes
	Amazon	39.60	
	Widescope Web Design	192.10	Software Annual Subscriptions
	Smart Office Systems Ltd	4.86	Printer Costs
	Widescope Web Design	74.29	.gov emails
	CCLA Deposit Fund	-952.80	Interest From Savings
	Wm Morrisons Supermarkets Ltd	920.75	Easter Eggs For Schools
	Alan Neal Graphics Limited	1,346.40	Bus Shelter Graphics
	Reay Security Limited	809.64	Bedlington CCTV
	Reay Security Limited	885.60	Opening and lock up Meadowdale
	Northumberland County Council	3,990.00	New Lighting Sockets for Christmas Lights
	Sport England	-11,225.00	Bedlington PlayZone (Westlea) grant funding
	House of Hamilton	6,000.00	Easter and Summer Events Deposits
	Trophies Plus Medals Ltd	90.36	Best Of Bedlington Prizes
	Amazon	9.99	Best of Bedlington Prizes
	CCLA Deposit Fund Transfer In	-5,000.00	Internal Bank Transfer
	Blachere Illumination UK Ltd	2,493.84	New Christmas Lights
	Reay Security	83.04	CCTV Cemetery Gates
	Widescope Web Design	78.50	Cress Heads Printing Costs
	Widescope Web Design	1,843.20	Newsletter Print and Design
	CCLA Deposit Fund Transfer In	-25,000.00	Internal Bank Transfer
	Lloyds	8.50	Bank Charges
	Widescope Web Design	37.44	Email bunker retrieval costs
	Northumberland County Council	18,885.60	Christmas Lighting Services
	Northumberland County Council	6,332.44	March Payroll Costs
	Northumberland County Council	391.20	Annual HR Support SLA Cost

		Reay Security Limited	83.04	CCTV Church Lane																
		Northumberland County Council (Whitley Memorial)	1,500.00	Pupils Fund Award																
		Broxap Limited	456.00	Seat Materials For repair																
		Northumberland County Council	3,041.80	Play Area Inspections SLA Cost																
		Wireless Logic Limited	574.86	CCTV Sim Card Charges																
		CCLA Deposit Fund Transfer In	-30,000.00	Internal Bank Transfer																
		Northumberland County Council (floral displays and bus shelters)	23,815.20	Floral Displays and Bus Shelter Cleaning																
		See Appendix A		For April 2026 Payments + Receipts																
26/95	c.	Other planning applications																		
		Where comments have not been requested.			Non for this meeting															
26/96	d.	Planning decisions notified to West Bedlington Town Council by																		
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		Northumberland County Council																		

26/97	e.	<p>Police report</p> <p>No Police report for this meeting. The next scheduled report is for June 2026's meeting.</p>	NOTED
26/98	f.	<p>Matters for information only</p> <p>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.</p> <p>i. Councillor – any matters for information only. ii. Town Clerk – any matters for information only.</p>	Nothing for this meeting
26/99	g.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>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.</p>	NOTED

SUSPENSION OF MEETING TO FACILITATE FURTHER QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

- A resident discussed Bedlington PlayZone and suggested
 - if the Town Council doesn't own it, to hand it back to Northumberland County Council.

MEETING REINSTATED

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		
26/100	a.	Nothing for this meeting.
26/101	b.	<p>Close of meeting</p> <p>The Chair closed the meeting at 8.02 pm.</p>

WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL - COUNCILLORS:

Trevor Austin, Dave Chapple, Brian Denny, Sian Denny, Cath Henderson, Adam Hogg, Al Roberts, Christine Taylor, Victoria Thompson.

Signed by Chair

Date

* Supporting documentation distributed to members before the meeting.

ⁱ The Town Clerk provided advice to confirm that absent Councillors could be both nominated and elected to office.