

Minutes of West Bedlington Town Council's meeting.
Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street West, Bedlington.
Thursday 15th May 2025, 6.30pm.



PRESENTATIONS

- Apologies from Toys, Snacks and Chats Playgroup who could not attend tonight's meeting.

ELECTION OF CHAIR (MAYOR) FOR THE YEAR 2025/26

| Min ref | | Elections of Chair (Mayor) and Deputy Mayor | |
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| 25/95 | 1. | Election of Chair (Mayor) for the year 2025/26. | Councillor Taylor was elected as Mayor of West Bedlington Town Council for the year 2025/26. |
| 25/96 | 2. | To receive the Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office. | Councillor Taylor signed the Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office. |
| 25/97 | 3. | Election of Deputy Mayor for the year 2025/26. <i>It is at the Council's discretion whether to elect a Deputy Mayor.</i> | Councillor Thompson was elected as Deputy Mayor of West Bedlington Town Council for the year 2025/26. |
| 25/98 | 4. | To receive the Deputy Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office. | Councillor Thompson signed the Deputy Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office. |

The meeting was suspended by the Mayor to allow public questions to the Council.

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

- A resident asked about removal of trees, (a message she wanted to share on behalf of her daughter), but further clarification about the issue and exact location were needed from the resident.
- A resident wanted to know about hedgerow removal, ref 25/01552/HEGRMN, and was told it was an item on the agenda for discussion.

PART A - ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

| Min ref | | Attendance / apologies and declarations of interest | Determination |
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| 25/99 | | In attendance | Councillors Austin, Chapple, Henderson, Taylor (Chair), Roberts and Thompson. Town Clerk S Young, and Assistant Town Clerk, M McTeer. Twelve (12) members of the public. |
| 25/100 | 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. Apologies for absence from Councillor Hogg, Councillor B. Denny and Councillor S. Denny were NOTED . ii. There were no dispensations for absence for this meeting. |

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| 25/101 | b. | Declarations 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. Councillor Taylor shared a declaration of interest in Bedlington Community Centre. ii. There were no dispensations for this meeting. |
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PART B – MATTERS FOR DECISION

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

| | | Details of meeting or delegated decisions | Determination |
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| 25/102 | a. | To agree and sign as a correct record the minutes of West Bedlington Town Council Meeting held on 10 th April 2025. | RESOLVED that the minutes of the West Bedlington Town Council Meeting held on 10 th April 2025 are APPROVED as a true record. |
| 25/103 | 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 10 th April 2025. |
| 25/104 | c. | To NOTE the draft minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town held on 10th April 2025. (Draft minutes distributed to members). | Draft minutes from the meeting on 10.04.25 were NOTED by members. Minutes will be approved as a true record at the next Annual Meeting of the Town in 2026 (date to be confirmed). |

2. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

| | | Matters for discussion / decision | Determination |
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| 25/105 | a. | Schedule of Council meetings for the year. The Council is asked to discuss and approve a DRAFT schedule of meeting dates for the forthcoming year. (Draft schedule distributed to members). <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> | Members APPROVED the dates provided. |
| 25/106 | b. | 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> The Council is asked to discuss and decide upon the continuation of the following current working/support groups or committees. 1) Services Working Group – front line service provision – bus shelters; public seats; litter bins; play areas; road traffic speed signs; community defibrillators; CCTV; etc. 2) Community Events Organiser Support Working Group – support event organiser; receive their feedback and suggestions; review performance; | After discussion, it was: AGREED that the Services Working Group, (1), stays as a stand-alone group. AGREED that 4, 5 and 6 will merge into one group. AGREED that 2 and 8 will merge into one group. AGREED that 3 stays as a stand-alone group. AGREED that 7 stays as a stand-alone group. |

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| | | <p>approve time-limited decisions where a delay would be detrimental or prohibit an event; etc.</p> <p>3) Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Neighbourhood Plan completion.</p> <p>4) Finance Working Group – accounts; financial planning; reserves; budgeting; precept preparation; etc.</p> <p>5) Staffing Working Group – HR issues and policies specific to staffing; salaries; recruitment; etc. This does not include the day-to-day management of staff.</p> <p>6) Governance Working Group – Council policies; procedures; Customer Charter and Standards; complaints; risk assessments (not financial risks); insurance; etc.</p> <p>7) Planning Working Group – consider planning applications where comments have been requested from the Planning Authority etc.</p> <p>8) Communications Working Group – newsletter; social media; community engagement; etc.</p> | |
| 25/107 | c. | <p>Committee / working group terms of reference</p> <p>The Council is requested to discuss, review, and approve the DRAFT terms of reference. (Draft documents distributed to members).</p> <p>1) Event Organiser Support Working Group.</p> <p>2) All other working groups.</p> | <p>Members DEFERRED the terms of reference to June's meeting, so there's time to update the paperwork for the newly-formed groups.</p> |
| 25/108 | d. | <p>Committee / working group membership</p> <p>The Council is requested to discuss and agree (considering any agreed terms of reference in c, above) the membership of each working group.</p> | <p>Members AGREED the members of each working group.</p> <p>1 – Councillors B. Denny and Hogg.</p> <p>2 and 8 (Events and comms) – Councillors Taylor, Henderson, B. Denny and S. Denny.</p> <p>3 – AGREED that the Town Council would manage this.</p> <p>4, 5 and 6 – Councillors Taylor, B. Denny and S. Denny.</p> <p>7 – Councillors Roberts, Hogg and Thompson.</p> |
| 25/109 | e. | <p>Council representation to other bodies</p> <p>The Council is requested to discuss and decide upon elected representation (and nominated reserve) on external committees / bodies.</p> <p>i. Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC)</p> <p>ii. Town / Parish Council Town Liaison Committee – usually Council Chair.</p> <p>iii. Borderlands Initiative.</p> <p>iv. Any other bodies determined by members.</p> | <p>It was decided that the following members would be West Bedlington Town Council's elected representation.</p> <p>i.) Councillor Roberts (Councillor Hogg, Deputy)</p> <p>ii.) Councillor Taylor</p> <p>iii.) Councillors Roberts and Thompson</p> <p>iv.) None</p> |

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| 25/110 | f. | Internal audit i. The Council is requested to discuss and decide upon the reappointment of Mr Malcolm Wilkinson as the Council’s Internal Auditor for the financial year 2025/26. 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. (Internal Audit Terms of reference distributed to members for information). | i.) Members AGREED to reappoint Mr Wilkinson for the financial year 2025/26. ii.) Members NOTED and ACCEPTED the competencies. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25/111 | g. | Bank Mandate The Council is asked to review its Bank Mandate signatories. The Council is required to hold three (3) Bank Mandate signatories at any one time. Banks will require a credit check for signatories. | It was AGREED that Councillors Roberts, Austin and Hogg would be the signatories. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25/112 | h. | Working groups (items for decision or discussion) 1. Any recommendations from any working group for decision by the full Council. None for this meeting. 2. Any other items from any working group meeting. Not for decision. | No comments for this meeting. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25/113 | i. | External meetings To receive feedback from councillors from any external meetings since the last Council meeting. | No feedback for this meeting. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25/114 | j. | Community Chest / funding requests The Council is asked to discuss and decide upon the following funding applications i. Community Chest Application from Toys, Snacks and Chats playgroup. (Application and Community Chest Fund Award Summary distributed to members). ii. A Pupils’ Fund application from Bedlington West End School Primary School, Bedlington. (Funding request distributed to members). | i.) Members APPROVED the application for £480 of funding. ii.) Members APPROVED the application for £1500 of funding. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25/115 | k. | Rural Market Town Group Membership 2025-26 The Council is requested to discuss and decide if it wishes to renew its annual subscription to the Rural Market Town Group at a cost of £148.68 including VAT. | Members AGREED to cancel this subscription. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25/116 | l. | Planning i. 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. | Comment regarding application 25/01144/FUL. It was agreed that a comment would be submitted to ensure the battery technology used will be the safest possible option available and to recommend there is an additional access route for fire-safety reasons. | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | <table><tr><td>Ref.</td><td>Description</td></tr><tr><td>25/01026/PRUTPO</td><td>Tree Preservation Order Application to Crown thin 2 Sycamore (T1 and T2) by 20% and reduce branches on north side of tree, overhanging property by 2-3m. 14 Oakapple Close, Bedlington Northumberland, NE22 7LL.</td></tr><tr><td>25/01144/FUL</td><td>Installation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure at Burnt House Solar Farm Battery Energy Storage System, Burnt House Solar Farm, Netherton Road, Bedlington, Northumberland.</td></tr><tr><td>25/00708/FUL</td><td>Conversion of stable block to incidental annex accommodatio Hartford Bridge House, Hartford Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6AQ.</td></tr><tr><td>25/00709/LBC</td><td>Listed building consent for conversion of stable block to incidental annex accommodation. Hartford Bridge House, Hartford Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6AQ.</td></tr></table> | | Ref. | Description | 25/01026/PRUTPO | Tree Preservation Order Application to Crown thin 2 Sycamore (T1 and T2) by 20% and reduce branches on north side of tree, overhanging property by 2-3m. 14 Oakapple Close, Bedlington Northumberland, NE22 7LL. | 25/01144/FUL | Installation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure at Burnt House Solar Farm Battery Energy Storage System, Burnt House Solar Farm, Netherton Road, Bedlington, Northumberland. | 25/00708/FUL | Conversion of stable block to incidental annex accommodatio Hartford Bridge House, Hartford Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6AQ. | 25/00709/LBC | Listed building consent for conversion of stable block to incidental annex accommodation. Hartford Bridge House, Hartford Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6AQ. |
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| | | 25/01302/FUL | Proposed 2 storey flat roof extension to existing nursery. Bedlington Bears Nursery, 2 - 4 Forster Avenue, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6EW. | | 8th May 2025 |
| | | 25/01552/HEGRMN | Hedgerow Removal Notice: Removal of four sections of hedgerow totalling 1198m. West Farm, Nedderton Village, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6AR. | Comment regarding application | 15th May 2025 |
| | | 25/01545/PRUTPO | Tree Preservation Order Application: 2no Ash Trees with dieback in upper crown and reaction growth present in the stem - Remove the crown of both trees leaving stems as standing monolith at 6m. 1no Ash Tree, end-weighted with snapped and hung-up branches in crown - reduce and reshape by 8m to lessen the wind sail of the crown. | It was agreed that an OBJECTION will be made. | 22nd May 2025 |
| | | 25/01328/FUL | Siting of five storage containers to be rented by local businesses. Land to rear of 78-80 Market Place, Bedlington, Northumberland. | Comment regarding application | 25/01328/FUL 2025 AGREED that a comment |
| | | <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> | | | will be submitted to consider parking and access, so it doesn't cause issues for businesses. |
| 25/117 | m. | Invitations The Council is requested to discuss and decide who (if anyone) with represent the Council at the following events. Details of both events are shown in Part C Invitations of this agenda. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. READLEY Asbestos and Mesothelioma Support Group - Action Mesothelioma Day (AMD) ii. Ashington Male Voice Choir - Annual Concert | | | No one can attend, so apologies will be sent to both event organisers. |
| 26/118 | n. | Bank reconciliation The Council is asked to APPROVE a checked bank reconciliation of £22,326.34 as of 30 th April 2025 for current account, a deposit account balance of £392,913.20 as of 30 th April 2025, and a CCLA account balance of £30,000. Copy of bank account statements distributed to members. | | | The bank reconciliations were APPROVED . |

PART C – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION OR TO BE NOTED

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| | | Matters for information or to be noted | | | |
| 25/119 | | RESOLVED to NOTE Sections a, b, and c. Note section f is not part of the agenda and is included for information only. | | | |
| | a. | Chair’s update and any reports from external meetings <div><div>i. The Chair will make any relevant announcements and provide updates to members.</div><div>ii. To receive feedback from councillors from any external meetings since the date of the last Council meeting.</div></div> | Nothing for this meeting. | | |
| 25/120 | b. | Consultations (not requiring a response from the Town Council) | | | |
| | | From | Description | Response details | |
| | | Non for this meeting. | | | |
| 25/121 | c. | Invitations | | | |
| | | From | Event | Response details | |
| | | READLEY Asbestos and Mesothelioma Support Group | Action Mesothelioma Day (AMD) 4th July at The Grand Hotel, Queen’s Parade, Sunderland SR6 8DB from 1.30pm. Invitation to the Mayor. Requires a response ASAP. | No one could attend. | |
| | | Ashington and District Male Voice Choir | 17 th May 2025, at 7pm ‘Annual Concert’ at St. John’s Church, Newbiggin Road, North Seaton, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 0 TH . Invitation to a Council representative and their guest requires a reply asap. | No one could attend. | |
| 25/122 | 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 |
| | | Smart Office Systems Ltd | 2.38 | Printer Costs | All payments NOTED. |
| | | CCLA Deposit Fund | -95.54 | Interest Received | |
| | | Widescope Web Design | 74.29 | .gov Emails | |
| | | Reay Security Limited | 83.04 | CCTV Church Lane Play Area | |
| | | Northumberland County Council | -149,129.00 | First Half Year Precept Payment | |
| | | Clear Insurance Management Ltd | 3,384.13 | Annual Insurance Premium – Town Council Assets and Risks | |
| | | CCLA Deposit Fund Additional Deposit | 5,000.00 | Bank Account Transfer | |
| | | Transfer Out To Deposit Account | 100,000.00 | Bank Account Transfer | |

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| | | Zoom Communications, Inc | 155.88 | Annual Software Subscription | |
| | | Widescope Web Design | 28.80 | Annual Subscription Computer Security | |
| | | House of Hamilton | 9,743.00 | VE80 Event(s) | |
| | | Morrisons | 22.43 | Tea Coffee for Annual Meeting of The Town | |
| | | Vistaprint | 51.00 | Stationary - Labels | |
| | | Information Commissioner | 47.00 | Annual Registration Fee | |
| | | Northumberland County Council | -250.00 | VE80 Event Funding | |
| | | St Bede's (Bishop Bewick CET) | 1,500.00 | Pupils Fund Award | |
| | | Bedlington Food Bank | 500.00 | Community Chest Fund Award | |
| | | Reay Security | 809.64 | CCTV Charges - Bedlington | |
| | | Reay Security | 446.40 | Locking and Unlocking Meadowdale Play Area | |
| | | Talk Talk Business | 62.92 | Telephone + Internet | |
| | | Cygnus Support | 500.00 | Community Chest Fund Award | |
| | | Northumberland Association of Local Councils | 1,783.57 | Annual Subscription Fee | |
| | | Lloyds Bank | 8.50 | Bank Account Charges | |
| | | Northumberland County Council | 6,111.67 | April Payroll Costs | |
| | | Wireless Logic Limited | 539.14 | SIM Charges for CCTV | |
| 25/123 | e. | Other planning applications Where comments have not been requested. | | | |
| | | Ref. | Description | | |
| | | 25/01370/DISCON | Discharge of Conditions 21 (Gas Protection) & 26 (Archaeology) of approved application 21/02236/VARYCO Car Park Vulcan Place, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5DN. | | |
| | | 25/01447/DISCON | Discharge of Conditions 8 (Aboriculture Method Statement), 12 (Drainage System Maintenance), 16 (Construction Method Statement), 17 (Details of Vehicular Access) & 20 (Glint and Glare) of approved application 22/01082/RENE Land East of Burnt House Farm, Netherton Road, Bedlington, Northumberland. | | |
| | | 25/01365/DISCON | Discharge of Condition 7 (SuDS) and 12 (validation and verification report) on approved application 24/00398/VARYCO St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy, Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6ED. | | |
| | | 25/01364/DISCON | Discharge of Conditions 5 (vehicular access), 11 (validation and verification report) and 13 (noise) on approved application 23/01439/VARYCO. 86A Front Street East, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5AB. | | |
| 25/124 | f. | Planning decisions notified to West Bedlington Town Council by Northumberland County Council | | | |
| | | Ref. | Description | Decision | |
| | | 25/00717/FELTPO | Proposal Location Applicant Tree Preservation Order: Fell T1 and T4 Sycamore - T1 is ivy clad and heavily weighted towards neighbouring property due to unbalanced crown. T4 is a leaning, mature Sycamore that is exceeding an acceptable height inside the garden. Remove and replace with x2 Mountain Ash or similar, Crown reduce T2 and T3 - Lime trees up to 3m and reshape. 1 South Farm, Nedderton Village, Northumberland, NE22 6BH. | PERMITTED | |
| | | 25/00556/COU | Retrospective: Change of use of flat 2 on ground floor to office and meeting space for R21 2 Old Barrington Arms, Vulcan Place, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5DL. | GRANTED | |
| | | 25/00517/COU | Change of use of hot food takeaway (Sui Generis) to hair/beauty salon (Use Class E) 46 Front Street East, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5AB. | GRANTED | |

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| | | 25/00782/FELTPO | Tree Preservation Order Application - T1 - Beech Tree - Removal to ground level due to presence of Kretzschmaria deusta, causing deterioration in health of tree, and high proportion of deadwood in the crown. Due to the tree being on the edge of a wooded area and the current location of the tree in a garden in close proximity to the property, and there are several other trees within the garden, it is not proposed to re-plant as it will be difficult to establish under the canopies of other trees. | PERMIT |
| | | 25/00717/FELTPO | Tree Preservation Order: Fell T1 and T4 Sycamore - T1 is ivy clad and heavily weighted towards neighbouring property due to unbalanced crown. T4 is a leaning, mature sycamore that is exceeding an acceptable height inside the garden. Remove and replace with x2 Mountain Ash or similar, Crown reduce T2 and T3 - lime trees up to 3m and reshape. 1 South Farm, Nedderton Village, Northumberland, NE22 6BH. | PERMIT |
| 25/125 | g. | Police report No report provided for this meeting. The next scheduled regular report is for June's meeting. | | |
| 25/126 | 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"> 1. Councillors – Any matters for information only. 2. Town Clerk – Annual ROSPA play area inspections have been confirmed for June 2025. Reminder to councillors to come into the office for their photographs taken (for ID cards, website and newsletter) before June's meeting. | | |
| 25/127 | i. | Date of next meeting The next meeting of the Council (subject to approval on the current agenda) will be on Thursday 12th June 2025 at 6.30pm in Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street West, Bedlington. The agenda for this meeting to be issued on Wednesday 4 th June 2025. | | |

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.

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| | | Matters for discussion / Decision / Information | |
| 25/128 | | The Clerk provided an update about Bedlington Community Centre. | |

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| 25/129 | | Close of meeting The Chair closed the meeting at 19.32. |
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WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL - COUNCILLORS:

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

Signed by Chair

Date