

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Council

Time and date

Monday 23 June 2025 at 18:00

Place

Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council Unit 1, 82-88 Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 1BN

Minutes

37.25. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

38.25. Open Session

Members of the public raised various issues:

- Concern over the capacity of the Town Council newsletter.
- Questions about the lease of the market and structural survey of the Markies building.
- Queries regarding the legality and transparency of working group meetings.
- Accessibility issues with holding meetings in the Town Hall due to lack of lift access.

The Mayor responded, noting the Council is pursuing the market lease and has commissioned a structural survey. He clarified working groups are advisory and make no formal decisions; recommendations must go to Full Council. He also noted accessibility issues are the reason meetings are held in the current premises.

39.25. Minutes

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2025 were considered. Corrections included:

- Cllr Bruce was self-nominated, not nominated by Cllr Bowden, and seconded by Cllr Seymour.
- Cllr Rowe and Cllr Driver were involved in the Youth Project item.
- Friends of Five Arches should be attributed to Cllr Bruce.
- Amendments to councillor names, meeting times, and project details.

Council RESOLVED to approve the minutes as amended.

Decision: Council RESOLVED to approve the minutes as amended.

40.25. Disclosure of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

41.25. Terms of Reference

Full Council [In-person] - 23/06/2025

It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the Council's working groups, with an amendment to include the words 'prioritising, scrutinising and developing' in the purpose statements.

It was also noted that there were no changes to the Planning Committee's Terms of Reference.

Decision: It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the Council's working groups, with an amendment to include the words 'prioritising, scrutinising and developing' in the purpose statements.

It was also noted that there were no changes to the Planning Committee's Terms of Reference.

42.25. Co-option on to the Council

Four candidates were considered for four vacancies. One candidate, Matthew Cooper, withdrew and was replaced by Paul Hillier. Presentations were given by three candidates:

- Graham Brown
- Anne Forbes
- Ayrin Khan

The fourth candidate, Paul Hillier, was not present. It was RESOLVED to co-opt all four candidates. It was agreed Paul Hillier would be invited to make a brief statement at his first meeting.

Ward allocations:

- Anne Forbes: Magdalene Ward
- Ayrin Khan: Grove Ward
- Graham Brown: St Boisil's Ward
- Paul Hillier: Upper Spittal Ward

Decision: It was RESOLVED to co-opt all four candidates. It was agreed Paul Hillier would be invited to make a brief statement at his first meeting.

43.25. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

Council considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for 2024-2025. Council RESOLVED to approve Section 1 of the AGAR.

The Council considered the Accounting Statements. Council RESOLVED to approve Section 2 of the AGAR.

Council RESOLVED to approve the Variances Report for 2024-2025.

It was noted the dates for the exercise of public rights will run from 25 June to 6 August 2025.

Decision: Council RESOLVED to approve Section 1 of the AGAR.

Decision: Council RESOLVED to approve Section 2 of the AGAR.

Decision: Council RESOLVED to approve the Variances Report for 2024-2025.

Decision: Council RESOLVED to approve dates for the exercise of public rights.

44.25. Strategic Plan Update

The update was NOTED. Further discussion and approval of priorities will take place at the September Full Council meeting.

45.25. Municipal Calendar

It was RESOLVED to approve the updated municipal calendar, including an additional Environment Working Group meeting on 7 July 2025 whilst noting the requirement to change the start time of Remembrance Sunday.

Decision: It was RESOLVED to approve the updated municipal calendar, including an additional Environment Working Group meeting on 7 July 2025 whilst noting the requirement to change the start time of Remembrance Sunday.

46.25. Notes from The Environment Working Group

Council RESOLVED to approve the following recommendations:

- Rename the group to 'Environment and Communities Working Group.'
- Increase meetings to 10 per annum.
- Install new bin at West End Road/Five Arches (subject to NCC approval).
- Install two additional bins at Spittal Play Park using existing stock.
- Improve signage for visually impaired residents in the High Street.
- Install 'Do Not Feed Seagulls' signage (subject to NCC approval).
- Update directional signage maps annually with QR codes.
- Form a Christmas Task Group, first meeting scheduled for 14 July 2025 at 4.00 pm.

Decision: Council RESOLVED to approve the following recommendations: Rename the group to 'Environment and Communities Working Group,' Increase meetings to 10 per annum, Install new bin at West End Road/Five Arches (subject to NCC approval), Install two additional bins at Spittal Play Park using existing stock, Improve signage for visually impaired residents in the High Street, Install 'Do Not Feed Seagulls' signage (subject to NCC approval), Update directional signage maps annually with QR codes, Form a Christmas Task Group, first meeting scheduled for 14 July 2025 at 4.00 pm.

47.25. Notes from The Budget and Administration Working Group

Recommendations were NOTED, including:

- Support for AGAR preparations.
- Recommendation to prepare a cover note for AGAR.
- Review of council investment diversification.
- Recommendation to adopt Canon printer lease Option 2 at a cost of £525 p.a., including consumables.
- The successful conclusion of the Internal Audit.
- That a Market Task Group be formed.

Council RESOLVED to approve the printer contract.

Decision: Council RESOLVED to approve the printer contract.

48.25. Notes from The Staffing Working Group

Council NOTED discussions on:

- Staff training needs and resources.
- Review of the staff handbook and HR policies.
- Staffing needs for Market.

Council RESOLVED to approve the following recommendations:

- All mandatory power tool training be completed as soon as possible (estimated cost: £5,000 for 3 people over 3 days; discounts to be explored),
- The outside workforce be paid overtime at a flat rate, during the summer period (April – Sept), to a maximum total of £10,000 annually, with all overtime to be pre-authorised, and recorded using signed timesheets, beginning in July this year.
- The cost of a two-year governance course to be undertaken by the Chief Officer at a total cost of £6,800 with appropriate safeguards.

49.25. Planning Committee

The draft minutes of the Planning Committee held on 5 June 2025 were noted.

50.25. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 22 September 2025 at 6 pm.