

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Full Council

Time and date

Monday 19 January 2026 at 18:00

Place

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

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE Full Council

Dear Councillor

The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

Iain McCready

Proper Officer

14 January 2026

Agendas and papers for all meetings can be accessed on <https://www.berwick-tc.gov.uk/meetings>

Members' Apologies

Members are requested to submit their apologies and any Declarations of Interest on the relevant form attached to this agenda to Chief.Officer@Berwick-tc.gov.uk by 5pm on the day before the meeting.

Recording of Council Meetings

This meeting is digitally recorded, broadcasted and retained until the minutes are signed.

Questions by the Public

At the discretion of the Town Mayor, those members of the public, residing or working within the Council's boundary, will be invited to make representations or ask questions in respect of the business on the agenda, or other matters not on the agenda, for a maximum of 3 minutes per person or 15 minutes overall.

Members of the Public are welcome and have a right to attend this Meeting.

Please note that there is a maximum capacity of 10 in the public gallery.

INDEX

Page Nos.

1.26 - Members of the Council	4
2.26 - Open Session	4
3.26 - Apologies for Absence	4
4.26 - Disclosure of Interests	4
Disclosures of Interest	6
5.26 - Minutes	4
2025-12-15 - Full Council [In-person] - Minutes	7
6.26 - Part 1- Items for Decisions	4
7.26 - Budget	4
Budget 2026-27 Council report	12
8.26 - Notes of the Business and Administration Working Group.	4
2026-01-12 - Budget and Administration WG - Minutes	17
9.26 - Notes of the Environment and Communities Group	4
2026-01-05 - Environment and Communities Working Group [In-person] - Minut~	20
10.26 - UK Town of Culture	4
11.26 - Tourist Tax	4
12.26 - Date of Next Meeting	4
13.26 - Part 2 - Confidential Items	4

14.26 - Confidential Matters

4

Appendices

4

AGENDA

1.26. Members of the Council

Members of the Council: Cllr John Robertson (Mayor), Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie (Deputy Mayor) Cllr Janice Bowden, Cllr Graham Brown, Cllr Robert Bruce, Cllr Rachel Driver, Cllr Anne Forbes, Cllr Mike Greener, Cllr Laura Hawken, Cllr Paul Hillier, Cllr Ayrin Khan, Cllr Philip Rowe, Cllr Catherine Seymour, Cllr Gary Smith, Cllr Thomas Stewart and Cllr Jane Turton

2.26. Open Session

Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. This is for a period of 15 minutes overall and is limited to 3 minutes per person.

3.26. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence.

4.26. Disclosure of Interests

See attached.

5.26. Minutes

To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 15th December 2025.

6.26. Part 1 - Items for Decisions

Review the notes of the Working Groups and discuss any recommendations to Full Council

7.26. Budget

To review and consider the report attached.

8.26. Notes of the Business and Administration Working Group.

To receive an update from the Lead Member on the recent meeting of the Working Group and to consider any recommendations to Full Council.

9.26. Notes of the Environment and Communities Group

To receive an update from the Lead Member on the recent meeting of the Working Group and to consider any recommendations to Full Council.

10.26. UK Town of Culture

To consider whether the Town Council supports any bids to the UK Town of Culture.

11.26. Tourist Tax

To consider whether the Town Council writes to the NECA Mayor expressing a view that if collected, the spending decisions should be taken locally.

12.26. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 23rd February 2026 at 18:00.

13.26. Part 2 - Confidential Items

TO PASS A RESOLUTION to exclude members of the public and press from the meeting at Part 3 of the agenda (if required) in view of any confidential items under discussion. These will usually relate to exempt staffing matters or contractual matters which may be commercially sensitive.

14.26. Confidential Matters

Any confidential matters (if required) arising from discussions of the Working Group notes.

Disclosures of Interest.docx

2025-12-15 - Full Council [In-person] - Minutes.docx

Budget 2026-27 Council report.docx

2026-01-12 - Budget and Administration WG - Minutes.docx

2026-01-05 - Environment and Communities Working Group [In-person] - Minut~.docx



Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council

Disclosure of Interests Form

(Localism Act 2011)

Notification by a Member of a Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Interest in a Matter under Consideration at a Meeting

Please complete the form below to indicate any agenda items in which you have an interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest in an item, please also indicate whether you wish to speak (refer to the Council's Code of Conduct for details).

As required by the Localism Act 2011, I declare that I have a disclosable pecuniary or personal interest in the following matter(s):

MEETING: _____

DATE: _____

NAME OF COUNCILLOR: _____

Agenda Item No.	Type of Interest (Disclosable Pecuniary / Other)	Reason for Interest	Wish to Speak (Yes/No)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please return this form to the Chief Officer before the meeting begins.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Council

Time and date

Monday 15 December 2025 at 18:00

Place

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

Minutes

88.25. Members of the Council

Members in attendance (15):

- Cllr John Robertson (Mayor, in the Chair)
- Cllr Janice Bowden
- Cllr Graham Brown
- Cllr Robert Bruce
- Cllr Rachel Driver
- Cllr Anne Forbes
- Cllr Mike Greener
- Cllr Laura Hawken
- Cllr Paul Hillier
- Cllr Ayrin Khan
- Cllr Philip Rowe
- Cllr Catherine Seymour
- Cllr Gary Smith
- Cllr Thomas Stewart
- Cllr Jane Turton

Apologies for absence:

- Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie (Deputy Mayor)

89.25. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie**.
All other members were present.

90.25. Disclosure of Interests

Members were invited to declare any interests.
No disclosures of interest were declared.

91.25. Open Session

The Chair invited members of the public to address the Council.

A representative from Berwick Arts Choir thanked the Council for consideration of grant support and outlined the positive impact the funding would have on forthcoming concerts.

Mr Kay, Deputy Director of the Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival, addressed the Council regarding the festival's community engagement and outreach work, including school programmes and public events. He highlighted the importance of Council funding in sustaining this activity.

Members questioned representatives on funding sources, community engagement, and economic impact. It was explained that funding was received from Arts Council England, the British Film Institute, and other sources, and that the festival generated significant economic benefit for the town through visitor spend.

Members noted the Council's limited events budget and the need for careful prioritisation.

92.25. Minutes

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24 November 2025 were considered.

Cllr Laura Hawken raised several corrections, including spelling errors and inaccuracies in recorded discussion. Members debated the accuracy of the minutes in relation to Schedule III income and the precept decision.

Cllr Catherine Seymour queried the recording of her abstention during a vote. It was confirmed that this had been checked against the meeting audio recording.

The minutes were approved, with agreement that greater care would be taken to ensure accuracy in future records.

93.25. Part I – Items for Decision

Items for decision were considered under the relevant agenda headings below.

94.25. Notes of the Budget and Administration Working Group

The Chair summarised the outcomes of the recent meeting of the Budget and Administration Working Group.

Members reviewed expenditure against budget, considered variances, and discussed the value of local and national subscriptions. The Working Group recommended integrating the community volunteer database into the Town Council website to reduce hosting costs.

Grant Applications

Berwick Arts Choir

The Working Group recommended that the grant be split across two financial years.

Decision:

The Council agreed to award a total grant of £1,000 to Berwick Arts Choir, comprising:

- **£500 in the current financial year, and**
- **£500 in the next financial year.**

Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival

An application for funding of £2,500 was considered.

Following debate, the matter was put to a vote.

Decision:

The Council approved the award of a £2,500 grant to the Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival.

Vote recorded: 8 votes in favour, 6 votes against.

Service Level Agreements

The Working Group recommended the introduction of **Service Level Agreements (SLAs)** for future funding arrangements.

Decision:

The Council approved the use of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for future funding to reduce administration and improve budget planning.

Use of Town Council Van and Materials – Three Fields Community Event

The Working Group recommended supporting the **Three Fields Community Event** through practical assistance.

Decision:

The Council agreed to:

- **approve the use of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council van to support the Three Fields Community Event, and**
- **approve the purchase of wooden boarding to enable the creation of reindeer decorations for the event.**

95.25. Budget (Projects)

The Council considered the budget report and discussed project priorities for the forthcoming year, including the impact of the precept on residents and the need to balance essential services with new initiatives.

Members noted that the **Pump Track (Youth Project)** had been **previously approved by Full Council** and was therefore not part of the prioritisation exercise, although it formed part of the overall budget context.

Members further noted that **Schedule III income fluctuates significantly from year to year and cannot be reliably predicted**. As a result, the Council agreed that Schedule III monies should be **directed towards projects and grants**, rather than used to fund **core or ongoing activities**, to ensure greater financial stability and more effective budget planning.

Project Prioritisation Exercise

Members considered a list of **ten potential budget proposals** set out in the agenda papers and were asked to **prioritise projects** within the available funding envelope.

The proposals presented were:

1. **Salmon Queen event** – £20,000
2. **Marketing and promotion / Market promotion** – £20,000
3. **Playground maintenance** – £10,000
4. **Equipment replacement programme** – £50,000
5. **Floral displays** – £7,500
6. **Additional planters** – £10,000
7. **Hyde Hill tree planters** – £15,000
8. **Christmas lights** – £20,000
9. **Website refurbishment** – £25,000
10. **Service Level Agreements (SLAs)** – £20,000

Members discussed each proposal, taking account of affordability, deliverability, impact on the precept, and alignment with the Council's Strategic Plan. Members were **polled on their priorities** in order to inform decision-making.

Agreed Priorities

Following the prioritisation exercise, the **four highest-ranked projects were agreed**:

- **Salmon Queen event** – £20,000
- **Marketing and promotion** – £20,000
- **Playground maintenance** – £10,000
- **Equipment replacement programme** – initially proposed at £50,000, with agreement to **commence at £10,000** and review funding subject to any surplus Schedule III income

Members voted on the agreed priorities. **Cllr Catherine Seymour** expressed opposition; however, the proposals were agreed.

Decisions:

- The Council agreed the prioritisation of the four projects listed above for the next financial year.
- The Council agreed to a phased increase of the precept by £70,000 per year over two years, totalling £140,000, to replace Schedule III funding.
- The Council agreed to prioritise projects within the £60,000 budget available for 2026/27 without further precept increase for grants or project spending.

96.25. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will be held on **Monday 19 January 2026 at 18:00**.

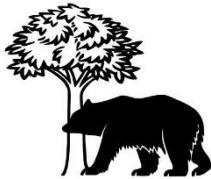
97.25. Part 2 – Confidential Items

No confidential items were raised.

98.25. Confidential Matters

None reported.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Budget 2026/27

Budget 2026/27: precept options, use of Schedule III excess, and agreed project uplift

Report for: Full Council

Report date: 13 January 2026

Officer: Iain McCready, Chief Officer

I. Background - prior Council decisions

At Full Council on 15 December 2025, members agreed a phased increase to the precept of £70,000 per year over two years (totalling £140,000) in order to reduce reliance on Schedule III income for core or ongoing activity. Members noted that Schedule III income fluctuates from year to year and is therefore better directed towards projects and grants rather than recurring expenditure.

At the same meeting, Council agreed that the £70,000 uplift for 2026/27 would be allocated to a small number of priority projects and improvements, as follows:

Salmon Queen event - £20,000

Town centre improvements (including the Butter Market and market-related work) - £20,000

Play area maintenance and repairs - additional £10,000 (to be added to the existing play maintenance budget line)

Berwick Youth Project (pump track) - £10,000

Playground equipment programme - additional £10,000 to commence (to be added to the existing play equipment budget line, as the first step in a rolling replacement programme)

These allocations total £70,000 and represent additional investment over and above the Council's existing service budgets.

2. Discussions at the Budget and Administration Working Group - 12 January 2026

The Budget and Administration Working Group considered the 2026/27 draft revenue budget and agreed to bring two scenarios to Full Council for decision:

Scenario 1 - the agreed £70,000 precept uplift, with any remaining 2026/27 revenue shortfall met from the one-off excess Schedule III receipt in the current year. The Working Group supported taking this proposal to Full Council (vote: 4 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention).

Scenario 2 - an alternative scenario where the precept is increased further to fully balance the revenue budget, enabling the one-off excess Schedule III receipt to be retained for other priorities (including reserves). The Working Group supported taking this proposal to Full Council (vote: 6 in favour, 1 against).

3. What the £70,000 uplift will be used for (public-facing narrative)

Full Council agreed a £70,000 uplift to the precept as part of a planned move towards a more stable and transparent funding base for the Town Council. Schedule III income can vary from year to year, and the Council's intention is to reduce reliance on that variable income for ongoing core activity. The uplift therefore supports clearer long-term budgeting, while enabling the Council to invest in a small number of priority projects that residents will see and benefit from directly in 2026/27.

Within the agreed £70,000 envelope, Council has identified the following priority items for 2026/27:

a) Tweed Salmon Queen 2026 - £20,000

The Tweed Salmon Queen is one of Berwick's distinctive traditions and a major community event which brings together local people, volunteers, and visitors. The 2026 programme includes event delivery and associated activity, supporting community participation and helping sustain the town's wider cultural and visitor offer. Funding is included to ensure the event can be delivered safely and well, with appropriate infrastructure, stewarding, and programming.

b) Town centre improvements, including the Butter Market and the Charter Market - £20,000

A thriving town centre matters for residents, local businesses, and visitors. Over the past year the Council has taken practical steps to improve the appearance and experience of the town centre through enhanced cleaning, seasonal displays and other visible improvements. In 2026/27 the Council intends to build on this by investing further in targeted public-realm improvements and in the Charter Market, which the Town Council now manages. The aim is to strengthen footfall, support local traders, and complement the town's wider initiatives including specialist markets and Quayside activity.

c) Play areas: maintenance and repairs - additional £10,000

The Town Council manages all of play spaces across Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth (with the exception of Westfield). A recent condition review has identified areas where improvements are needed to keep sites attractive, welcoming and in good condition. In 2026/27 the Council will invest an additional £10,000 in play area maintenance and repairs, added to the existing play maintenance budget line, to deliver targeted repairs and practical improvements alongside routine inspections and planned maintenance.

d) Berwick Youth Project (pump track) - £10,000

This funding provides the Council's previously agreed contribution to the Berwick Youth Project pump track. The Council's intention is to support positive opportunities for young people and

families, and to contribute to a project that has strong community backing and will provide an enduring local facility.

e) Play areas: rolling equipment replacement programme - additional £10,000 (initial allocation)

Alongside maintenance, the Council wishes to begin a planned programme of rolling replacement and improvement of play equipment across the sites it manages, rather than waiting until equipment fails. In 2026/27 the Council will invest an additional £10,000, added to the existing play equipment budget line, as an initial allocation to commence a rolling replacement approach. The wider programme will be reviewed as part of the Council's longer-term asset planning and future budgets.

Note: the allocations above total £70,000 and reflect the priority items agreed by Full Council within the uplift.

4. Budget development notes

In preparing the 2026/27 draft budget, officers have reviewed budgets line-by-line, updated cost assumptions where required, and reprofiled staffing budgets so costs sit in the most appropriate service areas. Staffing budgets reflect contractual spinal column increments for four members of staff from April and an uplift to the lowest paid post in line with National Living Wage/minimum wage requirements. For improved accountability, salary expenditure associated with civic activity is now shown within the Civic budgets (including associated National Insurance and pension lines).

The draft budget assumes the Council remains in its current offices in 2026/27. If the Council moves into the Barclays building during 2026/27, initial enabling works and fit-out costs may need to be met from reserves, with any ongoing savings in rent and utilities reflected as part of the move. Any such proposal would be brought back to members through a separate report.

Where 2025/26 projects (including the allotments programme, the Green Gym at 5 Arches and the Woodland Walk) have not commenced by year end, it is proposed that unspent budgets are placed into reserves and then drawn down in the new financial year when works start. Delays to these projects have largely arisen from legal and consent requirements managed through Northumberland County Council and other 3rd parties.

5. Scenario I - £70,000 precept uplift with one-off use of excess Schedule III

Under this scenario:

The 2026/27 precept is set at £471,775, representing the agreed £70,000 increase compared with the current year.

The 2026/27 revenue budget includes total expenditure of £685,650 and total income of £138,752. A budget shortfall of £46,897 is met from the one-off excess Schedule III apportionment received in the current year (approximately £52,769 above budget), as a transitional measure while the Council implements budget measures.

Indicative Council Tax impact (Town Council element only): based on a tax base of 3,706.23 Band D equivalents for 2026/27 (and 3,667.98 in the current year), the Band D charge would be

approximately £127.29 per annum (increase of £17.75 per annum compared with the current year).

Table I - Indicative annual Council Tax charge by band (Scenario I)

Band	Current Year	2026/27 - Scenario I	Increase (per year)	Increase (per month)	Increase (per week)
A	£73.03	£84.86	£11.83	£0.99	£0.23
B	£85.20	£99.00	£13.80	£1.15	£0.27
C	£97.37	£113.15	£15.78	£1.32	£0.30
D	£109.54	£127.29	£17.75	£1.48	£0.34
E	£133.88	£155.58	£21.70	£1.81	£0.42
F	£158.22	£183.86	£25.64	£2.14	£0.49
G	£182.57	£212.15	£29.58	£2.47	£0.57

Key considerations:

Keeps the precept increase aligned to the £70,000 uplift already agreed by Full Council.

Uses a one-off receipt (excess Schedule III) to balance the budget for 2026/27 while recurring budget measures are implemented.

Reduces, but does not remove, short-term reliance on Schedule III in 2026/27 (as a transitional measure only).

6. Scenario 2 - Higher precept to balance the budget and retain the Schedule III excess

Under this alternative scenario:

The budget is balanced without using the one-off excess Schedule III receipt by increasing the precept sufficiently to cover the £46,897 shortfall.

The 2026/27 precept would be £518,672 (an increase of £116,897 compared with the current year).

The one-off excess Schedule III apportionment received in the current year (c. £52,769 above budget) would not be required to balance the 2026/27 revenue budget and could instead be retained for other one-off purposes (e.g. reserves or additional projects), subject to Council decisions.

Indicative Council Tax impact (Town Council element only): based on a tax base of 3,706.23 Band D equivalents for 2026/27 (and 3,667.98 in the current year), the Band D charge would be £139.95 per annum (increase of £30.41 per annum compared with the current year).

Table 2 - Indicative annual Council Tax charge by band (Scenario 2)

Band	Current Year	2026/27 - Scenario 1	Increase (per year)	Increase (per month)	Increase (per week)
A	£73.03	£93.30	£20.27	£1.69	£0.39
B	£85.20	£108.85	£23.65	£1.97	£0.45
C	£97.37	£124.40	£27.03	£2.25	£0.52
D	£109.54	£139.95	£30.41	£2.53	£0.58
E	£133.88	£171.05	£37.17	£3.10	£0.71
F	£158.22	£202.15	£43.93	£3.66	£0.84
G	£182.57	£233.25	£50.68	£4.22	£0.97

Key considerations:

Removes the need to use the one-off excess Schedule III receipt to balance the revenue budget.

Allows the one-off excess Schedule III receipt to be retained for other priorities (including to bolster reserves), but at the cost of a higher precept for residents in 2026/27.

Provides a clearer separation between recurring revenue funding (precept) and one-off/variable income (Schedule III).

7. Next steps and decisions required

Full Council is asked to:

Confirm which budget scenario is to be adopted for 2026/27 and formally set the 2026/27 precept.

Confirm the approach to the one-off excess Schedule III receipt (use as a transitional balancing item in Scenario 1, or retention for other priorities/reserves in Scenario 2).

Confirm delivery of the agreed 2026/27 project priorities funded through the uplift and any phasing instructions.

Appendix A - Headline comparison of the two scenarios

Item	Scenario 1 (Precept £471,775)	Scenario 2 (Precept £518,672)
Precept change vs current year	£70,000	£116,897
Band D charge (Town Council element)	£127.29	£139.95
Band D increase vs current year	£17.75 per annum	£30.41 per annum
Budget shortfall / balancing item	£46,897 met from one-off excess Schedule III	No shortfall (balanced by higher precept)
Treatment of one-off excess Schedule III (c. £52,769)	Used to balance 2026/27 budget (transitional)	Available for other priorities (including reserves), subject to Council decision

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Budget and Administration Working Group

Time and date

Monday 12 January 2026 at 18:00

Place

Council Offices Marygate, Berwick-Upon-Tweed.

Councillors Present:

Cllr P Rowe (chair)

Cllr J Robertson

Cllr R Mackenzie

Cllr R Driver

Cllr C Seymour

Cllr M Greener

Cllr G Brown (None voting member)

Cllr L Hawken (None voting member)

Officers present: Iain McCready (Chief Officer), Stephen Robeinson (Operations manager)

Notes**1.26. Apologies for Absence**

The meeting began with the chair extending festive greetings and a Happy New Year to all attendees. The chair then moved on to the first agenda item, inviting any apologies for absence. No specific apologies were mentioned.

The chair highlighted the importance of attendance and encouraged members to inform in advance if they were unable to attend future meetings.

2.26. Disclosures of interest

The chair requested any disclosures of interest from the attendees. No disclosures of interest were noted.

The chair reiterated the importance of transparency and the need for members to declare any conflicts of interest to maintain the integrity of the group's decisions.

3.26. Notes of previous Meeting

The chair asked for comments on the notes from the previous meeting, which were documented between pages 6 through 9. A discussion ensued regarding the approval status of these notes. It was clarified that the notes from the Budget and Administration

Working Group were not formally approved as minutes by the full council but were noted. This distinction was important to ensure proper procedural understanding.

The attendees confirmed that there were no further comments or issues with the notes, allowing the meeting to proceed to the next agenda item.

The chair emphasized the need for clarity in documenting decisions and actions in future meetings to avoid any procedural misunderstandings.

4.26. Budget

The chair introduced the budget discussion, highlighting the inclusion of additional sheets in the meeting pack, specifically those with blue headings. The recommendation proposed was to approve the 2026/27 revenue budget, which included a total expenditure of £685,650 and total income of £138,752. The council tax precept for 2026/27 was proposed to be set at £471,775, an increase of £70,000 compared to the current year. The budget shortfall of £46,897 would be met from the excess Schedule 111 apportionment received in the current year, amounting to £52,769, as a one-off transitional measure while savings and restructuring are implemented.

A detailed discussion followed, focusing on the differences between the primary and alternative budget versions. The primary budget included the use of excess Schedule 3 funds, whereas the alternative budget proposed an additional increase in the precept to cover the shortfall. Specific figures and the impact on council tax bands were examined, with attention given to the indicative boundaries and the accuracy of current year figures.

Several councillors raised concerns about the process of agreeing on project expenditures before finalising the overall budget. It was noted that the council had already agreed to raise the precept by £70,000 and had allocated funds to various projects accordingly. The discussion emphasized the need for context when prioritising projects, including historical expenditure data where available.

Councillor Seymour highlighted the importance of keeping the precept increase as low as possible, considering the financial pressures faced by the community. The meeting concluded with a general consensus on the proposed budget, acknowledging the prudence of using excess Schedule 111 funds to balance the budget and the minimal impact on council tax rates for most properties.

Ultimately, a vote was taken, and the recommendation to take the budget proposal to full Council was supported with 4 votes in favour, 2 against, and 1 abstention. There was also a discussion about the need to provide an alternative scenario with further debate at the full Council meeting, this was voted on and the outcome was 6 in favour and 1 against.

5.26. Expenditure vs Budget Year to Date

The discussion on expenditure versus budget year to date involved reviewing various pages of the financial report. Specific items such as office software and email costs, bus shelter maintenance, and floral additions were highlighted. There was a mention of the Christmas lights working effectively this year, although some minor issues were noted.

Councillors raised questions about specific budget variances and the treatment of income from events like the Tweedmouth Feast. The operating costs for the year were discussed, with considerations about future grant funding and the creation of surpluses for future events. The review was thorough, covering multiple pages of the report, with councillors expressing their views and seeking clarifications on various financial aspects.

6.26. Grant Application

The grant application from The Friends of Castle Parks on behalf of the Berwick Festivals Group was discussed. The application requested funds to support the production of a map for the festival. However, it was noted that there was no money left in the budget to support this application, as all the remaining funds had been allocated.

Councillors debated the possibility of supporting the application in the next financial year, starting from 1st April, but there were concerns about setting a precedent for retrospective grants. It was ultimately decided to decline the application due to the lack of available funds. The decision was made with regret, acknowledging the importance of the festival group but adhering to the budget constraints.

7.26. Notification of Receipts

The notification of receipts for November was reviewed. Pages 34 to 39 of the financial report were discussed, with councillors checking the details of various receipts and ensuring that all transactions were accurately recorded. There were no significant queries or issues raised during this review.

8.26. Bank Reconciliations

The bank reconciliation processes for November were noted. The councillors reviewed the relevant pages of the financial report, confirming that all reconciliations were in order. There were no major concerns or discrepancies identified during this discussion.

9.26. Items for Next Agenda and Actions Arising

Councillors discussed several items for the next agenda, including the need to review the committee and working group structure, the number of meetings, and the involvement of officers. There was a suggestion to have more frequent forums with partner organisations to discuss strategies and share information. The importance of operational reserves was highlighted, with a proposal to have a serious debate about the appropriate level of reserves to be held.

There was also a mention of a recent consultative event discussing the neighbourhood plan, with councillors expressing the need for more engagement with partner organisations. The idea of holding additional town meetings or forums was considered, aiming to improve collaboration and information sharing.

10.26. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Budget and Administration Working Group was confirmed to be held on Monday, 09 February 2026 at 6:00pm.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Environment and Communities Working Group

Time and date

Monday 5 January 2026 at 18:00

Place

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

Group Members

Cllr Jane Turton – Chair
Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr Janice Bowden
Cllr Robert Bruce
Cllr Laura Hawken
Cllr Gary Smith
Cllr Thomas Stewart

In Attendance

Cllr Jane Turton – Chair
Cllr Janice Bowden
Cllr Laura Hawken
Cllr Thomas Stewart
Cllr Mike Greener
Iain McCready – Chief Officer (via Teams)
Stephen Robinson – Operations Manager

Notes

1. Apologies for Absence

The meeting began with the Chair wishing everyone a Happy New Year. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bruce and Mackenzie. Councillors Robertson, and Forbes although not voting members gave apologies as they had intended to attend.

2. Disclosures of Interest.

The Chair asked if there were any disclosures of interest. None were received.

3. Notes of the Previous Meeting

The notes from the previous meeting were briefly mentioned. There was a query about the cost of a bus shelter, which was confirmed to be £8,000. No further amendments or additions to the previous meeting notes were discussed, and they were agreed upon without objection. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and confirmed the accuracy of the notes.

4. Decisions from Full Council

The Chair provided an update on the decisions log from the Full Council. There was a detailed discussion about various sites and projects. Potential new allotment sites were discussed in detail including potential expansion of the Shielfield Park plot and new sites along the Five Arches. The Chair emphasised the importance of securing land for allotments and other community uses. The Chair thanked officers for their updates and the progress made.

5. Quayside Units.

The Quayside Units were discussed, noting that they are up and running despite the less-than-ideal timing for their launch. The units have seen good initial success, with traders reporting positive feedback. There was a detailed discussion about the accessibility of the units, particularly for wheelchair users, and the need to address the cobbled surfaces that may hinder access. Suggestions were made for mitigations. The Chair emphasised the importance of ensuring the units are accessible to all and discussed the possibility of extending the licence for the units to operate throughout the summer. There was also a discussion about the potential for working with Artist in residence at Berwick Academy to work with pupils to design and paint the huts. This recommendation was supported by the group and will be passed on to full council for consideration.

6. Palace Green Remembrance Garden

The proposal to install a dedicated memorial garden within Palace Green Scout Garden to commemorate those who served in conflicts and wars in the Far East was discussed. There was general support for the idea, but concerns were raised about the level of consultation with relevant families. It was emphasised that the families of those who were killed or imprisoned should be aware of and support the initiative. The Chair noted the importance of ensuring that the memorial has the backing of the community, particularly those directly affected. The idea was to have a small garden with a memorial stone and complementary planting, which would be inconspicuous and not interfere with the existing use of the area by Scouts and other community groups. The garden would serve as a living history project, engaging the community, particularly children, in maintaining the garden and understanding its significance. There was a debate on whether the memorial should be placed within the Castlegate War Memorial rather than dispersed around town. The working group agreed to recommend to full council, improving the site at Palace Green with a pocket park/garden and some wider maintenance but not a memorial at this time, with officers to seek grant funding where possible.

7. 5 Arches Adoption

The management plan for the 5 Arches Park was discussed, with emphasis on reviewing and reporting annually. Concerns were raised about rubbish near the park, potentially due to new residents not having bins. Engaging the community to take responsibility for the park was highlighted, including leafleting new residents. The green gym and fitness track projects were mentioned, with funds allocated in the budget. The working group agreed to recommend to full council the plan be presented to Northumberland County Council.

8. Town Forum Updates

The Chair mentioned the need for regular updates from the Town Forum. It was noted that there was no report for the current month as the officer was unable to attend the latest meeting. The importance of receiving updates from the Town Forum was emphasised and updates important updates will be brought to the next meeting from councillors who attended.

9. War Memorials

The discussion on war memorials highlighted the ongoing nature of the project. There was mention of forming a task group to address the memorials, but it was noted that NCC is still responsible until the transfer is complete. The Chair reiterated the need to keep the project moving forward and to address any outstanding issues. The discussion touched on the complexity of adding names to existing war memorials and an accessible entrance at the Castlegate memorial.

It was suggested that names could be added on a separate monument within the war memorial instead.

10. Woodland Walk

The update on the Woodland Walk project indicated that progress is being made, albeit slowly. The officers updated the group that the heads of terms have been agreed with no issues, and the project is now in the hands of solicitors. There was a sense of frustration with the pace of progress, but optimism that the project would move forward soon.

11. Salmon Queen 2026

The Salmon Queen 2026 project was discussed with a Task Group meeting having taken place that day. The Chair verbally updated the group that the planning was going well and that the notes of the Task Group will be brought to the next meeting.

12. Items For Future Agendas

Several items were added.

1. Pocket Park Palace Green
2. Far East Campaign Memorial
3. Grove Gardens South
4. Public Water Fountain Reinstatement.
5. Northumbria in Bloom
6. Public Access EpiPens

Items already on the list include

1. Town Centre Garden/Additional Trees
2. Assets of community value
3. Public Access defibrillators
4. Spittal Promenade
5. 5 Arches Entrance
6. 5 Arches Adoption
7. Spa Well Issues.

These items were noted for consideration in upcoming meetings.

Recommendation(s):

Item 5 – Full Council to approve officers to engage with Berwick Academy to work with the Artist in Residence and pupils to design and paint the quayside huts.

Item 6 – Full Council to approve the creation of a pocket park/garden within Palace Green and some wider maintenance of the area to improve it.

Item 7 – Full Council to approve the 5 Arches Management Plan to be sent over to Northumberland County Council for comment.