

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Full Council

Time and date

Monday 11 May 2026 at 18:00

Place

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

Annual Meeting of the Council Minutes

Record of Attendance

Members in attendance (15):

- Cllr John Robertson (Mayor) – in the Chair at the start of the meeting
- Cllr Janice Bowden
- Cllr Graham Brown
- Cllr Robert Bruce
- Cllr Rachel Driver
- Cllr Mike Greener
- Cllr Laura Hawken
- Cllr Paul Hillier
- Cllr Ayrin Khan
- Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie (Deputy Mayor)
- Cllr Philip Rowe
- Cllr Catherine Seymour
- Cllr Gary Smith
- Cllr Thomas Stewart
- Cllr Jane Turton

In attendance (Officers):

- Iain McCready, Chief Officer / Proper Officer
- Stephen Robinson, Operations Manager

Members of the public and a member of the press were in attendance.

1.26 Election of Town Mayor

The outgoing Mayor welcomed councillors and those present and moved to the first item of business, the election of the Town Mayor for the 2026/27 municipal year.

Cllr Robert Bruce nominated Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie. Cllr Mike Greener nominated Cllr Jane Turton. The nominations were duly seconded.

Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie addressed the Council. She thanked councillors for the opportunity to serve as Deputy Mayor during the previous year and spoke about the Council's shared vision for Berwick, the importance of partnership working between councillors and staff, and the need for respectful debate and challenge.

Cllr Jane Turton did not address the Council personally. Cllr John Robertson spoke in support of Cllr Jane Turton's nomination and referred to the mayoral role as combining civic leadership, chairing Full Council, and acting as a critical friend in ensuring that decisions of Full Council are progressed.

A ballot was held. The result was:

- Cllr Jane Turton – 8 votes
- Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie – 7 votes

RESOLVED: That Cllr Jane Turton be elected Town Mayor of Berwick-upon-Tweed for the 2026/27 municipal year.

Vote: Carried by ballot, 8 votes to 7.

2.26 Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Town Mayor

Cllr Jane Turton made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Town Mayor of Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council.

3.26 Vote of Thanks to the Outgoing Town Mayor

RESOLVED: That the Council record its thanks to Cllr John Robertson for his service as Town Mayor during the past municipal year.

Vote: Unanimous.

4.26 Address of the Outgoing Town Mayor

Cllr John Robertson addressed the Council. He thanked his wife for her support during his time as Mayor and thanked the Sheriffs who had served during his term, including David, Pat and Jo and their respective partners. He referred to fundraising for the Mayor's charity and thanked councillors and officers who had supported the Council's work during the previous three years.

Cllr John Robertson stated that the Council had moved from a difficult position to one where projects were being delivered, and he thanked the Chief Officer and Operations Manager for their work in moving the Council forward. He also spoke about inward investment in the town and encouraged people to be positive about Berwick and its future.

5.26 Address of the Incoming Town Mayor

Cllr Jane Turton addressed the Council. She said she was delighted and honoured to have been elected Mayor and thanked councillors for their support and confidence.

The Mayor referred to events and opportunities during the coming year, including the 80th anniversary of the Salmon Queen, the 200th anniversary of the lighthouse, the 150th anniversary of Tweed Dock, the visit from the Canadian Pipes and Drums, and the Council's bid for Britain's Town of Culture 2028.

The Mayor also referred to challenges for the town, including education changes, medical care, dentists, affordable housing and public transport. She stated that her focus would be on strengthening partnerships, particularly with youth, health and voluntary organisations, and on supporting residents and bringing people together. She announced that her chosen charity would be Spittal Improvement Trust and paid tribute to Cllr John Robertson's hard work and leadership as outgoing Mayor.

6.26 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

7.26 Disclosure of Interests

No disclosures of interest were received.

8.26 Election of Deputy Town Mayor

The Council considered the election of Deputy Town Mayor for the 2026/27 municipal year. Cllr Graham Brown and Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie were nominated and seconded. A nomination for Cllr Laura Hawken was not taken forward as Cllr Hawken did not wish to be considered.

Cllr Brown addressed the Council. He said he was honoured to be nominated and would carry out the role with full commitment if elected, but explained that it was not his preferred choice for personal reasons, as he expected to miss one or two meetings during the year.

Cllr Mackenzie addressed the Council. She thanked councillors who had voted for her in the mayoral election and said she would be willing to continue as Deputy Mayor to support work for Berwick and partnership working. She also congratulated Cllr Turton on her election as Mayor.

A ballot was held. The result was:

- Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie – 9 votes
- Cllr Graham Brown – 6 votes

RESOLVED: That Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie be elected Deputy Town Mayor of Berwick-upon-Tweed for the 2026/27 municipal year.

Vote: Carried by ballot, 9 votes to 6.

9.26 Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Deputy Town Mayor

Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Deputy Town Mayor of Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council.

10.26 Sheriff Appointment

The Mayor advised that she had not yet decided who she wished to ask to serve as Sheriff and therefore no appointment was made at the meeting. This will be brought to the next meeting of Council once a decision has been made by the Mayor for ratification.

The outgoing Sheriff, Joe Lang, addressed the Council. He thanked Cllr John Robertson for the opportunity to serve, thanked the Sergeant-at-Mace and the Sheriff's Lady for their work, and described the office of Sheriff as an honour and an important part of Berwick's heritage. He wished his successor well, once appointed.

11.26 Appointment of Planning Committee

The Council considered appointments to the Planning Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year. Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie advised that she did not wish to serve on the Committee and withdrew from the proposed membership.

RESOLVED: That the following councillors be appointed to the Planning Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year: Cllrs Robert Bruce, Rachel Driver, Mike Greener, Catherine Seymour, Gary Smith and Thomas Stewart. The Chair will be appointed at the Committee's first meeting.

Vote: Unanimous.

It was noted that, following the formation of the committees and working groups, officers would contact each group so that meeting dates, times and days of the week could be agreed in accordance with the approach resolved by Council on 27 April 2026.

12.26 Appointment of Working Groups

The Council considered appointments to the Council's working groups for the 2026/27 municipal year. The Chair of each Working Group will be appointed at the first meeting of that group.

RESOLVED: That the following councillors be appointed to the Budget and Administration Working Group: Cllrs Janice Bowden, Rachel Driver, Mike Greener, John Robertson, Philip Rowe, Thomas Stewart and Jane Turton.

Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the following councillors be appointed to the Environment and Communities Working Group: Cllrs Graham Brown, Mike Greener, Paul Hillier, Ayrin Khan, Rosemary Mackenzie, Gary Smith, Thomas Stewart and Jane Turton.

Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the following councillors be appointed to the Staffing Working Group: Cllrs Janice Bowden, Graham Brown, Laura Hawken, Paul Hillier, Rosemary Mackenzie and Jane Turton.

Vote: Unanimous.

13.26 Appointment of Task Groups

The Council considered appointments to the Council's task groups for the 2026/27 municipal year. The Chair of each Task Group will be appointed at the first meeting of that group.

RESOLVED: That the following councillors be appointed to the Tourism and Regeneration Task Group: Cllrs Graham Brown, Rosemary Mackenzie, Thomas Stewart and Jane Turton.

Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the following councillors be appointed to the Salmon Queen Task Group: Cllrs Mike Greener, Rosemary Mackenzie, John Robertson, Gary Smith and Jane Turton.

Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the following councillors be appointed to the Market Task Group: Cllrs Janice Bowden, Rachel Driver, Laura Hawken and Rosemary Mackenzie.

Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the following councillors be appointed to the Christmas Lights Task Group: Cllrs Janice Bowden, Mike Greener, Gary Smith, Thomas Stewart and Jane Turton.

Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the following councillors be appointed to the Neighbourhood Plan Task Group: Cllrs Rachel Driver, Mike Greener, Rosemary Mackenzie, Thomas Stewart and Jane Turton.
Vote: Unanimous.

14.26 Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

The Council considered appointments to outside bodies for the 2026/27 municipal year.

Freemen Trustees: The Chief Officer reported that Cllr Philip Rowe had resigned as the Council's representative on the Freemen Trustees and that a vacancy had therefore arisen. Cllr Thomas Stewart nominated Anthony Chessell. Cllr Laura Hawken seconded the nomination. Cllr Catherine Seymour was also nominated and seconded. A ballot was held.

RESOLVED: That Anthony Chessell be appointed as the Council's representative to the Freemen Trustees, subject to any ratification required by the Freemen Trustees.
Vote: Carried by ballot, 11 votes to 4.

RESOLVED: That Cllrs Rosemary Mackenzie and Jane Turton be appointed as representatives to Berwick Town Forum, with Cllrs Rachel Driver and Laura Hawken appointed as deputies.
Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Cllrs Philip Rowe and Gary Smith be appointed as representatives to Berwick Youth Project.
Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That officers make enquiries regarding Community Action Northumberland and report back to a future Council meeting if an appointment is required.
Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Cllrs Mike Greener and Thomas Stewart be appointed as representatives to the Conservation Area Advisory Group.
Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Cllrs Rachel Driver and Rosemary Mackenzie remain appointed as representatives to the Family Hub, formerly the Sure Start Children's Board, and officers seek to re-establish contact with the body.
Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Robert Bruce be appointed as the Council's representative to Friends of Five Arches.
Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Lesley Stephenson continue as Litter Prevention Champion and as the Council's representative to the North Northumberland Voluntary Forum.
Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Catherine Seymour be appointed as the Council's representative to the Northumberland Association of Local Councils County Committee.
Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Thomas Stewart be appointed as the Council's representative to the Town and Parish Liaison Group.
Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Jane Turton be appointed as the Council's representative to the Riding of the Bounds Association.
Vote: Unanimous.

St Aidan's: It was noted that the previous appointment appeared to be historic and that no appointment had been required during the previous year. No representative was appointed.

Cllr Thomas Stewart asked whether the Town Council could be represented on the Tweed Forum. It was noted that membership may be by invitation. The Council also discussed whether representation on the Harbour Commission could be explored.

RESOLVED: That officers contact the Tweed Forum and the Harbour Commissioners to ask whether they would accept a Town Council representative, and report back to the next Council meeting.

Vote: Unanimous.

15.26 Minutes

The Council considered the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 27 April 2026.

Cllr Laura Hawken raised a query regarding minute 8.26.4 on Service Level Agreements (SLA's). She stated that the SLA criteria had already been agreed and that the purpose of the proposed Task Group was to consider which organisations receiving regular grant funding may be suitable for a Service Level Agreement.

It was reported that councillors had been asked whether they wished to serve on an SLA Task Group, but only one response had been received and there had been no interest in forming the Task Group.

RESOLVED: That the matter of Service Level Agreements be referred back to the Budget and Administration Working Group for consideration at its June meeting.

Vote: Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 27 April 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Vote: Unanimous.

16.26 Schedule of Meetings

The Council considered the proposed schedule of meetings for the 2026/27 municipal year.

RESOLVED: That the schedule of meetings for the 2026/27 municipal year be approved.

Vote: Unanimous.

17.26 Date of Next Meeting

Noted: Monday 29 June 2026 at 6.00pm.