

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Full Council

Time and date

Monday 29 June 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

24 June 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

The meeting is recorded for council use only.

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AGENDA

32.26.Members of the Council

Members of the Council: Cllr Jane Turton (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 John Robertson, Cllr Philip Rowe, Cllr Catherine Seymour, Cllr Gary Smith and Cllr Thomas Stewart.

33.26.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.

34.26.Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence.

35.26.Disclosure of Interests

See attached.

36.26.Minutes

To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council meeting held on 11th May 2026.

37.26.Part 1- Items for Decisions

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

38.26.Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025 / 2026

- i. To receive the Annual Internal Audit signed AGAR for the year ended 31st March 2026 and to refer any issues raised in the report to the Budget and Administration Working Group.
- ii. To receive and respond to the Annual Governance Statements (Section 1 of AGAR) and agree signature by the Chair and Chief Officer.
- iii. To approve the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2026 (Section 2 of AGAR) and agree signature by the Chair and Chief Officer.
- iv. To approve the variances between 2024/25 and 2025/26 Annual Returns.
- v. To approve the submission of the AGAR for the year ended 31st March 2026, and publication on the Town Council website, as required.
- vi. To agree dates for the exercise of public rights.

39.26.Asset Register

To approve additions, disposals and reclassifications to the Asset Register.

40.26.Notes of the Budget 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.

41.26.Notes of the Environment and Communities 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.

42.26.Quayside Huts Design

To approve the design of the Quayside Huts.

43.26.Litter Picking Competition Prize

To discuss the report.

44.26.Sheriff Appointment

To note the appointment of Sheriff for the Municipal Year 2026/27.

45.26.Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 27th July 2026 at 18:00.

46.26.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.

47.26.Confidential Matters

Any confidential matters arising from discussions of the Working Groups.



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: _____

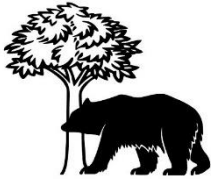
Agenda Item No.	Type of Interest (Disclosable Pecuniary / Other)	Reason for Interest	Wish to Speak (Yes/No)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



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, charring 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.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £15 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2 must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2026**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2026** Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2026
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities **must** publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2026 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2025/26** approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26** approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2026 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments **must** be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2026
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) **must** be approved before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references, even where approved on the same day.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) **must** certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority **must** in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor **must** be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- Additional costs may be incurred if additional audit work is required.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2025) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2026).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2026**

Completion checklist – ‘No’ answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is ‘no’, has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority’s approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2026 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

***Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners’ Guide to Proper Practices**, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council

<https://www.berwick-tc.gov.uk/>

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			✓
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	✓		
P. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

06/06/2026

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

DAVID NEWMAN

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date 10/6/2026

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We have assured ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A <i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.			<i>has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.</i>

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	
			<i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.</i>
1. Balances brought forward			<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies			<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts			<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs			<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments			<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments			<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward			<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments			<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets			<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings			<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?			<i>For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval.

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Explanation of significant variances in the accounting statements

Parish Council name: Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council

Please explain any variances of more than 15% between the totals for individual boxes in Section 2. We do not require explanations for variances of less than £200; however, in some cases there may be 'compensating' variances which leave the overall total for a box relatively unchanged – e.g. where there was a major one-off project in one year (e.g. contribution to village hall extension of £30,000), but a totally different expense of a similar size in the next (e.g. purchase of playground equipment of £28,000). In such cases, it would be helpful to provide an explanation of movements within each box. We also ask you to explain any change where there is a movement to or from zero. Please either use the proforma below or complete a separate schedule if more space is required.

Please see separate excel attachment as an alternative. It is at the discretion of clerks which template you choose to complete.

Section 2	2024/25£	2025/26£	Variance (+/-) £	Detailed explanation of variance (for each reason noted please include monetary values (to nearest £100))
Box 2 <i>Precept</i>	364,311	401,775	37,464	
Box 3 <i>Other income</i>	214,910	239,680	24,770	
Box 4 <i>Staff costs</i>	307,046	278,133	-28,913	
Box 5 <i>Loan interest/ capital</i>	0	0	0	
Box 6 <i>Other payments</i>	263,915	326,718	62,803	4,800 Traffic Management - Coldstream Guards 2,900 Survey of Barclays Building 6,800 Fabricate and intsal bus stop at Newfields 6,000 Supply and install fence at Five Arches Allotments 5,900 Lease of Charter Market
Box 7 <i>Balances carried forward</i>	323,175	359,779	36,604	If some of the year-end balances are earmarked for specific purposes rather than as a general reserve, please provide a breakdown. You do not need to explain the year-on-year variance for this box.

Box 9 <i>Fixed assets & long-term assets</i>	1,182,123	1,192,111	9,988	Explain <u>all</u> movements in this category and not just those above 15% Acquisition of street furniture such as benches, bus shelters and litter bins, equipment to aid floral displays such as watering lances plus office equipment such as IT equipment
Box 10 <i>Total borrowing</i>	0	0	0	

Local council name: Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council

Notice of appointment of date for the exercise of public rights
Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2026

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, and
The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 234)

<p>1. Date of announcement: <u>30 June 2026</u> (a)</p> <p>2. Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounts to be audited and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to them. For the year ended 31 March 2026 these documents will be available on reasonable notice on application to:</p> <p>(b) <u>Stephen Cozens, Finance Officer</u> <u>Email: steve.cozens@berwick-tc.gov.uk</u> <u>Tel: 01289 302391</u></p> <p>commencing on (c) <u>01 July 2026</u></p> <p>and ending on (d) <u>11 August 2026</u></p> <p>3. Local Government Electors and their representatives also have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the opportunity to question the auditor about the accounts; and• the right to make objections to the accounts or any item in them. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the Authority (f). <p>The auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose during the inspection period at 2 above.</p> <p>4. The auditor's limited assurance review is being conducted under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and the National Audit Office' Code of Audit Practice. Your review is being carried out by:</p> <p>Forvis Mazars LLP, Newcastle Office via 30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU Email: local.councils@mazars.co.uk</p> <p>5. This announcement is made by (e) <u>Iain McCready, Chief Officer</u></p>	<p>(a) Insert date of placing of this notice on your website.</p> <p>(b) Insert name, position and contact details of the Clerk or other person to whom any person may apply to inspect the accounts.</p> <p>(c) And</p> <p>(d) The inspection period must be 30 working days in total and commence no later than 1 July 2026.</p> <p>(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice</p>
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Asset Register Value Summary

	Opening Balances	End of Year 2025-26	Notes
Civic Regalia	£471,800.00	£471,800.00	
Office Equipment	£25,746.34	£27,186.18	
Street Furniture	£310,371.45	£316,499.45	
Play Equipment	£241,945.88	£240,245.88	
Other Assets	£92,803.31	£86,783.31	
Local Services Unit	£39,455.56	£39,802.45	
Markets	£0.00	£9,793.26	1
Total Asset Value	£1,182,122.54	£1,192,110.53	

Reconciliation with last year

Asset Value at 31st March 2025	£1,182,122.54
Subtract disposals during year	£12,250.61
Add additions during year	£22,238.60
Reclassification - Debits	£3,610.00
Reclassification - Credits	£3,610.00
Asset Value at 31st March 2026	£1,192,110.53

Notes

1 New Category for 2025-2026

Office Equipment

Opening balance	£25,746.34
Additions	£1,439.84
Disposals	£0.00
Closing balance	£27,186.18

Additions

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
24-492	Laptop	Lenovo V15 G2	Town Council Office	£341.50	April 2025	£341.50
24-497	Dishwasher	Beko Slimline	Town Council Office	£224.17	April 2025	£224.17
25-231	Meeting Owl 3	Owl Labs	Town Council Office	£874.17	April 2025	£874.17
Total				£1,439.84		

Disposals

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
Total				£0.00		

Street Furniture

Opening balance	£310,371.45
Additions	£12,133.00
Disposals	£6,005.00
Closing balance	£316,499.45

Additions

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
24-503	Litter Bins [5@198]	Broxap	various	£990.00	April 2025	£990.00
25-233	Litter Bins [5@198]	Broxap	various	£990.00	September 2016	£990.00
25-406	Litter Bins [5@198]	Broxap	various	£990.00	December 2025	£990.00
25-342	3 Bay Harrogate Bus Shelter	Ace Shelters	Ramparts	£7,795.00	December 2025	£7,795.00
25-515	Self-watering hanging baskets [40@34.20]	Amberol	various	£1,368.00	March 2026	£1,368.00
Total				£12,133.00		

Disposals

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
	Litter Bins 10 @ 125	Broxap	various	£1,250.00	February 2013	£1,250.00
	Litter Bins 5 @ 160	Broxap	various	£800.00	February 2013	£800.00
	Litter Bins 5 @ 125	Broxap	various	£625.00	May 2014	£625.00
	Litter Bins 5 @ 160	Broxap	various	£800.00	May 2014	£800.00
	Litter Bins 3 @ £230	Broxap	various	£690.00	November 2015	£690.00
	Litter Bins 8 @ £230	Broxap	various	£1,840.00	September 2016	£1,840.00
Total				£6,005.00		

Play Equipment

Opening balance	£241,945.88
Additions	£0.00
Disposals	£1,700.00
Closing balance	£240,245.88

Additions						
PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
			Total	£0.00		

Disposals						
PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
	Seesaw Zebra	Kompan	Flagstaff Park	£1,700.00	Jan 2017	£1,700.00
			Total	£1,700.00		

Other Assets

Opening balance	£92,803.31
Additions	£1,900.00
Disposals	£4,310.00
Reclassification - Debits	£3,610.00
Closing balance	£86,783.31

Additions

PO Number	Description (all are Christmas Lights)	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
25-362	Star Turn (LD11ST)	LITE	Local Services Unit	£200.00	November 2025	£200.00
25-362	Dallas Scroll (LD17DS)	LITE	Local Services Unit	£100.00	November 2025	£100.00
25-362	Red Rope Light with Silver Minis (3588)	LITE	Local Services Unit	£150.00	November 2025	£150.00
25-362	Star Silhoutte (15468/R) [2@150]	LITE	Local Services Unit	£300.00	November 2025	£300.00
25-362	Star Silhoutte (15468/B) [2@150]	LITE	Local Services Unit	£300.00	November 2025	£300.00
25-362	Reindeer Silhoutte (15472)	LITE	Local Services Unit	£150.00	November 2025	£150.00
25-362	Abstract Star (4062)	LITE	Local Services Unit	£150.00	November 2025	£150.00
25-362	Cool White Rope Light with Warm White Minis (LITE	Local Services Unit	£150.00	November 2025	£150.00
25-362	Gold Rope Light with Red Minis (3540)	LITE	Local Services Unit	£150.00	November 2025	£150.00
25-362	Gift Silhoutte (15470)	LITE	Local Services Unit	£150.00	November 2025	£150.00
25-362	Red Star, 168 x 163cm	LITE	Local Services Unit	£100.00	November 2025	£100.00
Total				£1,900.00		

Disposals

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
	Trailer	unknown	Depot	£4,310.00	May 2015	£4,310.00
Total				£4,310.00		

Reclassification - Debits (moved to Markets)

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
	Market Stalls & sheets [x5@ 722]	Zapp Canopy Umbre	Local Services Unit	£3,610.00	May 2015	£3,610.00
Total				£3,610.00		

Local Services Unit

Opening balance	£39,455.56
Additions	£582.50
Disposals	£235.61
Closing balance	£39,802.45

Additions

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
25-168	Tripod Ladder	Henchman	Local Services Unit	£582.50	July 2025	£582.50
Total				£582.50		

Disposals

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
23-028	Helmet, Visor and Ear Defenders [3@42.99]	Screwfix	Local Services Unit	£128.97	September 2022	£128.97
	Portable greenhouses	Amazon	Local Services Unit	£106.64	April 2023	£106.64
Total				£235.61		

Markets

Opening balance	£0.00
Additions	£6,183.26
Disposals	£0.00
Reclassification - Credits	£3,610.00
Closing balance	£9,793.26

Additions

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
25-388	Wooden Market Stalls [4@1224.50]	Timbela	Quayside	£4,898.00	November 2025	£4,898.00
25-547	Festoon Lights	Festive Lights	Buttermarket	£1,285.26	March 2026	£1,285.26
Total				£6,183.26		

Disposals

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
Total				£0.00		

Reclassification - Credits (received from Other Assets)

PO Number	Description	Make	Location	Value	Purchase Date	Replacement Value
	Market Stalls & sheets [x1@ 722]	Zapp Canopy Umbre	Local Services Unit	£722.00		£722.00
	Market Stalls & sheets [x4@ 722]	Zapp Canopy Umbre	Depot	£2,888.00	May 2015	£2,888.00
Total				£3,610.00		

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Business and Administration Working Group

Time and date

Thursday 18 June 2026 at 16:00

Place

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

Group Members

Cllr Thomas Stewart (Chair)
Cllr Janice Bowden
Cllr Rachel Driver
Cllr Mike Greener
Cllr John Robertson
Cllr Philip Rowe
Cllr Jane Turton

In Attendance

Cllr Thomas Stewart (Chair)
Cllr Janice Bowden
Cllr Mike Greener
Cllr John Robertson
Cllr Jane Turton

Officers:

Iain McCready, Chief Officer
Stephen Robinson, Operations Manager

Notes

1.26 Election of Chair for the Administrative Year

Cllr Stewart was proposed and seconded by Cllrs Greener and Robertson.
Cllr Robertson was proposed and seconded by Cllrs Turton and Bowden.

Resolved

Following a vote, Cllr Stewart was elected Chair of the Working Group for the 2026/27 administrative year.

2.26 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3.26 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

4.26 Notes of the Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting, which had previously been reported to Full Council, were acknowledged.

Cllr Bowden questioned the arrangements for establishing a Service Level Agreement Task Group. Members were informed that, when the establishment of Task Groups had been considered by Full Council, no councillors had expressed an interest in joining a specific Task Group to review Service Level Agreements.

It was agreed that the Council's existing Service Level Agreements and the possible establishment of a Task Group should be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Working Group.

5.26 Internal Audit 2025/26

The Working Group considered the Internal Auditor's report for the year ending 31 March 2026. Three principal areas requiring further attention were identified:

1. The Council did not currently have a formally adopted Investment Strategy.
2. The Council's Asset Register required review and updating.
3. The Council's website required updating and improvement to make information easier to locate and navigate.

Members recognised that these matters should be addressed as part of the Council's continuing work to strengthen its governance, financial management and public transparency.

It was agreed that officers would begin reviewing the Investment Strategy requirements and updating the Asset Register.

The Working Group also agreed to recommend that Full Council establish a Website Task Group to review the structure, content and accessibility of the Council's website. The Task Group would report its findings and any proposed changes to the Business and Administration Working Group.

Recommendation to Full Council:

That Full Council establishes a Website Task Group to review the Council's website and report its findings and recommendations to the Business and Administration Working Group.

6.26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

Resolved

To be taken to full Council for approval.

7.26 Expenditure vs Budget – Year to Date

The Working Group considered the expenditure against budget report and the accompanying variance report.

Members noted the Council's financial position and the explanations provided for the principal variances against the approved budget.

Resolved

To receive and note the reports.

8.26 Notification of Receipts

Resolved

The Working Group received and noted the schedule of income received by the Council.

9.26 Bank Reconciliations

The Working Group considered the bank reconciliation information presented for the relevant period.

Resolved

The reconciliations were noted.

10.26 Items for Future Agendas

The following matters were identified for consideration at future meetings:

- review of relevant Council policies;
- review of existing Service Level Agreements;
- consideration of whether a Service Level Agreement Task Group should be established;
- progress on the Investment Strategy;
- progress on updating the Asset Register; and
- progress on the review of the Council's website.

Where any matter required a formal Council decision, the Working Group would make an appropriate recommendation to Full Council.

11.26 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would be 16th July 2026.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Environment and Communities Working Group

Time and date

Wednesday 10 June 2026 at 13:00

Place

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

Group Members

Cllr Graham Brown (Chair)
Cllr Mike Greener
Cllr Paul Hillier
Cllr Ayrin Khan
Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie
Cllr Gary Smith
Cllr Thomas Stewart
Cllr Jane Turton

In Attendance

Cllr Graham Brown (Chair)
Cllr Mike Greener
Cllr Paul Hillier
Cllr Ayrin Khan
Cllr Rosemary Mackenzie
Cllr Thomas Stewart
Cllr Jane Turton

Notes

1. Election of Chair for the Administrative Year

The meeting commenced with the first formal item, namely the election of a Chair for the 2026/27 administrative year. Nominations were received for Councillor Brown and Councillor Mackenzie, and members agreed to proceed by a show of hands.

The vote was then taken in alphabetical order of the nominees. Councillor Brown received the higher number of votes, and Councillor Brown was subsequently invited to take the chair for the forthcoming year. Members also clarified that no Deputy Chair would be elected at this stage and that, if required in future, the chair for a meeting could be determined at the start of that meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were reported.

3. Disclosures of Interest.

Environment and Communities Working Group - 2026-06-10

Members noted that no disclosures had been submitted in advance. During discussion, it was clarified that some members were also on the mailing list for Greener Berwick and that this had implications for declarations where relevant.

The Chair and members distinguished between general interests already recorded on forms and interests that needed to be declared against a specific agenda item. It was noted that the outside-bodies section later in the agenda could be relevant where Green Table reporting arose.

4. Notes of the Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting, dated 7 April, were raised briefly. Members were advised that those notes had already been considered and agreed at Full Council, and therefore no further amendment or approval was required at this meeting.

5. Future Operation of the Working Group

A substantial discussion took place regarding how the working group should operate during the municipal year. Officers encouraged members to use the group less as a forum for isolated minor operational issues and more as a forum for strategic discussion, project development and oversight of the additional expenditure now being supported by the precept. Members agreed that future agendas should assist in tracking how this funding is being used and whether it is delivering the intended improvement.

Members also discussed the balance between recurring agenda management and strategic planning. It was confirmed that a wider strategy day for all 16 councillors was expected. That wider exercise was expected to refresh the council strategy and then feed priorities back into the working groups. Within that context, members supported the introduction of a standing item on spend against budget for the areas overseen by this group.

The discussion also addressed agenda-setting discipline and officer workload. Members supported using the final future-items slot to bring forward new topics, while also allowing the Chair and officers to shape agendas in advance where members supplied sufficient background information. It was stressed that requests should be accompanied by as much supporting detail as possible so that officers could prepare proportionately. Members also considered whether outside speakers could be used selectively, with one suggestion being tightly managed slots of approximately 5 minutes for a presentation followed by 5 to 10 minutes of questions.

Meeting length was considered as part of the operating model. A preference was expressed for more focused and strategic meetings, with one member suggesting 90 minutes as a default and the Chair stating a 2-hour maximum, with an expectation that meetings should not continue past two hours. Members linked this directly to the need to move routine updates into concise reports and to reserve meeting time for decisions, direction and problem-solving.

A further strand of discussion focused on the scope of the working group itself. Members wished to ensure that both the environment and communities elements remained visible, and officers proposed a clearer reporting structure for future meetings. That structure would include an operational manager's report, budget monitoring relevant to this group, and a new biodiversity and sustainability item that could also provide a route into issues such as trees, rewilding, water quality and similar cross-cutting topics. Community reporting was also discussed, with officers indicating that a baseline communities report could be produced and then refined over time.

6. Decisions from Full Council

This item prompted a brief review of whether a separate decisions-log update from Full Council remained useful within this working-group agenda. Members noted that there was no current log to receive and questioned the value of retaining the item here when relevant matters could be circulated or addressed through Full Council itself.

The discussion concluded that this subject did not need to remain as a recurring item on this working-group agenda.

7. Town Forum Updates

No substantive Town Forum update was available because the forum had not yet met. Members clarified representation arrangements and noted that brief reporting could continue through Full Council rather than through this working group.

The discussion also drew a distinction between matters already in the public domain and confidential or restricted Town Forum discussions. Members agreed that only concise and appropriate summary reporting should be provided through Full Council, and that if a topic emerging from the forum required fuller discussion by this working group, it could be brought forward separately as a future agenda item.

8. Northumbria Water

Members reviewed the current level of engagement with Northumbria Water and noted that several separate meetings were already taking place, covering matters such as rain gardens, community funding and sponsorship. It was acknowledged that councillors involved in those discussions were receiving frequent communications and that the relevance of those meetings to this working group would depend on the subject matter arising.

Specific themes of interest included possible tree planting linked to highway and drainage work, rain-garden proposals and the prospect of Northumbria Water contributing community funding for local improvements such as planters or other visible public-realm items. Members noted that Northumbria Water had also maintained reasonably effective public communication on its works, including mail drops.

The group did not support retaining Northumbria Water as a standing item at every meeting. Instead, members preferred updates to be brought forward only when a substantive matter had clear relevance to the agenda and required discussion or direction.

9. Horticultural Works

Officers provided a broad update on the summer floral-display programme. Planting of planters was underway, followed by ground bedding, and the hanging baskets were expected to be installed the following week or possibly the week after. Approximately 100 baskets were due to be installed. Sponsorship uptake had been mixed: most baskets were already allocated, but income had not reached the level anticipated. Members heard that the current charge remained £45 per basket after only a £5 increase agreed through Council earlier in the year, while product cost alone was estimated at approximately £25 per basket before watering and maintenance were taken into account. Officers noted that watering typically takes place twice a week for 8 to 10 weeks, making the current contribution modest against the total cost.

Discussion then turned to the long-term funding model for floral displays. Officers stated that the aim was for sponsorship eventually to meet flower costs, with maintenance managed operationally, but that this would likely take 2 to 3 years to achieve. Members suggested widening sponsorship efforts beyond individual shops, including the Chamber of Trade, Rotary and larger businesses, although officers reported that several major local firms had reduced community spending. It was also confirmed that the council had entered the town-centre and railway-station categories for this year's in-bloom activity, but without a full-scale town-wide campaign.

Members also raised concerns about the condition of some planting beds, particularly at the southern entrance to town, where the appearance had been unsatisfactory for an extended period. This led into a wider discussion on the sustainability of planting choices, soil quality and whether future schemes should be designed to reduce the need for repeated intervention.

On tree planting, members noted that three additional containers for the opposite side of Marygate had already been ordered under an earlier decision and were expected imminently.

Trees would not be planted into those new containers until winter, with seasonal bedding used first so that the trees could be planted while dormant. A fresh proposal was then debated to add more tree planters in the town centre, including 1 or 2 possible additions near the existing disabled bays and 4 further planters on Hide Hill. Costs were discussed in detail, with the planters priced at approximately £1,350 each and trees at approximately £120 each, plus soil and installation. Members

also considered the interaction with market space, the risk of clutter in a historic streetscape and the possibility that future Northumbria Water works could introduce permanent in-ground planting.

Following debate, the proposal for additional Marygate planters was not pursued, but the Hide Hill proposal remained under consideration. Officers confirmed that, from an operational perspective, the location was manageable, that levelling could be achieved and that the new pump for the watering vehicle should make servicing more efficient. Members then voted on recommending 4 tree planters for Hide Hill this year from the town-centre improvements budget, which had originally been set at £20,000. The proposal was carried by 4 votes to 3 and was to be referred onward to Full Council for final determination.

Recommendation to Full Council

That Full Council approves the installation of four tree planters on Hide Hill during the 2026/27 financial year, with the cost met from the £20,000 Town Centre Improvements budget.

10. Woodland Walk

An update was provided on Woodland Walk, with officers confirming that the project had now been signed off and was moving into delivery. The current expectation is that the preparatory stage will conclude in July and that works on site will be carried out in August using the council's own team. Members welcomed the fact that the scheme was now progressing after a lengthy period of delay.

A further suggestion was made to explore whether Northumberland Water could provide practical support, drawing on an earlier example where its staff had assisted with clearance work on Rotary Way. Officers noted that Northumberland Water was due to attend on 29 June to discuss community assistance more broadly, and members were keen that this opportunity should be used to determine whether similar support could be secured for Woodland Walk.

11. Salmon Queen 2026

The group received a brief progress report confirming that arrangements for Salmon Queen 2026 were advancing as planned. Members were informed that booked acts and infrastructure were in place, a new Salmon Queen had been appointed, and the event was expected to deliver a successful three-day programme. It was also reported that Northumberland Water had agreed sponsorship of £5000, which was welcomed as an important contribution to delivery costs.

Discussion then moved beyond immediate event logistics to the future development of the Salmon Queen role. Questions were raised about how consent had been obtained for the use of the current Salmon Queen's image on tourism posters, and it was confirmed that permission had been secured and that the same approach would be followed for the incoming Queen. Members also discussed whether the scheme should in future be linked to an educational bursary or similar award, potentially recognising participation and service across the year. The Chair invited a more detailed proposal to be developed and submitted to Budget and Administration for consideration.

12. Play Areas and Splash Park: Current Position

Members were updated that the Splash Park had recently failed after the controller stopped working despite the system having been commissioned and prepared for operation. Officers advised that the controller was old, that the faulty element was not serviceable, and that it had now been replaced. The Splash Park was therefore back in operation. However, the failure was taken as further evidence that the installation is nearing the end of its life cycle.

The cost implications were set out in some detail. The replacement controller was reported to have cost slightly over £2,000, and a further valve replacement was expected to cost approximately £2,000 to £3,000.

Members noted that this represented roughly £5,000 of expenditure in the current year simply to keep the facility operational. Officers cautioned that full replacement would be on a very different scale, in the region of £250,000, and therefore could not be treated as a minor maintenance matter.

The discussion widened to play provision more generally. A resident representation about pressure on Newfields Play Park was considered alongside uncertainty about the final equipment mix at Westfield and the wider distribution of provision across the town. Officers explained that resurfacing at Newfields was already planned, that there was some physical capacity to add equipment, but that meaningful expansion would quickly exceed £10,000 and could approach far larger sums once

equipment and surfacing were included. Members agreed that the issues relating to the Splash Park, Newfields, Westfield and other sites should be brought together as part of a broader strategic review of play provision rather than addressed in isolation.

13. Public Bins/Benches: Operational Management and Member Involvement

The group considered how operational decisions on public bins, and by extension benches, should be managed. Members were clear that once budgets had been set, officers should not need to bring every individual siting, replacement or minor addition back for member discussion. Instead, the emphasis should be on providing officers with workable parameters, while ensuring that members continued to receive regular visibility of expenditure and activity through monthly reporting.

Officers explained that bin requests remain constrained by Northumberland County Council (NCC), which must grant permission for locations and be willing to empty any additional bins. It was noted that the county council is now more resistant where bins already exist nearby, on the basis that additional bins do not necessarily prevent littering. Against that background, the group agreed that officers should continue to manage routine provision within the approved budgets, report spend and additions through the regular budget monitoring process, and alert members as those budgets begin to approach their limits.

A similar discussion was also had by the group about the placement and management of memorial seating. Members were happy to allow officers to work within the fixed budgets in the same way as the litter bins.

Recommendation to Full Council

That Full Council approves giving operational control of litter bin and bench placement to officers.

14. Reports from Outside Bodies

A report was received on the Green Table event. It was noted that the session brought together a relatively small number of local groups alongside a larger number of organisers and support bodies. Particular interest was shown in Holy Trinity's experience of installing solar panels, which were reported to be supplying approximately 50 per cent of the building's electricity needs despite some shading. Members also heard about wider decarbonisation work, especially the slower progress being made on heating compared with electricity, and the possible relevance of that issue for properties in the council area that remain off the gas network and are reliant on oil or bottled gas.

The Town and Parish Councils Liaison Group update highlighted the scale of county-level transport investment, including more than £200 million on road infrastructure, with around £150 million linked to the Moor Farm roundabout scheme near Ashington and a further sum of approximately £50 to £56 million for other road projects. Members also noted that £450,000 had been allocated from the mayoral transport fund for feasibility and business case work on a small number of strategic schemes, including Berwick Railway Station. This prompted local interest in station access, possible car parking on the town side and interchange improvements.

Further discussion focused on practical concerns at Berwick Railway Station, particularly the frequent unavailability of toilets and the hazardous condition of the station pavement in wet or icy weather. Members considered whether those matters sat more naturally with the Planning Committee than with this working group, and concluded that the issues should be referred there for possible follow-up. The more extensive NCC Environment and Transport Group report was noted without detailed discussion at this meeting.

Task: Refer the railway station toilet and pavement concerns to the Planning Committee for consideration.

15. Items for Future Meetings and Workload Planning

A substantial part of the meeting was used to reshape how the working group would operate in future. Members supported a more strategic agenda structure that would avoid repeated discussion of minor operational matters while still retaining visibility of ongoing work. It was agreed that future meetings should include a standing item on biodiversity and sustainability, an operations manager's report covering current projects and service matters, and regular income and expenditure reporting focused on the budget lines relevant to this group. Members also requested that the communities side of the remit be reflected more clearly in future reporting.

The discussion on biodiversity developed into a wider conversation about rewilding, tree planting and the council's practical scope to act on land it controls or to influence wider land management by NCC. Members emphasised that this should be approached with a clear baseline and realistic options rather than broad aspiration alone. In response, officers offered to prepare a paper setting out the current position and possible next steps, including where the council has direct powers and where it would instead need to advocate for change elsewhere.

Members also discussed how external groups might contribute to future meetings without creating disproportionate officer workload. The preferred approach was to begin with internal baseline reporting and then invite relevant groups or individuals for focused contributions where that would add value to a particular item. It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 8 July at 1:00.

16. Date of the next meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 8 July 2026 at 12:00.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Quayside Huts Design

Proposal Outline

Council previously agreed to officers working with the Artist in Residence at Berwick Academy to work with pupils to design murals for the Quayside Huts.

The work by the artist has been funded by the Maltings Berwick Trust.

Consultation workshops with the students came up with the following themes:

- The sea
- The river
- The people
- The town
- The history

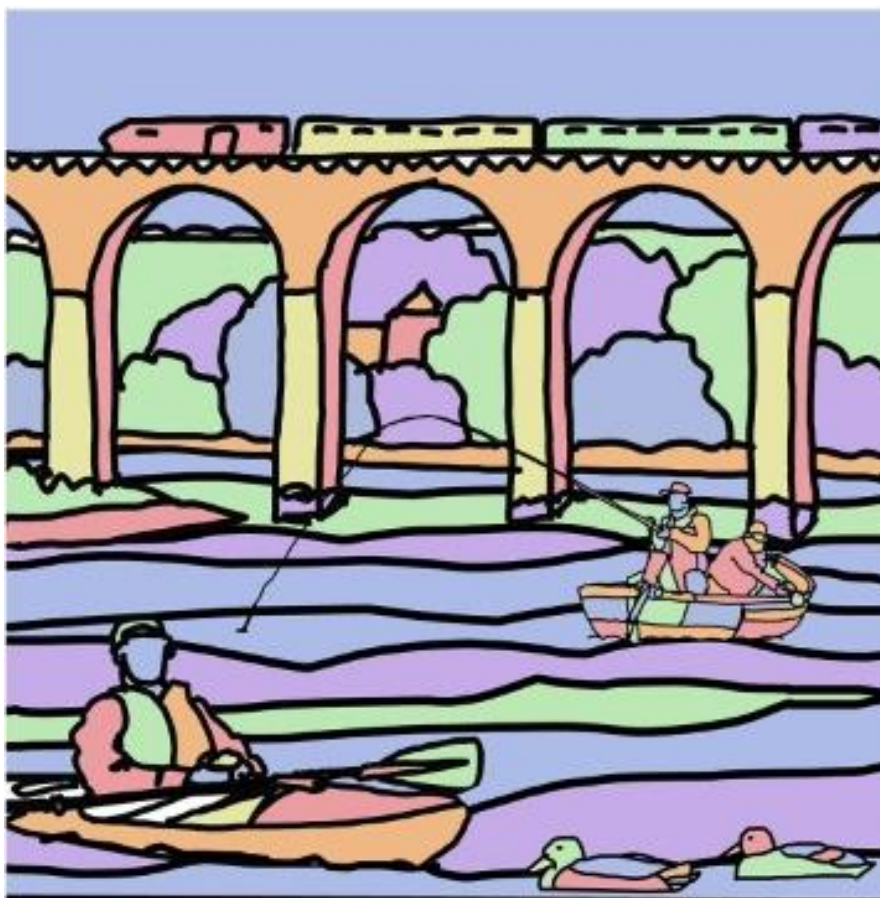
The images below were designed by the pupils



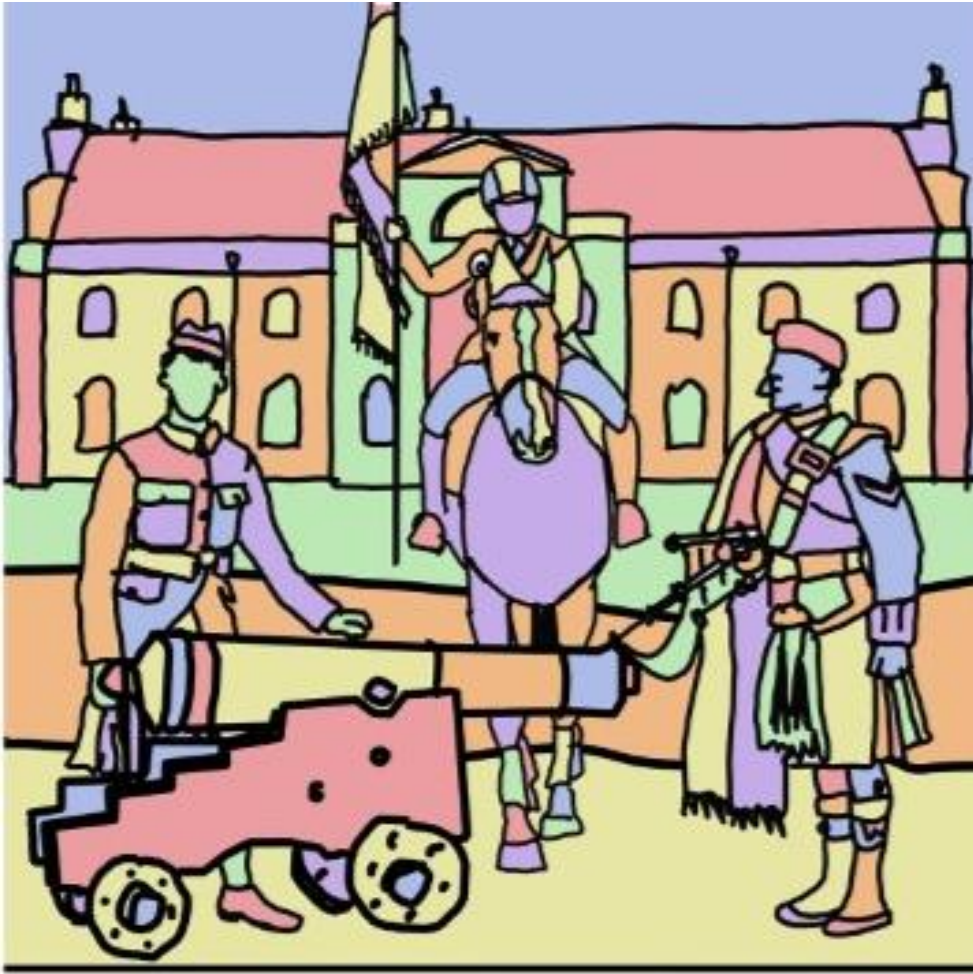
Recommendation:

Full Council to approve the designs presented.

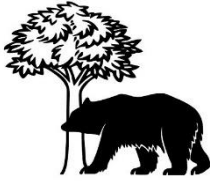
**Report by Operations Manager
June 2026**







BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL



Litter Picking Prize

Proposal Outline

Officers met with community groups to discuss Berwick Town Councils ongoing support for community litter picking across Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth. The group were joined by Asda's Community and Customer Champion, Shona.

The group discussed the need to educate young people to try and prevent litter being dropped in the first place.

Shona contacted the schools and 3 have taken part.

The project proposed was for those children who wish to take part, to produce a piece of art, small scale model, poster, drawing etc., (format of their choice), submit their piece and then each school would choose the winner. Their design would then be used to create a model for display.

We'd like the designs to incorporate the importance of not littering, the effects it has on environment, wildlife, etc., possibly display details of local litter picking groups, utilise the 3 R's message, reduce, reuse, recycle. We would like the models to use recyclable materials.

1. Each child produces a piece of work
2. Schools judge the winning piece.
3. A small group to be created with the winning child as lead, to work together to turn their piece into a model
4. Each of the 3 schools models would then be put on display throughout June/July, venues to be confirmed.

The 3 children whose pieces are chosen would each receive a prize.

Prizes have been donated by Greener Berwick.

There is a request to Full Council to donate a prize of £100 in book tokens to be given to the schools.

As no budget line exists for this it needs to come to Full Council for approval.

Recommendation:

Full Council to approve the spending of £100 on book tokens to be donated as a prize for the litter picking project.

Report by Operations Manager

June 2026