



## BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

**To: ALL MEMBERS OF BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

You are hereby requested to attend a Meeting of the **Annual Meeting of BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL** to be held on Thursday 9 May 2024 in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytyn House, Quay Road, Blyth. NE24 2AS. This meeting will immediately follow Public Question Time at 6.00 pm.

**The Council Chamber will be open to members of the public 10 minutes before the meeting is about to commence.**

**The agenda for the meeting is set out below**

Public Question Time will take place at 6.00 pm for a maximum of 20 minutes. A person may ask no more than two questions which must be relevant to Blyth Town Council. **Written questions are preferred and you can do this by emailing [info@blythtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:info@blythtowncouncil.gov.uk) by Monday 6 May 2024;** however, questions will be accepted at Council. No discussion or debate will take place on the question once it has been answered. Only one person will answer a question. Questions and responses will be anonymised and publicised on the Blyth Town Council website. The Question Time procedure is available on the website by following this link.

<https://www.blythtowncouncil.gov.uk/widescope/resources/public-question-time-reviewed-sept-2022-1.pdf>

**JOSEPH HUGHES  
TOWN CLERK  
BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

**2 May 2024**

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***Electronic devices can be used to access Committee papers. Please ensure that mobile phones are switched to silent mode during the meeting. Members are reminded of the Code of Conduct***

**AGENDA:**

<b>1</b>	<b>Election of the Mayor</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Receive the Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Election of Deputy Mayor</b>

<b>4</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Disclosure of Interests and the Grant of any Dispensations</b>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>To appoint representatives of Outside Bodies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northumberland Association of Local Councils</li> <li>• Disabled Forum</li> <li>• Friends of Ridley Park</li> <li>• Young People</li> <li>• Blyth Resource and Initiative Centre (BRIC)</li> <li>• Cultural Workstream</li> <li>• Heart of Blyth</li> <li>• Town Forum x 4 Councillors</li> <li>• Town Deal Board</li> <li>• Blyth Valley Enterprise Limited (BVEL) x 2 representatives</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	<b>To agree the establishment of Committees &amp; Sub Committees</b>

<b>Standing Committee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Lab.</b>	<b>Con.</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	
Environment (includes Allotments/Partnership etc)	13				
Community Development (includes Planning/Community Grants/Community Events etc)	13				
Governance (includes Strategic Priorities/Budgets/Staff/Complaints etc)	13				
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	
Proportion %	100 %	62.5 %	25 %	12.5 %	
Labour need to allocate to Committees – 24 members Conservatives need to allocate to Committees - 10 Lib/Dem need to allocate to Committees – 5					
<b>Sub Committees</b>					
Complaints & Grievance (Governance)	10				
Planning (Community Development)	10				
Staff (Governance)	10				
Community Funding (Community Development)	10				
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	
Proportion %	100	62.5	25	12.5	
Labour needs to allocate – 25 members. Conservative needs to allocate – 10 members. Lib/Dem needs to allocate – 5 members.					
<b>Partnership Board</b> -5 Labour, 1 Conservative and 1 Lib/Dem. Total 7 members <b>Partnership Negotiating Team</b> - 3 members <b>Working Groups e.g., Events</b> -All members can attend working groups (any recommendations of a working group need appropriate Standing Committee Approval). <b>Neighbourhood Planning</b> - All members can attend. Chaired by the Mayor.					

**Please see attached for Terms of Reference for Committees**

<b>8</b>	<p><b>The following provision shall only apply to the Complaints and Grievance Panel</b></p> <p><i>"Where any member of the Committee is unable to attend a scheduled meeting of that body, for a reasonable reason, then a representative of that political group (if any), to which that member belongs, may, by written notice to the proper officer at any time before the day of the meeting in question, authorise the proper officer to make a change to the standing appointments of the committee to substitute an alternative member for the duration of that meeting."</i></p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>To appoint members to the Committees for the next municipal year</b></p> <p><i>NB Councillors appointed to Committees shall so act until the next Annual Meeting of the Council or until they cease to be a Town Councillor or they are removed by a resolution of the Council.</i></p> <p><b>The Council stood adjourned for a short period to enable the Committees to elect their respective Chairs and Vice-Chairs.</b></p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Community Development Committee Meeting to be held after Agenda Item 9 to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Environment Committee Meeting to be held at the rising of the Community Development Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p>
<b>12</b>	<p><b>Governance Committee Meeting to be held at the rising of the Environment Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p>
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Community Funding Sub Committee to be held at rising of the Governance Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p>
<b>14</b>	<p><b>Complaints and Grievance Sub Committee Meeting to be held at rising of the Community Funding Sub Committee Meeting to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p>
<b>15</b>	<p><b>Planning &amp; Development Sub Committee Meeting to be held at rising of the Complaints and Grievance Sub Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p>
<b>16</b>	<p><b>Staff Sub Committee to be held at rising of the Planning &amp; Development Sub Committee to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p>

<b>17</b>	<p><b>Working Groups</b> – the following Working Groups need to allocate a Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair of any other working groups (once they are determined) will be decided by the Standing Committee.</p> <p><b>Events Working Group to be held at rising of the Staff Sub Committee to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair</b></p>
<b>18</b>	<p><b>The Council Resumed</b></p> <p><b>To agree the Minutes of the following Council Meetings as a true record:</b></p> <p>Special Full Council held on Thursday 29 February 2024</p>
<b>19</b>	<p><b>To agree the following Minutes of the Community Development Committee for information:</b></p> <p>a) Community Development Committee held on Tuesday 13 February 2024</p> <p><b>To agree the following Minutes of the Community Funding Sub Committee for information:</b></p> <p>b) Community Funding Sub Committee held on Tuesday 6 February 2024</p> <p><b>Minutes of the Planning &amp; Development Sub Committee</b></p> <p>There are no minutes to consider.</p>
<b>20</b>	<p><b>To agree the following minutes of the Environment Committee as a true record.</b></p> <p>a) Minutes of the Special Environment Committee held on Tuesday 23 April 2024</p> <p><b>To agree the following minutes of the Partnership Board as a true record</b></p> <p>b) Minutes of the Partnership Board meeting held on 16 April 2024</p>
<b>21</b>	<p><b>To agree the following minutes of the Governance Committee for information:</b></p> <p>a) Governance Committee held on Thursday 25 April 2024</p>

<b>22</b>	<p><b>Actions from previous Council meeting:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion re: investment opportunities with Credit Union</li> <li>2. Proposed future review of council policies to be submitted to July Council meeting.</li> </ol>
<b>23</b>	<p><b>Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24</b></p> <p><b>To consider the recommendation from Governance Committee to approve of the following:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council’s Internal Audit Report</li> <li>2. Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24</li> <li>3. Annual Governance Statement 2023/24</li> <li>4. Accounting Statements for 2023/24</li> </ol> <p>Appointment of Internal Auditor, Mike Slaughter</p>
<b>24</b>	<p><b>Register of Interests</b></p> <p>To remind Councillors of the need to regularly review and revise their personal Declarations of Interest.</p>
<b>25</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>This item is only for items of information to be given to Town Councillors and for items which either the Committee Chair or Town Clerk consider to be genuinely urgent.</p>
<b>26</b>	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Full Council will be held on Thursday 18 July 2024 in the Council Chamber, Arms Everytne House. Public Question Time starts at 6.00 pm and Council will commence directly afterwards.</p>
<b>27</b>	<p><b>PART II</b></p> <p>Pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.</p>

**MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL:**

A Barrass  
D Carr  
A Cartie  
G Davey  
S Davey  
B Erskine  
C Humphrey  
C Jones  
K Nisbet  
J R Potts  
J Reid  
M Richardson  
M Robson  
S Stanger  
W Taylor  
A Watson

## Functions reserved to the decision of the Full Council

- Setting the precept and approval of Council's annual budget
- Approval of the Annual Accounts.
- Completion of the Annual Return including the Governance Statement.
- Consideration of an Auditor's report made in the public interest (*within one month of receipt*).
- The making, amendment or revoking of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation.
- Adoption or revision of Council's Code of Conduct.
- Confirmation (by resolution) that the Council has satisfied the statutory criteria to exercise the General Power of Competence.
- Determination and review of the Bank Mandate.
- Matters of principle or policy including setting Strategic Objectives with clear outcomes and targets.
- Nomination or appointment of Representatives of the Council to outside bodies.
- Nomination or appointment of Representatives of the Council at any inquiry on matters affecting the Town, excluding those matters specific to a Committee.
- The making, amendment or revoking of byelaws.
- Agreement to write off individual bad debts above £500.
- Approval by resolution before payment of any grant or single commitment in accordance with Financial Regulations.
- Authorisation as to terms and purpose for any application for Borrowing Approval and subsequent arrangements for the loan.
- Approval of purchase, acquisition by other means lease, sale or disposal of tangible assets in accordance with Standing Orders or Financial Regulations.
- Approval of virement of unspent and available amounts in excess of £2,000 to other budget headings in accordance with Financial Regulations.
- Approval of use of Reserves or changes in earmarked Reserves as part of the budgetary process.
- The dismissal of any Officer.
- The overall review of any rents or charges.



## Terms of Reference – Governance Committee

The Committee will be responsible for the management, research and development of the following areas:

To co-ordinate the recommendations of the other Committees on strategic priorities, budget proposals (revenue and capital), and proposals on policies and procedures to enable the Committee to recommend a holistic approach in agreeing strategic priorities and objectives and recommend to the Council an annual budget and the annual precept to be levied by the Council together with action plans, which will deliver those priorities and objectives.

To carry out an annual review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and make recommendations to the Council on any necessary changes.

To receive reports from the other Committees on performance reviews in relation to Committee action plans as well as budget reports comparing expenditure and income against overall budgets and recommending any necessary action to the Council.

To ensure the preparation of annual accounts and arrange for their external audit.

To review the Council's governance arrangements in compliance with good practice and make recommendations to the Council on any changes.

To arrange for the annual review of the Council's insurances and to oversee the procedure for risk assessment.

To ensure that there are robust and adequate Health and Safety arrangements in place within the Council in respect of all of its activities and to ensure that these are understood and adhered to in all cases.

To consider any matters of policy which do not fall clearly within the responsibilities of any other Committee and to make recommendations to the Council.

To oversee all employment and staffing matters including disciplinary procedures.

To manage the Council's complaints procedure and to consider any complaints made against the Council in accordance with that procedure.

To consider any complaints made against any member of the Council and take appropriate action in consultation with Northumberland County Council's Monitoring Officer where appropriate.

To consider an overall communications strategy including Community engagement for recommendation for adoption by the Council.

The Committee may delegate any of its functions to a Sub-Committee or the Clerk of the Council.

**Powers Delegated to the Town Clerk within the responsibilities of the Governance Committee**

See powers delegated to the Town Clerk on financial and staffing matters included within Section 7 of this Report. (Powers delegated to Officers).

## Terms of Reference – Environment Committee

The Committee will be responsible for the management, research and development of the following areas in accordance with Council policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Day to day management of all assets e.g., play areas, allotments, open spaces, litter bins, bus shelters, flower beds and the enhancement of those services within the contract with the County Council and any other relevant contractor.

The Committee will consider and agree service standards for services within the contract and amend the contract subject to any budget requirements, so that they are consistent with the Council's priorities and objectives and provide best value for money.

The management and delivery of the Britain in Bloom and Blyth in Bloom competitions.

The annual consideration of priorities and objectives in relation to the services provided by the Town Council as well as other partner organisations and to recommend any changes in those priorities.

To work in partnership with relevant bodies and organisations in delivering the Council's strategic objectives and outcomes.

Preparation of an annual service budget, both capital and revenue, with proposals over a three year period, which reflect the Committees strategic objectives and priorities, and submitting these proposals through the Governance Committee within a timetable to enable the Council to set a fixed budget and agree a precept within the statutory guidelines.

To deliver those services in accordance with the approved budget.

To agree service action plans on service standards and outcomes to be achieved in line with its approved budget.

To monitor and review those action plans and budget performance at each committee meeting and report to the Council through the Governance Committee.

### **Powers delegated to the Town Clerk;**

The Clerk shall be delegated to undertake the day to day management of all assets within the Committee's Terms of Reference e.g., these will include:

- Management of playgrounds and open spaces.

- Day to day management of the partnership arrangements with Northumberland County Council and other contractors.
- Let allotments, serve notices to cultivate or terminate allotment tenancies on breach of any tenancy conditions.
- Draw up a management plan for the maintenance, repair, development and improvement including proposals for charges to tenants for each of the allotment areas which will be presented to the Committee for consideration on an annual basis.
- Collect all fees and charges in connection with allotments and undertake debt recovery action in accordance with Council policies and procedures.
- Liaise with the allotment holders and their associations and to arrange any consultation or meetings with the Committee in order to ensure their participation in any proposals with regard to the allotments.

**These powers can be delegated by the Town Clerk to the appropriate member of staff.**

## Terms of Reference - Community Development Committee

The Committee will be responsible for the management, research and development of the following areas.

Consideration of any **strategic** or **contentious** planning applications which are subject to consultation by the principal authority e.g., Northumberland County Council.

Making recommendations to the Council on any plans or proposals for the development, or wellbeing of the town.

Management and development of the Council's grants scheme in conjunction with the development of a programme of events which will deliver the Council's strategic objectives with regard to the economy, social, and environmental priorities.

To review priorities and policies in relation to the economic wellbeing of the town and to make recommendations to the Council regarding any changes in those priorities and policies.

Preparation of an annual service budget, both capital and revenue, with proposals over a three year period, and submitting these proposals through the Governance Committee within a timetable to enable the Council to set a fixed budget and agree a precept within the statutory guidelines.

To agree service action plans on service standards and outcomes to be achieved in line with its approved budget.

To monitor and review those action plans and budget performance at each committee meeting and report to the Council through the Governance Committee.

### **Powers delegated to the Town Clerk;**

Power to respond to any urgent request for response to consultation requests in connection with any planning application subject to consultation with a panel of the three Committee Chairs (or Vice-Chair) and the Chair of the Town Council.

Routine consultation on proposed planning applications will be dealt with by the Committee if they are within the required timescale, otherwise they will be referred to the delegated powers (as above). Either the Committee or the panel will have the power to refer a planning item to a planning Sub-Committee as and when necessary.

## Delegation to Officers

The Clerk to the Council is both the Proper Officer and shall carry out the functions of the "Proper Officer" as provided by the Local Government Act 1972 and as set out in the "job description" for the post, as well as the Responsible Financial Officer to the Council and is responsible for the Town Council's accounting procedures, financial records and is accountable for the proper administration of its finances in line with the current Account and Audit Regulations and the Council's adopted Financial Regulations.

In the absence of the Clerk, the full authority of the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer passes to the Deputy Clerk. Additionally, the Clerk may delegate to the Deputy Clerk or any other staff member if appropriate, to undertake functions delegated to the Proper Officer.

Delegated actions to the Clerk or other Officer shall be in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and this Scheme of Delegation.

### **The Clerk is specifically empowered as follows:**

#### Financial and Audit Powers and Authority

Power to make day to day purchases on behalf of the Council in order to exercise its functions duties, and responsibilities in accordance with Financial Regulations.

Power to authorise use of all Council facilities and equipment in accordance with any Council charging policies.

Power to deal with all aspects of the Council's insurances and to negotiate and accept terms for renewal as and when required.

To negotiate and recommend to the Council terms for acceptance relating to the Council's Banking arrangements.

To make proper arrangements for the payment of all sums owing to the Council and for the receipt of all sums due to the Council and to take appropriate recovery action where necessary.

Power to seek and obtain any grants and donations for which the Council may be entitled to apply.

Power to authorise any remedial or maintenance work on Council property or assets.

Power to invest surplus funds in accordance with Council's agreed policy.

Authority to vary budget amounts within a committee's budget in consultation with the appropriate committee Chair in accordance with Financial Regulations. Any variation made under this power should be reported to the appropriate Committee(s) at their next meeting for information.

#### Staffing - delegated power

Authorised to apply the Council's staffing, employment and disciplinary procedures in accordance with agreed policies.

Power to appoint staff (full time, part time and temporary) in accordance with the current Council policy.

Power to engage professional and consultancy advice in consultation with the Chairman of the Council up to a single amount per engagement of £5,000.

Power to authorise staff to use private cars and pay casual user mileage allowance for essential duties.

Power to implement nationally agreed salary/pay awards subject to details being reported for information to the next meeting of the Governance Committee.

Power to sanction and authorise payment of overtime within budget provisions.

#### **Other General delegated Powers.**

Power to take immediate action on all other urgent matters subject to consultation with all of the Committee Chairs or Vice-Chairs and a full report being taken to the next relevant Council or committee meeting.

Power to let contracts for works, supply of goods or services as required provided procurement is in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Power to delegate any functions delegated to the Town Clerk to any other member of staff of Blyth Town Council.

Any powers delegated by the individual committees within their terms of reference.