

AMBLE TOWN COUNCIL – April 2025

The Minutes of the Full Council meeting of Thursday 10th April 2025, 6.00pm, Town Council Offices, Fourways2, 6 Dilston Terrace, Amble.

PRESENT:

C Weir (Chair), H Lewis, I Rackham, M Joyce, I Parks, A Hume, D Bewley, K Morrison

V Smith– minutes

Prior to the commencement of the meeting Councillor Parks thanked Cllr Weir, Cllr Lewis and Cllr Morrison for their years of dedicated service to the Town.

OPEN SESSION

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME: (maximum 15 minutes)

In line with Standing Order 3d-1 members of the public may at the invitation of the Chairman ask questions, make representations, and provide information to the Council in respect of the business on the agenda or any other Town Council services.

Three members of the public were present.

An email was read out on behalf of Mandy Bond suggesting the location of a Chatty Bench in the Memorial Gardens to link in with VE Day. It was suggested that ‘Loose Lips Sink Ships, but Chatty Benches Build Communities’ could be a fitting tribute to go alongside the bench.

There is already a VE Day Commemorative Seat within the Memorial Gardens and Members were happy with their initial siting of the seat on The Braid. This is with the approval of NCC and Warkworth Harbour Commissioners but awaited a response from Country Parks.

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

232.APOLOGIES

None

233. BUSINESS REQUIRED BY STATUTE

233.1 To receive an update on May 2025 elections

Central Ward will have an election. It is expected that the Town Council will be required to pay for this. It was noted that Alnwick, a town of similar size has more Cllrs, Warkworth has 10 and Alnmouth has 10. This Council has in the past asked to increase the number of Councillors but this has been declined by NCC. Similarly, this Council has asked to abolish the ward system but this was also declined. It was suggested that the new Council revisit this.

234. To receive any declarations of interest from Members:

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda, as required by the Amble Town Council Code of Conduct

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for Members and by the Localism Act 2011, now or as they come up in the agenda process. Members are asked to review their completed Register of Interest forms to ensure that they are accurate and up to date.

Members are asked to raise declaration of interest as and when they appear on the agenda.

235. MINUTES: TOWN COUNCIL

235.1: To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2025 items 211 – 231.2

Resolved: The minutes were agreed as a true record.

236. CLERK'S REPORT:

RECOMMENDATION – That the Council notes the contents of the report and consider actions where necessary.

236.1 Clerks Report attached

Resolved: The Clerks report was noted.

237. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS and REPORT:

To receive the communications and report of the Chairman pertaining to Council Business:

237.1: Chairman

The Chair attended a civic reception at Tynemouth.

237.2: Vice Chairman

No vice chair business this month.

238: Update from Neighbourhood Development Steering Group

238.1 To receive report update from Steering Group and Sub Committees if available

The steering group met on 2 April and discussed an update on the Housing Needs Assessment as AECOM had questioned the difference in areas between the 2021 census data and the boundary change after that date in the Hauxley Grange area. Updates on housing occupancy since in a number of estates were discussed and Northumberland County Council were to provide new data where available. The HNA is still projected to be ready by the end of May.

The Steering Group were updated with the steady progress on collating information of the designated sites and information was given on what was needed for sites that would be community use.

The steering group confirmed the next steps would be to look at the housing land allocation in light of the HNA results and that the steering group could then confirm the policy areas as detailed below and begin work to flesh these out.

- Local green space policy
- Community facilities policy
- Conservation policy
- Future housing needs policy
- Sustainable development policy
- Primary residency policy

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Sarah Brannigan confirmed work was being done by NCC on a primary residence policy for the conservation area in Amble. No timeframe is available for this but it is being worked on.

In a meeting on 3 April with Sarah Brannigan the chair was informed of an expression of interest in the Edwin Street site from a disabled children's charity. There was also confirmation that the site was being put on the open market.

There will not be another meeting of the Steering Group until after the new Council sits. The group thanked the present Council members for their help.

239. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS:

239.1: To receive a report from County Councillor Clark

Cllr Clark has been contacted regarding the state of Percy Drive at Hauxley Grange after yet another accident here. These improvements are being made under S38 and S278 of the Highways Act 1980. NCC are in contact with Persimmon to get this moved on. Persimmons are liable for the highway works under these agreements despite highways generally being the responsibility of the County Council. Concerns were raised with regards to the other Persimmon estate who after 7 years still do not have their estate roads adopted by NCC as they are below standard.

The development access and the new access to the new Persimmon development-Hauxley View- at Hauxley Moor Farm will be onto the main road and not at the roundabout. The Island View car park is littered with pot holes and cars parked on grass damaging the verges. This has been passed to relevant NCC team.

A double yellow lines request was received for Belvedere Court, Turner Street and North Bank. NCC and Northumberland Estates are looking into this.

Another application has been received for a new roadway to Signal House. Strategic Estates are involved due to the dunes being under NCC responsibility.

The road resurfacing at Philip Drive and Links Avenue was carried out successfully with minimum disruption. There are now request for repairs to Lesley Drive including the speed humps. These will need to be added to the LTP and the approximate costs for the speed hump repairs is £16,000.

Bus timetables are due to be updated although it is not clear who is responsible for erecting the new timetables into the display cases.

A number of housing queries have been dealt with.

Lord Mayors Field has had the bonfire remnants cleared and has been cut. There remains concern over the SLA agreement, supposed to be in place with the Caravan Park to ensure its maintenance and free access to users. The clearance was a one-off gesture of goodwill from NCC. Clarity is needed on future arrangements.

Cllr Clark wish exiting Members well.

239.2: To receive a report from County Councillor Watson

The existing path behind the middle school is to be cleared and the existing lighting column there is to be utilised and taken within the school boundary. JW has asked for work to be done from the other side too, joining both sides. JW was advised to make contact with Tantallon Homes who were keen to extend that path to their estate.

Coble Quay – A final offer has been made however there has been no response. As this has gone on for a number of years, Members suggested a re route might be the best option.

LCWIP – Amble is under consideration but will not be one of the first Towns included.

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WHC were thanked for the offer of providing the Chatty Benches.

240. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES & REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS:

240.1 To receive the report of Councillors who represent ATC on outside bodies (Cllr Reports)

Cllr Weir attended meetings of Amble Development Trust, Amenities Committee and the Partnership meeting with NCC.

Cllr Morrison provided notes of her meetings with Amble Youth Project, Northumberland Landscape Partnership Meeting and the Events Committee.

241. FINANCIAL REPORT:

241.1 To consider voucher numbers 296 - 343 for payment and 75-79 for receipt.

The clerk updated members that additional payment vouchers were included on an updated report previously circulated. These were negative payments that were incorrectly input as income rather than refunds. The receipts and payments were approved.

- **To note income from estate of former Councillor John Michael Hedley**

The income was added to cemetery maintenance.

241.2 Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliation was noted.

TC

241.3 Year to date figures

The events committee budget head is overspent by £51. This is because road closures were over budget. Clerk to invoice for the overspend.

Budget line 129 to be amended to Chair rather than Chairmans.

The year to date figures were approved.

241.4 Grant Requests

- **England Schools Cross Country Finals to agree retrospective approval for £230 contribution**

Cllr Parks declared an interest.

The payment was agreed retrospectively.

- **Roger Hearing Necklaces – NTC - £570**

Proposal: Cllr Lewis

Second: Cllr Joyce

Resolved: On the proviso that any future maintenance is the responsibility of NTC. Grant agreed.

- **Amble Cancer Group £300**

There is no bank account set up however without the town councils assistance there is threat that it may cease to exist.

Policy states that unless exceptional circumstances, Council should not support with revenue costs however it is likely it will not be able to run without further assistance.

Proposer: Cllr Lewis proposed to support room rental for 6 months on the condition that a bank account is set up in that time; then the rest of the year would be allocated.

Group to be made aware that no further grant for revenue funding could be considered. The Town Council offered to help with the setting up of the account if necessary.

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Second: Cllr Joyce.

Clerk to also signpost the group to additional administration support from community voluntary action and thriving together.

241.5 To agree financial signatories for Town Council accounts

In May there will only be one financial signatory on the accounts. More signatories will need to be set up once the new Council sits. Financial regs state that two signatories must authorise payments – it was suggested that as all payments are emailed out, one Cllr confirms happy to proceed and another signs on to online banking and authorises them. This would avoid a lengthy process with the banking mandate.

241.6 To discuss additional bank accounts due to FSCS constraints

The Clerk is continuing to investigate other solutions.

241.7 To note updated NALC Model Financial Regulations updated March 2025

The new Model Financial Regulations have been amended and approved.

Cllr Lewis proposed that the Clerks limit for maintenance items was increased to £500.

Cllr Parks Second.

Resolved: Clerk to make the adjustments in the policy.

242.AMENITIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

242.1 To receive the Amenities Committee minutes from 28 March 2025

The minutes were approved as a true record.

242.2 To receive an update with regards to tree planting on George Street

NCC Neighbourhood Services have no knowledge of an agreement. Clerk to discuss with planning. Concerns to be raised regarding established tree roots compromising the stability of the retaining wall.

242.3 To note receipt of Chatty Bench and agreed locations

Members noted. The bench had not yet been installed however staff were liaising with Countryside Parks.

242.4 To note West Cemetery fountain maintenance and switch on

Noted.

242.5 To note repair to Paddlers Park Water Feature

Noted

242.6 To note damage to water pipe and its repair at West Allotments

Noted. Thanks to be passed to ESH.

Additional item at discretion of chair given urgent nature of request

Bus Shelter Improvement Programme.

After submitting the funding bid in September, NCC have confirmed that they have agreed in principle to the funding, however they are requesting further and more detailed information. Staff are currently pulling this together, however since the original bid was submitted, we have become aware that the Acklington Road / Gloster Park bus shelter needs to be replaced. Members agreed that NCC could be asked whether this could be added to the submission rather than the Church Street Bus Shelter seating.

243: PLANNING COMMITTEE

243.1 To note the planning update for March 2025

The planning report was noted.

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Complaints regarding work starting on the new JCSC site prior to conditions being discharged was discussed. Cllr Lewis proposed that the case officer and enforcement officer were contacted to investigate ASAP and the complaint forwarded to KIER.

244. AGENDA ITEMS:

244.1 2025-2026 Grave Digging Contract

TC

The 2025-2026 Grave Digging Contract was noted. This is an ongoing arrangement subject to annual costs agreed.

244.2 To agree amendments to Absence Management Policy

Additional line to be added to give wider scope of close family member.

Clerk to make the amends.

244.3 To agree amendments to Commemorative Seat and Plaque Policy

Amendments agreed.

244.4 To review and approve Data Protection Risk Assessment

TC

The Data Protection Risk Assessment was agreed.

244.5 To review and approve Draft Risk Management Scheme

The Risk Management Scheme was approved

244.6 To review and approve Acceptable Use Policy

The acceptable use policy was agreed. Clerk to request NCC to add a legal disclaimer and footer on all Cllr email accounts.

244.7 To review and approve amendments to Permission to erect a memorial form

TC

The updated form was approved.

244.8 To review and approve Annual Risk Assessment

The Annual Risk Assessment was approved.

244.9 To review and approve Annual Asset Risk Assessment and checklist

The Asset Annual Risk Assessment and checklist was approved. Quarterly checks to be diarised.

244.10 To review and approve the 2024-2025 Asset Register

The 2024-2025 Asset Register was approved.

244.11 To review and approve Unpaid and Compassionate Leave policy

The Unpaid Leave and Compassionate Leave policy was approved with an addition to give wider scope of close family member.

244.12 To agree date for Annual Parish Meeting between 1 March and 1 June.

TC

A new date of 13th May was agreed. The conference room has been booked and invites have been sent out.

244.13 To agree May date for visit to Barndale by The Sea School

Staff to check whether 4pm on 13th May is suitable. Staff to liaise with Chair/ViceChair then inform members of agreed date and time.

TC

244.14 To discuss letter of support for Bathing Status Application

Members agreed to provide a letter of support for CRAG bathing status application. Clerk to contact.

244.15 To discuss lack of selection of library books at Amble Library

Members remain concerned regarding a lack of stock at Amble Library. It was recommended that this be brought up with the new County Councillor after the May elections.

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244.16 To discuss the installation of Tommy and whether Town Council insurance can cover

Previously Council agreed to cover up to an additional insurance premium of £350 to cover the installation. It has been very difficult getting the insurers to understand our intention. Clerk to continue as this was becoming time critical.

TC

244.17 To consider and agree quotation for CCTV works

A quotation of £7488.15 plus VAT has been received for works required to stabilise the CCTV network and system. The newer works would carry a high guarantee of coverage and preclude drops in camera recording. A network proposal report has been circulated with agenda papers and Members agreed to proceed with the work. Clerk to ascertain what future provisions could be looked at in terms of improving night vision.

244.18 To note reason for election polling card for parts of Amble East Ward phrasing “Radcliffe Estate”

NCC advised this was necessary for Royal Mail. Upon contacting Royal Mail, the query was not answered properly. Update to be provided once received.

244.19 To note the response from David Smith MP re AI consultation

Noted.

244.20 To receive an update on Amble Toilet Refurbishment

TC

Temporary toilets have been placed at the Harbour. The refurbishment programme is expected to start in July. There has still been no information as to the work and as to how much money the Town Council may be asked to pay.

244.21 To receive an update on the provision of IT Software and Hardware

An SLA has been prepared. Members agreed to the quotation but have provided some comments and questions to be investigated further. It was agreed that once clarified the extra provision should be added before signing. Clerk to action.

244.22 To note final culvert route and start date for works

Works to re route the culvert have begun and are expected to last 5 weeks.

244.23 To note completion of End of Grant report for Neighbourhood Plan

To note

244.24 To note agreement to HUSK street naming consultation

To note.

244.25 To note Chairmans invite to RAF Boulmer Spring Reception 14 May 2025

To note

244.26 To note office sliding door repair

To note. Also noted was office blinds require some maintenance. Landlord has been informed.

244.27 To receive update for Centenary event and agree donation for assistance

A schedule has been prepared outlining tasks to be completed in the run up to the event.

244.28 To consider request to Northumbria Water re sewage odour on Leazes Street

TC

Northumbria Water attended the site and acknowledged that there were up to ten drain lids that were not fitted with the correct seal and works to replace these had been ordered.

244.28 To consider request to write to Harbour Commissioner re land behind Broomhill Street

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It was agreed to write to landowner to request the area is tidied up as it is unsightly and is attracting vermin. As vermin have been reported Clerk was asked to also contact Environmental Health.

244.29 To approve the draft Newspaper deadline 11 April 2025

The Newspaper was approved.

245. COMMUNICATIONS: RECOMMENDATION - *That the Council note or discuss where necessary the items.*

245.1 ASB issues and joint working with Hauxley Parish Council

245.2 To note resident continued correspondence

245.3 CAN Newsletter

245.4 Community Conversation, Supporting Nature in our Green Spaces 244.17 Consultation, deadline 21 April 2025

Additional Information added at discretion of chair due to time restrictions

Request to borrow PA system.

Approval granted subject to relevant insurances being obtained and failing that a personal guarantee from the borrower.

246. INFORMATION ITEMS AND ITEMS FOR CIRCULATION: RECOMMENDATION - *That the Council note the information items.*

246.1 Acklington Neighbourhood Plan

246.2 To note the response to the SLCC Allotment Survey

246.3 To note update with Coble Quay walkway

246.4 To note update on Amble First School

246.5 To note banking hub update if available

246.6 Meeting notes of culvert site meeting 13 March 2025

246.7 Notes of meeting with Northumbria Training 4 March 2025

246.8 Notes of meeting with Robin McCartney 11 March 2025

246.9 Notes of meeting with Northumbria Police 26 March 2025

Noted enbloc

Partnership Meeting notes with NCC also approved.

247. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

247.1 15 May 2025, Amble Town Council Offices, Fourways2 at 6p.m.

248. DATES FOR DIARIES

13th May 2025, Annual Parish Meeting, 6.00pm, Conference Room, Fourways2

15th May 2025, AGM followed by Full Council Meeting, 6.00pm, Council Offices.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: To consider passing the following resolution: That under Section 1(2) the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the agenda due to their sensitive nature.

PRIVATE

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249. EXEMPT REPORT

249.1 RECOMMENDATION – That the Council notes the contents of the report and consider actions where necessary.

The exempt report was noted.

250. PRIVATE REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES & REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS AS PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

250.1 To receive the private report of Councillors who represent ATC on outside bodies (Cllr Reports)

TC

Amble Development Trust

Cllr Weir requested updates on fire regulations and building security.

251. AGENDA ITEMS

251.1 To receive an update from Hay and Kilner re legal costs

Clerk to request reimbursement of invoice from developer.

Option Agreement ready to be signed. Hay and Kilner are awaiting confirmation from developer.

Updated site plan was approved.

251.2 To discuss annual leave request

Staff annual leave arrangements were discussed and a way forward was agreed.