

## **Clerks Report – March 2026**

### **212.APOLOGIES**

Members to receive any apologies

### **213. 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 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 review their Declaration of Interest forms and update if necessary.

### **214. MINUTES: TOWN COUNCIL**

#### **214.1 To agree correction of attendance for the meeting of 8 January 2026**

Members to agree correct of minutes from 8 January 2026 which had omitted the attendance of Cllr Regan who was present at the meeting.

#### **214.2: To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2026, items 193 – 204.1**

Members to approve the minutes of 28 January 2026.

### **215. CLERK'S REPORT:**

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

#### **215.1 Clerks Report attached**

Members to read and note the contents of the report.

### **216. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS and REPORT:**

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

#### **216.1: Chairman**

Members to receive an update from Cllr McTaggart

#### **216.2: Vice Chairman**

Members to receive an update from Cllr Richards

### **217: Update from Neighbourhood Development Steering Group**

#### **217.1 To receive report update from Steering Group and Sub Committees if available**

Members to receive bridging co-ordinator report / verbal update from representatives of steering group.

### **218. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS:**

#### **218.1: To receive a report from County Councillor Hume**

Members to note the update from Cllr Hume

#### **218.2: To receive a report from County Councillor Davidson**

Members to note the update from Cllr Davidson

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

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

Members to receive reports from those members who have attended other meetings on behalf of Amble Town Council.

**220. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

**220.1 To consider voucher numbers 269 – 302 for payment and 68 - 73 for receipt.**

Members to approve the payments and receipts as above.

**220.2 Bank Reconciliation to 31 January 2026**

Members to accept the bank reconciliation to 31 January 2026

**220.3 Bank Reconciliation to 27 February 2026**

Members to accept the bank reconciliation to 27 February 2026

**220.4 Year to date figures**

Members to review the year to date figures and budget heads

**220.5 Grant Requests**

- North East War Memorials

Request for a grant to assist them in continuing their work to list all war memorials from the River Tweed to the River Tees. See Memorials Index for information relating to local memorials. Minimum grant of £15.00 requested. A balance of £247 remains in this financial years grants budget.

**220.6 To agree budget correction due to formula error**

Members to approve the amended budget spreadsheet which has been amended after a formula error was identified by the Clerk. This has resulted in an additional £668 being required from the general fund as identified on the attached.

**221.AMENITIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:**

**221.1 To agree the Cemetery Fees for 2026/2027**

Members to discuss the Cemetery Fees for 1 April – 31 March 2026. Members to discuss whether to increase fees by 1% or 2% - both of which have been highlighted on the attached document.

**222: PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**222.1 To receive and note planning report**

Members to note the content of the planning report.

**223. AGENDA ITEMS:**

**223.1 To delegate authority to the Clerk to enter into a transitional SLA partnership for a period of 6 months and allocate up to £45,000 from existing budget towards meeting the costs of this.**

Members to discuss the option to extend the current contractual arrangements for grounds maintenance by 6 months. Members to note that a 6 month notice of termination is required when the contract is signed. After the 6 month period it will no longer be possible to extend this contract further.

**223.2 Perusant to sections, 111, 112(2), 214(2), 214(6), 215(1)&(2), of the 1972 Local Government Act and the s.96 of the Highways Act of 1980. Members consent to delegate spending authority of up to £63,850 from Earmarked**

**Reserves (as outlined in Appendix 1) to the Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer to set-up an Internal Grounds Maintenance Service. It is also moved that the 'SLA with NCC' budget heading, be renamed 'In-House Service Provision', and the amount budgeted be raised from £93,388 to £144,932.86, such as to allow for all other outlined costs to be met.**

Subject to the outcome of item 223.1 Members to discuss and agree to bring the Grounds Maintenance obligations in house at the termination of the Service Level Agreement, likely to be 30 September 2026. Members are provided with informative reports and risk register amended to take into account feedback received from Members previously. Members to note that the expenditure contained within the reports are up to a maximum of and will not necessarily meet those limits with best value being at the forefront of all purchases and decisions. If agreement is reached, Clerk will have delegated powers to carry out the necessary actions required to meet the deadline of 30 September 2026.

### **223.3 To agree position on Tender for Grounds Maintenance**

Members have indicated that a Tender for the Grounds Maintenance would provide a basis to demonstrate that Council have considered all options and would give a financial indication of the cost element. As requested at previous Full Council meeting, the Clerk has drafted tender documentation, and this has been fed into by individual members. Members are required to consider their position on the Tender. Members to note that the Tender is not comparable to bringing services in house due to the unquantifiable nature of works required year on year and the additional support that would be provided as part of in-house arrangements.

### **223.4 To consider proposal from community group Pride in Amble**

Pride in Amble is keen to continue working on the memorial gardens alongside Councils existing arrangements. The previous arrangement is that the community group assists within the whole area of the memorial gardens and the left hand side bed as you face the clock tower, with the Town Council providing plants as required. Pride in Amble are keen to have a member of the Town Council on Pride in Amble to assist them in their work and provide a link with the Council. Members to discuss. The right hand side bed was being looked after by Rotary and this agreement expired this year. Staff have made contact with the Rotary to inform them of this.

### **223.5 To agree works for Memorial Gardens**

Members to agree draft Tender advert and requirements. As this is below the threshold, it does not require a full procurement process but best practise is to go to Tender.

### **223.6 To agree policy review support, Health and Safety support and compliance via external contract**

An external provider has been contacted to quote for HR policy review, support and compliance. In addition to this, a quote has been provided for the provision of Health and Safety policies and training, including all on site, in person risk assessments of all Town Councils areas of responsibility. Members to review the briefing note and contractor proposal attached. Members to note the costs of this support is included within the in-house grounds maintenance costs as this work would be required as part of that process. Subject to the outcome of 223.2 this item may be required to be withdrawn.

### **Financial Implications:**

5 year support agreement – with 36 month break clause

- Employment Law/HR Fixed Fee Service - £1975 exc VAT
- Health and Safety Fixed Fee Service - £1950 exc VAT

- Combined (both of the above) - £3175.00 exc VAT

### **Online Health and Safety Training only**

Online Fixed Fee Health and Safety Training

- Free for the first 12 months (cancellation after the free period is available)
- Cost from Year 2 - £215.00 exc VAT

### **223.7 To note update re political affiliation when leafletting during election canvassing**

No legislation prohibits a Councillor standing for Election letting residents know they are an Amble Town Councillor. Whilst in the past it has been preferred that this is not used when canvassing, it is not lawful to prevent Members in doing so. Whilst appreciated that the reason for this was to ensure that Members worked together for the good of the Town rather than an individual party there is no legislation to prevent this and Members may if they wish, state this in their election materials.

### **223.8 To declare a Climate Emergency in line with Northumberland County Council, to half this Councils carbon footprint within two years with the ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030, extending to net zero for all greenhouse gases by 2040.**

Proposal by Cllr Rackham - Amble Town Council recognises there is a climate emergency. Amble Town Council commits to reducing the Council's carbon emissions and wider environmental impact. Therefore, it will actively and urgently work toward supporting the current UK Government's Net Zero commitment and Northumberland County Council's Carbon Neutral by 2030 target. Climate change and environmental impact will be the primary consideration across all policies, decisions and operations, with the intention of the Council being carbon neutral as soon as possible and by 2030 at the latest. It will extend that to net zero for all greenhouse gases by 2040.

### **223.9 To agree amendment to the Environmental Policy with agreement to measure and actively reduce Amble Town Councils carbon footprint**

Members to review the amendment to the Environmental Policy, highlighted on the attached policy in green. For clarity and ease of reference the paragraph states:

*Amble Town Council recognises there is a climate emergency. Amble Town Council commits to reducing the Council's carbon emissions and wider environmental impact. Therefore, it will actively and urgently work toward supporting the current UK Government's Net Zero commitment and Northumberland County Council's Carbon Neutral by 2030 target. Climate change and environmental impact will be the primary consideration across all policies, decisions and operations, with the intention of the Council being carbon neutral as soon as possible and by 2030 at the latest. It will extend that to net zero for all greenhouse gases by 2040.*

And

## **5. Implementation**

To achieve these objectives, the Council will:

- Include environmental considerations in decision-making and procurement processes where possible
- *Be mindful of UK Net Zero 2025 commitment made by the UK Government and look to reduce the Councils impact across all operations.*
- Train staff, councillors, and volunteers to follow sustainable practices.

- Collaborate with local authorities, organisations, and community groups on shared environmental goals.

**223.10 To agree the Staff Welfare policy**

Members to agree the Staff Welfare Policy – attached. This has been drafted in consultation with office staff.

**223.11 To receive an update on CCTV provision**

Liaison is continuing with Advance Northumberland and Morrisons with regards to the provision of monitored CCTV within this area. County Cllr Arty Hume is also keen to utilise his Members Small Scheme funds to help support this. Further updates will be given when available.

**223.12 To agree IT Service Level Agreement with Northumberland County Council and agree additional funding required from general fund.**

Members to agree to the Service Level Agreement for the provision of IT services and equipment for the period 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027 at a cost of £6691.07 with additional licenses paid direct to external provider at a cost of £1839.65. A balance of £1336.72 is required from the general fund however can be reallocated during the allocation of unspent funds after year end.

**223.13 To approve the Data Audit working document, Data Protection Roadmap, Model Publication Scheme and Data Protection Risk Assessment**

Members to review the documents listed to support Councils compliance with Assertion 10 as part of the 2025-2026 AGAR.

**223.14 To note action taken regarding compliance with Assertion 10 AGAR requirements**

Members to note the summary briefing paper of actions taken to ensure compliance with Assertion 10. This will be presented to the Internal Auditor as part of the 2025-2026 audit process.

**223.15 To receive report on suggested additional banking arrangements and agree new opening of new account(s)**

Clerk was requested to identify suitable alternative banking arrangements to safeguard the Councils finances in terms of the FSCS limits. Clerk has provided a briefing note on Unity Trust, a banking provided used by many other Town and Parish Councils for their banking needs. There are a number of options available. Clerk recommends an Instant Access account, however members to determine whether to open a Unity Trust current account or whether they are happy to use CHAPS transfers. It is not expected that regular transactions will be made from this account and Barclays will remain the Councils main account for every day transactions. There are no fees for an Instant Access Account, see attached briefing note which includes information on fees and charges. Clerk will have the opportunity to meet with Unity Trust colleagues on Wednesday at the SLCC regional conference.

**223.16 To agree Payroll and Pension Service Level Agreement with NCC for 2026/2027**

Members to agree to the payroll and Pension Service Level Agreement at a cost of £324.

**223.17 To agree Councils response to Community Governance Review taking into account previous outcomes- deadline 30 April**

Members to agree the Councils position and comments in response to the Community Governance Review. Previously, Council have expressed desire for ward system to be abolished and the number of Cllrs increased. Historically, it has not been possible to abolish the ward system with NCC stating that: *It is not possible*

*to remove the Wards as they spread over two County Electoral Divisions, Amble & Amble West with Warkworth. The Local Government Boundary Commission believes that, in the interests of effective and convenient local government, no unwarded parish should be divided by a County Division Boundary and that no parish should be split by that boundary and these are relevant considerations for principal councils- NCC- to take into account when undertaking community governance reviews.*

Members also indicated that Cllrs should be increased to 12. Members are asked to be mindful that if the number of Cllrs is agreed to increase that this would increase the number to be quorate to 4 and without the minimum number for quorate committee meetings would not be able to be held. Additionally, having an even number of Councillors may also require the need for the Chair to use their casting vote more often due to the equal number of voting Cllrs.

During Chairs discussion with Annie Howlston at NCC, Council has been informed that the Town Councils response does not hold more weight than that of an individual and therefore members are encouraged to answer the review survey on their own account.

Members to discuss and agree Councils response.

**223.18 To agree retrospective approval for staff training:**

**What to do if you Consider a Bad / Unlawful Planning Decision Has Been Made (18th February 2026) £46.20**

**Reginal Training Seminar - North (11th March 2026) - £85.00**

Members to agree to training undertaken by staff.

**223.19 To discuss and agree quotations for installation of coal truck liners**

As the costs for these works fall significantly under the procurement thresholds, staff have asked contractors to price for the works:

Already measured and fabricated coal truck inserts purchased by ATC.

All rotted wood to be removed and metal work sanded and black hammarite applied to metal work inc wheels, frame and tracks. Insets to be fixed into place. Locations:

- Nr Amble Inn, Percy Drive
- Leazes Street
- JCSC, Acklington Road
- Paddlers Park.

Quote 1 - £110 per coal truck

Quote 2 - £350 per coal truck plus VAT

Quote 3 - £2167.68 plus VAT

Members to note that due to the delay in receiving quotations for this work that these quotations do not include cost for topsoil.

**223.20 To seek retrospective approval for Newspaper for March 2026**

Members to agree Newspaper.

**223.21 To agree proposal to continue works on 4 year Strategy Plan and create Task and Finish Group**

Members to agree works to proceed on developing a 4 year plan for the Council. A task and finish group to be set up if agreed. Members taking part in this to be agreed.

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

**224.1 To note FOI request received 14 February 2026**

Members to note the FOI request received. Response to be drafted.

**224.2 To note communication from ICO**

Members to note.

**225. INFORMATION ITEMS AND ITEMS FOR CIRCULATION:**

RECOMMENDATION - *That the Council note the information items.*

**225.1 To note letter to Northumbria Police re Operation Ford**

Members to note.

**225.2 To note the update re Safer Communities funding requirements**

Members to note

**225.3 Libraries Consultation 2026**

Members to note

**225.4 Notes of meeting with Football Foundation 8 January 2026**

Members to note.

**226. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING:**

226.1 9 April 2026, Amble Town Council Offices, Fourways2 at 6p.m.