

**Minutes of the meeting of the Operations & Assets Committee
held on 25th June 2026 at the Lindisfarne Centre, Alnwick at
6.30pm**

Present Councillors M Harrington, P Broom, G Watson, L Wearn, K Hedley, R Bush and B Chapman

In attendance J Pibworth – Assistant Town Clerk, J McWilliams - Finance & Admin Officer.

026/14 Apologies for absence
A Hunt, Gill Castle, S Frost & J Humphries

026/15 Declarations of Interest
Cllr Geoff Watson declared a non-pecuniary interest in 026/20 (a) Allotments.

026/16 Approval of the minutes of the last meeting
The minutes of the last Operations & Assets Committee meeting on 28th May 2026 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 28th May 2026 were agreed as a true record.

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RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 28th May 2026 were agreed as a true record.

026/17 Matters arising not on the agenda
026/09(c) – Play Areas / Playzone - The Assistant Town Clerk advised councillors that the annual RoSPA inspections of the Town Council's play areas had now been completed. Two urgent repair issues had been identified: a split timber beam on the main play frame at Swansfield Park and damage to the platform of the larger play frame at Barresdale Play Area.

Councillors were advised that both issues would be made safe through temporary repairs, with longer-term remedial works to be undertaken in due course. It was noted that the costs of the repairs are expected to be met from the budget previously approved under Minute Reference 026/09(c).

026/18 Cemetery Activity 2026/27
The Assistant Town Clerk presented councillors with an overview of cemetery activity for the current financial year, together with comparative data from the previous two financial years.

Councillors noted that activity levels remained broadly consistent. It was highlighted that income generated from the out-of-parish surcharge had already exceeded the total received during the previous financial year, despite only a small proportion of the current financial year having elapsed.

026/19 NCC Local Services:

a) Feedback on 2026/27 SLAs - The Assistant Town Clerk reminded councillors of the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) currently in place between Alnwick Town Council and Northumberland County Council and outlined the standard and enhanced services provided. It was reported that, overall, the grass cutting and hanging basket services were operating well. However, councillors noted continuing concerns regarding the

standard of toilet cleaning at the Market Place and Greenwell Road public conveniences, with an increasing number of complaints being received.

- b) Feedback from meeting with NCC Local Services** - The Assistant Town Clerk referred councillors to the notes of the meeting held with Tommy McLoughlin, Northumberland County Council's Local Services Manager, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was reported that Northumberland County Council had acknowledged the concerns raised regarding toilet cleaning standards and had held a team meeting on 16 June 2026 to reinforce cleaning expectations, identify areas for improvement and introduce increased performance monitoring.

Councillors agreed to allow Northumberland County Council a reasonable period to implement these improvements before undertaking a further programme of spot inspections. In the meantime, councillors were encouraged to report and evidence any issues observed through the FixMyStreet reporting system. It was further agreed that, should standards fail to improve, longer-term options for the provision of the service would be considered at a future meeting.

- c) SLAs for 2027/28** - The Assistant Town Clerk circulated a schedule setting out the services provided by Northumberland County Council as standard together with those currently delivered under additional Service Level Agreements with the Town Council. Councillors were invited to review the information and give consideration to any potential changes or priorities ahead of future budget discussions.

O26/20 Asset Decisions

- a) Allotments** - The Assistant Town Clerk updated councillors on the recent fly-tipping incident at the Ratten Row Allotments. It was reported that the quantity of waste deposited was beyond the Council's capacity to remove using its own resources and that a specialist contractor would be needed to undertake the clearance. The estimated cost of the works was in the region of £3,000. Councillors were advised that, once the site had been cleared, the vacant plots would be made available to let.

RESOLVED: To approve the appointment of a contractor to clear the fly-tipped waste from the Ratten Row Allotments at an estimated cost of £3,000.

- b) Lindisfarne site furniture** - Councillors visited the Lindisfarne site to view the recently completed footpath works and consider potential locations for future street furniture, including benches, picnic benches and litter bins.

Councillors were invited to give further consideration to suitable locations and the type of street furniture that may be appropriate for the site. No decisions were made at this stage, with the matter to be brought back to a future meeting for further discussion.

- c) Cemetery – Additional facilities** - Councillor Broom raised the potential need for additional welfare facilities at the Cemetery. It was noted that the existing workshop does not include toilet facilities, and councillors discussed the potential benefits of providing improved staff welfare accommodation, including toilet facilities, a staff break room and accessible provision. Following discussion, councillors agreed that the feasibility of such facilities should be explored further.

RESOLVED: To request that the architect who recently undertook the Cemetery Lodge renovation investigate potential options and suitable locations for the provision of additional welfare facilities at the Cemetery and report back to a future meeting.

026/21 Northumbria In Bloom

The Assistant Town Clerk advised councillors that the Northumbria in Bloom judges are due to visit Alnwick on 8 July 2026, during which they will be taken on a tour of the town to view the floral displays and other areas of interest.

Councillors were invited to volunteer their time to assist with preparations ahead of the visit. It was noted that the Town Council has also publicised an appeal to ask for help with weeding and general tidying around the town in advance of the judging.

Meeting Closed at 8:05pm