

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 10th September 2026

At the Lindisfarne Centre, Alnwick at 6.30pm

Present Councillors G Watson, R Bush, M Swinbank, G Castle, M Harrington, L Wearn, P Broom, D Coulson, J Garside, M Garside, J Humphries & S Frost

In attendance P Hately - Town Clerk, J Pibworth – Assistant Town Clerk, J McWilliams – Finance & Admin Officer, J Coltman – Communications Officer

C26/44 Questions from the Public
None.

C26/45 Apologies for absence
Councillors Gill Castle, A Symmonds, S Harding & A Hunt

C26/46 Declarations of Interest
Councillor Swinbank & Castle declared a non-pecuniary interest in County Council matters.

C26/47 Approval of the Minutes of the Last meeting
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9th July 2026 were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2026 were agreed as a true record.

C26/48 Matters Arising
None.

C26/49 Mayor's Report
The Mayor gave an update of the activities undertaken since his last report.

C26/50 Update from County Councillors
Councillor G Castle gave updates on:

North Northumberland Community Partnership – Councillors were reminded that a North Northumberland Community Partnership event would be held at the Lindisfarne Centre on 30 September 2026 at 6.00pm. The event would provide an opportunity for residents to learn more about local projects, including the forthcoming cobbles and bus station works. Town Councillors were encouraged to attend.

Library and Customer Services – Northumberland County Council planned to combine its Customer Services, Library and Tourist Information services countywide from 27 January 2027. In Alnwick, this would result in Customer Services relocating from the Lindisfarne Centre to Alnwick Playhouse. Councillors Castle and Swinbank had raised concerns about how the new arrangements would operate locally and were liaising with the relevant officers and decision-makers. It was also noted that the vacated space within the Lindisfarne Centre was being considered for use as a Veterans Hub, although this had not yet been confirmed.

Taylor Drive Crossing – Options were being explored to improve safety at the Taylor Drive zebra crossing, with the installation of a raised table currently being considered.

Town Centre Improvements – Councillor Castle advised that a confirmed start date for the cobbles and bus station improvement works was still awaited, although works were expected to commence shortly. The Town Council reiterated the importance of clear and timely communication from Northumberland County Council with businesses and residents throughout the works.

Denwick Lane Drainage – Reports had been received regarding an overflowing drain during periods of heavy rainfall, including concerns about possible sewage. Northumberland County Council would undertake a public safety inspection, although responsibility for the drainage issue was understood to rest with Northumbrian Water.

Heritage Open Day – Councillors were reminded that a number of venues across Alnwick would be participating in the Heritage Open Day on 19 September 2026.

Willowburn Retail Park Substation – Councillor Castle reported concerns regarding the recently installed electricity substation at Willowburn Retail Park and its impact on visibility for motorists. It was noted that planning permission had previously been granted in connection with EV charging infrastructure; however, as the retail park roads are privately owned and not adopted highway, Northumberland County Council Highways had limited involvement. Northumberland Estates was considering alterations to road markings and traffic movements, including the potential introduction of a one-way arrangement, to address the concerns raised.

Councillor M Swinbank gave updates on:

Gambling Policy Consultation – Northumberland County Council is consulting on its draft Gambling Licensing Policy and is seeking views from residents, businesses and others with an interest in how gambling is regulated within Northumberland. The consultation would run from 9 September to 16 October 2026.

Playzone – Councillors were advised that Community@NE66 was currently undertaking a survey regarding the use of the PlayZone. The survey provided an opportunity for residents to give feedback on the facility and how they would like to see the space used in the future.

Christmas Lights – Initial discussions were taking place regarding this year's Christmas lights and switch-on event. It was noted that the works to Northumberland Hall would require consideration of alternative arrangements, including the location of the Christmas tree and the displays normally installed on the building.

Northumberland Hall – Work continued with the various organisations involved in the Northumberland Hall project. It was anticipated that the Market Place public toilets would need to close temporarily during the works, with alternative provision to be made for the period of closure.

C26/51 Minutes of the Committees

Minutes of the Governance & Community Engagement Committee Meeting (16th July 2026) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Governance & Community Engagement Committee meeting held on 16th July 2026 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Operations & Assets Committee Meeting (23rd July 2026) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Operations & Assets Committee meeting held on 23rd July 2026 were agreed as a true record.

Minutes of the Governance & Community Engagement Committee Meeting (6th August 2026) were tabled for approval.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Governance & Community Engagement Committee meeting held on 6th August 2026 were agreed as a true record.

C26/52 Financial Matters

a) Payments

The following invoices had been received and payments are due:

Supplier	Total	VAT Total	Description
Land Registry	£7.00	£0.00	Download of property plan
Peter Nyssen	£214.50	£35.75	Spring bulbs
Boston Seeds	£339.99	£56.67	Spring bulbs
Screwfix	£79.71	£13.29	Weed Control Fabric
Northumberland County Council	£411.00	£0.00	August Council Tax for Cem Lodge
Northumberland County Council	£100.00	£0.00	Harley Davidson Road Closure - Legal
Community@NE66	£1,000.00	£0.00	Playzone running costs
Alnwick District Playhouse	£1,000.00	£0.00	Payment 4 of kids go free
S J Carr	£120.00	£0.00	Cemetery Lodge & chapel gutter clearing
Maureen B Jackowiak	£19.00	£3.80	Replacement of damaged lights at cemetery
Chubb Fire & security Ltd	£324.37	£54.06	Preventative Maintenance visit
British Gas	£30.23	£1.44	Cemetery Lodge utilities
Clean that Cottage Ltd	£360.00	£60.00	Mechanics cleaning
Greengfingers	£514.20	£85.70	Grass cutting
McGowan Marketing	£60.00	£10.00	Monthly Website hosting
J G Paxton & Sons Ltd	£18.94	£3.16	Allotment materials
Robson & Cowan	£32.33	£5.39	Lawnmower part - Cemetery
Stephen Willcox Builder Ltd	£720.00	£120.00	Cemetery Lodge paint
UK Fuels Limited	£132.00	£0.00	Fuel for Council Van
Clean that Cottage Ltd	£450.00	£75.00	Mechanics cleaning
Northumberland County Council	£411.00	£0.00	September Council Tax for Cem Lodge
Ian Straughan	£260.00	£0.00	Cemetery Work w/c 30/07
Ian Straughan	£160.00	£0.00	Cemetery Work w/c 23/07
Ian Straughan	£260.00	£0.00	Cemetery Work w/c 14/07
Ian Straughan	£320.00	£0.00	Cemetery Work w/c 06/07
Ian Straughan	£260.00	£0.00	Cemetery Work w/c 02/07
W Pibworth (Pybba Services)	£680.00	£0.00	Cover for Ian Richardson
W Pibworth (Pybba Services)	£350.00	£0.00	Cover for Ian Richardson
J McWilliams	£27.18	£4.53	Fuel for Council Van as card didn't work
Davidson & Son	£96.28	£16.05	Mechanics supplies
Davidson & Son	£28.06	£4.68	Heavy Duty Bin Bags

Northumberland County Council	£180.00	£0.00	Room Hire
Northumberland County Council	£420.00	£70.00	Road Closure for Bikes
Playdale Playgrounds Ltd	£405.12	£67.52	Play area replacement parts - Swansfield
McGowan Marketing	£60.00	£10.00	Monthly Website hosting
Community@NE66	£800.00	£0.00	Playzone running costs
Alnwick District Playhouse	£1,000.00	£0.00	Payment 5 of kids go free
Alnwick Cricket Club	£924.00	£0.00	General Grant
Alnwick Round Table	£1,436.00	£0.00	Event Grant
Ian Straughan	£260.00	£0.00	Cemetery Work w/c 06/08
Ian Straughan	£260.00	£0.00	Cemetery Work w/c 13/08
Ian Straughan	£260.00	£0.00	Cemetery Work w/c 19/08
Ian Straughan	£260.00	£0.00	Cemetery Work w/c 27/08
James N McLean	£114.58	£19.10	Supplies
James N McLean	£16.99	£2.83	Supplies
Wicksteed Leisure Limited	£179.03	£29.84	Parts for swings
Countryside Services	£330.00	£0.00	Tree work at cemetery
Grasslands Nurseries Limited	£231.95	£38.66	Hedging for cemetery
Hobberlaw Plants	£56.00	£9.33	Planting
Greengfingers	£346.20	£57.70	Grounds Maintenance
Argyle Planning Consultancy LTD	£1,204.00	£0.00	ADNP Work
British Gas	£22.75	£1.08	Cemetery Lodge utilities
	£15,338.26	£691.09	

The following invoices are paid by direct debits & were reported for information:

Supplier	Total	VAT Total	Description
Lloyds Bank	£6.00	£0.00	Bank Charges
Unity Trust Bank	£16.15	£0.00	Bank Charges
Agilico Workplace Technologies (North) Ltd	£73.01	£12.17	Monthly copying charges
BT DD	£159.52	£26.59	Phone and broadband charges
Anglian Water	£16.75	£0.00	Water Rob Fount
Anglian Water	£558.58	£0.00	Water Ratten Row
Northumberland County Council	£18,197.49	£12.60	Monthly payroll
BT DD	£228.46	£38.08	Phone and broadband charges
Anglian Water	£12.94	£0.00	Water New cemetery tap
Biffa (DD)	£255.55	£42.59	Monthly waste collection
Yorkshire Power and Gas	£22.14	£1.05	Electricity Rob Foun
Yorkshire Power and Gas	£39.46	£1.88	Electricity Cem workshop
Yorkshire Power and Gas	£73.30	£3.49	Electricity Mechanics
Yorkshire Power and Gas	£21.40	£1.02	Electricity Rob Foun

Yorkshire Power and Gas	£28.39	£1.35	Electricity THC
Yorkshire Power and Gas	£55.61	£2.65	Gas Mechanics
Yorkshire Power and Gas	£86.61	£4.12	Electricity Mechanics
Yorkshire Power and Gas	£17.52	£0.83	Electricity Cem workshop
Yorkshire Power and Gas	£181.31	£8.63	Gas Mechanics
Unity Trust Bank	£12.70	£0.00	Bank Charges
Agilico Workplace Technologies (North) Ltd	£73.01	£12.17	Monthly copying charges
BT DD	£159.52	£26.59	Monthly telephone charges
Lloyds Bank	£6.00	£0.00	Bank Charges
Anglian Water	£326.28	£0.00	Water Ratten Row
Anglian Water	£30.37	£0.00	Water Rob Fount
Northumberland County Council	£18,449.41	£12.60	Monthly payroll
BT DD	£228.46	£38.08	Monthly telephone charges
Anglian Water	£11.54	£0.00	Water New cemetery tap
Biffa (DD)	£255.55	£42.59	Monthly waste collection
Barclays Bank DD	£8.54	£0.00	Bank Charges
Barclays Bank DD	£8.50	£0.00	Bank Charges
UK Fuels Ltd	£2.40	£0.00	Fuel card
	£39,622.47	£289.08	

RESOLVED: To approve the payments of £15,338.26 and note the direct debit payments of £39,622.47

b) Bank Reconciliation

The Finance & Admin Officer advised that the August 2026 bank reconciliation, which had been circulated, had been reconciled with the total bank balances standing at £368,271.04

RESOLVED: To approve the bank reconciliation for August 2026.

C26/53 Voerde Delegation

Councillors were advised that a delegation of 37 visitors from Alnwick's twin town of Voerde would be visiting Alnwick for a week. As part of the visit, the Town Council proposed hosting a gathering at the Lindisfarne Centre on 25 September 2026, providing food and refreshments for the delegation and Town Council representatives.

RESOLVED: To allocate up to £500 from the Twin Town budget towards the cost of food and refreshments for the gathering.

C26/54 Councillor Resignation

Councillors were advised that Councillor K Hedley had resigned from Alnwick Town Council and that a Notice of Vacancy would therefore be issued for the Hotspur Ward.

Although Councillor Hedley was not present at the meeting, councillors recorded their thanks for her time and contribution to the Town Council.

C26/55 Lionheart Radio

The Town Clerk advised that Lionheart Radio was required to relocate from its current premises and had applied to the Town Council for a grant of up to £5,000 towards the costs associated with the move. Lionheart Radio was understood to be in the final stages of negotiations for new premises.

The application had previously been considered by the Governance & Community Engagement Committee on 6 August 2026, which recommended that the grant be supported. As funding would be drawn from the Council Priorities budget, approval was required from Full Council. It was also noted that both County Councillors were contributing towards the relocation costs through their respective Members' Funds.

RESOLVED: To approve financial support of up to £5,000 to Lionheart Radio from the Council Priorities budget towards the costs associated with its relocation.

C26/56 Bus Shelter Programme

The Assistant Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had been awarded £51,700 from Northumberland County Council towards improvements to bus stops and shelters across Alnwick. The funding would cover 90% of the project costs and provide new and replacement shelters, together with upgrades to a number of existing shelters including lighting, seating and provision for real-time passenger information. The funding must be utilised by June 2027.

The Town Council's contribution could be met from funding previously carried forward within the Street Furniture budget for this project.

RESOLVED: To accept the £51,700 funding from Northumberland County Council and allocate up to £5,000 from the Street Furniture budget towards the bus shelter improvement project.

C26/57 Column Cottage

The Town Clerk explained that the flower bed at Column Cottage, installed by the former District Council at the request of the Town Council a number of years ago. In recent years it had been planted and maintained by Alnwick in Bloom.

The property and land is owned by Northumberland Estates and is currently tenanted. The tenant had requested that the flower bed be removed and the area returned to grass, which Northumberland Estates have confirmed would cost around £2,000. Northumberland Estates had confirmed responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the surrounding grassed area.

Given the prominent location of the flower bed and a wish to explore whether it could be retained, councillors felt that further discussion should take place with the tenant before any works were undertaken.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk and Mayor to meet with the tenant to discuss the flower bed and explore whether a mutually acceptable arrangement could be reached to maintain it.

C26/58 Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan

Councillors were advised that the Independent Examiner's First Determination on the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan Review had been received. The Examiner had determined that the proposed modifications would materially change the nature of the

existing Neighbourhood Plan and sought confirmation from the Town Council as to whether it wished to proceed with the examination.

A draft response confirming the Council's intention to proceed with the examination was considered.

RESOLVED: To approve the Town Council's response to the Independent Examiner's First Determination and confirm that the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan Review should proceed to examination.

C26/59 Correspondence

Correspondence was received from Alnwick Bowling Club regarding its 150th anniversary celebrations in 2027, inviting Town Council representatives to attend a programme of events being held throughout the anniversary year.

Councillors were invited to consider attending one or more of the events.

Meeting Closed at 8:25pm

C26/60	PRIVATE AGENDA ITEMS Exclusion of the Public and Press The following resolution was moved and seconded, to exclude the public and press. "That pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, on the grounds that if members of the public were present during the discussion of this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 1 and paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act". The item discussed was: 1. Column Field Seat
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