

**MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2026**



COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Derek Kennedy, Fay Hartland, Stephen Ball, Penny Grennan, John Ord, Suzanne Fairless-Aitken, Nigel Porter, Roger Higgins, Mike Domingue, David Wright, Dom McDermott, Tom Sharlot

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Andrew Gooding - Town Clerk

Newcastle University Student Group

TC26-033 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All councillors present

TC26-034 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest made

TC26-035 DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests for dispensations made

TC26-036 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

The Mayor, Cllr Kennedy, welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded those present of the anniversary of the Hexham Riots and its effect on the town.

TC26-037 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Representation was made concerning the refurbishment of the Sele Play Park. Of particular note was the importance that the community is consulted at all stages of the planning process. Additionally, it was highlighted that the number of baby swings (an item in high demand) was reduced as part of the scheme and seating would be an issue with the removal of the raised circle.

Representation was also made concerning the 'Love our Tyne' agenda item, advocating that a different approach to river management would place us at the vanguard of local regional action.

It was **AGREED** that the items raised during public participation be **NOTED**.

TC26-038 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was **AGREED** to **RECEIVE** and **SIGN** as a true record, the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 10 FEBRUARY 2026.

TC26-039 PRESENTATION BY NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON 'WHY PEOPLE FEEL THE ARTS AREN'T FOR THEM' AS PART OF THE RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN FOR HEXHAM ARTS TOWN.

The students gave an excellent [presentation](#) followed by questions which was well received by those present. The following points were highlighted:

- Lack of single source of information for engagement
- The need for physical as well as online communication
- A greater spread of activity throughout the year
- The scope for creating ritual events that people engage with each year.

It was **AGREED** that the presentation be **NOTED** and that the Council thank the students for their work.

TC26-040 TO SEEK SUPPORT FOR 'LOVE OUR TYNE' AS IT EXPLORES WITH OTHER COUNCILS, COMMUNITIES AND RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 'RIGHTS OF RIVERS' THROUGHOUT THE RIVER TYNE CATCHMENT.

Cllr Ord proposed the motion which was seconded by Cllr Sharlot.

It was noted that there is a growing realization that the way we treat our rivers as commodities to be exploited is failing. Only 36% of the Tyne is considered healthy with one sewage discharge station in Hexham running for over 300hrs. People have been seriously ill from being in the Tyne and this proposal asks for a different perspective to be taken.

The following points were highlighted:

- Need for other agencies eg NECA to support
- Need to have support and engagement with landowners

- Important for the community to engage with and feel part of the process.
- Reflect that the river has improved over time
- People have a sentimental attachment to the river and this should be embraced.

It was unanimously **AGREED** to support the Love our Tyne initiative and to explore further the implementation of rights of rivers across the River Tyne catchment.

TC26-041 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON HEXHAM'S POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES

Hexham Middle School (NCC) – No update

Old Bus Station (Dysart/NCC) – No update

Toilets (NCC) – awaiting the sequencing of NCC repairs schedule

West Road (NCC) – No update

Police Houses (PCC) – No update

Union Workhouse (79thGroup) – No update

Shambles (NCC) – No update

Cycle path (NCC) – Possibly extending to Corbridge Station

Railway Buildings and Water Tower – No update

West End Methodists – Shortly to go on sale.

Old Robbs/Beales Site – No update

Abbey House – No update

TC26-042 FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1/4/26 – Hexham Town Council Meeting with Northumberland County Council to discuss matters relating to the town.

TC26-043 MAYORS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Celebration of Volunteering and Community Leadership went well and the recipients of the Honorary Steward and Bailiff Award were very pleased.

The Mayor was welcomed at the food bank and was given an insight into the range of services on offer. The following app which identifies items currently needed was suggested as a positive way to help. <https://www.bankthefood.org/downloadapp/>

The Sele Playground works will start soon with an expected completion in early June.

Hexham Playzone opened last October. The new free community use will be:

15:00- 19:00 Summer

15:00 – 18:00 Winter

12:00 – 18:00 Weekends

Hours will be reviewed after the summer by the steering group.

The facility will be available to book by groups or individuals

<https://book.footballfoundation.org.uk/HexhamPrioryPlayzone>

The 265th anniversary of the Hexham Riots was noted when 99 people lost their lives

It was noted that the Town of Culture bid was being prepared and will be submitted by the end of the month.

It was noted that there is an imbalance in the train fares for those travelling from Hexham to Newcastle compared to those travelling a similar distance from Ashington to Newcastle. A business case is to be presented to NECA with the suggestion that the POP card is extended.

TC26-044 TO AGREE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

It was **AGREED** that the accounts for payment, as presented, be **APPROVED**.

TC26-045 TO NOTE THE APPROVED MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

It was **AGREED** that the approved minutes of committee meetings be **NOTED**.

Finance and General Purposes 17/12/25

Planning and Infrastructure 3/2/26

Community Engagement 22/1/26

TC26-046 TO NOTE CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- a. NALC e-news and events and NALC Chief Executive's bulletins
- b. CAN e-news
- c. Northumberland CVA Voice ebulletins
- d. Rural Bulletin