

Blakelaw and North Fenham Community Council



Meeting held at:
Moorland House
Blakelaw
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE5 3RY

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Chairperson of Council: John Wears
Clerk to the Council: Helen Richardson

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE HELD: Monday 12th January 2026

TIME: 6.00 pm

Present:

Councillors: Jimmy Gill(JG, Vice Chair), Maureen Kelly(MK), Ann Keenan(AK) and Debbie Playford(DP)

In Attendance:

Helen Richardson(HR) – Clerk to the Community Council
Jean McCartney – Resident
Irene Turnbull – Resident

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone in attendance to the meeting and introductions were made.

01/26. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from John Wears, Violet Rook, Deborah Wears, Ward Councillor Juna Sathian and Ward Councillor Marion Williams.

02/26. Declaration of Interests

- Debbie Playford – Chair of Blakelaw Flats TARA and SIFT (*H&S Group via NCC*)
- Maureen Kelly – Member of the Blakelaw Flats TARA
- Helen Richardson (Clerk) - Bank signatory for the Tuesday Trailblazers
- Jimmy Gill - Bank signatory for the Tuesday Trailblazers

03/26. Grant Applications

The Clerk advised that there were no grant applications to be considered.

04/26. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10th November 2025 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Vice Chair.

Community Councillors queried whether there had been any progress made following North East Youths attendance at the November meeting. The Clerk advised that she was not aware that this potential project had moved forward. Community Councillors discussed the youth work being provided within the area and the lack of information the Community Council had received with regards to the sessions and what appeared to be a lack of advertising of these sessions.

DP in her role as the Chair of Blakelaw Flats TARA, thanked the Community Council for their recent grant funding to support a Christmas lunch for residents. The flats community room had been full as well as a number of residents requesting a takeaway lunch to enjoy in their own home.

The Clerk advised the Community Council that 2 local schools had received their Christmas trees in December and had sent photographs of the children decorating the trees. They had thanked the Community Council for their kind gesture in gifting the trees.

The Clerk clarified a recorded payment to Mr J Wears of £450 noted as expenses was for second-hand candy floss and pop corn machines that were purchased for use at Community Council events and needed to be paid for on collection.

05/26. Police

The Police were not in attendance and no update had been provided by them.

DP provided an update as to issues in the area.

Motorbikes and quad bikes continued to be a problem in the area. Perpetrators had been identified following the incidents in relation to damage to the busses in the area and bin fires at the park, behind the flats and the bunker area.

Whilst it was recognised that the SAPs meetings were taking place it was disappointing to note that the Community Council had not been included in the invites or provided with an update and there appeared to be no community involvement.

JG requested that Safe Newcastle were contacted with regards to the Community Council receiving direct updates in relation to the SAPs meeting and that the Police were contacted to request an update for each meeting.

06/26. Community Councillor Update

Community Councillors and the Clerk provided an update on a number of issues that they had been dealing with on behalf of residents. This included overgrown trees, flytipping, general ASB, lighting, general parking, vehicles parking on paths and moss on paths.

JG advised Community Councillors that he had been dealing with a large number of telephone calls following the extension of the roll out of the food waste initiative by Newcastle City Council. These queries were mainly around when residents would receive their bins and what would happen at first collection. Residents appeared to be positive about the roll out.

07/26. Blakelaw Ward Councillor Update

There were no Newcastle Ward Councillors in attendance however an emailed update had been shared by Ward Councillor Marion Williams which was shared with those in attendance.

08/26. Sub Group Update

The Clerk provided an update in relation to the Legends on a Bench project, de-fib and the Bleed Kit that had been ordered although there appeared to be a continued delay on its delivery.

The Clerk provided an update in relation to the success of the Christmas fair and Community Coach trip to York although shared her disappointment at the fall in numbers of people not attending and not letting the organisers know, nor had they paid for their tickets. Community Councillors agreed that consideration would need to be given as to the number of busses required for the following given the cost.

The Clerk advised that a Staffing Committee was due to be held in the coming weeks.

09/26. Financial Matters

Report of the Clerk to the Community Council

Bank reconciliation:

As per transactions relating to transactions between the 11th November 2025 and the 12th January 2026

Per Bank:	
Account 1	£500.00
Account 2	£46,162.49
Total	£46,662.49

Less: Payments:

HMRC (December 2025)	£776.73
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H V Richardson (December 2025 Salary)	£846.29
HMRC (January 2026)	£776.73
H V Richardson (January 2026 Salary)	£846.29
Blakelaw TARA (Grant Funding)	£500.00
Tuesday Trailblazers (Grant Funding)	£495.98
Tesco Payment Card (Top-Up)	£500.00
English Martyr's Church (Hall Hire)	£36.00

Total £4778.02

Payments: In

Barclays Bank Compensation	£200.00
Interest	£138.86
Closing balance as at 12 th January 2026 (account 1)	£500.00
Closing balance as at 12 th January 2026 (account 2)	£41,723.33

Recommendation: Members are asked to note this report and approve the above payments.

To Review Current Banking Arrangements

The Clerk provided an update in relation the issues that the Community Council had been experiencing accessing their bank accounts held by Barclays Bank. The Clerk advised that the issues had been ongoing since the bank had requested updated details for the organisation and signatories. Despite the Clerk and JG providing significant amounts of information the bank appeared not to have acted upon it which caused the accounts to be frozen, this had led to financial commitments not being met over a 3 month period. Following a formal complaint the Community Council were awarded £200 in compensation however the issue was still not rectified and a lack of explanation had not been forthcoming.

The Clerk advised that she felt that it was a risk to have all of the Community Councils funds held by 1 bank and consideration should be given to either a complete move to a new provider due to the handling of the situation and/or split the Council's funds across 2 providers.

Community Councillors discussed the options presented but agreed to await the outcome of the ongoing issues before considering the matter further. Whilst Councillors accepted that the service received from Barclays wasn't acceptable, they had concerns regarding having funds across a number of accounts and the additional work this potentially would cause the Clerk.

Precept 2026/27

The Community Council had held a closed budget meeting to discuss the previous year's spend and to plan the coming years spend. The Clerk took the Community Council through the draft budget for 26/27. The Clerk advised that sadly there was no denying that costs were increasing significantly however with a small amount of underspend from the previous year the community council would **NOT** be required to raise their precept request to cover increasing costs although it was important to continue to regularly review spend.

The Community Council thereafter **AGREED** to request a precept of £41.5k from Newcastle City Council.

10/26. Any Other Business

There was no other business raised.

11/26. Date, time and venue of next meeting

The full community council meeting would take place on Monday 9th March 2026 at 6pm within the community room at Moorland House.

Signed

Dated