



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 AGM MEETING

DATE HELD: Monday 11th May 2026

TIME: 6.45pm

Present:

Councillors: John Wears(JW, Chair), Violet Rook(VR), 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
Tabish Furqan - Resident

23/26. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence to be recorded.

24/26. Declaration of Interests

- John Wears - Director of Learning 4 All and Secretary to the Tuesday Trailblazers
- 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
- Violet Rook – Member of the National Pensioner Convention

25/26. Co-Option of Community Councillors

The Chair advised that a closed meeting of the Community Council had taken place and current Community Councillors had met with 2 residents who had expressed an interest in joining the Community Council.

Following this meeting it was agreed that the Community Council would co-opt on to the Committee of Blakelaw and North Fenham Community Council both Tabish Furqan and Irene Turnbull.

The Community Council thereafter welcomed both Tabish and Irene to the Committee.

26/26. Election Of Chair (2026/27)

The Clerk confirmed that following a lengthy discussion there had been 1 nomination for John Wears to continue in the role of Chair. It was agreed that the current Chair would continue in the role for 2026 – 2027.

27/26. Election of Vice-Chair (2026/27)

The Clerk confirmed that following lengthy discussions there had been 2 nominations for the role of Vice-Chair had been discussed, Violet Rook and Debbie Playford. Following this discussion, it was agreed that Violet Rook would be elected into the role of Vice -Chair for 2026 - 2027.

28/26. Outgoing Chairs Report (2025/26)

Agenda items 6 and 7 were taken together and the Chair took the Community Council through his report.

“This Annual Report is prepared by Community Councillor John Wears, Chairperson, Blakelaw and North Fenham Community Council. The Annual Report is intended to provide information on the work of the Council during the period of May 2025 - May 2026.

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone involved with the day to day running of the Community Council, My fellow Councillors and our Council Clerk.

The Community Council Full Committee meetings this year were held in the community room, Moorland House Blakelaw. The Community Council sub-committees have been a mixture of face to face and online via Zoom

It has been a challenging year for the Community Council, the cost of services and products that we source and provide remain to be on the increase. The Committee continually seek best value for money for our community.

The Committee have continually monitored and reviewed our budget plans closely again this year. The Community Council have continued to monitor increasing costs and due to this careful monitoring, have been able to ensure that there was no increase in the Precept this year. We are fully committed to providing the same level of service to our local community in the coming year. Will continue to offer

Information advice and guidance, social activities, financial support for local services and community grant funding.

Sub Committees

*It was agreed that **Community Engagement and Environment Group** would continue to be one Committee and all Councillors would be invited to attend.*

The Committee has been responsible for the planning of events, keeping residents regularly updated regarding the ongoing work of the Community Council.

The group heads up all the Council's communications including the Council's website, social media platforms, newsletters, publications, and events.

Staffing Committee: *The group has met via zoom and face to face. Weekly one to one online meetings/telephone calls with the Chair and the Clerk have been in place throughout the year.*

Community Projects & Activities

Bleed Kits

The Community Council purchased a bleed kit to be located next to the community defibrillator. This had been purchased from the Holly's Hope Charity however there had been some issues around the delivery of the item. It was hoped that this kit would be received in the very near future.

Legends on a Bench

The Community Council has purchased a bench that would help support and raise awareness in relation to suicide. This would be placed as part of a peace garden in the grounds of English Martyr's Church. The bench had been purchased but required a concrete base for it to be fitted to. Securing a tradesman to undertake this work had been a problem but it was hoped that a local tradesman would see the recent advert posted on Facebook.

Community Coach Trips:

We held trips in the spring and winter, we headed to Whitby and York Christmas Market. The feedback again has been great and we are looking forward to the planned coach trips over the coming months. Thank you to all the volunteers involved that make these events such a success.

There had been an increased social media presence with many more residents following the Community Councils Facebook page, with an increase in views of the website and more engagement with those residents within North Fenham.

Youth provision in the area continued to be of concern and it was hoped that the Community Council following discussion with a local supplier could help support additional youth provision in the area.

The Community Council also continued to build strong relationships with local community groups, Newcastle City Council, local schools and English Martyr's Church.

The Community Council had worked closely with previously elected Ward Councillors, Marion Williams and Juna Sathian, and the Chair wished to thank them both for their hard work in the area during their time in office.

Working with Police and Local Ward Councillors

Anti-social behaviour continued to be an issue across the whole area of Blakelaw and North Fenham. We continue to encourage residents to report incidents of anti-social behaviour. We do this by sharing articles in our newsletter, on our social media sites and when receiving complaints.

Concerns had been raised throughout the year with regards to the lack of a Police presence at Community Council meetings however, we will continue to collaborate with Police to minimise the impact to our area.

We will continue to do all that we can within our powers to make Blakelaw and North Fenham a nicer and safer place to live.

Funding Local Community Activities:

Through the Community Council grants process we have financially supported the following local groups/organisation:

- 1. Tuesday Trailblazers - £495.98*
- 2. Blakelaw Flats TARA - £500*
- 3. Hilton Primary Academy – £124*
- 4. Thomas Walling Primary – £124*
- 5. Joybringers - £500*
- 6. Tyne & Wears Veterans - £480*

Moving Forward – Priorities for 2026-2027

Community Trips:

- We have trips planned for June and December.*

Community Events

- We have provisionally booked English Martyrs Church Hall and grounds for a fairs and events in the Summer and Christmas.*

I will continue to work hard to represent the residents of Blakelaw and North Fenham. It has been somewhat challenging over the past 12 months and the Committee has worked hard to best serve local residents. I will always put the interests of the residents of Blakelaw and North Fenham first.

I have been fortunate to serve our local community as Chair of the Community Council for the past twelve months. Thank you to everyone that has supported me and the work of the Community Council.”

29/26. Incoming Chairs Report (2026/27)

This agenda item was shared as part of agenda item 6.

TB withdrew from the meeting at 19:18pm

30/26. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the AGM meeting held on the 8th May 2025 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

31/26. Community Councillor Update

The Chair 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, fly tipping, general ASB, lighting, general parking, vehicles parking on paths and moss on paths.

Community Councillors held a discussion regarding the continued issues with regards to ASB in the area. TF shared that he had been part of a SIAG meeting involving the Police whereby victims of crime had been asked to share their experiences and why they had been dissatisfied but when this had been explored further, residents had been unable to articulate their views further.

DP provided an update in relation to the work she and MK had been doing with the residents within the North Fenham area.

Concerns had been raised following an attack on a local takeaway located within the main Blakelaw shopping centre. The Police had not provided any updates in relation to the incident.

32/26. Sub Group Update & Nominations to Sub-Groups

The Chair recommended that the Community Engagement and Environmental Sub Group continued as one meeting throughout the year with all Community Councillors being included. Community Councillors agreed this way forward for this sub group.

The Chair advised Community Councillors that the Staffing Committee was a closed and confidential committee due to the nature of the discussions held. The Chair advised that the committee was made up of the Chair, Vice Chair and 2 other Community Councillors. It was thereafter agreed that AK and IT would join the Staffing Committee.

Dates of these sub groups would be provided at a later date.

33/26. Financial Matters & Approval of Statutory Documentation

Review of Internal Audit Report

The Clerk referred Community Councillors to the report of the Internal Auditor which was taken as read. The Clerk advised that there were no recommendations and that the Internal Auditors conclusion was that the internal control and governance arrangements were satisfactory for the size of the Council.

Consider and agree Annual Governance and Accountability Statement (AGAR)

The Clerk referred Community Councillors to the Annual Governance and Accountability Statement which was taken as read. The Clerk explained the process of the audit to ensure that new councillors understood the requirements of the audit and the process that was undertaken in relation to documents that were submitted alongside the AGAR, the reporting of financial variances and ensuring the Notice of appointment of the date for exercising public rights was displayed.

Community Councillors discussed the paperwork and thanked the Clerk for her hard work and update. The AGAR was thereafter signed by the Chair and Clerk as required.

Documents for Approval (1st April 2026 – 31st March 2027)

Payments for approval

Report of the Clerk to the Community Council (10th March 2026 – 31st March 2026)

Bank reconciliation:

As per transactions relating to transactions between the 10th March 2026 – 31st March 2026

Per Bank:	
Account 1	£500.00
Account 2	£40,461.52
Total	£40,961.52

Less: Payments;

HMRC (March 2026)	£776.73
H V Richardson (March 2026 Salary)	£846.29
Legend on the Bench	£1924.00
Total	£3,547.02

Closing balance as at 31 st March 2026 (account 1)	£500.00
Closing balance as at 31 st March 2026 (account 2)	£36,914.50

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

Report of the Clerk to the Community Council (1st April 2026 – 11th May 2026)

Bank reconciliation:

As per transactions relating to transactions between the 1st April 2026 – 11th May 2026

Per Bank:	
Account 1	£500.00
Account 2	£36,914.50
Total	£37,414.50

Less: Payments:

HMRC (April 2026)	£776.73
H V Richardson (April 2026 Salary)	£846.29
CI Accountancy	£264.00
Stanley Travel (Whitby)	£1590.00
Stanley Travel (Leeds)	£750.00
NALC	£873.27
Blakelaw Flats TARA (Room Hire)	£105.00

Total £5205.29

Income

VAT Reclaim	£234.04
Whitby Trip	£90.00
Closing balance as at 11 th May 2026 (account 1)	£500.00
Closing balance as at 11 th May 2026 (account 2)	£32,033.25

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

Review and agree the Statement of Internal Control 2026/27

The Clerk referred Community Councillors to the previously circulated Statement of Internal Control for 2026/27 which was taken as read. There were no additional questions from Community Councillors.

The Statement of Internal Control was thereafter agreed for 2026/27.

Review and agree Financial Regulations 2026/27

The Clerk referred Community Councillors to the previously circulated Financial Regulations for 2026/27 which was taken as read. There were no additional questions from Community Councillors.

The Financial Regulations 2026/27 were thereafter agreed for 2026/27.

Review and agree Standing Orders 2026/27

The Clerk referred Community Councillors to the previously circulated Standing Orders for 2026/27 which was taken as read. There were no additional questions from Community Councillors.

The Standing Orders were thereafter agreed for 2026/27.

Review and agree the Risk Assessment 2026/27

The Clerk referred Community Councillors to the previously circulated Risk Assessment for 2026/27 which was taken as read. There were no additional questions from Community Councillors.

The Clerk advised that due to the previously highlighted concerns regarding the current banking provider she had upgraded the finance risk to high in relation to the banking element of the risk assessment.

The Clerk went on to explain as she had previously that the Community Council should consider using a second banking provider as having the Council's funds held with one provider and their ability to withdraw access as they felt fit was an extremely high risk.

The Risk Assessment was thereafter agreed for 2026/27.

The Clerk advised the Council that they would be required to review the banking signatories now that James Gill had stepped down from being a Community Councillor. This item will be brought back to the next meeting of the Community Council.

34/26. Any Other Business

There were no matters of any other business for discussion.

35/26. Date, time and venue of next meeting

The Clerk referred Community Councillors to the pre-circulated future meeting dates as per the below:

Monday 11th May 2026 – Moorland House @6pm

July 2026 – Date and venue to be confirmed

Monday 14th September 2026 – Moorland House @6pm

Monday 9th November 2026 – Moorland House @6pm

January 2027 – Date and venue to be confirmed

Monday 8th March 2027 – Moorland House @6pm

Community Councillors agreed that the Council would continue to meet bi-monthly but that following feedback received from residents within North Fenham, a venue in that area of the parish boundary would be located to hold 2 of the year's meetings.

Signed

Dated