



Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council

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To Members of Newbiggin by-the-Sea Town Council: J Casey, M Martin, T Roll, L Spratt, A Sutherland, G Woodman, J Woodman, and A Wootton.

You are summoned to the Annual Meeting of the Town Council to be held on Wednesday, 7TH January 2026, at 6:30 pm at St. Bartholomew's Church Centre for the transaction of the business shown on the agenda below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawson".

Leanne Lawson
Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

29th December 2025

OPEN SESSION

In line with Standing Order 3e-j, members of the public may, at the invitation of the Chair, ask questions, make representations, and provide information to the Council in respect of the business on the agenda or any other Town Council services.

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **To receive any declarations of interest from members:**

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011. Members are asked to review their completed Register of Interest forms to ensure that they are accurate and up to date.
3. **To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Ordinary Town Council held on 10th December 2025.**
4. **Playzone – Steering Group**
5. **Data Protection Policy**
6. **Insurance Review and Asset Register - Update**
7. **Allotment – Update**

8. **Newbiggin Climate Group**
9. **Dispensation for Members and Property Tax Base for setting the Precept**
10. **To agree the budget for 2026/27**
11. **To agree rents for 2026/27**
12. **To agree the Precept 2026/27**
13. **Reports for information to Full Council**
 - 14.1 **Northumberland County Councillors** – Cllr Ben Audsley and Cllr Karl Green
 - 14.2 **Northumbria Police**

Dates of next meetings are:

Finance and HR Committee – 21st January 2026

Ordinary Council – 18TH February 2026

Environmental Committee – 25th February 2026

Ordinary Council – 18th March 2026

Finance and HR Committee – 8th April 2026

Ordinary Council – 15th April 2026

Environmental Committee – 22 April 2026

AGENDA ITEM 1 – To receive apologies for absence

The Council should approve (or not) the reason for apologies given by absent councillors. If a council member has not attended a meeting of the council (or its committees) or has not tendered apologies which have been accepted by the council (or committee), for six consecutive months, they are disqualified. Apologies should be submitted to the Town Clerk in advance of the meeting and will be recorded in the minutes.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – To receive Declarations of Interests

Members and Officers are reminded of their obligations to declare interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct 2012. The Town Clerk will report any dispensation requests received. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a councillor's interest, the councillor has the responsibility of declaring that interest in accordance with the adopted code of conduct.

Members are asked to review their completed Register of Interest forms to ensure that they are accurate and up to date.

AGENDA ITEM 3 –

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Ordinary Town Council held on 10th December 2025

When the meeting is approving the draft minutes of a previous meeting as an accurate record, the only issue for the meeting is whether the minutes accurately reflect the proceedings at the meeting and the resolutions made at the time. It is irrelevant whether the chairman or other councillors were not present at the meetings to which the draft minutes relate.

If necessary, for the draft minutes of the previous meeting to be corrected because of inaccuracies, then the amendments to the draft minutes of the previous meeting must be approved by resolution of the council.

Guidance: The Chairman should confirm that all members have received and read the minutes of the previous meetings. The Chair should invite a proposal to confirm that the minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting; this needs to be seconded and agreed.

The Chair will initial each page and sign and date the minutes as a true record.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Playzone – Steering Group

Town Clerk to give a verbal update

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Data Protection Policy

The Council's current Data Protection Policy is based on the now-repealed Data Protection Act 1998 and no longer meets legal requirements. The Practitioners' Guide 2025 has introduced a new Assertion 10: Digital and Data Compliance in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). To enable the Council to answer "Yes" to this assertion from 2025/26 onwards, we must update our policies. Following review by the Town Clerk and looking at the NALC model IT Policy, a single, concise Integrated Data Protection and Information Technology Policy is recommended to replace the old policy and introduce formal IT Governance. The main changes are: -

- Update legal basis – references changed from Data Protection Act 1988 to current UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Modern Data Protection Rules – Mandatory 72 – hour breach notification to the ICO where required (no mention previously), clear procedures for data breaches and individual rights. Subject Access Requests are now free and responded to within one month (previously £10 fee and 40 days)
- New IT Governance – Formal rules introduced for email (.gov.uk addresses only for official business), passwords (strong, multi-factor authentication encouraged). Device security, backups, and encryption of sensitive data. Guidelines on acceptable use, internet, social media, and remote working. Proportionate monitoring of IT use permitted for compliance and security.
- Responsibilities – Town Clerk designated as lead for data protection and IT: no mandatory separate Data Protection Officer required.
- Training and Review – Training for members and staff on data protection and cybersecurity with annual review of policy and data/IT Audits.

The benefits of this would mean full compliance with the current law and the Practitioners Guide 2025, and provide a clear, up-to-date guidance for members and staff in one document.

RECOMMENDED that Members adopt the integrated Data Protection and Information Technology Policy and seek training and any necessary Third-Party reviews.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Insurance Review - Update

The Town Clerk has reviewed the insurance that we have held with Zurich for a number of years. Following the Internal Audit report, work has taken place reviewing insurance and the Asset Register. The Town Clerk will give a verbal update on findings.

RECOMMENDED that Members consider looking at ensuring the gaps that have been identified in this report are covered if deemed necessary.

AGENDA 7- Allotment Update

The Town Clerk is to give a verbal update.

AGENDA 8 – Newbiggin Climate Group

Representatives from Newbiggin Climate Group met with the Chair and Town Clerk in December 2025. Newbiggin Climate Group intend to change its name and is in the process of putting governance in place. They have asked for access to the original page that was set up to allow them to continue to grow what is already there.

RECOMMENDED that Members discuss what involvement Newbiggin Town Council will have with this group in the future.

AGENDA 9 – Dispensation for Members and Property Tax Base for setting the Precept

As all members have an interest in the property tax base as ratepayers in Newbiggin, it is prudent as a precautionary measure, that a dispensation be granted to allow all members to participate in the setting of the precept. The property tax base, as notified by Northumberland County Council, has decreased from £1539.38 to 1,516.37. Although we have been informed that this may change following the meeting at County Council on the 14th January 2026. The potential change in banding would see an increase from £1,539.38 to £1,565.16.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approve dispensations in the setting of the precept.

AGENDA 10 – To agree the Budget for 2026/27

A draft budget has been considered by a meeting of the Finance and HR Committee on 19th November 2025. Following a detailed discussion regarding the anticipated cost increases due to price rises and inflation, a recommendation was made to continue to focus on core services and continue to look at projects that have not yet completed or need revisiting. The budget agreed to be put forward for consideration is £322,380.

In January 2024 and January 2025, the Council agreed to a 7% increase in the precept. When considering the precept for 2026/2027, members acknowledged that costs continue to rise.

Discussions at the Finance and HR Committee focused on the core running costs of the Town Council, with a core budget of £322,380, alongside anticipated income. Before 2024, the Town Council had been supplementing the precept with balances, which had been gradually reducing over several years. However, it was noted that we have built up reserves and can start a 3, 5 and 10-year plan. Visioning sessions for members were started in December 2025.

The Town Council has plans to refurbish Memorial Park, and discussions with the Newbiggin Veterans Association are scheduled to commence in the coming year. Members also acknowledged the rework required at Horseshoe Steps.

Members reviewed the tax base figures and noted the potential for increased costs in the year ahead. Options for a 5% or 7% precept increase were considered. It was highlighted that the Town Council is the only element of Council Tax where funding remains within Newbiggin by the Sea. After discussion, members agreed on a precept of £322,090. However, it is

worth noting that this was based on information shared prior to this meeting. We have since received a letter to inform of the potential change to banding, which will be discussed at the County Council meeting on the 14th January 2026.

Members also discussed the number of new houses currently under construction and expected to enter the market next year. Earmarked reserves and general reserves were reviewed, along with potential future projects. Coastal erosion at Church Point was noted as an area of concern. The Town Clerk advised that while reserves are available, there are currently no confirmed projects in place. It was recommended that the precept increase should not exceed 5%.

RECOMMENDED that the Council accept the recommendation of the Finance and HR Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – To agree to rents for 2026/27

The allotments were last reviewed in 2025/2026, and an increased by 5% was agreed. Previous to this, there was no increase for 5 years.

RECOMMENDED that the Council consider a rent increase.

AGENDA ITEM 12 – To agree the Precept for 2026/27

The Precept has been considered by the Finance and HR Committee held on the 19th of November 2025.

Members received and reviewed the draft budget figures for 2026/27 together with the indicative tax base figures given at that time from Northumberland County Council for 2026/27 and the planning calculations for the 2026/27 financial year.

It was noted that the updated tax base given for Newbiggin by the Sea before we received further communication regarding the potential change to banding in December, reflected a decrease in the property base, which has a direct impact on the level of precept income that can be generated without increasing the Band D charge. Possible reasons for a decrease in the Tax Base – Increase in the number of Council Tax Support claimants, higher number of empty properties, or discounted, slow or delayed housing completions, increase in 2nd homes or holiday let discounts. The Town Clerk will reach out to request details on the Tax Base.

It was reported that, if the Town Council were not to increase, the reduction in the tax base would result in a shortfall of approximately £4,568 for 2026/27. To support financial planning, several precept-increase scenarios were presented using the 2026–27 planning data.

These include the annual D amount, the annual increase compared with the current year, and the monthly increase for residents:

Precept Scenarios for 2026/27					
Scenario	Annual Band D Charge	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase	Weekly Increase	Additional on previous year
0% Increase	£198.51	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	-£4,568
5% Increase	£208.44	£9.93	£0.83 per month	£0.08	10,483
7% Increase	£212.41	£13.90	£1.16 per month	£0.12	£16,504
10% Increase	£218.36	£19.85	£1.65 per month	£0.17	£25,534

These scenarios were considered in the context of anticipated expenditure for 2026/27, current-year spending commitments, inflationary pressures, and projected year-end balances. Members discussed options, including the potential precept increase required to maintain service levels and deliver planned projects.

If the potential change is accepted on 14th January 2026 at NCC, then this would see an increase in tax base at 0% of £5,118.

Precept Scenarios for 2026/27					
Scenario	Annual Band D Charge	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase	Weekly Increase	Additional on previous year
0% Increase	£198.51	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£5,118
5% Increase	£208.44	£9.93	£0.83 per month	£0.08	20,653
7% Increase	£212.41	£13.90	£1.16 per month	£0.12	£26,867
10% Increase	£218.36	£19.85	£1.65 per month	£0.17	£36,188

Finance and HR Committee Members acknowledged that the final budget and precept for 2026/27 will need to balance service delivery requirements with affordability for residents. The draft figures and scenario modelling will inform the preparation of the final proposed budget.

RECOMMENDED that the Council accept the recommendation of the Finance and HR Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 13 - Reports for information to Full Council

13.1 Northumberland County Councillors – Cllr Ben Audsley and Cllr Karl Green

13.2 Northumbria Police – Report or in person

13.3 Borderlands Place Programme – To note no further update

13.4 Northumberland Association of Local Councils – To note no further update