



BARROW TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness LA14 2LD

Minutes of the Meeting of Barrow Town Council held on 17th March 2026 at 18.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness. LA14 LD

C Atree	Apology	D Morrison	Apology
G Beddoes	Present	J Murphy	-
F Chatfield	Present	D Petrova	Apology
A Coles	Present	N Phillips	Present
B Elliot	Present	C Thomson	Apology
P Griffiths	Present	J Tyson	Present
S Hall	Apology	J McEwan	Apology
K Hyland	Present	W McEwan	Present
M Leach	Present	R Worthington	Apology
C Rudd	Present	S Churcher	Present
N Holmes	Present		

In Attendance: Lesley Smyth (Town Clerk). Claire Nolan (Deputy Clerk)
Steph Cordon (W&F Director of Thriving Communities)
David Haughian (W&F Assistant Director of Community and Infrastructure).
Steve Robson (Women's Community Matters)
Mai Harrison & Caleb Staples (Furness Autism)

The Chair welcomed the attending members of the public, noting
"Any member of the public who wished to ask a question, make
representations or present
a deputation or petition at this meeting should have applied
to do so three days before the commencement of the meeting.
Photography, filming or making an audio recording of this

meeting is permitted, provided this does not disrupt the meeting or distract Councillors in the course of their business. Avoid filming, photographing or recording members of the public who are sitting in the public gallery, which is not part of the meeting.

306/25/26 Apologies for absence

Received and accepted from Cllr J McEwan, Cllr S Hall, Cllr C Thompson, Cllr C Altree, Cllr D Morrison, Cllr D Petrova and Cllr R Worthington.

307/25/26 Declarations of Interest

Received and accepted from Cllr W McEwan, Cllr A Coles, and Cllr N Phillips in respect of their membership on the Westmorland and Furness Council.

308/25/26 Exclusion of Public and Press (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No items were considered for exclusion.

309/25/26 Presentation from Steve Robson

Domestic abuse is all too common in the UK, and its harmful impacts can extend to many areas of survivors' lives, including mental health, physical wellbeing and family safety. Some women are disproportionately affected, particularly those facing intersecting forms of inequality such as racism, disability, poverty, insecure immigration status, or discrimination based on gender identity, and they often face additional barriers to accessing support.

Women's Community Matters is a registered charity based in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, providing crucial local support for victims of domestic abuse through services like the 'New Lives Project' and "I believe you," addressing a crisis where 1 in 4 women in England and Wales will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime. The average annual attendance of persons availing themselves of their services is 2,793, of which 70% at any one time have been affected by domestic and/or sexual abuse.

National Domestic Abuse Context (UK)

- Prevalence: Nearly 1 in 3 women (30.3%) have experienced domestic abuse since age 16.
- Fatalities: On average, one woman is killed by a male partner or ex-partner every 5 days in England and Wales.
- Police Calls: Police receive a domestic abuse-related call every 30 seconds. Yet it is estimated less than 24% of domestic abuse crime is reported to the police.
- Young Victims: Women aged 16-19 are more likely to be victims, with 49% of teenagers in abusive relationships experiencing violence or controlling behaviour.

- Impact: 1 in 3 pregnant women experienced domestic abuse between April 2024 and March 2025, 14% of Refuge's service users reported being pregnant.
- 90% of high-risk victims are predominately female, and this is true for Cumbria.

Deaths through domestic abuse are reflected in the national homicide figures, with an investigation currently reviewing the inclusion of deaths by suicide within this data due to recent statistics revealing a greater number of women taking their own lives as opposed to being killed. MARA data shows:

- 105,000 women & girls live in domestic abuse households.
- Evidence of psychological and emotional damage.
- The prevalence of sexual abuse/rape within a marriage.
- The most dangerous time for the abused person is within the first year of their leaving home, when stalking, on-line abuse and revenge porn can occur.

The Chair thanked Mr Robson for his attendance and presentation. He then retired from the meeting at 18.20pm.

310/25/26 Presentation from Kai Harrison and Caleb Staples.

An invitation has been issued to all Councillors to attend the Furness Autism Expo on 16th April 2026 at 'The Bridge', where resources and expertise within the area will be showcased on the ground floor, and speakers comprising of parents, carers and professionals will be holding sessions on the first floor. The event, aiming to banish misconceptions and provide guidance and support, will close with a panel discussion.

The Chair thanked Mai and Caleb for their attendance and presentation. They retired from the meeting at 18.30pm.

311/25/26 Town of Culture 2028 – Steph Cordon and David Haughian.

A report outlining in detail the background to this Award had been distributed to all members for information prior to the meeting.

The UK Town of Culture competition has been introduced to recognise and celebrate the unique identity of towns across the country, offering a significant opportunity for places to develop cultural activity that brings communities together

It is recommended that Barrow Town Council considers whether it is happy to lead and co-create with partners the town's expression of interest for the UK Town of Culture competition, continuing to work closely with local cultural organisations, community groups, Westmorland and Furness Council and residents. This approach will ensure that Barrow's story is told with authenticity, that the programme reflects the hopes of the town's communities, and that Barrow is well placed to make a strong and meaningful bid. The submission deadline is 31st March 2026.

The winning town will receive £3.5 million to deliver a cultural programme in 2028, while all shortlisted towns will be awarded £60,000 to support the development of their full bids. Applications will be assessed against three core criteria:

- The strength of the town's story and cultural identity.

- The ability to design a cultural programme that is inclusive and reaches everyone.
- The town's capacity to deliver a successful, well-planned cultural programme that is rooted in local partnerships and community involvement.

Cllr W McEwan thanked the Westmorland and Furness Officers for their report noting his approval for a submission of interest which recognises what makes 'Barrow Special' and why such an award would be deserving.

Cllr Phillips noted the passionate response from the people of Barrow at the W&F Cabinet meeting earlier in the day to the closure of the Forum Theatre, where it was stated 'the Forum closure has ripped the heart out of Barrow'. He therefore raised the question 'What action are W&F Council going to take to restore the cultural scene in the Town, and if the Town Culture Bid is successful will W&F wish to secure the £3m to bridge their budget deficit.

Cllr Coles enquired if the £3m could be used to support areas of deprivation throughout the Town.

Steph Cordon assured the members any monies obtained would be at the sole disposal of the Barrow Town Council.

The Chair thanked both officers for their attendance. They retired at 18.40pm.

Resolved:

Proposed by Cllr W McEwan and seconded by Cllr C Rudd that the Town Council register their interest. A vote having been taken, 12 for. 1 against. The proposal was carried.

312/25/26 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th January 2026.

Proposed by Cllr Beddoes and seconded by Cllr W McEwan, and a vote having been taken.

Resolved

To receive the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th January 2026 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a correct record.

313/25/26 Mayors Communications & Announcements

Cllr F Chatfield reported on his Mayoral engagements since the last meeting.

23 rd January 2026	Sea Cadets Awards Evening
28 th January 2026	University of Cumbria Reception
29 th January 2026	Furness Academy COPE
30 th January 2026	Barrow Buzz Awards
3 rd February 2026	Art Gene New Exhibition
6 th February 2026	FGH Presentation
6 th February 2026	RAF Cadets Awards Evening
18 th February 2026	Ukraine Charity Concert – St Mary's Church, Dalton
19 th February 2026	Pop Up Pump Track
22-28 th February 2026	Visit to Australia
7 th March 2026	International Women's Day

11th March 2026
16th March 2026

Mill Lane Centre
Samaritans

314/25/26 Minutes of Committees

The Chair welcomed any questions in respect of the Committee Minutes previously distributed.

Finance Committee

No matters arising.

Resolved

To receive and approve the Minutes of the Finance Committee of 10th February 2026. Proposed by Cllr Churcher and seconded by Cllr Coles. All agreed.

Planning Committee

No matters arising.

Resolved

To receive and approve the Minutes of the Planning Committees of 8th January 2026 and 5th February 2026. Proposed by Cllr Holmes and seconded by Cllr Elliot. All agreed.

The Draft Minutes submitted of 5th March 2026 were for information only and will go to the next parent committee for approval before returning to Council in May 2026 for ratification.

Allotments Committee

No matters arising.

Resolved

To receive and approve the Minutes of the Allotments Committees of 17th December 2025 and 28th January 2026. Proposed by Cllr Rudd and seconded by Cllr Coles. All agreed.

The Draft Minutes submitted of 4th March 2026 were for information only and will go to the next parent committee for approval before returning to Council in May 2026 for ratification.

Events Working Group.

No matters arising.

Town Twinning

No matters arising.

315/25/26 Finance Report

The following documents had been distributed prior to the meeting:

1. Income & Expenditure Account for the period 1st April to 28th February 2026.
No issues raised.
2. Allotments Income & Expenditure Account for the period 1st April to 28th February 2026.
No issues raised.

Resolved:

Proposed by Cllr Churcher and seconded by Cllr W McEwan that the reports here presented be approved. All agreed.

The Clerk confirmed the requested percentage increase in Precept for 2026-2027 has been approved by Westmorland and Furness Council.

316/25/26 Service Level Agreements

Resolved: To renew the SLA's with Barrow BID and Barrow Full for a period of 12 months, commencing 1st April 2026, pending a presentation by both Organisations at Finance Committee on 14th April 2026 outlining their proposed spending arrangements for the year.

Proposed by Cllr Coles and seconded by Cllr Leach. All agreed.

Further, Cllr W McEwan confirmed his willingness to represent the Town Council on the Barrow Full Board.

317/25/26 Community Governance

A report on stage 2 of the review had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Three options were considered:

1. To submit no response.
2. To approve an increase in Councillor Membership to 25.
3. To confirm the membership number remain at 21.

Cllr Coles recommended the Town Council membership remain at 21.

Cllr Griffiths queried a potential conflict between councillor and private opinion and whether the response should be from individual Councillors or the full Town Council.

Cllr Coles noted individual Councillors may respond but NALC have confirmed more weight will be given to a decision submitted by the Full Council.

Resolved:

Proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Beddoes that Option 3 be selected (remain at 21 Councillors). A vote having been taken. 11 for. 2 abstentions. The proposal was carried.

318/25/26 IT & Data Protection Policy

Resolved:

Proposed by Cllr Coles and seconded by Cllr W McEwan that the draft policy here submitted be adopted. All agreed.

319/25/26 Social Media Policy

Two individual draft policies had been distributed for approval.

1. (Option 1) Council Draft Policy
2. (Option 2) NALC Policy.

Resolved:

Proposed by Cllr Coles and seconded by Cllr Elliot that Option 1 be adopted. A vote having been taken. 10 for. 3 abstentions. The proposal was carried.

320/25/26 Good Citizenship Award

The Clerk noted several applications have been received and requested a 'Review Panel' be appointed with the aim being to make the first award at Council in May 2026. Cllr Hyland proposed and Cllr Holmes seconded that an award be presented every 3 months thereafter. All agreed.

Resolved:

Cllr Hyland, Cllr Holmes, Cllr W McEwan, Cllr Coles and Cllr Leach be appointed to the Review Panel. Cllr Hyland and the Town Clerk to arrange an initial meeting of the 'Review Panel' at the earliest opportunity.

321/25/26 Any Other Business

1. Cllr N Phillips. The mayor on behalf of the Council and officers thanked Cllr Phillips for his hard work, commitment, and wished him well in his future career.
2. Barrow Town Assembly. The Clerk reminded all members of the Annual Assembly being held on 11th May 2026 and requested their attendance.
3. GDPR Training. The Clerk reminded all members of the compulsory training on 23rd March 2026 at 19.00pm. This to comply with Assertion 10 of the AGAR.

322/25/26 Date of Next Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 19th May 2026 at 18.00pm in the Council Chamber, Barrow Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness. LA14 2LD.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19.07 pm.

Lesley J Smyth

Town Clerk

For the attention: All Members of Barrow Town Council

Councillors

Cllr Chatfield	Barrow Central Ward
Cllr D Petrova	Barrow Central Ward
Cllr Phillips	Barrow Hawcoat Ward
Cllr Worthington	Barrow Hawcoat Ward
Cllr Morrison	Barrow Hindpool Ward
Cllr Tyson	Barrow Hindpool Ward
Cllr Holmes	Barrow Island Ward
Cllr W McEwan	Barrow Newbarns Ward
Cllr M Leach	Barrow Newbarns Ward
Cllr Aلتree	Barrow Ormsgill Ward
Cllr J McEwan	Barrow Ormsgill Ward
Cllr Coles	Barrow Parkside Ward
Cllr Hall	Barrow Parkside Ward
Cllr Churcher	Barrow Risedale Ward

Cllr Rudd
Cllr Beddoes
Cllr Griffiths
Cllr Elliot
Cllr Hyland
Cllr Murphy
Cllr Thomson

Barrow Risedale Ward
Barrow Roosecote Ward
Barrow Roosecote Ward
Barrow Walney North Ward
Barrow Walney North Ward
Barrow Walney South Ward
Barrow Walney South Ward