



# Bishop Auckland Town Council

## Council Meeting

12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

## Minutes

**Present:** Cllr S Zair (Chair), Cllr Harker, Cllr L Zair, Cllr M Siddle, Cllr D Wilson, Cllr H Balmer-Howieson, Cllr K Fryatt (nee Eliot), Cllr K Lawson

**Also Present:** Sarah Harris -Town Clerk, Vicki Booth-Assistant Town Clerk , Thomas Wales from BACCANALIA

**TC081/23      Apologies for absence** – Cllr J Blackburn, Cllr A Zair, Cllr A Legge

**Resolved:**      Members noted and accepted the absences

**TC082/23      Declarations of Interest** – Members were invited to declare any interest they may have.

**Resolved:**      Cllr K Eliot declared an interest in relation to the street food market via Bacchanalia.

**TC083/23      Minutes** - To approve the Minutes of the following meetings:

- 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 – Full Council
- 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023– Policy and Resources Committee
- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Allotment Committee

**Resolved:** That the above Minutes have been received, and that the Town Council agreed to adopt all recommendations contained within them.

**TCC84/23      Matters Arising** –

- a) The response from the Parkinson Partnership had now been received and we are below the threshold for VAT therefore rental of office space and meeting room was able to move forward without VAT implications.

**Resolved:** that members noted the good comprehensive report now on record, and that each individual hire case would be dealt with on a case by case basis. The Clerk is now to invoice for ESOL at the agreed rate of £15 per hour in the first instance.

- b) Now that Cllr K Lawson now back Cllr M Siddle no longer needs to substitute her attendance at meetings.

**Resolved:** that Cllr Lawson was welcomed back following her absence, and that the change was noted.

**TC085/23      Public Participation** – No members of the public were in attendance.

**TC086/23      Christmas Town Feedback** – Thomas Wales from Bacchanalia gave an overview of the Christmas Town event and the statistics around the sales and engagement. Over 35,000 people had attended the event. With traders reporting record sales, and wider businesses reporting more

success and trade than any previous events of any nature in the Town. The mix of free and ticketed attractions had worked well, and the team wished for the event to continue to grow. The cold but dry weather had contributed to the success, but the overall partnership working across the town had shown.

**Resolved:** that the members noted the update and thanked Thomas for the excellent event delivery, and congratulated him and team for the fantastic event which did indeed put Bishop Auckland on the Christmas map. The Council expressed that they were keen to continue their working relationship and retain their principle partnership moving forward with the event.

**TC087/23 Finance -**

- a) TC087.1/23 Community Fund Applications for consideration from Alcohol Support Service at The Four Clocks Centre. To provide funding towards two trips in 2024.

**Resolved:** that members agreed to support this provision

- b) TC087.2/23 Budget Planning and Precept for 2024-25 The Clerk presented the options available (See file report and power point) for precept for members to consider. There report included details of precepts for similar sized councils, and neighbouring parishes. The precept for Bishop Auckland remains very low and therefore the Council discussed that whilst the cost of living was currently high, the years of very low or zero increased had damaged the opportunity to enable more community support and increased service delivery to be enabled.

The proposal had included the option to go beyond the needed budget to enable delivery of wider community support activity, increased improvement to service delivery, and wider spend on community events. The proposal included provision for an additional £30k, £40 and £50k.

Band	Current	To cover budget	Additional £30K	Additional £40K	Additional £50K
Band A	£36.47	£50.54	£55.09	£56.61	£58.13
Band D	£54.71	£75.81	£82.64	£84.92	£87.20

The majority of households are Band A (with 58% and 88% being Band A-C). Neighbouring parishes have current precepts for Band D of £222.44, £194.82, £120.28, £301.24 and £65.51

Following discussions, the members asked the Clerk what the figures would be to go above the £50K, the ready reckoner spreadsheet supplied by DCC. Members asked for costs for additional £80k, £90K, £100K. The reason for this is at an additional fund to the budget still had BATC below its neighbours and similar councils by over £200 for a band D.

Band	Current	To cover budget	Additional £80K	Additional £90K	Additional £100K
Band A	£36.47	£50.54	£62.69	£64.21	£65.73
Band D	£54.71	£75.81	£94.04	£96.32	£98.60

**Resolved:** that all members agreed that

- that no reserves should be used to balance

- that budget presented budget is agreed and the precept is to be increased, with an additional funds added.

That members voted for the options for additional funds to be added to the budget as follows:

- Option B3 - additional £50k on top of the agreed budget voted by Cllr Wilson and Cllr Balmer-Howison.
- Additional Option of additional £100k Cllrs Lawson, Cllr Siddle, Cllr Fryatt (Eliot) Cllr L Zair and Cllr S Zair.

**Resolved:** Therefore based on the majority vote members agreed that an additional £100k be added to the budget subject to a strong plan for spending between service delivery, community support and events. Taking the precept to be collected to £404, 699, which equates to £65.73 for a Band A property and £98.60 for a Band D Property. Total precept to be received will be £435,441 made up of £432,639 precept and £2,802 LCTRS.

c) TC087.3/23 Statement of Payments (copy attached)

**Resolved:** That members agreed for the payments to be made and noted the transactions made as per Appendix 1 attached, with an addition of the payment for Parkinson Partnership for VAT advice at a cost of £500 ex vat which was also authorised.

**TC088/23 – Correspondence –** Just to note that the Council is still being copied into regular correspondence from a resident relating to the Bus Station works, not all emails are for the council. The Clerk has drafted a response.

**Resolved:** Members noted the correspondence and that the council appreciates that residents concerns however the matters relating to the application, highway and associated works need to be addressed by DCC as they are the planning and highways authority.

Appendix A agreed - Monthly Payments & Payments authorised							
Paid	Ref	Supplier	Detail	Net	VAT	Gross	Notes
<b>Events – Christmas (Local Government Act 1972, Section 145)</b>							
	EP	Amazon Business	Christmas Candy Craft String, 100M	£4.65	£0.93	£5.58	
	EP	Amazon Business	5x Springboard Lantern Activity Craft Packs	£44.95	£9.00	£53.95	
	EP	Amazon Business	5x Packs of 30 Piece Warm White LED Balloon Lights	£47.45	£9.50	£56.95	
	DC	Heron Foods	9x Bottle of Ribena Winter Spice and 4x Packs of Foxes Snowman Gingerbread Minis	£18.50		£18.50	Gift - Do not claim VAT.
	DC	ALDI Stores Ltd.	16x Boxes of Mince Pies, 6 Pack	£8.80		£8.80	Gift - Do not claim VAT.
<b>Events – Ward and In Year Events (Local Government Act 1972, Section 145)</b>							
	EP	Amazon Business	3x Earpiece for Radio Headsets	£16.86	£3.39	£20.25	
<b>Community Support – Community Fund (General Power of Competence - Localism Act 2011, Sections 1-8)</b>							
	DC	Currys Group Limited	EPSON EcoTank ET-2850 All-in-One Wireless Inkjet Printer	£259.99		£259.99	Community Fund - Do not claim VAT.
	EP	Amazon Business	WiMiUS 5G, Wifi Bluetooth Portable Projector (Community Fund - Durham Army Cadets)	£124.99		£124.99	Community Fund - Do not claim VAT.
	EP	Amazon Business	USB Powered Speakers with Sub-Woofer (Community Fund - Durham Army Cadets)	£45.16		£45.16	Community Fund - Do not claim VAT.
	EP	Amazon Business	Propvue Projector Tripod Stand (Community Fund - Durham Army Cadets)	£34.89		£34.89	Community Fund - Do not claim VAT.
<b>Kingsway – Maintenance/Repairs (Local Government Act 1972, Section 133)</b>							
	DC	B&Q Plc.	Large Bag of Tarmac Meltaway Rock Salt	£7.08	£1.42	£8.50	

Kingsway – Furniture/Equipment (Local Government Act 1972, Section 133)							
	DC	R. Defty	Snow Shovel	£9.50		£9.50	Card Receipt Only - Not a VAT Receipt.
Administration - Staff Training (Local Government Act 1972, Section 112)							
	EP	County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC)	County Durham and Cleveland County Training Partnership. 1x Roles and Responsibilities Training, 27th September 2023. 2x Finance and Budgets Training, 25th October 2023.	£30.00		£30.00	Town Clerk Assistant Town Clerk
<b>Total:</b>				<b>£652.82</b>	<b>£24.24</b>	<b>£677.06</b>	