

BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
Minutes of the meeting 18 March 2025
Held at Bishop Auckland Town Council Offices, Kingsway Court, Bishop Auckland

In Attendance: M Harker(Chair), K Lawson, M Siddle, D Wilson, A Zair, L Zair, S Zair,

Also Present: Vicki Booth (Acting Town Clerk),

TC 147/24 Apologies for absence: J Blackburn, A Legge, A Legge

Resolved: that apologies were accepted. No apologies were received from H Balmer-Howieson, K Fryatt.

TC 148/24 Declarations of Interest - To invite members to declare any interest they may have.

Resolved: Cllr S Zair declared an interest in the planning section of the agenda

TC 149/24 Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the following meetings:

Extra ordinary Full Council 4 March 2025
Policy and resources Committee 18 February 2025

Resolved: that the minutes were accepted and approved.

TC 150/24 Matters Arising To receive any matters arising from the above Minutes which are not included elsewhere on the agenda (for information only).

The Acting Clerk advised that the information presented regarding the balance of the Darlington Building Society account had been incorrect. That the balance was actually £21,786.66 as opposed to £41,786.66 due to £20,000 being withdrawn in December 2024. This has resulted in £35,000 withdrawal not being possible and advised members that the alternative account to withdraw funds from would preferably be Nationwide due to the interest rate.

Resolved: that members agreed that the funds be withdrawn from Nationwide.

TC 151/24 Public Participation - To hear from any members of the public subject to [Public Participation Policy](#)

Resolved: that no members of the public were present

TC 152/24 Reports

a) Durham County Council

Resolved: that Bridge Road repairs are now complete and this has led to some very positive feedback from members of the rugby club and the community in general.

b) Outside Bodies representation feedback

Resolved: Cllr Harker gave feedback from the Stronger Towns Boards and the Strategic Advisory Group. It was noted that the governance review will not be published in its entirety however there will be a release of the action plan following the recommendations from the report. Members raised concerns over the lack of transparency to the community.

TC153/24 Report of the Mayor - the Mayor gave feedback on meetings and events he has attended.

Resolved: that members noted the Mayor's update

TC 154/24 Report of Acting Town Clerk –

- i) **Payments for Authorisation** – Payments were presented and discussed

Resolved: that members approved the payments

- ii) **Account Balances** – Members were advised that the account balance on the Lloyds deposit account was incorrect and should read £939.00 however the total in banks figure was correct.

Resolved: that members noted the error on the paper

- iii) **Pre Q4 End, expected cost code balances at end of financial year** – Acting Clerk discussed how the precept funds will be distributed across the bank accounts. That the year end is likely to end in an underspend of approximately £35,000. That as previously discussed the temporary staff was to be coded to legal and professional fees and staffing cost reserves have been allocated to that cost code to cover this amount. That the reserves earmarked for the website have been allocated to the website cost code.

Resolved: that members tasked the Clerk to look at a range of possible new accounts that are easier to work with town councils and to get the best interest rates on our investments. That once the precept is received then payments can be made as per the budget setting TC109/24 to AYCC, WVCAG, WCCCC, CAB, Street Food Market and Pride. Members requested Cab come to a future meeting establish their strategy and what the funds are used for as they still have telephone booking issues. Members discussed the possibility of using the underspend to pay towards to balance of the PWLB however agreed to carry this forward to the next meeting for further discussion.

- iv) **NALC Survey of Parish and Town Councils** – The Acting Clerk advised that NALC are surveying local town and parish councils on the strengths and weaknesses of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and requested the Town Council take part in the survey.

Resolved: that members agreed to take part

- v) **Updated Asset Register** – Advised that the asset register had been updated since it was presented to Feb Policy and resources committee and highlighted the changes.

Resolved: that members agreed that some older furniture be removed from the register.

TC155/24 Pre-Election Period (Purdah) – An overview was given with key dates and activity limitations. Members were advised that the Annual Meeting of the Council and the Annual Town meeting were both set to be held on the 13th May 2025.

Resolved: that members noted the guidelines and key dates.

TC156/24 – Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Controls – A briefing was presented to members regarding the internal controls that are reviewed annually.

Resolved: that members noted the paper and approved.

TC157/24 – Audit Planning Diary – A planning diary was presented to Council for the 2025-26 year for consideration.

Resolved: that members approved the diary planning. That members agreed to appoint Mr Fletcher for the internal audit work and Mr Shingleton for the year end and any necessary budget setting work.

TC158/24 –Risk Management – An update was presented regarding the risks and controls put in place to mitigate any significant risks.

Resolved: that members reviewed and approved the documents noting the updates.

TC159/24 – BATC Policy Changes – that members considered the changes to the Allotment Enforcement Procedure, the Compliments and Complaints Policy and the Adoption of Vexatious and Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

Resolved: that members agreed and approved the updates to all three policies.

TC160/24 – Community Grants Application – Three applications were presented to members for consideration.

Resolved: that members approved Lingford Court if relevant accompanying documents are received. Approved the grant for Bishop Auckland Rugby Club and rejected the application for Erwans as not within BATC boundaries and could not confirm the number or how the community of Bishop Auckland would benefit from their project.

TC161/24 – Planning Applications – the current applications were discussed.

Resolved: that members had no objections to any current planning applications.

TC162/24 – Correspondence – Correspondence and updates were presented.

Resolved: that members noted the correspondence and thanks received regarding the community organisation donations made.

Exclusion of Press and Public in accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council do now exclude the press and public from the remaining item on the agenda by reason

of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudice to the public interest.

TC163/24 – Office Security – Members were presented with short- and long-term options for office security.

Resolved: that members approved the locking of the office on a Wed and Thur from 3pm when reception is not covered and from 5pm Monday and Tuesday and a 4.30pm on a Friday. That a video door bell is required for lone working and late working and that a long-term solution needs to be sought and costings can be sourced and brought to a future meeting.

TC164/24 – Outcome of Complaints Appeal – Members were advised of the outcome.

Resolved: that members noted the update.

TC165/24 HR Update – Staff holidays remaining and appraisals were discussed.

Resolved: that members noted the update.