

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

2nd September 2025

Held at 5.00pm in Town Council Offices, Kingsway Court, Bishop Auckland

In attendance: Cllr Harker (Deputy Chair), Cllrs Gray, Wilkinson & Wilson

Also In attendance: Mrs Sarah Harris, Town Clerk & Mrs Vicki Booth, Assistant Town Clerk

PRC017/25 - Apologies for Absence – Cllr Siddle & Zair

PRC018/25 - Declaration of Interests - No declarations of interest were made.

PRC019/25 - Action Log from Previous Meeting – each action was reviewed and discussed as required

Resolved: that members noted the update.

PRC020/25 Public Participation – no members of the public were in attendance.

Resolved: that no members of the public were present.

PRC021/25 – Finance

i. **PRC021.1/25** Bank Account Update

Darlington Building Society (DBS) – it was agreed at full Council on 29 July 2025 to close the account. As the understanding of the sector by Darlington Building Society hampers clear and transparent financial management of the Council's funds in this account, as well as putting unnecessary risks to the council relating to the public funds it holds.

When trying to action this the Clerk has identified that a restriction was imposed on the account due to 'signatories' who are now former councillors failing to return some paperwork last July. The Council had been trying to change the signatories on the account (removal of J Blackburn and A Zair to be replaced with K Lawson and M Siddle) however the former signatories have to sign to agree to be removed. They had done this but then DBS needed another change on the form, so they then require them to sign again.

It has been agreed that the council can submit an authorisation form, and a copy of council minutes and a letter outlining approval and the account can be closed. This process was agreed with Jonathan Snee a Darlington Building Society representative, via telephone on 1st September 2025.

Resolved: that members agreed that the Clerk can submit an Authorisation form to DBS, which is signed by the three remaining Signatories, Mike Harker, Sarah Harris and David Wilson, and supply copies of the minutes of the meeting. The Account is requested to be closed, with a cheque for the funds payable to Bishop Auckland Town Council.

Signed Chair:

PRC021.2/25 North East Credit Union – advised that the request to close the Account has been drafted and needs final signatures. Then the request will be made.

Resolved: that members noted the update.

PRC021.3/25 Hinkley and Rugby Building Society

It was agreed at the July town council meeting to open an account. The clerk wishes to confirm the amount to be deposited into the account be £100,000 and that it is 90-day notice account which they wish to open.

Also, only 4 signatories are able to be listed on the account, with two authorising signatures.

Resolved: that members confirmed that the amount to be used to open the account is £100,000, and the clerk is authorised to move that funds electronically and that the 90-day notice account. That Cllrs Harker, Siddle, Wilson and Mrs Harris Town Clerk be named on the account.

PRC021.4/25 Nationwide – the account can not be closed until the current signatory changes is complete. One form is remaining and needs to be signed by Cllr Lawson. This is due to happen tonight following the meeting.

Resolved: that Cllr Lawson needs to sign the form, and the Clerk submit it. Once the Change is made, the account is to be closed.

PRC021.5/25 Lloyds – account signatories need to be re-requested as the link and request to add Cllr Lawson has expired.

Resolved: the members note the update and the link to be re-requested.

PRC021.6/25 CCLA - it was agreed that the account would be topped up to £250,000 at the July 2025 Town council meeting. The paper work has been completed, however this involves an electronic transfer.

Resolved: that members noted the update, and agreed for the Clerk to be authorised to transfer the £105,000 amount electronically and submit the paperwork.

PRC021.7/25 Unity Trust - it was agreed to top up this account to £100,000 the Clerk needs approval to move the funds electronically.

Resolved: that the members agreed that the Clerk can move the funds to the Unity account to make the Balance £100,000.

PRC021.8/25 NE Credit Union – as per the full council decision in July the paperwork will be submitted pending signatures on the request, to close the account.

Resolved: that members noted the

ii. **PRC021.9/25 Stripe Online Payments**

The Scribe Accounting and Allotment Management Software package has the ability to integrate payment links into invoices and tenancy documents. This makes a seamless process for receiving online payments. It uses 'Stripe' which is similar to Sum Up, for which the council has a hand-held device for accepting payments via card. The Stripe solution charges. It costs 1.5% + 20p per transaction for UK Cards, and 2.5% +20p for EU cards. Sum up is 1.69% per transaction.

Signed Chair:

Resolved: that members agreed to set up a Strip account with payments into the Lloyds current account, as it will enable streamlining of processes.

iii. PRC021.10/25 Proposed Grant Agreement for Christmas Town

That the draft grant agreement was reviewed and discussed.

Resolved: that members agreed that the agreement was comprehensive and the phased payment schedule was a good idea.

iv. PRC021.11/25 Payment to Citizen Advice Service

Members discussed the service being delivered at present and what the community get for the £5,000 earmarked.

Resolved: that members agreed that a donation service level agreement needs to be devised and the council needs to establish the demand for the service and quarterly instalments. For draft to be taken to full council for review.

v. PRC021.12/25 Authorisation of Payments

Resolved: that members approved the payment report (see attached appendix1)

PRC022/25 – Audit

- a) Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2025/26** advised that the internal auditor is reducing his workload and will no longer be able to supply us with the service.

Resolved: that members await a paper at the next committee of proposed internal auditors.

b) External Audit Update

Resolved: that members noted that the audit has not yet been returned

- c) AGAR 2025/26 & Assertion 10** - the AGAR had not yet been returned. From 2025 onwards there is a new assertion 10, the council are well prepared but need to continually review.

Resolved: that members noted the report and that they hoped the AGAR would be back soon.

PRC023/25 – Asset Management

- a) Decommissioning of Allotment Land** – the clerk discussed what the proposal is for the next step in the sale of the land.

Resolved: that members agreed that the process presented to dispose of the land is agreed now that confirmation has been agreed on de-designation by the Secretary of State. The members also agreed to undertake land valuation with Vickers & Barrass.

b) Kingsway Building Maintenance – seek approval for painting of property, rear access door and potential of sliding door for safety issue.

Resolved: that members agreed for quotes to be sourced, for painting, installation of bi-fold doors, new rear access door and safety door in Reception, as well as approval to purchase two new tables and 4 new conference chairs.

PRC024/25 – IT – report on the need for new laptops for staff to enable Windows 11 optimisation, and the need for new mobile phones as the current handsets are 5+ years old.

Signed Chair:

Resolved: that members agreed that staff laptops be upgraded to a suitable device, as the prices are all similar, the Members agreed up to £600 for a device which the staff feels suits their needs with 3 year warranties. Members agreed that mobile devices for the Clerk, Deputy and Admin be upgraded to iPhone 16, 20GB data, with contact up to £40 for year one. To price the option of better devices for Members.

PRC025/25 – Corporate

- a) Insurance Renewal – the details of the insurance renewal were presented. The costs has increased £60 from last year.

Resolved: that the insurance renewal was agreed with Gallagher's.

- b) DCC Strategic Place Plan Consultation

Resolved: that members agreed that this should be discussed at full council and a report to be brought forward.

- c) Parish Plan Development – the Chairs and Mayor had met with the Clerk to discuss the preliminary findings. A workshop session to develop the plan is needed with Members.

Resolved: that members agreed that a workshop is needed and dates to be brought to full council.

- d) Correspondence - Art Work Letter – Mill Race Water Works

Resolved: That members agreed that the Art work should remain with the Council as it was a gift and part of our heritage, however the offer that a print could be taken from it to be made, with costs to be covered by the

- e) Communication Plan

Resolved: that members deferred the item till next meeting.

PRC026/25 – Planning - Bishop Auckland/ DM/25/01782/OUT

Demolition of existing launderette and dog grooming parlour and construction of proposed supported living and extra care housing with communal facilities, adjoining warden's house and associated works.

Resolved: that a response be drafted and shared for agreement by councillors.

PRC027/25 – HR – following the Deputy Clerks completion of CiLCA the Council agreed that the remuneration needed additional consideration by this committee.

Resolved: That the members agreed that the Deputy Clerk move to the LC 2 above substantive grade (sp 29-32) which would give her the 4 spine points as recommended by the contract, this equates to his equates to a £4,450 increase from the salary she was on prior to completion of CILCA, and in light of this increase that the Clerk be moved one spine point onto the LC3 above substantive grade (sp 42-45).

Signed Chair:

Appendix 1 PRC021.12/25 Authorisation of Payments

DATE	VAT	Total	supplier	power to spend	description	payment type	
ALLOTMENTS							
22.08.2025	£34.83	£208.95	Graham's Logs & Timber	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	timber for outer allotment fence repairs	EP	card purchase
22.08.2025	£6.66	£39.91	Screwfix Direct Ltd.	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	materials for outer fence repairs at Tindale	EP	card purchase
20.08.2025	£7.33	£43.98	Toolstation	Allotments - Smallholdings & Allotments Act 1908, s.23	Minotaur Digital Measuring Wheel	DC	card purchase
20.08.2025	£0.00	£220.00	A. Longstaff (AK Garden Maintenance & Waste Removal)	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	48 pollards	EP	paid due to invoice overdue
28.08.2025	0.00	539.00	Temp Cover	Administration of the council - Local Government Act 1972 s 112 (1)	Temp cover charge for Aug	EP	
20.08.2025	£0.00	£270.51	Wave Utilities - West Mills Allotment	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	water - Mill Race	EP	contract
20.08.2025	£0.00	£0.58	Wave Utilities - Edge Hill Allotment	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	water - Edge Hill	DD	contract
20.08.2025	£0.00	£10.35	Wave Utilities - Broken Banks Allotment	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	water - Broken Banks	DD	contract
20.08.2025	£0.00	£62.50	Wave Utilities - Pollards Allotment	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	water - pollards	DD	contract
20.08.2025	£0.00	£277.61	Wave Utilities - Woodhouse Close Allotment	Commons and Common pastures - Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, s.34	water Woodhouse	DD	contract
20.08.2025	£0.00	£33.17	Wave Utilities - Tindale Crescent Allotment	Commons and Common pastures - Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, s.34	water - tindale	DD	contract
20.08.2025	£0.00	£33.39	Wave Utilities - Town Council Office	Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133	kingsway water	DD	contract
27.08.2025	£49.00	£294.00	Trevor Burns fencing Contractors Ltd	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	re hang gate to vacant land, replace eye bolts	EP	outstanding
07.08.2025	£36.00	£216.00	Wayne Thexton (Wear Valley Tanks Ltd)	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	3 x 1000L IBC		card purchase
21.07.2025	£49.00	£294.00	Circle Waste (Circle Waste)	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	skip hire for Mill race	EP	transaction cancelled refund received

Signed Chair:

31.07.2025	£24.00	£144.00	Wayne Thexton (Wear Valley Tanks Ltd)	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	2 x 1000L IBC	EP	card purchase
06.08.2025	£0.00	£43.49	Owen Richardson (Boody Spelk)	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	garden & maintenance equipment	EP	outstanding
20.08.2025	£4.17	£24.99	Screwfix Direct Ltd.	Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26	chain and lock for Woodhouse Field	EP	card purchase
KINGSWAY							
20.08.2025	£0.00	£20.00	Adam Ingram (AIWC Commercial and Business Cleaning Ltd.)	Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133	window cleaning Aug	EP	contract
18.08.2025	£4.40	£92.43	EDF Energy (54 Kingsway)	Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133	electricity kingsway jul-aug 2025	DD	contract
04.09.2025	£2.74	£57.52	Corona Energy Retail 2 Limited	Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133	gas jul-aug 2025	EP	contract
20.08.2025	£1.33	£8.00	ASDA Stores Ltd.		cuttlery	EP	card purchase
11.08.2025	£54.75	£328.50	Vinovium Associates Ltd.	Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133	Keyholding Services - Quarterly	EP	contract
16.07.2025	£4.32	£90.72	EDF Energy (54 Kingsway)	Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133	Electricity Kingsway 01.06.25-30.06.25	DD	contract
13.08.2025	£3.33	£20.00	B&Q Limited		fence stain for Kingsway	EP	card purchase
01.08.2025	£2.67	£56.15	Corona Energy Retail 2 Limited	Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133	Gas 01/06/2025-30/06/2025	DD	contract
10.08.2025	£0.00	£20.00	Adam Ingram (AIWC Commercial and Business Cleaning Ltd.)	Administration of the council - Local Government Act 1972 s 112 (1)	window cleaning July	EP	contract
19.08.2025	£8.33	£49.98	Poppy Shop (The Royal British Legion Trading Ltd.)	Local Government Act 1972 s.137	2x Poppy Wreathes, Type C	DC	card purchase
ADMIN							
18.08.2025	£0.00	£2,791.80	Bishop Auckland Town Council (BATC)	Administration of the council - Local Government Act 1972 s 112 (1)	pensions - Aug 2025	EP	contract
18.08.2025	£0.00	£9.76	Lloyds Bank Plc.	Administration of the council - Local Government Act 1972 s 112 (1)	Lloyds Bank Account Usage 10.06.25-09.07.25	DD	contract
28.08.2025	£0.00	£3,694.39	Bishop Auckland Town Council (BATC)	Administration of the council - Local Government Act 1972 s 112 (1)	HMRC, Tax & NI Staff - Aug 2025	EP	contract
24.08.2025	£25.11	£150.64	O2	Local Government Act 1972 s.111	Mobile phones	DD	contract
26.08.2025	£12.04	£72.25	Totals Business Computers Ltd. (Total Business Group)	Local Government Act 1972 s.111	photocopier usage 01.08.25-31.08.25	EP	contract
28.08.2025	£0.00	£9,299.46	(Bishop Auckland Town Council (BATC))	Administration of the council - Local Government Act 1972 s 112 (1)	staff salaries - Aug 2025	EP	contract

Signed Chair:

06.08.2025	£0.00	£42.84	Owen Richardson (Boody Spelk)	Local Government Act 1972 s.111	Allot Officer travel expenses	EP	outstanding
22.06.2025	£20.36	£122.15	Grenke Leasing Ltd.	Local Government Act 1972 s.111	photocopier lease 01.07.25-30.09.25	DD	contract
18.07.2025	£0.00	£9.13	Lloyds Bank Plc.	Administration of the council - Local Government Act 1972 s 112 (1)	bank fees	EP	contract
06.08.2025	£26.95	£161.70	Bluecom Services Ltd.	Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133	Phone and Broadband	EP	contract
31.07.2025	£8.03	£48.17	Totals Business Computers Ltd. (Total Business Group)	Local Government Act 1972 s.111	photocopier usage 30.05.25-29.06.25	EP	contract
COMMUNITY							
03.09.2025	£2.37	£49.67	EDF Energy (Skatepark)	Highways - Parish Councils Act 1957 s.3	skatepark electricity 01.07.25-31.07.25	DD	contract
31.07.2025	£0.00	£1,000.00	Sarah Kirtley (Wear Valley Amateur Swimming Club)	General Power of Competence - Localism Act 2011, s.1- 8	community grant	EP	paid over from approved grant application
11.08.2025	£437.00	£2,622.00	Ian Liddle (I C Liddle Services)	Open Spaces - Open Spaces Act 1906, s.9-10	water baskets and summer planters and beds in July	EP	contract
15.08.2025	0.00	700.00	St Andrews Parish	S37	Donation for national celebration days support	CHQ	
DEMOCRACY							
28.08.2025	£0.00	£293.30	(Bishop Auckland Town Council (BATC))	The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regs 2003, Part 5, s.26	members allowance - Aug 2025	EP	contract
28.08.2025	£0.00	£73.40	Bishop Auckland Town Council (BATC)	The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regs 2003, Part 5, s.26	HMRC, Tax & NI members - Aug 2025	EP	contract
EVENTS							
20.09.2025	£36.80	£220.80	XL Team Medical Services (Excel EMS / XL Health)	Entertainment and the Arts - LGA 1972, s.145	first aid cover for Remembrance	EP	outstanding

Signed Chair: