

Bishop Auckland Town Council
Community Committee Minutes
3rd February 2026 at 6.30pm
Held at Bishop Auckland Town Council Office, 54 Kingsway

Present: Cllr Lesley Zair (Acting Chair), Cllr Elliott, Wilkinson,

Also present: Sarah Harris – Town Clerk & Vicki Booth - Assistant Town Clerk

CC038/25 Apologies for absence – Cllr Fox & Wilson

CC039/25 – Declaration of Interest

Resolved: that Cllr Wilkinson declared an interest in the Bishops Press

CC040/25 – Public Participation

Resolved: No members of the public.

CC041/25 – Christmas Town Feedback – Bacchanalia gave a summary of the Christmas Town 2025 and answered questions from council members.

Resolved: that members noted the summary report and thanked Bacchanalia for their report and insight and agreed that the event had been a success.

CC042/25 – Event Planning 2026 –

- a) **Easter** – it was reported that despite contacting 3 organisations. Only one had come back to the team to say that it was too short notice to provide a quote for April. The other two event companies hadn't provided quotes.

Resolved: that members agreed that the timescale was too tight so no easter event would be planned this year.

- b) **Food Festival** – the Clerk gave a summary what the council get for their sponsorship at the event. That an interactive engagement activity be held in the front of the artist hub with the view of linking to the Heritage and Horticulture events later in the year. A shared leaflet would also be developed to showcase the activities across the town.

- c) **Resolved:** that members noted the report and agreed to allocate up to £2,000 for the wider engagement activities for food festival and would support staffing the stall.

- d) **Youth Awards** – that the Deputy Clerk updated members with the planning for the 2026 YA's.

Resolved: That members agreed that sponsorship be sourced, and that they would dedicate time to judging the awards, and that they were happy with the online form, and that the catering return to afternoon tea/ or table buffet style food.

- e) **Heritage Fair:** an update report was provided outlining venues and locations for 2026.

Resolved: That members were happy that the event was growing, that they would support the event through volunteering, that budget could be used to buy in event support, and that they wished to be part of the wider programme of the South Durham Heritage Festival.

- f) **Freedom of the Town** – still awaiting a specific date in July. St Paul's Chapel will be used for the event and following a discussion with the Castle was underway.

Resolved: that it would be a dual event with Dr McManners also be awarded the Freedom of the Town.

g) Summer Holiday Support – that the Clerk has held initial discussions with The Hearth regarding summer activities programme.

Resolved: that members noted the update and agreed to receive a more detailed report from the Deputy Clerk on options.

CC043/25 – Community Support

a) Community Support Donations 2026-27 – that the Clerk discussed the paper to support the community groups again in the next financial year.

Resolved: that members noted all the updates and requested the Clerk bring a proposal to a future committee of how the funds are distributed.

b) Community Fund Applications – Applications were reviewed by members.

Resolved: that members approved the following applications

- Cornerstone for A debfib for £1000
- Four Clocks Centre for day trips for user groups for £1000
- Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre for support to the offender management group for £1000
- And that the latter 2 to be paid in advance as they are long term projects and strong established organisations, and it will be more beneficial to enable the activity if paid upfront.
- That the application for Renaissance NE CIC application was considered but the Clerk was tasked with going back and asking for more clarity, as they were still unsure as to how the grant would support the community.

Exclusion of Press & Public *Exclusion of Press and Public In accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council do now exclude the press and public for the remaining item on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.*

CC044/25 – Strategy and Action Plan Development – An update was given with a working draft of the strategy.

Resolved: that members agreed to defer this item due to time constraints but that each of them would look at the draft and return constructive feedback to the Clerk ASAP, as well as schedule another meeting for it to be considered in detail.