

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

3rd February 2026 at 4.30pm

Town Council Offices, Kingsway Court, Bishop Auckland

In attendance: Cllr Harker (Chair), Gray, Siddle, Wilkinson & Zair

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

PRC065/25 - Apologies for Absence – Cllr Wilson

PRC066/25 - Declaration of Interests - declarations made by Cllr Wilkinson re Bishops Press

PRC067/25 - Action Log from Previous Meeting – each action was reviewed and discussed as required.

Resolved: that members noted the update and requested this to be escalated to Helen Bradbury as there has not been a response from enquiries with Michael Turnbull. That members agreed that if a member requires an iPad then it is suitable to purchase with the magic keyboard.

PRC068/25 Public Participation

Resolved: that no members of the public were present.

PRC069/25 – Finance

a) **Bank Balances** - the Clerk gave an overview of the account balances

Resolved: that members noted the account balances

b) **Q3 Report** – the Clerk gave a summary of the report and that we are on track to come in within budget

Resolved: that members noted the year end is likely to come in under budget. That BATC have the licence for the lighting columns and they need to be tested again in 2026. For the Clerk to progress for them to be assessed and if 106 monies can be applied for in regards to replacements or repairs.

c) **Authorisation of Payments** - the list was presented – copy attached in appendix1.

Resolved: that members approved the payment report and authorised the payments. That Edge Hill and Pollards can be in receipt of the agreed association fee be issued. That flowers can be sent to FC due to her current ill health.

PRC070/25 – Audit

a) **Audit Planning Diary** –

Resolved: that members agree the audit planning timetable. However, if training required for councillors. That external training that crosses over can be logged on the training log. For the Clerk to

issue the training courses that are available. that the Clerk has a meeting with the appointed accountants this week and that Derek Shingleton is available to complete our pre audit checks.

b) Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit -

Resolved: That the report was agreed and the Clerk to meet with appointed company this week and this item will then come to the Full Council next week.

PRC071/25 –IT

a) IT Equipment – the Clerk advised of the options for a bigger screen in the conference room.

Resolved: that members noted the costs and agreed that a new fixed interactive screen be purchased for the Conference room and the smaller existing screen to be relocated to the Batts room.

PRC72/25 – Corporate

a) Town of Culture 2028 Bid – the Clerk advised of the opportunity for Bishop Auckland to apply for this expression which needs to be submitted by 31st March 2026. That there are 3 categories of sizes. That the Clerk attended an initial meeting and a range of partners expressed the Town Council be the lead body and a potential smaller working group to be set up. If the council are happy to go ahead then the working group report back to this committee. If Bishop Auckland gets through the expression of interest £60,000 will be allocated for the development. That the Clerk has drafted the Terms of Reference to take to the smaller working group. That the next wider partnership meeting will be the 6th March 2026.

Resolved: That members agreed the town council be the lead body and for the Clerk to bring further details to the next meeting. That if the Clerk is the bid writer then she needs to be ringfenced to have total focus on this application. That members agreed for the budget to be brought to the next meeting.

b) DCC Consultations – Two current consultations - Tackling Poverty and Registration Services. That the Clerk highlighted the draft responses prepared for the council to comment.

Resolved: that in error the paper was not within the pack and the item will be deferred to full council.

c) Risk Management – The risk register has been updated accordingly.

Resolved: that members reviewed the risk register and that going forward a working group session regarding the next risk register needs to be assembled for full scrutiny, but in the mean time that the risk register be amended to include owner and actions required columns, and be brought to full council for adoption.

d) Asset Register – that the Clerk highlighted some items that are requested approval for write off as they are obsolete. That new items have been added accordingly.

Resolved: that members discussed the register and agreed on the removal of obsolete items, and the amended register be taken to full council for adoption.

e) Kingsway Maintenance – that quotes are still being sourced, the rear yard door next to the kitchen area is raining in severely therefore does need urgent attention.

Resolved: that the 3 quotes for each area of work will be taken to full council.

PRC73/25 Planning – that members were advised no applications for comment at present.

Resolved: that members noted the update.

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.

PRC074/25 – Council Strategy and Action Plan Development – that the overall council strategy is in development and the sub strategy of a three pronged approach whereby the strategic and corporate come to the policy and resources committee.

Resolved: that members agree this is a starting block but the actions need to be expanded on how these actions will be achieved and for items to be timebound. For it to be evidence based for measurement. For the Clerk to look at the KPI's from this sub-strategy.

PRC075/25 – Resourcing – the Clerk discussed capacity within the office, currently and with the ambitious strategy and Town Of Culture Bids resources will become further stretched and unsustainable. A proposal was put to increase the staffing capacity, with two part time (20hrpw) roles, one for Community Development and One for Governance and Accountability Administration. As well as a contract to buy in expert support for PR and Coms. This would total and additional £56,000 which could be taken from the additional precept funds which were to be allocated to the development and delivery of the new council strategy.

Resolved: that members discussed the proposal and agreed that there was a need to increase the staffing capacity, in order to be able to deliver what is required for the town council to move forward as well as being in a better position to lead on the Town of Culture Application. The members agreed to support the recruitment of two part time staff and use of a Coms/PR Specialist.

PRC076/25 – Asset Management -

- a) **Sale of De-designated Land Update** – the Clerk gave an update on the offers that have been made and that the sales are progressing. The remaining land will go onto the open Market.

Resolved: that members noted the update, and welcomed the sales progressing.

Payment Report Policy and Resources Committee 03.02.2026

| Democracy | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---|--|----|--|-------------|
| 532 | 25.01.2026 | £9,053.65 | £0.00 | £9,053.65 | By election Henknowle Ward Nov 2025 | Durham County Council - Democratic Services | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111 | Outstanding |
| Allotments | | | | | | | | | |
| 526 | 31.01.2026 | £1,125.00 | £225.00 | £1,350.00 | 6 Months Pest Control at Pollards, Tindale Crescent, Woodhouse Close Allotments | A. Breeze Pest Control Ltd. | EP | Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26 | Contract |
| 552 | 28.01.2026 | £1,080.00 | £0.00 | £1,080.00 | mound at Tindale site & reduce hedgerow | S&P Landscapes/Groundworks & Fencing Contractors | EP | Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26 | Paid |
| 544 | 16.01.2026 | £114.66 | £22.94 | £137.60 | signage for allotment sites | The Sign Shed Ltd | EP | Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26 | Paid |
| Kingsway | | | | | | | | | |
| 547 | 26.01.2026 | £360.00 | £0.00 | £360.00 | Kingsway Cleaning | Blitzed 24/7 Cleaning | EP | Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133 | Contract |
| 533 | 12.01.2026 | £149.17 | £29.83 | £179.00 | SHARP Undercounter Fridge, SJ-UE121M4W-EN - White | Currys Group Limited | EP | Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133 | Paid |
| 550 | 01.02.2026 | £158.19 | £7.91 | £166.10 | gas kingsway | Corona Energy Retail 2 Limited | DD | Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133 | Contract |
| 524 | 19.01.2026 | £89.87 | £4.49 | £94.36 | Kingsway, Electricity 01/12/2025-31/12/2025 | EDF Energy (54 Kingsway) | DD | Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133 | Contract |
| 534 | 08.01.2026 | £12.71 | £2.54 | £15.25 | replenish refreshments for meeting room | Morrisons (WM Morrison Supermarkets Ltd.) | EP | Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133 | Paid |
| 543 | 21.01.2026 | £12.92 | £0.00 | £12.92 | Kingsway, Water 01/12/2025-31/12/2025 | Wave Utilities - Town Council Office | DD | Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133 | Contract |
| Admin | | | | | | | | | |
| 546 | 01.02.2026 | £496.20 | £99.24 | £595.44 | Microsoft Office 365, 01/12/2025-28/04/2026 | Phoenix Software Limited | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111 | Contract |

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| 549 | 01.02.2026 | £1,703.28 | £340.66 | £2,043.94 | scribe accounts and allotments renewal | Starboard Systems Limited T/A Scribe Accounts | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111 | Contract |
| 536 | 29.01.2026 | £8,543.20 | £0.00 | £8,543.20 | staff salaries - jan 2026 | Bishop Auckland Town Council (BATC) | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s 112 (1) | Contract |
| 538 | 29.01.2026 | £3,463.00 | £0.00 | £3,463.00 | HMRC, Tax & NI for Staff - Jan 2026 | Bishop Auckland Town Council (BATC) | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s 112 (1) | Contract |
| 539 | 29.01.2026 | £2,004.38 | £0.00 | £2,004.38 | Pensions - Jan 2026 | Bishop Auckland Town Council (BATC) | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s 112 (1) | Contract |
| 535 | 29.01.2026 | £271.43 | £0.00 | £271.43 | members allowance Jan 2026 | Bishop Auckland Town Council (BATC) | EP | The Local Authorities Regs 2003, Part 5, s.26 | Contract |
| 545 | 31.03.2026 | £77.00 | £15.40 | £92.40 | 1x Ticket - Developing Action Plans for Town, Parish and Community Councils, 27th January 2026 | Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111 | Paid |
| 523 | 06.01.2026 | £55.35 | £11.61 | £66.96 | 3x SeaCosmo iPhone 16e Cases, 1x Ream of A3 Paper | Amazon Business EU S.á r.l. UK Branch | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111 | Outstanding |
| 537 | 29.01.2026 | £58.60 | £0.00 | £58.60 | HMRC, Tax & NI for Members Jan 2026 | Bishop Auckland Town Council (BATC) | EP | The Local Authorities Regs 2003, Part 5, s.26 | Contract |
| 528 | 12.01.2026 | £31.26 | £6.26 | £37.52 | 2x Custom Date Stamps with BATC Wording | Design & Personalise Ltd. (Amazon Business) | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111 | Outstanding |
| 525 | 07.01.2026 | £12.87 | £2.57 | £15.44 | 2x Packs of Command Hooks and Pack of Cleaning Cloths | ASDA Stores Ltd. | DC | Community centres - Local Government Act 1972, s.133 | Paid |
| 527 | 18.01.2026 | £12.79 | £0.00 | £12.79 | banking fees 10/11/25-09/12/25 | Lloyds Bank Plc. | DD | Localism Act 2011, s.1-8 | Paid |
| 522 | 06.01.2026 | £9.82 | £1.96 | £11.78 | 30ft Roll of High Vis Reflective Tape, White | Amazon Services Europe S.á.r.L. | EP | Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 s26 | Outstanding |
| | 28.01.2026 | £1,351.07 | £270.21 | £1,621.28 | Anti Virus, 365 backup & system service | Durham County Council | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111 | Contract |
| 385 | 01.10.2025 | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 | SumUp Card Transaction Fees - Allotment Rents 2025/26, 01/09/2025-30/09/2025 | SumUp Payments Ltd | - | Local Government Act 1972 s.111 | Contract |
| Mayor | | | | | | | | | |
| 530 | 07.01.2026 | £120.00 | £0.00 | £120.00 | Mayor of Sunderland Bollywood Ball | Sunderland City Council | EP | Localism Act 2011 s1-8 (General Power of Competence) | Paid |

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| 548 | 21.01.2026 | £26.00 | £0.00 | £26.00 | 2 tickets Bishop United Radion Play - Town Hall | Bishop Auckland Town Hall (DCC) | EP | Localism Act 2011 s1-8 (General Power of Competence) | Paid |
| Community | | | | | | | | | |
| 529 | 14.01.2026 | £340.00 | £68.00 | £408.00 | full page ad re community funds | South West Durham News CIC | EP | Local Government Act 1972, section 142 | Paid |
| 531 | 09.01.2026 | £144.40 | £28.88 | £173.28 | 2x Haras Fence banners with BATC Logo | Banner World Ltd | EP | Local Government Act 1972, section 142 | Paid |
| 542 | 05.02.2026 | £59.35 | £2.97 | £62.32 | Skatepark, Electricity 01/12/2025- 31/12/2025 | EDF Energy (Skatepark) | DD | Highways - Parish Councils Act 1957 s.3 | Contract |