

## Bishop Auckland Town Council

### Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

3<sup>rd</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

## Appendix 1 - PRC069/25c

| ADMIN      |            |           |         |           |   |   |    |                                   |                 |
|------------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---|---|----|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 549        | 27.02.2026 | £1,703.28 | £340.66 | £2,043.94 | Scribe Accounts and Scribe Allotments Renewal, 2026     | Starboard Systems Limited T/A Scribe Accounts | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111   | Contract        |
| 551        | 07.02.2026 | £186.00   | £37.20  | £223.20   | mobile phones   | O2 - Telefónica UK Limited                    | DD | Local Government Act 1972 s.111   | Contract        |
| 561        | 05.02.2026 | £17.87    | £0.00   | £17.87    | OR mileage Jan  | Boody Spelk                                   | EP |                                   | Outstanding     |
| 504        | 10.12.2025 | -£15.82   | -£3.16  | -£18.98   | Credit: Samsung Galaxy Tab S22, Heavy Duty Phone Case   | Amazon Business EU S.á r.l. UK Branch         | -  | Local Government Act 1972 s.111   | Refund          |
| 506        | 10.12.2025 | -£12.74   | -£2.55  | -£15.29   | Credit: Diaclara iPhone 16 Heavy Duty Phone Case, Clear | Amazon Business EU S.á r.l. UK Branch         | -  | Local Government Act 1972 s.111   | Refund          |
| 507        | 10.12.2025 | -£10.62   | -£2.12  | -£12.74   | Credit: Diaclara iPhone 16 Heavy Duty Phone Case, Black | Amazon Business EU S.á r.l. UK Branch         | -  | Local Government Act 1972 s.111   | Refund          |
| 540        | 15.01.2026 | £20.26    | £4.06   | £24.32    | Plastic Pipe Cutter, Stop Fitting, Galvanised Wire      | Screwfix Direct Ltd.                          | DC | Small Holdings/Allot Act 1908 s26 | Paid            |
| 566        | 06.02.2026 | £28.00    | £0.00   | £28.00    | flowers for FC  | M&S - Marks and Spencer                       | EP |                                   | paid            |
| 569        | 10.02.2026 | £85.00    | £17.00  | £102.00   | SLCC Regional Training Seminar                          | Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)        | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111   | Outstanding     |
| 570        | 10.02.2026 | £85.00    | £17.00  | £102.00   | SLCC Regional Training Seminar                          | Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)        | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111   | Outstanding     |
| 571        | 10.02.2026 | £175.50   | £35.10  | £210.60   | VAT Training part 2 VB                                  | Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)        | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111   | Outstanding     |
| 572        | 10.02.2026 | £175.50   | £35.10  | £210.60   | VAT Training Part 2 MA                                  | Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)        | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111   | Outstanding     |
| 555        | 17.02.2026 | £17.08    | £0.00   | £17.08    | Lloyds Banking Fees 10/12/2025-09/01/2026               | Lloyds Bank Plc.                              | DD | GPC Localism Act 2011, s.1- 8     | Contract        |
| 578        | 17.03.2026 | £52.00    | £0.00   | £52.00    | Info Commissioners Office Renewal Fee                   | Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)       | DD |                                   | Outstanding     |
| 562        | 05.02.2026 | £20.00    | £0.00   | £20.00    | Gambling and Small Society Lotteries Licence            | Durham County Council                         | EP | GPC Localism Act 2011, s.1- 8     | Contract        |
| ALLOTMENTS |            |           |         |           |   |   |    |                                   |                 |
| 541        | 15.01.2026 | £7.49     | £1.50   | £8.99     | Minotaur Cable/Wire Cutter 200mm                        | Toolstation Ltd.                              | DC | Small Holdings/Allot Act 1908 s26 | Paid            |
| 556        | 20.01.2026 | £7.66     | £1.53   | £9.19     | faithful plastic pipe cutter                            | Screwfix Direct Ltd.                          | EP | Small Holdings/Allot Act 1908 s26 | Paid            |
| 557        | 20.01.2026 | £9.29     | £0.00   | £9.29     | wafer screws  | Screwfix Direct Ltd.                          | EP | Small Holdings/Allot Act 1908 s26 | Paid            |
| 575        | 09.02.2026 | £455.50   | £91.10  | £546.60   | Water application for Mill Race                         | Northumbrian Water                            | EP | Small Holdings/Allot Act 1908 s26 | Paid            |
| 576        | 10.02.2026 | £50.00    | £10.00  | £60.00    | scribe - prof services                                  | Starboard Systems Limited T/A Scribe Accounts | EP | Small Holdings/Allot Act 1908 s26 | Paid            |
| ADMIN      | £61.62     | 0         | £61.62  |           | card payment fees                                       | Sum up & Stripe                               |    |                                   | Paid see report |

|                          |            |           |        |           |  |   |    |   |             |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|--------|-----------|--|---|----|---|-------------|
| 574                      | 10.02.2026 | £100.00   | £0.00  | £100.00   | Cut steel gate cover, grinder and labour                   | S&P Landscapes/Groundworks & Fencing Contractors      | EP |   | Paid        |
| <b>EVENTS</b>            |            |           |        |           |  |   |    |   |             |
|                          | 11.02.2026 | £150.00   | £30.00 | £180.00   | 2 X pop up banners   | Lintons   | EP | Entertainment & the Arts                                      | paid        |
| 565                      | 06.02.2026 | £6.00     | £0.00  | £6.00     | forum membership   | County Durham History & Heritage Forum                | EP | Entertainment & the Arts                                      | Paid        |
| 558                      | 28.02.2026 | £14.21    | £2.84  | £17.05    | Photocopier Usage 31/12/2025-30/01/2026                    | Totals Business Computers Ltd. (Total Business Group) | EP | Local Government Act 1972 s.111                               | Contract    |
| <b>COMMUNITY SUPPORT</b> |            |           |        |           |  |   |    |   |             |
| 471                      | 27.11.2025 | £770.00   | £0.00  | £770.00   | Pending receipts of community grant approved applications  | Bishop Auckland Community Partnership                 | EP | GPC Localism Act 2011, s.1- 8                                 |             |
| 472                      | 27.11.2025 | £1,000.00 | £0.00  | £1,000.00 | Pending receipts of community grant approved applications  | Bishop Auckland Choral Society                        | EP | GPC Localism Act 2011, s.1- 8                                 |             |
| 473                      | 27.11.2025 | £1,000.00 | £0.00  | £1,000.00 | grant funds approved application for payout                | Bishop Auckland RUFC                                  | EP | GPC Localism Act 2011, s.1- 8                                 | Outstanding |
| 563                      | 06.03.2026 | £51.25    | £2.56  | £53.81    | Skatepark, Electricity 01/01/2026-31/01/2026               | EDF Energy (Skatepark)                                | DD | Highways Parish Councils Act 1957s.3                          | Contract    |
| 577                      | 10.02.2026 | £1,000.00 | £0.00  | £1,000.00 | Donation to Bishop Trains for David Million memorial bench | Bishop Trains Limited                                 | EP |   | Paid        |
| <b>KINGSWAY</b>          |            |           |        |           |  |   |    |   |             |
| 560                      | 05.02.2026 | £40.00    | £0.00  | £40.00    | window cleaning Jan  | AIWC Commercial and Business Cleaning Ltd.            | EP | Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133 | Contract    |
| 564                      | 05.02.2026 | £273.75   | £54.75 | £328.50   | security   | Vinovium Associates Ltd.                              | EP | LGA 1972, s.133   | Contract    |
| 567                      | 17.02.2026 | £94.29    | £4.71  | £99.00    | Kingsway, Electricity 01/01/2026-31/01/2026                | EDF Energy (54 Kingsway)                              | DD | Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133 | Paid        |
| 568                      | 10.02.2026 | £29.98    | £0.00  | £29.98    | Kingsway, Water 01/01/2026-31/01/2026                      | Wave Utilities - Town Council Office                  | DD | Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133 | Paid        |
| 553                      | 05.02.2026 | £134.75   | £26.95 | £161.70   | Telephone and Broadband - February 2026                    | Bluecom Services Ltd.                                 | DD | Provision of Parish and Community Buildings - LGA 1972, s.133 | Contract    |