

## BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Bishop Auckland Town Council Offices, Kingsway Court, Bishop Auckland

**In Attendance:** Cllr Sam Zair, Mayor (Chair), Councillors, R Elliott, J Fox, S Gray, M Harker, A Legge, M Siddle, D Wilkinson, D Wilson and L Zair

**Also Present:** Sarah Harris (Town Clerk) Vicki Booth (Assistant Town Clerk)

**TC 097/25 Apologies for Absence** – Apologies from Cllr L Zair & T Redmond were given.

**Resolved:** That the apologies for Cllr Zair and Redmond were accepted and were noted and received No apologies received from Cllr J Fox therefore no apologies were accepted.

**TC 098/25 – Declarations of Interest**

**Resolved:** Cllr Wilkinson declared an interest in Bishops Press. Cllr Siddle declared an interest in LNRS.

**TC 099/25 – Approve the minutes of**

- a) Town Council 13 January 2026
- b) Policy and Resources Committee 3 February 2026
- c) Community Committee 3 February 2026

**Resolved:** CC minutes noted - amendment St Peter's Chapel not St Paul's Chapel. This was amended by hand in the minutes. The minutes of the meetings were approved, and all decisions held within approved for action.

**TC100/25 - Matters arising:**

Downings Solar Farm development – Proposal by MS & seconded by DW for a vote. 5 in favour and 3 abstain. That a draft response will be drafted for the next Policy & Resources Committee for approval based on members majority approval for the development.

**Resolved:** that members noted the update, and that they agreed that a response be drafted for the solar farm application and that the council be in support. The draft be brought to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee before being submitted.

**TC101/25 Guest Speaker: Tony Hanson Corporate Director – Regeneration, Economy & Growth, DCC**

He gave a presentation (see file) he updated  
Future High Street Funds –

- Bus station update given and will be complete upon final tarmac once weather improves.
- Stack Development update given and delays due to structural delays due to neighbouring property.
  - Once scheme restarts will take 6 – 9 months to develop.
- Public Realms works complete.

- Road Junction Capacity Improvements – A688, South Church and Coundon gate roundabouts.
- Property Reuse Funds – 13 businesses with grants to bring businesses into town.
- Newgate Centre – exploring a range of potential options for the centre.
- Strategic Place Plan – Bishop Auckland, Crook, Chester-le-Street & Stanley. Community opinions of expectations and ambitions of the residents of the town.
- High Street Rental Auctions – to bring empty properties into use, support landlords, new businesses and community groups and improve safety of town centres.

**Resolved:** that members thanked Tony for the update and asked relevant questions, where he promised to supply information here for any questions he was unable to answer at the time, the Clerk to provide and email to him.

## **TC102/25 Reports**

### **a) Durham County Council**

Budget this week for DCC will be debated and set.

Local area networks – will be a report going to cabinet in March with the intent to relaunch in April. No significant boundary changes for this area for the local area networks. Funds not spent his year will be rolled over to next year which makes it £200,000. There will be a change in governance to try and make it more representative. Proposal for two tiers – 1 for financial governance and 2 - for ground level representation.

### **b) Outside Bodies**

Larger council forum this week. The exec meeting met to revise the constitution and MTFP. Election for the executives will take place this week. NALC conference will be held in June this year.

**Resolved:** that members noted the updates, and agreed that the council should be sending staff and member reps the NALC conference.

**TC103/25 Report of the Mayor** – the Mayor gave an update on the recent meetings and events he has attended.

**Resolved:** that members noted the update.

## **TC104/25 Public Participation**

**Resolved:** that no members of the public were present.

## **TC105/25 – Town of Culture 2028 Bid**

The Town Clerk gave an update that expressions of interest be submitted by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. One condition is a public authority must be the accountable body. That Bishop Auckland Town Council being that public body was discussed at the Policy & Resources Committee, the working group will be a sub committee of the committee with Cllr Harker Chairing. If we get through the expression of interest stage £60,000 will be given for development of the project. The Clerk gave details of the guidance given. A request that the underspend of the National Events budget in the Community Funds be allocated to the bid for leaflets and promotional material, in and EMR.

**Resolved:** that members agreed for that underspend be reallocated for the Town of Culture bid in an Ear Marked Reserve as the project will span into the next year.

#### **TC106/25 – Finance**

##### **a) AGAR Preparation**

- i. Asset Register  
Risk Register**
- ii. Effectiveness of Internal Control**
- iii. Audit Planning Diary**

**Resolved:** that members noted and approved, the Asset Register, Risk Register, Effectiveness of Internal Control and the Audit Planning Diary.

##### **b) Payments for authorisation**

**Resolved:** that members approved the payments (as per the attached in appendix 1) for authorisation along with noting the sumup and stripe payment fees.

##### **c) Floral Displays 2026-27**

**Resolved:** that members approved the paper submitted by the Clerk and go ahead with the order the summer and spring planting as detailed. They agreed to seek DCC Member funds for additional planters at the curtilage of the Town Hall and St Anne’s Church. They agreed to look at community planting and partnership with TAP and the Greener Together Group for the 3 round beds in the market place, and to undertake bulb planting in the autumn in those beds. They agreed that the Clerk is to obtain the watering quote from last years supplier, as a quote had been sought from neighbouring parishes without success, they agreed that provided the quote is within the remaining budget of the floral displays to go ahead but to provide and update to Policy and Resources Committee.

##### **d) Quotations for**

- i. Works at Kingsway Doors**
- ii. Works at Kingsway Decorating**
- iii. Drone imaging for allotments**

**Resolved:** that members considered the quotes and agreed for option A for the doors, for option B for decorating the communal areas of the building, for option B of the drone imaging.

#### **TC107/25 – Consultation DCC –**

- I. Tackling Poverty in County Durham**
- II. Registration Service Customer Survey**
- III. Strategic Place Plan – Bishop Auckland**

The Clerk gave an overview on the consultations paper listed above.

**Resolved:** that members agreed with the draft responses to be submitted to DCC.

**TC108/25 Exclusion of Press and 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.

### **TC109/25 – Resources**

The Clerk gave a summary of the papers enclosed over resources, members discussed the proposal. Cllr S Zair raised concerns over it not impacting on the future precept, and that the roles needed to be attaining measurable output.

**Resolved:** that members agreed the proposal of recruitment to two part time (20hr) roles, sourcing funding opportunities be added to the Community Development Role. They agreed that the roles be measurable. That members agreed on the two part-time roles and the outsourcing of the PR & Comms work.

### **TC110/25 – Council Strategy 2026-31**

The Clerk presented the overall strategy and discussed the 3 areas underneath that have been discussed at the relevant committees. That the next round of meetings will have the finalised versions ready for the launch in May with public consultations.

**Resolved:** that members discussed more work needing requirements on KPI's, and these are to be worked up by the committee strands. That they agreed that they want meaningful consultation and set the bar for this as it gets recognition. That the vision is mirrored by that of the community. The town must be the voice for its people. They agreed that the final drafts be brought back to full council in April.

Payment report Full Council 17th Feb 2025

Appendix 1

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 Outstanding
561	05.02.2026	£17.87	£0.00	£17.87	OR mileage Jan	Boody Spelk	EP		
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 Outstanding
578	17.03.2026	£52.00	£0.00	£52.00	Info Commissioners Office Renewal Fee Gambling and Small Society Lotteries Licence	Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)	DD		
562	05.02.2026	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00		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
EVENTS									
579	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

Payment report Full Council 17th Feb 2025

Appendix 1

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