

Annual Meeting of Bishop Auckland Town Council
Tuesday 26 May 2026 at 6.30pm.
Town Council Offices, Kingsway Court, 54 Kingsway, Bishop Auckland.

Present: Cllr S Zair, Cllr M Siddle, Cllr M Harker, Cllr L Zair, Cllr J Fox, Cllr R Elliott, Cllr D Wilson, Cllr D Wilkinson, Cllr S Gray, and Cllr T Redmond.

Also Present: Mrs Harris, Town Clerk, Ms Jordan Community Support Officer, and Mr Armstrong, Admin Officer. Plus one Member of the Public.

TC001/26 Election of Mayor - To elect a Mayor for the 2026-27 Municipal Year. Cllr Michael Siddle was nominated by Cllr R Elliott, and was seconded by Cllr Lesley Zair. No other nominations were received.

Resolved: that members elected Cllr Siddle as the Municipal Mayor for 2026-27 and he took the Chair seat.

TC002/26 Declaration of Acceptance of Office –

Resolved: that Cllr Siddle signed a declaration of acceptance of office, in the presence of the meeting, which was counter signed by the Clerk.

TC003/26 Presentation to Retiring Mayor

Resolved: that Cllr Siddle gave a vote of thanks for Cllr S Zair as the retiring Mayor, he was be presented with a medal to commemorate his term of office, along with a photo book documenting his time in office, and a bottle of wine. Cllr Zair thanked his colleagues for their support during his term of office. He confirmed that he had raised £4,500 for Butterwick Hospice Bishop Auckland.

TC004/26 Apologies for absence – to receive and consider acceptance of any apologies received.

Resolved: That members received apologies from Cllr A Legge, due to a work commitment. The apologies were accepted.

TC005/26 Declarations of Interest - To invite members to declare any interest they may have.

Resolved: That Cllr D Wilkinson declared his interest with South West Durham News, as his employer. This was noted and accepted by members.

TC006/26 Election of Deputy Mayor - To elect a Deputy Mayor for the 2026-27 Municipal Year.

Cllr Mike Harker was nominated by Cllr S Zair, and Seconded by Cllr L Zair. No other nominations were received.

Resolved: that member elected Cllr Harker as the Deputy Mayor for the Municipal year 2026-27.

TC007/26 Declaration of the Acceptance of Office for the Deputy Mayor.

Resolved: that Cllr Harker signed a declaration of acceptance of office, in the presence of the meeting, which was counter signed by the Clerk.

TC008/26 Minutes - The Minutes of the following meetings, were considered:

Town Council , 28 April 2026 was moved by Cllr Lesley Zair and Seconded by Cllr Elliott
Policy and Resources Committee, 12 May 2026 was moved by Cllr Lesley Zair and seconded by Cllr Mike Harker.

Resolved: that the members agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meetings, and any actions and decisions contained within were approved.

Signed Chair:

TC009/26 Matters Arising - To receive any matters arising from the above Minutes which are not included elsewhere on the agenda (for information only).

Resolved: the members were informed that their had been an change in circumstances surrounding a Community Grant which had been issued to the Choral Society. The Grant was to support their summer concert, and the venue had changed from Auckland Palace to the Mannor House at West Auckland. This had been changed without update to the council, and the venue was no outside of the Town Council boundary. It was agreed that the Clerk to investigate the change and to speak to West Auckland Parish Clerk about the possibility of them supporting instead. The Matter is to be brought back to the Policy and Resources Committee on the 2nd June for final decision.

TC010/26 To re-confirm the Constitution of the Council its Articles and, Responsibilities, along with Policy Framework including Rules of Procedure, Codes and Protocols, Members Allowances and the General Power of Competence. The report (see file copy) and associated documents were considered.

Resolved:

- That the members confirmed the Articles, Responsibility, Rules of Procedure, Codes and Protocols of Bishop Auckland Town Council Constitution, in line with the report (see file copy).
- That Members agreed the committee structure with HR as a Sub-Committee and Greener together as a working group along with their amended terms of reference as set out in appendix 1 and 2 of the report (see file copy) . As well as Town Of Culture Working Group to be a working group of the Policy and resources Committee, with their TOR as previously agreed.
- That Members agreed to the amended organisational structure, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report with the update that the Admin Assistant be renamed as Admin Officer.
- That Members agreed the Members basic allowance (£440) and Mayors Special Responsibility allowance (£440) for 2026-27.
- That the Members adopt the recommended new format (Appendix 4 of report see file copy) and document structure for the Councils Policy Framework, agree that all staff related policies and procedures should be in the staff Handbook.
- That members agreed the adoption of General Power of Competence as the criteria has been reached.

TC011/26 Appointments to Committees, Panels, Outside Bodies and Working Parties –

To appoint Members to serve on Committees, Panels, Outside Bodies and Working Groups. Cllr Fox announced that she had resigned from the Reform Party and was now acting as an independent Councillor on the Town Council and County Council.

Resolved: that members noted Cllr Foxes Change of Party. That Members agreed the following memberships and committee numbers, as follows:

- **Allotment and Environment Committee** – 6 seats. Membership as follows Cllr Siddle (Chair), Cllr J Fox (Deputy Chair), Cllr Legge, Cllr Redmond, Cllr Elliott and Cllr L Zair.
 - **Environment Working Group** – Greener Together – Chair Cllr M Siddle
- **Community Committee** – 5 seats – Cllr L Zair (Chair), Cllr R Elliott (Deputy Chair) Cllr Mike Harker, Cllr J Fox and Cllr T Redmond.

Signed Chair:

- **Policy and Resources Committee** – 6 Seats – Cllr S Zair (Chair), Cllr M Harker (Deputy Chair) Cllr S Grey, Cllr M Siddle, Cllr D Wilson, Cllr D Wilkinson.
- **Town of Culture Working Group** – Chair Cllr Mike Harker
- **Disciplinary and Grievance** – 3 Seats, Chair Rob Elliot, Cllr T Redmond, Cllr J Fox
- **Appeals Panel** – 3 seats – made up of members non involved in previous decision.

That Members agreed the following memberships of outside bodies, as follows:

- **Bishop Auckland and Shildon Local Councils Committee** – Cllr Michael Siddle and Cllr Mike Harker
- **CDALC Exec** – Cllr Mike Harker – deputy Cllr M Siddle
- **Local Network** – Need to understand the process and seat to be confirmed.
- **CDALC Larger Councils Form** – Cllr M Harker, Cllr M Siddle, and Clerk
- **South Durham GRT Forum** – Clerk and Deputy Clerk and Cllr Harker

TC012/26 Diary of Meetings 2025-26 - To consider a diary of meetings for 2025-26. (see file copy)

Resolved: that Members agreed the diary of meetings was approved, with the amendment of community committee moving to a Wednesday at 6pm

TC013/26 Finance

TC013a/26 Appointment of Bank Signatories

Resolved: that the Members nominated and agreed that Cllr Harker, Cllr Siddle, Cllr Wilson and Cllr S Zair be the Council Bank Signatories, along with the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk for the Current and Deposit accounts for Lloyds.

TC013b/26 Re-confirm Contracts and ongoing obligations

Resolved: that members agreed that the list of continuing contracts and obligations be approved (see file copy of the report) and that a record of regular payments made under this provision will be drawn up as part of the Payment Report and signed by the two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised to control the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made, this is in accordance with Financial Regulations. In accordance with Financial Regulation 6.7 a dispensation is sought to allow account signatories to countersign the payment schedule in respect to the payment of Members Allowances due to their pecuniary interests.

TC013c/26 Internal Audit Report – was received from the Internal Auditor Mitchel and Grieveson (see file copy). They report that the financial controls of the council to be satisfactory and that the Council has met all of the criteria as shown on page 3 of the AGAR and they certify the Internal Audit Report.

Resolved: that members noted and received the Internal Audit Report including the three recommendations made. (see file copy) and that that they the actions to mitigate and implement solutions to the recommendations as set out in the report.

TC013d/26 Bishop Auckland Town Council Annual Governance and Accountability Return

(AGAR) The SAPP (Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel) Practitioners Guide sets out the audit requirements for the Council. This includes completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, which contains the Annual Governance Statement, Annual Internal Audit, and Annual Accounting statements. The Return has been prepared 31 March 2026 was presented for approval, (see file copy of the report)

Signed Chair:

Resolved: that members agreed the following:

- That the Internal Audit Report is accepted and that it has been signed by the Internal Auditor
- That the Annual Governance Statement be approved (Section1)
- That the Chairman and the Clerk sign the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) – signing took place at the meeting.
- That the Accounting Statement (Section 2) for the financial year ended 31 March 2026 be approved
- The Chairman sign the Accounting Statement – signing took place in the meeting.
- That the AGAR and associated documents be submitted to the external Auditor by the Clerk and Published on the website for transparency.
- That the excise of Public Rights Notice be issued on the 2nd June 2026.

TC013e/26 Finance - Payments for authorisation as attached (see appendix 1)

Resolved: The members agreed that the payments be approved as per the report – see attached.

TC014/26 Town Council Strategy 2026-2031 and Sub Strategies and Action Plan Consultation

The draft strategy and three sub strategies were presented (see file Copy). The report contained information on the consultation.

Resolved:

- That members agreed the draft strategy and three sub strategies for consultation.
- That members agreed that the consultation is to run from throughout June, with it starting as soon as possible in June due to consideration of workload, once the online consultation is up and running. Following which committees consider any amendments at their meetings in July, and that the final documents along with consultation summary are presented to Full Council in July 2026 for adoption.
- That Members agreed to support the drop in sessions, 10th, 16th and 30th June before the Committee and Council meetings, as well as providing cover for the engagement stand at the Street Food Market on 5th June 4-8pm if possible, along with and Pride festival 13th June 2-7pm, Street Food Friday on the 26th June, Plus any other drop in or focus group sessions in the wards once they are arranged.

TC015/26 Correspondence –

To note any correspondence received.

Resolved: that members noted the positive thank you received from Reels Cinema regarding the 25th Anniversary.

TC016/26 Public Participation - To hear from any members of the public subject to [Public Participation Policy](#)

Resolved: that no member of the public wished to speak or raise any matters under public participation.

Signed Chair:

Appendix1 – Payment Report – Payments Approved Full Council 26 May 2026

Date	Co & Description	Type	Money Out	Powers	Payment Arrangement
Admin					
12.05.26	Mitchells Grievson – Internal Audit	EP	£1440.00	LGA 1972 s111	outstanding
05.05.26	O Richardson – mileage April 2026	EP	£49.19	LGA 1972 s111	outstanding
11.05.26	Fire Parts – extinguisher service and replacements where required	EP	£231.17	LGA 1972 s133	outstanding
07.05.26	CDALC – Parkinson partnership training	EP	£350.00	LGA 1972 s111	outstanding
30.04.26	Total Business – copier usage 30.03.26-29.04.26	EP	£48.21	LGA 1972 s111	outstanding
08.05.26	O2 – mobile phones	DD	£232.40	LGA 1972 s111	paid
28.05.26	Staff Salaries - May	EP	£9408.09	LGA 1972 s112(1)	Outstanding
18.05.26	Lloyds – banking fees	EP	£10.46		Paid
28.05.26	Staff HMRC/Tax/NI - May	EP	£3831.98	LGA 1972 s112(1)	Outstanding
28.05.26	Pensions – May	EP	£2307.98	LGA 1972 s112(1)	outstanding
Allotments					
12.05.26	O Richardson - Boards, fence rail, tape – mend road at Tindale	EP	£50.49	LGA 1972 s133	outstanding
14.05.26	Timpsons – key cut -OR reimbursement	EP	£9.00	LGA 1972 s111	paid
07.05.26	Wave – Pollards Water	DD	£412.86	Small Holdings & Allotments 1908 s26	paid
07.05.26	Wave – Tindale Water	DD	£118.14	Small Holdings & Allotments 1908 s26	paid
03.05.26	AK Garden Clearance	EP	£160.00	Waste removal Kingsway	paid
Kingsway					
12.05.26	ORichardson - Toilet flush, silicone, coupling plate, sanitary wipes	EP	£52.49	LGA 1972 s133	outstanding
14.05.26	ORichardson - Fit canopies & tap in courtyard, work gloves,	EP	£27.00	LGA 1972 s133	outstanding
01.05.26	Vinovium Associates – Security (quarterly)	EP	£328.50	LGA 1972 s133	outstanding

Signed Chair:

12.05.26	Key cut for John	DC	£9.00	LGA 1972 s133	paid
01.05.26	Bluecom – phone system and broadband	Dc	£161.70	LGA 1972s133	Paid
01.05.26	Corona – gas Kingsway	DC	£179.00	LGA 1972 s133	outstanding
05.05.26	EDF – Kingsway electricity	DD	£89.26	LGA 1972 s133	Paid
07.05.26	Wave – Kingsway Water	DD	£41.50	LGA 1972 s133	paid
Community					
14.05.26	SWDN – leaflet distribution (2 areas)	EP	£240.00	LGA 1972 s145	Outstanding
01.05.26	Baccanalia – market Instalment	EP	£1333.00	Entertainment & the Arts	paid
08.05.26	EDF - Skate Park Electricity April	DD	£53.30	Highways 1957 s3	paid
01.05.26	Baccanalia – pride instalment	EP	£3334.00	Entertainment & the Arts	Paid
20.05.26	Bishop Auckland College Award Sponsorship	EP	£150.00	Entertainment & the Arts	outstanding
03.04.26	EDF – Skate park Electricity March	DD	£50.27	Highways 1957 s3	paid
Events					
12.05.26	O Richardson - Wood for can crusher	EP	£11.50	Entertainment & the Arts	outstanding
12.05.26	Facebook promo	EP	£12.98		paid
14.02.26	O Richardson - ply for top of lazy susan's for YA's	EP	£52.00	Entertainment & the Arts	outstanding
Democracy					
28.05.26	Members Allowance - May	EP	£300.30	Local Auth Regs 2003 p5	outstanding
28.05.26	Members HMRC/Tax/NI	EP	£66.40	Local Auth Regs 2003 p5	outstanding

Signed Chair: