

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

15 JANUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Drew (Town Mayor), Thompson, Turnbull, Ing, Ewart, McLean, Connelly & Chatterjee.

Officers: Mr Clark (Town Clerk) & Ms C Atkinson (RFO)

64. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

Cllr's Bigge (unwell) and Coulthard (holiday) submitted their apologies.

Resolved – (a) That Cllr Bigge's submitted apologies be accepted and approved; and (b) That Cllr Coulthard's apologies are not approved.

65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 10/May/19 refers), Members were asked whether they had any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter on the agenda and, if so, to declare those interests at this point of the meeting. Members were reminded that a declaration could be given later in the meeting if a need arose during discussion. No declarations were made.

66. MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor referred to the announcement that Barclay's Bank in the town would be closing in January 2025.

It was agreed the closure, and the councils response would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting (March).

67. COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

(i) 20 November 2023

Resolved – That the minutes be accepted as being a true and accurate record.

68. EN BLOC ITEMS

This is a report arising from the decision at Minute 72/Aug/04 to amalgamate a number of agenda items so that the accompanying recommendations can be moved 'en bloc'. Any Member has a right to speak on any of the listed items, but it is hoped that discussion can be kept to a minimum.

The items included in the report were as follows:

- (1) Services Committee – 11 December 2023 – Draft minutes**
- (2) Partnership Committee – 18 December 2023 - Draft minutes**
- (3) Resources Committee – 08 January 2024**
- (4) Planning Committee – 11 December 2023**
- (5) Town Mayor Activities**

Since the Council meeting on the 20 November 2023, the Town Mayor accompanied by Consorts Nathaniel, Corrine and Cleo Drew have attended the following events: -

1st December 2023 - Barnard Castle Christmas Lights switch on

Recommendation – That the draft committee meeting minutes, and Mayoral activity be received and noted.

69. UPDATES, AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

From the meetings outlined above at item 68 the following updates are noted:

(1) Services Committee meeting – 04 December 2023

No referrals to full council.

Budgetary bids for 2024/25 were referred to the Resources Committee meeting held on 08 January 2024.

(2) Partnership Committee meeting – 18 December 2023

No referrals were made to full council.

Budgetary bids for 2024/25 were referred to the Resources Committee meeting held on 08 January 2024.

(3) Resources Committee Meeting – 08 January 2024

Further to the meeting of Resources Committee, it was resolved that:

The budget for 2024/25, and precept request is referred to full council.

(4) Planning Committee Meetings

No referrals to full council.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

70. REPRESENTATIONS WITH EXTERNAL BODIES

The Council's current representative on each relevant body can make a verbal update at the meeting.

(1) Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum - (Cllr Turnbull)

No meetings. Cllr Turnbull referred to potential training on understanding the Gypsy Romany community to give an understanding of its culture. If any member has a particular interest in this area they could take the vacant position.

(2) Larger Local Councils Forum – (Clerk & Cllr Foote-Wood)

Cllr Foote-Wood referred to the need to encourage people to come forward to become councillors. In this area in 2021 Barnard Castle was the only contested election to be held. It has been suggested that the issue is looked at locally.

(3) The Witham Hall Ltd (Cllr Chatterjee)

No meeting.

Cllr Ing referred to his attendance at the Witham in a personal capacity at a recent event.

(4) Dawson Cottages Trust (Cllr's Ewart & McLean)

Cllr McLean advised members they are at full occupancy again thanks to the links between the Trust, Council and the CAB in finding a tenant.

(5) A66 CLG (Cllr's Drew & Thompson)

No meetings or updates.

(6) St Mary's Barnard Castle Hall Association (Cllr Connelly)

Cllr Connelly advised members that the chairs have been reupholstered and the lights have been done.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

71. APPROVAL OF BUDGET 2024/25

Further to the meeting of Resources Committee on 08 January 2024 (minute 32/January/24 refers), the 2024/25 budget is recommended to the council. (Appendix A).

Questions were asked on the figures for the allotments and mini golf. The Clerk and RFO reminded members that these elements of the budget were self-financing.

Resolved – (a) That the 2024/25 budget be set as detailed in Appendix A, with gross expenditure of £239,405; and
(b) That the 2024/25 precept be therefore set as detailed in Appendix A, at £214,356 – a **decrease** of 8.70% on 2023/24. £114.00 (Band D property).

72. EAST WARD VACANCY

Following the passing of Cllr Frank Harrison a vacancy was posted in the prescribed manner. Fourteen days following the Notice, the Council were notified that an election had not been called. Members were now asked to consider co-option to fill the vacancy.

Resolved – That the vacancy be considered for co-option under the approved policy.

73. CONSULTATION – PRE SUBMISSION DRAFT STARTFORTH PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Received – link (URL) to draft plan - <https://www.startforthparishcouncil.org/startforth-neighbourhood-plan>

A discussion took place on the draft plan. It was referred that Startforth does not have the facilities such as schools, surgeries etc and increased housing has a collateral impact on Barnard Castle and should be noted.

Resolved – (a) That no objection is raised to the Startforth Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan per se; and (b) That a comment on the lack of community facilities within Startforth and how this would impact on Barnard Castle is drafted, and submitted as part of the consultation.

74. ROYAL GARDEN PARTIES 2024

Two tickets for the Royal Garden Parties in 2024 will be offered to the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC).

Should any member who has previously not attended a Garden Party wish to be entered into the draw they should give their names to the Clerk at this meeting.

Resolved – That any member wishing to be placed in the draw contact the Town Clerk directly.

Appendix A

Cost Centre	Budget 2023/24 £	Budget 2024/25 £
101 Council Administration	13,381	14,529
102 Central Support Svcs	149,438	127,369
104 Elections	1,000	1,000
105 Chains of Office	50	50
106 Woodleigh	25,012	25,782
110 Defibrillator	150	150
201 Allotments	4,303	4,399
211 Mini Golf	11,000	10,000
221 Christmas Lights	8,071	8,475
231 Play Areas	2,750	2,850
291 Wednesday Market	7,500	7,500
311 Ground Maintenance	20,213	24,158
321 Castle & Market Floodlighting	777	777
331 War Memorials	NIL	NIL
342 Bede Road Bus Shelter	50	50
354 Community Events	4,700	5,910
404 Wayfinding Units	NIL	NIL
501 Market Place Public Toilets	5,808	5,906
321 Dog Fouling	500	500
	254,799	239,405
Income		
1. Fees and charges (recreation)	15,499	14,499
2. Fees and charges (other)	8,050	8,550
3. Woodleigh Rental	NIL	Nil
4. Bank interest	2,000	2,000
5. Precept	229,250	214,356
6. LCTRS	NIL	NIL
	254,799	239,405

Band D £122.50

Band D £114.00 (-8.70%)