

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

20 JANUARY 2025

PRESENT: Councillors Ing (Town Mayor), Turnbull, Foote-Wood, Blake, Ewart, Chatterjee, Thompson & Mclean

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

Others: Teesdale Mercury.

58. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

Cllr's Drew, Bigge & Connelly submitted their apologies

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be approved.

59. 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.

60. MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made reference to his Mayoral activity and his meeting with the Witham Hall Ltd.

61. COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

18 November 2024

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

62. ATTENDANCE OF POLICE REPRESENTATIVE

Inspector Michael Summat was unable to attend this reconvened meeting. This item will be deferred to a later meeting.

63. 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 – 02 December 2024 (draft)**
- (2) Partnership Committee – 16 December 2024 (draft)**
- (3) Resources Committee – 06 January 2025 (draft)**
- (4) Town Mayor Activities**

Since the Council meeting on the 18 November 2024, the Town Mayor accompanied by Consorts, Master William Atkinson (WA) & Mrs Sue Ing (SI) has attended the following:

29th November – Christmas Lights switch on (WA)

30TH November – Clique presentation

11th December – Barnard Castle School – Drinks & Mince Pies (SI)

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Foote-Wood, attended Barnard Castle Cub Scouts Award Presentations on 8th & 9th December 2024.

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

64. UPDATES, AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

From the meetings outlined above at item 63 the following updates are noted:

(1) Services Committee meeting

No referrals.

Budgetary bids for 2025/26 were referred to Resources Committee meeting held on 6 January 2025.

(2) Partnership Committee

No referrals

Budgetary bids for 2025/26 were referred to Resources Committee meeting held on 6 January 2025.

(3) Resources Committee

Further to the meeting of the Resources Committee meeting, it was resolved that: The budget for 2025/26, and precept request be referred to full council.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

65. REPRESENTATIONS WITH EXTERNAL BODIES

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

No meetings.

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

No meetings.

(3) The Witham Hall Ltd (Cllr Ing as Town Mayor)

Received – report from Cllr Ing (Appendix B).

(4) Dawson Cottages Trust (Cllrs Ewart & McLean)

Cllr Ewart informed the meeting that the Trust were revising its policies (H&S, Safeguarding), and were actively seeking new trustees'

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

In the absence of Cllr Connelly, no report was available.

(6) Cultura Trust/Raby (Cllr Drew)

In the absence of Cllr Drew no report was available.

66. PARK RUN - DEMESNES

A request has been received to allow an official Park Run on the Demesnes.

Resolved – That approval in principle be given for the Demesnes being used for an official Park Run.

67. BARNARD CASTLE MEET

A request has been received for the Meet to use the Lower Demesnes between Friday 23rd to 27th May 2025 as the Meet showground

Resolved – That permission be approved for Barnard Castle Meet to use the Lower Demesnes between the 23rd and 27th May 2025 as their showground.

68. APPROVAL OF BUDGET 2025/26

Further to the meeting of Resources Committee on 06 January 2025 (minute 29/January/25 refers), the 2025/26 budget is recommended to the council. (Appendix A).

Resolved – (a) That the 2025/26 budget be set as detailed in Appendix A, with gross expenditure of £245,943; and
(b) That the 2025/26 precept be therefore set as detailed in Appendix A, at £209,086 – a **decrease** of 2.5% on 2024/25.

Appendix A

Cost Centre	Budget 2024/25 £	Budget 2025/26 £
101 Council Administration	14,259	12,396
102 Central Support Svcs	127,369	131,153
104 Elections	1,000	1,000
105 Chains of Office	50	50
106 Woodleigh	25,782	27,476
110 Defibrillator	150	225
201 Allotments	4,399	4027
211 Mini Golf	10,000	11,000
221 Christmas Lights	8,475	8,475
231 Play Areas	2,850	2,995
291 Wednesday Market	7,500	8,000
311 Ground Maintenance	24,158	22,660
321 Castle & Market Floodlighting	777	636
331 War Memorials	NIL	NIL
342 Bede Road Bus Shelter	50	50
354 Community Events	5,910	9,100
404 Wayfinding Units	NIL	NIL
501 Market Place Public Toilets	5,906	6,200
321 Dog Fouling	500	500
	239,405	245,943
Income		
1.Fees and charges (recreation)	14,499	15,127
2. Fees and charges (other)	8,550	8,850
3. Woodleigh Rental	NIL	9,880
4. Bank interest	2,000	3,000

5. Precept	214,356	209,086¹
6. LCTRS	NIL	NIL
	239,405	245,943

Appendix B

Witham headlines

General:

The committed to being more present, open, accessible and welcoming to everybody in Barnard Castle (and beyond). We want to be a partner within the town, and a stakeholder in the wider region. All our efforts whether in 'reach', accessibility, offer or engagement will be about our commitment to being part of the community and being active in the community. This will be demonstrated by externally funded works to the front door of the building, extending inside with improved welcoming facilities.

Our Centre Director (Amy Hughes) is committed to attending external meetings so that we understand what is going on with partners and can contribute – and we are committed to providing a representative if and when Amy is unable to attend.

Social media presence massively increased, boosting our engagement with wider and new audiences.

Audiences coming from further afield for music and comedy gigs, growing our reputation as a destination of choice in the county and beyond.

Cost of living challenges, and bad weather had a negative impact on our income during October and November, but the Barney Christmas lights, the panto and our Winter Wonderland all brought people in to enjoy a great time at the Witham and in the town during December.

Successes:

We have recruited some fabulous new volunteers including people who will support the Youth Theatre (previously Turrets).

Funding received from CDCF to continue to fund social media post (Louise) for another 6 months.

Capital funding to repairs and maintenance to the building (monies are ring fenced for capital but very welcome to keep the building safe and well) and a grant towards LED lighting to both reduce costs and to have a greener footprint.

Sponsorship funds secured from local business (£450 per month) which does go towards general running costs and is very gratefully received.

¹ This figure has been adjusted to correct an arithmetical error to ensure that the gross income equals the gross expenditure – and both are £245,943

We have some funding to run a warm spaces programme from January to March which will strengthen our community offer.

Challenges:

The Witham is heavily dependent on the brilliant support of people from the area in a variety of ways – volunteering, giving us their custom and making donations but the budget which has been set and approved by the Board contains a target of £47,000 through fundraising this year in order to avoid dipping into our depleting reserves.

We are also dependent on the support of our local partners such as the Town Council when it comes to submitting bids for the grants by which we can improve our financial position and maintain our beautiful but costly building (especially if we apply for national funding).

Arrangement with Leisure Centre have come to an end – income therefore reduced but relationship is good with great feedback having been received from users of our spaces.

Catering Manager has left, now recruiting a replacement.