

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

24 MARCH 2025

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

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

Others: Teesdale Mercury; Inspector Michael Summat, Barnard Castle Police; Stuart Jones, Barnard Castle Park Run.

69. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

Cllr Connelly submitted her apologies. No apologies were received from Cllr Bigge.

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be approved.

70. 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.

71. MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

72. COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

20 January 2025

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

73. ATTENDANCE OF POLICE REPRESENTATIVE

Inspector Summat gave members an overview on Policing in rural areas, which Barnard Castle falls into.

- Barnard Castle station currently has 3 officers and 4 PCSO's but this will increase shortly (1+1) as part of the Government commitment to increasing Neighbourhood Policing. They have a dedicated Rural Officer that deals with things such as rural, wildlife and environmental crimes.
- Durham constabulary has received £220,000 in funding from the Government under the Safer Street initiative. With that money Barnard Castle Police have purchased 3 more drones, and increased training specific to crime prevention in rural locations.
- Reference was made to the Appleby migration and the work with partners in preparation.

Cllr Thompson asked on how the public get access to crime figures.

The Police use social media to get messages out. Each station has its own Facebook page, and Durham Constabulary have one covering county wide.

Cllr Turnbull referred to her recent experience with the Police concerning drugs being secreted in an apple which her dog ingested. She felt that her concerns were not taken seriously and the Police not engaging with community.

Members generally felt that they know drugs are an issue in the town.

If intelligence on drug dealing is known this should be reported. He will look into the issue raised by Cllr Turnbull.

Cllr Ing thanks Inspector Summat for attending.

74. 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) Partnership Committee – 03 February 2025 (draft)**
- (2) Services Committee – 17 February 2025 (draft)**
- (3) Resources Committee – 10 March 2025 (draft)**
- (4) Planning Committee - 24 February 2025 (draft)**
- (4) Town Mayor Activities**

Since the Council meeting on the 20 January 2025, the Town Mayor has not attended any events.

The Deputy Mayor on 1st March attended an Environmental Issues Debating Competition for young people at Barnard Castle School.

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

75. UPDATES, AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

From the meetings outlined above at item 74 the following updates are noted:

(1) Services Committee meeting

No referrals.

(2) Partnership Committee

No referrals

(3) Resources Committee

No referrals.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

76. REPRESENTATIONS WITH EXTERNAL BODIES

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

The Clerk gave an update from the last meeting:

152 unauthorised encampments in 2024; temporary official stopovers being checked this month; Appleby is from 5 to 12 June 2025, with stopovers open 23 May to 27 June; the clean up from unauthorised encampments in 2024 was 10k

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

Reference was made to consultation on proposed changes to councillor conduct framework.

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

No meeting.

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

Fully occupied and trust financially in a better position than 3 years ago.

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

No report available in Cllr Connelly's absence.

(6) Cultura Trust/Raby (Cllr Drew)

A public event is planned in the near future to showcase the plans.

They are moving toward the stage of submitting an expression of interest for funding from the Heritage Lottery, but this will be after the elections.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

77. PARK RUN BARNARD CASTLE

Received – Report from Steven Bage on the proposal for a Barnard Castle Park Run (Appendix A).

Stuart Jones representing proposed Park Run in Barnard Castle presented to the meeting, referring to the submitted report.

The concerns over parking were addressed both in the report and by Mr Jones. The 'core' volunteers' team will monitor the location prior to the run on every occasion.

When the £4800 has been 'promised' it will only then be collected and sent to Park Run. It is hoped everything will be in place by the autumn.

The run will be called 'Park Run Demesnes'

Cllr Ing thanked Mr Jones for his presentation.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

Appendix A

Park Run proposal for Barnard Castle Town Council

Summary

- Parkrun is interested in a new weekly event, which would take place on the Demesnes, drawing up to 400 participants each week.
- The route (designed by Parkrun) will be 3 laps of the Upper Demesnes.
- A regular Parkrun event would help to improve and promote fitness and health for residents of Barnard Castle and surrounding areas, supporting the local economy through greater visitor numbers.
- Local runners would be advised to travel to Parkruns on foot. Those travelling from further afield will be instructed to avoid parking on the Lower Demesnes or adjoining streets, using public car parks if vehicle use is absolutely necessary.

- Funding is being sought from numerous public funding pots which support sport, health and community events, to cover the £4800 set up costs. The Parkrun set up costs will cover all Public Indemnity Insurance, materials and equipment, as well as course design and health & safety. All Parkrun events have defibrillators and organisers will have first aid training.
- Expected timescales for the first Parkrun will be Summer 2025 dependent on how soon funding can be secured.

Background

1. Parkrun is interested in hosting a new regular event in Barnard Castle. Parkrun Global Ltd is a UK registered charity (charity number 1175062) which delivers over 2,500 weekly 5k and 2k events in 21 countries across the world.
2. Parkrun is the biggest provider of free, regular physical activity in the world and one of the largest enablers of accessible volunteer opportunities on the planet.

Benefits of hosting a Parkrun in Barnard Castle

3. A Parkrun in Barnard Castle would create numerous benefits, some of which have been shown below.

Improving the fitness, physical and mental health of residents and visitors, manage weight and long-term health conditions.

Building social connections in the community, combatting loneliness and isolation.

Creating a safe space to encourage exercise and getting back to fitness.

Skills development from volunteering.

Supporting the local economy - local cafes, shops and restaurants would benefit from Parkrun events in Barnard Castle, which would be expected to draw between 50-400 participants and parkrun tourists every Saturday (and possibly Sunday if Junior parkrun was viewed as a popular event).

Increased visitors / Parkrun tourism.

Local interest in Parkrun

4. Barnard Castle already has a number of several active running communities (Teesdale A.C, Sole Sisters and others), and over 200 people expressed their interest in taking part on a recent post on the Barnard Castle Facebook page. It is expected that there will be considerable interest in a Parkrun in Barnard Castle, with many local residents having to travel to the Hamsterley, Darlington or Shildon Parkruns around 16 miles away.

Access and use of the Demesnes

5. Barnard Castle Town Council has provided provisional approval for use of the Demesnes on the basis that further information is provided around the proposed event. The Demesnes is the only suitable site for a Parkrun within the centre of Barnard Castle given it is public amenity land and traffic free, the latter being one of Parkrun's requirements for event courses.
6. A site survey was conducted on 7th February 2025 with representatives of Parkrun where it was confirmed that the Demesnes would be a preferred site for a Parkrun event, with some further work required to determine the exact 5K route. Presently the route suggested would be to start and finish on the Upper Demesnes, with 3 laps of the Hay meadow and adjoining field on the Upper Demesnes (see Appendix 1).

Parking

7. Parkrunners attending events held on the Demesnes would be instructed:

- To walk or run to the event if they live in Barnard Castle or Startforth,
- Use the Queen St / other public car parks in town.
- Avoid parking the Lower Demesnes, Gray Lane, Newgate, Parson's Lonnen or other adjoining streets.

8. Barnard Castle School has offered use of their car park on Sunday mornings, but Saturday mornings would not be possible due to their sports programmes. Bowes Museum has been approached with a view to allowing Parkrunners to use their parking facilities.

Other users of the Demesnes

9. Parkrun events are likely to take place from around 9-10.30am on a Saturday morning, and possibly Sunday morning if there is interest in a Junior Parkrun.

10. Other users' enjoyment of the Demesnes will be considered at all times, and the organising group will ensure that access is not impeded to walkers, dog walkers, allotment holders, and residents and visitors.

11. Parkrun events will not take place at the same time as Rugby matches, which occur in the afternoon and therefore there should not be any impact on access to the Rugby pitches.

12. The Barnard Castle Meet Committee has proposed hosting a joint Meet Fun Run / Parkrun event on the Saturday morning of the Barnard Castle Meet weekend going forward, which would be a sensible approach. It is unclear at this stage whether an event can be established in time for the 2025 Meet weekend.

Event set up / operation

13. The Parkrun set up costs will cover all Public Indemnity Insurance, materials and equipment, as well as course design and health & safety. All Parkrun events have defibrillators and organisers will have first aid training.

Funding

14. Barnard Castle Town Council has advised that its award of an £800 grant towards the £4800 set up costs required for a parkrun event, is conditional on the basis that the remaining funding is secured from other funding sources. Appendix 2 shows the list of organisations currently being approached for funding contributions. The Town Council will be updated once all of the £4800 has been obtained. All monies are payable to Parkrun directly.

Volunteers

15. Over 40 people have signed up to be regular volunteers who would undertake the "on the day" roles such as Timekeeper, Barcode Scanner, marshalling, Funnel Manager, Tail Walker. More volunteers are expected from Duke of Edinburgh volunteers / Venture Scouts etc.

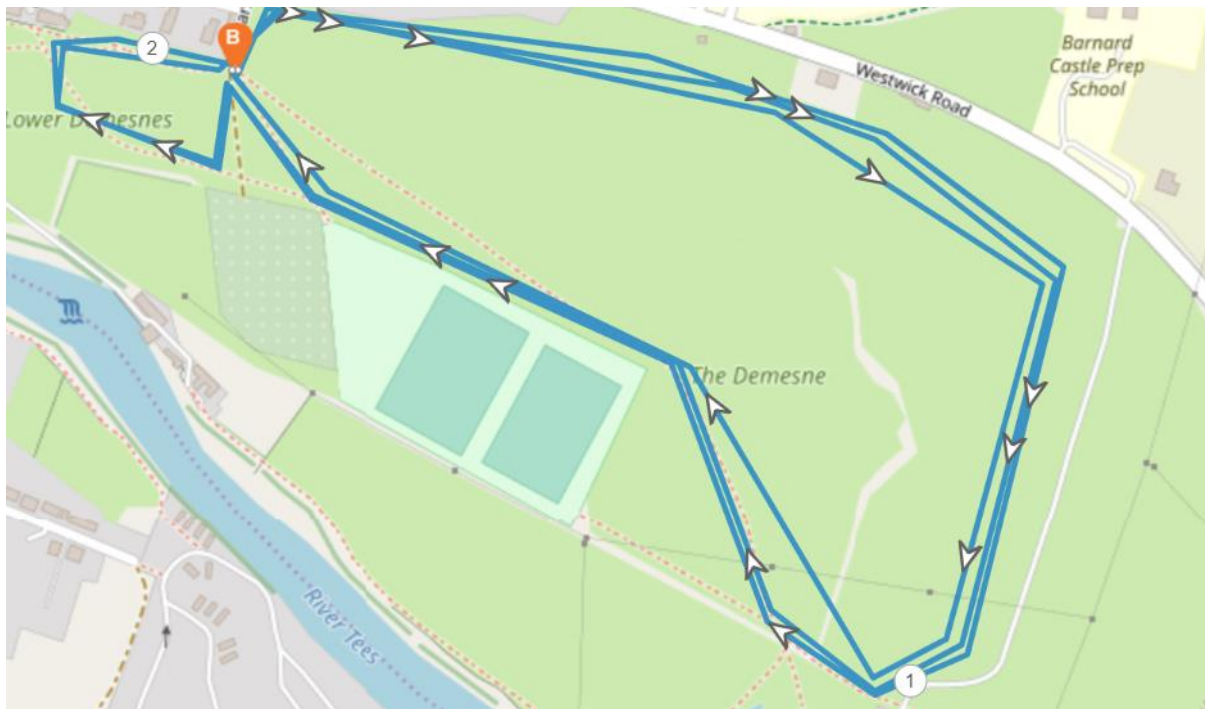
16. A "Core Group" of 6-10 volunteers has been established to set up the Parkrun event and to manage the event and develop a regular rota. The Core Group is being supported by the North East Ambassador for Parkrun and the Race Director of the Darlington Park Run who have provided invaluable advice and designed the course route.

Timescales.

17. It is expected that funding will be secured over the next 3-4 months with the first Parkrun event taking place in June or July 2025.

Steven Bage
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Appendix 1 – Proposed route (two laps - approximately 5km)



Appendix 2 – List of organisations being approached for funding:

- Durham County Council (Teesdale Action Partnership, Awards for All and Councillor's Ward Budgets)
- The Clique
- Morrisons Foundation
- Barnard Castle GP Surgery
- Barnard Castle Rotary
- Teesdale & District Lions Club
- GSK
- Lidl
- Newcastle Building Society
- Darlington Building Society
- Barnard Castle Town Council