



Barnard Castle Town Council

**PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 7 JULY 2025 – 6:00pm
DAWSON ROOM, WOODLEIGH¹**

AGENDA

- 1. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES**
- 2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR & VICE-CHAIR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2025-26**
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 4. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – 3 FEBRUARY 2025 – MINUTES**
- 5. THE BOWES MUSEUM**
- 6. THE WITHAM UPDATE**
- 7. THE TCR HUB UPDATE**
- 8. BARNARD CASTLE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS (BCCL)**
- 9. BARNARD CASTLE MEET**
- 10. 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEESDALE AVIATION DAY**
- 11. 200TH ANNIVERSARY STOCKTON & DARLINGTON RAILWAY**

¹ Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, recording of the meeting by any person is permitted. Those filming or otherwise recording the meeting should respect the rights of other members of the public attending and should not disrupt the meeting.

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

07 JULY 2025

DAWSON ROOM, WOODLEIGH 6:00 P.M.

DETAILED AGENDA

1. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR & VICE-CHAIR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2025-26

Recommendation – That a Chair & Vice-Chair of the Partnership Committee be elected for the municipal year 2025-26

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

in accordance with this Council's adopted Constitution (Members' Code of Conduct) (Minute 10/May/19 refers), Members will be asked whether they have 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 are reminded that a declaration can be given later in the meeting if a need arises during discussion.

4. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – 3 FEBRUARY 2025 – MINUTES (ENCLOSED)

Recommendation – That the minutes be approved as an accurate record.

5. THE BOWES MUSEUM UPDATE

A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

Recommendation – That the information is received and noted.

6. THE WITHAM UPDATE.

A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

Recommendation – That the information is received and noted.

7. THE TCR HUB UPDATE

A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

Recommendation – That the information is received and noted.

8. BARNARD CASTLE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS (BCCL)

Fundraising by BCCL

- Italian Night at Capri – attended by just over 80 people. Thanks go to Capri Restaurant for hosting, Andrew Nicholson for the quiz and for compering, all those who kindly donated raffle prizes and to everyone that attended.
- Plans are in process for other fundraising events including another quiz night, wine and cheese evening and of course Bonfire Night in November.

2025 Display

- Planning well underway with a committed budget the Committee have agreed to spend this calendar year on improvements for both the 2025 and future displays.
- The Christmas lights have all passed their annual safety test with only a handful of failures and repairs needed.
- New lights have already been ordered to expand the display for 2025.
- Any extensions to the display rely upon the installation of safe and compliant electricity supplies. For example, we are investigating extending the display further up Galgate, but this will need new and potentially costly supplies via Northern Powergrid.

Barnard Castle Town Council (BCTC) and Barnard Castle Christmas Lights Committee (BCCL)

- BCCL closely with BCTC to continue improving and investing in the annual display for the benefit of the town.
- It goes without saying that we are grateful to everyone that supports us, and the Christmas lights would not exist without this help and the generous financial donations given.

Recommendation – That the information is received and noted.

9. THE MEET

A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

Recommendation – That the information is received and noted.

10. 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEESDALE AVIATION DAY

A verbal update will be given at the meeting by the Clerk

11. 200TH ANNIVERSARY STOCKTON & DARLINGTON RAILWAY

Any update will be supplied by Cllr Foote-Wood at the meeting.

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

03 FEBRUARY 2025

PRESENT: Councillors Foote-Wood, Turnbull, Thompson, Ewart, & Connelly, & Vicky Sturrs (Bowes), Amy Hughes (Witham), Sarah Gent (TCR Hub), Colin Clasper (Meet)

Officers: Mr M. Clark (Town Clerk).

35. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted by Cllr's Bigge, Chatterjee, & Jonathan Wallis (BCCL).
Cllr Ing (ex officio)

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be approved.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

in accordance with this Council's adopted Constitution (Members' Code of Conduct) (Minute 10/May/19 refers), Members will be asked whether they have 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 are reminded that a declaration can be given later in the meeting if a need arises during discussion.

37. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – 16 DECEMBER 2024 – MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes be approved as an accurate record.

38. THE BOWES MUSEUM UPDATE

General

This quarter, the work from the previous two years in 'Getting the basics right and building strong foundations' demonstrates its value with consistently high performance in our visitor numbers and income, along with improved galleries, displays, and staff spaces.

Our learning and volunteer programmes are growing in scale, reach, and impact, and new projects are emerging with funding secured. Our financial position is more stable, and our forward plans are developing.

Autumn/winter continued this year's trend, with budget-beating numbers across our visitor numbers and income significantly higher than the previous two years. Much can be attributed to the Kith and Kinship Exhibition. Still, the overall improvements in our offer, programmes, and communications are resulting in more visitors, new members, repeat visits, increased dwell time, and increased secondary spending. Exceptional 'Average Transaction Values' in our shop and café evidence that people enjoy our offer.

Our ACE National Portfolio activities are going well, and (like all NPOs, we are awaiting a decision for the 2026-27 extension year.

We've published and shared our latest Annual Review and Impact Report with stakeholders. Detailing the 2023-24 year, it also begins to outline our impact data sharing elements, such as the economic return of our children and young people and volunteer programmes. We'll build this data through 2024-25.

Projects and Programmes

Since opening on 19 July 2024, Kith & Kinship: Norman Cornish and L.S Lowry has been particularly popular, contributing to uplifts in footfall and garnering positive comments and press coverage. This quarter, visitors have said:

"An excellent exhibition - the very best I've seen in decades. So much you've got right - excellent artwork descriptions with examples which add untold value to understanding and reflection."

"Absolutely wonderful exhibition - feeling very nostalgic - living in Spennymoor now to seeing what it was like. Lowry - brought back childhood memories which I am now sharing with my children. My uncle would sing matchstick men + matchstick cats and dogs when I was very young."

In post-visit surveys, 80% of visitors described Kith & Kinship as a highlight. **The show closed on 19 January.**

A co-production project funded by the John Horseman Trust and working with Artist Jonah York and learners from HMP Deerbolt developed an accompanying zine and soundscape for the Kith and Kinship exhibition and launched in October half term. Titled 'Unheard Voices', it focused on ideas of community and kinship within the work of Cornish and Lowry.

A celebration event at HMP Deerbolt for learners was a particular source of pride for participants. 32 learners took part, with a core 16 attending all 10 sessions. Every participant shared how much they enjoyed the programme and their first introduction to arts and culture. 100% said that because of this programme, they feel more motivated to try new things in the future.

Durham Creative Community Fellows (DCCF) launched on 1 October. DCCF is a unique initiative for artists, community organisers, administrators, and entrepreneurs to drive positive change in County Durham through arts and culture projects. Starting in February 2025, this free-to-participate-in nine-month programme will support learning life-changing skills in an online and in-person curriculum while forming a community of practice to connect, collaborate and hold each other accountable.

Durham Creative Community Fellows is part of Into the Light, a transformative three-year initiative to drive long-lasting growth in County Durham through cultivating talent, widening access to creative education, enhancing skills, and breaking down barriers in the creative industries.

As part of County Durham's Into the Light programme supported by ACE, TBM is the lead partner for DCCF and will deliver the programme in partnership with US-based NAS and Derby Museums.

Thirty people from County Durham applied for a place on the programme, eighteen have been selected.

Be You at the Bowes continued to run. The museum's first LGBTQIA+ working group, this collective of individuals comes together to discuss identity, gender, and representations of the body. BYatB recovers untold stories related to individual lived experiences to reveal the diversity of sexuality and gender present in the Bowes Museum's collection.

Across six sessions, 22 people met to discuss, shape and share, working towards a trail exploring interpretations of museum objects to be released with LGBT History Month in February. The group have also worked with a team of staff and community members from Northern Heartlands as well as wider town partnerships. Additionally, queer artist Lady Kitt led an LGBTQIA+ workshop for 12 participants from the community and cultural sector.

The TBM team continues working with wider community stakeholders including Curious Arts to develop a regionally-linked LGBTQIA+ offer and on 22 February will host Curious Histories 11:00 – 14:00. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/curious-histories-the-bowes-museum-tickets-1151903557549>

Upcoming Exhibitions

This year will launch '*From Joséphine: Trendsetters and Trailblazers*'. A landmark exhibition honouring the pioneering spirit and 200th anniversary of museum co-founder, Joséphine Bowes. This visually stunning exhibition showcases three centuries of eclectic art and creativity including a curated selection of works from The Bowes Museum's collection and major loans from across the UK and Europe. Expect to see an extraordinary mix of paintings, sculptures, textiles and ceramics from world-renowned artists including Pablo Picasso and Sir Grayson Perry CBE, rising contemporaries such as Joy Labinjo and Lucy Waters, and a special commission by Phoebe Cummings. The exhibition offers a glimpse into how Joséphine's remarkable understanding of artistic trends and cross-genre approach to collecting might have shaped the collection today.

This will be followed closely by '*Joséphine: A Woman of Taste and Fashion*' in our Fashion and Textile Gallery and '*Pippa Hale: Pet Project*', a brand-new play-led commission for families.

We're delighted to be hosting Nathan Coley's '*You Create What You Will*' 7-metre-tall installation in the parkland and joining in the celebrations for the Stockton and Darlington bicentenary with '*Dressed for Departure: Fashion in the Age of Rail*'.

Dates for your Diary

- *Pitman* by Eliot Smith Dance 6 February
<https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/pitman-by-eliot-smith-dance/>
- *From Josephine* Opens 8 February
<https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/from-josephine-bowes/>
<https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/media-centre/>
- Family Day 15 February (FREE ENTRY)
<https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/family-open-day-2025/>
- Nerina Pallot: Live at The Bowes 21 & 22 March
<https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/nerina-pallot-live-at-the-bowes-museum/>
- National Lottery Open Week Fri 21 & Sat 22 March
- Pippa Hale: Pet Project Preview 25 July
<https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/pippa-hale-pet-project/>
- Heritage Open Day 13 September (FREE ENTRY)
- Winter Market 12th-14th December

Members agreed that should the Bowes require a letter of support for funding bids it would provide one.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

39. THE WITHAM UPDATE

The Witham has seen a steady incline in footfall moving through January seeing approximately 1500 cafe visitors throughout. We have had 5 shows during the course of Jan due to low ticket sales after Christmas being the norm. February sees a bustling programme once more with 17 shows ranging from comedy, screenings, live theatre, tributes and kids shows. We have our daily classes such as Thai Chi, best foot forward, Witham youth Theatre, Barney Wellbeings, Yoga and Art classes. We have Welcome Spaces running each Monday for the next 9 weeks that offers free tea, coffee, soup and a roll to anyone that needs a warm space to socialise.

We have a new spiritual course arriving in March, Alpha course with the Influence Church and many new art classes.

Room Hire and Venue Activity

Christmas saw for a very busy couple of weeks, the panto was a huge success with a large increase in groups and schools, some of which have already secured their places for next year. This seen an approx. £2500 more in income from the panto alone from last year in which we had a £7500 increase from 2022.

We already have over 100 shows secured for next year, in our next programming meeting we are discussing the balance of genres and the reality of being able to run a higher amount of shows, due to staffing costs and staff strain – volunteer numbers and building works in the building we have to consider the impact on the team and reputation, therefore going to assess how we will move forward. Feedback has been that people would like to see more theatre – we actually have a large number of theatre that people don't attend so we have targeted those people to advise them it is happening they just need to follow us on socials and sign up to the newsletter – this was positively received.

We've seen the public programme run £45k approximately ahead of budget (final year end figs to be confirmed) which was a great success- but with cost increases with product and wages the bottom line is not as a healthy- still however we see progression in reducing the deficit.

Staffing Updates

I am delighted to advise we now have a café supervisor who has accepted the role on a 24 hours contract with the view of increasing hours when the new bar opens.

Volunteer Engagement

We are beginning a volunteer recruitment drive, as shows and room hire increase we are struggling with getting events covered- along with The Rotary we have meetings set up with local schools to discuss 6th formers volunteering to socialise, increase skills to help with curriculum and to see a show for free.

Maintenance and Operations

Works on the roof have been started by Glaspar Tunstall which will stop water ingress.

Velux will refurbish all roof windows in Feb to stop further leaks.

We now have planning permission to start our ACE capital works and will begin applying for building regs for the new front door, rear storage and solar panels. We can proceed immediately with LED lighting upgrades, digital advertising boards, garden pergola and new tech equipment.

We have also received funds in to start the new servery- currently our what was once a shop is being refurbished into the new gallery and VIP/box office. This will allow is to run as usual while the servery is being complete- we expect this to begin in March after design is finalised. We hope the new servery will be up and running by June.

We have introduced an optional building Levy which has been very successful so far, feedback has been very positive and we are already seeing people choose to pay this with tickets.

Networking and projects in process

I chaired the Future Art's networking meeting in which we discussed the issue of transport and combined authorities having an impact on us as centres. I have arranged a couple of visits to learn more on how they run. Future Arts are writing to the North East Mayor to discuss how as a group we can try to tackle the issue with transport to our venues. We aim to apply for a joint bid to tackle issue in the area temporarily.

Gallery and Community Engagement

We have an exhibition in the garden and café at present which is call Seek not Hide – it is an interactive installation and art trail by Disabled sculptor and Drag King Lady Kitt, working with YMCA, Teesdale's Cockfield Youth Club. The trail has been commissioned by Northern Heartlands as part of Pride in Teesdale, to help people explore how they can feel welcome, included and proud of who they are and where they live. What do you wish people understood about you without you having to explain? How can we be proud of things about us which are invisible, hidden or hard to see? This is part of Pride in Teesdale.

Finance and bids

We have begun reaching out to potential sponsors and donors and put a piece in The Mercury requesting support for particular items. Specifically The Witham Youth Theatre bursary places.

We have applied to Arts Council for a grant to help support The Youth Theatre and an additional smaller bid to Awards for all.

We have a bid currently in with The Paul Hamlyn Foundation to cover core costs – however this is a very unlikely acceptance.

Currently working on NHLF bid to increase heritage and skills.

Cllr Turnbull expressed her thanks to the Witham for their support around the dog fouling project.

Resolved – That the update be received, and the information noted.

40. THE TCR HUB UPDATE

Overall

TCR Hub continues to be very busy on a weekly basis with over 800 people visiting the building for a variety of activities (see attached timetable for this term) and a wealth of both community support and commercial projects running for all ages from young people, families, older people, those vulnerable and veterans.

Youth Update

We continue to deliver in-school sessions for year 7s that are struggling with the transition from primary to secondary school, these are going well.

The Social Action group is working towards an art exhibition at the Hub. They have visited Grassholme Observatory recently which they enjoyed. This was a trip provided through the Pride in Teesdale initiative.

We have started **Trashion Show** preparation, the show will be on **7th March** - hope to see you all there. We are working with Butterwick Hospice to create recycled garments. We have a new Podcast Club where the young people create a podcast for the TCR website once a half term, covering topics that they have chosen and feel passionate about.

Youth Open Mic will be on 14th Feb, lots of YP excited about this. Just Cook are the official food vendors for the Trashion Show - they are learning about catering a big event, how to cost their food and how to serve a large number of people.

Duke of Edinburgh - TCR are a licenced provider of the DofE Award Scheme. We have been delivering all levels of the award since 2010. We have a small team of dedicated volunteers and self-employed instructors who support the project.

The Award Scheme is open to young people aged 14 to 25 years. We tend to enrol from midway through Year 9. We support young people from all local Schools and Colleges and those who are homeschooled too. We aim to enable as many young people as possible to access the Award but at times may have a waiting list due to delivery constraints. Now is the time for young people to sign up so contact info@tcrhub.co.uk for more information.

Family Activities

Thanks to funding from TAAP and North Star Housing, TCR are delivering three family social clubs every week, two at the Hub and one on a Wednesday at the Randolph Centre in Evenwood. Tuesday and Wednesdays offer open weekly sessions for anyone to book in with children aged between 3 - 10 years. Thursday offers children with additional needs and their families a place to go to access advice and support. Both Wednesday and Thursday groups have split into fortnightly sessions now to increase capacity due to demand.

February half term - **Book Fest 22 - 28th February**, funded by Durham County Council, offer families the chance to enjoy a range of creative, outdoor and indoor sessions from embossed bookmarks and a treasure hunt to recording your own stories to share across generations and sensory play.

Food Provision

Between 23rd December and 4th January we sent out care packages of food and essential toiletries to **83 households**.

These included Christmas care packages which went to 50 households, out which had food to make Christmas dinner, festive treats, toiletry gift sets and in some hot water bottles.

Our weekly pantry sessions are now seeing up to 40 households a week.-People accessing food have been referred to further support, in the past few months this has included: Durham Carers, Citizens Advice, Council housing support, NHS, Social Prescribing Team, UTASS. We have also referred people into groups at TCR Hub including: Family Social Club, Community Lunch, Tea & Tots, TCR Coffee & Craft Group

Community Lunch which is designed for elderly & isolated participants to come and share a weekly meal has grown. At present we at least 20 people a week joining us.

We are looking to run a soup making session in half term for families to access, learning how to turn our waste veg into tasty meals and sharing lunch together.

Volunteering

Working with a team of over one hundred volunteers, TCR are currently introducing Better Impact to manage communications and operations with our amazing volunteer team. It's a positive step forwards to enable our volunteers from accessing opportunities and training as well as supporting staff in gaining the help they need.

Following helpful sessions with the County Durham Volunteer Coordinators Forum, TCR have introduced ESV days (Employer Support Volunteer Days) on a monthly basis for employers to book in teams of people to do 'big jobs' but also offer companies the chance to transparent community support opportunities.

Events

New Writing North bought **The Voyage Home to TCR** on Friday 31st January, as part of an Arts Council funded project.

TCR are delighted to be participating in the Meet Celebrations again and looking forward to offering people the chance to take part in an inclusive and enthusiastic way!

Looking forward to welcoming The Castle Player's next Production, **Shakespeare in Love** to the Hub as part of their tour on **Friday 4th July**.

Resolved – That the update be received, and the information noted.

41. BARNARD CASTLE CHRISTMAS LIGHT (BCCL)

2024 Display

- General feedback was that the display was extremely well received with excellent feedback given.
- Most of the display has now been dismantled and will be tested by Christmas Plus.

Fundraising by BCCL

- February/March – Fundraising event at a restaurant in the town – date TBC.
- Plans are in the process for other fundraising events including a race night, wine and cheese evening and of course Bonfire Night in November.

2025 Display

- Planning well underway with a committed budget the Committee have agreed to spend this calendar year on improvements for both the 2025 and future displays.
- Ideas and suggestions for improvements/additions are always welcome.

Barnard Castle Town Council (BCTC) and Barnard Castle Christmas Lights Committee (BCCL)

- BCCL closely with BCTC to continue improving and investing in the annual display for the benefit of the town.
- It goes without saying that we are grateful to everyone that supports us, and the Christmas lights would not exist without this help and the generous financial donations given.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

42. BARNARD CASTLE MEET

Colin Clasper on behalf of the Meet informed the meeting that preparations for 2025 are ongoing.

Last week the Meet made donations to the three schools and the Castle Players as a thank you for taking part every year.

Barnard Castle School have made an approach to take part this year. This would be the first time they have become involved.

Articles will be going in the Teesdale Mercury over the next few weeks highlighting plans and seeking donations.

The Infinity Choir have been approached to perform over the weekend, as well a youth bands.

The choir will be requesting, through the Meet, to also perform in the Market Cross (Butter Market). This will be dependant on a power supply being available.

Cllr Turnbull thanked the Meet Committee for offering to support the anti-dog fouling project.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

43. 200th ANNIVERSARY STOCKTON & DARLINGTON RAILWAY

Cllr Foote-Wood informed the meeting that the group had obtained nearly £3,000 in funding toward local events for the anniversary; this includes a £500 donation from the Glaxo staff charity fund and support from two of our County Councillors Neighbourhood Funding.

It is hoped to find a space to host a permanent exhibition of the artefacts donated/collected to mark the anniversary.

Next meeting of the group is on the 15th February.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

44. GRANT APPLICATIONS UNDER FINANCIAL DONATIONS POLICY

Received – Applications have been received from the Teesdale Archery Club and Park Run Barnard Castle under the Financial Donation Policy 2024-25.

Both grant applications were discussed, and examined at length by members.

Cllr Turnbull declared an interest in the Park Run application and took no part in the decision making.

Teesdale Archery Club

Resolved – That £300 be awarded on the proviso that membership details (numbers) are supplied along with details of other funding applied for, and how the group are intending to fund itself going forward.

Park Run Barnard Castle

Resolved – (a) That £800 be awarded in principle towards the establishment of Park Run Barnard Castle; (b) that the grant would not be paid until further information has been received confirming additional funding has been obtained that meet the requirements for an official Park Run; and (c) that should the process of establishing the Park Run go beyond the end of this financial year, the grant award would be accrued into 2025/26.