

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

07 JULY 2025

PRESENT: Councillors Kirkbride, Chatterjee, Turnbull, Ewart & Foote-Wood, & Sarah Gent (TCR Hub), Jonathan Wallis (BCCL), & Martyn Maughan (Meet)

Officers: Mr M. Clark (Town Clerk).

1. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

Cllr's Ing (ex officio) & Nilsson submitted their apologies. No apologies were received from representatives of the Bowes Museum and Witham.

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be approved.

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

Cllr Chatterjee was nominated for the position of Chair. Cllr Kirkbride was nominated for the position of Vice Chair.

Resolved – That Cllr Chatterjee be Chair of the Partnership Committee for the municipal year 2025/26 & Cllr Kirkbride as Vice Chair.

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 – 03 FEBRUARY 2025 – MINUTES

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

5. THE BOWES MUSEUM UPDATE

As no representative present from the Bowes Museum, no update was available.

6. THE WITHAM UPDATE

As no representative present from the Witham, no update was available.

7. THE TCR HUB UPDATE

Overall

TCR Hub are in the midst of our summer season so have a lot of school and group bookings for residentials and outdoor activities. Come down and you'll see young people, children and adults in canoes on the lake, on the high ropes course, enjoying archery and learning fire lighting skills. TCR has lots of busy weekends over the coming months with four weddings, lots of private hires for parties and accommodation bookings through booking.com and Air BnB.

Our CEO Rachel Elliott (nee Tweddle) has now moved on to pursue her own not for profit businesses, which include her Come Hill or High Water walking days and Marshall's community café which is based at 46 Galgate. She's running these alongside her new husband Jonny and a number of other local people.

Rachel wanted to take this opportunity to thank counsellors for their support in her 12 year tenure at the Hub. There have been a number of very successful events over the years

and counsellors have always been supportive and positive of TCR and the services that we deliver at the Hub. Rachel hopes to see counsellors in the new café and hope that they will continue to support the Hub Whilst interim Operational Managers Sarah and Jonny look after the charity for the next 12 months. Rachel will still be supporting the charity by managing funding applications and working with trustees as well as continuing to support some of the wider community events at TCR collaborate on.

TCR are offering a wide range of activities over the summer holiday for youth and families alike from cookery workshops for teens and families, a Llama day on 1st August, Leon's Exotic pets, awesome illustrator and author Liz Million, Creative workshops offering tie dye, make your own slime, printmaking and more!

Youth Update

Stronger Mental Health Support

Youth mental health work is now more joined-up and responsive. Outreach and in-house support have both expanded including School-Based support as the team run regular small-group sessions in local schools for neurodiverse students.

TCR Youth work focuses on mental health themes like anxiety, self-esteem, and emotional awareness. Includes creative, practical activities that offer a break from classroom pressures. Teachers report students return more settled and focused.

In-House Counselling at the Hub

Weekly funded counselling sessions provided consistently for two years. Young people feel safe to open up — some describe it as life-changing. Therapy in a familiar, youth-led space has reduced stigma and increased engagement.

Creative, Youth-Led Wellbeing Activities at TCR

Trashion Club – Repurposing clothes to explore identity and creativity; ran their own fashion show.

Music Space – Writing and producing music as emotional expression; peer mentoring emerging.

Just Cook – Shared cooking and meals offer a relaxed, supportive check-in space.

Social Action – Young people design and lead projects like care packages for the community.

Safe Group – Inclusive space for LGBTQ+ youth and those feeling excluded elsewhere; already deeply valued.

Impact on Young People

Increased confidence, stronger relationships, and greater emotional resilience. For example, one young person who began quietly observing now helps lead youth leadership work.

Duke of Edinburgh - TCR continues to provide the DofE Award Scheme with the last few expeditions of the year over the next few weeks. This year has seen a bumper crop of participants across Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards with nearly 70 young people completing training, expeditions, volunteering and skills building. It's a brilliant scheme supported by volunteers and trained Mountain Leaders Jonny Elliott and Rachel Tomlinson Elliott.

Family Activities

- **Family Social Plus** - SENDIAS are funding a continuation of Family Social Plus from September 2025 - July 2026 at TCR Hub. This important club gives children with additional needs and their families a place to go to access advice and support. It's become a lifeline to families who are struggling day-to-day and also offers invaluable advice and support on a weekly basis to help children have fun, feel like they are part of an inclusive and warm community, and help adults and kids access the support they need.
- Thanks to funding from TAAP and North Star Housing, TCR have delivered three family social clubs every week, two at the Hub and one on a Wednesday at the Randolph Centre in Evenwood where we have helped create a community garden with plants grown by local families.
- **Tea and tots** which is a parent and child group held on Wednesdays 12pm until 2.30pm. The group is well attended, and children can explore a wide variety of toys and crafts parents can join in with play and meet new people whilst enjoying a drink and homemade cakes.
- Toy library launched in December with funding support for children from birth up to 10 years old. We have toys and games to suit different ages and abilities including items that are great for children with additional needs. Parents can either visit the library on a Friday with an appointment or email terri@tcrhub.co.uk for an online catalogue. This has been a great help for many families who cannot afford to buy brand new items. Great feedback from parents who are very happy to have access to this community service.

Food Provision

Due to a review of our services, we no longer open our Food Pantry any longer on Mondays and Saturdays as was. Those in need of food support are invited to drop into TCR Hub on Mondays between 10am-12 noon, for our 'Food Support Coffee Mornings'. Aimed at people struggling with the cost of living, these offer a warm welcome with tea/coffee & biscuits and our Food Provision Coordinator Katie as well as a trained team of volunteer's signpost to other support services. 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 Creative Coffee morning on Tuesdays.

Community Lunch which originated as a funded project at TCR, now runs with a contribution from the participants to help ensure it is sustainable. This has not impacted on the numbers who attend with 16 coming last week to enjoy our Community Cook Louisa's tasty two course meal, with volunteer drivers enabling people to attend.

We are seeking more volunteer drivers to support projects like this - please spread the word as our drivers help so many enjoy a variety of activities who would struggle to attend otherwise so it's a very gratifying role. If anyone is interested, please contact [Jonny Elliott](mailto:jonny@tcrhub.co.uk) at jonny@tcrhub.co.uk

Volunteering

Our team of nearly one hundred volunteers are now on Better Impact, a really useful system to support both volunteers and staff in the smooth running of TCR support. It helps with both communications and operations with our amazing team and means we can, at the click of a button, report on volunteer hours, projects and also schedule in volunteer opportunities for people to access different things when they come to us.

TCR ESV days (Employer Support Volunteer Days) run 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

With over 25 in the parade group, TCR were proud to be part of the wonderful Barney Meet again this year, offering those individuals a chance to join in who might otherwise not have. We also offered children and families a warm welcome in the rainbow tepees down on the Demesnes on Sunday and Monday, as well as supporting tech and music through Sound Technician Tom Whittaker.

TCR hosted the GSK Family Festival weekend for over 500 people on 7th and 8th June 2025 with live music on the stage outside, outdoor activities, crafts, and food vendors onsite. Feedback was very positive, and we look forward to welcoming GSK again for future events later this year.

TCR are looking forward to welcoming The Castle Players this Friday for their outdoor production of *Shakespeare in Love* on Friday 4th July 2025.

Working in partnership with Nobia, we are bringing monthly evenings of live music and a delicious two course meal starting on 8th August and 5th September 2025.

Members extended their thanks, and good wishes to Rachel Tweddle (Elliot) for the work she has done in the 12 years working in the TCR Hub.

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

8. BARNARD CASTLE CHRISTMAS LIGHT (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.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

9. BARNARD CASTLE MEET

- The 140th Meet this year was seen as a success
- 90 volunteers over the weekend
- This year they added a youth band and local choir on the Saturday.
- On the Sunday we had children's sports and the Addition of a magician on the Monday
- Financially it was seen as a success with only a loss of £2,000. The whole event costs around £31,000 to put on.
- For 2025 replacement bunting is required with a cost of £850. A fund raising event is taking place on the 27th September at Barnard Castle Cricket Club – History of the Meet with pie and pea supper and quiz.
- 7 committee members, reduced from 8
- The committee will look at assistance for applying for grant funding more professionally.

A question was raised regarding the fair and its location reducing parking in the town.
The Meet are not involved in the fair or its location.

Members congratulated the Meet committee for all the work it does to bring the event together each year.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

10. 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF TEESDALE AVIATION DAY

The Clerk gave a run down of how the anniversary event on Saturday 20th September is planned at present.

The Lord Lieutenants office have advised that the event is to be treated as if it were a royal event.

1000 - Road Closure Between Baliol Street and slip road past the memorial garden

- Cadets assemble at Baliol Street end of Galgate Green, Barnard Castle
- Standard Bearers Briefing
- Cadets to form up under instruction of Sgt Allan Waring
- Standard Bearers/ Speakers take position

Parade and Service Commencement

1030 - VIPS Arrive - RAF Cadet Wing Band to provide music

1045 - Lord Lieutenant Arrives met by Lord Lieutenants Cadet and Mr Galley (Lord Lt car to park at town side of Memorial Gardens in entry lane and can turn around for exit)

- 1050 - Lord Lieutenant Inspects front rank of No.1 Flight then meets VIPS.
- 1100 - Service Begins - opening remarks from Mrs Claire Earl, Stories by RAF Cadets, Service from BC Chaplin, Air Commodore Sansom speech, Wreath Laying and last Post
- 1150 - HMP Deerbolt Governor (Or Rep) speech, Lord Lt Speech and unveiling of Plaque by Lord Lt Dame Sue Snowden
- 1200 - Service Ends, Inspection of Cadets and Band
- 1200 - Road Closure ends**
- 1220 - Lord Lieutenant Leaves the memorial Gardens with Mr and Mrs Galley

Lunch and Display

- 1230 - VIPS and invited guests make their way to Barnard Castle Town Council, Woodleigh, Flatts Road, Barnard Castle DL12 8AA for Lunch and refreshments - *Barnard Castle Band playing music*
- 1330 - Lord Lieutenant presents gifts to RAF Cadet Speakers.
- 1345 - VIPs Inspect the displays and Barnard Castle Band
- 1600 - Display closes to the public

This is a draft timetable and is subject to change.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

11. 200th ANNIVERSARY STOCKTON & DARLINGTON RAILWAY

We have been busy making final preparations for local events as part of the celebrations to mark the 200th anniversary of the founding of the world's first passenger steam railway, the Stockton & Darlington Railway, in 1825. Later, the S&DR expanded to include four railways centred on Barnard Castle. For 100 years the railways played an important role in the economic and social life of the area. Our group was formed "to preserve and promote the history of the Teesdale Railways".

EXHIBITION: our main focus has been to organise a major exhibition of local railway history in the Witham's ground floor gallery, August 22nd to September 6th inclusive. This is to avoid clashing with the main celebrations around the original S&D line leading up to Friday September 27th, the founding anniversary date. All town council members are cordially invited to attend our opening ceremony at 10 am at the Witham on Friday August 22nd.

PUBLICATIONS: we will have a number of printed publications available at the exhibition, both free and for sale.

RAILWAY BENCHES: there are eight original railway benches from Barnard Castle station in Harmire road and elsewhere. We would like permission to place a small plaque on each to mark the anniversary, wording to be agreed.

RAILWAY WALKS: Guided walks in and around Barnard Castle to follow original tracks and view remaining buildings and other structures are already under way. These will continue

into September. We have produced a free, eight-page A5 booklet to illustrate the walks, designed by Jonathan Ratcliffe who is leading the walks.

BARNEY MEET FLOAT: in line with the theme of this year's Meet, "transport", our group took part in the Meet parade with a replica vintage locomotive. Designed by Catherine Yates and followed by "George Stephenson", we had an enthusiastic reception along with all the other participants in the parade.

LONGER TERM AIMS: we hope to find a suitable place where the public can view our collection of railway memorabilia, not a fully-fledged museum but somewhere open to the public.

GSK (formerly GLAXO). The railways were an important factor in bringing Glaxo to Barnard Castle at the end of WW2. Since then, the company has been a major employer and crucial to the economy of the area. Also, when our local railways were all closed in the 1960s, Glaxo took over a good deal of redundant railway land to expand their plant. Eighteen months ago, our group secretary Jane Hackworth-Young and I met with GSK to discuss this year's celebrations. The local GSK staff could not have been more helpful and supportive. It is a happy coincidence that this year (2025) is the 80th anniversary of Glaxo opening its original plant. It was agreed that we would be given full use of the Crossing-keeper's Cottage on Harmire Road (owned by GSK, at present unused) during our exhibition. Later it was agreed we could place an original railway signal pole next to the cottage as a permanent memorial to our railway history.

Earlier this year, we received a brief note to say that GSK had decided to withdraw from these agreements, but without giving any explanation. Since then, we have tried in vain to arrange a meeting with GSK either here or at their headquarters in London. It was only last week that we were told the reason for GSK's refusal by email in confidence but were still denied a meeting. Their decision is final, so we must accept the situation with regret.

Both our group and the Friends of the S&DR are concerned about the future of the Crossing-keeper's cottage, an authentic and largely unchanged building from the early days of the railways. Niall Hammond, chairman of the Friends, has now asked GSK if they would consider selling the cottage to the Friends of the S&DR who would maintain and preserve it.

Cllr Foote-Wood distributed copies of the Barnard Castle Circular Walk to members. Colour copies will be printed and made available.

Resolved – (a) That the information be received and noted; and (b) That in principal approval be given to place small plaques on the old railway benches.