

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL
17 NOVEMBER 2025**

DAWSON ROOM, WOODLEIGH

6:00 P.M.

DETAILED AGENDA

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD - 6.00pm to 6.15pm

43. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

Recommendation – That the submitted apologies be approved.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 10/May/19 refers), Members will be asked whether they have any personal, pecuniary, 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.

45. MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

46. COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES (ENCLOSED)

(1) 15 September 2025

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

47. 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 are as follows:

(1) Services Committee – 06 October 2025 – Draft minutes

(2) Partnership Committee – 27 October 2025 – Draft minutes

(3) Resources Committee – 03 November 2025 - Draft Minutes

(4) Town Mayor Activities

Since the Council meeting on the 15 September 2025, the Town Mayor accompanied by Consort, David Walker, has attended the following:

20th September 30th Anniversary Teesdale Aviation Day

11th October Inaugural Demesnes Park Run

22nd October Barnard Castle Bowls Club (David Walker)

7th November Deerbolt Remembrance Service

7th November Barnard Castle Firework display

Cllr Chatterjee, as Deputy Mayor attended the Remembrance Service and Parade on 9th November

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

48. UPDATES AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

From the meetings outlined above at item 47 the following updates are noted:

No referral to full council from committees.

49. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

- (1) **Teesdale Residents' and Travellers' Forum - (Clerk & Stenson)**
- (2) **Larger Local Councils Forum – (Clerk & Cllr Foote-Wood)**
- (3) **The Witham Hall Ltd (Cllr Ing as Town Mayor)**
- (4) **Dawson Cottages Trust (Cllrs Ewart)**
- (5) **St Mary's Barnard Castle Hall Association (vacant)**
- (6) **Cultura Trust/Raby (Cllr Turnbull)**

50. WEST WARD VACANCY

Submitted - a report covering the process for co-option and details of the applications received.

51. NOTICE OF MOTION

Cllr's Rowell & Colledge have submitted the following written motion in the form of a report (submitted)

We, I think, we would all agree that Barnard Castle is a great place to live and for people to visit and has been publicised as such in various places. We as town councillors have a duty to maintain this and improve the offering to locals and visitors alike. Conversations with Councillor Rowell who, is herself a business owner within the town, about how businesses are doing reveals many are struggling financially even though football appears good.

However, we have also been made aware through Barnard Castle Official Facebook pages that both residents and retailers feel we are not very visible or consulting them and getting their views on how things might be improved. Consequently, it seems appropriate that we canvas views and develop from that plans of action that we as councillors can undertake to achieve the objective of making Barny a town where all can benefit.

52. CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

St Mary's Barnard Castle Christmas Tree Festival is being held from Wednesday 3rd to Sunday 7th December. The theme for decoration this year is 'Christmas and Travel'. The Town Council has sponsored a tree which will need to be decorated on the evening of 1st December or during the day on the 2nd or 3rd.

53. EAST WARD VACANCY

Following the resignation of Cllr Caroline Nilsson the Notice of Vacancy for the East Ward was posted on the 14 November 2025. If no poll is called for by Thursday 4th December, the council would be able to consider the co-option process.

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

15 SEPTEMBER 2025

PRESENT: Councillors Ing (Town Mayor), Ewart, Turnbull, Kirkbride, Chatterjee, Nilsson, Thompson, Rowell & Foote-Wood (from item 42)

Officers: Mr Clark (Town Clerk)

Others: Teesdale Mercury.

33. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

Cllr's Colledge & Stenson submitted apologies.

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be approved.

34. 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.

35. MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Ing referred to his attendance at the events referred to at item 37(4)

36. COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

23 June 2025

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

37. 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 – 07 July 2025 – Draft minutes**
- (2) Services Committee – 21 July 2025 – Draft minutes**
- (3) Resources Committee – 01 September 2025 - Draft Minutes**
- (4) Town Mayor Activities**

Since the Council meeting on the 23 June 2025, the Town Mayor accompanied by Consorts, Miss Ellie Walker Ing & Cllr Fiona Turnbull, has attended the following:

26 May	Barnard Castle Meet
02 July	Friends of Richardson Hospital 60-year event
01 August	Old Mill Blue Plaque unveiling
10 August	Railway Exhibition opening
13 August	Barnard Castle Football Club
03 September	Merchant Navy Day

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

38. UPDATES, AND REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

From the meetings outlined above at item 37 the following updates are noted:

No referrals to full council from committees.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

39. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES

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

Cllr Turnbull informed the meeting that due to work commitments she is unable to continue as a representative on this forum. The Clerk agreed to take her place at future meetings with Cllr Stenson.

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

No meetings.

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

No meetings.

(4) Dawson Cottages Trust (Cllrs Ewart)

Cllr Ewart explained the newer members about the Trust. The Trustees are currently looking at identifying 2 new residents. Looking for a new trustee to join the Trust.

(5) St Mary's Barnard Castle Hall Association (vacant)

Still looking for a member to come forward to represent the council.

(6) Cultura Trust/Raby (Cllr Turnbull)

No meetings.

40. WEST WARD VACANCY

Following the resignation of Mr Mike McLean 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 are now asked to consider co-option to fill the vacancy.

Resolved – (a) That the unfilled vacancy be filled through the Council Co-Option Policy; and (b) That said vacancy be posted.

41. TEESDALE AVIATION DAY AND REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

(1) Aviation Day

The 30th Teesdale Aviation Day Service will take place on Saturday 20th September 2025 commemorated at Woodleigh, Scar Top opposite the Castle and the Memorial Garden at Galgate. This milestone event celebrates three decades of honouring the region's strong aviation legacy, with this year's programme also marking the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain telling the story of the one and only day the aerial battle came to Barnard Castle.

Dame Sue Snowdon DCVO, HM Lord-Lieutenant to County Durham will be attending along with dignitaries from the RAF and Governor of HMP Deerbolt Melanie Stobbart.

Highlights of the day include:

- 1000hrs the Display area opens at Woodleigh and on Scar Top
- 1030hrs Form up of a significant Parade of over 100 RAF Cadets, RAFA and HM Prison Staff on Galgate.

- 1100hrs Service will begin with keynote address by Air Commodore Adam Sansom, RAF Regional Air Officer for the North of England
- Dramatic live storytelling by local RAF Cadets recounting the day the Battle of Britain came to Barnard Castle
- Wreath-laying ceremony at the Memorial Garden
- Unveiling of a memorial plaque for the late Mr Tony Galley on the Founders Stone
- Exhibitions and WW2 artefacts at Woodleigh, showcasing aviation history across the Dales including a static Spitfire display of the aircraft flown by Spitfire ace Adolph 'Sailor' Malan
- South Yorkshire Aircraft Museum and Solway Aviation Museum both with displays on site and much more.

(ii) Remembrance Sunday

Preparations for the Remembrance Sunday Service and parade on Sunday 09 November are underway. Members will receive an email with the detailed arrangements nearer the time but are encouraged to advise the office in advance of their attendance.

The Town Mayor will lay a wreath and observe the two minute silence at the Memorial Garden on Tuesday 11th November to mark Armistice Day.

Resolved - (a) That the information be noted; and (b) That members advise the office in advance of their attendance at the Service of Remembrance.

42. TEESDALE CANCER RESEARCH/TURNING BARNEY PINK

A request has been received from Teesdale Cancer Research for permission to put pink bunting around the memorial garden perimeter (Galgate) from 3rd to 17 October.

Resolved – That permission be granted to place pink bunting around the memorial garden from 3rd to 17th October 2025.

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

06 OCTOBER 2025

PRESENT: Councillors: Turnbull, Ewart, Colledge, Ing, Foote-Wood & Rowell

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

12. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be approved.

13. 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.

14. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 21 JULY 2025

Resolved – That the minutes be approved as a true record.

15. ALLOTMENTS

(i) General Update

Since the Services Committee meeting in July, a further 4 residents have been added to the Parishioner waiting list. The waiting list stands at 25.

1 vacant plot on the Demesnes has been re-tenanted.

There are now 3 vacant plots on Harmire Road. 3 people from the waiting list were offered the vacant plots and have accepted.

A new entrance gate has been installed at the Demesnes and repairs carried out to two water standpipes.



The water will be switch off for the winter on 4 December 2025.

(ii) Following further discussions with William Smiths on the creation of new allotments on their land they have said the project for them is now on hold until the spring of 2026.

They have indicated that they would like the council to manage the allotments. How this is to be worked will be discussed when they start the project up with members kept informed.

Resolved – (a) That the information is received and noted; (b) That a working party be established should the project require this in the spring 2026.

(iii) The organisers of the Barnard Castle Park Run have been allocated an area on The Demesnes allotment site to secure equipment. Originally this was to be a wheelie bin. They are now requesting the council consider a metal garden storage cabinet 2.62 x 1.8ft (below).

Although not a pecuniary interest, Cllr Turnbull declared her role as part of the organising group.

Resolved – That approval is given to install said metal garden storage cabinet on the area designated within the Demesnes allotments.

16. PLAY AREAS

There are currently no issues (repairs or otherwise) at any of the play areas. Weekly checks of each play area continue to be carried out.

17. OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT (DAWSON ROAD)

Pursuant of minute 6(ii) July 25 refers.

Cllr Foote-Wood will report on the favoured options for outdoor gym equipment for the Dawson Road play area following his discussions with local residents.

Resolved – That the Clerk is approved to apply for Section 106 monies on behalf of the council for the outdoor gym equipment to be located at Dawson Road.

18. MINI GOLF

The full-time operational period of the summer holidays has ended following a very successful period. The course was open every day, with no need for closure due to bad weather. A full end-of-season report will be provided following the closure of the course for the winter in November. In the interim, figures are provided to the end of August.

The table, below, compares the total income and expenditure against the budgeted figure for 2025/26 and the end-of-year figure for 2024/25. The position is positive, with an operating surplus of £1,629 at the end of August, discounting any use of reserves against the Repairs and Maintenance heading.

	Actual 2024/25	YTD (August) 2025/26	Budget 2025/26
Income	13,261	9,259	0
Expenditure	9,905	7,630	11,000
Operating Surplus	3,356	1,629	-11,000
Transfers from EMR*		1,859	
Movement to Reserves	3,356	3,489	-11,000

*The money transferred from the EMR, represents an underspend on Repairs and Maintenance in 2024/25 that was transferred to fund repairs before the start of the season, but after the start of the financial year.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

19. WEDNESDAY MARKET

In the weeks from 15 July to 24 September 2025 inclusive, total rental receipts have been £1797.00, an average of £163.00 per week. 5 charity pitches have been utilised, and trading opportunities are being offered to those on the waiting list to cover regular trader absences.

Currently there are 16 market traders considered regular attendees, with 4 traders brought in as casual when possible. The market is weather dependant at various times of the year. Traders are advised to contact the Market Supervisor in good time if not attending to allow him the opportunity to bring a casual onto the market.

Cllr Rowell asked about the parking on the cobbles on market days. The Clerk advised that the whole area is covered by a traffic order preventing parking during market trading hours.

Cllr Ing referred to the demise of the seasonal weekly Wednesday bus service from Kirkby Stephen to Barnard Castle with the owner of the company retiring.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

20. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES

The summer bedding will be replaced with winter plants in the next few weeks.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

21. WAR MEMORIALS

(i) Work was carried out in the Galgate Memorial Garden prior to Aviation Day.

(ii) A clean up of the area around the Bowes memorial will take place before Remembrance Sunday on 09th November.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

22. DOG FOULING PROJECT

Cllr Rowell has taken over the lead on this project from Cllr Turnbull. No meetings have taken place since the last Services Committee meeting.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE**

27 OCTOBER 2025

PRESENT: Councillors Kirkbride, Chatterjee, Turnbull, Ewart & Foote-Wood, & Jonny Elliot (TCR Hub), Vicky Sturrs (Bowes Museum) & John Emerson (Meet)

Officers: Mr M. Clark (Town Clerk).

Others: Teesdale Mercury & Duncan Barker (Bowes Museum)

12. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted by Jonathan Wallis (BCCL), Cllr Paul Ing (Ex-officio). No apologies were received from the Witham.

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be approved.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved – No declarations were made.

14. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – 07 JULY 2025 – MINUTES

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

15. THE BOWES MUSEUM UPDATE

Vicky Sturrs from the Bowes Museum spoke to her report:

- Exhibitions: Pippa Hale's *Pet Project* opened in July to critical and public acclaim, with Art Quarterly highlighting it as a leading example of playful, participatory design. Alongside works by Nathan Coley, Claire A. Baker, and *Dressed for Departure* in partnership with SDR200, the summer season has achieved wide visibility and positive feedback.
- Collections & Conservation: Major progress on the Founders' Galleries refit, with 374 objects selected for Rooms 14–16 – a 109% increase in items on display. New galleries will open in April 2026. A new storage vault has been created on site, and off-site storage returns continue. Conservation volunteering has expanded.
- Learning & Civic Engagement: Strong community partnerships with HMP Deerbolt, UTASS, and Weardale Together have deepened co-production. Heritage Open Days welcomed 2,569 visitors (45% first-time), generating a 78% increase in café income and a 57% increase in retail compared to 2024. This year's UK Creative Community Fellows Programme welcomed 20 fellows from across the UK to the Creative Community House in July.
- Sustainability: Energy-saving measures continue to reduce nighttime electricity consumption. The rear meadow has been reseeded with local seed to enhance biodiversity, and all EV chargers are now operational.
- Fundraising: Major successes include securing support from ACE's Museums Renewal Fund and the Art Fund's Going Places partnership. Additional grants include AIM, Foyle Foundation, and Natural History Museum.
- Forward Look: *Vivienne Westwood: Rebel, Storyteller, Visionary* and *Impressions of Light 2026* exhibitions development advancing. Both shows will have national/international impact; Founders' Gallery RIBA Stage 3 sign-off due next quarter; continued planning for 2027–28 programming cycle, including a national partnership with the Russell Coates and Watts Gallery.

Dates for your diary:

- Winter Market 12th-14th December

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

16. THE WITHAM UPDATE

With no representative available from the Witham no official update could be given.

Cllr Turnbull did report that the Witham is supporting those that have completed the Park Run on Saturday's.

17. THE TCR HUB UPDATE

Jonny Elliot from TCR gave those present a verbal update:

- Continuing with the food packages – Approximately 32 at present
- Christmas hampers will go out to those in need a week before Christmas.
- Will be doing Christmas dinner again this year for around 40 people
- Ran 38 activities over the summer with over 600 service users
- An additional 1000 customers used the TCR facilities – weddings, bed and breakfast etc
- Have run their school uniform exchange this year
- Involved again in Lumiere – operating mini busses to take people to the event
- The Christmas gift tree will be in place again this year.

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

18. BARNARD CASTLE CHRISTMAS LIGHT (BCCL)

Fundraising by BCCL

- November 7th - Bonfire Night, Upper Demesnes. Final planning taking place. The event will include music, atmospheric lighting down Parson's Lonnen, a special guest lighting the bonfire and the Town Crier in attendance. Tickets on sale via the Witham Hall and at Galgate News.

2025 Display

- Final stages of planning underway.
- Christmas Plus have already started work on this year's display including installing some of the new lights for this year.
- Remaining installations will take place in November to ensure everything is ready for the switch on event on 28th November.
- We will not give all the details away on this year's display as we don't want to ruin the enjoyment of seeing the lights!
- We are already looking ahead for the 2026/2027 display and as always welcome ideas for new lights and displays.

Switch on Event – 28th November 2025

Barnard Castle Christmas Lights are working in partnership with Barnard Castle Town Council in the organisation and delivery of this year's switch on event on 28th November.

- Other groups within the community are also involved including The Witham Hall, The Hub and Barnard Castle Meet Committee.
- There will be collaboration with businesses and shops on the high street to help engagement and footfall on the night. The aim is to make the event town centric with most of the celebrations and gatherings taking place in the town centre and

around the Christmas Tree next to the Methodist Church, as opposed to on Scar Top.

- More details to be announced shortly.

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.

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Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

19. BARNARD CASTLE MEET

John Emerson gave those present a verbal update:

- The cost to put the 2025 Meet on was £31,000.
- This year there was a small loss of just over £2,000.
- 90 volunteers came forward and helped over the Meet weekend.
- The 2026 Meet theme will be dance and music.
- The committee has now 8 members and will be looking for more grant funding and donations.
- February 7th, 2026, an evening at the cricket club with a live band is being planned.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

20. THE RICHARDSON HOSPITAL

Danielle Lewis and Nicola Bolton were both unable to attend.

21. REMEMBRANCE EVENTS

(i) Merchant Navy Day

A small ceremony took place on Wednesday 03 September in the Galgate Gardens of Remembrance to commemorate Merchant Navy Day. Rev Gavin Hulme undertook a blessing of the Red Ensign, and the Town Mayor raised the flag.

Ian Kirkbride read the Ode of Remembrance; Andrew Nicholson played the Last Post and Reveille. Visitors were invited for refreshments in the Dawson Room.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; (b) That thanks be given to Rev Gavin Hume, Cllr Paul Ing (Town Mayor), Mr Ian Kirkbride, and Mr Andrew Nicholson; and (c) That the date to commemorate Merchant Navy Day be agreed as Thursday 03 September 2026, and to be programmed into the events budget for 2026/27 with a small budgetary allocation.

(ii) Teesdale Aviation Day

The 30th Teesdale Aviation Day Service took place on Saturday 20th September 2025 commemorated at Woodleigh, Scar Top opposite the Castle and the Memorial Garden at Galgate. This milestone event celebrated three decades of honouring the region's strong aviation legacy, with this year's programme also marking the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain telling the story of the one and only day the aerial battle came to Barnard Castle.

Dame Sue Snowdon DCVO, HM Lord-Lieutenant to County Durham attended along with dignitaries from the RAF and Governor of HMP Deerbolt Melanie Stobbart.

The event was also supported by a contingent of cadets from Barnard Castle School Cadet Force, Bishop Auckland RAF Amateur Radio Club, Veterans, Mr Andrew Nicholson, councillors, and members of the public.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted; (b) That thanks be given to Dame Sue Snowden DCVO, Claire Earl, Christopher Galley, Melanie Stobbart, Rev Canon Alec Harding, RAF Leeming, RAFA, Barnard Castle School and Combined Cadet Force, Mr Andrew Nicholson; and all those that attended and contributed to the day.

(iii) Remembrance Sunday & Armistice Day

Preparations for the Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade on Sunday 09 November is ongoing. Members and all those who have indicated they are attending and laying wreaths have received details of the Service and timings.

After 28 years as the Parade Marshall, Mr Rowan Jeffries has had to relinquish the role due to ill health.

Mr Ben Harbottle, Barnard Castle Cadet Force will be the 2026 Parade Marshall.

The Town Mayor will lay a wreath and observe a two-minute silence at 11:00am at the Galgate Gardens of Remembrance on Tuesday 11 November to mark Armistice Day.

Resolved – (a) That the information is received and noted; and (b) That special thanks are given to Mr Rowan Jeffries for the 28 years as Parade Marshall.

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

03 NOVEMBER 2025

PRESENT: Cllrs, Kirkbride, Ing, Thompson, Stenson & Chatterjee

Officers: Mr Clark (Town Clerk) & Miss Atkinson

18. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE OF APOLOGIES

No apologies were received from Cllr Foote-Wood

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be accepted.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved – None declared.

20. RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING – 01 SEPTEMBER 2025 – MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting on the 01 September 2025 be approved as a true record.

21. BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS

Received – Reports on the income and expenditure activity of the Council from 1 August to 30 September 2025.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

22. BUDGET 2026-27 – COST CENTRE REPORTS

Received - A report based upon initial consideration of the principles underpinning the 2026/27 budget, to consider individual budgetary headings, including Fees and Charges.

Resolved – That the Cost Centre report was approved en bloc (Appendix A).

23. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2024/25

Pursuant to Minute 28/June/25 (b)(c) and the Council's approval of Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) and Section 2 (Accounting Statements), the Annual Return, together with all additional supporting documentation, were duly submitted to the Council's External Auditor, Mazars LLP, Durham, by the agreed date.

As the Council's income and/or expenditure for 2024/25 was over the £200,000 threshold, an 'Intermediate Audit' was required in support of the External Audit.

There were no material matters affecting the opinion.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

24. WOODLEIGH

- An emergency lighting inspection has taken place. Several repairs are required to the bulkhead lights. The quote for the work is £660.00.
- The office is to be relocated to Room 6 upstairs by the 31 October, following work being carried out by BT Openreach, our internet provider, and Comtek.
- The window frames requiring repair are to be carried out by DCC under the terms of the lease.

Resolved – (a) That the information is received and noted; and (b) that the emergency

bulkhead light repair quote is accepted and the work carried out.

Appendix A

BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 03 NOVEMBER 2025 BUDGET 2026/27 - COST CENTRE REPORT

Introduction

Following initial consideration of the principles underpinning the 2026/27 budget Carried out at the Resources Committee meeting on 01 September 2025, this report considers individual budgetary headings, including Fees and Charges. This is the next stage in the process of putting together the 2026/27 budget.

Outcomes from Previous Meeting

It was resolved by this Committee on 01 September that a non-pay inflation of 3% be assumed and that, in addition, pay inflation of 4% be modelled.
(minute 14b)(c)/September 25/refers).

Consideration of Budget Headings

The expenditure items are listed below for consideration at this meeting. For ease of reference, the cost centre number is shown in brackets.

Cost Centre Code's 101 is Council Administration and 106 is Woodleigh Operational.

Mayoral Allowance (101)

The Mayoral Allowances for 2022/23, 2023/24 & 2025/26 were removed from the budget due to reduced Mayoral functions. I recommend this remain for 2026/27.

Resolved – NIL

Training (101)

This allocation covers training for Members and Staff. This includes both councillors, staff training, attendance at training events, and the purchase of guides and administration tools required.

Resolved – £200 – No change

Audit Fees (101)

This allocation covers both the internal and external audit fee.

The external audit fee increases in line with threshold levels of income and expenditure.

The correct procedure for internal and external audit fees is that they are accrued at the year-end so that each year's accounts include the fees for that year. This procedure has been adopted since 2009.

Resolved – £1550 – No change

Bank Charges (101)

Based on the range of variable charges applied to cash, cheque and electronic banking.

Resolved – £400 – No change

Replacement IT & Software (101)

This budget has been in place since the purchase of equipment in 2013. Each year, it is used for replacement software renewed in year with the balance returning to the earmarked reserve.

Any underspend at year end is vired to the EMR for Replacement IT & Software (346). The EMR currently stands at £1,700.

Resolved - £650 – no change.

Insurance (101)

The council are in a long-term agreement with Zurich Municipal that runs until April 2027. The actual cost of the council insurance for 2025/26 was £2,760.

Resolved – £2,843 - non pay inflation increase of £83

HR Services (previously Professional fees & charges) (101)

Town Council procures its HR services from Durham County Council under a Service Level Agreement.

The charge for the HR Advisory Service consists of an annual joining fee of £125 which includes 2 hours HR work. In addition to this charge any further HR work after the first 2 hours has been used, would be charged at £75.00 per hour. The recommendation includes a further option for 3 additional hours.

Resolved - £350 – no change

Co Durham Association of Local Councils/NALC/SLCC Subscriptions (101)

This allocation covers membership of the County Durham Association of Local Councils and the National Association of Local Councils.

The membership fee for each element is set each year and multiplied by the most recent electoral figures available.

2024 electoral figures are announced in December which will enable the correct figure to be calculated for the January final budget meeting.

The recommendation agreed by the CDALC Executive to be put to their AGM is a 3.33% increase to 15.5p per elector (this year = 15p).

NALC will be considering its fee increase at its AGM on 13 Nov which will be an increase of 3.6% to 8.6p (this year = 8.34p) per elector. If agreed together that's **24.1p** per elector.

The SLCC figure for 2026/27 is known and will be £360

Resolved – This item be deferred until the meeting scheduled for 5 January 2026 when the correct figure for the electors is known for calculations.

Accounts Software Package (101)

This allocation relates to the annual subscription (RIALTAS) for updates to the software and access to the cloud, support desk, management reports, allotments database and helpline (RBS).

Resolved – £1,439 - non pay increase of £42

Travel Allowance (101)

This heading covers approved travel for members and officers other than for training events.

Resolved – Nil – no change

Stationary/ Office Goods (101)

Efforts are constantly being made on efficiency savings when purchasing stationery and office goods.

Resolved - £300 – No change

Consumables (101)

Actual spent in previous 12 months £115.

Resolved - £120 – non pay increase of £5

IT & Maintenance Support (101)

This covers Comtek computer support (including Microsoft 365 fees), photo copier leasing, Document Solutions & website hosting.

Resolved - £2,104 – Non pay increase of £62

Postage/Publications/Eye tests (101)

Resolved - £100 – reduction of £30

Financial Donations (101)

This policy and budget were reintroduced for 2024/25 after being dormant for a number of years and the amount available was reduced down to £500 in 2025/26 due to few, if any applications being made.

To date no applications have been made in the current financial year. I am recommending that this policy is made dormant for 2026/27 but with any underspend in 2025/26 placed in the EMR and made available should an application be received and approved.

Resolved - Nil – Reduction of £500

Central Support Services (102)

Resolved – This item is deferred until the meeting on the 05 January 2026 due to matters yet to be resolved.

Elections (104)

This heading covers an annual allocation to cover the billed costs of elections.

Resolved – £1,000 – No change

Chains of Office (105)

The standard allocation of £50 has been used for engraving work to keep the chains up to date.

Resolved – £50 – no change

Office Rent (106) (Woodleigh)

This sum was fixed under the terms of the Woodleigh lease and is reviewed every 5 years.

Resolved – £9,102 – No change

Water Rates/Business Rates (106)

The council office is nil rated for business rates, with Woodleigh tenants responsible for paying their own.

Water bills in the last full year available were £950

Resolved – £988 – non pay increase of £28

Electricity/Gas (106)

For 2023/24 the council increased the budget for gas and electricity to £8,369 in the light of the large increases in unit prices. In 2024/25 it increased this figure to £8,788.

In the last 12 months the spend on gas and electricity for Woodleigh has amounted to £10,488.

Resolved - £11,330 – Non pay increase of £330

Repairs/Maintenance General (Woodleigh) (106)

Resolved - £434 –non pay inflation increase of £13

Planned/Preventative Maintenance (106)

This is to cover future anticipated costs for electrical, drains, roofing etc that the council is responsible for at Woodleigh.

This year the boiler was replaced with the EMR now fully spent. It is prudent to begin to build these reserves up again to cover future eventualities.

Resolved - £1,200 – no change

Telephone/Broadband (106)

Resolved - £897 – non pay increase of £26

Service Level Agreement (SLA) (106)

An SLA is a contract with the lease holder and Durham County Council (landlord) to provide building compliance servicing. This includes Asbestos Management, emergency lighting, fire alarm servicing, fire extinguisher checks, intruder alarm annual servicing and monitoring.

Resolved - £2,142 – No change

Building Cleaning (106)

Resolved - £1,630 – No change

Supplies and Consumables (106)

Actual spend in previous 12 months £131.

Resolved – £150 – no change

Defibrillators (110)

Council approved this budget in 2019/20 to meet the costs of replacement batteries, and other consumables in the defibrillators located on Newgate, and Woodleigh.

Resolved - £225 – no change

Bede Road Bus Shelter (342)

This allocation covers the annual rental payable to the resident of Bede Road as the bus shelter is sited within their garden. There is also a small allocation to cover any minor repairs which may occur during the year.

Resolved - £50 – no change

Wayfinding Units (404)

This allocation is to cover incidentals and general maintenance such as stone cleaning. The excess on any insurance claim is £100 therefore this allocation continues to be satisfactory for a normal year.

Resolved – £Nil

Dog Fouling (281)

This item was established as part of the 2022/23 budget following the council's approval of an anti-dog fouling project with a budget of £500. I recommend retaining this budget and leave unchanged for 2026/27.

Resolved - £500 – No change

Castle & Market Floodlighting (321)

This Council is responsible for the electricity and maintenance costs associated with the Castle and Market Cross floodlights and this allocation covers those costs.

Resolved - £656 – non pay inflation increase £20

Market Place Public Toilets (501)

The base budget is the fee paid to Durham County Council in respect of half the maintenance costs of the Market Place public toilets.

Resolved – £6,386 – non pay inflation increase £186

- Allotments (201) – self financing
- Mini Golf (211) – self financing
- Play Areas (231)
- Wednesday Market (291) – self financing
- Grounds Maintenance (floral & grass cuts) (311)
- War Memorials (331)

Partnership Committee will meet on 15 December to determine the budgetary bids for **Christmas Lights (221)** and **Community Events (354)**. Services Committee will meet on 01 December to determine the budgetary bids for the Cost Centres as above. The bids will be referred to Resources at the meeting of 5 January 2026, and then to full council on the 19 January 2026.

Review of Dawson Room Hire Arrangements

Since 01 April 2016, charges for hire of the Dawson Room have remained unchanged as follows:

Rate	Cost 2025/26	Minimum Hire	Recommended 2026/27
Community Rate	£12.50 per hour	2 hours	No change
Discounted Community Rate Block Bookings	£10.00 per hour	2 hours	No change
Commercial Rate	£20.00 per hour	2 hours	No change
Refreshments (tea/ coffee/biscuits)	£1.20 per head	(inc VAT)	No change

Members should note that exclusive room hire is exempt from VAT, but that any refreshments are chargeable at the standard rate VAT item and, hence, are included separately in the above charges. No charge is made for hot water.

Members are asked to review the existing charges for hire of the Dawson Room and to recommend costs for 2026/27, to be presented to Council for approval.

Resolved – No change

Growth Items

All Members were contacted by letter on 1 August 2025 to indicate any projects they wished to put forward for 2026/27 and to be considered as part of the normal budgetary process. One response was received by the deadline of Friday 3 October 2025 and will be considered by the Partnership Committee at its meeting when the Community Events budget is considered.

Budget items relevant to Partnership, and Services will be considered at their meetings in December.

Conclusion

This report contains recommendations to known costs to reduce those issues to be considered at the Committee meeting scheduled for 05 January 2026 when the final budget will be reviewed. Cost centres agreed at this meeting will be considered *en bloc* at that meeting.

Martin Clark & Claire Atkinson
Clerk RFO

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING – 17 NOVEMBER 2025**

WEST WARD VACANCY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report outlines the process by which members may consider expressions of interest received and vote to fill the current West Ward vacancy.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

At the Town Council Meeting, held on 15 September 2025 it was resolved that the unfilled vacancy be filled through the Council Co-Option Policy.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST RECEIVED

- 2.1 The vacancies were advertised, and two confirmed expressions of interest have been received. This is appended to this report, (Appendix A) from:

- **Mr Marc Cole**
- **Mr Roger Peat**

- 2.2 The advertised person specification is attached (Appendix B) for members' information.

3. THE ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE FOR VOTING TO FILL THE VACANCY

- 3.1 The candidates have been invited to attend this meeting. They will be offered two minutes to state their suitability. Members will then be offered an opportunity to question the candidates. At the conclusion of the question and answer session, members may either resolve to proceed directly to a secret ballot or may resolve to exclude press and public (including the candidates) pending a debate on the suitability of the candidate.
- 3.2 Once a vote is called, the clerk will issue each member (including the Town Mayor) with a ballot paper marked with the names of the candidates. Each Member will vote, in secret, by placing a cross against the name of their chosen candidate and then folding the ballot paper. The clerk will count the ballot papers in front of members and the co-option will be decided by simple majority, which may be achieved with the addition of the casting vote of the town mayor.
- 3.3 Conclusion - Subject to the procedure outlined above, a vote on this matter may be called by any member, in accordance with Standing Orders.

Recommendation – that members consider which candidate is suitable to fill the vacancy on the West Ward.

Martin Clark
Town Clerk

Appendix A

Vacant West Ward Member Post – Expression of Interest

Marc Cole

It has been brought to my attention by Emma Rowell that there is a vacant West Ward Councillor position on Barnard Council Town Council. Since moving to Barnard Castle in August 2024, I have been greatly impressed by the work of the Town Council, particularly in relation to the Christmas lights, the various amenities provided in the town (e.g. the various allotment sites, the mini golf facilities etc.) as well as the largely successful efforts to deal with dog mess and of course the various military memorial days organised by the Council.

I have also been pleased in the way in which the Town Council has positively engaged and supported groups wanting to make the town even more attractive for residents and visitors alike, such as the recent park run proposals, for which I am a volunteer.

As I am now retired, I feel that getting involved with Town Council could be an ideal way to put something back into the community as well as utilising the skills and expertise gained during my career in the public, private and community sectors. As you will see from my attached CV, I have significant experience in delivering major regeneration projects in town and cities across the UK, including Manchester, St Helens, Bradford Nottingham, Grimsby, Aberdeen and Stockton. This involved bringing forward number of key economic development (e.g. Crewe Business Park) public infrastructure (e.g. St Helens Railway Station), public realm (e.g. Bradford City Park, Aberdeen Union Terrace Gardens), cultural (e.g. Aberdeen Art Gallery, St Helens cultural Quarter) and town centre (e.g. Stockton town Centre) regeneration schemes.

I also gained very useful experience in working closely with communities during my time with the Coalfields Regeneration Trust. The initiative established following the pit closure programme of the 1980's sought to assist former mining communities through funding a wide range of social, cultural and economic projects across England, Scotland and Wales.

I am keen to use this experience to build on the excellent work already being done by the Town Council to both improve its visibility with local residents and contribute to ongoing efforts to improve footfall and spending in the town.

To conclude, I hope that I possess at least some of the skills and experience that you are looking for in a successful Town Councillor and look forward to discussing the matter with you at your convenience.

Roger Peat

I would like to put my name forward for the vacant position on the West Ward of Barnard Castle Town Council.

Born 11/07/1956 in Barnard Castle and have lived here all my life. Educated at St Mary Junior School, Barnard Castle School and Houghall Agricultural College.

Working life. Ten years working on our farm followed by twenty years at our butchers and bakers' shop and then back to working on the farm.

Member of Barnard Castle Christmas Lights CIC since it was formed. Past Chairman and now a director and treasurer.

Main organiser of Barnard Castle Bonfire Night that now attracts approaching 2500 people.

Lead a local group of volunteers called The Workers who are affiliated to The Barnard Castle Lights that do various gardening jobs around the town such as The Remembrance Garden, Witham Garden, Almen Corner, Roman Way Picnic Site, Bridge Street Rose Bed and join with two town Litter Picks each year.

Formed a group called The Friends of The Upper Demesnes to transform a very rough neglected field into a Wildflower Meadow by bringing seed rich grass from Holwick after preparing the ground and regular management of the field in the proceeding years.

Was a board member of Teesdale Action Partnership, volunteer for The Witham and The Hub.

As such I have a good knowledge of The Town and residents that I believe would be beneficial to furthering the aims and good works of Barnard Castle Town Council.

Appendix B Person Specification

ESSENTIAL	ADDED VALUE
Relevant Knowledge, Education, Professional Qualifications & Training	
Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community. Commitment to legal framework and principles of local democracy.	A levels/Degree level and or Specific Vocational training or professional qualification (e.g. accountant, teacher, surveyor, architect).
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	
Solid interest in local matters. Ability and willingness to represent the council and their community. Good interpersonal skills. Ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing. Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff. Good reading and analytical skills.	Knowledge of HR, procurement, contract management, financial control or risk management and compliance, public relations Experience of working in another public body or not for profit organisation Experience of working with voluntary and or local community/ interest groups. Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish councils or local authorities.

Ability and willingness to work with the council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish councils, Durham County Council, charities). Ability and willingness to undertake relevant training. Ability to work under pressure	Experience of delivering presentations. Experience of working with the media. Experience in financial control/budgeting Experience of staff management
Other requirements	
Flexibility Enthusiasm Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the council (or the meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) in the evening and events in the evening and at weekends. (The basic commitment to meetings is to attend three, 2-hour meetings during each eight-week cycle) Meets the qualifying requirements of s.79 of the Local Government Act 1972	

(Based on the NALC recommended specification)

Town Action Plan

Introduction

We, I think, would all agree that Barnard Castle is a great place to live and for people to visit and has been publicised as such in various places. We as town councillors have a duty to maintain this and improve the offering to locals and visitors alike. Conversations with Councillor Rowell who, is herself a business owner within the town, about how businesses are doing reveals many are struggling financially even though footfall appears good.

However we have also been made aware through Barnard Castle Official Facebook pages that both residents and retailers feel we are not very visible or consulting them and getting their views on how things might be improved. Consequently it seems appropriate that we canvas views and develop from that plans of action that we as councillors can undertake to achieve the objective of making Barny a town where all can benefit.

Points for discussion

The following points have been split into actions that can be taken in the short term for information gathering purposes and those that require discussion and actioning in the slightly longer term. They are not exhaustive and only represent a short discussion. Therefore any other suggestions/ideas are of course welcome.

- Short Term Actions

- 1) Visit all businesses within the town including shops/pubs/restaurants and note views and ideas and distill those down into action.
- 2) Set up a residents forum perhaps on Barnard Castle Town Council website or reinstate monthly surgeries at a local venue, where views can be gathered. Also using the Wednesday market where we might have a presence to ask both locals and visitors their views.
- 3) Discuss how to increase the free parking within the town so visitors especially don't feel under pressure to move their vehicles attempting to allow more time to shop, thus benefitting all businesses.

- Medium Term actions

- 1) Review empty buildings/shops within the town including the ex banks, Turks Head and hold discussions with landlords/owners to see whether we can be of any help to resolve any issues preventing them from being made use of.
- 2) Businesses require footfall which means allowing visitors and residents to park without fear of traffic wardens giving out parking tickets as well as reducing overall parking fees. How can we lobby the County Council to let us increase times and reduce cost? For example could we have free parking for the whole of December to help with Christmas.
- 3) Set up/update a business directory and try to influence the type of business in the town that might complement existing offerings. To be regularly updated.
- 4) Set up an events calendar to be regularly updated for the coming year on a rolling basis so that residents and visitors alike are made aware of and to maybe plan a visit around.
- 5) Discuss with landlords how to improve the appearance of the town and ensuring we maintain a neat and tidy appeal for us all.
- 6) Arrange parking permits for the residents who live in the main shopping streets. Why would anyone develop a building such as an old bank if the potential buyers can't park.

Councillor Rowell has done some research into the offerings of Yarm and Northallerton and will report to the meeting on the 15th. In addition the current town plan needs to be updated and perhaps used as a template.

Once we have this plan in place, perhaps a meeting could be arranged at a County level and ascertain whether any funding or changes in policy might be required to enable the Town Council to achieve it's objective of ensuring Barny has a long term future.