



Barnard Castle Town Council

**PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2025 – 5:30pm
DAWSON ROOM, WOODLEIGH¹**

AGENDA

- 22. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES**
- 23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 24. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – 27 OCTOBER 2025 – MINUTES**
- 25. THE BOWES MUSEUM**
- 26. THE WITHAM UPDATE**
- 27. THE TCR HUB UPDATE**
- 28. BARNARD CASTLE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS (BCCL)**
- 29. BARNARD CASTLE MEET**
- 30. ARMISTICE DAY & REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**
- 31. BUDGETERY BIDS 2026/27**
 - (i) Community Events**
 - (ii) Christmas Lights**

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**

15 DECEMBER 2025

DAWSON ROOM, WOODLEIGH 5:30 P.M.

DETAILED AGENDA

22. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

Recommendation – That the submitted apologies be accepted.

23. 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.

24. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING – 27 OCTOBER 2025 - MINUTES (ENCLOSED)

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

25. THE BOWES MUSEUM UPDATE

A brief verbal update will be given at the meeting.

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

26. THE WITHAM UPDATE

A brief verbal update will be given at the meeting.

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

27. THE TCR HUB UPDATE

A brief verbal update will be given at the meeting.

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

28. BARNARD CASTLE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS (BCCL)

Fundraising by BCCL

- Bonfire Night – Largest audience that has ever attended, weather was favourable and the evening was a huge success. Gratitude for this event must go to the efforts of Roger Peat and the Clique in their organisation and running of the event and to Andrew Nicholson and Affinity Choir for the entertainment.
- Quiz Night at Capri on 12th November – Very well attended and another enjoyable evening for our many supporters who attended. Thanks to Capri, Andrew Nicholson for the quiz and entertainment, and all the businesses and individuals that gave raffle prizes and made donations.

2025 Display

- All lights are up and switched on.
- There have been problems with power sockets and timers which has meant some lights have not been coming on but this is all being addressed by Christmas Plus and electrician contractors.
- Very positive feedback has been received on this year's display.

Switch on Event – 28th November 2025

- Barnard Castle Christmas Lights worked 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 who were involved included The Witham Hall, The Hub, Barnard Castle Meet Committee, Barnard Castle Methodist Church and the Teesdale Lions.
- Our thanks go to everyone that was involved in the organisation and running of the event including the above groups, Andrew Nicholson, the Town Crier, David Harper, Paul Allison, participants in the procession and our special guests on the evening.
- The majority of those involved were doing so on a goodwill and voluntary basis giving up time and/or offering benefits in kind.
- The event would have been impossible without the sponsorship and donations from many local businesses and special thanks go to McGarry & Co for kindly being principal sponsors.
- Whilst the feedback has been extremely positive with a very large crowd turning out for the switch on, like with all new events there were a few technical problems and mistakes which can be easily improved for future years.

2026 Display

- Plans are underway and we are working closely with Barnard Castle Town Council to continue improving and investing in the annual display for the benefit of the town.
- It is likely significant and immediate investment is going to be needed on the power sources and electricity supplies, together with repair and maintenance of the existing infrastructure. Whilst this does not provide any "face value" to the public, it is all part of the ongoing investment needed to maintain the lights, and which all adds cost.
- 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 – (a) That the update be received, and the information noted; and (b) That the 2026 switch on event to be on Friday 27th November.

29. BARNARD CASTLE MEET

A brief verbal update will be given at the meeting.

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

30. ARMISTICE DAY & REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

- (i) A small ceremony took place to mark Armistice Day on 11 November at Galgate Greens Remembrance Gardens. The Union Jack flag was flown, and a two-minute silence observed at 11:00 followed by the laying of a wreath.

(ii) Remembrance Sunday took place on 09 November. The event was extremely well supported by all sectors of the community. Rev Canon Alec Harding led the service at the Parish Church. Barnard Castle Band provided a marching band which was led along Newgate with the rest of those parading led by Parade Marshall, Ben Harbottle. Andrew Nicholson played the Last Post and Reveille.

(ii) Particular thanks are extended to: Deputy Lieutenant Mr Neville Fairclough, Deputy Town Mayor (Cllr Rima Chatterjee), Rev Canon Alec Harding, Church Wardens of St Mary's Parish Church, the Combined Cadet Force and staff of Barnard Castle School, Ben Harbottle, the Standard Bearers, members of Barnard Castle Band, Andrew Nicholson, Town Councillors, and all residents that attended.

Recommendation – (a) That the information be received and noted; (b) That thanks be given to all businesses, organisations and individuals who played a part; and (c) Thanks to the council staff for organising the events.

31. BUDGETERY BIDS 2026/27

(i) Community Events (REPORT ENCLOSED)

(ii) Christmas Lights

The Town Council's commitment to Christmas Lighting remains strong.

For the financial year 2026/27 I am recommending the budget remains at £8,475 which remains above the contract amount with Christmas Plus and allows flexibility with any repairs/improvements that may be required.

Recommendation – a) That the Christmas Lights Budgetary bid from the Partnership Committee for 2026/27 be £8,475.

(b) That the recommendations are referred for final consideration to the Resources Committee meeting to be held on the 05 January 2026, and full Council on the 19 January 2026.

**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 (BCCCL), 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 Bowers 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
PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE – 15 DECEMBER 2025
COMMUNITY EVENTS: 2026/27 BUDGETARY BID**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a review of the known events programme to date and considers a budgetary bid for Community Events for inclusion in the overall Town Council's 2026/27 budget.

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Community Event budget in 2025/26 was set at £9,100 covering Remembrance events, Christmas and for the 30th anniversary of Teesdale Aviation Day.

- 2.2 below:

Event	Budget
Remembrance Events	£2,100
Christmas Event	£2,000
30 th Teesdale Aviation Day	£5,000
Total	£9,100

- 2.3 At its meeting in September, Resources Committee set a baseline of 3% for non-pay inflation in building the 2026/27 budget (Minute 14(b)/Sept/25 refers).
- 2.4 In August all councillors were asked to indicate any projects they wish to put forward for consideration in the 2026/27 budget. One idea was put forward for consideration and that is to have a Colour Run in summer 2026. The last Colour Run held in 2022 was a huge success.
- 2.5 For 2026/27 the proposal is increase the Remembrance and Christmas event budgets by the approved non pay inflation figure of 3%.
- 2.6 I am including the projected costs of a Colour Run, anticipated at £2,100 within the budget recommendations under 'other events'.
- 2.7 Any underspend on the 2025/26 Community Events budget will be placed in General Reserves.

Event	Proposed Expenditure
Remembrance Events	£2,160
Christmas Light Switch on (2026)	£2,060
Other Events (inc Colour Run)	£3,000
Total	£7,220

3. Event Management

- 3.1 Woodleigh Performance Area - It has been previously agreed (Minute 52(iii)/Nov/17 refers) that use of the power supply should be recharged to any group, based on metered use at the prevailing unit rate that the town council is charged. Council has also resolved that any commercial hire, i.e. where the user was not a community, voluntary or not-for-profit group, should be charged

an administration fee of £50, to cover the costs of processing a booking and ensuring appropriate insurance and approvals are in place, replicating the 'licence fee' currently levied by Durham County Council. It is proposed that these fees are unchanged for 2026/27.

- 3.2 Banner Frame - Since its installation in 2018, the town council has also administered access to the Banner Frame on the corner of Scar Top. It was agreed that, again, for bookings made where the user was not a community, voluntary or not-for-profit group, an administration fee of £50 should be charged (64(e)/Feb/18). These charges form part of the 'fees and charges' to be approved by Council as part of the budget determination. It is proposed that these fees are unchanged for 2026/27.

Conclusion

It is recognised that community events benefit the town in supporting the local businesses with increased footfall, but also importantly these events are seen as beneficial for the wellbeing of our residents.

Recommended – (a) That any underspend from the Community Events budget in 2025/26 is placed in General Reserves;
(b) That the budgetary bid for Community Events in 2026/27 be £7,220;
(c) That the fee to commercial organisations for use of the performance area and to book the Scar Top banner frame should continue to be £50; and
(d) That the recommendations are referred for final consideration by Resources Committee on the 05 January 2026, and full council on the 19 January 2026.

Marlin Clark
Town Clerk