



AGENDA

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Detailed agenda can be viewed at:

<https://barnardcastletowncouncil.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/>

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**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

16 FEBRUARY 2026

DETAILED AGENDA

33. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

34. 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.

35. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 01 DECEMBER 2025 - MINUTES (ENCLOSED)

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

36. ALLOTMENTS

General Update

Since the Services Committee meeting in December, one resident has been added to the waiting list. The waiting list is 26.

The material required to repair and improve the second entrance gate to the Demesnes allotment site has arrived, and work will begin within the next week, weather permitting.

The water on all sites will be switched back on at the beginning of March.

Recommendation – That the information is received and noted.

37. PLAY AREAS

The January playground inspection reports have been received. These have identified a number of minor repairs required at Green Lane and Scar Top sites which Mark will be checking over in the next couple of weeks.

38. MINI GOLF

Submitted – 2025 Report.

Preparations are due to get underway for the opening 2026 Season which this year will open on Saturday 28 March 2026.

Minor repairs have been identified and are currently being worked through by our maintenance supervisor. These will be completed prior to the 2026 opening.

Recommendation – That the information be received and noted.

39. WEDNESDAY MARKET

In the weeks from 19 November 2025 to 28 January 2026 inclusive, total rental receipts have been £1,194.00, an average of £133.00 per week. 2 charity pitches have been utilised, and trading opportunities are being offered to those on the waiting list to cover

regular trader absences.

Recommendation – That the information is received and noted.

40. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES

Agreement has been reached within the budget approved to have a further three tubs replaced in 2026.

The section of damaged wall adjacent to Bede Kirk reported at the December meeting has been repaired.

(ii) The 'Workers'

Cllr Peat will talk to members on the group of local residents, affiliated and insured through Barnard Castle Christmas Lights CIC that help maintain and enhance the appearance of the Town by gardening, litter picking or other small appropriate maintenance activities.

Recommendation – (a) That the information is received and noted; (b) That retrospective approval is given for the repairs to the wall adjacent to Bede Kirk/Harmire Road at £1,920.00 (net) funded from Ground Maintenance Ear Marked Reserve.

41. OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT (DAWSON ROAD)

Section 106 application submitted, awaiting response.

BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SERVICES COMMITTEE – 16 FEBRUARY 2026
MINI GOLF – REVIEW OF 2025 SEASON

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides members with a review of the 2025 Mini Golf season.

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The 2025 operating season was the eleventh full season since the course was redesigned in 2013. The 2025 season ran from Saturday 12th April 2025 until Sunday 2nd November 2025; with the course open every weekend, bank holidays and full weeks in line with local school holidays. This year the course was operated by two attendants.

3. Data

- 3.1 The range of ticket options continued to be popular. Visitor numbers for the whole season, compared to the previous seasons, are as follows:

Season	Single tickets	Group tickets (4)	Loyalty tickets (7)	Total rounds	Average no. visitors per day
2019	2,133	2,028	175	4,336	38
2021	2,443	2,572	308	5,323	78
2022	3,513	2,644	301	6,458	56
2023	2,862	2,788	350	6,000	52
2024	3,049	2,372	327	5,748	50
2025	2,834	2,032	567	5,433	49

- 3.2 As always, the usage of the course is dependent on the weather. For 2025 there were 112 operating days. The course did not experience any particularly bad weather days which resulted in closure of the course, however the unfavourable weather over the summer resulted in some quieter periods. This has always been a service where visitor numbers are naturally dictated by the weather.
- 3.3 There remains a problem with falling twigs/leaves and bird guano on the course. Each attendant has been trained to operate a leaf blower which is used as part of their regular cleaning routine. However, the trees and resultant debris will always need to be borne in mind when maintenance issues are considered.
- 3.4 The Council's market and maintenance supervisor assists with the upkeep of the course as do the attendants prior to the start of their shift.
- 3.5 Groups and registered charities are able to hire the course between the hours of 5.00pm and 9.00pm during term time and 6.30pm and 9.00pm during school holidays with supervised school parties being able to use the course for practical lessons on weekdays during term time. During 2025 there was no private hire bookings.

- 3.6 Information about the Mini Golf facility, including opening days and times, has been available on the Town Council's website.

4. Conclusion and Future Steps

- 4.1 Mini Golf is run as a 'self-funding service' with a 'Mini Golf Holding Account' set up to enable underspends to be set aside for future repairs and upkeep of the facility. As a course, it is also imperative that every effort is made to 'future proof' it.
- 4.2 The 2026 season will be the thirteenth operating season for the course and the ninth since the re-felting of the course in 2017.
- 4.3 The final net income and expenditure figures, compared to the previous four seasons, are as follows:

Season	Budget Income	Budget Expenditure	Income	Expenditure
2019	£10,000	£10,000	£9,471	£7,227
2021	£10,000	£10,000	£11,490	£9,002
2022	£10,000	£10,000	£14,447	£9,586
2023	£10,000	£10,000	£12,580	£8,369
2024	£10,000	£10,000	£12,639	£8,791
2025	£11,000	£11,000	£11,780	£9,082

- 4.4 The total income for 2025 season, including VAT is £13,834. The overall income and expenditure have remained broadly stable.
- 4.5 Members should be mindful that there will be further expenditure from the 2025/26 budget in respect of grounds maintenance, any repairs/modifications following the winter period, costs associated with equipment replenishment and recruitment, if required, prior to the start of the 2026 season.
- 4.6 For the 2026 season the NMW will be £12.71, for those aged 21 and over. The rates for 18-20 will be £10.85 and for 16-17, £8.00. It is recommended that the current mini golf attendant wage of £10.18 is raised to £10.85 aligned to the National Minimum Wage or the higher rate if staff are aged 21.

Recommendation –a) That the information be noted; and (b) That the mini golf attendant's salary for 2026 will be paid at the appropriate NMW rate an hour.

Claire Atkinson
RFO

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

01 DECEMBER 2025

PRESENT: Councillors: Turnbull, Ewart, Ing, Foote-Wood & Peat

Officers: Mr Clark (Town Clerk)

23. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

No apologies were received from Cllr Rowell.

Resolved – That the submitted apologies be approved.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Resolved – No declarations were made.

25. SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING – 06 OCTOBER 2025

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

26. ALLOTMENTS

General Update

Since the Services Committee meeting in October, no further residents have been added to the waiting list. The waiting list remains at 25.

The water on all allotments will be switched off for the winter on 4 December 2025.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

27. PLAY AREAS

There are no outstanding issues across the play areas.

28. MINI GOLF

The mini golf has had a successful year. The end of year full financial report will be available to members at the February meeting.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

29. WEDNESDAY MARKET

In the weeks from 1 October to 12 November 2025 inclusive, total rental receipts have been £1,144.00, 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.

Resolved – That the information is received and noted.

30. FLORAL AND OPEN SPACES

The winter bedding is in place.

Members asked if the tubs by the Gateway could be looked at with a view to improving.

The council have been informed by Durham County Council of a section of wall adjacent to Bede Kirk village green that requires repair. We are at present awaiting a further inspection of the area of concern with a view to be given costs for repair.

In the meantime, we have placed barriers on the footpath to identify the hazard.



It was agreed the Cllr Peat have a look at the damaged wall in order to ascertain what repairs could be carried out.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

31. 2026/27 BUDGETARY BIDS (REPORT RECEIVED- APPENDIX A)

Resolved - (a) That the Play Areas budget remain at £2,995 To cover inspections and general small items of maintenance/spares;

(b) That any underspend at the end of the year is vired to Play Area Repairs and Future Maintenance EMR

(c) That the ground maintenance budget (grass cutting & Floral) be set for 2026/27 at £23,344.

(d) That any underspend in the 2025/26 Grounds Maintenance budget be vired into the Grounds Maintenance Ear Marked Reserve;

(e) That the contracts for CE & CM Walker and One3One be extended to 2026;

(f) That the Play Areas 2026/27 Income budget (Tens Field Rental) be £100 (no change);

(g) That the Play Areas Repairs and Future Provision earmarked reserve continues;

(h) That the play areas inspection contract awarded to Park Lane Playgrounds be extended for the 2026/27 financial year;

(i) That Wednesday Market expenditure is set at £8,000 and Income at £8,000 for 2026/27.

(j) That War Memorials 2026/27 budgetary allocation be £NIL;

(k) That Lowfield Gardens be requested to carry out the 2026 floral displays watering service;

(l) That the Mini Golf Income be £11,000 and Expenditure be £11,000; and surplus funds from the season placed in Mini Golf EMR

(m) That the 2026 fees and charges be as follows (no change):

£3.00 per round for all users (£2.50+20% VAT);

£9.00 group ticket (up to 4 players – saving £3.00) (£7.50+20% VAT);

£15.00 loyalty ticket (7 rounds in advance – saving £6.00) (£12.00+20% VAT);

£1.00 lost ball (83p+20% VAT);

£6.00 damaged club (£5.00+20% VAT);

(n) That the 2026/27 Allotments Expenditure be £4,042 and Income be £4,042;

(o) That the allotment rental for 2027/28 for a full plot remains at £48.00.

(p) That the allotment rental for a half plot for 2027/28 is £30.

(q) That the dog agility fee for 2026/27 increases to £40.00

(r) That the Wednesday Market standard pitch fee for 2026 remains at £12, large pitch £18, and additional metre (or part) beyond 10m £2. Charity pitch remains at £0

32. OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT (DAWSON ROAD)

Section 106 application submitted, awaiting response.

Appendix A

BUDGETARY BIDS 2026/27

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is to consider budgetary bids, including fees and charges where applicable, for Play Areas, Wednesday Market, War Memorials, Floodlighting, Grounds Maintenance (grass cutting/Floral displays), Mini Golf, and Allotments, for inclusion in the overall Town Council budget for 2026/27.

2. Outcomes from Previous Meetings

- 2.1 It was resolved by Resources Committee on 01 September 2025 (minute 14(b)/September 25/refers) that non-pay inflation of 3% be assumed.

3. Play Areas

- 3.1 The town council currently manages seven play areas; Green Lane, Dawson Road, Kalafat, Marwood Drive, Bouch Way, Scar Top and The Lower Demesnes.
- 3.2 The Play Areas expenditure budget covers the costs of annual minor general maintenance and quarterly play area inspections. Quarterly inspections across all sites is currently £720.00 pa (net). The remainder of the budget is used for the cost of minor repairs/spare parts.
- 3.3 The Play Area inspection budget is recommended to remain at £2,995 for 2026/27 due to an underspend on minor repairs.
- 3.4 Park Lane Playgrounds have been carrying out quarterly play areas inspections in 2025/26. They offer good value for money, providing comprehensive reports and advice and have carried out play area repairs quickly and efficiently, when required to do so. It is proposed that their contract be extended for 2026/27.

4. Wednesday Market (self financing)

- 4.1 The anticipated out-turn income for the Wednesday market is expected to be in the region this year of £8,000. Expenditure is similarly anticipated to be approximately £8,000. This relates primarily to the costs associated with setting out the market

(salaries). Any surplus income is transferred at year end to the Wednesday Market Ear Marked Reserve.

4.2 Current pitch fees: Standard Pitch (0-6m) £12.00, Large Pitch (6-10m) £18.00, Additional metre (or part) beyond 10m £2 and Charity Pitch £0.

4.3 No change is proposed to the 2026/27 fees and charges for the Wednesday Market

5. War Memorials

5.1 Annual Inspections of each Memorial, and its immediate surrounds are carried out each year by the Chair of Services and a member of staff (spring). Any issues identified at those inspections are referred to the committee.

5.2 There is currently £1,500 in the War Memorial Earmarked Reserve.

5.3 In 2025/26, the War Memorials budget was approved as NIL. In 2026/27 the recommendation is for no change and is continually reviewed annually.

6. Floodlighting

6.1 This Council continues to be responsible for the electricity and maintenance costs of the Castle floodlights and has an associated budgetary allocation. The electricity costs are recharged to this council by Durham County Council on an annual basis. From 2015, following installation of external floodlighting to the Market Cross, the revenue costs, including electricity, of this lighting scheme are now met by the town council on the same basis.

6.2 The recharge for this financial year amounted to £470 (net). Given this was under budget the recommendation for 2026/27 is to reduce this budget element to £500.

7. Grounds Maintenance (grass cutting/floral displays)

7.1 Currently the grass cutting contract carried out by CE & CM Walker is currently valued at £14,060 the floral displays by One3One at £5,400, and the watering services by Lowfield Gardens at £3,200.

7.2 The grass cutting, floral displays and watering elements of the overall Ground maintenance budget are recommended to rise by the agreed non pay inflation figure of 3% - £14,482, £5,562 & £3,300 total £23,344

7.2 The contract for CE & CM Walker, Lowfield Gardens, and One3One be extended to 2027. This offers greater value and give consistency of works.

8. Mini Golf

8.1 Mini golf is a classed as a totally 'self-funding service', with no demand on the precept.

8.2 The 2025 income and expenditure will be reported in the review of the 2025 season. It is recommended that the estimate income and expenditure for 2026 remains at £11,000.

8.3 It is proposed that ticket prices remain unchanged for the 2026 season.

- 8.4 The mini golf attendants are employed on a seasonal basis and are included on the council's payroll and subject to the appropriate PAYE and National Insurance contributions. Expenditure in respect of employer National Insurance contributions also needs to be taken into account. It is proposed the attendants hourly rate remains at the present £10.18ph.
- 8.5 Since the 2013/14 budgetary cycle, Fees and Charges have been on a 'per season' basis to avoid changes in ticket prices should the season commence prior to 31 March (which would be the case if ticket prices were on a financial year basis).

9. Allotments (self financing)

- 9.1 The Allotments are an entirely self-funding service. After all expenditure relating to the service has been made in each year, any remaining underspend is transferred into the Allotments Improvement Earmarked Reserve.
- 9.2 The Allotments Earmarked Reserve was set up in December 2010 to facilitate essential capital projects i.e., upkeep and refurbishment of paths, boundary repairs, tree works, fencing and standpipe repairs etc.
- 9.3 The Allotment Improvements Ear Marked Reserves stands at £8,031.00.
- 9.4 For 2026/27 there are 84 active plots – 74 full and 10 half.
- 9.5 The plot rental for 2025/26 has already been determined at £48.00 because 12 months' notice must be given to tenants. It was also approved to reduce the fee for a half plot to £30 from 2025 (min 15(vi)/April/24 refers) . This would result in a 2025/26 budgetary allocation of £4,042 for both expenditure and income which includes the additional income from the sub-station of £150 and the recommended increase in the Dog Agility licence to £40.00 (from £25). This fee has not increased since 2019
- 9.6 With the allotments being self-funding and generating sufficient funding to cover costs I recommend no increase in allotment rental for 2027/28

10. Conclusion

Budgetary bids agreed at this meeting will be considered *en bloc* at the meeting of Resources Committee scheduled for 05 January 2026.

Recommendations – (a) That the Play Areas budget remain at £2,995 To cover inspections and general small items of maintenance/spares;
(b) That any underspend at the end of the year is vired to Play Area Repairs and Future Maintenance EMR
(c) That the ground maintenance budget (grass cutting & Floral) be set for 2026/27 at £23,344.
(d) That any underspend in the 2025/26 Grounds Maintenance budget be vired into the Grounds Maintenance Ear Marked Reserve;
(e) That the contracts for CE & CM Walker and One3One be extended to 2026;
(f) That the Play Areas 2026/27 Income budget (Tens Field Rental) be £100 (no change);
(g) That the Play Areas Repairs and Future Provision earmarked reserve continues;
(h) That the play areas inspection contract awarded to Park Lane Playgrounds be extended for the 2026/27 financial year;

- (i) That Wednesday Market expenditure is set at £8,000 and Income at £8,000 for 2026/27.
- (j) That War Memorials 2026/27 budgetary allocation be £NIL;
- (k) That the Floodlighting budget be £500;
- (l) That Lowfield Gardens be requested to carry out the 2026 floral displays watering service;
- (m) That the Mini Golf Income be £11,000 and Expenditure be £11,000; and surplus funds from the season placed in Mini Golf EMR
- (n) That the 2026 fees and charges be as follows (no change):
 - £3.00 per round for all users (£2.50+20% VAT);
 - £9.00 group ticket (up to 4 players – saving £3.00) (£7.50+20% VAT);
 - £15.00 loyalty ticket (7 rounds in advance – saving £6.00) (£12.00+20% VAT);
 - £1.00 lost ball (83p+20% VAT);
 - £6.00 damaged club (£5.00+20% VAT);
- (o) That the 2026/27 Allotments Expenditure be £4,042 and Income be £4,042;
- (p) That the allotment rental for 2027/28 for a full plot remains at £48.00.
- (q) That the allotment rental for a half plot for 2027/28 is £30.
- (r) That the dog agility fee for 2026/27 increases to £40.00
- (s) That the Wednesday Market standard pitch fee for 2026 remains at £12, large pitch £18, and additional metre (or part) beyond 10m £2. Charity pitch remains at £0