



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council held on
2nd December 2024 at 7pm at The Lounge, Community Link, Baildon.**

Present: Cllrs Turner, Wyatt-Millington, Foster, Griffin, Knowles, Ashton, Dixon, Reed, Town, Delaney, Shaw.

In attendance: Clerk, Cllrs Pollard and Coates Ward Councillors, Geoffrey Shaw-Champion and Wendy Tonks, Baildon Civic and Historical Society and 13 members of the public.

1. Chair's opening remarks

Cllr Turner welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr Turner noted that the Christmas Lights Switch had been a huge success with over 1,000 people attending and lots of families. The event shows Baildon at its best. This success comes on the back of a well-attended Remembrance Parade. He gave his congratulations and thanks to everyone who had been involved in organising these events.

2. Approve reasons for absence.

FC2425/47 Resolved: Cllr Sharkey reasons for absence were approved unanimously.

3. Disclosures of interest

Cllr Wyatt-Millington was a user of Baildon Recreation Centre and would abstain from voting on this issue.

Cllr Knowles was a member of the Baildon Civic and Historical Society and would abstain from voting on this issue.

4. Minutes of the Full Meeting of Council held on 23rd September 2024.

FC2425/48 Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Full meeting of Council held on 23rd September 2024 were approved subject a small amendment to add the correct dates on the bottom on page 1.

5. Clerk's Report

None

6. Appointment of councillors

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Signed.....

Date.....

Cllr Delaney was proposed to be appointed to the Community Committee by Cllr Wyatt-Millington and seconded by Cllr Griffin, approved unanimously.

FC2425/49 Resolved: Cllr Delaney is appointed to the Community Committee.

7. Public participation

Members of the public were invited to present any issues.

Mr Peter Ashton, on behalf of the Baildon Green Association, spoke about the letter he had written to Baildon Town Councillors in November. The letter had asked for the re-instatement of the Environmental Warden post. This post had been deleted by BTC in 2023 and a substantial portion of the duties moved to the role of the Deputy Clerk. Mr Ashton felt that a post was needed to look after footpaths, woodlands and other habitats in the neighbourhood area. In conclusion he would like BTC to consider re-instatement of these types of duties.

8. Baildon Civic and Historical Society and Yorkshire Day 2025

Mr Geoffrey Shaw-Champion and Ms Wendy Tonks presented their case for the Civic Society to repeat the very successful 2024 Yorkshire Day. They listed out the wide range of activities which had been popular and would be planned again, up to 800 people had attended the 2024 event and lots of families. Businesses had reported increased turnover on the day. A grant would assist the Society and would also help to make their case when applying for other grants.

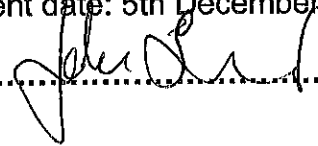
Cllr Turner responded that the 2024 event had indeed been very successful and could be built on year on year. A budget of £1,000 is proposed for Yorkshire Day 2025 in BTC's Draft budget and this would be considered in a forthcoming item on this agenda.

9. Closure of Baildon Recreation

Cllr Turner introduced what had been learnt in the press about Bradford Council's proposed closure. He had responded quickly to the Telegraph and Argus on behalf of the Town Council to express surprise and concern for the lack of consultation and what would happen to the existing users of the building. There was no doubt the building was in poor condition and prone to flooding.

Cllr Shaw had spoken with some residents and the feeling was that the building was not being used and so the decision had been made on that basis. Cllr Griffin noted that there had not been any consultation. If there had been, then this might have given users and the community a chance to encourage and increase usage of the building. Cllr Ashton queried whether in fact the service there had been run into the ground and was concerned about the timing of the decision, coming as it does whilst there is still no clarity on the development of Baildon Club to replace the facilities which existed in Ian Clough Hall. Cllr Dixon confirmed that the lack of consultation was a breach of the protocol between the Principal Authority and the Parish

Cllr Turner proposed that BTC writes a letter to Bradford Council to convey its concerns and asking for assurances.

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FC2425/50 Resolved: to delegate to the Clerk the writing of a letter to Bradford Council to express the feelings of Baldon Town Council on the matter of closing the Baldon Recreation Centre.

10. Important information from Councillors and Staff.

Cllr Wyatt-Millington spoke regarding his membership of the Shipley Model Railway Society who used Baldon Recreation. Their set up took up an entire floor and needed 2 hours to set up and take down ie it was significant. The Society has been at this location since 1982 and Bradford Council needed to understand the substantial nature of the set up for the Model Railway and how that would need to be accommodated elsewhere. He extended an open invitation to all town councillors to come and view the Model Railway.

Cllr Foster also mentioned that Baldon Recreation Centre outdoors areas stored all the Town Council's road closure signage and this needed to be raised.

Cllr Dixon extended an invitation to all councillors regarding giving feedback and comments on the Christmas Lights Switch On Event and could this feedback be emailed to her.

11. Bracken Hall Countryside Centre

Three recommendations from Environment Committee were presented for consideration by Full Council.

FC2425/51 Resolved: Full Council unanimously supports ENV2425/25 and is against closing Bracken Hall Countryside Centre. Proposed Cllr Turner, seconded Cllr Wyatt-Millington, voted for unanimously.

Cllr Shaw, as Chair of Environment Committee presented the background to ENV2425/21 ie transitioning the BHCC post to a full-time position for two years (ENV2425/20 &24) as a strategic investment in our leadership and to reinforce our commitment to Bracken Hall Countryside Centre. The Centre had been run by BTC for 10 years and success had been limited by the low number of staff hours, inability to earn income, difficulties recruiting volunteers and thus closures at the weekend. A full-time post would address many of these shortcomings. A full-time post would be more attractive than part-time in recruitment terms. It was important the Council took the opportunity of the 2025 City of Culture and legacy year in 2026.

Cllr Dixon noted that this was indeed the moment to try to reach the potential of the Centre and she commented that scheduling this item alongside the budget decisions had been tricky. She commented that time left on the lease is limited, the new postholder should be contracted to work 50% of weekends and Cllr Dixon did not agree that a 30-hour post would be less attractive for recruitment. The Centre was a small facility and so 30 hours should really be sufficient to manage it well. Cllr Dixon raised concerns about using reserves to fund salaries. Reserves can only be spent once and there is a concern about protecting the Council's financial position in the future.

Cllr Griffin and Cllr Foster supported 37 hours and wondered if the Environmental Warden duties could be incorporated into the job.

Cllr Ashton felt that any increase in hours was an improvement and the Centre had the potential to be much more used than it was currently. There was potential to combine environmental tasks in to the job. In conclusion 37 hours would be well used and the financial difference between 30 and 37 hours is not great.

Cllr Wyatt-Millington welcomed keeping the Centre open but queried the need for 37 hours. Cllr Knowles was concerned about the usage of the Centre and whether 37 hours could be justified. Where is the Business Plan to demonstrate need?

Cllr Turner summed up by saying that he believed that a full-time post would get the best candidates. If the Nature Reserve comes into existence, we would be well placed to take advantage of this. Local schools were keen to discuss what was on offer and a full-time member of staff would be able to fully address that. Any decision by the Council would need the backing of the public, volunteers and all those involved at Bracken Hall.

FC2425/52 Resolved: Full Council supports transitioning the BHCC post to a full-time position for two years (ENV2425/20 &24) as a strategic investment in our leadership and to reinforce our commitment to Bracken Hall. Proposed Cllr Turner, Second Cllr Shaw. 7 votes for the proposal and 4 votes against.

Full Council then addressed the recommendation from Environment Committee (ENV2425/22) requesting that Full Council tasks Staffing Sub Committee with progressing, as soon as possible, the formulation of the new position in terms of job description, costs and recruitment.

Cllr Dixon proposed an amendment to the proposed resolution:
'Full Council tasks Staffing Sub Committee with progressing, as soon as possible, the formulation of the new position in terms of job description *including regular weekend working*, costs and recruitment'.

This was seconded by Cllr Wyatt-Millington.

4 votes for the amendment, 7 votes against, amendment rejected.

Original resolution was proposed: 'Full Council tasks Staffing Sub Committee with progressing, as soon as possible, the formulation of the new position in terms of job description, costs and recruitment'.

Proposed by Cllr Turner, seconded by Cllr Shaw, resolved unanimously.

FC2425/53 Resolved: Full Council tasks Staffing Sub Committee with progressing, as soon as possible, the formulation of the new position in terms of job description, costs and recruitment.

12. Budget Report

The Clerk/RFO presented the Budget Report for the 2025/26 Budget for Precept. The Clerk/RFO described that the rationale had been to incorporate all the costs as recommended by Committees (with Option 1 for 37 hours post and Option 2 for a 30-hour post), increased payroll costs (e.g. Employer's National Insurance) whilst keeping the precept rise to 5% or 6% and controlling the use of available general reserves. The Council's reserves situation was discussed and whilst this budget proposal could be afforded, the Clerk/RFO highlighted that the BTC Investment, Contingency and Earmarked Reserves had to be closely monitored. The Clerk/RFO requested Council to give a clear steer on how to make small adjustments the budget in the event of a tax base rise.

Cllr Wyatt- Millington noted his concern regarding the use of reserves. Cllr Shaw mentioned that the proposed precept rises kept us within the midpoint compared to other Bradford Parish Councils' precepts. Reserves were there because other projects had not been fully spent and so we should use them to benefit this project and the residents of Baildon. Cllr Ashton concurred that use of reserves in this situation should be seen as an investment.

Cllr Knowles had asked for a review of expenditure on the toilets to assist with budget setting. Cllr Dixon, Vice Chair of Economy Committee said that this was in hand but had not yet been completed. Cllr Knowles noted that next year Full Council should meet *after* the tax base for Baildon Parish was confirmed by Bradford Council as this would give us better information to work with.

Cllr Foster proposed an amendment to Governance Committee's recommendations: **GOV2425/41 Resolved:** to recommend to Full Council the additional budget allocation of £4,000 for Community Development (6015).

Amendment to read: 'to recommend to Full Council *the additional budget allocation of £5,000 for Community Development in relation to £1,000 for funding the Wellbeing Café*'.

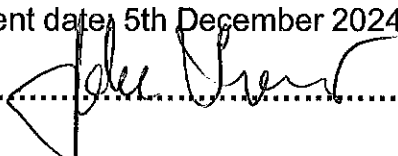
Proposed by Cllr Foster, Seconded by Cllr Ashton. 6 votes for, 4 votes against, 1 abstention.

FC2425/54 Resolved: Full Council approves the additional budget allocation in 2025/26 of £5,000 for Community Development (6015) in relation to £1,000 for funding the Wellbeing Café.

Governance Committee had recommended (GOV2425/46) that Full Council delegate to the Clerk/RFO the implementation of agreed changes to the draft 2025/26 budget and use a 5% **or** 6% rise in precept and the use of reserves to fund a balanced draft budget.

However Full Council only addressed Option 1 in the budget report because the decision had already been taken earlier in the meeting (FC2425/52) that the budget includes a 37-hour post at Bracken Hall Countryside Centre. This Option is that the 2025/26 budget report for precept from the Clerk/RFO is noted and the 2025/26 budgeted spend (based on a tax base of 6301) of £359,320 is approved with a 6% rise in the precept.

Proposed by Cllr Turner, seconded by Cllr Wyatt-Millington. 9 votes for, 1 abstention.



FC2425/55 Resolved: the 2025/26 budget report for precept from the Clerk is noted and the 2025/26 budget expenditure of £365,780 and raising £336,103.16 (on a tax base of 6301) from the precept is approved with a 6% rise in the precept.

Cllr Dixon suggested an additional resolution in order to give more guidance to the Clerk/RFO:

Amendment to read: *'Full Council resolves that should the Council tax base be confirmed as increased by Bradford Council in due course, any increased funding is allocated in such a way as to reduce reliance on reserves to balance the budget for 2025/26'.*

Proposed by Cllr Wyatt-Millington, seconded by Cllr Turner, unanimously voted for.

FC2425/56 Resolved: should the Council tax base be confirmed as increased by Bradford Council in due course, any increased funding is allocated in such a way as to reduce reliance on reserves to balance the budget for 2025/26.

13. Earmarked Reserves

The Clerk/RFO presented the summary recommendations of Governance Committee (GOV2425/45) for changes and amendments to Earmarked Reserves.

FC2425/57 Resolved: to note and approve the recommendations of Governance Committee in relation to the movements and changes to Earmarked Reserves and to delegate to the Clerk their implementation at the year end.

Proposed by Cllr Turner, seconded by Cllr Ashton and voted for unanimously.

14. Promotional Opportunities

Statement about Baildon Town Council's budget decision.

Statement about the Bracken Hall Countryside Centre post.

The 2K City of Culture budget to be promoted at the meeting on 10th December.

An open letter to be circulated about the Baildon Recreation Centre closure.

15. To notify the Clerk of any item for future agenda.

Cllr Ashton suggested that the Council Meeting Calendar for 2025/26 could usefully be taken as soon as possible.

16. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of Full Council is 10th March 2025