



Council Introduction

This is the Annual Report for Bishop Auckland Town Council Civic Year Ending 31st March 2023.

During the year the Council has continued to be actively involved in the management of the areas in its control, especially the areas of public open space. Investment is continuing in the parks and play areas, and this is supported by grant funding applications to ensure that our Town provides a wide range of facilities that help our residents, both young and old, to develop to their maximum potential, keep fit and active and make new friends at the same time. We will continue to do all that is possible to maintain our facilities and are open to all new ideas and suggestions from residents that will help to further improve our Town for our residents and visitors. Community Consultation has taken place during the year and our Action Planning for the coming year will be in response to the ideas and suggestions the Community has made.

The Town Council's aims and values are set out in the following Mission Statement:

“Working in partnership to improve the quality of life for all those who live, work, visit or invest in Bishop Auckland.”

In doing so, the Council will:

Conduct business openly and democratically, and consult with local people.

- Act in the best interests of local people in making appropriate representations to Durham County Council and other appropriate private and public sector groups.
- Deliver services to the highest quality in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and value for money.
- Continue to build relationships with the community and voluntary organisations and with the statutory, public and private sector.
- Encourage and promote economic and commercial long terms plans for the town through partnership working.
- Recognise and support diversity and seek to strengthen the inclusion of all residents of Bishop Auckland.

In 2022 Bishop Auckland Town Council signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge. The Civility and Respect Pledge is being introduced by the National Association of Local Councils because there is no place for bullying, harassment and intimidation within our sector. It shows that Bishop Auckland is committed to standing up to poor behaviour and to driving through positive changes which support civil and respectful conduct.



Bishop Auckland Town Council has an office based at Kingsway Court, 54 Kingsway Bishop Auckland. It currently employs a full time Town Clerk, a full time Assistant Town Clerk, and full time Admin Assistant.

Message from the Mayor Michael Siddle

Representing this community as Mayor for 2022-23 has been a privilege. I have enjoyed the great opportunities the role has given me. I have been part of some fantastic partnership working and developments within the town.

Hosting the late Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee party was definitely a highlight. What an amazing weekend was had by all involved and the fantastic number of people who came along to one or more of the three days events was staggering. Some special memories made for so many who took part. Who can forget those breakdancing guards and queen. I can see how Bishop Auckland has gone from strength to strength over the past 12 months and look forward to the completion of the regeneration works and for new life to be brought back into the town and once again Bishop Auckland will be a place to visit by all.

Other events I have represented the town at have included the David Venables Exhibition at El Castello Tapas Bar, The Durham Dash which hundreds of school children across the town took part in at the Kynren site, the opening of the new Spar on Watling Road as well as Dali Surreal World exhibition in the tower and market place to name just a few. This year has certainly kept me active.

Hosting the Mayor at Home in the beautiful surroundings of Auckland Castle was a proud moment in my tenure as was the wonderful Mayor's Valentine's Ball, held at the Town Hall. The evening has a great atmosphere and was made all the more special by the exquisite food from 2021 MasterChef contestant Mike Bartley and entertainment from the great local band JD and the Woodsmen. Let's not forget the exceptionally well attended quiz night at the Pollards, who kindly provided a pie and pea supper. I topped off my fundraising events with a well attended 'Steaming from the past to the future event' which incorporated an railway art exhibition, along with guest speakers.

I am thrilled to have raised over £3300, during my time as Mayor, for my chosen organisation Daisy Arts CIC, which will use the money to support their youth theatre group, which runs weekly sessions at Woodhouse Close. A special thank you goes to all those who supported my fundraising efforts by attending events and donating prizes, including some wonderful businesses in Bishop Auckland.

I can't finish without paying tribute to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. She fulfilled her promise to reign over us the whole life and she did this with such finesse. I wish King Charles III every success going forward.

I wish the incoming Mayor the best of luck as they take on the role.

*Michael Siddle
Mayor of Bishop Auckland 2022-23*

Services

The Council continues to deliver allotment provision across the town council area. Sites are predominantly managed by the Town Council, with some having associations in operation, and one site being self managed.

The Council has sites at

Tindale Crescent, Woodhouse Close, Edge Hill, Pollards, South Church, Mill Race, Broken Banks and West Mills.

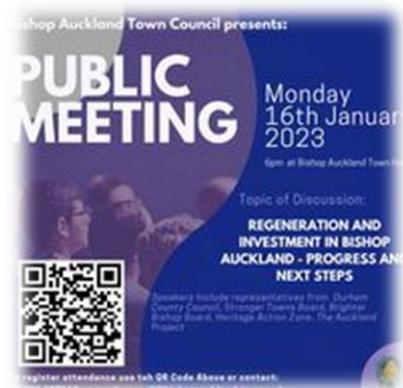
Over the Summer 2022 the Council undertook a review of the Allotment Rules and Regulations to ensure that they were fit for purpose and met the needs of the sites, and the tenants. A consultation was had and the new rules came into place from 1st November 2022.

An allotment mapping exercise also commenced to ensure that plots are appropriately recorded, and from November 2023, once the mapping is complete the new sizes will be used on the tenancies for tenants, to ensure that the records are accurate.

The Town Council undertook a full inspection of all plots in September 2022, this will now be an annual exercise to ensure that plots are being appropriately used and managed. This also enables proactive site management and maintenance.

Holding to account – Public Meeting

In response to calls from the community the Town Council arranged a public forum meeting for residents, businesses and general interested parties to come along to receive updates regarding the 'Regeneration and investment in Bishop Auckland' to learn of the progress and next steps. Durham County Council lead the presentations, from a range of parties regarding the projects and the progress. The meeting was well received and provided some reassurance to the community.



Events & Activities

It has been a busy year of activities and events across the town. The Following is just a snap shot of the activities which have taken place over the last year.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration Weekend

In June last year the Town Council brought together the community over three days of the extended Platinum Jubilee Weekend at a range of events, all of which were free to attend. The Council received an Awards for All grant to help support the activity however the majority of the funds came from the Town Council reserves. The council worked with the Auckland Project and commissioned Bridge Creative CIC and Baccanalia to help them deliver the event.

The celebrations started with the **Platinum Party** on the Thursday evening. This was an entertainment extravaganza in the Market Place, featuring a range of entertainers on the stage and street performers. There were singers and brake dancing soldiers. The finale of the evening was the lighting of the Jubilee Beacon by the Bishop of Durham Paul Butler, which was then followed by a fire show. It was a wonderful event. Over 7,000 people came out to celebrate and see the beacon be lit.

Friday brought a **vintage car show** to the Market Place, where each of the 35 exhibitors received a platinum jubilee medal.

Saturday was a **picnic party** at the castle with over 600 people enjoying a relaxed afternoon of entertainment, picnics, games and crafts for the children. This ran alongside a **free fun fair** for younger children in the market place.

A snap shot of the event can be seen in the following images:



Bishop Auckland Dash



Go-well are passionate about physical exercise and holds an annual event that started in 2020 to help promote and deliver innovative programmes to help improve wellness through movement with children. Thus encouraging children to have a more healthy lifestyle. Hundreds of primary school aged children attended to Bishop Auckland DASH in June 2022 at the Eleven Arches site where heats took place in the afternoon sunshine. It was a fantastic fun afternoon by all who attended and took part. I wish the best of luck to Go-well who has a vision to have a positive impact on the wellness of 1 million people by 2025.

Paying Tribute to Queen Elizabeth II

The whole country mourned the passing of the HM Queen Elizabeth II. In partnership with Rev Matt Keddilby Bishop Auckland Town Council delivered the proclamation and prepared a local service at St Andrew's Church followed by a vigil at St Anne's Church where 96 candles were lit.

This tribute gave the whole community the opportunity to pay their respects.



Dali Surreal Worlds

The Town Council had the pleasure to attend The Auckland Project preview event of the Dali Surreal Worlds in October 2022, an immersive community art project. The exhibition lit up not only the market place but the tower as there was a large-scale light installation at each site. The work was a collaboration between professional artists and over 200 local young people. This huge undertaking was inspired by the Salvador Dali masterpiece Christ of Saint John of the Cross which was being exhibited at the Spanish gallery.



Bishop Auckland Remembrance Parade

Huge crowds gathered in Bishop Auckland Market Place on Remembrance Sunday 2022 to pay tribute to those who had fought and lost their lives in war. The War Memorial Service at St Anne's Church in the Market Place was organised by Bishop Auckland Town Council staff. This year's Remembrance Service and Parade was very well organised. The parade was led by 8th Battalion the Rifles, followed by Army Cadet Force, Royal Air Force Cadets, the Scouts, Guides, veterans and members of the public, the 8th Battalion the Rifles set off from the Newgate Centre and marched to the War Memorial in the Market Place.

The Service at the War Memorial was led by Reverend Matt Keddilby of St Anne's Church. Two minutes' silence was impeccably held at exactly 11.00am marking the Anniversary of the end of World War One.

Christmas Town 2022



Town Council partnered with Bridge Creative and Baccanalia to host a weekend of successful weekend of Christmas cheer. The event was bigger and better than the previous year and footfall as huge, over 17,000 people attended. The Friday was the Bishop Auckland Town Council Community Christmas Party, with entertainment and craft making sessions for children. The roaring success was the sensational snow globe with people down the street to get inside.



Mayor's events

The Mayor Michael Siddle hosted his Mayor at Home event in the library of Auckland Castle. After a lovely buffet guests could look around the castle and enjoy what Bishop has to offer. A lovely afternoon was had by all and more funds raised for the Mayor's charity.

He also hosted a 'Valentines Ball' at the Town Hall with catering provided by 2021 MasterChef Contestant Mike Bartley, and entertainment from JD and the Woodsmen.

A fun quiz night was hosted at the Pollards Inn, with free pie and pea supper.

He hosted 'Steaming from the Past to the Future' a railway heritage evening, with speakers, and a railway art exhibition. All of the events have helped him to raise over £3,300 for Daisy Arts CIC whom he chose to fundraise for during his term of office, which will be used to support the Youth Theatre Group at Woodhouse Close.

Supporting the Community

Bishop Auckland Town Council allocates £5,000 each year to support local organisation working for the benefit of Bishop Auckland residents. Community groups and local charities can apply for grants of up to £500. Applications are considered twice a year. Firstly, in June and then again in December.

Grants are limited and are made available to organisations that can demonstrate a need for assistance. Grants cannot be awarded to Individuals, commercial businesses, political organisations or for the promotion of religious activities.

The following are just some of the community groups that have received grants during 2022-23 financial year showing the variety of projects that can be assisted.

The town council also have made donations and sought donations to support other projects such as:

- £500 Angel Trust's Jubilee Jog – to help fund medals
- £500 Replacement Cooker for the Reinvent Community Hub at Cockton Hill
- £478 Breast Feeding Peer Support Group at the Four Clocks Centre
- £500 To Support the Bishop Auckland Theatre Society with their Annual Pantomime
- £100 Donation to Wear Valley Community Action to cover hall hire for their annual community Christmas fair.
- £500 to Bishop Auckland Rugby Club to fund new Rugby posts for the first team pitch.

The town council also supports the Bishop Auckland Food Festival with a £10,000 contribution which saw over 35,000 visit the town for the 2022 event.

The Town Council also supports Citizens Advice Service in the town with £3,000 donation which helps to fund a local worker to support the people of Bishop Auckland.

Financial Summary

Total Budget 2022-23 - £281,099

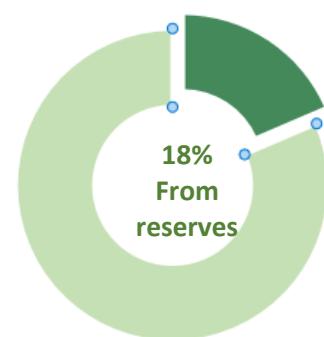


of the budget comes from Council Tax – the parish precept.

The Town Council does not receive any proportion of business rates



of which comes from grants, including Localisation of Council Tax Grant which is passed down from the Government by Durham County Council



The remaining amount of budget is taken from reserves of the council or other renumeration such as rent. .

The 2022 -23 Statement of Accounts, will be added to the Council website, once they have been approved by Town Council and then submitted to the auditor. The Internal audit report and external audit report will accompany them.

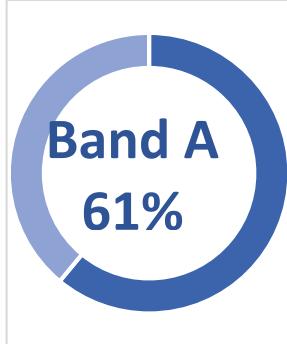
We have service level agreements with Durham County Council (DCC) for IT/HR Services, and building compliance. We now take finance payments by bank transfer, and pay as many of our invoices by bank transfer.

Council Tax – precept 2022-23

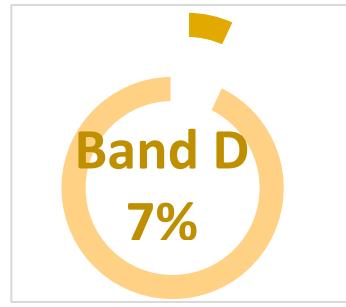
There are eight council tax bands which range from

- **Band A** - Properties valued at below £40,00 on 1st April 1991, to
- **Band H** - properties valued above £320,000 on 1st April 1991.

Council Tax is usually quoted at **Band D** so that comparisons can be made with other councils. However, this does not give the full picture as the majority of people within our area live in Band A properties



61% of council tax payers in the Town Council area live in Band A properties. These households will paid £33.14 per year



Only 7% of council tax payers in the Town Council area live in Band D properties. These households paid £52.10 per year

Town Councillors

During the 2022-23 municipal year there has been a change of councillors due to resignations or disqualification of a councillor during late 2021-22 and early 2022-23. There was a by-election in Henknowle Ward in September with Cllr Kim Lawson being elected. Cllr Mike Harker was co-opted to the Henknowle ward in October and Cllr Andrew Legge was co-opted to the Cockton Hill ward in November 2023. Co-opted Councillors are not eligible to take an allowance from the council unless they are elected as Chair..

Members Allowances

The Local Authorities Members' Allowances (England) Regulations 2003 require the Council to publish details of the actual allowances paid to its elected Councillors for the financial year 2022-23

Councillor	Basic Allowance	Mayor's Allowance	Travel Expenses	Notes
Balmer- Howieson Harley	£440.04			
Blackburn, Jamie	£440.04			
Brownson, Lee	£36.67			Resignation – April 2022
Chappell, Leanda	£220.02			Resignation – September 2022
Eliot, Katherine J.	£440.04	£36.67	£96.00	
Harker, Mike	£0.00*			Co-opted Town Councillor Henknowle Ward, 18 th October 2022 *Co-opted Members not eligible for basic allowance
Lawson, Kimm	£293.36			Elected Town Councillor Henknowle Ward By-Election, 21 st July 2022
Legge, Andrew	£0.00*			Co-opted Town Councillor Cockton Hill, Ward 29 th November 2022 *Co-opted Members not eligible for basic allowance
Siddle, Michael	£440.04	£403.37		
Tucker, Tanya	£36.67			Disqualification of Town Councillor – April 2022
Wilson, David	£440.04			
Zair, Adam J.	£440.04			
Zair, Lesley G.	£440.04			
Zair, Samuel	£440.04			

Cockton Hill Ward		Woodhouse Ward	
	Councillor Michael Siddle 32 Prescott Way Bishop Auckland Co. Durham DL14 6FL		Councillor Jamie Blackburn 28 Granville Road Bishop Auckland Co. Durham DL14 6UD
	Councillor Andrew Legge 49A Fore Bondgate Bishop Auckland Co. Durham DL14 7PE		Councillor Harley Balmer-Howieson 55 Murphy Crescent Bishop Auckland Co. Durham DL14 6QH
	Councillor Lesley Zair 3 Walcher Gardens Bishop Auckland Co. Durham DL14 7GA		Councillor David Wilson 28 Proudfoot Drive Woodhouse Close Estate Bishop Auckland Co. Durham DL14 6NX
Henknowle Ward		Town Ward	
	Councillor Katherine Eliot 50 Ennerdale Drive Crook Co. Durham DL15 8NU		Councillor Adam J Zair 3 Walcher Gardens Bishop Auckland Co. Durham DL14 7GA
	Councillor Mike Harker 16A Dene Hall Drive Bishop Auckland Co. Durham DL14 6UG		Councillor Sam Zair 3 Walcher Gardens Bishop Auckland Co. Durham DL14 7GA
	Councillor Kimm Lawson 45 Craddock Street Bishop Auckland Co. Durham DL14 6HB	BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL Kingsway Court 54 Kingsway Bishop Auckland Co Durham DL14 7JF TEL: 01388 207110 council@bishopauckland-tc.gov.uk www.bishopauckland-tc.gov.uk	