



Minutes of the Property Committee Meeting
Date: Wednesday 22 September 2026 Time: 5.30pm

**Venue: Downham Market Town Hall, Bridge Street, Downham Market,
 Norfolk PE38 9DE**

Present

Committee Chair – Cllr Jordan

Committee Members – Cllrs Lane, Leach, Leivers, Lewis, C Pyatt, Sims & Wiles (8)

Claire Dornan - Town Clerk

Darren Martin – Deputy Clerk

1 Member of the public

The Chair reminded members to turn their phones to silent and explained the emergency evacuation procedures.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Pegg gave his apologies due to ill health.

2. Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

Cllr Leivers declared an interest in Agenda Item 8b.

3. Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2026.

RESOLVED:

‘That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2026 be approved as a correct record.’

Proposed – Cllr Jordan

Seconded – Cllr Wiles

All in Favour

4. Public Participation

Members considered correspondence from Downham Town Football Club requesting that the Town Council act as a joint applicant in support of a grant application for the Club’s clubhouse.

As the matter was not included on the agenda, Members were unable to formally consider or vote on the proposal. However, Members raised concerns regarding the potential

obligations and liabilities that could arise from the Town Council acting as a joint applicant, including responsibility for maintenance, repairs and insurance.

Members also expressed concern that the clubhouse is a temporary structure and that, in the absence of formal planning permission, the Town Council's involvement in the grant application could potentially create planning and regulatory implications.

Members noted that the Town Council's planning application for the Jubilee Community Centre includes provision for a kitchen with an external hatch, and that the Town Council intends to pursue its own grant funding for this facility. It was considered that supporting a separate grant application for the football club could therefore conflict with the Town Council's own proposals.

Concern was also expressed regarding the precedent that could be established by the Town Council lending its local authority status to support grant funding for a privately owned facility. Members further noted the potential financial implications should the football club cease operating within the five-year period and any grant funding become repayable.

The Town Clerk was requested to communicate Members' concerns to the author of the correspondence.

Members were made aware of the complaint raised regarding the Sunday market which was discussed at Finance & General Purposes Committee. The Town Clerk believes that the matter has now been resolved.

Mr Peter Dornan (Member of the Public) who volunteers for the Town Council, advised that the flag rope had been replaced and the Town Council's flag was able to fly once more. The Chair thanked Mr Dornan for his contribution to the Council.

5. Town Hall and Town Square / Town Hall Car Park Works Town Square

a. To receive an update on the ACO drain and realignment of the steps and agree any further actions.

Members were advised that the work was scheduled for Wednesday 23 September 2026 and Thursday 24 September 2026.

b. To receive an update on the Town Clock and agree any further actions.

Members were advised that Smith of Derby will be completing the works on the cracked paint and the run of paint. It is believed that the paint failure was caused by the hot weather.

c. To receive an update on the Town Square lighting and agree any further actions.

Members were advised that the officer at Westcotec with whom the Town Council's office has been liaising is currently on sick leave and, consequently, the works have not yet been scheduled.

The Town Clerk expressed concern that the Autumn Equinox has now passed and the evenings are becoming darker. Members were advised that, if the works have not been scheduled by the next meeting, the Town Clerk will consider alternative options.

Town Hall Car Park and Town Square

d. To receive quotes to install the replacement of bollard flaps and sockets and agree any further actions.

Members were advised that 3 quotes had been sought. One contractor had denied to quote. Another had not submitted a quote. Therefore members only had the quote from Penty Contractors Ltd to consider for £1,200.00 + VAT.

RESOLVED:

'That the quote from Penty Contractors Ltd be accepted.'

Proposed – Cllr Leach

Seconded – Cllr Lewis

All in Favour

Town Hall

e. To receive an update on the planning permission for the replacement of the Town Hall windows and agree any further actions.

Members were advised that the Architect, Darren French, is due to submit the application for authorisation to the Town Clerk on Friday 25 September 2026.

f. To receive an update on the Town Hall lift and agree any further actions.

Members were advised that the works had been completed and the lift was fully operational.

g. To receive an update on the plastering of the Clock Room and agree any further actions.

Members were advised that the quotation for plastering the Clock Room had not included the removal and refitting of the Burko boiler.

The contractor had advised that the additional works could be undertaken by his team at a cost of £150 plus VAT.

The Town Clerk had obtained comparative costs from the Town Council's preferred electrician, at £50, and preferred plumber, at £82.50 plus VAT.

Members noted that arranging the works separately through the Council's preferred contractors would result in a saving of £17.50. However, it was considered that the saving would be outweighed by the additional officer time and project management required to coordinate the works.

RESOLVED:

'That the Purchase Order be increased by £150 + VAT to cover the additional works.'

Proposed – Cllr Jordan

Seconded –Cllr Lane

All in Favour

h. To receive an update on the ceiling rose outside the Assembly Room and agree any further actions.

Members were advised that the works had been completed.

The Town Clerk recommended that Members consider making provision within the 2027/2028 budget for the repainting of the ceilings, noting that the newly painted bright white areas highlighted the condition of the existing ceilings.

i. To receive an update on the replacement of damaged tables and agree any further actions.

Members were advised that the new tables had been received and asset identification stickers affixed.

The existing tables will now be assessed to determine their condition and suitability for disposal, with a view to offering them for sale via Facebook Marketplace in due course.

j. To receive an update on the Assembly Room curtain ties and agree any further actions.

The Town Clerk asked whether Members had considered replacing the existing curtain tieback hooks, as the designer had recommended positioning the tiebacks at a different level from the current fixings. It was also noted that the existing tieback hooks were no longer considered to be in keeping with the newly decorated rooms.

Members confirmed that replacement tieback hooks had not previously been considered and reviewed the recommendation from Curtains by Helena to purchase Large Ball Tassel Tieback Hooks.

RESOLVED:

'That the Town Clerk be authorised to purchase 8 pairs of Large Ball Tassel Tieback Hooks.'

Proposed – Cllr Jordan

Seconded –Cllr Wiles

All in Favour

k. To consider Town Hall stage quotes and agree any further actions.

Members considered the additional quotations received in relation to the proposed works to the stage. The contractor had provided four options for consideration.

Members agreed that further quotations should be obtained to enable a more comprehensive assessment of the available options and associated costs. It was noted that, depending on the scope and value of the works, a formal tender process may be required.

It was agreed that the matter would be considered in greater detail as part of the 2027/2028 budget-setting process.

Cllr C Pyatt noted that no significant works had been undertaken to the stage for approximately 40 years.

l. To receive quote for Town Hall Kitchen Fire Exit replacement and agree any further actions.

Members were advised that the quote had not been received from Evolution Doors, the Council's preferred contractor.

m. To receive report on Town Hall Grand Hall Fire Exits and agree any further actions.

Members considered the quotation received from Evolution Doors for the replacement of the panic bars on both doors, at a cost of £850 plus VAT.

Members agreed that the works were urgent and should be undertaken as soon as reasonably practicable.

RESOLVED:

'That the quote from Evolution Doors be accepted.'

Proposed – Cllr Lewis

Seconded – Cllr Sims

All in Favour

Members also noted the cracking to the existing doors and agreed that consideration should be given to their replacement as part of the planning application currently being prepared for the Town Hall.

RESOLVED:

'That the architect, Darren French, be instructed to add replacement Fire Doors to the Town Hall Planning Application.'

Proposed – Cllr Lewis

Seconded – Cllr Lane

All in Favour

n. To receive an update on Martyn's Law and consider any actions required in relation to the Town Hall.

Members were advised that the Town Hall and the Jubilee Community Centre site will be Standard Tier.

Members were advised that the Town Clerk had contacted Downham Town Football Club to obtain their maximum numbers to allow a Risk Assessment to be written. Downham Market Boxing Club will also be contacted as will hirers of the Jubilee Community Centre.

As the events held outside the Town Hall are open access the events will be out of scope.

6. Jubilee Community Centre

a. To receive an update on the installation of pedestrian crossings, flow plates, speed humps, signage and fencing and consider outstanding related works such as footpath past flow plates.

Members were advised that the fencing works previously approved by Full Council were scheduled for installation during the week commencing 5 October 2026.

It was noted that the flow plates would be installed following completion of the fencing works, as some of the associated signage would need to be mounted on poles attached to the new fencing.

Members requested that quotations be obtained for the installation of a 1.2 metre wide tarmac footpath along the Rouses End open-access fence, extending to the pedestrian crossing.

Cllr Lane reported an incident on Tuesday 15 September 2026, during which a Transit van travelled against the one-way system and narrowly avoided causing an accident. Members noted that the installation of the flow plates was intended to address this issue and improve compliance with the one-way system.

b. To receive quote for hardstanding under the bin store.

Members discussed the quotes for digging off and removing the soil from the corner of the car park to approximately 12 inches deep and levelling off approximately 10m triangle area to allow for a bin store area to be built to assist with manual handling on site.

RESOLVED:

'That the quote from NPS Fencing & Countryside Management Ltd for £2,000 + VAT be accepted.'

Proposed – Cllr Lewis

Seconded – Cllr Sims

All in Favour

c. To receive an update on the installation of hand dryers.

Members were advised that the hand dryers had been installed and the paper towel dispensers removed.

d. To note and receive an update on the leak in the first room.

Members were advised that the leak had been rectified.

Investigation identified that a compression joint was leaking and that a section of new pipework was required to supply the boiler.

The Town Clerk advised that the cost of the repair was £95.00 plus VAT and had been authorised and completed under the Council's Emergency Expenditure provisions.

e. To consider replacing the benches near the old Skate Park location.

Members noted that the Town Clerk had raised the condition of the benches near the Jubilee Sports Centre during a property inspection and they had also been raised by The Play Inspection Company on 18 September 2026 whilst they completed their inspection of the Adult Gym Equipment.

The Town Clerk suggested that the same benches that were recently purchased for the Memorial Garden be purchased to replace the existing benches and the Caretakers remove and dispose of the existing benches.

The cost of a Captain's Treble Seat 870 x 1671 x 650 in Brown had cost £342 + VAT per bench from NCC Recycled Furniture.

RESOLVED:

'That the Town Clerk be authorised to purchase 2 benches from NCC Recycled Furniture.'

Proposed – Cllr Lane

Seconded – Cllr Leivers

All in Favour

f. To receive an update on the Skate Park procurement process

Members were advised that the Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Mayor had attended a site meeting with the appointed consultant on 11 September 2026 to discuss the proposed Skate Park development.

The consultant had suggested that the new Skate Park should provide an area of approximately 40 metres by 20 metres, providing sufficient space for a range of features and facilities to cater for users of different ages and abilities.

Members were advised that the estimated cost of a concrete Skate Park had increased significantly, from approximately £300 per square metre three years ago to around £500 per

square metre currently. The consultant therefore recommended that the project progress as soon as practicable, given the potential for further increases in construction costs.

The Council currently has £203,000 earmarked for the project. However, the consultant recommended that a budget of approximately £300,000 be considered to enable the delivery of a high-quality, purpose-designed facility with a comprehensive range of features.

It was advised that a significantly lower budget would restrict the scope and specification of the facility and could result in a less comprehensive scheme.

Members discussed the potential long-term benefits of the project and noted that, following significant expenditure by the Council in recent years on improvements to car parking and other town facilities, investment in a high-quality Skate Park would represent a further long-term asset for Downham Market. Members considered that a well-designed facility could provide a valuable recreational amenity for the town, accessible to a wide range of age groups and providing opportunities for young people and the wider community.

Members agreed that an Expression of Interest tender process should be undertaken to invite interested and suitably experienced parties to submit proposals and ideas for the development of the Skate Park. This process would assist the Council in understanding the options available, the likely scope and specification of the facility and the associated costs before making a final decision.

It was agreed that consideration be given to increasing the budget provision for the Skate Park project from the current £203,000 to £300,000, subject to the outcome of the Expression of Interest process and further consideration of the proposals and costs received.

Members noted that progressing the project at the earliest practicable opportunity would assist in mitigating the risk of further increases in construction costs and maximise the value of the funds available for the project.

RESOLVED:

‘That Property Committee recommend to Full Council and increase in the Skate Park budget from £203,000 to £300,000.’

Proposed – Cllr Sims

Seconded – Cllr Lane

All in Favour

Members also discussed possible grant opportunities to explore.

g. To consider replacing the chain link fence.

Members agreed that the existing chain-link fencing was in need of replacement. It was considered that a site visit would be beneficial to assess the condition and layout of the existing fencing and to determine whether post-and-rail fencing would be a suitable alternative around the car park.

It was agreed that the next Property Committee meeting should, if practicable, be held at the Jubilee Community Centre to enable Members to undertake a site inspection and consider the fencing options in situ.

h. To consider the drawings from the architect and make recommendation to Full Council.

The Property Committee agreed that a planning application be submitted.

Members were keen for the project to progress and noted that the next meeting of Full Council was scheduled for 13 October 2026.

To enable the application to be considered at that meeting, Members requested that the following amendments be incorporated into the plans:

- Provision of a door between the bar and kitchen at the rear of the building.
- Provision of an external door to the office.
- Retention of the existing internal door providing access to the office from the hall.
- The area in front of the side storage area at the front of the building to be shown as tarmac, with posts provided to prevent unauthorised vehicular access.
- The boiler to be shown within the store adjacent to the disabled toilets.

The Town Clerk was requested to liaise with the planning consultant to ensure that the amended drawings were completed in sufficient time for consideration by Full Council on 13 October 2026.

RESOLVED:

‘That the Property Committee recommends to Full Council that planning permission be sought for the proposed works, subject to the amendments discussed.’

Proposed – Cllr Lewis

Seconded – Cllr Wiles

All in Favour

i. To consider location of the John Doyle Memorial Boat and Picnic Bench and any works required.

Members considered the proposed location for the John Doyle Memorial Boat and Picnic Bench and agreed that these should be positioned adjacent to the tree at Rouses End. It was noted that the items should not be located directly beneath the tree, in order to avoid potential damage to the tree roots and to minimise the risk associated with falling branches.

Members agreed that an official opening should be arranged and that Mrs Doyle should be invited to attend the event.

RESOLVED:

‘That the John Doyle Memorial Boat and Picnic Bench proceed at Rouses End, in accordance with the location agreed by the Committee, and that the Town Clerk make the necessary arrangements for installation and an official opening.’

Proposed – Cllr Leach

Seconded –Cllr Leivers

All in Favour

j. To consider the purchase of paint for the fencing.

RESOLVED:

‘That Bird Brand paint be purchased for the fencing.’

Proposed – Cllr Leivers

Seconded –Cllr Leach

All in Favour

k. To receive the outcome of the building survey and agree any required actions.

The Town Clerk advised that the survey remained outstanding and that confirmation of a date for completion was awaited.

l. To consider request for a hook to be placed on the front door to the building to ease unloading and access for hirers.

RESOLVED:

‘That a suitable door hook be installed on the front door of the building to assist hirers with unloading and access.’

Proposed – Cllr Leivers

Seconded –Cllr Leach

All in Favour

7. Property and Infrastructure

a. To receive an update on the Building Regulations sign-off for No. 6 Market Place and consider any further action.

Members were advised that a meeting had taken place with the contractor and Building Control to review the outstanding works and compliance items.

It was confirmed that the following actions would be undertaken by the contractor:

- Photographs relating to the outstanding items and the commissioning certificates would be provided to Building Control.
- The fire door to the kitchen would be adjusted (Item 2).
- Gaps within the electrical cupboard would be sealed with mastic (Item 3).
- A fire exit sign would be installed (Item 5).

Building Control was requested to confirm the requirements in respect of the following matters:

- Whether strips and seals are required to the electrical cupboard (Item 4).

- Whether the existing Yale lock is acceptable, given that the door cannot be replaced due to the building's Grade II listed status and associated conservation requirements (Item 6).
- Whether the existing steps are acceptable, noting that a door closer cannot be fitted due to the ceiling height (Item 8).
- Confirmation that the Emergency Lighting Inspection Certificate had been received (Item 10).
- The requirements for stair handrails, taking into consideration the restricted width of the available space (Item 12).
- The requirements for insulation within the Grade II listed building (Item 13).
- Whether a grab rail is required to the accessible WC door, noting that the door cannot be reached from within the WC (Item 15).
- Whether the white rails against the grey walls are acceptable (Item 15).

The architect was requested to progress Item 17.

It was noted that confirmation in respect of the outstanding matters was requested by 1 October 2026.

b. To receive the Property Inspection Reports and agree any required actions.

Members discussed The Play Inspection Company report, the Property Inspection reports and the Town Clerk's reports.

RESOLVED:

'That the basketball hoops currently cited in the Jubilee Community Centre car park be removed but retained for future use.'

Proposed – Cllr Leivers

Seconded – Cllr Sims

All in Favour

Members noted that the Town Clerk, Chair of the Property Committee and the Mayor had approved the installation of 'Look Right' and 'Look Left' signage at the pedestrian crossings on the Hollies Service Road.

The works were approved under the Council's Emergency Expenditure provisions due to concerns regarding pedestrians crossing the service road without due regard to approaching traffic.

Members were advised that the works were being undertaken at a fixed cost of £695 plus VAT. CamLine had also agreed to refresh the existing directional arrows on the Service Road as part of the works at no additional cost.

c. To agree the Property Inspection Rota.

It was agreed that Cllr Wiles and Cllr Leivers would complete the Property Inspection due w/c 21 September 2026.

It was agreed that Cllr Leach and Cllr Lane would complete the Property Inspection due w/c 05 October 2026.

It was agreed that Cllr Lewis and Cllr Sims would complete the Property Inspection due w/c 19 October 2026.

d. To receive an update on the Insurance claim for replacement of the Paradise Road Barrier and agree any required actions.

Members were advised that the Council's insurer had offered a settlement of £2,034, net of the applicable excess, towards the replacement of the Paradise Road barrier.

The Town Clerk requested that recovery of the policy excess be pursued, on the basis that the Council was not considered to be at fault for the incident.

Members were further advised that DAC Beachcroft had been instructed by the insurer to pursue recovery of the insurer's outlay from the third party responsible for the incident subject to agreement from the Council.

RESOLVED:

'That the insurance settlement of £2,034, net of the applicable excess, be accepted and that the Council authorises DAC Beachcroft to pursue recovery of the insurer's outlay from the third party responsible for the incident, including recovery of the Council's policy excess.'

Proposed – Cllr Wiles

Seconded – Cllr Lane

All in Favour

e. To receive an update on Car Park Tender and consider any further actions required.

Members were advised that the work had been completed.

Cllr Jordan advised that he had received good feedback on the space sizing.

The Town Clerk suggested that the spacing be reviewed in Paradise Road Car Park as some vehicles are starting to park at the end of the bays.

It was suggested that the Paradise Road Barrier be moved to the front of the car park to restrict the size of vehicles using the car park with a key being provided to Paradise Garage to allow access for recovery vehicles to their site.

It was noted that white lining in other car parks would need to be budgeted for 2027/2028.

f. To consider cycle path request and agree any further actions.

Cllr Leivers requested that a Parish Partnership application be submitted in December 2026 for the provision of a cycle path running from Downham Market Academy towards McDonald's along Bexwell Road.

RESOLVED:

‘That a Parish Partnership application be submitted for the provision of a cycle path along Bexwell Road.’

Proposed – Cllr Leivers Seconded –Cllr Wiles 7 in Favour 1 Against

8. Leases, Licences and Agreements**a. To receive an update on the progress of the Howdale PAX lease.**

Members were advised that the lease remained subject to approval by the other party’s solicitor.

b. To receive an update on the progress of the Discover Downham lease.

Members were advised that the lease remained subject to approval by the other party’s solicitor.

c. To receive an update on the licence with The Pantry.

Members were advised that the Council were awaiting return of the revised document.

d. To receive an update on the Downham Market Twinning Club commemorative plaque.

Members were advised that the commemorative plaque is now in situ.

e. To consider the potential transfer of the Community Orchard to the Town Council and, if appropriate, make a recommendation to Full Council.

Members discussed the potential transfer of the Community Orchard to the Town Council and the possible improvements that could be made to the site.

Members discussed the potential for the area to be developed as a more family-orientated community space, including the provision of additional benches and picnic tables and fencing at the end of the land to contain the area.

It was noted that a number of works may be required to bring the site up to an appropriate standard, including resurfacing the existing roadway and relaying the block-paved area.

Some members raised concerns regarding the potential impact on the Town Council’s resources and the financial implications of taking on responsibility for the site, including the ongoing maintenance and associated costs.

Members discussed whether it would be more appropriate for BCKLWN to undertake improvements to the site rather than the Town Council taking on an additional project with potentially significant expenditure.

Motion not carried:

‘That the Town Council does not proceed with the potential transfer of the Community Orchard.’

Proposed – Cllr C Pyatt Seconded –Cllr Leach 2 in Favour 6 Against

RESOLVED:

‘That the Town Council revisit the idea of the potential transfer of the Community Orchard in six months time.’

Proposed – Cllr Sims Seconded –Cllr Lane 7 in Favour 1 Against

f. To receive an update on the progress of the negotiations relating to the renewal of the Turning Circle lease.

Members were advised that the Town Clerk had not received from Matthew Hobbs who is working on behalf of Morrisons to the email dated 28 August 2026 stating:

The Property Committee met last night and have offered the following terms, subject to final approval of the lease by Full Council:

- A 10-year lease, commencing at £13,000 per annum.
- The rent to increase by 5% per annum.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss these terms further.

9. Financial Matters

a. To receive the budget monitoring report and consider any matters arising.

Members reviewed the current budget position and noted the following variances:

- The Pump Inspection expenditure was 29% over budget.
- Town Hall Maintenance expenditure was at 81% of the annual budget. Members noted that only six months of the financial year had elapsed and that expenditure would therefore require careful monitoring for the remainder of the year.
- Town Hall Equipment and Tools expenditure was at 90% of the annual budget.
- The Town Hall PPL and PRS Licence expenditure was 70% over budget.
- Town Hall Fire Alarm and Intruder Alarm expenditure was at 83% of the annual budget.

Members noted the areas of expenditure exceeding or approaching the approved budget and the need for expenditure to be monitored closely for the remainder of the financial year.

10. Meetings

a. To agree the date of the next Property Committee meeting.

Members agreed that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 22 October 2026 at 5.30pm.

Subject to availability, the meeting will be held at the Jubilee Community Centre. If the meeting cannot be accommodated at the Centre, it will be held at the Town Hall, with a site visit to the Jubilee Community Centre arranged prior to the meeting.

The meeting ended at 7:29pm.