

**Downham Market Town Council
Governance & Finance Committee Meeting
Thursday 26 June 2024 at 7pm**

This meeting was held at:
Downham Market Town Hall, Bridge Street, Downham Market, Norfolk PE38 9DW

	<p>Present</p> <p>Committee Chair – Cllr Brewer</p> <p>Committee Members - Cllrs Hobbs, Lane, Perkin & Westrop (5)</p> <p>Town Clerk – Claire Dornan</p> <p>There were 2 members of the public present</p>
	<p>The Chair advised the nearest fire exit from the Assembly Room and the meeting location in the event of the alarm sounding; outside Coggles Funeral Directors.</p> <p>The Chair asked that phones be placed on silent.</p>
1	<p><u>To receive Members’ apologies for absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllr Julie Pyatt who is on holiday.</p>
2	<p><u>To receive Members’ Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Cllr Lane declared an interest in Item 4.</p> <p>Cllrs Brewer & Westrop declared an interest in Item 5.</p>
3	<p>To agree updated Terms of Reference of the Committee</p> <p>The Town Clerk had updated the Terms of Reference as per the discussions on 23 May 2024. Members had been sent the updated copy of the Terms of Reference prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Brewer Seconded –Cllr Westrop</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the amended Terms of Reference be recommended to Full Council for adoption.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>

4	<p><u>To receive and agree actions where required:</u></p> <p><u>May 2024 Bank Reconciliation</u></p> <p>Members had received a copy of the Bank Reconciliation completed on 20 June 2024 ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>Cash in Hand as at 31 May 2024 - £1,085,978.62</p> <p>It was noted that there is £27,349.75 in the JCC Ring Fenced account, £6,119.64 in the CIL account and £18,831.54 in the Ear Marked Reserves. These accounts have restrictions on what they can be used for.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Brewer Seconded –Cllr Lane</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the May 2024 Bank Reconciliation be agreed.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p> <p><u>April 2024 Governance Sample – Cllrs Lane & Perkin</u></p> <p>Members had received a copy of the sampled transactions prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Cllrs Lane and Perkin confirmed that no issues had arisen and there were no concerns.</p> <p><u>May 2024 Governance Sample – Cllrs Brewer & Hobbs</u></p> <p>Members had received a copy of the sampled transactions prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Cllrs Brewer and Hobbs confirmed that no issues had arisen and there were no concerns.</p> <p><u>Actual V Budget Report to 31 May 2024</u></p> <p>Members had received a copy of the Actual V Budget Report prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that of the £1,000 budget for uniform, £758.43 had been spent, leaving 24% of the budget remaining for the rest of the year. This is due to the recruitment of a new member of staff who would not fit the uniform returned by a recent leaver and PPE purchases.</p> <p>It was noted that of the £1,000 budget for cleaning supplies, £473.79 had been spent leaving 52% of the budget remaining for 2024/2025. This is due to the recent flood in the kitchen which meant that toilet rolls had to be disposed of, these are now stored up</p>
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	<p>high and the purchase of 28% acid to resolve the drainage issues as recommended by All Clear Drainage Consultants.</p> <p>Cllr Westrop noted that £11, 435.12 had already been spent on the Car Park Repairs budget and this was import for discussions on agenda item 9.</p> <p><u>Bills For Payment</u></p> <p>Members had received a copy of the Bills for Payment between numbers 1-263.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Brewer Seconded –Cllr Lane</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the Bills for Payment be approved, as presented.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p> <p><u>Bank Statements</u></p> <p>Members had received a copy of the Council’s Bank Statement prior to the meeting and also cross referenced against the Bank Reconciliation up to 31 May 2024.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Brewer Seconded –Cllr Lane</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the Bank Statement be accepted, as presented.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p> <p><u>Receipts List</u></p> <p>Members had received a copy of the Receipts List between numbers 1-205.</p> <p>The receipts were noted.</p>
5	<p><u>Update on sale of Paradise Garage and 15 Paradise Road</u></p> <p><u>Overage Clause & Contract</u></p> <p>Members received correspondence from the Council’s solicitor, Paul Sheerin of Hawkins Ryan, prior to the meeting on Monday 24 June 2024 at 15:51.</p> <p>It was agreed that the solicitor should negotiate on behalf of the Council rather than cause confusion by involving Landles given the sale includes a piece of land that they did not market.</p>

	<p><u>Business Rates Refund</u></p> <p>It was noted that the Borough Council had agreed to refund the Business Rates on Paradise Road as it has been effectively vacant since March 2024 to a value of £645.85.</p> <p>It had also been confirmed by the Borough Council that 6 Market Place is already covered by the Town Hall Business Rates. No further Business Rates are due.</p>
6	<p><u>To discuss the new NALC Model Financial Regulations and agree actions</u></p> <p><u>Section 1 - 5</u></p> <p>The Chair and the Town Clerk had met the week prior to this meeting to review Section 1 -5 of the new NALC Model Financial Regulations.</p> <p>The Town Clerk gave an overview of the suggested changes and these amendments were agreed by members.</p> <p>The Town Clerk was requested to type up Section 1 – 5 prior to the next meeting so that members can formally agree the sections.</p> <p>A recommendation will then need to be made to Full Council that when the full version of NALC Model Financial Regulations the current Procurement Policy is rescinded.</p>
7	<p><u>To receive update on Health & Safety</u></p> <p><u>Fire Risk Assessment – December 2023</u></p> <p>The Town Clerk gave an update on the Fire Risk Assessment completed in December 2023 by Robert Wise Ltd.</p> <p><u>Town Hall</u></p> <p>The Town Hall was last discussed in the Governance Committee meeting on 13 February 2024, Agenda Item 11.</p> <p>The following update was given by the Town Clerk.</p> <p><u>High</u></p> <p>The Maintenance Officer and Caretaker attended the PAT Course on 15 February 2024. The PAT records are in the process of being updated and are scheduled in for completion. The Town Clerk confirmed that the team always perform visual inspections prior to testing or using any equipment.</p>

After trialling the fire extinguisher stand in the Grand Hall, it has been decided to peg back the drapes to prevent trip hazards and ensure access to all equipment despite the visual appearance of the room being affected.

Moderate

The emergency sledge is being inspected monthly and training is being given to all staff and Cllrs on 10 July 2024. Training has previously been given to staff.

The smoke seal on the Grand Hall door has been routed by N S Paving.

It has been decided not to use the refuge area due to concerns about the passageway.

Jubilee Community Centre and 15 Paradise Road

The Jubilee Community Centre & 15 Paradise Road was last discussed in the Governance Committee meeting on 05 March 2024, Agenda Item 12.

There was no further action required at 15 Paradise Road.

High

The Caretaker confirmed on 25 June 2024 that all the PAT had been completed at the Jubilee Community Centre.

Moderate

The annual 3-hour discharge on the emergency lights is due to take place on 02 July 2024 at the Jubilee Community Centre.

Advised

It was decided not to fit the break glass at the Jubilee Community Centre due to the cost and instead take the padlock off the gates to allow the area to be fully accessible in the event of an emergency.

Fire Fighting Equipment – March 2024

The Fire Equipment was checked by Steward Safety Supplies on 29 February 2024 and there were no outstanding matters. The Director has confirmed that upon the sale of Paradise Road the Fire Equipment can be transferred to the Town Hall.

Fire Alarm – May 2024 / June 2024

The JCC Fire Alarm was serviced by CTS Security Ltd under the old contract on 17 June 2024. The JCC Fire Alarm is due to be serviced again under the new contract by Pure Service Cambridge Ltd on 02 July 2024.

The Paradise Road Fire Alarm was serviced by CTS Security Ltd on 17 June 2024. The only issue highlighted was a beeping door which is not used and the contractor stated that no action was required. The Town Clerk instructed the Caretaking Team to replace the battery regardless of usage.

The Town Hall Fire Alarm was serviced on 15 May 2024. An issue was raised relating to a missing call point in the upstairs office at 6 Market Place. The contractor who developed the building is resolving this issue at no cost to the Council. There is an issue with the stage beam which is considered low risk and a solution is being considered.

Intruder Alarm – May 2024

The JCC Intruder Alarm was due to be serviced under the new contract by Pure Service Cambridge Ltd on 02 July 2024 however this will now be rescheduled as the specialist is leaving the company on 28 June 2024 and the company are awaiting a replacement. The Intruder Alarm was inspected by CTS Security Ltd under the old contract at the end of the contract in May 2024.

Paradise Road Intruder Alarm was serviced on 06 December 2023. As the property is in the process of being sold no interim service has been arranged. There have been no operational issues reported by the team.

The Town Hall Intruder Alarm is being upgraded on 27 June 2024 by Pure Service Cambridge Ltd when a call out system is being added as approved by Property Committee at their last meeting.

Emergency Lighting - May 2024 / June 2024

The Town Hall Emergency Lighting Assessment was completed on 15 May 2024. Some issues were raised with 6 Market Place and the contractor who developed the building is arranging for the lights to be replaced, at no cost to the Council, as they did not last 3 hours when tested. It is believed the contractor was supplied with old stock at installation.

The Jubilee Community Centre Emergency Lighting Assessment is being completed on 02 July 2024.

Paradise Road Emergency Lighting Assessment is due and the Town Clerk is awaiting an update on the sale to know whether to arrange the test or not.

Legionella Assessment – December 2023

The Assessment in all buildings occurred on 14 December 2023. There is a dead leg removal which is outstanding at the Jubilee Sports Centre (aka Boxing Hut) and this work is scheduled with Broomhill Plumbing & Heating Ltd for 01 July 2024 at a cost of £75.

The water fountain has not been tested however is flushed and temperature checked on a weekly basis. The feed comes direct form the mains.

Air Condition Service – December 2023

The Air Conditioning Service was completed on 12 December 2023 at the Town Hall and Paradise Road.

6 Market Place will need to be added to the service schedule for December 2024 as it was installed at the beginning of 2024 during the building work.

The Town Clerk has asked for a quote for installing air conditioning in the Clock Room.

Gas Safety – June 2024

The gas safety inspection was completed by Surefire Heat Ltd at the Town Hall and the Jubilee Community Centre on 07 June 2024. It has been recommended that 2 probes are replaced on the Town Hall boiler. A quote has been requested from Surefire Heat Ltd. Clay Heating & Broomhill Plumbing & Heating Ltd have been contacted for a quote but they are unable to work on Commercial Boilers.

There are no gas appliance at Paradise Road.

5 Year Electrical Safety Certificate

The Jubilee Community Centre's 5 year Electrical Safety Inspection was completed on 20 February 2023.

Paradise Road's 5 year Electrical Safety Inspection was completed on 20 April 2023.

The Electrical Certificate is awaited from the contractor for 6 Market Place.

There are various Electrical Safety Certificates for the Town Hall and the Town Clerk has suggested that the Council have one new inspection completed in 2025.

Annual Asbestos Survey – June 2024 / August 2024

The last Asbestos Survey at Paradise Road was completed by WEAR Ltd on 13 November 2019. The safes are no longer in the premises, as these were removed by Norfolk County Council Registration Team. The only asbestos remaining is within the staff toilet and is low risk and undisturbed.

A new Asbestos Survey has been completed at the Jubilee Community Centre by WEAR Ltd on 10 June 2024. There is a significant change to the report completed by an alternative company in 2010. There are 22 recommended actions. All staff, excluding the member of staff who is off on long term sick, have received a copy of the report and are aware of the category C & D reports.

	<p>A new Asbestos Survey for the Town Hall has been scheduled for 05 August 2024. The last report was completed 10 December 2019. As there has been a lot of work completed on the building since this date, an updated report is appropriate.</p> <p><u>Staff & Cllr Training – New date following postponement</u></p> <p>The Town Clerk has arranged the training for Wednesday 10 July 2024 at 5:30pm in the Assembly Room after the instructor cancelled the prior date in June 2024.</p> <p>Cllr Lewis has already given apologies due to work commitments.</p>
8	<p><u>To discuss a Health & Safety Training Package from Croner Group following review of policies and procedures (HR Provider) and agree actions</u></p> <p>Following a suggestion from our HR provider that the Council bolt on a Health & Safety package following recent contract enquires by the Town Clerk, the Town Clerk met with the representative.</p> <p>Members had received a quote for a 1 year, 3 year and 5 year package.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Westrop Seconded –Cllr Hobbs</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the Council commit to a 1 year contract as a cost of £207 + VAT per month, to include all training modules, with the expenditure coming from the Professional Fees budget.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>
9	<p><u>To discuss expenditure requests outside of budget approval and agree actions</u></p> <p>Further to the request from Property Committee to Full Council to transfer some of the £100,000 Car Park Repair budget to a new cost code to allow the Jubilee Community Centre Car Park to be built, the Governance & Finance Committee were asked to review the request and make their recommendation as per the Overspend Policy adopted on 21 November 2023.</p> <p>Members discussed the Full Council budget meeting on 12 December 2023 where Full Council explicitly voted not to provide a budget to the JCC Car Park or Changing Rooms. It was noted that if Full Council were to approve the Property Committee’s request, the Full Council vote would need to be rescinded.</p> <p>Members also discussed Full Council’s request that the Jubilee Community Centre Regeneration Working Party spend 2024/2025 reviewing the options for the site.</p>

There was concern that the urgent work on the Hollies Service Road had not been completed nor the maintenance on the car parks and therefore it was difficult to assess whether there would be money in the budget to transfer. Cllr Westrop referred to her comments about the expenditure on the cost code when reviewing the Actual V Budget Report.

Members were concerned that Fields In Trust had not approved the Car Park and there were still planning matters outstanding such as the Noise Management Plan and Traffic Management Plan plus the Asbestos Report was still awaiting review by the Planning Team at the Borough Council. The review date is 30 July 2024.

Members believed that the internal work on the Jubilee Community Centre, following the June 2024 Asbestos Survey, were more pressing than creating a car park which could change location if a new building were deemed appropriate.

Members queried if a grant for the upgrade work to the Jubilee Community Centre could also include the Car Park and therefore save the rate payer some of the cost.

Members asked if the Football Association would need to approve the work if they may have a charge over the site should funding be agreed. They may wish an alternative planning application to be submitted. The Town Clerk advised she didn't know the answer to this.

Members were concerned that the car park work could be completed and then in a year or two may need to be relocated.

Members asked if the outstanding lease between Norfolk County Council, Downham Market Town Council and Howdale Community Association had been resolved. The Town Clerk confirmed that there had been no reply from the solicitor. Members did not feel new work should start on site before this matter was resolved.

Members raised concerns about the Health & Safety of the site whilst work was undertaken and questioned if the site should be open to the public whilst large vehicles were moving around given the issues that occurred when the new roadway was built.

Members also questioned whether the work should be completed in entirety on the site and not piecemeal as it appears is being considered. Members raised concerns that completing the work piecemeal could breach procurement / tender legislation.

The Town Clerk raised that the Property Committee are fearful of losing the donations of hard core and kerbs. It was noted that these donations could be accepted and the donations delivered, as long as the area was Harris fenced and suitable signage was in place as long as the donor understood the donation may not be used immediately.

	<p>Proposed – Cllr Perkin Seconded –Cllr Hobbs</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the Governance & Finance Committee recommend Full Council refuse the request of Property Committee to use the Car Park Repair budget to complete the suggested work on the new Jubilee Community Centre car park. The Committee feel that the future of the site must be considered as a whole during 2024/2025 to ensure best value is received for the rate payer.</p> <p>That the Governance & Finance Committee recommend Property Committee accept the offer of the free hard core and kerbing and store on site, subject to appropriate health and safety requirements such as Harris Fencing, and clear correspondence with the donor about the plans for the site.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>
10	<p><u>To discuss the Council’s Insurance and agree actions</u></p> <p><u>Annual Policy</u></p> <p>The quote from AVIVA was received by members prior to the meeting, via the insurance broker, James Hallam Limited. The quote was £20,272.08 with a suggested addition of £12,500 worth of cover for the defib / blood box at a cost of £418.32.</p> <p><u>Cyber Insurance</u></p> <p>The quote from AVIVA was received by members prior to the meeting, via the insurance broker, James Hallam Limited. This insurance was suggested by the Internal Auditor, Norfolk Computer Services and James Hallam Ltd. Given the current climate, where ransomware is being used against schools, Councils and the NHS, it would be a layer of protection for the Council.</p> <p>The quote was £506.52 for a year.</p> <p>The Council budgeted £20,000 for insurance between July 2024 & July 2025 and this would be an overspend of £1,196.92 if all policies are agreed. The Council needs to have insurance in place no later than 05 July 2024 to ensure continuous cover.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Westrop Seconded –Cllr Hobbs</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the Governance & Finance Committee recommend to Full Council that the Council accept the insurance renewal quote and add defib / blood box cover and cyber insurance.’</p>

	All In Favour
11	<p><u>To discuss licencing requirements when hiring Town Council buildings and agree actions</u></p> <p>The Council discussed a possible situation where a hirer of the Town Hall did not have the correct performance licence in place.</p> <p>It was noted that if the Council requested a copy of the licence and it was incorrect that the Council could be drawn into licencing issues.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Brewer Seconded –Cllr Hobbs</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the Town Council implement an indemnity document for all licensable activities to ensure the Council is protected if a hirer has not followed their legal duties and also promote the need to ensure all activities are licenced correctly.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>
12	<p><u>To discuss a budget allocation for the Business & Tourism Committee and agree actions</u></p> <p>NB. The Town Clerk suggests the budgeted Community Development Committee allocation is given to Business & Tourism Committee</p> <p>It was noted that the Business & Tourism Committee will find it difficult to make any improvements to the Town without a budget.</p> <p>Community Development Committee were allocated £15,300 and have spent £1,315.11 on the D Day event and £900 on Christmas Lights 2024.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Lane Seconded –Cllr Perkin</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the Governance & Finance Committee recommend to Full Council that the Business & Tourism Committee are provided with the outstanding Community Development Committee budget of £13,084.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>

13	<p><u>To discuss additional Bank Signatories following absence of existing signatories and agree actions</u></p> <p>The Council requires the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk, in addition to 2 mandated Cllrs to authorise Direct Debit mandates etc.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that due to the inability of 2 mandated Cllrs being able to attend the office due to ill health and the refusal of another Cllr, the office have been unable to set up the Business Rates Direct Debit mandate, add Cllr D Sharman to the mandate, or remove A Buxton from the mandate, as directed by Full Council on 07 May 2024.</p> <p>Thankfully Cllr Wiles had assisted and arranged for the mandate to be signed by the Cllr who was unwell.</p> <p>Cllr Wiles has since offered to be added to the mandate to prevent future issues arising.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Brewer Seconded –Cllr Lane</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the Governance & Finance Committee recommend to Full Council that Cllr Wiles be added to the Bank Mandate as a Full Signatory.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>
14	<p><u>To discuss existing policies and procedures and possible new policies and procedures and agree actions including:</u></p> <p><u>Mayor Making Procedure</u></p> <p>It was agreed that Cllr Perkin would review the procedures of local Town Councils and report back to the Committee with a suggested procedure.</p> <p><u>Cllr expectations Policy</u></p> <p>It was agreed that Cllr expectations should be a statement rather than a policy. Cllr Westrop was asked to review the expectations of the office, response times, debate protocol and the Good Cllr Guide and report back to the Committee with a suggested statement.</p> <p>Cllr Perkin left at 8:04pm</p> <p><u>Internal Audit 2024/2025</u></p> <p>Members reviewed the latest Internal Audit. It was noted that the Internal Auditor had made some errors in her report which the Town Clerk had needed to request correction</p>

and the final report still had the Town Clerk's email address written incorrectly and the precept figures the wrong way round.

It was suggested that a deep dive audit is completed in 2024/2025.

The current auditor charged £148.50 for 2023/2024 and it was considered a simplistic assessment.

Mapus-Smith & Lemmon LLP had previously quoted between £2,000 to £2,250.

Norfolk Association of Local Councils had previously quoted up to £2,500.

Proposed – Cllr Brewer Seconded –Cllr Hobbs

It was resolved:

'That the Governance & Finance Committee recommend to Full Council a change of auditor to Norfolk Association of Local Councils with the funds being taken from the Professional Fees Budget.'

All In Favour

Annual Review of Standing Orders

Proposed – Cllr Brewer Seconded –Cllr Westrop

It was resolved:

'That the Governance & Finance Committee recommend to Full Council that the current Standing Orders are adopted for a further 5 months to align with the Financial Regulations review period.'

All In Favour

Grant Policy adaption following there being no Community Development Committee in 2024/2025

Proposed – Cllr Brewer Seconded –Cllr Lane

It was resolved:

'That the Governance & Finance Committee recommend to Full Council that the updated Grant Policy be adopted, with the removal of reference to the Community Development Committee, and acknowledging that all grants will be reviewed by Full Council during 2024/2025.'

All In Favour

15	<p><u>To agree extension to Cash Access contract – 1 Month (August 2024)</u></p> <p>Members had received a copy of the draft contract from Cash Access covering the period of 01 August 2024 to 31 August 2024 prior to the meeting.</p> <p>There was a query over why a transfer of £1 was being requested between the parties to acknowledge ‘consideration’ when the agreement was based on a weekly fee payable by Cash Access and this was not part of the original agreement.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Lane Seconded –Cllr Westrop</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>‘That the Governance & Finance Committee request the Town Clerk to sign the Cash Access contract for August 2024 and arrange the transfer of £1 in consideration and manage the receipt of the same.’</p> <p>All In Favour</p>
	Meeting closed: 8:22pm
	SIGNED
	DATE