

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

Date: Tuesday 13 January 2026

Time: 7:00 PM

Venue: Town Hall, Bridge Street, Downham Market PE38 9DW

Livestream Link: [YouTube Channel](#)

Present

Chair: The Mayor, Cllr Michael Lane (Until item 9) Cllr C. Pyatt (From item 9)
Councillors Brewer, Cain, Campbell -Robb, Daymond, Dickson, Jordan, Lewis, Leivers,
B. Moyses, S. Moyses, Pegg, Perkin, J. Pyatt, Sims & Wiles. (17)

Cllr Grover joined the meeting at agenda item 7.

Claire Dornan (Town Clerk)

7 Members of the public at the start of the meeting

The Chair reminded all present of the emergency evacuation procedure and of the need to keep phones on silent.

1. To Note Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Leach due to ill health.

Apologies were also received from County Cllr Tony White and Borough Cllrs Osborne and Ratcliffe.

2. To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider requests for Dispensations.

Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct.

Cllr Lane declared an interest as he had attended the Dementia Café Christmas Lunch and the Titash 20th Anniversary meal.

Cllrs Lewis & Perkin declared an interest in agenda item 20.

Cllr Jordan declared an interest in agenda item 24.1.

Cllr Brewer declared an interest in agenda item 21.

3. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 04 November 2025.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 04 November 2025 be approved.

Proposed Cllr Lane, Seconded Cllr Wiles 16 In Favour 1 Abstention

4. To approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on 09 December 2025

Resolved: That the minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on 09 December 2025 be approved.

Proposed Cllr Lane, Seconded Cllr Pegg 16 In Favour 2 Abstentions

5. Public Forum

5.1 County Councillor and Borough Councillors

There was no County Cllr or Borough Cllrs present at the meeting.

5.2 Police

There was no representative from the Police present at the meeting.

5.3 Public

Cllr Perkin provided an overview of his concerns regarding the written report submitted by County Cllr White in advance of the meeting. He expressed concern that the proposed SEND school may not be located in Downham Market, despite the site having remained vacant for four years.

Cllr Daymond asked whether clarification could be sought as to whether the SEND unit would be located at Bexwell Road or Ryston End.

Cllr Leivers stated a preference for the SEND school to be located separately from the Bexwell Road site.

The Town Clerk was requested to liaise with County Cllr White and to seek further updates.

There were no requests from members of the public to speak at the meeting.

6. Mayor's announcements

The Mayor reported on the following engagements:

- 09 November 2025 – Attended Remembrance Sunday

- 11 November 2025 – Attended *Pause & Remember*
- 12 November 2025 – Attended the Youth Advisory Board Conference
- 15 November 2025 – Attended Denver Rowing Club
- 21 November 2025 – Attended the MADS adult pantomime
- 26 November 2025 – Attended the Rangers' evening meeting at the Howdale PAX site
- 30 November 2025 – Attended the Christmas Lights Switch-On event
- 05 December 2025 – Attended the Wisbech Carol Service
- 09 December 2025 – Attended the Ashville House Christmas Party
- 11 December 2025 – Attended Borough Mayor Cllr Bullen's *Mayor's At Home* civic reception
- 12 December 2025 – Hosted and organised the Mayor's Festive Quiz, raising £620.00 for charity; thanks were extended to Knights Bakery and Tony's Market Emporium for their prize donations
- 14 December 2025 – Attended Mabel's Christmas Makers' Market
- 16 December 2025 – Opened the new Stonecross Petrol Station
- 16 December 2025 – Attended the evening performance of *Christmas in Downham*, organised by Churches Together
- 21 December 2025 – Attended St Mary's, Stradsett, Carol Service
- 25 December 2025 – Visited four care homes: High Haven, Carrstone House, The Grange and Ashville House
- 06 January 2026 – Attended the Titash 20th Birthday Celebrations

The Mayor announced that a total of £1,600 had been raised to date for his chosen charities, which are:

- Howdale PAX
- Clackclose Girlguiding District
- 1st Downham Market Scouts
- Downham Market Boys' Brigade

7. To consider the co-option applications received for East Ward vacancy and agree actions

The Council noted that two applications had been received for the East Ward vacancy, and the applications were duly considered.

Resolved: To co-opt Mr Colin Grover to fill the East Ward vacancy.

Proposed Cllr Wiles, Seconded Cllr Dickson

All In Favour

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by Mr Grover and the Proper Officer.

Cllr Grover then joined the meeting table.

8. To note the resignation of the Deputy Mayor and agree actions

It was noted that the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Hobbs, had resigned from the Council.

The Mayor made a speech:

I am not going to sit and be embarrassed and humiliated by motion number 9 on the agenda, nor do I want to embarrass other Councillors into taking part in a vote in this situation.

It has been an absolute honour and privilege to have served the Town of Downham Market as Mayor for the past eight months. However, just recently it has come to my attention that some Councillors do not support me.

So, with a heavy heart and sadness, I feel that as of this moment I resign from my role as Mayor of Downham Market; however, I shall stay on as a Councillor for the ward of Old Town and represent this wonderful growing town with its friendly people and listen to their concerns.

Cllr Lane removed his chains and asked for a proposal of who would Chair the meeting.

Resolved: That Cllr C Pyatt chair the meeting.

Proposed Cllr Lewis, Seconded Cllr Wiles 12 In Favour 3 Against 3 Abstentions

9. To consider the following motion:

To consider and agree actions on a vote of no confidence in the Mayor Cllr Lane.

Proposer Cllr Jordan Seconder Cllr Lewis

This item was not discussed.

10. To receive and approve the minutes of the following Committees:

10.1 Planning Committee – 08 October 2025, 21 October 2025 & 11 November 2025

Resolved: That the minutes of the Planning Committee dated 08 October 2025, 21 October 2025 & 11 November 2025 be approved.

Proposed Cllr Daymond, Seconded Cllr Wiles 17 In Favour 1 Abstention

10.2 Property Committee – 29 October 2025 & 05 November 2025

Resolved: That the minutes of the Property Committee dated 29 October 2025 & 05 November 2025 be approved.

Proposed Cllr Jordan, Seconded Cllr C Pyatt 15 In Favour 3 Abstentions

10.3 Human Resources Committee – 18 September 2025, 06 November 2025 & 11 November 2025

Resolved: That the minutes of the Human Resources Committee dated 18 September 2025, 06 November 2025 & 11 November 2025 be approved.

Proposed Cllr Pegg, Seconded Cllr Sims 12 In Favour 1 Against 2 Abstentions

10.4 Governance & Finance Committee – 16 October 2025, 12 November 2025 & 20 November 2025

Resolved: That the minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee dated 16 October 2025, 12 November 2025 & 20 November 2025 be approved.

Proposed Cllr Lane, Seconded Cllr Brewer 9 In Favour 7 Against 2 Abstentions

11. To agree finance matters for the Mayor / Chair's signature:

11.1 November 2025 Bank Reconciliation

Resolved: That the November 2025 Bank Reconciliation be approved.

Proposed Cllr Lane, Seconded Cllr Brewer 17 In Favour 1 Abstention

11.2 December 2025 Bank Reconciliation

Resolved: That the December 2025 Bank Reconciliation be approved.

Proposed Cllr Lane, Seconded Cllr Dickson 16 In Favour 2 Abstentions

11.3 November 2025 Bank Statements

Resolved: That the November 2025 Bank Statements be approved.

Proposed Cllr Lane, Seconded Cllr Brewer 17 In Favour 1 Abstention

11.4 December 2025 Bank Statements

Resolved: That the December 2025 Bank Statements be approved.

Proposed Cllr Lane, Seconded Cllr Pegg 17 In Favour 1 Abstention

11.5 Bills For Payment

Resolved: That Bill Payments 520 - 659 be approved.

Proposed Cllr Lane, Seconded Cllr Daymond 17 In Favour 1 Abstention

11.6 Receipts List

Resolved: That Receipts 863 - 1032 be approved.

Proposed Cllr Lane, Seconded Cllr Daymond 17 In Favour 1 Abstention

12. To discuss and note the External Auditors report 2024/2025

Resolved: That External Auditors report 2024/2025 be accepted.

Proposed Cllr Sims, Seconded Cllr Lane 17 In Favour 1 Abstention

13. To discuss and note the interim Internal Auditors report 2025/2026

Resolved: That interim Internal Auditors report 2025/2026 be accepted.

Proposed Cllr Lane, Seconded Cllr Campbell-Robb 17 In Favour 1 Abstention

14. To review the Borough Council's decision regarding the 3G Pitch application and agree actions

Members discussed the Borough Council's decision and expressed disappointment with the outcome.

It was noted that reserves should be earmarked for potential legal fees within the 2026/2027 budget.

Members agreed that a meeting should be arranged with Borough Councillors Ring, Squires, Ratcliffe, Osborne, Bullen and Tyler, together with MP Terry Jermy, to gain a clearer understanding of the Borough's decision.

It was questioned whether there had been any bias in favour of King's Lynn over Downham Market.

The Town Clerk was commended for the quality of the application, and Members felt that the Town Clerk had been sidelined and that the Town Council's submission had been ignored.

Members noted that the Town Council has sufficient funds within Capital Reserves to support the 3G project and that this level of funding is greater than that likely to be available to the King's Lynn applicant.

It was further suggested that the West Norfolk Tourism Forum should be involved, as a 3G pitch would represent a tourism asset.

The Chair requested a show of hands in support of the Town Clerk arranging a business meeting with interested parties. **All Members were in favour.**

15. To consider request from Property Committee dated 05 November 2025:

To request Full Council to allocate the CIL funding to commission a new concrete skatepark

The Council considered the Property Committee's request for Full Council to allocate CIL funding to commission a new concrete skatepark.

Members discussed the benefits of a concrete skatepark for Downham Market, noting that it would be inclusive, particularly beneficial for young people, and would provide activities for families, especially in light of the significant number of new housing developments currently under construction.

It was noted that there is currently no Business Plan in place for the Jubilee Community Centre site, and Members agreed that it was imperative that a meeting be arranged as soon as possible to address this.

Members noted that it would likely take up to a year for the project to reach fruition and agreed that it was important to carefully assess the location. While it was considered that the current location may be the most suitable, Members emphasised the importance of not rushing the decision.

It was noted that the available CIL funding may be insufficient to fully fund the project and that a contingency of at least 10% should be included.

The Town Clerk was asked to advise how much CIL funding is expected in 2026. The Town Clerk advised that it is difficult to provide an exact figure, as this is dependent on the timing of development releases and noted that a significant proportion of the housing is being built on zero-rated land, meaning receipts may be lower than anticipated.

Resolved: That CIL funding of £153,673.83 be allocated to the Skate Park Project within Earmarked Reserves, and that an additional £50,000 be allocated from Reserves.

16. To consider request from Property Committee dated 26 November 2025:

To agree expenditure from the Car Park Ear Marked Reserves for work in excess of £5,000 to complete the Hollies Pavement works.

Members considered the recommendation of the Property Committee regarding the repair of the damaged pavement at The Hollies. The damage has been caused by tree root growth, creating uneven surfaces and trip hazards. Members noted that two contractors had submitted quotes, with W N Surfacing providing a detailed specification following a site meeting on 14 October 2025. Alternative solutions were discussed, but professional advice indicated that root removal would be required to achieve a long-term repair.

Members discussed the proposed works, which include excavation of damaged areas, recompaction of the sub-base, resurfacing, removal of kerbed planters, and tree stump and root removal by the contractor. It was noted that tree felling would be arranged separately, and the Maintenance Team would manage bench removal and reinstatement, with the option to replace existing benches with recycled plastic units. The cost of the works from W N Surfacing was noted as £5,625 (plus VAT) for the main area and £1,800 (plus VAT) for a smaller area if undertaken together.

Members agreed that the proposed works would address ongoing safety hazards and provide a durable, long-term solution. Members also noted that the inclusion of new benches and associated secure installation could be considered.

Full Council approval was requested, as the total expenditure exceeds £5,000.

Resolved: That Full Council supports the Property Committee's request to fund the pavement repair works at The Hollies from the Car Park Earmarked Reserves, and also approves further expenditure relating to tree felling, replacement benches, and planters, with the Property Committee authorised to agree the final details at their next meeting.

17. To consider a budget for the Memorial Garden for 2025/2026 and agree actions

Members noted that a quote of approximately £5,500 had been obtained for the manufacture and installation of gates at the front of the Memorial Garden. The gates are required to prevent free-roaming dogs, which have caused fouling, damage, and digging within the garden. In addition, a short infill fence is required at the rear of the Memorial Garden, which can be installed by the Maintenance Team.

It was further noted that a recent Land Registry search had identified a strip of land to the side of the Memorial Garden as being under the ownership of the Town Council. Approval was requested for an additional £1,500 to manage this area effectively.

Members noted that a total budget allocation of approximately £6,000, plus the additional £1,500 for the adjoining land, would provide the Property Committee with sufficient flexibility and delegated authority to progress the works efficiently. It was noted that this approach would prevent delays, provide clear direction, and avoid the need for the matter to be referred back to Full Council.

Resolved: That Full Council approves a total budget of £7,500 from Reserves to allow the Property Committee to progress the installation of gates and fencing at the Memorial Garden, and to manage the adjoining strip of land recently identified as being under Town Council ownership. The Property Committee is authorised to agree the final details of the works within this budget.

18. To consider a budget for the Market for 2025/2026 to enable the purchase of gazebos and agree actions

Cllr Wiles left the meeting during this discussion and returned prior to the vote.

Members noted that the Council's existing market gazebos are beginning to fail, with holes in the fabric and a diminishing supply of replacement parts. Gazebos are an essential element of market infrastructure, supporting both regular and trial traders, and are also used for Council events.

It was agreed that Full Council would make the decision on the purchase, to avoid the matter being referred back to Committee. Members discussed the number of gazebos required and agreed that two replacement gazebos should be purchased in the 2025/2026 financial year.

The cost of a replacement branded gazebo, including frame, canopy, sides, and UK mainland delivery, is £678.00 (including VAT). Members noted that this would provide an initial solution to maintain market infrastructure while further planning for future replacements could be considered.

Resolved: That Full Council approves the purchase of two replacement market gazebos in the 2025/2026 financial year at a cost of £678.00 each (including VAT), with funds to be taken from Reserves.

19. To consider the creation of a Working Party to create a Business Plan for the Town Council

Members discussed the potential creation of a Working Party to develop a Business Plan for the Town Council. It was decided that the Deputy Clerk should re-circulate the latest version of the Business Plan to Members, and a future meeting would determine whether the establishment of a Working Party is required.

20. To discuss and agree a response to a request from a Market Trader to amend the Market Licence to include the ability to take 2 weeks annual leave at no cost to the trader

Members noted the report regarding a request from a permanent market trader to allow all permanent traders two weeks annual leave per year at no cost, in addition to the effective four weeks already included within the existing Market Licence. The report highlighted that other markets offer similar concessions and that introducing this could be seen as a gesture of goodwill.

The report also set out the potential financial impact, noting that with 25 permanent pitches and two trading days per week, the cost could be approximately £1,000 if fully utilised. Consideration was also given in the report to equity and precedent, administrative tracking of leave, and potential benefits to trader relations and Council goodwill. Alternative options included offering discretionary leave on a case-by-case basis or maintaining the current licence terms.

Members agreed that it was not unreasonable to allow permanent traders to take leave to spend time with their families and expressed support for the principle of offering a short period of unpaid annual leave within the Market Licence.

Resolved: That Full Council approves an amendment to the Market Licence to allow all permanent traders two weeks annual leave per year at no cost. This amendment will come into effect on the renewal of the Market Licence on 31 March 2026.

Proposed Cllr S Moyses, Seconded Cllr Dickson

16 In Favour 2 Abstentions

Cllrs Lewis and Perkin abstained as they had declared a pecuniary interest.

21. To consider and agree a response to a request from Bridge Street Surgery for support for the purchase of a Phlebotomy Chair

Members considered a request from Bridge Street Surgery for financial support to purchase a phlebotomy chair.

It was noted that the request falls outside the Council's grant policy and that the cost is considered a responsibility of the NHS.

Resolved: That Full Council declines the request from Bridge Street Surgery for financial support to purchase a phlebotomy chair, as the request falls outside the Council's grant policy.

Proposed Cllr Leivers, Seconded Cllr Cain

16 In Favour 2 Abstentions

Cllr Brewer abstained as she had declared an interest as Bridge Street is her GP Surgery.

22. To receive updates from working parties:

22.1 Jubilee Community Centre Site Terms & Conditions Of Use Working Party

It was reported that no meeting had taken place.

22.2 Jubilee Community Centre Site Business Plan Working Party

Members confirmed that a meeting had not occurred.

22.3 Car Park Orders Working Party

It was noted by Members that no meeting had been held.

22.4 Grounds Maintenance Working Party

Members noted that this is on the Property Committee agenda, for discussion on Wednesday 14 January 2026.

23. To receive outside body reports

23.1 Youth Advisory Board

Members noted feedback from the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) regarding recent youth engagement, including the Board Games Event and a survey on community events. Attendance at the last Board Games Event was low, and survey responses were minimal, suggesting limited engagement from young people at this time. Cllr Pegg stated that a previous attempt to run a Youth Council approximately 10 years ago had only lasted 6–8 months due to lack of interest.

In response, the Town Council has paused all Youth Council activities and youth events until September 2026, to be reassessed once students have returned from summer and exams are complete. It was emphasised that future events will be youth-led with input from the YAB, rather than Council-led alone.

Members agreed to note the YAB's feedback, support the pause of Youth Council activities, and encourage continued collaboration with the YAB via Council representatives to ensure the Council remains aware of youth needs.

23.2 Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel

Cllr Wiles provided a report on the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel. Members noted that the next meeting will be held on 20 January 2026, 7.00–8.00pm at the Town Hall, with the option to join via Teams.

It was highlighted that the Council's primary focus at the meeting will be addressing concerns regarding speeding on Bexwell Road.

Cllr Leivers and Cllr Wiles will attend on behalf of the Council to meet with beat officers and raise these concerns.

23.3 Downham Market & Downham West Joint Burial Board

Cllr Daymond advised that there had been no further meetings since the last report to Council.

23.4 100 Acre Charity

Cllr Wiles reported that the 100 Acre Charity had donated £3,500 to the local food bank. The Chair, Cllr Charlie Pyatt, requested that thanks be passed on to the charity. Members noted that the next meeting of the charity will take place in a few weeks.

23.5 West Norfolk Tourism Forum

Cllr Leivers reported that Philip Eke advised on 7 November 2025 that quarterly meetings will be suspended due to low attendance. It was noted that the intention is to continue with the Spring and Autumn Business Meetings, and that further information will be provided in due course.

24. To consider a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the press and public on the grounds that confidential contract and legal matters will be discussed.

Resolved: That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following agenda items on the grounds that confidential contract and legal matters will be discussed.

Proposed Cllr Lewis, Seconded Cllr Wiles

17 In Favour 1 Abstention

Cllr Jordan left the room having declared a pecuniary interest, along with members of the public, and the live streaming of the meeting was stopped during this item.

The meeting went into confidentiality

24.1 To consider the Gritting Contract

Members considered the proposal from the Property Committee regarding the gritting contract. The Town Clerk advised that any financial contribution agreed would need to be a gesture of goodwill and not compensation, as this would not be supported by the Council's insurance.

The Town Clerk also reminded Members of guidance received from the Norfolk Association of Local Councils. Some Councillors disputed this advice.

Members discussed the balance between public safety and the potential for legal action.

The meeting came out of confidentiality. Members of the public and Cllr Jordan were invited back, and live streaming was resumed.

25. To agree any actions required following discussions within confidentiality

Resolved: That the Council resumes the gritting contract with the agreement of the contractor.

A named vote was requested by Cllr Dickson.

In Favour – Cllrs Cain, Daymond, Grover, Leivers, Lewis, Pegg, C. Pyatt, J. Pyatt, S. Moyses, B. Moyses, Sims, Wiles (12)

Against – Cllrs Brewer, Campbell-Robb, Dickson, Perkin (4)

Abstention – Cllr Jordan & Lane (2)

26. To discuss and agree 2026/2027 Budget

There was insufficient time to discuss agenda items 26 - 28. The Chair expressed an interest in convening an Extraordinary Full Council meeting to consider them.

Resolved: That an Extraordinary Full Council meeting be convened to consider the outstanding agenda item, to be scheduled at the earliest practical date.

Proposed Cllr C Pyatt, Seconded Cllr Brewer All In Favour

27. To discuss and agree 2026/2027 Precept

28. To note the date of the next meeting – 10 February 2026, 7pm, Town Hall.

Meeting ended: 8:59pm