

Downham Market Town Council

Events Committee Meeting

Held on Thursday 03 September 2026 at 6pm

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

Present

Chair – Cllr Lane

Committee Members - Cllrs Campbell-Robb (Joined the meeting at 6:03pm), Daymond,
Grover & Leach & (5)

Town Clerk – Claire Dornan

Deputy Town Clerk – Darren Martin

There were no members of the public present.

Members were reminded of the evacuation procedures from the Clock Room.

Attendees were asked to switch mobile phones off or place them on silent.

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive and note apologies for absence.

The Town Clerk advised that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Campbell-Robb (Appointment), who had advised that he would be attending the meeting but would be late due to a personal appointment.

The Committee was advised that Cllr S. Moyses had ceased to be a member of the Committee following his non-attendance at two consecutive meetings.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of interest and consider requests for Dispensations.

Cllr Lane declared he had a standing dispensation for the municipal year.

3. Public Participation (Maximum of 3 minutes per person, up to 15 minutes)

There were no members of the public present.

4. Minutes

To approve the minutes of the Events Committee held on 06 August 2026

RESOLVED:

‘That the minutes of the meeting held on 06 August 2026 be approved as a correct record.’

Proposed – Cllr Leach Seconded –Cllr Lane 4 In Favour 1 Abstention

5. Budget

To review the event budget and agree any required actions.

The Committee reviewed the event budget and considered the current position of each budget line. The following updates were noted:

Town Crier: The allowance for the Town Crier has been paid.

Mayor's At Home: Planning is underway for the Mayor's At Home event, which is scheduled to take place in March 2027. The timing has been selected to ensure that the event does not fall within the pre-election period.

Remembrance Parade and Pause to Remember: No expenditure has been incurred to date in relation to either event.

Halloween: The expenditure shown against this budget line relates to the purchase of the Halloween packs, which have now been prepared for the event.

Christmas Lights Switch-On: The expenditure allocated to this budget line relates to the provision of Father Christmas and presents for the event.

Armed Forces Day 2026: The Armed Forces Day event was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions, resulting in the budget line currently showing a negative balance. J.R. Light & Sound has agreed that the associated expenditure can be carried forward and applied to the 2027 event as a gesture of goodwill.

Advertising: The advertising budget was approved by Full Council, and the first month of the Council's engagement with Steele Media has now been completed.

During this initial period, Steele Media has confirmed that the workload being undertaken is appropriate to the level of service agreed. The Committee noted that the initial experience of working with the company has been positive, with regular communication and meetings ensuring that advertising activity reflects the Council's requirements.

It was further noted that, during January, when fewer events are scheduled, Steele Media has recommended that any available advertising capacity be used to increase public awareness of the Council and the work of its Councillors. Members wishing to participate in this activity were advised that any statements submitted for inclusion must relate directly to the work undertaken by the Council and must not be party-political in nature.

New Event: The new budget line relates to the cost of downloading a Murder Mystery Trail pack, which was purchased to support the Council's application for the Love Your Market scheme.

7. Event Planning – Halloween

To review the event budget and agree any required actions

The Committee reviewed the arrangements for the Halloween event and considered the following matters:

Halloween Decorations: The Committee noted that Halloween decorations had been donated to the Council by a contractor, who has also volunteered to assist with the event.

Advertising: Advertising inviting stallholders to apply to attend the event has commenced. Further advertising aimed at the general public will be undertaken shortly and will continue up to the date of the event to maximise public awareness and attendance.

Children's Rides: No response has been received to enquiries made to the Council's regular provider of children's rides. However, an alternative operator, who also provides children's rides, has made contact regarding the possibility of attending the event with a stall. A site visit will be arranged to enable the operator to assess the available space and discuss the costs associated with attending the event.

Risk Assessment: The Risk Assessment for the event will be circulated to Members for information and consideration by the Administrator.

First Aid Provision: The Committee noted that formal first aid provision would not be required for the event, as Council staff are appropriately trained and the event is expected to be small and contained.

3D Printed Items: Cllr Grover presented the completed 3D-printed bowling balls and 300 small ghost figurines to the Committee. Cllr Campbell-Robb provided a copy of the relevant COSHH data sheet for the materials used. The Committee welcomed the items, which will be checked to confirm their suitability for inclusion in the children's gift packs.

Halloween Cake: The Deputy Town Clerk will contact the bakers, Cream Me Up Scotty, with a view to commissioning a Halloween-themed cake for the event. Local supermarkets have also been contacted regarding the donation of additional cakes to cover any potential shortfall in supply.

Pass the Parcel: Cllr Lane is arranging for 10 Pass the Parcel games to be prepared, with the gifts to be purchased and wrapped accordingly. Two versions will be prepared, with gifts suitable for children under five and a separate set suitable for children aged five and over.

Games: Cllr Lane raised the possibility of including musical chairs as an additional activity. The Town Clerk advised that a risk assessment would need to be undertaken on the day, taking into account the prevailing weather conditions and crowd size, before determining whether the activity could safely proceed.

7. Event Planning – Remembrance

To receive an update on actions taken since the last meeting and approve security costs.

Members were informed by the Deputy Town Clerk that the Remembrance Working Party had completed their initial meeting that day, with all major contributors present except for the St Edmunds Church who will be contacted separately. Points raised at that meeting were as follows:

The parade will use the short route again this year, turning right at the top of the Town Square. This will ensure the minimum of disruption and ease potential issues with the siting of the band.

All present were happy to use the previous year's Order of March and Order of Service.

As both the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy will be in attendance, the representative from RAF Marham will make inquiries to see if a member from the Army could be available to lay a wreath as well, along with sourcing a representative from RAF Marham to attend the Pause to Remember service.

Before the parade, tea and coffee will be available in the Town Hall for the dignitaries present. Cllr Lane volunteered to cover this role.

Cllr Sims had queried if the United States Air Force at RAF Lakenheath or Mildenhall should be contacted to see if they would like to represent their service. The Deputy Town Clerk to make further enquiries.

The Town Crier had stated that he would not be needing a microphone during the parade organisation but would be grateful for some assistance whilst assembling the parade participants. Nick Robinson from Holly Landscapes had volunteered to help in this task. While assembling the parade they would also make sure that all organisations parading were present, in the correct order and had a wreath layer.

Cllr Lane informed the Committee that the Downham Market Horticultural Society wished to lay a wreath for the first time this year. The Deputy Town Clerk is to add their details to the participants list.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Royal British Legion Poppy Shop would be opening in the Town Hall from 23 October 2026 from 10:00 AM, which the Mayor is to officially open. Although at present we do not have a definite date of when the poppy decorations will be installed at the Town Clock and Town Hall, this will take place before the date of the opening. This will incur a small additional cost for the hire of the cherry picker to attach the displays. Wreaths are already in the Council Office, having been donated by the Royal British Legion.

It has been agreed that poems for the Parade and Pause to remember will be entered by Hillcrest Primary School and Nelson Academy, whilst Downham Grange have already sent theirs in. It was agreed to advertise that any group who wished to enter a poem for

consideration should send them into the Town Hall for consideration and that poems from both children and adult organisations would be selected and included this year.

The search for a Bugler to play at both events was still ongoing. The local band and Air Cadets are to be contacted but if a musician cannot be found to undertake this task, then a recording would be played over the sound system.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that, for the Remembrance Parade, the medical Cover would be supplied by St. John Ambulance Service, free of charge. Excalibur Security would be providing security services for the Remembrance Parade as previously agreed.

8. Event Planning – Christmas Lights Switch On

To receive an update on the Christmas Lights Switch On event and approve security and first aid costs.

Advertising for Stall Holders for this event has already been posted by Steele Media with some responses already in.

The Committee were asked to approve the medical cover for this event and were informed that Norfolk Event Medical Services had quoted including an ambulance to be in attendance for this event and was regarded as offering the best service in this case and should be approved.

RESOLVED:

‘That the provision of First Aid medical cover for the Christmas Lights Switch-On be awarded to Norfolk Event Medical Service..’

Proposed – Cllr Lane Seconded –Cllr Grover All In Favour

The Town Clerk asked the Committee to approve the security company to be used at this event. It was felt that Excalibur Security, who had previously been used to cover security for this event, were the best option.

RESOLVED:

‘That the provision of security cover for the Christmas Lights Switch-On be awarded to Excalibur Security.’

Proposed – Cllr Lane Seconded –Cllr Campbell – Robb All In Favour

The Committee were informed that the Reindeers had been booked to take part in this event.

The Committee were informed that confirmation replies had been received, with reference for the decorations for the Town Square Christmas Tree, from Hillcrest Primary, Nelson Academy, The Swan Youth Project and Downham Dementia. All these groups will be providing handmade decorations by 13 November 2026. Other groups including Downham Grange, Scouts, Girl Guides and Boys Brigade will be contacted again.

The Committee was asked to consider the proposed Christmas Tree Festival. A poll of several shops had been taken to gauge interest in taking part in this possible event. The idea being that local groups and businesses could supply and decorate a tree in the Grand Hall with limited advertising around their entry. This would hopefully stimulate interest in the public and increase foot fall in town on the week before Christmas. Most had agreed in principle. If approved an online application form would be generated to be filled in and returned by the organisation. They would supply their own tree, up to a maximum height of 8 feet, decorations in their business colours, battery powered lights are permitted but plug in decorative lights are not to be allowed due to PAT testing requirements, and any advertising leaflets to be placed around their own tree. Depending on uptake there is also the opportunity of staging a small craft fair in the hall. The trees could be installed between 14 – 17 December 2026, open to the public 18th – 19th December 2026 and then taken down by the organisations on the 21 December 2026.

RESOLVED:

‘That approval be given for the event to proceed and for advertising inviting entrants to commence.’

Proposed – Cllr Lane Seconded – Cllr Daymond All In Favour

9. Event Planning – St Winnolds

Agree the format and arrangements for the event.

The Committee agreed that the event should proceed in accordance with the suggested plans to include a handmade craft fair, reflecting the traditional crafts associated with the historic days.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that enquiries were being made to increase the number of equine participants in next year's fair. Potential participants included horse sanctuaries, racing stables, riding schools and re-enactment groups. Any participating horses would need to be accustomed to working in a public environment, and owners/operators would be required to hold appropriate indemnity insurance. Confirmation of participation was awaited from a number of organisations, with proposals to be brought back to the Committee for approval once confirmed.

Local schools would also be contacted regarding the possibility of pupils making hobby horses to participate in the parade.

The Deputy Town Clerk will contact Discover Downham regarding the possibility of their attending with a stall or table.

10. Anglia In Bloom

To consider whether to enter Anglia in Bloom.

The Committee was advised that the application process for Anglia in Bloom had changed. Rather than the previous judged visits to each entrant, the new process requires an online application comprising a 300-word presentation and six photographs.

In view of the town's colourful floral displays, the Committee considered whether Downham Market should participate in the competition.

The Committee was supportive of entering the competition in 2027 and considered that participation would provide a positive opportunity to raise the profile of the town, encourage increased footfall and promote greater involvement from local schools, businesses, care homes and community groups.

It was suggested that the Scouts and Guides could be approached regarding the possibility of planting and maintaining the area adjacent to the Jubilee Community Centre.

Wales Court and other relevant areas will be approached to explore potential involvement and to encourage the creation of floral displays within their plots that complement the wider town centre.

It was agreed that photographs of the town's floral displays should be taken throughout the seasons for potential inclusion in the Anglia in Bloom application.

RESOLVED:

‘That approval be given for Downham Market to enter the Anglia in Bloom competition.’

Proposed – Cllr Leach Seconded – Cllr Lane All In Favour

11. Martyn's Law

To receive an update following officer training and consider any actions required.

The Committee was advised that the Town Clerk will attend a consultation meeting hosted by the Home Office on 17 September 2026. The meeting will cover the implementation of Martyn's Law and the implications for the management and delivery of Council events.

12. Next Meeting

To confirm the date of the next Events Committee meeting.

Members agreed the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 07 October 2026 at 6pm.

The meeting closed at 7:14.