Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
Date: Tuesday 13 October 2026
Time: 7:00 PM
Venue: Town Hall, Bridge Street, Downham Market PE38 9DW
Livestream Link: YouTube Channel

Present

The Mayor – Cllr Wiles

Councillors Cain, Campbell - Robb, Daymond, Dickson, Grover, Jordan, Lane, Leach, Lewis, Leivers, S Moyses, B Moyses, Pegg, Perkin, C Pyatt, J Pyatt, Sims & Webb (19)

BCKLWN Councillors Bullen & Osborne

Darren Martin (Deputy Clerk)

3 Member of the public were present at the start of the meeting.

The Mayor reminded all attendees of the fire procedures and mobile phone requirements.

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive and note apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Brewer (Illness) & BCKLWN Cllr Ratcliffe

2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of interest and consider any requests for dispensations. Members are reminded to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, in accordance with the Town Council's Code of Conduct.

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. Public Forum

3.1 County Councillor and Borough Councillors

Borough Councillor Osborne provided an update on several matters affecting the local area:

- **Town Hall Car Park Public Toilets:** Cllr Osborne advised Members that a successful meeting, regarding the ongoing issues with the public toilets located at the Downham Market Town Hall Car Park, had taken place on 21 September 2026. The Borough Council Business Operations Manager had met with Downham Market Town Councils Deputy Clerk. The points raised have been passed on to Cllr Osborne, who was unavailable to attend on the day, and he will be working to resolve some of these issues.
- **Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH):** Progress continues with the hospital car park redevelopment, supporting the wider building works. A wider clinical review is also

underway across Norfolk to determine which services will be provided at each hospital over the coming decades. A public consultation is currently taking place. The Borough Council recently passed a unanimous motion calling for as many services as possible to be retained at QEH, recognising the significant travel distances that would otherwise be involved. A public demonstration will take place in King's Lynn Tuesday Market Place on Saturday 17 October 2026 at 11.30 am to show support for retaining hospital services.

- **Food Bank:** Cllr Osborne had attended an engagement evening with the local food bank shortly after the previous Town Council meeting. The event provided an opportunity to hear more about the valuable work undertaken by the organisation. Several Town and Borough Councillors were also in attendance.
- **Community Project Fund:** An update was provided on the recently established £500,000 Community Project Fund. A total of 48 applications had been submitted from across the Borough, requesting approximately £650,000. A relevant committee meeting will take place on Friday 16 October 2026 to make recommendations to Cabinet. Three Borough Councillors, representing Downham, have collectively supported five projects, some of which have ranked highly during the initial assessment. These include projects involving the Town Council, the Football Federation and other community organisations. No final decisions will be made until the Cabinet meeting in November, although Friday's meeting should provide an indication of likely outcomes.

Borough Cllr Bullen provided further information and updates on several matters affecting the local area:

- **Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH):** Cllr Bullen echoed the concerns previously raised by Cllr Osborne regarding the proposed changes to hospital services, particularly the Accident and Emergency (A&E) and Maternity Departments at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn. He again highlighted the planned public meeting in the King's Lynn Tuesday Market Place, which he hoped to attend. He emphasised the importance of continuing to raise concerns about the future provision of these services.
- **Community Project Fund:** Cllr Bullen also welcomed the Community Project Fund, describing it as an exciting opportunity for the town. He referred to his previous involvement in one project and his support for two others, expressing hope that the town would be successful in securing funding.
- **Antisocial behaviour and vandalism:** Cllr Bullen reported his recent involvement in addressing antisocial behaviour and vandalism within the town.
- **Willows Nature Reserve**: Ongoing work relating to the development of the Willows Nature Reserve is taking place. He explained that a long-term plan was being progressed in partnership with Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Wildlife Trust and offered to provide further clarification on the works taking place when available.

Cllr Daymond asked if it was the intention to run bus services from the new QEH car park to the local towns in the form of a park and ride service. Cllr Bullen stated that he would look into the matter and report back

3.2 Members of the Public
(Three minutes per person, maximum 15-minute session.)

No matters were raised by the members of the public present.

4. Chair's Report
To receive the Chair's Report.

The Mayor advised Members of his recent engagements and meetings, including:

- attendance at an event at the Eternity Food Bank alongside Cllrs Cain & Leivers on 17 September 2026;
- attendance at a meeting with reference to the proposed new Skatepark with the consultant from Radii Ramps, the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to discuss the proposed layout, positioning and options on 18 September 2026;
- attendance at a wreath-laying ceremony with Cllr Sims & Leivers and representatives of the Royal Air Force & Royal Air Force Association, at the War Memorial, to commemorate the Battle of Britain on 20 September 2026;
- Attendance and hosting of the Mayor's Quiz Night at Downham Market Town Hall, raising £200 for the Swan Youth Project on 28 September 2026;
- attendance at a grant training session held at the Town Hall on 6 October 2026;
- attendance at a visit to the Downham Market Men's Shed on 8 October 2026;
- attendance at the Youth Engagement Event, organised in conjunction with the Swan Youth Centre, at the Town Hall with Cllr Sims on 9 October 2026.

5. Minutes
To approve the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 15 September 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 15 September 2026 be approved as a correct record.

Proposed Cllr Campbell - Robb Seconded Cllr Sims 17 In Favour 2 Abstention

6. Committee Minutes

a) To note the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 15 September 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 15 September 2026 are received and noted.

Proposed Cllr Daymond Seconded Cllr Wiles All In Favour

b) To note the minutes of the Property Committee held on 27 August 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Property Committee held on 27 August 2026 are received and noted.

Proposed Cllr Jordan Seconded Cllr Lewis All In Favour

c) To note the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 17 August 2026 & 22 September 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 17 August 2026 & 22 September 2026 are received and noted.

Proposed Cllr Pegg Seconded Cllr Cain 15 In Favour 2 Against 2 Abstention

d) To note the minutes of the Events Committee held on 03 September 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Events Committee held on 03 September 2026 are received and noted.

Proposed Cllr Lane Seconded Cllr Leach All In Favour

7. Member Proposal

'To disband the HR Committee with immediate effect and defer all HR matters to Full Council, and to consider engaging a contracted HR retained service'.

Motion proposed by Cllr Dickson, seconded by Cllr Pekin.

Before the motion was considered, the Mayor read out a statement addressing the responsibilities of the HR Committee and the importance of confidentiality when dealing with staffing matters.

The Mayor emphasised the following points:

- The HR Committee deals with a wide range of staffing matters, not solely disciplinary issues. These can include sensitive personal information concerning employees, which must remain private and confidential.
- Certain matters need to be discussed within a restricted committee setting, away from other councillors and members of the public, where appropriate.
- During the Mayor's time as Chair of HR, some particularly sensitive matters had been kept strictly between the Clerk and the Mayor and had never been disclosed to other individuals.
- The Mayor expressed serious concern after learning that a councillor had requested personal staff information from the Vice-Chair of HR to be sent to their private

computer at home. The Mayor questioned the security and confidentiality of information held on a personal device within a private household.

- The Mayor stated that the HR Committee could not simply be disbanded with immediate effect while existing HR business remained ongoing. The current HR company was, to the Mayor's understanding, still actively dealing with staffing matters.
- It was anticipated that other HR companies would be approached for quotations or tenders to provide HR consultancy services once the current business had been concluded.
- The Mayor questioned the urgency of the proposed motion and expressed concern that it could disrupt the Council's ongoing business.
- The Mayor concluded by stating that, following a meeting with the Deputy Clerk that morning, they had become aware of the level of distress the proposal had already caused among existing staff. Concern was also expressed about the potential impact on the Council's ability to recruit future employees if staff matters were not handled appropriately.
- The Mayor stressed the importance of protecting staff confidentiality and ensuring that the Council continued to meet its responsibilities as an employer.

A motion was proposed by Councillor Dickson and seconded by Councillor Perkin to disband the Human Resources (HR) Committee with immediate effect, defer all HR matters to Full Council and consider engaging a contracted HR retained service.

The Mayor then asked Cllr Dickson about the wording and structure of the proposed motion, asking which element was intended to be considered first:

- disbanding the HR Committee with immediate effect or
- transferring all HR matters to Full Council and considering the appointment of a contracted HR retained service.

The Mayor observed that the wording appeared to contain two separate motions.

The Mayor raised further concerns about the practical and confidentiality implications of transferring HR responsibilities to Full Council, including:

- Under the Council's current structure, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor could not be involved in HR matters.
- How would the Council manage sensitive staffing issues at Full Council, given the number of councillors who would have access to confidential employee information?
- Where would confidential HR meetings take place? The Council Chamber was not considered a suitable secure location, particularly given the possibility of members of the public overhearing discussions from the balcony.
- The potential impact on staff confidence and future recruitment, questioning who would wish to work for a Council where confidential personal information could be accessible to all councillors.

The Mayor reiterated that protecting staff confidentiality must remain a priority.

It was also stated that public speaking at a Town Council meeting is not an automatic right but a concession that may be permitted or refused by the Mayor.

Cllr Dickson informed the Full Council that as Cllr Brewer was unable to attend the meeting, and considering that the Cllrs testimony is important to the debate, also that further information had become available which needed to be checked for accuracy before being entered into the motion, it was therefore requested that the motion be withdrawn and brought back for consideration at the next Full Council meeting.

The Council noted the request.

Member Proposal 'To disband the HR Committee with immediate effect and defer all HR matters to Full Council, and to consider engaging a contracted HR retained service'.

To be withdrawn until the next Full Council Meeting

8. Finance & General Purposes Committee Recommendation

'To consider the recommendations of the Finance & General Purposes Committee:

'That the final draft of the Standing Orders be approved for recommendation to Full Council, subject to the following amendments:

8(i). Remove the words "stand when speaking" under paragraph 3(i).

8(ii). Add "January" to paragraph 5(j)(iv).

8(iii). Change "Council's" to "Councillors" under paragraph 13(f)(iii).

8(iv). Add page numbers throughout the Standing Orders document.

Cllr Leivers stated that she would be voting against the recommendations of changes to the Standing Order Policy, as this was one of the Council's most important policy documents and she had identified what were thought to be a number of issues relating to the wording of the statutory requirements that needed correcting. It was also stated that some members of the Finance & General Committee did not have their own copies of the policy available when the original meeting took place. She felt that the document should therefore be deferred until the next meeting to allow the necessary amendments to be made.

Cllr Jordan agreed that the recommendations to amend the document should be withdrawn from the agenda and be brought back for consideration at the next meeting.

Cllr Lane stated that considerable time had already been spent reviewing the document in detail and that Cllr Leivers had previously voted in favour of it being submitted to Full Council.

Cllr Leivers further stated that, having reviewed the amended draft, she had identified an issue where a section that should have been highlighted in bold to indicate a statutory requirement had not been formatted correctly. Cllr Leivers felt that, although the issues

were relatively minor, they were important and required further checking, with additional time allowed for amendments to be made.

Cllr Pegg stated that he had attended both meetings but had not received the paperwork prior to the first meeting. Cllr Campbell-Robb, however, stated that the document had been reviewed line by line at the previous meeting.

The original motion was put to a vote, with the following result:

'To consider the recommendations of the Finance & General Purposes Committee:

a) 'That the final draft of the Standing Orders be approved for recommendation to Full Council, subject to the following amendments:

8(i). Remove the words "stand when speaking" under paragraph 3(i).

8(ii). Add "January" to paragraph 5(j)(iv).

8(iii). Change "Council's" to "Councillors" under paragraph 13(f)(iii).

8(iv). Add page numbers throughout the Standing Orders document.

Proposed Cllr Campbell-Robb Seconded Cllr Lane 2 In Favour 12 Against 5 Abstention

The item was therefore withdrawn and agreed to be carried forward to the next Full Council meeting for further consideration.

9. Property Committee

a) 'That Property Committee recommend to Full Council an increase in the Skate Park budget from £203,000 to £300,000.' See Property Committee minutes 23 September 2026.

The Mayor praised the Council staff for the excellent work undertaken so far in carrying out the consultation and preparing the supporting documentation.

Cllr Leach stated that the proposed facility would provide an important amenity for the town's young people and supported progressing with the project.

Cllr Lane asked whether potential Lottery grants could be obtained to help fund the project.

The Mayor explained that £300,000 would be required for the project, with grant funding included within the overall funding considerations.

Cllr Leivers stated that sufficient reserves remained available within the Council's accounts to cover the costs.

Cllr J Pyatt questioned the significant percentage increase in the proposed budget and asked whether the Council would be funding the entire project.

Cllr Dickson agreed that the town needed the facility but questioned whether the Council should meet the full cost, although he confirmed their support for the proposal.

The Mayor explained that he had attended a meeting with the consultants, who had advised that increasing the budget to £300,000 would allow the Council to deliver a first-class facility that would be the envy of many other towns.

Cllr Leivers emphasised the importance of progressing the project as soon as possible, noting that construction costs were likely to increase further over time.

Cllr Grover questioned how much the project costs might continue to increase and requested assurances that the additional expenditure would not result in an increase to the Council's precept.

Cllr Campbell-Robb proposed that the Council proceed with the project immediately, stating that the facility was needed.

Cllr Leivers reiterated that sufficient funds were available in the Council's reserves and that the project would therefore have no impact on the precept.

Cllr Lewis expressed his hope that work could commence soon.

Councillor C Pyatt stated that all available grant opportunities should be pursued before committing to the construction of the project.

Cllr S Moyses agreed that sufficient reserves were available and supported proceeding with the project for the benefit of the town's young people.

Cllr Grover reiterated that he was seeking assurances that no additional costs would be passed on through the precept.

Cllr Daymond commented that the original skate park had been a viable facility but had a limited lifespan due to the way it had been constructed. He felt that the proposed replacement would represent better value for money.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Property Committee recommendation to Full Council for an increase in the Skate Park budget from £203,000 to £300,000.'

Proposed Cllr Campbell-Robb Seconded Cllr Leivers All In Favour

b) 'That the Property Committee recommends to Full Council that planning permission be sought for the proposed works to the Jubilee Community Centre, subject to the amendments discussed.' See Property Committee minutes 23 September 2026.

Cllr Jordan requested approval to submit the proposed drawings for planning permission.

Cllr Lewis explained that the planning application represented a significantly scaled-down version of the original proposals. The revised plans included the following:

- An external storage area and tarmac area for parking to the side of the building.
- A hall to the right-hand side of the building.
- A kitchen and separate accessible toilets, away from the main hall.

- A doorway connecting to the new office area.
- The existing main hall would remain unchanged.
- The rear room would be converted into a kitchen and bar area for that side of the building.
- The front offices on the left-hand side would be converted into a kitchen, incorporating a serving hatch opening onto an external patio area.
- External access doors to the toilets would be installed on the left-hand side of the building.

It was noted that the external toilet access would allow the portable toilets currently used by Downham Market Town Football Club to be removed.

Cllr Jordan explained that modular changing rooms were also being planned for the external area. These would be constructed to Football Association (FA) standards suitable for use with a 3G pitch.

Cllr Dickson queried the anticipated cost of the proposed alterations. Cllr Jordan advised that the architect was currently preparing the costings for the refurbishment.

Cllr Lewis further outlined other proposed improvements, which would include:

- Re-covering the roof.
- Installing LED lighting throughout the building.
- Updating the plumbing.
- Rendering the internal and external walls.
- Decorating the building in a neutral colour.

Cllr Leivers reminded members that the decision being sought at this stage was solely to approve the submission of the plans for planning permission, rather than approval to proceed with the refurbishment works themselves.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Property Committee recommendation to Full Council that planning permission be sought for the proposed works to the Jubilee Community Centre, subject to the amendments discussed.'

Proposed Cllr Jordan Seconded Cllr Lewis All In Favour

c) To obtain approval to submit the Town Hall Planning Permission Application, including the proposed windows and Grand Hall fire doors.

Cllr Jordan clarified that the item related solely to seeking approval to submit a planning application for the proposed Town Hall windows and Grand Hall fire doors.

Cllr Cain asked whether the replacement windows would be like-for-like replacements. Cllr Jordan confirmed that this would be the case and explained that the purpose of the item was simply to obtain approval to submit the drawings, which had already been circulated, for planning permission.

RESOLVED:

To approve to submit the Town Hall Planning Permission Application, including the proposed windows and Grand Hall fire doors.

Proposed Cllr Jordan Seconded Cllr Lewis All In Favour

10. Car Park Orders Working Party

a) To approve the commencement of a consultation on the key parking proposals discussed with the consultant, taking into account the normal temporary closure of car parks for weekly markets, including:

• three hours' free parking with no return within one hour across all Town Council car parks;

• options for long-term parking;

• options for residential parking permits; and

• no overnight parking at Jubilee Community Centre.

For clarity, approval at this stage is to undertake consultation only and does not constitute approval of any of the proposed parking measures.

Cllrs discussed the proposal to commence a soft consultation on the key parking measures under consideration.

Cllr Jordan asked what options were being considered for long-term parking. Cllr C Pyatt explained that residential and staff parking requirements were also being investigated.

Cllr Jordan queried why Jubilee Community Centre (JCC) car park had been included in the proposed orders. Cllr Campbell-Robb suggested that this was a point requiring clarification with the consultant.

Cllr Daymond asked whether the proposed restriction on overnight parking at JCC would affect the Scouts' summer camping activities.

Cllr Lane asked how long the consultation would run. Cllr C Pyatt confirmed that an initial two-week soft consultation was proposed, following which the matter would be brought back to Council before any further consultation took place.

Cllr Webb asked whether parking charges would be included in the proposals.

Cllr Lane expressed concern that two weeks would not be sufficient time for the soft consultation.

Cllr Grover commented that the proposals would be unlikely to make any difference to the existing parking situation in Downham Market.

Cllr Daymond asked who had been appointed as the parking consultant. Cllr C Pyatt explained that the consultant had been put forward as the most suitable person to undertake the work.

Cllr Pegg clarified that a further statutory consultation would take place at a later stage and would be open to the public.

Cllr Cain stated that she did not agree with the proposed three-hour parking limit across all car parks and questioned why this had been included.

Cllr J Pyatt reiterated that the current proposal was only for an initial soft consultation. The Town Clerk had circulated notes of the points raised to all councillors for consideration. Council was being asked to authorise the commencement of the consultation, after which the points and feedback received from members of the public would be brought back to Council for further consideration.

Cllr S Moyses requested the name and company details of the consultant. Councillor Sims confirmed that the consultant was independent.

Cllr Jordan stated that an indication of the costs associated with the consultations would be required. Cllr C Pyatt advised that he did not have the consultant's name available at the meeting but confirmed that this could be provided at a later date. He reiterated that the decision being sought was solely to authorise the commencement of the initial soft consultation.

RESOLVED: To approve the commencement of a consultation on the key parking proposals discussed with the consultant, taking into account the normal temporary closure of car parks for weekly markets, including:

• three hours' free parking with no return within one hour across all Town Council car parks;

• options for long-term parking;

• options for residential parking permits; and

• no overnight parking at Jubilee Community Centre.

Proposed Cllr Campbell-Robb Seconded Cllr C Pyatt 14 In Favour 4 Against 1 Abstention

11. Outside Body Reports

‘To receive verbal reports from Council representatives on the following outside bodies:’

a) Fen Line Users Association (FLUA)

Cllr Campbell-Robb. reported that there had been no new updates from the Fen Line Users Association.

Cllr Leivers advised that she had received a newsletter from the Association and would circulate it to all councillors the following day.

b) Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel (SNAP)

Cllr Leivers reported that a meeting of the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel had been held at the Town Hall, although no residents had attended.

The issues of anti-social behaviour and speeding within the town were discussed. Two roads had been identified as priorities for speed reduction measures and mobile speed monitoring vans would be used when available

Concerns were also raised regarding the dangers associated with e-bikes especially when being used on pavements. Police in our area have already seized 5 of these recently.

Cllr Leivers wished to express thanks to P.C. Cowan for being present at the meeting.

The next SNAP meeting would be held at Downham Market Town Hall on 14 January 2027.

c) Downham Market & Downham West Joint Burial Board

Cllr Daymond informed Council that the next meeting of the Joint Burial Board was scheduled to take place the 14 October 2026 and a report of this would be given at the next meeting.

d) 100 Acre Charity

Cllr Daymond stated that he was awaiting information from them and that there was nothing to report at present.

12. Councillors' Questions and Future Agenda Items

'To receive Councillors' questions and suggestions for future agenda items.'

Cllr Cain reported that she had attended a training session recently and commented that attendance by Cllrs had been low. Cllr Cain felt that the training had been worthwhile and expressed the hope that more Cllrs would attend future training sessions.

Cllr Lane also commented that the recent grant training held in the Town Hall had been worthwhile attending.

13. Date of Next Meeting

'To note that the next meeting of the Full Council will be held on Tuesday 10 November 2026.'

The next Full Council Meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 10 November 2026.

The meeting closed at 8.14 pm.