

Clerk's Report – Council and Committee Actions

For consideration by Full Council September 2026

Full Council

A number of actions arising from previous Full Council meetings have now been completed or significantly progressed.

North Yorkshire Council Planning Public Access portal is now accessible.

Correspondence has also been exchanged with Yorkshire Water regarding the condition and reinstatement of roads, footways and verges. Yorkshire Water has advised that North Yorkshire Council has revoked permits for further works until current works have been completed to the required standard. This matter will continue to be monitored.

The business case for the proposed transfer of the Rose Garden has been completed and submitted to North Yorkshire Council. Receipt has been confirmed and the Council is now awaiting an outcome. The Clerk has also inspected the Rose Garden and prepared a letter for residents living adjacent to the site explaining the Council's intentions. The letter will be delivered and a news update has been placed on the Council website.

The potential acquisition of Grasmere Public Convenience continues to be investigated. A plumber has been asked to provide an initial indication of refurbishment costs and research is being completed to alternative arrangements for sandbag storage. Further information and advice, including from Gargrave Parish Council, will be sought before the matter is brought back to Members.

Members were reminded at the August meeting of the outstanding Register of Interests and Sexual Harassment Legislation requirements. There remain three Members who have not completed the required training and four Members who have not updated their Register of Interests. These matters will continue to be monitored.

The Council has continued to liaise with the Environment Agency regarding the Angus Fire Site. A meeting was arranged for 5 August and a report has been prepared. The proposed Community Liaison Group will be brought forward for consideration at the September Council meeting.

The Council has responded to North Yorkshire Council in support of the proposed double yellow lines, along Main Street, opposite Robin Lane and has requested regular enforcement visits, particularly given the existing problems with vehicles ignoring the current restrictions.

Following Councillor Burton's resignation, the Monitoring Officer has been contacted and the Council website updated. The necessary vacancy process will continue.

The masterplan timeline and future actions have been sent to North Yorkshire Council officers. The Extraordinary Council meeting relating to the staffing matter was also arranged as required.

The Victoria Institute defibrillator battery is down to one bar, this is being carefully monitored and a new one sits in the office.

Open Spaces Committee

The Open Spaces Committee continues to manage a significant programme of maintenance and improvement works across the parish.

A number of tree matters have progressed. The ash tree at the cemetery has been inspected by a tree surgeon and early signs of ash dieback were identified. The tree is not currently considered to be an imminent danger and will be reviewed again when in leaf. Further quotations have been obtained for tree and hedge works, including works to overhanging trees.

The Committee continues to progress improvements and repairs to the parish play areas. Quotations are being obtained for wet-pour repairs, zip wire flooring, the accessible seesaw and other equipment. Three quotations have been received for the accessible seesaw and wet-pour works are being evaluated. The PHPF multiplay unit weld has been investigated, with HAGS confirming that the repair is not covered by the warranty.

The roundabout has been inspected by an engineer, who considers the bearing to be satisfactory and the equipment worth repairing. The proposed repair includes adjustment of the perimeter ring to address the finger-entrapment gap, together with replacement of bolts and the centre cap.

New play area signage has been installed.

The old fallen fence has also been removed and replaced by Yorkshire Housing. The top entrance gate remains unresolved despite repeated requests to Yorkshire Housing for repair.

Full Council has approved £33,000 for Goodenber Road Play Area, with a further £3,100 already held in the existing fund. The Clerk has prepared and is maintaining a spreadsheet of Open Spaces works, recommendations and costs so that the Committee can prioritise works and bring forward appropriate recommendations.

The new cemetery noticeboard has been installed. The kerb clearance works have been completed by the Caretaker. Further work is being considered in relation to the memorial wall, bench positioning and tree risk management. New burials in the cemetery and memorials topple tested – one laid flat still, unable to contact owners of the EROB. The pond works remain on hold while the specification and costs are considered. The Clerk is also continuing to seek confirmation of the public footpath position from the Public Rights of Way Officer.

Buildings Committee

Following the annual building walk-around, the Caretaker has worked through a number of identified issues, including stage cobwebs, touch-up painting and cleaning of the gents' toilets ceiling.

The Wenningdale Room works: decorating quotation received being approximately £400 per section. The cracking following the damp-proofing works has been inspected and the decorator is confident this can be addressed. A quotation for the replacement carpet and mat is awaited, with radiator re-fitting to follow once the entrance works are completed.

The emergency lighting and bulkhead works have now been completed by Howsons. The previously approved electrical works are also being progressed, including the new fan, external Christmas light socket and Lower Hall ceiling socket.

The automatic door service contract with ACE Elevators has been accepted at £480, and arrangements are being made for the work to be booked. Staff have also been reminded that the automatic door sensors will need to be deactivated and the doors manually locked following installation of the shutters.

Three quotations have now been received for the entrance shutters. As the Buildings Committee does not have sufficient budget, the matter will need to be referred to Full Council for consideration.

A priority list of internal fire doors requiring replacement has been prepared and is currently being checked by the Chair before being submitted to Full Council with a budget request.

Other matters remain under investigation, including the lift telephone/digital changeover and LOLER requirements, the Ballroom boiler, rear handrails, Lower Hall floor sanding and more suitable replacement feet for the Ballroom chairs.

Finance Committee

The principal outstanding Finance Committee matter is the deposit account administration update, which remains with the Chair.

The Clerk has continued to follow up outstanding invoices. All but one late payment has now been received. There is also an outstanding issue regarding a coffee morning payment where the incorrect amount was paid, and further communication is awaited.

Bank reconciliations still have an error of -£61.94, this is due to an ingoing unidentified payment into Unity bank, the Clerk has contacted the named depositor after requesting details from the bank, still no response.

Internal Audit quotes have been sought – receiving three independent quotes ranging from £350 to £600, contacts through the Internal Forum Audit Service.

Externally Audit still ongoing, questions have been answered and further breakdowns of payments and receipts have been sent.

Budget movements from furniture allocations to electrical repairs have been completed with £300 from furniture to electrical repairs.

Financial implications arising from the Open Spaces programme, Town Hall works and potential asset acquisitions will continue to be brought to the appropriate Committee or Full Council when firm costs and recommendations are available.

Boost and Community Projects

The Bygone Bentham Trail has been progressed. A new location for plaque 5 has been agreed at the Black Bull on Station Road side following the removal of the previous location at the Neil Wright building. This was necessary due to planning and listed-building considerations regarding additional signage.

The Clerk has reviewed the trail and identified the locations of all 17 plaques. The leaflet wording has also been updated and a meeting has been arranged with Creative Theory to discuss updating the leaflet using photographs from the trail.

The Bentham Boost children's trail is also progressing.

Three flags have been removed following complaints from residents, with the Parish Caretaker responding promptly to each request. Two flags now sit in the office which have ripped – a meeting will be arranged for the flag maker to attend to assess all flags which will be removed when the weather is better.

The Clerk has met with a consultation firm gathering information regarding the need for continued access to banking services in Bentham. In light of potential York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority funding, the Clerk has offered to support the building society with its application.

A meeting has also been arranged with the Bentham Masterplan team and North Yorkshire Council officers to discuss updating the Masterplan in relation to Town Improvement Plan funding.

General Clerk's Matters

New cleaning equipment has been ordered following a request from the Caretaker for equipment suitable for maintaining the Ballroom flooring. A new computer monitor has also been ordered for the Clerk to improve working arrangements.

A broken sign on Butts Lane has been reported to North Yorkshire Council.

In relation to the Sidings planning application; North Yorkshire Council acknowledged that Bentham Town Council had previously been given an incorrect date. The Clerk advised that local residents had not been informed and that notices had not been displayed near the Sidings in Low Bentham. North Yorkshire Council has advised that the required notices will be displayed on Friday 28 August. The Clerk will be researching and contacting North Yorkshire regarding a Asset of Community Value.

The cellar gate remains with the contractor. The contractor's mobile telephone number is currently inactive and the Clerk is attempting to re-establish contact to progress completion.

The annual boiler inspection has been arranged for Wednesday 23rd September 2026, as the inspection became due in August.

Actions Remaining to be Completed

The main outstanding actions across the Council and Committees are:

- Completion of outstanding Register of Interests and Sexual Harassment Legislation training requirements.
- Further quotations and recommendations for PHPF and Goodenber play equipment and wet-pour works.
- Further investigation of Grasmere Public Convenience, including refurbishment costs and alternative sandbag storage.
- Completion of the Victoria Institute defibrillator cabinet installation.
- Completion of the archive room data cleanse and cemetery record uploads.
- Progressing the outstanding deposit account administration.
- Full Council consideration of the entrance shutters and internal fire door budget requirements.
- Further investigation of the lift telephone/digital changeover and LOLER compliance.
- Specialist assessment of the broken boiler.
- Further quotations for rear Town Hall handrails and Lower Hall floor sanding.
- Progressing outstanding tree, cemetery, memorial and pond works.
- Continuing to pursue Yorkshire Housing regarding the top entrance gate at GRPA.
- Following up the issue of the cellar gate.