



Town Clerk Report January 2025

1 Introduction

In this report, I will cover the following:

- Report on progress against the priorities set out at the October Full Council meeting
- Some other key work undertaken
- Governance update, including updates on Co Option and Standing Orders
- Finance work update
- Staffing update.

2 Progress on Key Priorities Set Out at October Full Council

1. *Set the budget for 2025/26 – financial position is a top priority!*
An initial forecast was shared with the Town Council at the October meeting. A first draft budget was then submitted to the FP and GP Cttee for their December meeting. Following this meeting, and the Cllr feedback, a draft budget and suggested amendments has been prepared for the January Full Council.
This information is mindful of the auditor recommendations regarding reserves, and it cannot be emphasised enough that the level of reserves of the Council must be increased over time.
2. *Determine Xmas lights arrangements after 2024/25*
A priority for the new year. There has been successful liaison with the providers for this year.
3. *Investigate key finance lines*
This work is reflected in the forecast and budget figures produced. I have also ensured that we can make claims for the S106 and TetraTech monies so a further £40,000 will be received shortly.
4. *Understand toilets income and expenditure*
Detailed work has been undertaken and the Council is considering next steps at this January Full Council.
5. *Respond to NYC consultation on boundaries*
Completed.
6. *Determine WTC involvement in Neighbourhood Plan going forward*
I have had meetings with relevant parties, and this has been confirmed.

WTC has printed documents for current surveys and will also support the consultation in the new year, but the day-to-day work is being undertaken by the independent co-ordinator. This co-ordinator is funded by the Groundworks funding obtained by the Council.

7. *Understand Double Devolution next steps*

I am working with the relevant senior officer from North Yorkshire Council so as to bring an update to Full Council in due course. This will enable Cllrs to consider and agree a final submission to NYC of what the Town Council may wish to take on and the resourcing for this. This is key work for the Town Council in 2025.

8. *Understand implications of audit objections for the Council*

Work is already reflected in the budget and work has also been undertaken to help the Pannett records be ready for submission to the Charity Commission in January.

9. *Ensure day to day responses – leaks etc*

As described below, a lot of staff time has to be spent on this. This can also involve myself e.g. acting to get leaks fixed in 3rd party premises that was affecting one of our toilets.

10. *Help at Xmas festival*

It was great to be Santa! The festival was a great success – lots of people and a great atmosphere. It met its brief of bringing people to Whitby in late November.

11. *Prepare an office clear out!*

A clear out day happened on the 8th of January. I want to thank all the staff who mucked in and made such a difference over the day.

12. *Understand Town Fund arrangements*

This has been part of the meetings I have been having with NYC staff – more information will come to the Town Council in due course.

13. *Bank hub - following motion passed earlier in the year, explore how the Council can be appropriately involved.*

I met with the coordinator of this work in December and expect more information to come to the public in the early months of 2025.

14. *Understand the building maintenance requirements for 2025, including any further work needed after lift survey, legionella survey and building survey.*

I have liaised with the Joint Management Committee and have read the relevant documents.

A list of forthcoming works has informed the budget, while other work may be added to this if/when funding can be secured.

3 Other Key Work Underway

I have also been involved in a lot of key work not covered in the October report. Examples include the following.

1 *Fire drill and emergency plans*

I have worked with the staff team to review the current documents, and a final updated version is being agreed with the museum.

2 *Alarms Contract arrangements*

I am aware that this arrangement comes to an end in a few months and so it's a priority to determine what happens next.

3 *Learning the finance and payroll systems*

The systems used by the Town Council are different from ones I have used before – have taken time to get training on these.

4 *First aid training*

Undertook the one-day training with other staff – essential.

5 *Old town hall*

I have arranged for NYC to report to the Town Council at the January Full Council.

6 *Website training and work to get this up to date*

I am arranging website training for myself and relevant staff so that we can improve our website – this is definitely a priority and we ask for the patience and understanding of residents and Cllrs while this is being organised.

7 *Getting filming of meetings fixed*

The faulty filming equipment has been inspected and we are awaiting a quote for the works so hope to have this resolved in the very near future.

8 *Flood claim with loss adjuster*

Work has continued so that the loss adjuster claim can be completed once the re-decoration is complete.

9 *Priorities for the Council*

I will bring a report to the March Full Council on plans for enabling the Cllrs to work together on priorities for the Council for the period up to the next election in May 2027.

10 *Planning Application – Fish Market Improvement Project*

Finally in this section, I wanted to flag up for Cllrs and residents that a presentation about the upcoming proposals for the planning application for the fish market improvement project will be made to the next meeting of the Planning and Licensing Cttee on the 28th of January.

A presentation of earlier proposals was made to Council around 3 years ago.

4 Governance work

Key work I have been undertaking includes the following:

- Preparation for, minutes of, and actions arising from the meetings takes up a significant part of my time.
- There have been a number of FOIs and so dealing with these has taken up some of my time.
- I've also spent time on a number of items of communication and queries from Cllrs.

I will continue to give the time I can to these, while being mindful of being part of a very small team, with a lot of demands on my time.

I have also had induction meetings with the Deputy Monitoring Officer at NYC and the Chief Officer at the Yorkshire Association of Local Councils.

Governance Work - Co option

Following the recent vote not to adopt the 2 residents who came forward, the advice of the Elections Officer at North Yorkshire Council was sought on how to proceed.

The advice was as follows:

To refer to the town council's co-option policy in the first instance and continue to seek to co-opt suitable members to the vacant seats. You may need to publish a fresh co-option notice.

This will happen in the coming weeks so that the vacancies can be filled as soon as possible.

Governance Work – Standing Orders and Terms of Reference

The Annual Council meeting reviews these each May, and this will happen in May 2025 as usual. A priority will be spending some of my time preparing the necessary information for this.

5 Finance Work

A lot of the day-to-day finance work [invoices, income, payroll, vat returns, pension records etc] lies with me and this work takes a number of hours each week.

6 Staffing

I am very grateful for all of the hard work of the small but dedicated staffing team.

This is especially so when there have been 2 close bereavements within the team. I value working somewhere where people look out for each other and giving any

support we can. At the same time, I hope Cllrs and residents will understand that it is a more challenging period for the group.

One thing I have learned is just how much work is going on behind the scenes to look after the gallery/museum building, the allotments, the toilets and our other responsibilities. These do take up a lot of the time of our staffing team.

7 Conclusion

I trust this gives Cllrs and residents a good insight into the key work of the clerk and the priorities of the Town Council. I think it's really important to give everyone a good idea of what is happening.

As can be seen, there are 3 main elements to this work:

- Finance
- Governance
- Projects and Partnerships

I am now 3 months in post. I think it has been wise to spend this initial time learning the role, the organisation, the people, the town and the partnerships as well as I can.

Over the months ahead, I will be giving consideration about how best we organise our resources to deliver all aspects in the most effective ways possible.

ADAM CHUGG January 2025