

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of  
Yarm Town Council to be held at  
**The Fellowship Hall (side entrance)**  
**West Street, Yarm TS15 9BT.**  
**Date: Tuesday 8th March 2022**  
**Time: 7pm**  
Members of the public are invited to  
attend the meeting  
**Juliet Johnson, Proper Officer to YTC**



Yarm Town Council  
Town Hall  
High Street  
Yarm  
TS15 9AH

In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is permitted; the Chair will notify those present of this at the start of the meeting and ask whether they agree to be filmed, recorded or photographed

## YARM TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. John Coulson (Vice Chair)

Cllr. Chris Neil

Cllr. Philip Addison

Cllr. Pam Smailes

Cllr. Peter Monck

Cllr. Barbara Wegg

Cllr. Patrick Morton

Proper Officer / Town Clerk - Juliet Johnson

The Rate Payers' Representative (RPR) Karen Shields was in attendance.

Ward Cllr. Dan Fagan was in attendance.

Meeting Commenced - 7.25pm.

**1.0 To appoint a Chairman in the absence of the Chair and/or Vice Chair**

**1.1** In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chair, Cllr Coulson was in the Chair.

**2.0 Apologies for Absence**

**2.1** Apologies were received from the **Chairman Cllr. Alan Gallafant & Cllr. Alan Moffitt.**

**Cllr. Chris Johnson** had confirmed that he was unable to attend due to an unforeseen circumstance.

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 – section 100A(4), members of the public (other than those prohibited from doing so) are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda

Apologies were received from Ward Cllr. Andrew Sherris.

### 3.0 Code of Conduct | Declaration of Interest | Dispensation

- a) To record declarations of interest from members of any item to be discussed
- b) To consider, vote upon and record any requests for dispensation

#### 3.1 Request for dispensation - Cllr Alan Gallafant

**The Clerk** briefed the meeting that **Cllr Allan Gallafant** had requested dispensation for non-attendance at meetings (due to illness) in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, until such time as he is able to attend.

**APPROVED: The request for dispensation from Cllr. Gallafant was approved by all Councillors.**

### 4.0 Confirmation of Minutes

**To accept the minutes of the previous meetings:**

4.1 **Weigh and Tolls Committee** held on Tuesday 8th February 2022 and approve their signature by the Chairman of the meeting.

**PROPOSED: Cllr Addison                      SECONDED: Cllr Monck                      AGREED.**

4.2 **Yarm Town Council** held on Tuesday 8th February 2022 and approve their signature by the Chairman of the meeting.

**PROPOSED: Cllr Monck                      SECONDED: Cllr Addison                      AGREED**

### 5.0 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Ordinary YTC meeting, 8th February 2022:

#### 5.1 Litter Bins and Trade Waste Bins - Clerk/ALL

**Cllr Morton** stated that he felt the fly tipping situation as regards the trade waste bins had improved, if not entirely solved.

**The Clerk** confirmed that she is still awaiting copies of the original plans that show the proper location required for trade waste bins (as per planning permission granted to the businesses in question).

#### 5.2 Proposal for pavement markings (pubs, cafes and eateries). - Clerk / Cllr Neil

**The Clerk** reported that a Stockton Borough Council Officer (SBC) was still consulting with Highways as regards a potential option.

#### 5.3 Mayoral Chain - Cllr Wegg /Clerk

**Cllr Wegg** has some material she regards as suitable. **Cllr Wegg and the Clerk** to liaise as regards the measurements of the pins to be attached. Additional pins and refurbishment of existing ones is to be costed.

#### 5.4 Completion of relocation to temporary office

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**The Clerk** confirmed that the relocation of the office ( in readiness for refurbishment of the Town Hall/ Heritage centre) would be mostly complete by Friday 11th March 2022 (at the cost of £160). Storage of artefacts would be completed with a specialist company (costs to be confirmed) and Preston Park Museum.

**5.5 YTC adopting a 'Charity of the Year': Brief to Advertise - Clerk**

**The Clerk** confirmed that this would be completed at a later date (e.g. ready for the Annual Meeting year - May 22 to May 23 - as agreed by Councillors).

**5.6 Youth Provision, Countering ASB & CCTV - liaison with SBC - Clerk**

**5.6.1 Cllr Morton** referenced recent day time break ins and there was general discussion regarding recent reported incidents of anti-social behaviour.

**5.6.2 The Clerk** confirmed a planned meeting with Cornerhouse Youth Provision (following the brief verbal presentation given to Councillors at the last meeting) and requested that Cllrs confirmed their best availability for this. **Ward Cllr. Fagan** requested a Friday afternoon as he would like to be included.

**ACTION: The Clerk** to arrange.

**5.6.3** The Clerk briefed the meeting with information gleaned from a meeting with SBC lead officer on CCTV. In short:

- i) siting CCTV is governed by strict legislation (e.g. Freedom and Privacies Act 2018)
- ii) only the principal authority (SBC) can site CCTV in public areas (YTC can site cameras on its own land)
- iii) any siting of CCTV has to (e.g.) meet 12 criteria and be subject to a Privacy Impact Assessment
- iv) a very strong case for siting CCTV in public areas has to be built from incident logs - once certain thresholds are reached a principal local authority can apply to site CCTV (subject also to iii. above)
- v) SBC has achieved funding for additional CCTV in Yarm; the proposed locations determined were listed and 1 further camera remains;
- vi) the Clerk asked Cllrs to confirm or otherwise that, based on recent discussions regarding ASB, Central Street would be a preferred location for the remaining camera, if possible to locate here.

**AGREED:** Cllrs. agreed that Central St was the preferred location for the remaining camera. **Clerk** to confirm to SBC.

**5.7 Worsall Rd. Roundabout: Alternative Approach Proposal**

**5.7.1 Cllr Smailes** referenced that she/ a volunteer had obtained 2 quotes for work on the above that she had asked a volunteer to lead a group to achieve. **Cllr Smailes** confirmed that the area would be made safe to work for community groups (reference being that it is essentially a 'traffic island'). There has been no response from the prison to a request to become involved with the work. Cllr Smailes stated that she'd spoken with Ward Cllr Sherris & he'd confirmed that there was funding from the ward budget offered (see later item) and to go ahead.

**5.7.2 Ward Cllr Fagan** stated that there was a ward budget funding available but that this was available for whatever scheme YTC as a body agrees to go ahead with which, could indeed be the scheme that **Cllr Smailes** is linked to if YTC agrees it.

**5.7.3 The Clerk** suggested that YTC simply needed to receive simple written description of

- a) what the scheme is and will look like
- b) who the partners/participants are and in what way they will be contributing.

**ACTION:** **The Clerk** offered to help document this if **Cllr Smailes** or the group leader wished to contact her and this could then be circulated to Councillors.

**5.7.4 Cllr Monck** reminded **Cllr Smailes** & the meeting that permissions would need to be sought from SBC.

## **5.8 True Lovers Walk Volunteering Group: Update**

**5.8.1 Cllr Coulson** applauded and credited the continued work of the 'True Lovers Walk Volunteers Group' (formed by Ian Carter). The group meets on a Sunday morning and is very spirited, action focused and has made a significant improvement to the area concerned.

**5.8.2 Cllr Monck** asked who was responsible for the fishing platforms (not SBC - it is suggested that some are unadopted and others, not on the True Lovers Walk side, are owned by the Angling Club).

**(NB item 9.5, Cllr Moffitt, under Policy and Resources below REFERS)**

## **5.9 River Festival Project**

**5.9.1 Cllr. Morton** forwarded thanks to YTC from Simon Palmer (who presented the Water Festival proposal at February's YTC). Mr Palmer had appreciated YTC's support and agreement to fund the festival (amount as per February 2022 minutes).

**5.9.2** The date for the water festival was confirmed as **Saturday 4th June 2022.**

**5.9.3** Discussion then ensued regarding whether the steam boats (as per 2019 Yarm Gala) and the transatlantic rowing fundraiser (previous verbal presentation to YTC by Jason Watkin, in aid of veterans mental health) could be part of the Water Festival.

**5.9.4 The Clerk** suggested that these proposals (as per 5.9.3) should be examined at the first meeting of the Leisure & Culture committee to be scheduled shortly.

## **6.0 Council Finances**

**6.1** To authorise payment of the accounts

**6.1.1** Payments Lists Refers (2 months)

**- Cllr Addison**

**Cllr Addison** requested that the payments lists were approved.

**PROPOSED: Cllr Monck**

**SECONDED: Cllr Coulson**

**AGREED**

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## 6.2 Income and Expenditure Report

6.2.1 Cllr Addison & the Clerk presented the income and expenditure report. Cllr Smailes asked if VAT was being claimed. Cllr Addison confirmed that the most recent payment had been received on 7th March. Cllr Coulson proposed that the report be accepted.

PROPOSED: Cllr Coulson                      SECONDED: Cllr Monck                      AGREED

## 6.3 Update on Transfers

6.3.1 Cllr Addison presented the above (paper refers) and took Councillors through the key items and asked that Cllrs note the transfers made.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck                      SECONDED: Cllr Coulson                      AGREED

## 6.4 Bank Reconciliation

6.4.1 The Clerk / Cllr Addison requested that Cllrs. note the Bank Reconciliation (DOCUMENT REFERS).

## 6.5 Update on Projected Outturn

6.5.1 Cllr Addison presented the projected Outturn for 2021/2022 (DOCUMENT REFERS). The most recent change has been the fact that the 'Man Shed' project expenditure (£5,000) will now occur in the financial year 2022/2023. (approximately August/ September 2022).

PROPOSED: Cllr Coulson                      SECONDED: Cllr Neil                      AGREED

## 6.6 Discussion re. Processes & Information:

**Quotations, Tenders and Financial Information for Council Meetings** - The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken with the Lead Councillor for Finance and placed this item on the agenda due to a number of emails which revealed that there was differential and/or lack of understanding regarding required roles and best practice regarding this aspect of financial probity.

### 6.6.1 Financial Information

- a) The Clerk spoke regarding the issue of what financial information Councillors require at monthly meetings (given that there was no handover or induction for the clerk provided on these matters (NB current YTC Financial Regulations do not define what is required monthly - pt. 1.9 references 'as required', 1.10 references 'management information prepared for the council from time to time' and 2.2. References 'at least once in each quarter' as regards bank reconciliations).
- b) The Clerk confirmed that currently a Payments List and Income and Expenditure reports are provided. Monthly bank reconciliations (instead of quarterly) have also been requested. Transfers are also notified when they occur.
- c) Councillors were asked by the Clerk if anything else was required for monthly meetings and whether they were happy to receive the list as above.

AGREED: Councillors agreed to the list given at 6.6.1 b) above. (NB this list excludes additional information provided for e.g. end of year and AGAR processes and annual budget setting, December to January).

**6.6.2 Quotations and Tenders - The Clerk** described best practice and the public sector framework for Quotations and Tenders (as detailed in Financial Regulations, advised by NALC, practised by local authorities in general).

The summary is (using the amount thresholds agreed in our Standing Orders and previously discussed with the Auditor):

- a) For items under £1,000, 3 quotations do not have to be sought
- b) For items over £1,000 and under £8,000, 3 quotations should be sought (\*there can be some exclusions which can be agreed following Standing Orders due process e.g. urgent Health and Safety Issue, supply of a product/service that is unique)
- c) For items over £8,000, 3 tenders must be sought (the tender process is described in Financial Regulations)

**6.6.3 The Clerk** described the difference between the quotation process and the tender process which the clerk is responsible for deploying. A key point for both processes is that Cllrs should not be involved in obtaining quotations nor know the names of specific companies e.g when the responses and results of either a quotation or tender brief are presented to councillors for a selection decision\*. This is to avoid accusations of corruption/ 'backhanders'. The Clerk emphasised that this is why she had always presented the results as 'Company A, Company B or Company C' etc.

(\* the Chairman/ a Cllr. does however, witness the opening of tender submissions)

**6.6.4** Historically YTC has not developed & retained lists of suppliers in order to agree an approved list. In this context, the Clerk has asked the principal authority and fellow clerks for any supplier contact lists they refer to e.g. in the instance of tendering for arboricultural work.

**6.6.5 The Clerk** informed the meeting that, despite comms. from a Cllr. suggesting otherwise, it is part of a Clerk's professional capability and role to prepare tender specifications. She stated that one of the most useful skills in preparing a tender specification is 'knowing what you don't know but knowing how and who to source information and support from'. YTC tenders are not terribly technical, complicated or high value. The Clerk would welcome cllrs. help/review in this research and would double check that this is deemed as appropriate re best practice.

**6.6.6 The Clerk** confirmed that she had been involved in devising many very diverse tender specifications (& part of MBA training. NB if a tender project is valued at more than £50,000, this is the point at which a specialist Project Manager might be brought in).

**6.6.7 The Clerk** acknowledged a point that had been made as regards how the process could be benefitted by Councillors local knowledge. The Clerk advised that this should be done by making recommendations (or confidentially noting any contraindications) to her - by email - as to suggested suppliers/contractors who could then contribute this information to constructing YTC approved supplier lists (that could then come to council for approval).

**6.6.8 Cllr Smiles** commented that in the past councillors had openly discussed suppliers/contractors in the confidential part of the meeting and that therefore this was OK as the public didn't hear it and that the professional practice described by the Clerk was too complicated.

**6.6.9** It was proposed by **Cllr Coulson** that YTC should adopt the approach that councillors could contribute by making suggestions towards achieving an approved suppliers list.

**PROPOSED:** Cllr Coulson

**SECONDED:** Cllr Addison

**AGREED (there were 2 abstentions)**

**6.9.10 ACTION:** The Clerk requested that **Councillors** should forward any suggestions for approved contractors or suppliers ( e.g. one current issue being the need for specialist stonemason survey and repair for a heritage tomb)

## **7.0 To Review and Consider the Correspondence List**

**7.1 The Clerk** highlighted the FOI request included in the list that had been received. **Cllr Smailes** suggested that a member of the public had requested some information regarding blue plaques. **The Clerk** commented that she had searched for such an enquiry (on Cllr Smailes earlier notification of this ) and such an enquiry had not been received as far as she could see (NB the problem continues with spam enquiries attaching to and hiding genuine queries that arrive through the website enquiry form). **The Clerk** suggested that Cllr Smailes put the enquirer in direct touch with her and she would help if she could. **Cllr Monck** confirmed that the Civic Society normally dealt with blue plaques and suggested someone who might be able to help make / install.

## **8.0 Adjournment and Questions From the Public**

**8.1 The Chair** adjourned the meeting and asked for questions from the public.

**8.2** A member of the public gave a briefing regarding the progress made by the True Lovers Walk Volunteers group (who meet Sunday mornings to maintain this specific section of the Yarm river walkway. A meeting has been arranged with the local MP, involving the volunteer's group and YTC, to review the full scope of improvements and maintenance that the river walkways need. A key issue is the aspects of maintenance required by SBC ( i.e. addressing faults in the path that hinder accessibility). Bins and seats are needed. It is understood that the Canal and Rivers Trust are going to contribute seating.

**ACTION:** **Cllr Coulson** asked that the Clerk write and thank the Canals and Rivers Trust for their support to the volunteers group.

**(CROSS REFERENCE WITH ITEM 9.5 under Policy and Resources)**

## **9.0 Policy and Resources:**

**9.1 Cemetery Report** - in the absence of **Cllr Moffitt** this item was carried forward to the next agenda. It was confirmed that 2 damaged/fallen trees had been removed from the Cemetery. **The Clerk** is seeking 3 quotations for a specialist stone mason as regards assessing the work needed for a damaged tomb.

**9.2 Allotments Report** - in the absence of **Cllr Gallafant** this item was briefly reported on by the Clerk who confirmed that there were currently approximately 12 people on the waiting list.

**9.3 Open Letter from the Chair of NALC** - **Cllr Coulson** briefed the meeting regarding the contents of the above previously circulated. He read out a particular section of the New Year Open Letter forwarded to Councils by the Chair of the National Association of Local Councils, that he felt was pertinent for YTC:

*“Yet sadly, throughout the sector, there are growing concerns about the impact bullying, harassment, and intimidation have on our councils, councillors, clerks and council staff, and the resulting effectiveness of local councils. That is why*

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*we are working with One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Council Clerks and county associations to address this through our Civility and Respect Project. Our commitment is to deliver tangible resources, actions, and interventions in four main areas. Providing councils with the tools to support good governance, lobbying to strengthen the standards regime and encouraging more people to get involved, training, and processes to intervene to provide support to struggling councils. I ask you to place civility and respect at the top of your agenda, keep up-to-date on the project through our dedicated web page, and make full use of all the advice, guidance, and resources available to you.”*

**9.4 Standing Orders (approved 140921): proposal to note /approve/adopt version with agreed amendments** now executed i.e. not including reference to RPR voting rights (and improved document formatting)

**9.4.1 Cllr Coulson** introduced this item, referencing a conversation he'd held with the Clerk regarding it and proposed that the Standing Orders (DOCUMENT refers, version/format as circulated in February) be noted, approved, adopted.

**9.4.2 Cllrs Smailes and Wegg** indicated that they were just looking at the Standing Orders during the meeting.

**PROPOSED: Cllr Addison                      SECONDED: Cllr Coulson                      AGREED**

**9.5 Proposal for YTC to support & develop a River Walkways Project in partnership**

**9.5.1 Cllr Addison** suggested that this item should be carried forward to the next meeting as Cllr Moffitt was not present. **The Clerk** confirmed that **Cllr Moffitt** had briefed **Cllr Coulson** to present this item for discussion.

**9.5.2 Cllr Coulson** read a briefing paper from **Cllr Moffitt**, the key points of which:

- a) Initially summarise the development needs of the river walks - signage, seats, bins, lifebelts, nature information boards, resurfacing and levelling the paths (key issue for accessibility), renew / increase the gravel from Yarm School end to Atlas Wynd entrance, improve access into the river for a diverse range of users and usage (slipways, ladders, landing stages, repair and make safe the public path from West Street entrance up to Worsall Road;
- b) Present the reasoning behind this partnership proposal - e.g. the river has defined the existence, identity. Industry income and heritage of Yarm; proper maintenance and development is justified given the status of this asset and modern requirements/potential; key benefits include -necessary preservation of a key asset, mental and physical health for residents and visitors re. walking and other activities - general enjoyment and opportunity, encouraging visitors (benefiting businesses and boosting tourism), making this a high quality experience encourages repeat visitors, additional facilities e.g. proper mooring increase putting 'Yarm on the Map', also helping the economy.
- c) Scope how to achieve the project - the importance of forming a multiagency partnership between YTC, SBC, True Lovers Walk Volunteers and the Canal & River Trust; definition of roles & responsibilities across this partnership (examples given).

**9.5.3** The briefing paper read out by Cllr Coulson would be circulated as a paper for consideration at the next meeting.

**9.6 Ward Budget Funding:**

Snauths Play Equipment, Worsall Roundabout and Hanging Baskets

**9.6.1 The Clerk** briefed the meeting as to the offer of the Ward budget funding as regards the above -

**9.7** Hanging Baskets

**CLr Smailes** re-confirmed that she would like red, white and blue flowers for this year's hanging baskets. Karen Shields (RPR) suggested that purple often worked best as a substitute for blue.

**ACTION:**        **The Clerk** confirmed that she would go out for 3 quotations.

### **9.8     Morley Carr Bowling Facility**

**The Clerk** confirmed that she had spoken with Ward Cllr Sherris re. the above and that a Sports Development specialist re. Bowling was to be identified to help facilitate the first meeting of interested residents re the above. The response and requests to be included received by the Clerk have been extensive. The Clerk anticipated that a meeting might be organised for late Spring or early Summer given the current workload and fact that handover had not yet occurred from the developer.

### **10.0    Planning & Environment:**

#### **10.1    Matters Arising: Planning Applications & Lists**

No issues were raised by **Cllr Monck or other Councillors**, as regards any planning consultations or lists currently.

#### **10.2    Making Planning Objections: Process**

Following comms. from **Cllr Smailes** concerned that **The Clerk** did not know how to make a planning objection or how to use the SBC Planning Portal, The Clerk had requested that this item be placed on the agenda so she could go through the process with Councillors. In short:

- a) The Clerk has previously placed items on the planning portal using YTC's own account;
- b) Cllr Monck had recently placed an item on behalf of YTC for expediency at the time (given he is Lead Cllr. for Planning & Environs);
- c) The Clerk confirmed that, on occasion, e.g. when a major Objection is to be researched and submitted, she will immediately after a meeting, email an SBC Planning Officer a summary of the objection and state that a fuller reasoning of the objection would follow; SBC have confirmed that objections can be both emailed to them directly or placed on the portal;
- d) This is to ensure that a marker is put down quickly but that YTC can make a fuller Objection that is properly researched and (e.g. related to the Local Plan, Environment, Heritage, Economy reports and documents in order to create a robust and professional case for objection;
- e) The Clerk gave the example of the planning objection for Land South of Yarm School Development (April 21; DOCUMENT REFERS) submitted via the planning portal: headings covered information relating to the Local Area Development Plan, Housing Supply, Scope of the Development. Highway Infrastructure and Access, Impact on People, Place & Environment;
- f) Sometimes a planning deadline falls before a YTC meeting - SBC give extensions to comment in this instance to town and parish councils; the Clerk is therefore in touch with planning staff as to timelines and notifies as to when YTC can comment.

#### **10.3    Latest Play Area Reports & Issues: Update & Review of Processes with SBC**

