

YARM TOWN COUNCIL



DRAFT

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of Yarm Town Council held in the Town Hall at 6.00pm. on Tuesday, 14th May 2019.

PRESENT: Councillors P Monck (in the Chair); L Casey, Barbara Wegg, Bob Wegg, P Smailes, P Addison, T Chapman (Town Clerk) and 5 members of the public.

Minute.

01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Cllr S Luwero (delayed due to work commitments).

02 TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY HELD ON THE 9TH MAY 2018.

The minutes were accepted and agreed as a correct record.

03 MATTERS ARISING. None.

04 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT (INCLUDING WEIGH & TOLLS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE).

Cllr Monck gave the following report:

"I would like to begin with thanks to all my fellow councillors for the work they have carried out during the year. And my thanks also go to Terry Chapman, Clerk to Yarm Town Council, for all the work he puts in. Anyone who thinks that the job of the clerk is overstated, should think again. Without Terry's input, none of the events (Yarm Gala, Remembrance Sunday or the Christmas Tree Lighting), would have gone ahead.

Following advice from ISAG, it was agreed that Yarm Town Council would commission an events manager and has appointed Steve Chisholm to this role in order to organise the Town Council's three annual events.

The Council held a very successful gala in 2018, thanks to the work put in by Terry, and all the councillors who helped on the day. This was very well attended, despite competition from the England World Cup match and we had an increase in the number of Stalls attending and we look forward to this year's gala with great excitement, which will take place on 7th July 2019.

Yarm Fair was also very successful, we must thank Showmen's Guild, who are organisers for the Fair, for making it run so smoothly and making sure all the manuals and risk assessments were up to date and that the public enjoy this uniquely wonderful experience. Sadly, talk of moving the Fair to Preston Park raises its head on an annual basis, but I need to remind everyone, the Fair is a Royal Charter Fair, and can only be stopped by applying to the Privy Council to revoke the Charter.

In relation to other matters, Yarm Town Council has been granted planning permission to renovate the town hall, and to convert the ground floor to a Heritage Centre for Yarm. Plans are in place and we are waiting to hear from the Heritage Lottery Fund regarding the outcome of our Grant Application.

The project has included the excellent and thought-provoking input from the School Council of Yarm Primary School and we are extremely grateful to the teachers and pupils for their involvement. In addition, a group of volunteers, Friends of Yarm Heritage Centre, has been set up to oversee the Town Hall Project and we would welcome anyone who wants to be involved in restoring the Town Hall to its original "open-arched" splendour.

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Remembrance Sunday marked the Centenary of the armistice of WW1 and was attended by in excess of 3000 people, including the Deputy Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson. Thanks must go to Yarm1914 and the Royal British Legion for helping to organise the event. In addition, a particular expression of gratitude must go to local resident, and soon to be Town Councillor, Pam Smailes for the amazing and tireless work of the Knitting Groups she organised. The display of knitted poppies that enhanced the town and surrounding areas and the Town Hall itself was a very moving and touching spectacle.

The Christmas Tree lighting event was also a huge success once again, with more involvement from the schools and community singers. This event was organised with the help of Yarm Business Forum and Stockton Council and included the spectacular singing Christmas tree and is proof of what can be achieved when Yarm gets the resources it deserves and we work together. We even saw more of the High Street shops installing Christmas trees on the outside of their buildings, which can only enhance our beautiful High Street.

During the year, Yarm Town Council, after consultation with Layfield Primary School Council, invested significant sums of money in adding further play equipment on Snaith's Field. The children of the School Council identified the equipment they preferred (it wasn't the cheapest option and, thankfully, it wasn't the most expensive) and what we have now is some exciting equipment that has been the highlight achievement of the Town Council and enjoyed by many families and visitors.

Yarm Town Council continue to lobby Stockton Borough Council to provide additional Long Stay parking for Yarm. They (SBC) are supposed to be close to a solution but don't expect it to be quick. In 2018, SBC consulted with residents to make Bridge Street and West Street into a long stay parking, with parking meters. At the same time, they (SBC) introduced changes to the pay and display on the High Street, making it 3 hours max. Fortunately, following representation by residents, and Yarm Town Council at SBC Appeals and Complaints Committee, the Bridge Street, West Street Scheme was rejected. I am unconvinced that the Pay & Display scheme has achieved anything like the outcomes promised by the Borough Council.

Yarm Town Council has lobbied the Borough Council over the issue of Air Pollution in the Town. As a result of their inadequate response, we have contacted Defra and the MP. Air Pollution in Yarm in 2007 was the 7th highest in the country, nothing has changed except the way in which SBC collect the data, which, in the opinion of the Town Council, was inadequate and is even more inadequate now. Yarm Town Council will continue to lobby SBC to provide an adequate air monitoring system on the high street.

During the past year, it has been necessary for the Town Council to act decisively due to the appalling behaviour of a member of the public that has been constant, unpleasant, harassing and unacceptable. The person in question was subsequently banned by the Town Council from attending meetings of the council for 6 months. The matter is due to be reviewed soon. Also, action had to be taken against a member of the Town Council who was bullying and harassing an employee of the Town Council both in meetings and on social media. This council has a policy of Zero tolerance against this sort of behaviour, both during meetings and the misuse of social media.

People may believe that they can say what they like about councillors on Social Media, without redress, well I can tell you that is not the case. All Councillors must abide by the Code of Conduct, and we have been recently advised by NALC, that they are lobbying government to strengthen the powers of the Standards Board so that breaches of the code can be dealt with properly, with sanctions against Councillors.

Finally, it has been a privilege to be the Chairman of the Town Council and despite having to put up with several members of the public trying to disrupt council meetings I have once again, enjoyed my

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time as Chairman. The achievements are many, from the beauty of the High Street's Hanging Baskets, the new play equipment on Snaith's Field, improvements in the Cemetery and lobbying on behalf of the Town, it is a challenge that it is an honour to be part of."

05 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

a. Cemetery - Cllr Barabara Wegg

Cllr Wegg provided the following report:

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b. Allotments – Cllr Bob Wegg

Cllr Wegg provided the following report:

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06 TO NOTE THE ATTENDANCE OF COUNCILLORS AT MONTHLY MEETINGS.

Attendance was presented to the meeting.

07 TO AGREE TO INSTRUCT THE CLERK TO POST THE ABOVE REORTS ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE.

It was agreed to post the Chairman's report in the Town Hall notice board and onto the website.

08 TO TAKE THE VIEWS OF ELECTORS ON MATTERS OF INTEREST.

One elector raised the issue of the lack of progress in extending the Car Park at Yarm Train Station.

The meeting was closed at 6.28pm.

Signed Chair of the meeting _____

Date _____