



Yarm Town Council
Town Hall
High Street
Yarm
TS15 9AH

Minutes of the Yarm Town Council Meeting Tuesday 14 January 2020 at 7pm

In Attendance:

Cllr A Gallafant (Chair)	Cllr A Moffitt
Cllr C Walker (Vice Chair)	Cllr P Morton
Cllr P Smailes (Proper Officer)	Cllr P Monck
Cllr P Addison	Cllr M Simpson
Cllr J Coulson	

- 1.0 **Appointment of a Chair and Vice Chair:** Cllrs Gallafant and Walker noted as being in attendance
- 2.0 **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Johnson.
- 3.0 **Code of Conduct**
Declarations of Interest: Cllr Monck declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 11(f) (Snaith's Field)
Code of Conduct – Requests for Dispensation: no items requested
- 4.0 **Confirmation of Minutes – Yarm Town Council:** the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Tuesday 10 December 2019, were accepted and signed by the Chair
- 5.0 **Matters Arising:** no items noted
- 6.0 **Acceptance of Minutes – Weigh and Tolls Committee:** the minutes of the Weigh and Tolls Committee, held on Tuesday 10 December 2019, were accepted by Councillors
- 7.0 **Finance**
 - (a) **Accounts:** Cllr Addison provided a summary of accounts paid by either cheque or direct debit since the previous meeting. Cllr Addison advised that the bank mandate issue had now been resolved and that YTC had been awarded £400 in compensation to reflect errors made by Nat West Bank.

Cllr Walker queried payments to Cornerstone, and the extent of services provided through the contract. Cllr Walker suggested that, given his expertise in this area, Cllr Johnson should review service provision to determine our requirements. **Cllr Walker to liaise with Cllr Johnson to progress**

Cllr Walker queried the payment to Alrose Productions for sound equipment (linked to the Remembrance Sunday event), noting Mr Tommy Reay's attendance at a previous Council meeting, and suggested that we liaise with Mr Reay about providing this equipment for future events. **Cllr Gallafant to liaise with Mr Reay to progress**

Councillors thanked Cllr Gallafant for payment of the Town Clerk's salary out of his own private funds whilst the bank mandate issue was being resolved.

Cllr Walker advised that the Google account expenditure would increase to circa £60 per month to reflect the creation of YTC email accounts for all Councillors, however this would improve efficiency and effectiveness of our processes.

Councillors authorised the payment of accounts

- (b) **2020-21 Budget:** Cllr Addison invited comments on the draft budget, which was distributed to Councillors as part of the December meeting.

Cllr Walker queried provision for payment of telephone expenses for the Town Clerk, noting that most mobile phone tariffs would include free calls as standard. A discussion took place and it was agreed that alternative tariffs should be considered – **Cllr Walker to action**

Cllr Moffitt queried whether monies had been allocated for external painting of the Chapel – Cllr Monck advised that this would be included within the £3,000 allocated for Chapel Works.

Cllr Walker noted that no provision had been identified for Councillor Training, and suggested it might be prudent to allocate resource in this area. Cllr Monck advised that there was an additional line within the budget for 'Training' against which £3,000 had been allocated. Cllr Morton suggested we liaise with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to determine whether they were running any courses that would be beneficial to Councillors.

Cllr Moffitt queried provision for electricity via the allotment meter (£800) – Cllr Gallafant advised that he had looked into this and historic payments included electricity used within the Chapel. Cllr Gallafant had made efforts to alter this with Npower however, as he is not named as an authorised person on the account, no changes could be progressed (it was noted that the named official was a previous Town Clerk). Cllr Coulson advised that security lights are on during the day and suggested the settings ought to be adjusted – **Cllr Gallafant and Cllr Moffitt to progress**

Councillors approved the 2020-21 budget and thanked Cllr Addison for producing this on behalf of Yarm Town Council

8.0 No agenda item

- 9.0 **Correspondence List:** Cllr Addison provided a summary of correspondence received since the last meeting, noting that a number of invoice related concerns had been addressed.

Cllr Coulson queried whether Kirklevington Grange Prison had been approached to assist with ivy removal at the Church – Cllr Monck advised that the Prison had insufficient man power to assist and that this had been the case for the last three years.

Cllr Coulson highlighted a Facebook message received from Cheryl Henderson which concerned the placement of decorated rocks within the Town Hall. Cllr Morton suggested these could be displayed within retail units in the town – **Cllr Morton to liaise with Ms. Henderson to progress**

10.0 Adjournment and Questions from the Public

- Mr B Newcombe queried whether additional litter bins could be provided on the High Street – **Cllr Smailes to liaise with Care For Your Area**
- Anonymous member of the public queried where the agenda could be viewed – Cllr Walker advised this was available on the website and for future meetings would be placed on social media
- Anonymous member of the public queried the provision of disabled access ramps on the High Street – Cllr Morton advised that some shops have these in place but a number of older buildings may not be accessible due to the presence of external steps – **Cllr Morton to conduct a survey of businesses on the High Street to identify existing provision**

11.0 Policy and Resources

- (a) **YTC Policies and Procedures:** Cllr Walker queried existing policies and procedures and when these were last reviewed/approved. Cllr Monck advised the last review had taken place in 2018. Cllr Walker suggested that all live policies and procedures be loaded onto a shared folder once the G Suite structure had been finalised. Cllr Moffitt queried the process for obtaining quotations for planned works – Cllr Monck advised this was included within the Standing Orders, which can be reviewed. **Councillors to consider a future review of the Standing Orders**
- (b) **Email Etiquette:** Cllr Walker stressed the importance of maintaining professionalism within all YTC emails, advising that these may be subject to disclosure – **noted by all Councillors.**
- (c) **Exclusion of Yarm Resident from YTC meetings:** Cllr Moffitt suggested that YTC write to the resident in question to confirm the length of exclusion. Cllr Walker queried whether the exclusion could be unilaterally revoked should Councillors wish to consider the position. Cllr Gallafant suggested that regardless of the length of the suspension, if residents wish to be a nuisance in meetings they will do so and it is for the Council to manage this accordingly. Cllr Gallafant suggested removing the exclusion with immediate effect – **approved by a majority Councillors (Cllr Monck and Cllr Addison abstained from the vote). Cllr Gallafant to write to the resident in question and advise of the removal of the exclusion with immediate effect**
- (d) **Social Media postings:** Cllr Walker commented that engagement through Facebook had been particularly strong in recent weeks, and that all Councillors are able to suggest content for the account. Cllr Gallafant suggested that posts be fed through a single point of contact (Cllr Walker) to ensure consistency in terms of tone and content – **approved by all Councillors**
- (e) **Replacement Chapel Key:** Cllr Coulson queried whether the Chapel keys had been returned – Cllr Moffitt advised that the keys were still outstanding. Cllr Gallafant advised that there was no justification in purchasing a new Chapel key, and suggested the original is returned to YTC and ordinary keys are used in the future. It was noted that the Grave Digger is in possession of a key to allow access to his tools.

Cllr Coulson queried whether all Town Hall keys had been labelled and stored in the key box – **Cllr Gallafant and Cllr Monck to progress in advance of the next meeting**

Cllr Coulson requested that the following note be added to the minutes verbatim:

I was approached by the Chair prior to the December meeting and asked to take control in the running of the [said] Chapel. I agreed to take control with certain provisos, which were agreed. At no time did I seek or ask or want this role, but agreed, for personal reasons to the Chair. After a meeting on site on Monday 6 January 2020 with the Cemetery Chair, it became apparent that my role in the running of the Chapel became untenable

- (f) **Snaith's Field:** Cllr Gallafant advised that the landowners had agreed to the Council's proposal to reduce the size of the memorial, and that an invitation to tender would be produced for this work. Cllr Coulson queried who was liable to pay for this work – Cllr Gallafant confirmed that, whilst the original memorial was funded through a grant, Yarm Town Council were liable for the alteration works.
- (g) **Singular Decision Making by Councillors:** Cllr Smailes reminded Councillors that decisions cannot be made in isolation and they need to be brought back to YTC meetings or agreed via electronic means – **noted**
- (h) **Yarm Chapel:** discussed at 11(e)
- (i) **Consultation of Yarm High Street by SBC:** Cllr Monck advised that the second consultation was taking place in Yarm Library on Monday 20 January between 11am and 3pm. Cllr Walker confirmed this had been advertised on both the website and social media.
- (j) **Cemetery Committee** (not on agenda): Cllr Monck suggested Cllr Moffitt takes over as Chair of the Cemetery Committee. Cllrs Simpson, Monck, Addison and Coulson expressed an interest in joining this Committee.

The following items were not on the agenda and raised during the course of the meeting:

- (k) **Yarm Town Hall:** Cllr Gallafant informed the meeting that the Town Hall required significant refurbishment, including new windows and wiring, when it becomes a Heritage Centre. Cllr Monck advised that around 20 volunteers had expressed an interest in helping out with the Heritage Centre project.
- (l) **Tree Survey:** Cllr Monck proposed that the Council utilise the services of Oliver's, who had carried out the work in the past – **Cllr Monck to progress**
- (m) **Headstone Survey:** As with the Tree Survey, Cllr Monck suggested the Council utilise the previous service provider – **Cllr Monck to progress**
- (n) **Re-enactment of Stockton and Darlington Railway Meeting:** Cllr Monck informed the Council that invitations had been produced for this event, which would be taking place on Wednesday 12 February 2020. Cllr Coulson queried access for members of the public – Cllr Walker suggested that we remove the buffet element of the event and open it up to a wider audience. Cllr Walker advised that interest in the event was high, and that he had received a number of suggestions through social media around live streaming and photography. **Cllr Walker to approach Simon McCabe to see if we would be interested in taking official photos of the event. Cllr Walker to live stream proceedings via the Council's Facebook page**

(o) **Nat West Compensation:** Cllr Monck proposed that the £400 compensation be donated to AgeUK, however alternative suggestions were tabled by other Councillors – **agreed that this would be added to the agenda for February’s Council meeting**

(p) **Councillor Interests:** Cllr Monck advised that he was now on the Committee for Yarm School, and requested that the register for dispensations be updated – **Cllr Monck to progress**

(q) **Insurance Assistance:** Cllr Simpson requested assistance from the Council’s insurers in respect of a historic case that occurred in her previous stint as a Councillor. Cllr Moffitt queried whether Cllr Simpson was acting on behalf of YTC during the course of the case, and Cllr Simpson advised she had collected a number of witness statements which were discussed at a Council meeting in 2016. Cllr Walker advised that, in his view, this was a civil matter and not something that would be considered by the Council’s insurers at the time (Zurich Municipal) however details could be provided to allow Cllr Simpson to query this herself – **Cllr Monck to provide Cllr Simpson with the necessary contact details**

12.0 **Content for YTC website:** Cllr Walker reminded Cllrs Addison, Moffitt, Morton and Simpson that they needed to provide 300 word bios for the Council’s social media page – **Councillors to progress and send copy through to Cllr Walker as soon as possible**

13.0 **Items for Information/Consideration**

- Allocation of Nat West Compensation
- YTC support of local groups and charities
- Repointing of the church yard wall
- Increase in shop lifting in local shops
- Recreation Committee minutes/feedback
- Carols on the Cobbles

14.0 **The next Yarm Town Council meeting to be held at 7pm on Tuesday 11 February 2020 in the Fellowship Hall, West Street Yarm**

Cllr Gallafant declared the meeting closed at 8:10pm

15.0 **Confidential Item:** one item discussed in accordance with the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960

Cllr Gallafant

Date