

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 13th July 2021

Time: Immediately following Weigh & Tolls at 7.00pm

Members of the public are invited to
attend the meeting

in line with government guidance

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 photograph

YARM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Cllr. Alan Gallafant (Chair)

Cllr. Patrick Morton

Cllr. John Coulson (Vice Chair)

Cllr. Chris Neil

Cllr. Philip Addison

Cllr. Marjorie Simpson (left at @ 8.30pm)

Cllr. Alan Moffitt

Cllr. Pam Smailes

Cllr. Peter Monck

Cllr. Barbara Wegg

Town Clerk - Juliet Johnson

Karen Shields (Rate Payers Representative)

Stockton Borough Ward Councillors Andrew Sherris and Dan Fagan were also in attendance.

1.0 To appoint a Chairman in the absence of the Chair and/or Vice Chair - N/A.

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

2.0 Apologies for Absence - None Received. **Cllr Chris Johnson** not in attendance.

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 **Cllr Monck** declared a non-prejudicial interest regarding any items relating to Cemeteries, given his membership of the Parish Church Council.

3.2 No requests for dispensation were received.

4.0 Confirmation of Minutes

To accept the minutes of the previous meetings:

4.1 **Weigh and Tolls Committee** held on Tuesday 8th June 2021 and approve their signature by the Chairman of the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr Moffitt SECONDED: Cllr Monck AGREED: All

4.2 **Yarm Town Council** held on Tuesday 8th June 2021 and approve their signature by the Chairman of the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck SECONDED: Cllr Coulson AGREED: All

4.3 **Allotments Committee** held on Monday 5th July 2021 and approve their signature by the Chairman of the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr Coulson SECONDED: Cllr Moffitt AGREED: All

5.0 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Ordinary YTC meeting, 8th June 2021:

5.1 Additional High St. Banners

The Clerk reported that these were complete and now in place - fitted by SBC.

5.2 Feedback on Meeting: Environment Agency - Floodgates - Cllr Moffitt / Cllr Gallafant

5.2.1 Cllrs Gallafant and Cllr Moffitt updated the meeting regarding a very positive meeting with the Environment Agency (EA) . Cllr Moffitt stated that the EA had confirmed that they had assured that residents could choose to have the gates replaced rather than bricked up. Changes might simply be that a) if there had been 2 gates previously, the expectation would be for residents to manage with 1 or b) a larger gate might be replaced with a smaller one.

5.2.2 Cllr Gallafant stated that the two EA representatives that YTC had met with will be the same two people who will lead the project from now on and that a YTC representative (Cllr Moffitt or Gallafant) would also be available to accompany any meetings with residents.

5.2.3 Cllr Monck asked if there had been final confirmation as to why the gates were being replaced. Cllr Moffitt confirmed that EA had suggested the current system would not be sufficient in the future. Cllr Monck stated that there had been a leak in the gate nearest the firestation for some time. Cllrs Gallafant & Moffitt explained that the staff who closed the gates had to travel from Sheffield, accompanied by EA reps.

5.3 Grass Cutting Contract: September & October

5.3.1 The Clerk requested that the current temporary contract be extended to this year's last grass cutting round in October. The contract would then be re-tendered for a period of 3 years.

PROPOSED: Cllr Coulson SECLONDED: Cllr Gallafant AGREED.

5.4 Litter Bins and Trade Waste Bins - Cllr Moffitt / Clerk

5.4.1 The Clerk confirmed that she had followed-up with SBC the promise that whilst the rubbish sacks had been removed, the issue of businesses placing their trade waste bins according to Planning Permission conditions (i.e. hidden in their backyards) would be solved within two-three weeks. This had not happened. The areas in question continue to be Central Street and Low Church Wynd.

5.4.2 Cllr Moffitt stated that shortly after the original rubbish bags had been cleared, more had appeared (28 at last count).

5.4.3 Cllr Gallafant (Chair) asked **Ward Cllr Sherris** to contribute to the discussion, who confirmed that he had checked through the planning conditions and that all bins should be in the business' backyards. **Cllr Morton** confirmed that the rubble left in one of the business's bins (Central Street) has now gone.

ACTION: Clerk to follow up including now writing to SBC planning manager requesting that planning conditions relating to location of trade waste bins are properly adhered to (and asking that the businesses are informed that Yarm Town Council has requested this as a matter of concern and frequent public complaint).

5.5 Dog Fouling Stencils - Cllr Smailes

5.5.1 Cllr Smailes has contacted SBC Officer regarding stencilling of 'no dog fouling' on High Street pavements but has not received a reply.

5.6 Costings for ROSPA Recommendations: Play Areas

5.6.1 The Clerk confirmed that the goahead had been given to SBC as regards all the medium to high risk recommendations in the annual ROSPA report (circa. £1000, agreed at previous meeting).

5.7 Yarm & Eaglescliffe Rocks Rainbow Bench

5.7.1 Cllr Coulson reported that the Yarm and Eaglescliffe Rock's (YER) project - the Rainbow Bench - had now been manufactured by Blacksmith James Godbold and sited on the edge of Willey Flatts. The excellent craftsmanship of the bench was noted.

ACTION: Clerk to speak with YER re. the payment process.

6.0 Council Finances

6.1 To authorize payment of the accounts

6.1.1 Payments List Refers - Cllr Addison

As well as those presented on the payments list, **Cllr Addison** requested additional payments that had come in since this was compiled; as follows:

- a) £1,650 - lightning conductor repairs
- b) £338 - watering and maintenance of the hanging baskets
- c) £290 - repairs, siting and filling of two new flower tubs (with b) above totalling £628)
- d) £876 - grass cutting
- e) £35 - A4 paper (Cllr Smailes suggested a cheaper source - to be checked)

It was proposed that the payments list and the payments a) -e) above be approved.

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

6.1.2 Budgetary Control Report (document refers) - Cllr Addison / Clerk

Cllr Addison presented the budgetary control report. Cllr Moffitt queried what seemed to be an exceptionally large increase in office expenses. The Clerk & Cllr Addison confirmed that this was a typographical error.

ACTION: Clerk to correct

6.1.3 Pension Scheme - Cllr Addison

Cllr Addison stated that the Clerk wished to join the pension scheme from this month. **Cllr Gallafant** confirmed that this was a statutory requirement for YTC. **Cllr Addison** is actioning this.

6.1.4 Payment of Invoices: up to mid-August - Cllr Addison / Clerk

Cllr Addison requested that Councillors give dispensation to pay all payments due and arising in the summer recess (i.e. up until **the end of August**) that are budgeted for.

PROPOSED: Cllr Moffitt **SECONDED:** Cllr Addison **AGREED (end of August)**

7.0 To Review and Consider the Correspondence List - ALL

7.1. No queries were raised regarding the Correspondence List (see reference at **8.2** below)

8.0 Adjournment and Questions From the Public - Cllr Gallafant

8.1 Cllr Gallafant adjourned the meeting for questions from the public. None were received during the meeting.

8.2 Cllr Smailes raised the matter that a member of the public had submitted a question to be read out at this meeting and the Clerk had not done so (and that it didn't appear on the correspondence list).

8.3.1 The Clerk apologised for the oversight and confirmed that he had spoken to the enquirer within 24 hrs of receiving the enquiry (as much of what was asked was factual and could be answered immediately). The Clerk confirmed that the substance of the question was regarding pending plans for the Town Hall refurbishment / Heritage Centre development, a query regarding future provision of public toilets (and commentary /questions about the current condition of the toilets).

8.3.2 The Clerk confirmed that the exact question would be appended to these minutes, that she would create a written response (consulting councillors) and forward to the enquirer with an apology. (SEE NOTE ATTACHED).

8.3.3 The Chairman invited **Ward Councillor Sherris** to speak. He confirmed that several sites were being investigated by SBC as regards the future provision of public toilets, one option being to connect the provision to one of the car parks. Cllr Moffitt commented that one option might be adjacent to the wharf area.

8.3.4 The Chairman welcomed new **Ward Councillor Fagan** & asked him to speak and posed the question to him as to what part he had played in the development of the Town Hall Heritage Centre project as it had seemed to feature significantly in his (and Matt Vickers) recent election leaflets.

8.3.5 Cllr Fagan stated that he didn't want to answer questions but had just come along to listen as a member of the public.

The Chairman stated that **Cllr Fagan** should take note that a lot of hard work over a number of years by Yarm Parish (councillors and others) had gone into making the project happen (funding & go ahead confirmed prior to the election) and that newcomers 'taking credit' for this work as part of electioneering was viewed as poor practice and had caused significant consternation. **Cllr Monck** asked Cllr Fagan why this had been done and **Cllr Coulson** suggested that Matt Vickers should also be enlightened of these feelings. **The Chairman** stated that a line should now be drawn under the matter.

9.0 Policy and Resources:

9.1 Cemetery Report (General Update) - Cllr Moffitt

9.1.1 Cllr Moffitt (Chair of Cemeteries) confirmed that the redecoration, renovation of the parquet floor and entrance way tiles had all now been completed. Significant positive feedback has been received regarding the overall refurbishment.

9.1.2 Cllr Moffitt briefed the meeting re a recent and the **Clerk** enquiry regarding accessibility for the disabled and parking provision at the cemetery. Answer had been provided to the enquirer. Cllr Moffitt will shortly be calling a Cemeteries' Committee to review a number of issues.

9.1.3 Cllr Wegg commented that the railway side of the cemetery was currently unkempt. **Cllr Moffitt** commented that he was looking at this as part of a general tidy-up along with ensuring a deep clean of the chapel (re. the redecoration dust) which would also be undertaken.

9.1.4 Cllr Monck raised incidents of dog owners not always keeping dogs on leads in the cemeteries.

ACTION: **Clerk** to create and place signs.

9.1.5 Cllr Coulson confirmed that, on behalf of the committee, he had arranged for top soil to be delivered for use at the cemeteries. **The Clerk** confirmed that the grave digger was continuing a previous action to top-up sunken graves where possible (noting however that grave maintenance is the responsibility of the deed owner).

9.2 Allotments Report (General Update) - Cllr Gallafant

9.2.1 Cllr Gallafant confirmed continuation of enabling allotment holders to share or subdivide allotments (especially when plots become vacant). There are currently 15+ people on the waiting list. Allotment maintenance issues are being dealt with in line with YTC policy (inc. guidance from the National Allotments Association).

9.2.2 Beekeeping - development & policy appendix - Cllr Gallafant / The Clerk

(DOCUMENT REFERS) **The Clerk** referred the meeting to the new bee keeping guidance proposed to be added to the Allotments' Regulations (as per Allotments Committee Meeting minutes- 5th July 2021). A new apiary site could be created within the orchard area of Brickyard Allotments. The Clerk confirmed that the Yarm Community Allotments Association, Yarm School and the medical centre had all been consulted along with the bee keepers concerned. Signs had also been put up in order to consult the nearest allotment holders along with notices at the site requesting feedback from any allotment holder. The feedback to date has all been very positive.

9.2.3 Cllr Moffitt welcomed the bee keeping proposal and asked why the proposed guidance suggested YTC would only accept 1 application per year. The Clerk suggested that all / YCAA wanted to be assured this worked well and safely with initial hives and all wanted to ensure that the proposed hives (which sometimes need to expand to 2-3) settle properly in a newly created area. The number of bee keeping applications accepted each year can be updated easily through due process.

9.2.4 Cllr Moffitt also asked why honey / bee products couldn't be sold according to the proposed guidance. The Clerk confirmed that she understood this was in line with the Allotment Regulations regarding produce generally (and was also national practice - she would double check practice elsewhere regarding this).

9.2.5 Cllr Addison stated that the insurance company should be notified.

9.2.6 The Clerk confirmed that expenditure from the allotment development budget would be required to establish, in the interests of health and safety, a secure apiary area in Brickyard Allotments (circa. £600).

Cllr Gallafant proposed that the Council accepted the bee keeping appendix for the Allotment Regulations and the expenditure of £600 for the apiary area (development funds)

PROPOSED: Cllr Gallafant

SECONDED: Cllr Coulson

ALL AGREED.

9.3 Anti-Social Behaviour

- Cllr Wegg

9.3.1 Cllr Wegg briefed the meeting as to her concerns regarding anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the Willey Flatts and Chandler Rd area (including drug issues and a 4x4 vehicle driving on a green area where children played). There were also concerns regarding abusive behaviour stemming from one particular household.

9.3.2 Cllr Smiles commented that one of the litter picking groups finds drug litter in the areas of Willey Flatts and the Martial Arts Centre.

9.3.3 The Chairman asked **Ward Cllr. Fagan** to speak regarding ASB in the area. **Cllr. Fagan** confirmed that he was in liaison with the key police officer for this area and issue - a new person was about to come into post. **Cllr. Fagan** would come back to YTC regarding this. **Cllr Sherris** has leaflets that advise residents what to do in the instance of ASB.

9.4 Need for Leisure and Culture Committee

- Cllr Gallafant / The Clerk

9.4.1 The Clerk briefed the meeting regarding the need for a Leisure and Culture Committee. She noted that councillors had not voted to establish this at the Annual Meeting but that in terms of audit and best practice, this area was a significant proportion of spending for YTC. In addition, new projects would soon appear that would expand this area of work e.g. Morley Carr Bowling Facility and the Town Hall Heritage Centre (a major project with continued management requirements). Whilst a Town Hall Project Group currently existed for the build and establishment of the centre, once completed the Town Hall Heritage Centre could come under a wider Leisure and Culture Group (or continue as a separate project ?).

9.4.2 Cllr Smiles asked to be on this committee if it was established but stated that she didn't think a Leisure & Culture Committee was necessary.

9.4.3 Cllr Addison proposed that a Leisure and Culture Committee should be established.

PROPOSED: Cllr Addison

SECONDED: Cllr Moffitt

AGREED: 9 in favour, 1 against.

(NB noted that appointment to this committee could be agreed in September; Cllr Moffitt had offered to serve)

9.5 Disposal of moribund office items & business continuity

- Clerk / Cllr Gallafant

9.5.1 The Clerk requested dispensation to start the process of selecting office items to be kept and those to be disposed of in advance of temporarily moving out of the Town Hall prior to redevelopment beginning. The Clerk confirmed that she would start producing lists for items potentially for disposal to circulate to councillors for confirmation over the summer period. **The Clerk** also confirmed that a proposal for alternative office premises would also be circulated as part of business continuity arrangements and asked that councillors would also respond to this.

9.6 Defibrillator: Yarm CrowdFunding

- Cllr Coulson

9.6.1 Cllr Coulson briefed the meeting re. success of a local resident who had raised money (via crowdfunding) for additional defibrillators around the town (the resident was involved in achieving the first which has been situated at the Town Hall for a number of years). Suggestions received for locations included Yarm Medical Centre (outside) and also at Sainsbury's (whom Cllr Coulson confirmed were happy in principle) or behind, close to the wharf.

9.6.2 Cllr Coulson stated that he understood fundraising to date had achieved @ £4.6k (the proposed defibrillators cost approximately £1.4k each) and that he wished YTC to also contribute a further defibrillator. **Cllr Moffitt** stated that he was fully supportive and commended the fundraising but didn't understand why further YTC funding / a further defibrillator was required.

(YTC also understands that there might be a contribution from the Ward budget towards the cost of the hanging baskets to free-up funds towards the defibrillator).

9.6.3 The Chairman asked **Ward Cllr Fagan** to contribute to the discussion (given his medical background). Cllr Fagan confirmed that defibrillators needed to be used within 3 minutes so needed to be sited in a really obvious area. **Cllr Moffitt and Karen Shields** suggested central town (for speed of access). **Cllr Fagan** confirmed a 2nd defibrillator would best be placed in a forward facing location on the High Street. **Cllr Coulson** proposed that YTC commit to contributing to the cost of a further defibrillator (noting that it is understood from Cllr Coulson that the resident who had fundraised advocated being responsible for checks and maintenance re. proposed network of defibrillators).

PROPOSED: Cllr Coulson

SECONDED: Cllr Moffitt / Cllr Monck

AGREED.

ACTION: Cllr Coulson to confirm exact cost for next agenda & final approval.

9.7 River Walkways - access and development

- Cllr Moffitt

9.7.1 Cllr Moffitt stated that now investment in the Town Hall project is agreed and going forward, YTC should look to address the critical Yarm asset that is the network of river walks. Currently signage is really unclear, if not misleading, and the conditions of the walkways are in need of sustained repair and maintenance. During previous discussions, YTC has established that there are many diverse agencies that have a relationship or responsibilities regarding the river. It is still unclear however, as to who would be responsible for maintaining rights of way.

9.7.2 Cllr Moffitt advocated that YTC should put effort into uniting the various parties to look at the development of the river areas as a critical asset important to local people and significant for promoting to visitors. This would involve proper maintenance of the walkways, signage, seating and litter bins. **Cllr Smailes** echoed the importance of the river as the major asset for Yarm. **Cllr Wegg** raised the issue of disabled access to/ along the paths.

9.7.3 Cllr Gallafant concurred with the idea of uniting the key partners to look at a way forward for development and maintenance issues to properly secure the river walkways asset e.g. Environment Agency, Rivers and Canals Trust, Stockton Council (who currently fence off areas if there is deemed to be a health and safety issue), private land/house owners with riparian rights.

ACTION:

a) **The Clerk** to further establish with SBC their role and understanding of rights of way issues;

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b) The Clerk to liaise with **Clrs Moffitt and Gallafant** to bring key agencies together to assess the current position and agree a way forward.

10.0 Planning & Environment:

10.1 Matters Arising: Planning Applications & Lists - ALL

10.1.1 Cllr Monck commented on the successful completion of a project application at 104a High St (Muse) re. building of a refrigeration unit to the rear - **Cllr Gallafant** also concurred that this has been executed well.

10.1.2 Cllr Monck also commented that the Yarm School Bridge Access had been passed on appeal.

10.1.3 The Clerk passed around the letter from SBC planning regarding prospective application for rear outdoor seating from 77a High St (document refers - arrived and circulated 12th July). Councillors discussed that a similar application had been received for 77a re. a license during COVID temporary allowances for businesses but that it was understood that this application was now for permanent provision. Comment was made that there were issues regarding the closeness of adjacent residential property re. potential loss of privacy, noise disturbance and disruption to enjoyment of residence; a motion was made to object to the application on this basis

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck SECONDED: Cllr Addison AGREED: 4 in favour, 3 against.

(remaining Councillors abstained)

10.1.4 Cllr Smailes raised the issue of some of the restaurants on the High Street taking over too large a proportion of the pavement and causing obstruction (the example of Lebaneat was given). Cllr Smailes felt that SBC enforcement should be contacted regarding this. Cllr Moffitt suggested that Lebaneat's owned area extended to the pillars.

10.1.5 Cllr Neil briefed the meeting as to how some towns/cities (e.g. Leeds) physically marked the pavement to indicate proper areas of permission. **Cllr Neil** proposed this solution as a motion to be agreed and put to SBC Planning.

PROPOSED: Cllr Neil SECONDED: Cllr Coulson AGREED

ACTION: Clerk to contact SBC planning regarding this proposal.

10.1.5 The Clerk pointed out that **Cllr Monck** had generally led on planning issues since she'd proposed this as a regular agenda item but that Councillors had not formally nominated or agreed him as the lead councillor for these matters. **The Chairman** asked Cllr Monck if he wished to do this and Cllr Monck said he was happy to. **Cllr Gallafant** proposed **Cllr Monck** as the lead for YTC on planning issues.

PROPOSED: Cllr Gallafant SECONDED: Cllr Addison AGREED: 7 in favour

10.2 Latest Play Area Reports - Clerk

10.2.1 No comments were received regarding the current play area reports (ref. also 5.6 above).

11.0 To agree any content for the YTC website and requests for Facebook features

11.1 Feedback on items to date & proposed new items - Clerk / ALL

The Clerk gave an update regarding YTC facebook activity. For the period 15th June to 12th July YTC posts reached 11,116 people with 3,150 post engagements. The refurbishment of the chapel within the cemetery had prompted the largest number and most enthusiastic engagements.

12.0 To receive items for information and consideration for the next agenda - N/A

13.0 To confirm the date and time of the next YTC meeting: 14th September 2021

14.0 Confidential Item(s)

14.1 Allotment Assistance - Cllr Coulson

(DOCUMENT REFERS) Cllr Coulson confirmed that a local organisation would be offering volunteer help at the allotments. Cllr Moffitt asked The Clerk to circulate the formal memorandum of understanding that YTC should sign for this to go ahead. The Clerk stated she would circulate the agreement Cllr Coulson had been given, along with the accompanying details of how the volunteering would happen once she had these.

Cllrs Coulson, Gallafant & Wegg left the meeting.

14.2 Allotment Issue

The Clerk briefed the meeting regarding the status of the above issue. Brief discussion took place re.potential next steps. The Clerk would brief councillors if the required communication regarding resolution of the issue was received.

In accordance with the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960, press and the public shall be excluded for this item due to its confidential nature. LGA Act 1972 schedule 12 paragraph 10(2)(e)

Signed (Chair):

.....Dated:.....

Signed: (Clerk):.....Dated:.....

REF Item 8 - NOTE regarding missed public question

Question from Member of the Public:

"I notice from the Yarm TC minutes that the Town Hall is due to undergo some significant changes. Could you please tell me where I can access the plans on your site? Have these plans been open for discussion and suggestions with and from local residents please as I have do not recall having seen anything and I am sure that this is of great interest to local residents. I assume that the toilets will be refurbished as part of these plans. As the only public toilet in Yarm, it is in need of a significant improvement and needs to be accessible 24 hours a day for our visitors and residents alike. Could you please confirm that this will be the case. Are there any plans to perhaps have a second cubicle please? Finally, on this issue, might I ask what arrangements are being made for the regular and comprehensive cleaning of the toilets as there are frequent complaints about the poor hygiene standards in the current single toilet.

My second issue refers to the roundabout near the surgery on Worsall Road.... could consideration be given please to marking the significance of the Darlington to Stockton(?) railway as celebrated recently in the George and Dragon pub, by having an outline of the Rocket train in this area. This roundabout is in need of some much needed upgrading and what better way than to commemorate an important feature not only of Yarm , but of national significance than by placing a sculpture in this prominent place."

Answer Provided

(which includes response to latter additional enquiries received - not requested to be read out)

Response to Enquiry:

Plans for Town Town Hall, Public Toilets and Worsall Rd. Roundabout

Following my immediate response to your questions above, I confirmed to you that Yarm Town Council would forward a fuller formal response following our last meeting. As per my last email, I once again apologise for forgetting at the last minute to read out your question during the public section of the meeting.

The answers to your enquiries are below.

Plans for Yarm Town Hall

Following extensive work over a number of years, Stockton Borough Council have supported Yarm Town Council to identify funding to achieve the redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall to include a Heritage Centre. As a listed building there is a duty of care to restore and maintain the building in good condition.

STO Consulting were appointed in 2018 to conduct Audience Development Consultation and to develop a Business Plan. 90% of people canvassed were in favour of a heritage centre showcasing the history of Yarm. Within this work there was also an assessment and breakdown of what responding residents wanted included as regards Yarm heritage interests - in order of majority preference: development of social history; the wars; industrial heritage; rail history; the environment. Yarm Primary Schools' Council also contributed to this preparatory work.

Stockton Council triggered the go ahead for the project last Autumn and since then a project group led by Stockton building project managers, the architect and members of YTC have worked through all the necessary preparatory building surveys and assessments along with the initial audience development consultation and

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business plan work in order to assess how best to develop the heritage centre within the constraints of a listed building.

The resulting plans are nearly ready and will be in the public domain this Autumn. From this point onwards, additional opportunities for the public to be involved in the development will commence.

Public Toilets

Stockton Borough Council, who operate the public toilet in Yarm, are working with YTC to identify new and improved premises for public toilets. Plans for these have yet to be confirmed. The Yarm Town Hall Heritage Centre will contain an accessible toilet for use by visitors to the centre.

We understand from Stockton's cleaning team that the current public toilet is cleaned at least 3-4 times a day. As regards opening hours, currently Stockton Council ensures that the toilet is open daily 9am - 3.30pm. However, currently the YTC Clerk and Chairman extend the opening hours by volunteering to lock the toilet no later than 6pm every day. When we volunteered to do this, Stockton Council insisted on a closure time (5-6pm) as they stated that when the toilet had been left open previously '24/7' it was frequently vandalised and the continual closure due to damage, and costs of this, became prohibitive.

It is understood that opening hours and cleaning routines for toilets will be discussed with Stockton Borough Council in looking at proposals for new arrangements. Your views on the matter (and those of others) will be represented to Stockton.

Worsall Road Roundabout

A local business had agreed to sponsor an extensive plan for Worsall Road roundabout (including a cut-out image installation exactly as you describe) scheduled for Summer 2020. This was obviously then delayed at the height of the pandemic. Finally, due to the significant financial impact of COVID on this business, they were sorry not to be able to progress with the scheme. Councillors may choose to investigate a similar project for the future.

Additional Queries

In a more recent email to me you have asked if the Singing Christmas Tree (2019) could be repeated. Owned by Stockton this normally goes to different parishes each year. A number of options are being investigated for this year's celebrations. You also suggest the idea of an information / quiz sheet for visitors. This suggestion has already been raised in relation to the launch of the Heritage Centre - thank you for adding your voice to this.

If I can be of any further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Juliet Johnson - Yarm Town Clerk (On behalf of YARM TOWN COUNCIL)