

Minutes of the December meeting of  
Yarm Town Council held at  
**The Fellowship Hall (side entrance)**  
**West Street, Yarm TS15 9BT.**

**Date: Tuesday 13th December 2022**  
**Time: 7pm**

Members of the public were invited to  
attend the meeting

COVID Guidance at the time applied.

**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 John Coulson (Chair)

Cllr Chris Neil

Cllr Philip Adison

Cllr Pam Smailes

Cllr Ian Carter

Cllr Barbara Wegg

Cllr Peter Monck

Cllr Robert Wegg

Rate Payers Rep: Karen Shields

Town Clerk/Proper Officer: Juliet Johnson

**1.0 Notice of Meeting** - it was confirmed that public notice of the meeting had been given in accordance with schedule 12, paragraph 10 (2) of the LGA 1972.

**2.0 To appoint a Chairman in the absence of the Chair and/or Vice Chair - NA**

**3.0 Apologies for Absence**

**3.1** Apologies for absence have been received by Cllr Alan Moffitt, Cllr Patrick Morton, Cllr Marjorie Simpson and Ward Councillor Andrew Sherris.

**4.0 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

**4.1 Cllr Monck** declared a personal prejudicial interest in item 10.1.2.

**5.0 Confirmation of Minutes**

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

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

5.1 **Weigh and Tolls Committee** held on Tuesday 8th November 2022 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

**PROPOSED: Cllr Addison                      SECONDED: Cllr Neil                      AGREED**

5.2 **Yarm Town Council** held on Tuesday 8th November 2022 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

**PROPOSED: Cllr Monck                      SECONDED: Cllr Carter                      AGREED**

5.3 **Cemeteries & Chapel Committee** held on Tuesday 22nd November 2022 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

5.3.1 **Cllr R.Wegg** requested a word change in the minutes ref. pt 9 - he suggested that he had 'commented' rather than 'complained'. The Clerk agreed to change this. **Cllr Coulson** stated that the matter in question had not been a matter for the Cemeteries Committee.

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

**6.0 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Ordinary YTC meeting, 8th November 2022:**

**6.1 Litter Bins and Trade Waste Bins : Current Position                      - carried forward                      - Cllr Morton**

**6.2 YTC 'Charity of the Year'**                      **The Clerk** reported on working with LBentley at Corner House for them to get most out of YTC led events. This has included: obtaining a wreath for the team to be involved in Remembrance Day for the first time which they'd really liked; Corner House banner on Christmas Tree; Corner House being a supplier for Christmas Lights children's activities and benefitting from tips collected across all the children's activities; potential involvement and benefits of Christmas Eve activities; involvement in the Gala still to be discussed and scoped.

**6.3 River Walkways Partnership Project : Update                      - carried forward                      - Cllr Moffitt**

**6.4 Drainage issue nr. bridge (True Lovers Walk Volunteers)**                      **The Clerk** confirmed that this had been flagged with Stockton Borough Council for action.

**6.5 Civility and Respect Agenda (including Training)**                      **Cllr Coulson** asked if any other Cllrs wished to join the training (the Clerk is confirming the latest courses and places available and will circulate). **Cllr Carter** asked to join. **The Clerk** confirmed that one of the courses in particular looked at behaviours that could add up to / be experienced as bullying or harassment - she would bring this list to a future meeting.

**6.6 Social Media Policy & Conduct                      - carried forward                      - Cllr Morton / Clerk.**

**The Clerk** confirmed that she welcomed any further comments from Cllrs re. Social Media Policy prior to meeting with Cllr Morton to complete review. Code of Conduct policy is agenda item 10.3.

**6.7 High St Benches Refurbishment**                      **Cllr Carter** reported that slats had been removed from 2 benches (outside of Sainsbury's) to be repaired/ varnished off site. Temperature has to be 8+ degrees in order to repaint steel bench supports. Council noted that the Consultation for Yarm High Street (SBC) included proposals to replace street

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

benches/seating - it is understood that this will be late summer 2023 (prior to end of March 2024). **Cllr Carter** is prioritising the most damaged benches that cannot wait (e.g. next 2 are those outside the Black Bull).

**ACTION:** **Clerk** to check timetable for SBC bench replacement and report back.

## 6.8 Play Equipment Proposal

- **Cllr B.Wegg / Clerk**

The meeting was informed that the proposal for outdoor exercise equipment (rather than play equipment) previously proposed by Cllr BWegg (and member of the public Carole Jones) might be included in the resulting SBC Levelling Up Scheme (as per agenda item 10.7). The Clerk has forwarded the specific equipment proposal from Cllr BWegg to SBC and prior to this, has looked at 2 companies that could provide equivalent for comparator quotes (i.e. required if YTC instead needed to proceed with spend on this project). The Clerk reminded SBC (who seemed aware) that Snaith's Field was covenanted. (re children's play).

## 6.9 Tree Survey: A&B category work

**Cllr Monck** confirmed that permission had been received for the most urgent (category A) tree at the church yard to be attended to but that diocese permission was awaited for the other tree (category B). **Cllr Monck** stated that a faculty had also been applied for the Category B tree and the C category yews (that YTC are not doing but the church warden requested quotes for). **The Clerk** confirmed that companies had been identified to achieve comparator quotes for work that YTC had agreed should be done (categories A&B), which when scheduled, would include the relevant St Mary Magdalene trees (with diocese permission).

(Other matters carried forward: Flag Flying Policy; Night Market idea - Research; Minutes Protocol - potential to publish drafts; Heritage Mural Idea; Grass Cutting Contract; Keeping Yarm Safe - Update. **Night Market idea - Research: Cllr Carter** stated that he'd alerted SBC, in the context of the High St Consultation, that further built in event infrastructure might be useful e.g. power points. **Minutes Protocol - potential to publish drafts: The Clerk** reminded Cllrs of a previous debate re. whether or not YTC wished to resolve to publish draft minutes; the current system being to publish following approval at the next meeting (this current system is within legislation; legislation only requires smaller councils with expenditure less than £25k to publish drafts within 4 weeks as they do not make an Annual Governance Return; many councils however, are now publishing drafts). Therefore, a Cllr. may wish to make a proposal regarding this matter.

## 7.0 Council Finances

### 7.1 To authorise payment of the accounts

#### 7.1.1 Payments List Refers (December 2022)

**Cllr Addison** presented the payments list and drew attention to two payments: redirection of post which had to be paid at a higher amount than understood initially i.e. £381; payment of £3.8k (net) to Knights re. Yarm Town Hall Heritage Centre (YTHHC) legal fees. The Payments List was approved.

**PROPOSED:** **Cllr Monck**

**SECONDED:** **Cllr Carter**

**AGREED**

### 7.2 National Pay Award Notification

**Cllr Addison** notified the meeting of the national pay award for local council officers of £1,927 (regardless of pay scale/point)

### 7.3 Bank Reconciliations

**Cllr Addison** referenced an error on one account where a transfer had been made to the current account but not reconciled on the source account. This had now been corrected on the system.

### 7.4 Income and Expenditure Report - November 2022 (DOCUMENT REFERS)

**Cllr Addison** asked the Council to note the Income and Expenditure report.

### 7.5 '22/'23 Outturn Forecast

**Cllr Addison** reported that the Council's budget for '22/'23 had been made up of precept and drawing down a total of £29k from reserves (£21k agreed at the beginning of the year and £8k agreed part way through). The forecast shows potentially £200 credit but it is now estimated that a further £2-3k may be spent (part of this being the increased costs for event infrastructure - Remembrance Day, where there are no programming costs, being an example). YTC should be left with approximately £78 - 80k reserves for '23/'24.

### 7.6 Financial Planning '23/'24: Feedback from Committee Chairs & Initial Work

**7.6.1** **The Clerk** reported on the meeting recently held involving Chairs of Committees (**Cllrs Moffitt, Coulson, Addison** attended & apologies from **Cllr Monck**). In summary, the resulting draft budget is balanced by taking a sum from reserves and potentially a substantial increase in the precept request. However, this draft budget does not include allocations for (e.g.): Christmas Eve on the High St (Street Theatre performances and music) - this has been removed; the Coronation event (proposed budget required from the working group); the damaged St Mary Magdalene Tomb (whichever course of action is agreed); purchase of event equipment or shipping container to store.

**7.6.2** In addition, 10% inflation has been added across most items unless an argument was specifically presented as to why this would not be needed. **The Clerk** stated that '23/'24 financial planning had been flagged up at this meeting (rather than just presented in January) for Councillors to be given plenty of time to consider carefully from now on what should/should not be included in the budget and in what proportions the budget should be balanced from Council reserves and in the amount requested for the precept. The Clerk gave examples of the amount of reserves it might be healthy to keep but that this was ultimately a Council decision. The draft budget from the Committee Chairs group will be circulated.

**ACTION:** **Clerk** to circulate draft '23/'24 budget (draft work to date).

### 8.0 To Review and Consider the Correspondence List

- No queries.

### 9.0 Adjournment and Questions From the Public

**The Chair** adjourned the meeting for questions from the public. He reminded those present of the Civility & Respect Agenda and that Cllrs may choose to respond in writing rather than immediately as regards any questions.

**Questioner 1** a) **Carole Jones** briefed Cllrs re. her appearance as an Elf at the Christmas Tree Lights Switch on and stated that she would happily offer 'Elf Services' for future events. **The Clerk** thanked Carole for offering to help steward the Street Theatre acts on Christmas Eve. b) Carole stated to the meeting that she was really impressed by the approach taken by SBC to the High St Improvements consultation, including play equipment on Snaith's Field. c) Carole asked the meeting who had attended the Civility and Respect training to date: answer was given that participants were **Cllr Addison, Cllr Moffitt and Cllr Coulson**.

**Questioner 2** a) A member of the public identified himself as a father living on Bridge St. with 2 young children and stated that he was extremely concerned about the potential for a serious accident occurring on West Street / Bridge Street due to cars speeding. He identified that there was also increased traffic to the new car park and that whilst traffic calming can be both 'ugly & expensive' he felt it was needed urgently to prevent serious accidents or injury. **The Clerk** confirmed that Cllrs

had these matters on the agenda (item 10.5) and that 2 Ward Cllrs (who are Cllrs for Stockton Council - SBC) are aware and concerned about the issue (and would pick up concerns from the minutes of this meeting). **Cllr Monck** commented that he'd looked into traffic calming on West St in the past but that SBC would not install anything until an incident(s) had occurred, providing evidence of need. It is understood that **Ward Cllr. Sherris** had previously organised a community speed watch and that if a particular car was caught on a second occasion, this could be referred to the police. A number of people present ( including a further member of the public) gave examples of accidents that had already occurred, some already having been evidenced to SBC. Examples were also given re.requests for (e.g.) crossings similarly being refused until evidence of incident(s) had occurred and where a 'cut out' of a police person with a speed gun had been used to great effect.

**ACTIONS:** a) **The Clerk** will feedback issues raised to SBC and brief Ward Councillors.

**Questioner 3 Brian Newcombe** (member of the public) stated that Willey Flatts had lost 2 items of play equipment due to vandalism and these had not been replaced whilst expenditure had been agreed for many other items by past councils (and gave examples) that he did not think were as important. Mr Newcombe asked the meeting why this was the case and what would be done about it? **Cllr Addison** referenced that there were significant budgetary challenges re. replacing vandalised equipment. **Cllr Coulson** referenced that a written response could be provided for Mr Newcombe.

**ACTION:** **The Clerk** to liaise with Mr Newcombe as regards his enquiry and to provide a written response.

## **10.0 Policy and Resources:**

### **10.1.1 Cemetery Report**

- **Cllr Moffitt / Clerk**

**10.1.2 Resolution for the Clerk working with the PCC to apply to the Diocese for a faculty to deliver whichever option YTC & the Diocese agree as regards the damaged tomb at St Mary Magdalene.** **Cllr Monck** briefed the meeting as regards this item and left the room (given his declared interest in the matter). In short, regardless of whichever option is decided, Cllr Monck advised that obtaining the faculty would take a number of months and YTC would be charged £350 for each application whereas an application made by the Church would not be charged. This application should be made now (as described in the motion) and the option agreed/proposed for the Tomb communicated at a later date. **Cllr Addison** proposed that a faculty be applied for (as described above) once YTC had decided upon the preferred option as regards the tomb.

**PROPOSED:** **Cllr Addison**

**SECONDED:** **Cllr Coulson**

**AGREED**

### **10.1.3 Proposal to achieve parking spaces at Yarm Chapel (along the driveway) - £1,000**

**Cllr Coulson** briefed the meeting as per a proposal made by Cllr Moffitt at the Cemeteries Committee. In short, to achieve up to 6 parking spaces along the approach road to the cemetery by clearing some shrubbery. The cost of this would be less than £1,000 (including hire of digger and chipping surface for the spaces and the offer of free labour). Discussion included that a) this proposal must be subject to informing the rail authorities and b) perhaps a survey should be conducted first (comment from member of the public who had offered the free labour).

**ACTION:** **Clerk** to inform the rail authorities and advice noted to Councillors from the contractor (provider of the free labour). Project to then be scheduled.

## 10.2 Allotments Report

**Cllr Coulson** stated that there was nothing new to report as regards the Allotments but that liaison with Yarm Community Allotments Association (YCAA) as regards current issues was underway. **The Clerk** reported that collection of allotment rent had been much easier due to issuing postal letters/ rent demands rather than trying to save money by emailing many (which in the past had involved lots of time chasing up and was therefore a false economy).

## 10.3 Proposal to accept SBC Code of Conduct Update

**Cllr Coulson** proposed that the SBC code of conduct be adopted. This would be subject to appropriate adaptation to YTC (**Cllr Addison**). **The Clerk** repeated the prompt to Councillors to forward any comments for her to consider.

**PROPOSED:** Cllr Addison

**SECONDED:** Cllr Coulson

**AGREED**

## 10.4 British Red Cross Well-Being Workshops

The meeting agreed to share this information on social media.

## 10.5 West Street Highways Issues

### 10.5.1 Car Park Entrance : Placing of Flower Planters

**Cllr Carter** briefed the meeting that this proposal was in order to prevent parking on the pavement areas that had been created as part of the new car park entrance which was causing pedestrian obstruction for people with disabilities and parents with pushchairs etc. (people of Westgate would maintain these flower tubs). The issue of the 'invisibility' of the curbs of these new pavement areas was also noted as regards several incidents of cars being damaged.

**AGREED/ACTION:** Clerk to make request to Highways at SBC re flower tubs and request advice re improving visibility of the curbs; Clerk to also brief Ward Councillors as to the matter.

**10.5.2 Proposal for a reduction in the speed limit or 'sleeping policemen' installation** Discussion recapped the issues spoken of re. Questioner 2 in the Public Session (agenda item 9).

**ACTION:** Cllrs Carter, Monck, Coulson and Carole Jones (member of the public) agreed to form a community survey/watch as regards the traffic issues occurring and resident experiences pertaining to these. **The Clerk** to brief Ward Cllrs.

### 10.5.3 Installation of mirror on West St opposite Westgate (improved vision for safety)

**Cllr Carter** requested that SBC be approached to install the above as the entrance to the new car park had brought about significant risk for residents and those driving in the area. **Cllr Addison** concurred with the risk he felt had been created when passing through West St (re observing both left and right). A member of the public offered information as to why SBC might refuse this request i.e. installation of a mirror added to the risk in other ways.

**ACTION:** Clerk to request advice from SBC as to improvement of visibility and reduction to risk re. Westgate and West Street junction.

## 10.6 Provision of a High St. parking space designated for a police vehicle

**Cllr Carter** proposed that a designated space for a police vehicle (occupied or otherwise) to be parked on the High St. be identified, giving confidence to residents as regards countering ASB.

**ACTION:** Clerk to make request to SBC Highways.

**PROPOSED:** Cllr Carter

**SECONDED:** Cllr Coulson

**AGREED**

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

## 10.7 Improvements to Yarm High Street: Stockton Borough Council Consultation

The Clerk briefed

Councillors as to further opportunities to participate in this (dates as previously circulated). The priorities being focused upon for this second stage are based upon the initial stage of consultation (Summer 2022) which identified 5 top priorities:

- improving footpaths
- reducing street clutter
- adding more planting
- improving connections and accessibility to the river
- providing more seating and places to rest.

**The Clerk** emphasised that Cllrs could attend the sessions (and many had already done so) and respond as individuals but also Council could resolve to feedback key issues/ideas that were agreed by majority. 3 factors already fed into the consultation are : a) that YTC had previously resolved that following the achievement of YTHHC, usability and improvement of the river area and walkways as a major area for investment is a YTC priority b) the High Street audit work achieved by Karen Shields the Rate Payers Rep. c) recommendation of outdoors exercise equipment to be included in Snaith's Field ideas.

The meeting also agreed the following priorities to be communicated to the SBC consultation team:

- Ensuring there is Enforcement support for a number of experiential issues (previously flagged\*\*) that would spoil any amount of investment (\*\*e.g. parking infringement, ASB, dog fouling and pavement cycling);
- Ensuring High St employees do not 'block High St. parking spaces' when there is provision of long stay for £1.50 per day and the offer of use of the Yarm School car park at weekends; **Cllr Carter** described the lost potential of customers driving through (unable to turn round and look again) who cannot spot a space as they pass through and therefore continue out of Yarm; **Cllr Monck** underlined the problem re. employees allegedly parking and putting in false number plate information in order to renew the 3 hr parking rather than using long stay car parks.

## 11.0 Planning & Environment:

### 11.1 Matters Arising: Planning Applications & Lists

**Cllr Monck** stated that the Mount Leven 215 dwellings development was being presented again to Planning Committee for a final decision on 14.12.22 - the decision was previously deferred (see 08.11.22 minutes). **Cllr Monck** referenced several domestic planning issues (e.g. Worsall Rd., The Mount) that he felt did not require YTC comment.

### 11.2 Latest Play Area Reports & Issues: Update

**The Clerk** referenced the latest play area reports previously

circulated for any councillor comment.

### 11.3 Tees View Consultation: Forestry Commission - Woods for Nature (EMAIL 1.12.22 REFERS)

**ACTION:** Agreed that **The Clerk** will respond to this to say that YTC is supportive and approves.

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

12.1 Feedback on items to date & proposed new items

**The Clerk** will publicise remaining Christmas event.

## 13.0 To receive items for information and consideration for the next agenda

**Cllr Monck** will bring a report on the proposal for celebrating the Coronation from the working group that has been discussing this. **Cllr Smiles** requested the 'minutes protocol - publishing drafts' issue (as referenced at 6.9) be added to the next agenda.

## 14.0 To confirm the date and time of the next YTC meeting:

7pm, 10th January 2023

## 15.0 Confidential Items

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

**Cllr Coulson** proposed to exclude the press and public in order to consider the item of business (as at 15.1) in the context of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Sec. 1 (2).

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

### 15.1 Town Clerk's Salary and Role

**15.1.1 Cllr Addison** presented his report (prepared on behalf of the Staffing Committee) that recommended changes to the Clerk's salary and hours and as regards a role that has currently been conducted voluntarily by the Clerk towards development of the Yarm Town Hall Heritage Centre (REPORT REFERS). It was agreed:

Pay & Hours - a) To increase the hours the clerk is employed (28 -30 p.w.); b) for pay to be at LC2 (pts. 24-28) at pt. 26; c) for b) to be backdated to 01.08.22.

Yarm Town Hall Heritage Centre - a) to pay up to 10 hrs (p.w.) for consultancy work on YTHHC ; b) to pay this at a rate of £24 p.h. (2 x comparative quotes refers - £400 and £500 per day) out of the YTHHC allocated budget; c) to pay b) from 01.07.22.

**15.1.2** Discussion as regards Pay & Hours included: the pay point had originally been set up on the wrong point - this was flagged up to the Staffing Committee by Cllr Addison (July '22); the above proposal brings the current Clerk's pay into line / equal with the rate of pay received by previous Clerks (without CiLCA qualification); Cllr Addison had, years before, presented a report to Council that had been agreed as the proper paypoint being LC2; financial constraints of the current period (as of Clerk's report at 7.6 above). The details at 15.1.1 as regards Pay and Hours and YTHHC were proposed as per the accompanying report.

**PROPOSED:** Cllr Coulson                      **SECONDED:** Cllr Monck                      **AGREED**                      (2 Councillors abstained)

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

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)

The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Sec 1 (2) - A body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies.