

**Minutes of the YTC meeting held at The Fellowship Hall
 West Street, Yarm TS15 9BT.
 Date: Tuesday 11th July 2023
 Time: 7pm
 (immediately following Weigh & Tolls)
 Members of the public were invited to
 attend the meeting
 SIGNED: 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 Peter Monck (Chair) | Cllr Ian Carter | Cllr Barbara Wegg |
| Cllr Pam Smailes (Vice Chair) | Cllr John Coulson (from 7.53pm) | Cllr Robert Wegg |
| Cllr Philip Addison | Cllr Joyce Hardy | Town Clerk - J.Johnson |
| Cllr Marje Blair | Cllr Yvonne Pybus | 11 members of the public were present. |

1.0 Notice of Meeting - public notice of the meeting was 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 - N/A

3.0 Apologies for Absence - Apologies were received from Cllr Moffitt, Ward Cllr Sherris and the Rate Payers Representative Karen Shields.

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 Cllrs BWegg and RWegg declared a non pecuniary interest in all matters relating to the allotments and a pecuniary interest in relation to item 9.10.

4.2 Cllr Monck recorded a prejudicial interest in all matters relating to St Mary Magdalene and church yard, and a non-pecuniary interest for Yarm Cemetery (in respect of grave deeds).

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

5.0 Confirmation of Minutes

To approve the minutes of the previous meetings:

5.1 **Weigh and Tolls Committee** held on Tuesday 13th June 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr Addison **SECONDED:** Cllr Carter **AGREED**

5.2 **Yarm Town Council** held on Tuesday 13th June 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr Addison **SECONDED:** Cllr Carter **AGREED**

5.3 **E.G.M** of Yarm Town Council held on the 3rd June 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr Addison **SECONDED:** Cllr RWegg **AGREED**

6.0 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Ordinary YTC meeting, 13th June 2023:

6.1 **Litter Bins and Trade Waste Bins : Current Position** - Clerk continues to make reports to SBC /Enforcement and has enquired again about ensuring majority of bins in back yards, as required.

6.2 Civility and Respect & Training Update (Date for: Roles & Responsibilities & Declaration of Interests)

Cllr Monck reported on the Chairman's training he'd attended: important for keeping up to date, discussing issues and the opportunity to talk through issues with others in similar situations. Many Councillors present agreed to contribute to/ pay for their own training. Clerk will arrange the bespoke training session to cover Roles and Responsibilities and Understanding Interests / Declarations of Interests - best times agreed to be evenings of Monday or Wednesday in September.

6.4 **Code Lock for Allotments Gate from Spital** - The Clerk has developed a brief for this and will be seeking quotes. Cllr RWegg offered some friends who would do this free of charge. The Chair thanked Cllr Wegg & the Clerk requested to be put in touch with those offering to help so that she is aware of approach/risk assessment for this alteration to a YTC asset.

Cllr Coulson joined the meeting

6.3 **Space Dedicated for Police Parking** - Cllr Coulson briefed the meeting that the police had no man power and no vehicle to make this happen. Cllr Carter confirmed that originally this had simply been about the deterrent of a vehicle being parked. Clerk to follow-up previous information on cost and whether this could be reduced/avoided.

6.5 **Update: Petition Regarding Withdrawal of no. 7, 7a and 17 bus services**- Cllr Blair gave an update on this work (assisted by Cllr Hardy). Many signatures have been obtained and useful conversations with bus users (especially those not online). Changes have meant that (e.g.) travellers have to now go through 2 towns in order to visit someone close by. Cllr Pybus suggested that possibly a taxi company could offer a small shuttle bus service on key areas of the missing route. The Clerk will seek further information on the government subsidy that was offered, re. the deal that could not be reached.

6.6 **Proposed Alteration to Kissing Gate: Allotments (Worsall Rd)** - Cllr Hardy reminded the meeting of the issue; SBC are happy with YTC going ahead with this proposal; the Clerk will make further contact with the appropriate officer, liaise with Ward Councillors further and action.

6.7 Planning Objection: 111 High St. - (Cllr Coulson declared a non-prejudicial interest in respect of this item) Cllr Monck confirmed that the Clerk had compiled a robust objection and news is awaited as to the decisions;

6.8 Morley Carr Bowling Centre - The Clerk is awaiting an update from the solicitor (it is understood the play area (not YTC's) is not open due to damage).

(Other matters carried forward: River Walkways Partnership Project; Night Market idea - Cllr Carter has a further meeting on 24th July with Yarm School as partner in this idea being for a twice a month event within the school grounds; Research; St Mary Magdalene Tomb; Keeping Yarm Safe - meetings regarding ASB; West St Traffic Issues - speed monitoring continues to take place; parking spaces at Yarm Chapel; Yorkshire Day Invite; Angling Club Grant).

7.0 Council Finances

7.1 To authorise payment of the accounts - Payments List Refers (11th July 2023)

PROPOSED: Cllr Carter **SECONDED:** Cllr MonckCllr Addison **AGREED**

7.2 Bank Reconciliations (DOCUMENT REFERS)

The meeting noted the reconciliations presented and a date error on one was highlighted (which should have read 3/07/23)

7.3 Income and Expenditure Report (inc coding issue & VAT) (DOCUMENT REFERS) - Cllr Addison / Clerk

7.4 Electricity Tariffs: Agree Option (EMAIL REFERS) - The Clerk presented the tariffs emailed and confirmed the favoured option (some Cllrs having forwarded responses to tariffs previously circulated). **AGREED**

VAT claims are now made quarterly. The Clerk gave details as regards various items in the Income and Expenditure report, especially where the budget appeared overspent or where a higher percentage of the budget seemed to be spent (i.e. as seemed appropriate given the stage in the financial year): e.g. the temporary office budget is nearly spent in full as this will no longer be needed after this summer; the Council's insurance is paid in full at the beginning for the required period (end of May); the YTC contribution for the Town Hall refurbishment had been paid (from the earmarked reserve) through the YTHHC general/operational budget (allocated £20k for '23/'24) causing this budget to appear 'overspent' - the Clerk will look into correcting codes/titles to avoid this appearance. Cllr Addison reminded the meeting that the election costs paid at the beginning of '23/'24 were for the '22/'23 byelection (as allocated in the budget) and that this year's costs were allocated in earmarked reserves.

7.5 Proposal for revaluation of the Town Hall following refurbishment (@£350 - TBC) - Cllr Addison corrected the cost as being £980; a vote was taken based on £980 that an appointment for revaluation should be made and it was agreed.

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

8.0 To Review and Consider the Correspondence List (DOCUMENT REFERS) - No queries raised.

9.0 Policy and Resources:

9.1 Cemetery Report - Cllr B Wegg reported that a working party was tidying untended graves (where it is clear no family / friends are attending) at Yarm Cemetery. The group is going to re varnish and reset the wooden cross as the

previous siting / vessel was now failing. Shrubs and trees have been trimmed. It was suggested that signage is developed to highlight that Yarm Cemetery is an old rural graveyard and therefore that the ground can be uneven.

9.2 Allotments Report

- Cllr P Monck

9.2.1 Request for further discussion regarding the resolution of the 13th June '23 meeting (i.e. the motion that was not upheld - to allow access to the allotment hut regardless of membership of YCAA)

-Cllrs Smailes,R&B Wegg & Monck

9.2.2 Request for further discussion regarding the resolution of the 13th June '23 : requirement for all allotment tenants to have Third Party Insurance - Cllrs Smailes, R&B Wegg & Monck

As regards 9.2.1 and 9.2.2, Cllr Smailes stated that Cllrs R&B Wegg should have been able to vote on this issue but they had been prevented from doing so and therefore the discussion and vote should be re-held. The Clerk confirmed that: neither she nor the Chair had issued an instruction that the Cllrs concerned could not vote and that it is correct that no councillors can prevent another from voting; that two Councillors had expressed opinions that Cllrs R&B Wegg should not be voting given their declarations of interest (which they are entitled to do); it was Cllrs RWegg and BWegg's decision as to whether they voted or not; Recession of Previous Resolutions (Standing Order 7, requiring 4 signatures) applies when there is significant new information or a new context to be considered. Cllr Smailes stated that the new information was that Cllrs R&B Wegg had been told they couldn't vote when they could; the Clerk offered to look into this.

Cllr Carter was concerned that previously decided allotment issues had been discussed again, spending more considerable time on this one area of YTC's work.

9.3 Proposal for a bench at Leven Park (open green area, east of Canon Grove) - Cllr Monck referenced the bench refurbishment fund but suggested he would consult the requester further as to a possible contribution.

9.4 Update requested by YTC: CCTV at Willey Flatts (inc. annual costs) - Ward Councillor Coulson stated that the cost was £2,100 per annum; the Clerk will obtain further details and circulate so that YTC can reach a decision. Discussion related to what the £2,100 was specifically for - if monitoring, several Cllrs felt that 1 additional camera did not add significantly to on-screen monitoring; Cllr Smailes highlighted that the expenditure on CCTV was preventative of further costs (e.g. re. damage caused by ASB). It was decided that an EGM would be called as soon as further information is available for YTC to make a decision.

9.5 Update requested by YTC: Air Quality Monitoring by Stockton Borough Council - Having been in touch with the SBC officer responsible, Ward Councillor Coulson gave an update on this issue, what was involved in the monitoring process, what was monitored (nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter) and where sensors were placed. The system is governed by DEFRA & EU rules (now adopted). He reported that Yarm is not within danger levels and there is now a downward trend (potentially due to electric cars).

9.6 Joint Meeting with Eaglescliffe Council - Cllr Monck is attending an initial meeting and then a wider joint meeting will be arranged.

9.7 Proposal to have the river area that loops around the old town designated as a swimming area - Cllr Carter gave the background regarding this issue and the current increasing usage of the area by swimmers. Entering and exiting the river currently takes place from near the wharf at Sainsbury's and at the school. True Lovers Walk Volunteers are working to

improve the pontoons; awareness of the by laws would need to be raised for this scheme to work. It was proposed to achieve the designation of the area described as a swimming area.

PROPOSED: Cllr Carter **SECONDED: Cllr Coulson** **AGREED**

9.8 Agreement for expenditure for removals from temporary office back to Town Hall - It is currently estimated that this would cost less than £350 - removal at this level of expenditure was proposed

PROPOSED: Cllr Carter **SECONDED: Cllr Smailes** **AGREED**

9.9 Improvements to Agendas & Minutes - **Cllr Monck** detailed how there would no longer be a 'Matters Arising' section in the minutes and that Cllrs would need to put specific items on the agenda relating to updates; the Clerk detailed that good practice in some council's was to have a Clerk's 'Matters for Information' - fast progress updates on previous items (a version of a Forward Work Programme). **Cllr Monck** explained how the Chair's training he'd recently attended had recommended that a) the public session (to ask questions / raise points) should be prior to the main agenda items (i.e. Policy and Resources) and b) relate to those agenda items so the debate on these items by councillors could reflect and respond to the points raised by members of the public. Additional questions could also be asked and could receive a written reply (as is currently the guidance in standing orders) or appear on the next agenda if a councillor chose to champion the matter raised. The Chair's training had also covered issues surrounding bullying. **The Clerk** confirmed that the issues surrounding Matters Arising were similar to those re AOB which had been done away with. The Clerk confirmed a new approach to minutes as regards declarations of interest: from September, at the start of an item the minute would state if a Cllr declaring an interest had not taken part, voted, left the room etc. as a result of declaring an interest; where the minutes do not state this it can be presumed by the reader that there was participation in the discussion etc.).

9.10 Proposal to Recognise Years of Public Service by Marjorie Simpson (**Cllrs R&B Wegg** left the room for this item, having declared an interest) - **Cllr Pybus** proposed that a bouquet be purchased (value up to £50 agreed) and sent along with a letter thanking Ex Councillor Simpson for her many years of service.

PROPOSED: Cllr Pybus **SECONDED: Cllr Couslon** **AGREED**

10.0 Planning & Environment:

10.1 Matters Arising: Planning Applications & Lists - **Cllr Hardy** gave an update as regards the day-long planning appeal that had recently taken place regarding the application for 215 dwellings at Mount Leven Farm. Issues covered included the potential of much less traffic for the original proposal of bungalows, no path existing for children walking to school; the size and shape of the roundabout from the development being inappropriate for the traffic burden. A retirement home is now added as part of the application, which is likely to go ahead if the wider development does not. **Cllr Monck** thanked **Cllr Hardy** for her attendance and attention to this issue.

10.1.2 Cllr Monck gave details of a resident wishing to clear some undergrowth nr. the YTC sign on the edge of Willey Flatts Field and plant a tree in remembrance of ex-Councillor Gwen Porter. **The Clerk** is to action this and obtain the necessary permission from SBC (Stockton Borough Council).

10.1.3 Cllr Blair reported on an incident where a resident on a mobility vehicle had been forced onto a verge by off road parking on the pavement and had been tipped out of the vehicle; a range of such hazardous 'off road parking' had been observed and discussion included the need to contact the police, immediate involvement of enforcement and the legality and otherwise of this issue. **The Clerk** will raise this with Highways at SBC as to what can be done.

10.2 Latest Play Area Reports & Issues: Update - the Clerk will circulate the latest reports and continue to action medium to high priority repairs (as previously agreed by YTC); the budget for this is under pressure.

11.0 Adjournment and Questions From the Public - The Chair adjourned the meeting for public questions.

Member of the Public 1 (MP1) commented that the costs of items associated with The Riding of the Fair (the Civic Reception Meal and the potential cost of a Ridings bus, thought to be circa £450) should be contributed to the CCTV issue at Willey Flatts instead.

MP2 stated that if CCTV was being considered for Willey Flatts then please could it could be considered for Snaith's Field given the rise in vandalism and ASB around the play area there. **MP2** acknowledged the Chair's feedback from NALC training as regards the positioning of the public questions session (9.9 above) and supported this.

MP3 and MP4 stated that they were not in favour of moving the public questions session from after the main agenda items to before (following its recent move to the end of the agenda at public request).

MP5 stated that the swimming area as described in the previous agenda item (9.7) does not cover the full, larger area that is used by swimmers; MP5 asked if the work offered by Cllr RWegg's friends would be covered by appropriate risk assessments etc.; MP5 wanted reassurance that the cross to be varnished/resited was not of historic importance (confirmed as not): a request was made for posters warning of the dangers of hogweed given the quantity emerging nr. Teesdale Way towards Aislaby (the Clerk to make enquiries) ; a similar sign is required for the closed area of True Lovers Walk; MP5 remarked that it had been difficult to hear councillors during the meeting (Clerk to help address).

MP6 & MP1 raised the continued and worsening problem of trade waste and other bins in Low Church Wynd and Central Street (where anti-social behaviour is seemingly encouraged by the presence of the bins). **The Clerk** to follow-up again.

A motion was made and agreed to continue the meeting beyond 9.30 pm.

PROPOSED: Cllr Smailes **SECONDED:** Cllr Addison **AGREED**

12.0 To agree any content for the YTC website and requests for Facebook features - The Clerk reported that there had been issues with the website re. residual copies of out of date documents remaining (e.g. in a section of the website other than under the usual heading) and new ones being loaded. The issues are being addressed with YTC's IT support.

12.1 Feedback on items to date & proposed new items - N/A

13.0 To receive items for information and consideration for the next agenda - none at this time.

14.0 To confirm the date and time of the next YTC meeting: 7pm, 12th September 2023

A proposal was made 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). **AGREED**

15. Confidential Item 15.1 Update: Context and concerns regarding a series of FOI requests

15.1.1 Cllr Monck reported on a meeting with YTC's solicitors (with Cllr Monck & the Clerk) regarding a series of communications from a resident and the impact of this upon staff / YTC (as discussed at June's meeting). Cllr Monck had received advice, the details of which he would not share given concerns he had regarding confidentiality (referenced in

June's meeting) and inappropriate information potentially reaching a member/member(s) of the public. Cllr Monck will be following the advice given in relation to dealing with the matter.

15.1.2 The Clerk shared a copy of the contract/ person spec. for the Town Hall Development Manager work (shared in good faith in response to part of an FOI request). Whilst drafted in the first instance as a freelance contract (in consultation with all relevant councillors at the time), changes were possibly needed if it was to be PAYE (as per the first payment) & the contract would be re-circulated to all. The documents define the difference between the work for the Town Hall that is the Clerk role and the work for the Town Hall that is the Development Manager role. The Clerk asked Cllr Smailes to share with her the document that she'd seen online & was concerned about. Further discussion was held regarding the timeline of the issues concerned e.g. bringing the contract back to Council.

15.1.3 A report from the Internal Auditor would be circulated when complete.

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.