

DRAFT

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

Date: Tuesday 10th October 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 (Chairman)

Cllr. Alan Moffitt

Cllr. Philip Addison

Cllr. Yvonne Pybus

Cllr Marje Blair

Town Clerk - J. Johnson

Cllr. Joyce Hardy

12 members of the public (inc. 1 member of the Press)

1.0 Notice of Meeting - it was noted that 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

3.1 Apologies were received from **Cllrs. Pam Smailes, Robert Wegg, Barbara Wegg and John Coulson** and **Ward Cllr. 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 prejudicial interest in all matters relating to St Mary Magdalene Church and churchyard and a personal interest in a burial plot held at Yarm Cemetery.

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 12th September 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr. Addison **SECONDED:** Cllr. Blair **AGREED**

5.2 **Yarm Town Council** held on Tuesday 12th September 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr Addison **SECONDED:** Cllr. Hardy **AGREED**

6.0 Clerk's Report: Matters for Information

The Clerk reported on the following: **CCTV for Willey Flatts** – a new booster mast is awaited for Green Lane prior to installation; **Cemetery Signs** re uneven ground have now been received and printed; quotations for potentially bricking up the **Spital/allotments wall** are awaited and consultation on the decision continues; achieving a **designated swimming area** would involve conducting a survey for 20 days over the summer and achieving a minimum of 100 people utilising the river for bathing and associated activities; alteration to **Worsall Allotments / Meynells Walk kissing gate** has been completed; the return of the externally audited accounts is still awaited (there is a notice to say this on the website given they are required to be published by 30th September) – a qualification will be received for not having added the risk of the Town Hall redevelopment led by SBC to the risk register during 2022/2023; a full **update to the Financial regulations** has been completed by a working group; example options for a **metal bench at Worsall Rd Allotments** have been forwarded to Cllr Pybus; Cllr Coulson has arranged for emergency contact number and clearer signage for the **public toilet to the rear of the library – toilets available** to the public also include Fairfax Court, Strickland and Holt and The Black Bull; the **Green Lane** double parking near the school issue has been reported; **clearance of nettles at the Snaith's Field Orchard** was arranged (delayed due to illness); stewarding along Bentley Wynd re. nuisance to households due to the Fair has also been requested (i.e. not just in relation to cars). Other matters will be reported under agenda items to follow.

7.0 Council Finances

7.1 To authorise payment of the accounts -

Payments List Refers (5th September 2023 onwards)

- Cllr Addison / Clerk

Cllr. Addison briefed the meeting as regards re-organisation of the payments list into 3 sections.

A motion was proposed as regards agreement that all regular payments (contracts, direct debits and standing orders - examples as illustrated on the current and previous payments lists) would be paid automatically during the month and presented at the next meeting.

PROPOSED: Cllr Moffitt **SECONDED:** Cllr Monck **AGREED**

The Payments List was approved including payments presented (not on the list) as follows:

- a) Legal fees (£432); b) July – September Events Infrastructure Contract (£1,320 p.m.); c) general gardening and grounds maintenance £140; d) quarterly payroll services £78. The meeting also noted the report of dividends received through the PSDF of £359.17.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck

SECONDED: Cllr Moffitt

AGREED

7.2 Bank Reconciliations

(DOCUMENT REFERS) - Cllr Addison / Clerk

Cllr Addison presented the Bank Reconciliations which were noted by the meeting.

7.3 Income and Expenditure Report

(DOCUMENT REFERS)

The Clerk and Cllr Addison presented the Income and Expenditure list for any questions and queries. The Clerk highlighted the coding issue as regards the budget for operation and development for the Town Hall (code being 4160). This is wrongly titled currently and shows a significant overspend as no separate code was created from which the contributions could be transferred from reserves and paid across, so this was done through budget code 4160. The budget allocation for this 4160 code (which relates to operation and development of YTHHC- £20k allocated for the current year) is not overspent and is on target.

Other points to note in the Income and Expenditure report include: an overspend on play equipment maintenance allocation due to vandalism; a spend of 151% against the cleansing contract - one payment (rather than monthly instalments) and the contract with SBC having increased more than the 10% allowed for in the budget (and this not known until after budget setting) – Clerk to confirm the position. The hanging baskets budget is also overspent due to contract cost for watering having increased considerably (despite the savings made by not adopting one of the professional horticultural quotes) and the fact that there had been no contribution this year from Ward Cllrs, which all parties had thought likely until very reduced budgets had been confirmed after budget planning. Income from sponsorship for YTHHC should be chased up.

7.4 To approve the updated Financial Regulations & Risk Register (DOCUMENTS REFER) - Cllr Addison

7.4.1 The updated Financial Regulations were approved and accepted.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck

SECONDED: Cllr Addison

AGREED

7.4.2 The additions and amends to the Risk Register were noted and approved. It was suggested that further review/additions might be made and the Risk Register would then be represented to Council for reapproval.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck

SECONDED: Cllr Moffitt

AGREED

7.5 To approve expenditure for YTHHC Upper Floor Exhibition

(text/photo panels, cases, leaflets, DBS checks, launch materials/equipment - £1,400) - Cllr Monck

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck

SECONDED: Cllr Blair

AGREED

8.0 To Review and Consider the Correspondence List

(DOCUMENT REFERS)

The following queries were made in respect of the correspondence list:

- Methodist Church incident – confusion about locking up following a YTC booking.

- Item regarding S.Hunton: Suzi Hunton is the artist who has created the youth focused heritage mural in the window of the old Cooplands bakery premises: working as the Development Manager for YTHHC, the Clerk had arranged for Cooplands to fund this as part of the YTHHC outreach lead in work; YTC hold rights to the work and can use it for other purposes.

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9.0 Adjournment and Questions From the Public

9.1 A member of the public (**MP1**) reported the presence of Giant Hogweed in places along the path which runs from opposite Yarm Medical Centre to Snaith's Field Play Area.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Care for Your Area (SBC) & Network Rail. This can also be done directly by members of the public.

9.2 **MP2** asked about 3 councillors who had "not been turning up" and whether resignations were considered and that, given a recent resignation, this would be the time to make the decision so that, potentially, election costs could be saved. **MP2** thanked the majority of Council members for doing a good job.

9.3 **MP3** stated that she had spotted a further derogatory article in NYE which reflected the same behaviour from some councillors which had been condemned at a previous meeting and casts our council, unfairly, in a bad light. **The Chair** replied that there was awareness of this and steps were being taken.

10.0 Policy and Resources:

10.1 Cemetery Report

- Cllr B Wegg

Cllr Moffitt reported on updating details on burials for the Database (the Clerk will be uploading this to the website). This information is also the basis for the Cemetery information board that will be created. **Cllr Moffitt** has also updated the 'Pray For' sheets that are displayed in the Chapel entrance hall with the most recent burials. Different contractors are being sought for quotes for parking spaces at the cemetery and costs and installation of a compostable toilet (disabled access being important) has also been initially assessed by Cllr Moffitt and the Clerk. Signs warning the public to be wary of rabbit holes and uneven ground will be placed ASAP (**Clerk**).

10.2 Allotments Report

- Cllr P Monck

10.2.1 General Update

The Clerk reported that there were currently approximately 26 people on the waiting list. Notice has been given recently on several plots (including requests for subdivision to a smaller plot). Rents are coming in following the recent rent request letter (the allotment year running from 1st October to 30th September). Several transfers have been requested and these will be sorted once rent income has been reconciled.

Cllr Monck tabled a motion that whilst the consultation as regards the Council's motion to brick up the Spital Gate continues, the gate should be closed/secured and not used.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck

SECONDED: Cllr Moffitt

AGREED

The Chair spoke with members of YCAA (Yarm Community Allotment Association) who were present; YCAA offered to secure the gate and this was accepted.

10.2.2 Allotment tenancy Issue (A): to note and confirm final enforcement stage - Cllr Monck

The Clerk briefed the meeting as regards an allotment that had reached the final stage of enforcement (i.e. issuing of a Notice to Quit) and briefed Councillors as to the position; in short, the tenant has been sent all the appropriate

letters as per the management/enforcement process and no reply has been received (telephone calls have also been made) – it would appear that the allotment has been abandoned. Councillors agreed that the Notice to Quit stage should progress. **AGREED.**

10.2.3 Allotment Tenancy Issue (B): to note pause in enforcement stage for informal independent review & confirmation of next steps - Cllr Monck

The Clerk reminded Councillors of the tenancy issue briefing that had been given at the September meeting and that she had been given dispensation to carry out the next necessary steps. The tenant was concerned that they wouldn't be treated fairly by YTC (in the context of past issues) so the Clerk has paused the enforcement process, prior to the issuing of a Notice to Quit, in order to conduct an informal independent review (i.e. not YTC members) working with Councillors and Clerk (experienced in allotment issues) of another Council with complete anonymity of the tenant concerned preserved; all the information/ communications to date will be reviewed. The Clerk will present the findings of the independent review to YTC for a decision (a brief EGM may be required).

10.3 Update: Corner House Youth Project & being first YTC 'Charity of the Year'

(from Lucy Bentley)

The Chair invited Lucy Bentley to give a presentation regarding her work at Corner House youth project, having been YTC's first Charity of the Year.

Lucy began by giving an outline of the services Corner House provide which includes both targeted and open access services as well as detached youth work projects. The example of targeted work with 6 boys was given (re. avoiding exploitation and providing safeguards) – there is much need for work to support the criminally exploited. A cocktail of funding supports Corner House's work including Police and Crime Commission and lottery funding. Corner House works across 2 sites with sports pitches, allotments and key partners present e.g. 'Cultivate' running the Allotments and Sprouts running the food bank, shop and community cooking programmes. Specialist work includes Parent Carer sessions and work around foetal alcohol issues. Corner House finds it difficult to get funding for core work (as opposed to special projects); work is currently underway to raise £1m for a new building. Other work includes family support, trips out and holiday activities. A lot of work is delivered around community safety issues; Lucy reminded the meeting of the need to reference the preventative role of this work in the context of social media conversations about anti-social behaviour. There are key challenges around working with young people in Yarm – not least the growing gap between 'haves and have nots' with the same area and the fact that the Yarm postcodes often don't make the area a priority for funding, compared to other areas.

Corner House does comprehensive liaison with key associated services e.g. with Directors of Social Care, and is involved in key decision making processes. The meeting was asked to note that there was recently a noticeable reduction of problems at Willey Flatts; this was down to Cornerhouse's knowledge of key information that supports prevention and working with schools in this respect. In short, youth work is a lot more than 'opening the doors'. Lack of core funding means constantly having to rationalise work; there is currently no youth club in Yarm which would cost £6k fortnightly. Other current work in Yarm will end in April. Water safety work around the river has been part of provision; links developed through this work have been communicated with schools so that prevention of accidents education can continue. Corner House also operates youth mentoring programmes and enables young people, age 16, to add qualifications to their portfolio.

Lucy gave feedback on being YTC's first Charity of the Year: a longer, earlier run-in might enable members to engage with the key issues more fully; in some instances, it has cost Corner House to be involved in projects, despite funding raised.

The Chair thanked Lucy for her comprehensive presentation and the ongoing, in-depth work of Corner House.

10.4 Condition of Clapham Rd., Willey Flatts

Cllr Pybus reported extreme potholes and damage at Clapham Road which the Clerk has reported. The holes were filled with sand some time ago, but no repairs have occurred, and the position has become worse. Cllr Monck requested that other potholes on West St (opposite Fellowship Hall) should also be reported. **ACTION: Clerk to report.**

10.5 Trade waste bins, Low Church Wynd - public complaints **- Cllr Moffitt**

Cllr Moffitt stated that 5 members of the public had complained regarding the state of trade bins on Low Church Wynd, including reports of rats around them (a nearby restaurant has reopened). It was proposed that enforcement action needs to crack down on this continuing problem and that if this persists fines should be imposed.

PROPOSED: Cllr Moffitt

SECONDED: Cllr Monck

AGREED

ACTION: Clerk to speak with Enforcement to request that proper use/ siting of the bins is enforced and legal action results if regulations are broken.

10.6 Proposal to ensure jet washing of High St. bus shelters (post weekends) **- Cllr Hardy**

Cllr Hardy explained that the main bus shelters are used as urinals and recently were covered in vomit following a weekend causing unsanitary conditions and risk to bus users come Monday morning.

ACTION: Clerk to speak with Care for Your Area and SBC department responsible to ensure jet washing early on Mondays.

10.7 Motion to confirm that councillor training costs are met from allocated budget **- Cllr Monck**

Cllr Monck confirmed that training is to be paid from budget for councillors (who are all volunteers) as it is part of the expected role. It was noted that a motion should not force councillors to pay for training and potentially put councillors (who are volunteers) in a difficult position. Whilst a recording had suggested that this had been voted upon (with agreement to pay for training) there had been visual uncertainty about the vote. The agreement to pay for training had not been minuted or this position corrected on approval of the minutes. Cllr Monck proposed that training should not be paid for by individuals as it is a requirement of the role.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck

SECONDED: Cllr Moffitt

AGREED

10.8 Briefing: next steps in filling the councillor vacancy **- Clerk**

Cllr Monck and the Clerk briefed the meeting as to the next steps in filling a councillor vacancy:

- a) if at least 10 signatures requesting an election are received by a deadline the Returning Officer an election will be called;
- b) following the calling of an election, if there is more than 1 candidate standing, an election will be held (the cost of a By-Election is now £20,000);
- c) if there is only one candidate, that candidate will be appointed (the cost of this is £50);
- d) if no signatures are received by the Returning Officer, requesting an election, there is no election and the council may co-opt someone to the vacancy (essentially, a simple recruitment process).

10.9 Discussion: 200th Anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway

- Cllr Monck

Cllr Monck advocated that YTC should become involved with Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in the lead up to the anniversary and in relation to Yarm Town Hall Heritage Centre.

10.10 Proposal to join the Yorkshire Society - Cllr Monck deferred this item to the next meeting .

10.11 Briefing re. potential requirement for HR support

- Clerk

Cllr Moffitt proposed that, initially Stockton Borough Council should be approached for support and what the costs might be, when required.

ACTION: Clerk to speak with SBC initially re. possibility of purchasing HR support.

11.0 Planning & Environment:

11.1 Matters Arising: Planning Applications & Lists

- Cllr Monck / Clerk

Cllr Monck confirmed that there were no new major issues: confirmation regarding the position for 111 High St is awaited; there is a pending licensing decision regarding Tomahawk's request to move closing hours from 1am to 2am. It was proposed that this should be objected to (if others don't have licences to 2am) as this may set a precedent for others to follow suit which would create issues for residents in the High St area.

PROPOSED: Cllr Pybus **SECONDED:** Cllr Addison **AGREED**

Reference was made to the work beginning on the viaduct (residents of the West St. area have been notified).

11.2 Latest Play Area Reports & Issues

- Clerk

The Clerk reported on awaiting the fitting of the repairs to the wetpour surface at Willey Flatts play area (the company hadn't attended on a previously booked date) and for swings to be replaced (swings and other spare parts now arrived). Costs of damage through ASB will be featured on Facebook.

11.3 Briefing re. river pontoon to rear of Sainsbury's

- Clerk

The Clerk reported that the local boat company will be selling this pontoon to any interested party. It was stated that the True Lovers Walk Volunteers would not be interested in this.

Cllr Monck adjourned the meeting for any final questions or comments from the public.

A member of the public thanked the 3 newest Councillors for their reconciliatory statements and apology that had been made prior to the start of the formal meeting.

A second member of the public commented on the increasing population of rabbits at the allotments and cemetery.

A third member of the public asked what the results of the Asian Hornets survey had been. It is understood that one nest was found and destroyed. Another member of the public noted the presence of an adder at the wharf recently.

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

- Clerk / ALL

Cllr Monck referenced holding weekly or fortnightly surgeries ('Meet Your Councillors') with other members of YTC for the public to come and discuss issues of concern that could then be raised at Council. These would be advertised on Social Media. Features about the current council and the work and brief biographies of individuals should be included on Facebook – **Clerk** to discuss with councillors individually.

13.0 To receive items for information and consideration for the next agenda - none currently.

14.0 To confirm the date and time of the next YTC meeting: 7pm, 14th November 2023

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.