

Minutes of the September YTC Ordinary meeting

held at

The Fellowship Hall

West Street, Yarm TS15 9BT.

Date: Tuesday 12th September 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 Philip Addison

Cllr John Coulson (from item 9.2.3 onwards)

Cllr Marje Blair

Cllr Yvonne Pybus

Rate Payers Rep - Karen Shields

Town Clerk/Proper Officer - J.Johnson

(13 members of the public present, including press); YTHHC Development Manager - J.Johnson

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

3.1 Apologies were received from **Councillors Alan Moffitt, Joyce Hardy, Barbara Wegg, Robert Wegg and Pam Smailes.**

Cllr John Coulson would be joining the meeting later. Apologies were also received from **Ward Councillor Andrew Sherries.**

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

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

4.1 Cllr Monck declared a non-prejudicial interest in matters relating to St Mary Magdalene Church and churchyard. No requests for dispensation were received.

5.0 Confirmation of Minutes

To approve the minutes of the previous meetings:

5.1 Weigh and Tolls Committee held on Tuesday 11th July 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 11th July 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 10th August 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

The Clerk's request that an addition was made to state that 34 members of the public were present was accepted.

PROPOSED: Cllr Addison

SECONDED: Cllr Carter

AGREED

6.0 Clerk's Report: Matters for Information

The Clerk stated that now 'Matters Arising' was previously proposed by the Chair to no longer be part of the Agenda (following training advice), good practice in many councils includes an update on previous items as a Clerk's Report, which acts as a Forward Work Programme. An update was given as follows: **cemetery signs warning of 'uneven ground** underfoot, have been ordered; a contractor is providing a **full repair quote for the Spital gate, frame and wall** (Allotments); **bench approved for Leven Park** - details on financial contribution from the requester is awaited (Cllr Monck) and SBC confirms that permission is required inc. exact location specification; **CCTV for Willey Flatts** - camera ready & socket fitting awaited by SBC street lighting team within next weeks; Chair & Clerk attended preliminary **meeting with Eaglescliffe Council re. 20mph speed limit areas** (Yarm possible examples being West St, Worsall Rd)- potential joint meeting of councils (Cllr Monck); achieving a **designated swimming area** (Yarm School to 1st pontoon on True Lovers Walk)- Clerk has written to River and Canal Trust and the Environment Agency and described researched points to achieve this; **ex-councillor Marjorie Simpson - bouquet and letter of thanks** - forwarded; **trade waste bins** - Clerk is monitoring, photographing and contacting SBC- issues persist; **YTC Team Training** - Roles, Responsibilities and Declarations of Interest - **2nd October 7pm**; **Morley Carr Bowling Centre** - paperwork completed by solicitors; **Kissing Gate Alteration** - (Meynell's Walk through Upper Allotments) about to complete, cost circa £100; **Cemetery/Allotment Wall** - contractor identified; **St Mary Magdalene Tomb Faculty Application** - still to be completed; **Cemetery Parking Spaces** - contractors still need to be identified (1st has not quoted). Further items relating to **Allotments, Cemetery and Play Areas** will be updated under these agenda items.

7.0 Council Finances

7.1 To authorise payment of the accounts - Payments List Refers (mid July - 5th September 2023)

PROPOSED: Cllr Carter

SECONDED: Cllr Pybus

AGREED

7.2 Bank Reconciliations (DOCUMENT REFERS) - the meeting noted the bank reconciliation statement across all accounts

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7.3 Income and Expenditure Report (DOCUMENT REFERS) - the meeting noted the Income and Expenditure Report.

7.4 To note the report of the Internal Auditor (additional to schedule; confidential document refers): Financial Governance and Development Work for Yarm Town Hall Heritage Centre - Cllr Addison presented the report (prompted by a councillor and 2 residents): financial governance is in order, required processes have been followed and nothing illegal has taken place. Several recommendations were made in respect of Staffing Committee having job descriptions et al ready as soon as possible so that roles are clear (and minutes approved) and councillor working groups to support the Clerk in updating policies. The Clerk has spent approximately 6 days servicing this investigation; the Internal Auditor report has cost £400.

7.5 To agree expenditure for furniture: Yarm Town Hall Heritage Centre (£1,600) (Doc. Refers)

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

7.6 To agree a working group for the updating of Financial Regulations - the working group was agreed to be Cllr Monck, Cllr Addison and Cllr Moffitt (not present, so to be asked) and the Clerk.

7.7 To agree new signatories for a YTC account - a YTC savings account has signatories which need updating. It was voted upon that these would be as for the signatories on other accounts (Cllr Monck, Cllr Addison and Cllr Coulson).

AGREED

7.8 To note the report from the External Auditor - 2022/2023 Accounts (PENDING REPORT) - item carried forward to the next meeting (report not yet received).

8.0 To Review and Consider the Correspondence List (DOCUMENT REFERS) - the correspondence list was noted. Cllr Monck read a letter of thanks for the Council's donation to Yarm Angling Club, detailing how the donation would be used and that a report on the activities will be forwarded to YTC.

9.0 Policy and Resources:

9.1 Cemetery Report - a question was asked as to whether Cllr BWegg should return the Chapel key if absent. The Clerk confirmed that as Chair of the Cemetery Committee Cllr B Wegg would continue to hold this key and that another set of keys were held for signing out as required at the office. The Clerk gave a brief update regarding the cemetery.

9.2 Allotments Report - Cllr Monck

9.2.1 General Update

9.2.2 Motion to reverse the decision regarding reopening of the Spital Gate & fitting of a coded lock (4 signatures & reason/context received by the Clerk) - Cllr Monck

The Clerk read the motion and reasons received and signed by 4 councillors. The motion to reverse the decision regarding reopening of the Spital Gate was proposed to be reversed.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck **SECONDED:** Cllr Blair **AGREED**

(NB items 9.2.3 & 9.2.4 subject to the decision at 9.2.2; 9.2.3 & 9.2.4 to be discussed simultaneously)

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9.2.3 Motion to brick-up the Spital Gate

- Cllr Carter/Cllr Monck

**9.2.4 Motion to consult Brickyard Allotment Holders re. Proposals for Spital Gate,
(within the September Rent Letter)**

- Cllr Pybus

It was suggested that the Spital gate into the Brickyard allotments is bricked up and that this proposal is shared with allotment holders (along with the reasons for this and the alternative option ie. the gate, supporting frame, posts and wall being replaced and made open). A vote was taken regarding the proposal to brick up the gate - 9.2.3 (**AGREED**) but that allotment holders should be consulted regarding this proposal - 9.2.4 (also **AGREED**).

9.2.5 To discuss and agree Allotment Rent for October '24 - September '25

- Cllr Monck

The Clerk confirmed that the allotments are currently subsidised by approximately £3,000 per annum. Good practice in the management of many allotment authorities is to ensure they are cost neutral. Prior to the last 3-4 years, the allotment rent had not been increased at regular intervals; Yarm allotment rents remain quite low in comparison with many (e.g. Darlington Council - circa £170 PA - **confirmed as £195**). Cllr Addison proposed that the allotment rent for October 2024- September 2025 should be £45 PA.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck

SECONDED: Cllr Carter

AGREED

9.2.6 Proposal to install a bench at Worsall Rd (Upper Allotments)

Cllr Pybus detailed that pensioners passing through the allotments pathway from Meynells Walk to Yarm needed a bench to rest on and that this would also benefit allotment holders, many of whom had been consulted. Cllr Pybus offered to raise money for the project, a metal bench being preferred for robustness (the Clerk referenced the rainbow bench at Willey Flatts).

ACTION: Cllr Pybus will liaise with the Chair of YCAA regarding this proposal and a suitable location; metal bench options to be further costed (**Clerk**).

9.3 Ward Budget Requests Prioritisation - **The Clerk** confirmed that the confirmation of ward budget priorities to contribute to YTC are as follows: contribution to play equipment of £4k received in '22 - '23 (further contribution can be considered in '24 - '25); no contribution to hanging baskets this year; £1,800 contribution towards CCTV at Willey Flatts; £400 towards the Tom Brown 'silver nose' project with the Veterans' Breakfast Club (for YTHHC); £400 towards planning permission (if required) for the Yarm Heritage Mural, proposed for the West Street Car Park; £381.46 for 2 x litter bins for True Lovers Walk Volunteers (processed by YTC).

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

(from Lucy Bentley) - CARRIED FORWARDS TO A FUTURE MEETING

9.5 Network Rail Fencing - nr. Worsall Rd ('Skew Arch') Bridge (opposite surgery)

Cllr Pybus raised the issue as she feels the fence is badly sited and obscures part of an important historic structure in an unnecessary manner. Discussion ensued as to why this might be the case.

ACTION: Clerk to re-contact Network Rail to find out why the fence has been sited in this way and what might be done to improve it.

9.6 Yarm Town Centre Public Toilets - **Cllr Coulson** detailed the issues as regards the public toilet in Yarm (situated through the library corridor with separate opening hours but currently badly signed). SBC Enforcement have said that they can attend to open the toilet within 5 minutes if it is ever found locked when it should be open. Signposting and clarity re. toilet opening hours are urgently required. **Cllr Pybus** referenced the toilet open to the public that is in Fairfax Court (towards the back of the arcade on the right). **YTHHC Development Manager** detailed the issues that would arise if members of the public mistakenly thought that a public toilet is available when the Heritage Centre opens i.e. making the downstairs exhibition space dysfunctional. **Cllr Coulson** will update colleagues accordingly as to resolution of the issue re. signage.

9.7 Motion to reverse the decision made on 16.05.23 to limit YTC committees to 4 members only (4 signatures & context received by the Clerk)

The Clerk read the motion and reasons received and signed by 4 councillors. The motion to reverse the decision regarding the proposal to limit YTC committees to 4 people was proposed to be reversed.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck

SECONDED: Cllr Coulson

AGREED

9.8 (subject to decision at 9.7 above) Agreement of additional voting committee members

(Allotments, Cemeteries, Leisure & Culture)

Cllr Monck asked councillors if they wished to belong to any of the council's committees beyond the 4 members originally agreed. **Cllr Addison** requested to be added to Leisure and Culture and Allotments committees; **Cllr Carter** requested to be added to Leisure and Culture; **Cllr Carter** offered to be additional liaison with Businesses (n.b. this is not a committee but a lead Councillor role so Cllr Carter's offer would contribute in the instance of absence of the existing rep); **Cllr Blair** requested that she shadow the existing lead councillor for Planning (**Cllr Monck**); **Cllr Hardy** (not present) had requested via the Clerk to be involved in Leisure and Culture (if 9.7 was agreed) as had **Cllr. Moffitt** in respect of the Staffing Committee (given current circumstances).

10.0 Planning & Environment:

10.1 Matters Arising: Planning Applications & Lists - **Cllr Monck** briefed the meeting as regards: application re. Yarm Riding Centre Glaisdale Rd. site which has been refused; the Mount Leven Development proposal has also been refused - application for 65 bed nursing home is in process; news is awaited as regards 111 High St.; 16-16a High St. - demolition of an internal wall and an extended seating area has been applied for (**Cllrs Monck & Hardy** will review potential impact and feedback to Council); variation of opening hours at the Lotus Lounge, Fairfax Court, have been applied for - further information is awaited.

10.2 Latest Play Area Reports & Issues: Update (DOCUMENT REFERS) (including essential repair - additional to health and safety repairs - £750; play repairs budget) - **The Clerk** gave an update as regards latest reports circulated and repairs awaited, including continuing vandalism issues and the costs of this. It was suggested that the costs should become the subject of a facebook post, reminding people to report any vandalism they witness.

(N.B. the £750 repair related to this agenda item is not now currently perceived as required; an alternative has been requested from the supply company)

11.0 Adjournment and Questions From the Public

Cllr Monck adjourned the meeting for questions from the public.

A member of the public (MP1) wanted to know the names of Councillors who may not be turning up to meetings (it was noted that this would become apparent).

A second member of the public (MP2) requested that whilst a steward for traffic issues on Bentley Wynd during the Fair had been placed and that this was positive, a request was made that the organisers should be asked to provide a Steward to counter ASB (e.g. residents being frightened by people banging on windows of houses etc.)

ACTION: **The Clerk** will feed this back to organisers

A third member of the public asked a question relating to clearance of overgrowth and nettles so that the free fruit on the trees could be accessed.

ACTION: **The Clerk** will remind the grounds care contractor.

A further question was asked as regards fly posting in the High St on street furniture; a local business has taken to doing this.

A fourth member of the public asked if the Yarm Community Allotments Association (YCAA) could lock off the Spital gate and the **Chair (Cllr Monck)** moved to agree this; the **Clerk** reminded the meeting that motions could not be put/agreed during the adjournment for public questions; the Spital gate matter is to be resolved as agreed at 9.2.3 & 9.2.4.

A fifth member of the public referenced double parking along Green Lane nearest the school which meant children sometimes walking in the road/across the bridge. Cllr Coulson (speaking in his role as Ward Councillor) said that Stockton Borough Council are looking into this. A sixth member of the public queried as to whether a green area within the bounds of the school could be put to use for waiting to help alleviate this issue. It was also felt that traffic calming was needed given these issues.

ACTION: **Clerk** to report this to Enforcement / Care for Your Area (members of the public were reminded of the address where they can do this directly).

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

ACTION: Costs of repair to vandalised play equipment to be posted - **Clerk**

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, 10th October 2023

The Chair (Cllr. Monck) 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). AGREED

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15.0 Confidential Items

15.1 To consider an allotments tenancy issue.

The Clerk briefed the meeting as to an allotment tenancy issue and the management process underway. The Clerk briefed Councillors as to an incident that had occurred at the allotments. Both matters were discussed and the Clerk was given dispensation to take whatever action she deemed necessary (AGREED). An investigation is to take place as regards the incident. The Clerk will be seeking support from the National Association of Allotments in respect of both the tenancy issue and the incident. The Clerk will report back to Councillors on both issues which will require a Council decision(s).

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.