

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

Date: Tuesday 11th April 2023

Time: 7pm

Members of the public are invited to
attend the meeting

COVID Guidance at the time applies.

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 John Coulson (Chair)

Cllr Alan Moffitt (Vice Chair)

Cllr Philip Addison

Cllr Ian Carter

Cllr Peter Monck

Clerk / Proper Officer - J.Johnson

Cllr Chris Neil

Cllr Pam Smailes

Cllr Barbara Wegg

Cllr Robert Wegg

Rate Payers Representative - Karen Shields

5 members of the public were in attendance (including a member of the press)

1.0 Notice of Meeting - to confirm public notice of the meeting has 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 - N/A

3.0 Apologies for Absence

3.1 Apologies were received from **Cllr Patrick Morton, Cllr Marjorie Simpson & Ward Cllr Andrew Sherris. Cllr Marjorie Simpson** has stepped down as a Councillor due to ill health.

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 personal and prejudicial interest in matters relating to St Mary Magdalene and the churchyard; Cllr Wegg declared a non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the allotments.

5.0 Confirmation of Minutes

To approve the minutes of the previous meetings:

5.1 **Weigh and Tolls Committee** held on Tuesday 14th March 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

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

5.2 **Yarm Town Council** held on Tuesday 14th March 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

PROPOSED: **Cllr Moffitt** SECONDED: **Cllr Carter** AGREED

5.3 **Leisure & Culture Committee** held on Thursday 30th March 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

PROPOSED: **Cllr Moffitt** SECONDED: **Cllr Carter** AGREED:

5.4 **Allotments Committee Meeting** held on Thursday 16th March 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting - carried forward to the next meeting to agree (failed to attach with rest of papers issued, so day late).

Cllr Monck wished to raise several points of order (as regards the minutes approved above). **The Chair** moved business as these minutes had already been voted to be approved. **Cllr Addison** requested that any points of process/queries be communicated with the Clerk as soon as possible / prior to the meeting wherever possible.

6.0 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Ordinary YTC meeting, 14th March 2023:

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

Cllr Morton - No new position - to remain on the agenda.

6.2 **River Walkways Partnership Project : Update**

Cllr Moffitt stated that there was no further update from the last meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to ask for timescale on hearing about Levelling Up Fund available for Yarm and re: whether some might be used to secure the riverbank at points 5,6,7 (refs. As per Environment Agency Document previously circulated)

6.3 **Civility and Respect: update on briefing from previous meeting**

The Clerk summarised the details / information re. unacceptable behaviour that had been read at the 14th March 23 YTC meeting and noted that a cllr had requested at that meeting that the information should be presented again at this meeting so that the 3 councillors who had not been present might also address the matter/join the pledge. Due to the pre-election (purdah) period, rather than read the information again the Clerk circulated a paper containing the information and the meeting was given time to read this. The Clerk emphasised that the matter was about behaviours that many individuals and YTC as a whole were experiencing and that YTC as a whole and as individuals had a responsibility to wipe this out. Two

Councillors who had not been present at the March meeting (**Cllrs Carter and Neil**) wished to support and agreed with the two statements presented: a) that the behaviours described by the Clerk (in the paper, previously read out 14.03.23), experienced within YTC (examples from Clerk, Cllrs & public), do constitute bullying, intimidation and undermining and b) that these behaviours described should not be happening, that all are responsible for wiping them out as they have no place within Yarm Town Council. **Cllr Smailes** wished to abstain from supporting the statements at this time and felt it was a matter for the new council. **Cllr Moffitt** stated that civility and respect should be a constant and not something that could be chosen 'not to do'. Several Councillors referenced the names of previous Clerks that had experienced bullying and intimidation.

AGREED: **Cllrs Carter and Neil** supported statements a) and b) above (adding to the list of Cllrs who'd supported these statements on 14.03.23: **Cllr Coulson, Cllr Moffitt, Cllr Morton, Cllr Addison, Cllr Monck, Cllr B Wegg, Cllr R Wegg**).

6.4 Update: Upcoming Election, Voting ID & Associated Matters

The Clerk gave a reminder briefing including guidance re purdah (the pre-election period) and informed Councillors that she would welcome any enquiries regarding this if Cllrs needed support.

Cllr Moffitt queried a letter (that had utilised YTC headed paper) that had named 4 particular Councillors in association with requesting prizes for an event and emphasised that this should have been done via the Clerk.

6.5 Benches Refurbishment & Requests for Benches

Cllr Carter briefed the meeting on the progress of this project (worst condition benches being targeted first)

6.6 Tree Survey: Category B Work - Update

The Clerk confirmed that the contract was complete (apart from one tree in the allotments which was awaiting the moving of materials so it could be reached).

6.7 Parking Spaces at Yarm Chapel

Cllr Moffitt reported that this was looking more complex than had originally been thought - quotes and suggested methods awaited.

6.8 Annual Assembly: Reminder - Reports and Speakers

The Clerk reminded the meeting that 7pm 1st June had been decided as the date for the Annual Parish Assembly at the last meeting and that she'd asked for suggestions for community representative / partner speakers e.g. including YTC Charity of the Year. **Cllr Monck** stated that this should be left to the new council and that the current council's choices shouldn't be foisted on them. The Clerk disagreed and reminded councillors of the nature of a Parish Assembly i.e. featuring reports from current councillors re. the year gone by as well as discussion with community organisations / partners and that the timeline required planning ahead (i.e. the next YTC meeting is 16th May and the assembly being 1st June).

6.9 Morley Carr Bowling Centre

This item is to be presented under the line, following resolution.

6.10 Heritage Mural: Update

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Cllr Moffitt referenced initial discussions that had been held regarding how this project might be achieved. Suggested designers and installers had emerged. Further specification, breakdowns and estimates will need to be sought.

(Other matters carried forward: Night Market idea - Research; St Mary Magdalene Tomb; Keeping Yarm Safe; Yarm High St Consultation; West St Traffic Issues; Police Parking Space - answer awaited from Stockton Borough Council, SBC).

7.0 Council Finances

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

Cllr Addison detailed that the first instalment (+VAT) for the Yarm Town Hall Heritage Centre (£48k + VAT) has been paid.

The breakdown of the By-Election bill (July 2022) that the Clerk had requested had been circulated. This totals £17,904. **Cllr Addison** asked the meeting if this could be paid.

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

There is a significant credit on the Allotments electricity statement (the Clerk had challenged previous estimated bills). **Cllr Monck** proposed that the accounts be approved.

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

7.2 Bank Reconciliations (DOCUMENT REFERS)

Cllr Addison / The Clerk asked that the meeting note the bank reconciliations.

7.3 Income and Expenditure Report (DOCUMENT REFERS)

Cllr Addison / The Clerk asked that the meeting note the Income and Expenditure Report.

7.4 Insurance Quotation

The Clerk summarised and reminded Councillors the position as regards insurance renewal (the nature of the market and the comprehensive range of companies that quotes had been sought from re. '22-'23 with a 3 yr period in mind, as previously). The provisional quote for this year is £4,012.47. It was proposed to accept this and continue with the current company.

PROPOSED: Cllr Moffitt **SECONDED:** Cllr Coulson **AGREED**

7.5 Transfers to and from Earmarked Reserves (DOCUMENT REFERS)

The Clerk presented the Reserves Transfer Report that she and Cllr Addison had prepared and asked that Councillors approve this.

PROPOSED: Cllr Coulson **SECONDED:** Cllr Moffitt **AGREED**

8.0 To Review and Consider the Correspondence List

Cllr Monck asked what stage the resident FOI request was at. **The Clerk** confirmed that it was within the required timescale.

Cllr Coulson referenced a letter received by YTC regarding the closure of Barclays Bank on Yarm High Street - the last remaining bank (this letter had been received after the current correspondence list had been circulated). The letter requested feedback. Discussion included the following points: whether or not there would still be a Barclays cashpoint (if not this would leave only 1 that had times of being 'out of order'; if there were to be a pop-up bank proposed instead, notably a previous example had only lasted 6 months; Barclays had identified that not enough people were using the services that warranted the presence of a branch; removal of the banking facility can often be equated with taking cash out of the local economy (e.g. because of the alternative ways money is then obtained/spent).

It was proposed that objection and concern regarding the closing of the branch should be expressed to Barclays in the strongest terms:

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

9.0 Policy and Resources:

9.1 Cemetery Report

Cllr Moffitt reported that parking spaces were being investigated (as per matters arising); quotations re. the stone wall along the approach road are being sought; inscription panels from the Town Hall roof are now in the Chapel if people would like to view them. The Cemetery is looking tidy.

9.2 Allotments Report (inc. update from Allotments Committee)

- a) **Cllr Coulson** reported that all was well with the allotments and that there remained a harmonious atmosphere, with the 'Bacon Butty Sundays' (run by YCAA) being increasingly popular with tenants. They've brought together both 'Top' allotments' and bottom allotments site. **Cllr BWegg** stated that the organisers should have a hygiene certificate for this (as on YTC property); **the Clerk** would look into this and speak with YCAA but this was not what was understood re. the guidance.
- b) Discussion took place surrounding the YTC 'walk around' of the allotments, including whether this would be the whole council or allotment committee; the shared management agreement with YCAA highlights inspections by YTC. **Cllr Coulson** commented on how allotment tenants had found this intimidating in the past and could be done by the Allotments committee, a smaller group. **Cllr Monck** stated that it was the right of the whole council to inspect the allotments. **The Clerk** briefed the meeting as to how the allotments were managed on a week to week inspection basis (as per the role of the Clerk re. the best practice criteria set out by NSA - National Allotment Society,Legal), with YCAA input and appropriate management letters were sent as required). **The Clerk** mentioned that there were currently 3 management letters in process as part of how this works. **Cllr Coulson** stated that this process was currently working, looking better managed and minimal issues. **The Clerk** gave an option as to how a 'walk around' inspection might take place i.e. the allotments committee and Clerk plus YCAA representative (Clerk & YCAA being informed about different plots - histories and issues - so that superficial, uninformed judgements are not made); this would match NSA best practice, terms of reference for other committees (e.g. there is no whole council inspection of Cemeteries, Benches, Fellowship Hall etc.) and be less threatening (there had been feedback to the Clerk about issues from the past that had caused dismay / intimidation amongst tenants). **Cllr R Wegg** mouthed that this was "rubbish". **Cllr Moffitt** identified that all councillors were able to attend other committees and that this should be the case as regards an allotment walk around. **Cllr Monck** proposed an annual inspection of the allotments involving the whole Council.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck **SECONDED:** Cllr RWegg **AGREED**
9.2.1 Skip Approval (up to the value of £1000 throughout '23-'24) - Cllr Coulson

PROPOSED: Cllr Moffitt **SECONDED:** Cllr R Wegg **AGREED**
9.2.2 Allotment Insurance: Requirement

Cllr Coulson proposed that if allotment tenants are not going to insure their allotments through the National Allotment Society then they should be required to take out insurance from another source and provide proof of this as part of tenancy agreement; the YTC Allotment Rules and Regulations should be amended accordingly (**Cllr Moffitt** concurred). **Cllr B Wegg and Cllr Monck** stated that tenants could not be required/told to take out insurance. **Cllr R Wegg** stated that what SBC did in this respect should be checked and that Preston’s self-management of allotments had failed. **The Clerk** advised that the national trend and practice was towards self-run sites. **Cllr Monck** stated that the matter of insurance could not be voted on during purdah (the **Clerk** stated she understood that this was simply an Allotments rules adjustment, not a major financial decision by the Council which would be restricted during purdah but if Cllrs chose they could raise the matter at another meeting instead of voting). **Cllr Coulson** proposed that allotment holders should be required to have insurance.

PROPOSED: Cllr Coulson **SECONDED:** Cllr Moffitt **NOT AGREED**
9.2.3 Allotment Hut Usage - Cllr Smailes

The Chair, **Cllr Coulson**, asked the Clerk to read a statement that had been sent to her prior to the meeting which he felt would inform the ensuing discussion. The Clerk read out the statement. It was clarified that the allotment hut in question is owned by YTC; that there is a minute recording that YCAA run the hut; that there may be confusion regarding this as, in the past, the Chair of Allotments YTC and Chair of YCAA had been one and the same person. **Cllr BWegg** asked if YCAA would be sending the same statement to other people who are not members of YCAA. **The Clerk** clarified that the statement had not referenced any names. **Cllr Smailes** advocated that the hut should be available to everyone and no one should be stopped from using it; it is understood that YCAA are not stopping anyone from using it, wish the hut to be available to everyone but that they ask £3 per year as part of a pledge to their values/code of conduct (as well as for insurance etc.)

ACTION: The meeting agreed that the current sign should be taken down to emphasise that all are welcome.

Cllr RWegg referenced an incident at the allotments. **The Chair** suggested that the matter should be put in writing to the Council and that **Cllr RWegg** should encourage this. **The Clerk** suggested that this may be a complaint and if so should be submitted.

Cllr Carter expressed concern about this discussion (over £3 essentially) that had taken significant time, in front of members of the public in the lead up to the elections. **Cllr Addison** raised a separate query regarding physical access at the allotments. A reply by **Cllr Monck** was objected to by several Councillors.

The Chair, Cllr Coulson, temporarily adjourned the meeting.

The Chair reconvened the meeting on the basis that all present would remain respectful in order to continue.

Cllr Carter raised concerns regarding 2 councillors' behaviour (1 'firing bullets' for another) throughout the meeting and asked for this behaviour to stop.

The Clerk asked Cllrs to focus on the motion in hand re usage of the allotment hut and in relation to the £3 that is currently charged or make a motion for this issue to be presented at the next meeting. **Cllr Coulson** proposed that the issue should be addressed by the new council at the next meeting.

PROPOSED: **Cllr Coulson** **SECONDED:** **Cllr Addison** **AGREED**

9.3 To Approve the Updated Code of Conduct (based on SBC model previously circulated)

The Clerk presented an updated version of the Code of Conduct (DOCUMENT REFERS). The new Code of Conduct was presented for approval.

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

9.4 Use of Social Media by the Council

Cllr Smiles had left the meeting so this item was carried forward to the next meeting.

A Cllr. referenced a query raised on behalf of residents who'd asked questions in relation to the knitting on the High St. & expressed dismay that this had then been presented on social media by another Cllr. (as it had been an internal query) and that it had been misrepresented as a complaint and part of 'electioneering'.

10.0 Planning & Environment:

10.1 Matters Arising: Planning Applications & Lists

Cllr Monck noted that there were no further items as regards planning applications. The application for 215 dwellings at Mount Leven Farm was still pending an appeal and had also been resubmitted with amendments. The appeal is 16th May and Cllrs wanting to attend should register with the planning officer (as per communication circulated).

The Clerk reported that a request has been received by metal detector users interested in historic finds requesting permission to search Snaith's Field (promising to return any finds to YTC). The meeting confirmed that they did not give permission for this.

PROPOSED: **Cllr Coulson** **SECONDED:** **Cllr Addison** **AGREED**

10.2 Latest Play Area Reports & Issues: Update and Repairs Arrangements

The Clerk confirmed that annual ROSPA reports and Play Area reports had been received and that the local repair person had been forwarded these to action any medium to high risk issues, as previously agreed (re. managing health and safety). The Clerk asked if this could continue re. Health and Safety concerns. A recent issue had been dealt with (costing £50).

AGREED.

Cllr Coulson reported gang bullying incidents at Willey Flatts field. **Cllr B Wegg** commented that this had happened before. Cllrs commented that it was thought that people from other areas were travelling into Yarm to join in with this behaviour.

Cllr Addison declared an interest (as school governor) and informed the meeting that a school tended to perceive its

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responsibility ending 'at the school gate'. **The Clerk** reminded the meeting how CCTV was achieved (i.e. via Stockton Borough Council - YTC does not have this power as not YTC land - making the case to the Surveillance Commissioner based on incident reports so residents should be encouraged to report all incidents).

11.0 Adjournment and Questions From the Public

Cllr Monck stated that he felt that moving this item to the end of the meeting should not have been done at the last meeting or here as standing orders should have been changed in order to do so. **Cllr Coulson** stated that he understood that as Chair he could choose to move the order of an item for expediency i.e. as YTC had been asked to do so by members of the public at a previous meeting. **The Clerk** stated she would check this.

It was proposed to extend the meeting beyond 9.30pm

PROPOSED: Cllr Coulson **SECONDED:** Cllr Moffitt **AGREED**

The Chair moved to adjourn the meeting for questions from the public.

Member of the public 1 - asked a question regarding whether the timeline of the Town Hall being extended by 6 weeks was an oncost. **Cllr Monck** confirmed this was being covered within the Levelling Up Fund. **The Clerk** offered to request details from SBC re. the build costs.

Member of the public 2 - asked if new play equipment is being bought and if so whether it is accessible for disabled children and suggested that it should be accessible for all children.

It was confirmed that the feedback to SBC regarding further Levelling Up Fund consultation had requested outdoor exercise equipment. YTC Councillors would confirm in the future the nature of spend on installing any new play equipment, noting the comments from the member of the public.

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 be promoting the requirement for the photo ID required for voting at the election on 4th May 2023.

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

14.0 To confirm the date and time of the next YTC meeting: 7pm, 16th May 2023

14.1 Staffing Committee Meeting

The Chair confirmed that a staff meeting was being held on 19th April. The format for all Councillors to feedback as regards the Clerk's work is: what is going well/achievements; what could be improved/yet to be done and how councillors and clerk might work better together, to support each other. All councillors are asked to forward feedback.

Cllr Coulson stated that it had been an honour and a privilege to serve as Chair for YTC, thanked fellow councillors and members of the public for supporting him and those that had not for making him a stronger person.

PROPOSAL TO EXCLUDE PRESS & PUBLIC: In accordance with the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960, it is proposed that press and the public shall be excluded for this item due to its confidential nature (in this instance, commercial sensitivity and financial probity). LGA Act 1972 schedule 12 paragraph 10(2)(e) **AGREED**

15.0 Confidential Items

15.1 Consideration of Hanging Baskets Quotations - 4 companies had been asked for quotations against the specification Councillors agreed a quote for the High St hanging baskets (£25 per basket, representing a £1 increase per basket on last year, totalling £1,700 for 68).

PROPOSED: Cllr Coulson **SECONDED:** Cllr Moffitt **AGREED**

6.9 Morley Carr Bowling Facility - quotations from different solicitors were presented re. finalising the handover and a quotation of £600 was agreed. **AGREED**

SIGNED (Chair):

.....DATE:.....

SIGNED (Clerk):.....DATE:.....

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.

CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL AFTER THE PURDAH PERIOD (I.E. POST ELECTION)

ITEM 6.3.2 - 6.3.5, YTC Ordinary Meeting - 7pm Tuesday 14th March 2023

Civility and Respect Agenda (YTC being a signatory to this pledge)

The Clerk read out the list of behaviours identified in one of the recent national C&RA training courses (10 example behaviours that make for a toxic, bullying & dysfunctional environment and the impact this has on individuals involved and the organisation as a whole): “condescending comments (& nasty asides), demeaning emails, disrupting meetings, reprimanding someone publicly, talking behind someone’s back, giving someone the silent treatment, not giving credit where credit is due, rolling eyes (and staring people out) and being yelled at. The Clerk suggested that all behaviours within this list were regular occurrences at YTC.

The Clerk then introduced a list of behaviours that she, Cllrs and members of the public had identified experiencing at YTC - the Clerk suggested that all members / employees

- a) experienced these behaviours and
- b) had a responsibility to ensure that they are wiped out

The list included deliberately nasty or undermining comments or actions that fall far short of the Civility and Respect Agenda, and the Nolan Principles (the bedrock of the Code of Conduct expected of those in public life) is as follows:

- constant criticism;
- small process matters or queries saved for/ brought to full council (public meeting) and made into a big issue;
- what seemed to be the blocking of the Clerk’s phone number by a Cllr. for an extended period (so the Clerk could not make contact);
- refusing to speak with the Clerk and insisting on emails only;
- being blanked / ignored when a certain Cllr. is greeted out and about (in front of people);
- being heckled by a Cllr in a public meeting whilst difficult parts of the Clerk’s job are carried out (e.g. announcing disqualification of another Cllr);
- shouted at that things are part of the Clerk’s job which aren’t (as confirmed by NALC) e.g. preventing a Cllr from becoming disqualified by non-attendance at meetings;
- friends of a Cllr. spot the Clerk in shop cues and then overloudly insult her appearance & intelligence (and on one occasion, involving a Cllr., stated/ threatened that the MP / Tees Valley Mayor would be contacted as ‘what was going on was not right’ - *NB this point was not read out at the meeting*);
- being ‘stared out and stared at’: reported experience by a number of allotment tenants / Clerk (National Association of Allotments count this as ‘intimidation’);

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- YTC has seen a cycle of frustration - repeated breaches in confidentiality resulting in frustration and an angry outburst involving a request to all to swear on the Bible (i.e. re no breaching confidentiality);
- sarcasm;
- goading - constantly picking at someone, negativity (over a period of time, to deliberately provoke some other behaviour that is unhelpful);
- a Cllr. deliberately (& within the Clerk's hearing) criticising the Clerk's actions and deliberately giving misinformation to a member of the public in order that they then harrang the Clerk (this occurred at The Proclamation of the Accession and at The Riding of the Fair);
- gossip (negative rumours - Cllrs about other Cllrs), turning gossip into a witch hunt including handing information about the matter to members of the public who do not want it;
- 2 Cllrs blanking and refusing to accept black armbands handed to them by the Chair, in public at the entrance to the Church at the start of the Proclamation Ceremony but then accepting them from another Cllr.;
- a Cllr(s) prompting a member of the public to make repeated FOI requests to the Clerk (as confirmed by the member of the public);
- for an extended period, a constant stream of emails accusing Cllrs & Clerk of wrongdoing and threatening legal action;
- putting in writing unsubstantiated/untrue accusations about the Clerk to a senior colleague at SBC;
- a member of the public, a guest at the Ridings of the Fair reception, (allegedly) overheard a conversation between 2 Cllrs. discussing how they dreaded a certain other Cllr. dying whilst in office as they might be expected to go to the funeral;
- on one occasion, Council voted on giving a resident a 'civic thank you' gift for help with events on Christmas Eve' - all were in favour until the name of the person was mentioned and then 2 withdrew support as they 'didn't like' this person;
- the Clerk has found a Cllr signed in/attempting to sign in to her personal google email account;
- week of 11th April 2022, 2 difficult/challenging events took place for YTC - on 16th & 17th the Clerk was followed home from the allotments in the evening and whilst not necessarily anything to do with YTC, the fact that the first thought was that it might be connected speaks volumes about the culture of intimidation that has developed;
- a councillor feeling that a false facebook account created in their name was done by another councillor.

Following 20+ examples of inappropriate behaviour/incidents, the Clerk then listed formally recognised effects on those experiencing bullying and impacting upon an organisation:

- loss of focus and effectiveness;
- ill-health and absenteeism;
- loss of confidence; overthinking and overchecking work;
- financial impact upon the organisation;
- loss of reputation for the organisation (difficult to recover).

In conclusion it was noted that:

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- a) At least 2 councillors had resigned formally attributing this to bullying and 4 people / current members of YTC had stated that they felt sick or ill prior to attending meetings or have had their health adversely affected over a period.
- b) Examples of statements by members of the public have included:(summary) *'if we're invited again (referring to the Fair Ridings Reception) we would struggle to find a representative to attend, given the treatment they received and the treatment they witnessed towards you'* (i.e. the Clerk); (in relation to a recent meeting attended) *"Since when do Councillors no longer feel they need to hide their utter contempt for each other"*.
- c) Whilst some individual actions / types of behaviour may not seem significant on their own, it is the constant 'drip feed' of all behaviours intended to intimidate, undermine or bully that creates a toxic environment for all in YTC.

Reference was made to the fact that 'Dignity' was obviously important to members, given the concern of several Councillors as regards what they thought to be an 'undignified' lay out of the last Ridings Reception top table, but that, given the behaviours mentioned in this agenda item, it would take a lot more work than a table layout to achieve Dignity for YTC. Whilst recognising that we're all human (and passions run high on certain issues), we all experience these negative/dysfunctional behaviours to our detriment and we are all responsible for ensuring these behaviours cease for our betterment.

CLlr Coulson asked for a show of hands for or against the following 2 statements:

- a) That the behaviours described by the Clerk, experienced within YTC, do constitute bullying, intimidation and undermining - **all present agreed;**
- b) That these behaviours described should not be happening, that all were responsible for wiping them out as they had no place within Yarm Town Council - **all present agreed.**

It was suggested that those not present should also be asked to join this pledge. Members of the public were thanked for their support in listening to and taking on board this item. It was suggested that collectively the Council should call out inappropriate behaviour collectively and reference was made to the social media policy (and recent incidents) and the Code of Conduct. The Clerk stated that these policies formed a suite of guides for behaviour along with a Dignity at Work document she was preparing (in line with YTC signing up to the Civility and Respect agenda) that would come to Council shortly (with input from several Councillors).

Statement read out by Clerk of the Council - Juliet Johnson.

ACCOUNTS FOR APPROVAL 11th APRIL 2023 MEETINGS

WEIGH & TOLLS COMMITTEE ACCOUNTS

MEMBERS APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS RECEIVED FOR PAYMENT

Payments by Direct Debit		£	£	
Creditor	Service	Sub Total	Total	Ref
Stockton-on-Tees BC	Market Toll Rates 1.4.23		£40.48	d/d
Virgin Media	Town Hall Wi-Fi 3.3.23		£38.40	d/d
Payments by BACS		£	£	
Wave	Town Hall Water rates for 2023-2024		£0.00	BACS

YARM TOWN COUNCIL ACCOUNTS

MEMBERS APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS RECEIVED FOR PAYMENT

Payments by Direct Debit		£	£	
Creditor	Service	Sub Total	Total	Ref

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

EE	Mobile & telephone 18.3.23	£30.04	d/d
Stockton-on-Tees BC	Willey Flatts Cleansing. 1.4.23	£0.00	d/d
Stockton-on-Tees BC	Cemetery refuse bin. 1.4.23	£73.84	d/d
Stockton-on-Tees BC	Cemetery rates. 1.4.23	£97.07	d/d
Google	Town Council e-mail	£55.20	d/d
Barclays	Bank charges 14/2 to 13/3	£8.50	d/d

Payments by Cheque		£	£
Creditor	Service	Sub Total	Total

Payments via BACS		£	£
Creditor	Service	Sub Total	Total

Town Clerk	Salary for March	£1,341.88	BACS
HMRC	Tax and NI for March	£882.42	BACS
Cornerstone	IT support	£95.26	BACS

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Cornerstone	Cloud hosting for March	£24.00	BACS
Elder Lester	Rent for Rees Mill for March	£400.00	BACS
E-on	Allotment hut electricity : charge for qtr ending February 2023 was £235.47, however the balance on the account was a credit of £930.35	£0.00	
Event Management	Fee for January, February and March	£3,960.00	BACS
Stockton on Tees BC	Part contribution to Town Hall works	£57,600.00	BACS
Wave	Water vgages for Town Hall 1/4/23 to 31/3/24	£1,542.85	defer
Cllr P Addison	Printer hire for March	£22.49	BACS
Income	£	£	Ref
	Sub Total	Total	
SBC	Precept and rate support	£0.00	BACS
Public Sector Deposit Fund	Interest February	£245.85	d/c
Funeral Services	Cemetery fee	£850.00	121

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Stockton-on-Tees BC Direct Debits for 2022/2023

Direct Debits	Est/Month	Annual	
Market Toll rates			d/d
Cemetery rates			d/d
Town Hall rates	0	£0.00	d/d