

An EGM of Yarm Town Council was held at
The Fellowship Hall (side entrance)
West Street, Yarm TS15 9BT.
Date: Tuesday 2nd August 2022
Time: 7pm
COVID Guidance at the time applied.
Juliet Johnson, Proper Officer to YTC



Yarm Town Council
Town Hall
High Street
Yarm
TS15 9AH

Tuesday 2nd August 2022

Yarm Town Council

EGM MINUTES

PRESENT:

Cllr John Coulson (Chair)

Cllr Patrick Morton

Cllr Alan Moffitt (Vice Chair)

Cllr Chirs Neil

Cllr Philip Addison

Cllr Marjorie Simpson

Cllr Ian Carter

Cllr Pam Smailes

Cllr Peter Monck

Cllr Barbara Wegg

Clerk/Proper Officer - Juliet Johnson

Cllr Bob Wegg

- 1. To appoint a Chairman in the absence of the Chair and/or Vice Chair - N/A**
- 2. Apologies for absence - Chair**
 - 2.1 Apologies were received from Ward Cllrs Andrew Sherris & Dan Fagan
- 3. Code of Conduct | Declarations of Interest | Dispensation: - Chair**
 - a) To record declarations of interest from members of any item to be discussed
 - 3.1 Cllr Bob Wegg declared a non-pecuniary interest as regards all items relating to Allotments**
 - 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

3.2 None requested.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

4.1 To accept the minutes of the YTC Annual Parish Assembly (240522)

- Chair

PROPOSED: Cllr Addison

SECONDED: Cllr Neil

AGREED

5. Allotments Items:

5.1 At the start of this item, **Cllr Monck** stated that items under 5. could not be considered as The Clerk had made an amendment to agenda item 5. (see italics below) which meant it was not received until Friday (29.07.22) which did not therefore give 3 clear days as per the original unamended agenda (issued 28.07.22) - this should therefore be the one used. **The Clerk** stated that **Cllr Monck** had suggested the amendment (on 29.07.22) and she had therefore agreed to add what she regards as a point of clarification (not a new addition, motion or proposal), having checked with **Cllr Monck** that he would not then suggest that the Agenda was late if she did this.

5.2 **Cllr Addison** proposed that the meeting should proceed with the Agenda item that contained the point of clarification.

PROPOSED: Cllr Addison

SECONDED: Cllr Carter

RESOLVED

a) To note and confirm the role Yarm Community Allotments Association (YCAA) plays in the management of Yarm Allotments (DOCUMENT REFERS);

- Cllr Coulson

PROPOSED: Cllr Addison

SECONDED: Cllr Moffitt

RESOLVED

The following items are in the context that the Clerk has received a signed proposal, from 4 YTC councillors - Cllrs Coulson, Neil, Addison & Moffitt - ref. Standing Order 7.a) - as stated at b) below and also stating: "we the undersigned propose that the Town Council Allotment Committee should comprise 4 Town Councillors (as per other committees) with the addition of a member of YCAA and that member to have voting rights"

In short, the proposals are:

b) To reverse the decision of the Annual Meeting of 10.05.22 (minute ref. 7.0 a)) re. having 4 councillors as the membership of the Allotments Committee for the singular and specific purpose to include a representative of YCAA (i.e. 5 members);

- Cllr Coulson

5.3 Cllr Addison proposed the reversal of the decision as described at b) above.

PROPOSED: Cllr Addison

SECONDED: Cllr Moffitt

RESOLVED

c) if b) above is agreed, to grant the representative of YCAA on the YTC Allotments Committee - named (Patrick Pearce) - voting rights on YTC Allotments Committee

- Cllr Coulson

7.1.2 This agenda item has been raised in response to concerns raised with the Clerk about items appearing as personal social media posts - historically (i.e. 2-3 yrs ago) and more recently (i.e. April). The additional / related issue is how YTC members communicate with each other and the impact of spreading hearsay.

7.1.3 During this meeting the issues should be discussed openly and constructively with example /illustrations if necessary. The Clerk warned Cllrs not to make allegations/suggestions that may (legally) compromise themselves and YTC.

7.1.4 The Clerk suggested that Cllrs/ YTC needed to think carefully about the nature of social media e.g.

- a) 'if you post an item, it's out there' - it can then be out there indefinitely potentially and can be endlessly copied and saved, even if taken down, account deleted etc. etc.
- b) whilst posts can be considered historic, because of a) above, they can come back time and time again (example of MP recently in the media over posts made at the age of 18)
- c) 'if you post it on social media it is never private' - regardless of settings, whatever 'friends' you approve or block; essentially you have no control over what is done with what you post - even your closest friends are not responsible for / will not think through the issues we (being in public service) need to consider in making/sharing/copying social media posts.

7.1.5 As regards the Code of Conduct, the Clerk reminded Cllrs of the Nolan Principles (guiding public life) applying to the issues in this agenda & to how members of YTC should act in seeking to address such issues of concern. Even if an action is not held up as a Code of Conduct Complaint (once a complaint has been made) that does not mean it is necessarily an 'OK' action for a Councillor / public servant to make - the Nolan Principles are the 'map and compass' to guide and inform the actions of those in public life. The Clerk also gave examples of where even some actions in the private lives of public figures can have immense and unfortunate impact upon the public role of the person concerned, colleagues and organisation (the examples included reference to the Equalities Act of 2010) - the reputation of YTC being key.

7.2.1 **Cllr Monck** addressed the meeting regarding concerns about social media posts that had been drawn to his attention. He read a statement reiterating the Nolan Principles, commenting that posting derogatory material on facebook is unacceptable, that Cllrs have responsibilities not to behave in this way and that discretion should be displayed in all forms of communication. **Cllr Monck** quoted from the Code of Conduct and added that freedom of expression is protected but that Cllrs should not post material that could be interpreted as derogatory/offensive even if done in a personal / private capacity. **Cllr Monck** felt that social media comments posted, however long ago, brought YTC into disrepute and could not therefore be disregarded.

7.2.2 **Cllr Coulson** gave a statement regarding his own posts on social media and emphasised that these were historical and from 3 years ago, prior to joining YTC & becoming a Cllr and Chair - as a Cllr and Chair he would certainly not intend any offence or make derogatory remarks about any group or individual. **Cllr Coulson** read a message he'd sent to **Cllr Monck** on becoming Chair, complementing Cllr Monck's experience and proposing positive cooperation for the good of YTC. **Cllr Coulson** apologised if certain colleagues had been affected and time taken up

by this whole issue, stating that he'd made posts in his personal life that were not council related and reiterated that these posts were prior to him becoming a councillor.

7.2.3 Cllr Monck proposed a motion of no confidence in the Chair and a recorded vote was requested. The vote of no confidence in the Chair took place:

PROPOSED:	Cllr Monck	SECONDED:	Cllr Bob Wegg
FOR:	Cllrs Monck, Bob Wegg, Barbara Wegg & Smailes	AGAINST:	Cllrs Neil and Simson
ABSTENTIONS:	Cllrs Carter, Moffitt, Morton, Addison & Cllr Coulson (having declared in interest)		

7.2.4 Cllr Morton suggested that the second part of the discussion still needed to be addressed (7b. communications in general - e.g. online & in person) i.e. including how YTC *should* be using social media. It was suggested that this item be carried forward to a future meeting.

8. Date of next meeting & close of meeting.

- Chair

The date of the next YTC meeting is 13th September 2022. The meeting closed at 20.20.

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.

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