

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

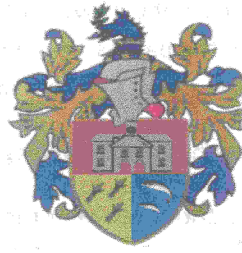
Date: Tuesday 13th September 2022

Time: 7pm

Members of the public were 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 Patrick Morton

Cllr Alan Moffit (Vice Chair)

Cllr Pam Smailes

Cllr Philip Addison

Cllr Barbara Wegg

Cllr Ian Carter

Cllr Bob Wegg

Cllr Peter Monck

Town Clerk / Proper Officer - Juliet Johnson

4 members of the public were present

0.0 A vote of thanks was proposed for the Clerk for her work on actioning necessary arrangements for ceremonies and Book of Condolence etc. on the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

PROPOSED:

Cllr Addison

SECONDED:

Cllr Coulson

AGREED

1.0 Notice of Meeting

1.1 Public notice of the meeting has been given in accordance with schedule 12, paragraph 10 (2) of the LGA 1972.

1.2 The Clerk drew attention to 9.2 - Allotments Report - and asked the meeting to

- a) check that Cllrs had the correct agenda - a specific allotments item at 9.2.1 had been clarified in re-issuing the agenda (all confirmed they had this);

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asked as to what alternative equipment could be purchased. Cllr Monck suggested the replacement of the 'rocket' equipment structure at Snaith's. Cllr Coulson recommended re-consulting ward Cllrs.

AGREED ACTION: Ward Cllrs to be consulted as to what the ward funding could be used for and where.

6.5 River Walkways Partnership Project : Update

Cllr Moffitt informed the meeting that the Environment Agency are currently finalising their site inspection surveys for the several new flood gates (the whole installation now delayed until Spring 2023). Cllr Carter commented that SBC have transferred the work to correct bumps in the river pathway (caused by tree roots) which affects accessibility until October (this is due to staff shortages/losing staff to the private sector). Cllr Coulson congratulated Cllr Carter on the work he has led at True Lovers Walk. Cllr Carter referenced future ambition for the walkways to carry information about the history of the river.

6.6 Flag Flying & Policy : update Clerk/Cllrs Coulson & Moffitt - meeting still to be arranged.

6.7 Offer of a Memorial Bench for Cllr Alan Gallafant (from the family)

Cllr Moffitt - the Wellness Centre area had been agreed for the site. Further advice from the family is awaited. Cllr Barbara Wegg asked if planning permission would be needed - the Clerk replied that it might depend upon the site identified.

6.8 Ward Councillor Request: relocate bench used for ASB (Sheepcote Hill, Lower Willey Flatts)

Cllr Coulson has met with Ward Cllr Sherris and it has been agreed to leave this issue for now due to removal difficulties.

6.9 Proposal for Memorial Bench for Vincenzo Serino

Cllrs Moffitt & Carter briefed the meeting that this is going ahead and that the request is confirmed as a bench in the same design as those on True Lovers Walk and also for it to be located in the river walkway area.

6.10 Allotment Development Fund

Cllr Addison reported on a request by Cllr Smailes as regards the agreed purpose and use of the Allotment Development Fund. No reference to the fund being ring-fenced for the purchase of land can be found. Cllr Addison has circulated a document detailing spend (NB the Allotment Development Fund existed prior to the receipt of money for land leased to the Doctor's Surgery). At the time of the receipt of the land lease money the then Chairman had wanted a significant proportion of this to be spent on other things, Cllr Bob Wegg had advocated the money be spent on toilets and general upgrading specific to allotments and a letter from Yarm Gardening Association had referenced the Allotment Act in that the funds obtained from leasing the land had to be spent on allotments only. The last reference in the minutes (Nov 2011) leaves the issue unresolved. It appears the fund is for general upgrading of the allotments (past and present practice).

6.11 Pack up & Clearing of the Town Hall & Artefacts

The Clerk reported that further work had taken place to pack artefacts (including labelling, valuing, ensuring pest free etc.). Industrial style Council chairs still to be disposed of (auction house); table to be dismantled for storage and disposal of remaining items underway.

7.0 Council Finances

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ACTION: Clerk to contact SBC to see if drainage in this specific location can be addressed.

8.1.4 A third member of the public (C) offered to help the Clerk dismantle the old Council table currently still in the Town Hall and needs to be moved. The offer was gratefully received.

9.0 Policy and Resources:

9.1 Cemetery Report

9.1.1 Cllr Moffit gave an update. The St Mary Magdalene Tomb Survey is underway and the recommendations for repair will become available. The Cemetery has also been tidied in terms of groundcare. Cllr Barbara Wegg suggested that tubs that were located near a bench should be moved so as not to cramp the sitting area. She also asked why graves faced in different directions - the suggestion is that this is simply historic.

ACTION: Clerk to speak with grounds care re. tubs.

9.2 Allotments Report

Cllr Coulson reported that a large shed had been removed and ground filled / corrected and the allotment was now let. There is currently 1 plot vacant at Brickyard. A number of transfers have recently taken place. Cllrs Wegg noted that the wall between Brickyard Allotments and the Cemetery driveway was overgrown with ivy (+ overhanging trees along the Spital) and that in the past the Community Allotments Association (YCAA) had dealt with this. It was noted that the issue of voting rights for YCAA on YTC Allotments committee might be brought back to a future meeting following further research.

9.2.1 To consider, propose and agree the rate of annual Allotment Rent for Oct. '23 - Sept.'24

The Clerk gave the background as to why the rise agreed at the October 2021 meeting could not be applied in October 2022 (in short, it had not been put on the agenda in time to give proper notice to tenants). Cllr Bob Wegg queried the year for application of the rent rise. It was proposed that a rent of £35 per plot should be agreed to be applied for the allotment rent year October 2023 - September 2024. Allotment rent of £35 per plot for October 2023 - September 2024 was proposed.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monck **SECONDED:** Cllr Coulson **RESOLVED**

Cllr Bob Wegg stated that he'd declared a non-pecuniary interest but queried as to whether a rent rise was needed. Cllr Addison commented that the allotments are currently subsidised by approximately £3,000. Cllr Coulson gave comparator rents (e.g. £78 in Middlesbrough, £185 in Darlington) and that the Council had to ensure income towards all the work that had taken place at the allotment and that would be required in the future.

9.3 To pass a resolution to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge

Cllr Coulson introduced this agenda item - a national campaign addressing bullying, harassment and dysfunctional behaviour in the local council sector - an initiative led by SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) and NALC (National Association of Local Councils). A pledge, containing key commitments, had been issued by the campaign (circulated to all Cllrs) with the suggestion that local councils should sign up to this. The campaign also included training for all. Cllrs Moffit & Coulson recommended that all members of YTC should attend some element(s) of the training offered. It was proposed to sign the pledge.

PROPOSED: Cllr Monk **SECONDED:** Cllr Coulson **RESOLVED**

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Cllr Moffitt proposed that if Cllrs signed the pledge the Council should agree that all YTC should attend Civility & Respect training.

PROPOSED: Cllr Moffitt

SECONDED: Cllr Coulson

RESOLVED

9.4 Confidentiality in YTC

9.4.1 Cllr Moffitt raised the issue of the lack of confidentiality as regards an issue that was necessarily discussed 'under the line' (without public and press present) at the EGM 2nd August 2022. Cllr Moffitt produced a bible and stated that he would like, in theory, all present to swear on this that they had not shared confidential information from this EGM and whether one or more persons would, therefore, then actually purger themselves - Cllr Smailes answered that she felt that this was directed at her and she would be happy to. Cllr Moffitt felt disclosure of such confidential information was disgraceful and the person(s) responsible were not fit to be a Cllr. All members (apart from Cllr Barbara Wegg) swore on the Bible. Cllr Coulson supported Cllr Moffitt's view of this.

9.4.2 The Clerk stated that taking confidentiality seriously was part of the Civility and Respect agenda (towards colleagues and to the Council, the body we are all signed up to as public servants). If these issues are not taken seriously, negative impact for clerking and the organisation as a whole is the (deserved) result. Cllr Addison pointed out that when one is elected as a Cllr confidentiality is an important required duty and responsibility.

9.5 Consideration of correct use of social media for YTC

Cllr Morton asked the Clerk to summarise the current position and perhaps be given 10 minutes to go through social media good practice at the next meeting. The Clerk confirmed that currently any post (on public groups) that references the status of councillor(s) and delivering YTC agreed / linked tasks (including those led by individual councillors) should be posted through the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair) - this then bears the official YTC crest. The Clerk requested that a Councillor(s) - potentially those who had abstained from the pertaining vote at the August EGM - should review the current existing Social Media policy with her.

ACTION: Clerk to circulate the current Social Media Policy; Cllr Morton and The Clerk to review guidance on this for a future agenda.

9.6 a) Proposal to renovate Yarm High St. Benches

9.6.1 Cllr Carter presented a proposal in which he negotiated sponsorship from a local business for a one off renovation of all the benches on Yarm High St (this includes Yarm and SBC owned benches). Cllr Carter, The Clerk and an SBC Officer have conducted a survey of all High Street / wharf benches as to condition and ownership. Some were found to be unadopted and not listed (on current SBC plan of 'all' benches).

It was proposed to accept the generous offer from the local business to fund and renovate High Street benches (subject to a) approval received from SBC for this to happen as regards the benches they own and for the specific plan of work for their renovation to be forwarded to and approved by SBC; b) for up to £300 of the YTC's current budget allocation for bench maintenance (£3k) to be spent on items of equipment (e.g. paint kettles and sander) to support the delivery of the sponsorship offer.

PROPOSED: Cllr Carter

SECONDED: Cllr Coulson

RESOLVED

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