

Notes of the March 2023 YTC Ordinary Meeting held at

**The Fellowship Hall (side entrance)**

**West Street, Yarm TS15 9BT.**

**Date: Tuesday 14th March 2023**

**Time: 7pm**

Members of the public were invited to  
attend the meeting

COVID Guidance at the time applied.

**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 Peter Monck**

**Cllr Patrick Morton**

**Cllr Barbara Wegg**

**Cllr Robert Wegg**

**Clerk/Proper Officer - Juliet Johnson**

**4 members of the public were present.**

**1.0 Notice of Meeting** - it was confirmed that public notice of the meeting had 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** - apologies were received from **Cllr Carter** and **Ward Cllr Sherris** (verbal apologies were given at the meeting for Cllr Smailes and Cllr Neil).

#### **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 R Wegg declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 10.2.1. Cllr Monck declared a personal and prejudicial interest as regards matters relating to Yarm Parish Church / Churchyard (St Mary Magdalene).

#### **5.0 Confirmation of Minutes**

**To approve the minutes of the previous meetings:**

**5.1 Weigh and Tolls Committee** held on Tuesday 14th February 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting. **PROPOSED: Cllr Addison** **SECONDED: Cllr Monck** **AGREED**

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

**PROPOSED:** Cllr Addison                      **SECONDED:** Cllr Monck                      **AGREED**

5.3 **Leisure & Culture Committee** held on Thursday 28th February 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.                      **PROPOSED:** Cllr Monck                      **SECONDED:** Cllr Addison                      **AGREED**

5.4 **E.G.M - YTC** held on Friday 3rd March 2023 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting.

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

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

**6.1 Litter Bins and Trade Waste Bins : Current Position**                      **The Clerk** stated that it had been confirmed that SBC Environmental Health & Enforcement are regularly monitoring bins but that they cannot be relocated into backyards. Several Cllrs were unhappy with this.                      **ACTION:** **the clerk is to enquire why this is the case**

**6.2 River Walkways Partnership Project : Update**                      The meeting was reminded of previous communications with the Environment Agency (EA) as regards a long term solution for securing priority parts of the river banks (EA plan ref. Areas 5,6 and 7) followed by request to the SBC High St levelling Up Fund consultation team that this erosion project be prioritised. Communications are also underway with Groundworks to open up the Worsall Rd section of the river path (inc. how to resource, refurbish and make safe this area).

**6.3 Civility and Respect: national agenda - behaviour; update from training; Dignity at Work & Code of Conduct policies**

6.3.1 An update was given by a Cllr and the Clerk on a recent training day which had included presentations regarding: dealing with conflict, managing stress and anxiety, supporting LGBT+ work and working with Traveller, Romany and Gypsy communities.

6.3.2 The Clerk presented an item on behaviours as regards the Civility & Respect Agenda (C&RA). 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) - a separate DOCUMENT REFERS & contains this list.

6.3.3 The Clerk then introduced a list of behaviours that she, Cllrs and members of the public had identified experiencing at YTC (DOCUMENT REFERS) - 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), including actions that causes the Council to be dysfunctional, create a cycle of negativity and/or a toxic working environment for all (e.g. Councillors & Clerk).

6.3.4 Following the 20+ examples of inappropriate behaviour/incidents, the Clerk then listed formally recognised effects on those experiencing bullying and impact upon an organisation (DOCUMENT REFERS). Examples of several statements by members of the public that illustrated inappropriate behaviour within YTC were read out (DOCUMENT REFERS). It was stated that 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 create a toxic environment and a cycle of negative

behaviour. Reference was made to the fact that 'dignity' was obviously important to members, given the concern expressed as regards what several thought to be an 'undignified' lay out of the last Ridings Reception top table, but that, given the specific examples of behaviours mentioned in this agenda item, it may take more work than a table layout to achieve dignity. 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.

6.3.5 The Chair 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 and intimidation - **all present agreed;**
- b) That these behaviours described should not be happening, that all at YTC are individually and collectively responsible for wiping out these behaviours that are bullying, intimidation and undermining as they have no place within Yarm Town Council - **all present agreed.**

6.3.6 It was suggested that those not present must also be asked to join this pledge. Members of the public were thanked for their support in listening / taking on board this item. It was suggested that YTC should call out inappropriate behaviour collectively. Reference was made to work between a Councillor and the Clerk regarding the Social Media Policy (including giving a toolkit and strategy for how Councillors could think through how to respond to certain situations). The Clerk clarified the Social Media Policy and Code of Conduct form a suite of behavioural guidance along with a Dignity at Work document also being prepared - an open invitation was extended to others who wished to contribute.

**6.4 High St Benches Refurbishment** - carried forward to the next meeting.

**6.5 Tree Survey: category B work - Update** - this would all be concluded by 20.03.23.

**6.6 Parking Spaces at Yarm Chapel** - the proposed car park spaces are cleared and marked. The Clerk asked councillors to forward any further contacts they would like to add to a contractors list as quotes were being sought.

**6.7 Provision of High St parking space designated for Police Vehicle** - the Clerk confirmed that SBC had stated a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) would be needed if this is to be pursued. Further info to be sought for next meeting.

**6.8 Issues relating to West St Car Park Entrance & Traffic on West Street** - Suggestion of the mirror to aid vision when turning out of Westgate was refused (re causing more serious vision issues). Full completion of the car park is still awaited for SBC to conclude an audit of issues arising e.g. cars hitting the new paved areas at the entrance (it has been suggested bollards must go here re. visibility of the curbs and to illegal parking which causes pavement access issues for those in wheelchairs/mobility vehicles). The current entrance sign had clearly been damaged by a vehicle parking/ reversing on these entrance curbs. It was suggested that the fences in the car park (sectioning off the wall to be completed) could be adjusted to allow for at least 1 further parking space until completion (the car park being full daily). An update was given as regards a proposed mural for the car park wall (with a suggested contribution from the ward budget). A recent speed watch group for West St. had to be cancelled due to illness; this is to be reconvened for a rush hour time slot. Request had been received from a Ward Councillor that volunteers might also help with other speed watch 'hot spots'.

**6.9 Grass Cutting Contract: Update** - The Clerk confirmed that a contract (as per decision previous) is now in place with Hodgson's Gardening Services.



as regards publicising the opportunity to become a Councillor and what was involved - the Clerk will be making a poster / social media posts regarding this. The Clerk has circulated the candidate pack and has this available.

**10.4 Annual Parish Assembly: Date & Format** - the Clerk confirmed the period in which this needed to be held; it was proposed that this be held on 1st June 2023 at 7pm. It was suggested that key community partners be invited to speak.

**PROPOSED: Cllr Monck                      SECONDED: Cllr Addison                      AGREED**

**10.5 Use of Social Media by the Council - carried forward.**

**10.6 Yarm High St Consultation Summary (Stockton Borough Council)** - The meeting confirmed appreciation for the approach/work conducted by SBC (including creation of small green areas in amongst cobbles). It was recognised that when the Levelling Up Fund work begins on the High St it will be directly outside businesses. SBC will be communicating what's entailed to ensure awareness and timescale (including communication through the Business Forum). YTC's input had included a requirement for outdoor exercise equipment on Snaith's Field as well as the priority of shoring up the river bank in key locations (as at item 6.2) which, it is understood, had also been raised by residents as a priority in the consultation. Clarification was given (from a Ward Cllr.) as to Levelling Up Funding investment in Yarm being as required.

**10.7 Motion to move the public session to the end of the YTC Ordinary meeting** - It was proposed that this item be moved to follow the Planning and Environment agenda item at each YTC Ordinary meeting.

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

**11.0 Planning & Environment:**

**11.1 Matters Arising: Planning Applications & Lists**

**11.1.1** The meeting was briefed as to both a) an appeal to an application being tuned down and b) a resubmission of the plan with revisions - both as regards the 215 dwellings at Mount Leven Farm (app. no. 21/2925/FUL). A date is awaited for the hearing of the appeal.

**11.1.2** Discussion was held as regards Aislaby Rd and Playing Fields for Yarm School. It is understood that the current application is to remove restrictions so that others (organisations) can use the playing fields. **ACTION: the lead councillor for planning will research this and report back.**

**11.1.3** The Clerk confirmed that SBC had been contacted regarding the contractors attending to the Spital Roundabout planting and tidying (re. not wearing hi-vis and parking on the roundabout with no hazards). An apology has been forwarded and the contractors had immediately corrected their practice. However, the 'cage van' is permitted to park on the roundabout as it is a work vehicle & provides safe removal of debris/cuttings and to deliver plants and other necessary materials. The roundabout is being planted with silver and gold foliage. Ward Cllrs. to be thanked in writing.

**11.1.4** The SBC team leading on the High St Consultation (use of Levelling Up Fund) have been contacted as regards the signage (i.e. both north and south approaches to the High St to bear signage showing clear location of long stay car parks). Further requests had also been received regarding any new signage to include the Churches, heritage and also the Wellness Centre (recognising that signage is to be rationalised and improved in terms of different purposes).

**11.2 Latest Play Area Reports & Issues: Update and Repairs Arrangements** - The Clerk briefed the meeting as to the removal of the basket swing at Snaith's Field, which has been vandalised, by the recently identified local repair person (as

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was medium/high risk damage) and is obtaining a quote for a new one. The meeting was briefed as to the offer of renewal for the SBC annual contract for inspecting play equipment (which, as part of the SLA, this includes immediate closure of play equipment if evidently unsafe i.e. removal, closure or fencing off of an affected area) as well as annual ROSPA reports. It was proposed to renew this contract, annual cost being circa £1300.

**PROPOSED:** Cllr Addison

**SECONDED:** Cllr Coulson

**AGREED.**

**9.0 Adjournment and Questions From the Public** - A member of the public raised issues regarding potholes in roads and specifically, with reference to Worsall Rd. & the lack of bins including for dog walkers (Morley Carr). **ACTION: to be raised with Ward Councillors.** A second member of the public suggested that YTC could 'grow their own' hanging baskets for the High St. and involve the Wellness Centre. Whilst the meeting welcomed the idea, discussion concluded that this would be a very labour intensive task and establishing the infrastructure to do this could end up costing more than purchasing the baskets. A member of the public asked if the Levelling Up Fund High St consultation report was available to the public (**ACTION: Clerk to enquire if a report is available to the public or when it will be**). A member of the public reinforced YTC's awareness as regards awareness of the urgency of riverbank erosion issue; discussion around this issue referenced speed boats accompanying rowers not observing the speed limit; it was agreed that if the member of the public had observed particular organisations breaking the river speed limit, they should contact the organisation directly to raise the issue - YTC supported this. A member of the public asked if temporary hoardings would be brought in to protect the newly refurbished Heritage Centre during the Fair; it was confirmed that the glazed arches would be extensively reinforced and that YTC will be liaising with the Fair as to the new area available. Another member of the public enquired as to a speed survey that he understood had been undertaken by SBC around 10th December 2022 (as regards Worsall Rd and other areas). **ACTION: Clerk to contact SBC as regards speed surveys in Yarm in 2022 and the results; member of the public to make contact with the Clerk so a reply can be sent** (email address given to members of the public in attendance).

**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 making a series of posts as regards: a) Photo ID required to vote; b) publicising the opportunity and process to become a Councillor and stand in the upcoming election.

**13.0 To receive items for information and consideration for the next agenda** - Year End Transfer of Funds & Reserves.

**14.0 To confirm the date and time of the next YTC meeting: 7pm, 11th April 2023. The meeting closed at 9.05pm.**