

Minutes of the March 2024 meeting of Yarm Town Council  
held at  
**The Fellowship Hall**  
**West Street, Yarm TS15 9BT**  
**Date: Tuesday 12th March 2024**  
**Time: 7pm**  
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

### (incorporating Weigh & Tolls)

**PRESENT:** Cllr Peter Monck (Chair); Cllr Pam Smailes (Vice Chair); Cllr Philip Addison; Cllr Steve Atkinson;  
Cllr Marje Blair; Cllr John Coulson; Cllr Joyce Hardy; Cllr Brian Newcombe; Cllr Yvonne Pybus;  
Cllr Barbara Wegg; Cllr Robert Wegg; Town Clerk / Proper Officer /RFO; Rate Payers Representative- Karen Shields; 1 member of the public.

**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 - N/A**

**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 Cllrs R&B Wegg** declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 10.3; **Cllr Monck** declared a non-pecuniary interest in all matters relating to St Mary Magdalene Church and the Churchyard and also in relation to a grave deed held for Yarm cemetery.

**5.0 Confirmation of Minutes - To approve the minutes of the previous meetings:**

**5.1 Yarm Town Council (incorporating Weigh & Tolls)** held on Tuesday 13th February 2024 and approve their signature by the Chair of the meeting. Cllr Coulson requested an amendment to item 10.6 which was accepted.

**PROPOSED: Cllr Newcombe                      SECONDED: Cllr Addison                      AGREED**

**6.0 Clerk's Report: Matters for Information - DOCUMENT REFERS** The meeting noted the report and confirmed several matters: presentation of 4 signatures as regards item 10.1.3 have been received by the Clerk; Cllr R Wegg attended the pest control course - feedback awaited; the annual security and panic alarms contract for YTHHC was agreed to be paid (£272 per annum). The quotation for work at the Spital is to be dealt with under the Allotments item.

## 7.0 Council Finances

**Cllr Monck** informed the meeting that this meeting's papers had been released in the public domain prior to this meeting and opportunity for Cllrs to view, discuss and make decisions; this included releasing personal information as relates to the Clerk; an FOI request had been received in relation to this. **Cllr Smailes** stated that this release of information was due to her giving a memory stick containing the papers to a friend to print and that the matters in question relate to public money.

### 7.1 To authorise payment of the accounts - Accounts Payable (DOCUMENT REFERS)

(includes Weigh & Tolls) - **Cllr Addison** presented the payments list, highlighting key items and added an item received since meeting papers circulated: £85 for play equipment repairs at Willey Flatts. **Cllr Smailes** challenged items being added and stated that this was because 2 people do the accounts. **The Clerk** clarified that there is due to a proper requirement for separation of duties in handling the finance (ref. Initial action plan she'd put in place with auditor on arrival in 2020); small items can be paid if budgeted for on approval of the Chair and this item related to managing risk at play areas (YTC had also previously given the Clerk/Chair dispensation to action medium to high risk play repair issues immediately). Cllr Smailes stated that items were repeated on the list one month to the next; the Clerk explained that the showed 3 sets of information - payments to be paid, payments that have been paid (previous month) and regular payments/commitments (such as direct debits) for the month in question (**Clerk Note: format as discussed by Council previously**). The payments list was proposed including additions.

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

**7.2 Bank Reconciliation (DOCUMENT REFERS)** - the bank reconciliations were noted by the meeting. The Clerk re-briefed the meeting as regards the transfer of money from a dormant savings account (as per councillor signatures received) to the Public Sector Deposit Fund (the background to which was explained, including the rate of return).

**7.3 Income and Expenditure Report (DOCUMENT REFERS)** - the Clerk drew attention to the payment from reserves for the Yarm Town Hall build project which had been paid through the Town Hall Development code (causing it to appear overspent when not; spend against the £20k budget is circa £17k).

**8.0 To Review and Consider the Correspondence List (DOCUMENT REFERS)** - **The Clerk** confirmed that FOI requests are included in the Correspondence List.

**9.0 Adjournment and Questions From the Public** - the meeting was adjourned for questions from the public. A member of the public (**MP1**) asked **Cllr Smailes** to whom the memory stick (containing council papers and personal information) had been given. **MP1** asked why (if the reason for sharing the memory stick was for printing) the Clerk or a Councillor colleague could not have been asked by Cllr Smailes for printed copies. Cllr Smailes apologised and stated that, however, the matter related to public money.

## 10.0 Policy and Resources:

### 10.1 Weigh and Tolls Matters

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

**10.1.1 Events Update - Cllr Smailes** stated that a working group had met and had discussed how the gala would be replaced by grants to schools to support their galas instead (saving on infrastructure and event management costs). Contact had been made with Yarm Primary School. Activity workshops could also be organised also reducing the need for event management and infrastructure costs (i.e. with no need for ISAG application). The Fellowship Hall and Challoner House could also be used for children's Christmas parties (2pm, 14th December - Fellowship Hall). The Ridings catering costs could also be reduced by having an invite list of only Councillors (without partners), the Showmen's Guild and Stockton's Mayor & Mayoress. Drink might only be served for a toast. It was suggested that all attending the meal should be asked for a donation towards costs. Remembrance Sunday arrangements would also be in place. **The Clerk** confirmed that a set format was in place with RBL, the Yarm Churches, Event Management, SBC traffic control, wreath layers and those in the parade which it was now felt by all partners worked well (details of several years improvements were given) - any suggested changes / additions should be notified to the Clerk to share with delivery partners. Singing Christmas Tree (for Christmas Lights Switch-On) requested previously is understood to be available for Yarm this year - written confirmation awaited from Stockton Borough Council (SBC) - it is understood that the choir for this (involving local people/children) would be part of the offered arrangement and no other major programme would be required (potential significant savings). It was suggested that, as for previous years, a local family/family member should be invited to switch on the Christmas Lights - e.g. the local family linked to the Deborah Charity.

**ACTIONS:** **Cllr Smailes** to present costs & proposals for Council to approve; **The Clerk** to chase written confirmation re Singing Christmas Tree; **The Clerk** to arrange a Father Christmas for 1.12.24 Christmas Lights Switch-On).

#### **10.1.2 Yarm Town Hall Heritage Centre (YTHHC)**

**Cllr Monck & the Development Manager**

reported on continuing development, including next stages in completing upper floor displays. Circa 3, 000 visitors have attended over the 4 x weekly volunteer-led half days since opening on 19th January. Work by contractors to secure the viaduct foundations was revealing lots of archaeological finds (to be reported to Tees Archaeology; samples given to YTHHC). A mediaeval wall has also been uncovered underneath the viaduct (reference to this will feature in the upper floor 'Architecture' section). The next two themes of the 7 remaining permanent upstairs displays were being developed with the Friends of YTHHC members: Yarm at War and the Heritage of Faith (it is hoped that this will be ready around the time of the 260th John Wesley Anniversary, given the significance to Yarm. The next temporary exhibition to be completed will be about the building of the replica prehistoric canoe. Meetings and development work with the Friends of YTHHC and volunteers continue positively.

#### **10.1.3 Ratification of Proposal to Mechanise Town Hall Clock Winding (circa. £6k) - Cllr Monck/Pybus**

(waiving of Standing Order 18.1 d) in line with Standing Order 26b) & 9) on presentation of 4 signatures to the Clerk) - The Clerk has received the required 4 signatures as per the above. It was noted that the winding mechanism with the additional mechanism to keep the clock to time (and set BST & GST) now totals £7,896 (an additional £1,600 on the original quote (a reduced cost if added at the same time as the winding mechanism). The proposal was made to continue with the mechanisation.

**PROPOSED:** **Cllr Monck**

**SECONDED:** **Cllr Coulson**

**AGREED**

#### **10.1.4 Christmas Lighting for Town Hall - Update (DOCUMENT REFERS)**

**- Cllr Blair** presented her research as

regards adding a Christmas greeting in lights to Yarm Town Hall to further enhance the restoration, as seen in other authorities and boosting the impact of festive lights in the High St. The specification for a main greeting on the north facade (e.g. Merry Christmas from Yarm - with a large snowflake) was presented along with options for the south facade (simpler

and with choice from a selection of motifs). Highest and lowest price illustrations were given. Research has resulted in a specification being drawn-up and storage/installation requirements will be detailed further.

**ACTION:** Lighting proposals/quotations tailored to Yarm Town Hall to be presented at the next meeting (**Clerk**).

**10.1.5 Proposal from Preston Park Museum: Future Display of Yarm Helmet** - **Cllr Monck** detailed a request from the museum regarding moving the Yarm Helmet (currently on loan to them) into a new area - a proposed 'open house stores' where the public can see and learn how objects are stored and cared for.

**ACTION:** Preston Park Museum to be asked for further details including the last year's worth of monitoring reports on the helmet's condition & care (e.g. including monthly temperature & relative humidity readings for the last year) - **Clerk**

## **10.2 Cemetery Report**

**10.2.1 General Update** (a number of issues have been covered in the Clerk's Report - DOCUMENT REFERS). **Cllr B Wegg** stated that both the cemetery and chapel were generally in good order.

**10.2.2 Discussion: Regular Opening of Chapel & Display of Bier** - Discussion took place regarding opening the Chapel more regularly. It was agreed that a series of dates (key occasions) should be identified when the chapel will be open and staffed, starting with Easter.

**ACTION:** **Cllr B Wegg** to inform the **Clerk** of chapel opening dates for posting on Facebook.

**10.2.2 Cllr Pybus** stated the issue regarding the need to open the Chapel more but also ensure the Bier is looked after and not compromised re. security. **The Clerk** confirmed the issues as regards conservation and looking after the Bier whilst also having it on display. Options that had been proposed included: hanging the bier from the chapel ceiling (potentially challenges for chapel structure and damage to the Bier); placing it on a raised platform/mezzanine at a high level (giving floor space below) or creating a low plinth in a corner with acrylic screens with fastenings to protect/secure it.

**ACTION:** Measuring and review of options to take place at Chapel; **Clerk** to arrange.

**10.2.3 Opportunity to Hold Weddings at the Chapel** - **Cllr Pybus** reported that initial discussion with a local Reverend suggested that weddings could be held in the Chapel. **The Clerk** stated that similar had been found when looked into previously (i.e. celebration event without legal ceremony) and summarised the previous work re. the SBC requirement if the Chapel is to be licensed for weddings as per other venues. Further research will be undertaken and brought to a future meeting.

**10.3 Allotments Report** - The update given in the Clerk's report was referenced (DOCUMENT REFERS) covering most current issues e.g. given the Spring season (as in previous years), number of plots being given up, transfers occurring, waiting list reducing. **Cllr Pybus** raised the issue of an overly large structure within 1 plot on the upper allotments. **ACTION:** **Cllr Monck** (Allotments Chair) and the **Clerk** to view and report back.

### **10.3.1 General Update**

**10.4 Requests from Charities: Option to Choose a Charity of the Year** (DOCUMENT REFERS)

Discussion was held and, whilst it was referenced that there were many local families with children suffering from particular conditions, it was agreed to approach Deborah ('the butterfly skin' charity - epidermolysis bullosa) to offer the opportunity to be Charity of the Year, given the presence of a local family with a child suffering from this condition.

**PROPOSED:** Cllr Blair                      **SECONDED:** Cllr B Wegg                      **AGREED**

**10.5 Willey Flatts Playing Field & Idea for Skatepark (response to Cllr BWegg) - Cllr Coulson** (offering feedback as Ward Councillor) stated that SBC had confirmed that the installation of a Skate Park would cost £50 - £100k and that SBC would not fund this.

**10.6 Ex-Public Toilets (Town Hall) - Sign Off of Deed of Surrender (SBC) (DOC. REFERS)**

**Cllr Monck** proposed that it should be agreed that the document circulated should be signed off.

**PROPOSED:** Cllr Addison                      **SECONDED:** Cllr Newcombe                      **AGREED**

**10.7 Discussion: Personal Safety for Councillors & the Public (especially women & girls)**

**Cllr Coulson** (feeding back as Ward Councillor) gave a briefing on emergency contact numbers as regards people/women feeling in danger e.g. 112 from a mobile (fire brigade, medical assistance & police); dialling 999 and then adding 55 also enables the police to identify the location; emergency texts can also be sent. The 'Life 360' is also a useful app to download for personal safety.

**10.8 Progressing Morley Carr Bowling Facility** - **Cllr Atkinson** informed the meeting that he and **Cllr Newcombe** wished to take this project forward and would look to enable a management committee to be set-up to run the facility (with YTC as 'arms length' landlord, not micromanaging the initiative). The project should become self-sufficient once established. **Ward Cllr Andrew Sherris**, following significant work over a number of years to achieve the facility, would be kept apprised. It was proposed that Cllr Atkinson and Cllr Newcombe lead the project.

**PROPOSED:** Cllr Atkinson                      **SECONDED:** Cllr Addison                      **AGREED**

**ACTION:** Cllr Monck to arrange a visit to the facility with **Cllr Newcombe and Atkinson**; the Clerk to arrange a set of keys for **Cllr Atkinson**.

**10.9 YTC Policy re. Vexatious Behaviour (DOCUMENT REFERS)** - **Cllr Coulson**, having raised this matter, stated that he was glad YTC had this policy in place, that it had not been used for a while.

**ACTION:** **Comparator policies to be sourced for a future update.**

**10.10 Discussion and Proposals for 2024 High St Hanging Baskets (DOCUMENT REFERS)**

**Cllr Smailes** presented an artificial topiary ball decorated with knitting, proposed to replace some of the hanging baskets in the High St this year. **Cllrs Pybus and Newcombe** had visited the Shaw Trust and proposed that real flower hanging baskets be purchased from their charity workshop. **The Clerk** referenced the document circulated giving examples, considerations (e.g. quality, size, UV resistance) and indicative costs for the 4 options councillors had requested re. High St hanging baskets: all real flowers (as in previous years); combination of real flowers and and artificial topiary balls; combination of artificial flowers and artificial topiary balls; all artificial flowers. It was decided that 8 x artificial topiary balls should be purchased as presented by Cllr Smailes (£34.99 for 2) and that 60 hanging baskets should be purchased from the Shaw Trust

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

(at £10 each) with £50 for delivery (local remover). (Clerk to action; Cllr Smailes to forward her chosen topiary ball details

**PROPOSED:** Cllr Coulson                      **SECONDED:** Cllr Atkinson                      **AGREED**

Watering arrangements were briefly discussed.

**10.11 To note inclusion of resolution as regards venues for council meetings in YTC Standing Orders - 3.a) & b)**  
(DOCUMENT REFERS) - The Council noted and approved the amendment.

**11.0 Planning & Environment:**

**11.1 Matters Arising: Planning Applications & Lists** - Cllr Hardy gave an update as regards 111 High St (expansion dental practice) impacting Holmdene. Cllr Hardy had attended the planning committee, revoiced YTC's objections and requested that the decision be deferred so that members of SBC planning committee could visit the site prior to decision. An amended planning application for 111 High St was approved.

**11.2 Latest Play Area Reports & Issues**

The Clerk reported on the latest reports and repairs (ref. Clerk Update Report).

**12.0 Adjournment and Final Questions from the Public** - The Chair adjourned the meeting for further questions.

**13.0 To agree any content for the YTC website and requests for Facebook features**

**13.1 Feedback on items to date & proposed new items**

The Clerk will advertise dates and times for chapel opening on Facebook once received (Cllr B Wegg to forward).

**14.0 To receive items for information and consideration for the next agenda**

An item on the cemetery gate was requested.

**15.0 To confirm the date and time of the next YTC meeting (Challoner House): 7pm, 9th April 2024**

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.



<b>ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT 12th MARCH 2024</b>				
<b>YARM TOWN COUNCIL ACCOUNTS</b>				
<b>MEMBERS APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS PAID FOR BY DIRECT DEBIT</b>				
<b>Payments by Direct Debit</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
<b>Creditor</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Ref</b>
Stockton-on-Tees BC	Market Toll Rates 1.03.24		<b>£0.00</b>	d/d
Virgin Media	Town Hall Wi-Fi 1.03.24		<b>£12.00</b>	d/d
EE	Mobile & telephone 16.02.24		<b>£9.12</b>	d/d
Stockton-on-Tees BC	Cemetery rates. 1.03.24		<b>£0.00</b>	d/d
Google	G Suite		<b>£84.00</b>	d/d
British Gas	Allotment hut electricity 28/2		<b>£31.12</b>	d/d
<b>YARM TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS PAID BY CHEQUE OR BACS</b>				
<b>Creditor</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Staff	February salary		<b>£1,919.45</b>	BACS
Dev Mangr YTHHC	Mid Sept/Dec23 (£857.92 -20% tax)		<b>£686.34</b>	BACS
HMRC	Tax & NI for February		<b>£667.53</b>	BACS

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

Flooring Contractor	Repairs to surface on Willey Flatts play area		<b>£1,980.00</b>	BACS
Mediale Contractor	Installation costs		<b>£600.00</b>	BACS
EDF	YTHHC security cupboard/plinth		<b>£225.00</b>	BACS
Clock Winder	Electric costs for TH 1/1 to 1/2		<b>£394.71</b>	BACS
Northern Counties	Clock winding fee 23/24		<b>£550.00</b>	BACS
Allotment Association	Rodents course fee for Cllr R Wegg		<b>£120.00</b>	BACS
Gallagher	Adjustment to insurance to yearly insurance cover ( YTHHC reincorporation fee)		<b>£468.53</b>	BACS
Cornerstone	IT support for February		<b>£96.36</b>	BACS
Cornerstone	Cloud hosting fee for February		<b>£24.00</b>	BACS
Town Clerk	Gloves/ sacks for allotment volunteers		<b>£23.45</b>	BACS
<b>MEMBERS TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT BY CHEQUE OR BACS</b>				
<b>Creditor</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Town Clerk	Salary(overtime for Feb. £297.28 - 20%tax)		<b>£237.82</b>	<b>BACS</b>
Cllr P Addison	Cemetery water invoice		<b>£30.87</b>	BACS
Brass Band	Fee for Xmas lights switch on		<b>£400.00</b>	BACS
Dev Manager YTHHC	YTHHC Dec 23/Jan 24		<b>£0.00</b>	
Play Eqpmnt. Repairer	Play equipment repairs		<b>£86.00</b>	BACS
Yarm Methodist Church	Friends of YTHHC meeting room hire		<b>£20.00</b>	BACS
<b>INCOME TO YARM TOWN COUNCIL</b>				
Allotment holders (6)	Allotment rents		<b>£200.00</b>	d/c
Various donations	Donations to the YTHHC		<b>£48.90</b>	Cash
Various donations	Donations to the YTHHC		<b>£56.82</b>	Cash
Various donations	Donations to the YTHHC		<b>£33.80</b>	Cash