

Yeovil Town Council



Town House
19 Union Street
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 1PQ

Grounds and General Maintenance Committee

Monday 9th September 2024

7:00pm

Hybrid Meeting:

Face-to-face at Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil

BA20 1PQ; and virtual using Zoom meeting software

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact town.clerk@yeovil.gov.uk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Card'.

Amanda Card, Town Clerk
2nd September 2024

Grounds and General Maintenance Meeting

This information is also available on our website: www.yeovil.gov.uk

Members of Yeovil Town Council are summoned to attend:

Jade Cabell

Jane Lowery

Tareth Casey

Ashley Richards (*Vice Chairman*)

Emma Jayne-Hopkins

Andy Soughton

Andy Kendall (*Ex-officio*)

Roy Spinner (*Chairman*)

Jamie Lock

Adrian Wilkes

Tony Lock (*Ex-officio*)

Vacancy (co-opted non-voting)

Public Comments at meetings (held via Zoom)

Members of the public may attend the meeting either physically or via zoom.

If you would like to join the meeting via zoom, please e-mail ytic@yeovil.gov.uk by 9:00am on Monday 9th September 2024. Instructions will be sent to you to view the meeting.

Equality Act 2010

The general public sector equality duty places an obligation on a wide range of public bodies (including town and parish councils) in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The protected characteristics are:

Age	Race
Disability	Religion or Belief
Gender Reassignment	Sex
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Sexual Orientation
Pregnancy and Maternity	

Recording of Council Meetings

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 allows both the public and press to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings (including on social media).

Any member of the public wishing to record or film proceedings must let the Chairman of the meeting know prior to, or at the start of, the meeting and the recording must be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting), but non-disruptive. Please refer to our Policy on audio/visual recording and photography at Council meetings at www.yeovil.gov.uk. This permission does not extend to private meetings or parts of meetings which are not open to the public.

Members of the public exercising their right to speak during the time allocated for Public Comment who do not wish to be recorded or filmed, need to inform the Chairman who will instruct those taking a recording or filming to cease doing so while they speak.

A G E N D A

Public Comment (15 Minutes)

Due to the confidential nature of the business of items 11/206 – 11/208, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3, a motion to exclude members of the public and press during discussion of this item will be considered by the Councillors. *Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3*

11/194. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Council to receive apologies for absence and consider the reasons given. *LGA 1972 s85(1)*

11/195. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e). (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

11/196. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 14th May and 20th May 2024.

11/197. UPDATE ON REMOVAL OF SHELTER AT ROSEBERY RECREATION GROUND

To consider the report by the Deputy Town Clerk attached at pages 7 to 8.

11/198. CO-OPTED (NON-VOTING) MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE

To consider the letter from Yeovil Allotment Association attached at page 9.

11/199. ALLOTMENT LETTING/AVAILABILITY REPORT

To consider the report by the Assistant Town Clerk attached at page 10 (correct at time of publishing of this agenda).

11/200. FEEDBACK FROM YEOVIL ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

To receive any feedback via Cllr Spinner.

11/201. FEEDBACK FROM CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBER

To consider a verbal update (subject to the outcome of agenda item 11/198).

11/202. ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW

To consider the report by the Town Clerk attached at pages 11 to 13.

11/203. MONKSDALE HEDGE

To consider the report by the Assistant Town Clerk attached at pages 14 - 16.

11/204. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee will consider passing a resolution to exclude the press and public from the *next items* in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

11/205. SUNNINGDALE DOORSTEP GREEN PATHWAY (CONFIDENTIAL)

To consider the confidential report by the Deputy Town Clerk attached at pages 17 to 18.

11/206. ELIZABETH FLATS FENCING (CONFIDENTIAL)

To consider the confidential report by the Deputy Town Clerk (to follow).

**11/207. URGENT BUSINESS (STANDING ORDER PARAGRAPH 4d (xiv):
APPEAL AGAINST NOTICE TO QUIT (CONFIDENTIAL)**

To consider the confidential report by the Deputy Town Clerk attached at page 19.

11/197 UPDATE ON REMOVAL OF YOUTH SHELTER - ROSEBERY AVENUE RECREATION GROUND

Background

This committee considered the following request from a resident local to Rosebery Recreation Ground on 19th November 2018 (9/248 Roseberry Recreation Ground Shelter):

“Would you please consider removing the 'pod' shelter from the Rosebery Avenue Recreation Ground where there is a problem with drug dealing. Councillor Tony Lock is aware of the problem.

The shelter is used by drug dealers and those injecting themselves. Also by alcoholics who stay there all night playing loud music and shouting. They leave their empty beer cans and other rubbish in and around the shelter which is collected by the Council cleaning dept who do an exceptional good job at clearing up the mess.

The multi-purpose play area is successful and extremely popular with the youngsters. There are no problems and is used daily. I hope you will seriously consider removing the shelter.”

The Committee discussed the request. This was the only request received at that time concerning the removal of the shelter due to anti-social behaviour issues. Other key stakeholders had commented that the Rosebery Recreation Ground Shelter had not been reported as an issue.

It was resolved that the Chief Inspector for Neighbourhood Policing be informed of the complaint; and that the Deputy Town Clerk respond to the request stating that the shelter would not be removed and that the local police should be contacted every time an issue occurs.

September 2023

An e-mail was received from a PCSO for the Neighbourhood Policy Team informing the Town Council of complaints received from a number of residents whose gardens back onto the playing field, where a number of youths were using the youth shelter to smoke and play loud music.

This issue was escalated, and communication made with the Locality Officer at Somerset Council regarding the youth shelter and the anti-social behaviour that it attracted. The police requested that the roof of the shelter be removed and this was agreed by the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee (Minute Reference 11/15) and carried out by the Locality Team at Somerset Council shortly after the meeting. It was also agreed to review the impact of the removal of the roof of the shelter in six months.

March 2024

The Locality Team confirmed that there had been no reports of anti-social behaviour since the roof of the shelter was removed. The Grounds and General Maintenance Committee agreed to review the impact of the removal of the roof in a further six months as the previous six months had been mostly over the winter period.

September 2024

An update will be reported at the meeting.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the report.

*(Sally Freemantle, Deputy Town Clerk – 01935 382424 or
sally.freemantle@yeovil.gov.uk)*

Yeovil Allotment Association

Mr. David Recardo
Yeovil Allotment Association
83, Lyde Road
Yeovil
Somerset
BA21 5DH

Email: david.recardo@me.com

M: 07725 665 998

Ref: Yeovil Allotment Association Representative.

Dear Yeovil Town Council,

Following the resignation of Manny Roper as our representative to the GGM Committee, the association would like to propose Dave Potten as the replacement.

I hope this brief letter is sufficient to allow Dave Potten to take up the role.

Regards



David Recardo
YAA Secretary

Site Name	Plots on site	Vacant Plots	Let Plots	Percentage of let plots
Elizabeth flats	25	6	19	76%
Goar Knap	42	2	40	95%
Hillcrest	9	4	5	56%
Larkhill	30	0	30	100%
Milford Dip	41	0	41	100%
Monksdale	19	3	16	84%
Newtown	35	0	35	100%
Rustywell	23	1	22	96%
St Georges	29	2	27	93%
Sunningdale	56	2	54	96%
Turners Barn Lane	25	0	25	100%
Totals -	334	20	314	94%

11/202 ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW – EFFECTIVE FROM 1st OCTOBER 2025

Background

The Council reviews allotment rents on an annual basis - the last allotment rent review was carried out in September 2024 when it was agreed that the charge would increase from 49p per m² to 50p per m². All tenants were given twelve months' notice of the increase effective from 1st October 2025.

Charging Policy

The Town Council seeks to recover an increasing proportion of the net cost of providing allotments from the tenants, thereby reducing the level of shortfall by council taxpayers. There is a correlation between any substantial price increases and the number of tenants who surrender their tenancy. This Committee needs to consider the sustainability of increasing prices – **an untenanted plot costs the Town Council more to manage and maintain than the revenue that can be generated from it being tenanted.**

Historical Charges

The table below shows the historic charges per sq. metre.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Charge per sq. metre	40p	40p	43p	49p	50p
Sq. metres	48,970	48,970	48,970	48,970	48,970
Budgeted Income (£)	19,588	19,588	21,371	23,995	24,485
Budgeted Expenditure (£)	19,688	19,996	21,058	24,165	24,443
Shortfall (£)	100	408	(313)	(170)	(42)
Shortfall (%)	1%	2%	(1.5%)	(0.7%)	(0.2%)
Average Annual charge (based on 143m²)	57.20	57.20	61.49	70.07	71.50
Average Weekly charge (based on 143m²)	1.10	1.10	1.18	1.35	1.38
% increase (compared to previous year)	0%	0%	7.50%	14.0%	2.0%

The charge per m² in 2017/18 was 34p; 2018/19 was 37p and 2019/20 and 2021/22 was 40p.

Current situation

The Council continues to seek ways of reducing cost and working more effectively.

	Estimated Outturn For 2025/26	Estimated Budget for 2026/27
Staffing Costs (inc NI and Pension) (£)	11,200	11,760
Allotment Maintenance	13,243	13,800
Total Expenditure (£)	24,443	25,560

The following table indicates the potential changes required to the charge per sq. metre to fully fund.

Charge per sq. metre	50p	52p	53p
Sq. metres	48,970	48,970	48,970
Budgeted Income (£)	24,485	25,464	25,954
Budgeted Expenditure (£)	25,560	25,560	25,560
(Shortfall)/Surplus (£)	(1,075)	(95)	394
(Shortfall)/Surplus (%)	(4.2%)	(0.4%)	1.5%
Average Annual charge (based on 143m²)	71.50	74.36	75.79
Average Weekly charge (based on 143m²)	1.38	1.43	1.45
% increase (compared to previous year)	0%	4%	5%

Water Charges

Mains water charges are recharged to each allotment site and collected from tenants on an annual basis. This approach is both equitable (since tenants on each site only pay for mains water they have used) and encourages tenants to adopt alternative more

environmentally friendly ways of collecting and recycling rainwater (thereby reducing their dependency on mains water and saving money) thus supporting the Council's values of raising awareness of environmental issues, improving the quality of the environment and encouraging an environmentally friendly ethos.

Water meter readings are taken at the end of the summer growing season to ensure that the costs could be calculated and included in the invoices that are sent out in October each year. Costs are split proportionately with tenants of plots less than 125 m² (standard half-plot) pay 50% of the charge

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED**:

- (1) to note the report;
- (2) to agree whether to keep the charge per sq. meter at 50p or increase to 52p or 53p; and
- (3) should the Committee consider increasing the charge per sq. metre and propose that charge to the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee the year commencing 1st October 2024.

Should Members have further questions, please contact the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

(Amanda Card, Chief Executive / Town Clerk - amanda.card@yeovil.gov.uk)

11/203. MONKSDALE HEDGE

Background

There is a requirement the Monksdale hedge is maintained on an annual basis. The last hedge cut was agreed at committee in November 2023 and completed in early April 2024. The cut included trimming the sides, tops and remove the stems that were growing above the established trim height. This was the biggest cut the Monksdale hedge has had in years and we were satisfied the contractors had completed the job.

Previous costs maintaining the hedge (The cost for this work is taken from the allotment maintenance budget):

Cut in April 2024: £3720

2023 - No cut

2022 - £2079.51

2021 - £2244.93

2020 - £935



Photo **before** it had been cut November 2023



Photo taken **after** it had been cut 15 April 2024

We have recently received complaints from residents regarding the Monksdale Hedge. The hedge has grown a significant amount since the cut in April.

Resident on Abbey Road received July 2024:

The hedge had around half a foot reduced from the top in March but it's nowhere near enough if you're only going to maintain it once a year. It needs to be drastically trimmed if that's going to last the year. Plus you're cutting it back before it really reaches its growth cycle so it's just encouraging new growth. The brambles are continually growing over into our garden and we're having to do our best to cutback from our side but as it's so high, now in excess of 10ft in places, it's becoming dangerous. Our neighbour at 71 is also trying his best to cut it back but it's an impossible task to keep on top of when it's only being maintained from one side. Plus it's not our hedge so why are we having to maintain it to stop it causing damage to our fencing? Will you be prepared to replace it when the hedge becomes so overgrown that it starts to cause damage? If finance is an issue why not remove all of the growth and replace it with fencing which will be much easier to maintain?



Photo taken from a resident's garden

Resident on Abbey Road received June 2024:

At the bottom of my garden there is a very high conifer hedge (12feet +) with Ash saplings growing within the hedge on the allotment side of the fence of the allotment site in Monksdale and I am informed that it is the responsibility of the Town council to maintain and cut? I am therefore requesting that the hedge be trimmed in height down to no more than 7/8 feet for now, where it borders my property please.

Conclusion

Monksdale is the only site that has a hedge boundary as most sites have fencing. Maintaining the conifer hedge annually is becoming costly and could be argued the

hedge needs to be cut more than once a year. The committee may want to consider other options including fencing the site in the future.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to

- 1) to note the report; and
- 2) to decide what course of action to take.

(Lucy Ryder, Assistant Town Clerk – 01935 382424 or lucy.ryder@yeovil.gov.uk)