Yeovil Crematorium & Cemetery Committee

Minutes of the meeting of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee held on Wednesday 10th December 2025 at 6:00pm at Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil.

Present:

Nicola Clark	Somerset Council
Tony Lock	Somerset Council
Graham Oakes	Somerset Council
Colin Rose	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Rob Stickland	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Helen Stonier	Yeovil Town Council
Clive Wakely	Funeral Directors' Representative

In Attendance:

Barbara Appleby	Yeovil Without Parish Council Clerk
Geetha Blood	Finance Lead Specialist, Place, Somerset Council (virtual)
Amanda Card	Yeovil Town Council Clerk/Clerk to the Committee
Christian Evans	Head of Finance Business Partnering, Somerset Council (virtual)
Janet Pascoe	Finance Business Partner Regulatory and Operational Services, Somerset Council (virtual)
John Ranger	Specialist - Bereavement Services, Somerset Council
Jonathon Stevens	Head of Operations, Somerset Council (virtual)

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

6:06pm - the meeting commenced.

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(1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs V Burt; A Soughton and J Snell.

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies

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(2) DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at this time.

Councillor	Reason	Interest
Cllr T Lock Cllr G Oakes	Member of: Somerset Council Yeovil Town Council	Personal
Cllr N Clark	Member of: Somerset Council	Personal
Cllr H Stonier	Member of: Yeovil Town Council	Personal
Cllr R Stickland	Member of: Yeovil Town Council Yeovil Without Parish Council	Personal
Cllr C Rose	Member of: Yeovil Without Parish Council	Personal

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(3) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee held on 9th July 2025 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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(4) BUDGET SETTING 2026/27

The Committee considered the Cemetery and Crematorium Budget from the Lead Finance Specialist – Somerset Council.

The budget for the Cemetery for 2026/27 has increased by £11,300 to £113,900.

Summary	2025/26 Budget	Draft 2026-27 Budget	Budget Change
Staff Costs	94,300	94,300	0
Premises Costs	55,700	54,700	(1,000)
Plant & Machinery Costs	4,200	4,000	(200)
Administration Costs	24,600	27,600	3,000
Expenditure	**178,800**	**180,600**	**1,800**
Income	**(76,200)**	**(66,700)**	**9,500**
Net Expenditure	**102,600**	**113,900**	**11,300**

Historically, the full deficit had been financed through a precept levied on both Yeovil Town Council and Yeovil Without Parish Council, apportioned according to the electoral register as at 1 October of the preceding financial year. However, the report incorrectly stated that the budgeted deficit for 2026/27 would be funded entirely from reserves.

The Clerk to Yeovil Without Parish Council proposed that a fixed portion of the deficit be financed through the precept, with the remaining balance funded from reserves. A paper was circulated outlining several options and recommending that the fixed deficit be set for a four-year period.

The Clerk to the Committee emphasised that the overall budget would remain unchanged; the proposal related solely to the method of funding the deficit.

6:25pm – The Funeral Directors' Representative left the meeting and did not return.

A Councillor queried the removal of the external training budget. The Head of Operations advised that any required training would be delivered in-house.

The Crematorium decreased by £193,634 to a net surplus of £502,800:

Summary	**2025/26 Budget**	**Draft 2026-27 Budget**	**Budget Change**
Staff Costs	451,700	455,500	3,800
Premises Costs	452,600	412,800	(39,800)
Plant & Machinery Costs	5,600	5,600	0
Administration Costs	248,300	260,100	11,800
Expenditure	**1,158,200**	**1,134,000**	**(24,200)**
Income	**(1,467,364)**	**(1,636,800)**	**(169,434)**
Net Expenditure	**(309,164)**	**(502,800)**	**(193,634)**

A Councillor noted that Yeovil Crematorium is owned by Somerset Council (89%) and Yeovil Without Parish Council (11%) and expressed concern that Somerset Council may be financially benefiting from the service level agreement (SLA) for the Crematorium. Assurances were provided that this was not the case.

A Councillor asked when a Board meeting would be held to discuss matters relating to the Crematorium, so that, as joint owners, Yeovil Without Parish Council could meet with Somerset Council to consider issues associated with this activity. The Specialist Bereavement Services Officer advised that the Somerset Council unitary arrangements and internal changes needed to settle before a meeting could be convened, which could take up to 12 months.

It was argued that, given Yeovil Without Parish Council's 11% ownership, some feedback should nevertheless be provided to them. The Head of Operations explained that the Specialist Bereavement Services Officer's role had changed and that he was now responsible for Bereavement Services across the whole of Somerset.

A Councillor queried the inflation rate used in the SLA, noting that it referred to the Retail Price Index (RPI) while the budget-setting reports referenced the Consumer Price Index (CPI). It was agreed that CPI should be used.

RESOLVED: (1) to approve both the Cemetery budget and the Crematorium budget; (2) to delegate to both the Clerk of Yeovil Town Council and Clerk of Yeovil Without Parish Council how the budget will be funded, in terms of precept and use of reserves for 2026/27*; (3) that further consideration be given to fixing the deficit and use of reserves for future financial years; (4) that the Head of Operations organise a meeting between Yeovil Without Parish Council and Somerset Council regarding the Crematorium; and (5) that the SLA refer to CPI rather than RPI.

**It has since been agreed that the £113,900 deficit will be financed by Yeovil Town Council precept of £76,000; Yeovil Without Parish Council precept of £24,000 and the remaining £13,900 to be funded from Cemetery Reserves.*

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(5) CEMETERY UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Specialist - Bereavement Services.

He highlighted issues with the cemetery roads that presented a health and safety concern and required attention. The various options to address these issues were discussed.

7:10pm – the Finance Lead Specialist, the Head of Finance Business Partnering, and the

Finance Business Partner Regulatory and Operational Services left the meeting and did not return.

The issue concerning the boundary wall was discussed. The Clerk to Yeovil Town Council advised that the Town Council does not hold any plans or deeds relating to the cemetery.

The Chair referred to the Cemetery Lodge, which the Specialist Bereavement Services Officer had previously indicated he may have a use for. The Officer advised that other priorities had since taken precedence. The Lodge has been securely closed in the interim and will not be used for the foreseeable future.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) that the Head of Operations arrange a site visit with Councillors and expert officers to explain the issues and possible solutions and once the findings are available to hold a special meeting; and (3) that the Specialist - Bereavement Services to ask the property owner regarding the boundary wall to look at their title deeds.

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(6) CREMATORIUM UPDATE

The Committee considered the Crematorium Update report. It was commented that the report did not hold much information, and the Committee would like to see more detail.

This should include:

- A general overview of crematorium events since previous meeting of this committee;
- Details of planned repairs and overhauls together with predicted costs;
- Details of routine equipment or plant updates and predicted costs;
- Monthly figures chart to be presented numerically and not as percentages with explanations to any movement in trends; and
- Broad outline of team changes.

Any items of a confidential nature (i.e staffing or commercially sensitive) would be dealt with accordingly via the exclusion of the press and public.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) that more detailed reports be brought to future meetings of this Committee.

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(7) EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity of agenda item 8 would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3

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(8) POTENTIAL AVAILABLE LAND FOR FUTURE BURIAL PROVISION (COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)

The Committee considered the report of the Clerk of Yeovil Without Parish Council regarding potential available land for future burial provision.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) that the Clerk of Yeovil Without Parish Council register with a land agent.

Please note that the next meeting of this Committee is Wednesday 8th July 2025. An interim meeting will be arranged to discuss the Cemetery Road once relevant information is available.

7:50pm – The meeting closed.

Signed: …….. (Chair) Date: ……..