

Yeovil Crematorium & Cemetery Committee



Minutes of the meeting of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee held on Wednesday 13th November at 6:00pm at Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil.

Present:

Vyvyenne Burt	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Nicola Clark	Somerset Council
Tony Lock	Somerset Council
Graham Oakes	Somerset Council
Colin Rose	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Jeny Snell	Yeovil Town Council
Rob Stickland	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Helen Stonier	Yeovil Town Council

In Attendance:

Barbara Appleby	Yeovil Without Parish Council Clerk
Amanda Card	Yeovil Town Council Clerk/Clerk to the Committee
Christian Evans	Head of Finance Business Partnering, Somerset Council
Kerry Hepple	Service Manager, Climate & Place, Accountable Bodies and Community Service Finance, Somerset Council
John Ranger	Specialist Operations Manager –Somerset Council
Jonathon Stevens	Head of Operations, Regulatory & Operational Services

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

6:06pm - the meeting commenced.

(1) ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Clerk to the Committee called for nominations for Chairman.

It was proposed by Cllr G Oakes, and seconded by Cllr J Snell, that Cllr R Stickland be elected to serve as the Chair for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED: that Cllr R Stickland be elected to serve as the Chair for the ensuing year.

(2) ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

It was proposed by Cllr R Stickland, and seconded by Cllr G Oakes, that Cllr N Clark be elected to serve as the Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED: that Cllr N Clark be elected to serve as the Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

(3) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs EJ Hopkins and Clive Wakely.

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies

(4) DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at this time.

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

(5) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee held on 19th December 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

(6) OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2023/24

The Committee considered the Outturn Report 2023/24 from the Service Manager, Climate & Place, Accountable Bodies and Community Service Finance, Somerset Council.

The cemetery outturn position showed an underspend of £88,838 against the budget of £98,620. This was due to income being overachieved and underspends due to reductions in staff costs, grounds maintenance and utility costs.

	2023-24 Actuals (£)	2023-24 Budget (£)	Variance (£)	2022/23 Actuals (£)
Burial Fees	(80,163)	(67,330)	(12,833)	(69,754)
Rent & Wayleaves	(4,200)	(4,620)	420	(4,200)
Income (Total)	(84,363)	(71,950)	(12,413)	(73,954)
Staff & Pension Costs	46,933	96,910	(49,977)	87,920
SC Management Fee	14,051	14,620	(569)	14,161
Grounds Maintenance & Equipment	7,414	18,130	(10,716)	29,658
Buildings Maintenance	3,181	10,000	(6,819)	8,734
NNDR (Business Rates)	10,604	10,970	(366)	9,855
Administration and Office Costs	5,780	1,100	4,680	48
Utility Costs	1,972	15,240	(13,268)	12,671
Professional Fees	4,210	3,600	610	455
Expenditure (Total)	94,145	170,570	(76,425)	163,502
Surplus/Deficit for the year	9,782	98,620	(88,838)	89,548

The crematorium outturn position showed an underspend of £338,490 against the budget of £244,450. This was due to income being overachieved and underspends due to reduction in staff costs, administration and office costs, utility costs. Somerset Council's management fee and other expenditure.

	2023-24 Actuals (£)	2023-24 Budget (£)	Variance (£)	2022/23 Actuals (£)
Cremation Fees and Grave Maintenance Income	(1,444,170)	(1,347,370)	(96,800)	(1,268,701)
Other Sales	(93,577)	-	(93,577)	(84,229)
Income (Total)	(1,537,747)	(1,347,370)	(190,377)	(1,352,930)
Staff & Pension Costs	381,818	418,990	(37,172)	351,025
Grounds Maintenance & Equipment	82,307	89,250	(6,943)	88,119
Rent Payable to SC	110,000	110,000	-	110,000
Administration & Office costs	14,867	39,670	(24,803)	18,811
NNDR (Business Rates)	65,873	50,430	15,443	50,432
Medical Referee Costs	37,924	27,000	10,924	28,314
Utility Costs	104,339	152,750	(48,411)	97,699
Building Maintenance	44,494	42,600	1,894	29,921
SC Management Fees	73,046	88,430	(15,384)	87,583
Other Expenditure	40,139	83,800	(43,661)	77,431
Expenditure (Total)	954,807	1,102,920	(148,113)	939,335
Surplus/Deficit for the year	(582,940)	(244,450)	(338,490)	(413,595)

RESOLVED: to note the Outturn Report 2023/24.

(7) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2023/24

The Committee considered the Financial Statements 2023/24 from the Service Manager, Climate & Place, Accountable Bodies and Community Service Finance, Somerset Council.

It was noted that there should not be any balances within the Yeovil Without Parish Council Reserves for the Crematorium since notice had been given in January 2023 to terminate the capital agreement. Yeovil Without Parish Council is still waiting for the surplus profits to be transferred.

RESOLVED: (1) to agree the Financial Statements 2023/24 subject to the necessary amendments regarding the reserves; and (2) that the Chair sign the Financial Statements 2023/24 once the necessary amendments have been made.

(8) CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2024/25 **(MONTH 1 – 6)**

The Committee considered the Budget Report 2023/24 for Month 1 – 6, which was introduced by the Service Manager, Climate & Place, Accountable Bodies and Community Service Finance, Somerset Council.

As at the end of September 2024, the cemetery an end of year underspend of just over £45k.

Summary	Annual Budget	April to September 2024		
		Budget	Actual	Variance
Staffing Costs	£94,457	£46,229	£12,938	(£33,291)
Premises Costs	£53,920	£26,960	£22,596	(£4,364)
Plant & Machinery Costs	£5,300	£2,650	£3,173	£523
Administration Costs	£24,100	£12,050	£813	(£11,237)
Expenditure	£175,777	£87,889	£39,519	(£48,369)
Income	(£74,750)	(£37,375)	(£34,513)	£2,862
Net Expenditure	£101,027	£50,514	(£5,006)	(£45,508)

As at the end of September 2024, the crematorium is predicted to have an end of year underspend of just under £50k

Summary	Annual Budget	April to September 2023		
		Budget	Actual	Variance
Staffing Costs	£443,505	£221,753	£161,140	(£60,613)
Premises Costs	£393,349	£196,675	£137,590	(£59,085)
Plant & Machinery Costs	£31,560	£15,780	£0	(£15,780)
Administration Costs	£248,220	£124,110	£93,332	(£30,766)
Expenditure	£1,116,634	£558,317	£392,074	(£166,243)
Income	(£1,438,639)	(£719,320)	(£602,220)	£117,100
Net Expenditure	(£322,505)	(£161,003)	(£210,146)	(£49,144)

The Service Manager, Climate & Place, Accountable Bodies and Community Service

Finance, Somerset Council stated that the report would include a forecast for the year end position in future

RESOLVED: to note the Budget Report 2024/25 for Month 1 – 6.

(9) CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM DRAFT BUDGET 2025/26

The Committee considered the Draft Budget 2025/26, which was introduced by the Service Manager, Climate & Place, Accountable Bodies and Community Service Finance, Somerset Council.

The draft budget for the Cemetery for 2024/25 has increased by £223 to £102,600,

Summary	2024/25 Budget	Draft 2025-26 Budget	Budget Change
Staff Costs	92,457	94,300	1,843
Premises Costs	55,020	55,700	680
Plant & Machinery Costs	4,200	4,200	0
Administration Costs	24,100	24,600	500
Expenditure	175,777	178,800	3,023
Income	(74,750)	(76,200)	(2,800)
Net Expenditure	101,027	102,600	223

and the Crematorium decreased by £49,703 to a net surplus of £309,200.

Summary	2024/25 Budget	Draft 2025-26 Budget	Budget Change
Staff Costs	443,505	451,700	8,195
Premises Costs	419,349	452,600	33,251
Plant & Machinery Costs	5,560	5,600	40
Administration Costs	248,220	248,300	80
Expenditure	1,116,634	1,158,200	41,566
Income	(1,438,693)	(1,467,400)	(91,269)
Net Expenditure	(322,005)	(309,200)	(49,703)

A query was raised regarding Somerset Council providing the information on time. The Clerk to the Committee responded by informing the Committee that both the Clerk and the Clerk to Yeovil Without Parish Council had a meeting with the Service Manager, Climate & Place, Accountable Bodies and Community Service Finance and the Head of Finance

Business Partnering at Somerset Council. At this meeting, a timetable was outlined which should work for Yeovil Town Council, Yeovil Without Parish Council and Somerset Council. The Clerk to the Committee said she was confident that the final budget figures would be provided so that both Yeovil Town Council and Yeovil Without Parish Council could set their precepts on time.

The Head of Finance Business Partnering at Somerset Council thanked both the Clerk and the Clerk to Yeovil Without Parish Council for the useful and positive meeting, as it enhanced their understanding of the requirements and timeframes as well as providing a lot of historical information.

The Service Level Agreement would be reviewed as it was felt that it was no longer fit for purpose. Currently there were no timeframes about when information should be expected. The revised Service Level Agreement will come back to the next meeting (January 2025) alongside the final budget.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the draft budget; and (2) that the final budget be considered alongside the Service Level Agreement at the next meeting to be held in January 2025.

(10) CREMATORIUM UPDATE

The Specialist Operations Manager at Somerset Council presented his report.

The Chair raised concerns that he had not been informed about the donation to the local charity, since he was also the Chair of Yeovil Without Parish Council, who owned 11% of the crematorium.

Representatives from Yeovil Without Parish Council also raised concerns that they were neither being involved in decisions in capital expenditure (whereby there was an expectation that they should be contributing 11% of the costs) nor were they being informed of the capital expenditure.

The Clerk to the Committee read out an e-mail from Clive Wakely suggesting an additional screen in the chapel. The Specialist Operations Manager stated he would look into this.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) that the Head of Operations, Regulatory & Operational Services would provide regular feedback to Yeovil Without Parish Council.

(11) YEOVIL CEMETERY UPDATE

The Specialist Operations Manager at Somerset Council presented his report.

Burials have slowed down on the common graves and there was about 4 years' worth of burial potential remaining.

The damage to the cemetery grounds led to some questions about insurance. The Committee asked for clarification on what was and what was not insured.

In regard to the tree roots lifting and cracking the road, resulting in a variety of trip hazards, discussions were held about how to resolve the issues. A few options were considered. It was felt that further conversations should be had with an arborist and a temporary sign put up to warn of uneven surfaces.

The Specialist Operations Manager spoke of the kerbs sets and gardens within the lawned areas of the Cemetery, making maintenance very difficult and costly. It was felt that the Policy needed to be reviewed and that perhaps a press release be issued regarding the change in policy.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) that the Head of Operations, Regulatory & Operational Services seek clarity of the insurance; (3) to consider in July 2025, a review of the policy on kerb sets and gardens within the lawned area; and (4) that the Specialist Operation Manager liaise with an arborist regarding the tree roots and put temporary signs warning of the uneven surfaces.

(12) CEMETERY LAND

The Committee discussed the land.

The Specialist Operation Manager spoke of the approach that had been made to him regarding Quaker land.

Cllr N Clark would continue to speak with the portfolio holder at Somerset Council (noting that there is a new portfolio holder).

RESOLVED: (1) that the Specialist Operation Manager follow up on the Quaker land; (2) that Cllr N Clark make contact with the new portfolio holder at Somerset Council.

(13) 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 the following agenda item 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

(14) CEMETERY LODGE

The Committee considered the e-mail of Property Development Project Manager regarding the Cemetery Lodge.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) that the Specialist Operation Manager bring forward a proposal to January meeting.

(15) FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 8th January 2025 – Final Budget for 2025/26

Wednesday 10th July 2025 – Outturn and Financial Statements for 2024/25

Wednesday 10th December 2025 – Final Budget for 2026/27

7:33pm – The meeting closed.

Signed: (Chair)

Date: