Yeovil Crematorium & Cemetery Committee

Minutes of the meeting of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee held on Wednesday 4th November 2026 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
Colin Rose	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Jeny Snell	Yeovil Town Council
Rob Stickland	Yeovil Without Parish 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 (virtual)
Katy Menday	Director of Leisure and Environment, Yeovil Town Council (virtual)
Clive Wakely	Funeral Director's Representative (co-opted non-voting)

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

6:00pm - the meeting commenced.

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(1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs G Oakes; A Soughton; and H Stonier

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 Cllr J Snell	Member of: Somerset Council Yeovil Town Council	Personal
Cllr N Clark	Member of: Somerset 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 8th July 2026 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

6:03pm: The Head of Finance Business Partnering, Somerset Council joined the meeting virtually.

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(4) EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee is requested to pass a resolution excluding 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 would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

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(5) FUTURE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YEOVIL CEMETERY AND YEOVIL CREMATORIUM

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk reminded Councillors and Officers that Somerset Council intends to serve notice on the current management arrangements for Yeovil Cemetery, with responsibility for the management of the Cemetery reverting to Yeovil Town Council. It is anticipated that operational work at the Cemetery will be undertaken in-house, supported

by the Council's expanded outdoors team and staffing resources transferred under TUPE arrangements from Somerset Council. The Director of Leisure and Environment will provide strategic oversight of the service and work collaboratively with both authorities to review future staffing requirements, organisational structures and any potential recruitment needs. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk highlighted the importance of maintaining appropriate standards throughout the transition and ensuring that service quality is not adversely affected. It was explained that, for budget-setting purposes, Yeovil Town Council is currently working on the assumption that the budget figures previously provided by Somerset Council for the current financial year will remain broadly unchanged. Further work will be undertaken to identify service improvements, assess resource requirements and understand the financial implications of delivering the desired standard of service, with any future budgetary adjustments being reported in due course.

Members noted that, following the transfer of management responsibilities, Somerset Council's direct involvement in the operation of the Cemetery would be significantly reduced. This prompted discussion regarding whether the existing governance arrangements, established when both the Cemetery and Crematorium were managed by the principal authority, remained appropriate and effective. Members considered the future role and necessity of the Joint Burial Committee and discussed whether the current structure continued to provide value or whether it had become an additional layer of administration that duplicated decision-making processes.

During the discussion, Members identified a number of potential benefits associated with local management of the Cemetery, including improved accountability, more direct oversight of service delivery, enhanced responsiveness to complaints and operational issues, and an increased ability to address concerns raised by residents, service users and elected representatives in a timely manner. Members noted that local decision-making could enable maintenance issues and operational concerns to be resolved more quickly and effectively than under existing arrangements.

Concerns were raised regarding the legal basis of the Joint Burial Committee and the process that would be required should dissolution be pursued. Officers advised that further investigation would be required into historical agreements, statutory provisions and governance documentation, including arrangements dating back to local government reorganisation, to determine whether dissolution was legally permissible and to identify any procedural or statutory requirements. Members recognised that any future decision would need to be subject to legal confirmation and compliance with all relevant statutory processes.

Members also highlighted the importance of maintaining effective engagement with stakeholders, including funeral directors, clergy, celebrants and other users of the Cemetery, should governance arrangements change. It was agreed that appropriate stakeholder liaison arrangements would need to be established to ensure these groups continued to have opportunities to provide feedback and contribute to the ongoing development of cemetery services. Representatives of the funeral sector welcomed continued engagement and emphasised the importance of maintaining a formal mechanism

through which operational feedback and the views of bereaved families could continue to be communicated to the authority.

In addition, Members recognised the importance of maintaining effective partnership working between Yeovil Town Council, Yeovil Without Parish Council and Somerset Council. Particular concern was expressed regarding the future governance arrangements for the partnership between Somerset Council and Yeovil Without Parish Council in relation to the management and oversight of the Crematorium should the Joint Burial Committee be dissolved. Members noted that the Committee currently provides a formal mechanism for communication, financial oversight and joint decision-making between the partner authorities and were keen to ensure that suitable replacement arrangements were established. Members requested that proposals be developed setting out how governance, budget setting, financial reporting, maintenance planning, performance monitoring and strategic oversight of the Crematorium would continue in the future. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of maintaining regular face-to-face meetings between representatives of both authorities to support transparency, accountability and effective partnership working.

Whilst there was broad support for the principle that the Joint Burial Committee may have fulfilled its original purpose, Members agreed that any future changes should only proceed once the legal position had been fully established and an appropriate governance framework had been identified. The Committee therefore agreed in principle that the Joint Burial Committee had fulfilled its purpose and that, subject to legal confirmation that dissolution was permissible and completion of any required statutory procedures, steps should be taken to pursue its dissolution.

RESOLVED: (1) to note Somerset Council's intention to terminate the current management arrangements for Yeovil Cemetery; (2) to note Yeovil Town Council's intention to assume direct responsibility for the management and operation of Yeovil Cemetery, in consultation with Yeovil Without Parish Council, from 1st April 2027; (3) to recognise that the current governance arrangements were established at a time when Somerset Council managed both the Cemetery and Crematorium services; (4) to note that historical records indicate that the origins and legal basis of the Joint Burial Committee have not been conclusively established and may have arisen from local government reorganisation arrangements; (5) to agree, in principle, that the Joint Burial Committee has fulfilled its purpose and that, subject to legal confirmation that dissolution is permissible and to completion of any required statutory procedures, the Joint Burial Committee should be dissolved with effect from 1st April 2027; (6) to determine: the legal basis upon which the Joint Burial Committee was established; whether the Committee is a statutory or voluntary arrangement; the ownership position of the Cemetery and Crematorium assets; the powers available to the constituent authorities to amend or dissolve the existing arrangements; and any statutory procedures, approvals or consultations required before changes to governance arrangements can be implemented; (7) to request officers, subject to the outcome of (6) confirming that dissolution is legally permissible, and subject to any approvals required from the constituent authorities to prepare and implement the necessary legal, financial and administrative arrangements required to: dissolve the Joint Burial Committee; to transfer governance responsibility for

Yeovil Cemetery to Yeovil Town Council, working in partnership with Yeovil Without Parish Council as joint owner; and to establish appropriate governance arrangements for Yeovil Crematorium involving Somerset Council and Yeovil Without Parish Council as joint owners; (8) to request that appropriate stakeholder liaison arrangements be established to maintain regular communication and engagement with representatives of Yeovil Cemetery, Yeovil Crematorium, local Clergy, celebrants and Funeral Directors following the dissolution of the Joint Burial Committee; and (9) to request that proposals be developed by Somerset Council and Yeovil Without Parish Council for a future governance partnership arrangement to oversee the Crematorium, ensuring appropriate member engagement, regular face-to-face meetings, budgetary oversight, performance monitoring and effective partnership working following any dissolution of the Joint Burial Committee.

6:34pm – The meeting closed.

Please note that the next meeting of the Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee will be held on Wednesday 9th December 2026 at 6pm.

Signed: …….. (Chair) Date: ……..