



# Yeovil Town Council

Town House  
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Mayor: Cllr T Lock  
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**Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Extraordinary Culture Committee held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2026 at 7.35pm in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ; and by video-conference using Zoom meeting software.**

**Present (in person):** Cllrs D Woan (Chair); T Casey; E Hopkins; T Lock; G Oakes; K Parsons; and A Richards.

**In Attendance (in person):** Cllr A Soughton Cllr R Stickland; Cllr A Wilkes; A Card (Chief Executive/Town Clerk); L Ryder (Deputy Town Clerk) and T McKay (Events Officer).

**Present (virtually):** Cllrs K Gill (from 7:42pm until 8:10pm) and J Snell (until 8:10pm).

There were no members of the press or public.

## **Public Comment.**

There was no public comment.

**7.35 pm** – Meeting Commenced

## **11/240 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN**

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs K Gill\* (conflicting engagement); J Lowery (conflicting engagement) and W Read ((work commitments).

*\*Legislation requires that Councillors need to be physically present at the meeting to be shown as present. If a Councillor is unable to attend in person but can attend virtually, then apologies for absence should be given.*

**RESOLVED:** to accept the apologies with the reasons given.

## **11/241 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **11/242      MOTION**

Members were reminded that the motion had been split between the Property and Community Committee and the Culture Committee. The Committee focused on the elements relevant to culture and events, particularly how Yeovil Town Council could support, manage and promote activities.

Cllr Casey introduced the motion.

Discussions were held on the role of the Council's Events Officer. Concerns were raised about whether the motion duplicated existing staff responsibilities or created additional duties. It was clarified that managing bookings, programming and events for the area concerned was not currently part of the Events Officer's role and therefore would represent an expansion of responsibilities. Members discussed whether such operational details should be included in the motion and noted that any increase in event management activities could place additional demands on staff resources, potentially requiring further support if the Council took on greater responsibility for delivering events.

Following discussion, members agreed to amend the wording of the motion so that it referred to Yeovil Town Council supporting the management, programming and promotion of the facilities, rather than specifying an individual officer. The Committee also noted the need, in due course, to formally write to Somerset Council regarding the transfer of management responsibilities.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to formally write to Somerset Council, when appropriate, to progress transfer of the management responsibility for: the Triangle public space; the water feature; the digital screen; event booking and programming of the area; and the Glovers Walk Meanwhile Use site; (2) to assess how Yeovil Town Council could support the management, programming and promotion of these facilities, with the aim of maximising community use whilst minimising any additional staffing requirements; and (3) to see opportunities to develop a coordinated programme of community events, family activities, cultural events, markets, public screenings and town centre initiatives across these spaces, ensuring they become vibrant and well-used assets for the benefit Yeovil residents and visitors.

## **11/243      RECRUITMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT OFFICER**

Members considered a recommendation from the Staffing Committee to recruit a Development and Impact Officer, a specialist role focused on identifying grant opportunities, preparing funding bids, and securing additional income for the Council.

*7:43pm Cllr T Lock left the meeting.*

*7:44pm Cllr T Lock returned to the meeting.*

Supporters argued that grant writing is a highly skilled activity and that the Council is currently missing funding opportunities because it lacks dedicated capacity to monitor funding streams and submit applications. It was noted that employing an in-house officer would cost around £25.00 per hour including on-costs, compared with external consultants charging £40.00 - £52.50 per hour. The proposed role would be a three-day-per-week post, with one day funded by Somerset Council through arts-related partnership work.

*7:53pm Cllr A Soughton left the meeting.*

*7:53pm Cllr A Soughton returned to the meeting.*

Some councillors questioned the business case for the post, arguing that the report did not provide sufficient evidence of expected returns, missed funding opportunities, performance targets, or measurable outcomes. They also felt there was inadequate information to justify the expenditure and suggested that consultants could potentially provide the service instead. Concerns were also raised that councillors who were not members of the Staffing Committee had not seen the detailed discussions that informed the recommendation, leading to debate about transparency and the availability of supporting information.

In response, committee members and officers stated that the proposal had been thoroughly scrutinised by the Staffing Committee and was supported because the Council currently lacks the expertise and capacity to pursue significant funding opportunities. Examples were given of major projects such as the Octagon Theatre and Ham Hill Visitor Centre, where grant funding had been critical. Supporters argued that failing to recruit would result in missed funding opportunities and greater costs through reliance on consultants.

Following an extensive debate, a named vote was held

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; and (2) to agree to support the recruitment for the post of Development and Impact Officer on the salary scales SCP 20 – SCP 25 (£33,640 - £37,526 pro rata) (*voting: 5 for; 2 against*)\*1.

*\*1 For (Cllrs E Hopkins; T Lock; G Oakes; K Parsons; and D Woan); Against (Cllr T Casey; and A Richards).*

#### **11/244      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 11/245 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

*8:10 pm – Cllrs K Gill and J Snell left the meeting and did not return.*

**11/245      SOUTH   SOMERSET   HERITAGE   COLLECTIONS   PROJECT**  
**(CONFIDENTIAL)**

The Committee considered a recommendation from the Heritage Working Party on the future of the South Somerset Heritage Collection, currently stored at Lufton. Members were asked to support progressing the project and approve up to £95,000 for the appointment of a specialist heritage consultant team to undertake the next phases of work.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; (2) to recommend to the Executive, expenditure of up to £95,000 for the appointment of a specialist heritage consultant team; and (3) to provide interim reports to the Heritage Working Party during the consultancy process to provide oversight and ensure that the project remained on track.

The meeting closed at 8:19pm.

Signed: ..... (Chair)

Date: .....