



# Yeovil Town Council

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Mayor: Cllr T Lock  
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**Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Executive held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2026 at 7.00pm held by video-conference using Zoom meeting software; and in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ.**

**Present (in person):** Cllrs A Soughton (in the Chair); T Casey; K Gill; T Lock; G Oakes; K Parsons; A Richards; J Snell; R Stickland; and H Stonier.

**In Attendance (in person):** Cllr A Wilkes; A Card (Chief Executive / Town Clerk); and J Pang (Deputy Responsible Finance Officer).

**In Attendance (virtual):** Cllr A Kendall.

There was one member of the press present virtually and two members of the public present in person.

## **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

*7:01pm – the meeting commenced.*

### **11/376 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs W Read (conflicting engagement); R Spinner (personal reasons); and D Woan (conflicting engagement).

*\*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.

### **11/377 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr R Stickland declared a personal interest in agenda item 11/379 (Grants) as he is the Chair of Yeovil Without Parish Council, as all grant applicants are required to apply to parish councils within Yeovil, including Yeovil Without Parish Council. He does not sit on the Grants Committee.

Cllr J Snell declared a personal interest in agenda item 11/379 (Grants), specifically in relation to the grant application from Westlands Sports Football Club Ltd, as her daughter is a member of a Westlands team which would benefit from the proposed new football goals.

## **11/378**      **MINUTES**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meetings held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **11/379**      **APPLICATION FOR GRANT AID**

**Sing2Breathe - £1,360** to help deliver an 8-week block of sessions and support the ongoing creation of online video content and exercises for participants.

A representative from Sing2Breathe outlined the “Sing2Breathe” programme, which has been operating in Yeovil for 12 months and has grown significantly, including becoming a registered charity. The programme supports individuals with lung conditions through structured sessions combining breathing techniques, gentle movement, relaxation and singing, improving both physical health and social wellbeing while creating a supportive peer network.

The group is currently at full capacity with a waiting list, primarily serving Yeovil residents. Funding was requested to support the continuation of sessions and the development of resources for use between sessions, helping participants to better self-manage their condition and reduce reliance on GP services.

Members debated the application.

**Yeovil, Sherborne and District MS Group - £1,000** to fund support provided to residents of Yeovil and surrounding areas living with Multiple Sclerosis.

The Group Co-ordinator introduced the local MS group, drawing on his own experience of living with multiple sclerosis. The group has grown from a small meeting in the 1980s to over 150 members and aims to ensure no one faces MS alone by providing support, information, access to services, and grants for essential equipment.

The group delivers regular social and wellbeing activities to reduce isolation, but demand is increasing and funds are declining. Funding was requested to support ongoing costs such as venue hire and activities, along with assistance in identifying further funding opportunities.

Members debated the application.

*7:18pm – The representatives from Sing2Breathe and Yeovil, Sherborne and District MS Group left the meeting and did not return.*

**Westlands Sports Football Club - £950** to purchase a new football goal for the football club.

Members debated the application.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to award £1,360 to Sing2Breathe; (2) to award £1,000 to Yeovil, Sherborne and District MS Group; and (3) to award £950 to Westlands Sports Football Club.

### **11/380      REPORT FROM PREVIOUS GRANT APPLICANT**

In January 2025, Citizens Advice Somerset was awarded £2,325 as a contribution towards the cost of its advice service.

A report was subsequently submitted outlining the impact of the funding.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report.

### **11/381      YEOVIL STREET PASTORS – PROPOSED SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive / Town Clerk regarding a proposed Service Level Agreement with Yeovil Street Pastors, following a previous grant of £1,000. Members noted a proposed annual contribution of £3,500, based on the organisation's identified funding shortfall.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; and (2) to approve the Service Level Agreement and proposed contribution of £3,500.

### **11/382      APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS**

Members considered the payments made by Yeovil Town Council:

- 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026;
- 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026; and
- 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026 – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the payments made by Yeovil Town Council as detailed above.

### **11/383      REVENUE BUDGET OVERTURN 2025/26**

The Executive noted that all committees had recommended the transfer of underspends into earmarked reserves, with the purposes having been explained at previous meetings.

It was reported that, subject to these transfers, the overall underspend for the financial year would be just under £150,000 (approximately 4.5% of the total budget).

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; (2) to note the overall overturn for Yeovil Town Council in 2025/26 was £3,149,465 (£2,624,870 net expenditure and £524,595 movement into reserves) with explanations of significant variances as highlighted in Appendix A; (3) to approve the movement in reserves as listed on Appendix A; (4) to note the new Earmarked Reserve – Tennis Court Sinking Fund; Holiday Play Scheme; Allotments (SALC Grant); Open Space; and Ninesprings café refurbishment; (5) to note the Earmarked Reserve Balances; and (6) to note the Unallocated General Fund Balance.

### **11/384      BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2026 (MONTH 1 – 2)**

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk presented the budget monitoring report for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026. It was noted that at this early stage in the financial year, there is a predicted overspend of £31,000, equivalent to just under 1% of the budget.

However, forecasts will be refined as the year progresses, and the Council is currently considered to be on target.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report.

**11/385      BANK RECONCILIATION**

Members considered the formal bank reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the formal bank reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026.

**11/386      BALANCE SHEET**

Members considered the Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026.

**11/387      TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Deputy Responsible Financial Officer presented the report which ensured transparency and accountability in treasury management, outlining the Council's position at year end and performance over the year. No questions were raised by Members.

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk noted that improved cash flow management by the Finance Team had enabled funds to be invested more effectively, generating £169,000 in returns against a £100,000 budget, demonstrating strong financial performance through active daily monitoring and safe investment practices.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report.

**11/388      MAYOR'S ACCOUNTS 2025/26**

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk commended the Mayor, Cllr T Lock for maintaining excellent records throughout the year, with a clear audit trail supporting all receipts and payments.

Members noted that any underspend would be returned at year end, and welcomed the improved financial reporting, which provides clear accountability for the mayor's allowance.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report.

**11/389      TRANSPARENCY CODE 2015 – COMPLIANCE POSITION AND PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk introduced the report, stating that the team has carried out significant work to meet Transparency Code requirements, including publishing spends over £500, grants, assets, and procurement card data for public access. Most areas are compliant, with only procurement information outstanding (rated red). This gap is due to the transfer of services from Somerset Council and the lack of a complete contracts register, requiring a manual review of spending. Progress is underway, and full compliance is expected by the end of the year.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; and (2) to endorse the completion and publication of the outstanding datasets required to achieve full compliance with the Transparency Code 2015.

**11/390**      **INTERNAL AUDIT INDEPENDENCE AND PROGRAMME OF WORK REVIEW (2025/26 – RETROSPECTIVE)**

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk presented the report which sought retrospective approval to demonstrate to external auditors that the Council has reviewed the internal auditor's independence and work programme for 2025/26. The internal auditor was confirmed as independent, with no involvement in accounts preparation and no personal, professional or financial links to the Council. The agreed audit programme, including allocated days for each area, has been fully completed.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; (2) to note that formal consideration of internal auditor independence and the audit programme of work was not recorded during the 2025/26 financial year; (3) that having undertaken a retrospective review of the Internal Auditor's independence for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, that the Executive it is satisfied that the Internal Auditor was independent, objective, and free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest during that period; (4) to endorse the Internal Audit Programme of Work for 2025/26, noting that it was developed in consultation between the Deputy Responsible Financial Officer and the Internal Auditor and is proportionate to the Council's identified risks; and (5) to agree that this consideration is recorded in the minutes as evidence for audit purposes.

**11/391**      **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

The Health and Safety Policy, recommended by the Property and Community Committee (9<sup>th</sup> June 2026), was presented for approval. Minor amendments were identified, including aligning meeting frequency to quarterly, updating terminology and ensuring PPE standards reflect both CE and UKCA requirements.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; and (2) to adopt the Health & Safety Policy, subject to some minor amendments.

**11/392**      **ARMED FORCES COVENANT PLEDGE**

The Executive considered the recommendation from the Property and Community Committee (9<sup>th</sup> June 2026) to adopt the Armed Forces Covenant pledge.

**RESOLVED:** to adopt the Armed Forces Covenant pledge.

**11/393**      **UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk presented the report. She highlighted that the Council is experiencing increasing incidents of inappropriate behaviour towards staff across its sites, prompting the need for a formal policy to protect them. The policy sets out expected standards of behaviour, defines unacceptable conduct, and explains how such behaviour will be managed, with the Chief Executive responsible for deciding proportionate responses.

During discussion, some amendments were proposed, including adding a right of appeal (to be handled by the Staffing Committee or escalated externally if needed), strengthening wording to ensure actions and records are definite (not optional), and including consideration of vulnerable individuals.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; and (2) to approve and adopt the Unacceptable Behaviour Policy subject to some amendments as described above.

**11/394**      **URGENT DECISION – RECRUITMENT OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER**

The report presented an urgent decision on recruiting a Democratic Services Officer. However, The Chief Executive/Town Clerk reported that the recruitment process was unsuccessful due to a lack of suitably experienced candidates.

To address ongoing workload pressures and avoid further delays, it was proposed to instead recruit a lower-graded Admin Officer and provide in-house training to develop them into the role of Democratic Services Officer. This approach was considered more practical than re-advertising, which may yield the same result.

Concerns were raised about training costs and staff retention, but it was confirmed that learning agreements would be in place to mitigate this risk. While external support was discussed, it was noted this could be costly.

Members agreed this was a sensible “Plan B” given the specialist nature of the role.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; and (2) to approve the recommendation to proceed with recruiting and training an Admin Officer, to develop them into the role of Democratic Services Officer.

**11/395**      **AMPHITHEATRE WATER FOUNTAIN OPERATIONS**

The report discussed issues with the town centre Amphitheatre water fountains, which had been switched off during hot weather, leading to public complaints. Somerset Council asked whether the town council could assist with monitoring and maintaining water quality.

Officers advised that any involvement would require proper training, clear responsibilities, insurance cover and full cost recovery from Somerset Council. Members debated whether to step in, noting concerns about taking on responsibility for an asset not owned by the Council, balanced against public expectations and reputational impact.

It was also highlighted that wider discussions with Somerset Council about management of the town centre are ongoing.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report and the operational constraints affecting the water fountain; (2) to agree that Yeovil Town Council supports additional monitoring during peak weather periods (subject to future decisions); (3) to agree that Officers engage further with Somerset Council to explore feasible partnership or resourcing options; and (4) to delegate authority to the Chief Executive/Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Executive, to progress the matter.

**11/396**      **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 11/397 - 11/400 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

*8:13pm – Cllr A Kendall and the member of the press left the meeting and did not return.*

**11/397      PROCUREMENT OF CONSULTANCY SUPPORT FOR YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL 5-YEAR PLAN (COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)**

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk introduced the report which explained that the Council is looking to develop a five-year strategic plan to guide its future direction and priorities now that services have stabilised. Proposals were received from two consultants, with the Local Council Consultancy (LCC) preferred due to its clearer structure and defined deliverables.

The plan would begin with the leadership team and involve councillors and stakeholders to align priorities and set aspirations. While concerns were raised about costs and scope, members agreed it would be a worthwhile investment and a good use of resources.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; and (2) to appoint Local Council Consultancy (LCC) to support Yeovil Town Council to develop a new 5-Year Council Plan.

**11/398      ADDITIONAL WORKSPACE FOR YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL – UPDATE & REQUEST TO PROCEED (COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)**

The proposal, recommended by the Property and Community Committee (9<sup>th</sup> June 2026), seeks approval to fund and progress additional workspace at Penn Mill. The aim is to address current accommodation issues, including overcrowded and unsuitable working conditions, particularly for the finance and estates teams, and to provide storage for equipment.

The new site would house the Estates Team, Countryside Team and the Finance Team along with operational functions, while the Town House would remain in use for front-facing services, meetings, and potential income generation through Council Chamber room hire.

Members recognised the health and safety benefits and practical advantages of the move.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; and (2) to agree an 'up to' budget of £165,000 for capital works to enable officers to move forward with delivering a modern, compliant workspace for employees, to be funded as described within the report; and (3) to delegate authority to the Chief Executive/Town Clerk, in consultation with both the Chair of this Property & Community Committee and the Chair of the Executive to finalise and sign the lease.

**11/399      BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (CONFIDENTIAL)**

The Executive considered the proposed funded biodiversity enhancement project as recommended by the Leisure & Environment Committee (8<sup>th</sup> June 2026).

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; and (2) to approve the project as outlined recognising the organisational commitment required, and to delegate authority to the Chief Executive/Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee and the Chair of the Executive, to enter into and sign the Strategic Partnering Agreement on behalf of the Town Council once all required schedules are in place, enabling the project to commence.

**11/400      COLLABORATION AGREEMENT (CONFIDENTIAL)**

The Executive considered the report of the Chief Executive/Town Clerk regarding the Collaboration Agreement between Yeovil Town Council and Somerset Council for the Octagon Theatre.

The agreement is largely non-binding, with the key binding elements covering matters such as confidentiality and Freedom of Information. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk, with the support of the solicitors, had negotiated revisions to ensure both councils are held to equal standards.

There was some debate over the Outline Business Case.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; (2) to approve the Collaboration Agreement between Yeovil Town Council and Somerset Council (*voting: 9 for; 1 against*)\*<sup>1</sup>; and (3) to approve that the Collaboration Agreement be executed under the Common Seal in accordance with Standing Orders 26 (*voting: 9 for; 1 against*)\*<sup>1</sup>.

*\*<sup>1</sup> For (T Casey; K Gill; T Lock; G Oakes; K Parsons; J Snell; A Soughton; R Stickland and H Stonier); Against (Cllr A Richards).*

The meeting closed at 8:58pm.

Signed: ..... (Chair) Date .....