



Yeovil Town Council

Town House
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Mayor: Cllr T Lock
Chief Executive/ Town Clerk: Amanda Card BA (Hons), FCPFA, BSc (Open)
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Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Finance & Policy Executive held on Tuesday 31st March 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); K Gill, A Kendall; W Read; J Snell; R Stickland; A Wilkes; and D Woan.

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

In Attendance (virtual): Cllrs G Oakes (from 7:35pm) and A Richards.

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

Public Comment

The member of the press suggested that Somerset Council should be asked to contribute towards the flood lights at Yeovil Recreation Centre, noting that there was around £400,000 in the sinking fund originally held by South Somerset District Council. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk answered stating that the sum of money had been absorbed into Somerset Council's general reserves shortly after unitary reorganisation.

He also queried why the South Somerset Heritage Collections options appraisal and feasibility study would be considered in a confidential session. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk confirmed that this was because the report included commercially confidential information.

There was no other public comment.

7:02pm – the meeting commenced.

11/358 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs T Casey (injury); T Lock (conflicting engagement); and A Richards (personal reasons)*.

**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.

11/359 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr R Stickland declared a personal interest in agenda item 11/359 (Cemetery Lodge, Preston Road) as he is the Chair of Yeovil Without Parish Council, which owns 10% of the Cemetery Lodge. He also recorded a standing declaration of interest to be applied whenever Yeovil Without Parish Council was referenced.

11/360 MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2026.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings held on meeting held on 20th January 2026 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11/361 APPLICATION FOR GRANT AID

Project Dance Charity Foundation - £2,000 to help deliver their Yeovil-wide Schools Programme, offering free in-school dance workshops and free theatre tickets so students can attend BUSK, a vibrant youth talent showcase at Westlands Entertainment Venue.

At this point, Cllr J Snell declared a personal interest in that she was a member of Brympton Parish Council who had been approached for a grant. She further declared that her children attended Westfield Academy and Preston C of E Primary School, both who could potentially benefit from the initiative.

At this point, standing orders were suspended.

James Bamford, Director of Project Dance Charity Foundation, attended the meeting to deliver a presentation. He outlined Project Dance's ambition to expand its Yeovil-based arts programme, developed with support from the Royal Academy of Dance, London Children's Ballet and local schools, to improve young people's access to dance. Citing Sport England evidence on the benefits of dance for attainment and wellbeing, he explained that the scheme would deliver free in-school workshops and free theatre visits to a locally created production set to tour nationally. With South Somerset identified by Arts Council England as an underfunded priority area, the project aims to address limited arts opportunities by taking high-quality dance education directly into schools—something they welcomed, given tight school budgets and strong interest from local educators.

At this point, standing orders were re-instated.

Members debated the application.

7:23pm – The Director of Project Dance Charity Foundation left the meeting and did not return.

Yeovil Flower Arrangers Society - £600 to fund flowers and materials for their inspiring floral demonstrations, bringing residents together through creativity, connection, and improved wellbeing.

At this point, standing orders were suspended.

Jackie Parsons, Chair of the Yeovil Flower Arrangers Society, explained that the group—soon celebrating its 75th anniversary—meets at Holy Trinity Church and offers friendly, inclusive flower-arranging sessions supported by qualified demonstrators through NAFAS. The society welcomes people of all ages, helping to reduce loneliness and support community connection, although it currently operates on a tight budget. They run demonstrations, workshops, and special sessions, and aim to involve everyone from complete beginners to experienced arrangers.

At this point, standing orders were re-instated.

Members debated the application.

7:23pm – The Chair of the Yeovil Flower Arrangers Society left the meeting and did not return.

7:35pm – Cllr G Oakes joined the meeting virtually.

Yeovil St Michael and All Angels Parish - £1,000 to support the launch of the new Birchfield Intergenerational Community Lunch, starting this April and delivered in partnership with Birchfield Community Primary School, Able2Achieve, and Spark Somerset.

Members debated the application.

RESOLVED: (1) to award £2,000 to Project Dance Charity Foundation; (2) to award £600 Yeovil Flower Arrangers Society ;and (3) to award £1,000 to Yeovil St Michael and All Angels Parish.

11/362 APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

Members considered the payments made by Yeovil Town Council:

- 1st January 2026 – 31st January 2026; and
- 1st February 2026 – 28th February 2026.

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

11/363 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 28TH FEBRUARY 2026 (MONTH 1 – 11)

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk presented the budget monitoring report for the period ending 28th February 2026. It was noted that the current forecast indicates an underspend of £151,974, representing 4.6% of the approved budget.

A Councillor raised concerns about rising electricity costs and the potential impact of the conflict in Iran. He also expressed concerns regarding the Council's Climate Emergency declaration and the progress being made towards its goals.

The Chief Executive / Town Clerk acknowledged the high electricity costs and noted that the budget had been set before the conflict in Iran, which could not have been anticipated. She explained that the Council is progressing its climate actions, including installing photovoltaic panels and battery storage at Milford Hall as a first major project, with learning to be applied to other buildings. However, Town House cannot accommodate panels due to its conservation area status and unsuitable roof structure. While progress on the Climate Emergency has been slower due to limited staff resources and competing priorities, further projects are planned, and additional resources would be required if the Council wishes to accelerate this work.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11/364 BANK RECONCILIATION

Members considered the formal bank reconciliation as at 28th February 2026.

RESOLVED: to approve the formal bank reconciliation as at 28th February 2026.

11/365 BALANCE SHEET

Members considered the Balance Sheet as at 28th February 2026.

RESOLVED: to approve the Balance Sheet as at 28th February 2026

11/366 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members discussed a proposal to stop holding separate Planning Committee meetings due to the small number of applications and the inefficiency of organising short meetings. Instead, planning applications would be considered during Full Council meetings, with the scheme of delegation used in months when no Full Council meeting is scheduled. A special or reserve-date Full Council meeting could be arranged for any major or contentious applications.

Some councillors raised concerns about reduced public opportunities to comment, uneven treatment of applications depending on timing, and the need for clearer communication to residents about the Town Council's consultee role.

8:08pm – Cllr W Read left the meeting.

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk and Chair noted that neighbours are formally notified by Somerset Council and can always submit their own comments. A Councillor further highlighted that future national planning reforms may further reduce the number of applications received.

8:10pm – Cllr W Read returned to the meeting.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to agree to implement the proposal with effect from May 2026, with a review to take place after six months.

11/367 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk introduced the revised Scheme of Delegation.

Members raised minor wording and clarity issues – such as ensuring community safety responsibilities listed all relevant agencies.

8:25pm – Cllr J Snell left the meeting.

8:27pm – Cllr J Snell returned to the meeting.

RESOLVED: (1) to agree and recommend to Council the revised Scheme of Delegation, subject to the minor wording and clarity amendments as raised.

11/368 BUSINESS DEBIT CARD APPLICATION

Members considered a proposal to introduce a business debit card to streamline petty cash top-ups, as the current process requires two councillors to sign cheques, causing delays. The card would be held by the Deputy Responsible Finance Officer, who would be responsible for withdrawing cash solely to replenish petty cash floats.

Councillors sought assurance on transparency and audit trails, and officers confirmed that all withdrawals would appear on bank statements, feed into reconciliations, and be reviewed by the internal auditor, with petty-cash expenditure already recorded monthly.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to authorise the application for a business debit card.

11/369 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk presented two internal audit reports, highlighting that although several high-level issues were identified for 2024–25 - largely due to newly devolved services—all but one have now been resolved, with the remaining issue relating to money owed by Somerset Council and therefore outside the Town Council's control.

She emphasised that internal audit reports will always contain some recommendations, and that most of the auditor's findings were either already addressed or low-risk. A Councillor sought clarification on a small unreconciled amount, which will be written off as it was not material.

Councillors expressed satisfaction with the progress made and thanked officers for their work.

RESOLVED: to note the Internal Audit reports.

11/370 FUNDING THE FLOODLIGHTS AT YEOVIL RECREATION CENTRE

Members considered the Leisure & Environment Committee's recommendation to appoint a contractor for new floodlights at the Recreation Centre. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk

explained that part of the project would be covered by the Recreation Centre reserve, with the remainder funded through expected electricity savings of approximately £22,000 over four years (around £5,500 per year).

To enable the installation, the Committee was asked to approve releasing £22,000 from the Climate Change Reserve on a “spend to save” basis, with future savings used to replenish the reserve.

At this point Cllr J Snell declared a personal interest due to her football team’s use of the facility.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to approve that £22,000 should be released from the Climate Change Reserve to be replenished over a 4-year period at £5,500 per annum.

11/371 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 11/372 -11/374 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

8:39pm – The member of the press left the meeting and did not return.

11/372 ASSET TRANSFER UPDATE: LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk explained that the transfer of freehold assets from Somerset Council to Yeovil Town Council has slowed significantly due to the need for Secretary of State approval and requirements regarding subsidy control. Somerset Council are now required to create a scheme addressing these issues. Some assets also face delays due to unresolved title registrations. As the original long-stop date of July 2026 cannot now be met, extensions are needed for current licences to occupy and related operational agreements. Members also discussed outstanding invoices owed by Somerset Council; while payment is expected, there is a small risk of clawback should subsidy rules apply, so it was proposed that the money be received but held in reserve until the position is confirmed.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to agree to the formal extension to this longstop date (as advised by our legal representatives); and that the legal deed be authorised to be executed in accordance with Standing Order 26 (Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds); (3) to agree to the extension of the licences to occupy (as advised by our legal representatives); and that the legal deed be authorised to be executed in accordance with Standing Order 26 (Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds); (4) to note and accept the issue regarding the Leonardo grant payment; and (5) to note the issue regarding invoices raised

in accordance with the Deed to Facilitate; and to agree that earmarked reserve be set up to hold the payments pending the final outcome of the Subsidy Control assessment.

11/373 CEMETERY LODGE, PRESTON ROAD, YEOVIL (CONFIDENTIAL)

Members considered the report of the Director of Infrastructure (Property & Assets).

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to agree in principle to the proposal as outlined within the report, subject to the agreement of Yeovil Without Parish Council.

11/374 SOUTH SOMERST HERITAGE COLLECTIONS OPTIONS APPRAISAL AND FEASIBILITY STUDY (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Committee considered the recommendations from the Heritage Working Party.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to approve that the £5,000 be funded from the New Initiative budget.

The meeting closed at 9:06 pm.

Signed: (Chair) Date