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 Leisure and Environment Committee held on Monday 9th November 2026 at 7:00pm in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA21 1PQ and by video-conference using Zoom meeting software.

Present (in person): Cllr R Spinner (in the chair); T Casey; K Gill; A Kendall; J Lock; T Lock; K Parsons; W Read; A Richards; A Soughton; D Woan.

Also Present (in person): D Potten (co-opted, non-voting)

In Attendance (in person): A Card (Chief Executive/Town Clerk); K Menday (Director of Leisure and Environment); L Ryder (Deputy Town Clerk);

There was one member of the public (in person) and no members of the press present.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

7:00pm – the meeting commenced.

11/343 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

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

No apologies were received.

**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.

11/344 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr K Gill declared a personal interest in that he was an allotment holder.

11/345 MINUTES

The Committee approved as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th September 2026.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on 7th September 2026 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11/346 FEEDBACK FROM CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBER

The Tenant Representative for Goar Knap allotment site expressed gratitude for the ongoing efforts from officers and staff in the management of allotment services and has received positive feedback from several tenants.

A brief update was provided on the investigation into backflow prevention arrangements at allotment sites from Wessex Water.

Concern was raised regarding the rise in vacant plots across several sites, noting that this may be due to significant hot, dry weather and as a result, crop failure.

RESOLVED: that the matters be noted.

11/347 ALLOTMENT LETTING/AVAILABILITY REPORT

The Committee considered the Allotment Letting/Availability Report.

It was noted by the Deputy Town Clerk that, after the Council has undertaken debt management, there will be an estimated 40-45 allotment plots available for new tenants and that the current decrease isn't atypical when entering the winter period, with the expectation that this number will rise again throughout the year.

Members discussed the effects of ongoing issues at different sites, and the impact of extreme hot weather, noting that these may be currently contributing to low tenancy numbers.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11/348 NEWTOWN ALLOTMENT SITE WATER USAGE

The Committee considered the report regarding Newtown Allotment Site Water Usage from the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members were informed of the progress of claiming costs back from an unusually high water charge from Water2business, with the money now being received. It was noted that the Council is actively monitoring water usage across the allotment sites and identifying any potential issues accordingly.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11/349 SERVICE UPDATE

The Committee considered the Service Update report from the Director of Leisure and Environment.

The Committee noted the success of the Estates Team and colleagues' recent relocation to the Pen Mill operational base, with the Director of Leisure and Environment stressing the positive impact it has had on the streamlining of operations and staff safety. The recent success of the Remembrance Parade poppy project was also celebrated, with significant community engagement both in the creation of the knitted displays and footfall at St John's Church to view the project. Additionally, the success of the Autumn events programme was noted, with Friends of the Country Park receiving the largest amount of donations to date.

The Director of Leisure and Environment provided an update on several ongoing projects across the directorate, such as green spaces and play parks. The importance of promotion for the green and open spaces was noted, with design work for the new website having now been completed, ensuring better public access to Council services in this area. Additionally, the successful recruitment of students for work experience placements through the Yeovil College Futures Fest was noted as a positive step in encouraging young people to become actively involved in their environment and local government initiatives. Members were updated on ongoing consultations with residents regarding improvements to play parks, particularly within Abbots Mead and Milford Park. Section 106 funding has been provided by Abri to further support the consultation process. Members also noted the securing of funding from the Tree Council's Branching Out Fund, with the Estates Manager now able to complete the final planting of the edible hedge at Birchfield this winter, in collaboration with the community at Birchfield Community Primary School.

The Director of Leisure and Environment highlighted that due to the change in season, the work programme of the frontline Estates Team will shift, with tree work having begun on various allotment sites to ensure boundaries are clearly identified.

The Committee discussed and raised questions regarding future strategies for protecting plant life across sites from climate change, concerns regarding Birchfield's edible trees encroaching on property, and the positive impact of both the recent poppy displays and events work at Yeovil Country Park.

Members also expressed gratitude for the work completed by the Green Spaces team.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

7:21pm – Cllr T Lock left the meeting.

7:22pm – Cllr T Lock returned to the meeting.

11/350 UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR YEOVIL

The Director of Leisure and Environment provided members with an update on the drafting of an Environmental Improvement Plan, detailing prioritised outcomes and overall vision over a 5-year period in relation to nature recovery, biodiversity enhancement, climate resilience and resident access. It was noted that although the plan is environmental, it is led significantly by the community and their desires. Upon receiving feedback of the initial proposal, the Director of Leisure and Environment aims to invite members of *all* Committees to a workshop, aiding the collating and refinement of information for future public consultation.

RESOLVED: 1) to note the report and 2) propose future workshop to shape draft Environmental Improvement Plan.

11/351 BUDGET MONITORING UPDATE

The Committee reviewed the Month 6 (April 2026 – September 2026) budget monitoring report.

Members asked questions regarding the budget monitoring update. It was clarified that the electricity costs for both Ninesprings Café and Yeovil Country Park Café had previously been included within the electricity budgets for the Yeovil Recreation Centre building and the Yeovil Country Park building. These costs have now been separated, providing a more accurate reflection and enabling a truer indication of the overall electricity costs for each department.

RESOLVED: to note the report

7:40pm – Cllr J Lock left the meeting and did not return.

11/352 BUDGET SETTING 2027/28

The Committee reviewed the Budget Setting 2027/28 report.

Members noted the update on the transfer of responsibility for Yeovil Cemetery. It was reported that Yeovil Town Council would oversee the service during 2027/28, with associated resources and staff transferred through the TUPE process. Members were advised that, as this would be the Council's first year managing the Cemetery, the proposed budget would mirror current arrangements. A budget review would be undertaken following a full year of operations, enabling future budgets to be set more accurately.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

7:44pm – One member of the public and D Potten left the meeting and did not return.

11/353 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 11/340 to 11/342 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

11/354 TREE REPORT

The Committee considered the report from the Director of Leisure and Environment.

Members noted updates on current arrangements, development opportunities and future resource requirements for the Council's approach to tree management and inspection. The Committee discussed the potential utilisation of developing technologies to further aid service delivery and decision making.

RESOLVED: 1) to recognise the need for a structured tree inspection programme; 2) to request an appraisal of future delivery models; 3) receive a further report on recommendations, implementations and costs; and 4) note that any future funding requirements may be considered through the budget-setting process.

11/355 UPDATE ON FUNDED BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Committee considered the report from the Director of Leisure and Environment regarding a proposed strategic partnership and associated environmental initiatives. Members noted the progress made through ongoing discussions with external partners and project arrangements. The Committee was provided with an update on the proposed timescales and anticipated benefits of the initiative in supporting the Council's environmental objectives.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.

Signed: ……... (Chair) Date: ……