



Yeovil Town Council

Town House
19 Union Street
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 1PQ

Mayor: Cllr T Lock
Chief Executive/Town Clerk: Amanda Card BA (Hons), FCPFA, BSc (Open)
01935 382424 www.yeovil.gov.uk
E-mail-town.clerk@yeovil.gov.uk

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Culture, Events & Promotions Committee held on Tuesday 16th June 2026 at 7.00pm 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; K Gill; E Hopkins; J Lowery; T Lock; K Parsons; and E Potts-Jones.

In Attendance (in person): Cllr A Soughton, A Card (Chief Executive/Town Clerk); A Burgan (Director of Culture) and K Beverley (Arts Engagement and Outreach Manager, Somerset Council).

Present (virtually): Cllr A Richards.

In Attendance (virtually): T McKay (Events Officer).

There was one member of the press present virtually and no members of the public present.

Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

7.00 pm – Meeting Commenced

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk introduced Tamara McKay the newly appointed Events Officer.

11/229 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 W Read (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.

11/230 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr J Lowery declared a personal interest in item 11/232 (Outturn Report for 2025/26) and 11/236 (Octagon Arts Engagement & Outreach report 2025/26), as the Westlands Entertainment Venue employs her daughter.

11/231 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Committee approved as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th January 2026 and 12th May 2026.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th January 2026 and 12th May 2026 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11/232 OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2025/26

The Committee discussed a year-end underspend of £279,818, noting that a significant portion relates to the ticket levy, which will be transferred into reserves. Members were directed to supporting details in the agenda, including a breakdown of the figures and a list of committee-specific reserves showing the impact of proposed transfers. The Committee was then asked to approve recommendations to move funds to and from reserves.

During questions, members raised concerns about ongoing maintenance issues at Westlands, particularly the air handling system, and asked when cost estimates would be available. The Chief Executive /Town Clerk confirmed that more detailed costings and formal quotations will be brought forward in September, with procurement subject to tender due to the value involved. Initial estimates suggest the underspend should cover most, if not all, of the works.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to agree to recommend the proposed reserve transfers to the Executive.

11/233 BUDGET MONITORING UPDATE (APRIL 2026 – MAY 2026)

The Chief Executive /Town Clerk presented the budget monitoring update report stating that there is currently a forecast overspend of just over £14,000, but it is still at a very early stage in the financial year, so this is only an initial estimate. A clearer and more accurate picture will emerge as the year progresses and more invoices are received and processed.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

11/234 BLUE PLAQUE TRAIL

The committee considered a proposal to modernise the blue plaque trail by converting it from a paper-based format into a digital app, following discussions with a supplier who could deliver this for around £500. Members generally supported the idea, noting it would bring the scheme into the 21st century and improve accessibility. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk

suggested that should the app be ready, it could be launched at the September Super Saturday event.

Concerns were raised about the condition of the existing plaques, which were considered as needing refreshing and there could potentially be more sites of importance. It was agreed to proceed with the app using current content, while also undertaking further investigation into the plaques (including whether original moulds exist and the cost of refurbishment). A full update will return to Committee in September.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to proceed with enhancing the blue plaque trail by converting to a digital app; and (3) to undertake an investigation into the refreshing of the blue plaques and additional sites and submit a report to the September meeting of this Committee.

11/235 SUPER SATURDAY – 4TH JULY 2026 UPDATE

The Chief Executive /Town Clerk introduced the report of the Events Officer presenting an update on Super Saturday (4 July), which this year will incorporate an Armed Forces theme and covenant signing, reflecting joint working between this Committee and the Property & Community Committee. A wide range of themed activities and organisations have been engaged to support the event, and members were invited to ask questions on the arrangements.

Discussion focused on concerns about vehicles being placed in the amphitheatre area, with members strongly opposing this due to risks of damage, oil leaks, and existing wear to the surface. It was agreed that officers would explore suitable alternative locations for the vehicles. It was suggested that Officers seek clarification from experts at Somerset Council on weight limits and long-term use of the amphitheatre, to ensure the space can be used safely and to maximum effect for future events.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) Officers seek clarification from experts at Somerset Council on weight limits and long-term use of the amphitheatre, to ensure the space can be used safely and to maximum effect for future events.

11/236 OCTAGON ARTS ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH REPORT 2025/26

The Committee received a presentation from the Arts Engagement & Outreach Manager. The Octagon Arts Engagement and Outreach programme operates as a key department within the Octagon and Westlands. It is funded by Somerset Council and supported by Arts Council investment. The programme has grown significantly, delivering over 1,500 sessions, engaging more than 16,000 participants and providing extensive opportunities across workshops, performances, schools' programmes, health initiatives, and career pathways. It focuses on widening access, attracting new audiences, and supporting local artists, while

also delivering social value through inclusive schemes, subsidised tickets, and targeted health and wellbeing projects.

Members praised the breadth, quality and impact of the programme, particularly its work with schools, young people, and disadvantaged groups, and its role in inspiring participation in the arts.

Concerns were raised about ensuring greater visibility and communication of the programme, as well as strengthening inclusion for groups such as home educated and NEET (not in education, employment or training) young people.

There was also interest in understanding contributions from other parishes and maintaining focus on benefits for Yeovil residents.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to agree a contribution of £6,000.

11/237 SOUTH SOMERSET HERITAGE COLLECTION – LUFTON UPDATE

The committee received a brief update on the South Somerset Heritage Collection at Lufton. It was noted that the working party has already met. A proposal from the South West Heritage Trust has now been received, following earlier discussions.

A further meeting of the working party will be convened shortly to review the proposal in detail. This item was presented purely as an update at this stage.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

At 8:06pm the Arts Engagement and Outreach Officer left the meeting and did not return.

11/238 TOWN COUNCIL EVENTS UPDATE

The committee received an update on town council events, including a successful Town Crier competition, which ran alongside the Eats Festival and generated positive feedback, despite some concerns about limited publicity. The event made effective use of the amphitheatre and digital screen and overall was well organised and enjoyed by participants and visitors.

The report outlined the 2026 and 2027 events programme, including the expansion to two Super Saturdays per year, however there are plans to grow the town's events offer further. Members discussed the importance of improving promotion and marketing, involving partners, and encouraging ideas from councillors and the community. It was emphasised that the council can act as an enabler and facilitator, supporting others to run events as well as delivering its own, with the expectation that the events programme will continue to expand with dedicated staffing support.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11/239 COUNTRY WEST FEST

The Committee reviewed the Country West Fest event, noting that although attendee feedback and artist quality were positive, attendance was lower than expected, resulting in a reported financial shortfall. Members highlighted several issues, including competition from other festivals, limited sponsorship, timing, branding, and the overall event experience. While some felt the losses and financial risks made the event difficult to justify, others argued that first-year events rarely succeed financially and that there were valuable lessons to build on.

After discussion, there was general agreement that the concept should not be abandoned immediately. Instead, the Committee discussed referring the matter back to the working party to develop a more detailed proposal, including format, costs, timing and feasibility. This will be brought back to the Committee (1 in September) before any final decision is made on whether to proceed with a future event.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) that the working party develop a business case with possible bookings for a future event (potentially in September 2027 - although no commitment is to be made at this time) which is brought back to the next meeting of this Committee; and (3) that Cllr T Casey joins the working party and Cllr J Lock be invited to join.

The meeting closed at 8:45pm.

Signed: (Chair)

Date: