



Yeovil Town Council

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Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee held on Monday 11th July 2022 at 7.00pm held in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA21 1PQ and by video-conference using Zoom meeting software.

Committee Members Present (in person): Cllrs R Spinner (Chair); T Casey; A Kendall; P Lock; E Potts-Jones; A Richards; A Soughton and H Stonier.

Committee Members Present (Virtually): Cllr J Lock (until 7.43pm) and Mr M Roper (Co-opted Non-voting).

Members Present (Virtually): Cllr T Lock (Lyde Ward).

In Attendance (in person): A Card (Town Clerk); and S Freemantle (Deputy Town Clerk), S Barnes (Locality Team Leader – SSDC).

Public Comment. There were no members of the public and one member of the press (virtually) present. The Chairman gave the Co-opted Non-voting member the opportunity to speak during Public Comment or in the specific agenda item 11/024 Feedback from Co-opted Non-voting Member. Mr M Roper chose to speak in public comment and explained that he had raised a lot of issues at the last meeting of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee and he had sent an email to the Clerk as requested by the Chairman. Mr Roper stated he would like an answer about whether there was any point in him carrying on in the Co-opted Non-voting seat at the Committee. The Chairman explained that a meeting had taken place just prior to the Committee meeting to discuss the email and that a response would be sent after the meeting. Mr Roper asked what the purpose of the Assistant Town Clerk and Administrative Assistant's visit to Milford Dip allotment site was and the Chairman asked the Deputy Town Clerk to respond. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that they had visited the site as they had promised they would at the last meeting of the Yeovil in Bloom Steering Group meeting on 20th June when Mr Roper had expressed his dissatisfaction with the state of Milford Dip allotment site. Mr Roper asked why two tenants had recently taken on plots with very high weeds and why they had not been made presentable before the tenants had started working them. He accused the people in charge of "not doing their job properly" and alleged that there was no liaison between this department and the tenants and tenant representatives. He alleged that the two members of staff who visited Milford Dip allotment site did not talk to the tenants who were on site at

the time. Mr Roper concluded by saying that he was “really, really disappointed in the state of the unlet plots” and asked if something could be done to remedy this.

7.07pm – Meeting Commenced.

11/019. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

There were no apologies for absence.

11/020. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Roper declared an interest in agenda items 11/024 Feedback from Co-opted Non-voting Member, 11/025 Allotment Letting/Availability Report and 11/026 Forthcoming Allotment Rent Review.

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors at this stage, however Cllr P Lock declared a personal interest later in the meeting on agenda item 11/022 Skate Parks Redevelopment Update as she is a member of the Working Party for the project.

11/021. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Committee approved as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th June 2022.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee held on 13th June 2022 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

11/022. SKATE PARKS REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report by the Locality Officer (SSDC) and S Barnes, the Locality Team Leader (SSDC) explained that he was in attendance at the meeting to answer questions about the project as the Locality Officer (SSDC) was on leave.

It was explained that the whole project covered Milford, Yew Tree and Oak Tree skate parks, but that any contribution from Yeovil Town Council would be spent on Milford and Yew Tree as they are located within the administrative area of Yeovil Town Council. It was confirmed that neighbouring parish councils had been approached for funding and that Yeovil Without Parish Council had agreed a contribution of £3,334.

Cllr P Lock declared a personal interest in this agenda item as she is on the Working Party for the project.

Discussion took place regarding the tender process and the contract. It was confirmed that the fixed price contract would be between the contractors and SSDC and that any contingencies would need to be factored in by the contracting council.

The existing equipment is outdated, although it has lasted for approximately 30 years. It would potentially need to be replaced within 18 months. In response to a query about noise, the Locality Team Leader explained that the new equipment would be made from concrete, so quieter than the steel equipment in use currently which acts as a drum.

7.43pm – Cllr J Lock left the meeting and did not return.

It was confirmed that Yeovil Town Council would receive an update at a future meeting on the proposed designs.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to agree to the contribution of £50,000 to the Skate Park Redevelopment Project to be split between Milford and Yew Tree skate parks.

11/023. PLAY AREA UPDATE

The Locality Team Leader (SSDC) provided an update regarding the play area repairs at Milford, Oxford Road, Preston Park, Yew Tree and Howards Road play areas and a full list is available on request.

The Locality Team Leader also explained that a refurbishment of the play area at Ninesprings will be taking place, and whilst this is not the responsibility of Yeovil Town Council, it is a key location in Yeovil and a popular area in close proximity to Yeovil Country Park.

With regard to the plans for Arnewood Park gardens, it was explained that this project was in the early stages of being scoped.

The Locality Team Leader also updated the Committee on the “School’s Out” programme of play for local youngsters for four weeks during the summer holidays. Activities would include arts and crafts, cooking and countryside skills and it was understood that the community benefit of holding these schemes extended beyond the arrangements for play/entertainment for the children, but also enabled the parents to have the opportunity to chat and relax, giving the potential to assist with other concerns.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the Play Area Update including the plans to refurbish Ninesprings play area in spring 2023 and the early-stage commencement of the project at Arnewood Park Gardens; and (2) to note the information regarding the “School’s Out” scheme.

8.03pm – The Locality Team Leader (SSDC) left the meeting and did not return.

11/024. FEEDBACK FROM CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBER

No update was provided and it was confirmed that no feedback had been received from the allotment site tenant representatives.

RESOLVED: to note the matter.

11/025. ALLOTMENT LETTING/AVAILABILITY REPORT

The Committee considered the report.

Discussion took place regarding the state of plots which were perceived to be untenanted.

8.10pm – Cllr H Stonier left the meeting and did not return.

The Town Clerk explained that some new tenants prefer to take the plots on as seen if they are keen to get started as soon as possible. She also explained that the process of evicting a tenant from an allotment plot took time; 2 weeks to wait for a response on a Pre-Notice to Quit letter, an inspection of the plot, 4 weeks to wait for the Notice to Quit period to end and then an opportunity for the evicted tenant to appeal.

Discussion took place regarding the potential ways that the uptake of vacant plots could be improved including advertising, radio, notice boards and social media.

RESOLVED: (1) that the report be noted; and (2) that availability of plots be promoted.

11/026. FORTHCOMING ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW

The Committee considered the report by the Deputy Town Clerk.

RESOLVED: (1) that the report be noted; and (2) that the decisions on allotment rent be made in accordance with the following table to bring the decision-making schedule back in line with the annual invoicing date.

Allotment rent increase?	Tenants informed (12 months' notice)	Charge effective for period
Decision made November 2021	December 2021	January 2023 to December 2023
Decision to be made in September/November 2022	December 2022	January 2024 to September 2024
Decision to be made in July 2023	August/September 2023	October 2024 to September 2025
Decision to be made in July 2024	August/September 2024	October 2025 to September 2026

11/027. FINANCIAL STATEMENT – APRIL AND MAY 2022

The Committee considered the Financial Statement for the period 1st April to 31st May 2022.

RESOLVED: that the Financial Statement for the period 1st April to 31st May 2022 be approved.

Public Comment. There were no members of the public and one member of the press present. The member of the press offered to run a feature in the next edition of the Yeovil Press to publicise the availability of allotment plots in Yeovil.

8.30pm – Mr Manny Roper (Co-opted, Non-voting Member) and the member of the press left the meeting and did not return.

11/028. 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 items 11/029 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

11/029. ALLOTMENT MAINTENANCE WORKING PARTY (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Committee considered the verbal report by the Deputy Town Clerk.

RESOLVED: to note the report and send a letter to the Co-opted Non-voting Member.

The meeting closed at 8.53pm.

Signed: (Chairman)

Date: