



Yeovil Town Council

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Mayor: Cllr T Lock
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Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on Monday 7th July 2025 at 7:00pm 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; K Gill; A Kendall; J Lock; T Lock; A Soughton; and 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); and S Freemantle (Deputy Town Clerk).

Public Comment.

There were three members of the public (in person) and no members of the press present.

A member of the public raised concerns that maintenance of the allotments would not continue at the current standard following the end of the maintenance contract. He also asked whether the existing rules for taking on an allotment will continue.

The Director of Leisure and Environment provided reassurances that the new professional outdoor green spaces team were now in place and would be continuing with the maintenance to the same excellent standard set by the contractor. She added that there would be no change to the administration in relation to tenancy agreements and allotment management.

7:04pm – Meeting Commenced.

11/262 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr W Read (conflicting engagement) and Cllr A Wilkes (conflicting engagement).

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies with the reasons given.

11/263 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr K Gill declared a Personal Interest in agenda items 11/265, 11/266, 11/267 and 11/268 due to his allotment tenancy with the Town Council.

Cllr A Kendall declared a personal interest in agenda item 11/269 due to his representation of Somerset Council for Yeovil in Bloom. Cllr Kendall also declared a personal interest in

agenda item 11/273 due to his representation on Planning Committee South for Somerset Council.

11/264 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Committee approved as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th May 2025.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on 19th May be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11/265. FEEDBACK FROM YEOVIL ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

Cllr Spinner explained that he had attended the last meeting of the Yeovil Allotment Association which had been a really positive meeting and specific issues had been discussed directly with the office.

RESOLVED: that the feedback be noted.

11/266. FEEDBACK FROM CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBER

The Co-opted Non-Voting Member explained that he had been asked by the Chairman of the Yeovil Allotment Association to forward an offer to judge the allotment sites for the Best Kept Allotment Competition.

The Co-opted Member explained that it was understood that the best kept allotment competition had been cancelled due to financial constraints, not lack of judges and he felt that cost saving could have been made if certificates had been awarded instead of trophies. He explained that tenants looked forward to the competition and it encouraged tenants to keep their plots clean and tidy. He supported the “Growing Together” initiative – a scheme for tenants to nominate a fellow tenant for an award, and for the tenant representative of each site to nominate a tenant who had supported and inspired fellow tenants.

With regard to the allotment tenancies, the Co-opted Member felt that inspections should take place more regularly and suggested that overgrown plots could be offered for free to prospective tenants for a period of 12 months; and that a deposit be requested from all new tenants which would be returned to them if the plot is left in an acceptable state on termination of the tenancy.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the issue with running the Best Kept Allotment Competition was not a financial one, but about staff resources this year. It was explained by the Chairman that there was a plan to meet regularly with tenant representatives where matters regarding tenancy agreements could be discussed.

RESOLVED: that the matters be noted.

11/267. ALLOTMENT LETTING/AVAILABILITY REPORT

The Committee considered the report by the Assistant Town Clerk.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

11/268. ALLOTMENT UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the report by the Assistant Town Clerk and the “Growing Together” initiative to recognise the outstanding community efforts of allotment tenants and supported the proposal to run this competition this year. Feedback would be welcomed to ascertain whether to continue to run this alongside the Best Kept Allotment Competition in future years.

In response to the questions raised by the Co-opted Member, the Town Clerk/CEO explained that the new Estates Team and Engagement Officer would be more active on allotment sites and part of their roles would be to check the plots and sites. She added that the new Estates Team would also be on a position to help present vacant plots in a better condition than there was the capacity for previously.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11/269. YEOVIL IN BLOOM UPDATE

The Committee considered the verbal report by the Deputy Town Clerk and noted the portfolio. The Director of Leisure and Environment briefly outlined the arrangements for the South West in Bloom judging day, explaining that the approach was about community and the tour would conclude with an informal gathering in the country park to which all the community groups who had been involved in preparations for Yeovil in Bloom would be invited.

A question was raised regarding the future of the Yeovil in Bloom Steering Group. In response, it was confirmed that the group would be reshaped in the coming year, with an emphasis on inviting and involving community groups to ensure broader participation and representation.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

11/270. DEVOLUTION UPDATE REPORT

The Director of Leisure and Environment introduced the report and explained that the initial grass cutting and horticultural maintenance on each site was taking longer than routine cuts would due to the state that the areas were in at the point that the responsibility for them was passed on to Yeovil Town Council. However, she expressed strong satisfaction with the new Estates Team, which took up post at the end of May and has already tackled these inherited challenges with enthusiasm and inventive solutions as sites and play areas transitioned from Somerset Council.

During May, the Estates Manager and colleagues conducted site visits in advance of the June takeover to scope out immediate maintenance needs and begin medium-term planning for community improvements, examples of which are outlined. They were thinking about the initial works that needed to take place and also thinking forward to medium-term planning as to what needs to be provided for our communities. In the report there are a few examples of some of the enhancement works and medium-term works that are being factored into the management plans which will be provided for every space. These will be available for comments from members and used as a basis for consultation with communities.

The Director extended thanks to the Town House team as they had received a high volume of calls and emails in relation to open spaces following transferral to the Town Council.

An effective management plan for trees and woodlands would be created as there are now large areas within the Town Council's remit.

Play area inspections have now all taken place and Summerhouse View Play area had to be temporarily closed until the safety matting could be replaced and wooden perimeter fencing which was identified as unsafe had to be removed from around Howard's Row play area.

With regard to Yeovil in Bloom, the team had done its very best with significantly reduced resources and it was felt that Yeovil should be very proud of the result, regardless of the competition outcome due to the immense team and community effort.

It was noted that space is at a premium for team members and machinery. The Director added that the planning application for the growing hub at the former ski centre had now been completed and submitted.

The Director answered questions about her report and agreed to provide a list of every green space for which Yeovil Town Council is now responsible.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

11/260. 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 11/272 and 11/273 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

**11/272. PROCUREMENT REPORT PURCHASE OF MOWERS – URGENT
DECISION: FOR INFORMATION**

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

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

11/273. COUNTRY PARK UPDATE REPORT - CONFIDENTIAL

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

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to welcome the opportunity to progress the Country Park; (3) to submit an Expression of Interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in relation to the project; and (4) to bring a further update to a future meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee.

The meeting closed at 8:04pm.

Signed: (Chair)

Date: