



Yeovil Town Council

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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 8th September 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; A Kendall; J Lock; T Lock; A Soughton; A Wilkes 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 L Ryder (Deputy Town Clerk).

In Attendance (virtually): Cllr A Richards (Wyndham Ward) and S Wheeler (Parks and Engagement Officer)

Public Comment.

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

7:00pm – Meeting Commenced.

11/274 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr K Gill (personal reasons) and Cllr W Read (conflicting engagement).

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies with the reasons given.

11/275 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

11/276 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Committee approved as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th July 2025.

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

11/277. FEEDBACK FROM YEOVIL ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

Cllr Spinner explained that he had been made aware an Officer had started attending the Yeovil Allotment Association meetings and questioned whether they both should attend going forward. Cllr Spinner fed back that the association had been planning their Annual Show and that they had discussed the new Estates team who had just recently taken over the maintenance on the allotments.

RESOLVED: that the feedback be noted.

11/278. FEEDBACK FROM CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBER

The Co-opted Non-Voting Member went through a list of concerns he had been asked to raise. He had done some research on rents in other towns and villages and explained they had better facilities and were charging less. He raised the idea of deposits again and concerned this could potentially deter new tenants from taking on plots.

The Co-opted Member had been asked by the Chairman of the Yeovil Allotment Association to remind the committee that the association has a gold club membership with Brimsmore for £100 a year. He said it may become detrimental to the association as members pay £10 a year for the membership if the Council are going to offer their own rewards to the allotment tenants.

He explained that the Estates team had been doing a good job on the allotments and tenants seemed to be pleased with the results.

RESOLVED: that the matters be noted.

11/279. ALLOTMENT LETTING/AVAILABILITY REPORT

The Deputy Town Clerk updated the Committee that three plots had since been tenanted and that next month is when the rents are due which will see an increase in tenants vacating plots. In response to the question raised regarding Elizabeth Flats having the most vacant plots, it was explained the site needed a lot of work and that the Estates Team will be working on the site over the winter.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

11/280. ALLOTMENT RENT REVIEW

The Chief Executive/Town Clerk explained the rent review had been difficult to calculate with all the changes that have happened including the Estates Team taking over the maintenance. The calculations are based on an annual inflation rate of 4.8% increase, changing the budget from £25,560 to £26,786.

In response to the question raised by the Co-opted Member, the Chief Executive/Town Clerk explained if the committee retained the cost at 53p it would be a shortfall of £832 costing a Band D household 9p per annum. It was confirmed that the calculations are based on all plots, including vacant plots. The Chief Executive/Town Clerk confirmed a 54p charge would be a shortfall of £342 costing a Band D household 3p per annum.

It was discussed that now the Estates Team are carrying out the maintenance whether there would be potential to not increase the rents next year. The Director of Leisure and

Environment explained there is a significant amount of back dated work and believed whilst the costings should be lower, the input will be far greater over the next few years.

RESOLVED: (1) that the report be noted; (2) that the allotment rent be increased to 55 pence per square metre for the period 1st October 2026 to 30th September 2027; and (3) that the proposed rent increase be referred to the Finance and Policy Executive Committee.

11/281. BUDGET MONITORING UPDATE MONTH 4 (APRIL 2025 – JULY 2025)

Members considered the budget monitoring update for the period April 2025 – July 2025. It was discussed that the electric consumption was higher at Yeovil Recreation, and Chief Executive/Town Clerk explained the broker had calculated the usage and it was an estimate rather than actual due to not having a full year to make a comparison. It was also confirmed that the £51,000 spent under the purchase of new vehicles was for two Ferris Mowers which was discussed at the previous meeting.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

11/282. GRANT APPLICATION FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING

The Director of Leisure and Environment introduced the report and explained the reasons for applying for the grant. The timescales for the grant process were discussed and as the Committee meet bimonthly, an extraordinary meeting could be called if necessary to support the process. The Director of Leisure and Environment clarified if the grant application was unsuccessful then the work would still be carried out but over a longer period. The support for existing tenants will be by working with the Tenant Representatives, newsletters and the Parks & Engagement Officer.

RESOLVED: (1) that the report be noted; and (2) agree to go ahead with the submission of the grant application to SALC.

11/283. DEVOLUTION TRANCHE 2 UPDATE REPORT AND STAFFING REQUEST

The Director of Leisure and Environment updated the Committee on the following items: Yeovil in Bloom, Open Spaces, Open Space Management Plans and Vision, Vision for Parks and Open Spaces and Allotments.

The Committee were informed that on Thursday 18 September 2025 there will be a launch of a new volunteer group at Sidney Gardens and the results for the Southwest in Bloom will be announced on Wednesday 8 October 2025.

The Estates Manager has drafted a management plan for the open spaces which will be circulated to the relevant ward members. It was also explained that at the next meeting, the Director Leisure and Environment will bring a proposal for changes to the current management of the allotment sites.

During the play area update, it was explained that after receiving the annual reports there are significant works that will need delivering. The Estates Manager will prioritise a list of works and there may be potential some items of equipment will need to be decommissioned. The work from the Estates Team have been widely recognised and three parish councils

have approached the team to see whether they could carry out their play inspections which may be considered in the future.

Members considered the staffing request for one trainee member of staff that would help towards the significant work on the allotments and play areas. It was confirmed that this member of staff would become qualified after several years to deliver the works as part of succession planning.

Cllr Wilkes raised a question of the Director of Leisure and Environment (and asked for it to be minuted) as to whether there was a resource management plan that maps out what the Estates Team need overall to justify asking for the extra resource which the Director indicated no.

It was also asked whether there would be provisions for disabled access in the play areas. The Parks and Engagement Officer is currently investigating accessibility across all the sites.

RESOLVED: (1) that the report be noted; and (2) the request to employ a new Trainee Estates Officer to be taken to the Staffing Committee.

The meeting closed at 8:04pm.

Signed: (Chair)

Date: