



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 8 June 2026 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); K Gill; A Kendall; J Lock; T Lock; K Parsons; W Read; A Soughton and D Woan.

Also Present (in person): Cllr A Wilkes (Abbey Manor South) and 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).

There was one member of the press present virtually (from 7.07pm) and two members of the public present in person.

Public Comment

A resident raised concerns about ongoing issues including poorly maintained town centre planters, graffiti in Tabernacle Lane, and persistent speeding and dangerous traffic conditions on St. Michaels Avenue. They highlighted incidents of excessive speed, congestion, and increasing road rage, expressing concern that an accident could occur despite the introduction of a 20mph limit. Councillors acknowledged the issues, noting awareness among local members, and suggested passing traffic concerns to the appropriate bodies. Officers confirmed that work on the planters is underway, with plans to improve their condition, and that Somerset Council has attempted to address the graffiti.

There was no other public comment.

7:05pm – the meeting commenced.

7:05 pm – One member of the public left the meeting and did not return.

11/317 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T Casey (work commitments).

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies with the reasons given.

11/318 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

11/319 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Committee approved as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th March 2026 and 12th May 2026.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on 12th March 2026 and 12th May 2026 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11/320 CO-OPTION OF A NON-VOTING MEMBER

The Committee considered the position of Co-opted Non-voting Member of the Committee.

RESOLVED: that Dave Potten be co-opted as the non-voting member of the Committee and act as a representative for all the Town Council's allotment sites.

11/321 FEEDBACK FROM CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBER

The Co-opted non-voting member raised concerns regarding security at allotment sites, including reference to tenant requests for CCTV, noting that previous advice indicated such measures may not be permitted.

Significant concern was expressed about the condition of allotment sites, with reports of overgrown plots deterring prospective tenants and resulting in lost income. It was noted that grounds maintenance resources are limited and currently spread across multiple priorities, with officers confirming that standards are "acceptable" given existing capacity, though improvements would require additional resources. Officers clarified that vacant plots are cleared and rotavated shortly before being re-let to prevent regrowth, and that prospective tenants should be informed of this.

It was agreed that a future agenda item would be brought forward to review vacant plots, maintenance standards and resourcing in more detail.

RESOLVED: that the matters be noted.

11/322. ANNUAL ALLOTMENT REPORT

The Committee considered the Annual Allotment Report presented by the Director of Environment. The report highlighted progress made over the past year, including improved maintenance standards despite some ongoing challenges with machinery and storage, and a positive response from tenants to the current approach to managing and preparing vacant plots. Members noted the inclusion of positive feedback from tenants and the public.

Tree works have been undertaken, with further boundary maintenance planned for the winter months. The “Allotments for All” project was reported as progressing well, supported by strong collaboration between tenants and the estates team, and positive feedback from participants.

Occupancy levels have increased from 92% to 95%, demonstrating continued improvement, although some sites, particularly Elizabeth Flats, remain challenging. The move to digital record-keeping through Parish Online was noted as a significant improvement in managing plots and tenancies. It was also confirmed that all sites now have tenant representatives in place.

The Committee noted the positive progress made and expressed appreciation for the work of officers.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

11/323 MILFORD DIP ALLOTMENT BREAK-INS

The Committee considered a report from the Deputy Town Clerk regarding recent break-ins at Milford Dip allotment site, where several thefts, including rotovators, have occurred.

Members discussed the concerns raised by tenants, including a request for improved security measures such as CCTV. It was noted that while CCTV may act as a deterrent, there are significant legal, data protection and cost implications, and its effectiveness in preventing or resolving such incidents is limited. Officers advised that any installation would require careful consideration and compliance with regulations, and that individual tenant use of CCTV is not recommended.

Members also highlighted that the Council’s responsibility is primarily to ensure safe access to the allotment site, and that tenants are responsible for the security of their own belongings. Suggestions included seeking advice from the police’s designing-out-crime officer and reinforcing communication to tenants regarding security precautions.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) that no immediate further action would be taken at this time; and (3) that the Deputy Town Clerk would write to tenants to clarify the Council’s position.

11/324. SERVICE UPDATE

The Committee considered the Service Update Report presented by the Director of Leisure and Environment, noting a wide range of ongoing work and positive feedback from residents.

Updates included the installation of the summer planting scheme with a shift towards more sustainable, lower-water planting, and the development of new features such as a wildlife-themed bed at St John’s. Increased community engagement was highlighted through a rise in “It’s Your Neighbourhood” entries.

There has been continued improvements in the management of open spaces despite resource and machinery challenges, as well as effective partnership working with community wardens to address antisocial behaviour.

Progress in digitising inspections and records, ongoing play area maintenance planning, and successful events and volunteer contributions across parks and the country park were also noted.

The Director of Leisure and Environment updated the committee following a recent unauthorised encampment at Yeovil Recreation Centre, a site visit identified the need for additional security measures. Proposed works included installing four new telescopic bollards and extending fencing at vulnerable areas, at a cost of £8,852.59.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to agree a dispensation from standard procurement rules; and (3) agree to proceed with commissioning the work from the supplier.

8.01pm – Dave Potten and one member of the public left the meeting and did not return.

11/325. PROCUREMENT APPROACH AT MILFORD PLAY AREA

The Committee considered the report by the Director of Leisure and Environment on the procurement approach for the Milford play area following the closure of the play castle due to structural failure. It was explained that a cracked concrete base, caused by subsidence of the earth mound beneath the structure, had rendered the equipment unsafe.

The proposal outlined a two-stage approach, with the urgent decommissioning and removal of the existing structure to ensure safety ahead of the summer holidays, followed by the procurement of a new play feature.

This would include consultation with local children and be subject to a request for quotations process, with an estimated budget of £16,000 and funding to be drawn from reserves and potential Section 106 contributions.

Members discussed concerns regarding the inspection history and the sudden deterioration of the structure, though it was noted that no prior reports had identified the issue.

The Director of Leisure and Environment confirmed they would request a copy of the 2024 play inspection report for Milford Castle.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to agree that the Director of Leisure and Environment progress the project; (3) to note the proposed procurement approach; and (4) to confirm that the final appointment of a contractor would return to committee for approval.

8.12pm – Cllr J Lock left the meeting

11/326. OUTTURN REPORT FOR 2025/26

The Committee considered the outturn report for 2025/26 for the Leisure and Environment budget.

It was noted that there was an overall underspend of just under £150,000, and it was proposed that a portion of this be transferred into reserves to support future capital projects, including the Milford play area and the Yeovil Recreation Centre, particularly in preparation for anticipated costs such as replacement of the athletics track.

Members agreed that moving underspends into reserves was a sensible way to prepare for future costs and avoid large one-off expenses.

8:14pm – Cllr J Lock returned to the meeting.

Discussion took place regarding budget allocations, future risks associated with asset maintenance, and the responsibilities arising from assets transferred through devolution.

Questions were raised about long-term financial exposure and the need to manage risk appropriately, balanced against maintaining safe and usable facilities.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the outturn report; and (2) to recommend to Executive to transfer funds to and from reserves for Leisure and Environment Committee.

11/327. BUDGET MONITORING UPDATE

The Committee reviewed the Month 2 budget monitoring report and noted a predicted underspend. However, officers explained this figure was likely inaccurate due to projection errors and incomplete cost estimates, including staffing and utilities.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11/328. 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 11/329 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

7.56pm – The member of the press left the meeting and did not return.

11/329. FUNDED BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

The committee considered the proposed funded biodiversity enhancement project and heard an overview from the Director of Leisure and Environment. Members asked

questions about delivery, costs, and arrangements, and officers provided reassurance where appropriate.

8:40pm – Cllr A Soughton left the meeting and returned.

8.41pm – Cllr W Read left the meeting

8.42pm – Cllr W Read returned to the meeting.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to agree, in principle, to the project outlined in the report; and (3) to recommend to the Executive that the project be approved as outlined above, and to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee and the Chair of the Executive, to enter into and sign the Strategic Partnering Agreement on behalf of the Town Council once all required schedules are in place, enabling the project to commence.

The meeting closed at 8.44pm.

Signed: (Chair)

Date: