Yeovil Crematorium & Cemetery Committee



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Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee

Wednesday 4th November 2026

6:00pm

Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ

Amanda Card
Clerk to the Committee
28th October 2026



This information is also available on our website: www.yeovil.gov.uk

Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee

Members of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee are summoned to attend:

Vyvyenne Burt	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Nicola Clark	Somerset Council
Tony Lock	Somerset Council
Graham Oakes	Somerset Council
Colin Rose	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Andy Soughton	Yeovil Town Council
Jeny Snell	Yeovil Town Council
Rob Stickland	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Helen Stonier	Yeovil Town Council
Clive Wakely	(Funeral Directors' Representative - co-opted non-voting)

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- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The protected characteristics are:

Age	Race
Disability	Religion or Belief
Gender Reassignment	Sex
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Sexual Orientation
Pregnancy and Maternity	

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A G E N D A

Public Comment (at the Chair's discretion up to 15 minutes)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**
3. **MINUTES**

   To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th July 2026 attached at pages 5 to 10.

4. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

   The Committee is requested to pass a resolution excluding 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 would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

5. **FUTURE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YEOVIL CEMETERY AND YEOVIL CREMATORIUM**

   To consider the report as attached at pages 11 to 18 .

Yeovil Crematorium & Cemetery Committee

Minutes of the meeting of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee held on Wednesday 8th July 2026 at 6:00pm at Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil.

Present:

Tony Lock	Somerset Council
Graham Oakes	Somerset Council
Colin Rose	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Jeny Snell	Yeovil Town Council
Rob Stickland (Chair)	Yeovil Without Parish Council
Helen Stonier	Yeovil Town Council

In Attendance:

Barbara Appleby	Yeovil Without Parish Council Clerk
Amanda Card	Yeovil Town Council Clerk/Clerk to the Committee
Christian Evans	Head of Finance Business Partnering, Somerset Council (virtual)
Janet Pascoe	Finance Business Partner - Regulatory and Operational Services, Somerset Council (virtual)
John Ranger	Specialist - Bereavement Services, Somerset Council
Jonathon Stevens	Head of Operations, Somerset Council (virtual)

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

6:00pm - the meeting commenced.

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(1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs V Burt; N Clark; A Soughton and C Wakley.

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies

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(2) DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at this time.

Councillor	Reason	Interest
Cllr T Lock Cllr G Oakes	Member of: Somerset Council Yeovil Town Council	Personal
Cllr N Clark	Member of: Somerset Council	Personal
Cllr H Stonier	Member of: Yeovil Town Council	Personal
Cllr R Stickland	Member of: Yeovil Town Council Yeovil Without Parish Council	Personal
Cllr C Rose	Member of: Yeovil Without Parish Council	Personal

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(3) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee held on 10th December 2025 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Chair noted that, although he was happy to sign the minutes, the agreed site visit for councillors and officers to review the path and road issue did not take place. While some councillors have since visited the site independently and photographs are available, others have not seen the issue firsthand. The Chair wished this concern to be recorded before the matter is discussed further.

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(4) OUTTURN REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2025/26

The Committee received the 2025/26 outturn report from both Head of Finance Business Partnering, Somerset Council and Finance Business Partner - Regulatory and Operational Services, Somerset Council, covering the financial performance of the cemetery and crematorium services. Members were advised that both services had achieved positive financial outcomes during the year.

For the cemetery, officers reported an underspend of £57,285, which would be transferred to the cemetery reserve fund, increasing the closing reserve balance to £462,630. The

underspend was mainly attributable to staffing vacancies and lower-than-anticipated expenditure on planned maintenance. Income was below budget due to reduced demand for cemetery services and the loss of rental income from a property that had been vacated. Members were reminded that the approved budget strategy included the planned use of reserve balances in future years. During discussion, a typographical error in the reserve summary was identified and acknowledged by officers.

In relation to the crematorium, officers reported an underspend of £307,696 and an overall in-year surplus of £616,866. The favourable position resulted from staff vacancies, lower maintenance and utility costs, and higher-than-budgeted income. Members were informed that the surplus would be apportioned between Somerset Council and Yeovil Without Parish Council, with Yeovil Without Parish Council due to receive £68,564 plus applicable interest. A further minor error in the report, which incorrectly referred to Yeovil Town Council instead of Yeovil Without Parish Council, was noted and would be corrected.

There were no substantive questions from members on the financial position of either service.

RESOLVED: (1) to approve the Statement of Accounts; (2) that the Chair of the Yeovil Crematorium and Cemetery Committee sign the Statement of Accounts; and (3) to note that the surplus for the Crematorium has been split with 11% transferred to Yeovil Without Parish Council and 89% transferred to Somerset Council.

6:13pm – The Head of Finance Business Partnering, Somerset Council and Finance Business Partner - Regulatory and Operational Services, Somerset Council left the meeting and did not return.

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(5) CREMATORIUM UPDATE

The Committee considered the Specialist - Bereavement Services' report on crematorium activity. Members were presented with tables comparing the number of cremations undertaken during the current year with those in the previous two financial years. The Specialist - Bereavement Services reported that cremation numbers had declined for three consecutive months and were showing a year-on-year reduction when compared with the previous two years. Whilst the crematorium continued to operate at a profit, members noted the downward trend in activity.

When asked for a more detailed comparison of cremation numbers, the Specialist - Bereavement Services advised that this information could be provided to individual members but could not be discussed in the public meeting as it was commercially sensitive.

Members also sought an update on the condition of the crematorium and were informed that the facility was operating smoothly, with no significant maintenance issues or works currently required.

RESOLVED: to note the report and the update provided.

(6) REVIEW OF EMERGENCY CONTACT PROCEDURE

The Committee considered a review of the crematorium's emergency contact procedures following an incident on 15th March 2026. The Chair explained that he had been contacted by another councillor after the police were unable to gain access to the crematorium site in response to an alarm indicating that someone may have been in distress. The police were reportedly unable to reach the appropriate emergency contacts and access was eventually arranged through a series of calls involving councillors. It was later established that the alarm originated from the former lodge property rather than the crematorium itself. The Chair expressed concern that the incident highlighted weaknesses in communication and access arrangements and noted that, had it been a genuine emergency, the delay could have had serious consequences.

The Specialist - Bereavement Services advised that the incident occurred during a transition between security contractors, which had contributed to the difficulties experienced. Following a review, out-of-hours contact details had been displayed around the crematorium grounds and the matter had been risk assessed. He was confident that appropriate arrangements were now in place to prevent a recurrence and apologised for the difficulties encountered.

Members discussed whether emergency contact information was sufficiently accessible, particularly when the site gates were locked. It was suggested that details of the security company holding site keys could be displayed on the entrance gates to enable emergency services to make direct contact if required. Members also raised concerns that emergency services may not have access to the correct council contact information. It was suggested that Somerset Council review how emergency contact details are shared with the police to prevent similar incidents occurring in future.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to contact the Leader of Somerset Council to share out of hours contact numbers with the Emergency Services.

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(7) CEMETERY UPDATE

The Committee considered the Specialist Operations Manager's report on cemetery maintenance and operational matters. He reported that incidents of anti-social behaviour and vandalism had resulted in a damaged fence at the top of Cemetery Lane, which had been used to gain access to the cemetery at night. Arrangements were in hand to repair it in a way that would prevent further breaches.

Following a recent site visit by some members and officers, a number of maintenance issues were highlighted. Significant damp and moisture ingress were identified in the cemetery chapels, with concerns raised that, if left untreated, the condition of the buildings could deteriorate further. Members agreed that both chapels should be professionally surveyed to determine the cause of the damp, assess the condition of the roofs, and provide recommendations and cost estimates for any necessary repairs. Concerns were also raised regarding broken historic stained-glass windows in the former Roman Catholic chapel,

which currently presents a health and safety risk and requires assessment as part of any future plans for the building.

Members also noted the poor appearance of an area containing garages, overgrown vegetation and stored materials which was visible from sections of the cemetery. It was agreed that the boundary fencing should be reinstated and officers were asked to obtain cost estimates for the work to improve the appearance of the site for visitors.

The Committee noted that there was available provision within the maintenance budget to address these issues and agreed that surveys and costings should be progressed. Members further agreed that a site visit should be arranged for councillors to view the cemetery, chapels and identified maintenance issues firsthand, with suitable dates to be circulated for consideration.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to arrange for both chapels to be surveyed and appraised, including issues relating to damp, moisture ingress and the condition of the buildings, and to obtain recommendations and cost estimates for any necessary repairs; (3) to obtain quotes to repair the historic stained glass in the chapel; (4) to obtain quotes to re-instate the fences around the garaged areas; and (5) to arrange a site visit for members.

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(8) TARMAC SURFACING REPAIRS TO CEMETERY FOOTPATHS

The Committee considered a report on repairs to the cemetery roads and footpaths. Officers explained that the report had been prepared by Somerset Council's landscaping team and provided an assessment of the works required together with estimated costs. Members were advised that the report was intended as guidance and could be used to support a future procurement process, with officers recommending that alternative quotations also be obtained before any decisions were made.

Members noted that a recent site visit had highlighted particular concerns with sections of roadway affected by tree roots. One potential solution discussed was the removal of a badly damaged stretch of tarmac north of the chapels and its replacement with a gravel surface, thereby reducing future maintenance requirements.

The Chair reminded members that a previous resolution had been for councillors to undertake a site visit before decisions were taken on the road repairs.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to defer consideration of the road and footpath repair options until a site visit has taken place; and (3) to convene an extraordinary meeting to consider the report and findings of the site visit to determine how to proceed with the repairs.

6:41pm – The Specialist - Bereavement Services left the meeting and did not return.

6:42pm – The meeting was adjourned for a comfort break

6:45pm – The meeting was reconvened.

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(9) 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 10 and 11 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

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(10) FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF YEOVIL CEMETERY (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Committee considered the future arrangements for the maintenance of the cemetery and discussed the current service provision. Members received information regarding the existing maintenance arrangements and potential alternative delivery models.

The Committee expressed a desire to maintain a higher standard of cemetery maintenance and recognised the importance of understanding both service requirements and financial implications before considering any future changes. It was noted that any potential changes would require detailed investigation and discussions between the relevant parties.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to explore options for the future delivery of cemetery grounds maintenance services and to receive further information on service standards, operational requirements and associated costs before any decisions are made.

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(11) POTENTIAL AVAILABLE LAND FOR FUTURE BURIAL PROVISION (COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)

The Committee received a confidential update regarding the ongoing search for land suitable for future burial provision. Members reviewed progress made in identifying potential opportunities and discussed a number of options for further investigation.

RESOLVED: to note the update on potential land for future burial provision and to continue exploring suitable opportunities, with further reports to be submitted to the Committee as required.

Please note that the next meeting of this Committee is Wednesday 9th December 2026. An extraordinary meeting will be arranged to discuss the pathways at Yeovil Cemetery once the site visit has taken place.

7:22pm – The meeting closed.

Signed: …….. (Chair) Date: ……..