

Yeovil Youth Council Constitution

Aims and Objectives

- (1) The Youth Council (The Council) shall seek to represent the young people of Yeovil as a section of society on any issue of concern to them.
- (2) The Council shall seek to communicate and liaise between and, where appropriate, advise and support existing and new youth organisations within Yeovil.
- (3) The Council shall work towards the improvement of the image and status of young people within Yeovil.
- (4) The Council shall, where applicable, be involved in the organisation of events for young people and seek to further the understanding between groups of young people including those with different cultural and religious backgrounds and those with special or different needs.
- (5) In pursuit of these aims and objectives, the Youth Council shall operate as a non-party political or statutory body.

Membership of Youth Council

- (6) To guarantee an even age spread, the membership of the Youth Council shall be drawn from the following five education establishments in the Town as indicated:

Education Establishment	Years 8/9	Years 10/11	Years 12/13/14
Buckler's Mead Community School	2	2	N/A
Park School	1	3	
Preston Community School	2	2	N/A
Westfield Community School	2	2	N/A
Yeovil College	N/A	N/A	4

- (7) Each appointment will be made by way of an election with those elected being entitled to serve for two years maximum. This will ensure that newly elected councillors have a chance to develop their role and make an effective contribution to the working of the Council. The representatives of Yeovil College will be entitled to serve for a maximum of two years or until they reach their 19th birthday - whichever is the sooner.
- (8) The runner-up in any election will be automatically appointed as a voting substitute - able to attend meetings of the Council in the absence of their respective elected councillor. This will help with continuity - including feedback; ensure meetings are well attended and give more students the chance to gain direct experience in the working of the Council.
- (9) In the event of a resignation of an elected councillor, the elected substitute will automatically assume his or her place with a fresh election being held to fill the remaining balance of the substitute's two-year period of office.
- (10) Elections will be organised by the Secretary on behalf of each education establishment using a simple model for ease of understanding. This will ensure consistency and take the burden of administration away from teaching staff.

- (11) The Council may co-opt other people to participate in meetings of the Council as non-voting members or advisers or guests to enable representatives of young people having a stake in the Town, but not attending one of the five education establishments having direct representation, to have a voice on the Council. Co-optees shall not be appointed for longer than one year.
- (12) The Council shall have the power to invite any other organisation, which has requested representation, to nominate a representative. It will be up to the nominating organisation to decide how they choose their representative.
- (13) Each member shall provide the Secretary with details of their home address and telephone number for the purpose of circulating meeting papers and correspondence.

Officers

- (14) The Council shall, at its first meeting and, in subsequent years, at its first meeting in the Autumn term (*usually October*) elect a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman, and appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer. These meetings will be known as Annual General Meetings.
- (15) If vacancies occur among the Officers, the Council shall have the power to fill them from amongst its members. Any person elected to fill such a casual vacancy shall hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Council.
- (16) The duties of the Secretary shall be to collect items for the agendas for meetings; to attend meetings of the Council and take notes of proceedings; to prepare a formal record of each meeting for issue to members as soon as possible after the meeting and to deal with any correspondence arising from the decisions of the Council.

(In practice and with the consent of the Youth Council, the secretarial role is undertaken by officers of the Town Council who provide practical help, advice and support).
- (17) The duties of the Treasurer shall be to record all financial transactions, and to place orders for goods and services on the instructions of the Council following approval and confirmation by Yeovil Town Council.

Meetings

- (18) The Council shall meet every month except August and December.
- (19) An annual programme of meetings shall be drawn up in advance each year and circulated to all members of the Council.
- (20) Meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil unless the Council decides otherwise.

Agenda

- (21) Members of the Council should actively seek the opinions of the people they represent with a view to placing items of interest on the agenda of meetings of the Council.
- (22) The following methods may be useful ways of seeking such items:

- Using assemblies/classes to explain the role of the Youth Council and who to contact
 - Surveys to help ascertain key issues worthy of consideration
 - Including photographs of elected members and agendas/minutes on noticeboards
 - Monthly surgeries where students may meet their representatives
 - Establishment of a Youth Council website/e-mail addresses for youth councillors
- (23) All items for inclusion on the agenda must be received by the Secretary at least fourteen days prior to the date of the next meeting.
- (24) Seven days before each meeting, an agenda will be sent by the Secretary to each member at his or her home address. This will specify what is to be discussed at the meeting.
- (25) The order of business at each *Annual General Meeting* shall be:
- Apologies for Absence
 - Election of Chairman
 - Election of Vice-Chairman
 - Appointment of Secretary
 - Appointment of Treasurer
 - To approve or amend the Constitution
 - To confirm as a correct record the notes of the previous meeting
 - To deal with any matters arising from these notes
 - To consider new matters for discussion
 - To receive details of the budget available to the Council
 - To consider any financial matters
 - To agree date of next meeting if not already fixed in advance
- (26) The order of business at each *intervening* meeting shall be:
- Apologies for Absence
 - To confirm as a correct record the notes of the previous meeting
 - To deal with any matters arising from these notes
 - To consider new matters for discussion
 - To consider any financial matters
 - To agree date of next meeting if not already fixed in advance

Chairing of Meetings

- (27) The Chairman, if present, will chair the meeting. In the absence of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman shall take on the role. If neither is present, those members attending the meeting shall elect a Chairman for the meeting from amongst themselves.

Voting

- (28) Voting shall be by show of hands or, if at least two-fifths of those present so request, by secret ballot.
- (29) In any case of equality of votes, the Chairman may give a casting vote in addition to any vote he/she may already have given.
- (30) If more than one course of action is suggested, the Chairman shall decide which must be voted on first and, only if the vote is lost, will another suggestion be put to the vote.

Conduct of Business

- (31) Each item on the agenda will usually be discussed in the order shown but this may be varied with the approval of the Council, following a formal request to the Chairman.
- (32) During discussion, each member must indicate his or her desire to speak by raising a hand to catch the eye of the Chairman. A member may only speak when the Chairman consents.

(The Youth Council has agreed to aim for at least 50% of the overall number of elected voting members to be present at its meetings).

Conduct of Members

- (33) Anyone who disobeys a ruling of the Chairman on who shall speak, or who interrupts, or in some way disrupts a meeting, shall be asked by the Chairman to stop up to three times and, if he or she persists in his or her behaviour, shall then be excluded from the meeting.
- (34) Should a member of the Council for any reason act in any way which is considered by the rest of the Council to be unacceptable, the Council shall on a vote have the right to exclude he or she from membership. In such an event, the member concerned shall be replaced forthwith in accordance with the membership provisions set out in this Constitution.
- (35) Any member who wishes to resign must do so in writing to the Secretary, giving one month's notice and, at the same time, informing the education establishment which he or she represents.

Financial Matters

- (36) All monies raised by or on behalf of the Council shall be applied to further the objects of the council and for no other purpose provided that nothing in this Constitution shall prevent the payment of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.
- (37) Accounts, including the repayment of expenses incurred by the secretary and Treasurer in carrying out their duties, shall be paid subject to every payment being placed before the Council and being formally approved.
- (38) All accounts to be paid by the Treasurer shall, after approval by the Council, be placed before the Town Council for final approval and signing of cheques.

Other Matters

- (39) Two nominated representatives of the Youth Council shall attend a meeting of Yeovil Town Council at least once every three months to report on activities. The Council may choose to nominate the same people each time or may change the nominations to take into account the subject to be discussed.
- (40) Any proposed changes to the Constitution shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand adjourned until the next following meeting of the Council and, in the meantime, the approval of the Town Council shall be sought on the proposals.
- (41) A copy of this Constitution shall be given to every member of the Youth Council when appointed.