

Yeovil Town Council



Town House
19 Union Street
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 1PQ

Yeovil Town Council

Yeovil Town Council

Tuesday 7th November 2023

7:30pm

Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact town.clerk@yeovil.gov.uk.

Amanda Card, Town Clerk

1st November 2023

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

Members of Yeovil Town Council are summoned to attend:

Andy Kendall – Mayor of Yeovil Town

Emma-Jayne Hopkins – Deputy Mayor of Yeovil Town

Barry Boyton

Graham Oakes

Jade Cabell

Evie Potts-Jones

Tareth Casey

Wes Read

Kayleigh Fieldsend

Ashley Richards

Nigel Gage

Jeny Snell

Karl Gill

Andy Soughton

Kaysar Hussain

Roy Spinner

Tony Lock

Rob Stickland

Jamie Lock

Helen Stonier

Sarah Lowery

Dave Woan

Jane Lowery

Vacancy

Public Comments at meetings

Members of the public may attend the meeting either physically or via zoom.

If you would like to join the meeting via zoom, please e-mail ytic@yeovil.gov.uk by 9:00am on 1st November 2023. Instructions will be sent to you to view the meeting.

Equality Act 2010

The general public sector equality duty places an obligation on a wide range of public bodies (including town and parish councils) in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to:

- 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	

Recording of Council Meetings

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 allows both the public and press to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings (including on social media).

Any member of the public wishing to record or film proceedings must let the Chairman of the meeting know prior to, or at the start of, the meeting and the recording must be overt (i.e. clearly visible to anyone at the meeting), but non-disruptive. Please refer to our Policy on audio/visual recording and photography at Council meetings at www.yeovil.gov.uk. This permission does not extend to private meetings or parts of meetings which are not open to the public.

Members of the public exercising their right to speak during the time allocated for Public Comment who do not wish to be recorded or filmed, need to inform the Chairman who will instruct those taking a recording or filming to cease doing so while they speak.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Members are invited to join the Mayor's Chaplain in the Council Chamber for "Reflections".

A G E N D A

Public Comment (15 Minutes)

11/113 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Council to receive apologies for absence and consider the reasons given. LGA 1972 s85(1)

Council may need to approve a dispensation for Cllr A Kendall from attending meetings of the Council by reason of illness, in order for Cllr Kendal ceasing to be a member of the authority under Section 85 of the Local Government Act.

Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that "if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his/her last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he/she shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a Member of the authority".

11/114 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e). (NB this does not preclude any later declarations).

11/115 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the previous Town Council Meeting held on 10th October 2023.

11/116 MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S RECENT AND FORTHCOMING ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

To note the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's recent and forthcoming engagements as attached at pages 3 to 4.

11/117 CORRESPONDENCE

To consider the correspondence attached.

- Letter concerning disabled parking in the town (page 5)
- Letter concerning financially contributing toward the Octagon Theatre (pages 6 to 9)

- E-mail regarding bus services and bus depot (pages 10 to 11)
- E-mail concerning proposed demolition of bus depot (page 12)

11/118 REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES AND OTHER MEETINGS

To note the meetings of each Committee, any resolutions and recommendations contained therein to be ratified.

Planning Committee – 18th September 2023 / 16th October 2023
Presented by Cllr E Potts-Jones

Promotions and Activities Committee – 12th September 2023.
Presented by Cllr Sarah Lowery

Grounds and General Maintenance Committee – 11th September 2023.
Presented by Cllr Roy Spinner

Buildings and Civic Matters Committee – 19th September 2023.
Presented by Cllr Rob Stickland

Policy, Resources and Finance Committee – 25th September 2023.
Presented by Cllr Graham Oakes

11/119 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Members who represent the Town Council on outside bodies should take this opportunity to report on any matters of interest.

Following a resignation of a councillor – **Yeovil Recreation Charity** seeks another representative from Yeovil Town Council.

11/120 CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2022/23

To note the conclusion of the audit carried out by the external auditor of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 (as attached at pages 13 to 22)

11/121 FORWARD PLAN

To consider the Forward Plan as attached at page 23, lists the items due to be discussed and the decisions due to be made by Yeovil Town Council.

The timings given are indicative and occasionally may be rescheduled and new items added as required.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Yeovil Town Council approve the Forward Plan.

Public Comment (15 Minutes)

List of Engagements attended/to be attended by the Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall and the Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Emma-Jayne Hopkins 3 October 2023 to 5 December 2023.

<u>October Engagements</u>	
21/10/2023	- The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Emma-Jayne Hopkins attended the production of 'Into the Woods' by Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society
<u>November Engagements</u>	
04/11/2023	- The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Emma-Jayne Hopkins attended Ivel District Girlguiding Creative Activity Day
07/11/2023	- The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Emma-Jayne Hopkins will attend the Yeovil College University Centre Graduation Ceremony 2023
08/11/2023	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will visit St Margaret's Primary School
11/11/2023	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend the service at the War Memorial to mark Armistice Day
12/11/2023	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will lead the Civic Parade to the War Memorial for the wreath laying ceremony. Then he will lead the Civic Parade onto St Johns Church for the Remembrance Day service
15/11/2023	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend the Opening of Yeovil Independent Living Centre at Yeovil Innovation Centre
15/11/2023	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend Yeovil Street Pastors AGM
19/11/2023	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend the silver Celebration for Holy Trinity Church and Community Centre
19/11/2023	- The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Emma-Jayne Hopkins will attend Verwood Civic Day
23/11/2023	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will attend the Good Fellowship Christmas Lunch
25/11/2023	- The Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Andy Kendall will host his Charity Ball Evening in aid of Yeovil Hospital Charity and Yeovil Opportunity Group

December Engagements

02/12/2023

- The Deputy Mayor of Yeovil, Councillor Emma-Jayne Hopkins will attend Phoenix Voices Christmas Concert

Yeovil Town Council

To Whom it may concern,

17th October 2023.

As an 81 year old lady. I am contacting you over my serious concerns with disabled parking in the town of Yeovil. As many other residents of the town, I have difficulty with walking and general mobility to access areas of the town. My main concerns are the lack of spaces at the top of the town. I have major difficulties with walking hills in particular. As you are well aware, Yeovil is a hilly town.

Would you please address my concerns as soon as possible. If this issue is addressed, then it would make the town accessible to everyone, whatever their needs, which how it should be for every age group. Despite being a blue badge holder I really am struggling to access the town, as I would like to do.

Thank you in anticipation

Ms

October 12th, 2023

Yeovil Town Council
Town Hall
Yeovil

Dear Councillors

Ref: Town Meeting Tuesday October 10th 2023 Westland Re: Octagon Theatre

Firstly, I would like to point out I have lived in Yeovil for over 25 years. I have to say it was and still is the least cultural town I have ever known. Then the Yeovil Arts Centre was closed by the Council years ago. So needless to say, I certainly welcome a worthwhile, sustainable, and feasible project of improving and enlarging the Octagon Theatre. But I want to inform you of my credibility regarding the financial and ethical points I am making below. During my employment years, I had been in the stock brokerage business for fifteen years. It opened my eyes to figures, formulas, and a knowledge of when to cut losses to avoid disaster. And to observe a good sales pitch when I hear it.

During the Town Council meeting there were a few noticeable yet extremely important information details omitted from the presentation. I would like to put forward my comments for the record:

1. The timing of closure of the Octagon Theatre - Not one of the Councillors present at the meeting mentioned **why** the Octagon Theatre was closed *before* the council had secured adequate funding necessary to complete the work. I am on the understanding there was a survey taken seven years ago and, if that is the case, what was different in the current one to cost £1.7 million?
2. Not one of the Councillors mentioned a risk assessment which is necessary in all projects undertaken. This not only leads me to wonder why, but also raises questions regarding the project's success. As the Independent Councillor Tareth Casey pointed out, it is also my fear that the council will repeat the failure of keeping to the original plans and promise to local tax payers as happened with the Goldenstones swimming pool project.
3. The fact that the Octagon Theatre has been closed has left an unused theatre for those whose lives have not only become dependent on, but also whose lives have been changed by it. (Namely the public speaker with a disabled child). But in Councillor Andrew Soughton's announcement of current damage from the survey being 'very little', it was not followed up with any suggestion or statement of it opening up as is until the proposal of the project is finalised with sufficient funding in place. Or, in place of closure, to open the theatre and undertake gradual improvements toward the end goal. By prioritising the needs in an affordable manner would ensure the town would not enter into extreme debt over this project.

4. There was no mention of a potential completion date or if any contingencies are in place to avoid the most modern of aspects in every project; that of the project becoming over budget down the road. This could lead to either increased debt or yet another substantially smaller venue than originally promised.

Financing:

5. So far it has cost £1.7 million for surveys and planning, as pointed out by Councillor Andrew Soughton. It reminds me of several previous expenditures on planning alone, only to have the council backtrack and cancel projects altogether. It makes me wonder why the council repeats these huge and avoidable expenditures, as with the Acacia House project. Because of this, my feeling is that the consultation process needs a thorough review to reduce the losses which the tax payer is forced to endure due to the lack of accuracy and full exposure of detailed information. Changes to the consultation process would enable the public to have a more knowledgeable opinion before voting for or against any project. This statement comes from a past and personal experience of my own in having been told a consultation process had taken place, only to find, after extensive talks, there had been none – (reference to a residential parking scheme).
6. I find it rather coincidental, having attended previous Council meetings held by former SSDC Councillors (some of whom are now intertwined with the SCC), that when being asked uncomfortable financial questions, the meetings suddenly end. Two examples: Acacia House and a residents parking scheme several years ago. At the time of the latter, the Council promised to get back to the residents with answers. To this day that has not happened. I am hoping all questions will be answered prior to the start of the Octagon project to eliminate any backtracking.
7. For the current project of the Octagon Theatre, the above point brings me to the partnership between Yeovil District Council and Somerset County Council. I noticed at the meeting, held at Westlands on Tuesday evening, several Town Councillors are also members of the Somerset County Council. I question if there is a conflict of interest here and/or whether some Councillors may be more influential over others.
8. I welcome a good partnership between the Town Council and Somerset Country Council, but I am wondering why the Town Council has to bear a substantial loan responsibility along with the County Council. Correct me if I am wrong, but if there are two loans, it doubles the repayment which the tax payer will undergo. The Town may have a glorious stage for incoming patrons of the arts, but for those paying for it will no longer be able to afford to enjoy it for themselves.
9. For the Town Council to take on a substantial loan, what will happen to the Town council if they are unable to re-pay? What is the full risk of this to the Town Council as well as the tax payer? Can a Town Council be shut down for any reason due to debt leaving residents at the mercy of a single, unchallenged Somerset Council? These are issues to keep in mind.

Speeches.

10. I have to say there were some wonderful speeches at the meeting. Councillor Graham Oakes is a great performer. His speech appeared to come from the heart, but I'm afraid it held more of an influencing sales pitch tone rather than detailed informational facts of the project. (No offence meant to the Councillor.) Speeches make an impression on people who are more likely to be in favour of pleasantries rather than face frightening facts. People need to have the full facts when faced with enormous costs.
11. I know Liz Pike. A wonderful person who truly speaks from her heart and a great advocate of the Arts. I first met her at the Art Group a few years after moving to Yeovil and she gave me hope for the future expansion of culture in Yeovil. Now, without the Octagon, all we have left is the Literary Festival – once a year. The opportunities of expanding culture in Yeovil has been gradually diminished over the years with fewer and fewer venues.
12. Liz Pike's speech, in favour of the Octagon, and quite rightly so, went on and I could have listened to her longer. However, when Ray Tostevin's speech, equally impressive, was interrupted it left me feeling it was due to his approaching toward voting against the project. No-one present at the meeting wants to vote against the project itself, but merely point out the pitfalls if we do not cover every avenue prior to commitment. For such an expensive risk for the town, three minutes is far too little for the public to put their point across whether voting for or against. Perhaps if Councillor Graham Oakes had not spent so long in his speech, then it would have allowed other public speakers, with relevant issues to the matter at hand, to be heard for an equal opportunity. The democratic courtesy of every meeting.
13. It was also noticeable there were only two Councillors who were against the current project as it stands. The only two who pointed out more specific and well-founded observations which people need to know. But it is easy for people to reject honesty and truth in favour of 'heart felt speeches' which gain an emotional response rather than logical reasoning.
14. At this point, and still relevant to the subject, I need to express my disappointment in the mathematical ability of one of the Councillors who mentioned the shop closure percentage in town was only 17%. I beg to differ. Considering I conducted my own long walk since the meeting, I discovered the only road with 16.6% alone, was that of Bond Street. The rest added up to a total of 47.7% of shops closed in the Town – from, Westminster Street, Princes Street, Park Road, Upper and lower Middle Street including Union Street, Bond Street, Quedam, and Glovers Walk, along with Wyndham Street. Yes, it was a long walk, but that is always the case when endeavouring to get to the truth. Which brings me to the reason why I mentioned the discrepancy of 17%. I worry that if inconsistencies and false statements are not checked, then more will be given out to the unsuspecting public. Furthermore, it does not alleviate fears when such inaccuracies of a Councillor, if not checked, will spill over and into the millions of pounds in expensive long term loans of which the tax payer may

have to re-pay for many years to come. Please pay attention to the financial consequences and possible repercussions **before** becoming embroiled in such a colossal financial arrangement. Double check the figures to eliminate further mistakes.

Thank you



Card, Amanda

From:
Sent: 21 September 2023 12:40
To: Card, Amanda
Cc: Tony Reese; david.northey@severnside-rail.org.uk; Peter Travis
Subject: Full Yeovil Town Council meeting 7th November 2023 Future of bus services and Depot facilities in Yeovil and public transport Network service provides by First group plc

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Amanda.

I view of the proposal by First group plc South buses to close Neutilus works Reckleford bus and coach Depot.

With the need for arrangements for maintenance of buses and coaches Service Network in South Somerset and West Dorset and in Yeovil a Town of 60 000 people. At present first group plc South buses Run the following bus services from Yeovil bus and coach Depot.

Service 58 Yeovil bus and coach station Yeovil pen mill station to Sherborne Town and Railway station Templecombe and Wincanton bus and coach station Somerset council bus service improvement plan service

Dorset Council funded Service

Y4 Yeovil bus and coach station to Yeovil pen mill, Sherborne Town for Sherborne station, Templecombe strumister Newton and Blandford Forum. Somerset council bus service improvement plans service. Service 54 Yeovil bus and coach station to Ilchester Somerton Lanport and Taunton.

Service 51 Yeovil Town service
Commercial service

Service 77 Yeovil bus and coach station to Ilchester Somerton Street Glastonbury and Wells bus and coach station. And service 55 college Service. Service 77 is transferring to Wells bus Depot under First Group Wales and the west buses. Part funded by Somerset council

Dorset Council contracted service

Service 6 is operating from Yeovil bus and coach station to crewrence Beaminster and Bridport bus and coach station. Operated by Bridport bus and coach Depot.

The proposal is for a new bus Depot facility outside with Drivers mess room supervisor office bus washing machine Fuel and Coolant facilities cleaning but only limited maintenance overnight by man with van .

But with no pits Jack's to carry out Full maintenance.

The issue is to make sure we have

Light maintenance for light bulbs

Wheelchair ramps bells repair windscreen wipers mirrors repairs ect so buses can run .

The Depot will contain 12 buses

But need provision for 20 buses

But yesterday 20 th September 2023 the the Town services had broken down bus cancelled evening journeys service 51

And the 77 Yeovil bus and Ilchester Somerton Street Glastonbury and Wells bus and coach station. Ran 30 mins late this is with full maintenance facilities at Reckleford bus and coach Depot.

The Neutilus works has Aviation and Transport Heritage and should be considered for listing Being built in 1912 / 1913 built by petters and used for Engineering and Aviation work and in 19 40 / 1950 used as the Area operating office and Depot for the Southern Railways Southern National omnibus company and Royal Blue motor services Ltd.

When Yeovil Town station was a major bus rail and coach interchange for the South west of England.

Today FirstGroup plc operates South bus from Fareham Hampshire

First Group plc MTR South Western Railway company.

And First group plc Great Western Railway company the serv Yeovil Junction railway station and Yeovil pen mill stations

With service to London Waterloo to Exeter centre and St David for Devon and Cornwall.

First Group plc Great Western Railway company to Castle Cary for London Paddington and Westbury Bath spa and Bristol Temple meads.

To Dorchester west and Weymouth.

With connections to Wareham for Swanage Poole and Bournemouth.

So FirstGroup plc has a big investment and interest in Yeovil and Somerset and Dorset.

And provide most public transport along with South west Coaches and Somerset buses on the 68 Yeovil Bus and coach station to Yeovil Junction and Yeovil pen mill stations.

We believe in view of the changes in Yeovil bus and coach Depot facilities

First Group plc South

Mr Simon Goff or Carol sim chief operating manager should be invited to the council.

With Dan okay and luke Farley

From First group plc Great Western Railway company.

And First group MTR South Western Railway company.

To talk about the future of public transport in Yeovil and District

Buses and integration with Railway service

Ticket office closures and Disabled access to Yeovil pen mill and Yeovil Junction railway stations

With Mike Rigby Council Transport executive councillor for Somerset council

Councillor noc lacey clerk of Dorset Council public transport Councillor

Nine Howe of Transport focus.

Bus user groups

Somerset bus partnership.

Somerset bus campaign

Yeovil bus and railway users .

Yeovil is a very important town in west country and requires investment in it Public transport and bus Network.

We would ask that this issue is put on the next full council agenda on the 7th November 2023 .

Including the listing and conservation of the Neutilus works and the Reckleford bus and coach Depot.

David Redgewell

South west transport Network and Railfuture Severnside

Dear Yeovil town councillors, Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society has sent the letter below to Somerset Council...and want Yeovil Town Council too to be aware of our concerns, mirrored of course by many residents....Tina Rowe committee member YALHS

Dear Somerset Council South Area Planners,

Proposed demolition of former Nautilus Works, Reckleford, Yeovil (redundant First Bus depot)

Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society is extremely concerned at reports that First Bus plans to demolish this locally and nationally important former industrial complex, which saw the birth of Westland Aircraft. It is the unanimous request of YALHS committee members that, as a minimum, the facade of the former office building facing Reckleford, with its distinctive arched windows, be retained. First Bus is reported to be wanting to demolish the buildings to make the site more attractive to a housing developer. The Reckleford facade could, and should, be incorporated in any future housing scheme.

Nautilus Works was purpose-built at the turn of the 19th/20th century by the Petter family to produce oil engines for agriculture and light industry. The firm was already nationally renowned for its fire grates and ranges, with Queen Victoria a customer. A range was installed at Osborne House. In 1915 the Petters began building Short seaplanes for the war effort and Westland Aircraft was born as a division of J B Petter and Sons. While the Shorts and other aircraft were produced on a new site at Westland, the Nautilus Works can be said to be the genesis of Westland.

While Historic England has not given the buildings Listed status the Nautilus Works is described by South West Heritage Trust as: "of clear local historic interest....and a prominent reminder of the area's former industrial character." The Trust is seeking local listing status for the Works. It also rates an entry in the Pevsner Buildings of England guide for South Somerset.

There is considerable local opposition to the possibility of the loss of this heritage. Yeovil has lost more of its historic heritage than many towns. The wonderfully-detailed description of the Nautilus Works on South West HeritageTrust's Historic Environment Record shows that artefacts remain on site which could be of interest to our heritage service collections - for example slight remains of rail track used to speed oil engine production. We hope that First Bus would be happy to discuss the future of such pieces of history.

We understand that you are in discussions with First Bus. Please encourage a future for the site of which Yeovil - and First Bus - can be proud.

Yours sincerely,

Tina Rowe

on behalf of the committee, Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society

Section 3 - External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return lays out the respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority. The external auditor carries out a limited assurance review which is deemed appropriate by the National Audit Office for local public bodies with the lowest level of spending. Within the report and certificate, as well as the certificate, the external auditor provides an opinion and lists other matters which do not affect the opinion.

The External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23 states:

"On the basis of our review of Section 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability (AGAR). In our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority: In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, and accompanying note, the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to objectives C and N, risk assessment publications on website. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner."

The Internal Auditor noted the following with regards to objectives C and N:

Internal Auditor note on test C: Risk Management

I checked to see that the Council had carried out an annual risk assessment during the year. The last assessment was carried out in February 2022, for the 22/23 financial year. The Clerk noted that due to staff sickness, the planned review in February 2023 (for the 23/24 financial year) did not occur. The risk assessment was reviewed by the Policy, Resources & Finance Committee in March 2023 and approved and adopted by full Council at its meeting in April 2023. This means that, although much of the work has been carried out, the Council has not recorded in its minutes that the risk assessment was carried out in the 22/23 financial year itself. Consequently I have assessed this test as a 'fail'.

Internal Auditor note on test N: Publication

I checked to see that the Council complied with the publication requirements for the previous year's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The Council had to publish before 29/06/22 (the start of its public rights period) ss1&2 of the AGAR, and the public rights notice including a declaration that the accounting statements were unaudited.

On or before 30/09/22, the Council was required to publish the notice of conclusion of audit, and ss1-3 of the AGAR (including the completed external audit report).

The Clerk provided evidence that the public rights documentation had been published on 28/06/22, and that it was still in place on 24/08/22 (after the 30 working days required by the statute). However, although the notice of conclusion of audit and ss1-3 of the audited AGAR were on the Council's website at the audit date of 29/03/23, there was no evidence as to the publication date.

The evidence indicates but does not prove compliance with the publication requirements. I have therefore assessed the test as 'not covered'.

Late in the afternoon on Friday 29th September 2023. Yeovil Town Council received the 2022/23 AGAR External Auditor Report from the external auditors PKF Littlejohn LLP.

Unfortunately, Yeovil Town Council will not be able to demonstrate that they published the notice of conclusion of audit on or before 30th September 2023, since the External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return as not received until late in the afternoon on Friday 29th September 2023 in the Town Clerk's inbox. There was not time to compile the Notice of Conclusion of Audit. The notice was not posted on the website until 3rd October 2023.

The Council is **RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) to note the report;
- (2) to note the opinion given by the external auditor and to note other matters not affecting the auditor's opinion; and
- (3) to note that the publication date of the Notice of Conclusion of audit was not met.

(Amanda Card, Town Clerk – 01935 382424 or amanda.card@yeovil.gov.uk)

Yeovil Town Council



NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

**Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015 No.234)**

1. The audit of accounts for Yeovil Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2023 has been completed and the accounts have been published.
2. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of Yeovil Town Council on application to:

Name: Amanda Card
Position: Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Address: Yeovil Town Council, Town House, 19 Union Street,
Yeovil, Somerset. BA20 1PQ
Tel No: 01935 382424
E-mail: amanda.card@yeovil.gov.uk

Days and time of availability: Monday – Friday 9:00 am to 3:00pm by appointment.

3. Copies will be provided to any person on payment for **£1.00** for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.

Amanda Card
Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

3rd October 2023

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2023**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2023**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2023.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2022) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2023).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2023**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities In England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Yeovil Town Council

www.yeovil.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.		✓	
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✱		✓
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

✱ See ATTACHED NOTE

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

29/03/2023

30/03/2023

13/06/2023

Mrs R Darkin-Miller LLB(Hons) BFP FCA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date 27/06/2023

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: if the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Internal Auditor note on test C: Risk Management

I checked to see that the Council had carried out an annual risk assessment during the year. The last assessment was carried out in February 2022, for the 22/23 financial year. The Clerk noted that due to staff sickness, the planned review in February 2023 (for the 23/24 financial year) did not occur. The risk assessment was reviewed by the Policy, Resources & Finance Committee in March 2023 and approved and adopted by full Council at its meeting in April 2023. This means that, although much of the work has been carried out, the Council has not recorded in its minutes that the risk assessment was carried out in the 22/23 financial year itself. Consequently I have assessed this test as a 'fail'.

Internal Auditor note on test N: Publication

I checked to see that the Council complied with the publication requirements for the previous year's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The Council had to publish before 29/06/22 (the start of its public rights period) ss1&2 of the AGAR, and the public rights notice including a declaration that the accounting statements were unaudited.

On or before 30/09/22, the Council was required to publish the notice of conclusion of audit, and ss1-3 of the AGAR (including the completed external audit report).

The Clerk provided evidence that the public rights documentation had been published on 28/06/22, and that it was still in place on 24/08/22 (after the 30 working days required by the statute). However, although the notice of conclusion of audit and ss1-3 of the audited AGAR were on the Council's website at the audit date of 29/03/23, there was no evidence as to the publication date.

The evidence indicates but does not prove compliance with the publication requirements. I have therefore assessed the test as 'not covered'.



R Darkin-Miller LLB (Hons) BFP FCA 27/06/23

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Yeovil Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		'Yes means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓
			<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

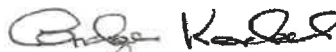
27/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

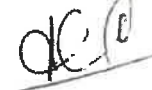
11/098(2)

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman



Clerk



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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Yeovil Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,232,411	1,422,428	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,177,276	1,273,440	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	121,795	155,191	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	310,763	344,261	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	798,291	1,008,063	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,422,428	1,498,735	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,545,830	1,584,223	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1,587,638	1,587,638	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval



Date

27/06/2023

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

27/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

11/098(3)

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved



Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Yeovil Town Council – SO0316

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, and accompanying note, the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to objectives C and N, risk assessment and publication of documents on website. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner.

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

Date

29/09/2023

Date	Item
12 th November 2023	Remembrance Sunday
5 th December 2023	Presentation – Yeovil In Bloom Draft Budget 2024/25 Reports and Recommendations from Council's Committees: Planning – 20 th November 2023 Grounds and General Maintenance – 13 th November 2023 Promotions and Activities – 14 th November 2023 Buildings and Civic Matters – 21 st November 2023 Policy, Resources and Finance – 28 th November 2023
23 rd January 2024	Budget 2024/25 Risk Strategy Programme of Meeting 2024/25 Mayor Elect/Deputy Mayor Elect Reports and Recommendations from Council's Committees: Planning – 11 th December 2023 Grounds and General Maintenance – 8 th January 2024 Promotions and Activities – 9 th January 2024 Buildings and Civic Matters – 15 th January 2024 Policy, Resources and Finance – 16 th January 2024
5 th March 2024	Reserve Date
2 nd April 2024	Mayor Elect/Deputy Mayor Elect Reports and Recommendations from Council's Committees: Planning – 22 nd January 2024 / 12 th February 2024 / 18 th March 2024 Grounds and General Maintenance – 11 th March 2024 Promotions and Activities – 12 th March 2024 Buildings and Civic Matters – 19 th March 2024 Policy, Resources and Finance – 26 th March 2024

Members have requested presentations from:

- Ambulance Service
- Fire Brigade

We are awaiting responses from these organisations.