

# Yeovil Town Council



Town House  
19 Union Street  
Yeovil  
Somerset  
BA20 1PQ

**Leisure and Environment Meeting**

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## Leisure and Environment Committee

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**7:00pm**

**Hybrid Meeting:**

**Face-to-face at Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil**

**BA20 1PQ; and virtual using Zoom meeting software**

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For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact [town.clerk@yeovil.gov.uk](mailto:town.clerk@yeovil.gov.uk).



**Amanda Card**, Town Clerk  
23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024

This information is also available on our website: [www.yeovil.gov.uk](http://www.yeovil.gov.uk)

**Members of Yeovil Town Council are summoned to attend:**

Jade Cabell

Jane Lowery

Tareth Casey

Ashley Richards (*Vice Chairman*)

Emma Jayne-Hopkins

Andy Soughton

Andy Kendall (*Ex-officio*)

Roy Spinner (*Chairman*)

Jamie Lock

Adrian Wilkes

Tony Lock (*Ex-officio*)

Dave Potten (*co-opted non-voting*)

**Public Comments at meetings (held via Zoom)**

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](mailto:ytic@yeovil.gov.uk) by 9:00am on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2024. 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	

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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.

# **A G E N D A**

**Public Comment (15 Minutes)**

**11/220. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN**

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

**11/221. 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).

**11/222. MINUTES**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

**11/223. FEEDBACK FROM YEOVIL ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL**

To receive any feedback via Cllr Spinner.

**11/224. FEEDBACK FROM CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBER**

To consider a verbal update.

**11/225. URBAN TREE CHALLENGE PLANTING OPPORTUNITY**

To consider the report by the Director of Leisure and Environment attached at pages 6 to 10.

**11/226. DEVOLUTION TRANCHE 2 UPDATE REPORT**

To consider the report by the Director of Leisure and Environment attached at pages 11 to 12.

**11/227. FLEET MANAGEMENT – VEHICLE REPLACEMENT REQUEST**

To consider the report by the Director of Leisure and Environment attached at pages 13 to 14.

**11/228. UPDATE FROM YEOVIL RECREATION CENTRE**

To consider the report by the Director of Leisure and Environment attached at pages 15 to 16.

**11/229. MONKSDALE HEDGE UPDATE**

To consider the report by the Deputy Town Clerk (to follow).

**11/230. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT MONTH 9 2024/25**

To consider the budget monitoring report (to follow)

**11/231. BUDGET SETTING 2025/26**

To consider and recommend to Policy, Resources and Finance Committee the draft budget for 2025/26 (to follow)

## 11/125 URBAN TREE CHALLENGE PLANTING OPPORTUNITY

### Introduction

Somerset Council have been successful in applying for funding through the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf) which supports tree planting in urban and peri-urban areas and is administered by the Forestry Commission (FC). [Urban Tree Challenge Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

It is funded by the Exchequer through the Nature for Climate Fund (NCF) to plant more trees in and around England's towns and cities, delivering natural capital benefits, such as climate change adaptation, flood risk management, improved health and wellbeing and urban biodiversity. The Fund provides capital payments for the planting of large 'standard' trees followed by 3 years of establishment payments.

Somerset Council have secured the offer of funding for 85 new standard trees across green spaces in Milford and Yew Trees parks in Yeovil.

### Project proposal

All of the sites within this proposal are currently owned and managed by Somerset Council, but are due to be transferred over through the Devolution program to Yeovil Town Council. Somerset Council are therefore seeking Town Council support and collaboration to enable the planting and establishment of up to 85 trees under this scheme.

It is proposed that Somerset Council undertake the delivery of the tree planting within this current financial year (2024/25), which would include financial responsibility and receipt of Grant Payments for the purchase of the trees and associated capital items such as stakes, guards and mulch.

Somerset Council would then transfer the planted trees and the remainder of the Grant Agreement (the establishment phase) to the Town Council within the Devolution Process. This would require the Town Council to agree to undertake establishment activities including watering and inspections over the period March 2025 – Sept 2027, to fulfil the requirements of the Grant Agreement.

The Town Council would receive the annual Establishment Grant Payment for this activity – see table 1.

Site name	Number of trees proposed	Total Annual Establishment Payment (£)	Total Annual Establishment payment over Three Years (£)
Milford Road	20	3,024.00	9,072.00
Lower Milford	45	6,804.00	2,0142.00
Yew Tree Park	20	3,024.00	9,072.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>12,852.00</b>	<b>38,556.00</b>

Table 1.

The grant payments available are sufficient for the new open spaces team to complete the establishment works required.

## Project Objectives

The benefits and role of trees within urban environments is well documented and understood and are set to play an increasingly valuable and essential role in mitigating some of the impacts of ecological stress and climate change in the decades to come.

The ongoing and continual care, management and successional planting of urban trees is essential to maintain existing tree stock and work towards creating diverse, resilient and adaptable urban green spaces.

UTCF funding represents a rare **'full cost recovery'** opportunity to plant large trees within the urban environment, where the collaboration between Somerset Council and Yeovil Town Council has the potential to enable effective and efficient delivery.

The planting of the trees aligns with the principles of green infrastructure and enhancing green infrastructure for the town.

## Planting Proposals for Yeovil



UTCf 2024 Yeovil - Milford Road



**Somerset**  
Council

Somerset  
Council  
County Hall  
Taunton  
TA1 4DY  
0300 123 2224

Scale:1:1250  
Centre:355878, 116736  
Date produced:2024-12-10  
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UTCf 2024 Yeovil - Yew Tree Park



**Somerset**  
Council

Somerset  
Council  
County Hall

Scale:1:1250  
Centre:353954, 115020

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## Design Principles

The Woodland Creation Officer at Somerset Council has set out the planting plans above (approved by Forestry Commission) in collaboration with the Open Spaces Manager at Somerset Council. Trees outlined in red indicate a fruit tree.

- **Any new tree planting should not impact or reduce the current use** (formal and informal) and enjoyment of these spaces.  
This could be from siting trees too close to formal sports pitches/areas, prohibiting free movement within children's play areas, interfering with passage along existing formal and informal paths and tracks and where parks offer limited open space for informal enjoyment such as picnics and games.  
The location, layout and spacing of tree planting should all be considered and determined with this in mind.
- **Species selection should be predominantly native broadleaf** to support the enhancement of biodiversity and create a resilient and dynamic 'urban forest'.  
Species selection takes into account desired size (height and spread), form (shape and style) , colour (spring and autumn), formative pruning requirements, growth rate and lifespan, as well as some potential negative effects such as excessive pollen creation, sap/fruit/leaf fall, root spread and invasiveness
- **Tree planting should enhance diversity** (ecological and structural), sense of place and natural beauty and where possible provide areas of shade for future park users
- Where the potential exists, such as within large parks with extensive informal open space, **new planting schemes/styles should be considered** that provide opportunities to increase canopy cover whilst adhering to the above principles.  
New styles of planting such as tree avenues, copses and small orchards should always aim to enhance a space and act as a new iteration of the parks use, function and place within the wider area.

The requirements of the Grant Funding are there to ensure that each and every tree that is planted is provided with the very best of chances to ensure its long-term health and development. Through the selection of site suitable species, careful sourcing of strong and healthy tree stock from suppliers who are registered as Plant Healthy Nurseries [Welcome to Plant Healthy - Plant Healthy](#), careful handling, site preparation, planting and the installation of robust tree protection measures, each tree will be given the very best of chances for rapid establishment and strong development.

It is critical that immediately following planting and for a minimum of three years after, each tree receives individual attention in the form of regular watering during spring and summer, and the checking (and maintenance/replacement where necessary) of the stakes, tie, watering tube, mulch and metal cage at intervals throughout the year. It is this activity that Yeovil Town Council would be responsible for, utilising the Grant payments set out in Table 1 to facilitate delivery.

This 'establishment activity' is purposefully prescriptive, as it is known that young 'semi-mature' standards require significant volumes of water during the growing season, and that average summer rainfall is not sufficient to provide that requirement. This water/moisture deficiency is now commonly exacerbated through extended periods of very dry weather, inflicting additional stress and preventing strong and healthy development. The regular watering of generous quantities of water and the use of watering tubes to ensure that the water is able to reach the root zone, help to ensure long term success.

Somerset Council will remain the 'Agreement Holder' and will issue a separate Funding Agreement between Somerset Council and Yeovil Town Council to formalise the delivery of this activity and effectively transfer the Conditions and Grant Payments of the FC issued Grant Agreement. This agreement would remain in place for the duration of the three years of the Establishment Activity and an additional five years for the 'maintenance period'.

### **Timeframes**

Due to the Forestry Commissions' delay in determining the UTCF application, we are now operating within a very tight timescale. All of the tree planting needs completing by mid March 2025. This would mean that the 'establishment activity' would commence spring 2025 and extend to the autumn of 2027.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED**:

- 1) to consider the report and agree to the tree planting schemes for Milford and Yew Tree parks; and
- 2) to instruct the Director for Leisure & Environment to confirm with Somerset Council the Town Council's agreement to undertake the establishment works as set out in the report.

***(Katy Menday, Director for Leisure and Environment -  
katy.menday@yeovil.gov.uk)***

## **11/126. DEVOLUTION TRANCHE 2 UPDATE REPORT**

### **Introduction**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024 tranche 1 of the devolution program took place when the facilities at Yeovil Country Park and Yeovil Recreation Centre transferred to Yeovil Town Council under an interim Licence to Occupy. The freehold transfer of the land is anticipated to take place later in 2025. Tranche 2 of the devolution program involves the transfer of all open spaces across the town, play areas and the In Bloom program. This report gives an update on the current work on tranche 2.

### **Timescales Agreed to Date**

Yeovil Town Council initially asked for a 1<sup>st</sup> February transfer date, but Somerset Council suggested 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. Project team discussions have confirmed that the tranche 2 transfer of the open spaces, play areas and In Bloom program extends only to the transfer of the land or facility, with very limited staff to TUPE, no vehicles, and no equipment or machinery. Therefore the service/s needs building from scratch and April is a more realistic, although still challenging, deadline.

### **Open Spaces**

A spreadsheet and mapping exercise is underway to confirm the open spaces transferring to Yeovil Town Council. Due to time constraints this will follow the Licence to Occupy route as in tranche 1.

Somerset Council have confirmed that no staff, vehicles, machinery or equipment are available to transfer for open spaces. This could have significant, but as yet un-quantified, budgetary implications and the devolution budget agreed as part of the program will be required. In the coming weeks the Director of Leisure and Environment will be researching and costing the purchase, hire or lease of the vehicles and equipment required to run the service. This will return to members as a March report. It should be noted that for vehicles and equipment the lead in time for ordering is unlikely to align to an April transfer date.

A further issue to be resolved is the provision of a depot site and staff rest facilities for the small open spaces and In Bloom team. Current solutions include negotiating the transfer of the Birchfield storage compound, where we will need to locate a container for secure storage, and enhancing the staff welfare facilities at Yeovil Recreation Centre to accommodate new team members. The open spaces team will also need a waste handling licence in place for them to move green waste, and the provision of storage bays for the green arisings.

To provide capacity for the Director of Leisure and Environment it is proposed to progress the recruitment of the Operations Manager. This is first with the staffing panel for discussion in January.

In summary for open spaces, subject to final arrangements with Somerset Council, there will be a range of set up costs associated with tranche 2. These costs will be reported at the March committee in more detail, but in high level summary will include;

Creation of secure appropriate compound / depot space

Lease / hire costs of required vehicles and machinery

Purchase of tools

Creation of small welfare area for staff, including access to IT

### **In Bloom**

The Director of Leisure & Environment has registered with the South West RHS team and received the information about the 2025 program.

Somerset Council have confirmed that one staff member will TUPE and provide continuity across civic schemes. The Director of Leisure and Environment is working with Somerset Council to ensure there will be floral displays for summer 2025, it is most likely that the planting schemes for 2024 will be followed with small amendments.

Yeovil Town Council have confirmed that they will not be managing the planting on roundabouts, and the scheme will be changing to provide a sustainable future as per the November report to committee.

The Growing Hub at the Old Ski Centre site is progressing as utilities have been located and a grant bid for 55k submitted to the Customer and Communities fund of South Western Railway. This is for the capital set up of the site. Somerset Council have confirmed they will transfer a triple span poly tunnel for the site, the rest of the nursery equipment and tools are still under discussion. There is no vehicle available to transfer for the In Bloom gardener.

The Biodiversity Ranger is investigating tree nurseries and wildflower growing opportunities and funding for the wider Ski Centre Site. The South Somerset Environment Forum remains engaged with the Growing Hub project and wider changes to open spaces and In Bloom across the town.

The In Bloom Steering Group meetings are currently paused awaiting a review of the Terms of Reference to look at membership and the role of the group once there is greater staffing capacity.

### **Play**

Somerset Council have confirmed a part time member of staff will TUPE, confirmation has been requested on the role description for the individual so the capability / capacity to complete inspections and remedial repair works is understood.

No vehicle, tools or equipment, will be transferred and so aligned to open spaces a vehicle will need to be leased, and tools purchased to run the play service.

Yeovil Town Council have asked Somerset Council for use of the store at Petters Way garages and a response is awaited. If unavailable another secure container will be required for materials and hand tools at a location to be confirmed.

The Committee are **RECOMMENDED**:

- 1) to note the report; and
- 2) to note that tranche 2 will require use of the agreed devolution budget to establish services and agree to accept a report in March providing greater detail.

***(Katy Menday, Director for Leisure and Environment –  
katy.menday@yeovil.gov.uk)***

## **11/127. FLEET MANAGEMENT - VEHICLE REPLACEMENT REQUEST**

### **Introduction**

SureStart Automotive Ltd were asked to conduct a general safety inspection of the Town Council's blue VW Caddy van registration plate WG56 KCO in November 2024. This report summarises the findings and recommends the disposal of the van and procurement of a replacement vehicle for use by the Facilities Officer and Community Ambassador.

### **Safety Inspection Report Findings**

In the November 2024 inspection report 21 issues were identified with the vehicle of which 8 are MOT failures. The vehicles next MOT is due by 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025. The garage provided the following conclusion –

“This vehicle has a fair number of items which would at present date be MOT failures. Overall, the condition of the body work and structure is extremely poor and will require attention. Regarding general mechanical repairs the vehicle would be considered in poor condition for the age and mileage. Service history and repairs show maintenance as required however the majority of the repairs required seem to have been missed on regular inspections and indeed MOT Testing. Should retention of the vehicle be considered for future fleet use we would recommend the above faults to be rectified. The brake servo was waterlogged and has now been drained for safety.”

Considering the likely high cost of repairs, versus future life span and value of the vehicle, it is appropriate to replace the van at this time. As an imminent need to replace the vehicle was already recognised by the Clerk a budget has already been agreed by Council to progress a replacement van.

### **Procurement of a new van**

A specification will be drawn up by the Leisure Administrator who supports with the Fleet records. This will take into account the size of van required taking feedback from the Facilities Officer, Community Ambassador and Deputy Clerks. The opportunity to switch to a hybrid or fully electric vehicle will also be considered at this time.

Once the specification is established the Leisure Administrator will secure quotations for lease costs for a new vehicle. The Director will then consult with the Chairman of the Leisure & Environment committee, based on costs provided, to agree the procurement of the new vehicle.

### **Budget**

There is an existing agreed budget of £8,000 per year to pay lease costs for a new vehicle.

There is further £2,000 per year in the budget to pay for fuel, maintenance, repairs, safety inspections and MOT's.

Any remaining budget will be used towards the wider vehicle sourcing programme required for tranche 2. See devolution update report.

### **Disposal of WG56 KCO**

It is proposed to arrange for WG56 KCO to be taken to Hussey's auctioneers at Exeter for disposal. There may be a small receipt from this sale once the auction fees have been paid.

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to confirm the proposed route to dispose of the existing caddy van and delegate the procurement of a new van to the Director of Leisure and Environment in consultation with the Chairman of this committee.

*(Katy Menday, Director for Leisure and Environment -  
katy.menday@yeovil.gov.uk)*

## **11/228. UPDATE FROM YEOVIL RECREATION CENTRE**

### **Introduction**

On 1<sup>st</sup> August Yeovil Recreation Centre transferred as part of the devolution program to Yeovil Town Council. Sixteen staff members, both permanent and casual, TUPE'd across to manage the greenspace, sports facilities, sports activities and café on site. The team have worked hard to ensure a continuity of service for customers, residents and site users and are pleased to report the following positive outcomes in the second half of 2024.

### **Grounds Management Association Finalists**

The team at Yeovil Recreation Centre are delighted to have been shortlisted for two national awards in the 2025 Grounds Management Association (GMA) Industry Awards.

These annual awards celebrate and highlight the outstanding contributions of individuals, teams, and organisations who set the standard for excellence in the grounds management sector. This year's finalists were selected by a panel of ten leading industry experts, who reviewed nominations across 17 categories. From grassroots volunteers to top-tier professionals, the awards recognise outstanding achievements across all levels of sport and recreation. [GMA Industry Awards Shortlist](#).

Yeovil Recreation Centre has been shortlisted in two categories: Community Grounds Person/Team of the Year and Best Managed Artificial Surface of the Year. Up against stiff national competition that includes Scottish Rugby Union and Repton School, the team is delighted to see their work recognised on a national stage.

A press release was issued in early December and Head Groundsman Rodney Pippard and Activities Officer Ashley Smalley then conducted a radio interview with BBC Somerset on 9<sup>th</sup> December. The application this year included a range of positive feedback comments from visiting Hockey clubs and information about the petition launched at the beginning of 2024 to save the site from closure, which secured over 15,000 signatories.

On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January the GMA judge is attending site to meet the team and see the facilities.

The winners will be revealed during a prestigious ceremony at Anfield Stadium, home of Liverpool FC, on Thursday, 13 March 2025. Two team members will be attending for the ceremony.

### **Grant funding for facility enhancement**

The Activities Officer has secured a grant of £2,248 from the Football Foundation towards new goal posts for use across the facility. The cost of the replacement goals is £2,997 and so this 75% grant is a significant help in covering the costs of these vital pieces of equipment. The grant enables the purchase of four sets of 7v7/5v5 metal football goals used for matches for age groups U7-U10 youth teams on our grass pitches, for both boys/girls and mixed teams. The grant supports facility upkeep and ensures demand from various youth teams who use our pitches throughout the season can be met. Teams using the site currently include Westlands, Pen Mill and Ilchester FC and also events held by Somerset FA. These goals can also be used as training goals on the AGP throughout the week and for casual use at weekends. This investment ensures all relevant safety measures are met, and the new equipment, including nets and counterweights, means we are fit for the future.

## **New Events for 2025**

The site team are aware of a need for greater marketing of the facility, both to increase use and income but also to ensure residents of Yeovil are aware of the full range of activities available to them at the site to benefit their health. A lack of capacity has hampered this work and so we have partnered with the sports students at Yeovil College to deliver a Festival of Sport for 2025. Year 1 sports science and sports coaching students are tasked with arranging a full day of events on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June. They will handle everything from booking clubs and coaches to risk assessments, marketing, event infrastructure and planning. The event will provide real life work experience for the students and the Yeovil Rec team will provide all the support and advice required through regular planning sessions in the run up to the event.

## **Track Mark Accreditation**

The Athletics Arena has successfully attained its Track Mark accreditation for a further 4 years, guaranteeing the facility can host events at a regional level and is fit for purpose for the 2025 athletics season. Thirty events are already booked between April-July 2025. The Track Mark accreditation was introduced to ensure athletics facilities meet the regulated national safety guidelines & standards set by England Athletics for hosting athletics events and training. Once attained facilities can host anything up to regional athletics competitions, which in turn allows competitors to qualify for the Commonwealth Games. This accreditation also demonstrates that the facility is in a high quality and safe condition for our home club (Yeovil Olympiads Athletics Club) to use all year round, plus local schools and colleges who hire the venue. The work of the Grounds team has kept the facility in good condition (securing the pass) despite the fact that the track surface is now 12 years old. This facility is a major source of income especially in the spring-summer season when busy athletic events bring trade to other areas of site like the cafe.

## **Joanna France Clubhouse, Athletics Arena**

In addition to the work of the site team, the Yeovil Olympiads Athletics Club (YOAC) have secured astonishing investment in refurbishment and retrofitting of the Joanna France clubhouse. An internal make-over has already been completed and in January the tender process will commence for the external insulation and full recladding, solar PV array with battery storage and other energy saving measures at the clubhouse. YOAC have secured in excess of 250K of investment in the building from Centrica (British Gas).

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the report.

***(Katy Menday, Director for Leisure and Environment –  
katy.menday@yeovil.gov.uk)***