



Yeovil Town Council

Town House
19 Union Street
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 1PQ

Mayor: Cllr A Kendall, Town Clerk: Amanda Card BA (Hons), CPFA, BSc (Open)
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Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Buildings & Civic Matters Committee 19th September 2023 at 7.00pm held by video-conference using Zoom meeting software; and in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ.

Present (in person): Cllrs R Stickland (Chair); T Casey; N Gage; K Gill; T Lock; W Read; A Richards; J Snell and A Soughton.

In Attendance (in person): Cllr J Lowery (Yeovil Summerlands Ward); A Card (Town Clerk); H Ferdinand (Deputy Town Clerk); Gareth Williams (Co-ordinator at Yeovil Crime Reduction Team); Robert Koranyi (Yeovil Crime Reduction Team) and Chris Robson (Yeovil Crime Reduction Team).

There was one member of the public present.

Public Comment

Sergeant Dan Crawford sent his apologies due to other commitments but forwarded a statement that the Town Clerk read.

“ Prior to the summer, I made you aware of the summer demand operation put in place by the Chief Constable and agreed by the Police Crime commissioner called Operation Hibiscus to manage the increased call demand on the service during the summer months. This is now coming to an end next week, on the 26th of September 2023. What this means in simple terms, is that police officers on the local neighbourhood teams, can solely focus on the core policing issues in the community of Yeovil.

Despite the increased demand on the police service through the summer, I and the local leadership team have done our utmost to ensure the team maintain public visibility as best as possible through this time period, whilst also still trying to reduce harm in our community.

An example of this would be the recent closure of an address on Eastland Road following numerous incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour and disorder occurring at the address, which resulted in my team gathering the required evidence to present this matter to the Magistrates Court in 23 days, leading to the Magistrates concluding that the property should be closed under Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Crime Act 2014 for a period of three months. This alongside PCSOs attending a large number of community events throughout summer, which

have been published on Yeovil Neighbourhood Policing Page demonstrates our commitment to the community.

It has been a very busy period for my team over the summer months, however we are really excited by the recruitment of two new Police Community Support Officers within the team and a new Police Constable also starting last week.

I recognise there is certainly still work to be done. This Autumn, the teams focus will be on problem solving local community issues, such as the current levels of Anti-Social Behaviour and retail crime within the town, through working closely with key stakeholders such as Yeovil Town Council, Yeovil Crime Reduction Team, Somerset Council and other third-party sectors.

Another focus will be focusing on reducing violence, the fear of crime and drug use within Yeovil's Night-time Economy, using a variety of police tactics to do so, which will include ensuring licensed premises are abiding by their licensing conditions and the licensing act. This will be all alongside our normal day to day business of safeguarding and protecting the communities most vulnerable and engaging with Yeovil's community as much as possible.

As Councillors, I ask that you continue to promote to your constituents, the importance of reporting intelligence and incidents to the police using the various reporting methods below;

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

Avon and Somerset Police Online <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report/>

Or 101 / 999 in an emergency."

The Chair stated that any questions should be forwarded to the Town Clerk who would then forward them to Sergeant Dan Crawford for answers.

Gareth Williams - Co-ordinator at Yeovil Crime Reduction Team provided an update on the work of Yeovil Crime Reduction Team.

He stated that Operation Hibiscus ran by the police had had a huge impact on the service of the Yeovil Crime Reduction Team, which had led to the challenges of an increase in anti-social behaviour, an increase in drunk and disorderly behaviour and an increase in shop lifting and various other issues. He had challenged the Police about these impacts, and he had written a letter to the Police Crime Commissioner. He highlighted the tools that were available to the local authority and the Police to tackle the issues – Community Protection Notices (CPNs); Community Protection Warnings (CPWs); Community Protection Orders (CPOs) and Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs). A lot of those involved in anti-social behaviour and shoplifting are subject to these orders, and the challenge was made on behalf of the businesses and other partners about the impact of these orders not being enforced. The Police Crime Commissioner has acknowledged the letter and a meeting has been arranged in Bristol next week. Feedback will be given to the Council as there is a dramatic impact on the safety of people in the town centre – both businesses and people who come into the town centre.

Yeovil Crime Reduction Team continue to offer outreach support, alongside the Link (commissioned by Somerset Council) to identify new rough sleepers and those with mental health issues so that they could be signposted to the correct agencies. This is done on a daily basis and these costs are absorbed by the Yeovil Crime Reduction Team. He highlighted that Yeovil Crime Reduction are also the main drivers for the collation of information for the injunction process.

Yeovil Crime Reduction are now working with Yeovil Country Park and the rangers who are now on Radio Link which helps with the safety of those in the Country Park.

Information regarding issues and individuals are being shared with partners – including the Police, Somerset Council and Yeovil Town Council.

Mr Williams commented that the volumes of issues are the worst he had experienced during his time in at Yeovil Crime Reduction and the KPIs prove this. He also commented that there does not appear to be a Community Safety Team in the new Somerset Council to help with these matters in Yeovil town centre, particularly to enforce orders. He said more pressure needed to be put onto Somerset Council for action to be taken as this is having a serious impact on the Town Centre businesses. He stressed that the orders were there to protect businesses and people.

A Councillor asked whether Yeovil was subject to the shoplifting epidemic. Gareth Williams said that it was something that was a new national trend on social media. He re-iterated that there were the CPN/CPW tools could also help tackle low level shoplifters. He stated that there were a lack of security guards in Yeovil and businesses were cautious about laying hands on shoplifters.

A Councillor stated that the Police Crime records did not align with the picture that Mr Williams had given. The response was that it dependent how the information was classified and a suggestion was made to submit a Freedom of Information request. The Councillor continued to ask about the prosecution rates which appeared to be very low and how that could be changed. The response was again the enforcement of the tools that were available and more pressure needs to be put on Somerset Council.

Gareth Williams highlighted that there was an issue waiting for Somerset Council to sort out the legal element for prosecution for breaches in injunctions. There are situations where the evidence for breaches in civil injunctions had been collated and cases were ready to be submitted to court.

A Councillor raised that that the Town Council could employ wardens in the Town to enforce the orders. The Town Clerk reminded the Committee that there was a budget line for Community Safety of £17,500.

The Town Clerk will put on the agenda for the next meeting a report to assess the feasibility of employing an enforcement officer/community warden for the Town Centre to assist in alleviate some of the issues that have been raised.

The Chair stated that any questions should be forwarded to the Town Clerk who would then forward them to Gareth Williams for answers.

The member of public referred to item 11/108 – Finger Post Restoration saying that he and his wife would be happy to volunteer to maintain the fingerpost on Dorchester Road.

7:37pm – The representatives from Yeovil Crime Reduction Team and the member of public left and did not return.

7:37pm – The meeting commenced.

11/103 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies were received from Cllrs E Hopkins (conflicting engagement) and A Kendall (unwell).

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies with the reasons given.

11/104 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr J Lowery declared a personal interest in agenda item 11/104 – Octagon Plaques and 11/112 Yeovil War Memorial and Millenium Clock (Commercial in Confidence) due to a relative's name being on both.

Cllr T Casey declared a personal interest in agenda item 11/108 – Finger Post Restoration due to raising the issue.

Cllrs T Lock; W Read; J Snell and A Soughton declared a personal interest in agenda item 11/114 as they were also members at Somerset Council who owned Milford Hall.

There were no other declarations at this time.

11/105 MINUTES

The Committee confirmed as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 18th July 2023.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meetings held on 18th July 2023.

11/106 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – JUNE 2023 / JULY 2023

Members considered the Financial Statement for the period 1st June 2023 to 31st July 2023.

A question was raised by a Councillor regarding where Yeovil Town Council were with ascertaining what services Somerset Council could possibly pass down to the Town Council. The Town Clerk stated that there was not yet a list which had been forwarded to her.

RESOLVED: that the Financial Statement for the period 1st June 2023 to 31st July 2023 be approved.

11/107 DEFIBRILLATOR UPDATE

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk regarding the defibrillator project.

The defibrillator cabinet at Southville Elim Church had been installed that day. The official launch would be held in early October, however the Town Clerk stated that the defibrillator would be ready for use before that date, as she believed it was not favourable for an empty cabinet to be on the wall for a long period of time. The Town Clerk would inform Councillors when the official launch would take place.

At this point, Cllr R Stickland declared a personal interest in that he was Chair of the Newtown Residents Association before it terminated, which had partially funded the defibrillator at Southville Elim Church.

The Town Clerk spoke of meeting that was due to take place on 20th September 2023 with Battens and Emerald First Aid about the possibility of working with Battens to have a public access defibrillator along Princess Street.

A question was raised regarding the Cow and Apple defibrillator. The Town Clerk stated that a conversation was first to be had with the new business that had taken over Cow and Apple's original premises to see if they wished to continue to support the defibrillator. If they did, then an additional defibrillator would be installed on the Cow and Apple's new premises, if not, then the defibrillator would be relocated.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

11/108 FINGER POST RESTORATION

Members considered the report of the Assistant Town Clerk regarding finger post restoration whereby Somerset Council had confirmed they were no longer responsible for maintaining finger post and that responsibility now belonged to the local parish council.

A question was raised as to how many finger posts there were around Yeovil that the Town Council could now be expected to maintain. The Town Clerk did not have this information but would find it out.

Cllr Casey stated that Finger post restoration is about and always has been about local residents doing this with the support of Somerset Council and Yeovil Town Council. He asked if the training had also been removed as this would involve sending local people out on to roads which would create health and safety risks. Training would have to take place. Questions were raised about how other parishes did this work. The answer was that the rangers did this.

It was likely that the finger posts needed to be maintained on a case-by-case basis.

The Town Clerk did state that anyone working on the Highway would need to be Chapter 8 (code of practice in accordance with Traffic Signs Manual issued by the Department for Transport) trained.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) to maintain the fingerposts as and when they need doing; and (3) to bring an update to the next meeting.

7:57pm – Cllr J Snell left the meeting

11/109 OCTAGON PLAQUES

Members considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk (HF).

7:58pm – Cllr J Snell returned to the meeting

Discussions were held as to the merits of the various locations as listed within the report.

8:02pm – Cllr A Soughton left the meeting

8:04pm – Cllr A Soughton returned to the meeting

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) to investigate the following venues in order of preference (i) St John's Church; (ii) Yeovil Library; and (iii) Westlands Entertainment Venue.

11/110 OFFICIAL IMAGE OF HM KING CHARLES III

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk regarding the official image of HM King Charles III. Currently, there is no official image. The Town Council's details have been added to a data base of Royal Images and the Town Council will be informed once an official image becomes available.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

11/111 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity of agenda items 11/112 to 11/114 would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3

11/112 YEOVIL WAR MEMORIAL & MILLENNIUM CLOCK (CONFIDENTIAL)

8:07pm – Cllr T Casey left the meeting

Members considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk (HF) highlighting the correspondence which had taken place between the Town Council and the Regeneration Programme Manager for Somerset Council.

8:09pm – Cllr T Casey returned to the meeting

RESOLVED: to note the report.

**11/113 MAYORS' PHOTOGRAPHS AND STAIRWELL DECORATION
(COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk (HF) regarding the Mayor's photographs hung on the walls of the stairwell and the decoration of the stairwell.

The Committee agreed that the decoration of the stairwell should be carried out as a matter of course to maintain the Town House. The digitisation of the Mayors' photographs would require a specialist and it was requested that costs for this should be sought so that it could be put in the budget for 2024/25.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; (2) that the decoration of the stairwell should be carried out as a matter of course to maintain the Town House; (3) to make some tentative enquiries to ascertain costs for the digitisation of the Mayors' photographs so that provision can be made in the budget for 2024/25.

11/114 MILFORD HALL ENERGY (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk (HF) regarding the energy consumption at Milford Hall. Discussions were held on the various issues that the report raised.

8:25pm – Cllr J Lowery left the meeting

8:26pm – Cllr J Lowery returned to the meeting

The Committee expressed their thanks to the Deputy Town Clerk (HF) for the comprehensive report that she had written laying out all the facts. It was felt that further information was required to enable decisions to be made by this Committee.

RESOLVED: (1) to note the report; and (2) that the Deputy Town Clerk (HF) investigate the matters highlighted by the Committee further; and (3) that these findings be fed back to the next meeting of this Committee.

The meeting closed at 9:13pm.

Signed:

Dated: