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**Yeovil Town Council**

**Annual Report 2020/21**

**Amanda Card**

**Town Clerk**

4th May 2021

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**1 Members of Yeovil Town Council – 2020/21**

David Recardo –Mayor of Yeovil Town

Helen Stonier – Deputy Mayor of Yeovil Town

Philip Chandler (until 4th July 2020)

Olivia Darling-Smith (from 4th August 2020)

Jade Dash

Amy Grieves (until 16th May 2020)

Nigel Gage

Karl Gill

Peter Gubbins

David Gubbins

Gordon Hunting

Kaysar Hussain

Andrew Kendall

Terry Ledlie

Mike Lock

Pauline Lock

Tony Lock

Jane Lowery

Sarah Lowery

Graham Oakes

Evie Potts-Jones

Wes Read

Ashley Richards (from 1st September 2020)

Andy Soughton

Roy Spinner

Rob Stickland

**2 Team Structure**

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**3 Yeovil Town Council**

The Council met on 9 occasions during the year.

The Council as a whole has faced many challenges due to COVID-19. This has had an impact on how Council business is conducted, including the way that meetings are held. The Council moved all its meetings to virtual meetings using Zoom meeting software. Yeovil Town Council’s first ever virtual meeting was held on 26th May 2020.

In May, we held our Annual Town Council meeting and appointed members to serve on the various Committees to the Town Council and the outside bodies on which the Council is represented. We also elected our Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen on these Committees.

At the July meeting, Council agreed to invite both the Leader of Somerset County Council and the Leader of South Somerset District Council to a Special Meeting to present their business cases for “One Somerset” and “Stronger Somerset” respectively.

At the August meeting, the Council approved the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements for the financial year 2019/20.

In September we had two meetings. At the first meeting, the Town Clerk updated the Councillors on the approach during COVID-19. A rigorous risk assessment had been carried out and appropriate mitigations had been put in place to ensure the safety of staff and service users. Risks were continuously assessed, and Public Health Guidance was reviewed upon each update.

A special meeting was held in September so that the Council could hear in more detail about the Stronger Somerset proposal for Unitary from both the Leader and the Chief Executive of South Somerset District Council. The proposal was being submitted by the four district Councils in Somerset. This proposal involved 2 Unitary Authorities and would look to reform Local Government rather than be just a re-organisation. Stronger Somerset could provide opportunities for Towns and Parishes to develop ambitions for taking on more responsibilities.

At our November meeting, Johnathan Higman (Chief Executive at Yeovil District Hospital). He gave an overview of the hospital, the services they provide, how they had to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the plans for the future.

In December, Chief Inspector Sharon Baker (Local Policing Area Commander, East Somerset Avon and Somerset Police) delivered a presentation on the work of the police within Yeovil.

The draft budget for 2021/22 was noted and further consideration would be given to the setting of the 2021/22 precept pending final notification from South Somerset District Council of the tax base and the Crematorium and Cemetery Committee final budget.

We were also informed of the conclusion of the audit of the Annual Return and the external auditor’s comments which gave assurance that Yeovil Town Council have an excellent standard of financial accounting and controls.

At our February Meeting, we gave final consideration to the setting of the 2021/22 budget. We decided to approve the Town Council’s precept as £1,177,276, which resulted in an increase on a Band D charge of £2.76 per year (or 5p per week) and increase from £126.55 to £129.31.

At this meeting, the Risk Strategy and Risk Assessment for 2021/22 for Yeovil Town Council was approved and adopted.

At our April Meeting, Mark Willcox (Director of Youth and Community at YMCA Mendip) gave a presentation about the provision of Youth Service in Yeovil.

Also at this meeting, Members considered how they would respond to the Secretary of State’s consultation regarding the proposal for a unitary local government. Yeovil Town Council agreed to support the proposal for two Unitary Councils in Yeovil proposed by the four District Councils; rather than the one Unitary Council as proposed by Somerset County Council.

***Cllr David Recardo, Chairman of Yeovil Town Council***

***4th May 2021***

**3 Planning Committee**

As a result of the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, Planning meetings had to be cancelled from March 2020 and consultations on planning applications carried out via email with the Chair and Ward Members under the Town Council’s ‘Scheme of Delegation’. However, by June 2020 all Town Council meetings, including the Planning Committee, were held virtually via Zoom meeting software. In total 10 virtual Planning Committees have been held during the 2020/21 year.

At the first virtual Planning Committee held in June 2020, a spreadsheet of all planning applications dealt with previously under the ‘Scheme of Delegation’ was reported. In total 30 applications had been dealt with during the first national lockdown in this way.

Numerous applications have been received and considered thoughout the year. As well as the standard ‘full’ and ‘outline’ applications, other proposals for advertisements, works to listed buildings, works to protected trees, and proposed changes of use to land and buildings have also been considered. The Town Council is a consultee in the planning application process and South Somerset District Council as the Local Planning Authority takes the final decision. The final decisions taken by the Local Planning Authority are reported back to the Committee.

There continues to be a wide variety of proposed development to be considered by the Committee. As always, numerous minor domestic extensions have been dealt with (which need to be considered carefully in terms of their potential impact on the occupiers of neighbouring properties), as well as larger scale developments which can have a significant impact on the Town as a whole. A few applications of note have been considered by the Committee during the year where the Town Council has sought to assist and support the Local Planning Authority in the final determination of the applications, and in some cases highlighting issues for negotiation:

* In May 2020, under the ‘Scheme of Delegation’ Members considered the proposals for the new Yeovil Police Station in Horsey Lane (20/01207/FUL). The existing police station building is to be demolished as it is unfit for purpose. The replacement building is smaller in floorspace and contemporary in design including energy efficient fixtures such as photovoltaic panels, and low and zero energy/carbon technologies. The Town Council was suppprtive of the proposals, and after some amendments, the application has been granted planning permission.
* The Committee considered proposals for the redevelopment of the former Park School site, Kingston, Yeovil (applications 20/01087/FUL & 20/01088/LBC) at the July 2020 meeting. The proposals involve the the conversion of the existing buildings to 7 dwellings, conversion of and works to the listed Kingston House to 8 dwellings, and the erection of 30 new dwellings on the site with landscaping and enhancement measures. Objections were raised by the Committee concerning: the inadequate planning for additional traffic; lack of any proposed management of construction traffic; and the scale and density of the housing would result in overdevelopment and would be out of keeping with the surrounding development and detrimental to the neighbouring conservation area. To date the application has not been determined by the District Council.
* A proposal to redevelop the old and delapidated buildings at Grimsby Corner, Reckleford was brought to the Committee in September 2020 (20/01834/FUL). The applicant, Acorn Developments (SW) Ltd, have already developed other sites in the immediate area, eg The old Creamery and the former Western Gazette building. The application proposes the demolition of the existing shops and garages, the change of use of land to residential, and the erection of a 48 unit apartment building. And the scheme would provide significant financial support for much needed improvements in the area. The Committee was cautious and raised concerns including the limited parking provision, the height of the building, and the loss of the existing buildings, but resolved to support the proposals as the development will help to regenerate the area. The application remains undetermined.
* An application for a new McDonalds Restaurant on the Sherborne Road was considered in February 2021 (20/03569/FUL) together with associated applications for advertisements. The proposals involve the demolition of the existing car showroom, and the erection of a new two storey restaurant building with a drive-through facility. Concerns were raised about the traffic generated and the impact on the nearby junction with the A30, but the Committee resolved to support the development and the associated signage. All the applications have been approved and the development is currently underway.

Whilst the vast majority of planning applications are approved, a small number are refused each year, and the Town Council plays a part in supporting the Local Planning Authority in providing a case to resist inappropriate and unacceptable development when necessary.

As Chair, I would like to thank the Committee Members for their commitment to the Planning Committee by taking time to investigate and consider applications ahead of meetings to ensure informed decisions are taken, and also to those who have provided comments under the ‘Scheme of Delegation’ when Planning Committees could not be held.

***Cllr Graham Oakes, Chairman of the Planning Committee***

***4th May 2021***

**4 Grounds and General Maintenance Committee**

The Committee met on 5 occasions during the year.

**Play Areas**

The Committee manages 16 play areas across Yeovil and receives regular reports regarding inspection and maintenance.

Partnership working with South Somerset District Council continues in line with the 5-year investment plan of improvement to the Town’s play and youth facilities. A play equipment upgrade for St John’s Park play area has been agreed and initial Working Parties have been formed to review provision of equipment at Turner’s Barn Lane play area and Yew Tree skate park.

**Youth Facilities**

The free Open Access Holiday Activities Programme for young people was unfortunately unable to take place. Instead, contributions from Yeovil Town Council enabled play boxes to be distributed around Yeovil with a booklet including ideas for play, craft and simple cooking tasks for children to carry out at home. The feedback from this initiative as an alternative to the usual community activities was very positive. The activity idea booklet was also available online, enabling as many children as possible access to the ideas and encouraging them to share their creations.

**Allotments**

The Council’s pro-active and flexible approach to allotment management continues to help achieve a thriving allotment community, and the active promotion of vacant allotments has maintained an excellent level of allotment lettings across the Town’s 11 allotment sites, many with waiting lists. The varied benefits of allotment gardening are explained in the publicity of the vacancies which includes advertising on Facebook, in the press and posters in the community. Residents outside as well as within the parish of Yeovil are currently eligible to have the opportunity to take a tenancy of a Yeovil Town Council allotment.

Each allotment site is encouraged to have a nominated Tenants’ Representative. These representatives meet regularly throughout the year with the Town Clerk to discuss allotment issues which have been raised by their fellow tenants and where necessary they are forwarded to the Committee for their consideration.

Unfortunately, the judging for the Best Kept Allotments’ Competition could not take place in the summer. Staff and Councillors who have visited the allotments have commented on the excellent standard of the allotment sites despite the difficult year. The Town Council has been sympathetic to those who have been shielding. Those who have been able to have used their allotment as an uplifting refuge and a strong sense of (socially distanced!) community has prevailed.

The income raised from allotment rents helps to meet the costs of maintaining the Town’s allotment sites, and any[[1]](#footnote-1) annual rent increase means that the budgeted income represents an acceptable percentage of the overall costs, whilst also continuing to ensure a fair and sustainable approach to their future provision. A mains water charge now re-charges the cost of mains water used by tenants on a site by site basis. This will mean that tenants will be paying for the water actually used, whilst encouraging more environmentally friendly ways of collecting and recycling rainwater thereby reducing the dependency on mains water. This approach is in line with the Council’s values of raising awareness of environmental issues, improving the quality of the environment and encouraging an environmentally friendly ethos in line with the Climate Control Policy.

An Allotment Maintenance Working Party continues to review the Allotment Tenancy agreements in line with Town Council policies and legislation.

Yeovil Town Council started a new term of working with local contractors for general allotment site maintenance who have proven to be extremely efficient.

**Greenspace Areas**

The Committee has continued to fund the maintenance of an extensive number of areas of amenity and open spaces in the Town – including Yeovil Country Park. This ensures that local communities have ongoing access to public areas of green space close to where they live. Organised monitoring and review arrangements have taken place to identify issues affecting open spaces across the town.

The Committee supported South Somerset District Council’s request for continued funding towards a Community Heritage Officer to work within the Country Park team to continue the provision of activities made available by the V3 Project and provide support for the Heritage Officer and volunteers at the Community Heritage Access Centre.

The Committee is supportive of the Countryside team’s (SSDC) ongoing work to maintain our “Green Flag” and “RHS Best Park” award-winning Yeovil Country Park. The team, including volunteers, reaches out to a wide variety of community groups and their work has been vital throughout the pandemic, especially as the significance of greenspace became apparent for outdoor exercise and outdoor socialising when permitted. Adapting to the increasing visitor numbers to the natural open space, in line with government restrictions has also been a crucial part of the Country Park management plan. The Ninesprings Café, Education and Information Centre, which the Town Council helped to fund, is an invaluable resource, both in terms of an excellent facility for communication and marketing, and a lovely meeting point for social and educational purposes. Whilst opening this facility was restricted at times throughout the year, a take-away service continued which was appreciated by visitors to the park.

The Committee continued to work with Streetscene services to monitor the provision and use of dog waste bins allocated throughout Yeovil Town, responding as appropriate to suggestions from the community regarding prevention of fouling. Two dog waste bins and two litter bins were replaced in Sunningdale Doorstep Green.

A close working relationship with South Somerset District Council has continued, with the Service Level Agreement as a foundation document for streamlining services and setting out the best way to progress with joint future initiatives.

***Cllr Andy Kendall, Chairman of the Grounds and General Maintenance Committee***

***4 May 2021***

**5 Promotions and Activities Committee**

The Committee met on 4 occasions during the year.

**VE Day**

Whilst the planned Music in the Park event could not go ahead due to the pandemic, memories of the end of World War II were gathered and shared in the local press. Creative Minds, a local arts organisation worked with old and young generations to share stories and experiences, and this intergenerational project was celebrated in the library windows and subsequently online when the ability to get together in person was no longer possible. Sparked by this project, Creative Minds continued to interview local people who had wartime memories and the fascinating recordings have been published on their website.

**Yeovil in Bloom**

Yeovil was delighted to receive commendations from the regional RHS “In Bloom” judges despite formal judging being cancelled.

The awards were:

Yeovil in Bloom – Certificate of Recognition

Yeovil in Bloom – Certificate for Inspiring Others

Yeovil St John’s Churchyard – Certificate of Recognition

 **Christmas Lights**

The lovely Christmas lights display was erected throughout the town once again and included winning designs from the past three young designers of the Christmas Light Competition. Local children are invited to design a light with the winner’s design being made into an led display light and put up in lower Middle Street as part of the municipal display. We therefore now have a stunning image of Father Christmas going headfirst down a chimney to adorn the town next to a wonderful Christmas stocking light and a gorgeous illuminated gingerbread man which was created in the first year of the competition.

**New Website**

Work is underway on a new website for the Town Council which will better represent the work of the Council and reflect the needs of the community.

**Yeovil Super Saturday**

The 2020 Yeovil Super Saturday took place on Saturday 19th September. In its fourteenth year, the community spirit of the day was as powerful as ever as the town was thriving with residents and visitors enjoying the attractions and perusing the food stalls. It was the first year the Town Council had worked with eat:festivals for the event. The delicious street food and delectable treats were a welcome interlude in a restrictive year.

“Bugfest” provided the opportunity to view insects, reptiles and tarantulas up close and was extremely popular, and whilst visitors could not take a creepy or crawly home with them, they could make a request for a bespoke balloon animal or sculpture created on the spot by Lucy Lost It!

Positive feedback was received about the stilt walker and mirror men who were dancing like disco balls in the sunlight. Eat:festivals provided further children’s entertainment in St John’s Churchyard, and the musical backdrop to the whole event provided by a selection of talented buskers gave the day a festival feel.

St John’s Church was once again part of the event as they provided refreshments and a book sale.

The feedback from the day was very positive.

***Cllr Sarah Lowery, Chairman of the Promotions and Activities Committee***

***4 May 2021***

**6 Buildings and Civic Matters Committee**

The Committee met virtually on five occasions during the 2020/2021 year using Zoom meeting software. The work of the Committee has been significantly impacted during the last year by the pandemic and the associated national lockdowns, but in most cases work has continued to be carried out, albeit delayed at times.

**Town House**

The Committee had agreed in the previous year that the Town House should be refurbished including being redecorated inside and out. The majority of the internal decoration had been completed by the start of the first lockdown in March 2020, but the external redecorating had to be postponed. Despite the lockdown during the first part of 2021, contractors have been keen to proceed with the external works, therefore by early February the repairs to the windows had commenced, and in March the scaffolding was erected to allow the repairs and decoration of the first floor windows. Some of the sliding sash windows had to be replaced because of the extent of the necessary repairs, and the window in the Mayor’s Parlour had rotted so badly that it had resulted in the ingress of water through the walls. The Committee therefore took the decision to replace this window also, and this new window was installed in April. As the building is a Grade II listed building, all the new windows have been like for like replacements.

During the Spring and Summer of 2020, the full refurbishment of the Chamber kitchen and the staff kitchen at the Town House took place, and these are now complete with new tiling and flooring. New carpeting was also laid throughout most of the ground floor.

The security alarm system at the Town House became unreliable in April 2020 and a new Texecom intruder alarm system had to be installed with some urgency. The opportunity was also taken to modernise the internal security door system. The safety of staff became a concern with some individuals working on their own in the Town House, and occasionally in the evenings due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Therefore, a holistic review of the CCTV system was undertaken, and the system upgraded and improved to provide greater protection for staff and the building.

A thorough risk assessment was carried out of the office before staff returned to work as normal in the Town House in July 2020. Mitigation measures were put in place including screens placed on the front counter and the desks rearranged to allow social distancing, a sanitising station has been placed at the front door, and a thorough cleaning regime has been introduced.

The Council Chamber has also been reconfigured, initially to accommodate a large monitor on the wall to aid meetings, and then again more recently to observe social distancing measures and allow hybrid meetings to take place. A maximum of 18 Councillors, plus staff, can be accommodated safely in the Chamber at any one time, and a web-cam has also been purchased to enable some Councillors and members of the public to participate remotely.

**Community Halls**

Both Milford Hall and Monmouth Hall have been closed for most of the last year due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. For a short period in the Autumn of 2020, some ‘permitted activities’ took place at Milford Hall, but only after a thorough risk assessment was carried out. Further Special Conditions of Hire for the Covid-19 period were drawn up to supplement the existing Terms and Conditions of hire, and additional signage has been displayed. The Centre Pre-School based at Milford Hall has continued to open when allowed to do so. Bookings are now being taken again for ‘permitted activities’, but again strict controls are being put in place to safeguard hall users.

The maintenance and servicing of both Halls has continued throughout the year where appropriate.

**Public Toilets**

The Peters Street and Petters Way public toilets were also closed during the first national lockdown and measures had to be taken to ensure their safety before they were re-opened. The pipework was chlorinated and sterilised and flushed through, and both buildings were cleaned with a powerful machine using boiling temperatures to kill any bacteria that was present. Both sets of toilets remained open during the recent lockdown.

There have been on-going problems with the rainwater recycling system at Peters Street toilets which has resulted in some of the cubicles being out of action on a regular basis. The Committee considered this issue at the January 2021 meeting and agreed that once restrictions had lifted a specialist company be sought to investigate the issues raised and provide a report and recommendations.

**Defibrillators**

The Town Council has committed to a budget of £9,000 per annum from 2021/22 for four defibrillators to be installed within the parish of Yeovil Town in busy areas close to either shops, a public house or a community hall. A procurement process is currently underway, and to date one location has been agreed with the Nationwide to attach a defibrillator to the wall of their premises in Middle Street. The three other possible locations are Westfield (near the Co-operative or the St Peter’s Community Centre), Forest Hill (near the shops), and St John’s Road (near the shops). Negotiations are on-going.

**Remembrance Sunday**

Following advice from Avon and Somerset Constabulary and the Royal British Legion, the Council decided that the usual event to commemorate Remembrance Sunday in the Borough would not be able to go ahead due to concerns about public health and safety during the pandemic. However, the Committee agreed to an alternative to the usual event whereby a video was made beforehand which went live on the Town Council’s Facebook page on Sunday, 8 November 2020 so that the two minutes silence could coincide with 11.00am. The video was also available on the website.

The video included the flying of the Union Jack at the Town House, a speech by the Mayor, the laying of wreaths at the Borough War Memorial and the war graves at the cemetery, the playing of the Last Post, photographs of the processions of previous years, and addresses inside St John’s Church. The video was a big success and reached over 3,000 people and received numerous very positive comments.

**The Borough War Memorial**

In January 2021, a stonemason was appointed to carry out an inspection of the Borough War Memorial to ensure it was safe given the intricacy of the stonework and the fact that it stands in a very busy pedestrian public space. A number of small pieces of stone were found to be loose, as well as one of the large decorative finials which was split and presented a significant hazard. The repairs were subsequently dealt with to make the Memorial safe again.

**Commemorative Benches**

In July 2020, the Committee considered and supported the provision and funding of three benches under the New Initiatives Scheme: to provide one for the hospital garden at Yeovil District Hospital to celebrate the work of the NHS during the pandemic; one near to the Borough War Memorial to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day; and, another bench in the town centre to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Victory over Japan Day. Negotiations are currently on-going.

***Cllr Rob Stickland, Chairman of the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee***

***4th May 2021***

**7 Policy, Resources and Finance Committee**

The Committee met on 5 occasions during the year.

**Grants and Service Level Agreements**

We considered 3 grant applications in accordance with our Small Grant Assistance to Local Organisation policy and made awards for £4,705 to 3 local organisations.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Organisation** | **Purpose of Grant Application** | **Amount awarded** |
| Oaklands Surgery Coffee Morning | Community Transport costs | £1,000 |
| YFW Blood Bikes (Yeovil Freewheelers) | Towards the cost of bike tyres | £1,500 |
| Life Education Wessex | Towards mental health, obesity and substance misuse workshops at Milford School | £2,205 |

Yeovil Town Council contributed £7,000 to each of the three secondary schools in Yeovil (totalling £21,000) for the purchase of additional IT equipment to help disadvantaged young people continue their education during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the financial contribution, 106 devices were purchased. Councillors agreed that the contribution had a made a real difference and that the Town Council should be proud of themselves.

**Policies**

The following policies were approved and adopted:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Policy** | **New** | **Reviewed** |
| Risk Strategy and Risk Assessment |  | ü |
| Virtual Meeting Protocol | ü | ü |
| Safeguarding Policy |  |  |

The Policy, Resources and Finance Committee agreed that unless a change was required due to legal requirements, recommended changes in practices or change in internal operations, that policies would not need to be reviewed every year. They agreed that those policies that were either new or had a major policy revision would be reviewed one year after its effective date, and thereafter no less that every five years.

**Youth Clubs**

The partnership between the YMCA Mendip and Yeovil Town Council has resulted in a successful delivery of Youth Provision in Yeovil. During the lock down period, there has been several changes in the way services are delivered. Physical Youth Clubs had to be temporarily closed due to COVID-19 and virtual and on-line delivery began. YMCA Mendip started outreach sessions focussing on Milford and Westfield areas, Mudford Rec and the town centre.

The Youth Council met every third week, until the outbreak of COVID-19. The Youth Council will be regenerated at an appropriate time.

**Internal Audit**

There were 3 internal audits carried out throughout the year by Darkin Miller Chartered Accountants. There were 20 recommendations – 4 high priority; 8 medium priorities; 6 low priorities and 2 information priorities. This gives reassurance that there is a sound system of internal controls at Yeovil Town Council. The internal auditor recommended that a formal bank reconciliation is carried out and presented to Policy, Resources and Finance Committee so that Members have clarity over the funds held by the Council, and further confirmation that a key financial control is operating effectively.

**Statement of Accounts and Revenue Budget Outturn Report for 2019/20**

The Statement of Accounts and Revenue Budget Outturn Report for 2019/20 were approved. There was an underspend of £111,519 for 2019/20 (£849 for 2018/19). As at 31st March 2020, the earmarked reserves (reserves set aside for specific purposes) totalled £118,315 (compared to £50,166 as at 31st March 2019) and the unallocated general fund balance was £739,462 (compared to £681,432 as at 31st March 2019).

**Climate Control Action Plan**

A Climate Control working party was established to devise and monitor the Climate Control Action Plan. Steady progress is being made to achieve what has been laid out within the Action Plan. Two applications were made to the Somerset Climate Emergency Community Fund for Solar Panels at Milford Hall and an electric vehicle. Unfortunately, after a delay in consideration of the applications, Yeovil Town Council’s applications were unsuccessful.

**Paperless**

In order to reduce the cost of printing and postage, and to be more environmentally friendly, the Committee formally agreed to allow for electronic summons and agenda via e-mail be implemented. All Members completed electronic service of summons consent forms to give or not give their consent to receive summons and agendas electronically. It was recognised that there were some issues with Members not having adequate devises to read agendas and reports prior to meetings and at the meetings. It was agreed that further work would need to be carried out to review the options for a longer-term solution.

**Website**

A website working party was set up in July 2020 to commission a new website which would also include a Members area, allotment and hall availability and manage assets (See Digital Mapping Software). Thirty-nine tenders were received, these were shortlisted to 4 organisations who were invited to present to the working party. The Working Party is also exploring the costs of @yeovil.gov.uk email addresses for the Councillors.

**Parish Online**

At its latest meeting, this Committee agreed the purchase of a Digital Mapping System – Parish Online. This system is specifically for Town and Parish Councils with just under 1,400 current subscriptions. The digital mapping system will enable the Town Council to record and manage assets on a self-service on-line mapping tool.

**Insurance**

The Council underwent a procurement exercise to ensure that the assets, activities and people within the Council were adequately insured. The insurance was renewed for a further three years with Zurich Insurance.

**Opportunities Working Party**

An Opportunities Working Party has been established, with the task of considering opportunities for Yeovil Town Council following Unitisation.

**Staff**

The team have continued to deliver the services of the Council, during a very hard and very different sort of year due to COVID-19. There has been some staff changes: we have recruited a new Facilities Officer and one of our Admin Officers (GT) retired. It has been decided to hold the post for the time being to assess need. One of Deputy Town Clerk’s (SF) has successfully achieved Corporate Governance Level 5 and our Admin Officer (LJ) has achieved ILCA (Introduction to Local Council Administration).

***Cllr Graham Oakes, Chairman of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee***

***4th May 2021***

1. It was agreed not to increase the allotment rent in 2020, 2021 or 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)