



# The Yarmouth Isle of Wight Town Council

## **Minutes of a meeting of Yarmouth Town Council held at CHOYD Tuesday 3rd February 2026 at 6:30pm**

PRESENT: Councillors D McCleary (Mayor), G Head (Deputy Mayor), P Cronin, P Spink, A Draper, B Freshwater, P Farrell, M Peckham

IN ATTENDANCE: B Jacobs (Town Clerk), Clare Griffin (WWSSC) and 8 members of the public

The Mayor paid tribute to Sirpa from Holdings who has recently passed away, and sent good wishes to her family who have done much for the Yarmouth community.

Clare Griffin of West Wight Sports & Community Centre gave a verbal presentation about the activities of her organisation which was formed some 50 years ago to provide a centre for local children to swim. Starting with the opening of the new pool in 1978, it now provides sport and community facilities for West Wight and other IW residents and has a membership of around 1000 of which 142 come from Yarmouth. 60 staff are employed to run a wide range of sports and community facilities, including swimming lessons for some 300 children. WWSSC is about to completely refurbish or renew the main swimming pool. They also employ a Community Connector who provides a wide range of community support.

£30K of Funding comes from the annual cross-Solent swim, though bad weather has prevented the most recent swim and has led to a big drop in income, exacerbated by big rises in employers' National Insurance. Other income comes from use of facilities, fundraising and grants.

In response to a question about withdrawal of YTC's £9K per year grants, Clare advised that it could lead to cutbacks in services and price rises for use of facilities.

### **190/2025 APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence

## **191/2025 PUBLIC FORUM:**

### **i) ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

IW Cllr Spink's report appears below in Appendix 1.

A member of the public queried the number of affordable social housing units in the former school building, pointing out the accepted bid was for 8 units, and Cllr Spink agreed to investigate that issue. He also responded to another question confirming he wished to see as many affordable units as possible built in order to give the opportunity for a younger demographic in Yarmouth.

### **ii) COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS**

Cllr Freshwater reported that he had attended a meeting of Yarmouth Community Foundation and volunteers were working very hard to bring the school building back into use, and although public access is limited at present it is available Friday and Saturday mornings for anyone who arrived before 11am. He also reported that YCF had met with Louise Metcalfe of Yarmouth Guides and Scouts twice in the last 10 weeks, and a meeting was planned the following Wednesday between some Councillors and Louise. The Mayor asked that Louise should be informed of the procedure for YTC grant applications. Numbers are increasing and currently there are 15 Cubs, 16 Beavers and 18 Scouts.

### **iii) LOCAL ISSUES**

Cllr Farrell reported that one of the black and gold bollards in Quay Street had been knocked over and not replaced. The Clerk was asked to bring this to the attention of Island Roads.

The issue of a street furniture audit was discussed, and the Clerk reported that he had conducted one in August which identified a small number of benches requiring work and had requested West Wight Men in Sheds to carry out the repairs, but the weather since then had not allowed the work to be carried out. The Mayor proposed that a further audit be carried out in the summer.

Cllr Draper reported that a structural engineer had been engaged to assess the mortuary chapel in Thorley and hoped that would lead to funding to help preserve it.

Cllr Peckham reported that there would be a picnic on the pier on 19/7 to celebrate the Pier's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Cllr Freshwater reported that the street light at the junction of South Street and High St was again faulty, and the Clerk undertook to report it to Island Roads.

### **iv) PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Sylvia Mence asked YTC to support funding for a row of planters outside the road access to CHOYD to prevent car parking in that area which was causing severe damage to the grass. It was proposed by Cllr Farrell, seconded by Cllr Spink and unanimously agreed to make a grant of up to £630 to CHOYD to cover this initiative.

Tree Warden Thomas Cowley presented a report which appears below under Appendix 2. The Clerk was asked to contact the planter of the Holm Oak and suggest an alternative.

It was suggested that YTC pays the £250 annual subscription to the Tree Council and Wight Nature Fund will grant the same amount to YTC to cover the outlay, as happened last year.

## **192/2025 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

There were no additional declarations.

## **193/2025 MINUTES AND CONFIRMATION OF ACTIONS**

It was RESOLVED to take as read and confirm as accurate the minutes of the January monthly meeting held 6/1/26.

## **194/2025 FINANCE**

### **194/2025.1 Payment of Accounts**

It was proposed by Cllr Cronin, seconded by the Deputy Mayor and unanimously agreed to approve payment of the following accounts for February:

256087	Island Holiday Media	Wightlife advertising (shared with YTT and YHC)	£6,000.00
256088	IWALC	Subscription	£262.73
256089	Jati	Bench (offset by grant)	£80.00
256090	IWC	Environment Officer	£591.76
256091	CHOYD	Room hire	£30.00
256092	Brighstone L'scaping	Grounds maintenance	£236.94
256093	Brighstone L'scaping	Cemetery maintenance	£564.94
256094	B Jacobs	Clerk's salary Dec 25	£1,032.08
256095	HMRI	Clerk's salary Dec 25 PAYE	£389.19

### **194/2025.2 Bank Reconciliation**

The financial statement for 31/1/26 was noted.

### **194/2025.3 2026/27 Annual Budget**

The latest draft of the above and the 2026/7 precept were considered and it was noted that the contactless operator for the public toilets is withdrawing its support for the present 2G/3G system in 2026, and upgrading to 5G/6G will cost YTC £3K.

The following decisions were taken:

Details	Proposer	Seconder	Supporters
Increase provision for surface repairs at Play Area	Cllr Farrell	Cllr Head	All
Increase charges for public toilets to 50p	Cllr Farrell	Cllr Peckham	All
Increase precept by 3%	Cllr Freshwater	Cllr McCleary	All

### **195/2025 PLANNING ISSUES**

The following was noted:

#### **Applications approved:**

<b>Application No</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>YTC Comment</b>
25/01474/FUL	Kings Head Quay Street Yarmouth Isle Of Wight PO41 OPB	Alterations and change of use of first floor and second floor rooms as bed and breakfast accommodation for use in association with existing public house	Not notified
25/01674/HOU	Folly House Tennyson Road Yarmouth Isle Of Wight PO41 OPX	Demolition of conservatory; proposed single/two storey rear extension; alterations to include new front porch	no objections to this application, though the presence of roof lights and consequent light pollution is noted.

### **196/2025 RECREATION GROUND**

Committee Chairman Cllr Cronin explained that work on the Rec has had to be suspended until the weather becomes drier. Stop nets and new goalposts were planned, and will hopefully be funded by grants. He reported that the Play Area was still being regularly used in spite of the weather. Regular inspections of play equipment were planned to be carried out and Cllr Cronin suggested that those inspected should receive RoSPA training.

There had been no progress in registering the land between the Rec and the Cycleway as it has not been possible to locate the deeds, only a copy of the conveyance.

### **197/2025 SCHOOL SITE HOUSING**

This had been dealt with above.

### **198/2025 DOG FOULING CYCLEWAY AND SIGNAGE**

Cllr Draper reported that she had been negotiating with Keep Britain Tidy for a better price for its posters and membership than the £1.8K quoted. This will be further discussed at the next meeting.

### **199/2025 NEIGHBOURHOOD/PLACE PLAN**

Cllr Freshwater drew attention to the Terms of Reference and Future Priorities Working Group report he had circulated among Councillors. It was proposed by Cllr Freshwater, seconded by Cllr Peckham and agreed unanimously to put the Neighbourhood Plan on the back burner but keep Future Priorities Group on the monthly agenda.

### **200/2025 OLD TROUGH OUTSIDE GOSSIPS CAFÉ**

Cllr Cronin suggested that ripping out the trough to relocate it would cause great damage to the adjoining ancient wall, and it was agreed to remove this issue from future agendas. It was also pointed out that the present trough is only about 20 years old.

### **201/2025 YARMOUTH PROMOTION**

The Wightlife advertising deal had gone ahead.

Cllr Farrell reported that he had been canvassing in Yarmouth for funding for the plaques.

### **202/2025 CHANGE OF DOMAIN**

The Clerk reported that JNR Computer Services of Bognor Regis are by far the cheapest contractor for domain registration and dedicated email set-up and maintenance and it was proposed by Cllr Freshwater, seconded by Cllr Peckham and unanimously agreed to proceed with them.

### **203/2025 CYCLEWAY EROSION AT THE SCRAPE**

This had been dealt with above.

### **204/2025 FIRE STATION SITE**

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service HQ was contacted before Christmas and again on 12/1/26 regarding its proposals for the above but no response had been received to this approach or to a subsequent chaser.

### **205/2025 GRANT FOR TRANSPORT SHALFLEET SCHOOL PANCAKE RACES**

It was proposed by Cllr Farrell, seconded by the Mayor and unanimously agreed to confirm a grant of up to £240 for the above.

### **206/2025 CLERK'S REPORT**

#### **206/2025.1 VANDALISATION OF HEROE'S ORCHARD**

The ongoing sabotage of these trees was considered. The Clerk suggested that a practical solution would be to fence off the trees until they achieved suitable maturity. Cllr Freshwater felt that raising the canopy on other trees in the area might stop

people from vandalising the orchard. It was agreed to discuss this issue further at future meetings.

#### **206/2025.2 COMMEMORATIVE HOLM OAK**

The Clerk was asked to write to the applicant and suggest an alternative tree which YTC would pay for.

#### **207/2025 CORRESPONDENCE**

The correspondence received since the last meeting was noted.

#### **208/2025 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Tree vandalism

Future Priorities Group

New domain implementation

The Scrape

Dog fouling

#### **209/2025 MEETING VENUES**

The venue for the March monthly meeting was confirmed, CHOYD 3/3/26 18:30.

### **Appendix 1: IW Cllr Report from Cllr Spink**

**Breach of Bridleway Yarmouth- Freshwater (former railway line).** The IW Council has determined that this is a coastal defence/erosion issue. I have therefore, written to the officer responsible stressing the need for repair work to be carried out as swiftly as possible. I have received the following reply:

“I have spoken with several departments today and can confirm the current position: The structure is both a coastal asset and a public right of way.

The Coastal Team has prepared an outline specification for the required works.

The Estuaries Team and Natural England wish to review that specification to ensure it meets all habitat protection requirements, and they are meeting with the Coastal Team and Public Rights of Way on Monday to discuss this. The works will be delivered through the Green Link Project”.

**Premier Stores Yarmouth:** As previously reported the officer dealing with this matter has left the employ of IWC. I have received notification, however, that this matter has been transferred to the Head of Enforcement who has informed as follows below:

“The Freeholder has served a 146 notice on the leaseholders requiring them to undertake the remedial works on 2 October 2025. The notice gave the leaseholders 3 months to undertake the works. The solicitor has advised that the next steps will be repossession of the property and forfeiture of the lease. I have written back asking

whether the solicitor has received instruction from the freeholder to move forward to repossession however, to date, I have not heard any further. I will chase this up again today”.

I have replied asking who will be responsible for replacing the shopfront should repossession succeed. I will of course keep YTC updated.

**Planning Application re Wellow Fields:** Although not in Yarmouth/Thorley, residents have expressed concern re this application. Planning committee refused this application last month by the narrowest of margins i.e. the casting vote of the chair. The grounds were that the development would be out of character: with the surrounding area and would be motor car dependent (i.e. environmentally unsustainable).

**YHAC:** I raised at the recent meeting whether the ‘old trough’ outside Gossips could be relocated to a more prominent position YHC land. The Harbour Commissioners are kindly looking into this. The minutes of the meeting may be viewed on the YTC and Harbour website.

**Housing Yarmouth School Site:** It was a condition of the winning bid that part of the site be used for affordable/social rent housing for those with a connection to the Town. Under the IW Council’s Land Disposal Policy the site is to be assessed for the viability of social rent housing, which is an agenda item for the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee this Thursday.

## **Appendix 2: Tree Warden and Wight Nature Fund:**

**The Tree Warden scheme** continues along nicely, with more local councils being introduced to the scheme, as it's possible to meet with them and discuss the benefits with councillors.

A number of new Veteran and Ancient Trees have been added to the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Inventory, across the Island. This includes some around Yarmouth: the Scot's Pine by the Mount and the Macrocarpa by the side of St James House. We are waiting on verification of these newly added trees. This does not afford protection - the Macrocarpa already has a TPO on it and the Scot's Pine is not under threat and is in the Conservation Area, so would not qualify for needing TPO protection.

As per email circulated between Jerry Willis and YTC it seems the application last January, for the orchard on **The Mount** to be added to the Tree Protection Orders held by the IWC was lost in processing. Given that there has been further hacking at the trees by persons unknown, I have asked for this to be expedited. I await support for protection of this natural community asset from Councillor Spink, which I'm sure will be forthcoming directly.

As also outlined in other emails, given the difficulty that the National Trust have in limiting the spread of Holm Oaks on St Boniface Down and also the cost incurred for management of the Holm Oaks in the Yarmouth School Site, I am deeply concerned at the planting of a memorial Holm Oak on The Mount, by the Community Orchard. I appreciate this is a sensitive situation, but the memorial plaque says 'be kind' and the kindest thing to do for the other trees in this vicinity, is to remove the Holm Oak and replace it with a native species such as a Wild Service Tree, or another apple, or pear

tree, which will kindly give back to the community, instead of the current choice, with will shade out the surrounding trees, ruck up the road and need regular maintenance by the Town Council, in the future.

**Wight Nature Fund:**

We will hold sessions in late February and through March with IW College Students, to coppice another coupe in the woodland.

Halo thinning of the conifers in the Western compartment of the woodland commenced a couple of months ago. This has successfully introduced light to the veteran oaks and woodland floor, which should see bluebells return in coming years, as we fell and replace more of the conifers with traditional native deciduous trees. At this time all thinning will be completed by students on City & Guilds chainsaw courses, run by local provider, ARB Advice. This contributes to WNF's Education objective and supports restoration agreed in our Forestry Commission Woodland Management Plan. WNF would request that YTC allow transaction of the Isle of Wight Network Tree Council subscription, in March/April, for FY26-27, which must be transacted by a local authority. This will be fully funded by Wight Nature Fund.