

Yateley Town Council
Minutes of the Town Council on Monday, 2nd March 2026, 7.00pm
held at The Oak Room, Council Offices, Reading Road, Yateley, GU46 7RP

Present – Councillors:

Cllr Mark Griffin (Chairman)
Cllr Stuart Bailey
Cllr Gerry Crisp
Cllr Alex Drage
Cllr Mark Higgins
Cllr Pam Phelps-Jones
Cllr Tony Spencer
Cllr Mark Vernon
Cllr Julia Wedlock

Absent Councillors

Cllr Graham Cockarill
Cllr Bob Harward
Cllr Greg Easterbrook
Cllr Nicky Jones

In Attendance – Officers, District & County Councillors and Public

Cllr Tim Davies (HCC)
Treasurer, Yelabus
Representative from Hampshire Bus Action Group (HAMBAG)
Development Manager, Vision 4 Youth
Representative from The Yateley Society
1 member of the public
Julie Routley (Town Clerk)

C6655 Welcome & Apologies for Absence

Cllr Griffin welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Apologies had been received from Cllrs Cockarill and Easterbrook.
Cllrs Harward and Jones were absent.

C6656 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Wedlock declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item C6669, HAMBAG (Hampshire Bus Action Group), as a member of the Hampshire Bus Action Group (HAMBAG).
Cllr Vernon declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item C6662, Yelabus Community Transport Grant, as a volunteer driver for Yelabus.
Cllr Bailey declared a pecuniary interest in Item C6663 Grant Applications,
b) St Barnabas, due to his spouse's role as the Vicar of St Barnabas, and a non-pecuniary interest as he serves on the Frogmore Fete Organising Group and is a parishioner of St Barnabas. He confirmed that he would take no part in the discussion or vote on this item and would leave the room while it was considered.

Cllr Phelps-Jones declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item C6663 Grant Applications
a) Vision 4 Youth, as a trustee of Vision 4 Youth.

C6657 Minutes of the Last Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting 19th January 2026 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 27th January 2026.

The Chairman duly signed the minutes as an accurate record.

C6658 Long Service Award – 25 Years

The Council was pleased to recognise the long and dedicated service of Maureen Daws, who has completed 25 years with Yateley Town Council.

The Chairman presented Maureen with a Long Service Certificate in appreciation of her significant contribution to the Council over the past quarter century. Members noted that Maureen has been a consistent source of support, knowledge and professionalism within the Council Office, and her long service reflects exceptional commitment and loyalty.

The Council also received messages of congratulations from all four Town Clerks who have worked with Maureen during her 25 years of service. Former Clerks shared warm reflections on her reliability, good humour and unwavering support, commenting that twenty-five years represents an exceptional level of dedication and that Maureen has demonstrated these qualities throughout her service.

Maureen expressed her thanks to the Council and commented that working as part of a strong and supportive team has made the years pass quickly.

The Council recorded its appreciation for Maureen's outstanding service and expressed its gratitude for her invaluable contribution to both the organisation and the wider community.

C6659 Public Participation

Firgrove Farm 26/00145/OUT A representative of The Yateley Society raised concerns regarding planning application 26/00145/OUT – Firgrove Farm, including the potential impact of construction traffic routes, heavy urbanisation, road junctions, heritage buildings, flooding, infrastructure, coalescing settlements.

The Town Clerk confirmed that this application would be considered by the Planning Committee on 9th March 2026.

C6660 District & County Reports

County

Cllr Davies (HCC)

Budget Cllr Davies reported that Hampshire County Council had met and adopted its budget and financial strategy for the next two years, covering the period up to the anticipated local government reorganisation. The approved budget includes a 4.99% council tax increase, comprising the standard 2.99% and a further 2% allocated for

adult social care. He noted that, as the Council is approaching the pre-election (purdah) period, no major policy changes are expected before 7 May.

Universal services meeting Cllr Davies advised that funding is available for bus shelters through an HCC grant scheme.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Yateley Town Council has already submitted a grant application under this programme.

Buses Cllr Davies noted that while Yateley does have bus provision, there may be scope to explore a morning service linking Yateley with Fleet or Farnborough railway stations. A representative from HAMBAG, who was in attendance, explained their ongoing efforts to encourage HCC to support such a service. Cllr Davies expressed his support for this proposal.

Tree Planting – Tudor Drive Yateley Cllr Davies reported that he has been working with Cllr Drage (HDC) and YTC regarding the creation of a “mini forest” at the bottom of Tudor Drive, following concerns about parking on the green area. He is in contact with County Officers about progressing a tree-planting scheme at this location.

Local Government Organisation Further information on the proposed move to a unitary authority is expected by the end of March.

Cllr Bailey (HCC)

Budget The Chief Financial Officer at Hampshire County Council has advised that, given the current financial position, a council tax increase of 14.99% over two years would have been required to meet service pressures—particularly those relating to adult social care. It is anticipated that HCC’s financial resources will become exhausted during the next municipal year, and a Section 114 notice may become necessary, restricting discretionary spending. This situation is not unique to HCC and reflects the pressures faced by upper-tier authorities nationally that are responsible for adult social care. Additional support from central government is being sought.

Potholes and Highways Over the past six weeks, potholes have been the dominant issue. Highways officers have reported that the volume of potholes is four times higher than expected, resulting in more defects on the network and longer repair times. Additional resources have been brought in, and the number of outstanding potholes is now beginning to reduce. The prolonged wet weather has been the main contributing factor.

Major roads are being prioritised. Contractors have been instructed to repair any further potholes encountered while on site, where safe and feasible. A continuing challenge is that the County Council now operates largely on a reactive repair model, with limited forward programmes for full resurfacing; most work therefore remains patch-based rather than preventative.

Residents were reminded to report defects using the links below:

HCC Highways:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes>

There is more information on the general road maintenance page:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance>

Fix My Street <https://hart.fixmystreet.com/>

Aylesham Way Resources have been temporarily diverted from the pavement resurfacing works on Aylesham Way to assist with pothole repairs. The team is expected to return and complete the resurfacing once emergency works have stabilised.

District

Cllr Drage (HDC)

Hart District Council's budget for the forthcoming financial year has been approved.

Cllr Bailey (HDC)

Car Parking Charges The District Council has confirmed that car park charges will be frozen. Provision is also being made to set aside funds for the following year.

Grant Funding Volunteer groups that own community assets are eligible to apply for District Council grant funding. This eligibility may also extend to town and parish councils.

Heathlands Court Work is progressing on plans for the refurbishment of Heathlands Court, with stakeholders to be kept informed as project timelines are confirmed. This multi-million-pound investment will bring the building up to modern standards. No significant expenditure has been made on the facility since it was first constructed, and it remains the only provision in North Hampshire for families at risk of homelessness. The improvements will ensure the building is fit for purpose and able to meet current needs. The project is supported by ring-fenced funding, and the community services team is working closely with VIVID Housing, who are acting as project managers.

At 7.33pm Cllr Davies left the meeting.

C6661 Clerk's Report

Members noted the Clerk's report.

Members welcomed the news that arrests had been made in relation to incidents involving the use of catapults to harm wildlife. The Town Clerk also reported that gates had been installed at Swan Lake during the previous week to help protect nesting birds.

C6662 Yelabus Community Transport Grant

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the Yelabus Treasurer was present and gave a brief synopsis of the report.

It was **RESOLVED** to award Yelabus the Community Transport Grant of £15,250 for the 2026/27 financial year.

Cllr Vernon abstained from voting.

The grant will be paid on 1st May 2026, in accordance with the organisation's request.

At 7.51pm Treasurer, Yelabus left the meeting.

C6663 Grant Applications

Members considered the following grant requests:

a) Vision 4 Youth

Members considered a request from Vision 4 Youth for a £6,000 commissioning grant for the 2026/27 financial year. A grant application and written report from the organisation had been circulated in advance, and Abby Roper, Development Manager, attended the meeting to answer questions.

It was noted that, in addition to the grant request, the Council's opportunity cost for Vision 4 Youth's use of the Youth Suite and Tennis Courts amounts to £6,480 per annum.

It was **RESOLVED** to award Vision 4 Youth a £6,000 commissioning grant for 2026/27 in support of the youth work delivered by the organisation. The grant will be unrestricted, with the condition that Vision 4 Youth acknowledge the Council's support in all publicity through the use of a "Supported by Yateley Town Council" statement and, where possible, the Council's logo.

Cllr Phelps-Jones abstained from voting.

The grant will be paid on 1st April 2026.

Cllr Bailey left the meeting whilst the next item was discussed.

b) St Barnabas' Church

Members considered a request from St Barnabas' Church, submitted on behalf of the Frogmore Fete Organising Group, for a grant of £750 towards the Frogmore Fete 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** to award £750 to St Barnabas' Church towards the Frogmore Fete 2026, subject to the condition that the Council's support is acknowledged in all publicity through the use of a "Supported by Yateley Town Council" statement and, where possible, the Council's logo.

The grant will be paid in the next payment run during the week commencing 9th March 2026.

Cllr Bailey returned to the meeting.

At 8pm Development Manager, Vision 4 Youth left the meeting.

It was agreed that item C6669 Would be taken next.

The representative from HAMBAG left the meeting at 8.30pm after this item was discussed.

C6664 Investment Policy & Strategy 2026/27

- i) It was **RESOLVED** to agree Finance & Policy Committee's recommendations:

St James's Place To make no changes to the Council's St James's Place investment allocations for 2026/27.

CCLA To make no changes to the CCLA Property Investment Fund

- ii) Members reviewed the Council's Investment Policy, noting that the presented version had been recommended by the Finance & Policy Committee following its meeting on 23 February 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Council's Investment Policy and Strategy for 2026/27.

C6665 Council's Risk Management Policy and Risk Register 2026/27

Members reviewed and approved the Council's Risk Management Policy and Risk Register, including the Annual Risk Assessment for 2026/27, noting that the document had been reviewed and recommended by the Finance & Policy Committee on 23 February 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Council's Risk Management Policy and Risk Register 2026/27.

C6666 Business Plan – 3 Year Business Plan

Members considered the Business Plan 2025/26–2028/29. A Member noted that the Plan aligns well with the Neighbourhood Plan, the Council's Strategic Plan, and the 3-Year Financial Strategy.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Business Plan 2025/26-2028/29.

C6667 Local Council Award Application

Members noted that achieving the Gold Award would be a significant accomplishment held by relatively few councils and expressed the importance of promoting the achievement if successful.

- i) It was **RESOLVED** to confirm that all required documents, information and conditions for the Local Council Gold Award application are in place.
- ii) It was **RESOLVED** to approve payment of the £200 application fee.

C6668 Replacement Windows – Council Offices

Members considered the updated quotations for the replacement of the Council Office windows and noted that the original lowest quotation was found not to be compliant following specification review. Updated quotations were obtained after planning permission was granted.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and ratify the appointment of Jewel Home Group Ltd for the replacement of the Council Office windows at a cost of £19,207.50 + VAT as the lowest compliant quotation.

C6669 HAMBAG (Hampshire Bus Action Group)

A representative from HAMBAG attended the meeting and outlined the group's aim to lobby for improved public transport links across Hampshire. Members expressed support for the work of HAMBAG and recognised the value of partnership approaches in strengthening local bus provision.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council supports the work of the Hampshire Bus Action Group and will work for ways to partner with groups to support it and refers the matter to the Environment Committee to explore opportunities for collaboration and practical ways the Council can assist.

C6670 Town Mayor's Announcements

Since the last meeting, the Mayor had attended the following events:

- Tree Planting with the Yateley Lions – 22nd January 2026
- Repair Café Launch Day – Yateley Industries 14th February 2026

The Mayor has been engaging with the 3 nominated charities for this civic year: Vision 4 Youth, Daisy chain Café, and Cornerstone Counselling.

The Mayor is planning the following activities during the Civic year to support his chosen charities:

- Mayor's Quiz Night - 11th April 2026 7.30pm at The Tythings
- Mayor's Ramble Rally - 9th May 2026 10am-1pm

The Mayor will also be attending the following events:

- Yateley Choral Society - 21st March 2026
- Yateley Industries Spring Fair – 29th March 2026
- Yateley May Fayre – 4th May 2026

It was noted that the current Mayor's civic term will conclude on 11 May 2026.

C6671 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies & Local Updates

No reports were given.

C6672 Police Matters & Community Safety

Cllr Bailey reported that he had attended a recent 'Cops and Coffee' session hosted by the local neighbourhood policing team. Members were advised that the next Police Liaison Meeting is expected to take place in May, with the date to be confirmed once police availability is known, and all Councillors were encouraged to attend.

The Town Clerk also noted that the Police had been highly responsive to a recent incident of anti-social behaviour and vandalism and continue to maintain a strong and proactive partnership with the Town Council.

C6673 Committee Minutes & Recommendations from Other Committees

The minutes from the following Committees and Working Parties were noted:

Committee	Date	Minute Nos.	Recommendations
Community	02.02.26		To note: • <i>Ramble Rally – date proposed 9th or 10th May to take place in the Frogmore, Darby Green Area – details to be confirmed</i> • <i>Quiz Evening – since the meeting the date has been confirmed as 11th April</i>
Environment	09.02.26	1875-1882	
Finance & Policy	23.02.26	2157-2170	
Personnel	Has not met		
Planning & Licensing	26.01.26	3368-3375	
	09.02.26	3376-3384	
	23.02.26	3385-3392	

C6674 Information Items

- i) Date of next meeting – Annual Meeting of Town Council 11th May 2026, 7.00pm at The Oak Room, Council Offices.
- ii) Forward Plan
The items on the Forward Plan were noted.

Meeting closed at 8.55pm