

Yateley Town Council
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council
on Monday, 11th May 2026, 7.00pm
held at The Oak Room, Council Offices, Reading Road, Yateley, GU46 7RP

Present – Councillors:

Cllr Graham Cockarill (Chairman)
Cllr Mark Griffin
Cllr Stuart Bailey
Cllr Alex Drage
Cllr Bob Harward (arrived at 7.13pm)
Cllr Mark Higgins
Cllr Pam Phelps-Jones
Cllr Tony Spencer
Cllr Mark Vernon
Cllr Julia Wedlock

Absent Councillors

Cllr Greg Easterbrook
Cllr Gerry Crisp
Cllr Nicky Jones

In Attendance – Officers, District & County Councillors and Public

Julie Routley (Town Clerk)

C6675 Election of Town Mayor for the 2026/27 Civic Year

Nominations were invited for the position of Town Mayor. Cllr Cockarill was nominated and seconded. There were no other nominations.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Cockarill as Town Mayor.

Cllr Cockarill chaired the meeting from this point.

C6676 Declaration of Acceptance of Office by The Town Mayor

To receive Town Mayor's signed declaration of acceptance of office

The signed declaration of acceptance of office was received and witnessed by the Town Clerk.

C6677 Election of Deputy Town Mayor for 2026/27

Nominations were invited for the position of Deputy Town Mayor. Cllr Phelps-Jones was nominated and seconded. No further nominations were received.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Phelps-Jones as Deputy Town Mayor.

C6678 Welcome & Apologies for Absence

Cllr Cockarill welcomed all to the meeting welcomed all to the meeting and thanked Cllr Griffin for all his hard work during his 2-year term as Mayor.
Apologies had been received from Cllrs Crisp and Easterbrook.
Cllr Jones was absent.

C6679 Declarations of Interest

- i) No interests were declared.
- ii) Members were reminded of their obligation to review and update their Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as necessary
- iii) No requests for dispensations were received.

C6680 Minutes of the Last Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2026.
The Chairman duly signed the minutes as an accurate record.

C6681 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

C6682 Council Committees

- i) It was **RESOLVED** that the following Standing Committees are required for the 2026/27 period:
 - Finance & Policy
 - Planning and Licensing
 - Community & Environment (note name change)
 - Personnel
- ii) It was **RESOLVED** that no Operational committees are required since Community Committee is to be integrated into Environment making Community & Environment Standing Committee.

C6683 Review of Terms of Reference for Committees

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Committee Terms of Reference 2026-27, subject to the removal of the Community Committee

It was further noted that the Community & Environment Committee will review and redraft its Terms of Reference to incorporate Community responsibilities, and will submit a revised version to Full Council for approval.

C6684 Council Committee Membership, Chairs & Vice Chairs

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the membership of the Council's Standing Committees and Operational Committees, Chairs and Vice Chairs, as detailed below:

Standing Committees

Finance & Policy

Cllr Greg Easterbrook – Chair / Leader of the Council

Cllr Stuart Bailey– Vice Chair

Cllr Bob Harward – as Chair of Planning
Cllr Alex Drage – as Chair of Environment
Graham Cockarill
Cllr Mark Vernon
Cllr Mark Higgins
Cllr Nicky Jones

Planning & Licensing

Cllr Bob Harward – Chair
Cllr Tony Spencer – Vice Chair
Cllr Greg Easterbrook
Cllr Mark Griffin
Cllr Julia Wedlock

Environment

Cllr Alex Drage - Chair
Cllr Tony Spencer – Vice Chair
Cllr Gerry Crisp
Cllr Bob Harward
Cllr Mark Higgins
Cllr Pam Phelps-Jones
Cllr Nicky Jones
Cllr Julia Wedlock

Personnel

Cllr Greg Easterbrook– Chair
Cllr Alex Drag – Vice Chair
Cllr Tony Spencer
Cllr Bob Harward
Cllr Mark Griffin (Substitute)

Appeals

Cllr Mark Vernon - Chair
Cllr Julia Wedlock– Vice Chair
Cllr Graham Cockarill
Cllr Pam Phelps-Jones

C6685 Council Representation on Outside & Other Bodies

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Council's representation on outside bodies, as detailed below:

Allotments – Swan Lake User Group

Cllr Tony Spencer

Blackbushe Airport Consultative Committee

Cllr Mark Griffin

Blackwater Valley Recreation & Countryside Partnership

Cllr Mark Griffin

Daisy Chain Café – Full Trustee Position

Hart District Association of Parish & Town Councils /

Hampshire Association of Local Councils

Cllr Bob Harward

Cllr Tony Spencer

Police Liaison

Any Member can attend, if available.

Vision4Youth Trustee

Cllr Pam Phelps-Jones

Yateley Air Training Corps

Cllr Tony Spencer

Yateley Bowling Club

Cllr Stuart Bailey

Yateley Common Management Committee

Cllr Graham Cockarill

Cllr Mark Griffin

Cllr Bob Harward

Cllr Pam Phelps-Jones

Yateley & Hawley Charities

Cllr Greg Easterbrook

Cllr Julia Wedlock

Yateley United FC

Cllr Gerry Crisp

Yelabus

Cllr Greg Easterbrook - Trustee

Cllr Wedlock

C6686 Policy Reviews

The following policies had previously been reviewed by the Finance & Policy Committee.

- i) To review and approve the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

The Scheme of Delegation was reviewed. No amendments were proposed to the presented version.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Scheme of Delegation Policy as presented.

ii) To review and approve the Council's Standing Orders.

Members reviewed the Council's Standing Orders and agreed that improvements could be made to enhance clarity and coherence. It was suggested that the Finance & Policy Committee be tasked with undertaking a detailed review.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council's Standing Orders be approved as presented.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Finance & Policy Committee review the Standing Orders at its next meeting and bring forward any recommended amendments.

iii) To review and approve the Council's Financial Regulations.

The Council's Financial Regulations were reviewed. No amendments were proposed to the presented version.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Council's Financial Regulations as presented with no further amendments.

iv) To review and approve the Council's Annual Action Plan

The Council's Annual Action Plan was reviewed. No amendments were proposed to the presented version.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Council's Annual Action Plan as presented with no further amendments.

Members are advised that other policies delegated to Finance & Policy and Personnel Committee have been reviewed during the year.

C6687 Confirmation of Insurance Arrangements

The Council considered its insurance arrangements for the 2026/27 civic year. It was noted that a three-year insurance contract had been agreed on 03.03.25. The Council has also increased its fidelity cover to £2 million and taken out separate cyber insurance.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council confirms it has appropriate insurance cover in place for the 2026/27 civic year.

C6688 Determination of the Dates, Times and Place of Meetings for the 2026/27 Civic Year

The Council considered the schedule of dates, times and venues for Council and Committee meetings for the 2026/27 civic year, as circulated. A number of amendments were made during the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the schedule of meeting dates, times and places for the 2026/27 civic year be approved, subject to the amendments agreed.

The approved schedule is appended to these minutes.

C6689 District & County Reports

County

Cllr Bailey (HCC)

Members congratulated Cllr Bailey on his re-election as County Councillor for Yateley East and Blackwater. It was noted that Cllr Richard Quarterman had been elected as County Councillor for Yateley West and Hartley Wintney.

Cllr Bailey reported that the political composition of Hampshire County Council had changed following the recent elections and that discussions were ongoing regarding the formation of the new administration. The Annual Meeting of the County Council is scheduled to take place on 21 May 2026, at which the new Leader will be elected.

Cllr Bailey expressed his appreciation for the work of former County Councillor Tim Davies and noted that he would be working closely with Cllr Quarterman going forward.

District

Cllr Drage

It was reported that Cllrs Bailey and Quarterman had retained their seats on Hart District Council following the recent elections.

It was noted by a Member that Hart District Council had delivered a balanced budget without reductions to services.

C6690 Clerk's Report

Members noted the Clerk's report. The Town Clerk further reported that there had been a positive response to the Council's stall at the May Fayre, with 58 individuals signing up to the mailing list. In addition, approximately 240 responses were received to the Churchill Crescent Play Area refurbishment consultation, including significant engagement from children, many of whom voted for their preferred design using tokens on the day.

Members noted that the Town Clerk had recently been awarded Fellow status by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), the highest grade of professional membership offered by the organisation.

Members congratulated the Town Clerk on this significant professional achievement, recognising her sustained commitment to continuous professional development and the high standard of support provided to the Council.

C6691 Earmarked Reserves

- i) It was **RESOLVED** to note the Earmarked Reserves movements for 2026/27, implemented at the start of the financial year in accordance with the agreed budget.
- ii) It was **RESOLVED** to approve the establishment of new Earmarked Reserves to ring-fence grant funding upon receipt, specifically £12,000 from PCCO and £23,000 from HCC.

iii) It was **RESOLVED** to approve the transfer of £5,000 from General Reserves to the Play Area Equipment Earmarked Reserve to address the identified shortfall and enable completion of the Churchill Crescent refurbishment project (total project cost £45,000).

C6692 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

The Town Mayor thanked the Town Clerk for all her work in completing the year-end accounts and for the successful outcome of the internal audit.

i) It was **RESOLVED** that there are no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP (External Auditors)

ii) To receive the Internal Auditor's final report for the year ending 31st March 2026
Members received the final Internal Auditor's report. There were no matters for concern raised in the report.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Internal Audit Report for the year ending 31st March 2026

iii) To review and approve the Internal Controls & Audit: Review of Effectiveness – evidence for AGAR Section 1

Members considered the evidence for the Annual Governance Statement in the AGAR.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Internal Controls & Audit: Review of Effectiveness document.

iv) To approve the Annual Governance Statement Evidence – evidence for AGAR Section 1.

Members reviewed the Annual Governance Statement evidence document.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement evidence document.

v) To approve the Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31st March 2026 – evidence for Section 2 (attached)

Members reviewed the unaudited Financial Statements for the year ending 31st March 2026, which provides evidence for the Accounting Statements in the AGAR.

A Member referred to the supporting Income and Expenditure Account and queried the operating income and running costs in relation to Darby Green Centre, stating that it had not historically received funding for improvements and expressing the view that the building would benefit from refurbishment.

This was corrected by another Member, and clarification was provided regarding previous investment and improvements undertaken at the site.

It was agreed that the matter of improvements to the Darby Green Centre be referred to a future meeting of the Community & Environment Committee for further consideration.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31st March 2026.

vi) Review of Inventory of Land and Assets

To note and approve the Asset (Fixed Assets) Register as at 31 March 2026, as evidence supporting AGAR Section 2.

Members noted the Asset (Fixed Assets) Register as at 31 March 2026, noting that only material enhancements or additions are recorded as new assets and that like for like replacements are excluded.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Fixed Assets Register for the year ending 31st March 2026.

vii) To consider and agree affirmative responses to items 1-8 of the AGAR Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

Members considered the affirmative responses to the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26, in light of the supporting evidence previously provided.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the AGAR Section 1- Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

viii) To consider, approve and sign off AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26

Members considered the Accounting Statements 2025/26, in light of the supporting evidence previously provided.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the AGAR Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26.

ix) Confirmation of Dates for the Exercise of Public Rights

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer had circulated details of the Exercise of Public Rights and a copy of the notice to be displayed on the day before the exercise period commences.

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the period for the exercise of public rights as Wednesday 2 June 2026- Tuesday 14 July 2026

The notice will be published on Monday 1st June 2026.

C6693 Attendance Record For 2025/26

Members received the annual attendance record for all Council and Committee meetings held during the past municipal year. This information will be published in full

on the Council's website in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, to support openness and accountability.

Councillor	Overall Meetings attended in 2025/26 1st May 25 -30th April 26		
	Required	Attended	Attendance %
Cllr Stuart Bailey	17	12	70.6%
Cllr Graham Cockarill	23	19	82.6%
Cllr Gerry Crisp	14	4	28.6%
Cllr Alex Drage	14	14	100.0%
Cllr Greg Easterbrook	44	25	56.8%
Cllr Mark Griffin	25	18	72.0%
Cllr Bob Harward	50	19	38.0%
Cllr Mark Higgins	23	18	78.3%
Cllr Nicky Jones	23	2	8.7%
Cllr Pam Phelps-Jones	14	13	92.9%
Cllr Tony Spencer	41	35	85.4%
Cllr Mark Vernon	17	13	76.5%
Cllr Julia Wedlock	36	29	80.6%

Note: Attendance figures include only meetings that councillors were formally required to attend. Councillors may have attended other meetings as substitutes or observers; these are not included in the attendance calculations

C6694 Council Member Allowances 2025-26

The Council Member Allowances taken for 2025-26 were **NOTED**.

This information will be published on the Council's website in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.

The following Town Councillors claimed a Member's Allowance of £535.68 per year for the 2025/26 financial year (subject to tax and NI):

Cllr Gerry Crisp
Cllr Mark Griffin
Cllr Bob Harward
Cllr Pam Phelps-Jones
Cllr Mark Vernon
Cllr Julia Wedlock

C6695 Churchill Crescent Play Area Refurbishment – Tender and Consultation Outcome

The Council considered the report outlining the outcome of the tender process for the refurbishment of the Churchill Crescent Play Area and the results of the public consultation. Members noted the strong engagement from the community, including the May Fayre display and public voting exercise, which provided valuable feedback on preferred designs and equipment.

It was **RESOLVED**:

i) That Supplier B, Sutcliffe Play Ltd, be appointed as the contractor for the play area refurbishment, at a cost of £45,000 + VAT.

ii) That the inclusion of additional items identified through consultation be approved, namely an additional bench and an additional swing, at a cost of £2,068.29 + VAT, with the additional expenditure to be funded from General Reserves and transferred to the appropriate Earmarked Reserve.

Members further noted that the proposed refurbishment is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on the Council's carbon footprint. It was acknowledged that the use of durable and, where possible, sustainably sourced materials will help minimise long-term environmental impact, while the enhanced facility is likely to encourage greater local use and reduce the need for travel to alternative play areas.

C6696 Parish and Town Council Election Timing – Local Government Reorganisation

The Council considered correspondence received via Hart District Council regarding a Government proposal to align Parish and Town Council elections with elections to a future Unitary Authority.

Members discussed the potential implications of combining elections, including the impact on candidate recruitment, councillor terms of office, and the need to maintain focus on local issues and representation.

It was **RESOLVED** to respond to Hart District Council, regarding the Government proposal as follows:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to combine parish and town council elections with those for the new unitary authority. Yateley Town Council has considered this matter carefully and would like to raise significant concerns about the potential impact of combining elections.

Firstly, holding all parish and town council elections at the same time as unitary elections would result in a large number of seats becoming vacant simultaneously. Experience shows that it is already challenging to recruit sufficient candidates for local councils. Concentrating all vacancies into a single election cycle is likely to exacerbate this difficulty, increasing the risk of uncontested seats or vacancies remaining unfilled.

Secondly, we believe that maintaining separate elections plays an important role in highlighting the distinct purpose and value of parish and town councils. These councils represent the most local and responsive tier of government, and separate elections help ensure that residents can focus on specifically local issues, candidates, and responsibilities. Combining elections risks overshadowing parish-level matters with broader unitary authority concerns, thereby diminishing public awareness and engagement with the work of town and parish councils.

In the case of Yateley, a significant number of councillor positions will be due for election in the coming cycle. Extending the term to five years, alongside combining elections, is likely to make recruitment even more challenging, as potential candidates may be reluctant to commit to a longer period in office.

Overall, the Council is concerned that combining elections would weaken the distinct identity and voice of parish and town councils, reduce engagement at the local level, and make it harder to attract candidates. For these reasons, we strongly support retaining separate election arrangements.

We would therefore urge the District Council to recommend to Government that parish and town council elections remain independent of unitary authority election cycles.

C6697 Town Mayor’s Announcements

Since the last meeting, the former Mayor, Cllr Griffin, had attended the following events:

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

Cllr Griffin had also hosted two fundraising events:

- Mayor’s Charity Quiz Night – 11 April 2026
- Mayor’s Charity Ramble Rally – 9 May 2026

Both events were reported as successful and well attended.

It was further noted that, during the 2025/26 Civic Year, Councillor Griffin raised a total of £2,693.26 for his chosen charities. This equates to £897.75 for each of the following organisations:

- Cornerstone Counselling
- Daisy Chain (Dementia) Café
- Vision 4 Youth

It was noted that the funds will be formally presented to the charities in due course, and that the transfer of funds to their bank accounts will be subject to approval under Agenda Item C6701.

The incoming Town Mayor, Councillor Cockarill, will announce his chosen charity or charities for the 2026/27 Civic Year in due course.

C6698 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies & Local Updates

Cllr Wedlock –

Hampshire Bus Action Group HAMBAG

It was reported that Eversley Parish Council has now endorsed the vision of the Hampshire Bus Action Group (HAMBAG). Including Yateley Town Council, a total of five councils have endorsed the initiative to date.

The group is seeking to secure endorsements from ten councils in the first instance, after which it intends to approach all 50 local councils to invite wider participation and support.

Cllr Phelps-Jones

Vision 4 Youth

It was reported that the organisation has strengthened its governance with the appointment of three new skilled trustees.

The group also confirmed a successful London Marathon, with two runners participating and raising funds for the charity.

Vision 4 Youth is currently implementing a new digital registration system.

Cllr Spencer-

Yateley United Football Club

The Council extended its congratulations to Yateley United Football Club on their promotion to Step 5 of the non-league football pyramid, at a level eligible to participate in the FA Cup. This was recognised as a significant achievement for the club.

Members also noted the club's success in reaching the final of the Aldershot Senior Cup.

C6699 Police Matters & Community Safety

Members were advised that the next Police Liaison Meeting is scheduled to take place on 1 June 2026 at 11.30am in the Oak Room, Council Offices. Members were encouraged to attend.

It was noted that a new Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) has recently joined the Yateley area and has introduced themselves to Council staff.

C6700 Committee Minutes & Recommendations from Other Committees

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

Committee	Date	Minute Nos.	Recommendations
Community	Not met		
Environment	09.02.26 23.03.26	1875-1882 1883-1892	
Finance & Policy	13.04.26 27.04.26	2171-2183 2184-2188	
Personnel	23.03.26	485-493	
Planning & Licensing	09.03.26 23.03.26 13.04.26 27.04.26	3393-3400 3401-3408 3409-3416 3417-3424	

C6701 Schedule of Payments

It was **RESOLVED** to approve:

The list of payments emailed to the Committee prior to the meeting:

Pages 2074/75 are April invoices

Pages 2076/77/78/79 are May invoices

Cashbook:

Deposit refund – 7th May - £100.00 – EM

As per Agenda Item C6697, it was **RESOLVED** to make the following payments from the Mayor's Treasurer Account:

- Cornerstone Counselling £897.75
- Daisy Chain Café £897.75
- Vision 4 Youth £897.75

C6702 Information Items

- i) Date of next meeting – 8th June 2026, 7.00pm at The Oak Room, Council Offices.
- ii) Forward Plan
The items on the Forward Plan were noted.

Meeting closed at 8.46pm

Yateley Town Council Meeting Dates Civic Year 2026-27

Month	Town Council	Finance & Policy	Planning & Licensing	Community & Environment	Personnel
Start time	7.00pm	7.00pm	10.00am	6.30pm	6.30pm
2026					
May	11		18		
June	8	15	1, 15	1	
July		6	6, 20	20	
August			17		
September	14		7, 21	28	21
October		19	19		
November	2	16	2, 16	30	
December	7		14		
2027					
January	18	11	11, 25		
February		22	8, 22	8	
March	1		8, 22	22	1
April		12	12, 26		
May	10	TBC*	TBC*	TBC*	TBC*

Annual Town Meeting of Electors on: 15th March 2027

**Future meeting dates for the next civic year will be confirmed at the Annual Town Council Meeting scheduled for 10th May 2027*

Community Climate Forums:

27th July, 26th October, 25th January 2027, 26th April 2027