Yateley Town Council

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

Present – Councillors:
Cllr Graham Cockarill (Chairman)
Cllr Stuart Bailey
Cllr Alex Drage
Cllr Gerry Crisp
Cllr Mark Griffin
Cllr Mark Higgins
Cllr Pam Phelps-Jones
Cllr Tony Spencer
Cllr Mark Vernon
Cllr Julia Wedlock
Cllr Christina Wilkin

Absent Councillors
Cllr Greg Easterbrook
Cllr Bob Harward

In Attendance – Officers, District & County Councillors and Public
Julie Routley (Town Clerk)

Sexual Harassment Training
Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Members received training on sexual harassment awareness, prevention, reporting procedures and the Council's policies. The training formed part of the Council's ongoing measures to ensure that it takes all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and promote a safe and respectful working environment.

C6743 Welcome & Apologies for Absence

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

C6744 Approval of Absence from Meetings

Members considered a request to approve a further period of absence from meetings for Councillor Crisp in accordance with Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was noted that Councillor Crisp was present at the meeting. Following discussion, Members agreed to defer consideration of the matter until the next meeting of the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that consideration of the approval of a further period of absence for Councillor Crisp be deferred until the next meeting of the Council.

Chair.....

The Mayor and several Members expressed their thanks to Councillor Crisp for his service to the Council and recognised his significant contribution during his term of office. It was further noted that consideration would be given to an appropriate opportunity to formally recognise the service of Councillor Crisp and any other Members who may stand down at the forthcoming elections.

C6745 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

C6746 Minutes of the Last Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2026.

The Chairman duly signed the minutes as an accurate record.

C6747 Public Participation

No public were present.

C6748 Appointment to Community & Environment Committee

Members considered the appointment of a Member to the Community & Environment Committee to fill the current vacancy.

It was noted that Councillor Wilkin had been co-opted to the Council at the previous meeting and had expressed an interest in serving on the Community & Environment Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Wilkin be appointed to the Community & Environment Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

C6749 District & County Reports

<u>County</u>

Apologies were received from Cllr Quarterman (HCC), but he had circulated a written report prior to the meeting.

<u>Cllr Bailey (HCC)</u>

<u>Roadworks – Cricket Hill</u>

<u>Top of Cricket Hill Roundabout (A30)</u>

It was reported that further improvement works are planned at the Cricket Hill/A30 roundabout, commencing on 16 November and expected to last approximately four weeks. The works will primarily be undertaken overnight, although temporary traffic signals will be in operation during the day. The scheme is intended to improve traffic movements at the junction and enhance pedestrian access across the A30.

<u>Bottom of Cricket Hill</u>

Cllr Bailey noted that significant works had recently been undertaken at the lower end of Cricket Hill. Whilst acknowledging the investment made, he expressed concern that the revised layout may have reduced safety for some pedestrians, particularly those crossing from Fiske Court. He advised that he would raise these concerns with Hampshire County Council officers.

Chair.....

Land off Swan Lane / Behind Hearsey Gardens

Cllr Bailey provided an update on matters relating to land to the rear of Hearsey Gardens and adjacent to Swan Lane. It was noted that extensive vegetation and tree clearance had taken place and that large vehicles had accessed the site via the residential estate. Concerns have been raised by local residents regarding the impact of the works and the future use of the land.

Members noted that the land is understood to have been divided into individual plots and that planning enforcement action has previously been taken in relation to works on parts of the site, including the service of stop notices. It was further reported that additional areas of vegetation had recently been cleared, with concerns raised regarding the potential impact on the local environment. Relevant authorities, including Natural England, had been informed of certain matters.

Cllr Bailey reported that, over the preceding weekend, further works had been undertaken on part of the site, including vegetation clearance, ground levelling and the laying of a hard surface. A number of caravans had subsequently been brought onto the land. Residents had expressed concern regarding the loss of woodland screening to the rear of their properties and the ongoing activity on the site.

Cllr Bailey advised that Hart District Council's concerns relate to whether works undertaken on the site comply with the relevant planning permissions and planning legislation. He noted that a number of planning enforcement matters have been raised and are being considered through the appropriate processes.

District

Cllr Cockarill (HDC)

HDC Budget It was noted that, due to the pause in Local Government Reorganisation, Hart District Council will now need to prepare a budget for the next financial year, which had not been necessary whilst reorganisation proposals were expected to proceed.

Local Plan Members were advised that the next stage of consultation on the Local Plan is out for consultation. It was noted that Yateley Town Council has been invited to submit its views as part of the consultation process.

C6750 Clerk's Report

Members noted the Town Clerk's report.

C6751 Interim Internal Audit Report 2026/27

Members received and considered the Interim Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2026/27. Members noted the auditor's positive findings, including that no procedural errors requiring reporting to the external auditor had been identified, no material weaknesses in internal controls had been found, and that the Council's systems and procedures were considered appropriate and effective. Members also noted the auditor's view that the Council had a well-managed and robust governance framework and that only one recommendation had been made, relating to the inclusion of a colour-coded risk matrix within the Council's risk assessment documentation.

Members considered the recommendation that the Council's Risk Assessment documentation be enhanced through the inclusion of a colour-coded risk matrix and

Chair.....

supported the proposed action plan submitted by the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

It was **RESOLVED:**

i) That the Interim Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2026/27 be received and noted.

ii) That the proposed action plan, including the incorporation of a colour-coded risk matrix within the Council's Risk Assessment documentation at the next review, be accepted.

Members expressed their thanks to the Town Clerk and the wider staff team for their continued hard work and professionalism in maintaining high standards of governance, financial management and internal control, as reflected in the auditor's findings.

C6752 Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Interest Income

Members considered the report regarding the treatment of interest earned on SANG funds and noted the advice received from the Internal Auditor that such interest is not required to be ringfenced for SANG expenditure and may be used for other Council purposes.

Members discussed the proposal to transfer the accumulated interest of £30,797.92 currently held within the SANG Earmarked Reserve (326) to the Play Equipment Earmarked Reserve (328). Whilst Members supported the principle of utilising these funds to support future play equipment investment, it was considered more appropriate to incorporate the transfer into the budget-setting process for the 2027/28 financial year.

It was **RESOLVED:**

i) That the transfer of £30,797.92, representing accumulated interest currently held within the SANG Earmarked Reserve (326), to the Play Equipment Earmarked Reserve (328) be approved in principle, with the transfer to be included within the Council's 2027/28 budget-setting process rather than being actioned immediately.

ii) That future interest earned on SANG funds be transferred to the Play Equipment Earmarked Reserve (328).

C6753 Review of Standing Orders

Members considered the revised draft Standing Orders and the advice received from the Internal Auditor regarding the retention of the NALC Model Standing Orders structure, numbering and order.

The draft Standing Orders were reviewed in detail and Members considered a number of amendments to ensure the document reflected the Council's local requirements whilst remaining aligned with the NALC Model Standing Orders and recognised good governance practice.

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It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Standing Orders, incorporating the amendments agreed at the meeting, be adopted with immediate effect.

Members thanked the Clerk for the considerable work undertaken in reviewing and updating the Standing Orders.

C6754 Hart Local Plan – Proposed Content and Evidence Consultation

Members considered the consultation issued by Hart District Council on the proposed content and evidence for the emerging Hart Local Plan.

Members noted that the consultation deadline was 7 December 2026 and that the next meeting of the Planning & Licensing Committee was scheduled for 16 November 2026. Members further noted that, as the Local Plan progresses, the Council's Neighbourhood Plan would need to be reviewed to ensure that it remained aligned with the strategic planning policies adopted by Hart District Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that authority be delegated to the Planning & Licensing Committee to consider the consultation and formulate and submit a response on behalf of the Council prior to the consultation deadline.

C6755 Town Mayor's Announcements

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

- Race Across Yateley – 11th October
  The Mayor reported on Race Across Yateley, held on 11 October 2026. The community fundraising event was organised by Harry's Hydrocephalus Awareness Trust and Yateley Industries and brought together residents of all ages to complete a series of challenges and checkpoints across the town, raising funds for local charitable causes.

Upcoming events

Yateley Lions Fireworks – 7th November

Remembrance Day

- St Barnabas Service – Sunday 8th November 10am
- St Swithun's Service and Parade – Sunday 8th November from 2pm onwards

Armistice Day – Wednesday 11th November, 11 am at the War Memorial

Christmas Lights Switch on Darby Green – 27th November

Christmas Light switch on and Christmas Market – Church End Green – 28th November

Mayor's Christmas Pub Carolling – 18th December

Members were reminded of the Mayor's Christmas Pub Caroling event on 18th December. The Mayor encouraged all Members to participate if available and thanked them in advance for their support of this festive community event.

Chair.....

C6756 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies & Local Updates

Cllr Griffin-

Blackbushe Consultative Committee

Cllr Griffin reported that he had attended a meeting at Blackbushe Airport approximately three weeks earlier. He advised that the airport is currently constructing a large hangar and has recently introduced an electric tilt-rotor aircraft. It was noted that the airport's operations are predominantly focused on general aviation and leisure flying activities.

Cllr Phelps-Jones

Vision 4 Youth

It was reported that Vision 4 Youth has received an award in recognition of its Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, which provides free holiday activities and meals for eligible children. The organisation has also achieved Purple Provider status, the highest level of accreditation for youth providers.

Thanks were extended to Hart Leisure Centre for supporting the delivery of half-term activities.

Members were advised that Vision 4 Youth recently held a successful fundraising quiz night at the Dog and Partridge public house. It was also noted that two participants, including PC Ben Blundell, will be running the London Marathon to raise funds for the charity.

Cllr Wedlock –

Yelabus

It was reported that Yelabus had previously faced funding challenges in relation to the purchase of a new bus. The necessary funding has now been secured, and a replacement vehicle has been ordered, with delivery expected in March 2027.

Hampshire Bus Action Group (HAMBAG)

It was reported that HAMBAG is in contact with Cllr Quarterman (Hampshire County Council) to establish whether councils to the north of Hartley Wintney would wish to contribute their views on local bus services and future transport provision in their areas. It was further noted that, once the proposed Strategic Authority is established, HAMBAG intends to engage with the elected Mayor to share local priorities and advocate for improvements to bus services across the area.

C6757 Police Matters & Community Safety

Members noted recent incidents of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in the vicinity of Yateley Green, which have been reported to the police.

It was further noted that the date of the next Police Liaison Meeting will be confirmed nearer the time, as scheduling is dependent on police shift patterns.

C6758 Committee Minutes & Recommendations from Other Committees

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

Committee	Date	Minute Nos.	Recommendations
Community & Environment	28.09.26	1910-1919	

Chair.....

Finance & Policy	19.10.26	2212-2224 (2225)	
Personnel	21.09.26	494-497 (498-502)	
Planning & Licensing	21.09.26 19.10.26	3484-3491 3492-3499	

C6759 Information Items

i) Date of next meeting – 7 December 2026, Darby Green Centre, Darby Green Road, GU17 0DX

ii) Forward Plan

The items on the Forward Plan were noted. It was noted that the Full Council Meetings taking place on 7th December 2026 and 1st March 2026 would take place at the Darby Green Centre.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

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Chair.....