

Sherborne Youth Town Council Meeting

Thursday, 13 November 2025

12.30 to 2 pm at The Gryphon School

Present:

All local schools were represented at the meeting, except for Sherborne Boys and Girls School, who unfortunately could not send councillors to this meeting.

Also in attendance was representation from Sherborne Town Council, Sherborne Abbey, Dorset Youth for Christ and Staff from various school settings.

Welcome and opening remarks:

Ms Rann and the Town Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated this was the third academic year of the Youth Town Council and it had been exciting to be part of the discussions and learn about what can be done by the youth councillors.

It was great the Youth Town Council had been represented at the recent Remembrance Service to lay a wreath.

Sherborne Museum recently have recently been recognised for a Hidden Gem Award for exemplary volunteering.

The Council has approved its latest Forward Plan that focuses on green initiatives, inclusivity, and the overall wellbeing of the town.

Minutes of the previous meeting:

The Minutes from the previous meeting, dated Thursday, 19 June 2025, were approved.

Reminder of the purpose of the Youth Town Council and the role of Chair and Vice Chair to be elected next meeting:

Each year, the Youth Town Council elects a Chair and a Vice Chair to help set the agenda and run the meetings. Anyone interested in taking on one of these roles, should nominate themselves at the next meeting, where the positions will be filled.

Update on Bollard decorating:

Permission has been received from Highways and Conservation, and we are awaiting better weather. The art departments will receive assistance from Gryphon. This will continue with the use of the first two bollards at the top of town. There is currently £2000 allocated to spend which will increase to £3,000 in April 2026.

Creating a Nature Conservation Area Footpath and Bridge:

Mike Balfour had been invited to the meeting to share his ideas for the creation of a new nature conservation area. Mike noted there had been significant improvement in our natural surroundings, but one area that still needed attention was our wildlife. We are seeing a lack of diversity in birds, butterflies, and other species. After the war, farmers were able to cultivate more land for food production, but this has had a disastrous effect on local wildlife.

Action is needed and it was proposed our efforts should be focussed on the River Yeo. The wonderful woodlands surrounding it could be transformed into a nature conservation area. Rivers are vital wildlife corridors, and crucial partners in this initiative would be the Wildlife Trust, which helps restore habitats and offers grants. Wild Sherborne has recently been established and supports this initiative.

It's essential to involve young people, as they often bring fresh ideas and perspectives. It would be great to have a young person assist us in this endeavour.

However, the costs associated with these efforts are quite high. Sherborne Town Council has allocated a small amount of funding for a feasibility study.

It will require a collective effort from many people to make this plan a reality. Our hopes include creating a footpath, enhancing the beauty of the water, and installing informative signs about local bird species. The goal is to promote wildlife conservation while establishing a safe walking path.

Children came up with several exciting ideas which included the following:

- Clearing out wood to create pathways and using that wood to construct bird nests or bridges
- Organising scavenger hunts and themed walks (e.g., Halloween, Christmas) where participants can spell out words they find along the way
- Opening the bridge in the water meadow
- Creating slightly raised footpaths or overflow areas to ensure they remain usable by wildlife
- Installing information points about various bugs and species
- Setting up discovery points to make the experience more engaging
- Protecting hedgehog habitats and adding informational signs
- Using natural materials to minimise visual impact and ensure they are non-toxic
- Establish nature protection clubs to engage the community in conservation

Various permissions will need to be sought along with expert advice. Construction systems beneath the pathway will also need to be explored to keep animals away from it. We need to ensure that the area is accessible for wheelchair users and consider adding bird-watching posts or hides to observe different species.

A significant issue is the high nitrate concentration in the water. It would be worth investing time and resources into persuading farmers to reduce pesticide use to improve water quality.

Proposals for use of telephone kiosks in Cheap Street and Newland Gardens:

The Town Council has recently adopted the two telephone kiosks and will soon be holding a public consultation on their future uses.

The following ideas were suggested:

- Add an armchair and books for reading, creating a space to relax in the red box
- Include a first aid kit and additional bandaging.
- Provide a contact list with important numbers such as those for the Police, Fire and suicide prevention hotlines, along with taxi numbers and other useful information.

- Set up a book swap and an information point.
- Create a digital immersive information point, including a QR code linked to nature pathways and connected with the museum.
- Share information about the future of Sherborne and the agenda of upcoming events in the area.
- Consider adding a photo booth with a donation fee of £1 to £3, styled like those in London, and featuring a modernised iPad for WhatsApp and FaceTime.
- Enable scanning to see your location, find nearby shops, parks, and other amenities, and access Google Maps for the nearest cinema and more.

It was agreed that the following agenda items would be added to the next meeting:

- Issues to be raised by members of the Youth Council for the year ahead
- Mission Statement of Sherborne Youth Council

Future Meetings:

- January 15th - Venue TBC
- February 26th - Venue TBC
- April 16th - Venue TBC
- June 11th - Venue TBC