

Garstang Town Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting, 20th April 2020

Minutes of the virtual Town Council meeting, held on 20 April 2020, 7.30pm.

Present

Chairman: Cllr Webster

Councillors Present: Allan, Brooks, Halford, Hynes, Leech, Mitchell, Pearson (arrived at item 6), Ryder, Salisbury and Webster

Also present: Town Clerk Edwina Parry, Wyre Cllr Dulcie Atkins, Wyre Cllr Robert Atkins and 3 members of the public.

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the first virtual meeting of the Town Council and ran through the virtual meeting housekeeping, protocol and voting procedure.

251(2019-20) Apologies for absence

None

Cllr Pearson had notified the Clerk that he may be late in attending the meeting.

252(2019-20) Declaration of Interest

None

253(2019-20) Holding virtual local Council meetings and amendment to standing orders

The Clerk informed the Council of the following.

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 came into force on 4 April 2020.

Summary

- The 2020 Regulations permit the holding of remote meetings, with conditions.
- Local councils can decide the methods they will use to facilitate the holding of remote meetings.
- There is no requirement to hold an annual meeting of the Council.

Regulation 5 covers remote attendance; extending the definition of “place” to include more than one location and including electronic, digital or virtual locations. It goes on to set out all the conditions that must be complied with, making sure the member attending remotely can be heard and where possible seen by other members and by the press and public and can hear and preferably see the other members.

Regulation 13 modifies the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 allowing for remote attendance by the press and public.

Resolved: Cllrs approved to amend and modify Standing Orders to cover regulation 5 and 13 of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, This will allow the Town Council to hold virtual meetings. If there was any prohibition or other restriction contained in the standing orders or any other rules of the town council governing the meeting, then any such prohibition or restriction would have no effect.

254(2019-20) Public Participation

The meeting was adjourned to allow members of the public to speak.

Cllr Atkins reported the following;

- a) The Wyre parking permits for the High Street car park were now operational for 3 hours. This would assist users of the Arts Centre.
- b) Planning application 16/00550/DIS2. Cllr Atkins advised that she was supporting the Conservation Officer's recommendation

The meeting was reconvened.

255(2019-20) Minutes of the last meeting

A copy of the minutes of the Town Council meetings held:

- a) 16 March 2020.
- b) 21 March 2020

had been circulated.

Resolved: The minutes of the meetings held on 16 March 2020 and 21 March 2020 were confirmed and signed electronically as a true record.

256(2019-20) Town Council Annual Meeting in May 2020

The Clerk informed the Council of the following.

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 refers:

- i. Regulation 6(c) removes the requirement for a parish council to hold an annual meeting in May 2020
- ii. Regulation 4 (2) carries the current appointment of chairman on until the Annual Meeting in May 2021 although councils may elect a chairman at earlier meeting should they wish to. Regulation 4 makes it clear that (until 7 May 2021), parish council meetings may be held at such hour and on such days as they may determine without requirement for further notice. Similarly, parish councils can alter the frequency, move or cancel such meetings without requirement for further notice. The initial obligation to provide three clear days' notice of parish councils meetings will however continue.

Cllrs considered advice provided by the Clerk:

- a) Where an appointment would be made or require to be made at an annual meeting of a parish council, such appointment continues until the next annual meeting of the parish council or until such time as that council may determine.
- b) The Annual Meeting – The requirement to hold an annual meeting of the council is suspended, but the council can hold one if it wants to. Councils are advised to hold an annual meeting in May 2020 as normal, unless there is an extremely good reason not to. Any decision to not hold an annual meeting must be made by the council, not by the clerk or chairman unilaterally.
- c) The current Mayor and Deputy Mayor are willing to continue in their positions until May 2021. To date, there is no decision yet about when or if there will be an Annual Meeting at Wyre Council.

Resolved: Cllrs agreed to include the election of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on the agenda for the May Council meeting [combination of Annual meeting of the Council (Mayor making) and the normal monthly meeting] which would be held on 18 May 2020.

257 (2019-20) Thursday 30 April 2020 – Annual Town meeting & Town awards

- a) Annual Town meeting - Cllrs considered advice provided by the Clerk: SLCC guidance - The Local Government Act 1972 Part III requires that an annual parish meeting takes place between 1st March and 1st June each year. There is no duty for the Parish Council to convene this although it is customary that it is convened by the Parish Council Chairman at a date and time set by the Parish Council. There is no effective sanction should the Parish Council not set a date and time for this to occur or if the Chairman does not convene the meeting.

Resolved: That the Council does not hold a virtual Town meeting on Thursday 30 April 2020

- b) Town awards

Resolved: The project team, led by the Mayor, will collate the nominees, hold a virtual meeting to discuss the nominees and decide on the winners for each category within the next 4 weeks. The nominees to be notified and published in due course. The Town Awards evening would be postponed until further notice. The winners will be announced when we are able to host the Town Awards evening.

258 (2019-20) Planning Applications

Cllrs considered application 16/00550/DIS2 Approval of details reserved by condition on planning permission 16/00550/FULMAJ, condition 24 (external materials), Garstang Business and Community Centre 96 High Street Garstang

Resolved: Planning application 16/00550/DIS2 The Town Council wished to support Wyre Council's conservation officer comments.

259(2019-20) Finance

Payments – Cllrs approved the following expenditures

Royal Bank of Scotland Bank account

Payroll (figures provided by Towers + Gornall)

to be paid electronically on 26/3/2020 (E00248 & E00249) 2,705.88

LCC pension direct debit (19/4/20) 760.86

Clerk; LC2 range (new SCP as from 1/4/19 19-32), 'National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of service of Local Council Clerks in England & Wales 2004'.

Lengthsman scale point SCP 1-4 (new SCP as from 1/4/19)

Lancashire County Pension Fund Valuation 2019

Councillors noted the correspondence from LCC

The new future service rate for Garstang Town Council, effective from 1 April 2020 for a period of three years, is 21.8% (was 17.5%)

In addition, deficit contribution payments are also payable alongside the future service contributions. The annual deficit contribution amounts for the three year valuation period is set out below and these will be taken as an appropriate monthly equivalent alongside the monthly future service contribution payments.

Annual deficit contributions: 2020/21 - £200, 2021/22 - £200, 2022/23 - £200

Royal Bank of Scotland – cashbook 3

Electronic payments (Invoices had been circulated by email)

E00250 E Parry – Clerk expenses 11/3/20 – 14/4/20 114.55

Viking Direct Ink cartridges and filing envelopes

E00251	LALC Subscription 2020/21	656.18
E00252	HM Revenue 2019-20 Q4 payment	2,086.53
E00253	Wyre Council Grounds Maintenance agreements of Kepple Lane Park and Moss Lane playing field 2020/21	5,202.00
E00254	C&C Supplies – Lengthsman supplies	84.05
E00255	Mower Power – servicing Lengthsman’s machinery	397.49

Income received:

6 April 2020

Precept notification for 2020/21, along with a VAT invoice for the election costs deducted.

Precept	76,809.00
Less: Poll Expenses	114.01
Net payment	76,694.99

Electronic payment since last meeting.

7/4/2020	E00247 Zurich Insurance (minute 230;16/3/2020)	1,122.86
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260(2019-20) Cllrs noted the statement of Accounts at 31 March 2020

HSBC Current account	£4,840.23
Royal Bank of Scotland	£2,237.55
HSBC Reserve account	£14,753.16
Money Market Account 3 month	£30,553.33
HSBC Christmas Lights account	£120.54

261(2019-20) The information report from the Clerk was noted (detailed in the Appendix)

262(2019-20) Items for Next Agenda

Councillors were asked to raise matters to be included on the agenda and ‘Report of other representatives and projects’, for the meeting of the Town Council **on 18 May 2020 by notifying the Clerk by 8 May 2020**. The item should specify the business which it is proposed to transact in such a way that the member who receives it can identify the matters which he will be expected to discuss i.e. it needs to specify either what the proposal is and that a decision is required or whether the item is for information only.

The Meeting Finished at: 20.40 (which included a comfort break of 10 minutes)

Appendix Clerks Report: For information

Garstang Volunteer Force (GVF) and Wyre Council

The Clerk, in partnership with GVP and Wyre Council, has produced local list for Garstang of services and helplines. It is being reviewed weekly and posted on Garstang Town Council website.

LALC, Annual Conference, received Tue 24/03/2020

Having had to cancel our booking for April 25th, the hotel has agreed to transfer our booking to October 17th (situation permitting). The programme as far as possible will be the same.

Wyre Council

Joanne Porter, 01 April 2020 – 2 Town Cllr vacancies

Further to my email of 20 March about the above I have received some advice from my Elections Association.

The notice of casual vacancy must be advertised 'As soon as practicable' but this is not defined in the legislation, but can reasonably be taken to mean as soon as possible. Given the current situation and issues around public safety, there may be scope to take a wider interpretation of 'as soon as practicable' and delay publishing the notice of vacancy since it is arguably not practicable to publish at present.

Delaying might then allow time for further legislation to be made which is expected to address the issue of by-elections. The situation could then be reviewed.

So for the foreseeable I would advise not to publish the notice of vacancies.

Response from David Thow 06/04/2020

In response to the resolution below.

Planning Committee 17/2/2020

Resolved: That the Town Council write a letter to Wyre Council, explaining the TC's discontent with the inaction on Wyre's conservation and management plan. The TC have heard that it may be getting updated, but the TC would like to know the purpose of the updates if nothing is happening/no action is being taken with it currently.

Response from David Thow 06/04/2020

The Wyre Council 'Garstang Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan' document was written as part of the requirement under S.69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for local authorities to periodically review their conservation areas. Subsequent guidance on the appraisal, designation and review of conservation areas from Historic England suggests that it is useful for such documents to include plans for the management of such areas.

Whilst the Garstang Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan describes the character and history of the area at some length, the management plan section is extremely brief and includes no more than a list of suggestions. At no point are any specific policies identified.

Garstang Town Council will be aware that the principal instruments within the 'development plan', the essential part of the decision making process for all issues of development management, includes the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Wyre local Plan 2031 (WLP31) and any relevant supplementary planning documents. A conservation area appraisal and management plan is a

'material consideration' only unless it contains specific policies that are reiterated within the WLP31.

Within the WLP31 Policy CDMP5 refers to the historic environment but only contains generic policies. It does not contain any policies specifically aimed at the management of any particular conservation area.

The net result of this situation is that the Garstang Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan document, as with all the other similar documents covering the other conservation areas in Wyre, carries little weight in terms of the decisions made on planning applications within the conservation area simply because it contains no policies aimed at achieving that end. There are therefore no policies that could be enforced or acted upon.

This is one of the key reasons why the Council is keen to pursue a programme of review of all the conservation areas and to include within the management plans clear policies that are supported within the Local Plan and which, most importantly, are unambiguous and legally enforceable.

The key priority area for the Council in the immediate future is the review of the Fleetwood Conservation Area and the development of a management plan that is both realistic and enforceable.

The Council will keep Garstang Town Council abreast of the development of the future work programme in this area, specifically when it will be the turn of Garstang to be reviewed. Clearly in the current extraordinary climate progress on this work plan has been and will continue to be delayed until normality resumes.

NALC update – updates been sent to Cllrs, as received.

06 April 2020

Audit dates

External Audits & AGAR – The government has extended the audit timetable by two months, so the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) must now be completed by 31 August 2020 at the latest.

Following NALC's engagement with government around local council audit timeframes final regulations are due to be made the week commencing 6 April which will extend the statutory audit deadlines for 2019/20. It is proposed that:

- The publication date for final, audited, accounts for local councils will move from 30 September to 30 November 2020
- To give local councils more flexibility, the requirement for the public inspection period to include the first 10 working days of July has been removed. Instead, local councils must commence the public inspection period on or before the first working day of September 2020

This means that draft accounts must be approved by 31 August 2020 at the latest or maybe approved earlier where possible.

Authorities must publish the dates of their public inspection period this year, and the government recommends that they provide public notice on their websites (where available) when the public inspection period would usually commence, explaining why they are departing from normal practise for 2020. We will provide updates for our members once these regulations have been made. The Joint Practitioners Action Group (JPAG) will also provide an addendum to the Practitioners Guide to layout fully for councils the new time frames that the government puts in place.

We are pleased the government has listened to the sector and recognises the need for an extension to the timeframes for audit. This extension is for two months and not the minimum of at least three months which NALC called for in our response to the consultation on the draft regulations.

Holding remote meetings

NALC has been working with the Crown Commercial Service to allow local councils to access a discounted rate for using Zoom – an online meeting platform. More information on this discount and how to access it will be available in the coming days.

Small business grant funding scheme

In response to COVID-19, the government announced there would be support for small businesses, and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. You can check government guidance to see if any businesses run by your local council would be eligible for this support. This support will take the form of two grant funding schemes, the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. The schemes will be delivered by principal authorities – if you are eligible, your principal authorities will be in touch with you to arrange payment.

07/04/2020

Local council meetings

On 2 April, the government published The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. These regulations come into force on 4 April.

NALC launched two documents — a legal briefing note on our interpretation of the regulations and practical guidance for local councils on how to hold effective remote council meetings. NALC has also responded to the government, feeding back issues relating to the regulations – this information can be found in the engaging with government section.

Tesco Bags of Help Community Project Support for your community (email from LCC)

You may be aware that Tesco have some funding available from the purchase of carrier bags in store, which can be allocated as grants to community groups. I have checked eligibility and Parish and Town Councils can apply for this funding. The fund will provide a single payment award of £500 to organisations who are supporting vulnerable groups in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This grant funding may be especially helpful to food banks and other local COVID-19 response groups, which could benefit from this funding.

Groups are being urged to apply for the grant by visiting the website [here](#).