



# Garstang Town Council

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Garstang Scout and Guide

Headquarters

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## Full Council Meeting, 12th December 2022 Minutes

Minutes of the Town Council meeting, held at Garstang library, on Monday, 12 December 2022, 7.30pm.

### **Present**

Chairman; Councillor Leech

Councillors present: Allan, Atkinson, Dyer, Halford, Leech, Mitchell, Pearson, Sewart and Webster.

Also present: Town Clerk, Edwina Parry, Wyre Councillor Dulcie Atkins and PC Sanderson.

### **116(2022-23) Apologies for absence**

Councillor Brooks.

Wyre Councillor Robert Atkins and County Councillor Shaun Turner.

### **117(2022-23) Declaration of Interests and Dispensations**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **118(2022-23) Public participation**

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

PC Sanderson provided an update to the Town Council. Recently there had been a joint initiative with the licensing team at Wyre Council, whereby they visited the public houses in Garstang, accompanied by the police 'drug' dogs.

Wyre Councillor Dulcie Atkins spoke about the recent Planning Committee she had attended.

The meeting was reconvened.

### **119(2022-23) Announcements**

- i) The Mayor wished everyone a Happy Christmas and thanked Councillors for their hard work during the year.
- ii) The Locum Clerk's temporary contract had finished and the Town Clerk was back at work, working her regular hours.
- iii) The Mayor spoke about the 'Warm spaces' venues in Garstang and asked Councillors to publicise them.

- iv) Further to the member of the public attending November's Council meeting, the gullies had been cleaned, outside her business premise, the next day.
- v) The Mayor congratulated the organisers of the Christmas lights switch on, Victorian evenings and the Santa Dash. They had been great community events in Garstang.

**120(2022-23) Minutes of the last meeting**

Councillors were asked to approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2022.

**Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November were confirmed and signed as a true record.

**121(2022-23) 2023/24 Precept and budget figures, Councillor Atkinson and RFO**

Full Council were asked to refer to the [Finance Committee minutes](#) (15 November 2022). Councillors were asked to comment on the recommendation from the Finance Committee.

Councillor Atkinson, Chair of the Finance Committee, briefed the Council as follows:

The draft precept that is proposed for Full Council to comment on, based on the draft 2023/24 budget is: £114,434.

Based on last year's Tax Base, with the above draft precept, the Band D Equivalent would be £62.26 per year.

The committee noted that this was below the average Band D Equivalent in England, and where a council of Garstang Town Council's size would normally precept, however the committee noted that this was a significant increase if the Tax Base remains unchanged.

The committee agreed that further work would be undertaken to provide a more certain forecast at the January Committee meeting, and further resolved there are no changes to EMRs currently.

Additional information from RFO; for reference, the precept for 2022/2023 is £97,033. For a Band D property this is the equivalent of £52.79

The Committee highlights the following key areas:

- Christmas Lights – an increase due to the contract being up for renewal in 2023, and the Town Council now taking responsibility for the Christmas Lights.
- Staff Costs – an increase which is based on the agreed pay deal for 2022/23 (NALC briefing shared with Councillors by Councillor Atkinson) and a forecasted 4% increase for 2023/24. Any impact as a result of the Autumn statement will be factored in for January's Committee Meeting.
- Amenities – an increase to cover expected maintenance costs in the next financial year, including the Town Council's additional responsibilities now it is solely responsible for Kepple Lane Park.
- Office Accommodation – a decrease due to the new office accommodation solution.
- General Reserves – an increase to set aside budget for future Council projects and uncertainty for the next financial year, namely:

- Garstang Christmas Lights
- Town Centre Project
- King Charles III Coronation 2023
- Election costs for May 2023 election
- Reserves for replacement of assets on council amenities
- Emergency Plan Project
- War Memorial Reserves
- Civic Costs – an increase to cover the purchases of flags and past Mayor badges.
- General inflationary increases

Finance committee will recommend a final budget at the meeting on 10 January 2023, to be approval at Full Council's meeting on 16 January 2023.

**Resolved:** Full Council endorsed the recommendation from the Finance Committee and approved the draft 2023/24 budget, with a proposed precept of £114,434. The Council acknowledged that, based on last year's Tax Base, the Band D equivalent would be £62.26 per year.

**122(2022-23) Relocation of Tourist Information Centre, Councillor Sewart**

Before discussing this agenda item, Councillor Sewart read out the following statement to Councillors.

Before we continue with this agenda item I have a brief statement to make which I ask to be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

Last night Councillor Brooks sent you an email insinuating / suggesting that I had broken the Councillors Code of Conduct regarding both this issue and that of a previous piece of work, namely ASB Guidance for Councillors.

I wish it to be known that as a result I have made contact with the Wyre Council Monitoring Officer and made a self-referral so that she can adjudicate on this matter.

I have also provided additional information and asked her to do likewise regarding the conduct of Councillor Brooks.

Needless to say it would be wrong to make further comment on this issue until she has had chance to meet with both parties involved and any other persons she may wish to speak to.

Given that the following item is for noting and for a consultation response only I have spoken to both the Chair (Mayor) and the Town Clerk who are both satisfied that it is appropriate for me to continue.

Councillors noted the implementation plan for the new tourist information offer from Wyre Council.

As part of Wyre Council's consultation request, the Town Council' views were sought in relation to the use of 2 digital information screens in the town and if supported, where they should be located..

(It was noted that the Town council were not the decision makers in this issue but will inform any decision made).

**Background information:**

The current Visit Garstang Centre will close at 4pm on Thursday 22 December.

Wyre Council have given notice to Booths on the premises but still have time in the new year to clear the premises and move over to the library. It is our intention to have a member of staff at the library or a volunteer on Tuesdays 11am – 3pm to help with any enquiries as we transition over. We have asked LCC for permission to do this from January at least until the Garstang Walking Festival in May. In January we will move any directional signage to make sure it's pointed to the library and we will be putting up signage outside the library too once we get the go ahead.

Wyre Council, as part of the overall offer, have reserved 2 digital information screens for Garstang and wish to consult with Garstang Town Council to aid their decision making on this matter. The signs have already been purchased and will be run and powered by Wyre Council, they have been received well in other areas, a picture of one in Cleveleys is included with background pictures. If not placed in Garstang they will be offered elsewhere in the Borough.

The signs will display specific tourist and community information for the Garstang area. Although, control of the signs will not be shared for various reasons, Wyre Council have offered to include suggestions from Garstang Town Council as to content which could be included such as local events, health information, road closure notices or 'know your town council' etc.

The agenda item was discussed for 40 minutes

**Resolved:** The Council noted the implementation plan for the new tourist information offer from Wyre Council.

The Council **further resolved** with the Mayor's casting vote, to support the use of the digital screens (3 Councillors were in favour, 3 Councillors were against and 3 Councillors abstained from the vote)

The Town Council were unable suggest a location, for the electronic boards, based on the following reasons:

- i) An assessment from the Planning conservation officer, was required, with regard to using digital information screens in a conservation area.
- ii) The boards should be trialled in different locations.
- iii) Unsure of how the boards will be powered.
- iv) Unsure of the content of what will be uploaded and how will it be managed.
- v) Is there a plan for maintenance of the screens?

The Council **further resolved** for Wyre Councillor Dulcie Atkins to invite Emma Lyons, Communications and Visitor Economy Manager to the next Town Council meeting on 16/01/2023 to enable Councillors to learn more about the proposal.

Wyre Councillor Dulcie Atkins left the meeting

**123(2022-23) Public Realm Agreements - Lancashire County Council (LCC) Scrutiny Task Group Survey**

The Council noted that LCC are currently supporting a scrutiny task group which is carrying out a review of all aspects of the Public Realm Agreements held between Lancashire County Council and the 12 district councils. It is considered appropriate to include a survey of all parish and town councils in the county in order to complement or extend written evidence, which should assist the task group in its compilation of findings and in due course any recommendations.

**Resolved:** The Council did not wish to make a comment on the survey.

**124(2022-23) Trimming of trees on the riverbank by the High Street car park, Councillor Webster**

Councillor Webster gave background to her proposal to seek permission to ask Wyre Council to trim the trees on the riverbank at the bottom of the High Street car park, near the bonfire circle.

**Resolved:** Councillor Webster withdrew her proposal.

**125(2022-23) Finance and Amenities Committee, Councillor Atkinson and RFO**

The Council noted that there is a vacancy on the Finance and Amenities Committee.

**Resolved:** Councillor Dyer was appointed onto the Finance and Amenities Committee.

**126(2022-23) Finance payments**

Councillors approved the following payments:

Unity bank account – cashbook 5

Reference	Description	Amount
BACS00506 & BACS00507	Payroll (figures provided by Towers + Gornall) To be paid electronically on 26/12/2022, Clerk: LC2 range SCP 19-32), 'National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of service of Local Council Clerks in England & Wales 2004'. Lengthsman: scale point SCP 1-4	£3,057.18
BACS00508	SLCC Enterprises Limited - Locum Fees - October 2022	£711.00
BACS00509	C& C Supplies – Lengthsman supplies	£6.41
BACS00510	Lengthsman – reimbursement for Lengthsman supplies	£70.62
BACS00511	Houghtons Filling station - Lengthsman supplies	£149.81
BACS00512	Garstang Library Room hire April – June 2022	£45.51

Reference	Description	Amount
BACS00513	HMRC - PAYE due for Quarter 3 (Oct – Dec)	£3,044.74
Cashbook 3 & 5 direct debits (period of transition between accounts)	The minutes will detail which cashbook the direct debits have been taken from	
Direct Debit 9/12/2022	Vodafone – mobile phone 28 Oct - 29 Nov 2022	£12.06
Direct Debit 8/12/2022	Three.co.uk - Office internet	£8.75
Direct Debit 19/12/2022	LCC Pension; November	£1,482.97
Payments made in between meeting according to Financial regulations		
BACS00503	Pilling Band for Remembrance Sunday	£225.00
BACS00505	Preston Print for Remembrance Sunday Invoice not received yet.	
BACS00504	Garstang Arts Centre for Remembrance Sunday	£300.00

Unity Corporate Multipay Card (operated with Lloyds Bank) Cashbook 6  
Approval for payment as per standing orders or minute

Reference	Description	Amount
CC029	27/12/2022 Microsoft Teams 27/11/2022 - 26/12/2022, code 4738	£64.80

**127(2022-23) Statement of Accounts at 30 November 2022 – for information**

Cashbook 1	HSBC Current account	£1,153.23
Cashbook 2	HSBC Reserve account	£33,086.44
Cashbook 3	Royal Bank of Scotland	£42,463.90
Cashbook 5	Unity Trust account	£4,880.11
Cashbook 6	Multipay Lloyds bank (28/11/2022)	£132.60
Money Market Account	3 month	£30,844.75

**128(2022-23) 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 16 January 2023 by notifying the Clerk by 8 January 2023. 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 Clerk has produced an agenda item template to assist Councillors collate their agenda item. The template can be found on Teams – Full Council.

**The Meeting Finished at: 09.05pm**

## For Information Only

### 129(2022-23) Clerk's Report

#### a) **Notification of external auditor appointment for the 2022-23 financial year for the 5 year period until 2026-27**

Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA) is the independent, sector led organisation responsible for the appointment and contract management of external auditors to smaller authorities since the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 established new arrangements for the accountability and audit of local public bodies in England. Smaller authorities are those whose gross annual income or expenditure is less than £6.5 million.

Under the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015, SAAA is responsible for appointing external auditors to all opted-in smaller authorities, for setting the terms of appointment for limited assurance reviews and for managing the contracts with the appointed audit firms.

This communication is to notify you that SAAA has appointed an external auditor to the authority for the 5-year appointing period from 2022-23 until 2026-2, following a procurement exercise to appoint auditors to each contract area from 1 April 2022.

The Town Council's appointed auditor will be PKF Littlejohn LLP.

### 130(2022-23) Councillor Report

#### a) **Soroptimist International of Garstang, Councillor Pearson**

Background - Minute 312(2021-22); May 2022

Some time ago I was tasked with looking at the Coffee pod recycling project in Garstang with the Soroptimists.

I have been in regular contact but not been able to achieve much progress. I have now been told that this project in Longridge has been pulled due to management and logistical difficulties. Consequently the project is not being pursued in Garstang.

#### b) **Remembrance Sunday, Councillor Allan**

There will be a review of the 2022 event taking place on Tuesday 13th December at 7.30pm in the Library.

The review will take feedback from the Remembrance Sunday Team members who have all been asked to gather feedback from their wider contacts. We will also consider feedback received from the community.

Representatives will attend from the AFMVBC, RBL, Church, and Town Council.

I have already received some suggestions from Councillor Brooks, Wyre Councillor D Atkins and Col Stam.

### 131(2022-23) Outside body representatives

#### a) **Fairtrade Group, Councillor Allan, Town Council representative**

Garstang Fairtrade Committee were asked if we wanted a stall during the Victorian Festival. Unfortunately we had to decline this as the charge to us would have been £70 per night and we do not have the funds to cover these

costs. It would have been a great opportunity to promote Fairtrade and we would have had a presence if the charge could have been waived.

Great Big Green Week was a big success for our small group. We ran an all-day info event in the URC Church Hall on Saturday 1st October. We had Wyre Climate Change team manning a display and demonstrating how to make plant pots from newspaper and they also made a planter for wild plant seeds that has been placed in the new Dementia Garden behind the Library. The RSPB attended with information Displays. We also had Cosy Homes Lancashire in attendance advising on energy conservation and providing info packs for residents. Garstang Deputy Mayor, Sharna Mitchell, Wyre Council Climate Lead Councillor Sir Robert Atkins and Lancashire Council Climate Lead Councillor Shaun Turner attended the event.

We will continue to run Fairtrade produce stalls at the Arts Centre on a monthly basis.

Fairtrade Fortnight 2023 will run from 27th February to 12th March. During this we hope to have a promotional stall in the High Street. We will be getting involved with our schools to provide information on Fairtrade and the challenges of Climate Change.

We recognise the need to recruit new members and our focus will be on encouraging new people to get involved with the group.

**b) Greater Garstang Partnership Board Update December 2022, Councillor Allan**

Discussions at November's Board meeting focussed on;

**UK Shared Prosperity Fund approval progress.**

We were advised that 5 projects were being put forward for Garstang. All projects are contained in the approved Regeneration Framework;

- 1) Town Centre Study
- 2) Sports and Social Club Developments
- 3) Carers Group
- 4) Future Aspirations
- 5) Garstang Glow – an innovative lighting event

Wyre advised that Garstang project funding figures had been put forward for 5 projects these being Town Centre Review, Sports and Social Club, Carers Group, Future Aspirations and Garstang Glow.

The amounts came to a total of approximately £800K which equates to about 25% of the available monies. (there are some significant Wyre overheads) I have attached a Wyre document giving more details on the borough wide proposed projects and funding allocations.

As soon as I have any project funding updates I will circulate them. Until the funding amounts have been signed off these should be kept as Confidential as they could change significantly and I wouldn't want expectations to be raised inappropriately.

Hopefully we may get more detailed info at the next Board meeting



### **Visitor Economy – Emma Lyons**

Emma provided an update on the provision of two digital sign boards to be located in Garstang. Councillor Sewart has been in discussions with her about the project. I have asked that Councillor Dyer is consulted about locations for these boards. I asked how the Boards could be updated or refreshed and was told that this would be done by her department. We would not be able to update the content ourselves. They will be dealing with these for all 4 main centres in Wyre. I have attached a document with an example of the Boards.

They are introducing online ticketing for locations around Wyre using something she called Ticket Tailor.

She mentioned the Heritage Trail which was being developed based on documents produced some years ago in Garstang. This is a phone based App. She said that Chris Wyatt was working with the Victorian Festival committee They are hoping to make more use of Cherestanc Square during the walking festival.

### **132(2022-23) Mayor's engagements**

28th November	Christmas Lights switch on
5th and 6th December	Victorian Evening
14th December	Rotary Christmas Meal