



# Garstang Town Council

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Garstang

PR3 1HB

## Finance Committee Meeting, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021 Minutes

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting, held at Garstang Free Methodist Church, on 13 July 2021, 7.30pm

### **Present**

Chairman: Cllr Halford

Councillors Present: Allan, Atkinson, Halford, Mitchell, Pearson, Ryder

Also Present: Town Clerk/RFO Edwina Parry.

### **1(2021-22) Appointment of Chairman and Deputy Chairman**

Councillors were asked to appoint a Chairman and deputy Chairman for the new Civic Year.

Councillor Atkinson was appointed Chairman. The deputy Chairman was deferred until October's meeting.

The Committee thanked Councillor Halford for being Chairman, since the Finance Committee was formed in 2008, and for his time and contributions over the years.

### **2(2021-22) Apologies for Absence**

No apologies had been received

Councillors Mitchell and Pearson were not present.

Retrospective apologies were received after the meeting from Councillors Mitchell and Pearson.

### **3(2021-22) Declaration of Interests and Dispensations**

12(2021-22), Councillor Atkinson declared an 'other interest'. He is the Town Councillor representative on Kepple Lane Park Trust.

### **4(2021-22) Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

### **5(2021-22) Receipts and payments account year end 2021/22 (Q1)**

The Committee were asked to consider and approve the following:

- a) Bank reconciliation year ending 30 June 2021 for the 4 cashbooks (copies of bank statements have been included).

**Resolved:** The bank reconciliations for the 4 cash books were approved.

The Committee approved that electronic statements should be detailed on file in preference to hard copy statements and the dates detailed are the first day to the last day of the month. The Committee **further resolved** to process cashbook 4 from telephone banking account to

internet account. In the short term a hand written reconciliation on the bank statement was acceptable.

- b) Summary receipts & payments to 30 June 2021.  
Councillor Allan reported that Receipts and Payments Summary detailed £137,401.08. These cumulative funds are represented by £137,916.91. The difference was attributed to the Lengthsman's mower. Councillor Atkinson referred to Journal 69; minute reference 286 (2020-21)  
Resolved: That a journal transfer be carried out at the beginning of the financial year, April 2021, to transfer monies from code 4702 Lengthsman's Assets maintain/rep to EMR 325 reserve contingency.  
**Resolved:** The RFO was asked to resolve this issue with Rialtas. Councillor Atkinson reported that a call would be arranged with Rialtas as there were explanations required about current year fund, general reserves and transfers, trial balance and how they are accounted for.
- c) Detailed receipts & payments budget report (1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021). Councillors will see that budget headings have been reviewed by Councillor Atkinson and the RFO and amended, as per minute 40(2020-21).  
Variances were discussed and how they were detailed. The difference in variances were picked up on the monthly verification sheets; should the variance be looked at month by month or by quarter? The external audit requires variances of more than 15% (except variances of less than £200); are required to be explained.  
**Resolved:** Councillor Atkinson and RFO to review how the figures are presented.
- d) List of receipts & payments from the 4 cashbooks (1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021)  
**Resolved:** The cashbooks were approved.

### **Bank verifications**

The Committee noted, as per financial regulation 2.2, Councillor Atkinson had verified the accounts for Q1 April to June 2021.

The Committee noted minute 35(2020-21), 27/04/2021

*Resolved: Councillor Atkinson offered to assist. He would carry out April's verification and alternate with Councillor Mitchell going forwards.*

And that Councillor Mitchell was unable to carry out the verification of accounts.

### *Financial Regulations 2.2 detail*

*On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman [or a cheque signatory] shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion*

*be reported in the first instance to the Finance Committee, if there are any exceptions, these are to be reported to the council.*

**Resolved:** The Committee agreed to suspend temporarily 2.2 Financial Regulations (up to a period of 3 months) and that Councillor Atkinson continues to carry out the bank reconciliations. The RFO was asked to make an enquiry with Unity bank about opening a new bank account.

**6(2021-22) Internal Audit (year end 31/03/2021)**

As part of the AGAR external audit checklist the Town Council needs to have taken 'appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit'. To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the authority needs to have considered all matters brought to its attention by its external auditor and internal audit and taken corrective action as appropriate.

In readiness for the Finance Committee meeting, Councillors had considered the detailed Internal Audit report and reported their comments to the RFO. Members comments had been collated and circulated. The Committee were asked to recommend any action to be taken by Full Council.

**Resolved:** The Committee made comments to the comments raised by the Internal Auditor. The recommendations would be taken to the Full Council on 16 August 2021 for approval.

**7(2021-22) Risk Register, quarterly review**

The Committee considered the risk register and reviewed points

- a) Point 2: All online bank accounts
- b) Point 7: Election costs
- c) Point 18: Confidentiality
- d) Point 20: RFO has amended
- e) Point 23: risk assessments are outstanding

**Resolved:** The Committee noted:

- a) Point 2: All online bank accounts – The review is to make an enquiry with Unity bank account.
- b) Point 7: Election costs – Considered as part of Reserves Policy review, Impact score to be changed to 2.
- c) Point 18: Confidentiality – Financial regulations refer 6.11. The Clerk's working arrangements were currently under review. As an interim measure a copy of passwords to be given to the Mayor.
- d) Point 20: Committee approved the amendment.
- e) Point 23: risk assessments are outstanding. This is the highest priority of the Committee. The RFO has set aside Wednesday's for Finance, however in practice, the RFO/Clerk can be assigned other tasks, which take her away from Finance. The Mayor and Chair of Finance said that Wednesday's would be monitored.

The Committee **further resolved** that once the risk assessments had been completed, the Chair will review the fall back actions of the risk register and bring back to October's meeting.

**8(2021-22) Asset Register, quarterly review**

Minute 38(2020-21), 27/04/21 refers

Resolved: The Committee approved the register (V2.0, 31/03/2021). The Committee further resolved, that the RFO make enquiries about the Asset Inventory System from Rialtas.

The RFO had made enquiries with Rialtas software and circulated the information to the Committee. Considering the costs of the Asset Register software, Councillor Atkinson offered to set up a new spreadsheet for the Asset Register, which the Chair agreed to.

**Resolved:** Councillors approved the new version of the Asset Register. Any missing figures will be populated by the RFO by 31 July 2021. Councillors noted that the summary sheet will be added to the website in PDF form.

**9(2021-22) Grant Awarding Policy**

Minute 019(2020-21), 13/10/2020 refers

At the meeting on 12 January 2021, review Financial regulations point 10. Orders for Work, Goods and Services and Grant awarding 'policy.

The RFO had circulated the Grant Awarding Policy for Councillors to review.

**Resolved:** Point 9 to be deleted. The sentence ' Applications may be submitted at any time, however they will only be considered twice a year by the Town Council. (June & February)' to be deleted. A breakdown of costs from other grant providers, to be included. The grants policy to apply to all external donations/contributions.

The final version was delegated to the RFO and verified by the Chair. The policy to be taken to Full Council in August 2021.

**10(2021-22) Reserves policy**

Minute 26(2020-21), 12/01/21 refers

Resolved: That the Reserves policy be delegated to the RFO to amend, (incorporating the by election figure from Wyre Council). The RFO would revise policy to the Finance Committee by email, incorporate their comments and then put forward for approval to Full Council on 15 February 2021.

The RFO had circulated a draft Reserves policy, alongside the SLCC template. The current expected cost for any by-election is £8163.64 Ref Wyre council 18/06/2021.

The Committee were asked to review and recommend a draft policy for Full Council to approve.

**Resolved:** The estimated by-election costs of £8163.64 was noted. If a by election were to be called, the costs would be met from the EMR 325 Reserves Contingency. The Council would commit to replenish the EMR 325 Reserves Contingency over a 4 year period following the election. The EMR 325 Reserves Contingency to cover 3 to 5 months' expenditure.

The final version was delegated to the RFO and verified by the Chair. The policy to be taken to Full Council in August 2021.

**11(2021-22) Moss Lane Park Report, Councillor Atkinson**

Minute 061(2019-20) refers

The Committee further resolved that a breakdown of figures for Moss Lane would be provided for the next meeting of the Full Council.

Councillors were asked to consider the report prepared by Councillor Atkinson.

**Resolved:** The Committee agreed that the report should be taken to Full Council in August 2021 for information. The Committee notes that there is remedial works to be carried out at the Park and that the costs will be taken from Moss Lane EMR.

**Standing item: outstanding resolutions**

**12(2021-22) Tree surveys**

Reference 233(2019-20) Tree Surveys- Kepple Lane Park (KLP) and Moss Lane Play (MLP) area.

Tree surveys are required for Kepple Lane Park and Moss Lane Play area.

The Finance Committee (who met on 13/07/2021) recommend to Full Council that the surveys are carried out by Treestyle Consultancy, who previously carried out the surveys. The cost for Kepple Lane Park is £315 (to be conducted now - July/August 2021) and the cost for Moss Lane Park is £285 (to be conducted December 2021), making a total of £600. This expenditure will be met from the Amenities budget code 4705, EMR 324 (30/06/2021 total £750). The Finance Committee are recommending that 10.3 Financial regulations is suspended, as this survey is being conducted by a specialist services (Financial regulations 11.1ii).

**Resolved:** The recommendation to Council is that tree surveys are carried out by Treestyle Consultancy for Kepple Lane Park and Moss Lane Play area at a cost of £600 from the Amenities budget code 4705, EMR 324. The Chair pointed out that there would be an overspend on this code as the stone at 'Norah's Garden' had now been complete (minute 33(2019-20). This recommendation to be taken to July's Full Council meeting 19/07/2021.

**13(2021-22) New bank signatories for the Royal Bank of Scotland account**

**Resolved:** The RFO to process Councillor Pearson's documentation and depending on the outcome of discussions with Unity Bank, start the processing of Councillor Atkinson's details.

**14(2021-22) Risk assessments**

Minute 29(2020-21), 12/01/2021 refers

Point 23: Working practices – That the RFO completes the risk assessment review in February/March 2021.

The RFO had compiled a list on 25 January 2021 (circulated). The RFO is seeking support to prioritise the assessments in her tasks and duties.

**Resolved:** As per minute 7(2021-22)

e) Point 23: risk assessments are outstanding. This is the highest priority of the Committee. The RFO has set aside Wednesday's for Finance, however in practice, the RFO/Clerk can be assigned other tasks, which take her away from Finance. The Mayor and Chair of Finance said that Wednesday's would be monitored.

**15(2021-22) 3 year budget**

**Resolved:** The 3 year budget would be planned for 2022-2023.

**16(2021-22) War Memorial Quotation**

Minute 30(2020-21), 12/01/2021 Asset Register

Councillors considered the asset register (V1.19).

Resolved: Item 7 a replacement value needs to be sought by the RFO. It was agreed that the stone mason be approached, who is working with Councillor Webster, or a local builder for a value.

**Resolved:** Councillors Allan and Atkinson to address.

**17(2021-22) Date of next meeting**

12 October 2021

**The Meeting Finished at: 9.33pm**