



# Garstang Town Council

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Garstang Scout and  
Guide Headquarters  
Kepple Lane  
Garstang  
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## Finance Committee Meeting, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 Minutes

Minutes of the Finance Committee held at Garstang Library, on Tuesday, 26 April 2022 at 7.30pm.

### Present

Chairman: Councillor Atkinson

Councillors present: Atkinson, Allan, Halford, Mitchell and Pearson.

Also present: Town Clerk/RFO Edwina Parry

### 59(2021-22) Apologies for Absence

No apologies

Councillor Lees was not present

### 60(2021-22) Declaration of Interests and Dispensations

Councillor Pearson declared an 'other interest.' He is the Town Councillor representative on Kepple Lane Park Trust and Chair of the Garstang Scouts and Guides Headquarters.

### 61(2021-22) Public Participation

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

### 62(2021-22) Minutes of Finance Committee meeting, 11 January 2022

The Committee noted the advice from the Clerk that Committee meeting minutes should be approved at the next Committee meeting and not at the next Full Council meeting.

A copy of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 11 January 2022 had been circulated.

**Resolved:** The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 11 January 2022 were confirmed and signed electronically as a true record.

### 63(2021-22) Terms of Reference, RFO

To ensure that the Committee was aware of the matters delegated to the Committee, to make decisions on behalf of the Council, the [Committee Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation](#) had been circulated for information.

### 64(2021-22) Receipts and payments account year end 2021/22 (Q4), RFO

The Committee are asked to consider and approve the following (circulated in verification bank reconciliation file on Teams):

- a) Bank reconciliation year ending 31 March 2022 for the 5 cashbooks (copies of bank statements have been included).  
**Resolved:** The bank reconciliations for the 5 cash books were approved.
- b) Summary receipts & payments to 31 March 2022.  
**Resolved:** The summary receipts & payments report (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022) was approved.
- c) Detailed receipts & payments budget report (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022)  
**Resolved:** The receipts/payments by budget report was approved.
- d) List of receipts & payments from the 5 cashbooks (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022)  
**Resolved:** The list of receipts and payments from the 5 cashbooks (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022) were approved.

The Committee noted that January and Februarys accounts had been verified by Councillor Pearson (04/04/2022), and only March's accounts remain unverified.

**65(2021-22) Risk Register, quarterly review, RFO**

Councillors considered the attached risk register (V2.0) and make any comments/updates on the register.

The Committee noted

- a) Point 1: Keep to new FSCS protection, keep control of numerous accounts Review monthly control, annually. Review annually at Finance Committee in April.

The RFO reported that after receiving the precept monies a transfer was undertaken between RBS cashbook 3 to Unity Trust bank account (cashbook 4) witnessed by the Chair of Finance, Councillor Atkinson. HSBC, Royal bank of Scotland and Unity Trust bank are within the FSCS protection.

- b) Point 20: The Council's action plan is to be reviewed by Chair of Personnel, Councillor Mitchell which will then be taken to Full Council for approval.

- c) Point 23 Annual risk assessments still outstanding. Reviewed with Councillor Mitchell, Chair Personnel committee (6/4/2022) the target is to complete at least 1, per full working week. Will be monitored at fortnightly 'catch up' with Councillor Mitchell and risk assessment content will be reviewed with Councillor Atkinson. Councillor Mitchell added that the risk assessments that impacted staff were to be addressed first.

**Resolved:**

- a) The Committee approved that point 1 had been addressed.
- b) The Committee would await the Full agenda item for the action plan (point 20)
- c) Point 23 was noted.
- d) Point 8 Best value accountability, take a review for value for money e.g. forthcoming Christmas lights project. Review 2022-23 financial year
- e) Point 11 in the control column include inspections for Moss Lane Park.
- f) Point 18 delete iDrive from the control column. RFO to provide a control sheet for quarterly updates for passwords, which detail a 'nil return' if required.

- g) Point 19 –The Committee discussed the risk of some Councillors using their personal email account for council business and that this was considered as a risk to the council. The Committee increased ‘highly likely’ to 3 and the impact stayed the same at 2 moderate, increasing the risk level to a ‘red’ 6. Report the change to Full Council ‘for information.’
- h) A new point 9 was approved and inserted ‘Adherence to financial regulations’. This was to address the risk to the Council of Councillors placing orders.

**66(2021-22) Asset Register year end March 2022, RFO**

Councillors considered the circulated end of year asset register. There have been no additions to the register in Q4 (January to March 2022).

**Resolved:** To review all assets pertaining to Kepple Lane Park  
Item 16 original value needs copying over into insurance column  
Item 57 and 58, RFO was asked to put in the number of shields  
RFO to add Moss Lane Park, 2 picnic tables gifted by C&S supplies.  
With these amendments, the Asset Register was approved.

**67(2021-22) The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2021/22, RFO**

The Committee noted that the Annual Governance and Accountability is made up of three parts pages 3 to 6:

- a) The Annual Internal Audit Report must be completed by the authority’s internal auditor. The Council’s internal auditor for year end 2022 is Naomi Goddard, Town Parish Audit who will undertake the internal audit the week commencing 23 May 2022. She has communicated that the audit takes place over a few days with sending information back and forth, but in relation to your sign off meeting it is worth allowing an additional week in case of any problems.  
The authority should receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- b) Sections 1 and 2 are to be completed and approved by the authority (20 June 2022).
- c) Section 3 is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.

**Resolved:** The Finance Committee considered draft section 2, printed from the accounts package (circulated in bank verifications) and agreed to recommend to Full Council meeting on 20 June 2022, that it is approved.

**68(2021-22) Council Amenities and Assets Annual Checks, Councillor Atkinson**

**Resolved:** That going forward Councillors should carry out annual checks/workshops of the Councils amenities and assets to understand any issues and work required.

For 2022/23 it is proposed that Councillors will initially hold informal reviews arranged by Councillor Atkinson as Chair of Finance and Amenities, these shall include: Kepple Lane Park, Moss Lane Park, The Pat Seed Garden and the War Memorial. These will be informal discussions only to consider potential ideas and plans in an informal, onsite session/walkaround.

Councillor Atkinson will arrange a discussion with the Clerk and Lengthsman to gain the Lengthsman's valuable insight into any works he believes should be undertaken on the amenities the Lengthsman supports the maintenance of. Inspection of the Councils Allotments will be preliminarily carried out by the Clerk in consultation Councillor Atkinson.

This is an initial scheme for the first year, which can be reviewed and changed for future years depending on the benefit yielded.

**69(2021-22) Kepple Lane Park, Councillor Atkinson and RFO**

The Clerk/RFO and Councillor Atkinson have contacted Wyre Council's Council Legal Team regarding notifying HM Land Registry of the surrender of the lease for Kepple Lane Park.

We had already found the following information which guided us to contact Wyre Council for further advice.

"Rule 79 of the Land Registration Rules 2003 provides the statutory framework for closure and cancellation. This states that "an application to record in the register the determination of a registered estate must be accompanied by evidence to satisfy the registrar that the estate has determined;" and that if the registrar is so satisfied, they "must" close the registered title and cancel any notice in any other registered title relating to that estate. Closure of a registered leasehold title will automatically lead to the [cancellation of any notice of the lease](#) in any other registered title.

Wyre Council Legal Team responded that their practising certificates do not allow them to give out external legal advice (only advice within Wyre Council) therefore Wyre Council's legal team was unable to provide us with any legal advice on the matter. However, to assist though they detailed [the relevant land registry practice guide](#)

**Resolved:** Upon initial examination of the guide provided, if the Clerk/RFO in consultation with the Chair of Finance does not believe the Council has the expertise within the Council to identify what needs to be undertaken, or undertake this task that external legal advice be taken, and quotes sought for undertaking the task.

The Committee **further resolved** that authority should be delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Finance and Amenities to review any outstanding issues or actions as a result of the lease being surrendered, including but not limited to the handover of keys (the only keys to be returned to Garstang Town Council are those relating to Kepple Lane Park), handover of assets (subject to Full Council approval) and documentation.

**70(2021-22) Amendments to Financial Regulations, Councillor Atkinson and RFO**  
**Passwords**

6.11. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be retained in a fireproof and lockable cabinet in the Town Council office, at Garstang Police Station. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances,

the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.

**Resolved:** That the regulations are changed to reflect that the Town Council no longer has an office at the Police station and that the passwords are held by the Mayor.

**71(2021-22) Payments, Councillor Atkinson and RFO**

The Chair of Finance proposed that the Finance Committee recommends the following changes to financial regulations to Full Council.

This is due to the additional responsibilities the Town Council has taken on (namely Kepple Lane Park) and the positive way in which the Council was able to operate during the covid-19 pandemic with delegation of authority.

Current regulations:

4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget.

This authority is to be determined by:

- the council for all items over £500;
- the Clerk, in conjunction with Mayor of Council and Deputy Mayor, for any items between £251 and £500
- The clerk for items up to £250.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the Mayor & Deputy Mayor. Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

Proposed regulations:

4.1. Expenditure on items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget and earmarked reserves, ordinarily by Full Council.

However contingency authority is delegated as follows:

- I. the Clerk, in conjunction with Mayor of Council, Deputy Mayor and Chair of Finance, with Full Councils views sought electronically, for any items between £501 and £2500 (net), where the order/payment is required before the next Council meeting.
- II. the Clerk, in conjunction with Mayor of Council and Deputy Mayor, for any items between £251 and £500 (net).
- III. The clerk for items up to £250 (net).

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the Mayor & Deputy Mayor. Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

**Resolved:** The Finance Committee recommended the above changes to be taken to Full Council for approval with point II amended to detail.

II. the Clerk, in conjunction with Mayor of Council and Councillor bank signatory, for any items between £251 and £500 (net).

**72(2021-22) Bank Verifications Councillor Atkinson**

Proposal going forward for the Financial Year of 2022/23 onwards:

That the bank verifications should take place on a quarterly basis, with the total values from the third month of the quarter to be used for the verification. Spot checks will be undertaken on payments to check that they have been accounted for correctly within the Councils accounting system, to undertake this a sample of 10% to 20% of payments and receipts will be used.

Verifications will no longer check that payments and receipts align to the Councils minutes.

The rationale behind why the Council is able to move to this model is because the Council now used Unity Bank, which has secondary and tertiary approval requirements for payments to be transacted.

Quarter 2 and Quarter 4 verifications will be undertaken by the Chair of Finance. Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 will be undertaken by another Finance Committee Member.

Financial Regulations will need to be updated as follows.

**Current Regulations**

2.2. 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 Page 5 of 19 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.

**Proposed Regulations**

2.2. Once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member of the Finance and Amenities Committee 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 approved the proposed regulation and **further resolved** the Revised verification sheet as circulated on Teams. Councillor Pearson will undertake quarter 1 and Quarter 3 verifications.

**73(2021-22) Approval of Planned Expenditure on Agendas, Councillor Atkinson**

Procedures of the Council has been those proposals for approving planned expenditure would be detailed in an Agenda to Full Council, recent examples have been Past Mayors Badges, Entry of Kepple Lane Park Trust to North West in Bloom, Desk Chair, Airforce Flowerbed. To streamline the agenda and

also make it easier for Councillors who are approving payments in Unity a new method is as follows:

**Resolved:** That when planned expenditure is put to Council, if this is within the scope of an agreed budget code or EMR this shouldn't be listed as a separate agenda item but instead included within the payment agenda item section for Councillors to approve collectively. The table shall include the value, reason and budget/EMR code.

This shall not apply to planned expenditure which exceeds the budgeted amount, is not within the scope of an approved budget code/EMR or grant applications.

**74(2021-22) Key Holders Register, Councillor Atkinson**

**Resolved:** That authority be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of Finance and Amenities to develop a key holders register, and liaise with any tenants regarding this.

**Standing item: outstanding resolutions**

**75(2021-22) New bank signatories for the Royal Bank of Scotland account**

The RFO has to process Councillor Pearson's documentation and start the process with Councillor Atkinson.

**Resolved:** The Committee agreed that this resolution is now superseded by the opening of Unity Trust Bank.

**76(2021-22) Variances – for decision**

Minute 5(2021-22), 13/7/2021 refers Variances were discussed and how they were detailed.

**Resolved:** Councillor Atkinson and RFO to review how the figures are presented.

**Resolved:** The Committee agreed that this minute has been superseded by consideration of other accounting systems. A report will be brought back to Committee

**77(2021-22) Tree Surveys, Councillor Atkinson – For information**

To note that the tree surveys have been received for Moss Lane Park and Kepple Lane Park, and the Chair, Deputy and Clerk will review and bring forward a proposal for action required to be completed post nesting season. Reports are circulated on file.

**78(2021-22) Moss Lane Park, Councillor Atkinson – For information**

Councillor Atkinson has sought an update from the project team on the progression with the meeting with Kompan.

**79(2021-22) Unity bank – for information**

The Unity bank is now open.

The RFO will now close cashbooks 1 and 2 (HSBC current and deposit account) and transfer the monies into cashbook 3 (Royal Bank of Scotland

current account and the newly opened Unity bank, taking into account the £85,000 limit of Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).

**80(2021-22) Date of next meeting**

Meeting dates for the Civic year 2022-23 to be determined at the Annual Town Council.

**The Meeting Finished at: 08.37pm**