



Garstang Town Council

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Finance Committee Meeting, 11th January 2023 Minutes

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting, held on 11 January 2023, 7.30pm.

Present

Chairman: Councillor Atkinson

Councillors Present: Allan, Atkinson, Halford and Pearson,

Also present: Town Clerk/RFO Edwina Parry

30(2022-23) Apologies for Absence

Councillors Dyer and Mitchell

31(2022-23) Declaration of Interests and Dispensations

No declarations of interest were received.

32(2022-23) Public Participation

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

33(2022-23) Minutes of Finance Committee meeting, 15 November 2022

A copy of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 15 November 2022 had been circulated.

Resolved: The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 15 November 2022 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

34(2022-23) Receipts and payments account year end 2022/23 (Q2 and Q3)

The Committee were asked to consider and approve the following:

- a) Bank reconciliation month ending 31 December 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 December 2022.

Resolved: The summary receipts & payments report (1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022) was approved.

- c) Detailed receipts & payments budget report (1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022)

Resolved: The receipts/payments by budget report (1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022) was approved. The Committee **further resolved** for the RFO to follow up the LCC grant payment; budget code 1702

- d) List of receipts & payments from the 5 cashbooks (1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022). The RFO, has not entered all credit card purchases

onto the new cashbook 6). As part of the risk management, the RFO would ask Councillors to view the payments as detailed on the bank statement detailed on the bank verifications.

Resolved: The list of receipts and payments from the 5 cashbooks 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022) were approved.

The committee noted that Q4 accounts, along with the 2022/2023 end of year accounts would be considered on 18/4/2023.

35(2022-23) Nationwide saving account, RFO

The RFO reported that the Nationwide account (Business 95 Day Saver Issue 9 - Monthly interest account) is open. Cashbooks 1 and 2 (HSBC current and deposit account) and the Money Market 3 month investment have been closed. The Committee were asked to provide a figure to invest into the Nationwide savings account. The Committee noted that the account had to start with at least £5,000 (up to £10 million, maximum), and make minimum withdrawals of £500. The interest rate is 2.50%. The Money Market 3 month investment closed with a balance of £30,844.

Resolved: The Committee resolved to transfer £30,844 into the Nationwide account.

36(2022-23) Risk Register, quarterly review, RFO

The Chair reported that the risk assessment had not been amended. The Chair and RFO plan to meet before the end of February to complete the outstanding actions, at which point the intention is to review the Risk Assessment in detail, including its format and topicality.

Resolved: The Committee noted that the risk register had not been amended. The Committee also noted that the Chair and RFO plan to meet before the end of February to complete the outstanding actions, at which point the intention is to review the Risk Assessment in detail, including its format and topicality. The Committee **further resolved** that a new risk be added 'business continuity management' reflecting the risk of staff absence. The Committee acknowledged that this overlapped with the Personnel committee.

37(2022-23) Asset Register 31 December 2022, RFO

The Chair reported that the asset register had not been amended. The Chair and RFO plan to meet before the end of February to complete the outstanding actions, at which point the intention is to review the Asset Register, to update any outstanding information.

The Chair reported that he had arranged to meet with the former Kepple Lane Park Trust members, on 14/01/2023, regarding the remaining assets on the park not included on the Town Councils Asset Register, a recommendation will then be brought forward.

Resolved: The Committee noted that the asset register had not been amended. The Committee also noted that the Chair and RFO plan to meet before the end of February to complete the outstanding actions, at which point the intention is to review the Asset Register, to update any outstanding information.

Councillor Pearson offered to attend the meeting on 14/01/2023, with the Chair and the former Kepple Lane Park Trust members.
The 'bog garden' was to be identified on the Park. The RFO offered to assist by looking at archive paperwork.

38(2022-23) Budget 2023/24

The Committee noted that at the Town Council meeting on 12/12/2022, the following was resolved, Minute 121(2022-23):

2023/24 Precept and budget figures, Councillor Atkinson and RFO

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.

The following actions had been agreed to be undertaken for the January Committee meeting. The Chair reported the updates.

- i) RFO and Chair of Finance – include actual costs to date.
The Committee noted that these were yet to be included in the budget sheet.
- ii) RFO – report on the grants received to date from LCC.
The Committee noted that the deadline for the grant application for the Public right of Way and Biodiversity grants had not been met (submitted a week after the deadline date). The Clerk had actioned the oversight with County Councillor Turner back in August and agreed to follow up again.
- iii) Chair of Personnel – Confirm working from home allowance resolution.
The Committee noted the Personnel Committee's draft minute 19b) 11/5/22.
Domestic Expenses
Resolved: The Committee approved that the flat-rate of £6 per week is paid on a monthly basis at £26 per month, back-dated to the last payment made. The Committee further resolved that Councillor Mitchell would bring back information on how you can calculate the breakdown of costs from working from home.
- iv) Councillor Pearson and Councillor Allan – Confirm quotes for works to the War Memorial.
Councillor Pearson and Councillor Allan reported that communications were ongoing for quotations. The Chair asked the RFO to assist.
- v) Councillor Allan – to confirm the governance status of the GGPB.
The Committee did not address point v.

Since the resolution of Full Council, cited above, the Town Council has received the Tax Base from Wyre Council.

The Tax Base for 2023/24 is 1,883.41, and with the current draft precept level provided to Full Council of £114,434, this equates to a Band D Equivalent of £60.76. This currently results in a Band D increase of £7.97, which equates to 15.1% increase.

The Committee considered the budget alongside the 2023/24 Tax base.

The budget was amended at code 1870 'Interest received' from £6.00 to £250.00.

Resolved: The Committee resolved the following:

- a) That Full Council approve the Draft V0.1 Budget 2023/24 (as circulated with the amendment at code 1870 'Interest received' from £6.00 to £250.00.)
- b) That Full Council approve a precept for 2023/24 of £114,188. This is a Band D equivalent of £60.63 (an increase of £7.84 [equates to 14.85%] in comparison to last year's Band D equivalent).
- c) The Committee did not make any changes to Earmarked or General Reserves
- d) The Committee agreed that a press statement be prepared for the Green Focus magazine (February and March editions) to communicate to the public the details and reasoning behind the budget and precept figures. The statement to be delegated to the RFO in consultation with Chair of Finance, Mayor and Councillor Mitchell.
- e) That the Committee approve a plan for undertaking a 3-year budget, as per Financial Regulations 3.1 at their next meeting (18/4/2023).

39(2022-23) Internal Audit year end 31 March 2023, RFO and Councillor Atkinson

The Chair reported that 3 quotes had been sought for the internal audit for year-end 2023.

The Committee were asked to appoint a supplier.

Resolved: The Committee appointed Supplier C to be the internal auditor for year-end 2023. Before confirming the appointment, the RFO was asked to check that 2 visits/ year were not required (from month six of the financial year and a year-end audit to review the accounting statements as detailed by supplier A).

40(2022-23) Lancashire County Pension Fund - Funding Strategy Statement Consultation

The Committee noted that the 2022 valuation of the Lancashire County Pension Fund (LCPF) is progressing and that the Council's views were sought on the revised Funding Strategy Statement (FSS). The circulated email provided further detail on the FSS and how best to respond to this consultation.

Resolved: The Committee tasked the RFO to write and thank Lancashire County Pension Fund for the opportunity to respond to the consultation. No further comment was made.

41(2022-23) Kepple Lane Park Annual Maintenance 2023, Councillor Atkinson

The Chair reported that historically, under the previous arrangement when Kepple Lane Park Trust managed Kepple Lane Park (under the lease which has now been terminated), the Town Council would work with the Trust on approving and financing the annual maintenance to take place in February/March.

Now the Town Council has full responsibility for the parks maintenance it needs to determine a suitable maintenance solution for 2023.

In the interests of time, and continuity in the short term, Councillor Atkinson has obtained a quotation for the annual maintenance from the same supplier that

has undertaken it for the previous years. The quotation has been circulated with the specification they have provided for the works.

For next year's (2024) annual maintenance, the committee will have had chance to develop a long-term plan for the maintenance of the park, and will then have a blueprint/specification to go out to tender.

Committee was asked to consider if they wished to approve the quotation of £3,846 (net) from the supplier.

Resolved: The Finance Committee's recommendation to Full Council was for Full Council to approve the quotation of £3,846 (net), Vat £769.20, Total (inc Vat) £4,615.20, from the supplier for the annual maintenance at Kepple Lane Park.

The Committee **further resolved** that to endorse the recommendation, Full Council will need to suspend financial regulations 10.3, on the basis that the supplier has been utilised by the council on numerous occasions, and has always undertaken quality work.

Furthermore, the Committee recommended that Full Council accept the quotation's terms and noted that the Contractor shall invoice the Client for

- i) 33% of the contract price prior to commencement of works
- ii) with another 33% Payable on commencement
- iii) and the remaining 34% being payable (plus VAT where applicable) upon completion of the work. Unless otherwise stated in the Quotation or unless otherwise agreed by the parties, invoices shall be payable immediately upon receipt. This will be done in line with Financial Regulations 12.2.

42(2022-23) Amenities

The Committee noted the outstanding issues with council amenities outlined in the 2 tables; Kepple Lane Park and Moss Lane Park.

Kepple Lane Park

Issue	Update and Proposal
Trim Trail Gym Instruction Sign has been damaged.	<p>Wyre Council have the sign and are looking at ways for this to be fixed, although have said it doesn't seem as straightforward as it seems.</p> <p><u>Councillor Atkinson to liaise with Wyre and will either come back to Committee or use financial regulations 4.1 if required.</u></p>
The chain and handle on one of the spinner arms has come off.	<p>Wyre have no other concerns regarding this equipment.</p> <p>Wyre are getting the costs for the replacement part and will let the Town Council know once they have received these.</p> <p><u>Councillor Atkinson to liaise with Wyre and will either come back to Committee or use Financial regulations 4.1 if required.</u></p>

<p>The musical panel in the children's play area is broken.</p>	<p>The supplier of the panel does not have any replacement parts for this item.</p> <p>Some time ago Wyre enquired about replacement and the cost was £1500, albeit the cost has likely increased since that quote.</p> <p><u>Councillor Atkinson looks at alternative solutions/replacement items and reports back to Committee with a proposal.</u></p>
<p>Matting under the spinner is in a poor condition.</p>	<p>Some time ago there was discussion with Wyre Council around replacing the grass and matting under the spinner.</p> <p>Wyre advise that the grass matting surface in place is not suitable for this type of equipment with forced movement, and reinstating the status quo would only lead to it being in the same condition in a matter of weeks.</p> <p>The Lengthsman has been asked on his thoughts for possible solutions.</p> <p><u>Councillor Atkinson and Allan to investigate alternative solutions and bring a proposal back to Committee to improve the spinner ground surface before next summer.</u></p>
<p>Tree Surveys</p>	<p>The order for the KLP tree surveys was placed on the 5th August 2021, on the 2nd November 2021 the Tree Surveys were received by the Town Council.</p> <p>Circulated with the agenda is the tree survey.</p> <p>The tree surveys identify work that needs undertaking, including pruning, mulch around the bases and the felling of some trees.</p> <p><u>Councillor Pearson to lead on arranging for these works to be undertaken.</u></p> <p>Nb, 2 trees fell down on KLP during the bad weather and have been removed by Wyre Council.</p>
<p>Annual Maintenance</p>	<p>Annual Maintenance for 2023 needs planning and undertaking.</p> <p><u>Councillor Atkinson to meet with Garden Inspirations</u></p>
<p>Kepple Lane Park Car Park</p>	<p>The Scout and Guide Building Management Committee has reported a Health and Safety concern regarding an old tree bed on Kepple Lane Park Car Park. Councillors should note that</p>

	<p>there is a notice displayed on the car park, articulating that cars are parked on the car park at their own risk.</p> <p><u>A quote is sought for the square to be filled with tarmac, and this is delegated to the RFO, Councillor Atkinson and Councillor Pearson to resolve within the confines of the Kepple Lane Park/Amenities budget.</u></p>
Kepple Lane Park A6 Hedge	<p>The boundary hedge of KLP onto the A6 has been reported to be hanging over the pavement by the Lengthsman.</p> <p><u>Councillor Atkinson engages with Wyre Council Rangers for this to be trimmed back.</u></p>

Moss Lane Park

Issue	Update and Proposal
Broken Arm of the new Goal Posts	<p>One of the arms on the new goal posts has been broken.</p> <p>The arm has been removed by Wyre Council, and is not repairable.</p> <p><u>Councillor Atkinson arranges for another arm to be ordered from the supplier, and the arms only be put up for the Children's Festival to prevent further damage.</u></p>
Tree Surveys	<p>The order for the KLP tree surveys was placed on the 5th August 2021, the Tree Survey has not yet been completed by the supplier (the order requested December 2021).</p> <p>Councillor Atkinson has asked for this to be undertaken ASAP.</p> <p>A separate agenda item is to be brought forward by Councillor Leech to Novembers Full Council meeting regarding correspondence from a member of the public.</p> <p><u>To be determined by Full Council, Councillor Atkinson has liaised with the contractor to get the surveys done as soon as possible.</u></p>

Resolved: The Committee agreed to follow up the action points outside of the meeting.

43(2022-23) Allotment Notice

Notice has been served by one of the Allotment Tenants, and the plot is now vacant. Councillor Atkinson is arranging a visit for January/February 2023 to review the current status of the allotment plot.

Resolved: The committee undertakes the inspection and reviews the current status before advertising any vacancy.

44(2022-23) 22(2022-23) Accounting Systems

Background: Finance committee Minute 22 (2022-23), 15/11/2022

Resolved: Following the councils interim financial operating arrangements [079(2022-23)], it is resolved that the council must move to a cloud based financial accounting system by April 2023.

Resolved: That the purchase of the new accounting system is delegated to the RFO and Councillor Atkinson.

Standing item: outstanding resolutions

45(2022-23) 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.

46(2022-23) 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.

47(2022-23) Key Holders Register, Councillor Atkinson – for information

The key holders register is nearing completion

48(2022-23) 23(2022-23) Financial Regulations

Resolved: Following the councils interim financial operating arrangements [079(2022-23)], it is resolved that the council needs to amend its financial regulations. Finance Committee asks the Chair of Finance and the RFO to bring forward an amendment to financial regulations which would allow for council's financial business to still be transacted in the absence of the RFO, including but not limited to the ability to make payments and place orders, by April 2023.

49(2022-23) 26(2022-23) End of Year Audit 2021/22– for information

Council notes that the AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for external audit review. (The figure in Section 2, Box 9 of the prior year comparative column does not agree to the prior year final signed AGAR.) The RFO was asked to review the AGAR and provide committee with a correct version, and ensure this is corrected in future years.

The Chair reported that the RFO had updated and circulated the section 2 Accounting statement 2021/22 sheet

50(2022-23) Date of next meeting

18 April 2023.

The Meeting Finished at: 8.45pm