



Garstang Town Council

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Garstang Scout and Guide

Headquarters

Kepple Lane

Garstang

PR3 1PB

Finance Committee Meeting, 31st October 2023 Agenda

FAO Finance and Amenities Committee

You are summoned to attend the meeting of the Finance and Amenities Committee to consider the items detailed on the attached agenda.

The meeting will be held at Garstang library,
Windsor Road, Garstang, PR3 1EX
on Tuesday, 31 October 2023 at 7.30pm.

If you are unable to attend please could you submit an apology to the Clerk.

Members of the public and press are invited to attend the meeting

Please contact the Clerk by 13.00, Monday, 31 October 2023, to express your interest in attending the meeting.

Recording of Public Council Meetings

Please be aware that the public meeting may be recorded for the accuracy of the minutes.

As per standing orders 12g; for any meeting that has been recorded the recording will be kept for a period of 6 months after the minutes have been approved as accurate before the recording is deleted.

E Parry

Town Clerk

26th October 2023

Agenda

1) **Apologies for Absence**

2) **Declaration of Interests and Dispensations**

Reference Standing Orders point 13, the Proper Officer will arrange for those Councillors living within the township of Garstang to complete a dispensation form, prior to the start of the meeting. At this item, the Proper Officer (with Committee members) will approve the dispensation as per standing orders 13 hi)

3) **Public Participation**

The Chairman will ask Councillors to agree to adjourn the meeting to allow non-Councillors to speak and will ask Councillors to agree to reconvene the meeting on the conclusion of the public participation.

4) **Minutes of Finance Committee meeting, 11 July 2023 – for decision**

Councillors are asked to approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 11/07/2023 (circulated on Teams).

5) **Appointment of Deputy Chairman – for decision**

Background, 11/07/2023, Minute ref 01(2023-24) *Appointment of Chairman*
Resolved: Councillor Atkinson was elected Chairman of the Finance and Amenities Committee. The Committee further resolved to appoint a Deputy-Chairman at the next meeting in October 2023.

Does the Committee wish to appoint a Deputy Chairman?

6) **Receipts and payments account year 2023/24 (Q2) – for decision**

Background, 11/07/2023, Minute ref 06a) (2023-24)
Resolved: The Committee resolved that the summary and receipts report and the bank reconciliation report are circulated for Committee meetings.
The reports have been circulated on Teams.

For information Full Council have access to Scribe.

For decision: The Committee are asked to approve Q2 receipts and payment and approve the bank reconciliation at 30 September 2023.

7) **Review of Income Streams as per financial regs**

The Town Council's financial regulations state:

9. INCOME 9.3. The council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.

Councillors are asked to consider the fees, as detailed below and make any recommendations for the Full Council to approve.

a) Allotments rent

Currently as per tenancy agreement (11th January 2010), annual increase of £1 (2023; £44)

b) Scout Hut rent Currently the rent is £60 (approved Full Council 106 (2019-20). The tenancy agreement states that the rent is to be reviewed every 5 year period. Next review May 2025.

8) **Appointment of Internal auditor – for decision**

The RFO has received notice that the internal auditor, used for the last 2 years, will cease trading from the 31 October 2023.

The RFO is advising that a new internal auditor is appointed. Guidance on appointing an internal auditor can be found on [JPAG section 4](#)

The RFO has sought quotations and summarised the responses, along with individual quotes, on Teams.

9) **Review of Reserves policy – for decision**

As part of the budget review and good practice, the Committee are asked to review the [Council's Reserve policy](#). To assist a reference point is [5.24 – 5.35, JPAG](#).

The RFO is advising that the Elections Reserve section is updated, along with the reference to the JPAG Governance & Accountability Practitioners' Guide 2021 with JPAG, March 2023.

The Committee are asked to make recommendations, for Full Council to approve at their next meeting on 20/11/2023.

10) **Risk Register, quarterly review – for decision**

Councillor Rogers and Councillor Atkinson held a review of a revised format for Risk Management purposes which is currently being revised, the Clerk will then be engaged and after that review it will be brought back to Finance Committee for review ahead of the Governance Review in February.

In the intervening period Councillors are asked to consider the attached risk register and make any comments on the register.

11) **Asset Register – for information**

The current Asset register will be superseded, by using the [Asset register within Scribe](#). The RFO is required to enter the data onto the register.

12) **Amenities**

A) **Committee Scope**

At the June 2023 council meeting Councillor Atkinson raised the following Agenda Item, which was subsequently withdrawn due to limited meeting time being left to have a thorough discussion on the topics

Amenities Management, Councillor Atkinson – for decision

The workload associated with the management of the Council's amenities is significant and the amenities form a central pillar of the council's investment in the community. Despite efforts to bring this into the Finance Committee (through the formation of the Finance and Amenities Committee) there is still not enough focus on of Councillors time in this area, and more work is required. Last year Councillor Brooks proposed that a separate group organisation should be formed, and in the discussion, it was noted that with the Council only

just taking on Kepple Lane Park it was too early to tell, the proposal was then withdrawn. Councillor Atkinson is raising this now that a new Council has been formed as to whether there is a new way forward required, any new ideas or drivers in the council to take the management of the Amenities forward productively. No proposal is suggested through the hope of a discussion through which the Council can decide how it wishes to proceed

Proposal: The Finance and Amenities Committee refers the agenda item back to Full Council with any appropriate comments.

B) Current Amenities Issues

As part of a continued effort to highlight potential or current issues with the Council Amenities Councillor Atkinson has developed the list detailed below, a number of these are already on the radar of the committee but included for consistency

Multiple Assets/Other

- Grass cutting contract not formalised with Wyre Council
- Title deeds do not show up on land registry website (likely due to the age of the deed transfers)
- Drum-beat of Tree Surveys (KLP and MLP recently surveyed but regularity required, and Pat Seed Garden and War Memorial never surveyed in recent history)
- Ongoing review of Allotments underway
- Council storage facilities

Scout Hut

- Tenancy Agreement requires alteration due to incorrect boundary being detailed

Kepple Lane Park

- Trim Trail Gym Instruction Sign Damaged
- Musical Panel broken in the Toddlers Play Area
- Matting required to be replaced on the Spinning Arm, Large Rope swing and potentially the zip wire
- Goal mouth on Kepple Lane Park (also raised by Councillor Rogers)
- Boundary with Elite Motors require attention
- Long term annual maintenance contract not tendered
- Dip space requires 'a plan' (plan made and shared with Committee but not implemented)
- Storage units require painting due to ASB
- Removal of old plastic planters (transferred to the Town Council)

Moss Lane Park

- Poor field drainage
- Tree issue with neighbouring resident
- Agreement for Junior Football Club to utilise the field not yet formalised
- Concern raised informally by Tree Surveyor around boundary wall and dead trees in neighbouring property
- Continued lack of drainage within the trampoline

- Damage to fence around play area caused by strimming of grass
- Gates at Police Station and Church Street entrance as a minimum require re-painting
- Plan for ex-Councillor Leech's Mayoral Funds which have been transferred to the Council

War Memorial

- Requires areas of re-pointing and inspection
- No disabled access
- Tree surveys

Pat Seed Garden

- Long term plan for repaving
- Tree surveys

Proposal: Committee is asked to review the list and consider the most appropriate next steps.

13) **Budget 2024/25, RFO and Councillor Atkinson – for decision**

Background Information

Reference [The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guide March 2023 section 5.24 – 5.27](#)

The Town Council's budget is comprised of its anticipated revenue expenditure for the year, based on the annual running costs and what information the RFO has received from Councillors about any new projects which need to be included. This sits alongside decisions by the Council on reserve levels.

The Town Council's principal income is derived from its precept. The precept is calculated as follows:

- The Tax base is calculated each year after receipt from the Valuation Office of the latest Valuation list.
- A "tax base" is the number of Band D equivalent dwellings in a local authority area. To calculate the tax base for an area, the number of dwellings in each council tax band is adjusted to take account of any discounts, premiums or exemptions.
- The Town council is notified of the Tax Base (set by Wyre Council, around 2nd/3rd week of December). The TC will then be able to use this information to calculate the Band D equivalent, by taking the precept requirement divided by the tax base.

In the Appendix, Councillors will find the draft budget timetable.

Members have been circulated a draft budget to consider alongside the current position of the Councils reserves and overall finances. It is a working paper and is expected that the Committee will work through the codes line by line

The precept has been set at zero to highlight the shortfall..

In terms of Band D equivalent this would need to be determined following receipt of the Tax Base from Wyre Council. The historical precept figures are detailed below.

	2022/23	2023/24
Precept	£97,033	£114,188
Tax base	1,838.05	1,883.41
Band D Equivalent	£52.79	£60.63
Change on Previous Year	£2.32	£7.84
% Change on Previous Year	4.6%	14.85%

Points for consideration are as follows:

a) Points to consider

Committee members will go through the draft budget paper line by line to review the budget for each code and agree upon any revisions.

Committee members have been provided with the following reports:

- Forecast report 2023/24 (summary and monthly)
- Draft budget 2024/25
- Budget notes
- Current EMR balances

All Councillors should be aware of Financial regulations 7.4

b) Project Fund Requests and EMRs

Reference

148(2023-24)Precept/Budget 2024/2025, Councillor Atkinson and RFO

Councillor Atkinson explained that the Finance Committee would meet on 31 October 2023 to discuss the budget for 2024/2025. Councillors were asked to provide projects and associated finance requirements/budgets (based on estimates obtained) so that they may be included in next year's precept.

Resolved: Councillors put forward the following projects:

- i. Cherestanc Square – any foreseeable costs relating to the possible Town Council ownership of the Square (non-recurring and annual)
- ii. Refurbishment of the 2 Council Parks; Kepple Lane and Moss Lane.
- iii. Moss Lane Park – works to tackle the drainage issues.
- iv. Garstang Waves project.
- v. Community Events e.g. Switch on of Christmas Lights, celebration of The Olympics 2024.
- vi. Allotments
- vii. Christmas Lights
- viii. Consider increasing the grants budget

- ix. Replacement of assets
- x. Community Hall funding.

Proposal: Committee members are asked to review the budget for 2024/2025.

14)

Date of next meeting
9 January 2024.

Appendix

Budget 2024/25 Timeline

Date	Meeting	Information
16 October 2023	Full Council Meeting	Councillors were given notice that they will need provide budgetary figures at October's meeting. Councillors are asked to ensure that suitable estimates are obtained to support budget requests.
20 November 2023	Full Council Meeting	Draft precept figure and budget for comment by Full Council.
9 January 2024	Finance Committee Meeting	Finance committee meeting will include agenda item for finance committee to make any final changes to the budget, which will at this time include the Tax Base as provided by Wyre Council. Finance Committee will approve a draft to be submitted to Full Council for approval. This to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget paper• Band D equivalent using tax base provided by Wyre Council.• Any changes to EMRs
15 January 2024	Full Council Meeting	Full Council to approve Precept figure and budget.