



Garstang Town Council

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Amenities & Public Realm Committee Meeting, 1st September 2026 Minutes

Present

Chairman; Councillor Pearson

Councillors present: Allan, Dickinson, Pearson and Perkins (ex-officio member).

Also present: Town Clerk and Lead Lengthsman.

013(2026-27) Apologies for Absence

Councillors Hesketh and Hodgson

Councillor Pearson gave apologies for Councillor Halford

014(2026-27) Declaration of Interests and Dispensations

138(2021-22) Councillor Allan declared an 'other interest'. He is a Committee member of AFVBC.

015(2026-27) Public Participation

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

016(2026-27) Minutes of the last meeting

A copy of the minutes of the Amenities & Public Realm Committee meeting held on 30 June 2026 had been circulated.

Resolved: The minutes of the of the Amenities & Public Realm Committee meeting held on 30 June 2026, were confirmed and signed as a true record.

017(2026-27) Chairman's report

Councillor Pearson reported that:

- i. He had acted as a point of contact for the Assistant Lengthsman while the Lead Lengthsman was on holiday.
- ii. He had attended meetings regarding the purchase of a new storage container to address equipment storage issues.
- iii. He had supported the Friends of Kepple Lane Park with minor digging and watering work to help establish the group. He noted that, if the stage project progresses, it could form part of the Friends' wider activities.

018(2026-27) Kepple Lane Park signage, staff

The Committee noted that the new park welcome signs remain at design stage, with a mock-up still awaited. The signs should include direct Council contact

details, as QR codes were considered unnecessarily complicated. Hedgehog habitat signage will be progressed separately.
The Committee will be asked to provide feedback and choose a preferred design.

019(2026-27) Town Maintenance Service reports, Lengthsman Team

The Town Maintenance Service reports for June and July 2026 had been circulated. The Chair thanked the Lead Lengthsman for the reports, which provided an overview of recent work. It was noted that grass cutting had been temporarily paused during dry weather to avoid damaging grassed areas and resumed where appropriate.

The Committee raised no questions on the June or July reports.

020(2026-27) Green flag award, Staff

The Clerk introduced the item, noting that informal discussion had followed Wyre Council's press release on Green Flag Award status and that the matter had also been considered by the Strategic Plan working group. Councillors agreed that Green Flag accreditation would be beneficial, recognising the public recognition it could bring, the value of reflecting work already being undertaken in the parks, and the potential positive impact on staff pride, community use and the developing Friends of Kepple Lane Park group.
It was noted that achieving the award would require additional work and that the standard should be pursued when the Council is ready, rather than creating immediate pressure on staff. Officers advised that, if the Committee wished to proceed, the work could be reviewed over the winter and scheduled realistically within existing workloads.

Resolved: That the Council aims to work towards Green Flag Award status and asked officers to return with a suggested timeline.

021(2026-27) War Memorial Bench and Planters, Staff and Councillor Pearson

The Committee noted that this item links to minute 254(2025-26), Memorial Bench for AFVBC Members. The bench has been selected and the installation process is in progress.

The Chair reported that the Bloomers had conveyed that the greystone concrete planters are deteriorating, showing chipping and porosity. It was evident that the Youth Council's wooden planter (installed circa 2012) may be beyond repair and could fail if moved. The Lead Lengthsman advised that it appears stable for its age, but its true condition will only be known once lifted.

Councillor Allan did not vote on this item

Resolved: The Committee agreed to proceed with the proposed work in collaboration with the Bloomers. Authority was delegated to staff, in consultation with the Chair, to identify a suitable new location for the Youth Council legacy planter and to progress the refurbishment or replacement of the accompanying planters through partnership working with Garstang in Bloom, AFVBC, and other relevant partners.

022(2026-27) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 - Exclusion of the Press and Public for

The Committee resolved that in accordance of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the press and public be excluded from the meeting.

023(2026-27) Quotation for McCarthy Stone - Stanley Place and Stanley Gardens, Staff

Councillors had considered the full costing report that had been circulated. The Clerk reported that the Committee holds delegated powers for the Lengthsman Expansion Team, enabling Officers to establish and operate maintenance contracts except in extraordinary circumstances. As this would be the first private-sector maintenance contract undertaken by the service—rather than work for a parish council or public body—the Clerk/RFO considered it appropriate to seek the Committee’s endorsement before proceeding.

Resolved: That the Council proceeds with the proposed external contract at the amended quoted rate, recognising it as an initial commercial opportunity.

024(2026-27) Purchase section of Moss Lane Park

Resolved: That the Committee does not support the sale or disposal of any part of Moss Lane Park and that no further action be taken regarding the enquiry.

025(2026-27) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 - Re-admission of the Press and Public.

The Committee resolved that the confidential business having been concluded, the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting

026(2026-27) Date of next meeting

7.00pm, Tuesday 3rd November 2026.

The Meeting Finished at: 7.40pm

Appendix

Officer Project Update (For information)

a) Outstanding resolutions of the Clerk

047(2025-26) Allotments – Ash Tree Removal

Resolved: That authority be delegated to the Clerk, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, to arrange for the removal of the ash tree, subject to final checks on contractor competence and appropriate insurance.

045(2025-26) Kepple Lane Park – Outdoor Stage a) That officers include questions relating to the need for and potential use of a stage within the playing field questionnaire being circulated to local schools. That the Friends of Kepple Lane Park, along with other park users and local drama/musical groups, be consulted for their views.

b) That, subject to receipt of a formal quotation, a long-term structural solution be progressed (Option B). Councillor Allan suggested that any long-term solution should include a canopy over the stage.

Current position: No further stakeholder feedback has been received (No questionnaire sent out to date from Clerk). The long-term future of the stage remains unresolved and no structural option has progressed.

Next step: Member direction is required on whether to continue pursuing retention/refurbishment or to consider removal.

The Theatres Trust

Deadline: Midday on 11th September

Who for: Organisations owning or running theatre with leases of more than 5 years

What for: Purchase of key plant & machinery, replacement of inefficient and out-dated equipment, improvements to heating and building insulation, planting sedum roofs or green walls, and general impactful, high-quality interventions.

How much for: Grants of up to £20,000

Link: <https://www.theatrust.org.uk/how-we-help/grants-funding/theatre-improvement-scheme>

046(2025-26) Kepple Lane Park A6 Entrance

a) That officers obtain quotations for both options: making the informal access from the A6 impassable, and creating a formal, safe entrance to Kepple Lane Park.

b) That the Clerk seek advice from Wyre Council regarding the potential availability of Section 106 funding associated with the nearby development.

b) Moss Lane Park – Church Street Entrance (Accessibility)

Accessibility concerns raised by residents have been formally progressed with Lancashire Highways. The constraint created by a highway chicane approximately 900 mm from the park boundary fence has been assessed against statutory and best-practice accessibility standards.

Current Position:

The issue was logged via the Love Clean Streets system. An initial rejection was challenged and re-submitted, referencing the legal minimum access width of 1000 mm and the preferred accessible width of 1500 mm.

What's Next:

A response from Lancashire Highways is still awaited.

c) Friends of Kepple Lane Park

Following the park's Silver Gilt award in Britain in Bloom, an officer-led initiative successfully re-established structured community involvement within the park.

Current Position: The group continues to meet twice monthly and remains in an establishing phase, with a small but steady core of regular participants. The pollinator bed has now been fully restored and the group continues to support wider biodiversity and community activity within the park.

Britain in Bloom judging in July produced very positive feedback on Kepple Lane Park. Friends of Kepple Lane Park members were present during judging, providing a welcome demonstration of the increased community participation at the site.

A sponsorship board has been designed and quotations obtained, but it has not yet been installed and no sponsorship leads have been secured to date. No applications have yet been received for a volunteer "digital friend" role to support social media activity.

What's Next: The group would benefit from further support to broaden participation, develop sponsorship and strengthen its online presence, while continuing practical biodiversity and community work within the park.

d) War Memorial

Visual investigation suggests possible subsidence affecting the rear wall of the memorial. Early engagement with the War Memorials Trust has clarified potential funding routes.

Current Position:

The memorial remains open and safe for public use. The Trust typically funds up to 50% of eligible repair costs.

What's Next:

The Clerk to lead with a grant pre-application and further investigation work will be progressed before any repair works are undertaken.

e) Biodiversity – Hedgehog Habitat (Kepple Lane Park)

This project has evolved from an initial biodiversity proposal into a wider programme aimed at securing accreditation for Kepple Lane Park as a recognised hedgehog release site.

Current Position:

Blackpool Hedgehog Rescue has visited the site and provided accreditation criteria. Significant progress has been made towards meeting those requirements.

Management practices have been amended to improve habitat quality, including the creation of longer grass areas, the cessation of routine herbicide use within designated habitat zones, and the construction of a dead hedge which now functions both as wildlife habitat and a replacement barrier for a damaged section of fencing. The former access route has been successfully

closed and the area is now providing additional habitat and nesting opportunities for wildlife.

The Friends of Kepple Lane Park group has supported habitat planting and wider biodiversity improvements. Nesting boxes have now been installed and the community leaflet drop promoting hedgehog highways has been completed. Communication with Blackpool Hedgehog Rescue continues.

Friends group members are gathering supporting information for a Lancashire County Council Champions Fund application to support the remaining habitat enhancement works, principally signage and additional planting required to complete the accreditation programme.

What's Next: Accreditation has not yet been achieved. The revised maintenance regime is working well, including longer grass, designated no-stim/no-herbicide areas and the dead hedge. Accreditation will be pursued once the remaining signage and planting requirements are complete; hedgehog releases cannot take place until accreditation has been achieved.

f) Kepple Lane Park – Football Provision

Current Position: Officers have met with representatives of Garstang Juniors FC regarding potential use of Kepple Lane Park for training and match play. A no-cost summer trial was offered; take-up and any use of the pitches are to be confirmed with the Clerk.

The club's involvement could provide access to Football Association funding opportunities for replacement goalposts and pitch improvements, helping address existing deficiencies in football infrastructure at the site. Garstang Juniors FC have also expressed an interest in becoming involved as a stakeholder within the wider Friends of Kepple Lane Park initiative.

What's Next: The Clerk will confirm, at the meeting, whether the summer trial was taken up. Further discussions on future use, replacement goalposts and potential Football Association-supported pitch improvements can then be progressed as appropriate.

g) Park Hill Road Rain Garden

A multi-agency flood mitigation project has progressed from concept stage toward formal development.

Current Position:

Lancashire County Council has agreed to act as lead authority for the project and outline designs have been prepared. The project remains focused primarily on flood alleviation while delivering biodiversity benefits where possible. Funding applications have now been formally submitted and the project is progressing through the appropriate approval processes.

What's Next: No further update has been received. Officers will follow up with Lancashire County Council for an update on the funding application and progression of the project.

h) Parish Maintenance Expansion / Service Level Agreements

The expansion of the Lengthsman service has now moved from development into operational delivery.

Current Position: Five neighbouring parish councils continue to receive services under agreements with Garstang Town Council: Cabus, Claughton, Cockerham, Kirkland and Winmarleigh. Feedback from partner parishes remains very positive. Further contract opportunities are visible and potential new contracts are being explored.

An Assistant Lengthsman remains in post at 18 hours per week. All planned equipment has now been delivered, with the final equipment arriving in early July. The compact tractor has recorded approximately 65 operational hours and has completed its initial break-in service.

The service has fully recovered from the earlier equipment-related delays. Programmed work is up to date and there is capacity to undertake small additional works where appropriate. The previously considered one-off work for Bonds and Barnacre Parish Council was subsequently delivered by Lancashire County Council and was therefore not required from the Town Council.

What's Next: Officers will continue to monitor service performance, workload, financial performance and opportunities for further work. With the contractual notice date of 9 November approaching, officers will review performance and liaise with partner parishes regarding continuation of existing agreements and any opportunities for additional provision. A fuller service and financial review will be presented following completion of the first year of operation.

Operational Infrastructure

Current Position. Temporary storage arrangements remain in place and continue to create some operational inefficiency, although this is less significant now that the earlier service backlog has been cleared. No security concerns have been identified.

Existing arrangements remain workable pending delivery of the permanent storage solution.

What's Next: The new storage container is scheduled for delivery on 12 September 2026, after which the service will move to the permanent storage arrangement.

i) Britain in Bloom 2026 - Judging took place on 22 July 2026. Formal results and detailed feedback are awaited.

Kepple Lane Park received particularly positive feedback during its judging visit, reflecting the developing character of the site and its approach to community involvement and biodiversity.

Members of Friends of Kepple Lane Park were present during judging, demonstrating the increased community participation that has been a focus following feedback from the previous year. Further feedback and results will be reported when received.

Allotments changeover of tenants?

Allotments – Tenant Changes: Two plots have recently changed tenancy and have been successfully reallocated. Both were surrendered for personal reasons and were left in good condition, with no remedial works required from the Lengthsman Team. One former tenant has subsequently become involved with Friends of Kepple Lane Park.