Garstang Town Council

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Amenities & Public Realm Committee Meeting, 3rd November 2026 Minutes

Present
Chairman; Councillor Pearson, followed by Councillor Hodgson
Councillors present: Allan, Dickinson, Halford, Hesketh, Hodgson and Pearson
Also present: Town Clerk and Lead Lengthsman.

027(2026-27) Appointment of Chair
The Chair explained that, following his appointment as Chairman of the Finance & Governance Committee, a new Chair was required for this Committee. The Deputy Chairman, Councillor Hodgson, had advised the Clerk that he was willing to be nominated.

Resolved: Councillor Hodgson was appointed Chairman.

028(2026-27) Appointment of Deputy Chair
Resolved: Councillor Halford was appointed Deputy Chairman

029(2026-27) Apologies for Absence
Councillor Perkins, ex-officio member.

030(2026-27) Declaration of Interests and Dispensations
There were no Declarations of Interest declared or requests for dispensations.

031(2026-27) Public Participation
There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

032(2026-27) Minutes of the last meeting
A copy of the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 1 September 2026 had been circulated.

Resolved: The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 1 September 2026 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

033(2026-27) Chairman's report
The outgoing Chair reported on the installation of the second storage container, at the Scout & Guide HQ, Kepple Lane, to support secure machinery and separate storage of petrol and electrical equipment. He thanked Councillor Hodgson and his team for arranging the crane and brickwork. He confirmed his continued support for the Lengthsman Team and Clerk.

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The Chair, Councillor Hodgson reported that the outstanding works comprised the Scout & Guide Hut emergency-exit ramp, the front access ramp and anti-climb measures. Councillor Hodgson and the Lead Lengthsman hoped to progress the emergency-exit ramp within the next few weeks. Councillor Hodgson would convey thanks to the two helpers from the Lions.

034(2026-27) Kepple Lane Park signage, staff

The Committee reviewed the revised welcome-sign design and discussed the proposed dimensions (circa 1200 x 600), materials and mounting arrangements. These details remained to be confirmed. Councillors favoured a QR code over a web address, emphasising that it should remain valid long term.

Resolved: Councillors approved the revised welcome-sign design as circulated and asked staff to staff will obtain quotations to supply and install two signs; at the south and north entrances.

035(2026-27) Town Maintenance Service reports, Lengthsman Team

The Town Maintenance Service reports for August and September 2026 had been circulated.

Resolved: Councillors congratulated the Lengthsman Team on the professionalism shown in adapting mowing arrangements during the unusual weather and noted the grass's recovery following rainfall.

Councillor Hesketh arrived.

036(2026-27) Green flag award, Staff

An initial Green Flag Award self-assessment had been completed for both Kepple Lane Park and Moss Lane Park, by the Lead Lengthsman. It identified significant additional physical, management and operational requirements.

Councillors considered the initial Green Flag Award self-assessment for Kepple Lane Park and Moss Lane Park. They noted the significant work required to achieve accreditation and raised concerns about the associated costs, staffing capacity and ongoing maintenance commitments. Councillors questioned whether the award would deliver sufficient tangible benefits for residents to justify the resources required.

Councillors recognised the value of the assessment in identifying improvements and informing longer-term plans for both parks. They supported a strategic approach, establishing what each park should provide and prioritising works within available resources. It was noted that the parks had different characteristics and would require separate consideration.
The discussion also recognised the contribution of Britain in Bloom and the Friends of Kepple Lane Park to horticultural, environmental and community improvements. Councillors considered that improvements should be driven by local needs, with any future Green Flag accreditation being a potential outcome rather than the principal objective.

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Resolved: To defer pursuing Green Flag accreditation, retain the completed assessment and use it to inform outline improvement plans for Kepple Lane Park and Moss Lane Park.

Councillor Dickinson arrived

037(2026-27) Moss Lane Bench Options

Wyre Council advised that the timber picnic tables on Moss Lane were in poor condition and should be removed from the site as soon as possible. The picnic tables had been removed and staff had produced options of replacement.

Councillors considered the replacement picnic-table options and discounted the smaller 1.5-metre models. They expressed a preference for the Costcutters extended-top table, noting its wheelchair accessibility, 25-year construction guarantee and stated lead time of 10–15 days. Delivery charges remained to be confirmed.

Resolved: Councillors approved the purchase of two Costcutters extended-top tables at £605.56 net each, funded from the Section 106 earmarked reserve (EMR).

038(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.

039(2026-27) Parish Maintenance Service – Commercial Contracts and Charging Rates, Staff

The Clerk/RFO thanked the Lead Lengthsman for preparing the reports and meeting prospective clients at Tarnacre Mews, Garstang Juniors Football Club and the Millennium Green Trust. Councillors noted that the McCarthy Stone contract had been awarded to the Council.

The Clerk/RFO outlined the proposed three-tier charging framework for parish councils, community organisations and commercial customers. Tarnacre Mews would fall within the commercial category, while the proposed work at Garstang Community Primary School for Garstang Juniors Football Club and for the Millennium Green Trust would attract the community rate.

The proposed rates were presented for Committee approval to establish a consistent basis for future quotations.

Resolved: Councillors supported the distinction between customer categories and approved the proposed charging framework and rates as presented.

040(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

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041(2026-27) **War Memorial Bench Installation Update**

The Committee noted that the memorial bench had been delivered. Its proposed location and installation arrangements have been agreed with the Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club. Installation is scheduled within the Lengthsman Team's winter works programme after Remembrance Sunday.

042(2026-27) **Date of next meeting**

7.00pm, Tuesday 5th January 2027.

The meeting finished at 7.32pm

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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.
Current update: A contractor site visit is awaited to establish the necessary tree works and associated costs.

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 and no questionnaire has been issued. The future of the outdoor stage remains unresolved; members need to determine whether to retain, refurbish or remove it.
Next step: Committee direction is required before further work is progressed.

[Expired September funding reference removed; no current funding proposal confirmed.]

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 potential Section 106 funding. An indicative cost of approximately £8,000 has been received for formalising the A6 entrance; no formal quotation has yet been obtained. Further direction is required before progressing.

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: No further response has been received from Lancashire Highways. The accessibility issue remains outstanding.

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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: Friends of Kepple Lane Park continues to meet regularly, although wet weather has affected attendance. Recruiting additional members and sustaining a volunteer base are priorities. The group is exploring social prescribing and other community networks as possible recruitment routes.
The group achieved Level 4 – Thriving in the Britain in Bloom It's Your Neighbourhood awards. The wider park results are due on 29 October, after publication of this agenda. The willow tunnel is identified for renewed work towards the end of the season.
No sponsorship commitments have been secured. Funding is awaited from County Councillor Tomlinson to support the remaining requirements of the proposed hedgehog release site.

What's Next: Councillors are encouraged to help identify new volunteers, community contacts and potential sponsors. The group will continue its practical improvements and biodiversity work.

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.

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The Friends group continues to support biodiversity improvements. Nesting boxes and community leaflets have been provided; unfortunately one hedgehog house has been destroyed by vandalism.
Further funding has been requested through County Councillor Tomlinson to support the remaining site requirements; funding has not yet been confirmed.

What's Next: Accreditation has not yet been achieved. Subject to funding and completion of the remaining requirements, the group hopes to progress to hedgehog releases in 2027.

f) Kepple Lane Park – Football Provision

Current position: Garstang Juniors FC made limited use of Moss Lane Park during summer 2026, rather than Kepple Lane Park. Feedback was positive and the arrangement worked well.
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: Any future football provision or capital improvements would require further discussion and agreement; no permanent arrangement is currently proposed.

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 from Lancashire County Council. The Town Council awaits information on the scheme's funding and progression.

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 remains overwhelmingly positive and no partner has indicated an intention to discontinue. Forton's public rights of way have been mapped to support preliminary costings, with further information awaited. An initial enquiry has been received from Myerscough but no further direct discussions have taken place.
Staffing, machinery and storage arrangements are in place. The Kubota BX231 and Kersten equipment are operational and accumulating working hours.

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Service delivery is progressing well. Officers will continue to review the most efficient and cost-effective staffing, equipment and working methods as the service develops.

What's Next: Officers will monitor performance, workload, finances and possible expansion. A comprehensive operational and financial review, including achievements and lessons learned, is planned following the end of the March 2026–March 2027 service year.

Operational Infrastructure
Current position: Permanent storage arrangements are now in place and operating alongside the service's equipment and staffing provision.
Officers will continue to assess the suitability of operational arrangements as the service grows.

What's Next: Continue reviewing storage and operational efficiency as service requirements evolve.

i) **Britain in Bloom 2026 – Judging took place on 22 July 2026. Formal results are due on 29 October, after publication of this agenda; a verbal update will be provided at the meeting. Friends of Kepple Lane Park has achieved Level 4 – Thriving in the It's Your Neighbourhood awards.**
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 – current position
The allotments continue to operate satisfactorily. One half plot is currently vacant and ready for letting.

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