Garstang Town Council

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Finance & Governance Committee Meeting,

27th October 2026 Minutes

Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting, held at Garstang library, on Tuesday 28th July 2026, 7.00pm.

Present Chairman: Councillor Pearson
Councillors present: Allan, Kelly and Pearson
Ex-officio member Councillor Sandra Perkins.

Also present: Town Clerk/RFO Edwina Parry

027(2026-27) Apologies for Absence
Councillor Halford

028(2026-27) Declaration of Interests and Dispensations
No declarations of interest or dispensations were received.

029(2026-27) Public Participation
There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

030(2026-27) Minutes of Finance Committee meetings, 28/7/2026 and 23/09/2026
Councillors were asked to approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the Finance Committee meetings held on 28/7/2026 and 23/9/2026.

Resolved: The minutes of the Finance Committee meetings held on 28/7/2026 and 23/9/2026 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

031(2026-27) Receipts and payments account to 30/9/2026 (Q2)
Resolved: The Committee approved:
i) Q2 receipts and payments that includes a comparison with budget,
ii) the bank reconciliation at 30 September 2026.

032(2026-27) Review of Reserves policy, RFO
The Clerk/RFO reported a significant development since the Committee meeting on 23/09/2026: a by-election was required to fill the vacancy following Councillor Atkinson's resignation.

Proposed policy amendment
The RFO advised that the paragraph below should replace the existing text in the reserves policy.

Elections Reserve

A dedicated Election Reserve is held to meet the costs associated with by-elections. Given the possible increasing likelihood of by-elections being required, the Council will make annual budgetary provision to build and maintain this reserve. Based on estimates provided by Wyre Council (October 2026), the cost of a by-election is currently estimated at £14,500, including approximately £6,000 for polling card printing and postage. Where election costs exceed the balance of the Election Reserve, the deficit will be funded from other available Earmarked Reserves and/or the General Reserve, with replacement considered as part of future budget setting.

Resolved: That the Committee recommend to Full Council, at its next meeting on 16/11/2026, that the reserves policy be amended to include the above paragraph.

033(2026-27) **Budget 2027/28, RFO**

Background: Full Council 19/10/2026, Minute 109 (2026-27)
Resolved: The Council reviewed V0.2 budget and approved:
a) Create a new EMR for Christmas lights of £3,000, recognising that the Council is in year 4 of a 5-year contract.
b) the Clerk/RFO should consider establishing an earmarked reserve to provide for future by-election costs. Members noted that estimated costs had increased significantly, from approximately £9,200 in 2024 to around £14,500, October 2026.

Committee members had been provided with the following reports:

i) V0.3 Draft budget 2027/28 including the forecast report (from November). Since V0.2 was reviewed by Full Council 19/10/2026, the RFO has updated staff salaries, established a new Christmas Lights EMR (£3,000), and included a £5,000 budget provision for election expenses.
ii) Budget notes
iii) Current EMR balances

The Committee was asked to: review/recommend the following:

a) Review/ recommend any changes to Earmarked Reserves balances
b) Review the V0.3 budget 2027/2028, and make recommendations for it to be considered by Full Council on 16 November 2026.
c) The RFO updated the Committee with the feedback from Councillor Hesketh who had met with Tom Hutton, CEO Fleetwood Town Community Trust. To summarise Tom has offered to address Full Council on a Penwortham-style youth project, which would require collaboration, start-up funding and future expansion. Penwortham's scheme received an initial £12,000 and currently attracts around 40 young people per night across three weekly sessions, offering activities such as sports, esports, food, crafts, music and social spaces. The proposal aligns with the Mayor's priorities and the Council's wider aspirations for supporting young people. Councillor Hesketh asked that £8,000 be included in the budget.

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Resolved:
The Committee recommended to Full Council that:

i) Cost code 74 be amended to detail Section 106 monies.
ii) New cost code 77 Election Expenses to be increased from £5,000 to £10,000, with the reserve to be maintained at this level in future years.
iii) That £8,000 be transferred from cost code EMR New Community Investment into a new cost 78 titled EMR Youth Provision.

The RFO summarised the recommendations and how they affected the precept figure. The recommendations would be incorporated into V0.4 of the budget for Full Council to review on 16/11/2026.

		27/10/2026
Receipts	£	43,474.12
Payments	£	227,688.03
Precept Value	£	184,213.91
Tax Base		1979.35
Band D Equivalent		£93.07
Last Years Precept		£162,269.03
Last Years Band D		£81.98
Change in Precept		£21,944.88
Change in Band D		£11.09

034(2026-27) **Date of next meeting**
26 January 2026.

Meeting closed: 7.44pm

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Appendix

	Change	Actioned
Code 12	Virement 0.95 from Code 13 to Code 12.	✓
Code 13	Virement 0.95 from Code 13 to Code 12.	✓
Code 16	Insurance increase budget (to reflect actual figures).	✓
Code 18	Change name to Annual membership.	✓
Code 22	Banking fees increase budget (to reflect actual figures).	✓
Code 28	The Committee approved the RFO's recommendation that EMR 53 Civic Mayor boards is changed to Civic and that the underspends from cost centre Mayoralty are transferred at year end to build up the reserve.	☐
Code 25	Remove Meeting and replace with award.	✓
Codes 30,31,32 & 75	To be detailed under a new cost centre heading of Parish Maintenance Scheme.	☐
code 75	Increase the budget receipt of (RFO reported this would be automated under forecasting) - give an extra £12,000 receipt	✓
Code 37	Change name to Playing field inspections.	✓
Code 38	Cost centre Amenities be amended to include only Codes 37 and 38.	☐
	Create a new EMR for Christmas lights of £3,000, recognising that the Council is in year 4 of a 5-year contract.	✓
Code 25	Remove Meeting and replace with award.	✓

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