

GREAT SANKEY PARISH COUNCIL

Finance Committee

Minutes of meeting: Tuesday 5th January 2021
(via Zoom)

Chairman: Cllr T Williams
Present: Cllr P Watson
Cllr P Jones
Cllr S Watson
Cllr P Warburton
Cllr D Price

In Attendance: Mrs K Carter

1. To receive and approve any apologies for unavoidable absence.

There were no apologies.

2. To approve the minutes of previous meeting 1/12/2020.

The draft minutes were moved and accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed as such.

FINANCE/2021/1

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2020 as a true record.

3. To receive the External Auditor's Report on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2020.

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and contained two 'except for' matters. The first related to an incorrect date on the return and the second requires an amendment for refunds of £4,757 which were entered into the incorrect box on the return. These are relatively minor errors which the Council noted. The figures will be amended on next year's return. No further action is necessary.

FINANCE/2021/2

RESOLVED: To note and accept the External Auditor's Report on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year-ended 31 March 2020. Amendments for refunds of £4757 will be made on next year's return.

4. To consider the budget and precept level for 2021-22 and make a recommendation to full Council.

Initial figures had been discussed at the December meeting and a draft budget circulated prior to the meeting. The draft budget allows for the precept rate to be kept the same as the current year. Initial estimates to the end of the financial year suggest a budget surplus of around £146,000, although the final figure will not be known until the year-end. The surplus results from a large rebate on business rates of £56,000 due to overpayment from 2011 at one community centre as well as lower expenditure in 2020-21 resulting from Covid-19. Members discussed the Council's long-term projects and recommended moving the surplus into earmarked reserves to continue these.

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FINANCE/2021/3

RESOLVED: To recommend to full Council that

- the draft budget for 2021-22 is accepted;
- surplus funds from 2020-21 are moved to earmarked projects;
- the precept level is maintained at £45.80 per Band D household.
(Local Government Finance Act 1992 s41)

5. To scrutinise financial expenditure arising since the last meeting, including payments by Direct Debit.

A list of payments to be made had been circulated prior to the meeting. A further breakdown of costs for the grounds' maintenance was requested for information which will be provided. All payments were authorised.

Presented By	Description	Amount, £
WBC	Grounds Maintenance Q 3 2020/21	£797.42
B&B Hygiene Ltd	Cleaning Supplies	£280.61
EDR Landscape Mngt	Grounds Maintenance	£4641.42
WBC	Service Charge – Hood Manor	£382.89
Independent Street	Great Sankey Market	£500.00
PKF	External Audit	£1560.00
Andrew Jones Landscape	Grounds Maintenance	£1250.00
FairFX cards	Top-up of pre-paid cards	£385.81
	Total	£9798.15

FINANCE/2021/4

RESOLVED: To authorise all payments listed in Appendix 1 (under LGA 1976 s19 or LGA 1972 s101, 111, 112, 133, 142 or 137).

The following direct debits on the Council's account during November were also checked and approved:

BT	02/11/2020	WIFI/Telephone	HL	89.76
BT	02/11/2020	WIFI/Telephone	TP	96.36
BT	02/11/2020	WIFI/Telephone	Office	142.38
BT	02/11/2020	WIFI/Telephone	BB	90.19
SWALEC	02/11/2020	Electricity	WH	233.75
Water Plus	02/11/2020	Water charges	HM	38.52
Water Plus	02/11/2020	Water charges	WH	34.00
Water Plus	02/11/2020	Water charges	BB	120.27
KCOM Group plc	04/11/2020	e-mail hosting/microsoft office	Office	45.59
BT	06/11/2020	WIFI/Telephone	HM	90.72
SWALEC	09/11/2020	Electricity	BB	160.92
SWALEC	09/11/2020	Electricity	TP	192.96
SWALEC GAS	09/11/2020	Gas	TP	178.97
SWALEC GAS	23/11/2020	Gas	HM	28.77
SWALEC GAS	23/11/2020	Gas	HL	30.51

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BT	30/11/2020	WIFI/Telephone	WH	89.76
Utility Warehouse	30/11/2020	Phone charges	Office	107.10
			Total	£1770.53

6. To consider any quotes received and authorise or make recommendations to full Council where appropriate.

Item 1: Project form from Cllr Warburton – memorial bench for Vicarage Community Park. Members were broadly in favour of a ‘Lest We Forget’ style memorial bench but were mindful that the Vicarage Community Park has only just been completed and were unsure of replacing one of the new benches at this stage. It was therefore proposed that an alternative location is found, and Lingley Green was suggested. This to be discussed further at the Parish Council meeting on 13th January.

FINANCE/2021/5

RESOLVED: To purchase and install a ‘Lest We Forget’ memorial bench within Great Sankey at a cost of £1201.20. Suggested location Lingley Green with the final decision to be made at full Council.

7. To consider requests for financial assistance; to decide if any donations are to be made or if requests should be recommended to full Council.

Item 2: Request from resident to install a memorial plaque on a bench on Vicarage Community Park. Councillors were supportive of the request but were not keen for a dedication on the benches themselves as this may prompt similar requests which could be difficult to manage if numerous requests are made. It was therefore proposed that the flower beds might be a suitable alternative and a dedication could be placed among the rose bushes or trees. It was also suggested that the resident may wish to be involved with the upkeep of the bed as well and will be contacted for further discussion.

FINANCE/2021/6

RESOLVED: To agree in principle to a resident installing a memorial plaque on Vicarage Community Park; suggested location as one of the flower beds, subject to further discussion with the resident.

8. Budget 2020-21 – to scrutinise documentation, and when satisfied as to correctness to sign off financial reports and bank reconciliations for November.

Budget monitoring pages were considered and accepted.

FINANCE/2021/7

RESOLVED: To accept the bank reconciliation and budget monitoring pages for November 2020 (Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015, Part 2 s4)

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9. Items to note and/or for inclusion on a future agenda.

Item 1: Christmas Market

It was noted that the market had been a success and was received enthusiastically by the public. Both the Woodlands Pub and Independent Street are keen to repeat the event as it has the potential for commercial success, and it is hoped to do this as soon as Covid restrictions allow.

Item 2: It was agreed that the Council should write to all major businesses on Omega to ask for financial assistance towards the drainage of the Parish Playing Field which will be a significant community asset in the area. Quotes are awaited following a site visit in December before moving forwards with the project.

Item 3: a proposal was made to build a porch at the entrance of Whittle Hall Community Centre to help with draughts and therefore energy efficiency. It was also noted that additional items have been mentioned to continue the improvements in all centres. It was agreed a list should be drawn up to prioritise and plan future works.

Item 4: a proposal was made to start planning for a replacement council van, possibly electric or hybrid. Initial options will be sought for consideration.

Item 5: Sankey Station. Some progress has been made with one of the current owners of the building who have indicated they are willing to consider a possible long-term lease. A proposal and quote from Rise Associates to produce a business plan for the project will be circulated and considered at the January full Council meeting.

10. To authorise payment of wages, tax and ERNIC for December.

The list of wages to be paid was considered and authorised.

FINANCE/2021/8

RESOLVED: To authorise payment of wages and HMRC costs as listed for December 2020 (LGA 1972 s112).

It was also confirmed that the Council would continue to pay staff their guaranteed minimum hours and safeguard their jobs during the current lockdown period.

FINANCE/2021/9

RESOLVED: To pay staff their guaranteed minimum hours and safeguard jobs during the current Covid-19 lockdown period (LGA 1972 s112).