

# GREAT SANKEY PARISH COUNCIL

## Finance Committee

Minutes of meeting: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
Whittle Hall Community Centre

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**Chair:** Cllr Price  
**Present:** Cllr Watson  
Cllr Pennington  
Cllr Hussain  
Cllr Williams

**In Attendance:** K Carter (Clerk)

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cotter and Catlow.

**2. To approve the minutes of previous meeting 2/1/2024.**

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

**FINANCE/2024/6, RESOLVED:**

*To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 as a true record.*

**3. To consider salary for apprentice gardener.**

A proposed salary for the apprentice gardener had been discussed previously by full Council, with no decision made. The rate must be at least minimum wage, which was felt to be too low, but the Real Living Wage paid to caretakers was deemed too high for a trainee position. An intermediate rate, within the guidelines set by the Professional Gardeners Guild, was proposed (£19,016 per annum) with an uplift for Year 2 of the apprenticeship (£21, 208 per annum), subject to satisfactory progression. If taken on as a permanent employee at the end of the apprenticeship, there is then scope to increase the wage again in line with the Real Living Wage and bringing the post onto the LGA pay scales that existing staff are on. After discussion, it was agreed to recommend this option but with an additional, lower rate for 16-17yr-olds.

**FINANCE/2024/7, RECOMMENDED:**

*To propose an incremental salary scale for the apprentice gardener, with further uplift if permanent position offered, subject to satisfactory progress and completion of the training (Horticulture Operative, Level 2):*

	16-17 years		18+ years	
	Hrly rate, £	Annual, £	Hrly rate, £	Annual, £
Year 1	7.80	15,210	9.75	19,016
Year 2	8.70	16,965	10.88	21,208

LGA 1972, s112

It was proposed that, if the salary is agreed, Officers should proceed with the recruitment process and the Employment Committee meet to agree detail of the apprentice contract. The contract would be based on the standard council contracts, with some flexibility in the role required, continued employment to be subject to satisfactory progression on the apprenticeship and scope for further training if employed permanently at the end of the 2-year training period.



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**FINANCE/2024/8, RECOMMENDED:**

*Council officers to proceed with recruitment of the apprentice gardener if salary agreed; Employment Committee to agree contract terms (LGA 1972, s112).*

**4. To be advised of centre maintenance program for 2024-25.**

This was an information item; the budget for maintenance for 2024-25 has been agreed. Various items have been identified by the Maintenance Officer which need work (redecorating and floor renovation in the main halls of Tim Parry and Whittle Hall Community Centres, toilet refurbishment at Hood Manor Community Centre). Officers will obtain quotes for consideration at a future meeting to allow works to be scheduled in at appropriate times in the financial year.

**5. To receive a progress report on the winter works schedule for GSPC's green spaces.**

The Parish Council had previously approved a schedule of grounds maintenance works for the winter months (*PARISH/2023/69*). An interim report had been circulated detailing work achieved and costs. Work is proceeding well and within budget, it is anticipated all items should be completed by the end of the financial year.

It was suggested that, following the elections in May, the council should consider their short-term and long-term strategy for the grounds service. A committee could be set up to discuss options in detail. The committee would then meet several times per year to review progress and plans, as well as budget requirements.

**FINANCE/2024/9, RECOMMENDED:**

*To set up a Grounds Strategy Committee following the elections in May 2024, with delegated powers and budget (LGA 1972 s102).*

**6. To be advised of new procurement thresholds and required amendments to Financial Regulations.**

Members were informed that the thresholds for public procurement have changed from January 2024 and the Financial Regulations should be amended to include these new amounts. The main provision affecting the Parish Council will be the threshold over which the council is required to advertise the opportunity on Contracts Finder if an open invitation to tender is published. This threshold has been increased from £25,000 to £30,000.

**FINANCE/2024/10, RESOLVED:**

*To amend GSPC's Financial Regulations with the new procurement thresholds for 2024.*

**7. 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. The following payments were scrutinised and approved.

Presented By	Description	Amount
Toilets on the Go	Porta-loo hire Fun Day 2024	£324.00
Shades of Green	Hire of Chipper – Approved Winter works	£336.00
Walton Turf	Top Soil – repair at TP Rec	£42.00
The Design Project	Artwork GSPC Newsletter	£600.00
All Steel Fencing	Fencing TP – Approved WW	£1032.00
Defibshop	Defib and cabinet – WH	£1992.00
Omolola Olorunfemi	Customer refund	£13.00



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Wizz Distribution	GSPC annual newsletter – distribution	£2,530.00
Abraxas	GSPC annual newsletter – printing	£2,995.00
T&O Harrison	Greenwaste ticket	£30.00
Edmundson Electrical	Replacement Light Bulbs	£9.70
Trade UK	Centre Maintenance	£10.39
Cheshire Constabulary	PCSO	£9,489.50
Tudor Environmental	Grounds Maintenance Tools	£167.26
Travis Perkins	Fence Panel hire – Approved WW	£27.30
B&B Hygiene Ltd	Cleaning supplies – Centre Maintenance	£429.92
Travis Perkins	Hire of Fence Panels – Approved WW	£57.90
Trade UK	Bird Feeders and Feed	£138.58
Edmundson Electrical Ltd	Replacement lightbulbs – Centre Maintenance	£12.29
Travis Perkins	Plate Compactor hire – Pothole repair	£53.00
MKM	Tarmac – Pothole repair	£136.68
WBC	Christmas Tree 2023	£1,731.74
Wicksteed	Playground fittings for roundabout repair	£45.79
Canda Copying	Rental of office copier	£94.80
Canda Copying	Copies B/W & Colour	£73.22
WBC	Q4 PPF Grounds Maintenance	£922.55
Trade UK	Bypass Lopper – Grounds Maintenance	£28.50
WBC	Wild Flowers 2023/24	£4323.24
WBC	Cleansing Whittle Pond area	£274.98
WBC	Christmas lights	£396.52
B&B Hygiene Ltd	Cleaning supplies	£347.23
Trade UK	Centre Maintenance – HM	£5.79
Edmundson Electrical	Replacement light bulb	£4.68
Brentwood Moss	Bag of bark – Approved WW	£61.20
Ladybrook	Plants – Approved WW	£547.92
Comtec	Electrical work at Centres	£720.00
Peter Watson	Refund for paper cups for PC Meetings	£18.95
Equals Business Card	Top-up for staff cards	£484.38
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£29,285.68</b>

**FINANCE/2024/11, RESOLVED:**

*To authorise all payments listed above (under LGA 1976 s19 or LGA 1972 s15(5), s101, 111, 112, 133, 142 or 137).*

The following direct debits on the Council's account during December were also checked:

Novuna	01/12/2023	Electric Van	Lease	456.20
BT	01/12/2023	WIFI/Telephone	BB	88.80
BT	01/12/2023	WIFI/Telephone	Office	169.70
Lex Autolease	01/12/2023	Council Electric Van	Lease	851.98
Water Plus	01/12/2023	Water charges	BB	77.88
Water Plus	01/12/2023	Water charges	WH	57.75



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Water Plus	01/12/2023	Water charges	HM	51.11
BT	04/12/2023	WIFI/Telephone	TP	100.72
BT	04/12/2023	WIFI/Telephone	BB	67.21
Water Plus	04/12/2023	Water charges	HL	98.00
GCI Network	04/12/2023	e-mail hosting/microsoft office	Office	93.99
BT	07/12/2023	WIFI/Telephone	HM	91.75
Peninsula	11/12/2023	H&S Service	Office	200.93
BT	29/12/2023	WIFI/Telephone		67.21
Utility Warehouse	29/12/2023	Mobile phones	Office	48.70
Water Plus	29/12/2023	Water charges	HL	59.74
Water Plus	29/12/2023	Water charges	TP	53.69
Unity Trust	29/12/2023	Bank Charges	Office	12.00
Service Fee Charge	29/12/2023	Service Charge	Office	67.80
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2715.16</b>

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

**Feb24\_A.** For office/welfare space for the grounds team. Three quotes were considered for a purpose-built container to fit within the compound at Whittle Hall Community Centre. The lowest quote was approved.

**FINANCE/2024/12, RECOMMENDED:**

*To purchase office/welfare space for the grounds team from Container Cabins Ltd (£8,600 +VAT) (LGA 1972, s111).*

**Feb24\_B.** Drainage repair, Tim Parry Recreation Ground. Costs had been obtained to repair the drainage channels alongside the footpath to address the flooding on the car park. Costs were for materials only; staff can carry out the installation. Approved.

**FINANCE/2024/13, RESOLVED:**

*To carry out repairs to the drainage channels on Tim Parry Recreation Grounds (indicative costs £5,500) (Open Spaces Act 1906, s10).*

**Feb24\_C & Feb24\_D.** Indicative costs had been obtained for Tim Parry Recreation Ground for a vehicle barrier at the access road to the centre and a separate footpath alongside the road. There have long been problems with unauthorised vehicles driving up to the community centre at inappropriate speeds causing issues for pedestrians, although no-one has yet been injured. Requests for drivers to respect the regulations are increasingly ignored. It was proposed that efforts are concentrated on the vehicle barrier which may negate the need for a footpath. This could be considered later if necessary. Two quotes had been received for an automated arm barrier; however, concerns were raised about the potential for this to be damaged. It was agreed to explore other options such as retractable bollards and review at a future meeting.

**FINANCE/2024/14, RESOLVED:**

*To investigate options for an automated vehicle barrier at Tim Parry Recreation Ground to prevent unauthorised access to the community centre. To defer decision on a separate footpath if this is deemed necessary after the barrier installation.*



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**Feb24\_E.** Quote from Little Superstars to provide the summer playschemes in July/August 2024. Approved.

**FINANCE/2024/15, RESOLVED:**

*To engage Little Superstars to provide 6 weeks summer playscheme in July/August 2024 at a cost of £3,600 (LGA 1972 s145).*

**Feb24\_F.** Replacement gate for Hood Lane Community Centre. Three quotes were received (one bespoke quote, two comparable online quotations), £775-790. It was noted that the gate posts may also need replacing and it was agreed to engage All Steel Fencing to manufacture the gate.

**FINANCE/2024/16, RESOLVED:**

*To engage All Steel Fencing to supply a replacement gate for Hood Lane Community Centre, approx. cost £775 +VAT (LG (Misc. Prov.) Act 1976 s19).*

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

Request 1: from new customer for reduced hall hire rates. The customer is not a community organisation but states the group is being run on a not-for-profit basis. The committee does not wish to be unduly harsh but felt it would be unfair to other customers to waive the rules and apply the community rate. It was agreed to offer the business introductory rate for 6 weeks and suggest the group formalise with a constitution and commitment as a not-for-profit organisation.

**FINANCE/2024/17, RESOLVED:**

*To offer the business introductory rate to a guitar group for a period of 6 weeks (LG (Misc. Prov.) Act 1976 s19).*

Request 2: from the Royal Marines Association Corps of Drums for a donation towards a trip to Normandy for the 80<sup>th</sup> D-Day Celebrations. Group to be contacted to ensure some members are residents of the parish to comply with donation rules before a final decision is made.

**10. Budget 2023-24 – to scrutinise documentation, and when satisfied as to correctness to sign off financial reports and bank reconciliations for December.**

The budget monitoring sheets, and bank reconciliation were considered and agreed.

**FINANCE/2024/18, RESOLVED:**

*To accept the bank reconciliation and budget monitoring pages for December 2023 (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 reg 4).*

**11. To authorise payment of wages, tax and ERNIC for January.**

The list of wages to be paid was considered and authorised. Total Employment Costs (including salaries, pensions & HMRC) were £21,673.86.

**FINANCE/2024/19, RESOLVED:**

*To authorise payment of wages and HMRC costs (£21,673.86 total) for February 2024 (LGA 1972 s112).*

