

GARSTANG TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL EXTRA ORDINARY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2020, 7.30pm

Present: Chairman - Cllr Webster

Cllr Allan	✓	Cllr Halford	✓	Cllr Pearson	✓
Cllr Atkinson	✓	Cllr Hynes	✓	Cllr Ryder	✓
Cllr Brooks	✓	Cllr Leech	* no apologies	Cllr Salisbury	* no apologies
Cllr Dyer	* apologies	Cllr Mitchell	✓	Cllr Webster	✓

Also present: Wyre Ward Cllr D Atkins, member of the press, 4 members of the Royal British Legion and 5 members of the public.

123(2020-21) Apologies for absence

Cllr Dyer

Wyre Cllr D Atkins gave County Cllr Shaun Turner's apologies. He was attending a LCC meeting discussing Covid.

124(2020-21) Declaration of Interest

Cllr Webster, Item 4 declared an 'other' interest; Cllr Webster is a dual hatted Wyre Cllr for Brock with Catterall. However, she declared that she is not involved in the decision process of the future of Garstang swimming pool (with Wyre Council or the YMCA).

The meeting was adjourned to allow members of the public to speak.

125(2020-21) Public Participation

The acting Chair of Garstang Swimming Pool Work Group spoke. She thanked the TC for looking into the opening of the swimming pool and for their hard work. The secretary commented that it was reassuring, as a member of the public, the lengths that the TC went into to discuss the issue of opening the pool. He noted that Wyre is the only council when looking at the neighbouring district councils, that does not have a public pool open. The group is going to formally constitute as a group. The group would like to continue to work with the TC in the short and long term.

The Mayor thanked the 2 speakers for their kind comments.

A 3rd member of the public spoke, he understood that Fylde council had paid additional money to the YMCA to get the pool open in Fylde.

126(2020-21) Garstang swimming pool, Cllrs Allan, Dyer, Halford and Webster

The Mayor gave a summary (detailed in the Appendix) of the information that the working group had ascertained. When asked, Cllr Webster reported that no information had been received about redundancies about the swimming pool. Cllr Pearson suggested that the TC should remain in contact with the group and assist where possible. Wyre Cllr Dulcie Atkins, said that it was important that the Town Council attended the Wyre Council meeting on the 21 October 2020 with the YMCA, so that the Town Council knows what is going on. The Clerk responded and asked Cllr Atkins to arrange for an invitation to be sent from Wyre Council, to the TC, to attend the meeting.

Resolved: The Town Council endorsed the working group's recommendation and resolved not to donate £12,000 to Wyre Council, to reopen Garstang pool. The Town Council **further resolved**

that the TC be kept informed of developments from the 'Save Garstang swimming pool' group and that the TC working group bring back any further developments to the Town Council.

127(2020-21) Remembrance Sunday, Clerk, Cllrs Webster & Allan

The meeting was adjourned to allow members of the Royal British Legion (RBL) to speak. David Brewin reported that due to Covid, the RBL were not looking at organising a parade or a church service or arranging the laying of the wreaths due to safety concerns. The poppy appeal is still going ahead.

The Council noted the following statement made by Wyre Council (24/9/20)

Wyre Council is advising that to minimise risk for Wyre Cllrs and members of the public a very cautious and measured approach needs to be taken. They have stated that if Remembrance Service events do take place, then Wyre Council will not be making arrangements for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Members or Officers to attend.

The Council also noted the guidance from the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) (25/09/2020) (The LRF involves the emergency services; local authorities; health agencies; Environment Agency and Maritime Coastguard Agency)

Coronavirus restrictions in place for Lancashire

Taking into account all the regulations and guidance, our advice to the people and businesses of Lancashire is as follows:

- Do not socialise with anyone outside of your household or support bubble, either in your house, garden or anywhere else.

Resolved:

- i. That the Town Council follow the guidance of Wyre Council and do not organise any formal wreath laying ceremony on Remembrance Sunday.
- ii. The Mayor and Young Mayor will informally lay a wreath on behalf of the community of Garstang.
- iii. That the TC initiate discussion with the RBL to discuss a Remembrance Sunday event for 2021.

The Town Council **further resolved** that the TC should communicate through the normal channels of the media, Courier, Green Focus magazine and the TC Facebook page that there will not be an organised event this year for Remembrance Sunday.

The meeting finished at 20.20

Appendix

On 24/9/20, the Mayor received the following statement from Wyre Council.

We discussed the impact of the new lockdown rules at Cabinet and Senior Management Board yesterday.

As part of that we reviewed Leisure and Pool provision.

The optimism that was emanating from YMCA a few weeks ago has not translated into the increase in footfall and thus income that might have been expected.

Income levels at our Leisure Centres have not reached 50% of normal to date, and are lower than forecast after reopening. With that in mind and with the potential impact on confidence caused by the new rules, and the rising infection rates, at this time we would not be considering reopening any pools, even if Garstang Town Council were generous enough to put up a cash contribution, to help their residents who are keen swimmers, to access the pool earlier than might otherwise be the case.

John Cronin from the YMCA will be meeting with us on October 21st and we will review the Leisure provision in Wyre after that.

We are committed to keeping as much Leisure provision as we possibly can, and geographic location of public and private provision, will be a factor to be taken into account.

At the moment we are estimating an unrecoverable loss overall of between £2m and £3m in the current financial year, but that may of course worsen if the pandemic is not slowed down.

The overall loss figure I quote is across the board, not just Leisure. Again, for clarity the usage figure at Garstang Leisure has been ok, better than some other sites.

I don't want anyone to become unduly pessimistic about Garstang. Risking reopening a closed facility at considerable cost, when it may have to be closed again would be a reckless use of public money.

I am happy to arrange for a zoom meeting with your working group in late October or early November, when hopefully the position will be clearer.

In the meantime I wish you and your colleagues all the best and hope you and your residents keep safe.

Kind Regards, Cllr Alan Vincent, Deputy Leader, Wyre Council

The following additional information has been ascertained by the working group.

a) Garry Payne, Chief Executive, Wyre Council 22/9/20

To my knowledge we have not made any formal request to the Town Council for a financial contribution and as for re-opening pools in Wyre (of which we have 3) the YMCA are still collecting data on dry side usage and I am sure you are aware the dry side use subsidises the wet side. The YMCA will be collating the data at the end of this month following which further considerations will be given to re-opening the pools.

b) John Cronin, CEO, YMCA Fylde Coast Head Office, YMCA Fylde Coast 29/9/20

- i. If all things remain constant, the pool is always planning to reopen.
- ii. The issue is reduced operating income as a result of demand and operational constraints. When the pool is open, operational we will attempt to ensure we work on the maximum capacity we can within a safe covid secure environment.
- iii. YMCA have not asked for this money.
- iv. The 630k has not been spent. It is an agreed balance that can accessed to run all the YMCA facilities in agreement with Wyre and cover surrounding running costs, such as rates, insurances etc for the period of closure for all buildings. As the 'dry' side of operations subsidises the 'wet' the decision was made between Wyre and YMCA for pools to stay closed until other operations were in a better position to continue subsidising the pool. Essentially, if Wyre/YMCA thought it was a sensible decision financially to open the pool, they would. What the YMCA do not want to do is open, waste cash then have to close again, then have no money to continue.
- v. If all things remain constant, we are planning to open in January.