

Gressingham Parish Council

Unconfirmed Minutes of the 412th meeting held on 20th July 2026

A meeting of Gressingham Parish Council was held on 20th July 2026 in which the following participated: Martin Brooks (MB) (Chair), Michele Luxon (ML) Neil Read (NR) Sally Riley (SR) Grant Parker (GP), Lesley Lee (LL).

412/1 Apologies for absence

No apologies.

412/2 Declarations of Interest

There were no initial declarations of interest.

412/3 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th May 2026 were approved for signature by the Chair.

412/4 Matters arising from previous minutes (not covered elsewhere)

NR asked about response from the Highways Dept. regarding various issues. We are unable to contact the Highways Dept. directly now but we sent our queries via Councillor Shaun Crimmins and a reply was received. MB will forward this to NR.

412/5 Leonard Metcalfe was invited to the meeting following the City Council's refusal of his latest planning application. Unfortunately, Leonard was unable to attend although the invitation remains open.

Councillors reviewed the processes followed when considering this recent planning application and confirmed that the PC had adhered to its Code of Conduct and the criteria set out through the National Planning Policy Framework and Lancaster City Council Planning department. It is important to emphasise that the Parish Council is asked to **express an opinion** on any submitted planning applications but that Lancaster City Council Planning department **makes the final decision** on applications based upon responses from statutory consultees, other interested parties and its own investigations and review of each submission.

Residents who are considering submitting a planning application may, if they choose, discuss aspects of their plans with PC members **prior** to application. In addition, when asked to comment by the City Council on planning applications, councillors may wish to seek clarification of residents'

plans prior to submitting their comments. Councillors agreed that in future, where residents did request prior discussion, a minimum of two Councillors should visit.

412/6 Finance and Governance

a) Expenditure for discussion. 2026/27 in year financial statement to 20th July 2026 for approval.

LL discussed the Excel spreadsheets for May and June as well as the Budget monitoring sheet. The bank balance is £9768.35. After the reserve, admin and operating costs are deducted, there is a contingency

fund of £3236 plus a pot of £1867 for grants and donations to village organisations, societies and activities.

RESOLVED: Proposed SR, Seconded NR.

b) 2025/26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return Update.

Everything was published, as required, and submitted to the External Auditors by the 1st July deadline. No correspondence has been received to date.

c) 2026 Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of this meeting are available on the PC website. MB gave a brief report from the minutes for the benefit of the Councillor.

d) Monitoring against Annual Governance Cycle

It was noted that all actions had been carried out at the required times and included in relevant agendas and minutes. NR suggested that the 'Plague Stone' check should be carried out twice a year and added to the cycle.

412/7 Gressingham and Eskrigge Community Emergency Plan (CEP)

It was noted that no action had been necessary since the May meeting.

412/8 Police and Crime/Neighbourhood Watch

There is nothing to report.

412/9 Planning and Tree Works

- a)** No new applications have been received from the City Council.
- b)** MB discussed the new layout for the Unitary Authorities. It was agreed that this is the best possible outcome for Gressingham, as Lancaster will be linked in with the Ribble Valley and Preston. The new authorities will come into existence on 1.4.2028 with elections for Councillors May 2027.
- c)** Some trees in the village are looking a little unsafe and we need to keep an eye on them.

412/10 Roads and Traffic

a) Traffic issues and road safety (including SpID update)

It was noted that both SpIDs were operating satisfactorily.

b) Road fault reports

Nothing has been reported.

412/11 Amenities and facilities and Environment

Defibrillator

SR reported the defibrillator is working well. The current battery level is 49%.

White Bridges Update.

The Ford is still in need of repair. Quotes are being obtained and will hopefully be available soon. The area needs clearing again but this time we need to consider the wildflowers that grow on the patch under what was Anthony's barn wall for Greener Gressingham.

Gressingham Village Trust (GVT)

The flat above the OSR:

Two single glazed windows and the front door will be replaced.

A plumber has been organised to fit a new bathroom.

Another joiner has been engaged to carry out assorted internal jobs such as kitchen alterations, fitting new internal doors and the creation of a new doorway between two rooms.

A work party has been set up for Monday 27th July to commence removing carpets, stripping wallpaper etc.

Currently, as a rental property an EPC rating of C should be the target, but there is an exemption if, after spending £10,000, this target cannot be achieved.

The cost of the renovations is likely to exceed £25,000.

Greener Gressingham

A group of residents (Rosie, Michelle, Jane and Sally) have been working hard to put a 22 page application together for a Grant from the Forest of Bowland for rare species and swifts. £1380 towards 25 Swift boxes and calling systems. Also, money towards the orchard project.

Some verges and the churchyard are thought to contain important species of wildflower and grasses. Alice is working on doing a survey of these areas with a view to producing a management plan.

The Parish Council has agreed to donate £300 towards the purchase of trees and £250 towards the Swift boxes

Gressingham Village Archive update.

The launch will take place on 18th September in the OSR. Frank Waring will talk about 5 significant maps, etc. He has very kindly donated a scanner to the Archive. Kelly Wiseman has been working on scanning many documents and old parish magazines. A payment will be made to her for this work when complete. NR has done a fantastic job in compiling the information and producing the website. Christine Grieve has kindly donated tea and coffee takings (approximately £68) from the Craft evenings to the Archive. LL will pay into the bank account.

406/12

Any other business

MB will contact John Hamlett to put the information regarding the new Unitary Authorities on the Gress for the residents. It was also suggested to put on the Gress a reminder not to light bonfires at the moment as everywhere is so dry.

406/13

Date of next meeting

Monday 28th September 2026 was agreed as the date of next meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Note: these minutes are unconfirmed until ratified by the next meeting of Gressingham Parish Council.