

Gressingham Parish Council

Unconfirmed Minutes of the of the 411th meeting held on 18th May 2026

A meeting of Gressingham Parish Council was held on 18th May 2026 in which the following participated: Martin Brooks (MB) (Chair), Grant Parker (GP) Neil Read (NR) and Sally Riley (SR) plus the Clerk Lesley Lee (LL).

411/1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Michele Luxon.

411/2 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair and confirmation of Clerk and RFO

Martin Brooks was re-elected as chair and Michele Luxon as vice-chair respectively with Lesley Lee continuing the role of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. Acceptance of Office declarations were completed.

RESOLVED:

- i. (proposed SR, seconded GP): to elect Martin Brooks as Chair for 2026/2027 and*
- ii. (proposed NR, seconded GP) to elect Michele Luxon as Vice-Chair for 2026/27.*

411/3 Declarations of Interest

There were no initial declarations of interest

411/4 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30th March 2026 were approved for signature by the Chair

411/5 Matters arising from previous minutes (not covered elsewhere)

None were raised

411/6 Finance and Governance

a) Final Accounts to 31st March 2026

The accounts to 31st March 2026 were approved.

RESOLVED: Proposed MB, Seconded GP.

b) 2025/26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

i) Certificate of Exemption

As discussed and agreed at the meeting on 30th March 2026 the PC now formally confirmed that it would submit to the External Auditors a Certificate of Exemption from undergoing a limited assurance review as all the criteria for doing so were met, i.e.

- total gross income and expenditure was below £25K; **and**
- the external auditor had not issued any of the following during the 2024/25AGAR process: public interest report/statutory recommendation/advisory notice/judicial review/application to court re an unlawful item of account **and**
- the relevant financial year (2025/26) was not one of the first three years of the PC's existence.

RESOLVED (proposed SR, seconded NR): that Gressingham Parish Council should submit the Certificate of Exemption to the external auditors after it had

been signed by the Chair and Clerk and prior to the submission deadline of 1st July 2026. Action MB/LL

ii) 2025/26 Internal Audit Report

Members reviewed and accepted the report of the internal auditor (Kathryn Parker) noting that she had made no specific recommendations and had completed and signed the Internal Audit report on p4 of the AGAR Part 2. PC members expressed their thanks to Ms. Parker..

RESOLVED (proposed MB, seconded SR): to accept the 2025/26 internal audit report.

iii) 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement

PC members reviewed the Annual Governance Statement on p5 of Section 1 of the AGAR Part 2 and agreed that the PC had acted in accordance with the statements set out in boxes 1-9, noting:

- the processes for the control of finances applied throughout the year and monitored at every meeting;
- that monitoring against the Annual Governance Cycle was done at every meeting of the PC;
- the record in the minutes of the above actions.

RESOLVED (proposed NR, seconded SR):

i) to confirm that appropriate financial control had been duly exercised during 2025/26;

ii) to approve the 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement for signature by the chair and the Clerk. Action: MB/LL

iv) 2025/26 Accounting Statement

PC members reviewed the Accounting Statement on p6 of the AGAR Part 2, noting that it had been signed by the Clerk (as Responsible Financial Officer) **before** the meeting (as required). The PC had also received the 2025/256accounts spreadsheet (for reference) together with the bank reconciliation and statement of variances (for approval).

RESOLVED (proposed SR, seconded MB):

i) to approve the 2025/26 Accounting Statement for signature by the Chair;

ii) to approve the Bank Reconciliation Statement;

ii) to approve the explanation of variances.

v) Dates for the Exercise of Public Rights

Members agreed the period during which members of the public would be able to inspect the 2025/26 accounts and AGAR documents, noting that (as required) notice of this period would be published by the Clerk.

RESOLVED (proposed SR, seconded MB): that the period for the exercise of public rights should run for a period of 30 working days from Wednesday 3rd June 2026 to Tuesday 14th July 2026 including, as required, the first 10 working days of July and that the Clerk should publish the required documentation on the web-site in advance of this date. Action: MB/LL

c) Annual PC Report to 31 March 2026

MB ran through the report and drew attention to the main items. It was agreed to approve the report as a record of the preceding year's work.

d) 2026/27 in-year financial position as at 18th May 2026 and the budget monitoring for 2026/27

The Unity Trust account balance as at 18th May 2026 is £10010.70.

The PC has previously agreed to maintain a general reserve of £4000 for 2026/27.

As previously agreed when the 2026/27 was set on 19th January 2026:

£1600 will be needed for administrative and operating costs,

£250 to cover the SpID and defibrillator routine running costs,

£2293 has been allocated for a general contingency fund (e.g. SpIDs,

defibrillator, salt bins) and

£1867 has been allocated for Section 137 expenditure of which £400

is usually donated to the GVT to cover OSR room booking costs,

leaving £1467 for other projects that will benefit as many parish

residents as possible.

The payments for powering the two SpIDs are now due. These

payments will be issued shortly via the bank account as normal.

RESOLVED (proposed GP, seconded MB):

i) to approve the 2026/27 financial statement to 18th May 2026 and that the chair and another Councillor should sign the statement;

ii) to maintain a reserve of £4000 during 2026/27.

iii) to authorise expenditure as set out above. Action: MB/LL

e) Register of Interests

Members were reminded of the need to notify the Clerk of any changes to Pecuniary Interests.

f) 2026 Annual Parish Meeting

It was noted that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held at 7.00pm on 26^h May 2026 in the garden at Gressingham Hall.

g) 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. The Cycle had been updated following the new Financial Management Policy

411/7 Gressingham and Eskrigge Community Emergency Plan (CEP)

It was noted that no action had been needed since the March meeting.

It was observed that when we needed sandbags recently to prevent flooding no one looked at the CEP to see where they are situated.

411/8 Police and Crime/Neighbourhood Watch

Nothing to report.

411/9 Planning and Tree Works

The Clerk reported that one new application for consultation had been received from the City Council Planning Office since the last meeting of the PC in March.

26/00398/AD – Fleets Farm – Agricultural determination for erection of agricultural storage building.

The PC had previously discussed this application by email and had no objection in principle but was concerned that the covered walkway could be used for both agricultural and equestrian purposes. This application has subsequently been refused by Lancaster City Council.

411/10

Roads and Traffic

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

- i. It was noted that both SpIDs were operating satisfactorily;
- ii. It was noted that an email had been sent to Councillor Crimmins, as we were unable to send anything directly to the Highways department regarding concerns with various highway issues. We had a speedy response with replies on the following concerns; Potholes – some had been repaired. Gulleys and Drains – there is an ongoing program of clearing them Road Sweeper – They do come every few months but only clear some of Fall Kirk. Road Closure Signs – They are unable to customise road closure signs to explain where the actual closure is taking place.
- iii. United Utilities have at long last filled in the potholes at the top of Fall Kirk.

411/11

Amenities and facilities

a) Defibrillator

SR reported that the battery is at 50% which should last through the winter.

b) White Bridges path

Following the excess rain the sets have been damaged and need repairing. A work party could be organised to repair them in the drier months or we could get quotes to repair them. MB to investigate further.

c) Gressingham Village Trust (GVT) / Greener Gressingham

Encouraging Swifts to return to nest in the village.

SR explained what would be needed to achieve this. We need to see if there is enough enthusiasm from villagers and for someone to lead this. We can ask at the Annual Parish meeting next week. Boxes would need to be purchased and calling systems to encourage the swifts into the boxes. The boxes also need to be near to each other. The Parish Council would be happy to support this project financially.

Grant application for £300 for the community orchard.

An application has been received for fruit trees etc. for the new orchard. This was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED: Proposed: MB Seconded NR

d) Village history project

SR informed the meeting that the website is moving on now. People's properties and photos have been uploaded. Could do with more. Transport and Community section is now complete as are various other items. There is to be a presentation and launch on Friday 18th September. On this date will be a talk by Frank Waring with maps from 1804 including enclosure maps and land usage. Another presentation will take place on Friday 13th November which will include World War 2 Gressingham resident's information.

Scanning of quite a number of various documents is required by a volunteer. Possibly purchasing a scanner from the Grant money.

411/12

An email was received for the PC from David Wiper regarding a missing /damaged stile on Rabbit Lane, which was discussed at the meeting.

The PC noted that public rights of way must not be blocked and although the stile has been removed, the public footpath has not been obstructed at any time. The PC understands that the landowner intends to install a new stile and gate in due course.

A reply will be sent to David Wiper from the Clerk.

411/13

The Clerk informed the PC of various emails from Lancashire CC she had received recently.

It was also noted that a councillor had been copied into an email communication between two residents regarding a disagreement over a recently approved planning permission within the village. The PC decided that no action would be taken at this time.

Date of next meeting

Monday 27th July 2026 was agreed as the date of next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Lesley Lee
Clerk to Gressingham Parish Council

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