

Gressingham Parish Council

Unconfirmed Minutes of the of the 398th
meeting
held on 25th March 2024

A meeting of Gressingham Parish Council was held on 25th March 2024 in which the following members participated: Martin Brooks (MB) (Chair), Grant Parker (GP), Sally Riley (SR)) plus the Clerk, Lesley Wareing (LW). Parishioner Christine Grieve was in attendance throughout.

398/1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Michele Luxon and Neil Read.

398/2 Declarations of Interest

There were no initial declarations of interest.

398/3 Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd January 2024 were approved for signature by the Chair.

398/4 Matters arising from previous minutes (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

None were raised.

398/5 Finance and Governance

a) Financial statement to 25th March 2024.

It was noted that

- the current account balance was £4795.70
- after deducting the £1000 Lancashire County Council footpath maintenance grant, the £2500 reserve and the bill for the two new email addresses there would be a total of £1245.70 remaining to spend or carry forward;

It was agreed that an additional £500 should be carried forward and added to the £2500 reserve to increase it to £3000 for 2024/25, in line with recommended practice. This left £745.70 available for expenditure. The PCC considered the following funding needs:

- a grant towards the cost of a new church lawnmower;
- a grant towards the cost of a Gressingham & Eskrigge village history archive website;
- possible additional expenses for the power supply to the east end SpID;
- possible expenditure on the defibrillator (currently in the USA for repair);
- the purchase of a new traffic mirror for the junction of Tenter Hill and Fall Kirk;
- the cost of repairing dilapidated stiles.

After discussion it was agreed to:

- set up a PC working party, chaired by SR, to investigate ways, means and costs of setting up a village history website;

- make a one-off grant of £100 to the PCC towards the cost of a new churchyard lawnmower (the PC recorded its thanks to Grant Parker for his very generous offer to make a personal donation of £180 to the PCC towards the new lawnmower);
- carry forward the remaining £645.70 with £500 to be earmarked for the new village history archive start-up costs and the balance to be added to the 2024/25 contingency fund for a possible traffic mirror purchase, possible SpID expenses, defibrillator and stile repair costs; these items to be considered at the May meeting when more information would be available.

RESOLVED:

- i) **to approve the accounts to 25th March 2024 and that the chair should sign the financial statement;**
 - ii) **to maintain a reserve of £3000 for 2024/25;**
 - ii) **to authorise expenditure as set out above.**
(Proposed: MB, seconded SR) Action: LW
- b) Final 2023/24 accounts to 31st March 2024**
It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the final accounts to 31st March 2024 for formal approval in early April. **Action: LW**
- c) Insurance Policy Renewal**
It was reported that the premium for 2024/25 had been paid and the policy renewed.
- d) 2024/25 Precept**
As agreed at the January meeting the 2024/25 Precept had been set at £3800 and the form had been submitted to the City Council by the deadline. The Precept would be paid into the PC bank account in early April.
- e) 2023/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**
The Clerk reported that on 18th March she had received email instructions for the 2023/24 review which looked to be similar to the previous year. The PC had not been selected as part of the random 5% sample required to undergo an intermediate audit so the PC would again be able to submit a Certificate of Exemption to the external auditors. Once the 2022/23 accounts had been finalised and approved (via email) the Clerk would arrange for the internal audit to take place as soon as possible (Andrea Lumb has agreed to do this). This would be the first stage of the annual review process. Once the internal audit has been completed the PC will then need to approve all the documentation and the Certificate of Exemption submitted to the external auditors by the 3rd July 2023 deadline.
RESOLVED: that a Certificate of Exemption should be submitted for the 2022/23 AGAR. (Proposed: MB, seconded SR) Action: LW
- f) New email domain update**
The Clerk reported that two new email addresses had been created, one for the chair and one for the clerk. The PC now had, as required, an independent email domain for which it was responsible.
- g) Data Protection Privacy Statement**
This had now been completed and would be posted on the PC website as soon as possible. **Action: LW**
- h) Model Financial Regulations**
It was noted that these would be brought to the May meeting of the PC for formal adoption for the new financial year.
- i) PC grant application form.**

Following discussion and outline approval at the November meeting this had been finalised.

j) PC Annual Report

It was agreed that the Clerk would draft the annual report in consultation with the Chair to be presented to the May meeting of the PC and then to the Annual Parish Meeting in late May. **Action: LW/MB**

k) Annual Parish Meeting

It was agreed to hold the meeting in late May following the same format as in 2022 and 2023. The Clerk and the Chair would liaise with the chair of Gressingham Village Trust. It was agreed to include a village history website on the agenda. **Action: LW/MB**

l) 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.

398/6 Gressingham and Eskrigge Community Emergency Plan (CEP)

NR had completed a rolling review of the CEP over the preceding few months and it is therefore up to date and fit for purpose.

398/7 Police and Crime reports update

The PC continues to be concerned about reports of several recent thefts of agricultural equipment from farms around the Lune Valley.

398/8 Planning and Tree Works

It was noted that now new applications had been received for comment since the 22nd January meeting and that all applications previously considered had now been determined and already noted by the PC

398/9 Road maintenance and traffic (including SpIDs)

a) Traffic issues and road safety concerns

It was noted that:

- NR the 20mph speed limit application had been turned down for a second time; further discussion of this and data from the west end SpID was needed at the May meeting;
- a new "Slow Down, Save Lives" sign had been erected by the church in addition to the new high-viz 30mph signs in Rabbit Lane.
- an invitation to join the Community Road Watch scheme had been received and that SR would investigate further; **Action: SR**
- the start of the Fall Kirk road works closure had been postponed until 8th April and would last until 17th May 2024. "Unsuitable for HGV" signs have been put in all the places requested except the Rabbit Lane/Fall Kirk junction in the village; additional signs on the Carnfoth-Kirkby Lonsdale road either side of the Fall Kirk junction would be useful; **Action LW**
- The Clerk had been to Stone Cottage to try and work out exactly where the new drain to catch run off from the field opposite should be located. More investigations to be carried out. **Action: MB/LW**

b) SpIDS

It was noted that a new power source for the east end SpID is to be set up in the near future. Equipment has already been purchased but there may be further expenses.

c) Road fault reports

The faults shown on the LoveCleanStreets website were noted but there was no information available as to status or progress.

398/10

Amenities and facilities

a) Lancashire Co Council footpath clearance grants

The 2023/24 grant of £500 was finally paid on 21st March 2024.

This, plus the £500 for 2022/23 gives £1000 in total for footpath maintenance which would be completed as soon as possible.

b) White Bridges path (and other footpath clearance and maintenance)

It was reported that the pathway and bridges were currently in good order. A working party to clear weeds and overgrown trees and shrubs might be needed over the summer.

c) Litter Pick

A litter pick organised by Tim Millar had been held on Saturday 2nd March 2024 and had been well supported. The PC recorded its thanks to Tim Millar, Alice Helyar and all the volunteers.

d) Defibrillator update

SR reported that the defibrillator was in the US for repair and a report was awaited. As previously reported, the cabinet supplier had suggested that there was nothing wrong with the cabinet and that more silicone sealant might be needed. **Action: SR**

e) Greener Gressingham update.

The bat and bird box project, funded by the Lancashire County Council Biodiversity grant plus a donation from the PC had been very successful. Over 50 bird boxes and 16 bat boxes had been constructed and were ready for installation around the village. The PC recorded its particular thanks to Martin Brooks, Stuart Piner and Frances Hamlett and also to all the people who had attended the construction workshop.

f) PTWG update.

MB reported that repairs to the OSR were to be undertaken later in 2024 or early in 2025 and that estimates for damp-proofing and energy-saving insulation were being obtained.

398/11

Correspondence received (not covered elsewhere)

The Clerk had just received a letter from Lancaster City Council about a new "Civility Pledge" and would bring details to the May meeting of the PC.

398/12

Date of next meeting

Monday 20th May 2024 was agreed for the annual meeting of the PC meeting at which a chair and vice-chair would need to be elected.

It was also agreed to organise the Annual Parish Meeting in the week commencing 27th May 2024. **Action LW/MB**

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