

**Minutes of the Gressingham Annual Parish Meeting
held on Wednesday 24th May 2023
at Gressingham Hall**

Present: Martin Brooks(Chair), Nigel Bottomley, Lib Cottam, Christine Grieve, John Hamlett, Alice Helyar, Moyra Jacques, Jon Laughton, Mary McClements, Jane Paxman, Neil Read , Michelle Skinner, Lesley Wareing (note-taker),
Apologies were received from Charlie Lewis, Sally Riley, Lynne Rowling, Rosie Smith. Louise Stevens, Glen Stevens.

1. Preliminaries

The chair of Gressingham Parish Council, Martin Brooks (MB), outlined the purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting (which is open to everyone registered on the electoral roll in Gressingham Civil Parish) and explained that in accordance with established convention, the chair of the PC would chair the meeting and the Clerk to the PC, Lesley Wareing would take the minutes.

2. 2022 Gressingham Annual Parish Meeting minutes and matters arising

- a) The minutes of the 2022 Gressingham Annual Parish Meeting - which had been circulated following the 2022 meeting via TinyLetter and posted both on the Gressingham village notice-board and on the Gressingham PC website – were noted.
- b) Martin Brooks reported that the old village marquee had been given away - as had been agreed at the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting. The possibility of purchasing a new village marquee was discussed but not supported. However, it was agreed that the Fellowship should explore the idea of buying series of modular gazebos or an awning for the OSR courtyard.

3. Gressingham Village Trust (GVT)

a) Confirmation of Trustees

The chair reminded the meeting that the Gressingham Annual Parish Meeting oversees the appointment of the GVT trustees.

Under its current constitution, the GVT needs seven trustees. Three are ex-officio appointments (the Vicar of Gressingham or nominee, and the two Gressingham churchwardens or, in the absence of churchwardens, up to two individuals to be appointed by the Gressingham Parochial Church Council). The other four trustees are appointed by the Gressingham Annual Parish Meeting. It was reported that:

- the three *ex-officio* trustees are currently:
Vicar of Gressingham: **Lucie Lunn**
Gressingham Churchwarden: vacancy
Gressingham PCC appointee: **Louise Stevens**
- the *appointed* trustees are::
John Hamlett to 2024
Rosie Smith to 2025
Martin Brooks to 2026
Jane Paxman to May 2023

It was noted that:

- the new Vicar, Lucie Lunn, had agreed to serve as a trustee;
- that the PCC would need to decide how it wishes to proceed in relation to the vacant Churchwarden position and the GVT trustee related to this position;
- the term of office of **Jane Paxman** expired on the date of the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting (i.e. on 24th May 2023) but she was willing to serve a further four-year term until May 2027. Her reappointment was **proposed by Martin Brooks and seconded by Christine Grieve.**

It was agreed unanimously:

- that Jane Paxman should be reappointed as a trustee of the GVT for a further four-year period until May 2027;***
- that the chair of the GVT would ask the PCC to consider how it wished to proceed in respect of the trustee position related to the vacant Churchwarden post;***
- that the chair of the GV would talk to the new Vicar in general terms about the three ex-officio positions.***

Action JP.

b) Pearson Trust Working Group Report (PTWG).

The chair of PTWG, Jane Paxman reported that it had continued to explore funding possibilities to convert Gressingham Church for use both as a place of worship and a social centre for Gressingham.

Unfortunately, the 2022 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had been rejected. Competition for such a large grant was very keen and the Gressingham project was considered to be “capital heavy” and to involve insufficient numbers of people from the wider community in the actual process - on which the HLF seemed to focus much more than on the end result.

Sadly there seemed to be no way forward along this route. Jane Paxman had spoken to Sir Nick Pearson who had confirmed his ongoing commitment to Gressingham. It was reported that the new Vicar also has some suggestions about possible sources of funding and support for the church.

Neil Read proposed a vote of thanks to Jane Paxman and other members of the PTWG for all the hard work they had undertaken on behalf of the village and JP thanked the PCC and the PC for the help they had given. She noted that as a result of all the work done, the Church now had a very comprehensive set of up-to-date surveys.

c) Old School Room (OSR)

Martin Brooks reported that he had been able to secure a £200 reduction in the annual premium for the OSR insurance policy by agreeing to produce and maintain training records for employees and volunteers who worked in the building. A Volunteer Training Document had been drawn up by John Hamlett and copies were studied by all those present. A copy has also been attached to the notice board within the OSR. In addition to the training records, other records are also being maintained and constantly updated e.g. electrical & fire testing, health & safety and building maintenance.

It was noted that the GVT Trustees would be considering how best to proceed with trying to fund maintenance and repair work to the fabric of the building.

3. Gressingham Parish Council report

MB ran through the written report which is available on the Parish Council website: www.gressinghampc.org.uk highlighting the following:

- membership and meeting arrangements, noting that the following people had been re-elected on 4th May 2023 to serve until 2027:

Martin Brooks (chair)

Michele Luxon (vice-chair)

Grant Parker

Neil Read

Sally Riley

and that **Lesley Wareing** would continue as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer;

- the availability of agendas, minutes and other information on the PC website
- the PC finances (including the 2023/24 Precept), noting that the PC was now responsible for more equipment maintenance and (potential) replacement costs than had previously been the case;
- the continuance of the Community Emergency Plan for the village
- the planning applications considered including the successful objections to the Story Homes application to build 76 houses in Hornby near the Pointer junction, for which particular thanks to **Sally Riley** and her sister were recorded for the work they had done;
- road safety and traffic issues including
 - concerns about the increase in the volume and speed of traffic along Fall Kirk and the application to be made for a 20mph speed limit
 - the two operative Speed Indicator Devices - for which thanks to **Neil Read** were recorded
 - the positioning of traffic mirrors at dangerous junctions
 - the requested new road signs for Rabbit Lane
- road maintenance including blocked and damaged grids and drains
- the state of the footpath and bridges between Fall Kirk and Back Lane (White Bridges)
- public footpath clearance work and stile maintenance and replacement, for which thanks to **Martin Brooks** were recorded, noting that a further County Council grant was available for more work in 2023
- Litter Picks, for which thanks to **David Wiper** for organising were recorded
- maintenance of the village defibrillator for which thanks to **Sally Riley** were recorded.

During discussion of the various issues it was requested that the PC should continue to pursue Lancashire County Council about road safety and road maintenance issues. Specifically the PC was requested to email the County Council about the traffic lights on Fall Kirk (by the minor landslip near Moor Garth) which had been in position for several weeks although no repair work had yet been carried out.

There was support for the PC supplementing the County Council footpath maintenance grant of £500 by contributing towards the costs of maintaining the 29 footpath stiles in the parish. It was also noted that the County Council Biodiversity grant of £300 would be spent on a community project (led by **Frances Hamlett** and

Stuart Piner) to build and erect bird nesting boxes, bat boxes and insect houses in appropriate sites around the parish.

4. Report from the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

It was noted that **Mary McClements** had retired from being Churchwarden after many years of service for which grateful thanks were recorded. It was noted that the PCC would now have to appoint a replacement and also nominate someone to the vacant GVT trustee position. It was also noted that the PCC would be considering how best to proceed with trying to fund maintenance and repair work to the fabric of the Church.

5. Gressingham Fellowship

John Hamlett reported that the Fellowship had managed to organise several events over the past year and outlined upcoming events during this summer.

6. Comments and questions from those in attendance

No further business was raised and the chair closed the meeting.

Lesley Wareing
Clerk to Gressingham PC
19th May 2023