

Gressingham Parish Council

Unconfirmed Minutes of the 409th meeting held on 19th January 2026

A meeting of Gressingham Parish Council was held on 19th January 2026 in which the following members participated: Martin Brooks (MB) (Chair), Michele Luxon (ML), Grant Parker (GP), Sally Riley (SR), plus the Clerk, Lesley Lee (LL).

409/1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Neil Read.

409/2 Declarations of Interest

There were no initial declarations of interest.

409/3 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th November 2025 were approved for signature by the Chair after a minor amendment on Page 3.

409/4 Matters arising from previous minutes (not covered elsewhere on the agenda) No additional matters were raised.

409/5 Finance and Governance

a) 2025/26 in-year financial position as at 19th January 2026 for approval.

It was noted that current bank balance is **£6791.38**.

Members discussed known and possible expenditure and income during the remainder of the financial year to 31st March 2026. The approximate balance remaining after VAT refunds have been received will be £2534 + the Reserve figure. It was suggested that we should regularly work out the percentages of spending against the precept figure to monitor our efficiency.

RESOLVED:

- i) ***to approve the financial reports to 19th January 2026 and 24th November 2025 and that the chair should sign the financial statements. (Proposed MB, Seconded ML)***

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that monthly Bank Fees had been Increased from £6 to £7.

b) Insurance Policy Renewal

It was noted that the renewal premium of £214 will be due in mid February 2026 and the Clerk was asked to arrange payment. **Action: LL**

c) 2026/27 Budget and Precept

The PC considered the budget estimate for 2026/27 noting that it had not previously come to a decision on the Precept figure at the meeting on 24th November 2025. During discussion it was **agreed** that:

- as the PC needed to maintain a reserve equivalent to its annual expenditure, the reserve could be increased from £3500 to £4000 for 2026/27;

- that the Clerk's remuneration needed to be increased in line with what the PC had agreed in January 2023 i.e. that the Clerk's remuneration needed to be increased incrementally each year to keep it within the recommended National Local Government Service Pay Scales. The Clerk had been asked to provide approximate hours worked since starting and after consultation with other Parish Clerks it was agreed to pay LC1, Salary Point 5, which is the lowest point. This means that we need to increase the Clerk's remuneration to £1000 p.a. for this year and to check with hours worked next year and adjust accordingly;
- operating costs for 2026/27 (including Clerk's remuneration, the insurance premium, LALC membership, website and email fees, stationery, Bank Fees, Microsoft Annual costs, routine SpID and defibrillator running costs) would be £1843, (i.e. 44.40% of the total budget);
- there would be a contingency fund of £1000 to cover the cost of any exceptional expenditure relating to the two SpIDs and a defibrillator (over and above the annual routine operating and maintenance costs) plus any salt bin or traffic mirror replacement costs and/or external audit fees and election expenses;
- £1419 would be available for Section 137 expenditure (grants and purchases for the benefit of the community) including the £400 to the GVT to cover the costs of OSR room hire for village events and activities.

It was **agreed** that the proposed budget of **£4150** would cover all regular annual operating costs, allow for adequate reserves and contingency funds, keep in line with Annual Inflation (approx. 3.5%) and also provide for Section 137 expenditure on projects and amenities that would benefit as many residents as possible.

RESOLVED: to approve the budget estimates and to set the Precept for 2026/27 at £4150 (proposed MB, seconded SR). Action MB/LL (to submit Precept request to the City Council before the 31st January deadline).

It was also **agreed** to increase the Clerk's remuneration to £1000 p.a. (Proposed MB, Seconded GP)

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

This will be completed alongside the Internal Audit (**Action: LL**)

e) Annual Review of GPC effectiveness.

The PC reviewed its activity over the previous year noting that it had:

- carried out thorough and considered responses to planning applications;
- monitored road faults and road safety issues and had communicated with the County Council;

- had continued to support two SpID devices and a defibrillator on behalf of the village and to maintain road safety traffic mirrors;
- had supplemented County Council gritting and salting arrangements;
- had continued to review the governance procedures and update required documentation;
- had funded and supported amenities and activities of benefit to the community including donating £1000 to the new OSR roof.
- Completed a litter pick and clean up of the White Bridges Area.

It was agreed that the Clerk and the Chair should draft an annual report for presentation to the Annual meeting of the PC in May and thence to the Annual Parish Meeting. Action LL /MB

f) 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.

g) Model Financial Regulations

The Clerk has looked over and amended as necessary; this will now be passed to SR for further scrutiny.

409/6 Gressingham and Eskrigge Community Emergency Plan (CEP)

The CEP has been updated by NR and copies handed out to relevant PC members.

The new CEP was accepted and agreed by all PC members present. NR would now send copy of the updated CEP (with personal data redacted) to the City Council (**Action: NR**)

409/7 Police and Crime reports update

Two quad bikes had been stolen locally and one had driven through Gressingham. The Police had called on residents with door cameras to see if they could obtain any evidence.

409/8 Planning and Tree Works

25/01246/FUL:

High Dam Farm. Another attempt for planning permission but not heard anything.

25/0273/TCA

Gressingham Hall – 3 Trees to be felled, no objections. Not heard any more yet.

409/9 Road Maintenance, safety and traffic

a) Traffic issues and road safety concerns (including SpIDs and traffic mirrors)

It was noted that both devices were functioning correctly.

b) Road fault reports; Love Clean Streets app doesn't always work!

- c) Large pothole on way out of Fall Kirk reported and water still seeping out onto the lane outside Gressingham Hall. Looks like it could eventually subside. **MB** will take a look at both.

There will be a road closure on Fall Kirk from Valley Cottage to Silverhill from 27th January 8.30am. to 29th January 16.00pm., for United Utilities.

409/10 Amenities and facilities

a) Defibrillator

It was noted that the new (better insulated and better heated) defibrillator cabinet is amazing! The battery level is 58%. New defibrillator pads will not be needed until February 2027.

b) White Bridges path update.

GP will power wash now all the leaves have fallen.

c) OSR/GVT update.

MB reported that:

The new roof is now complete. All gutters have been repaired and painted.

Next GVT meeting will be in early May.

409/11 The Clerk mentioned a few items sent via email:
A budget survey from Councillor Crimmins.
A new LIVE gritting app now available from Lancashire CC.
An update on the shake up of the Unitary Authorities.

409/12 History Website archive is slow. Email soon to be sent out for more information from residents.

409/13 Date of next meeting

Monday 30th March 2026 was agreed as the date of next meeting. This would allow the PC to agree the 2025/26 final accounts for submission to the internal auditor.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

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

Lesley Lee – Clerk to Gressingham Parish Council.

19th January 2026.