

Gressingham Parish Council

Unconfirmed Minutes of the 410th
meeting
held on 30th March 2026

A meeting of Gressingham Parish Council was held on 30th March 2026 in which the following members participated: Martin Brooks (MB) (Chair), Michelle Luxon (ML), Grant Parker (GP), Sally Riley (SR)), Lesley Lee (LL) (Clerk)

County Councillor Shaun Crimmins was in attendance.

410/1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Neil Read.

410/2 Declarations of Interest

There were no initial declarations of interest.

410/3 Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th January were confirmed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

410/4 Matters arising from previous minutes (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

None.

410/5 Finance and Governance

a) Financial statement to 30th March 2026.

It was reported that the end of year balance at 30th March 2026 was £6165.38 with a payment of £85.88 not yet included making a carried forward total of £6079.83.

It was noted that:

£3500 of the £6079.83 is the agreed reserve.

the unspent amount remaining at 30th March 2026 is £2579.83,

The PC agreed at the meeting on 19th January 2026 that the reserve should be increased to £4000 for 2026/27.

It was also noted that the 2026/27 precept of £4150 will be paid in to the bank account shortly after 1st April 2026. This will give an opening balance for the 2026/27 Financial Year of ~ £10229 of which:

- £4000 will be kept in reserve
- £1000 will be ringfenced for the Clerks' remuneration.
- £959 will be spent on administrative and operating costs.
- £170 on recurrent and facilities expenses.
- Up to £1867 on Section 137 items.
- Leaving £2233 + £121.53 VAT Refund for contingency funds or any other suggested expenditure. (See 410/10).

RESOLVED:

- i) to approve the accounts to 30th March 2026 and that the chair should sign the financial statement.**
- ii) to maintain a reserve of £4000 for 2026/27**
- iii) to authorise expenditure as set out above.**
(Proposed: MB, seconded ML) Action: LL

b) 2025/256 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

It was reported that the Clerk had recently received email instructions for the 2025/26 review which looked to be similar to the previous year. The PC has not been selected so far 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. Now that the 2025/26 accounts have been finalised and approved the Clerk will arrange for the internal audit to take place as soon as possible (Kathryn Parker 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 at its May meeting so that the Certificate of Exemption can be submitted to the external auditors by the 1st July 2026 deadline.

RESOLVED: that a Certificate of Exemption should be submitted for the 2025/26 AGAR. (Proposed: MB, seconded ML) Action: LL

c) Financial Regulations

The draft Financial Regulations were attached to the minutes for all to view, several points were discussed and the PC agreed to proceed with a few changes to be made.

It was agreed to adopt the Financial Regulations with changes discussed (MB proposed ML seconded).

d) PC Annual Report

It was noted 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: LL/MB**

e) Annual Parish Meeting

Councillors agreed to hold the next Parish Meeting between Tuesday 26th and Thursday 28th May 2026 following the same format as in previous years. The Chair would liaise with the chair of Gressingham Village Trust about the suggested dates. **Action: LL/MB**

f) Monitoring against Annual Governance Cycle

It was noted that the annual review of the Health and Safety Policy, Risk Assessments and the schedule of maintenance and safety checks had all been completed by NR. The Data Protection and Information Management Policy had been reviewed by LL. A new Risk Management Policy had been set up by LL and all agreed to adopt this for Gressingham PC. All other actions had been carried out at the required times and included in relevant agendas and minutes.

410/6

Gressingham and Eskrigge Community Emergency Plan (CEP)

This was renewed and updated in January by NR.

410/7 **Police and Crime reports update.**
Nothing to report.

410/8 **Planning and Tree Works**

It was noted that no new planning applications had been received for comment since the 19th January meeting. However the PC was reminded of the following:

i 25/01246/AD - Borrans Farm (Deer Beck Farm) – This planning application has again been refused. Drainage, scale & not an established group of buildings and the fact that it is an open greenfield site were the reasons for refusal.

ii. 25/073/TCA – Gressingham Hall – 3 trees to be felled. Granted.

iii. A notice was put up in a field opposite Springfield by The Caravan and Motorhome Club for a 5 caravan site. MB submitted a letter from the PC expressing our concern regarding the visibility of the proposed site in an open area of countryside and also the dangerous access point off Borwick Road.

410/9 **Road maintenance and traffic**

a) **Traffic issues and road safety concerns (including mirrors)**

MB had reported the damaged grit bin and also asked for all the bins to be topped up.

b) **SpIDS**

It was noted that NR had completed the annual check of the SpIDs and the West is working efficiently but the East one has had the cable damaged when a new fence was installed. NR has repaired it temporarily.

c) **Road fault reports**

NR reported a pothole just past Stone Cottage and it was repaired in a few days.

MB/SR are going to do a survey of all the potholes around the village and will send their findings to County Councillor Crimmins.

MB has had contact with UU who are coming to repair the massive pothole at the top of Fall Kirk. Apparently it should be repaired soon!

410/10 **Amenities and facilities**

a) **White Bridges path**

Following the excessive heavy rain last week some of the sets have been washed away. They are in the stream and need retrieving and at some point during the summer, when it is dry, replacing and repairs are required to some of the loose ones too. The PC have agreed to pay for the cost of the work.

b) **2026 Litter Pick**

A litter pick organised by Tim Millar had been held on Saturday 14th March 2026 and had been well supported. The PC recorded its thanks to Tim Millar, Alice Helyar and all the volunteers. Thanks also go to Chloe Millar and Isobel Davidson who have both recently collected litter as part of their Duke of Edinburgh awards.

Defibrillator update

SR reported that the battery was at 53% and should last over next winter even though it will drop quicker as it gets older.

Pads will be required in the next financial year. **Action: SR**

d) **Greener Gressingham update.**

SR discussed putting fruit trees in a field adjacent to Fall Kirk on the way down to the river. We need to find a plan of the area. (LL to look into). The PC agreed to a contribution if it goes ahead. SR to look into.

Swift boxes were also discussed. The number of swifts in the village have dropped dramatically over recent years and it was felt that boxes may encourage them to return. SR to look into.

GVT update.

The tenant in the OSR flat, Bill Taylor, has sadly passed away. Once notice has been given on the flat and it is empty it will need redecorating. Volunteers will be needed.

Dog Responsibilities.

It was noted that The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Amendment Act 2025 came into effect on the 18th March 2026. There are now unlimited fines for attacking and worrying livestock in fields and on roads and footpaths. Police also have greater powers and can now seize dogs, collect their DNA and enter premises with a warrant.

NR has previously put signs up around the village asking dog owners to bag and take home their dog's waste. It is illegal to leave these bags on the side of the road or hanging from the hedgerows because this is considered as littering. Also, livestock or wildlife may eat them which can be fatal. Dog poo contains many types of parasites and bacteria which are dangerous to livestock and humans. Dog poo should be collected immediately and taken home for safe disposal.

More worrying, a few owners are not keeping their dogs on a lead when they are on footpaths through fields and they might then chase livestock.

It was suggested that a summary of this discussion should be put on the village newsletter. MB/ML

410/11 Any correspondence received (not covered elsewhere)

None.

410/12 Any Other Business

None.

410/13 Date of next meeting

Monday 18th May 2026 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 between Tuesday 26th to Thursday 28th May 2026 at Gressingham Hall subject to Jane Paxman's agreement. **Action/MB**

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

Lesley Lee – Clerk to Gressingham Parish Council - 30th March 2026.