



GRAVENHURST

Parish Council

Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of Gravenhurst
Parish Council held in the Village Hall, Gravenhurst
on Thursday 15th January 2026

Present: Councillors: Lockey (Chair), Cooper, Sibley, Simkins and Thaneja
Clerk: A Marabese
Ward Councillor: Blake Stephenson
Public: Five members of the public

Meeting started at 8:00pm.

8317. Apologies for absence.

Apologies received and accepted from Councillors Green-Noon and Robertson.

8318. Chair's announcements:

a. A notice on openness and transparency of the meeting was read out.

b. To resolve to extend the meeting finish time beyond 2 hours.

Councillors agreed that no extension to the meeting finish time was required.

c. Other information.

The Chair thanked the Clerk and members of the public for helping to resolve the water leak issues on the High Street with Anglian Water.

8319. Members interests

a. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on agenda items, requests for dispensations and grant any requests for dispensations.

None.

PUBLIC SESSION

8320. The Chair suspended Standing Orders at 8:08pm to receive a report from the Ward Councillor and to allow members of the public to address the Council in relation to items on the agenda or request matters to be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

a. Ward Councillor Report

- CBC Budget: CBC will be getting a three-year settlement from central government, but year one proposals provide a £17m shortfall rising to £28m in year two and £40m in year three. This will be a difficult budget to balance therefore ward councillors will need to question the provision of both statutory and non-statutory service. Councillor Stephenson who is also the Member of Parliament for Mid Bedfordshire is trying to secure a meeting with the Minister to get a better settlement as government assumptions, (some incorrect) mean that CBC will need to increase council tax by 5% for the coming 3 years.

b. Village organisations

- None present.

c. Questions and issues raised by the public:

- Residents requested an update on the application to add to the Definitive Map parts of FP4 that run through St Giles Church and behind 53 and 53A High Street, as most people who provided statements have been contacted by the CBC Officer reviewing the application. *Council advised that no further updates have been received don timescales to review the application.*
- Residents provided an update on the recent water leak repairs on the High Street, and it was noted that they had been in communication with the Clerk on this. Residents have also reported other water leaks to Anglian Water e.g.: on Campton Road.

Standing orders were re-instated at 8:15pm



MINUTES

8321. Adoption of minutes of the Meeting of Gravenhurst Parish Council held on Thursday 27th November 2025.

Proposed Councillor Lockey/Seconded Councillor Cooper. Resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 27th November 2025 having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record by the Chair. Carried.

PROCEDURES, CONSULTATIONS AND LEGAL

8322. To approve data audit and next steps as part of digital and data compliance actions.

Proposed Councillor Lockey/Seconded Councillor Cooper. Resolved to approve data audit and actions required. Carried

PLANNING AND HOUSING

8323. Planning applications to consider.

a. None

8324. Planning applications responded to under delegated powers:

a. CB/25/03217/LDCE - Land to the West of Barton Road, Barton Road, Gravenhurst - Lawful Development Certificate Existing: Five outbuildings, various uses in existence for over ten years.

The Clerk reported that an objection to this request for and LDCE had been submitted and confirmed that the letter had been circulated to councillors.

8325. Update on St Giles works and fencing around war memorial.

The Clerk reported that she had an unscheduled meeting on site at St. Giles with the property owner who has started to fence off the war memorial and is diverting the footpath around the church grounds. The property owner has no intention of removing access to the path via the church to the rear of number 53 High Street. This work is part of pre-commencement works for the conversion of the church into a dwelling as per planning permission granted. The first works on site will be to create the site vehicular access. The Council will be updated on the progress works.

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

8326. Recreation Ground - To receive update on all matters concerning the Recreation Ground and consider any actions.

a. Update on Recreation Ground Improvement project and any actions required to include:

i. Signage.

This is in progress.

ii. Damage to play flooring.

The Clerk advised that Greyhound Leisure visited site to conduct repairs.

- The spring on the pedestrian gate has been replaced and is now working fine. The joints have been greased as this helps with it closing nicely - this should be done regularly. The original spring was bent, caused by the gate being forced open past 90 degrees as the bottom plate is also slightly damaged. If this persists, we should consider having a gate stop installed to prevent this. *Clerk to request information.*

- The mats underneath the basket swing have been cable tied where the gapping was present. These could be pinned back together in the spring/summer when the existing mats are more pliable in warmer conditions. The area underneath need grass seeding as there is little grass



growth. This would also help to hold the mats in place. *Councillor Cooper to arrange.*

- The Vespy noise is the rubber bush rubbing against the steel housing. This is normal due to its design. Nothing is moving in its foundation at the time of visit.
- The paint work on the viper I will be discusses with HAGS. *Clerk to chase HAGS.*
- Shackles on the Titan seem fine. They could do with a regular spray of lithium grease to keep them moving freely. *Clerk to purchase.*
- Surfacing in the gateway area to stop the ground erosion is recommended. Eco mulch would be best. *Councillor Cooper to install grass mats.*

b. To review Recreation Ground Inspection Reports and schedule for those inspecting.

- The Clerk advised that HAGS are yet to provide and update on the internal claim made regarding the paint peeling from the Viper. *The Clerk will chase HAGs for a response.*
- Councillor Cooper advised that he has conducted regular inspections using the new checklist and will continue to conduct inspections until he goes on holiday when Councillor Lockey will take over.
- Children have further damaged hedging planted by CPRE last year. Fencing to be purchased to prevent damage to remaining hedge plants.
- Residents and social media posts have raised concerns about dog fouling on the Recreation Ground. The Council will continue to monitor the situation and continue with the campaign encouraging social responsibility from dog owners.

c. CPRE hedge planting.

CPRE are yet to advise dates for hedge planting. *Clerk to chase.*

d. To receive report on Recreation Ground Use survey and agree on actions.

The Clerk gave a brief update on responses but will provide a detailed report at the next meeting with any recommendations.

e. All other items.

The Clerk advised that after investigations the Right of Way Officer confirmed that trees have been removed along FP10 (runs from the High Street to the Recreation Ground and beyond) along a section not under the Parish Council control. The Rights of Way Officer has contacted the landowners and homeowner. To confirm response to CBC Leisure Strategy Parish Schedules update.

8327. Allotments – To receive update on allotments and consider any actions:

Council has been advised of the installation of a large shed on site. Clerk not aware so will investigate.

HIGHWAYS AND LIGHTING

8328. To receive update on any Highways matters and consider any actions.

a. High Street Water Leaks

The Clerk reported that she has been in contact with the Anglian Water engineer who has found the source of the water leaks (faulty seals on supply pipes from the mains to two houses) and arranged for repair. She has also contacted the CEO of



Anglian Water regarding the problem and to comment on the excellent work of the engineer.

- b. Application to CBC for alterations to the Definitive Map so that footpath across St Giles and behind 53 & 53A High Street is added to FP4.

The Clerk did make a request to CBC that the matter be reviewed sooner due to the community unrest this issue is causing. No real response received however it was noted that all those involved in the application (both landowners and residents providing statements of truth) have been contacted by CBC.

- c. Other matters arising.

Flooding across both Campton and Shillington Roads was noted.

CEMETERY

8329. Update on St Mary's Churchyard replacement gate posts.

Cllr Cooper has collected the new gate posts and refurbished gate and will install when weather and time permits.

FINANCE MATTERS

8330. To approve purchase orders

None required.

8331. Grant applications to consider:

- a. FROGs grant funding application for £350.

Proposed Councillor Simkins/Seconded Councillor Thaneja. Resolved to approve grant request from FROGS for £350 and that payment be added to the payments list for this meeting. Carried.

8332. To review current v actual expenditure and income and forecast to end of year.

The Clerk and Councillors reviewed the current budget year actual and forecasted income and expenditure report prepared by the Clerk to confirm predicted end of year general reserves (carry forward) together with earmarked reserves for both the current year and the recommended start position for 2026-2027.

8333. To review and approve 2026/207 budget.

The Clerk together with Councillors Green-Noon and Lockey had prepared a draft budget for 2026-2027. Councillors and the Clerk robustly reviewed the budget line by line making amendments as required.

Proposed Councillor Thaneja/Seconded Councillor Lockey. Resolved to approve the 2026-2027 budget as amended during the meeting (Income £49,839.80 / Expenditure £ 61,321.52). Carried.

8334. To review and approve 2026/2027 precept.

The Clerk and Councillors reviewed 2026-2027 precept options and, based upon the approved budget, discussed the merits of each option and the impact on both general and earmarked reserves. The Clerk provided data on average Band D Council Tax charges for Central Bedfordshire parishes and England to compare Gravenhurst to.

Proposed Cllr Thaneja/Seconded Cllr Lockey. Resolved to approve and to set a precept of £45,000 which equates to Band D Council Tax charge of £139.75 (increase of £21.60 per annum on 2025-2026 or £2.16 per month). The Clerk was asked to draft an article for the Grapevine. Carried

8335. To approve bank reconciliations to 31st December 2025.



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Proposed Councillor Sibley/Seconded Councillor Cooper. Resolved to approve bank statements and bank reconciliations to 31st December 2025, and that they be signed by councillors at the meeting. Carried.

8336. To approve payments to be made and those to be made in between meetings.

Payment No:	Payee	Purpose	Amount
Direct Debits and payments made before agenda issued			
DD101	SSE	Lighting Electricity Supply - November 2025 (22/12/25)	£95.90
DD102	Unity Trust Bank	November 2025 Bank Charges (31/12/25)	£6.00
DD103A	Everflow	Cemetery Water 14/01-13/02/26	£12.77
DD103B	Everflow	Allotment Water 14/01-13/02/26	£23.90
DD104	ICO	Data Protection Fee	£47.00
DD105	Unity Trust Bank	December 2025 Bank Charges 931/1/26)	£6.00
DD106A	Everflow	Cemetery Water 14/02-13/03/26	£11.76
DD106B	Everflow	Allotment Water 14/02-13/03/26	£20.34
Payments requested with distribution of agenda			
BACS829	CPRE Bedfordshire	Grant	£400.00
BACS830	BATPC	SNG training	£86.00
BACS831	Forvis Mazars LLP	External Auditor Fee	£504.00
BACS832	A Marabese	Salary (paid 22/12/25)	
BACS833	Andy Muskett Ltd	Street lighting maintenance Q3`	£108.00
BACS834	ACM Business Services Ltd	2025 Telecoms	£180.00
BACS835	A Marabese	Salary (paid 15/01/26)	
BACS836	HMRC	Q4 PAYE & ER NI	£420.21
BACS837	Driftwood Joinery	Cemetery Gate refurb	£796.80
BACS838	Meppershall Parish Council	Crosscharging (Clerk phone, training and SLCC)	£365.54
BACS839	FROGS	Grant	£350.00

Proposed Councillor Simkins/Seconded Councillor Thaneja. Resolved that payments, as presented to Council, be approved for payment. Carried.

MEETING CLOSE

8337. Close of meeting

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 9:23pm

Certified a true copy of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th January 2026.

Signed
(Chairperson)

Date