

Gressingham Village Trust

a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registered with the Charity Commission as charity number 1181569.

Trustee's Annual Report 2023

Gressingham Village Trust (GVT) was incorporated and registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 15 January 2019, with registered charity number 1181569.

Overview 2023

During 2023, GVT continued to manage and maintain Gressingham's Old School Room (OSR), including the grounds and the first floor flat.

At the Annual Parish Meeting on 24th May Jane Paxman was re-elected to a term of office to run to 2027, Revd Lucie Lunn has assumed the role as an ex officio Trustee and Mary McClements stood down as an ex officio Trustee.

GVT Trustees met once during the year. The contractor engaged for external painting of windows and doors did not start work as expected in 2023. Use of the OSR continued to recover post-Covid with, for instance, the creation of a weekly craft group.

In February 2023 the Pearson Trust Working Group (PTWG), a Gressingham Village Trust committee, submitted a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a substantial grant to both turn the parish church into a multi-purpose community centre (and place of worship) and to support its operating and maintenance costs from income generated by converting the OSR into two rental flats. The application was unsuccessful and, as it was clear the level of funding required would not be available from other sources, work on the project ceased and the PTWG was disbanded. In the absence of the PTWG project the OSR needs significant repairs and maintenance to continue its role as a community centre. Grant funding, together with the OSR's own resources, will be required for this.

Constitution and 'committees' (subcommittees) (to be noted in each annual report)

The constitution is very practical and sets out in detail how the organisation is to operate. It should be referred to for questions on practical matters such as what constitutes a quorum (clause 15(3)) and the election and appointment of trustees (clause 10).

- The Pearson Trust Working Group was a 'committee' of GVT under the terms of clause 14 of the constitution; its delegated powers were set out in the minutes of 23 January 2019 and 27 February 2019.
- Independent examination of accounts is required when income exceeds £25,000 per year.

The following policies are in place (to be noted in each annual report)

- Emergencies can be handled in good faith between meetings (adopted 29 April 2019; the example was slates having blown off the roof and a repair having been quickly organised).
- Any three trustees acting together can attend to repairs, renewals and replacements between meetings up to £500 (adopted 11 July 2019).
- The following policies have been submitted to the Charity Commission, which requires policies in each of these areas to be in place:
 - Investment Policy. Funds beyond those in the current account are currently held in a bank deposit account.
 - Risk Management Policy. A Risk Assessment has been carried out for the building and activities within it. The risk of loss of money by fraud or theft by a trustee is managed by requiring two signatories on cheques and other instructions to the bank.
 - Conflicting Interests Policy. This is set out in the GVT constitution.
 - Complaints Policy. Should a complaint be made it will be addressed by all Trustees by meeting, or by online communication, within one week of the complaint being made.
 - Volunteer Management Policy. Volunteers and volunteering will be overseen directly by the trustees.
 - Safeguarding Policy. Best practice will be followed in relation to safeguarding practices for young people and vulnerable adults. Advice is available via the church-appointed trustees from the Diocese of Blackburn safeguarding team.
 - Staff Payments policy. Payments to staff will be made by bankers order only.

Property ownership (to be noted in each annual report)

- GVT has Possessory Title at the Land Registry on "School House, Gressingham, Lancaster LA2 8LP", title number LAN220739, Registered Proprietor Gressingham Village Trust, since May 2019. Absolute Title can be claimed after twelve years, that is, in May 2031 (see minutes of 11 July 2019).
- GVT additionally holds title to the septic tank site across the road from the OSR. Registration of this with The Land Registry, title number LAN247174, was completed in May 2023.

Key observations in relation to current tenancies (to be noted in each annual report)

- From the current tenancy agreement for the upstairs flat: "The Landlord may increase the rent on 1 January each year, by a maximum of the percentage change in the Consumer Prices Index in the year to the preceding June, as published in the middle of the preceding July. To do so, the Landlord must serve a rent review notice on the Tenant during September or October each year specifying: (a) the percentage by which the rent will increase on the forthcoming 1 January; and (b) the new rent payable from the forthcoming 1 January."

List of attachments

- Accounts 2023
- See also 'Note on the status of trustees in the event of the delay or cancellation of the Annual Parish Meeting', attached to the 2019 Annual Report.

Jane Paxman (Chair of Trustees) 27 October 2024.

Year end; 31st December 2023

Notes: Water Plus is failing to bill GVT and, despite GVT's attempts, they refuse to recognize the account. GVT is making provision for when billing resumes - £100pa, plus CPI in future.

Current Account balance includes £400 cheque (deposited January '24) from Gressingham Parish Council.

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