

Gressenhall Parish Council AGM – Tuesday 5th May 2026**Report from Gressenhall Allotments**

The allotment rent was raised to £15 per year in October 2025.

Income received per year from the allotments is £120.

Two allotments were empty for a while and badly overgrown with weeds.

These two allotments now have new tenants and the rent for the first year was waived, as agreed by the Parish Council.

Unfortunately, I have been notified recently, that some allotments are not being serviced and are once again becoming badly overgrown with weeds. This is very much to the detriment of those tenants who are working hard on their own allotments. Measures to address this will hopefully be discussed in the following Annual Parish Council Meeting this evening.

There are currently three people on the waiting list, and anyone else who is interested in becoming an allotment holder, can contact the clerk and be added to the waiting list.

Community car annual report

~~From Anne Maskell <anne.maskell@gressenhall-pc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk>~~

Date Fri 2026-05-01 4:05 PM

To clerk@gressenhall-pc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk <clerk@gressenhall-pc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk>

The last year has been less busy than the last two years, which has been a relief as our driver numbers have also reduced.

We did a total of 408 journeys, (compared with 2025 of 588) taking 452 passengers 9,057 miles. The split between hospital and surgery/optician/dentist was similar, 208 for hospital and 338 for surgery etc and 42 other health related trips. The total cost of the scheme was £4,075.65. Fares of £2,008.20 were paid, leaving Breckland paying a total of £1,131.15 and the parish council paying £935.30.

I am incredibly grateful to one of my drivers, Paul, who has covered at least half of the burden and still asks for what is coming up. I am grateful to the other drivers who continue to do what they can fit trips into their busy lives.

Our passengers continue to support us with their good humour, anecdotes and donations. Thanks to them we are able to continue to supplement the mileage rate that has remained unchanged for twenty years.

We are still very short of people available as drivers, and do need to boost our numbers. At the moment we are largely dependant on only 3 or 4 drivers .

Lastly thanks go to both councils for their continued support for the scheme which provides a lifeline to those without transport.

Anne Maskell

Sent from my iPad

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REPORT FOR THE GRESSSENHALL POOR LANDS CHARITY -MAY 2026

The Trustees met once during the year.

Monies were distributed during the year to individuals in need in the village. Anyone may write to the Chairman for financial assistance.

The land off Taylors Lane continues to be let on a 5 year tenancy agreement by a local resident. The tenancy is due for renewal in October 2026.

The accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2026 are not yet finalised

Molly Crisp

Secretary

**Report from St Mary's Community Primary School, for
Gressenhall Parish Council Annual Meeting - May 2026**

Our Senior Leadership Team

Tanya Treavett – Headteacher
Sophie Marsham – Deputy Headteacher
Maddy Marriage – SENCO
Karin Barker – School Business Manager

Current number of children on roll: 155

This year has been one of continued growth and purposeful development at St Mary's. I am delighted to share an overview of our work and achievements. Since our last Ofsted inspection in November 2023, we have remained firmly focused on strengthening every aspect of our provision, and we look forward to welcoming inspectors back to see the progress we have made.

The success of our school is the result of the dedication of every adult who works here. Our teaching and support staff create a nurturing, stimulating environment for our pupils, while our office and site teams ensure the school runs smoothly and safely each day. I am immensely proud of their commitment and professionalism.

School Development priorities:

Priority 1: The quality of education

- Maintain a strong focus on delivering a high-quality curriculum, effective teaching and positive outcomes for all pupils.
- Set consistently high expectations that inspire pupils to become independent, motivated learners.
- Ensure lessons are well-structured, purposeful and responsive to pupils' needs.
- Adapt teaching to support the strengths and needs of every learner, promoting good progress for all.
- Use accurate assessment across the curriculum to inform planning and drive improvement.

Priority 2: English Writing

- Strengthen staff understanding of age-related expectations.
- Increase the frequency and rigour of writing monitoring.
- Share clear success criteria for each genre with pupils.
- Enhance the quality of feedback to support pupils in moving their writing forward.
- Improve planning through collaborative approaches.
- Ensure SPaG is applied appropriately and consistently across genres and year groups.

Priority 3: Personal Development

- Provide all pupils with a rich range of experiences that develop their talents, interests and character.
- Embed the Kapow RSE curriculum to support pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and relationships.
- Develop and embed a whole-school assembly programme, including class assemblies.

Priority 4: Leadership and management

- Maintain robust monitoring systems enabling leaders and governors to evaluate the quality of education effectively.
- Ensure all staff have access to targeted professional development that supports their practice and career growth.

Governing Body

Our governing body continues to offer invaluable support as we implement new initiatives. I would like to thank Linda Talbot and Jean Johnson (Co-Chairs), along with Emily Knight, Ben Niven, Di Mapplebeck, Emma Russell and Jack Harvey for their commitment throughout the year.

We currently have vacancies on the board; if you are interested in contributing to the strategic leadership of the school, please contact the office for further information.

Friends of St. Mary's

The Friends of St Mary's (FOSM) remain a vital part of our school community. Their creativity and hard work have enabled us to enhance pupils' experiences through events and fundraising. This year, their support has provided:

- New library books
- 16 laptops to support the curriculum
- A wireless speaker for school production
- New EYFS outdoor equipment
- The long-awaited St Mary's Towers play structure, which the children are thoroughly enjoying



Trips, Events and Enrichment

Pupils have benefited from a wide range of enriching experiences, including:

- Year 6 residential to Hautbois House
- An in school performance of Pinocchio
- Our first Beetley's Got Talent and our first whole school Art Gallery event
- Eco Council reaching the finals of the Schools Reimagined competition
- Educational visits to West Stow, Lynn Museum and Gressenhall
- Year 4's upcoming residential to X Adventure

Looking Ahead

Like many areas of Norfolk, we are experiencing a decline in the number of school-age children, which has financial implications for all schools. In response, we have made the strategic decision to reduce our Reception intake to 15 pupils from September 2026.

Despite these challenges, we remain ambitious for our school and proud of the progress we continue to make. We warmly welcome volunteers and visitors—whether you would like to hear readers, support in class or simply learn more about our work, we would be delighted to involve you in school life.

Tanya Treavett
Headteacher

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GRESSENHALL READING ROOM AND VILLAGE HALL

REGISTERED CHARITY NR. 272666

Chair's APM Report Tuesday 5th May 2026

The Reading Room Committee, comprising 8 members, continues to hold bi-monthly meetings.

Very sadly, we lost one of our long serving members, Loraine Forrest, who died October 2025.

We offer our sincere thanks to Loraine's family, who together with Jane Roberson organised a concert last February, at St Mary's Church, performed by the Gressenhall Singers to celebrate Loraine's life, for which we received a share of the monies raised.

A new Committee member, Lorraine Houseago, joined us in 2025, and has taken on the responsibility of handling the bookings for the Hall.

Over the last year, our hiring income has been steady, with recurring regular and the occasional ad-hoc hirers.

The 125 club is fully subscribed and provides valuable funds and we continue to advertise in the News and Views of any fund raising events and to attract new hirers.

We have continued to organise a series of popular and very well attended talks on Friday evenings. Our latest series of six talks began last September on a monthly basis culminating in a talk, this March by Hannah Jackson, the Project Manager of the Refurbishment and associated works for the re-interpretation of the Norman Keep at Norwich Castle Museum.

A further series of talks are already planned, commencing in September 2026.

We held a successful fund raising event at the Summer Fete,
“changing water in to wine.”

Last December we held our second Reading Room Christmas Bingo Extravaganza including Christmas songs with musical accompaniment by Linda Howell. It was very well supported and we are planning to repeat the event next Christmas.

As Subscribers to the News and Views will have seen and hopefully read in the May Edition, Nick Hird wrote an article setting out the Reading Room’s history since its opening in 1904. The last two paragraphs refer to our future plan to improve wheelchair access, toilet refurbishment and additional storage space.

To that end, we have appointed an Architect, with, an intention to seek tenders in early summer. We are planning fund raising events for the year to add to grant funding that we will certainly require, in order to achieve our aims.

Garth Russell - Reading Room Chairman

DATE	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	BANK ACCOUNT
Items of income and expenditure	Subscriptions	Advertising	Printing
			Admin costs
			Bank Charges
Category Totals	£3,094.15	£5,167.50	£6,882.31
			£59.99
			£59.99
INCOME Total	£8,261.65		OUTGOINGS Total
			£7,002.29
			Ac current
			£5,640.00
			£4,365.87
			Sum Carried Over

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GRESSENHALL FETE COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL AGM MAY 2026

The 2025 Fete in June was another roaring success with a huge number of people attending throughout the day and evening. Many of the village organisations had stalls to raise money for their own funds. There was also free musical entertainment all evening which was enjoyed by a good crowd.

The Switch on of Christmas Lights was held in early December, again the village supported the event well, Fakenham Town Band, Dereham Busybodies and The Gressenhall Singers entertained the crowd. Father Christmas arrived by tractor and trailer and had lots of children visit him in his grotto. Again, there were a fabulous array of craft and food stalls. The Christmas tree lights were switched on by the competition winner and remained a wonderful sight on The Green until early in the New Year.

Father Christmas drove around the village a few days before Christmas on a tractor and trailer handing out mince pies and fruit to young and old alike.

The Fete committee continue to support local organisations in the villages as well as paying for musical entertainment at Woodstock Care Home on a monthly basis.

Molly Crisp

St Mary's, Gressenhall
Report for Parish Council AGM 2026

The Rector moved to another Benefice after a long period of illness and the Benefice entered a time of vacancy on 19th March 2025.

The past year has been a successful one for St Mary's. The church has bucked the national trend towards decline, particularly in rural parishes, and seen gentle but steady growth with new faces in the congregation. The church has competition from other activities which take place on Sunday mornings and so it is encouraging to see numbers increasing at regular Sunday morning services as well as at festivals. Attendance at all festivals has increased, particularly at Christmas.

The church continues to benefit from being open daily and having a fully staffed PCC, churchyard maintenance team, bellringers, cleaning and flower arranging teams. St Mary's is also fortunate in having two regular organists.

The regular pattern of services was maintained throughout the year with the addition of a Pet Service which was held in September. Two sell-out concerts were held during the year.

Due to active fund raising and income from the congregation, parish share was paid in full and all other costs were met. Ongoing regular maintenance and improvements are a constant financial drain but the PCC are committed to ensuring the long term survival of the church for future generations.

St Mary's is grateful for the support from the Parish Council and is always delighted to welcome councillors to church services.

Reverend Julia Houston
April 2026

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Report from St Mary's Church Bell Ringers

Despite losing our inspirational tower captain in 2024, 2025 was still a very positive year for the bellringers. We gained two new ringers (more always welcome / needed) and as such we were able, with the help of the occasional visiting ringer, to support all the church services and weddings throughout the year.

Our Tuesday practice nights have continued to be well attended with both an early novice practice at 6.30pm followed by the more experienced ringers at 7.30pm.

The tower also hosted several peal attempts and quarter peal attempts, all of which were successful and the donations made by the visiting bands have contributed to the overall finances.

There was a positive start to the beginning of 2026, with the replacement of the bell ropes. Many of the old ropes were very worn and required tape to hold the splicing in place. At the same time, the bells were serviced, significantly improving their handling. This was all done expediently so only one practice night was missed. The next project is alteration to the tower staircase and lighting which will hopefully improve the access for all ringers. The work for this commenced on Monday 13th April and should be completed within two weeks. The financing for this will be shared by the parochial parish council and the bell tower funds.

The Bell Tower finances for year ending 31 December 2025

BALANCE B/F	£4,610.99
PLUS TOTAL INCOME:	£956.37
	£5,567.36
LESS TOTAL EXPENDITURE:	£1,325.25
	£4,242.11
BALANCE C/F	£4,242.11
ANNUAL DELTA:	-£368.88

NB: Bank Account= £4267.11 because clock purchase £5 and visit fee £20 to Peter Mancroft did not go through the bank account but came straight from tower box

INCOME SUMMARY

Donations from visitors (inc. training events):	£524.37
Profit from Summer Fete Tombola:	£212.00
'Tower Fund' element of wedding fees:	£220.00
	£956.37

EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

Ringing/Training/Safety Equipment:	£215.00
Other 'band' expenditure (e.g. 'Get Well' cards etc.):	£343.37
Maintenance of Bells and associated fittings:	£0.00
Maintenance of other fixtures/fittings (e.g. Light Bulbs ... etc.):	£766.88
Donation to PCC:	£0.00

'Bell' Maintenance

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The Gressenhall Singers

April 2026 Yearly report for the Parish Council AGM

Another good year for the choir with all the usual events on the Green plus singing at special services at St Mary's. Numbers stay comfortably at 60 with the 2 rehearsals 3pm and 7.30 each Wednesday, giving singers flexibility. Our ages range from 14 to 89.

Our yearly Summer Concert raised well over £2000 for our church where every ticket was sold.

Vivian Singh sang in the choir and in his 80s still cycled to rehearsals. After moving to Gorleston from Longham asked if the choir would sing at his funeral...to quote a very dry Vivian "I don't know when it will be yet but I've probably got a year left". He was very specific as to music he wanted. A section of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* with our singing shepherd Sam Eglington was required (possibly the MOST difficult piece we have ever tackled.) Fortunately, we had 2 years to work on it before Vivian died, last October.

In November we were honoured to sing at Rev Julia's daughter's wedding – a delightful occasion at St. Mary's, where Rev Julia was thrilled to be able to 'marry her own daughter'!

A huge loss to us was soprano Loraine Forrest who died of cancer last autumn. To celebrate her life with us, the choir sang at a special commemorative concert in February. St Mary's Church was full and almost £2000 was raised and shared between Priscilla Bacon Lodge, St Mary's Church and the Reading Room. (Loraine had spent her final months at Priscilla Bacon in Norwich and was for many years on the Reading Room committee.) Loraine loved the choir and rarely missed a rehearsal or performance...

The choir was invited by organist and choir master Adrian Richards to sing Evensong at Lynn Minster at the end of April – a very different 'gig' for us where we needed to sing a Psalm, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittus settings, plus all the usual sung responses. With 40 singers wishing to take part, a coach was hired for the afternoon. All went smoothly and Adrian finished the service with the rousing Bach *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor*, followed by rapturous applause. We'd love to return to this superb building.

The Gressenhall Singers celebrate their first 10 years in October this year and have a special concert organised for November 21 when they'll perform 2 classical works: Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* and Bob Chilcott's *A Little Jazz Mass*.

A special thanks to my neighbour, alto in the choir and keen flag-flyer Myrna Kemp, who organised a flag for the singers and my birthday last week.

Jane Roberson
Director of The Gressenhall Singers
April 22 2026