

Garvald and Morham Community Council

Minutes of Meeting Held at Garvald Village Hall

Chair: Phillip White

Date: 1st June 2026

Venue: Garvald Village Hall

1. Attendance and Apologies

Present

Phillip White (Chair)

David Ramsay (Vice Chair)

Ian Middlemass (Treasurer)

Chiara Brand

Ian Smith

Tom Trotter

John McMillan

George McGuire

Gary McGregor

Graeme Davies [Chair, Gifford Community Woodlands Trust]

Rachel [Chair, Yester Primary Parent Council]

Chloe Clark [GetOut Outdoor Learning CIC]

Holly Briggs [GetOut Outdoor Learning CIC]

John Kinnaird

Shamin Akhtar

Apologies

Hazel Clarke

No other apologies were received.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, having been circulated, were approved.

Matters Arising

Play Park Swing

It was noted that a swing had been removed from the play park and had not yet been replaced.

Shamin had previously agreed to investigate the matter.

Members agreed that further follow-up would be undertaken.

Later in the meeting, it was reported that the relevant authority had confirmed the swing would be replaced, although no timescale had been provided.

3. Appointment of Office Bearers

The annual appointment of office bearers was undertaken.

The following appointments were agreed:

Position	Appointee
Chair	Phillip White
Vice Chair	David Ramsay
Treasurer	Ian Middlemass

Following the appointments, members and guests introduced themselves.

4. Presentation – Forest School Provision at Yester Primary School

Representatives from Get Outdoor Learning, Yester Primary Parent Council and the Community Woodlands Trust attended to provide an update on Forest School activities and future plans.

Background

The Community Council has previously supported the initiative through grants of:

£2,000 (August 2024)

£4,800 (August 2025)

The presenters thanked the Community Council for its support and outlined the impact that funding has had on pupils at Yester Primary School.

Current Provision

Forest School sessions take place during the school day and include:

Nature-based learning

Woodland exploration

Species identification

Tool use and practical skills

Fire and outdoor cooking activities

Curriculum-linked literacy, numeracy and science activities

Free play and exploration

Sessions are designed to be accessible to all children regardless of family circumstances, with equipment and waterproof clothing provided where required.

Benefits Identified

The presentation highlighted a number of positive outcomes:

Health and Wellbeing

Increased physical activity through walking and outdoor play

Improved mental wellbeing

Reduced stress and anxiety

Increased confidence and resilience

Learning and Development

Enhanced environmental awareness and nature connection

Improved vocabulary and communication skills

Development of practical and problem-solving skills

Increased confidence in assessing and managing risk appropriately

Community Benefits

Greater connection between children, families and the community woodland

Increased awareness of local biodiversity and conservation

Parent Feedback

Results from a parent survey showed:

100% support for continuation of Forest School provision

Strong support for year-round delivery rather than a single-term programme

Future Proposal

Representatives explained that a consortium had been formed involving:

Yester Primary Parent Council

Community Woodlands Trust

Get Outdoor Learning

School representatives

The consortium intends to pursue a longer-term fundraising strategy with the aim of raising approximately £40,000 over three years.

The proposal would:

Continue annual P2 Forest School provision

Provide additional targeted support groups

Increase access to Forest School experiences across all year groups

Funding Request

The consortium asked whether the Community Council would consider:

Accepting a further application despite previous rounds of funding

Considering support as part of a longer-term fundraising strategy

Discussion

Members welcomed the presentation and recognised the positive impact the project was having on local children and families.

It was noted that:

The Community Council has limited funds available and must balance competing demands.

Any future application would be considered on its merits and within available budgets.

Members were supportive of the initiative and encouraged the group to continue pursuing additional funding opportunities.

Representatives also presented letters and artwork from pupils thanking the Community Council for previous support, including funding for school PE equipment.

The Chair thanked the presenters for attending and providing such a comprehensive update.

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that grants approved at the previous meeting had now been paid:

£3,000 to support a swimming club exchange visit with French students.

£3,645 towards various Garvald community events including the Flower Show and Fun Day.

Current Balance

Community Council funds currently stand at:

£34,080.80

The annual accounts are currently undergoing audit and will be presented at the next meeting.

6. Haddington and Lammermuir Area Partnership

Phillip White reported on attendance at the Area Partnership AGM held on 14 May.

The meeting reviewed projects and activities supported during the previous year and was considered informative and worthwhile.

7. Police Report

No crimes were reported within the ward during the previous three months.

8. Garvald Village Hall / Community Trust Update

Gary MacGregor provided an update on current activities and projects.

Village Hall Window Project

Discussions continue with planning officers regarding replacement of village hall windows.

An architect is being engaged to prepare the required plans.

Subject to planning approval, a trial replacement window is targeted for October.

Fundraising

A recent plant sale organised jointly with the Horticultural Society raised approximately £500 and was well supported by the community.

Upcoming Events

Bicycle Maintenance Workshop – 20 June

Flower Show – 22 August

Community Emergency Resilience Exercise – September

Health and Wellbeing Day – September

Weddings

Three weddings are currently scheduled at the village hall:

6 June

29 August

3 October

Trustee Recruitment

Two trustees intend to retire at the forthcoming AGM.

The Trust is seeking suitable individuals who may be interested in joining as trustees.

9. East of Scotland Community Benefits

Discussion took place regarding:

- Potential funding opportunities

- Community support networks

- Partnerships that may assist future Forest School development

John McMillan offered advice and suggested several contacts and organisations that may be able to provide support or guidance.

The Community Council thanked him for his continued assistance and attendance at meetings throughout the year.

10. Any Other Business

Rabbit Population

Concerns were raised regarding increasing rabbit numbers within the village.

Members discussed the issue and agreed that further intervention may be required.

Village Green Bench

A request was made to review the condition of a bench located on the village green and consider whether any action is required.

Forest School Feedback

Additional comments were made regarding the positive impact Forest School has had on children attending Yester Primary School, particularly in relation to:

- Environmental awareness

- Knowledge of local wildlife and trees

- Sense of ownership and pride in local woodland areas

Play Park Swing Update

It was confirmed that the removed swing is due to be replaced, although no date has yet been provided.

11. Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: August 17th at 7:30 in Morham Village Hall

Addendum 1

Funding Requests Approved

1	Advance funding for 2026/7 Rural Support Scheme from Crystal Rig 3 Fund	£14,135
2	Matilda Simpson request to support trip to Costa Rica to volunteer with Raleigh International from Crystal Rig 2 Fund	£485
	Total	£14,620