Garvald and Morham Community Council

Minutes of Meeting Held at Morham Village Hall

Chair: Phillip White
Date:17th August 2026
Venue: Morham Village Hall

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1. Attendance and Apologies

Present

- Phillip White (Chair)
- David Ramsay (Vice Chair)
- Chiara Brand
- Ian Smith
- Tom Trotter
- Gary McGregor (Garvald Village Hall Trust)
- Alan Nicholson
- David Murray (Morham)
- Susan Hastie

Apologies

- Ian Middlemass
- John McMillan
- George McGuire
- Shamin Akhtar

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and were approved.

- The outstanding issue regarding the replacement swing in the Village remains unresolved.
- Phillip will contact Shamin Akhtar to ask them to chase up the installation.
- The Chair commended the quality of the previous minutes created using a recording.

2. Treasurer's Report

The current balance was reported as **£32,284.82**.

- Two funding applications from the previous meeting are still awaiting payment.
- It was reported that the relevant application has been approved and should be paid in the next round of accounts.
- The remaining accounts/funding processes with the relevant authority are progressing.

- Payments relating to the yoga activity were also noted.

3. Rural Support for Winter

The Community Council discussed repeating the winter rural support scheme operated over the previous two years.

- The scheme was considered successful, with more than 50% of households taking up the offer last year.
- Last year's payment was **£150 per household**.
- Members agreed to repeat the scheme at **£150 per household**.
- Dave will take responsibility for administering the scheme, with support from Ian.
- The process will again primarily be handled by email, allowing households that participated previously to confirm whether they wish to receive the payment.
- The existing bank details should make administration considerably simpler.
- Information will be placed on the website and emailed to previous applicants.

4. Area Partnership

There had been no meeting since the previous Community Council meeting.

A meeting is due to take place on Thursday, which Phillip intends to attend. No further report was available.

5. Police Report

No crimes had been reported in the police report for the area.

Members nevertheless discussed recent incidents of antisocial behaviour and vandalism around the Morham village hall and surrounding areas later in the meeting.

6. Garvald Village Hall Report

Building Works

The Village Hall Trust provided an update on planned works:

- Mill Architects visited on **23 June** to undertake the required window survey for East Lothian Council.
- An application for **listed building consent** is being prepared.
- The application had been delayed by the holiday period but was expected to be issued shortly.
- If submitted as planned, a response from the Council is expected by the end of October.
- Subject to approval, the intention is to carry out a **trial window** before proceeding more widely.

The architect also recommended that the roof above the large crack at the far corner of the building be repaired in the short term. The architect was to contact Mary Thorburn

Builders, who are currently working in the village, to assess the problem and provide an indication of the required work and cost.

Fundraising

A piping concert is planned for **Saturday 12 September**, featuring Fred Morrison and Ian Spears.

Any profit after costs will be donated to the Garville Village Hall roof repair fund.

Events

- The village show was scheduled for the coming weekend.
- Weddings were booked for **29 August** and **3 October**.
- An emergency resilience exercise was scheduled for **Saturday 5 September**.

Insurance

Kirsty Malcolm has investigated alternative insurance through a specialist third-sector broker.

- The new arrangement is expected to save approximately **£347** compared with the renewal quotation from the existing insurer.
- There is an intention to investigate whether officeholder cover, previously costing approximately **£497**, can be incorporated into the buildings insurance in future, potentially creating a further saving.

Trustees

Three existing trustees have indicated that they intend to stand down at the AGM later in the year.

- New trustees are therefore being sought.
- The possibility of existing Village Hall committee members also becoming trustees is being investigated.
- The matter will be discussed at the next committee meeting.
- Members of the community will also be invited to put themselves forward at the AGM.

7. Morham Village Activities

An update was provided on the pipe band.

- Activity has been relatively quiet over the summer, although the band continues to progress well.
- In July, the primary school and pipe band travelled to Dumfries for the Robert Burns World Conference gathering at the Burns Centre.
- The band performed to a high standard and received positive feedback.
- The performance included a rendition of **“Scots Wha Hae**, following a request from a Burns-related guest, and was subsequently featured by ITV Borders.
- This was noted as a positive outcome from the community's support for the band.

Village Hall / Antisocial Behaviour

Members discussed several incidents of vandalism and antisocial behaviour around the hall and its grounds, including:

- An attempt to set fire to materials near gas cylinders.
- Damage to a memorial tree.
- Other minor damage and disruption around the Morham hall and gardens.

It was reported that the individuals believed to be responsible had been identified and spoken to.

Members discussed whether CCTV or lower-cost alternatives such as video doorbells might be appropriate. The matter will be considered further with the trustees at their maintenance meeting in September.

The meeting also noted reports of recent rural break-ins at local farms. Members agreed that residents and local farmers should remain vigilant and share information about suspicious activity.

Funding Application

The Council noted that further consideration of the relevant funding application for the hall had been deferred until **October**.

8. Local Development Plan / Glebe Field

A substantial discussion took place concerning the possible designation of the **Glebe Field in Garvald** as a potential development site.

Members noted that:

- East Lothian Council's current planning process includes maps and lists identifying potential development sites.
- There appeared to be confusion because the Glebe Field appeared on one map/list but not another.
- One version appeared to identify the site as a preferred development site.
- The status of the site remains unclear while the planning process is ongoing.
- A previous proposal for approximately **12 houses** on part of the Glebe Field was also recalled, although the history and current status of that proposal require clarification.
- Members stressed that inclusion as a potential site does **not** mean that development has been approved.
- Any future proposal would still have to go through the normal planning and consultation process.

Actions / Further Investigation

It was agreed that clarification should be obtained from the relevant planning officers, particularly regarding:

1. The exact status of the Glebe Field in the current Local Development Plan process.

2. Why it appears on one map/list but not another.
3. Whether the historic proposal for housing remains relevant.
4. Whether the Council has approached the Church of Scotland regarding the site.
5. The planning implications of the field's status as Church of Scotland glebe land.

Tom agreed to investigate the planning position and report back.

Members also discussed whether the community should seek to retain the Glebe Field as a community asset and potentially investigate a **community buyout**, should the land become available.

It was recognised that such an initiative would require further investigation, including the legal status of the land, its value, funding, and an appropriate community ownership structure.

A historic glebe scheme document from 1930 was identified as potentially useful evidence regarding the status of the land. Members expressed interest in obtaining and reviewing it.

The website information about the potential development was discussed. It had been removed because the existence of two different Council maps had caused confusion. The community website may publish an updated explanation once the position has been clarified.

9. Any Other Business

Newlands Hill Public Inquiry

Members were advised that a **public inquiry concerning Newlands Hill** is expected to take place on **12 October**, reportedly in Gifford.

The announcement was noted, with further details expected once formally advertised.

Core Path Gate

A report was received that a gate on the core path between Garvald and Gifford had been damaged.

A Nick Morgan from the Council had agreed to take the matter forward and arrange the necessary repairs.

Rabbit Problem

The Horticultural Society had again raised concerns about rabbits in the village.

The issue remains ongoing and is being addressed.

Drainage Issue

Ian Middlemas had raised an issue concerning drainage towards Coldale.

Tom was provided with details of the location so that the matter could be investigated further.

15. Close

The Chair thanked everyone for attending, including Alan and Susan, and closed the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: October 5th in Garvald Village Hall at 7.30

Addendum 1

Funding Requests Approved

Monday 17th August 2026 in Morham Village Hall

1	Funding for Yester Primary School Parent Council to fund Forest Schools provision for from Crystal Rig 3 Fund for 3 years.	£13,350
	Total	£13,350