

DRAFT

Gargrave Parish Council Minutes of the meeting of 7th January 2026

Present

Claire Cadman, Chair, Ian Ackroyd (IA), Steve Coetzer (SC) Karen Hunter (KH), Alan Sutcliffe (AS), Jayne Dunlop (Clerk)
Cllr Simon Myers, Lesley Tate (Craven Herald) and five members of the public

1. Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone and summarised the rules of participation.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1. To receive apologies for absence and record these in the minutes.

Apologies were received from Martin Banks. Chris Hoskin and David Shuttleworth.

2.2. To consider the approval of reasons for absence given by councillors.

The absence book was circulated and reasons noted.

3. Declaration of interests

3.1. To receive, consider and decide upon any applications for dispensation.

No applications for dispensation were received.

3.2. To receive any declarations of interest not already declared under the Council's Code of Conduct or a member's Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

No declarations of interest were received.

4. To confirm the minutes of meeting held on 3rd December 2025, as a true and correct record.

Proposed by the Chair seconded by AS and agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 3rd December are a true and correct record.

5. Report from invited guests

5.1. To receive a report from NYC Cllr Simon Myers.

Cllr Myers reported that NYC held a budget meeting earlier in the day outlining the proposed cuts from Westminster. Savings made by local government reorganisation have cushioned the blow and NYC is making every effort to avoid large rises in council tax. The Government wants councils to increase council tax to the maximum level permitted. It is hoped that there will be positive news on SEND spending which is bankrupting councils at present. The extra cost to Highways in recognition of extra maintenance of roads at the coast or at altitude is no longer being accommodated. The Fair Funding review is unfair to rural communities.

It is expected that plans for new affordable housing at Neville House site will be discussed by NYC in March. Cllr Myers will update the Parish council with plans as this progresses and hopes for a public consultation.

He is continuing to seek funding for work on the River Aire in Gargrave and hopes there will be a small amount of funding similar to S106 funds, becoming available to the parish Council.

5.2. Presentation of scoping survey of the River Aire in Gargrave

Sam Watkiss, consultant geomorphologist from JBA presented the findings of the JBA scoping survey report (previously circulated to councillors) along with some proposals on measures to improve the river banks.

The presentation looked at two main areas, the geomorphological change of the river in recent years and then some conceptual measures for the future.

General notes:

- Before the collapse of the weir at the Mativ factory, the river had low energy.
- The river is in a constricted channel compared to at Coniston Cold and East of Gargrave.
- It is a very dynamic river which aims to meander rather than follow a straight path.

Geomorphological change:

Following the collapse of the weir in 2022, the loss of this artificial barrier permitted increased erosion and transport of sediment during flood events. The river is trying to return to its natural process, and is in transition, as it moves towards a natural bed profile. This has resulted in a high level of erosion but the changes along the river are less significant in 2025 in some locations, as the river moves towards equilibrium. Channel widening is noticeable sixty metres upstream from the weir due to the action of the river, reflecting the requirement of the river to gain space in order to reach a dynamic equilibrium of erosion and deposition.

Monitoring of the river shows steepening of the banks upstream of the weir due to riverbed erosion (as the channel adjusts its bed profile following weir collapse) and the banks are composed of gravel and sand which have collapsed in places. Elevated rates of erosion (compared to pre-weir-collapse conditions) have been caused by a steeper channel and faster water flow but progressive channel widening (with bank erosion) will reduce river energy and the river is likely to be more stable.

At Mill lane steep, unstable banks and the two large trees with exposed roots show that the channel is still adjusting and the recent collapse of one of these shows the impact of the erosion. Taking the channel towards the opposite bank by increasing the channel width might reduce the erosional pressure on Mill Lane.

The gabion baskets were undermined by erosion and there is merit in allowing the river to move towards Middle Green in order to remove the erosional pressure against the Mill Lane (northern) bank. Future erosion management plans may seek to increase the width of the channel into Middle Green, encouraging the river into 'lower risk' areas.

The river bed is still being lowered at the fallen stepping stones, the water pipe is exposed and the wall on the South Street bank is being undermined. At the substation the river bed has dropped approximate thirty centimetres exposing gravel beneath the base of the wall which is susceptible to erosion.

Upstream of the Roman river ford there is no significant morphological change and it is important to ensure that the ford is not undermined.

In summary:

- The river is still in transition as the channel attempts to adjust laterally.
- The speed of change should reduce but the river bed is steeper than before the weir collapse and dynamic morphological change can be expected in future.
- Erosion management should be carried out by working with the river dynamics.

Conceptual ideas:

The bank profiling and increasing channel width can be modified to give the river more space thus reducing the energy of the river during flood events. Locations of channel width increasing may be targeted into lower risk areas, such as Middle Green, reducing the risk to key structures.

Large cobbles and boulders could be used to protect the Roman ford. Coarse rapid/cascade features could be used along the full reach to give stability and protection to the water pipe that runs across the river and other key features.

Targeted infrastructure protection would be part of redesign of the river banks.

5.3 Questions from Councillors on scoping survey

In discussion, it was noted that use of small boulders and cobbles (such as the coarse cascade/rapid features suggested above) would help to reduce the water speed and river bed erosion if the stepping stones were re-instated.

Tree planting could help to stabilise the banks.

It was agreed that protection of the ford is extremely important.

Questions were raised about JBA's involvement at the time of the weir collapse and whether or not the potential upstream erosion was reported. It was noted that JBA did identify the processes of, and the potential risk of, a knick-point erosion following weir collapse within their reports (June 2023).

6. To receive information on the following ongoing issues and decide further action where necessary:

6.1 Note update on Northern Power Grid work at the substation on South street

Work is due to begin mid-January. The new pole will be installed, then the new temporary substation will be commissioned, the underground system prepared, the old pole will be removed (this will involve some disruption to electricity supply), then the temporary substation will be energised and all work should be completed by the end of February. All those affected by the outage will be notified and we have asked for residents in South Street to be kept informed.

Tom from Northern PowerGrid has indicated that he is seeking a social impact grant due to the disruption that has been caused to the community. There are some guidelines on the spend and he is hopeful that money will be available. To this end he would like Council to consider what might be beneficial to the community eg stepping stones, planting, benches etc. (not sport). To this end he is planning a site meeting to discuss some initial ideas and look at what is possible. He would like the council to send some dates at the end of January for consideration for him and the team. Monday 26th and Wednesday 28th January were suggested and the Clerk will arrange with Tom.

7. To consider removal of tree in river at Mill Lane downstream of the gabions.

EA has approved removal of the fallen tree without a FRAP as it is a flood risk. It was recommended that the Clerk contacts two local tree surgeons who will have the relevant equipment to remove the tree. Details will be forwarded to the Clerk.

8. To note update on councillor vacancy:

Following publication of the casual vacancy by NYC, there have been no requests for an election so we now need to fill the vacancy by co-option. There have been no expressions of interest. Applications should be submitted by January 30th. Candidates will be expected to say a few words at the meeting on

4th February.

9. Public Participation

A resident highlighted issues with a planning application for a window replacement highlighting difficulties with the planning process. Details have been emailed to the councillors who expressed concern that they may have received incorrect information on a previous related application.

A resident asked what plans the Council has to regenerate the river. This is something that will need to be planned and the Clerk indicated this would start at the next council meeting.

In response to a query about Cllr Taylor's proposed visit to the railway station in January, the Clerk will send him a reminder. The footpath was suggested as a possible project for social impact funding from Northern Power Grid though councillors felt that the funding would fall far short of the amount required.

10. Matters requested by councillors:
none

11. Planning Applications

ZA25/27481HH 8 St Robert Close, extension to first floor balcony and alterations to first floor window opening. Councillors were unable to access the application details online and were therefore unable to form an opinion. The Clerk will request an extension to enable a comment to be submitted.

ZA25/27501/HH 46 Eshton Road, single storey front extension, 2 storey side extension and alterations. There was no objection to this application.

ZA25/27530/TCA Old School House Church Street, remove cedar tree and plant oak tree. It was noted that one tree was replacing another so there was no objection to this application.

ZA25/27508/LBC 70 High Street, Patio Door. There was no objection to this application.

ZA25/27469/ LBC 70 High Street window replacement. Based on information from the client the council felt unable to comment on this application.

ZA25/27531/FUL 18 East Street, dental practice, full planning permission for double storey rear extension. There was some discussion about the plans, an 'artificial roof', parking and details of the extension. There was no objection to this application.

ZA25/27563/LBC Aqueduct 38 Leeds Liverpool canal, 1500m west of Gargrave at the canal crossing of the River Aire, BD23 3NN. Listed building consent for repair of a canal leak by injecting polyurethane grout into the towpath behind the canal wash wall. There was no objection to this application.

12. Planning Decisions: to receive and note the following planning decisions/information:

ZA25/27430/LBC Coniston Bridge, rebuilding of collapsed/collapsing section of the wall and install temporary concrete block parapets, for over winter. Granted.

ZA25/27449/HH 10 Marton Close, single storey extension and solar panel installation. Granted

ZA25/27486/TPO 9 Meadowcroft, fell one sycamore. Refused.

13. To set date of next meeting for TGR working group.

The date of next meeting of the TGR Working Group is confirmed as Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 7pm. Venue to be confirmed and circulated to members.

14. Financial matters:

14.1 To receive and approve the schedule of cheque payments and receipts as tabled

GARGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL			
Invoice Review: 7th January 2026			
DATE	ITEM DESCRIPTION	INCOME	PAYMENTS
04/12/2025	EA FRAP PAYMENT FOR STEPPING STONES		1,041.00
05/12/2025	VILLAGE HALL RENT FOR FINANCE MEETING		36.00
15/12/2025	DELL BACKUP LAPTOP		399.00
11/01/2026	SKY MOBILE INITIAL PAYMENT		5.40
15/12/2025	VILLAGE HALL		216.67
15/12/2025	IONOS CLOUD LTD WEBSITE/DOMAIN NAME		20.39
31/12/2025	NAT WEST BANK CHARGES		4.20
02/01/2026	SKY MOBILE RENTAL		6.00
	CEF - 2 x CORE LED		85.15
	CLERK SALARY		706.30
	CEF 10 WAY CONNECTOR		21.00
	BUSYBEES PAYROLL (NEST pension set up)		35.00
	HMRC PAYE		497.39
NAT WEST as at 31 DECEMBER 2025 £49,300.09			
		0.00	3,073.50

The need for a second laptop was queried and the Clerk reported that it was a backup device which can be stored off site and also be available for use with VAS. It was included in the IT budget for the current year.

The Clerk drew attention to the BusyBees invoice which has enabled her pension (as required by law) to be set up very quickly. She also took this opportunity to inform councillors that Nat West banking process has been completed and she is now in a position to fully carry out the role of RFO.

The schedule of payments and receipts was approved.

14.2 To receive and approve the bank reconciliation. This was not available.

14.3 To consider Clerk's membership of SLCC.

There was some discussion about the merits of this when the council has membership of YLCA which provides advice. The Clerk stated that the SLCC membership provides legal notes and discount on publications that are available to support the Clerk's role and also supports the Clerk professionally. It was agreed that Council would support this membership at £200 for one year and

if it proves not to be useful then it would not be renewed. It was noted that this is not included in the budget for 2026/7.

14.4 To consider purchase of the Clerk's Manual.

The Clerk was asked to check when a new edition is to be published before committing to spending on a 2023 edition.

15. Correspondence received: To receive information on the following new correspondence and decide further action where necessary.

- Flooding at the railway station

"I am writing to report ongoing flooding at the entrance to the platform at Gargrave Train Station. Northern railways knows but it is up to the landowner to sort. Who owns this piece of land?"

It is understood that this is at the entrance to platform 1 and is owned by Gargrave Stone Sales. The Clerk will inform the enquirer.

- Highways re gabion ownership.

The latest email response from Highways, "The location of the gabions is not within the highway extent, road surface only on Mill Lane, the verge isn't Highway Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE) and our Legal Team have advised regardless of previous actions there is no legal basis for the Council [ie NYC] to be expected or required to repair or replace."

- Planning application window replacement High Street ZA25/27469/LBC
This was discussed under planning

16. To notify the Clerk of matters for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting.

VAS A65 East and West update (SC), Christmas tree trimming (CC)

17. To confirm the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 4th February 2026.

The meeting ended 9.40pm