

Great Ecclestone Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

7:00pm Monday 11th May 2026
in
Great Ecclestone Village Centre

Welcome by the Chairman

Minutes of the APM 2025 approved

Reports:

Parish Council Chairman's Report Parish

Council Financial Report

Borough Councillor's Report

Great Ecclestone in Bloom Report Flood

Police Report - given verbally

If you have any subjects for discussion,

Please notify the Clerk or your Councillors before the meeting of any items for discussion

clerk@greatecclestone.gov.uk

All Parish and Town Councils throughout England are required by law to hold an Annual Parish Meeting between April and June each year. The purpose of the meeting is to allow the Parish Council and other organisations in the village to outline what they have been doing over the last 12 months. It also enables the residents of Great Ecclestone to have their say on anything they consider is important to the village, this is welcomed and is the purpose of the meeting. A written record of the meeting will be taken.

Great Ecclestone Parish Council
Accountability Report
May 2026

I hope all residents and users of the village find it helpful to receive a report from the Parish Council about what it has been doing over the last year. We have the privilege of living in a relatively tranquil village with a busy commercial centre with excellent owner-occupied shops. Notwithstanding the housing developments on the outskirts of the village, it remains the historic rural village it has been for so long and it makes for a great place to live. We benefit from a sense of community to which our schools, churches and voluntary organisations (the Bowling and Cricket Clubs, the Scouts, WI, Gardening Club come to mind) all contribute so well.

The Square hosts the regular Wednesday open markets. It must be said that Great Ecclestone seems to pick Wednesdays for the worst weather of its week but our stall-holders mostly brave the elements to provide this characterful contribution to the village. The Square was home to some great Christmas decorations this last year as well as hosting Carol Services and the annual Armistice service.

The Square, though, has been a cause of concern for many years because of anti-social parking and excessive traffic speed. The Council met representatives of the local businesses who helped developed ideas to improve things. Whilst we do not think there is a single simple solution to these complex issues we have developed a plan based on those discussions which we hope will change things for the better. We have also had long standing discussions with Lancashire County Council (the highways authority) and are hopeful that these will soon mean a reduction in the speed limit on Copp Lane.

The Council has continued to support Great Ecclestone in Bloom. Pam and the volunteers had their tremendous efforts recognised by the judges awarding a gold medal in 2025. Not only that but the village received a heritage award for the pinfold on West End. It is great to have that recognition but even better to have such a beautiful village. We owe thanks to Pam and the volunteers who work tirelessly to make such a fabulous impact. "Pam and the volunteers" sounds a bit like a 1980's girl band to me though there are male volunteers and more welcome!

Our village is a rural one but that doesn't mean that we can't contribute more to ecological initiatives. Happily, with great support from the Lancashire County Council Treescapes Team we have been able to plant a community orchard on the Thorne Meadows development and a Miyawake forest on the Recreation Ground off Pennine View. These efforts have not cost the village a penny with a kind donation funding the orchard, materials provided by LCC, trees donated by the Highways Agency and superb ground preparation for the forest kindly donated by JLC groundworks. It was great to see many from the village and particularly children involved in the planting. They will grow up to see "their" forest develop. Both the forest and the orchard are coming on nicely.

The Council also supports the Village Centre which provides valuable services to villagers and local businesses. The Great Ecclestone Village Centre Charity which ran the Centre has sadly had to cease trading recently due to financial pressures. I want to

express my thanks to the Trustees of this charity over the last 26 years for this contribution to village life. The Council thinks these services are important and so has taken over the running of the centre temporarily while a more long-term solution can be found. We are grateful to the owners of the building for their support in making this possible.

The Council often takes the opportunity to comment on planning applications. We try to support villager's ambitions for improvement and development where we can. We also try to get involved effectively when we feel plans impinge too much on the village or neighbours. We will continue to be involved in resisting the White House Farm developments which have occurred without planning permission and continue despite refusal for retrospective planning permission by Wyre Council.

Bubbling away in the background is the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026. The local headline is that Lancashire will be split into several "unitary" authorities. It also means that Wyre Council (our planning authority and bins provider) will be merged with some other local councils. There is a risk this does the opposite of devolution for a village like ours that is not regarded as a priority by public bodies now. Combine this with the substantial housing developments and there is a risk that Great Eccleston becomes a dormitory village. The Parish Council is alert to this and working actively to improve services, facilities and public spaces.

Meanwhile, John Clueit, our lengthsman, has continued to look after our village as best he can, David Astall has worked on flood prevention in the village and extended this to community resilience preparations. David has also met with Historic England to review the listed buildings in the village to make sure they are being looked after and if not, ensure that the enforcement authorities are alerted. Thanks to John and David.

We increased the budget significantly last year so that we could build some reserves. Parish Councils are advised to have between 6 months and 18 months of turnover in reserves and we had none. The village needs these reserves to be able to respond to immediate needs such as maintenance of the Square. We will have built up sufficient reserves by the end of 2026/7.

I would like to thank my councillor colleagues, David, Sue, Jackie, Nick, Pam and Trevor for their guidance, support and constructive dialogue during this last year as I found my way around the responsibilities and arcane procedures.

Finally, my thanks must go to Hugh Glover, our clerk, for his knowledge and expertise in all things Parish Council. He has been a source of insight and "how to" expertise.

My thanks go to those named in this report and those not who contribute so much to our village having a sense of community and it thriving as an historic rural village.

Alan

Alan Yates
Chair, Great Eccleston Parish Council

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

GREAT ECCLESTON PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		Yes	No*	*Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No			
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓				prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓				made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓				has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓				during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓				considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓				arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓				responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓				disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A		has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.
			✓		

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

09/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

477/11/b

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Clerk

www.greateccleston.org

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

GREAT ECCLESTON PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	5010	7	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	45000	47300	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	4314	5275	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	10374	10428	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	43943	42151	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	7	3	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	7	3	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	32408	35081	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

Date

09/06/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

09/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

477/11/c

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of **Great Eccleston Parish Council – LA0087**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2024/25

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

The smaller authority should ensure that it has regard to the level of reserves held when considering future precept requests.

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP		
External Auditor Signature		Date 14/09/2025

Income and Expenditure				9 March 2026	Budget 2025/2026
	Actual	Budget	Variance	2026	2026/2027
	£	£	£	12	6
Income					
Market	1,180	1,350	(170)		1,200
Wyre Borough Council Precept	64,000	64,000	0		67,000
WIB	2,871	2,900	(30)	773	2,540
Funding from Sec 106 for Village Hall professional fees & 2000 young peoples					7,000
Total Income	68,051	68,250	(200)		70,740
Expenses					
Accounting, Professional & legal fees	767	1,400	634		7,500
Employee Costs	10,314	10,604	290		10,925
Signage/Welcome Beds/Fixed Assets Insurance Costs	4,385	4,850	465		1,700
Lengthsman	1,738	1,537	(201)		1,700
Watering	3,888	3,927	40		4,050
	1,450	300	(1,150)		1,600
Planting	3,072	2,900	(172)		3,000
Membership Fees	325	325	0		335
Printing, Postage and Stationery	600	600	0		618
Publications	15	15	0		16
Rates	200	200	0		206
Repairs	3,282	4,750	1,468		1,000
Room Hire & storage	1,421	1,200	(221)		1,236
Election Expenses	0	0	0		0
Free resource Section 137	0	500	500		515
Training	387	500	113		1,030
Travel	962	1,000	38		515
Web Site Hosting and Maintenance	1,497	700	(797)		1,000
Xmas/ Other/Events	1,440	1,600	160		2,000
Contingency	0	0	0		0
Village Centre support	15,000	15,000	0		12,000
Replenish Reserves	15,000	15,000	0		20,000
Total Expenses	65,741	66,908	1,167		70,946
Net Income	2,310	1,342	968		(206)

COUNCILLOR SUSAN CATTERALL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025 TO 2026

This year has been a challenging journey having to deal with hospital appointments, treatments and operations. Apart from a very small number of occasions I have still been able to carry out Borough and Parish Council duties.

As always “Planning” issues seem to be the most contentious with people and as a result I have been asked to call a number of applications before the Planning Committee, some of which are still waiting to be heard.

One of these was that relating to Cross House Farm which although it was refused is still causing concerns.

Issues in relation to flooding and drainage on Barrows Lane was brought to my attention and after approaching United Utilities I was informed that this was not their remit. Lancashire County Council attended at my request and carried out remedial and cleaning work. This has made an improvement but monitoring is still ongoing as the problem has not been completely solved.

I joined Nick and Trevor on a cold windy morning to help our Chairman Alan at Miyawake Forest together with lots of parents and children. Along with volunteers from Bloom, Wyre and Lancashire County Council we planted lots of trees. I was supported by Ryan who is Wyre Boroughs Tree Officer and we muddled our way to planting five trees. Despite the conditions a fantastic effort by lots of people making it a great success to unite the community.

I was approached by a representative from the Organisers of the Great Eccleston Show about trying to obtain wi-fi on the show ground. A long convoluted problem arose because of the need for a registered address to get installation authorised. Several departments at Wyre Borough Council were able to assist me in outlining procedures to satisfy the Post Office and Open Reach to initiate installation. This is still ongoing and I await notification from the show organisers to let me know if they have been successful.

Finally I was approached recently by a parent about her daughter and friend who were approached in the village by a person trying to sell them vapes and drugs. I met with a member of the local Policing Team who are going to get in touch with the parent to make further enquiries to address the issue together with the Policing Team at Garstang.

Sue Catterall

Great Eccleston Annual Parish Council Meeting 11th May 2026

Great Eccleston in Bloom (GEIB) Report

Thanks to the efforts of all involved, the Village was kept neat and vibrant, earning another Gold Award from the RHS Britain in Bloom North West Judges in July 2025.

In Bloom Sub Sections	In Bloom Scoring (Max 100 points)	Points / Award
Horticulture - max 40 points Environment - max 30 points Community - max 30 points	2022 – 74 Silver 2023 – 79 Silver 2024 – 89 Gold 2025 – 90 Gold	60 to 74 points = Silver Good 75 to 84 points = Silver Gilt Very Good 85 to 100 points = Gold Excellent

Achievements leading up to judging in July 2025

Fund Raising & Sponsorship

- Great Eccleston Parish Council funded tiered planters, bus stop planters, lamp post beds, memorial planters, hanging baskets in the village centre, and five additional barrels. They also provided a new half-barrel for the bus stop near the Health Centre, which was planted, and new watering equipment.
- The November 2024 Christmas Craft Fair organised by the Volunteers raised £901 for GEIB through stall hire, tombola and refreshments, with strong community support. This allowed a greater range of planting throughout the Village.
- Many businesses contributed to GEIB by payment for their advertising on the Amenity Signs at both ends of the Village.
- Additional sponsorship was provided by ES Williams, Great Eccleston Health Centre, Great Eccleston Dental Practice, Moons Funeral Service, Peppy's and a small number of residents. Volunteers donated compost and some plants.

Volunteers

- The volunteer team expanded slightly in 2025 with new members and partners.
- Volunteers increased their regular sessions to plant and maintain village areas, including Welcome Beds, Health Centre Beds, Shady Bed, Pinfold Friendship Garden, barrels and planters.
- Volunteer support included work at the Bungalows, bench refurbishment, litter picking, roadside weeding, and assistance/attendance at charity and education events.
- Key projects involved the Friendship Circle, Pinfold Friendship Garden, and transforming the telephone box into a free seed and gardening book swap.
- During spring drought, volunteers watered beds and planters before scheduled contracts began.



Projects to July 2025

- Friendship Circle project progressed. Engagement with Wyre re landscaping on Garstang Road



Pinfold Friendship Garden continued as a key wellbeing and biodiversity space, with friendship figures, painted pebble activity, noughts-and-crosses table, new insect house, and added wildlife water source enhancing visitor engagement. Subsequently awarded a RHS Heritage Award by the Judges in 2025.

- Telephone box repurposed from floral display into a free seed and gardening book swap, promoting sustainability, sharing, and community involvement
- Village Centre Garden further improved with additional planters, yoga use on the upper patio, compost development, water butts, and stronger use as a shared community and wellbeing space
- Community education supported through fruit tree pruning sessions with expert guidance from Willowbridge Plants and herb-bed pebble labels created for the Health Centre beds.
- Made pebble decorations for trees in the Square with Northlands Rest Home



Projects planned post judging for 2025/26

- Christmas Craft Fair in November 2025 to raise funds for 2026
- Historical and other info boards at the Bus Stop
- Friendship Circle and Bench on Garstang Road
- Additional benches along Garstang Road
- Retain and recruit Volunteers – increased involvement
- Barrel planting designed and sourced by Volunteers
- Engagement with Wyre re landscaping around the Friendship Circle
- Increase Facebook Activity
- Create In Bloom email address
- Telephone box refurbish

On behalf of Great Eccleston In Bloom Sub-Committee

8th May 2026

Flood report

David J Astall, Flood Officer and Chairman Great Ecclestone FLAG

Another year when in spite of numerous flood warnings the river Wyre defences have held and the main part of the village has not suffered from flooding. Work has been carried out in the White's Bridge area to strengthen the riverbanks and this seems to have held. However the flood in this area has now moved closer to Marsh Farm possibly as a result of this groundwork. The bridge itself continues to be in a bit of a state as the banking is above the parapet of the bridge therefore when the dyke floods it is more likely to flood the road. The dyke water is also egressing through the mortar of the bridge and weakening the structure. The road still does not have the lighting promising by the LCC Councillor, Matthew Salter, five years ago, or the illuminated signs to alert drivers of a flood at the bridge. The signs appear to be permanently in place. The issues with White's Bridge have caused more flooding at Moss side. These properties continue to flood even when the main village is spared from the flooding. LCC / Wyre and the Environmental Agency are trying to sort this issue out.

The main cause of concern nowadays tends to be from surface water flooding. The main areas of flooding are: the bottom of Raikes Road, the bottom of St Mary's Road and Copp Lane. This year no reports of flooding have been filed for Copp Lane or St Mary's Road but flooding on several occasions has been reported at the bottom of Raikes Road. The road in bad weather, even when White's Bridge is not flooded can be impassible. On several occasions this has not been from the gulleys over topping down Raikes Road but a damaged gulley at the bottom of Raikes Road. This has been reported several times and promises of repairs have been made but still none have been forthcoming. I even reported it directly to the LCC councillor, who wrote it in his book. (seems to be a pattern emerging here). Water Lane has been impassible on several occasions due to the two side drains down the lane. The Eastern drain may be re-dug in the future due to the new ownership of Part Raikes Farm.

This year The Environmental Agency took up my complaint about letting people know that the flood alert had passed and in the last few occasions of flood alerts being issued a follow up call has been sent to tell residents that the danger has passed, this is a great asset as it helps to put people's minds at ease. The river level and rain gauges are continued to be monitored on a regular basis following rain in the area.

This year Great Ecclestone was chosen to receive the ERAL radio system. This system consists of two hand held receivers and a base unit. The base unit, housed in the VC also contains a UPS just in case there is a major power outage in an emergency. The HH units are tested on a regular basis every last Thursday of the month. Training has been carried out and David Astall (DA) and Hugh Glover (HG) were trained by the Police then cascaded training was given to Alan Yates (AY) and Pam Taylor (PT). A distance check was carried out between DA and AY to check that the radios could send and receive messages between each part of the village.

Following training the radio system can now be used for other resilience emergencies like Wild Fire, Incidents at the Showground and Incidents on the main road.

The Flood policy was started to have its 5 year re-write recently but this had to be put on the back burner due to my illness and hospitalisation. This should be completed sometime over the

Summer. I continue to attend the Flood Forum and report back on their findings. The website is still basic but hopefully in the near future will get a much needed re-vamp.

Recently Great Ecclestone was chosen to be have a major training incident carried out by the British Red Cross. This involved several members of the PC. It is hoped that a follow up training incident can be carried out in the near future. This scenario and training will be used for county wide training.

David J Astall

7th May 2026