

## **Minutes of the Thorverton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday October 13<sup>th</sup> 2020, 7pm, by way of the on-line facility 'Zoom' (Coronavirus Act 2020)**

**Present:** Cllrs S Crang, S Fice, A Foster (Vice Chair), J Hodge, A McKee, N Lane (Chair), T Sanders, G Sims, D Waldron  
**In attendance:** Mrs A Marshall (Clerk), D/Cllr Deed and 1 member of the public.

The Chairman welcomed new Cllrs Adam McKee and Trevor Sanders and it was confirmed that they had both signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and had submitted their Register of Interest forms to the District Council. New Councillor training had been attended by Cllrs Fice, McKee and Sanders. All Councillors were reminded to keep their Register of Interest forms up to date, this being the responsibility of individual Councillors.

**Public Open Session:** None.

### **External Reports:**

i) C/Cllr Squires had submitted a report which focussed on the new NHS Covid application which is now available for download by the public, and which forms part of the Governments Test and Trace scheme.

ii) D/Cllr Deed attended the meeting between 7.30pm and 8pm - see item 20/77 below for his report.

iii) Police statistics – one crime was reported in the month of August, being of anti-social behaviour.

**20/73 Declarations of interest:** Cllr Waldron declared a personal interest in agenda items 9 (defibrillators) and 19ii (TMGT grant funding), due to his partner being involved in both these areas.

**20/74 Apologies for absence:** Cllr Wells, due to a work commitment. C/Cllr Squires, due to a family illness.

**20/75 Confirmation of Minutes:** It was RESOLVED to sign the Minutes of September 8th as an accurate record.

**20/76 Working Groups and Responsibilities:** The current listing was reviewed and it was RESOLVED to make the following changes; School representative changed to Cllr McKee, Allotment representative changed to Cllr Fice, Section 106 working group changed to Cllrs Lane, Foster and Sanders, Hulk Lane working group disbanded, Cllrs Waldron and Wells were removed from the Grant Giving working group and Cllrs Sanders and McKee were added, Mr R Cashmore and Cllr Crang were removed from the Silver Street Footpath working group and Cllrs Fice and Sims were added. A temporary 'new mower' working group was set up involving Cllrs Fice and Sims.

**20/77 Silver Street Footpath:** The Chairman gave an overview of the situation to date and public feedback was noted. It was RESOLVED that the working group should meet to review the public feedback in detail, and to answer the questions raised, prior to recommending the way forward to Council at a future meeting.

7.30pm D/Cllr Deed joined the meeting at this point and Standing Orders were suspended.

**Silver Street Footpath –** D/Cllr Deed reported that on discussing this project with MDDC legal issues relating to access rights, ownership and the use of the access road as a public footpath had come to light. He aimed to resolve these matters and would keep the Council informed on progress.

**Covid 19 –** D/Cllr Deed reported that Thorverton is currently within the 'medium tier', despite the current spike of positive cases seen in Exeter of late. The MDDC website fully explains the different tiers and the latest Covid updates from the Government.

**Planning –** the Government had issued a White Paper which would see some decision making removed from MDDC and which would make it easier for minor planning amendments to be achieved. The District Council will need to increase the number of houses built, year on year, by 75% going forward to meet Government requirements and this paper would help with that.

**Devolution –** a further White Paper had been issued in connection with reducing the unitary authorities in England to just 60 and, as a result, some Councils would amalgamate or disappear. This would see further devolved responsibilities and powers passing down to Town and Parish Councils. A decision on how to take this matter forward has been postponed until the New Year.

**Climate Change –** MDDC has now approved the appointment of an officer to lead on this topic and to help push forward its plans for carbon neutrality. D/Cllr left the meeting at this point and Standing Orders were resumed.

**20/78 Dark Lane wall:** Following completion of the wall repairs and the granting of £1,000 towards costs by DCC Highways (against an expected grant of £3,500), it was RESOLVED to apply to C/Cllr Squires for funding from the Locality Budget to help cover some of the funding shortfall.

**20/79 Football Club:** it was agreed to bring agenda item 14 forward to this point. Cllr Waldron suggested that better use might be made of the Parish Council owned Recreation Ground and that local residents are not being able to make full use of the site due to football club usage. It was noted that very few football players are from the village, currently, and that having the football pitch dominate the site meant that a tennis court, basketball hoops or an all-weather sports pitch, for example (and as had been requested by members of the public), could not be installed. The Council was asked to consider alternative uses for the space, with the football club remaining in situ, and called for the community to be consulted on the matter. It was agreed that, especially during the winter, the site was underused. Cllr Crang reported that the matter of charging clubs to use the site had been discussed years ago and it had been concluded by the then Council that nothing could stop the football club, or other clubs, having specific use of the Rec for specific reasons and also that fees could not be charged. The Council should, however, agree match fixtures, which would then allow exclusive use of the Rec for the matches. Cllrs Hodge, Lane and Fice were in favour of having the Football Club at the Rec as it provides an opportunity for younger residents, welcomes residents who turn up to watch the matches and brings funds into the village. It was noted that the club cuts the grass and looks after the grounds at no cost to the Council. The matter of on-going anti-social behavioural issues and complaints received about bad language and footballs entering gardens were acknowledged. The Agreement between the Football Club and Parish Council had been circulated and no amendments were suggested. Council was asked to consider how the grounds would be managed, and the costs involved, if the club was not in situ. The member of the public present at the meeting, being a representative of the Football Club, was invited to speak and Standing Orders were suspended. He reported that two male football teams, plus an under 13's team, were currently using the Rec on a regular basis and that the first team had won the Devon Cup last season. He added that players and supporters bring funds into the village which is a benefit. Whilst there were currently not many players from the village there were 8 or 9 players from surrounding areas in teams and any new 'local' members were always welcome. It was acknowledged that the club works hard to maintain the pitch to match level and has recently spent funds cutting back trees, putting up protective garden netting and paying for mower repairs. It was reported that the club would be happy to open its changing room facilities to any other club or group wanting to use them and that the club's management were fully aware of the recent complaints and would continue to manage situations as best it could. The Chairman thanked the representative for his continued involvement with the Parish Council and thanked the Football Club for overseeing recent maintenance at the Rec at no cost to the Council. Standing Orders resumed.

**20/80 Defibrillators:** The existing Parish Council owned defibrillator is located on the external wall of the Exe Valley Doctors' Surgery in Thorverton. Earlier this year it was resolved to purchase a second machine, to be located on the external wall of the Women's Institute Hut, but due to Covid it had been difficult to put any fund raising events in place to cover costs. Council was reminded that resident Maggie Dunlop had first raised the idea of a defibrillator and had gone on to lead the fund raising, oversee its purchase and installation, arrange regular training events and she continues to complete the required regular checks and manage the machine. Maggie had now offered to do the same for the second machine and it was RESOLVED to accept this offer and to formally ask Maggie to organise fund raising for the second machine and to continue with the management of both machines. When considering ideas for fund raising a 'Just Giving' page was suggested. It was confirmed that the current reserved funding held under the heading of 'defibrillator' was ring-fenced for the maintenance of the existing machine.

**20/81 Planning matters:**

- i) **20/01223/FULL** retention of access track and vehicle hardstanding at 9 Silver Street, Thorverton. Refused. Noted.
- ii) **20/01375/CAT** notification regarding works on 1 Cypress and 1 Lime tree within the Conservation Area at Mar Lodge, Thorverton. No objection. Noted.
- ii) **20/01413/FULL** erection of an agricultural storage building and stables at Tallets Barn, Heathfield, Thorverton. It was noted that the MDDC Historic Environmental Team had objected to this application.

#### **20/82 Handyman:**

- i) Salary – it was RESOLVED to accept the salary request of £216.75 gross for September.
- ii) Report – the report was noted and it was RESOLVED to add the clearing of the brook at the Memorial Hall to the duties list, Cllrs Hodge, Fice, Sanders and McKee volunteered to help with this task. It was also RESOLVED to add the cutting back of the hedges and tidying up of the path along the Barliabins footpath to the duties list.
- ii) Equipment Store - Cllr Hodge was now awaiting container quotes to share with the Council and was looking into the adequacy of the proposed space for the store.

#### **20/83 Finances:**

- i) Bank balance – it was noted that on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 the balance stood at £58,716.17
- ii) Banked receipts – noted as being £1.26 bank interest and £70.00 garage rent in September.
- iii) Payments – it was RESOLVED to make the following payments:

A Marshall - Clerk salary	Salary £550.86 gross, less tax due	£539.86 net
N Matthews - Handyman salary	Salary £216.75 gross, less tax due	£177.95 net
A Marshall – Clerks expenses	Stationery (ink & envelopes)	£39.99 (VAT n/a)
Viridor Credits	3rd party contribution re mower grant	£363.70 (VAT n/a)
MDDC	Garage rental – monthly direct debit	£55.68 (VAT incl)

The Bank reconciliation was agreed and signed.

#### **20/84 Recreation Ground:**

- i) Rec in general - Cllr Sims reported that the tree work had been completed and that the annual play and gym equipment inspection was due at month end. Cllr McKee reported that the 'Kids Club' was now using the Rec and that usage should improve as Covid restrictions eased.
- ii) Wild life garden maintenance - Cllr McKee had spoken to the school who had confirmed interest in helping keep the garden tidy. As the children were currently unable to leave school, due to Covid restrictions, any activity would need to be postponed for the time being. Cllr Sims had pulled up nettles, cut back brambles and spread the tree chippings at the garden. It was RESOLVED that Cllrs Lane, Waldron and Sims would form a working group to tidy up the garden further and the Clerk would ask the three residents who had also shown an interest to join the group.
- iii) Purchase of a new mower – £3,637 of grant funding from Viridor Credits had been confirmed and so it was RESOLVED that Cllrs Sims and Fice would now research purchase options and report back to Council next month.

**20/85 Parish Council Legal representation:** It was agreed that the Council's current Solicitors had not been providing the expected service of late. It was RESOLVED that other providers should be invited to supply letters advising of their services and costs for Council consideration. Cllr Crang reminded all present that the current Solicitors office holds the Council's legal documents and at no cost. Cllr Lane with the Clerk would seek recommendations from other local Councils.

**20/86 Satisfaction Survey:** Last year residents were invited to complete a short questionnaire regarding services provided by the Parish Council but the number of responses was disappointing. It was RESOLVED to use the same questionnaire throughout November this year and to make use of social media in order to reach more residents.

**20/87 Printer purchase:** Due to the current printer being in poor order, and the property of the Clerk, it was RESOLVED to purchase a new printer/scanner/copier up to the value of £100 net.

#### **20/88 Representative reports:**

i) Footpaths – Cllr Foster reported that the amended footpath route at Parliament Cottage had now been signed and that a new waypost will be installed and be visible from the road. Two 'bridle path' wayposts had been put up at Hulk Lane and a new sign stating 'To Permissive Bridleway' had been installed near to the Silver Street entrance to the lane. It was RESOLVED that a letter of thanks should be sent to Mr & Mrs Mildon for their help with the Parliament footpath.

ii) Thorverton Millennium Green Trust (TMGT) – members of the Trust were sad to hear of the death of Richard Turner-Warwick who, together with Dame Margaret, had been a great benefactor and developer of the Millennium

Green. The last grass-cut of the year will take place next week prior to the tractor/mower being reclaimed by its owner. An application to Viridor Credits for a new mower is pending. Thanks were given to the Parish Council in anticipation of it supplying a letter of support for the funding.

**iii) School** – Cllr Lane reported that the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association is looking for a new secretary and chair. Anyone interested should contact [thorvertonptfa@exevalleyfederation.org.uk](mailto:thorvertonptfa@exevalleyfederation.org.uk) The Exe Valley Federation is starting half-term virtual prayer meetings to pray for help with the challenges that the schools are facing during these difficult times. Contact [apmathers@gmail.com](mailto:apmathers@gmail.com) for further information.

**iv) Focus** – a new editor for the magazine has not yet been found and so Focus, which has been running for 50 years, is likely to fold in the New Year. Anyone interested in the role should contact Cllr Lane or the Focus Chairman.

**v) Speedwatch** – Cllr Hodge reported that in September three Speedwatch sessions had taken place and 129 vehicles had been checked. Five vehicles were found to be travelling above the 30mph limit and 40mph was the highest speed recorded. It was confirmed that the registration numbers of speeding vehicles are passed to the Police.

#### **Correspondence:**

**i) Thorverton Cricket Club** – a request for a letter of support, in connection with external funding for the purchase of new netting, had been received and it was RESOLVED to supply a letter.

**ii) Thorverton Millennium Green Trust (TMGT)** – a request for grant funding of £200 towards the purchase of a new mower had been received and it was RESOLVED to make the grant, subject to the purchase proceeding. A request for a letter of support, in connection with external grant funding for the new mower, had also been received and it was RESOLVED to supply a letter.

**PART 2 (private session):** It was RESOLVED that, due to the sensitive nature of the business to be discussed, the following items be dealt with as Part 2 business and, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be asked to leave the meeting:

**i) New Cemetery** – Cllrs Fice and Waldron had, as agreed by Council, commenced negotiations with regards the purchase of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of an acre of land off Dark Lane where the siting of the new Cemetery is planned. Costs are now being gathered and will be presented to Council for consideration at the next meeting.

**ii) Allotment field** – the Deed of Variation, in connection with water pipes being laid along the boundary of the allotment field, had now been received and, as previously resolved, the Clerk and Chairman would deal with the documentation. The Church Commissions Agent had advised that the purchase of the allotment field site by the Parish Council would be considered further once the pipe work had been completed.

#### **Business at the Chairman's discretion:**

**i) Cllr Crang** asked for an update on the South West Water compensation claim to be requested.

**ii) Cllr Waldron** enquired as to whether an action plan could be added to future agendas and the Chairman agreed to discuss the matter with the Cllr.

**iii) Cllr Hodge** enquired as to whether the erection of the Christmas trees could still go ahead, due to the current Covid restrictions, and Cllr McKee volunteered to look into this. It was suggested that there would be no 'tree lighting ceremonies' this year due to Covid.

**iv) Cllr Sims** reported that the reservoir in Dark Lane was getting very overgrown with vegetation and suggested that the owner be notified in order that the debris could be cleared.

**Next meeting:** November 10<sup>th</sup> 2020, 7.00pm, by way of Zoom unless otherwise advised.

The meeting closed at 21.10

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