

Minutes of the Thorverton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday November 10th 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, N Lane (Chair), T Sanders, G Sims, D Waldron and K Wells. **In attendance:** Mrs A Marshall (Clerk), C/Cllr Squires, D/Cllr Deed and 1 member of the public.

Standing Orders suspended.

Public Open Session: None.

External Reports:

- i) **C/Cllr Squires** had submitted reports regarding the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Public Health.
- ii) **D/Cllr Deed** reported that a) a motion had been passed at MDDC to look into how female Councillors were being treated, with focus on the current unbalance of female (24%) to male Councillors; b) five additional Syrian refugee families were to be taken on by MDDC under the Syrian Settlement Scheme, adding to the three families already under MDDC care; c) the Public Spaces Protection Order is progressing and will set out where dogs can and cannot be let off the lead in Mid Devon's public open spaces. It will also set out how many dogs a person can take out on a lead at any one time; d) the MDDC budgets for 2021 have identified a shortfall of £3million caused by leisure facilities and car parks being closed during Covid 19 lockdowns. The shortfall will reduce to £250,000. on receipt of newly announced Government funding. Services will still need to be cut, however; e) the Silver Street footpath matter will be considered by the Assets Committee on 25th November and, if appropriate, a public consultation will then be arranged. Cllr Deed confirmed his support for the project but reminded all present of the legal issues with regards the ownership of the road. Cllr Deed left the meeting at this point.
- iii) **Police statistics:** No crimes had been reported from Thorverton parish in the month of September.

Standing Orders resumed.

20/93 Declarations of interest: Cllrs Waldron and Sanders, being residents of School Lane, declared a personal interest in the School Lane junction matter.

20/94 Apologies for absence: Cllr McKee, due to illness.

20/95 Confirmation of Minutes of the meeting of 13th October 2020: It was RESOLVED to sign the Minutes as a correct record of the meeting.

It was agreed by all present to bring forward agenda item 13.i to this stage.

20/96 Request for a mirror at the School Lane junction: Due to poor visibility at the junction, School Lane residents had requested support from the Parish Council regarding the installation of a mirror on the lamp post opposite the junction. This would enable visibility up through Bullen Street and make the junction safer for both drivers and pedestrians. Standing Orders were suspended to allow C/Cllr Squires to speak and she advised that it is not Devon County policy to put mirrors in place due to sun reflection issues, and as drivers can be distracted when relying on mirrors. She suggested that the petition sent to the Parish Council from School Lane residents be submitted to Devon County, or that residents write in individually to air their views. Standing Orders resumed. Councillors agreed with the concerns raised by the residents and RESOLVED to support the request for a mirror at the junction to improve visibility and safety. Alternative suggestions would be invited from Devon County should a mirror not be allowed, even for a trial period. The Clerk would write to DCC Highways through C/Cllr Squires. Cllr Squires left the meeting at this point.

20/97 Covid 19 update: Councillors considered the current second Covid 19 lockdown situation and whether any additional support for the village should be put in place. The funding put aside for use by the local Covid 19 Support Group remained untouched and additional grant funding had been made available by Devon County Council. Following discussion, and the consideration of many suggestions, it was RESOLVED that Cllr Lane, as representative on the local Covid 19 Support Group, make contact with the group to put across the suggestions raised in connection

with supporting local residents living alone by offering zoom meetings or accompanied walks, for example, and the idea that these activities could be advertised on the Parish Council's website and on local social media.

20/98 Planning matters:

i) 20/01788/LBC listed building consent for an en-suite shower room at 2 Silver Street, Thorverton. It was RESOLVED to submit no comment.

ii) 20/01394/FULL removal of conditions 7 & 8 of planning permission 06/02077/FULL relating to live/work unit to allow full residential use at Crosses Barn, Thorverton. Granted. Noted.

iii) EDDC 20/1517/FUL (amended) construction of digestate storage lagoon with associated hardstanding and 2.4m high security fencing at Rixenford Lane, Upton Pyne (bordering Thorverton parish). It was RESOLVED to submit a comment stating that the Parish Council remains unconvinced by the amended plans and that the concerns regarding traffic in and around the lane remained.

20/99 Handyman:

i) Equipment store – Cllr Hodge reported that the cost of the container/store would be in the region of £3,150 and that this would be a cost efficient way forward taking into account the monthly garage rental costs. Further costs were being investigated and Cllrs Hodge and Crang would assess the site for suitability prior to the matter being brought back to Council for further consideration.

ii) Duty list – there had been no Handyman request for payment for the month of October. The current duty list was considered, along with additional suggestions, and it was RESOLVED not to replace the rotting gate and fence wood at Barliabins at the present time. It was also RESOLVED not to form a working group to rake up leaves at the Broadlands area. Checking local grit bins for damage, and to ensure they are full, would be added to the duty list. Cllr Lane volunteered to take on the creating of a draft Snow Plan for Council consideration.

20/100 Finances:

i) Bank balance – noted as being £66,627.87 as at November 1st 2020.

ii) Banked receipts for October – noted as being £7,869.50 Precept, £1,000. DCC Highways grant.

iii) Payments – it was noted that the Chairman is currently paying the £11.99 per month (plus VAT) Zoom membership which would be refunded when requested. It was RESOLVED to make the following payments:

A Marshall - Clerk salary	Salary £490.86 gross, plus tax refund	£492.06 net
A Marshall – Clerks expenses	MDDC brown bin (no.2) annual renewal £50, new printer £84.99, stationery £14.50, stamps £7.48	£156.97 (incl VAT)
VisionICT	Website charge – additional work	£36.00 (incl VAT)
MDDC	Garage rental – monthly direct debit	£55.68 (incl VAT)

20/101 Recreation Ground:

i) RoSPA Report – the annual play and gym equipment inspection report was considered and it was confirmed by Cllr Sims that no urgent action had been highlighted. It was noted that the multi play climber was showing signs of wood rot, and so would need replacing in the not too distant future. Also, parts of the rubber matting had started to lift and so would need attention eventually. It was RESOLVED not to take any action at this time.

ii) New Mower – Cllr Sims had investigated four different mowers and proposed that the Council purchase a Cub Cadet Z1 48 inch cut machine, with mulcher, from Hayes of South Molton. The offer cost would be £7,299. including VAT and it was RESOLVED to make this purchase. The Clerk would place the order by month end and arrange the Viridor grant funding as part payment. Delivery was not expected until March 2021 (the warranty would commence on delivery) and so the existing mower would remain in place until then.

20/102 Silver Street Footpath: Cllr Wells and D/Cllr Deed had provided project updates and it was confirmed that Cllr Wells had submitted the Section 106 funding application for £15,000. to MDDC. The next steps are to await news from MDDC with regards to the Section 106 funding decision and the legal position of the road ownership. If

favourable, the working group would then review the public comments and feedback received in detail. Cllr Sims had found an old report, circa 1970, which had highlighted the unstable position of the bank due to water.

20/103 Representative reports:

- i) Footpaths** – it was agreed to put the review on the ‘Definitive Rights of Way’ for Thorverton Parish on the December meeting agenda for consideration. It was noted that a resident had produced a map showing parish footpaths which had been well received and it was suggested that a leaflet on local walks be produced by the Parish Council. Cllr Foster volunteered to investigate this matter further and report back to Council at the next meeting.
- ii) Speedwatch** – Cllr Hodge reported that 4 sessions had taken place in October and that 224 vehicles had been monitored of which 14 were found to be travelling in excess of the 30mph village centre speed limit. 41mph was the highest speed recorded. The details of vehicles found to be speeding had been passed to the Police.
- iii) Focus** – Cllr Lane reported that a new Editor had been found and that they will commence the role shortly.
- iv) School** – parents had been asked to wear face coverings when on site. The School is considering the possibility of Sandford School joining the Exe Valley Federation (see correspondence, below).
- v) Raddon Group** – nothing to report. The next meeting will take place in February 2021.

20/104 Correspondence:

- i) School Lane junction.** Residents of School Lane had asked the Parish Council to support their request for the installation of a mirror, at the School Lane junction with Bullen Street, for safety reasons. See item 20/96 above.
- ii) School Lane mud on road.** A verbal request had been received from a resident to have the mud cleared from School Lane, at the footpath to The Glebe, and it was confirmed that this had already been done by Cllr Sanders. The resident had provided positive feedback on the completed work and Cllr Sanders was thanked by all present.
- iii) Thorverton School Consultation.** The document, advising that Sandford School could be brought under the umbrella of the current Exe Valley Federation, was considered. It was RESOLVED not to comment.

20/105 Christmas trees: It was confirmed that both trees had been ordered and that Cllr Hodge, with support from Cllr Fice, would oversee the collection, erection and decoration of the trees. The current Covid 19 restrictions would need to be taken into account.

20/106 Christmas cards: It was RESOLVED to send Christmas cards to volunteers, as a thank you, again this year.

20/107 General Data Protection Regulations: The Clerk had attended a refresher course and had circulated the resulting notes, together with the Parish Council’s existing GDPR related documents, to Council. It was RESOLVED not to make any amendments to the body of the documents. It was recommended that Councillors set up separate email addresses for Parish Council business.

20/108 Satisfaction Survey: Cllr Lane had set up a Survey Monkey system for Satisfaction Survey responses but had only just been made aware of a fee of £99. falling due should more than 25 responses be received. As 50 responses had been received, to date, the fee had become payable and it was RESOLVED to make this one-off payment.

20/109 Parish Council Legal representation: Enquiries had been made of three companies, to date, and it was noted that all costs were similar. Cllr Waldron suggested a review of the internet for Council specific companies, which could prove more cost effective, and the Chairman agreed to investigate further and report back in due course.

20/110 Community Archaeology Project: The pre-publication report had been received and considered. It was RESOLVED not to suggest any amendments to the report and to gain confirmation that the report can now be published. The Clerk would also clarify the current standing with regards to costings and any outstanding Heritage Lottery Fund grant funding. When confirmed, it was RESOLVED to publish the final report on the Parish Council’s

website and to make reference to it on Facebook and in the Focus magazine. Cllr Fice involuntarily left the meeting at this point due to technical difficulties.

20/111 It was RESOLVED to enter into part 2 (private session) to consider the following matters:

i) New Cemetery. The working group had met with the landowner who had confirmed a sale price of £8000 for the proposed 1/3rd of an acre of land. The request by the landowner for specific fencing along the boundary was noted. Costings were estimated at £12,500 to include the land purchase, fencing, planning permission and legal fees for both sides. It was RESOLVED to write to the landowner to agree the purchase price and to agree to proceed with the purchase, subject to planning permission.

ii) Allotment field: The legal documents, regarding the laying of water pipes, had been signed and returned to the Solicitor. There was no update from the Church Commissioners regarding the purchase of the allotment field.

iii) Handyman's annual employment review. Following consideration of the annual review document it was agreed that all objectives had been met. It was RESOLVED not to purchase a vehicle for the Handyman position, due to costs, but to continue paying any relevant mileage claims. It was RESOLVED to consider the purchasing and fitting of a tow bar as and when relevant. It was RESOLVED to increase the hourly rate of pay to £13.00 with immediate effect.

iv) Clerk's annual employment review. Following consideration of the annual review document it was agreed that the refined objectives had all been met. It was RESOLVED that, due to the increase in duties over the past year, the objectives should be updated further, to cover the role more thoroughly, and that the hourly rate of pay should be increased to £13.24 (point 19 on the national pay scale for clerks), with immediate effect.

20/112 Business at the Chairman's discretion:

1. Cllr Sims reported that the wildlife garden and the trees at the Recreation Ground had been tidied up with the help of residents. He had removed the bird boxes for repair and would replace them in the New Year.

2. Cllr Hodge asked for a letter to be sent to Thorverton Millennium Green Trust asking for dogs to be kept under control as chickens had been killed, a sheep had been injured and private gardens had been entered by rogue dogs. Cllr Waldron reported that a sign had recently appeared at the entrance to the field asking dog owners to keep their animals under control for the reasons stated. A message had also been posted on the Nextdoor service.

20/113 Next meeting: December 8th 2020, 7.00pm, by Zoom. All are welcome to attend and joining instructions can be found on the meeting agenda or can be obtained from the Clerk.

The meeting closed at 9.28pm

Chairman 08/12/2020