

Minutes of the Thorverton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday February 9th 2021, 7pm, by way of the on-line facility 'Zoom' (Coronavirus Act 2020)

Present: Cllrs S Crang, A Foster (Vice Chair), J Hodge, N Lane (Chair), A McKee, T Sanders, G Sims, D Waldron and K Wells. **In attendance:** Mrs A Marshall (Clerk), C/Cllr Squires and no members of the public.

Standing Orders suspended.

Public Open Session: None.

External Reports:

i) C/Cllr Squires reported that the DCC budget setting process is taking place and there has been an increase in spending on Social and Children's Services. There are currently 825 children in care in the County, which is a significant increase on the past couple of years. Confirmation had been received with regards to the replacing of the chain foot bridge near Tray Mill and the Parish Council (PC) was asked to consider submitting a letter of support to Ros Davies of DCC in this regard.

ii) D/Cllr Deed had circulated a report advising that MDDC's Cabinet had agreed the budget for 2021/2022 and that the deficit had been whittled down to £386,000 from £3 million. The shortfall will be taken from the New Homes Bonus reserve in order to balance the budget which will now go forward to full Council on 24th February for approval.

iii) Police statistics: One crime of criminal damage and arson, and one crime of a violent and sexual nature, had been reported from Thorverton parish in December.

Standing Orders resumed.

20/155 Declarations of interest: Cllr Waldron declared a personal interest with regards to defibrillator matters as his partner manages the machines on behalf of the PC.

20/156 Apologies were accepted from: Cllr Fice due to a family matter, and D/Cllr Deed.

20/157 Confirmation of Minutes of the meeting of January 12th 2021: It was RESOLVED to sign the document as a correct record of the meeting.

20/158 Highways:

i) Vehicle speeds within the village – Cllr McKee reported that vehicles were passing the end of Cleaves Close and the entrance to the Recreation Ground at considerable speed, raising safety concerns. Cleaves Close residents had requested that the matter be looked into by the PC and that perhaps a sleeping policeman could be installed and a Speedwatch event arranged. The '20 is plenty' scheme was considered. Standing Orders were suspended for C/Cllr Squires to speak and she advised that an official request should be sent to her, with regards to any proposed deterrent, which she would pass onto DCC Highways who would then arrange to assess the speeds of vehicles in the area and, if found to be significant, refer the matter to the Police and Safety Officers. She reported that the '20 is plenty' signs are not official so if the PC decided on this route the signs must be green in colour and not located on DCC Highways land. Standing Orders resumed. Cllr Sims confirmed that the Raddon Road area was not a suitable location for a Speedwatch event. Cllr McKee proposed that the '20 is plenty' pilot be put in place, with the possibility of erecting signs around the village, and this was RESOLVED. It was agreed that Cllr McKee would investigate further and report back to Council at the March meeting in order that the next steps could be considered.

ii) School Lane junction safety mirror – no update had been received from DCC Highways to date. Standing Orders were suspended for C/Cllr Squires to speak. She suggested that double yellow lines along Bullen Street could be a solution to improving visibility on the junction as it was highly unlikely that a mirror would be approved. Standing Orders resumed. Cllr Sims suggested that the white lines already in place along Bullen Street could be extended into Dinneford Street to help with better visibility, the existing signage could be renewed and the hedge belonging to the Old Post Office could be cut back. The Clerk would chase a response from DCC.

iii) Buses turning at Broadlands – it was confirmed that a letter had been sent to Stagecoach advising of the unacceptable situation of buses churning up the grass verges when turning. A response had been received advising

that the bus drivers had been asked to take more care in the area. The suggestion of decorative stones on verges was considered but not taken forward as DCC Highways owned the land and permission would not be forthcoming due to liability implications. Signs and bollards were also suggested but discounted due to the same ownership problems. C/Cllr Squires was unable to offer any solutions. It was RESOLVED to send a request to C/Cllr Squires for a site meeting with Steve Tucker, DCC Highways, to be arranged in order that solutions to this and other matters, as mentioned above, could be discussed.

20/159 Planning Matters:

i) 20/00168/FULL Approved - retention of garden room at Thorverton Primary School.

C/Cllr Squires left the meeting.

ii) Drains - Cllr Waldron reported a terrible stench of drains along the Raddon Road. It was agreed that Councillors would investigate the matter prior to the next meeting when the item would be discussed further.

20/160 Handyman: It was RESOLVED to pay the salary request of £169.00 gross and the expenses claim of £5.52. No report had been received and no additional duties were added to the list. The purchase of a snow shovel at a cost of £32.88 (incl VAT) was RESOLVED.

20/161 Storage Container in the Quarry Car Park: Cllr Hodge reported that a new 16-foot container would best suit the available site which would come with a 20-year lifetime guarantee. A ‘used’ container would only cost a little less but would not have the same guarantee or be in such good condition. The cost of the proposed new container would be £2,300 plus VAT, delivery and sleepers/a concrete pad or feet for the base. Cllr Hodge would obtain further information from a local storage company and TMTG before report back to Council with a final recommendation. It was confirmed that 3 quotes would be required prior to the item being ordered. Cllr Hodge proposed that planning permission be applied, which was RESOLVED, and he volunteered to complete the required paperwork.

20/162 Finances:

i) Bank balance – was noted as being £51,349.82 as at February 1st 2021.

ii) Banked receipts – noted as being bank interest £0.35p and allotment rents £240.00 in January 2021.

iii) Payments – it was RESOLVED to make the following on-line payments:

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| A Marshall - Clerk | Salary - £529.86 gross, less tax due Expenses - McAfee annual laptop security renewal £24.99, gritter £199.02, shovel £32.88, ink £9.99. | £523.26 net £266.88 (incl VAT) |
| N Matthews – Handyman | Salary - £169.00 gross, less tax due Expenses - buckets | £144.20 net £5.52 (VAT n/a) |
| Society of Local Council Clerks | 50% of annual membership fee (split with FPC) | £83.00 (VAT n/a) |
| GX Accounts | PAYE management | £22.50 (incl VAT) |
| M Dunlop | Defibrillator1 electrodes and parts | £232.00 (incl VAT) |
| Royal British Legion | Donation (agreed January 2021) | £100.00 (VAT n/a) |
| Mid Devon Mobility | Donation (agreed January 2021) | £200.00 (VAT n/a) |
| St John Ambulance | Defibrillator (agreed and paid in January 2021) | £1,746.00 (incl VAT) |
| AC Archaeology | Communal Dig (agreed and paid in January 2021) | £13,440.00 (incl VAT) |
| MDDC | Garage rental – monthly direct debit | £55.68 (incl VAT) |

20/163 Recreation Ground: Cllr Sims suggested a date of 1st April 2021 for the delivery of the new mower, which was RESOLVED. It was further RESOLVED to advertise the old mower on local social media asking for ‘written offers’ to be put to the Clerk ready for Council consideration at the March meeting. Clerk to make the arrangements. A resident had volunteered to renovate the unused notice board at the allotment site and install it at the entrance to the Recreation Ground at no cost. It was RESOLVED to ask the resident to go ahead with this.

20/164 Representative reports:

i) Footpaths – Cllr Foster reported that the way posts had been installed on the fields adjacent to Parliament Cottage clearly indicating the agreed route and labelled ‘County Road’, in keeping with the signage used on the track alongside Armour Wood. A fold out map was to be produced showing the parish footpaths and it was hoped that this would be available to purchase for a small fee at the local shop and Post Office. As well as an Ordinance Survey based map some information and pictures of the more significant routes would be featured. The Raddon Top posters, now in place, would also form part of the leaflet. Cllr Foster had volunteered to cover the professional production costs but it was RESOLVED that the PC should support the production of the leaflet and seek ways in which to contribute towards the costs. It was further RESOLVED that an invitation to submit photographs of favourite local walks should be put on local Facebook.

ii) Definitive Map Review (DMR): Cllr Foster gave thanks to Cllrs Waldron, Sanders and a member of the public for their support with this project to date. It was confirmed that the parish of Thorverton had been reviewed by DCC in the 1990s and, as a result, there are only now two particular paths which are likely to form part of the final decision to be made in 2025. The two paths are at Lee Cross – a notice is due to be served in order for this path to be re-opened - and Prowse’s Barn Lane. It was noted that the footpath at Parliament Cottage had been tidied up to a great extent. The working group will continue with the DMR project and report back to Council in due course.

iii) Allotments – the current Agreement had been reviewed, amended and circulated for consideration. Following discussion it was RESOLVED to adopt the revised document, with the replacement of the wording ‘weed free’ with ‘good order’. The new Agreement would become relevant at year end. An email from an allotment holder was reviewed and it was RESOLVED to let the tenant renew his tenancy until the end of this year when the situation would be reviewed, as it had been discovered that he was no longer a Parish resident.

iii) Thorverton Millennium Green Trust – increased usage of the green during lockdown had been seen resulting in very muddy paths. The new mower should be delivered in March.

20/165 Correspondence:

i) New bench in the Quarry Car Park in memory of Sybil Tulloch, deceased. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should ask the family whether they would agree to the bench being situated in the Barliabins area instead of the car park. If not, the Post Office would be asked where best to site the bench in the car park.

ii) March 2021 Census – the detail had been circulated and was noted.

iii) Defibrillator funds – Cllr Waldron declared an interest. The Council considered emails received from the resident managing the defibrillators on behalf of the PC, together with advice from Devon Association of Local Councils, in connection with the defibrillator funds. It was apparent that a misunderstanding over the ownership of defibrillator funds had occurred and it was confirmed that the funds, and both machines, belong to the PC. In order to find a solution with regards to how the funds could best be accessed quickly it was RESOLVED that the Clerk should look into whether the machines and funds could be transferred from PC ownership to an independent source. Alternatively, delegated authority to the Clerk, with regards the use of defibrillator funds, could be arranged in order to cover payments for emergencies. The matter would be further discussed at the next meeting.

iv) Handling of correspondence - Cllr Waldron suggested that since the previously held Correspondence Handling Policy had been discarded, there was now no clear path by which the Clerk should handle correspondence which had left him feeling uninformed with regards to correspondence received and sent. It was agreed that the matter should be reviewed and the suggestion of a new basic policy and holding correspondence in a cloud was well received. Cllr Wells volunteered to look into this matter with the Clerk and report back in due course. The Chairman added that he had reviewed the emails received and sent by the Clerk during January 2021 and that, in his opinion, all relevant correspondence had been circulated.

iv) Electric car charging point – a resident had requested that this matter be considered further and had supplied grant funding information for consideration. Following discussion Cllr Hodge volunteered to investigate the matter, along with Cllr McKee, and to report back to Council at a future meeting.

v) Dog mess issues – a resident had requested that the PC look into the ever increasing issue of dog fouling around the village. The Chairman suggested that this was a matter for MDDC and it was RESOLVED not to take any action at this time. A review of parish dog and general bins would feature on the March agenda for consideration.

20/166 Aims of Thorverton Parish Council: Cllr Wells, McKee and Sanders had reviewed the document, together with feedback received from Councillors, and it was agreed that the ‘aims’ should not change from year to year and that these should be supported by ‘objectives’ to be annually reviewed. It was RESOLVED to adopt the revised document as presented to Council by the working group.

20/167 Flower/bulb planting: Discussion with regards to the planting of daffodils and wild flowers around the Parish too place and, as a result, it was RESOLVED to take advice from local horticulturalists prior to discussing the matter further at the March meeting.

20/168 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 planning application support – three quotes had been received, in accordance with financial regulations, and were duly considered. It was RESOLVED, on experience and cost, to contract HL Architecture to support the PC with the new Cemetery planning process.

20/169 Action Plan: It was concluded that the document, in its current format, was not very useful and so should stop being produced. Alternative ways of presenting outstanding items to Council were considered, including the use of ‘Matters Arising’ which the Council was strongly advised against using by the Clerk. Cllr Waldron agreed to provide examples of how the current meeting agendas could be amended in order to include outstanding items.

20/170 Business at the Chairman’s discretion: None.

20/171 Next meeting: March 9th 2021, 7pm, by Zoom.

The meeting ended at 21.32

Chairman 9th March 2021