

Minutes of the Thorverton Annual Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday May 4th 2021, 7pm, by way of the on-line facility 'Zoom' (Coronavirus Act 2020)

Present: Cllrs A Foster, J Hodge, N Lane, A McKee, T Sanders, G Sims and D Waldron.

In attendance: Mrs A Marshall (Clerk), C/Cllr Squires, D/Cllr Deed and 1 member of the public.

21/01 Election of a Chairman: It was RESOLVED that Cllr Foster should be Chairman and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office would be signed after the meeting and lodged with the Clerk. Cllr Lane was thanked for being Chairman over the past two years.

21/02 Election of a Vice Chairman: It was RESOLVED that Cllr McKee should be Vice Chairman and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office would be signed after the meeting and lodged with the Clerk.

Standing Orders suspended.

Public Open Session: None.

External Reports:

i) **C/Cllr Squires** had nothing to report at this time due to purdah. She was asked for an update with regards to the School Lane junction safety issue and as no information was at hand she agreed to look into the matter.

ii) **D/Cllr Deed** gave thanks to the Clerk for her work over the years and said that she would be missed. The MDDC annual meeting had recently taken place by Zoom, avoiding the need to have the meeting face to face in line with Government Covid 19 guidelines. It was noted that with effect from 7th May 2021 all Council meetings would need to be face to face. The Court Barton Deed of Variation matter had been investigated and it was confirmed that the document remains with MDDC Legal Department and would be moved on to fruition as soon as possible. The Silver Street footpath matter now needed the Parish Council to arrange a public consultation to ascertain local views as MDDC had completed contacts with residents living along the proposed route and most of the feedback was in favour of the footpath. It was confirmed that whilst MDDC owns most of the private road, one house had been sold with a section of road, in error, and this had held up the project. As the road had never been dedicated a highway but had never had any signs or gates in place indicating that it was not a public highway there would be no legal way to defend the public from using it. D/Cllr Deed voiced his support of the new footpath due to there being a clear need for it and he urged the Parish Council to now take control and to move the project on. He confirmed that whilst there are no restrictions in place to prevent public use, there was no guarantee that MDDC would support the footpath project along this private road.

iii) **Police statistics** – the latest information evidenced that four crimes had been reported from the parish in March 2021 being 1 of 'other' theft, 2 of a violent and sexual nature and 1 of anti-social behaviour.

Standing Orders resumed.

21/03 Declarations of interest relating to items on this agenda: None.

21/04 Apologies: Cllr Crang, work commitment.

21/05 Confirmation of Minutes: It was RESOLVED to approve the meeting minutes of April 13th 2021 as a correct record. It was also RESOLVED to approve the Annual Parish meeting minutes of 2019 (there was no meeting in 2020) and that Cllr Lane would sign on behalf of the Parish Council.

21/06 Outstanding Resolutions: Cllr McKee confirmed that he would report back to Council with regards to the bin review at the June meeting. Cllr Foster reported on the Definitive Map Review (DMR) and said that confirmation had been received from DCC with regards to the Lee Cross footpath being reopened as a restricted byway. It was also confirmed that the Thorverton DMR had taken place some years ago and that there was no prima facie case for amending the map with regards to Prowse Lane, Courthayes and Bidwell Lane. On Hulk Lane and the long term status of the 'permitted bridleway', it was reported that investigations are ongoing by the working group.

21/07 Existing and new Clerk roles: It was reported that the Clerk had resigned and that her last day in office would be May 14th 2021. It was RESOLVED to approve the advert and job description for a new Clerk, in retrospect, and it

was confirmed that the role was being advertised with a closing date of 19th May with interviews planned for the week commencing 24th May. The start date for the new Clerk would be 5th July, or earlier. One application had been received to date. It was agreed that the Clerk, with the Chairman, would respond to any applications attaching the job description, offering full training and advising of the proposed time lines.

21/08 Confirmation of Working Groups and members: It was RESOLVED to appoint a lead Councillor for each working group and to add further members to each group when Council was once again at full membership - New Cemetery – Cllr Waldron. Section 106 Funding – Cllr McKee. Grant Giving – Cllr Sanders. Staffing – Cllrs Foster and Lane (these Councillors, with the Clerk, would carry out the interviewing of the new Clerk). Planning – Cllrs Foster. Silver Street Footpath – Cllr McKee. Recreation Ground wildlife garden – Cllr Sims.

21/09 Confirmation of Councillors as representatives: The following Representatives were RESOLVED - Focus – Cllr Lane. Raddon Group Cllr Lane. Highways/Footpaths – Cllr Foster. Snow Warden – Neville Matthews (Handyman). School – Cllr McKee. Memorial Hall – Cllr Sims. Speedwatch – Cllr Hodge. Defibrillator - Cllr Foster. TMGT – Cllr Waldron. Recreation Ground - Cllr Sims. Allotments – Cllr Lane. Social Media – Cllr McKee.

21/10 Highways:

- i) **'20 is Plenty' project** – Cllr McKee reported that the signs are in the process of being made and that businesses were being approached for sponsorship. A further update would be available at the June meeting.
- ii) **School Lane junction safety** – a letter had been sent to Meg Booth, Head of DCC Highways, and a response was still pending. Cllr Squires agreed to chase a response. Cllr Waldron reminded all present that the Parish Council had been recommended to take the matter (of a mini-roundabout) to a higher level and this is what had happened. He added that it would not be acceptable for the matter to be put back into the hands of the local Highways Manager.
- iii) **Raddon directional sign** – two quotes had been received with regards to a finger post signs pointing to both Raddon and Berrysbridge, and a third quote was pending. C/Cllr Squires volunteered to investigate ownership of the land, once a position had been decided, and to gain any permissions from DCC Highways as applicable. She confirmed that any sign would need to meet the standards of DCC Highways. As the cost of a new sign had not been budgeted for, estimated to be in the region of £250 - £300, the funding would need to come from donations, grant funding or general reserves. It was RESOLVED to seek public feedback on social media, Nextdoor and in Focus as to whether the sign is thought to be a good idea. Cllr McKee would look into exact costings.

21/11 Planning Matters:

- i) **21/00311/LBC – granted.** Erection of a new porch at Raddon Gardens Cottage, Thorverton. Noted.
 - ii) **21/00752/FULL** erection of roof to provide covered yard at Yellowford Farm, Thorverton. It was RESOLVED to submit 'no comment' on this application.
 - iii) **21/00666 FULL** change of use of agricultural land to cemetery to include widening of existing pedestrian access at Courbet Court/Lynch Road, Thorverton. It was RESOLVED to submit 'no comment' on this application.
- D/Cllr Deed left the meeting at 20.04

21/12 Existing Policies, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations: It was RESOLVED to continue with all policy documents until 2023 or earlier amendment, as required, in line with the resolution of July 2019.

21/13 Risk Management Policy: It was RESOLVED to approve the updated document.

21/14 Handyman: It was RESOLVED to agree the salary request of £224.25 gross, and expenses as £41.99, and the purchase of weed killer and a new rake. The monthly report and duty list were considered and the possible moving of the water butts at the allotments was added to the list. It was RESOLVED to give the Clerk delegated authority to spend up to £250 on sundry items and equipment with regards to Handyman matters going forward, any item over £100 should be referred to full Council. It was agreed that Cllr Lane would support the Handyman should there be a gap in line management with the change in Clerk.

C/Cllr Squires left the meeting at this stage 20.15

21/15 Recreation Ground: Cllr Sims had circulated a report highlighting the poor state of some pieces of play equipment and it was noted that the multiplay equipment and some safety surfacing, in particular, were in need of attention. It was confirmed that there was £6,000 in the equipment 'sinking fund' and that a member of the public had kindly offered to organise 'crowdfunding' for new equipment, if resolved, and Cllr Waldron offered to look into grant funding. A zip wire had been requested by members of the public but it was confirmed that there is insufficient room for this at the Rec. Cllr McKee suggested an 'inclusive' piece of play equipment, such as a basket swing or a triangular climbing net, both very popular with children currently. It was RESOLVED that Cllrs McKee and Sims would put together a strategic plan for the renewal of play equipment, including recommendations for new equipment and costs, in order that the matter can be discussed in more detail. Cllr Sims reported that the builder's rubble had been removed but that a safety bar by the large swings had been knocked over. It was RESOLVED that Cllr Sims should get the safety bar re-instated and that he should close the swings to the public in the meantime. The Football Club was now removing the nets in between matches, as requested, and the new mower was doing a good job. With regards to the Football Club and Section 106 funding due from the new housing development, it was confirmed that these funds had to be spent in the vicinity of the Rec and it was hoped that some funds may be used towards new play equipment. Cllr Foster was in contact with the Club about this. It was noted that outstanding Section 106 funds from the Court Barton Close development had been earmarked for the Silver Street footpath project.

21/16 Finance:

- i) Bank balance** – the bank balance as at 1st May 2021 was noted as being £53,475.21
- ii) Banked receipts for April** – were noted as being £0.30p bank interest, £40.53 Wayleave, £8,956. 50% of precept, £3,637. Viridor Credits (mower).
- iii) Internal Audit** – the complimentary report was considered and it was RESOLVED to pay the fee of £100.
- iv) Annual Governance & Accountability Return Section 1** – it was RESOLVED to approve and sign the document.
- v) Annual Governance & Accountability Return Section 2** – it was RESOLVED to approve and sign the document.
- vi) Strimmer repairs** – it was RESOLVED to pay the late invoice of £150.28 (incl VAT) for emergency strimmer repairs.
- vii) Covid 19 Support Group** – following an email request it was RESOLVED to pay £75 to the support group, in aid of the Lucy's Larder project, from the DCC Grant Funding being held by the Parish Council.
- viii) Payments** – it was RESOLVED to make the following on-line payments:

A Marshall - salary	£529.86 gross, less tax due	£526.06 net
N Matthews – salary	£224.25 gross, less tax due	£182.45 net
N Matthews – expenses	Equipment	£41.99 (incl VAT)
A Marshall - expenses	£13.74 defibrillator sign	£13.74 (incl VAT)
c/o HL Architecture Ltd	New Cemetery environmental survey	£540.00 (incl VAT)
G Sims	Reimbursement for repairs to seats at the Rec.	£5.94 (VAT n/a)
Came and Company	Annual general insurance renewal (3 rd of 3 years)	£589.61 (VAT n/a)
MDDC	Garage rental – monthly direct debit	£55.72 (incl VAT)
T&D Garden Machinery	Strimmer repairs	£150.28 (incl VAT)
Covid 19 Support Group	Lucy's Larder food supplies	£75.00 (VAT n/a)
J Hole	Internal Auditor	£100.00 (VAT n/a)

21/17 Existing Projects:

- i) New Cemetery** – Cllr Waldron reported that the planning application had been validated by MDDC following the completion of the required ecological survey. The outstanding 'dig' report was being finalised and should be with the Council shortly; receipt of this document would enable the remaining Heritage Lottery Grant Funding to be released.
- ii) Silver Street Footpath** – covered during D/Cllr Deed's report earlier in this meeting.
- iii) Wild flower/bulb planting/Thorverton in Bloom competition** – Cllr Lane reported that the bulb planting would need to be scheduled for later this year. He asked Councillors to support the Thorverton in Bloom competition by encouraging neighbourhoods to spruce up their streets in time for the June judging. Cllr Lane was given authority to oversee the competition on behalf of the Parish Council.

21/18 Correspondence:

- i) E-mail regarding the Rixenford Lane digestate lagoon – noted.
- ii) E-mail asking for information on the new housing development at Broadlands – it was agreed that Cllr Lane would forward the questions to Heritage Homes and invite a representative to a future Parish Council meeting. It was noted that the name of the new development was ‘Rosebanks’ although this could be subject to change.
- iii) E-mail from the Covid 19 Support Group – request for £75 from the grant funding held by the Parish Council (see payments above).

21/19 Councillor Exit Survey: It was RESOLVED to adopt the draft document. Cllr Sanders was thanked for putting this together and he agreed to forward it to Cllrs Fice and Wells, who had recently resigned from the Council.

21/20 Resignation and co-options: The resignation of Cllr Sam Fice was noted, MDDC had been advised and the Notice of Vacancy had been published. One resident had applied for the post of Parish Councillor, to date, and it was RESOLVED to again advertise the two vacancies on social media, which Cllr McKee volunteered to do. It was agreed that, depending on applications received, both vacancies should be filled by co-option at the June meeting.

21/21 Representative reports:

- i) **Footpaths** - see the update under item reference 21/06 above.
- ii) **Thorverton Millennium Green Trust** – whilst the new mower is working well, issues continue to be seen with regards to vandalism. The Chairman suggested that if vandalism continues to be seen around the village (trees in the Millennium Field, defibrillator sign in The Bury, safety rail at the Rec), then the Parish Council would need to consider what it could do to deter it.

21/22 WhatsApp: Cllr McKee had suggested a Parish Council WhatsApp group to be used in emergencies, or for quick messages, and it was RESOLVED to accept Cllr Foster’s offer to set this up.

21/23 Meetings:

- i) **Annual Parish Meeting on 28th April 2021:** Cllr Lane thanked the Cllrs who attended the Zoom meeting and reported that all went well. There was, however, disappointment that the representative from Heritage Homes could not attend at the last minute. Issues raised by the public included the repair of the village leats, which Cllr Crang would be asked to report on this at the next meeting, and how to encourage more residents to use the Football Club. It was noted that the Cricket Club is used by a good number of local people and it was agreed to look into how to help the Football Club raise local interest.
- ii) **June monthly meeting:** It was RESOLVED to have the June meeting on 22nd June 2021, being later than scheduled, due to the Covid 19 Government guidelines. It was noted that all meetings from 7th May must be face and face and the Clerk was asked to book the Memorial Hall accordingly. It was noted that a previous resolution had been made to keep meetings at the Hall until further notice. It was agreed that an extraordinary meeting would probably need to be called to confirm the appointment of the new Clerk by full Council.

21/24 Business at the Chairman’s discretion:

- i) Cllr Hodge suggested that Cllr Crang be asked to take the lead on the repairs to the village leats as he had already been working on this project. Cllr Hodge volunteered his help. The Chairman would contact Cllr Crang in this regard.
- ii) Cllr Hodge reported that the draft planning application for the new equipment container in the car park had not progressed due to computer issues, Cllr Sanders volunteered to help with this. It was expected that the draft document would be presented to Council for approval at the June meeting, with the required three quotes.

The meeting closed at 21.12