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Thorverton Parish Council

**Minutes of the Thorverton Parish Council meeting held at 7:00pm
on Tuesday 11th January 2022, at Thorverton Memorial Hall**

Present: Cllrs A Foster (Chairman), S Crang, J Hodge, N Lane, C Marshall, A Price, T Sanders G Sims and B Uglow. **County Cllr Squires and District Cllr Deed**

In attendance: J P Roberts (Clerk & RFO) and 4 members of the public.

21/134 Public Open Session

A member of the public raised many criticisms of the Council including meddling outside the remit of the Parish Council, arrogance, lack of engagement with the residents, note-keeping on financial matters, forgotten items, the use of working groups, why previous Cllrs had resigned and the size of the bank balance. He promised an email of his complaints to the Council. He said he was here in support of another member of the public who spoke next.

The next member of the public complained that he had experienced sleepless nights, incurred expenses because of the Council's actions on a planning matter which had exacerbated his problems having suffered a recent bereavement and a stroke. He gave details of how he believed the Parish Council had not followed their own Correspondence Policy and further believed a Cllr should be suspended for his actions. He also enquired about his Freedom of Information request. He then quizzed the clerk on his experience, minute writing, Council procedures and opinion of his case and advised that he had taken the case to the Monitoring Officer. He handed in a 4-page document from which he had read.

The Chairman responded that he was sorry to hear of the angst and problems the member of the public had suffered and his complaints and FOI requests would be dealt with in a professional and diligent fashion.

External Reports

i) C/Cllr Squires reported on Devon County Council's budget setting for the coming year. DCC is short of Social Workers & Care Workers. Training is being provided and retention schemes are in place but it is a national problem.

She asked that Highways issues should be forwarded to Steve Tucker as well as her and Parishes should liaise closely with their Neighbourhood Highways Officer.

ii) D/Cllr Deed circulated a written report prior to the meeting and summarised it orally.

MDDC is slowly returning to normal, although staff are encouraged to work from home, wherever possible. One needs to monitor the effect on the level of the Council's services to insure there is no noticeable deterioration.

Mid Devon District Council is conducting a parish review which will take about a year to complete. This review will encompass all towns and parishes within the district.

Options for consideration may include-

Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes.

Changing the name of parishes.

The electoral arrangements for parishes, e.g., number of councillors.

Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

For more information go to parishreview@middevon.gov.uk

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Her Majesty The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee may seem some way off but preparations have begun. I have received a letter from Mr Gove, MP outlining events that may be organised. Those pertinent to a rural parish might include-

- Street Parties and “The Big Jubilee Lunch”.
- Beacon Lighting.
- The Queen’s Green Canopy.

Moving to MDDC activities this year, Cabinet have met and made decisions on the following subjects-

- Customer Care Policy,
- Complaints Policy,
- Strategic Grants & Service Level Agreement, New Local Plan Issues consultation paper,
- Local Development Scheme,
- the Cullompton, Conservation Area Management Plan,
- Tax Base Calculation,
- 2022/23 Budget Update Report,
- Modular Build Schemes (in Cullompton and Tiverton, and
- Information Security and Information Security Incident Policies.

The 498 pages of the Agenda are available to read on the Council’s website, or if you prefer, you can listen to the Cabinet proceedings online. As Chair I managed to keep the meeting to 2 hours 20 minutes.

Should Parish Councillors have any question, happy to attempt an answer at the meeting.

Questions in advance may get a more cogent and comprehensive answer at the meeting.

Please note that I am always working on some request from residents within my Ward. I avoid discussing individual cases in a public arena and will only advise on technicalities regarding Planning matters but not participate in discussions of individual planning applications.

[Cllrs Squires & Deed and 3 members of the public left at 7:42pm]

iii) The crimes reported in the last month were 2 violent sexual offences in Watery Lane.

21/135 **Declarations of interest**

Cllr Sims declared an interest in items 11.1 and 17.1 on the agenda.

21/136 **Apologies**

None received

21/137 **Confirmation of minutes**

After a minor correction to paragraph 21/130 (Sheep Dip) Council **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the amended minutes of the meeting held on 14th December as a correct record.

21/138 **Outstanding resolutions**

6.1 Legal Services

6.2 Hulk Lane Bridleway

6.3 Purchase of the allotment field

6.4 Parish Plan /Neighbourhood Plan

6.5 **New Cemetery** – The final price is £8500 plus a free plot as Chair’s email. Clerk to instruct solicitor to proceed. Planning permission has been granted.

6.6 20 is Plenty

No updates except 6.5.

21/139 **Precept**

Council **RESOLVED** to set the Precept at £ 17,426 for 2022-23. Clerk to advise MDDC before the deadline.

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21/140 **Satisfaction Survey**

Council noted the results of the Satisfaction Survey previously circulated. The survey was entirely anonymous and it cannot be discerned if it is the same responders as last year. It was felt that the Council should refresh people’s memory on what the Council does and update the website to make clear where people should go to access information or help. To publish the results Council **RESOLVED** that an abridged commentary and tables from the agenda document will be prepared by Cllrs Lane, Sanders & Price which will be circulated to all Cllrs and sent to Focus.

21/141 **Allotments**

Council **RESOLVED** to advertise in Focus, Nextdoor and Facebook (simultaneously on 1 February) for anyone wanting to take on a plot for 2022. The first applicant will be allocated the plot currently used by the non-resident and the next applicant allocated the one vacated but in poor condition. If there are no applicants the non-resident will be allowed to continue renting the plot in 2022.

21/142 **Highways**

- (i) **School Lane junction safety** - Cllr McKee (absent) liaised with the school.
- (ii) **Raddon directional sign** - Cllr McKee (absent) dealing.
- (iii) **Pavement o/s shop** - Reported to DCC 19 Nov and repaired as tarmac (not cobbles). This are temporary repair and will be subject to specialist repairs.
- (iv) **Highways Repairs** - Council **RESOLVED** that future liaison which will be with the clerk. The clerk will obtain the road condition scores and Highways’ priority list as these were said to be available at the recent conference.
- (v) **Dark Lane signage** - Reported to Steve Tucker 19 Nov. Clerk to follow up.
- (vi) 30mph sign at Broadlands has been moved but is still after the entrance to the new housing and the Thorverton sign has moved to the wrong side of the road – clerk to enquire about the final plans

21/143 **Planning matters**

[Cllr Sims left the meeting while item 21/143 (i) was discussed]

Council **RESOLVED** to make no comment on the following two applications:

- (i) 21/02434/HOUSE - Erection of a garage block and workshop with ancillary accommodation above at Pleasure House Thorverton EX5 5PJ

[Cllr Sims returned to the meeting after item 21/143 (i) was discussed]

- (ii) 21/02569/HOUSE - Conversion of garage to include erection of extension at Raddon Close Thorverton EX5 5PJ

Council noted the decision to approve 21/02328/NMA - Non-Material Amendment to 20/00465/FULL for changes to windows/glazing on north, east & west elevations at Higher Mill Thorverton EX5 5LL - permission granted 23 Dec 21.

[The remaining member of the public left at 9:22pm]

21/144 **Handyman**

Council **RESOLVED** to arrange that the Handyman (Ben Fitch) will have his employment ended by agreement but will continue on a contractual basis. Council **RESOLVED** that the Handyman’s work would be arranged & supervised by Cllrs Marshall and Price with exceptional items being brought to full Council.

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Cllrs will speak to Cllrs Marshall & Price if work arises in their patches.

21/145 Recreation Ground

Cllrs Sims & Price reported that 4 different colour paints, thinners and brushes etc would be needed to bring the swing sets, gates and the slide up to scratch. Estimated cost is approx. £200. This will probably take 3 weekends with a few people or one weekend with a lot of people. Focus and Facebook will be used to drum up volunteers.

The annual inspection will be rebooked for this year.

Openreach will be erecting a telegraph pole, but there is no money payable as the Council originally took a capital payment.

The table tennis players have requested some form of hardstanding at both ends of the table to allow wet weather play.

There has been no recreation ground financial activity this month.

21/146 Finance and Payments

(i) Council noted that as at 4th January 2022 the bank balance stood at £ 58,140.97 (£36,632.46 in the Reserve Account and £21,508.51 in the Current Account).

(ii) Council **RESOLVED** to make the following payments:

MDDC	Garage rental (monthly DD)	£ 55.72 (incl VAT)
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Chairman's reimbursements (while covering Clerk)

Hire of WI Hut	Oct 21	£ 20.00
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Litter pickers	Dec 21	£ 15.95
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Hi-Vis jackets	Dec 21	£ 15.00
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Ink cartridges	Jan 22	£ 30.00
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Total (payable to Cllr A Foster)	£ 80.95
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GX Accountancy Inv3522 for payroll services (qtr to 5 Jan 2022)	£ 30.05
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HMRC – Tax and NIC due for Oct 2021 to Dec 2021	£ 101.20
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(iii) **Grants** - The Grant Giving Working Group reported that 2 applications had been received and neither had completed our Grant form but advised the Council on the information that they did have. The Council **RESOLVED** the following

CHAT – to decline this request as the Council will concentrate funds on Lucy's Larder.

CAB – to donate £400 and ask for a paragraph or two for Focus so people are aware of the services available.

The clerk will check whether a payment has been made to the Baby and Toddler group.

21/147 Existing Projects:

(i) **New Cemetery** - Council **RESOLVED** to accept the offer of £8,500 and a free plot as discussed by the Chairman with the landowner.

(ii) **Thorverton in Bloom** - Council **RESOLVED** to announce that we will hold a Thorverton in Bloom competition in 2022, with the judging period and criteria as set out thus – There will be two judging periods (late-June and mid-August) to encourage people to make good displays throughout the summer.

Thorverton in Bloom judges will allocate marks on

Colour/scent/appearance (40% of marks)

Extent of coverage, showing local community involvement (20%)

Originality (20%)

Environmental-friendliness (20%)

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Cllr Lane will provide a short item for Focus.

(iii) Jubilee Green and Barliabins

The Council thanked the Cllrs involved who are still obtaining prices and hope to have costs ready for the next meeting. The trees at Barliabins are Larch and the Tree Surgeon advises they will grow to 3 times the current height which means they risk being blown down in high winds when fully grown. It is recommended that they are removed and replaced with a more appropriate species. This will need careful consultation and communication. Ongoing to the next meeting.

21/148 **Correspondence**

[Cllr Sims left the meeting at 10:23pm before this item was discussed]

- (i) **K Wilson address to December’s meeting, FOI request and email of 4 Jan 2022** - The Council discussed the December comments, 4th January and the comments made at this meeting at length. The Council **RESOLVED** to ask the clerk to complete the FOI request in due course and to advise him that the Council noted that he has complained to the Monitoring Officer about what he alleged to be a breach by Cllr Lane of the Code of Conduct and we await the outcome of that due process.
- (ii) **Website enquiry (28 Dec 2021)** - The Dinneford St water outlet needs a sign ‘Not potable water’.
- (iii) **Small Trees in the Rec Hedges** - item postponed to next meeting.

21/149 **Representative Reports**

There were no updates under this item.

21/150 **Business at Chairman’s Discretion**

The Chairman thanked everyone for staying so late to cover the long agenda. Cllr Hodge will ask British Power Group to attend March’s meeting as they may be able to provide EV charging points at no cost.

21/151 **Date of Next Meeting**

This was confirmed as 7pm on Tuesday 8th February 2022 at the Memorial Hall.

Signed Date
Cllr A Foster, Chairman