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THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting of Thorverton Parish Council incorporating the May Monthly Meeting and the Recreation Ground AGM held at the Memorial Hall, Silver St, Thorverton on **Tuesday 10th May 2022** at 7pm.

PRESENT Cllr Andrew Foster (Chair)
Cllr Andy Price (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Stuart Crang
Cllr Neville Lane
Cllr Colin Marshall
Cllr Trevor Sanders
Cllr Graham Sims
Cllr Bryanna Uglow
Cllr Jan Wills

ABSENT
Cllr John Hodge

District Cllr Bob Deed

IN ATTENDANCE: Jim Roberts (Clerk and RFO)
1 member of the public

1. Guest Speaker - MDDC Planning

Cllrs Crang, Uglow & Wills with Mr Andrew Wiles spoke via Zoom to Angharad Williams (MDDC) about the affordable housing at Broadlands. Council had submitted some questions in advance. Why were the affordable homes reduced from 5 to 4? – The developer submitted a viability assessment which is supported with evidence. An independent assessor looks through these cases and advises the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The LPA then discuss any issues with the developer. AngW has discussed similar cases for months if the case isn't acceptable to the LPA. AngW confirmed that LPAs normally have an Affordable Housing Officer (AHO). The AHO will have access to data (Housing Needs Register) and can advise on the needs of the local community for the type of housing (ie no. of bedrooms). AngW will ask the AHO at MDDC to confirm what was monitored

The Council queried the price rise as the semi-detached homes are now priced at £300,000 (80% value) which has risen from £239,000. AngW confirmed that the MDDC s106 Monitoring Officer oversees these agreements and there are often clauses that allow a market review in the process of the development. In this instance this clause is not in the agreement. There is nothing that can be done about the price increase now. AngW will ask the AHO to identify the reasons and the monitoring of the Broadlands case.

The Council asked about the somewhat eccentric agreements and property choices in this case. AngW wasn't involved so it is difficult for her to comment. Managers had the discretion at the time. AngW wants to bring local communities closer to the Planning department and she wants MDDC Planning to be accessible. She will try to

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get things right and hopes that matters like ours will be considered more carefully. She is more than happy to help as best she can.

Her opinion is that Planning applications need community feedback. It is not a requirement of National Policy to consult Parishes for s106 variations, only to consult the Ward Member of MDDC for the Parish.

Cllr Crang outlined the financial figures for developing the self-build site, which seemed unusual. AngW couldn't answer this specifically – normally between the s106 monitoring Officer, AHO and lawyers and the Housing Team. A separate team would need to reply accurately to this question. Housing will receive the applications and register the residents who are interested. Mr Wiles suggested that the Parish Council should seek a review or audit of how these properties were allocated and if the s106 agreement has been complied with. In order to fully understand what happened the Housing Team will need to look into it.

AngW wants to try and help further if she can and will point us to the right people

The Chairman thanked AngW very much for taking the time to talk to the Council.

Cllr Deed confirmed that AngW has been in post for 6 months. He does not recall any emails regarding the s106 variation for Broadlands and noted that Ward Members did not always receive s106 variation consultations.

2. **Public Open Session** No items raised.

3. **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Council **elected** Cllr Foster as Chair and Cllr Price as Vice-Chair.

4. **Declarations of Interest** - None.

5. **Apologies** - Apologies were received from Cllr Hodge who is on holiday and Cllr Crang who left the meeting to return to lambing at 7:36. Council unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the reasons given.

6. **External Reports** -

6.1 **C/Cllr Squires** – No report this month as she is at another meeting

6.2 **D/Cllr Deed** - As the main issues of the month would be dealt with at a meeting to be held the next evening Cllr Deed promised to submit a written report later (attached at Appendix A). He also reported that:

- The £150 Council Tax rebate for Band A-D properties and MDDC has distributed 80% so far. There is an additional fund for those in properties outside the range and in financial difficulties who can apply to MDDC.
- Climate Change had been discussed to identify what MDDC can do to move the agenda forward. An interesting meeting has been held, but the really effective measures are very expensive. To bring the 3100 MDDC-owned homes to standard B would cost £37m. Members of the public would need to spend an average of approx. £15,000 each to bring their homes up to standard. But MDDC are working with businesses and the community to

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achieve what they can. Hopefully any measures taken will help with the cost-of-living challenge.

D/Cllr Deed was asked about the Council's difficulties of establishing the planning status of a property. D/Cllr Deed offered no comment on that matter.

6.3 Police statistics – No update on the police database since the last meeting (Cllr Sanders had tried 3 databases)

7. Highways - Raddon sign and School Lane surface sinking.

The Council is waiting for the outcome of the County Cllr's meeting with Highways.

8. Confirmation of Minutes

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of 11th April 2022 as a true record and the Chairman duly signed them.

9. Review and adoption of paperwork

9.1 Standing Orders & Financial Regulations – will be reviewed in 2023 as resolved in July 2019.

9.2 Contacts -

The Council reviewed their contact details and the document is ready to be published..

9.3 Correspondence Policy

Council discussed the need for and benefits of the Correspondence Policy. Council asked the clerk to provide a new draft policy for the next meeting. **Clerk to action**

10. Affordable Housing

The clerk will formally thank AngW and confirm the actions that were agreed. Council wanted to have an answer for the frustrated residents who are seeking affordable homes, and they want future developments to be handled differently.

Council asked the Task & Finish Group to complete their findings on this issue.

[The Chairman suspended Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to speak]

AW advised that he thought it was reasonable to ask MDDC for a reflection on the broad lessons to be learned and go into detail to explain if the right allocation decisions have been made for the non-rented properties. The Chairman thanked him for his continuing contributions.

[The Chairman resumed Standing Orders and a member of the public left the meeting at 8:19pm]

Council **RESOLVED** that MDDC should be asked to audit the processes used for, and allocation of, the non-rented affordable homes at Broadlands.

11. Recreation Ground

11.1 AGM 2022

The Trustees voted to accept the financial figures for 2021/22 prepared by the Clerk and asked him to update the Charities Commission website before the due deadline.

11.2 Mower service and financial report for April (£58.28 materials)

Council remarked how nice the gates were looking after Cllr Sims' excellent work and they were very grateful for his many years of hard work freely given.

The mower is being serviced and it is taking longer than usual. Cllr Sims has researched the children's preferences with the teachers at the school and the children preferred

1. Trampoline 2. Net climber 3. Rotating net spinner 4. Climbing frame with slides

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Cllr Sims commented that it would be impractical to have a trampoline at the Recreation Ground. The Clerk will pursue with MDDC the s106 authorisation procedures and to meet with Cllrs Sims and Price to ensure the process is sound.

Cllr Wills will look into the s106 agreements that affect Thorverton and ascertain how much is available to spend.

The Council noted that it will need to ensure the needs of the whole community are met when spending s106 funds.

12. Projects

12.1 Dinneford St Water Outlet 'Not drinking water' sign

This has been installed. The Council thanked Cllr Marshall.

12.2 Bike rack for the Post Office - purchased and Cllr Marshall will fit.

12.3 Parish Communications including the new leaflet, social media & Saturday Market.

The Chairman thanked everyone for the efforts in distributing the leaflets. Cllr Wills is due to do the next Saturday Market. The Footpath Guide leaflet will be reprinted by the shop and the Post Office (independent of the Council) and they will sell it for £1 a copy.

12.4 New Cemetery

The clerk reported that the solicitor has now responded and a legal pack has been received.

12.5 Jubilee Green & Barliabins Update

The Council thanked the group for a very good report that had been previously circulated. The Clerk to write to Alex Fice to confirm the donation from the Council of £100 to the RBL and to thank him for agreeing to continue to maintain the Jubilee Green.

The group will contact the Devon Wildlife Trust representative who has offered to visit and advise on rewinding verges and other environmental concerns.

The Chairman advised that the Jubilee Party group may have some funds left over once the festivities have finished.

12.6 Litter bin for Silver St / Hulk Lane

No update, clerk will chase.

12.7 EV Charging points

Council noted the update from Cllr Lane who had kindly uploaded the early results.

12.8 Platinum Jubilee memorial

At the last Jubilee the stone was inscribed on Jubilee Green and there is room to add to it. No firm decision was made.

13. Raddon Hills Group report

Council noted the report from Cllr Lane and the next Raddon Hills meeting will discuss grant availability and successes that some Parishes have had.

14. Village Tidy-up Day

Cllr Marshall will arrange a date for the Tidy-Up Day in early September.

15. Planning Matters

15.1 Planning Applications

15.1.1 22/00635/DPO Court Barton Close – Variation of s106 agreement

Council asked the clerk to seek assurance from the Local Planning Authority that there are no implications for the village or tenants.

Council resolved to make no comments on the following applications

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15.1.2 22/00743/HOUSE The Briars, Jericho St – extensions to side & above garage

15.1.3 22/00789/HOUSE 12 Silver St – Extensions and a porch

Cllr Uglow agreed to help the Chairman and Cllr Crang pre-screen the planning applications as they are received.

15.2 Planning Decisions

15.2.1 21/00840/HOUSE Ascough, Dinneford St - 1st floor extension (granted)

16. Handyman

16.1 Grass cutting is now needed and Cllr Marshall will contact the handyman.

16.2 Cllr Price has cleared the waste and the deposits in the stream from the leat clearing. In future such waste will be composted. The clerk will write to the original correspondent.

17. Finance

17.1 Bank Balance - Council noted the bank balance of **£63,680.63 (5th May 2022)**.

17.2 Banked Receipts (April) - £ 8,713 precept and £ 2.55 interest.

17.3 Garage Rents - Council unanimously **RESOLVED** to keep the ground rents at the current level.

17.4 Grant Giving - £150 for Thorverton Through Time website.

The clerk to write to ask where the other £150 is being spent. Once evidence is shown the cheque can be released.

17.5 Insurance renewal - Pre-renewal questionnaire

Due to the 37.6% increase in the premium the clerk was asked to challenge the insurance brokers for a lower premium.

17.6 Payments - Council unanimously **RESOLVED** to make the following payments:

17.6.1 MDDC Garage rental (monthly DD) **£ 55.72**

17.6.2 Ben Fitch Inv no. BF20220074 for work in April (5.5 hours) **£ 82.50**

17.6.3 DALC Training Course inv 3992 **£ 36.00**

17.6.4 AM Burke (Razorsharp Creative) Thorverton through time website **£ 150.00**

NB Only to be released on receipt of evidence of other expenditure.

17.6.5 G Foster Printing of the 'Here to Help' leaflet and the EV Survey **£ 304.00**

17.6.6 JP Roberts Pay for April **£ 516.84**

Reimbursements – Rec Ground materials **£ 109.60**

'Do not Drink' sign **£ 40.99**

Ben Fitch – BF20220046 **£ 98.50**

DALC Annual subscription inv 3940 **£ 222.68**

GX Accountancy inv 3783 **£ 89.82** **£ 1078.43**

18 Correspondence

18.1 Wildflower Area

Council agreed to leave the stream side of the bank outside the Memorial Hall to grow and the vegetation will be left to die off naturally.

18.2 Tiverton Pannier Market invitation

Council thanked the Pannier Market for the offer but declined at this time.

18.3 Sports Club rents

Council has a quid pro quo where the Football Club cut the grass during the season and a volunteer cuts it out of season. The FC supply the mower fuel and maintain the hedge.

18.4 Police Neighbourhood Engagement Plan

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Cllr Sanders will contact the Constabulary directly to organise a visit.

18.5 Temporary Traffic Restriction Order 2244748 – Sun 22nd May

Noted

19 Business at the Chairman's Discretion - No decision making during this item.

The email from the Cricket Club concerning use of s106 funds was noted and will be discussed at the next meeting.

Cllr Marshall reported that he has sprayed Dinneford St, Jericho St, Bullen St, The Bury & School Lane and will complete spraying in the next 7 days

20 Next Parish Council meeting - Tuesday 14th June 2022.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 22:08

Signed

Cllr Andrew Foster, Chairman

Date

Appendix A

Written report received on 16th May from C/Cllr Bob Deed

"The last month continued to be challenging at MDDC in view of increasing Covid related illnesses, the resultant reduction of available staff and the especially difficult recruiting environment.

The dispersal of funds regarding the government's scheme to pay £150 to Band A-D property owners has seen 80% of all those Council Tax payers receiving the rebate. Other funds continue to be paid in respect of others in particular financial hardship.

The response of MDDC residents to the Ukrainian crisis has seen over 60 families offer accommodation with over half having received Ukrainians into their homes, already.

Personally, as Chair of the Devon Districts Forum I am talking with Devon CC as to how the eight Devon District Councils can assist DCC in the provision of paid Care workers within the County and for unpaid Care workers, as well.

As ever, anyone can zoom into any of the Council's meetings. The Cabinet meeting on 17th May is, however, concentrating on the improvement proposals for enhancing the Bull Ring area of Cullompton and the North West Cullompton Master Plan."