

THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Thorverton Parish Council held at the Memorial Hall, Silver St, Thorverton on Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 7pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Andrew Foster (Chairman)
Cllr Andy Price (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr John Hodge
Cllr Stuart Crang
Cllr Claire Heaven-Roberts
Cllr Colin Marshall
Cllr Shirley Nightingale
Cllr Graham Sims
Cllr Bryanna Uglow
Cllr Shirley Nightingale

ABSENT

None

IN ATTENDANCE: One members of the public
Jim Roberts (Clerk and RFO)

District Cllr Rhys Roberts
C/Cllr Margaret Squires

1. Public Open Session

A member of the public asked for some assistance with the digging of the test wildflower bed at the Glebe verge and advised that some poles and rope would be needed to fence off the area once the planting had started. They also intended to advertise the turf locally for anyone to have who wanted it,

Council will hope to find volunteers on the Village Tidy-up Day (23rd March).

[One member of the public left at 7:04pm]

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Apologies

None.

4 Confirmation of Minutes

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of Tuesday 13th February 2024 as a true record and the Chairman duly signed them.

5 External Reports

5.1 Devon County Council

C/Cllr Squires reported:

The DCC budget was agreed in February and is balanced, but Children's Services and Adult Social Services always need money. DCC is urgently seeking Foster Carers as agency carers are more expensive. The settlement figure from central government was slightly higher than expected and the extra funds were allocated to Districts for Housing and Highways to tackle drainage issues.

Cllr Squires offered to help with the set up of a small library that Cllr Nightingale is leading for Thorverton.

The Council asked about water running down the side of the road near the main entrance of Lynch Farm which risks picking up slurry. The blocked drain causing the extra run off means the water is diverted into the farm's

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slurry pool risking an overflow back onto the road. This has been reported by the farmer. C/Cllr Squires will help and asked for an email with details and the reference number of the report.

The Council asked about the weight limit on Berrysbridge which C/Cllr Squires will try to help with as well. The Chairman will email her.

The 30mph sign has still not moved to beyond Leonard Square, but this may be due to the site not being fully adopted by DCC yet (see para 10.2 below).

5.2 Mid Devon District Council

D/Cllr Roberts reported:

- MDDC has completed the 24-25 budget which is also balanced with a 2.99% increase in Council Tax for the District (although bills will rise by 4.7% once the other elements of the bill are included) . Housing will be a theme of 24-25. Grants will be made to Town and Village centres of up to £5000.
- 3 Rivers company should close as a business by 31st March. It will take many years for the losses to be fully recovered by MDDC.
- Consultations are being made to move decisions from Westminster to the provinces. As part of this the Combined County Authority of DCC with Torbay and 4 other Districts including Mid-Devon should start in October. This will have a £50m budget but will not affect the existing District and County Council responsibilities.
- The car parking charges have been agreed and Tiverton car parks will be free on certain Saturdays.

5.3 Saturday Market

Cllr Uglow was asked about using the telephone box as a library, allotment renewals being issued in December, the availability of allotments and the overdue renewals.

[C/Cllr Squires left the meeting to attend another Parish Council at 7:29pm]

6 Projects

6.1 Affordable Housing

The Chairman reported:

- Things are moving quickly and a meeting has been had with an advisor who successfully implemented an Affordable Housing scheme in East Devon.
- A Steering group of 12 has been formed which replaces the smaller Parish Council TAHG structure.
- Four working groups now exist - Communication, Technical, Governance and Finance.
- 11th April will be an Open Meeting about Affordable Housing which will be heavily advertised.
- A Community Land Trust will be set up but the exact nature hasn't been finalised yet.
- Membership of the CLT will be open to all for a £1 lifetime membership fee.
- The Parish Council will have a role in the CLT. This will help with continuity as the years go by because the Council is a body rather than a person.

[D/Cllr Roberts left the meeting at 7:36pm]

6.2 Thorverton Library

Covered under C/Cllr Squires report (5.1) above.

6.3 Prosperity Fund for Open Spaces

Cllr Uglow explained that the fund existed which may be useful for other projects. Council asked Cllr Uglow to email D/Cllr Roberts to try to make progress with accessing funds for either Barliabins, the Rec Ground or both.

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7 Recreation Ground

7.1 Financial Report

Compost was purchased for £11.98.

7.2 Other Rec Ground Matters

Cllr Sims has completed planting the hedges and the Council thanked him for the considerable work involved.

The Ride-On Mower is due a service which the clerk will arrange with a new supplier.

The Rec Area working party is working to complete a National Lottery funding bid for the new Play Equipment.

8 Grounds Maintenance

8.1 Contractor work for the month:

The weather is holding up the contractor's work, but grass cutting etc will begin once the rainfall permits. It is hoped the contractor can attend the Village Tidy-Up Day to meet volunteers working on the projects.

8.2 Village Tidy-Up Day

Confirmed as 10am Saturday 23rd March, meeting at the Jubilee Green. Refreshments provided afterwards.

9 Planning & Consultations

9.1 Town and Parish Charter Review

Council is concerned about the proposal to end the obligation to consult Parish Councils about conservation matters. Council **RESOLVED** to make the following contribution: Thorverton Parish Council opposes the proposed deletion of 'Conservation Area Consent' in paragraph 1. of the Planning Charter for Town and Parish Councils.

We and our residents value, and are emotionally invested in, the conservation of the village and have received no explanation as to why we should not continue to be consulted on matters of such importance locally.

9.2 24/00380/LBC Perry Farm Listed Building Consent for 1st floor barn conversion. Council **RESOLVED** to make no comment on this application.

9.3 24/00375/FULL Land at Chilton Gate

 Barn conversion

This late item had been received by email today. Council is aware of the intentions to convert this property because of a previous Certificate of Lawful Use application. Council **RESOLVED** to make no comment on this application.

10 Correspondence

10.1 Facebook Post about Flooding and Potholes

The new Road Warden is attending a two-day course. All potholes and flooding should be reported, and re-reported if necessary, as action is only taken on reports.

10.2 Leonard Square Lighting Fault

Heritage Homes are still responsible for these lamps as they have not been adopted by DCC yet. This is because the site is not yet completed. The Council is relying on the Leonard Square residents reporting issues to their existing contacts at Heritage Homes.

10.3 Thorverton PO Agreement Renewal

Council supports the Post Office as a useful facility and could not see that closing it would have any effect on the company.

11 Clerk Pension Arrangements

Council **RESOLVED** to offer to contribute 8% to a Nest pension for the clerk backdated by 6 weeks (the maximum allowed).

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12 Parish Council Meetings

12.1 NALC Civility and Respect Project

Councillors were encouraged to review the full NALC document to consider if any elements can be used locally.

12.2 Review of Streamlined Meeting Procedures

Councillors were pleased with the shorter meetings and wanted to continue the procedures trialled.

12.3 Annual Parish Meeting

Council **RESOLVED** to hold the Annual Parish Meeting as a 'Celebrate Thorverton Hour' from 7-8pm in an Open Table format on Tuesday 9th April 2024. The Monthly Parish Council meeting will follow at 8pm.

Finance

13.1 Bank balance

This is still not available as statements are not being received. The clerk has now run out of cheques as well and will require a year's bank statements for the audit at the end of the month.

13.2 Payments

Council **RESOLVED** to make the following payments:

13.2.1 Information Commissioner's Office Annual fee (Direct Debit) £ 35.00

13.2.2 Vision ICT Ltd Website hosting for TPC (annual) £ 161.26

13.2.3 G Foster Website hosting for CLT site Nov 2023 – April 2024 £ 77.94

13.2.4 The payment listed on the agenda was not made as no invoice has been received.

13.2.5 BRN Fitch Grounds Maintenance to 8th Feb 24 £ 180.00

13.2.6 J P Roberts - clerk pay, (Feb, incl. backpay) £ 755.19

Reimbursement for Green Waste Bin Permit £ 65.00

Reimbursement for Timber for play item repairs £ 16.42

Reimbursement for Printer Cartridges £ 27.00 £ 863.61

(Item 13.2.6 is waiting for a new chequebook).

13 Business at the Chairman's Discretion

13.1 The volume of work for the clerk will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

13.2 The current Cllr vacancy will be filled at the next meeting after the Returning Officer's notice has expired.

13.3 Improved communications from Parish Council

13.4 The Chairman offered to look after a Parish Council Facebook page.

13.5 The Wooden Play tunnel probably won't last beyond this summer.

13.6 The Council hopes for progress on the new cemetery which is still with the solicitors for conveyancing.

14 Next Meeting

Tuesday 9th April 2024

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.04pm .

Signed Date
Cllr Andrew Foster, Chairman