

THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Thorverton Parish Council held at the Memorial Hall, Silver St, Thorverton on Tuesday 8th April 2025 at 6:57pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Andrew Foster (Chairman)
Cllr Andy Price (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr John Hodge
Cllr Colin Marshall
Cllr Stephanie Shelton
Cllr Graham Sims
Cllr Bryanna Uglow

ABSENT

Cllr Stuart Crang

IN ATTENDANCE:

County Cllr Margaret Squires, District Cllr Rhys Roberts
4 members of the public
Jim Roberts (Clerk and RFO)

1 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman is the Chairman of the Thorverton Community Land Trust Board on which Cllr Uglow is the Parish Council's nominated Board member. The clerk is also a member of TCLT Board. Cllr Hodge declared he was a member of the TCLT. Cllr Uglow is the nominated Councillor on the Thorverton Memorial Hall committee.

2 Co-option of Councillor

Postponed to the next meeting.

3 Apologies

Cllr Crang could not attend as he is overseas.

4 Minutes

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2025. The Chairman duly signed them. **Proposed** Cllr Price **Seconded** Cllr Hodge

5 Public Open Session

No issues raised

6 Reports

6.1 County Cllr Squires

C/Cllr Squires reported the following:

DCC has put forward 5 options for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) with a view to achieving the Government's suggested population size of 500,000+ for unitary authorities. Plymouth, Exeter and Torbay areas are looking to expand to achieve this target as well. The issue of Council Tax varies across the proposed new unitary councils as the tax varies across the different councils that will amalgamate.

DCC Highways advise that white lines on the roads will be tackled across the County with priority for A roads and gritting routes.

It helps considerably to report any DCC issues on DCC's Report-a-Problem webpage. All villages in her ward have the same issue.

Leonard Square hasn't been adopted by DCC and won't be until the

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Chair
Initials

developer completes the necessary work. Pressure needs to be put on the developer to complete the white lines, ensure the lighting functions and the speed limit is moved (if this was a planning condition of the development).

Council asked about repairing a blocked drain that dates back to 2021 near the old railway bridge. C/Cllr Squires has been advised that this needs a big scheme to sort out the drainage connections between Silver St and Hulk Lane. She believes a scheme has been drawn up, but it is very difficult to predict the time this will take as she has known larger schemes to take years.

C/Cllr Squires is not standing for re-election and the Chairman presented a bouquet to thank C/Cllr Squires for all her help over the years.

6.2 District Cllr Roberts

D/Cllr Roberts reported the following:

Earlier today he was informed of the very sad sudden death of Cllr Frank Letch, Chairman of MDDC. There will be a condolence book arranged to which he hopes that the parishes will contribute.

He thanked the Chairman for attending the joint Parishes meeting which D/Cllr Gwen Duchesne attended. She will be a useful contact with her responsibility for Parishes. County Council elections will take place on 1st May, candidates will be notified soon. A successful business drop-in day was held at MDDC which is scheduled to be repeated. The leisure service Active Mid-Devon is now live which makes memberships and bookings much easier. Membership numbers are higher than they've ever been. All Parish clerks will have enforcement training now that two Enforcement Officers have been appointed at MDDC.

The deadline for LGC is in November and the plans for Devon are not firm at the moment. Seven of the eight district Councils are in agreement with Exeter City Council being the exception. ECC would like to be a unitary Council but would need the populations of East Devon, Teignbridge and Mid-Devon to reach the population target. D/Cllr Roberts expects the future organisation will be three unitaries for Devon:

1. Plymouth,
2. Torridge, West Devon, South Hams & Torbay
3. Exeter, Teignbridge, North, Mid and East Devon

Government is very keen on Mayoral authorities and would prefer that Devon & Cornwall were a single authority. Mayors will have significant powers once installed

D/Cllr Roberts welcomes the change and looks forward to seeing how other regions of the country fare who are further along with their process.

There is no funding for these changes from national Government.

6.3 Saturday Market

No market since the last meeting (next one is in four days' time).

7 Projects

7.1 Affordable Housing & MDDC Call for Sites (CfS)

[Chairman called this item forward to before item 2]

D/Cllr Roberts gave details of the CfS which went to landowners in March. This happened because a significant increase in the housing targets for MDDC from Government (now 560 new homes per year for 5 years). There is no guarantee of planning permission but once the CfS is complete MDDC's Local Plan will be updated to reflect the increased housing target.

The Church Commissioners (ChCmrs) have advised of the sites they have put forward to MDDC. The sites they have put forward were shared with the meeting. Council is also aware that an option has been signed with one landowner to develop a farmer's field. Council cannot confirm that the full results of the CfS will be available, but D/Cllr Roberts will enquire.

Council will be ready to do more as and when the Local Plan is updated and

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Initials

when planning permissions are sought. Council has no powers in this matter, it is only a consultee to permissions (MDDC decides). Council understands that the proposed Culm Valley development near the M5 Junction 28 will meet most of the MDDC target.

D/Cllr Roberts reminded Council that the revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework would be key to ongoing development plans nationwide. He offered to help the village understand the issue in any way he could. He hoped that the message could be cascaded from Council meetings as this is regularly discussed.

Councillor Shelton asked if a public meeting should be called regarding the call for sites amid concerns from the public. It was thought not necessary at this time

[Two members of the public left at 7:14pm]

The Thorverton Community Land Trust AGM will take place on 16th Wednesday April.

7.2 Secure Cycle racks at Leigh Gardens

Council considered alternative locations and whether students could use the existing rack in the Quarry Car Park. Cllr Price will advise.

7.3 New Cemetery

Council has signed the contract and title deed and is waiting completion from the vendors.

[D/Cllr Roberts left at 8:05pm]

7.4 Rooks

Cllr Price has spoken to the school and local residents. The school do not have a problem with rooks during the school day at the moment. Council is concerned that pollarding trees would only lead to them nesting elsewhere in the village. For now the Council will await notification from the school if it needs help from the Parish Council on this matter.

[Two members of the public left at 8:11pm]

8 Recreation Ground

8.1 Financial Report for March

£5.50 spent on materials for the tunnel.

8.2 Signage

Cllr Price explained that he had seen information signs at other play parks giving important information. Council discussed the importance of dissuading dogs and which information is essential. Cllr Price and the clerk will revise the sign without the address and the reference to the hospital in Exeter.

8.3 Damage from footballs & grant for nets

Council considers that this project will be led by the Thorverton Football Club and use the s106 funds available at MDDC. The clerk will forward to TFC the grant information shared by Cllr Uglow which could also be a source of funding.

8.4 Basketball Hoop

Council **RESOLVED** to accept quote two as recommended by the working party. Cllr Sims abstained from this vote. **Prop** Cllr Uglow **Sec** Cllr Price

8.5 Lottery Bid

The clerk apologised that this had not yet been done. Council reminded the clerk that he should add that there is no public transport to any other play areas on a Sunday or in the evenings and the project doesn't qualify for any of the Waste Contractors' funding schemes as it falls geographically between two companies.

8.6 Dogs

The football club needs to be reminded that dogs are not allowed on the recreation ground as the main offenders are away supporters. The Chairman will also remind residents to not bring dogs onto the Recreation ground using his Focus reports. Disappointingly Cllrs have met with abuse when challenging dog owners on the Rec.

9 Grounds Maintenance

Council thanked Cllr Marshall for organising the Tidy-Up Day which was a

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success.

9.1 Contractor

The contractor will be grass cutting and spraying this month. The entrances to Cleaves close need doing and these will be on his list.

10 Finance

10.1 Bank balance

Council **NOTED** the balance of £58,364.27 (£37,776.43 + £20,587.84) at 28th Feb 2025.

10.2 Payments

Council **RESOLVED** to make the payments 10.2.1-4 and 10.2.6:

Prop Cllr Shelton **Sec** Cllr Marshall

10.2.1 Information Commissioner's Office Annual Fee (direct debit) £ 52.00

10.2.2 GX Accountancy Payroll services Jan-Mch 2025 invoice 6252 £ 63.00

10.2.3 DALC Annual subs incl NALC Affiliation invoice 6642 £ 418.58

10.2.4 Force Cancer Charity Donation £ 100.00

10.2.6 HMRC Clerk PAYE for January – March 2025 £ 400.77

Council **RESOLVED** to make the correct payment to the clerk of £546.46 (not £686.26 as listed on the agenda). **Prop** Cllr Marshall **Sec** Cllr Hodge

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| 10.2.5 J P Roberts - clerk pay (March) | £ 476.46 | |
| Reimbursement MDDC Green Bin Renewal | £ 70.00 | £ 546.46 |

11 Meetings

11.1 The next meeting will be the Annual Council Meeting on Tuesday 13th May 2025 beginning at 7pm and include the Recreation Trust AGM.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:56pm.

Signed Date
Cllr , Chair