

THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Thorverton Parish Council held at the Memorial Hall, Silver St, Thorverton on Tuesday 15th July at 7:30pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Stephanie Shelton (Chair)
Cllr Andrew Foster
Cllr John Hodge
Cllr Graham Sims
Cllr Bryanna Uglow

ABSENT

Cllr Stuart Crang
Cllr Andy Price (Vice-Chairman)

IN ATTENDANCE:

District Cllr Rhys Roberts
County Cllr Keable *[from 7:53pm]*
2 members of the public
Jim Roberts (Clerk and RFO)

1 Chair Acceptance of Office

Cllr Shelton opened the meeting with the following statement:

Thank you for electing me as Chair of the Thorverton Parish Council. In conjunction with other council members our sole aim is to support, protect and energise Thorverton and the surrounding area. To ensure its future legacy for generations to come and make it a village to be proud of.

As a council we will never have all the answers, or probably be able to fulfil all your requests, as we are very depended on other organisations to support us in this task, I.e. MDDC, Highways, etc. but as the new Chair I promise that if we cannot fulfil your request we will tell you, and tell you why it is not possible.

Also, as the Chair of this Council, you as Councillors, and members of the public will provide me at times with information you wish to remain private. I will honour this unless this information is detrimental or harmful to yourselves, others, or the parish. Should this be the case I will advise you I cannot keep this information to myself and what statutory bodies I need to share this information with.

But what I urge, and do urge, is for new Councillors to join us. To become part of the structure in supporting our village. We can only do so with your help so please join us.

If you are happy with this then I will sign the declaration of acceptance as Chair.

Cllr Shelton read aloud the Declaration of Office and signed the document

2 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Uglow is the nominated Councillor on the Thorverton Memorial Hall committee.

Cllr Foster is the Chairman of the Thorverton Community Land Trust Board on which Cllr Uglow is the Parish Council's nominated Board member. The Chair is also President of the local WI.

3 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Price & Cllr Crang who are both working.

4 Public Open Session

A resident of Courbet Court raised the issue of access to buildings next to the new cemetery. They hoped that a strip of one metre of land could be left to allow access for maintenance of the garage that sits adjacent to the boundary line. The Cllrs will take this reasonable request to the next meeting of the Cemetery Working Group.

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The second speaker asked to be kept informed about the cemetery developments as had been promised by the clerk in 2021. The speaker had noticed the three trees on the plans that are next to their properties. Council assured the speaker that the plans were only draft at this stage and the final layout would be shared with everyone before going ahead. The Working Group will ensure that plans are communicated.

The information board for the archaeological dig was shown in different places on the two proposed layouts. The speaker hoped it wouldn't be against their fence. Council considered that it was probably best to be located at the entrance. No final decision had yet been made and the Working Group would be finalising the plans.

The speaker also suggested that the entrance to the cemetery be directly opposite the entrance to Barliabins. Council advised that there are differences in the ground level between the path and the new cemetery which dictate where the entrance has to be. Council is trying to avoid steps in the entrances to maximise accessibility.

The first speaker hoped that a 'No Parking' sign could be put up in Courbet Court as it would be tempting for visitors to think that the turning area would be temptingly convenient parking. Council advised that owners can put up signs on private property.

[One member of the public left the meeting at 7:50pm]

5 Minutes

Council **RESOLVED** to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2025 and the Chair duly signed them.

Prop Cllr Foster **Sec** Cllr Uglow

Council **RESOLVED** to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2025 and the Chair duly signed them.

Prop Cllr Sims **Sec** Cllr Uglow

6 Actions Outstanding from Previous Minutes

Council discussed the list of points in the additional information.

6.1 New Cemetery

The Chair advised that the vendor had been in touch and the boundary required a barbed-wire fence in addition to the agreed fence to make it stockproof. A member of the Working Group had purchased the fence and asked the contractors to install it.

6.4 Lottery bid

The clerk had not received a reply from the National Lottery explaining the reasons for the refusal of the Council's application for funding. Council will probably have to bid again without any further advice.

[At this point in the meeting the Chair called forward items 7.1 and 7.2]

6.7 Litter Bins

There has been no reply from MDDC regarding the policy for the number bins allocated by population or property numbers and how that grows when new building is developed.

6.9 Dead tree overhanging Lynch Close

D/Cllr Roberts advised that this item is now dealt with.

6.10 Update of the website to gov.uk

Clerk to put this item on the October agenda

6.11 Email addresses

Clerk to put this item on October agenda

6.12 Jubilee Green Donation

The volunteer had requested that the usual annual donation of £100 be donated to help the school garden project. Given the restrictions on Council donations to individuals or schools the Council will wait to hear from the volunteer. Focus could be a possibility for ensuring the funds reach the desired project.

6.13 Dinneford St water trough repairs

Chair will contact the possible contractor for this project.

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6.14 Hedge outside Old Pound

The owner is aware of the need to trim back the hedges. The powers to enforce this action lie with DCC. Their procedures are to send 2 letters asking for the work to be done. If these do not lead to the desired action a third and final letter is sent advising that DCC will cut the vegetation themselves and details of the amount the landowner will have to pay for this work. Council **RESOLVED** that another letter should be sent to the owner advising that the issue will be put to DCC. **Prop** Cllr Foster **Sec** Cllr Hodge

6.15 Change the Parish Council's bank to Unity Trust

This is ongoing and the clerk will add to the September meeting.

6.16 Thorverton in Bloom

This will be on the agenda in February 2026.

6.17 Untaxed vehicle in the Quarry Car Park

Council asked the clerk to place notices on the vehicle and email the contact on the vehicle to let them know.

6.18 Arrange the Autumn Tidy-Up day

Council asked Cllr Foster to put it in Focus that the Autumn Tidy-Up Day will be on Saturday 4th October

6.19 Future of the Sheep Dip

Council is content to wait for the Church Commissioners to reply to the clerk's email.

6.20 School Lane drainage at end of Glebe Footpath

This has been brought to the C/Cllr Keable's attention via the Chair's email.

6.21 School Lane double yellow lines

This has been brought to the C/Cllr's attention via the Chair's email.

6.22 Tree inspection/survey

Council **RESOLVED** that the clerk will ask a tree surveyor to carry out the inspection.

Prop Cllr Uglow **Sec** Cllr Hodge

6.23 Register Dorothy's Triangle as Parish Council Owned

This issue will be on the agenda in November.

6.24 Clerk's pension arrangements

Council encouraged the clerk to make this a priority.

7 External Reports

7.1 County Councillor

Council thanked C/Cllr Steve Keable for his written report and he explained that DCC has managed to balance the budget. The concern for the future is that Council funding is being cut by national government so whatever the structure of local government in the future it will face many financial challenges.

Highways have a £400m backlog of repairs and only a £100m budget so there are limited funds to fix the roads. The audit committee has called in the Highways budget to make sure that value for money is being achieved.

Services for vulnerable children also significantly affect the budget. A ten-year plan has been created to tackle the provision of help for those affected and reduce costs by bringing more provision of services back into Devon.

Chair asked about her email listing the DCC Highways issues in Thorverton and C/Cllr Keable hopes to get to it soon (he has been inundated with correspondence and is working through everything in date order). The email will be posted on the noticeboard with the minutes to advise the residents (see appendix A).

[C/Cllr Keable left the meeting at 8:08pm]

7.2 District Councillor

D/Cllr Rhys Roberts reported the following:

The MDDC Leader has updated the D/Cllrs on the Local Government reorganisation. There are now 8 Devon Councils who have agreed to the plan for 3 Unitary Authorities - Plymouth, South Devon & Greater Northern Devon. Exeter City Council still hopes to become a unitary authority but they

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do so without the support of the necessary District Councils to get the population required. £8m has been set aside for preparatory work to meet the deadline of late November with public consultation somewhere around April – July 2026. The new structure will take over in April 2028 when the County and District Councils will be dissolved. It is inevitable that some of the work will cascade down to the Town and Parish Councils. D/Cllr Roberts hopes to share the presentation given to MDDC in the last few days and will send the information when allowed so to do.

The MDDC social rent error with some of their tenants has led to a liability of £1.8m. Refund letters have been posted but this 20-year problem will take some time to process. Some tenants will have passed away and the position of some is affected by their benefits.

Hospitality businesses should be aware that MDDC have launched a Visitor Economy Grant Scheme for up to £6,000. Details and application are online.

The Planning Validation consultation is open (see item 8.2.2). The issue is important as it affects the land that will be available for development. The new list will come into effect in June 2028 and consultation on the draft will be in March/April 2026. MDDC will need to apply the vast majority of development land options on local lists due to the pressure on housing targets exerted by the national government.

Tidcombe Hall is East of Tiverton has been approved for 100 houses on appeal (with conditions). The principle reason given for approval (despite 158 letters of objections as well as MDDC planning dept and Council objecting) was the Planning Inspector's view that MDDC had no detailed plan for how they were going to meet the new targets, despite the targets only being out for 8 weeks.

The MDDC Local Plan has to identify a 5-year supply in 2028 of 571 houses per year as a minimum. D/Cllr Roberts now understands that the 2700 new homes in the Garden Village scheme do not count towards this target.

In Cullompton travellers have trespassed on a site next to a leisure facility which had to close. This has been resolved. D/Cllr Roberts urged the meeting to get everyone to check that land is not accessible to trespassers.

Training and updates are available to Parish Council on new housing targets, regional infrastructure and new planning regulations. He shared the contact at MDDC.

Cllr Foster drew D/Cllr Roberts' attention to the fact that Silverton have reported that Thorverton had acquired land for affordable housing but this wasn't the case as the acquisition is still in progress.

Council raised the issues of MDDC grass cutting and leaving the cuttings behind.

Unfortunately, this was very soon after the village tidy-up day when local families had made the area looked immaculate.

Residents had emailed D/Cllr Roberts about the dead tree overhanging Lynch Close.

MDDC sent out a team to address cutting the dead limbs, including the Tree Officer.

Unfortunately, extra trees have been trimmed that shouldn't have been and an apology sent. Additionally some dead branches were left on a drive in the close. This has been cleared. Tim Jarrett is the MDDC Tree Officer.

To conclude he congratulated the Chair on her appointment and wished her well.

[D/Cllr left the meeting at 8:33pm]

7.3 Saturday Market

Cllr Crang reported that the single item raised was the overgrown vegetation in the car park, see 11.1 below.

Cllr Foster is due to attend August's Saturday Market

8 Planning and Consultations

8.1 Planning Applications

8.1.1 [25/00953/CLU](#) Berrysbridge Lodge

Certificate of Lawfulness re agricultural occupancy condition

Council **RESOLVED** to make no comment on this application.

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Prop Cllr Foster Sec Cllr Hodge

8.2 Consultations

8.2.1 Local Government Reorganisation [MDDC Survey](#) closes Mon 11th August

Cllr Foster will put this item in the Council's Focus article encouraging individuals to express their views.

8.2.2 Planning Applications Validation Checklist

Comments to DMConsultations@middevon.gov.uk

Cllr Foster will review the document as part of the affordable housing project and advise the Council of any areas they should consider reviewing for possible comments.

Individuals will again be encouraged to express their views in the Focus article.

9 Projects

9.1 New Cemetery

The next meeting is on Friday (18th July). The issue with the planning application is the necessity for the Biodiversity Net Gain metrics. This requires the definitive plan for the new layout to be finalised so that the clerk can attempt to do the necessary spreadsheets.

9.2 Cyber Risk

Council had received an email regarding free services from the Government for local councils. Council asked the clerk to include these when implementing the new website address and emails.

9.3 Silver St Footpath – Overgrown Vegetation

The Chair will approach the landowner about this matter.

9.4 Highways

See the C/Cllr's report above (para 7.1) and email in appendix A.

9.5 Barliabins

Cllr Uglow reported that the Working Group would like the grey & black recycled plastic bench. The group is considering using a circle of paving slabs to site the bench which are available from the Memorial Hall.

The working group asked if a bench could be moved from Jubilee Green to Barliabins.

Council **RESOLVED** to buy the recycled bench and fixings for up to £1,000.

Prop Cllr Foster Sec Cllr Hodge

Council asked the clerk to arrange an Extraordinary Meeting at 5:30pm on Wednesday 23rd July at the WI Hut to arrange payment of the invoice for the work at Barliabins which arrived today.

[One member of the public left at 9:54]

9.6 MDDC Grass Cuttings

Raised with D/Cllr Roberts but there is little that can be done. Council will consider asking the handyman to clear any cuttings MDDC leaves behind, especially if the cut happens after a period of growth.

10 Recreation Ground

10.1 Financial Report

£349.00 spent in June (see 14.2.7). This represents a significant saving over the price quoted from the major suppliers. Cllr Sims asked if Council would consider replacing the other seat which is showing excessive wear.

Council **RESOLVED** to buy a second new Cradle Seat for £142.

Prop Cllr Hodge Sec Cllr Uglow

10.2 Basketball Hoop & Surface

The hoop has been delivered and the group are going to mark out the location for both the surface and the hoop. Cllr Sims and the clerk will meet the tarmac company on Friday.

Council will arrange a small celebration of the opening.

10.3 Damage from footballs & grant for nets

Council has received an update from Thorverton Football Club and

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understands that the club has ongoing projects that they are trying to co-ordinate. Priority is being given to changes to the WI Hut. Council is concerned if liability will lie with them as the Recreation Ground Trust. Council will research the arrangements already agreed with the Football Club over s106 funding and planned Rec Ground expenditure (Cllr Foster to lead).

10.4 Lottery Bid

This item will be dealt with at the next meeting in September.

10.5 Information & No Dogs Signs

Council **RESOLVED** to purchase 3 signs giving emergency information for £35 each.

Prop Cllr Sims **Sec** Cllr Foster Cllr Hodge abstained

The clerk will investigate the costs of the more prominent 'No Dogs' sign.

10.6 Mower service quote

The quote of £677.23 includes the strimmer and the mower. The mower needs hydraulic oil changing and the battery could do with renewing. Another supplier did not return the call. Council **RESOLVED** to accept this quote.

Prop Cllr Uglow **Sec** Cllr Foster

11 Grounds Maintenance

11.1 Contractor

The work for this month is:

Trimming the vegetation on The Glebe-School Lane footpath.

Preparing allotment 22 for a new tenant.

Weedkilling in The Glebe

Overgrown vegetation in the Quarry Car Park

Grass cutting in Cleaves Close from the entrance on both sides to the circle.

12 Council Administration

12.1 Review of Council Orders and Policies

12.2 Allocation of Council Roles and Working Groups

12.3 Retraction of Unfounded Accusation

These items will be dealt with at the next meeting earlier in the agenda.

13 Budget Review – First Quarter 2025-26

Council **APPROVED** the Budget review (see appendix B).

Prop Cllr Foster **Sec** Cllr Uglow

14 Finance

14.1 Bank balance

Council **NOTED** the current balance of £ 60,263.57 (9th July 2025).

14.2 Payments

Item 14.2.3 is not required as no invoice is due. The authorised work is a very small job and is being held to combine with other work to make it worthwhile hiring the necessary equipment.

Council **RESOLVED** to pay Items 14.2.1, 14.2.2 and 14.2.4-14.2.10.

Prop Cllr Foster **Sec** Cllr Hodge

14.2.1	G Pook	Reissue of lost cheque	£	614.00
14.2.2	BRN Fitch	Grounds Maintenance June	£	378.23
14.2.3	P Marshall	Cobbles repairs June (awaiting invoice) not more than	£	250.00
14.2.4	SWANHS Foundation Trust	Grant (2025-06 p2 para 8.4)	£	100.00
14.2.5	A Saunders	Professional fees for Cemetery Work	£	500.00
14.2.6	DALC	Reissue of lost cheque	£	418.58
14.2.7	Graham Sims	Reimbursement - play equip. spares	£	349.00
14.2.8	GX Accountancy	Payroll servs Apr-Jun 2025 inv 6409	£	63.00

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14.2.9 J P Roberts Clerk pay for June	£ 517.46
14.2.10 HMRC Clerk PAYE & National Insurance Apr-Jun 2025	£ 100.52

15 Next Meeting

An Extraordinary Meeting will be held on Wednesday 23rd July 2025 at 5:30pm.
The next monthly meeting will be held at 7:30pm Tuesday 9th September 2025.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10:55pm.

Signed Date
Cllr Stephanie Shelton, Chair

Appendix A Outstanding Highways Issues in Thorverton

Chair's email to C/Cllr Steve Keable, 8th July 2025

Thank you for coming to the last meeting of Thorverton Parish Council, held on Tuesday 10th June, it was good to meet with you.

You may recall we discussed some issues arising with Highways that unfortunately still had not been actioned within the Parish. Although these may seem minor to some, within a small village these can take on major proportions and become problematic and distressing to those living with the consequences.

The outstanding issues are:

- 1) The white lines at the beginning and end of Bullen Street, which have been erased over time. This issue was raised when a double decker bus and tractor and trailer had to reverse the length of the street, onto a four cross way near to the Primary School (vehicles reversing down or up Bullen Street being an almost daily occurrence). This action was both illegal and dangerous to both other drivers and pedestrians. Whilst we appreciate white lines are not of a priority, in this instance we believe it to be essential. Other white lines within the village have eroded and cause congestion, especially during School drop off and pick up times.
- 2) Hulk Lane under the railway bridge flooding - we were advised by Margaret Squires this is a bigger issue, the drains being connected to those on the Cricket Club corner at the bottom of Silver Street and the old railway bridge. We would appreciate being able to inform Parishioners of either an update or timescale when this problem could be looked at and resolved, or why the delay has taken so long.
- 3) Yellow line extensions by the school as far as the field blue gates - this was to prevent the wall damage opposite the school when lorries have damaged the wall due to cars parked beside the School gates.
- 4) The Glebe footpath to its junction with School Lane. We have been advised this needs an upgrade to the drainage system and to clear existing clogged ditches.
- 5) The pavement along Silver Street from Court Barton to the first houses on the left hand side going towards the Cricket Pitch. We have had correspondence from concerned parishioners seeing people with young children and prams/pushchairs having to walk onto the road as the path is overgrown with nettles and brambles.
- 6) The '30 mph' sign along the Berrysbridge Road. This was moved when the Leonard Square development commenced and now needs to be replaced before the entrance to the new estate. With regard to Leonards Square the street lights leading to the development need to be adopted as this is a dark, unlit and narrow road with no road markings. With regard to this road the 'Thorverton' sign is on the right hand side of the road coming into the village, as opposed to the left hand side. This may not be able to be moved, due to the camber of the bank, but the feasibility of this would be welcome.

As mentioned, it would greatly benefit the Council if we could have some explanations for our Parishioners as to why these issues are still outstanding. Whilst we appreciate you cannot give any assurance of timelines an explanation as to why these matters are in abeyance would be helpful. We look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix B Budget Review for Quarter 1 – 2025-26

Thorverton Parish Council Budget v Actuals 2023-24							
2022-23		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26			Notes
Detail	Actual	Actual	Actual	Quarter 1 April - June			
				Budget	YTD	FYF	
Payments							
Staff Costs	£ 7,222	£ 5,780	£ 7,893	£ 10,160	£ 1,912	£ 9,300	Basketball Hoop £ 1990.20
Administration	£ 1,437	£ 820	£ 1,814	£ 1,500	£ 225	£ 1,500	
Prsh Mntnce - cntrctr	£ 3,509	£ 2,015	£ 1,980	£ 3,000	£ 1,090	£ 3,000	
Prsh Mntnce - matrls	£ 2,971	£ 1,306	£ 671	£ 3,000	£ 534	£ 2,000	
Recreation Ground	£ 933	£ 680	£ 2,770	£ 1,250	£ 1,996	£ 3,240	
Allotments	£ 255	£ 238	£ 291	£ 250	£ -	£ 250	
Grant Giving	£ 1,097	£ 875	£ 1,300	£ 1,500	£ 250	£ 1,250	
Insurance	£ 719	£ 746	£ 832	£ 1,000	£ 843	£ 843	
Annual Subs	£ 323	£ 440	£ 390	£ 500	£ -	£ 500	
Legal fees	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 500	£ -	£ 500	
Training	£ 114	£ 402	£ 60	£ 750	£ -	£ 750	
Garage rental	£ 688	£ 668	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
New Cemetery	£ 1,140	£ -	£ 10,145	£ -	£ -	£ -	
TCLT	£ 2,000	£ 494	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Elections	-	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
New tool store	-	£ -	£ 7,099	£ -	£ -	£ -	
New Play Equipment	-	£ 1,000	£ 2,500	£ 2,500	£ -	£ 2,500	
Charging Points	-	£ 1,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
General Reserves	-	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Total	£ 22,408	£ 16,464	£ 37,745	£ 25,910	£ 6,849	£ 25,633	
Income							
Precept	£ 17,426	£ 17,763	£ 20,529	£ 24,089	£ 12,045	£ 24,089	
Cemetery		£ -			£ -	£ -	
Defibrillator		£ -			£ -	£ -	
Grants received	£ 2,310	£ 4,232			£ -	£ -	
Rents	£ 850	£ 170	£ 880	£ 980	£ 90	£ 1,070	
Deposits	£ 75	£ 25	£ 75	£ -	£ -		
Bank Interest	£ 161	£ 494	£ 528	£ 400	£ 108	£ 400	
VAT refund		£ -		£ 400	£ -	£ 700	
Miscellaneous	£ 1	£ 200	£ 5,281	£ 41	£ -	£ 700	
Total	£ 20,823	£ 22,884	£ 27,293	£ 25,910	£ 12,242	£ 26,959	
Bank Reconciliation							
Bank Statements	Date	Current Acct	Reserve Acct	Other	Uncashed Cheques	Total	Income & Expenditure
Opening balance	01-Apr-25	£ 16,884.33	£ 37,816.54			£ 54,700.87	Opening £ 54,700.87
							Payments £ 6,849.34
							Receipts £ 12,242.04
Closing Balance	30-Jun-25	£ 22,283.99	£ 37,924.08		£ 114.50	£ 60,093.57	Closing £ 60,093.57

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