

## THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of Thorverton Parish Council held at the Memorial Hall, Silver St, Thorverton on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7:00pm.

### **PRESENT**

Cllr Andy Price (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr Stuart Crang  
Cllr Andrew Foster  
Cllr John Hodge  
Cllr Graham Sims  
Cllr Bryanna Uglow  
Cllr Karl Wilson

### **ABSENT**

Cllr Andrew Foster None

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

About 80 members of the public, D/Cllr Rhys Roberts, C/Cllr Steve Keable, Jim Roberts (Clerk and RFO)

### **1 Chair Welcome**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He was pleased to see so many passionate people at the meeting and the guests who had come to get involved. He urged everyone to listen carefully to the presentations and ask questions at the appropriate time.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs Hodges, Uglow & Wilson are members of Thorverton Community Land Trust. Cllr Uglow is the Council's nominated member of the Thorverton Memorial Hall. Cllr Sims is a family member re Paws for Pleasure and Cllr Wilson is the owner of Paws for Pleasure.

### **3 Apologies**

Cllr Foster sent apologies as he had a diary clash.

### **4 Public Open Session**

#### **4.1 Summerfield Development Plans for Diocese Field**

The Exeter Archdeacon, a member of the Exeter Diocese board of finance Dominic Neil & Grahame Diocese Field and representatives of the developers Summerfield gave details of the plans for housing development on the 1.83ha field next to School Lane and The Glebe. There will be an exhibition of the plans in The Exeter in two days' time where questions can be answered individually and at length, The financial difficulties of the Diocese were explained and the legal obligation on the Church to maximise the return on the assets they own to provide income for the clergy. The Charity Trustees had discussed possible land sales in 2025 and consulted the local church. They had reached the difficult decision to sell the School Lane Field and Summerfield had purchased an option to develop. The Archdeacon recognised this was an unpopular decision but it had not been taken lightly. The Summerfield team explained the challenges MDDC faced with the increased housing target of 571 dwellings each year. As the current Local Plan only has 356 dwellings/year (meeting the original target) there are not enough open market or affordable homes planned in Mid-Devon. This means that MDDC Planners have a presumption in favour of sustainable

.....  
Chair  
Initials

development (called the 'tilted balance') as the need for housing outweighs any impacts and the focus is to understand and mitigate the impacts wherever possible.

Maps and diagrams showing details of the plans for the field showing how issues of drainage, access, amenity areas, trees, wildlife etc had been tackled as well as the planned 30 homes (with 9 affordable properties). These are a mix of 2- 3- & 4-bed homes. There will be a self-build plot to meet policy, should get slightly more than 10% increase in biodiversity.

Summerfield aim to submit the planning application in May when anyone can contribute their comments to the MDDC Planners and the Parish Council will be formally consulted. Summerfield hoped to adjust the development in collaboration with the community and welcomed ideas to improve the plans.

Questions were raised about the s106/Community Infrastructure Levy that might be raised and this will be discussed with MDDC. Normally the funds go to mitigate the impacts on education, affordable housing and open space, but Summerfield are happy to listen to consultations that conform with the regulations.

The local church had already raised objections and the Diocese recognised the decision was unpopular but hoped the community could take advantage of the opportunities to contribute ideas

The impact on the sewage treatment works were raised and the plans for water attenuation were explained.

When asked who would be helped in the Diocese the Archdeacon explained there were 18 clergy across Devon and each cost £70,000/year for their stipend and housing.

#### **4.2 Stonegate Update on Plans for the Thorverton Arms**

The Stonegate representatives explained that they had 3000 leased and tenanted pubs and were very keen to get the Thorverton Arms reopened. There are no plans to sell the pub which had had to close on safety grounds.

They had worked closely with DCC and opened pedestrian access to School Lane (the community is very grateful for this access).

The gable wall is part stone and part cob. The cob elements to be rebuilt, replaced with new Cob blocks. The target dates is to have the scaffold removed by June and the pub handed back in July.

Chairman thanked Stonegate for opening up the pedestrian access and invited questions.

The Stonegate team answered questions on the technical aspects of the rebuilding of the wall (materials, methods, alternatives etc), previous & future maintenance, insurance arrangements, inspection arrangements and possible causes of the collapse.

*[At 8:23 the presenting teams and about 40 members of the public left the meeting]*

#### **4.3 15 minutes for members of the public to raise any Parish matters**

No further items raised.

### **5 Minutes**

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 10th February 2026 and the Chair duly signed them. **Prop** Cllr Hodges **Sec** Cllr Wilson

### **6 External Reports** To receive reports from:

#### **6.1 County Councillor Steve Keable**

C/Cllr Keable reported:

Due to the time taken for the very interesting presentations C/Cllr Keable gave a shorter report but offered copies of his March update (see Appendix A) DCC now had the first budget of the current regime (LibDem and Green) which had got got all party supports 52 votes for and 2 abstentions. More

.....  
Chair  
Initials

money into roads which goes to replace the money that has been previously trimmed from the budgets. The library service will receive increased funds and 22,000 people responded to the library consultation.

Cllr Uglow asked about pothole reporting. C/Cllr Keable explained that he sits down with the Highways Officer going through these reports. He urged everyone reporting highways issues to send photos and [www.what3words.com](http://www.what3words.com) locations if possible.

Council asked about DCC adopting Leonard Square which was held up by the developer not meeting DCC standards to accept handover. C/Cllr Keable would help where he could but it was up to the developer to complete all the requirements of their planning permission or the costs just fell on the Council Taxpayers.

## 6.2 District Councillor Rhys Roberts

D/Cllr Roberts also promised a brief report and advised:

After the earlier complete lack of consultation with the local community and Council by the Diocese and their developers he encouraged a small group to co-ordinate a thoroughly organised and loud response.

Cllr Uglow asked who is protecting the rural lifestyle. C/Cllr Keable said that, regrettably, government legislation is stacked against anything other than development.

D/Cllr Roberts advised that the MDDC Budget was now set and there would be a 2.99% increase in the District element of Council Tax. Parish Council amounts are up by 20% on average.

Leisure membership fees are not going up this year and there are new Padell Courts and Pool Pods at Tiverton and a new app Active MDDC to plan and manage bookings online. The Local Government Reorganisation consultation closes at the end of this month for public comments.

Preparatory work has started on the Cullompton relief road.

Cllr Sims invited both Councillors to come and look at Cleaves Close. The bin lorries are going up to 5ft over the grass and leaving mud on the road. Black bin lorry reverses which is fine but the recycling one drives around. Many kerb stones broken.

## 6.3 Saturday Market

No issues this month, next market will be hosted by Cllr Price.

## 7 Projects

### 7.01 Wildflower Patch

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

The volunteer had noted the feedback and keep more flowering through the year. There will also be more height and variety and will flower for longer. The display will improve as it goes.

Council **RESOLVED** to support the wildflower patch and thanked the volunteer for her hard work. Funding of £100 for the coming year. **Prop** Cllr Crang **Sec** Cllr Hodges

*[The Chairman resumed Standing Orders]*

### 7.02 Repair outside Terra Nova

To be reported to the Conservation Officer at MDDC via D/Cllr Roberts

### 7.03 Pothole Reporting

See County Councillor Report above.

### 7.04 Fence at Broadlands

This issue falls between the developer, MDDC and DCC and no progress is being made. Cllr Wilson will try to address the problems.

*[2 members of public left]*

*at 9:02pm]*

.....  
Chair  
Initials

**7.05 New Cemetery incl quotes (gates)**

Council **RESOLVED** to accept the lower quote for the gates and to ask about galvanising. Prop Cllr Uglow Sec Cllr Hodges [2 members of public left at 9:07pm]

**7.06 Barliabins land slip**

Council discussed the landslip in the corner of Baliabins. Council considered that planting will help secure the soil. Cllr Crang will mark off the corner put some plants in. The Millenium Green Trust offered hedging plants (from the Woodland Trust). There were dips in Barliabins which could have been the trees but may be landslip. Chair will enquire at work.

**7.07 MDDC Register of Assets**

Discussed the map of assets in the Parish and the MDDC suggestion of transfer to the Parish Council. Cllrs will give it some thought before the next meeting.

[2 members of public left at 9:19pm]

**7.08 School Lane Closure**

Covered earlier during the presentation

[2 members of public left at 9:25pm]

**7.09 Speedwatch**

The Council will make one more attempt to find volunteers via the Focus update and the Saturday Market. The volunteers are under pressure from the Police to return the equipment but will alert them that the Parish is giving it one last go.

[1 member of public left at 9:30pm]

**7.10 New Website**

The new website is online now, but only as a first draft. There is lots of information to migrate.

[D/Cllr Rhys Roberts left the meeting at 9:38pm]

**8 Planning**

**Planning Decisions**

Council **NOTED** the following decisions:

**8.1.1 26/00097/CAT**

**Ivy Cottage, Lynch Road** Intention to fell Leylandii

**NO OBJECTION**

**8.1.2 25/01610/FULL**

**Stone Farm Bungalow** Change to equestrian use

**APPROVED**

**8.1.3 Appeal against refusal 23/01665/CLU Chilton Gate, EX16 8RS**

**DISMISSED**

**Planning Applications**

[1 member of public left at 9:39pm]

**8.2.1 26/0273/DOC Bridge Farm** Distribution Hub for Digestate

Cllr Crang commented that this application was outside the area and had no impact on Thorverton traffic from the documents available.

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

A member of the public raised detailed issues about the Clyst St Mary Anerobic digester that uses Yellowford Farm and Bridge Farm will be an intermediary site for distribution.

These have increased 66,000 tonnes per year. Every tonne that goes into into the digester a tonne comes out again, a major contributor to all the traffic; 2500 journeys at Stoke Canon and Cowley Bridge road.

The permitted tonnage through Thorverton has not changed but Bridge Farm application has no effective control and the use of Yellowford Farm as an intermediary site will, in his opinion, lead to a big increase to the traffic movements.

The speaker also alerted the Council that the application will allow current unofficial and indeed, in some cases, illegal movements.

Devon Highways have not been consulted on the matter.

[The Chairman resumed Standing Orders]

.....  
Chair  
Initials

Cllr Crang is aware that the C/Cllr for Stoke Canon has objected to the application on highways grounds.

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

**Prop** Cllr Crang **Sec** Cllr Uglow **Abstained** Cllr Sims abstained

### **Planning Applications Received Too Late for the Agenda**

#### **8.3 Consideration of the need for an Extraordinary Meeting**

26/0076/FULL Revised Drawing

26/00338/FULL 5 dwellings smaller to be circulated

Council **RESOLVED** not to hold an Extraordinary Meeting to discuss these applications.

**Prop** Cllr Crang **Sec** Cllr Hodges

#### **8.4 Housing Development - Finding out the Parish Opinion**

Council **RESOLVED** to hold an Extraordinary Meeting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April in the WI Hut at 7:30pm to discuss how to research the residents' opinions on the housing development. The Council will also discuss the wooden equipment on the Rec.

*[Cllr Hodge left the meeting at 10:10]*

### **9 Recreation Ground**

**9.1 Financial Report** for February: £ nil.

#### **9.2 Wooden Play Equipment**

Council will inspect the equipment to decide if it needs to be retired.

#### **9.3 Safety Surfaces – Swings, Slides & Picnic Table**

Clerk to get quotes.

#### **9.4 Information & No Dogs Signs**

Cllr Uglow advised that the TFC Secretary has written to all opposition clubs to advise that dogs are not allowed on the Recreation ground. Because these instructions are being ignored by one or two people others see dogs on the Rec and bring theirs.

Whilst challenges have been made in the past the level of abuse received has dissuaded Cllrs and others from doing so.

At the next meeting the Council will re-visit the size of signage and how dogs can be kept away.

### **10 Grounds Maintenance Contractor** Work for the month

1. Quarry car park bank
2. Grass cutting
3. Check leats
4. Weed killing if possible
5. Clean mud along the brook.

Cllr Sims has cleared the dams but they will need proper clearing out this summer.

### **11 Council Administration**

#### **11.1 Resignation of the Chair**

Council regretted, but understood, the resignation of Cllr Shelton and would welcome her back at any time. Council was very grateful for her positive & friendly approach as well as her hard work and commitment to the village and the Council. This was clearly evident as she has already volunteered to run the Night Landing lights for an hour a month to prolong the life of the lamps.

Council **RESOLVED** to recognise her contribution with an honorarium

**Prop** Cllr Wilson **Sec** Cllr Crang

#### **11.2 Publication of Bank Statements**

.....  
Chair  
Initials

Postponed to the next meeting.

**11.3 Holding Meetings in the WI Hut**

The only obstacle to the WI Hut meetings is the lack of WiFi.

Council **RESOLVED** to stay in the Memorial Hall because of the better Facilities

**Prop** Cllr Crang **Sec** Cllr Uglow

**12 Finance**

**12.1 Bank balance**

Council **NOTED** the current balance of £ 42,527.08 (4<sup>th</sup> March 2026) and receipts this month of: Allotments £10.00, Interest £27.80

**12.2 Payments**

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

<b>12.2.1 BRN Fitch</b> Grounds maintenance February	<b>£ 481.97</b>
<b>12.2.2 Savills (UK) Ltd Client A/c Re CC Agricultural</b> Allotment field	<b>£ 90.00</b>
<b>12.2.3 Westexe Solutions Limited</b> Repairs to Night Landing Lights	<b>£ 318.75</b>
<b>12.2.4 J P Roberts</b> Clerk pay for February	<b>£ 557.80</b>

**Prop** Cllr Crang **Sec** Cllr Wilson

**13 Next Meeting**

The Extraordinary Meeting will be held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March and the next Monthly Meeting will be held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026.


There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10:34pm.

Signed ..... Date .....  
Cllr Andy Price, Vice- Chairman

**CLlr Steve Keable** March 2026

**Devon County Councillors Report - Creedy, Tav & Mid Exe:**  
 Bideigh • Brushford • Cadbury • Cadeleigh • Chawleigh • Cherton Fitzpaine • Coldridge • Crawys  
 Murchard • Down St. Mary • Eggeford • Kennerleigh • Lapford • Murchard Bishop • Newton St. Cyres •  
 Nymet Rowland • Poughill • Puddington • Sandford • Shobrooke • Silverton • Stockleigh English •  
 Stockleigh Pomeroy • Thalbridge • Thorverton • Upton Hellions • Washford Pyme • Wembworthy •  
 Woolfordworthy • Zeal Monachorum Steve.Keable@devon.gov.uk

**Mid Devon Councillors Report - Tav Vale:**  
 Chawleigh • Lapford • Nymet Rowland • Wembworthy SKeable@middevon.gov.uk



Welcome to the March Newsletter - The big issue this month is to explain about our Council Tax ...

The 2026-27 budget is the first opportunity the new County Administration elected last May has had to shape and determine the priorities for the next 3-years, in the first multi-year settlement in a long time.

**Prioritising roads, children and SEND services in our £839million budget**

**Stay informed about local decisions, community initiatives, and opportunities to have your say**

**Council Tax takes the strain**

Including the 2% allowance Government made some years ago for Adult Care, Council tax will be up by the maximum permitted 4.99%. Government continues to reduce grant and puts pressure on local councils to make up the difference or cut services, rather than to fund from central taxes.

4.99% amounts to £1.73 a week increase on a Band D property and less for Bands A-C property where most people live. To balance income against expenditure DCC has also to deliver just under £39m of savings or find alternative income.

Council Tax was never designed to fund something as large and complex as adult social care or children's services. We disappointed that Devon's 'settlement' announced by Government in mid-February failed to recognise rurality by restoring the £10m removed in 2025.

Devon is large, dispersed, aging and rural. Delivering services here costs more. Distances are greater, workforce markets thinner and economies of scale are hard to achieve. While these rural cost drivers are not recognised by Government in national funding, we will continue to press that case firmly and consistently.

From April, the County will spend £839.2 million on day-to-day services next year: up 4.1% than in 2025-26. Councillors also agreed a £770.6 million capital investment programme covering the five years from 2026/27 to 2030/31.

**This money will be used for major projects such as road repairs, new school places, support for children with special educational needs, and improvements to council buildings across Devon.**

**Roads and transport**

Spending on highways maintenance will rise to £32.4 million in 2026/27.

- £4m additional revenue funding for drainage, gully clearance, ditching, vegetation management and preventative works.

£15m additional capital from April for targeted investment in preventative maintenance, resurfacing, patching and serviceability.

- A further £10m matched-funding opportunity for parish & town councils is to be developed.

£0.5m to strengthen highways inspection, quality assurance, engagement & communications.

Additionally, over the next five years, £546.1 million in total will be invested in highways. This includes an extra £55 million over five years for preventative maintenance.

**Libraries**

The misleading stories of libraries closing in recent months are not true. Two separate things have been happening 1) consultation about the running of libraries and 2) setting the budget for April.

The County Council before last May had set a course of budget reduction for the library service beyond 2025-26. It is this that has been reversed with additional £425k to support delivery, in addition:

- An additional £225k to restore the book replacement fund to £0.5m
- £1m reserve for Libraries and Rural Hubs to implement the transformation and community-led improvement through the consultation where 22,000 people have responded to the consultation.

.....  
Chair  
Initials

## **Devon Budget Decisions**

---

### **Children and families**

The Children and families budget will see the largest increase in funding across the council. Spending will rise to £268 million in 2026/27, an increase of £10.1 million. This reflects growing pressure on children's social care, early help for families, and support for children who cannot live at home.

- £76.5 million will be invested over five years in children's homes, school expansions and specialist education provision.
- Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities remains a key priority. Over the next five years, £25.8 million will be spent on new and expanded specialist schools to create more places for children who need extra support.

### **Adult social care**

Adult social care continues to be the council's biggest area of spending. The budget for adult social care will rise to £395.9 million in 2026/27, an increase of £9.9 million, or 2.6 per cent. This helps cover rising costs, including higher wages for care staff.

- £51.6 million investment over five years to help adults live independently, including adaptations to homes and investment in care facilities and equipment.

**The budget was supported by all political parties with 52 voting in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions.**

"This is a budget built on fiscal responsibility."

**Councillor James Buczkowski, Devon County Council's Cabinet Member for Finance**

### **SEND**

The Government's announcement to fund much of the SEND deficit support is welcomed. This is not new money but to clear the tab that has accumulated over the years of national policy expansion, and without funding it. This tab deficit was being picked up through Devon County finance. This cash impact is significant as it strengthens the DCC balance sheet and materially improves our treasury position – higher cash balance improves liquidity, reduces exposure to short-term borrowing and allows more efficient capital financing decisions.

.....  
Chair  
Initials

