

THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Extraordinary Meeting of Thorverton Parish Council held at the Memorial Hall, Silver St, Thorverton on Wednesday 24th June 2026 at 7pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Andrew Foster (Chairman)
Cllr Stuart Crang
Cllr John Hodge
Cllr Karl Wilson

ABSENT

Cllr Andy Price (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Bryanna Uglow
Cllr Graham Sims

IN ATTENDANCE:

73 members of the public, D/Cllr Rhys Roberts,
4 representatives of Wain Homes
Jim Roberts (Clerk and RFO)

1 Chair Welcome

The Chairman opened the meeting with a warm welcome to all.

2 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Hodges & Wilson are members of Thorverton Community Land Trust. Cllr Wilson is a member of the Thorverton Community Action Group and was there in that capacity this evening. Cllr Foster is Chair of the Thorverton Community Land Trust

3 Apologies

Cllrs Price, Uglow and Sims were unable to attend the meeting due to prior commitments.

4 Presentation on Housing Plans for Thorverton from Wain Homes

The Chairman asked for questions to held to the end of the presentation and invited Oliver Patrick for Wain Homes (WH) to address the meeting.

Mr Patrick made the following points:

WH has created a website and circulated a leaflet to Thorverton properties.

The website had received feedback from residents.

WH had had pre-planning discussions with MDDC and the site would have 66 two-storey homes, all of which would be affordable.

After discussions the proposal had been reduced from 92 to 66 homes, had an increased green buffer and both emergency access & footpaths will be improved

Lynch Rd will be improved and the 30-mph sign moved.

The proposed site will have a children's play area.

The financial benefits via s106 or Community Infrastructure Levy cannot be specified at this point but are part of the application and therefore Thorverton organisations are invited to put forward ways that this money could be spent.

In response to comments made that are opposed to the development WH had carried out additional work including a Transport Assessment, Drainage Survey, Ecology Survey and a Formal Landscape Assessment.

WH recognise the many objections made but had received some supportive comments.

The Chairman gave the results of the Parish Council's survey:

153 responses – 89% strongly object or object to proposals, 85% support for PC spending money for expert assistance with objections.

5 Public Open Session for Questions & Answers

The public made the following points:

It's not a sustainable development – little or no public access to public transport, damaging pressure on local roads (esp Lynch Rd into Bullen St), the

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school cannot expand, the village sewage system is at its limit (as shown by the evidence of frequent discharges) climate change and increased adverse weather will only lead to more overflows. At a minimum WH will need to renew the sewer from the top of Bullen St.

WH comment: SWW is responsible for the sewers and have advised there is capacity in the system. MDDC will engage with SWW.

New homes need a pathway into the village. Will this go through Lynch close? What about after Lynch Close to the village which has no path.

WH comment: MDDC won't permit development without good access

Our water supply comes from Raddon Rd and runs through the field that will be built on.

WH comment: Existing water supplies will be lifted and shifted and will be maintained

There will be at least one car per property if not 2 and possibly 4. Where will Bullen St people park? What about the Ruffwell Site or other side of the village. The new houses won't be affordable.

WH comment: This site chosen because they have an agreement on it. MDDC's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) identified land available which MDDC needs as it currently doesn't meet the Government's Housing Target.

Affordable homes will include rentals at 20% less than market rent.

Why not expand the towns instead of small villages?

WH comment: Thorverton has access to services so this site is considered sustainable by MDDC.

There is no bus connectivity, and the last month or three months there has been poor service, and no service after 6pm Bullen St is a conservation area and will suffer from the road traffic. Encroaching on the edge of the village will change the nature of the village.

Listen very carefully to the people in the village. The 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) will be lost by taking the hedgerows out

WH comment: WH are taking these things seriously. There are bus services and analysis of roads and safety with MDDC and DCC Highways shows speeds far below 30mph and no evidence of collisions on Lynch Rd.

The site is really good farmland. There are 53 properties for sale within 1 mile, 174 within 3 miles. We already have the orchards, allotments and hedgerows. Why build at all?

WH comment: The short answer is that housing is needed nationally and locally. There are 2500 on the register at MDDC needing a home and MDDC is not currently meeting its housing target.

Your bus information misguided, the current service is a lottery, check the facts. Where do the funds that are offered go when MDDC is eliminated under Local Government Review (LGR)?

WH comment: The money does not disappear and Highways, Schools and NHS will request s106 funds to cover additional costs; this will be allocated. The MDDC holds the funds and the money will be held whatever the future Council structure.

The Thorverton Community Action Group speaker confirmed that their survey had raised a similar result to the Parish Council's, ie virtually universal objection. He thanked WH for the presentation and pointed out that many practical objections have been raised. There is no silent majority in support of this. He quoted CCP (WH's Communications Partner) from their Facebook page: 'What are motivating these NIMBYs? Pure hypocrisy and selfish behaviour.' Did you look at the village and the other plans? The village cannot cope with that amount of building? Did you do a housing survey?

WH comment: There are, no doubt, community impacts all planning applications, MDDC will assess the cumulative impacts on all services. WH commits to address these via the planning process. Housing surveys and Housing Needs Assessments are the responsibility of MDDC.

There will be more trees in the hedgerows along Lynch. Who is responsible for ongoing maintenance?

WH comment: A residents management company.

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In terms of consultation the WH website is poor. If you are consulting with a community make it legible; a poor show which shows disrespect. No excuse with technology nowadays. Assessment of traffic through the village and Lynch Rd is OK but the concern is the traffic through the middle of the village?

WH comment: CCP will review the website to address the issues. For housing developments the applicant has to prove that the peak traffic is safe. DCC Highways will review the data and critique.

What is the forecast profitability and the s106 funds?

WH comment: Building homes has to be financially viable. The s106 is up for negotiation but WH won't be drawn on profitability.

Flooding is an issue and the proposed development will have an unacceptable impact on safety and the traffic impact is severe. This number of houses means there is nowhere to put any more pavements. The primary school is already full, so children will need to be driven to schools outside Thorverton.

WH comment: All very valid concerns that will be comprehensively debated. Pre-application discussions noted the limited highways and further work is required when the planning application is provided. Planning applications must improve any flooding problems. WH's survey shows 59% improvement in surface water drainage.

Have you walked up and down through the village? If so, you will know that you have to walk on the road. Increased traffic puts pedestrians, especially children at risk.

WH comment: WH agree and developments can't go ahead unless they are safe, deliverable and achievable.

The MDDC HELAA Appdx 3a 206 .pdf is worth looking at. It doesn't make any mention of local need for housing in Thorverton. MDDC hasn't assessed Thorverton specifically for need. Traffic density is responsible for heart attacks and strokes in the people suffering the effects of traffic.

WH comment: HELAA is a very early stage of the Local Plan and begins with a Call for Sites from landowners. This site was put forward to meet the need, and the need exists now. Councils will continue to work with developers to provide homes. The Planning Application will also take into account an air quality assessment. There will be disruption from the building process, but that is temporary.

A local landowner close to proposed site asked about the eco-biodiversity surveys and pointed out that his site is protected land (English Heritage). Please walk up the road after this meeting; imagine 30 cars at 10 minutes, schoolchildren, buses, bin lorries. Have a look at the top of Bullen St as that will be the issue. He asked for a show of hands against the development which led to almost everyone in the meeting raising their hands.

What is the area of land in the middle of the site, future development?

WH comment: This area is retained in private ownership and not part of the development. There is no pamphlet on the boundary of the plot. What's going to happen in the rectangle? Also, is there enough parking for cars?

WH comment: The development will comply with DCC Parking Strategy for the spaces/house depending on the size of the house.

Thank you for the positives of this development. In recent years the village has lost a pub, a chapel, 4 shops, 2 bakers and a garage. Numerous developments since but these have not returned. This development will be almost a 20% increase in the size of the village.

WH comment: Thorverton is a beautiful part of the world and committed to engaging with residents with a landscape driven plan. If everyone engaged with pre-application discussions and try to work together to create something good for all.

Bullen St; you can't make it wider, can't put a footpath in. Your Highways consultant must have driven through when it was empty. Understand that the Government needs to build but this feels like too many in one village. The village that doesn't kick off will get a development. You can't change Bullen St so you need a plan. WH is going to rely on desk surveys and reports and the

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village has to report the defects in these reports. The tilted balance is a presumption in favour of development where housing targets are not met. Objectors have to show that impacts are significant and demonstrably worse to stand a chance of stopping applications. There will be District or even a General Election in April next year. What will happen next in light of all these concerns?

WH comment: The Planning Application is due very soon. There is a public consultation open online together with a statement of community involvement . A Road Safety audit (not a desk-based survey) has assessed the community impact across all the developments and happy to take comments.

Are you aware of a conservation area?

WH comment: Yes

This application is opportunistic and the MDDC Planners will be very pleased as they need to build.

WH comment: Planning is never easy. DCC and MDDC will be grilling the application and if not up to grade they won't support it.

There isn't anything that you could say that would change what the landowner and developer can do, the only people who benefit will be the landowner and Wain Homes. Cannot change the centre infrastructure of the village. The proposal doesn't actually touch the impact beyond the immediate development itself. Catchment of the school is the hamlets and farms around, these plans risk pushing them away. Nothing we can do or say that can change you going to planning, but it doesn't change what you're going to do from this moment forward. The plans don't actually show the safety and congestion in real life. They do show immediate access in and out of the site but not beyond. This is a statement not a question.

D/Cllr Rhys Roberts made the following observations:

Really important that trust will only be maintained with matters of fact.

MDDC does not attach any strategic importance to this site for Affordable Housing.

MDDC is going through LGR but changes won't take place within the next 6 months.

Both developments are outside the village boundary and only arise because of the political situation at the national level. The Government is driving the Housing Targets.

Mid-Devon needs an additional 6,000 applications over the course of the Government.

Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton have 3000, the villages and hamlets will need to provide the other 3000. Changes to Planning imposed later this year will mean D/Cllr Roberts will lose the right to call in contentious applications to be scrutinised by the Planning Committee. He advised the WH attendees (as opposed to their JCCP spokesman) that they should have engaged with this meeting more.

The Chairman closed the meeting by saying thank you to all and that the message has been clear; the Parish Council is guided to oppose the development and will be doing so.

6 Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 7:30pm on Tuesday 14th July 2026.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:32pm

Signed Date
Cllr Andrew Foster, Chairman