

**MINUTES of the THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018**  
**at 7.30pm in the Thorverton Memorial Hall**

**Present:** Cllr N Bright (Chairman), Cllr D Waldron, Cllr N Lane, Cllr R Turner, Cllr S Crang (Vice Chairman), Cllr G Sims, Cllr J Spivey, Cllr H Lawson and Cllr J Hodge.

**In Attendance:** the Clerk, Cllr P Heal (MDDC Chairman), D/Cllr Deed and 3 members of the public.

Standing Orders suspended.

**Public Open Session**

Cllr Peter Heal, Chairman of MDDC, updated all present on the following matters:

- The MDDC Local Plan, which includes the proposed M5 J27 development, is on track for adoption.
- The MDDC Budget – currently showing a shortfall of £661,000 - is being worked on. The shortfall is due to decreasing Government funding and a shortage of local planning applications being submitted. Planning fees are down £300,000 currently and whilst reserves could make up this shortfall this would be a last resort. Overheads continue to be reduced by amalgamating, for example, waste services and the Parks Department. Recycling rates continue to be good which helps with income.
- The Housing Department is working on the impact of Universal Credit and it is positive to see that rent arrears across the District are at a very low level. Housing stock is close to 3100 let units with Right to Buy at around only 20 per year. New houses continue to be built, and to a high standard, for rental.

Cllr Lane asked about how the proposed development at J27 of the M5 could impact on Tiverton town. Cllr Heal reported that, based on evidence, he is confident that there will be little negative impact although there could be up to a 5% drop in turnover which can be balanced out by the control of retail development at J27.

Cllr Lane questioned the shortfall in planning fees as the fees are meant to cover the administration of the applications. Cllr Heal confirmed this and advised of a shortfall in Planning Officers meaning that employees are being kept in place in anticipation of a rise in application numbers. Planning regulations come with strict timescales and so people need to be in place and on hand. Recruitment costs are high and have impacted on the budget.

Cllr Spivey enquired as to what 'reserves' are in place and the response was approximately £2,000,000. which would only be called upon as a last resort as these funds are held to cover major problems.

Two members of the public wished to speak:

1) A query was raised regarding the Court Barton S106 funding and why it is not being used to keep the Sheep Dip in order, this being a site of significance which should remain in the forefront of priorities as agreed by previous Parish Councils. The resident asked for the site to be tidied up and kept in a good safe state of repair for the public to use and enjoy and that S106 funding be used for this.

2) Several queries were raised by a resident concerning Parish Council finances who noted that in years of austerity the Parish Council's annual expenditure, and Precept demands, had risen and that the figures appeared to be out of kilter with some neighbouring Parish Councils. He suggested a lack of Governance and that the accumulation of public funds was criminally negligent. Questions were put to the Parish Council with a written reply requested. The resident then called for the Parish Council to cease spending both time and money on the new Cemetery and Dark Lane wall projects as he felt that neither were in the public interest.

**External Reports:**

i) **D/Cllr Deed** reported A) the MDDC Planning Officer situation is complex and that, for example, one Officer is still working on a local case submitted in 2017 which has still not been determined. B) The Raddon Hills Group had met at the Memorial Hall recently - Cllr Spivey will report to Council on this. C) Crediton Town Council Offices have been sold to a commercial purchaser and not to the Town Council. D) MDDC is giving focus to the difficult situation of providing sufficient social housing and is continuing to build stock and to keep on top of loan repayments.

ii) **C/Cllr Squires** – not present and no report.

iii) **The Police** – 2 crimes of a violent and sexual nature/common assault were reported in August and both are still under investigation.

**Representative Reports:**

i) **TMGT** – a large Oak tree situated on Church Commissioners land had collapsed on the North side of the Green demolishing the Nissan hut and falling across the fence into the Green. The matter was being addressed.

ii) **Memorial Hall** – Christmas tree lighting, The Holly Ball, Christmas Bingo and the DAAT event are all coming up.

iii) **the School** – no developments to report. iv) **Focus** – the 2019 Calendar is now available to purchase locally at £5. The Focus magazine had won 8<sup>th</sup> place, out of 400 entries, in a recent 'Parish Magazine' competition.

v) **October Saturday Market** - feedback included a call for the 30mph signs to be pushed further out towards Fursdon/Cadbury which had been looked into but due to lack of evidence could not be proceeded with. A request for blocked drains at Ford Meadow and along the Fursdon Road to be dealt with which the Clerk would report. It had also been mentioned that DCC had accepted responsibility for ownership of the Dark Lane wall many years ago but it was confirmed that this was no longer the case and that ownership could not now be confirmed. Cllr Lawson volunteered to cover the December market. There was no November market due to the Craft Fayre.

Standing Orders resumed.

**18/106 Apologies** for absence: Cllr Reygate, holiday.

**18/107 Declarations** of Interest were received from Cllr Bright regarding grant funding for the Church due to being a member of the PCC. Cllr Lane regarding allotments due to his wife being a tenant. Cllr Waldron regarding the Defibrillator due to his partners involvement.

**18/108 Confirmation of Minutes** of the meeting of Tuesday 09<sup>th</sup> October 2018: it was RESOLVED to sign the Minutes as a correct record of the meeting (Cllrs Turner and Crang).

It was agreed to bring forward to this point the matter of Communications.

**18/109 Communications:**

a) **Clearing of the brook at Stonebridge** – an e-mail had been received in this regard and it was confirmed that no grant funding was now available from MDDC for such work and that, in the past, the parish council had occasionally paid for stream dredging but that this may not now be the correct route. Cllr Crang proposed the Clerk contact the Environment Agency to request action, due to the potential flood risk, seconded by Cllr Waldron and RESOLVED.

b) **Dark Lane** – e-mails had been received regarding damage to property along Dark Lane. The Chairman reminded Council that the agreement with DCC Highways to close the Lane, free of charge, was temporary and only until the unsafe wall had been taken down. The Lane is currently open and vehicles have damaged property by getting stuck. Cllr Lawson proposed that a letter be sent to DCC Highways asking for the current signage to be improved and for the current bollards, at 8 foot apart, to be replaced by bollards at 6'6" apart and at both ends of the Lane. It was added that a height restriction bar should also be requested. Seconded by Cllr Waldron and RESOLVED.

c) **Devon Communities Together – Invitation to the Court Barton Close Housing Award.** The Clerk would register those Cllrs wanting to attend.

d) **Tiverton Housing Summary.** An e-mail had been received asking the Council to consider this video. Noted.

e) **Leat near Hazel Cottage, Raddon.** An e-mail had been received asking for support in getting this leat cleared. It was RESOLVED that the Environment Agency be asked to look at the matter (Cllrs Crang and Waldron).

f) **Traffic Notice – Chapel Cross.** Noted.

**18/110 Grant Funding:**

a) **Communities Together Grant Funding** - the Devon Air Ambulance Trust Night Landing Site. No update.

b) **Communities Together Grant Funding** - letter of support for Shobrooke Parish Council. It was RESOLVED to send a letter of support regarding the intended purchase of a new grit bin for Raddon (Cllrs Bright and Spivey).

c) **Citizens Advice** - request for funding. After noting the number of local people helped by the organisation in the past year it was proposed by Cllr Turner that £200 be granted. This was seconded by Cllr Spivey and RESOLVED.

d) **Thorverton Parish Church** - grounds maintenance. It was RESOLVED to grant the requested £750 to the Church again this year (Cllrs Waldron and Lawson). Cllr Bright declared an interest.

**18/111 Devon Air Ambulance Trust:** following discussion regarding the use of MAT Electrics for the required electrical work, and a review of the Councils Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, it was RESOLVED that MAT Electrics be used for the Thorverton project (Cllrs Crang and Waldron). On the matter of fund raising Cllr Hodge reported that local band Stay Lucky would play for free in February/March 2019 and that the Memorial Hall would forgo the hall hire fee and give profits to the fund. It was agreed that the Clerk would send thanks to the Memorial Hall in anticipation of the event.

**18/112 Development:**

a) **New Cemetery** – Cllr Bright feedback from the Working Group and confirmed that John Valentin, AC Archaeology, was preparing the draft HLF funding application for Council review. A draft letter, to be sent to local organisations asking for support, had been circulated and it was RESOLVED to accept and send out this letter after some minor amendments suggested by Cllr Waldron (Cllrs Waldron and Crang). The list of suggested recipients was read out and agreed (Cllrs Bright and Lawson). It was proposed by Cllr Crang that the Working Group give consideration as to what funding the Council should put forward and this was seconded by Cllr Spivey and RESOLVED. The creation of leaflets for local circulation, to attract helpers, was proposed and it was RESOLVED that the Working Group should look into

this (Cllrs Bright and Waldron). It was noted that HLF may require the Church Commissioners to enter into a Licence at some stage regarding access to the new Cemetery site.

**b) Court Barton Amended Deed of Variation and new Management Company** – no update had been received regarding the Deed of Variation. It was noted that Barton Meadows Management Company is now in place and is being overseen by Blenheim Estates of Paignton. The Clerk had made enquiries, as previously agreed, regarding the S106 funding and the possible purchase of a strip of land alongside the attenuation pond to provide a public footpath from Silver Street to the Millennium Field.

#### **18/113 S106 Court Barton funding:**

**a) Land along Silver Street** – Cllr Crang had nothing further to report.

**b) Sheep Dip** – Cllr Turner and the Handyman had assessed the sites maintenance requirements and reported that the boundary wall would need repointing, new fencing and a general tidy up was required, metal work would need checking for safety, the gate and both benches required attention, a new information board would be a benefit. It was estimated that this work would cost in the region of £4,500. After discussion, and taking into account the residents comments from earlier in the meeting, it was RESOLVED that a token offer to purchase the site should be submitted to the Church Commissioners to open negotiations (Cllrs Bright and Turner). Council was reminded that it would have to pay both lots of legal fees regarding any purchase. Cllr Spivey suggested a purchase would be a liability needing ongoing annual maintenance and Cllr Lawson responded in that annual maintenance, of approximately £200, would be justified due to the site being important. Cllr Waldron proposed that a local land agent be asked for advice and Cllr Lawson volunteered to action this which was RESOLVED (Cllrs Waldron and Lawson). Cllr Crang would update the resident who spoke during the Open Session.

**c) Public feedback - S106 spending.** Feedback from the May 2018 Public Meeting was reviewed and it was confirmed that the purchase of the Sheep Dip site had been suggested by many residents. Cllr Sims requested that a thatched shelter, for example, sited on Leigh Gardens be considered and it was agreed to put this on the next agenda.

#### **18/114 Recreation Ground:**

**a) Body Twister** – Wicksteed had confirmed that it would replace the faulty equipment by November end.

**b) New Strimmer** – it was RESOLVED that a new strimmer be purchased, up to £400 plus VAT, and that funds for this should be vired from the earmarked 'trailer funds' as this item was no longer needed (Cllrs Turner and Crang).

**c) Annual Play/Gym Equipment Inspection** – it was reported that the annual inspection had been carried out by RoSPA, through MDDC, without notification and so it was RESOLVED in retrospect that the inspection report be accepted (Cllrs Bright and Crang). Cllr Sims reported that items for consideration were the litter bin not being regularly emptied - Cllr Heal, MDDC, agreed to take this forward – and that the goal posts had been included but belonged to the Football Club. Several posts of the wooden play equipment are nearing 12 years old and are showing signs of rot and would need attention in the next year or two. A plastic cap was missing from the Wicksteed Hand Wheel and the Clerk would ask for a replacement. It was noted that invoices for this and the past two years inspections had again been requested from MDDC by the Clerk.

**d) New Ride-on-Mower** – Cllr Sims had spoken with the Football Club regarding possible grant funding towards a new mower and feedback on this is pending.

**e) Annual Charity Commission Return** – it was noted that this had been completed by the Clerk.

**18/115 Charles Arnold Baker – Local Council Administration:** it was RESOLVED that the new version be purchased while available at a discount price (Cllrs Bright and Crang).

**18/116 Allotments:** it was noted that all 28 plots are currently let and that 2 residents are on the waiting list. Annual renewal is due on 31<sup>st</sup> December and the current rent is £10 per annum, per plot, with a £25 refundable deposit payable. £180 is paid annually to Strutt and Parker regarding the renting of the land. It was RESOLVED to keep the fees unchanged for the coming year (Cllrs Crang and Turner). Cllr Lane declared an interest.

**18/117 Defibrillator:** it was RESOLVED to refund the cost of new batteries at £42.00 (Cllrs Turner and Crang). Cllr Waldron declared an interest.

#### **18/118 Finance:**

- 1) The bank balance as at 01/11/2018 was noted as being £54,551.17
- 2) The half year budget document was reviewed and it was noted that spending is on track.
- 3) It was RESOLVED to make the following payments (Cllrs Turner and Spivey):

November 2018	Clerk salary	November basic pay gross	£335.00	
		Less tax due	£ 6.60	
		Net payment =	£328.40	£328.40
	HMRC	Tax due Clerk		£ 6.60
	Clerk expenses	Garden waste bin renewal £49.00 (Jubilee Green), paper, ink		£ 67.00 (VAT n/a)
	Thorverton WI	Meeting room charge May-Oct 2018		£100.00 (VAT n/a)
	M Dunlop	Reimbursement for Defib batteries		£ 42.00 (VAT n/a)

4) Banked Receipts for October were noted as being: half year Precept credit £9,835.13 and anonymous DAAT donation £100.00

**18/119 South West Water and Openreach – Installation of Event Date Monitoring** (Quarry Car Park): Openreach had confirmed a non-negotiable one off Wayleave payment of £25 regarding the cable to be input from the lamp post beside the Post Office to the new monitoring box. No funding had yet been offered by SWW which would be chased.

**18/120 Exe Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**: postponed due to a Government review.

**18/121 Communications Policy**: Cllr Lane suggested that he and the Clerk consider refining the policy adopted at the November meeting following feedback from DALC. It was RESOLVED that a Working Group be set up, involving Cllrs Lane and Crang and the Clerk, and that recommendations be presented to Council at a future meeting (Cllrs Lane and Waldron).

**18/122 A.Planning Applications:**

**i) 18/01589/HOUSE** erection of two storey side extension, single storey side and rear extensions and front porch after demolition of existing garage and conservatory at Laburnum Cottage, Bullen Street, Thorverton. After consideration it was RESOLVED to **object** to this application and to submit the comment ‘the Parish Council is concerned about the loss of the stone wall at the Bullen Street entrance and also the widening of the driveway in a Conservation Area. It has, however, no comment to make regarding the extensions’. (Cllrs Lawson and Waldron).

**ii) 18/01635/FULL** re-instatement of part of existing stone boundary wall and engineering works at the Quarry Car Park, Dark Lane, Thorverton. It was RESOLVED not to comment on this application due to the Parish Council being the applicant (Cllrs Crang and Turner).

**iii) 18/01654/HOUSE and LBC** erection of two storey side and rear extension after demolition of existing two storey side extension at Berrysbridge House, Thorverton. It was RESOLVED to submit ‘no comment’ regarding this application (Cllrs Crang and Turner).

**B.Planning Decisions noted:**

**i) 18/01291/FULL** erection of replacement bungalow, garage and workshop, following demolition of existing bungalow at Berrysbridge Lodge, Thorverton. Permission granted.

**ii) 18/01510/LBC** replacement of UPVC double glazed window frames and supports to kitchen and conservatory with timber at Raddon Cottage, Thorverton. Permission granted.

**iii) EDDC 18/1661/FUL** change of use of 2 barns to class B1 at Fortescue Farm, Netherexe. Permission granted.

**18/123 Christmas tree and Christmas cards**: Cllr Waldron reported that both trees would be collected on 27<sup>th</sup> November, and erected and decorated on the 28<sup>th</sup> November, in time for the Lighting Ceremony on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December. It was RESOLVED to send Christmas Cards to Parish Council volunteers (Cllrs Bright and Spivey).

**18/124 Welcome Pack**: following a review of the draft Welcome Letter it was RESOLVED that Cllrs Spivey and Lane would amend the letter for presentation to Council at a future meeting (Cllrs Spivey and Bright).

**18/125 Highways:**

**a) Lamp post cobble work** – it had been confirmed that MDDC is following up the need to replace the unacceptable cobble work around the bases of the new lamp posts and that the next stage is for the Company involved to be ‘ticketed’ with a defect notice by MDDC. The Clerk was asked to follow up this matter.

**b) Hulk Lane dedication of Public Bridleway** – a response had been received from DCC which did not address the Parish Councils enquiries. Cllr Crang suggested that a letter be sent enquiring as to which section of the Highways Act allows the actions that have taken place to actually take place and that the Parish Council does not accept that the Highway has been ‘lost’. Cllr Lawson reported that Hulk Lane would have remained inaccessible if the work had not

been completed. After further discussion Cllr Crang proposed that a letter be sent to DCC stating that 'the Parish Council has not been consulted regarding the stopping up of the Highway and it does not believe that DCC has the power to stop up a Highway by stating that it has been 'lost'. Could DCC enlighten the Parish Council by quoting the legislation to which this relates'. This was seconded by Cllr Spivey and RESOLVED (7 for, 2 against).

**c) School Lane junction** – Cllr Lawson had received requests from residents for a mirror to be put up at the School Lane/Bullen Street junction due to safety issues. She had since learnt that DCC Highways is not in favour of mirrors and so it was RESOLVED that the Clerk write to DCC Highways asked for suggestions as to how the safety of the junction could be improved due to concerns from several residents (Cllrs Lane and Lawson, 8 for and 1 against).

**d) Raddon sign post** – a response was pending from DCC Highways regarding a quote for an official sign.

**18/126 PART 2:** it was RESOLVED that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items as they involve the likely disclosure of sensitive and confidential information (Cllrs Bright and Turner).

1) **Dark Lane wall repairs:** after consideration it was RESOLVED that the MDDC Conservation Officer be contacted to discuss options for the way forward regarding the re-building of the wall and that the Working Group would take this forward (Cllrs Crang and Waldron).

2) **Employee Annual Reviews:** the annual employment reviews for both the Clerk and Handyman had been completed. It was RESOLVED that the Clerks hours be increased from 28 per month to 30 per month, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018, to help with overtime issues due to an increased work load (Cllrs Lawson and Waldron). It was RESOLVED to pay the Clerk 10 hours overtime which had built up over the past 3 months (Cllrs Lawson and Waldron).

**18/127 Business at the Chairman's discretion:**

1) Cllr Lane suggested a review of the Parish Council stand at the Saturday Market – agreed next agenda.

2) Cllr Lane requested that Assets of Community Value be reviewed - agreed next agenda.

3) Cllr Sims requested that the Parish Council considers paying the hall hire fees and being part of the 12 month review meeting for Speedwatch. It is hoped that a meeting, involving the public, will take place in the New Year. Agreed next agenda.

4) Cllr Spivey enquired about the broken fence outside the Memorial Hall which had been reported but not mended.

5) Cllr Bright suggested that as the Royal British Legion gifted the Parish Councils Remembrance Day Wreath it may wish to consider a donation. Agreed next agenda.

**18/128 The next Parish Council meeting will take place on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the Thorverton Memorial Hall and all are welcome to attend.**

The meeting closed at 22.26

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