

Minutes of the Thorverton Annual Parish Meeting, Wednesday 17th April 2019, 7.30pm, at the Thorverton Memorial Hall

Present: Approximately 24 members of the public.

Minutes of the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting: It was resolved to sign the draft Minutes as a correct record of the meeting. Apologies: None. Matters arising from the Minutes: None.

Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Nick Bright, reported on the past year:

The current Parish Council has full membership and consists of 10 Councillors namely myself as Chair, Cllr Stuart Crang as Vice Chair and then Cllrs Hilary Lawson, Graham Sims, Neville Lane, Robert Turner, David Reygate, David Waldron, John Hodge and John Spivey. The PC held 11 meetings this year. We are ably assisted by our qualified clerk Alison Marshall who is an employee of the Council and carries out a wide range of duties some of which (but not exclusively) are dealing with the legal aspects of the Council, preparing meeting agendas, taking minutes of the PC meetings and dealing with any correspondence, preparing the years budgets for discussion by the Council. The clerk is also very proactive in seeking sources of outside grants and funding to enable the Council to carry out capital expenditure without having to fully utilise the money obtained from the precept.

The council also employs a handyman, Colin Marshall, who is responsible for dealing with maintenance issues such as grass cutting, weed eradication and minor potholes, but can be tasked with any job of maintenance around parish. Since Colin's employment the village has benefited from his involvement and people have remarked at how neat and well maintained the village has been. Because of his training we are able to hire Colin out to other Parish Councils who do not have a qualified handyman and we make a profit on the arrangement.

There is always other ongoing work to be done throughout the village and the Parish Council organised a village tidy up day in July which attracted a lot of people to help in such things as weed clearing, sign cleaning, litter picking and general tidying and polishing.

The Parish Council agrees annual budgets each year and due to lower than anticipated spending last year there is a surplus so it was agreed to reduce the precept this year. This surplus does not include the moneys ring-fenced or earmarked for specific items such as the proposed new Cemetery, defibrillator and Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) night landing site. Within the budget we set aside a sum in order to be able to give grants to local organisations which benefit people in the parish. This past year we have given to the Tiverton and District community Transport Association (Ring and Ride), Citizens Advice Bureau, Thorverton Parish Church for helping to maintain the Churchyard grass, Royal British Legion for last year's commemorations and as a donation for the Remembrance Day Wreath that the Parish Council laid.

Cllr Sims is our Snow Warden. He has been making sure that the grit bins are full in readiness for anything the cold weather can throw at us. Luckily enough his services have not been required this year as much as they were last year.

Regarding the proposed new cemetery on Dark Lane the Parish Council has been working towards an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a grant towards the full archaeological dig that is necessary because of the Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Age finds that were uncovered during an initial investigation. We have been working with a specialist archaeological company who have been giving expert advice and the application to HLF has gone in. The cost of the dig with community involvement is

£29,250, however the Parish Council has been able to obtain donations and grants from other organisations for £6,150 which means that the actual grant applied for is £23,100.

We have been advertising for volunteers to help with the dig and so far we have 60 local people signed up. When the grant from HLF is forthcoming there will be further communications to those volunteers as to how they can help. This is an opportunity for us to learn about the distant past of the village and one important thing is that the school will also be involved in the learning of the history of Thorverton.

The rebuilding of the wall along Dark Lane, next to the car park, is still under discussion. Back in 2017 we inspected the wall and contacted Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) and Devon County Council (DCC) for their comments on its stability. They advised that it was unstable, due to ground subsidence, and to ensure that it did not cause an accident or injury part was taken down. We were advised by the MDDC Planning that the wall should be rebuilt as original and we obtained advice from a structural engineer who gave us a specification. We sent out for quotations but the Parish Council was not happy with the costs involved which would need to be paid for by public money. We have had further on site discussions with the MDDC Conservation Planning Officer and following this an alternative proposal has been suggested. The Parish Council is currently looking at the possible cost.

The Parish Council installed a new mower store on the Recreation Ground to house the ride on mower which is used to cut the grass and football field regularly by members of the Thorverton Football Club. This is an agreement which works well and we thank them for that. The mower is getting old and costing money every time it is serviced therefore the Parish Council is looking to purchase a new one. We have just obtained a grant to go towards this purchase.

Due to the new development at Court Barton the Parish council has been allocated with what is called Section 106 money which has to be spent on the provision for the improvement of public open space and recreational facilities. We will have approximately £17,000 in total by the end of this year which the Parish Council agreed should be spent on a substantial project because of the amount of money involved.

Following suggestions from members of the public the Parish Council is looking at various ways in which the money can be spent for the improvement of public open space. To facilitate some suggestions we looked into purchasing a small parcel of land opposite Court Barton Close to have a recreation area at the other end of the Village. However the owners, the Church Commissioners, were not willing to sell. The Parish Council is still actively looking at other items on the list of suggestions which were put forward by the public two of which are the purchase of the sheep dip at a very nominal sum and looking at forming a footpath link to join silver Street, opposite Court Barton close, with the Millennium Green to give a circular walk. Another area which has been noted as requiring improvement is the land known as Barliabins above the quarry car park. Any future section 106 money from other developments (not including Court Barton Close and Broadlands) within the parish will be put towards this.

Following a suggestion from a resident the Parish Council has been pursuing the formation of a night landing site for the Devon Air Ambulance. A meeting was held with the Devon Air Ambulance Trust and it was suggested by them that the best place for this was on the recreation ground. The requirements were for a lighting column to be erected on the Rec so that the helicopter could see to land and that any medicinal work could be carried out, as required, prior to transportation. A public meeting was held at 35 people attended. The response in favour of the night landing site was 100 % positive so the project was taken forward. The WI was happy for the electricity to be taken from their hut. The PC had to raise £3,227

towards the cost and a grant was received from MDDC Communities Together Fund. Further monies were received from donations and the band who played at the December ball. There was also another dance in March, at the Memorial Hall, with proceeds going into the fund. The dance was a great social event with all the organisations involved giving their time and services free. The Parish Council is grateful for this and we thank all those who have donated in whatever way. We have exceeded the amount required and any excess this will be earmarked for the DAAT night landing site to cover any further expenses and maintenance. Following a recent meeting on site with DAAT it is planned that the installation of the light and electrics will be carried out on 26th April 2019 and the whole should be up and running by the end of April.

The Recreation Ground is the Parish Councils largest asset which is well used by the football club, local villagers, and children. It is kept mown by the football club using the Councils mower and Colin, our Handyman, keeps the edges and around the play equipment strimmed. Cllr Sims carries out regular visual inspections of the equipment and there is an annual RoSPA inspection carried out by a certified body. There have been minor repairs to some of the old play equipment carried out by Graham and helpers for which we are grateful. However these are showing signs of their age and will not last forever. The Parish Council is putting away a sum of money each year as a sinking fund as we realise that equipment is very expensive and grant giving bodies like to see that this sort of thing is taken into account.

The Parish Council has been looking into giving all new residents of the village a Welcome Pack which introduces them to the facilities in the village. This has been resolved and a letter of introduction has been agreed which will be posted through new residents doors together with a copy of focus, previous Minutes of the parish Council meetings, and contact details of the Councillors.

Following the installation of the Defibrillator there was a CPR training day held. There will be another one at the Exeter Inn on 9th May at 7.00pm.

In May of this year there will be a new Parish Council with some existing and some new members and I would like to wish them well in their deliberations.

I would like to express my thanks to all those that have served on the Parish Council for the last 4 years and to all of the parishioners who have helped with the things that the Parish Council has put forward.

Matters arising from the Chairman's report:

Question – Can you update us regarding the proposed Broadlands Development?

Response - Outline planning has been approved, nothing has been done regarding a detailed planning application as yet. Owners of the land, the Church Commissioners, have found a sticking point with the overhead electric cables which need to be put underground. They are looking at putting the cables underground from the nearest pole behind Broadlands, through the allotment ground, to a pole on the south boundary so as to do away with the overhead cables.

Question – Can you update us on the Hulk Lane bridleway?

Response – The PC is trying to arrange a meeting with Devon County Council – it is expected that this will take place in May – in order to work out the way forward regarding the public bridleway.

Question - Are the current Parish Councillors here this evening, and who are they?

Response - Of the current Parish Councillors some are here this evening but on 2nd May there will be a local election for a new Parish Council, and also for a District Councillor. We know that 11 people have applied

to be on the new Parish Council, some new to the role and some existing Councillors, and as there are only 10 spaces there will be a local election.

Other questions raised by those present:

1. Parking in the village, Jericho Street and the Jubilee Green in particular. There are now many more cars parking on the pavements, which is illegal and difficult to Police, what is the right thing to do to take this forward?

The Parish Council, a while ago, tried a leaflet drop to those residents who were parking cars on pavements but this act was thrown back at the Parish Council by way of complaints. The Parish Council then resolved not to get involved with village parking until further notice.

2. The Memorial Hall car park could be used for parking – local residents could have a permit to park there. Could the Memorial Hall Committee think about this?

Colin Marshall – as Vice Chair to the Memorial Hall Colin agreed to bring this up at the next Committee meeting and update the residents accordingly.

3. Can photos of the candidates standing for the parish council election be published in Focus so that residents can see who they might be voting for?

D/Cllr Deed – Focus has always been non-political. Any candidate would need to have a word with the Editor.

Jan Wills – I am happy to put details of local candidates in the village shop.

It was noted that as postal voting had already started some members of the public would have voted without having this information to hand. It was concluded that canvassing is a personal matter for individual candidates to take forward should they so wish.

4. Who is the MDDC Conservation Officer assigned to the village?

The position is currently being advertised.

5. Has the Conservation Officer been called in regarding the parking on the cobbles around the village?

Parking on the cobbles is a DCC Highways or Police matter. The letter of complaint received by the Parish Council in this connection will be passed to the Police now that permission has been gained from the writer to do so.

6. If the Parish Council purchases the Sheep Dip what will it be used for?

It is an historic site which will be tidied up and made a place for the community to sit and relax in.

7. Has any historic contamination been found at the Sheep Dip? Does the Parish Council know what it is inheriting?

No tests have been carried out, to date, as far as known.

8. I would like to thank the Chairman and all the other Parish Councillors, and the Clerk, for all the hard work put in for the benefit of the community over the past four years.
Round of applause.

As there were no other matters raised the meeting closed at 20.00

Signed

DRAFT