

**MINUTES of the THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on TUESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2020,  
at Thorverton Memorial Hall, 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllrs S Crang, R Deed, R Flatt, A Foster, J Hodge, N Lane, G Sims, D Waldron and K Wells.

**In attendance:** Mrs A Marshall (Clerk) and 1 member of the public.

Standing Orders suspended.

**Public Open Session:** The member of the public present did not wish to speak.

**External Reports:**

i) **C/Cllr Squires** had submitted reports on climate change and fly tipping which were noted.

ii) **D/Cllr Deed** reported that the Council Tax for the new tax year had been set and that at Band D a rise of 2.46% or £5, whichever is the higher, would be seen. It was noted that only 10% of Council Tax revenue from residents would go to Mid Devon District Council.

iii) **Police statistics** – one crime had been reported in January, under the heading of ‘criminal damage and arson’, which was now closed due to no suspect having been identified.

Standing Orders resumed.

**19/208 Declarations of interest relating to items on this meeting agenda:** None.

**19/209 Apologies for absence:** C/Cllr Squires, another meeting.

**19/210 Confirmation of Minutes:** The draft Minutes of February 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 were considered and a query was raised concerning the resolution made in point 19/194. As it was unclear from those who had attended the meeting as to the correct wording of the resolution it was RESOLVED to amend the wording as follows ‘the Parish Council should express an interest in purchasing the land then await the outcome of the finance investigation by the Clerk prior to agreeing what offer to put forward’. Following the amendment it was RESOLVED to sign the Minutes as a correct record. The Clerk would withdraw the offer of £20,000 to purchase the field. The Chairman suggested that resolutions should be read back to Council in future to ensure accuracy.

**19/211 Co-option of a new Parish Councillor:** One completed application form had been received and it was RESOLVED to co-opt Mr Sam Fice onto the Parish Council. The Clerk would make contact with Mr Fice, who had given his apologies due to a family illness, in order that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office could be completed prior to the next meeting.

**19/212 Defibrillator:** Cllr Waldron reported that the Women’s Institute had agreed to site a new Defibrillator on the external wall of the WI Hut. It was confirmed that the gate leading to the hut would be left unlocked once the machine had been installed and that a new gate latch, and a new light to go above the machine, would be required. Cllr Crang proposed that the new machine be purchased and installed at the WI Hut and that existing Defibrillator funds be used for this, which was RESOLVED. Cllr Waldron would contact C/Cllr Squires regarding funding and proposed that the Parish Council organises a fund raising event for purchase of the new machine, which was RESOLVED. The fund raising event would be discussed at a future meeting.

**19/213 Sheep Dip purchase:** The report detailing the contamination testing results had been circulated and summarised by Cllr Flatt. The results indicated arsenic levels seven times higher than would be considered safe for public open space and also high residual pesticide levels. Due to this the recommendation from the Consultants was that the public should be kept away from the soil, and the site, although the risks were low should there be no dermal contact with the soil. The concrete had not been tested. Due to the public safety issues highlighted, the nearby water course and recourse for members of the public having already entered the site, it was suggested that the public should be advised of the results, as soon as possible, and that the information should be shared with the current owners of the site. It was further suggested that unless the current owners, being the Church Commissioners, were willing to fund the decontamination of the site the Parish Council should not proceed with the purchase. On enquiring as to why the site had been considered for purchase in the first place Cllr Deed was advised

that the decision had been made further to several requests from residents. Cllr Flatt proposed that further to the results of the contamination testing due diligence be undertaken by the Parish Council and the report be shared with the Church Commissioners, the Environment Agency and Mid Devon District Council (MDDC). He further proposed that a notice be should be displayed on the parish notice board, and on the website, advising of the sites potential health hazards with a recommendation that the area be avoided. This was RESOLVED. Cllr Crang proposed that the report should be available to anyone wishing to view it, which was RESOLVED. Cllr Deed would enquire of MDDC as to the amount of Section 106 funding needing to be returned. It was RESOLVED that the offer to purchase the Sheep Dip site from the Church Commissioners be withdrawn, which the Clerk would action.

**19/214 Allotments:**

- i) Purchase of the allotment field** – it had been RESOLVED earlier in the meeting to withdraw the offer of £20,000 to purchase the field, which the Clerk would process. Following discussion Cllr Crang proposed that legal advice be taken as to the security of tenure that the Parish Council currently enjoys on the allotment field, which was RESOLVED. No budget restriction was proposed regarding the cost of legal advice, which the Clerk would arrange.
- ii) Laying of water pipes** – a quote for legal fees, at £1,000 plus VAT, had been received from the Parish Council’s Solicitors regarding the giving of legal advice in connection with the laying of water pipes through the allotment field. An Agent of the Church Commissioners had indicated that these fees would be paid by the Church Commissioners. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk liaise with the Agent in order to gain confirmation in writing that the fees would be covered and, if a positive response was received, the Clerk should instruct the Parish Council’s Solicitors to go ahead with the requested advice.

**19/215 South West Water compensation claim:** A response is awaited from South West Water.

**19/216 New Cemetery:** The New Cemetery working group had circulated three documents for Council consideration. The first document detailed a best estimate of the minimum and maximum costs of providing a new Cemetery and the second document detailed the possible income stream that a new Cemetery might produce. The third document comprised a draft letter, addressed to Thorverton Parochial Church Council, requesting an update on several issues that had been last discussed some years ago. Cllr Crang suggested that costs for a block wall, within document one, should replace the costs of a stock fence. It was RESOLVED that the draft letter be sent.

**19/217 Handyman:** It was RESOLVED to make the requested payment of £367.00 gross for works completed in February. It was noted that these funds would be paid in April due to late submission of the required data. Following a review of the duty list it was RESOLVED to add the clearing of the brambles, behind the garages at the Quarry Car Park, which a resident had volunteered to help with.

**19/218 Store for tools and equipment:** Cllr Hodge reported that a single use 20 foot shipping container, costing £1995 plus VAT, may be a suitable permanent alternative to the current rented garage. Investigations as to available space within the Quarry Car Park were ongoing. It was confirmed that no footings would be required for such a container as wooden sleepers would be sufficient although the ground would need to be levelled. The option of purchasing a garage in the village for approximately £8,000 was dismissed, due to the high costs involved. Cllr Deed would enquire of MDDC regarding planning permission for a shipping container.

**19/219 Finance:**

- i) Bank balance** – as at 01/03/2020 the balance stood at £69,702.79
- ii) Bank receipts in February** – £60 Allotment rents, bank interest.
- iii) Payments** – It was RESOLVED to make the following payments -

A Marshall - Clerk salary	Salary £421.88 gross, plus tax rebate	£468.68 (VAT n/a)
N Matthews - Handyman salary	No data received.	£0

	HMRC	No PAYE due at this quarter end.	£0
	A Marshall – Clerks expenses	Initial garage rental fees, stationery, stamps, hall heating	£54.70 (incl VAT)
	Society of Local Council Clerks	50% of annual membership fee	£80.50 (VAT n/a)
	Vision ICT	Annual website management fee	£150.00 (incl VAT)
	Horizon Consulting Engineers Limited	Sheep Dip contamination testing	£944.40 (incl VAT)
	GX Accounts	Quarterly payroll	£22.50 (incl VAT)
	Strutt and Parker	Half yearly rent for the allotment field	£90.00 (VAT n/a)

### **19/220 Planning Applications and Decisions:**

- i) 20/00265/FULL** erection of a conservatory at 33, Broadlands, Thorverton. It was RESOLVED not to comment on this application.
- ii) 20/00310/HOUSE** demolition to courtyard outbuildings, lean-to's and boundary walls. Erection of single storey rear extension and alterations to fenestration at Bridge House, Thorverton. It was RESOLVED to submit the comment 'given the historic interest of the outbuildings the Parish Council was surprised that no Listed Building Consent (LBC) notification had been received, covering the outbuildings and Bridge House itself'. The LBC notification had since been received and so no comment was submitted.
- iii) 19/01917/FULL** erection of a dwelling with associated works and demolition of existing buildings at 13-17 Silver Street, Thorverton. Granted.
- iv) 19/01527/MARM** reserved matters for the erection of 16 dwellings following outline approval reference 17/00878/MOUT land south of Broadlands, Thorverton. Granted.

### **19/221 Communications:**

**i) Parish Council Facebook page** - Cllr Wells asked Council to consider the setting up of a Facebook page to support local communication and fund raising, for example. Facebook pages from other Councils had been reviewed and it was noted that the Police favoured public reports through this media. It was suggested that such a site could be used by the Parish Council to post comments and/or receive comments from the public. It was RESOLVED that Cllr Wells set up a Facebook page for the Parish Council and, prior to the page going 'live', she investigates how to restrict comments and a facility where by the Parish Council would not have to respond to comments.

#### **ii) Communications received** -

- Coronavirus health warning posters and other information. Noted.
- E-mail from a resident regarding the allotment field proposed purchase. Noted.
- E-mail from a resident regarding mobile phone reception in the village. See item 19/224 below.
- E-mail from a resident regarding graffiti in the village. Noted. The graffiti had now been removed.
- Annual report from Thorverton School. Noted.
- Request from Thorverton Amateur Dramatic Society to borrow the Parish Council's laptop. It was RESOLVED to lend the machine under the usual contract which the Clerk would arrange.
- Book of Scams. Noted.
- MDDC and DCC Climate Emergency updates. Noted.
- Citizens Advice – thank you letter regarding grant funding. Noted.

**19/222 Annual Parish Meeting:** It was RESOLVED to hold the Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May, 7.30pm, at the Thorverton Memorial Hall and that village organisations should be invited and offered a stall on which to advertise their organisation. The Clerk would book the hall, send out the invitations and advertise the event. Cllr Deed would invite a colleague from MDDC to speak on climate change.

**19/223 Village Tidy Up Day:** It was RESOLVED to hold this event on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Details to follow.

**19/224 Vodafone mobile 'phone reception in Thorverton:** Cllr Waldron reported on the poor mobile 'phone signal within the parish and enquired as to the viability of the three Vodafone masts which, when installed, were expected to boost mobile 'phone signals and, eventually, provide open access. It was reported that the Parish Council currently offers up to £60 per year to cover the masts electricity charges and that this contract was due to end this year. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk enters into dialogue with the resident who had recently written to the Parish Council on this matter, to try to ascertain the possibility of gaining an improved mobile 'phone signal for the village. 21.33 Cllrs Deed and Wells left the meeting at this point.

**19/225 Representative Reports:**

**a) Footpaths** – Cllr Foster had circulated an information sign which he planned to laminate and post on the Raddon Top footpath route. It was RESOLVED that he take this matter forward. A meeting with the owners of the land at Parliament would take place shortly, in order to discuss the route of the nearby footpath. A meeting at the School had been attended and the matter of child safety, when walking to and from School, had been raised. It had been suggested that, due to the School having no funds, the Parish Council could investigate the possibility of Section 106 funding being made available for a new project to install an electronic gate in The Glebe, and to build a footpath from here to the School buildings; the first step would be to raise this matter at a future Parish Council meeting. There would be no public access into the field. The benefit of such a scheme would be that children would not need to walk along School Lane or Bullen Street when going to and from School. Following discussion it was RESOLVED that Cllr Foster should make enquiries as to whether Section 106 funding would be available for such a project and, if so, to request that the matter be put on a future agenda for Council consideration.

**b) Thorverton Memorial Hall** – due to Coronavirus it had been decided to put up wall mounted hand-wash dispensers in both toilets and in the kitchen. Disposable paper towels would also be available in the kitchen to replace the use of tea towels. The Hall would receive a thorough clean next week and, to date, no events had been cancelled due to the virus.

**c) Thorverton Millennium Green Trust** – due to the wet conditions of the past couple of month's maintenance had been at a minimum. The Willows had been pruned and bundles of switches were available for collection for anyone wanting them. The next working party would take place at March end.

**d) Speedwatch** – events had taken place and letters, as relevant, had been issued by the Police to owners of vehicles found to be speeding.

**19/226 Recreation Ground:** Cllr Sims had nothing to report on the Recreation Ground this month or on whether the bad language from footballers, as noted a few months ago, had improved.

**19/227 PART 2 (private session):** It was RESOLVED that, due to the sensitive nature of the business to be discussed, the following item be dealt with as Part 2 business and, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be asked to leave the meeting:

**i) Handyman's three month Employment Review** – following consideration of the Clerks report it was RESOLVED to extend the probation period for a further three months to allow time for current paperwork issues to be sorted out. Cllr Foster volunteered support with this matter.

**19/228 Business at the Chairman's discretion –**

1) Cllr Sims reported that Hulk Lane had recently flooded due to the drains being blocked.

2. Cllr Flatt reported that the Dark Lane wall repair work was due to start in early April and requested that the road closed notice requirements be clarified. The Clerk would review this matter with C/Cllr Squires.

**19/229 Next meeting:** Tuesday April 14<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The meeting closed at 21.55

**If you require this document in large print contact the Clerk, Alison Marshall, on [thorvertonpc@gmail.com](mailto:thorvertonpc@gmail.com) or 01392 861228**