

**DRAFT Minutes of the Thorverton Parish Council Meeting held at 7:30pm on
Tuesday 9th June 2020, by way of Zoom**

Present: Cllrs S Crang, R Deed, S. Fice, A. Foster, J. Hodge, N. Lane (Chairman), G. Sims, D. Waldron and K. Wells

In attendance: C/Cllr M. Squires and four members of the public. In the absence of the Clerk due to sickness, Cllr Waldron took these minutes.

Standing orders suspended.

Public Open Session:

- i) A resident read out a letter relating to the legal aspects of land owned by Thorverton Parish Council and its possible use as a footpath providing access for school children from The Glebe. The Chairman confirmed that the Clerk would be responding to the questions raised in the Freedom of Information request made recently by another resident.
- ii) Another resident asked for a full response to his letter relating to the possible purchase by the Parish Council of the allotment field from the Church Commissioners. The Chairman asked the resident to send him a copy if he felt that he had not received a reply that addressed his questions.

The Chairman then said that he felt that the Parish Council was not functioning as well as it should. He invited all Councillors to feed back to him their individual views and suggestions to improve its efficiency. He invited members to an 'open meeting' scheduled for Thursday 18th June to move matters forward. The Chair confirmed that R. Flatt had now resigned from the Council.

External Reports:

- i) **C/Cllr Squires** talked through her report (previously circulated) which concentrated on education. In Devon 29% of eligible children are believed to be in school. Bus services should resume normal operations next week. There was nothing to update on highways matters.
- ii) **D/Cllr Deed** reported that MDDC are not able to replace Councillors under current Government Lockdown Guidelines. There is a meeting later this week about the role and performance of the MDDC Development Company.
- iii) **Police Statistics for Thorverton:** In January one criminal damage and arson crime was reported. In February one theft was reported. In March one criminal damage and arson crime was reported. In April one vehicle crime was reported.

Standing Orders resumed.

20/17 Declarations of Interest: None.

20/18 Apologies: A. Marshall (Clerk) - sickness.

20/19 Confirmation of Minutes: It was **RESOLVED** to sign the Meeting Minutes of the 12th May 2020 as a correct record of the meeting.

20/20 Covid-19 Pandemic: The Chairman confirmed he had recently attended a local conference at which it was noted that the Devon Communities Together Emergency Plan template, on which our emergency plan was based, does not properly cover such a pandemic. It will need significant revision. The Addendum to Standing Orders (circulated to councillors with the meeting papers), and valid until May 2021, was proposed by the Chairman and **RESOLVED**.

20/21 Allotments:

- i) **Return of deposit** - the Chairman proposed and it was **RESOLVED** to refund the £25 deposit to the vacating user of Plot 29.
- ii) **Laying of water pipes** - no update.
- iii) **Possible purchase of the field** - no update.

20/22 South West Water Compensation Claim: Nothing new to report. Council awaits formal agreement from SWW to proceed to settle as per the latest exchanges of e-mails.

20/23 Website accessibility Regulations:

- i) It was proposed by Cllr Waldron and **RESOLVED** to commission Vision ICT to review and write our Accessibility Statement at a cost of £45 + VAT.
- ii) It was proposed by the Chair and **RESOLVED** to upload photos and brief profiles of Councillors onto The Parish Council's Website.

20/24 Recreation Ground update: Cllr Sims reported that an Elm tree needs taking down due to disease. A resident has asked for overhanging tree branches to be cut back from their garden. It was proposed by Cllr Sims and **RESOLVED** that both jobs are scheduled in for the autumn.

20/25 Jubilee Green: It was proposed by Cllr Waldron and **RESOLVED** to accept the kind offer from the local branch of Royal British Legion to maintain the Green during the summer. The village Handyman has already been made aware of this offer and will be informed of Council's acceptance, by the Chair.

20/26 Handyman: It was proposed by the Chair and **RESOLVED** to pay the requested salary and to agree the current duties as set out in the clerk's note.

20/27 Finance:

- i) **Bank balance** - the latest position was not available but would be circulated shortly.
- ii) **Banked receipts** for May - to be circulated shortly.
- iii) **S106 Sheep Dip** return of project funding to MDDC (£6213.00) - it was queried as to why the full £7,000.00 grant award was not being returned. It was explained that £6213.00 was the net amount, after the costs of the site contamination survey had been paid, and it was **RESOLVED** to repay this lower figure.
- iv) **Payments** - the Chair proposed that the following payment be approved which was **RESOLVED**

A Marshall - Clerk salary	Salary £426.38 gross, plus overtime 1/1/20 – 30/4/20, less tax due	£659.18 net
N Matthews - Handyman salary	Salary £452.63 gross, less tax due	£366.63 net
HMRC	Employee tax due for the quarter to June	£143.20
A Marshall – Clerks expenses	Mileage (audit), ink, stamps	£20.51 (VAT n/a)
MDDC	S106 Sheep Dip Project returned funds	£6,213.00 (VAT n/a)
G Sims reimbursement	Dog signs for the Recreation Ground	£14.75 (incl VAT)
S Tempest-Brown	Refund of allotment deposit	£25.00 (VAT n/a)
EDF Energy	Christmas tree lights	£44.27 (incl VAT)
GX Accountancy	PAYE and payroll for quarter to June	£22.50 (incl VAT)
MDDC	Garage rental – direct debit	£55.68 (incl VAT)

20/28 Internal Auditor: It was proposed by the Chair and **RESOLVED** to re-appoint Jane Hole for the 2020/21 Internal Audit.

20/29 Facebook: Cllr Wells reported that the TPC page is up and running and that it will accept external comments only, without any commitment to reply. There is a link to the Council's Correspondence Policy on the website. Cllrs Wells and Hodge are both currently able to post onto the page. Many other Parish Councils are setting up similar communication mediums. Cllr Fice commented that it was a useful additional method for TPC to make contact with the Community.

20/30 Village 'Tidy Up Day' - June 27th: Cllr Waldron suggested that this be postponed until September by when, hopefully, social distancing measures may have been relaxed and local hostellers may be able to provide refreshments afterwards. This was **RESOLVED**.

20/31 Business Cases: Cllr Wells suggested that the proposed template would help the Council with both project process and accountability. It would also help reduce the amount of time spent during meetings on background/research and mean better informed decision making could take place. Cllr Wells was asked to discuss the proposed template with Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) to ascertain what Parish Councils can/cannot legally do. Subject to this, Cllr Wells proposed that the Council adopt a Business Case template and this was **RESOLVED**.

20/32 Representative Reports:

Thorverton Millennium Green Trust - donations had been received by way of a pic-nic bench, garden seat and a ride-on-mower. Work had taken place to clear the peninsula and the adventure trails had been made safe by widening the path. Memorial Hall - remains closed. Speedwatch - the group has not yet re-started after lockdown. School - children in reception and years 1 and 6 have returned to school. The Exe Valley Federation has published the results of the parent questionnaire from earlier this year with over 90% of those who responded saying that they were happy with their child's experience, and that their child had been well looked after at school. A summary of results can be obtained from the school. Footpaths - Cllr Foster was delighted to announce that a local landowner had agreed to a public footpath being re-instated on their land and Devon County Council will be contacted to organise appropriate signage. It was agreed that Cllrs Foster and Crang would liaise outside of the meeting with regard to 'The Definitive Rights of Way'. Although the deadline for this may be as far off as 2026 the matter needs to be resolved. Council also agreed that the Raddon Top 'Guide' be posted on the entrances to the relevant footpaths.

20/33 Correspondence:

i) MDDC Design Guide - the public consultation is open until 6/7/20. It was agreed that Council would make no comment but that individuals are free to do so.

20/34 Planning:

i) **20/00553/FULL** - Revised drawings and additional information. Erection of an agricultural storage building with formation of access track at 9 Silver Street, Thorverton. It was noted that MDDC had raised many further questions. It was **RESOLVED** to make no further comment.

ii) **20/00310/HOUSE** - Additional information. Removal of lean-to roof to courtyard outbuildings, erection of single storey rear extension and alterations to fenestration at Bridge House, Thorverton. It was **RESOLVED** to make no further comment.

iii) **20/00465/FULL** - Revised drawings. Erection of two storey extension and alterations to existing dwelling following demolition of existing garage; creation of new access, erection of new garage including store and sheep shelter, ancillary attic space and associated landscaping at Higher Mill, Thorverton. It was **RESOLVED** to make no further comment.

Cllr Crang inadvertently left the meeting at this point, due to technical difficulties.

Cllr Deed advised that he would be resigning from Thorverton Parish Council at the end of this meeting.

20/35 Part 2: 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) Review of the Clerk's hours: Feedback from the Working Group was heard and there followed discussion over whether it was timely to move to any resolution given the Clerk's current absence. It was agreed to defer any decisions until after the Clerk had returned to work.
- ii) Handyman employment: It was proposed by Cllr Wells and **RESOLVED** that the contract be made permanent.

20/36 Business at the Chairman's discretion:

- i) Cllr Sims reported that the dam is being inspected on Saturday (13th June) by Cllr Crang, B Butt and N Heard.
- ii) Cllr Waldron commented on the deteriorating state of a village property. He will enquire further at MDDC to ascertain the legal position.

Date and time of the next meeting: - Tuesday 14th July at 7:30pm by way of Zoom unless otherwise advertised.

The meeting closed at 9:43pm

If you require this document in large print contact the Clerk on e-mail at thorvertonnpc@gmail.com or by 'phone on 01392 861228