

MINUTES of the Thorverton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday July 14th 2020, at 7.30pm, by way of the on-line facility 'Zoom' (Coronavirus Act 2020)

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

In attendance: Mrs A Marshall, Clerk, D/Cllr Deed and one member of the public.

Standing Orders suspended.

Public Open Session:

The Clerk was thanked for dealing with correspondence efficiently. Cllr Waldron was asked to explain his comment from a recent meeting with regard to the covenants on the school field no longer being applicable. Cllr Waldron advised that he had made no such comment. The Chairman confirmed that a response would be sent following this meeting with regards to the further Freedom of Information request. The member of the public asked that car parking in The Glebe be taken into account should the gate and path project in the school field be taken forward and the Chairman confirmed that, should the project move forward, matters raised by the public would be addressed.

External Reports:

i) C/Cllr Squires – a report had been received which focussed on the increased local testing for Covid 19 from 6th July and the completion of Exeter's Nightingale Hospital.

ii) D/Cllr Deed reported that the Local Plan is due to be approved at the end of July and that this will see a potential end to speculative bids being put forward for housing. Work on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) continues with the plan covering future major planning projects and sites. No new planning proposals were planned for Thorverton. The GESP will put forward sites for 60,000 new homes needing to be facilitated but not all the sites identified would be used. A public consultation later this year would see the number of sites reduced. GESP will streamline planning decisions which could result in Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) having less say in the planning arena and an easing of permitted development rules, for example.

Free car parking in Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton during August and September had been announced in order to support local traders. To help further MDDC had now distributed £20 million of Government grant funding to local businesses.

The Exe Valley Cycle Group is looking to turn the old Tiverton to Exeter railway line into a footpath/cycleway. Phase one would cover the Bickleigh to Tiverton route with phases two and three covering the Bickleigh to Upexe and Upexe to Thorverton routes.

iii) Police statistics – no crimes had been reported in the Thorverton area during the month of May.

Standing Orders resumed.

20/37 Declarations of interest: None.

20/38 Apologies: C/Cllr Squires due to another meeting.

20/39 Confirmation of Minutes: It was RESOLVED to sign the meeting Minutes of June 9th 2020 as a correct record. Cllr Waldron was thanked for taking the Minutes and the Clerk was thanked for producing the final document.

20/40 Vice Chairman: It was RESOLVED that Cllr Foster take up the position of Vice Chairman.

20/41 Working Groups: It was RESOLVED to make the following amendments to the current list of Working Groups and members –

i) New Cemetery working group to consist of – Cllrs Hodge, Waldron, Fice, Wells and Mr Nick Bright.

ii) Section 106 funding working group to consist of – Cllrs Lane, Foster and Waldron.

iii) Staffing working group to consist of – Cllrs Lane, Wells and Fice.

iv) Planning working group to consist of – Cllrs Crang and Foster.

No changes were made to the Hulk Lane and Grant Giving working groups at this time.

20/42 Representatives and Responsibilities: It was RESOLVED that Cllr Lane take up the role of Raddon Group representative and that Cllr Sims take up the role of Memorial Hall representative. No other changes were made.

20/43 Planning matters:

- i) 20/00553/FULL revised drawings - erection of an agricultural storage building with formation of access track at 9 Silver Street, Thorverton. Application withdrawn.
- ii) 20/00812/LBC listed building consent - replacement of door joinery in porch extensions and timber windows at Higher Dunseller, Thorverton. Following discussion it was RESOLVED to make no comment.
- iii) 20/00465/FULL erection of 2 storey extension and alterations to existing dwelling following demolition of existing garage; creation of new access; erection of garage including store and sheep shelter and ancillary attic space; associated landscaping, Higher Mill, Thorverton. Granted.
- iv) 20/00310/HOUSE and 20/00311/LBC removal of lean to roof to courtyard outbuildings; erection of single storey rear extension and alterations to fenestration and part replacement of outbuilding roof covering from corrugated metal to tiles at Bridge House, Thorverton. Granted.

20/44 Handyman: It was RESOLVED to pay the salary request of £312.38 gross and the expenses request of £26.40. Following a review of the monthly report and duty list it was RESOLVED that **a)** the Chairman would review the garage storage situation with the Handyman **b)** a tarpaulin should be purchased for the trailer in order that it could be stored outside **c)** the pointing of the Dark Lane wall alongside the Barliabins area should be put on hold due to cost implications **d)** a plank of wood should be placed across the two low tree stumps in the Barliabins area to make a bench **e)** the Barliabins area and the footpath from Dark Lane to Lynch Road should be added to the grass cutting rota **f)** the Dinneford Street leat should be cleared of debris. It was agreed to put the matter of the equipment storage container back on the agenda in September. Cllr Hodge would investigate costings further. Cllrs Fice and Lane volunteered to help the Handyman with the clearing of the debris in the Quarry Car Park and at the allotment field. It was confirmed that a budget review would take place at the September meeting in order to vire funds, if necessary, to the Handyman's budget line.

20/45 Recreation Ground:

- i) **Re-opening of the play and gym equipment** – following guidance from the insurance company, Government and District Council it was RESOLVED to accept the risk assessment and bespoke poster, as circulated, in order that the play and gym equipment could be opened to the public. It was expected that the opening would take place on July 18th and Cllr Wells volunteered to update Facebook in this regard. Cllr Sims enquired about the handling of footballs and it was confirmed that the Football Club had completed a risk assessment and that the Clerk would obtain a copy.
- ii) **Correspondence from the Football Club** – an e-mail had been received from the Football Club offering excess grant funding to pay for dog signage and the recent mower service, for example. It was RESOLVED that the kind offer be accepted and that funding for work on the wild life garden and the planned tree work might also be accepted. It was noted that the Viridor grant funding application for the new mower was pending.

20/46 Finances:

- i) **Bank balance** – noted as being £75,634.96 as at 1st July 2020.
- ii) **Banked receipts** – noted as being £70 garage rent, £3,559.72 VAT re-claim, £8.39 bank interest (May and June).
- iii) **Clerk's overtime** – it was RESOLVED to pay the 3 hours of overtime accumulated in May.
- iv) **Payments** – it was RESOLVED to make the following payments and for the Clerk to make any required payments in August as a meeting was not planned –

A Marshall - Clerk salary	Salary £426.38 gross, plus overtime & tax refund	£467.51 net
N Matthews - Handyman salary	Salary £312.38 gross, less tax due	£254.38 net
A Marshall – Clerks expenses	Stationery	£55.10 (incl VAT)
N Matthews – Handyman expenses	Fuel	£26.40 (incl VAT)
T&D Garden Machinery	Ride on mower annual service	£308.96 (incl VAT)
Vision ICT	Website accessibility review	£54.00 (incl VAT)
MDDC	Garage rental – direct debit	£55.68 (incl VAT)

20/47 Dark Lane wall repairs: It was reported that the wall repairs were proceeding well. Council was reminded of its resolution to apply for Devon County Council Highways Maintenance Community Enhancement Funding and it was agreed that the Clerk should commence work on this.

20/48 New Cemetery: Cllr Waldron spoke on behalf of the working group and talked through the circulated report. Council was asked to consider the purchase of a larger parcel of land off Dark Lane, where it was planned to create the new Cemetery, to enable the possible additions of, for example, a community orchard, tennis court and/or allotments. Council was also asked to consider progressing the new Cemetery planning permission. It was confirmed that there had been no update regarding the Archaeology Project progress. Following a discussion, during which it was confirmed that the farmer now owned the proposed new Cemetery site which had been purchased from the Church Commissioners unbeknown to the Parish Council, it was RESOLVED that the working group should discuss with the new land owner what land was available to purchase and at what price. The new land owner had confirmed agreement with the new Cemetery plans and had that the site was still available to purchase. It was agreed that any planning application should be delayed for the time being. Cllr Waldron suggested that Council also considers further the purchase of the allotment field from the Church Commissioners, as had previously been discussed. The Clerk would obtain the up to date position regarding the field. Cllr Wells volunteered to investigate whether Section 106 funds could be used towards the purchase of the allotment field or the new Cemetery site.

20/49 Tree Assessment: An assessment of the trees on Jubilee Green had taken place and, as a result, it was recommended that the old tree nearest to Bridge House should be removed due to its dangerous condition. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would investigate the removal with MDDC and make the necessary arrangements with a local tree surgeon. A replacement tree would be considered in due course. The Council was reminded of its responsibility to assess all Parish Council owned trees every few years and it was agreed to put this matter on a future meeting agenda.

20/50 Representative reports:

i) Thorverton Millennium Green Trust – it was reported that the green is in good condition following the repair of the mower. A bridge had now also been repaired. Two Walnut trees and an Oak tree had recently been planted.

ii) Footpaths – the new path between Armour Wood and Parliament Cottage was being discussed by DCC in order that it can, hopefully, be officially signposted as a footpath. Cllr Foster had investigated the listing of the village cobbled footpaths, something raised by the Parish Council in October last year, and reported that it was unlikely that they would qualify according to information provided by Historic England. The ‘Definitive Rights of Way’ review for Thorverton Parish remains open and it was agreed that this would feature on a future meeting agenda. Complaints had been received from residents of Berrysbridge regarding the encroachment of a section of footpath number three which is being looked into by DCC.

iii) Allotments – an e-mail had been received from a resident indicating that tree and garden debris had been dumped on allotment number one, being the area kept as grass, and the resident asked for the removal of the mess. It was RESOLVED that the Handyman would be asked to see to this matter and that the public would be requested, through Focus and Facebook, not to ‘fly tip’ further debris on the allotment field.

iv) Focus – the magazine is in need of a new Editor and anyone interested in the role is invited to contact the Chairman of Focus or the existing Editor.

v) School – following the summer holidays the school is hoping to be fully operational, and back to full numbers, in September.

20/51 Improving the working of the Parish Council: The Chairman asked for suggestions from those present and, following discussion, it was RESOLVED to **a)** amend the agenda format slightly and to include an action plan at the end of minutes **b)** any substantial correspondence received, and replies, would be circulated **c)** the Communication and Correspondence policy would be removed, due to it being difficult to follow **d)** future meetings would start at

7pm e) storage of documents on the Cloud would be explored by Cllr Wells and the Clerk with the aim of making Council documents more accessible.

20/52 PART 2 (private session): It was RESOLVED to take the meeting into private session, due to the sensitive nature of the business to be discussed, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972.

i) Clerk's working hours: The Clerk left the meeting for this item. Following discussion it was RESOLVED to increase the Clerk's hours from 8 to 9 per week, with immediate effect, and to review the situation further at the Clerk's annual review in November.

ii) Freedom of Information request: A further request had been received regarding covenants on the land owned by the Parish Council at the top of the School field. Following discussion it was RESOLVED that the public interest in the legal advice held by the Council relating to this matter did not outweigh consideration of Legal Professional Privilege, and so should not be made public. It was further RESOLVED that the draft response presented to Council be sent.

20/53 Business at the Chairman's discretion:

i) Cllr Sims enquired as to whether a water tap could be installed at the same time as the water pipes were put through the allotment field in connection with the new Broadlands development. In response it was thought that due to the pipes only taking surface water a tap facility would not be possible.

ii) Cllr Waldron updated Council on a response from MDDC regarding a semi derelict village property. It was noted that no action was to be taken by MDDC as the property was no longer classed as 'residential'. A further update was pending.

20/54 Next meeting: In accordance with Standing Orders no meeting would be held in August. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on September 8th 2020, at 7.30pm, by way of Zoom unless otherwise advised. The meeting closed at 21.47

Chairman 8th September 2020