

Cllr Bob Deed - District Councillor Report January 2022

MDDC is slowly returning to normal, although staff are encouraged to work from home, wherever possible. One needs to monitor the effect on the level of the Council's services to insure there is no noticeable deterioration.

Mid Devon District Council is conducting a parish review which will take about a year to complete. This review will encompass all towns and parishes within the district.

Options for consideration may include-

Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes.

Changing the name of parishes.

The electoral arrangements for parishes, e.g., number of councillors.

Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes.

For more information go to parishreview@middevon.gov.uk

Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee may seem some way off but preparations have begun. I have received a letter from Mr Gove, MP outlining events that may be organised. Those pertinent to a rural parish might include-

Street Parties and "The Big Jubilee Lunch".

Beacon Lighting.

The Queen's Green Canopy.

Moving to MDDC activities this year, Cabinet have met and made decisions on the following subjects-

Customer Care Policy,

Complaints Policy,

Strategic Grants and Service Level Agreement, New Local Plan – Issues consultation paper,

Local Development Scheme,

the Cullompton, Conservation Area Management Plan,

Tax Base Calculation,

2022/23 Budget Update Report,

Modular Build Schemes (in Cullompton and Tiverton, and

Information Security and Information Security Incident Policies.

The 498 pages of the Agenda are available to read on the Council's website, or if you prefer, you can listen to the Cabinet proceedings online. As Chair I managed to keep the meeting to 2 hours 20 minutes.

Should Parish Councillors have any question, happy to attempt an answer at the meeting. Questions in advance may get a more cogent and comprehensive answer at the meeting.

Please note that I am always working on some request from residents within my Ward. I avoid discussing individual cases in a public arena and will only advise on technicalities regarding Planning matters but not participate in discussions of individual planning applications.

Cllr Bob Deed

Thorverton Parish Council 2021 Satisfaction Survey Results

1. Councillors saw the results of the 2021 Satisfaction Survey, which were circulated in advance of the Council meeting on 14 December 2021. However, given the weight of other items considered at that meeting, Council deferred full discussion of the results until the January 2022 meeting.

2. The following might be drawn from the results for 2021, which are set out in Appendix 1 – with the results from 2019 and 2020 in Appendix 2:

- Only 29 people completed the survey (compared with 73 in 2020). This might suggest that others are generally content, although alternatively it might reflect growing apathy or a feeling that there is little point in completing the survey if the Council makes little change in response. It is possible that the rather limited publicising of the survey did not help, with no clerk to post a link on the website or to post Facebook and Nextdoor messages.
- In terms of “knowing us”, a lower percentage in 2021 compared with previous years indicated that they knew the names of three or more councillors or could say that they knew what the Council is responsible for. And half of respondents did not feel that they knew what the Council’s priorities were.
- Two-thirds of respondents felt that they knew who to approach if they wanted to ask the Council about something – this was a lower percentage than respondents in 2019 and 2020.

- Of those who had had contact with the Council over the past year, almost all were at least reasonably happy with the way in which the matter was dealt with.
- The perception of the service provided by the Council has fallen again: in 2019 77% felt that the service was either very good or good; in 2020 this was 54%; in 2021 it was just 48%.
- The perception of the quality and quantity of information from the Council also fell: in 2019 75% felt that the information provision was very good or good; in 2020 this was 53%; in 2021 it was just 41%.

3. It is suggested that councillors discuss the results at the January Council meeting, with a view to:

- a) Agreeing on how best to publish the results. My suggestion would be to publish in Focus and on the Council’s website, with a link on Facebook and Nextdoor, setting out some comments from Council followed by the full table of results in Appendix 1 below, but without the individual comments.
- b) Agreeing on any actions that might be taken to improve the perceptions that we are unknown, that people don’t know what we are responsible for and what our priorities are, and that we don’t provide what is seen as particularly good information.
- c) Agreeing on any action to take in response to the individual comments.

*Neville Lane
21 December 2021*

2021 Survey Results

Appendix 1

1. Do you know the names of three or more parish councillors?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	58.62% 17
Maybe	6.90% 2
No	34.48% 10
Total:	29

2. Do you know what the parish council is responsible for?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	41.38% 12
Maybe	31.03% 9
No	27.59% 8
Total:	29

3. Do you know what any of the council's priorities are?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	20.69% 6
Maybe	27.59% 8
No	51.72% 15
Total:	29

4. If you wanted to ask the parish council about something would you know who to approach?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	65.52% 19
Maybe	6.90% 2
No	27.59% 8
Total:	29

5. Have you had any contact with the parish council over the last year?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	34.48% 10
No	65.52% 19
Total:	29

6. If you did have contact with the parish council, were you happy that the matter was dealt with well?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	60.00% 6
OK	30.00% 3
No	10.00% 1
Total:	10

7. How would you describe the service that the parish council has provided over the past year?

Answer Choices	Responses
Very good	17.24% 5
Good	31.03% 9
Acceptable	34.48% 10
Poor	17.24% 5
Total:	29

8. How would you describe the quality and quantity of information from the parish council?

Answer Choices	Responses
Very good	17.24% 5
Good	24.14% 7
Acceptable	31.03% 9
Poor	27.59% 8
Total:	29

Comments

1. I would like to see the PC become properly democratic. At the moment it seems to the uninitiated to have become a self-perpetuating clique. It doesn't seem to the eyes of the layman to represent the wishes of the majority. Its actions often appear arbitrary and not based on the common sense of the majority. The whole PC should resign and stand for re-election!
2. I don't feel the Parish council manages its stakeholders well, poorly communicates with them and is aligned with its own agenda rather than representing the views and the needs of the community.
3. I have been trying to have a sign erected at the top of our 'very narrow' lane near the recreation ground for several years now, because people drive too fast, and I have already had my car written off by a neighbour [who was going too fast, according to the Insurance Assessors]. Proposed sign should say "Concealed entrances ahead, please drive slowly". Historically, the lane was meant for horse and cart, and not suited to large modern vehicles, nor the speed that they do. As well as a sign at the top of the lane, they should be at intervals past Michael Ayre's farm, going out to Upton Pyne, and copied on the back for people coming the other way. Unfortunately the Parish Council do not seem to have the authority to carry out such a simple job, this should be addressed by the present committee, and taken up with the government officials concerned; there is too much 'red tape' and bureaucracy at all levels of government these days and the reason why nothing gets done, or quickly enough, to the frustration of the general public.
4. We need a footpath from the village to the cricket pitch but this still hasn't happened. Potholes on the local lanes are awful but nothing gets done.
5. More information on progress of matters such as signpost for Raddon and 20 is plenty signs.
6. I am new to Thorverton, within the last year and have met one of the councillors. The Focus magazine is our way to keep updated on most issues related to Thorverton. Helping with key facilities in the parish such as the Memorial Hall and church I see as some of the key priorities for the council. I have read finding a new site for a village cemetery is a project. It would be good for the council to look at faster broadband connections for the whole village and better mobile signal within the village, as telecommunications are necessary for so many functions in life and anyone running a small business. BT seem to be upgrading the copper cables to fibre in Raddon lane but this would seem to be as the result of repeated problems with the copper cables, not as the result of a planned normal upgrade. (Jurassic Fibre are also installing Fibre To The Premises in many areas of East Devon and Exeter. If BT can't help everyone, perhaps Jurassic could be encouraged to install fast fibre services. I would also encourage better road signage within the village.
7. It would be very helpful if the Parish Council could organise a Safety sign down Raddon Lane, with the words "Concealed Entrances, Please Drive Slowly", but although I have asked on several occasions over the years, it just does not happen and I am directed towards Devon County Councils Highways Department, and no action is taken by them either. As I had my car written off a couple of years ago, outside Hazel Cottage, which has a semi-concealed entrance and am planning to buy another car fairly soon, it would be comforting to know that the next car is not going to be written off as well. In addition I know a neighbour who cleared all the drains and undergrowth from outside his property to the T-junction near Michael Ayre's Farm, and when finished rang Highways to advise that he had carried out the work, which he had been asking Highways to do for over two years, but no action had been taken. Upon hearing that the work was completed, Highways became very defensive, telling the pro-active resident that he was not allowed to carry out any more work like this because it is the responsibility of the Highways Department. You really couldn't make it up, as the resident had been waiting such a long time, he simply gave up and took the matter into his own hands. There are many simple jobs such as this that the Parish Council could be responsible for, if only they could receive agreement from the local authorities, by ditching all the red tape! Also I am sure that local people would be only too willing to 'pitch in' to do this work, myself included, and we wouldn't expect to be paid.

8. The cobbles around the Berry Dairy really need to be put in order. Either they are left in a mess or very badly repaired.
 9. I would like the Parish Council to reconsider making use of the Sheep Dip. Wouldn't it be possible to fence off the dip itself, paint and repair the benches and replant the planters....nothing more...just a place to sit and admire the view. As it is, the area is open and being used. Can't it be better maintained?
 10. Diversity is lacking among councillors, until recently no female representative was on the council. Decision making seems slow. I would like to see a greater effort being made to improve the village for others, youth and other parties and not just the rec ground and football.
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The number of people giving the various replies is set out below, with percentages in brackets (while 73 people completed the survey, not all of them answered every question so the numbers for each question do not always total 73). The percentages in the 2019 survey are shown in purple:

<u>Knowing Us</u>		Yes	Maybe	No
1.	Do you know the names of three or more parish councillors?	41 (56%) 82%	10 (14%) 5%	22 (30%) 14%
2.	Do you know what the parish council is responsible for?	36 (49%) 45%	29 (39%) 45%	9 (12%) 9%
3.	Do you know what any of the council's priorities are?	11 (15%) 18%	21 (29%) 45%	40 (56%) 36%

Approaching Us

		Yes	Maybe/OK	No
4.	If you wanted to ask the parish council about something would you know who to approach?	55 (75%) 82%	9 (12%) 5%	9 (12%) 14%
5.	Have you had any contact with the parish council over the last year?	17 (23%) 32%		56 (77%) 68%
6.	If you did have contact with the parish council, were you happy that the matter was dealt with well?	11 (65%) 57%	2 (12%) 29%	4 (24%) 14%

Assessing Us

		Very good	Good	Acceptable	Poor
7.	How would you describe the service that the parish council has provided over the past year?	9 (13%) 44%	29 (41%) 33%	26 (37%) 17%	6 (9%) 6%
8.	How would you describe the quality and quantity of information from the parish council?	10 (14%) 35%	28 (39%) 40%	24 (33%) 20%	10 (14%) 5%

Allotments Update Parish Council

Item for 11 January 2022 meeting of Thorverton

Purpose

1. To update Council on the allotments and to request agreement to advertise for anyone wanting to take on a plot.

Background and Update

2. We have 28 plots, all of which were paid for in 2021. Council agreed to eject one plot holder who had not kept their plot in reasonable condition, and another two people have given up their plots. However, we did have two people on the waiting list, so they will take on two of the vacant plots. (The other vacant plot is in very poor state still.) In addition we have one plot rented to someone no longer resident in Thorverton and Council agreed that this non-resident should not keep the plot in 2022.

3. All allotment plot holders have been sent letters requesting rent for 2022 and it is possible that one or more may choose not to continue renting.

Proposal

4. It is suggested that Council agrees to advertise in Focus, Nextdoor and Facebook (simultaneously on 1 February) for anyone wanting to take on a plot for 2022. It is suggested that if we receive any applicants we should give them the plot currently used by the non-resident and after that the one vacated but in poor condition, but if we receive no applicants we should allow the non-resident to continue renting the plot in 2022.

*Neville Lane
31 December 2021*

Highways Repairs Parish Council

Item for 11 January 2022 meeting of Thorverton

Purpose

1. To seek Council's views on how we might improve liaison with our Neighbourhood Highways Officer so as to ensure prioritisation of work that parishioners regard as important.

Background and Discussion

2. At the 24/25 November 2021 DCC Highways Conference representatives were told of the increasing role of Neighbourhood Officers. Ours is Steve Tucker, who is already well known to some of us. We were informed that there would be greater communications from Neighbourhood Officers with local stakeholders (parish councils and others). There was also mention that the priority list of planned schemes of work would be shared with parishes, although this has yet to happen and may well not happen without some prompting. The schemes of work reflect the road condition scores which have been allocated to help determine priorities. Steve Tucker should be able to help us with this to show us the priority list and then we could decide which stretches of road we felt should be prioritised for preventative maintenance work (presumably the stretch of the Crediton road past Raddon Court would be high on our list).


3. If we were able to see current prioritisation we may well want to consider whether the priorities were in line with what we would see as parishioners' priorities.

Proposal

4. It is suggested that Council asks the clerk to contact our Neighbourhood Officer partly to establish a positive communications channel which could be beneficial in the longer term and, more specifically in the short term, to ascertain the road condition scores and priority list for road repairs.

THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Item 14.3.3 GX Accountancy Invoice

		
INVOICE	Invoice Date 14 Dec 2021	GX Accountancy & Bookkeeping Services
Thorverton Parish Council	Invoice Number 3522	Unit 1 Fortescue Court Thorverton
	VAT Number 327170614	Exeter Devon EX5 5JN
Description	VAT	Amount GBP
Preparing your payroll during the quarter ended 5 January 2022	20%	25.04
	Subtotal	25.04
	TOTAL VAT 20%	5.01
	TOTAL GBP	30.05
Due Date: 11 Jan 2022		
We prefer payment by bank transfer where possible. Our bank account details are:		
Account Name: Glenn Redler Sort code: 60-83-71 Number: 88631928		
We reserve the right to charge interest on overdue balances that are not received by the due date. Should you have any questions regarding your fee, please contact us immediately.		
View and pay online now		

Item 14.3.4 HMRC Invoice

Thorverton Parish Council 120/RA56248
Employer's Payslip for Oct-2021 to Dec-2021

HMRC Account	
Balance owed from Jul-2021 to Sep-2021	0.00
Tax & NIC due for Oct-2021 to Dec-2021	101.20
Payment for Oct-2021 to Dec-2021	101.20
Balance carried forward to Jan-2022 to Mar-2022	0.00

Payment Details	
Amount	101.20
Reference	120PT00287887
Sort code	08-32-10
Account no.	12001039
To reach HMRC by	22-Jan-2022

Item 14.4 Grant Applications

CHAT – see separate .pdf for application.

Grants Giving Working Group comments –

While we applaud the work of this charity with food provision and with giving support and advice on housing issues, we do not feel that Thorverton Parish Council should offer to make any grant donation on this occasion. We have our own village Foodbank (Lucy's Larder), which we feel that Council would prefer to support, and we are aware that CHAT has benefited from a church collection recently. We are also not convinced that many parishioners would use CHAT's services.

CAB Application

Dear Andrew

Re: Thorverton Parish Council Donation Request

Citizens Advice Torridge, North, Mid and West Devon offers free services to members of the public providing advice and information for the benefit of the individual and the community. Many members of the public come to us in difficult circumstances when they have no one else to turn to, often in life changing situations.

In the 2020-21 financial year our organisation as a whole helped **13,822** individuals with **30,501** issues and on average were able to help each client make an income gain of **£6,353**, and, in cases where there were significant debt issues, we ensured that an average **£12,694** of debt per person was written off. Our work also contributes significantly to health and well-being: - A survey by National Citizens Advice in December 2020 found that of over 400 people who had used our services 6 in 10 felt less, stressed, depressed and anxious and 4 in 10 had more money or better control of their finances. During the current financial year as a direct result of the economic effects of the Pandemic, already significant problems with debt across the county were further exacerbated with current predictions (September 2021) suggesting that the additional impact of the end of the Job Retention Scheme and the £20 a week increase to Universal Credit would mean that around 75% of the people we give debt and benefits advice to will not have enough income to cover essential outgoings. Coupled to the impact of planned energy price increases and supply issues we believe that there is significant chance of an overall increase of greater than 60% in demand for advice and

an estimated 600,000 people across the UK will find themselves unable to afford basic food and essentials.

We constantly strive to ensure that our service adapts to meet the challenges of our clients in these times. In order to continue to provide high-quality advice and guidance, we switched a significant part of our delivery towards internet and phone-based services which remains tailored towards meeting individual's needs efficiently and effectively but have gradually re-opened our face-to-face services for the most vulnerable clients across the county and are looking at potential options for new outreach centres and arrangements which create greater access for people in rural areas. We also have a number of specialist advice projects that can be accessed including a service for cancer sufferers, support and advice to families with young children, carers and help for people who have financial problems.

We pride ourselves on our credible reputation for giving high quality advice. To ensure our volunteers are providing this standard, we continually update and support them with training on complex enquiry areas. Training is a large expense for our organisation along with the need for experienced paid supervisors to support our volunteer advisers. We receive no financial help from our National Body, operating as an independent charity.

Between April and September 2021 17 clients from Thorverton parish accessed our services for advice and information on 28 issues with Benefits and Tax Credits and Universal Credit being the most common issues. Last year we helped clients from the Mid Devon Local authority area to receive over £1.95 million of income gain to which they did not know they were entitled. This financial support was then brought back into the local economy. For every £1 of Local Authority funding we receive, we generate £3.47 in fiscal benefit

As normal we are approaching every town council and parish council throughout the Mid Devon District Council area for funding and we would be extremely grateful if your Parish Council would consider making a donation to our valuable service to enable the residents of your Parish to continue to access free, independent, confidential and impartial advice.

If you would like any further information, please feel free to contact me.
Thank you for your support.

Grants Giving Working Group comments –

We have consistently supported Citizens Advice and see that they provide what could be an invaluable service giving advice to people struggling with benefits, tax credits, universal credit and so on. These issues are likely to be with us for some while, accentuated by the pandemic. Citizens Advice demonstrated that they had actively supported several parishioners. We recommend a grant of £400 - which would be the same as last year's award.

Other Grants

There was some question about how best to make the grant payment to Thorverton Baby and Toddler Group.

The GWG would appreciate an update for councillors on whether payment has been made to the Group.

It may be that it would be appropriate to use some of our grant pool to help fund activities in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June. Councillors may want to discuss this.

CLlr Neville Lane

1. To update Council on bulb planting and to seek agreement to announce details of a Thorverton in Bloom competition in 2022.

Background and Update

2. At its March 2021 meeting, Council agreed to a bulb planting plan as set out in a note circulated prior to that meeting. This covered planting daffodils just below the wall at the corner of the entrance to Raddon Road; between the road and stream near to the front of the Memorial Hall and closer to the ford and bridge; along the verge in Silver Street, opposite Court Barton Close; and just in front of wall to the Quarry Car Park. That planting of bulbs was carried out as part of the Village Tidy-Up Day, aided by a bulk purchase from Allies Mid Devon (agreed at Council’s September meeting), who were encouraging villages to create beautiful areas and to remember lives lost to Covid19.

3. Council also agreed to a Thorverton in Bloom competition for 2021 and at its July meeting, Council agreed to put £50 towards a prize for the winning street (The Bury) and a shield has subsequently been purchased and was presented to representatives of The Bury in December, and is likely to be displayed in the Berry Dairy.

4. Thorverton in Bloom did encourage several people to make a greater effort than usual to brighten up the village and it is probable that there would be still greater effort if we confirmed in good time that there would be a competition in 2022. In 2021 we had just one judging period – at the end of June – and it has been suggested that there might be two judging periods (late-June and mid-August) to encourage people to make good displays throughout the summer. It is suggested that in announcing that Thorverton in Bloom will run in 2022, we should mention the areas that judging would focus on. This may help focus minds. Britain in Bloom focuses on three broad areas of horticulture (40% of marks), environment (30%) and community (30%). It is suggested that for Thorverton the following areas might be appropriate: colour/scent/appearance (40% of marks); extent of coverage, showing local community involvement (20%); originality (20%); and environmental-friendliness (20%).

Proposal

5. Council is requested to agree to announce that we will hold a Thorverton in Bloom competition in 2022, with the judging period and criteria as set out in paragraph 4 above.

*Neville Lane
31 December 2021*

Thorverton Parish Meeting 14/12/2021

Copy of notes of complaint for Thorverton Parish Councilors and Clerk 7Pm

Thorverton Memorial Hall

From Karl Wilson

Paws For Pleasure, Raddon Rd, Thorverton, EXS SPJ

[Redacted] complaint

Letter

To Whom it may concern,

Without Prejudice

Thank you, Chairman and Councilors, for letting me speak at this meeting this evening.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Karl Wilson . Some of you will remember me from years ago I when was a member of the Parish Council. (For about 5 years) So I am very familiar how the Parish Councils rules and protocols should work and be adhered to.

I have lived in Thorverton for over 25 years, and I am the co-owner, along with my wife Vanessa of Paws for Pleasure, the secure dog walking facility that opened in the Village in June 2021.

I would like to introduce my colleague, Richard Kaye who is here in a personal capacity to help and advise me where necessary. He is a specialist in Data Protection and is also a qualified solicitor.

Mr Kaye has been asked to attend this evening to help me explain the mistakes and errors that the Parish Council have made in their dealings with my company.

Please excuse my reading from a script and Mr Kaye's note taking. I recently have suffered a minor stroke so my note taking, and short-term memory have been affected. Hence the help.

I must stress that I am not here to discuss "Paws for Pleasure" nor its planning consents or lack off as this in No Way is a concern off the Parish Council and does not fall within the Parish Councils remit.

What I am here to discuss is the way the Parish Council has acted towards my Company, Paws for Pleasure. This has now been ongoing for nearly six months and has been very draining and worrying, especially when opening a new business and considering my recent health issues.

I would like to inform you all that the Parish Council has entered an official enquiry to Mid Devon District Council planning office, asking whether Paws for Pleasure has applied for "change of use" on its land from Agricultural use to Commercial use.

Because of the Councils application, I have suffered an extreme amount of anguish, sleepless nights, stress and emotional upset over the last 6 months since mid-summer and the start of our business.

Worryingly, I have checked through the Parish Councils website (from June to November) and checked for Paws for Pleasure being on the agenda for discussion and there are no notes or records in any of the minutes. Which means this issue has not been discussed or approved by the Council.

The only reason Paws for Pleasure is on the agenda today is because I have asked it to be!

For your information, and as far as I am aware, the only Members of the Parish Council that are aware of this application are the Chairman, Mr Foster, My Father-in-law, Mr Sims and Mr Lane.

The only reason Mr. Simms is aware of the Councils application is because I have advised him in case, he would like to Declare an interest at this point. I would invite Mr Lane and Mr Foster if they would like to declare an interest at this point?

I would like to Stress that your Chairman, Mr Foster has been very helpful in keeping me informed during the last 6 months, both verbally and officially by responding to our emails. So, thank you Mr Foster for your help and advice. Sadly though, this has not negated the worries and stress caused by the Councils actions.

Mr Kaye and I have emailed the Chairman in lieu of a Parish clerk, asking for information and an email trail of the Councils' application. We have used the "freedom of Information Act 2000" to gain information to investigate whether the Council has acted outside its protocols, codes of conduct and its own rules as published on the Thorverton Parish Website.

Sequence of events; -

- 1) Mid-Summer 2021, Mr Foster approached me in the Village and asked if Paws for Pleasure had applied to Mid-Devon District Council for "change of use" planning permission, explaining that Mr Lane had an alleged parishioner who had asked this question.

My direct response was that this was outside the Parish Councils remit and that any official enquiries by parishioners should be directed straight to Mid Devon Council as they are the planning authority.

- 2) Mid-Summer 2021, The next time I saw Mr Foster, I thought I would explain in some more detail about the way we had approached planning, the status of our land etc. and generally explain why we had decided to take the route and stance we had as we believed our land to be Amenity.

Mr Foster asked if it would help if I spoke to Councillor Lane to explain this. I declined and explained that it was nothing to do with the Parish Council and that any enquiries by parishioners would need to be made in writing to Mid-Devon Planning and that my private business was nothing to do with the Parish Council. I also asked who was making the complaint. Mr Foster replied "please don't ask that"

- 3) 8th October 2021 The Parish Council submit an enquiry to MDDC about Paws for Pleasure Planning. Shortly after, we receive a letter from Mid Devon Council Planning dept.

On seeing Mr Foster shortly after this date I informed him that we had received a letter from Mid Devon regarding Planning. His response was "I know, I am the clerk at the moment as well as the Chairman"

As you can imagine I find it incredulous that the Parish Council has pursued this matter.

I enclose copies of all emails received from TPC

It is clear from information in the Mid Devon Code of Conduct for Town and Parish Councils that several breaches of conduct occur in the Councils' approach to Mid Devon, they are listed below.

- 1) Correspondence to the Parish Clerk regarding a serious enquiry or issue, should be emailed to all councillors to peruse before the next Parish Council meeting. Any items should then be put on to the agenda at the next meeting to be discussed and voted on. Action is then sanctioned by the majority vote.

-In this case, there is no record of correspondence or a written complaint or enquiry.

-The Councillors have not received emails informing them of a "supposed" and undocumented complaint from a resident.

-Thorverton Parish Council is acting outside its remit on Planning

-Councillors are not allowed to use the resources of the Council unless they have prior permission from the Council, ensure that such resources are not used improperly and have regard to any other requirements relating to local Authority publicity. (IE Clerks time and expenses)

In other words, unless Councillor Lane has any information to demonstrate to the contrary, it would appear that Councillor Lane has pursued a fictitious, unprovable, anonymous and probably nonexistent complaint in the name of Thorverton Parish Council:-

- 2) Thorverton PC have not followed their own procedure as published on their website about how to deal with a complaint, their website is ambiguous, and complaints should only be taken seriously if in writing. Otherwise, situations like this arise and could easily have been prevented, this could also be conceived as a petty interference from Councillor Lane and one might ask what his motivation and reasons are for raising such issues without documentary evidence. Indeed, what does he hope to achieve by his interference on an issue that has absolutely nothing to do with him or Thorverton Parish Council whom he has bought in to disrepute!
- 3) If Mr Lane wanted to find out whether Paws for Pleasure has the correct planning Permissions, he should have contacted Mid Devon District Council in his own name. It would appear that by trying to hide behind the Parish Council he may well have a hidden agenda, could this be linked to one of his comments in an internal email?

Quote From an email By Mr Lane

"I have noticed that a new business has started at the Pleasure House, Raddon Road. This is advertised on its website as Paws for Pleasure", offering secure dog exercising (at a price). I understand that the field used for this was agricultural land and don't believe that we have seen a change of use request for it. Please could you ask MDDC Planning Department whether they have had any change of use application or whether it needs one?"

[Highlighting and bold type are additions made by Mr Wilson.]

- 4) Councillors are not allowed to make individual decisions on behalf of the Council, it would appear that Councillor Lane is indeed trying to do this. I would refer you to the Nolan principles in that Councillors should act solely in the terms of public interest. How are Mr Lane's actions in the public interest?
- 5) Why have emails regarding Paws for Pleasure been sent to a Parish Council Clerk who resigned some weeks before? Surely this is a very slack approach, unethical and reproachable?
- 6) Integrity. Integrity is the most important aspect of a local Council's ethics. Again, unless Mr Lane can demonstrate the opposite to the satisfaction of the Council, it would appear that Mr Lane has acted unethically in all the items listed above. He has been a long-standing Parish Councillor and twice been Chairman so one can assume he knows the rules, regulations and protocols inside out. This blatant lack of integrity brings the whole of TPC's ethics, decision making and honesty into doubt. If a Parish Council or cannot be trusted to work within the simple rules and protocols as set out by Mid Devon they should resign.

I must just add that unless this open letter and my comments are fully documented in the Minutes of this meeting, and a satisfactory conclusion is not reached within 7 days of this information, I will be taking the complaints to the next Level at Mid Devon District and conversing with their Monitoring Office who will in turn report to the Standards committee.

[These four pages were handed to the Chairman after being read out by Mr Wilson. They were accompanied printed copies of his email exchanges to 24th Nov 2021 including his Subject Access Request (and reply). He also handed over printed copies of Thorverton Parish Council's Complaints Policy, Code of Conduct and Handling of Correspondence Policy all with some sections highlighted. The clerk has these copies. JPR 05-Jan-2022]

Agenda Item 17.1 FOI request

Email from Karl Wilson to TPC Clerk - Wed, Dec 22, 2021, 10:46 AM

Freedom of Information Act 2000

22/12/21

To The Clerk of Thorverton Parish Council

From Karl Wilson

Paws For Pleasure, EX5 5PJ

Dear Mr Roberts,

I wish you well in your new role.

Sadly, I have an ongoing issue with Thorverton Parish Council, which as the new Clerk, you are going to inherit.

Would you please pass this email to all councilors?

Dear Mr Foster,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak at your Parish Council meeting on the 14th Dec 2021.

Under the freedom of information act 2000, I am requesting the following information regarding Paws for Pleasure only, up to and including today's date; -

1. All internal email conversations regarding our complaint and about Paws for Pleasure made on the 14th of *[presumably December 2021]*
2. Internal records of conversations had during the TPC meeting on 14th Dec.
3. Copies of all emails you or the council have received regarding Paws for Pleasure from ALL councilors and parishioners.
4. Records of all Telephone conversations regarding Paws for Pleasure

5. External emails received by TPC regarding our complaint.
6. Letters from any source that are relevant to our complaint.
7. Whether you as a council have decided to hold an emergency meeting to discuss Mr Lanes conduct
8. Whether you as a council have decided to volunteer our complaint to the Mid Devon Monitoring Office.
9. Whether you as a council have decided to self-report our complaint to the Mid Devon Standards committee.
10. All or any other information regarding Paws for Pleasure, in any other format.

Mr Foster has kindly provided the minutes of the meeting on the 14th of Dec.

I am not happy with the way the Parish Council have chosen to deal with our complaint as I feel Mr Lane should have been suspended for misconduct until a formal decision by the council has been made or indeed, he chose to resign.

Councilor Lane has blatantly infringed the councils' protocols and policies which are well documented and proven in my letter of complaint.

The councils lack of action in suspending Mr Lane enables him to be involved with the whole process of investigating his own actions and influencing decisions that may be made by the council.

Clearly this an ethically incorrect decision for the Parish Council to take as they are leaving themselves wide open for further criticism and investigations by Mid Devon Devon District Council.

In light of the previous comments, I would like to Formally advise Thorverton Parish Council that we will be submitting complaints today to both the Standards Officer at Mid Devon District Council and their monitoring office.

Yours Sincerely

Karl Wilson

Agenda Item 17.1 Email of 4th Jan 2022

Email from Karl Wilson to TPC Clerk - Jan 4, 2022, 3:45 PM (1 day ago)

Dear Councillors,

I Hope you all had a good Christmas and Happy New Year.

Back to business!

I have checked on the Thorverton Parish Council Website and as of yet there is no date showing for the next meeting.

Please could you confirm time, date and venue as I will need to give Mr Kaye and Mrs Penberthy-Hutchings plenty of notice.

I would like to raise a few points for consideration by the Chairman prior to the next meeting please.

I would prefer if "Paws for Pleasure" was not used as a sub heading in your agenda. This has clearly now become a disciplinary action and investigation in to Mr Lanes conduct and is only related to our company due to his negligence. I don't want bad press for my company or my company to be associated with Mr Lanes actions in the media.

Have Thorverton Parish Council advised MDDC of the issues raised by me regarding Mr Lanes actions and behaviour? -Are we expecting a member of MDDC Monitoring Office or Standards committee to attend the meeting? - Will the Parish Council request a representative of MDDC attends the meeting? -Have Thorverton Parish Council notified MDDC of the dates of the next meeting? -If the answers are "No" from TPC, I am quite willing and happy to let MDDC know. Please advise accordingly.

My legal expenses are beginning to rise quite rapidly, can you please explain how I can re-claim my expenses and compensation from the Council. Is there a form to fill in etc?

I have invited a reporter to attend on the evening. therefore, (as is our right), I give you notice that we will be recording the sections of the meeting that are relevant to our complaint.

I would like a quick conclusion to this messy business and would like to offer a proposal to hurry things along.

I would like the Chairman and Councillors to consider the following please, prior to the next meeting, if the clerk can find the time to forward to all Councillors.

If the clerk will not or cannot forward this email as a request from a Parishioner, please advise and again, I will do this as per my email before Christmas.

Assuming the Council finds Mr Lane at fault and wishes him to be removed from the Council, or Mr Lane resigns, I am prepared to withdraw my complaint to Mid Devon District Council.

For this to happen, the reasons for Mr Lanes resigning (or sacking) have to be in the minutes on the TPC website and in the minutes of the meeting.

Mr Lane has to agree to never re-apply for a Parish Council position either in Thorverton or anywhere else and to sign a declaration from TPC to that effect.

Mr Lane should write an open letter of apology to me and my family, explaining his actions which has to be published in the Thorverton Focus and has to be proof read and pre-agreed by me.

My full letter of complaint has to be included in January 2022 minutes.

Thank you for your time in considering my email and I look forward to your responses.

Best Wishes

Reply from the clerk to KW – Wed, 5 Jan 2022, 09:30

Dear Mr Wilson,

To answer the factual questions you have asked -

The date of the next Thorverton Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 11th January 2022.

The time of the next Parish Council meeting is 7pm (as clearly stated on the homepage of the Thorverton Parish Council website).

The venue for the meeting is Thorverton Memorial Hall (as clearly stated on the homepage of the Thorverton Parish Council website). The address is Thorverton Memorial Hall, Silver St, Thorverton, EXETER, EX5 5NZ.

I have circulated your email (and this reply) to all Councillors.

The rest of your email will be dealt with in accordance with the Parish Council's Correspondence Policy. I know you are aware of this as you handed a copy to the Chairman at December's meeting with many sections highlighted. You will therefore receive a reply (should the Council decide to reply) after January's meeting.

The Paws for Pleasure Freedom of Information request will also be dealt with at January's meeting. I know that you are aware of the Code of Conduct as you also gave a highlighted copy to the Chairman at January's meeting. All deadlines set by the relevant Act will be met.

In the spirit of openness and civility I would like you to be aware of the advice the Council has received from the Devon Association of Local Councils regarding enquiries from parishioners about planning permissions. The advice received was -

Councils normally expect a clerk to handle correspondence on their behalf without requiring council approval, as part of their delegated powers. In the model standing orders, this is confirmed at 15.b.x where the clerk shall 'receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council' and there is likely to be a similar delegation in Thorverton's standing orders.

In the situation you've outlined, there was no decision of the council that needed to be made; the clerk was sending correspondence on behalf of the council to carry out research, which is something they may do at any time in line with council procedures without needing to go through the council first so they acted in accordance with procedures. Mid Devon District Council appears to have then acted on that correspondence in line with their own procedures (although may of course have received other correspondence on the same matter).

I trust you will find this useful.

Jim Roberts

Clerk

07768 457590

For Thorverton Parish Council

thorvertonpc@gmail.com

Agenda Item 17.2 Tiverton Mobile Library



Tiverton Mobile Library Timetable 2022

Thursday

Jan 6	Apr 28	Jul 21	Oct 13
Feb 3	May 26	Aug 18	Nov 10
Mar 3, 31	Jun 23	Sep 15	Dec 8
Village	Stop	Arrive	Depart
Bickleigh	School term time	09:50	10:20
Bradninch	Guildhall	11:00	12:15
Silverton	Wyndham Rd	13:15	14:00
Rewe	Car Park	14:15	14:35
Stoke Canon	Vinnicombes Rd car park	14:45	15:30
Thorverton	Quarry Car Pk	15:45	16:30

Agenda Item 17.3 Website Enquiry

Received 28th December 2021

Comments

Does the water outlet in Dinneford Street need a warning that the water is not for human consumption? Recently I stopped a couple of cyclists from refilling their water bottles as they thought it was clean spring water, rather than water from the stream

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Agenda Item 17.4 Small Trees

Email received 15 Dec 2021

Good evening

I am unsure who has responsibility for the trees in the attached pictures!

I think they all need sorting sometime in the future.

(One is on the rec hedge & the others are nearly opposite)

Regardsiov

