

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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The following paper is submitted by the Mr. Fawcett, Chair of the Friends of Thurston Library for consideration by full Council at its Committees Meeting on 17th March 2021

Newcomers to Thurston – a Community Welcome

Background

There is only one chance to make a good first impression.

Thurston is seeing unparalleled growth, possibly the most rapid percentage increase of any community in Suffolk.

There will be a very large number of people of all ages moving to Thurston every year for at least the next five years, from within the county and from other areas.

Integrating the newcomers into the community has benefits for those arriving and the community itself. The task will last for many years.

Experience has shown that a welcome on arrival in a community makes a good first impression that is remembered and lasts, encouraging people to commit to the community and its activities.

The booklet prepared originally for newcomers and now to be circulated throughout Thurston would have added weight *as part of a wider initiative of welcome*.

The two bodies that have a declared and agreed interest in welcoming newcomers are the Parish Council and the Library, through the Friends of Thurston Library

Suggested next step

Both organisations, the Parish Council and Friends of Thurston Library (with Thurston Library), have agreed the merit of working together on an ongoing basis.

Proposal: As a first step the Parish Council and Thurston Library form a group of (say) three members each from the Parish Council and Library to meet in March or early April to take the initiative forward.

Notes

The Parish Council and Library have the similarity of serving the community to provide services, expertise and resources that underpin village life.

The Parish Council offices are open two days a week at the moment. The Library is currently open five days a week with a limited service. We can only hope that there will be a return to wider opening as part of the government roadmap.

Some people would naturally think of going, and being comfortable about going, to the Parish Council office and others to the Library; they are very different environments and have a differing role emphasis.

By establishing a publicised base for advice in the Library and in the Parish Council office would offer a mutually advantageous situation

- spreading the workload
- widening the access to people
- allowing for personal contact with the two umbrella community groups (Parish Council and Library) that can point the way towards opportunities in and information
- displaying resources (not necessarily the same in both places) about the community, including volunteering opportunities, clubs and societies and the services on offer in the village
- hosting welcoming events (if social distancing measures allow).

The profile of the Parish Council and Library would be raised and that they are seen to be working together would emphasise community cohesion.

The Parish Council and Library would benefit from the direct access by members of the community, allowing for personal contact and an increase in uptake of opportunities.

The result would be that newcomers to Thurston and the two organisations would benefit.

Richard Fawcett
March 2021