

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the MEETING held on Wednesday 23rd June 2021 commencing at 7.00pm in Thurston Community Library, Norton Road, Thurston.

Present: Cllrs. Dashper (Chair), Cllrs. Cornell, Haley, Hay, Morris, Rainbow, Towers and West. Also in attendance: Mrs V Waples, Parish Clerk; Mrs A King, Deputy Clerk.

1. **OPENING** – the Chairman opened the meeting advising all that the Protocol adopted by the Parish Council for reporting at Parish Council Meetings, would be enacted for this meeting. A copy of the Protocol is available from the Clerk or can be downloaded from the website:
<https://thurstonparishcouncil.uk/parish-council/policies-procedures-and-strategy/>
2. **APOLOGIES** –
 - a) Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Turner due to personal commitments.
 - b) The meeting agreed to accept the apologies submitted, aif.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST FROM COUNCILLORS INCLUDING GIFTS OF HOSPITALITY EXCEEDING £25** –
 - a) To receive declarations of pecuniary, local non-pecuniary interest(s) and personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature including gifts of hospitality exceeding £25 – Cllr. Hay made the meeting aware that he had had an application submitted under a prior approval application for a potato store. There were no further declarations declared.
 - b) To receive requests for dispensations – none had been received prior to the meeting.
4. **PUBLIC FORUM** -
 - to receive questions and matters of concern from members of the public in attendance on the agenda for the evening – there were no members of the public present and no pertinent issues had been submitted by email for consideration by the Council.
5. **FINANCIAL MATTERS** - to note that all associated papers can be found at:
<https://thurstonparishcouncil.uk/parish-council/agendas-and-minutes>
 - a) To consider donations against the Council's small grants budget for the year ending 31st March 2022 (Paper A inc. A1,A2,A3 refers) – the meeting agreed to the following requests as submitted under the Council's small grants scheme – New Green £1,500 to assist with grounds maintenance; 1st Thurston Accounts £500 for two event shelters and Cavendish Hall £500 to assist with hall maintenance. It was noted that the pot would stay open for applications coming forward until the balance was exhausted.
6. **MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUPS – YOUTH MATTERS**
 - a) To discuss matters relating to the formation of a Youth Council – the Clerk made the meeting aware that she along with Cllr Turner and the Chair had discussed the progress with the establishment of the Youth Council and it had been agreed that it might be best to wait for the new head to be in position at the Community College and once settled in post, look to set up a Steering Group which could include Councillors, the Community Engagement Officer from Stowmarket SNT (along with their colleague in the SNT who has the portfolio for school matters), representatives from the College Youth Council and the College itself to brain storm how to take this matter forward. It was confirmed that there were no takers at the college to the initial request for pupils to come forward and that in the current circumstances those who would be interested are working to catch up on lost time. All agreed that it would be best to revisit the subject matter later in the year when it was considered more appropriate.
7. **MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUPS – CLIMATE AWARENESS / ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**
 - a) To receive and consider the recommendations from the Committee for works to the tree outside No. 36 School Road:
 - i. To carry out a total reshape - £450 plus VAT or

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- ii. To remove the whole tree including grinding out the stump - £1020.00 plus VAT – Council was in agreement, via a majority decision, that this was the preferred course of action and that such works should be undertaken once the nesting season had taken place.
As *ii)* was chosen, a replacement tree such as a Cherry Tree would be installed – Council was in agreement that the Tree Warden be granted permission to source a replacement tree/trees at an appropriate time – perhaps a Bird Cherry Tree.
 - iii. To agree to carry out the removal of dead wood from the mature Oak tree O/S 15 St Peters Way at a maximum cost of £350.00 plus VAT – Council was in agreement for this work to be carried out at the same time as ii.
- b) To receive a verbal update from the Chair of the Committee – in Cllr. Turner’s absence, the Deputy Clerk advised that an order for noise assessment has been placed and that there was possibility of temporary bottle recycling bins being installed at the New Green Car Park until the recycling centre was granted planning permission and up and running. The meeting was reminded of the active travel consultation which allowed for suggestions for improvement or comments that work well. Comments submitted by Councillors and parishioners to date had been collated by the Deputy and uploaded onto the website.

8. MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUPS – LIBRARY

- a) To receive a report from the Chair of the Friends of Thurston Library – a written report had been submitted which mentioned that The Friends of Thurston Library have been working within the limits of the COVID pandemic and the resultant restrictions on the running and use of the library. They were pleased to welcome Ellie Longman as Library Manager and have been working with her in moving the library forward and enhancing the service offered. In producing the monthly input about the library in the monthly Thurston Library, The Friends have continued to keep the community aware of changes and developments to the service in Thurston. New activities in the library or online run by Ellie are Baby Bounce on Tuesday afternoons in the library, Thurston’s Thursday Treats and Bakes online. In July, look out for Chocolate Apple Pies, Blueberry Fool, Chocolate and Blackcurrant Muffins and a Saturday Story time (currently online, soon in the library). The ever-popular Summer Reading Challenge resumes this year; Wild World Heroes is the theme this year. The library is currently looking for volunteers to help run this. The library is also distributing copies of the Thurston Guide 2021 and Ellie has adapted a recent Suffolk Libraries publication to welcome newcomers to the library. The Friends of Thurston Library is now planning The Big Weekend for September along with the Parish Council. It is hoped that it will be able to run a Christmas Tree Festival along with St Peter’s Church again this year. Suffolk Libraries have decided to resume normal opening. For Thurston, the times will be Monday Closed; Tuesday 1400 – 1800; Wednesday 1000 – 1300; Thursday 1400 – 1800; Friday 1000 – 1300; Saturday 1000 – 1500; Sunday 1000 – 1500.
- b) To receive further information on the “Big Weekend” event being planning, in conjunction with the Friends of Thurston Library Group, for the end of September 2021 – plans for Big Weekend were well underway and many organisations had agreed to take part. Businesses as well as clubs were being approached to take part. Date is to be 25th and 26th September 2021. An article will be added to the next edition of the newsletter informing all about it and asking those who wish to be involved to come forward. The idea was that the whole village will be utilised with activities taking place at various venues.

9. MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUPS – RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

- a) To receive a report from the Chair of the Recreational Facilities Committee – currently there was a healthy bank balance although large bills were expected once works to the pavilion had been finished. New signs for the Recreation Ground have been received but minor amendments are to be added to allow them to be erected on poles. New benches are still to be installed but there is a shortage of concrete. CCTV is working correctly and the delay in installing internet at the pavilion is being chased by Officers as target dates are continually being moved.
- b) To receive an update on works to the roof and exterior of the pavilion - roofing works ongoing. There was an issue with tiles which is in the process of being sorted with the expectation that the work will

be finished by the end of the following week. Once the roof had been completed the exterior works and matting works to the play area would then be finished.

10. OTHER MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION -

- a) To receive notification of the Traffic Regulation Order as approved by Suffolk County Council - (Parish of Thurston) (C559 Norton Road, U4917 Pakenham Road, and U4908 Church Road) (30 Mph Speed Limit) Order 2021 – Council noted that the TRO had been approved by the Head of Legal Services at SCC and came into force on 4th June 2021.
- b) To consider whether the Parish Council should participate in the online Safe Spaces initiative led by the Royal Mail group and charity Hestia – the background to the initiative was considered by the Council which would provide information on domestic abuse, and signposts any individual for national or local support, as well as being easily exited on a computer if needed. It was also noted that the page is not recorded in a user's browsing history. All agreed that this initiative should be supported, and the Clerk should take appropriate action to populate the website with the relevant links, aif.
- c) To receive the outcome of the report EN/21/00382 – Thurston Oaks, Persimmon and the protection of Oak Trees at the Persimmon Homes site – the meeting was provided with an update from enforcement officer which stated that following investigations as to the protection of existing trees and potential works, the Officer was satisfied that the areas had since been tidied up and the tree protection measures fully implemented. Advice had been sought from the BMSDC Tree Officer over the fallen branches who had confirmed that they were happy for the work to be carried out. It was noted that the Enforcement Officer had now closed the case.
- d) To note that the Clerk and County Councillor Penny Otton are in discussions with SCC and BMSDC regarding the possibility of parking restrictions being imposed at identified locations in Thurston – the meeting noted that due to a significant number of complaints over residents being impacted by parking along the main roads in Thurston, the Community Liaison Engineer from SCC Highways for the area had agreed to meet to discuss options open to the Parish Council.
- e) To receive an update from SCC Highways Department on remedial works to Meadow Lane from damage caused by the Developer Linden Homes – it was confirmed that the Principal Engineer (Technical Approval) at SCC Highways Department had advised Council that they had had another meeting with the developers regarding the repair of Meadow Lane (and other issues with their site). The stated that they now have an agreement on what they are going to do and now waiting for a programme of works. It did however appear that there were competing priorities at play. Confirmation was given that once confirmed dates were received for the works the residents of Meadow Lane will be consulted. The Clerk also confirmed that she had sent a separate email requesting clarification over the footpath outside of Linden Homes as to why it did not link up with either Meadow Lane or the access to the new Primary School. It was also reported that Footpath TH7 which runs from Meadow Lane to Sheep Lane over the bottom part of the Linden Homes site appeared to have problems with overgrown vegetation.

11. PLANNING MATTERS:

- a) Land to the rear of the Community College – to consider further matters coming forth – Council to receive an update on matters to progress Phase 3 – purchase of remaining land forming party of the county council option agreement - as identified under the CIL Bid M19-06 Thurston Community College – the background to this matter was put to Council once more which stated that SCC have an option to purchase land adjoining Thurston Community College, for educational purposes. This was negotiated as part of s106 Developer Contributions associated with planning permission granted for residential development in the village. SCC have previously decided that they do not now need all the land involved for a scheme to extend the College and the Parish Council agreed to ask whether, when SCC exercises the option it could include additional land, which the parish could subsequently take over for community uses. The Parish Clerk explained that this would result in the land being purchased at approximately £100k per acre. The area being pursued by the Parish Council (Land 2) was approx. 2.88 acres which would cost around £290k plus legal fees, stamp duties and associated costs with a loan for repayment etc. The Parish Clerk explained that given the timescales required for building out

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Phase One as per the CIL bid submitted, SCC were prepared for the matter to be discussed further by the PC but a response as to whether the PC wished to pursue the option to be included in the finance package being brokered by SCC must be returned within the week.

The reason the matter was being brought back to the Council was that the landowners, and developers, would need to agree to a variation of the restrictive user clauses which apply to the land. This would allow the land to be used for community, as well as education, purposes. The current owners of the land have said they will only agree to the variation if another site they own is given planning permission.

The matter was debated further by Council and the following comments were made:

- Given the price the PC is expected to pay this is not value for money as it is a very inflated price.
- The PC has been compromised in the negotiations and there has been very little assistance from SCC to follow this through until right at the last minute.
- Surely the deal was for a joint bid to be submitted.
- CIL monies would be used to buy this land but was this best use of the money.
- PC does not own any land in Thurston, and this is one way of obtaining land for the use of the community in perpetuity.
- Price is probably realistic given land values in Thurston.
- Potential for the CIL monies to go even higher with further improvements coming online.
- PC should not be forced into being held to ransom to offer something that was not in its remit to offer.
- Should not the parish council take time to look at more appropriate targeted areas that could come forth and might be more suited for recreational use.

The Parish Clerk reminded the Council of the S106 agreement that was written which, once the option was exercised by SCC for the land they require, would hand the land back to the landowners for them to dispose of as per the manner of the agreement. This was likely to result in more housing as Persimmon had first refusal on the land. Given the location and conversations that had been had previously with the Planning Department there would be little room for Council to object to development in principle.

Following further debate, it was proposed and agreed by a majority decision, with two abstentions, that the parish council should cease negotiations with either the current landowners or Suffolk County Council on this matter, aif. It was further agreed that the parish council should look to explore other parcels of land that might be more suitable for recreational use and that this should be the subject of a separate meeting, aif.

12. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS: all to take place in Thurston Community Library unless the agenda specifies otherwise.

- a) 7th July 2021 - Full Council Meeting – commencing at 7.00pm
- b) 14th July 2021 – Council’s Committee – *to note this meeting is cancelled*
- c) 21st July 2021 - Planning Committee Meeting – commencing at 7.00pm
- d) 28th July 2021 – Recreational Facilities Meeting – commencing at 6.00pm
- e) 28th July 2021 – Climate Awareness & Environment Committee Meeting – commencing at 7.00pm
- f) 30th July 2021 - Policy and Resources Committee Meeting - commencing at 10.30am

13. TO RESOLVE THAT UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISISON TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960, THAT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DUE TO THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED – there was none to be transacted

14. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING – there being no other business the meeting was closed at 8.22pm.

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Appendix A - Glossary of Common Abbreviations used

Aif	All in favour
AGAR	Annual Governance and Accountability Return
APM	Annual Parish Meeting
ASB	Anti-social Behaviour
BACS	Bankers Automated Clearing Services
BUAB	Built Up Area Boundary
BMSDC	Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils
CC	Credit Card
CAS	Community Action Suffolk
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Chq.	Cheque
Cllr.	Councillor
CMP	Construction Management Programme
Cttee.	Committee
DC	District Council
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DD	Direct Debit
FOI	Freedom of Information
FR	Financial Regulations
GPoC	General Power of Competence
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
JR	Judicial Review
LAIS (from SALC)	Local Association's Information Services
LGBCE	Local Government Boundary Commission for England
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MSDC	Mid Suffolk District Council
NHS	National Health Service
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NR	Network Rail
PC	Parish Council
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
Pdf	Portable Document Format
PIISG	Parish Infrastructure Investment Steering Group
Rec.	Recreation
RFO	Responsible Financial Officer
SARS	Suffolk Accident Rescue Service
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SALC	Suffolk Association of Local Councils
SCC	Suffolk County Council
SID	Speed Indicator Device
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SNT	SaferNeighbourhood Team
SO	Standing Order
SPS	Suffolk Preservation Society
TCC	Thurston Community College
TNPSG	Thurston Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
VAS	Vehicle Activated Sign
VCSE	Voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations