

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL – Leisure and Environment Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on Wednesday 31st May 2023 at 6.00pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.

In attendance: Cllr. B Rainbow (Chair), E. Bond, B Morris, J Hay, T Welham and J West.

Also in attendance: Mrs A King, Deputy Clerk and 2 members of the public.

1. **Election of Chair** – Cllr Rainbow was nominated and re-elected as Chair of the Leisure and Environment Committee.
2. **Chair's Welcome** - the Chair 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/>
3. **To receive Apologies of Absence** – Cllr Cornell sent their apologies due to personal commitments, these were accepted by all.
4. **Declarations of pecuniary and local non-pecuniary interests:**
 - a) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other registerable interests and non-registerable interests as detailed in Appendix B of the LGA Model Code of Conduct – none received.
 - b) To note the determination of requests for dispensations in accordance with council's Dispensation Policy – none received
5. **To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meetings:**
 - a) 22.03.2023 – Leisure and Environment Committee - approval of the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting that took place was given by all present, aif. The Chair signed the minutes in accordance with legislation.
6. **To receive comments from the members of the public present:**
 - a) **On the agenda under discussion** – None received.
 - b) **On any other matters relating to recreational matters within the village of Thurston** –
 - Requests were made to reconsider the rewilding of the third green at Heather Close. Residents surrounding the green had been spoken to and were enthusiastic to the idea. The clerk advised that evidence must be provided in order for her to speak with the biodiversity team at Mid Suffolk.
 - Suggestions were put forward regarding the mowing of the Heath Road play area. Would it be possible to leave the perimeters to grow free?
 - Barton Road – tree fallen and could pose a safety hazard to pedestrians.
7. **To receive and consider matters relating to the Monthly Risk Assessments Reports:**
 - a) **To receive updates on previous works highlighted in the Monthly Risk Assessments for action.**
 - Heath Road Play area: Refer to item 17
 - Thedwastre Play Park Area: The clerk confirmed the play equipment had been washed and treated to remove the algae.

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- New Green Open Space: No updates to receive.
 - Recreation Ground Play Area: No updates to receive.
- b) To consider matters on the Monthly Risk Assessment Reports for the following and agree appropriate actions arising:**
- Heath Road Play Area: refer to item 17.
 - Thedwastre Play Area: Nothing to report.
 - New Green Open Space: The waste bin had been moved to the youth shelter, and the waste bin beside the picnic bench had also been moved. The clerk is to speak with maintenance to request that the bins be re-concreted into position and secured with a metal pole in the ground.
 - Recreation Ground Play Area: The play equipment and benches was in need of cleaning.
- 8. To receive an update from the clerk regarding the bug hotel:** It was reported that the bug hotel had been built and positive comments had been received. The DofE volunteer is monitoring it.
- 9. To consider installing a solar powered battery operated camera in the wildlife area to record any creatures that may be in residence:** This was enthusiastically received, Cllr Hay advised that he had them in his woodland and would be willing to loan the council a camera for a trial period. The committee agreed that assuming the issues surrounding GDPR and privacy were adhered to, it would be an idea that they would like to take to full council for approval on.
- 10. To receive an update from the clerk regarding the Duke of Edinburgh volunteer:** The clerk advised that the DofE volunteer had been an active participant in the building of the bug hotel and was now monitoring it and the garden on a weekly basis. She is taking weekly photos of the garden to showcase how it grows through the season and recording flower species as they emerge.
- 11. To discuss the wildlife garden, and in particular the pond area and consider locality budget funding for marginal planting. Discuss management of the area and identify work to be carried out in the short and medium term:** Whilst it was agreed that having a wildlife pond would be a good thing to have, the current pond is not an asset to the garden. Current climate changes mean that any pond on that site without a water source would dry up in the summer and be detrimental.
The clerk advised that an email had been received from Suffolk Wildlife Trust with the offer of a site visit on June 23rd to discuss options in more detail.
All agreed that if the pond was to be removed and replaced with meadowland, timescales would allow for a visit from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust.
The final decision and recommendation to New Green and the Parish Council would therefore be deferred to the meeting of June 28th. In the meantime, the clerk is to action the meeting on June 23rd.
- 12. To discuss the invasive plant that is causing concern at the Churchyard and consider ways to alleviate the problem:** Green Alkanet is an invasive weed that can realistically only be controlled with the use of strong pesticide. All agreed that this was not an option for the control of it in the churchyard given that there are other plants that have been planted in memory of loved ones that may also be affected. The only option would

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be to hand weed it on a very regular basis in order to weaken the plant. This is onerous and potentially expensive. It was agreed that the contractors that look after the churchyard would be contacted for their advice.

13. To receive the Tree Condition Survey at School Road, and recommend to full council the actions that need to be undertaken and the timescales involved – as a quote had been received, this was moved to item 17 for discussion.

14. To consider the e-mail received from Suffolk Wildlife Trust regarding community wildlife courses that are being offered over the coming months and draw up a list of councillors that would like to attend – All agreed that the courses were of interest, however it was noted that many of them were spread about in locations throughout Suffolk. It was decided that if councillors were interested in any of the courses, they would book themselves onto them and advise the clerk.

15. To identify any further projects that could be explored and taken on – the 0-3 year plan was reviewed and it was noted that a number of the short term goals had been successfully completed or were nearing completion –

- Footpath leaflets – narrative had been submitted, awaiting Discover Suffolk response.
Rewilding of public open spaces – Birch Road currently piloting rewilding, new or existing areas to be revisited regularly.
- Bug hotel – made and in situ.
- Bird boxes – been distributed amongst the interested villagers.
- Wildlife garden – on going. See item 11.
- EV Charge points – CIL bid successful, project now with the Parish Council moving forward.
- Reducing Carbon Footprint – Thermal Imaging Project carried out in February, any further incentives will be considered when they come forward.

A further project that was suggested was to engage with the community regarding play equipment and amenities that would appeal to the under 16's within the village. Suggestions of an assembly to engage with the primary school children were put forward and received positively. The clerk is to speak with the Heads of both schools to establish if this would be possible.

Also suggested was that any engagement with parents and children when they are using the facilities would be productive. Cllrs to report back at the next meeting when they have done so.

16. Date of next meeting – 28th June 2023 commencing at 6.45pm in the Thurston Community Library.

17. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the Meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted –

The quotes for fencing requirements were discussed and it was resolved that the quote supplied by FNCE would be taken to full council for approval.

The quotes from Urban Forestry were considered regarding tree works on School Road Gravel Pit. It was agreed that whilst the Medium and High priority works should be carried out, the low priority work was not necessary and much of the work highlighted

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could be carried out by a willing volunteer. It was agreed that Part One – High and Medium Priority Work quote would be put forward to the full council for approval.

18. Close of meeting – there being no further business to transact the Chair closed the meeting at 19.13.

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