

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL – Leisure and Environment Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on Wednesday 24th January 2024 at 6.30pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.

In attendance: Cllrs. L Bond, S Gerrish, B Morris, M Moy and T Welham.

Also in attendance: Mrs. P Gladwell (Deputy Clerk) 2 members of public.

Election of Chair – It was agreed that Cllr Gerrish take the chair for this meeting, aif.

1. **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/>
2. **To receive Apologies of Absence** – Verified apologies were received from Cllrs. S Pott and P Smith. The meeting was in agreement to approve the apologies received with aif.
3. **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.
4. **To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meetings:**
 - a) Minutes of the meeting of 29th November 2023 – 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.
5. **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 – None received.
6. **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: Various issues raised are to be monitored until the annual inspection due to take place in January.
 - Thedwastre Play Park Area: Bin at Trim Trail is still to be refixed. Damaged sign still to be removed. Action on both will be chased.
 - New Green Open Space: Broken bar on MUGA, Kompan would not commit on structural integrity of this being removed and suggested that it is referred to the annual inspector, the welding work has been actioned. Padlock on rope swing, removal has been actioned. Surface Matting under Rotator, to be monitored until the annual inspection.
 - Recreation Ground Play Area: bare patch on pitches close to the school and movement of the shelters, this has been referred to the Recreation Ground Trust for action.
 - b) **To consider matters on the Monthly Risk Assessment Reports and the quarterly Kompan report for the following and agree appropriate actions arising:**

To be signed by the chair at the meeting of 28th February 2024

- Heath Road Play Area: Worn ground under seesaw and dirty swing seats, all agreed to wait for the annual play inspection prior to undertaking any further work.
- Thedwastre Play Area: Kompan quarterly report shows various low risk issues such as cleaning, surfacing and repainting, all agreed these be monitored until the annual inspection report is received. Flat swing seat too low. Agreed to raise this if possible.
- New Green Open Space: Kompan quarterly report shows various low risk issues such as cleaning, surfacing and repainting, all agreed these be monitored until the annual inspection report is received.
- Recreation Ground Play Area: Nothing new to report.

7. Clerks report –

- a) Update on Thurston Walking Leaflet – Second draft has now been proof-read and confirmed. Print run will be actioned.
- b) Update on Thermal Imaging Scheme – Confirmation that the camera will be available to carry out imaging of five properties during week commencing 13th Feb 2024. A request has been received to carry out an imaging on a property in Tostock as they are not running their own scheme. Cllrs. Bond and Gerrish expressed their willingness to assist officers with the imaging and all agreed that the Tostock property be included.
- c) CAB Cost of Living forum – Councillors were reminded that the date for the forum is 16th February 10am – 12 noon should they wish to attend.
- d) It was confirmed that the CIL bids for both the Inclusive Play Equipment at Thedwastre Park and the bench at Woodside Close have been submitted with a decision expected in February.

8. Wildlife Garden Project –

- a) To receive an update on the work schedule and arrange a site visit to consider the next steps – It was confirmed that the removal of the pond liner had been completed. All agreed that a site visit would take place in order to test the soil, consider whether additional soil is required and design the layout for planting.
- b) To source wildflower seeds and plants and arrange planting schedule – all agreed that a soil suitable grass and wildflower mix will be sourced and sown in the Spring with further Autumn sowing and planting to be carried out once any growth over the summer can be monitored.
- c) To consider the provision of a lectern and gate signage – consideration of designs for the lectern was deferred until planting had been established. Gate signage will be considered at the site meeting.
- d) To consider the provision of seating – consideration of the seating requirements will be taken at the site meeting.

9. Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan –

- a) To consider carrying out a biodiversity audit of council landholdings, other parish areas and to review any biodiversity plans already in place in the parish – Consideration was given to outsourcing the audit and the cost implications of this. It was agreed that an article be placed in the Newsletter informing residents of the requirement to produce a biodiversity review and to seek anyone with professional ecologist experience to provide input into the audit.
- b) To review the Biodiversity Action Plan and consider any actions/strategies needed to ensure compliance with the council's duty to maintain, improve and enhance biodiversity – It was agreed that all current development sites would need to be assessed against their

promised delivery of biodiversity net gain. It was noted that consideration would be needed regarding future projects and how these could increase biodiversity once the audit had been completed. It was confirmed that the development of the Wildlife Garden would be an opportunity to increase biodiversity. Further consideration of the Action Plan and future projects would be ongoing with all noting that all projects should aim to sustain and enhance natural habitats and connect and diversify to meet the needs of a variety of species.

- c) To note the MSDC Call for Land to help support nature recovery across the district and consider any register of interest – It was agreed that any land owners who might intend to plant to support nature recovery should be encouraged to contact MSDC for help and guidance and that this could also be a valuable resource for any projects the council might take forward.

10. **To consider the removal of six no. dead trees and two no. dead branches at New Green** – It was noted that this work had been actioned under delegated powers due to safety concerns following recent weather warnings and would be referred to full council for retrospective approval of the expenditure. Cllr Morris proposed the planting of three no. broad leaf lime trees as replacement for one of the removed trees, all were in agreement to action this as soon as possible, aif.
11. **Date of next meeting** – 28th February 2024 commencing at 7.00pm in the Thurston Community Library.
12. **Close of meeting** – there being no further business to transact the Chair closed the meeting at 19.45pm.