

## THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL – Leisure and Environment Committee

**Minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 6.30pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.**

In attendance: Cllrs. S Gerrish, B Morris, M Moy, P Smith, S Pott, and T Welham.

Also in attendance: Mrs V Waples (Clerk)

1. **Election of Chair** – agreement was forthcoming that Cllr. Pott be elected to the position of Chair, aif.
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** – Verified apologies were received from Cllr. Bond. The meeting was in agreement to approve the apologies received with aif.
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) Minutes of meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> October 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.
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 – None received.
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: hedge had been cut back internally and externally.
    - Thedwastre Play Park Area: Bin at Trim Trail has still not been refixed.
    - New Green Open Space: hole for the bolt at the double gate had now been dug out.
    - Recreation Ground Play Area: none.
  - b) **To consider matters on the Monthly Risk Assessment Reports for the following and agree appropriate actions arising:**
    - Heath Road Play Area: although no new significant issues were raised, all agreed to wait for the annual play inspection due out in the new year prior to undertaking any further work.
    - Thedwastre Play Area: Environmental Trust sign on the fencing was in a poor state of repair. All agreed that it should be removed if possible.
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- New Green Open Space: Goal nets had been tied to posts.
- Recreation Ground Play Area: bare patch on pitches close to the school. It was agreed that the Football Club be asked for a comment. The shelters had been moved and the Football Club would be asked to re-site them away from the entrance.

## 8. Clerks report –

- a) Update on High Street Safari Christmas Trail – dates of the trail have been set for 27<sup>th</sup> November – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. All 10 sites have been agreed and posters installed. Sites are Primary School, St Peter’s Church, Cavendish Hall, Parish Council Offices, Old Primary School, School Road Open Space, Thurston Butchers, Thedwastre Play Area and the Library. There is no competition this year, but we are hopeful that the Primary School will advertise the Trail and arrange for something else for the children to run alongside the trail. Key now is for advertising to ensure it is a success. All were asked to Facebook share, talk about it, undertake the challenge and encourage participation as much as possible to encourage families to take advantage of this free outdoor activity.
- b) Update on Thurston Walking Leaflet – draft has now been proof-read and confirmed. The leaflet will be called Thurston Circular Walks with a strapline of “Two historic circular walks around Thurston” with walk 1 entitled “The Orchard Walk” and walk 2 “Blackthorn Valley Walk”.
- c) Update on local E-bike Schemes – all noted that District Cllrs. Bradbury and Austin had highlighted this initiative and suggested the New Green Centre and the car park next to the railway station as possible sites to have e-bike facilities. The Sustainable Travel Officer at BMSDC was currently developing an e-bike rental scheme at Needham Lake site with a local company. She had indicated that she would be happy to share how their scheme was doing and what the update was. All agreed to ask for a six-month review relating to the Needham Market Scheme being trailed as a pilot to review the progress and what the update is prior to considering this matter further.
- d) Update on Thermal Imaging Scheme – although you agreed at the last meeting not to pursue this project, since then further expression of interests have been received and therefore, your Officers have left the option open to borrow the camera for just one week in February. This would enable us to carry out the few requests received and to continue to advertise the service for a couple of months more. Whilst this will be on a smaller scale than last year, this has enabled the council to offer the service for those that would like it.
- e) Update on the Provision of Inclusive Play Equipment at Thedwastre Park Play Area – whilst Council has still to receive the recommendation for the installation of the carousel roundabout and inclusive swings from the committee, it was agreed that ideally all equipment should be located within the existing fenced area at Thedwastre Play area. Currently there is no clearance for either piece of equipment. Kompan, with whom the Deputy Clerk has liaised, have submitted a quotation on the options available to the council based upon a site visit. The proposal is for an inclusive roundabout, with new bases and wet pour and also includes the uplift and relocation of one of the benches and fencing. It also includes some new additional fencing to extend the existing line along with an area of new mulch with 50mm stone beneath to give a route from the gate to the new roundabout. The existing cradle seat swing frame will have one seat swapped for the You and Me seat and the existing flat seat frame will have one seat swapped for the Inclusive Boat seat. Indicative sketches were shared with all present. All agreed that this was a positive step forward and agreement was forthcoming for a CIL bid to be submitted for the inclusive play equipment in the sum of £27,441.11.

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**9. Wildlife Garden Project –**

- a) To receive an update on the work schedule, arrange a site visit to consider the next steps – all were in agreement that the contract for works to the new green pond removal be offered to AMS Landscape Construction Services at a cost of £1,142.00. Separate quotes would need to be sourced for cutting back the scrub and moved away from the hedge. The allocated sum of £2,000 from a CIL bid for such works was noted.
- b) To source wildflower seeds and plants and arrange planting schedule – all agreed that decisions with regards to planting and schedules will need to be made once the ground work had been undertaken. Agreement was forthcoming that a working group would be set up for planting and volunteers would be requested nearer the time.
- c) To consider the provision of a lectern and gate signage – all were in agreement that the design for both could only be confirmed once the work had been undertaken and information was forthcoming as to content and how the works had progressed.
- d) To consider the provision of seating – again the meeting agreed that the seating requirements be reviewed once the work had been completed.

**10. To consider the provision of benches in residential open spaces** – the lack of a response from the article in the newsletter was noted and that only one suggestion for new benches had come forward – replacement of the bench at Woodland Close. It was agreed that if the bench were to be replaced then the existing plaque should be placed on the new bench. All agreed that just this bench should be replaced and that others would follow for the public open spaces that would come under the remit of the parish council once the land transfers had taken place. Benches in other areas could be considered at the same time including in the wooded area to the north of Cavendish View. A CIL bid would be submitted for the one bench. Discussion also followed over the possibility of installing appropriate seating in the wooded areas on Cavendish View.

**11. Land at Norton on Road Phase 2 Lindon Homes – to consider the current Open Space Proposal from Vistry Homes** – the meeting noted that whilst the transfer was subject to a s106 agreement, Vistry had indicated that they were amenable to installing further sensory type equipment. Officers had submitted additional play equipment to Vistry which were designed to create an inclusive and sensory rich environment: oak rubbing posts depicting local fauna and flora; Sense Totem poles to include interactive and stimulating features and communications panels which were tactile in design for children who have difficulty communicating verbally. The meeting was informed that whilst Vistry were amenable to additional play equipment being installed to the north of the site, they would not support play equipment that would impact on the residential amenities of residents.

**12. To consider the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in England and agree a policy and any actions to be taken** – the meeting agreed to recommend to Council that it adopts the circulated Biodiversity Policy and grants delegated power to the LEC to carry out a review of biodiversity plans in place and create, maintain and update an action plan of what more the council can do and how else it can support the actions of others.

**13. To consider resolving to support the Climate and Ecology Bill campaigned for by Zero Hour** – the committee agreed to support the Climate and Ecology Bill currently before the House of Commons which seeks to address the challenge of climate change by creating a whole of government approach to deliver a net zero and nature positive future. The committee notes

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that the Climate and Ecology Bill has been introduced in the UK parliament on four occasions since 2020 and is backed by 180 cross party MP's and 237 local authorities alongside eminent scientists, non government organizations, charities, business and 42,000 members of the public. The committee agree to inform local residents, our local MP and the local press of the decision to support the Climate and Ecology Bill and to confirm their support to Zero Hour.

14. **To consider the removal of six no. trees and two no. dead branches at New Green** – Council agreed that a further inspection was required along with photos for further consideration.
15. **Date of next meeting** – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024 commencing at 6.00pm in the Thurston Community Library.
16. **Close of meeting** – there being no further business to transact the Chair closed the meeting at 19.40pm.