

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 21st February 2024 at 6.00pm in the Thurston Community Library, Norton Road, Thurston.

In the Chair: Cllr. Rainbow. Present: Cllrs. Balaam, Bond, Moy and West. In Attendance: Mrs V Waples, Clerk.

The Chair declared the meeting open at 6.00pm and thanked all for attending. The notice for the reporting at meetings of the parish council was taken as read.

1. Apologies of absence –
 - a) Verified apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Dashper.
 - b) The submitted apology was approved and accepted by all present, aif.
2. Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests -
 - a) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registerable interests and non-registerable interests in items on the agenda and their nature including gifts of hospitality exceeding £50 – there were none received.
3. To approve the minutes of the Committee Meeting of 15th November 2023 as previously circulated –
 - a) **the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting that took place with agreement forthcoming for them to be signed as such by the Chair, aif.**
4. To consider the following matters as part of the council's year-end process:
 - a) To review the Council's Financial Risk Assessment 2023-2024 – Paper 2024/1 - the meeting reviewed the document and **resolved to agree that the document was a true reflection of the financial risks facing the council and the manner in which they would be mitigated, aif.** It was understood that this was a live document. The meeting was informed that staff performance reviews would take place in March.
 - b) To review the Council's Risk Management Strategy 2023-2024 – Paper 2024/2 - the meeting reviewed the Council's Risk Management Strategy for 2023-2024 and noted that amendments had been made to the document to reflect that this was a live document. **It was resolved to agree that overall it provided an accurate assessment of the management of risks carried out by the council, aif.** The strategy would be updated to reflect an amendment to the reviews of the Financial Risk Assessment and Internal Control Reviews.
 - c) To review and agree the effectiveness of Internal Control as written within the Internal Control Policy – Paper 2024/3 - the meeting reviewed the effectiveness of its internal control and agreed that the Internal Control Policy, as written, should be re-adopted as it was an effective tool for Council to enable it to review its processes and to support the audit process, aif. The meeting also reviewed the current Internal Control Review document to be used for the year 2024-25 and **resolved to agree that subject to the next internal control review, no further amendments were required, and it should be so adopted, aif.**
 - d) To review the effectiveness and scope of Internal Audit – Paper 2024/4A - the meeting reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit carried out for the previous year and found that the proposed works to be carried out for the year 2023-2024 were comprehensive, adequate and appropriate. It was confirmed that the scope of the review covered independence, competence, relationships and audit planning and **all resolved to agree that the overall structure of the internal audit was satisfactory for a Council the size of Thurston, aif.** It was to be noted that once again given the increase in income and expenditure the council would be automatically subjected to an intermediary audit by the external auditors but that this would not impact on the internal audit process or scope that would still be required.
 - e) To confirm the recommendation of the appointment of the Council's Internal Auditor to full Council – see Paper 2024/4B – having reviewed the Internal Audit Terms of Reference and Internal Audit Plan supplied, **the meeting resolved to recommend to full Council the re-**

Signed.....

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appointment of Mr T Brown, CPFA to carry out the internal audit for the year ending 31st March 2023, aif.

5. To review and adopt the following policies:
 - a) Dispensation Policy – revised – **it was resolved to adopt the policy as written noting the amendments and updates to following the adoption of the Model Council Code of Conduct 2020, aif.**
 - b) Pensions Discretions Policy 2024 – **it was resolved to adopt the policy as written noting that there was a requirement for council to ensure fairness and consistency in consideration of flexible retirement and increases to pension benefits, aif.**
 - c) Council’s Policies, Procedures and Protocols as per Appendix A – agreement was forthcoming that there were no amendments due to any of the policies and procedures as identified at Appendix A other than changes to the review dates. **It was resolved that the policies and procedures be adopted as reviewed with the meeting also noting that there were no amendments due to any of the Council’s protocols as written, aif.**

6. To note the Fire Risk Assessment of the Parish Council Office as carried out by the Clerk – this had been added to the agenda in error although the Clerk confirmed that she was still to receive clarification of the insurance cover that was in place for the building as part of the services provided by the Trust within the rental charge for the office suite as well as dates for the upgrade of the lighting in the New Green Centre as well as the parish office suite.

7. To receive an update on the following:
 - a) Detached Youth Work Project - to note interviews for the Senior Detached Youth Worker have been scheduled for Friday 23rd February 2024 – the Clerk advised that the post had been advertised on the Indeed website, the council’s own website, social media and the four parish noticeboards. Five had applied and following the implementation of the job specification criteria, three had been invited to interview with one having confirmed attendance.
 - b) Newsletter Editor – to note the advert has been placed for a Newsletter Editor and interviews would be held on 1st March 2024. It was confirmed that the post had been advertised on social media, website and the four parish noticeboards and that six persons had shown interest with two having already submitted application forms.

8. To consider matters coming forth from Committee Members: there were no matters raised.

9. Date of future meetings of the committee:
 - a) 18th September 2024 commencing at 6.00pm in the Community Library, Norton Road – the next scheduled date was confirmed although this may be subject to amendment with further meetings scheduled if changes in legislation required review of existing / adoption of new policies.

10. There being no further business to transact, the Chairman closed the meeting at 18.44pm.

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Appendix A - Agenda Item 5c) - The following policies were reviewed and found to be up-to-date and would be amended to show revision dates.

All can be found at the parish website at the following address: <http://thurston.suffolk.cloud/parish-council/policies-procedures-and-strategy>

- Accident Policy and Procedures
- Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Bio Diversity Policy
- CCTV Policy
- CIL Grant Awarding Policy
- Climate Awareness and Environmental Policy
- Communication Policy
- Complaints Policy Procedure & Appeals Procedure & Annexe to Complaints Policy
- Co-Option of Councillors Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Detached Youth Worker Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure & Disciplinary Rules
- Document & Electronic Data Retention Policy
- Emergency and Dependent's Leave
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Fixed Asset Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Grant Awarding Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Holiday Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Information Security Incident Policy
- Internet Banking Policy
- Investment Policy
- IT and Electronic Communication Policy
- Lone Worker Policy
- Media Policy
- Meeting Attendance Policy
- Playground Risk Management Policy
- Policy for Recording and Reporting at Meetings
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Persons Policy
- Sickness and Absence Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Staff Use of Social Media Policy
- Staff Appraisal Policy
- Staff Recruitment Policy
- Subject Access Request Policy
- Subject Access Request Procedure
- Training and Development Policy
- Travel and Expenses Policy
- Use of Photographs Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

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