

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 14th April 2016 at 8.000pm in the Cavendish Hall, Church Road, Thurston, as prepared by the Clerk to the Council.

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr P Robinson, took the Chair.

In Attendance: Parish Cllrs. D Ames, R Alston, C Dashper, R Fawcett, D Moss, Mrs A O'Connell, B Rainbow, Mrs J Service, M Thomas, Vicky Waples, Parish Clerk; County Cllr Penny Otton; District Cllr. D Haley and fifty-four members of the public.

1. **Opening and Welcome -**
The meeting was declared open at 8.00pm.
2. **Apologies for Absence -** District Cllr. E. Jewson; Thurston Primary School and Thurston Under Five's Pre-School.
3. **Minutes of APM 19th March 2015 -** These having been previously circulated were unanimously approved as a true record of the meeting.

4. **Chairman's Report -** *a full copy of this report is available from the Clerk to the Council.*

The Chairman of the Parish Council delivered his report in which he outlined the Parish Council's activities over the past year. Thurston Parish Council is made up of a full complement of 11 volunteer councillors. I would like to thank everyone, for their support, commitment and humour over the past 12 months, with out this we could not have achieved all the things we have. I would like to thank Chris Dashper (our Vice Chairman) for chairing the TPC meetings when I was unable to attend. Also I would like to welcome our newest Councillor David Moss, who has just joined us and I hope he will enjoy working with us for many years. I hope they both know just how much I along with all the Councillors, appreciate their support and hard work. We are well supported by our Suffolk County Councillor Penny Otten and our Mid Suffolk District Councillors Derrick Haley and Esther Jewson, who attends most of our monthly meetings and are always ready to help with advice, support and sometimes-even money. We do however have heated discussions with our District Councillors at times if we feel that information we should have is not forth coming, especially with information relating to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council office is open every Tuesday and Friday where residents can raise queries or obtain information on council activities. Our monthly Parish Council meeting is held on the first Wednesday of every month in the Parish Council Office Meeting Room. Anyone can attend the Parish Council meetings and raise a matter in our open forum. We also have Council Surgeries once a month where residents can attend and discuss any issues they have. The dates of these meetings are advertised on the notice boards around the village, in the Library and on our website www.thurston.onesuffolk.net and in the Village Newsletter. Many of you will know that we match-fund our very own Police Community Support Officer for Thurston in the past. However Claire, who was our PCSO, left us to join the British Transport Police, in September of last year. I'm pleased to say she has graduated to the position of BTP PC and is stationed at Victoria Station in London. You may also know that when Claire left us, the Suffolk Constabulary were in the middle of a review and would not continue with the Match Funded role until the review was complete. We finally received confirmation at the end of December that a dedicated PCSO was possible. We had a public meeting in January, to present 4 options to the village on the possible funding or not of the dedicated PCSO. Although the majority favoured a fully funded PCSO, the Parish Council felt that a part funded PCSO would give us the same service at half the cost. Throughout this year we will evaluate the effectiveness of the PCSO, to ascertain if we should carry on with the position of PSCO after March 2017 at which time it would become Fully Funded. Although the accounts for this financial year are not yet completed, I can tell you the expenditure for the year is on budget. Once we have completed the end of year accounts the final figure will be published on the Village Website with a hard copy available from the Parish Office. The organisations we supported this year include New Green Community Centre, the maintenance of the churchyard of the St Peter Church, the Village Newsletter, the village library and Thurston evening Women's Institute, Royal British Legion, Home Start Mid Suffolk and Magpas Helimed.

Any organisations within the village that provide their services for the benefit of residents, can apply in writing to the Clerk for a grant and outline the service you provide within the village and what the grant is required for. One of the statutory roles played by the Thurston Parish Council is in planning applications. As a statutory consultee, the PC Planning group meets regularly to discuss every planning application. For interest, over the past 12 months, this group has been consulted on 40+ Planning applications for building in and around Thurston: We may not always recommend what residents would like, but we are required to assess each application on a set of policies that are in the local plan, and our comments must be based on these policies not on our personal feelings. I announced last year that we had been awarded Foundation Status, with the local Council Award scheme, which signifies the Council meets the minimum standard for operating lawfully and according to standard practice. I also said this year we would be working to the next level, which is the Quality award, I can confirm that we are waiting the decision of Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) as to whether our efforts this year has given us the Quality Standard. The next step is the Gold Award, but we believe this can wait until the Neighbourhood Plan project has been completed. Following the Public meeting, which unanimously voted for us to fund our own dedicated PCSO, the Parish Council has increased the the precept (the part of the council tax that pays for grit bins, bus shelters, seats, recreation grounds maintenance, litter bins and dog litter bins and some of the street lighting in the village) PCSO and maintenance, by £16.28 per year, equivalent 31p per week for a band "D" property. This was due to the decision of those attending the public meeting in January as mentioned previously.

5. **Report from County Cllr Mrs P Otton** - *a full copy of this report is available from the Clerk to the Council*

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET: this was again agreed with a zero increase in council tax; but with an extra 2% to cover increase in cost of adult care. There was a petition to stop the 50% reduction in financial support to community transport and to stop the reduction in fire engines at Bury, Ipswich and Lowestoft, both were noted down. The results of the consultation on the fire service will be reported in April. HIGHWAYS: the new assistant director for highways is Mark Stevens. The issue of road repairs continues to be a problem. With the parish council we are again meeting with highways officers to see if we can get the problem with Sandpit Lane crossing changed as this is confusing and is at risk of causing an accident. I met with them and the parish council on 22nd September to raise all outstanding issues including overgrown hedges and verge cutting. Pokeridge Corner - some work was done. Fishwick Corner this is still on the list for some work following some serious accidents. I have been contacted by a resident on Church Road about speeding. I have suggested this could be considered as a VAS route but the review has said this is not suitable. FLOODING OLD NORTON ROAD: the residents here asked for my help to get the contractors on site ASAP. There is obviously a fundamental drainage issue here which needed to be rectified. A14-HIGHWAYS AGENCY: I now have a new contact; Caroline Delahanty - caroline.delahanty@highwaysengland.gov.uk and at last the direction sign and chevrons have been re-instated. BUS SERVICE: the new contracts for community bus service have been agreed and for Mid Suffolk area is to be run by ASPIRE. Suffolk County Council will no longer issue timetables so they can be downloaded from www.suffolkonboard.com and printed to be given out or left in public places. LIBRARY: I had a meeting with Richard Fawcett with Alison Wheeler (Suffolk Libraries) about the impact of reduced funding for libraries. I congratulate Thurston Library for the continuing success. I am looking into a possible trip to Kew at Christmas. SCHOOLS: I am of course concerned that the government has decreed that all schools must become Academies, i.e. no longer the responsibility of the county council with no requirement for parent governors. The county council will still have responsibility for school transport and providing school places! Any new housing developments must take into account the need for extra school places. THURSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL: A letter was received from the Secretary of State for Education agreeing to conversion to an Academy. Land and buildings would need to be transferred to the Academy Trust with Rattlesden, Woolpit and Gt Barton primaries. The legal transfer of the land and buildings was completed. BEYTON SWIMMING POOL: with a group of concerned residents who are trying to have the pool re-opened as a community facility we have been in discussion with Marc Rolph business manager at Thurston community college. A business plan has been developed and they are now looking for financial help to get the renovation of the boiler and other work done. CLOSURE OF MAGISTRATE COURTS: there was unanimous agreement to object to the proposal to close the court in Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft.

THURSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE: at the liaison meeting it was agreed to look at the problem of buses and traffic congestion outside the school. Particularly at end of school day. I met with all concerned and it was agreed to ask David Gibbs, at SCC School Transport Department to ask that the busses waiting on Norton Road be contracted to arrive a little later so they can park in the college car park. This has now been agreed so we wait to see if this helps. I am sorry to report that this is still a problem. CHILDRENS CENTRE: I am sorry that the council chose to close the children's centre next to the library but hopefully the good work is carrying on at New Green. GYPSY AND TRAVELLER TRANSIT SITES: the call has gone out for landowners to put forward suitable sites. These still to be resolved. FOOTPATHS: the annual report of the Suffolk Access Forum was given in September. I asked whether SCC would be willing to indemnify local communities in the same way they do for clearing snow, to take on cutting/clearing footpaths. As yet no response! The Suffolk Rights of Way Improvement Plan includes; "developing and managing work to improve health, inclusion, green access through safer routes to school"! DEVOLUTION PROPOSALS: following the chancellors announcement this is going full steam! However there is already a vote against by Cambridge county council. I have grave concern at the idea of a directly elected Mayor who will have so much power with little democratic accountability. All council have to vote on the plan by June followed by some sort of consultation then back to the councils around September with elections for the Mayor in May 2017. LOCALITY BUDGET: I am pleased to have been able to give some support to a project at the College run by a Charity which helps students get into the world of work. VAS SIGNS Hopefully these are now up and running I have used my small highways budget to pay for the posts. These will hopefully reduce the amount of speeding in the village.

6. Report from District Cllr D Haley & Mrs Jewson – *a full copy of this report is available from the Clerk to the Council.*

Cllr Mr Haley was invited to submit his report in which he mentioned that he was the Ward member Thurston, Beyton and Hessett and was again privileged to be re-elected to serve as one of your District Councillors for the above ward in May 2015. The Conservative and Independent Group increased its majority in the council and he was also re-elected as Leader of the council. He has now decided to step down as Leader and not to seek being re-elected as Leader of the Council at the AGM on the 28th April when a new leader will be elected. It was pleasing for us to be able to help all three villages with grants with the locality money we had which although small did manage to support a number of projects that had been submitted for help and a number of those have already been completed. I would like to thank the clerks and parish councillors for their help during the year and look forward to working with you all during 16/17. Devolution - Following weeks of negotiation between Government and local councils and LEAs a deal worth over £1bn for East Anglia was announced in the budget on the 16th March by George Osborne MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Council's Joint Strategic Plan is being refreshed following the election in May last year as the two new administrations wanted to review and update the strategies of the two Councils, in light of key local, regional and national factors that have changed since the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) was developed in 2013/14. New Homes - We have planning consent to build circa. 38 new council homes supported by Homes and Communities Agency grant funding. These are the first houses to be built in a generation and will be completed by the end of 2016/17. Trusted Partner Pilot - Babergh and Mid Suffolk have been chosen by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to participate in a Trusted Partner pilot scheme to identify tenants who may struggle to pay their rent, following the introduction of Universal Credit. The pilot will allow us to make appropriate recommendations for a payment of housing costs direct to the landlord, (known as an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA)). The pilot will last between six and nine months and started in January 2016. Sheltered Housing Review - It has been some five years since this service was last reviewed. People are living longer and we need to make sure that the service we offer meets the needs of residents now and in the future, whilst also providing value for money. As part of the review, we consulted residents to get their views on the service, what they like, what they don't like, what we could do better etc. We conducted 25 separate tenant involvement events with our Sheltered Residents at 22 different locations across the two districts. CIL - In January both councils voted to adopt CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) charging in the districts. Charging will start on 11th April meaning that any planning permission granted on or after this date may be liable to pay CIL. The Infrastructure Team will be providing further information over the coming months and at Parish Liaison meetings with further details on what CIL charging means for communities and how you can take advantage of the opportunities it presents.

Joint Local Plan - We are seeking to develop a Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk (both Councils currently have separate policies) and have briefed Councillors on our intended approach. We have started a detailed conversation with Councillors (the cluster meetings) on how the district wide housing targets may resonate at a local level. This includes a conversation about the impact of growth on infrastructure, facilities and the service improvement opportunities that arise. There will be an ongoing dialogue with Councillors as the plan progresses.

When questioned he confirmed that the Parish Council would be invited to a meeting with the new Spatial Manager to discuss this latter matter further. He also confirmed that prior to any planning applications being approved the current infrastructure would need to be considered along with any constraints to growth. He also explained, when questioned, that a directly elected mayor would be democratically elected and would have combined authority with all districts having a seat on the board and that this was not another tier of government.

7. Report from Mid Suffolk South SNT - *A full copy of this report is available from the Clerk to the Council.*

A written report had been submitted by the Stowmarket Neighbourhood team which now covered amongst others the parish of Thurston. It was explained that the role of the SNT has changed to ensure that they spend more time solving the issues that present the highest levels of Threat, Harm and Risk and are based around four key areas: command engagement; demand management, vulnerability and safeguarding and crime reduction. Each PC and PCSO had been allocated a specific role within these areas. The team and these roles can be viewed at any time on the Suffolk Constabulary website by selecting the Stowmarket Neighbourhood. The Stowmarket SNT had 1 Sergeant; 3 PCs and 5 PCSOs in addition to the PCSO for Thurston. It was confirmed that a report would be produced on a monthly basis that would cover information from the wards in the area covered by the SNT.

THERE FOLLOWED A SHORT INTERVAL DURING WHICH THE LADIES OF THURSTON EVENING WOMEN'S INSTITUTE SERVED REFRESHMENTS

8. To receive an update on the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan - the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Group submitted the following report in which he reminded the meeting that we have continued working on the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan throughout this year with the help from residents who form the steering committee. We have recently completed the Expression of Interest, which is a process within the Neighbourhood Plan, where by Landowners and Developers can put forward parcels of land they feel may be suitable for development at some point in the future. It does not mean all the land that is put forward will be developed, or will be suitable for development. We are currently confirming the criteria, including the views put forward by you the residents at the public meeting and those coming from the current public consultation. The current Public consultation, ends on the 17th April. You can comment, via email or at the office. There is a Council Surgery at the Parish Office tomorrow if anyone wishes to make comments, myself and Richard will be available at this Surgery. As part of the assessment process we will also be looking at land that was not submitted under the NP Call for Sites but which abuts the village settlement boundary. This land might have been submitted to Mid Suffolk under its call for sites in 2014, but as yet they have not shared that information with the Parish Council or NP steering group. Once our professional partners have assessed these sites, we will arrange public viewings of the preferred sites, along with the unsuitable sites and how they were assessed. I must remind everyone again, that No Development, is an option we don't have, our only choice is to have a NP which allows us an opportunity to influence what is built in the village and where. We are also waiting to hear the results of the Objectively Assessed Numbers, which is the number of properties Mid Suffolk expect to be developed in Thurston. Our understanding now is, that these numbers will not be specific to Thurston, but will be as a Cluster of Villages around us. The Cluster is made up of Villages that look upon us as a Key Service Centre for some of their services. These numbers are very important to us to ascertain, whether the current infrastructure can support the number of properties required, So, for us to keep moving forward, until the MSDC figures are released we are putting forward some growth scenarios to a number of infrastructure providers in order for these Authorities to evaluate the impact of housing numbers in Thurston. The growth scenarios we are asking them to look at are the following: Low 200, Medium 400, High 600. Please note these figures are growth scenarios and will be used to find out the stress points on the current infrastructure. As I have said it is an exercise we need to carry out at some point, so we may as well do it now, instead of waiting for figures from MSDC. I'm sure everyone is aware of the Hopkins Homes desire to develop land on Norton Road, and Bovis Homes at Barton Road, I feel we should reiterate, that

Thurston Parish Council and the NPSG have not had any discussion with developers. When Bovis Homes approached the Parish Council last year, we informed them we could not make comments on concept plans. Bovis then informed us, that they would be discussing with MSDC and we would be invited to join that consultation. The next communication we had was at the last Parish Council meeting where we were presented with the concept plan that you are now all aware of. Both Bovis and Hopkins homes have intimated to us that they have been in pre-planning discussions with MSDC, we have asked MSDC for clarification, but we have been informed, It is not possible to divulge confidential information relating to pre-application enquires. We will continue to work on the Neighbourhood Plan. Our first task is to ensure we have the correct assessment criteria in place to assess not only the sites that came from the Expression of interest but also those parcels of lands which abut the settlement boundary. This way we can ensure that we have assessed all categories of land and have ensured that all possible options for the Neighbourhood Plan have been explored. We are hopeful that this will also include those sites that were submitted to Mid Suffolk under their Call for Sites over 2.1 hectares in December 2014. We will then analyse the results from this and present to the residents for their comments. It is then when we start putting together the Draft Plan with policies, which we hope will be ready for consultation to the Village by the end of this year or beginning of next year.

9. Reports from Parish Council Representatives -

a) Thurston Neighbourhood Plan - the questionnaire that was completed last year has now been analysed and the results will now be collated and policies generated to be put into the plan. There was an obvious gap in information for housing, so we are creating a housing needs survey which we hope will be sent out at the beginning of April. This is important to ascertain the type of accommodation the residents and their families will require. More information on this will be sent to everyone, via the Village Postcards.

a) Recreation Ground Trust – Cllr Dashper, Chair of the Trust stated that he was I am very pleased to be able to confirm that since the 2015 Annual Parish Meeting, when I mentioned that we were exploring a number of options for the redevelopment and renovation of the pavilion, we have been able to complete a significant package of works on the changing rooms in particular, improving access to the showers, replacing the flooring and addressing damage to the walls caused by flood damage a few years ago. These works were made possible by accessing a combination of S106 monies held on behalf of the parish by Mid Suffolk District Council and Cllr Otton’s locality budgets, along with Thurston Parish Council covering any shortfall. I am grateful to Cllr Otton for her contribution and to Mid Suffolk for their support in accessing the S106 funds and also to our Clerk Vicky for steering this project from the early stages through to completion. Thanks to the income received from our regular users and that provided by the pre-school, the recreation ground has this year become self-sustaining financially and we start the new financial year with a healthy balance in the bank. With our newly refurbished changing rooms we hope that both the maintenance costs will be reduced and the pavilion will become an attractive option for other potential hirers, generating additional income and helping us to look at other ways to improve and upgrade the facility. It just remains for me to extend my thanks to my fellow councillors serving on the Recreation Ground Trust committee, our caretaker Robert and of course to all our regular users of the recreation ground and the pavilion, including Thurston football and cricket clubs, for their continued support over the course of the last year.

b) Library – Thurston Community Library is one of 44 Suffolk Libraries. Thurston Library Working Group and was set up in April 2011 and the subsequent Friends Group is made up of Parish Councillors, District and County Councils councillors, a member of the College senior team, a representative of the Health and Children’s Centres Team, and members of the community and our librarian. The Children’s Centre was closed as a discrete facility and Suffolk Libraries has taken on the lease with SCC. The Friends Group has supported the library directly by refurbishing the library (including redecorating it and cleaning the carpet) and purchasing mobile shelving that allows for much more flexible use of the space. More recently we have taken on the garden outside the library transforming it into an attractive and interesting space to complement the interior. We have been actively looking at what a library of the future should provide for the community. Events organised during the year included a summer Race Night, a visit to Parliament and the BBC, the first Christmas Tree Festival, and a well-attended AGM that may have been helped by BBC Radio Suffolk’s Mark Murphy being guest speaker. (This year Charlie Haylock will be coming to speak). We sold donated books again in the summer. We have continued to be innovative: we have the first Suffolk Library Minecraft group for primary age pupils and the Ancestry group is thriving; two Friends top up the books in the separate library at Thurst (where you can take out, return or renew any library books you have); for the thirsty, we have installed a drinks machine. An intrinsic part of

how we operate is by joint working. We have worked closely with St Peter's Church and the Parish Council. Future plans: Coming up on 11 June is the Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations and in July a Posh Picnic meal and Rock and Roll Band. bring your drainpipes and mini-skirts; there will be a second Christmas Tree Festival We have great plans to look at what we should provide digitally for the community. We hope to be the leaders of a project of national significance and in the mean-time are making a local start, particularly with primary aged students. We will be marketing the library and the former Children's Centres as spaces available for all sorts of use - appropriate to them being part of Suffolk Libraries. The Parish Council provides funds, on behalf of the village, to support the library and will continue to do so, for which Suffolk Libraries and the Friends Group are particularly grateful. Thanks go to the many involved with the library: to our Librarian, Cathy McDonald, and to the support given by the Parish Council (particularly the Chairman and the Clerk), Volunteers, and County and District Councillors. We are grateful for the support of everyone involved with the library; if you would like to join us, please have a word with me; likewise, if you have any thoughts about what you would like your library to do.

c) Footpaths - Cllr Mrs Service, as the Council's Footpath Officer reported that there was a comprehensive network of footpaths around the village and all well walked. There was a general appeal to all dog walkers to clear up after their pets and use the waste bins provided around the village to deposit bags they have used. If any footpaths signs or pathways need attention, all were asked to contact the Parish Clerk so these matters could be attended to. Suffolk Wildlife Trust has been successful in purchasing land along the Black Bourn Valley at Norton which has been done with the help of public contributions and work has now been completed in this nature reserve and plans are to install a hide and provide car parking. As this site borders on the Grove Farm area in Thurston it adds another interesting and attractive place to walk.

d) Thurston Relief in Need Charity - Cllr Mrs Service reported that although the charities do not make their annual donations to small number of residents in the village due to the removal the unfortunately the re-cycling bins were removed at the end of last year, we were still able to consider and have made payments in the last 12 months. Our approximate income is £750 per annum which is made up from the income of shares, renting out to the Parish Council land in Heath Road for use as recreational area, Wayleave rent and rent of our 9-acre field also in heath Road. The trustees are aware of their duties to make sure that they obtain the best income they can, and this is always on the agenda at their meetings as there is the possibility of developing the land in Heath Road. They had great pleasure in welcoming the new vicar to the group when she took up her new post last autumn.

9. Reports from Village Organisations

a. Thurston Community College - a report was submitted by the Assistant Principal in which she mentioned that Community Voice meetings were held on a regular basis and that these were ideal opportunities to network and share and feed one into the other. These were attended by several groups within the village and worked well on common issues. The College was keen to promote closer links with the Parish Council, New Green and Library and looked forward to closer co-operation. The College felt that it had a good rapport with the community and felt part of the village. There was a recognised need to replicate that in Beyton and the College was keen to work with the Parish Council in Beyton. The issue over buses and congestion on Norton Road was being addressed. The College had been working closely with the Parish Council and had fed back concerns to the bus companies involved. The College had been approached to help support the funding of the PCSO but unfortunately due to legislation found that this was not an option for them. The College was investing in new litter bins for the field and would continue to monitor the issue regarding rubbish. Parking issues and inappropriate parking by staff and parents was being addressed and had involved assistance from the Parish Council and the local SNT. The College had been involved with the Christmas Tree Festival and was in the process of engaging with the community via a Pilot Tea Party for residents of Thurston. The College has also assisted with the issuing of and collection of the Youth Questionnaires for the Thurston NP. A reminded was given that study leave was due to commence for Year 11 and that once they had finished their exams they would be allowed to leave the premises. If there were any issues please let the college know. An invite to help celebrate the Queen's 90th Tea Party on 17th June 2016 would be issued to the community. She also made the meeting aware that the College had applied for and would be given a specially-commissioned Government banner marking 800 years since the creation of the Magna Carta in 1215. Thurston College was the only school in the country to receive such an award and would become the official custodian of one of the 18 banners that was hung at Westminster Hall last year marking the anniversary.

b. 1st Thurston Scouts – the leader of the Scouts reported that the troop was still the largest in the District and County and had grown once again over the past year. A range of activities were provided for 6-14 year olds and that they currently had 90 members. There was a waiting list of 30! There was still a need for more adult volunteers to manage that many children. List of activities accessed by the group included a range of water activities covering Wales, the North Sea and Lackford Lakes. The Scouts had undertaken as part of their work to turn the back of the Cavendish Hall into a garden – so far scrub had been cleared and would be planted up once the tree stumps had been removed. The group had supported the Christmas Tree Festival and had carried out a number of charitable works around the area.

c. Cavendish Hall – the Chairman of the Cavendish Hall reported that the past year has been one of consolidation. The committee has been strengthened and the building, having recently undergone a programme of internal and external repair, refurbishment and redecoration, has received some positive feedback from users. Bookings remain fairly steady but there is spare capacity, particularly for morning and afternoon sessions. We are in the process of reviewing marketing and putting various ideas into practice with a view to taking up some of this spare capacity. A website is also being developed. It is 2 years since the last increase in hire charges, so a review has recently been carried out. As a result, some minor increases have been implemented as from 1 April, but overall the Cavendish Hall continues to offer competitive rates and very good value for money. A modest profit was reported to the recent AGM. A number of proposals for fund raising community activities and events, such as tea dances, a history weekend, cake club, and cheese & wine have been suggested and are being pursued. Procedures for regular maintenance checks and compliance with Health & Safety requirements are under constant review, with the aim of ensuring the building condition is maintained to a high standard, with the comfort and safety of building users in mind. He mentioned that it had been a challenging year financially not least with the loss of the TUF's rent. The hall had been refurbished with the assistance of a grant from County Cllr. Otton's Locality Budget as well as donations from other sources. The hall had been refurbished both inside and out. The current Chairman would be standing down during the coming year as she felt that having overseen three refurbishments she was now due a break! She mentioned that the committee would therefore be looking for a new Chairman and a new secretary.

d. New Green Centre – the Chairman of the New Green Community Trust reported that The New Green Centre continues to be used for a diverse range of activities. There are 44 regular hirers, some of the mains ones being the U3A, Forge Church and various Fitness Groups. Part of the centre is used by the Parish Council to accommodate their offices. We have had several weddings, funerals and children's parties over the last 12 months. We liaise with O Crumbs a local business, who provide hirers with catering facilities (usually funerals). We had a successful November Christmas Fayre with charities and groups using the Centre for promotion and sales which was successful and enjoyable. We are planning the Craft Spring Fayre now due on 1st May. We are also involved in the Queen's 90th birthday celebration. The Thurst café is well liked and used by various groups of young mums and older citizens. The café currently opens on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. We are considering if the hours need to be changed or extended. The crocheting group is going well on Tuesday mornings. There are currently 10 Trustees although we would be open to any new Trustees. We are supported by the Friends of the New Green, who also give their time and provide practical support. We have recently had a lot of heating and plumbing works carried out. We have a steering group which includes members of the Parish Council that is currently consider how we might provide additional recreational facilities on our site. This is a long term project and subject to funding and the necessary permissions. We undertook a village survey in February/March to establish the level of support, we had 248 responses. The results and our outline plans will be on display on the 1st May at the Centre. It is likely that the project would take place in stages. Financially we break even –In 2015 our income was £56k, Expenses £55k. We expect 2016 to be similar. We are grateful to Jill Rood who works as the Centre Administrator on a volunteer basis.

e. Thurston Pre-School –a brief report was submitted by the Chairman of the Pre-School which stated that they had a quiz night arranged in July at the Cavendish Hall and all proceeds will go to the Pre-School.

f. WI Afternoon – it was reported that this was a very successful group with 30 members. There were speakers each month and the group met every 3rd Thursday of each month in the New Green Centre. The previous October the group had celebrated its 25th Birthday. Visits had been arranged including trips to the Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds and Clare Gardens. The group had supported the Thurston Christmas Tree Festival and had enjoyed a pleasant evening during December at which canapes had been served by the menfolk.

g. WI Evening – a report was submitted which stated that we have had another enjoyable year at Thurston WI. We meet every first Thursday of the month at Cavendish Hall at 7.30. We have met here since January 1919 so this year we celebrated our 97th birthday. We had a great party with lots of food, the ham bought from the butchers, the bread bought from the garage and the rest of the food provided by members. We had games and a fun time. We are planning ahead and thinking about our 100th birthday in 3 years-time. We have a few ideas on how we will celebrate. We had our annual meeting of the National WI in June at the Royal Albert Hall, it was the 100th year of the WI so it was a special occasion. The Queen, Princess Anne and Sophie Duchess of Wessex attended as well. Two of our members were fortunate enough to go, the rest were able to see live screening of the event at the cinema. The Queen also hosted a WI garden party held earlier in the month at Buckingham palace and one of our members was lucky enough to attend that. They really enjoyed it despite the huge queues for the toilets!! To share the joy of the occasion our member who attended hosted a garden party in her garden and we had wonderful weather and lovely food. In the summer we went to the Suffolk Punch Trust at Hollesey Bay. It was a very interesting day out, planned and run by our outings secretary and much enjoyed by our members. We have had a variety of speakers over the past year, from a Thai food demonstration to a milliner, all very interesting and organised by our hard-working programme secretary. We had our annual get together in October, with our group of local WI's who make up the Theadwastre group, Thurston afternoon, two from Elmswell, Pakenham, Woolpit, Norton and a new WI, Drinkstone. Our WI is enjoyed by over 40 members, mostly from Thurston, but also from the surrounding villages. The hard-working committee ensure that our evenings and outings run as smoothly as possible and we have our local headquarters at Park Farm, Fornham, to support us and offer many more activities. I would like to thank the committee members for helping to keep our WI fresh, active and up to the minute with national and international affairs.

h. Thurston Primary School – a written report had been received from the Head Teacher in which it was reported that the Spring term was the first term of Thurston Primary Academy. We prioritised the key improvement focus based on historic results and new government initiatives. Our priorities remain improving outcomes in Mathematics, English – in particular spelling and grammar in KS2, and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. Our main priority is to build a strong working relationship with Great Barton, Woolpit and Rattlesden Primary Academies. Headteachers from the four schools have regular meetings to discuss joint school development issues, policies and school to school support. We have started to plan joint staff professional development and pupil projects. We aim to hold a joint Arts Week in June to share art, dance, music and drama with a focus on the theme 'Cats'. Our Year 6 pupils have worked alongside Great Barton year 5 pupils on a Jazz Project led by Pete Letanka, eminent jazz pianist and gifted teacher. Six days of work shared between schools culminated in an exciting and very successful concert at The Apex where the school children played and sang alongside the National Youth Jazz Orchestra. It was extremely well-received and the pupils were very proud of their achievements. We continue to hold class assemblies, Share days with parents and fundraising events both for the school and notable charities. Year 5 pupils have visited the Thurston lunch club and entertained the diners with songs and conversation. We recently celebrated World Book Day with a 'Bring and Swap a book' afternoon, at the same time raising money for St Nicholas Hospice. We feel we have a real strength in community commitment in terms of fundraising, taking advantage of publicised days for national charities.

10. **To receive issues from members of the public present** – there were none raised but a general reminder was given to all to respond to the recent public consultation held by Artisan Planning on behalf of Hopkins Homes.

11. The Chairman having thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and the WI for providing refreshments, and there being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 10.24pm.

Signed..... Date.....
Chairman