

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Office
New Green Centre
New Green Avenue
Thurston
IP31 3TG

Tel: 01359 232854

e-mail: info@thurstonparishcouncil.gov.uk

website: <http://thurston.suffolk.cloud>



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 21st March 2018 in the Cavendish Hall, Church Road, Thurston as prepared by the Clerk to the Parish Council.

The Chair of the Parish Council, Cllr. C Dashper, took the Chair for the Meeting.

In Attendance: Cllrs. Hasler Masters, Morris, Moss, Rainbow, Robinson, County Cllr. Penny Otton, District Cllr. Derrick Haley, Mrs V Waples and 4 members of the public and 2 representatives from Pigeon Development Management Ltd.

1. Opening and Welcome by the Chairman of the Parish Council – the meeting was declared open at 8.15pm and all were thanked for attending.
A statement was read out indicating that, in accordance with the changes in legislation, the public and councillors were permitted to film, record, photograph or use social media to report on the proceedings of the meeting.
A full transcript is available from the Clerk
2. To receive apologies for absence: Helen Wilson, Principal, Thurston Community College; Mrs Lambert, Mr Bayes Co-Headteachers, Thurston Primary Academy; Rev'd Manette Crossman, Vicar of Great Barton and Thurston; Trustees of New Green Community Trust; Cavendish Hall Management Committee; President of Thurston Afternoon WI; Thurston Footpath Warden; Stowmarket SaferNeighbourhood Team; Cllrs. Mrs A. O'Connell, President of Thurston Evening WI & District Cllr. Esther Jewson.
3. To confirm the minutes of the APM of 21st March 2017 – these having been previously circulated were unanimously approved by the meeting.
4. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Parish Council Christopher Dashper - the Chairman of the Parish Council delivered his report and drew the meetings attention to the following:
 - Good evening- this is the Chairman's report on the past year for Thurston Parish Council.
 - My first task tonight is a number of important thank you's.
 - Firstly, to my predecessor Peter Robinson, the previous Chairman of the Parish Council. After a number of years on the council and as Chairman, Peter decided to step down from the role and the Parish Council last summer and he has been a tough act to follow, but I am delighted to say that Peter has recently returned to the council and we welcome him back with his wealth of experience and knowledge of the village.
 - Secondly to all of Thurston's councillors, past and present (in Peter's case both). After a difficult year for the village and the parish, we have 9 dedicated councillors working to try and achieve the best for the village. During the year, councillors Robert Alston, Mike Thomas, David Ames and Jeanette Service have left the council and Ian Hasler and Barbara Morris have joined, along with Peter Robinson returning. My thanks go to the Vice Chairman, Brian Rainbow, for

supporting myself and Vicky, Clerk to the Council and to all the councillors, including Richard Fawcett, Anne O'Connell, David Moss and Jonathan Masters serving as part of our committees and carrying out weekly tasks such as turning or moving our Vehicle Activated Sign between its two sites in the village. Throughout the year councillors have maintained their commitment to the village and their determination that Thurston should provide the best environment possible for those who live, work and attend school here.

- To Steve and Trevor for their efforts to keep the village litter free, functional and presentable.
- Last, but certainly by no means least, my particular thanks to Vicky, our Clerk. Vicky has worked tirelessly to support the Parish Council over the last year, the range of tasks I am sure going above and beyond that of most Clerks in other Councils, even down to editing the Parish Magazine! Vicky has continued to work on the Neighbourhood Plan alongside regular duties and is a vital part of the Council and without doubt the efficiency and success of the Council is down to her efforts. My particular thanks to Vicky for her support to my transition to Chairman during the year.
- Our Suffolk County Councillor Penny Otton and our Mid Suffolk District Councillors Derrick Haley and Esther Jewson support us and have been particularly active in relation to the planning issues facing the village over the last year.
- As you will all be aware, this has been a tumultuous year for Thurston in terms of future development. At the Mid Suffolk Referrals Committee meeting in November 2017, the district council determined to approve 818 new houses for the village. Added to the homes already under construction and those with planning permission but not yet built, this means over 1,000 new homes could be built in the village over the next 10 years. Now that planning permission has been determined, the role of the Parish Council is to influence the development that is coming, to ensure that new homes fit with the character of the village and that facilities such as exemplary new play areas are of the highest standard and that sites have facilities such as suitable cycle paths and appropriate landscaping. The Parish Council is already working closely with some of the developers and stands ready to talk to others as their plans mature. We are also working with Mid Suffolk District Council to address issues with the railway station crossing identified as part of the planning process. A key aspect to help support and manage future development is the Neighbourhood Plan and as the plan enters the final stages of development, we look forward to its adoption to help to ensure that development in the years to come reflects the needs of the village as closely as possible. More on the Neighbourhood Plan later. The Parish Council remains a statutory consultee for all planning applications in the village and as I am sure you would expect the level of approved development is being considered when we review new applications, both in terms of the need of the village and the cumulative impact on infrastructure, such as the roads and junctions.
- Outside of planning and development, we are pleased to be able to support local organisations each year with small donations so that they are able to provide services to support our residents. Organisations supported this year include New Green Community Centre, The Cavendish Hall, St Peters Church with maintenance of the Church Yard, the Village Newsletter, Thurston Library, Royal British Legion, Ixworth Patients Association, MidSuffolk Croquet Club; Mid Suffolk Citizen's Advice Bureau, Suffolk Rescue Accident Service and Tiny Toes Toddler Group. Organisations within the village who provide services to local residents, can apply in writing to the Clerk for a grant and outline the service they provide within the village and what the grant is required for, the request will then be considered by the Parish Council. Requests from organisations based outside the village, regional groups such as the Air Ambulance, may be considered where there is, or has been a benefit to Thurston.

- Thurston Parish Council has a number of responsibilities many of which have a financial implication, including maintaining the village sports, recreational and play facilities and equipment, some street lighting and general village maintenance and litter clearance. The village also now fully funds its own Police Community Support Officer for Thurston, Matt Smith. The combined cost of these services along with the core running costs of the parish council is supported by the annual precept, funded by the Council Tax paid by each household. For 2018/19 the Parish Council share of this will increase by 3.91% or £2.39 per annum. In terms of the parish finances, expenditure for the year is on target. Accounts will be published on the village website once they are completed for the year.
 - The Parish Council office is open every Tuesday and Friday between 9:30 and 3:30 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 at the Library. Anyone can attend the Parish Council meetings and raise an issue or an area of concern in public forum. We also have Council Surgeries once a month where residents can attend and discuss local issues they may have. The public are also invited to attend our planning meetings, usually held twice a month, also at the Library. The dates of all of these meetings are advertised on the notice boards around the village, in the Library and on our website www.thurston.suffolk.cloud and in the Village Newsletter.
 - Another busy year awaits us from April. Key tasks for the Parish Council include
 - Continuing to work to secure the best solution possible to the new developments in Thurston.
 - Supporting the work to complete the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Working with Suffolk County Council to devolve responsibility for some minor highways works down to the Parish Council.
 - Addressing the issue of speeding through the village by fitting a second Vehicle Activated Sign.
 - Collaborating with key stakeholders in the village, such as Thurston Community College, who we worked with closely over the proposals by Suffolk County Council to change the school transport policy in the village.
 - Working with the Skate Park Steering Group to assist them in their efforts to develop a Skate Park in the village in memory of Ben Wragge.
5. To receive a report from County Councillor Penny Otton – County Councillor Penny Otton was invited to submit her report in which she drew the meeting’s attention to the following -
- Obviously, the big story recently was the BEAST FROM THE EAST! I’m sure there were numerous problems with the snow and road closures. Hopefully most were cleared, however there will be a back log for any works that had been scheduled. I met with Mark Stevens, Director of SCC Highways to get a face to face discussion on the highways contract and your proposal to take on some small highways issues. I am sorry this has been delayed for so long.
 - HIGHWAYS - again, complaints about potholes has filled my in-box! The council is borrowing £21million form the public works loan board for highways repairs; I just hope this will do some good. I am delighted that at long last the work was started on Old Norton Road and has now been completed! I contacted the residents following heavy rainfall and I am pleased there was no problem again.
 - FISHWICK CORNER- following yet another very serious accident and a report from Dr Mason, part of the emergency service that attended the accident, I have forwarded his comments to Mark Stevens Director of SCC Highways. They will be responsible for a death here if highways continue to fail to do the necessary improvements.
 - GREAT GREEN- having met with residents and a highways officer a traffic/speed survey has been done. It shows some a rise in speeds. I have agreed to change the white lining and will fund this from my small highways budget.

- **SCHOOL TRANSPORT** - I cannot express just how dismayed we were to see what the impact would have on pupils attending Thurston Community College and the implications for the school. My group called the first cabinet decision into SCC's Scrutiny Committee, but I was disappointed that they gave very little recommendations back to the cabinet. Since then there have been several workshops and I must congratulate Helen Wilson for the presentation she gave and organised at the college. This included children, parents, governors and parish council chairs. A petition with more signatures than any other ever was presented to the council. At that meeting of the council I again stressed just how devastating these changes would be. On Thursday 22nd March a motion to hold an extraordinary full council meeting will be put where all councillors, rather than just the 9 cabinet members, will be able to vote and make a recommendation to the cabinet in July.
 - **PLANNING** - again, you have been faced with an over whelming number of applications. I have tried to work with the parish council to resolve some of the infrastructure issues, including highways, the station and the proposal for a new primary school.
 - **MID SUFFOLK PLANNING REFERRALS COMMITTEE OF 1ST NOVEMBER 2017** - I sent a letter to all members of the committee plus Cllrs. Hayley and Jewson setting out my concerns in respect of highways, education, health, and the station.
 - **LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE** - I wrote to support the parish council's request that any decisions are called in by him. I am sorry that this was been declined.
 - **BUSINESS RATES RETENTION** - Suffolk chosen as pilot scheme for 100% Business Rates Retention. Suffolk is one of only 10 pilot areas announced. Both the county council and the district/borough councils will be part of the scheme. However, until more information is released from the Department for communities and Local Government, it is not possible to say exactly how much additional income this could generate into the Suffolk system. Hopefully this may bring more money back into the county.
 - **LOCALITY BUDGET**- I am pleased to have been able to help towards the cost of new lighting at Cavendish Hall and the new "shed" for the Croquet club.
 - I feel I must congratulate and thank your parish council for the amazing work they have done in dealing with so many large planning applications and thank them for their help over the past year.
6. To receive reports from District Councillors Derrick Haley & Esther Jewson – a written report had been submitted from District Cllr. Haley on behalf of both Councillors in which he reported on the following items:
- **Relocation** - Mid Suffolk District Council along with Babergh District Council closed both of their offices in Needham Market and Hadleigh and moved into Endeavour House, Ipswich the home of Suffolk County Council. This was as big operation to move all the staff of both council's into just one office , it was however achieved with very little disruption. This also meant a big change for councillors because we also meant we were also operating from just one office. The councils did however open two public access offices in Stowmarket and Sudbury we are expecting more to be opened during the coming year. We do have a number touch down points for staff to work from. The whole idea is that we become a more agile council by using more technology.
 - **Electoral Review** - We have also been having an electoral review by the Local Boundary Commission for England on the number of councillors that is required to carry out the council's business. The new draft recommendation out now for consultation and it recommends reducing the number of from the present number of 40 down to 34. In this ward it would mean that Hesselton is removed and replaced by Tostock, with no other significant local changes here in Thurston.

- **Housing** - Many hours of this past year have been spent by myself, Esther and many of you on the planning applications for new housing here in Thurston. In an effort not to rake over old ground suffice to say that two full planning referral meetings (one in July and one in November) have been heard thus far with consultations with Highways, Education and Network rail still rumbling on as we write this today.

- **Locality grants** - on a brighter note both Esther and myself were happy to award our locality Budget is based on Thurston, Beyton Parish Council the New Green Centre and a local youth organisation. We are really pleased that this will be put to good use in order to benefit people here in Thurston.

- **Finance** - the Council approved its Medium Financial Strategy and the 2018/19 Budget at the council meeting on the 22nd February. The final General Fund is based on a council tax increase 0.5%, an increase of 81p per year for a Band D property to support the Council's overall financial position. There are no changes to the Sheltered Housing utility charges and are kept at the same level.

The Mandatory decrease of 1% in Council house rents, equivalent to an average rent reduction of 83p per week, as required by the Welfare Reform Act has been implemented. The Sheltered Housing Supported people cost of £3 per week and Service Charges have been increased by £5 per week for each scheme (set at £4 cap per week last year) meaning a net increase of £2 per week for tenants. This will reduce the subsidy by £30k. In principle, the Right to Buy receipts should be retained to enable continued development of new council dwellings. As part of the four-year settlement in 2015 the government indicated that a tariff would be payable to central government of £337k in 2019/20 to redistribute the core funding and council tax generating capabilities to other councils across the country based on spending needs. The Secretary of State has confirmed that the government will be looking at options for dealing with this and will be consulting on proposals before the next year's settlement. We would like to thank the Clerk and the Parish Councillors for working with us during the past difficult year and that we continue to work together for the benefit of our communities during the coming year.

7. To receive a report from the Mid Suffolk SaferNeighbourhood Team – having previously submitted their apologies for non-attendance, the following report was read out to the meeting:

The following crimes were recorded for the period 17th March 2017 to 20th March 2018 : Vehicle Crime Theft -12; Criminal Damage – 14; Theft Other – 8; Other – 9 – total 50 which is an increase of 5 over the previous year. Whilst there has been an increase in 3 of the 5 categories, crime in Thurston remains significantly lower than most towns and villages in Suffolk.

Your SNT Officers - Since April 2016 there has been a significant change in neighbourhood policing in Suffolk and especially that of the role of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT's). After the implementation of the Suffolk Local Policing Review on 1st April 2016, Safer Neighbourhood Teams were re-organised in order to work closer with partner agencies such as Mid Suffolk County Council, Environmental Health, Housing Associations, Mental Health and Social Services in how we can combat community concerns and issues throughout Suffolk. As a result of the review, the decision was made that PCSO's would no longer work beyond 6pm for both weekdays and weekends in order to work better with partner agencies. Specific points of contact roles (SPOC's) were created to deal with day to day issues which affect all communities in Suffolk. These roles replaced the traditional geographical responsibilities.

The following officers are now your point of contact dealing with the various issues for the Stowmarket locality:

Supervisor for Stowmarket SNT - Sgt Lisa Vaughan 1550

Mental Health and Domestic Violence – PCSO Matthew Brown 3090

Youth – PCSO David Harvey 3098

ASB & Crime Reduction – PCSO Abigail Durrant 3287

ASB & Licensing – PCSO Philip Brill 3210

Vulnerable Communities – PCSO Karen Murton 3067

Fully funded Thurston role – PCSO Matthew Smith 3204

With each of these SPOC Officer roles the fully funded officer for Thurston can look for assistance in tackling a specific incident which they would oversee. Police officers on the safer neighbourhood teams will still cover day time and evening time duties but they could be asked to cover for response officer's duties depending on staffing levels.

With the recent news of Norfolk Constabulary deciding to remove all Police Community Support Officers beginning the 1st April 2018, understandably concerns were raised if Suffolk Constabulary would do the same. As at this present point in time Suffolk Constabulary has decided to not follow Norfolk in getting rid of their Police Community Support Officers however it is important to stress that the constabulary is still facing the real challenges of a reduced budget by central government in the next few years and the role of Police Community Support Officers will be continually reviewed.

Fully Funded PCSO - in the new financial year of 2017 it was decided that Thurston Parish Council would make the PCSO role a fully funded position, the Thurston fully funded PCSO role is attached to the Stowmarket Safer Neighbourhood Team, as the stations at Elmswell, Needham Market and Debenham have now closed meaning the Stowmarket Safer Neighbourhood team now covers the whole of Mid-Suffolk. Although the Safer Neighbourhood Team and Response Teams work in Stowmarket the public inquiry desk is no longer open and members of the public are encouraged to use either Bury St Edmunds station, go online to the Suffolk Constabulary website or contact 101 to report a crime or with any other enquiries.

Since 1st January 2017 PCSO Matthew Smith 3204 has been in the role for Thurston, the fully funded role requires the officer to help out with enquiries to do with crimes, such as taking on house to house / CCTV enquiries, reassurance visits to victims, tackle anti-social behaviour concerns and provide crime reduction advice in the village as well as provide inputs at both Thurston College and Thurston Primary School. The officer reports to the parish council on a weekly basis about any crimes or issues raised to the police by members of the public which may be beneficial for the parish council to be made aware of as well. The officer will also report general patrols undertaken in the village.

In July 2017 PCSO Smith was part of an operation with other members of the safer neighbourhood team and response officers which stopped the production of a large amount of cannabis being produced in a premise within Thurston which is still under investigation. This was part of a week of action by the police to tackle the increase of drugs which has come into the county predominantly from organised gangs in London.

Most recently PCSO Smith has begun to process of under taking a street survey to all the residents in Thurston to allow residents to report any concerns or issues they are facing to the police but also to alert any other agencies as well. PCSO Smith also attends the councillor surgery meetings to give a chance for residents to raise concerns they have which could be a police matter.

8. To receive an update on the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan – The Co-Chair of the Thurston Neighbourhood Plan presented his report in which he drew the meeting's attention to the following:

This process has been underway for quite a few months and years, but the end is in sight. Over the last 6 months the group has concentrated on getting together all papers that will inform the Neighbourhood Plan - housing, transport, history, local context, infrastructure, spatial strategy, environment, etc. It is anticipated that a final draft will be produced by Easter. The Parish Council will then be required to carry out a six-week consultation and a copy of the draft Neighbourhood Plan will be sent out to all residents. Following this all comments will be reviewed, and

changes made where errors and omissions have been verified. The Neighbourhood Plan will then be sent onto MSDC and they in turn will carry out a consultation with statutory consultees for a 6 weeks period. The Parish Council will however send a draft 'heads-up' copy to MSDC for their comment during the 1st consultation phase. Following the six-week consultation by MSDC the plan will then be submitted for independent examination for approximately 8 - 12 weeks. The Parish Council and MSDC will then need to respond to any comments made by the Independent Examiner. After this the community referendum will take place. As such it will be a further 36 weeks before it goes into law and is an established NP. At the referendum 51% of those who turn out need to vote in favour of the plan to allow it to be laid in law as a legal document. Thanks offered to all who have supported Graham and Richard and Peter with the work.

There followed an interval during which refreshments were provided by the ladies of the Evening Women's Institute, to whom the Parish Council is very grateful.

9. To receive reports from Parish Council Representatives -
- i. Recreational Ground Trust (304946) - The trust is responsible for maintaining play equipment, the Recreation Ground & Pavilion at the Recreation Ground on Church Road. The Committee also looks after the Play equipment & grounds at Heath Road & Thedwastre Park (New Green). Equipment & areas are checked on a monthly-basis and any problems identified are reported at Monthly Parish Council meetings. An annual check is also carried out by an independent assessor. All play equipment is well used in particular Thedwastre Park. The recreation ground & pavilion are used by the Football Club & the Cricket Club, depending on the season. As well as the public using the main areas of the recreation ground, use is also made of part of the area by the Primary School for sporting activities. The pavilion is also used two mornings a week during term time by French for Tots & with occasional hirings by clubs from within the outside of the village. The committee hope that additional hiring's can be found in the future. During the last year main expenses apart from grass cutting & ground maintenance of all three sites has been minor works to the pavilion. The Recreation Ground Committee meets four times a year and all meetings are open to the public. The next meeting will be Wednesday 28th March 2018 in the Community Library.
 - ii. Library - The Friends of Thurston Library continue to support and promote the Library in close conjunction with Suffolk Libraries, with whom they have an excellent relationship. Apart from the core offering of the libraries, there is a full programme of activity each week, month and over the year.
 1. Weekly activities - there are regular activities in the library every day of the week:- Monday: Watercolour group; Tuesday: Minecraft and sewing bee for children; Wednesday: Sewing bee for adults; Thursday Code Club & Ancestry; Friday Sewing bees - adults in the morning and children after school; Saturday: Cycle maintenance on the first Saturday of the month from June to October and a sewing bee is planned; Sunday: Lego club.
 2. The Parish Council holds its full meetings and some committee meetings in the library each month.
 3. Events organised during the year - the Friends of Thurston Library have organised a full programme of events during the year: - A 3-week positive ageing course in March; Charlie Haylock talk on 4 May - An eccentric look at Suffolk; Mediterranean supper on 15 July with St Peter's Church; Local author Pauline Manders gave a talk on 25 May; BBC Radio 4 Any Questions broadcast at Beyton Sixth on June 16 at the invitation of the Friends of Thurston Library; Bicycle maintenance: June to October on the 1st Saturday of each month with Sustrans and Cycling UK; The Friends supported the Summer Reading Challenge; A Wine-tasting on 1 September; A visit to Cambridge University Press on 16 November; Sewing Bees started to run from November; The AGM was held on 7 December

with Linda Scoles giving a talk; The Christmas Tree Festival was held with St Peter's Church. Entertainment took place in the library: Tricky Ricky, Button pairing and Christmas Crafts were all a success; The Valentine's Make and Bake on 14 February; Promotion of the Thurston Loop Cycle route with Sustrans took place in March.

4. Looking ahead - the Friends of Thurston Library are planning a programme of events for the year. The first event will be a concert by VOCA held with the Cavendish Hall Committee. We will know in April if we are able to take part in the East Anglian Collaboratory, an opportunity for the community, schools, churches and businesses to solve real life problems. We will be taking part in an Arts Council National Project. Thurston has been asked to join with Bury St Edmunds Library as we are very active in the community. Professional artists will visit libraries to involve young people aged 11-24. A group called Metal which works with young people are leading the work. (Metal say: we work to provide the catalyst that can transform the potential of people and places through great art and inspiring ideas). With the generosity of a locality grant from Councillor Haley and Councillor Jewson, the Friends of the Library are purchasing six iPads for loan and use with the above projects.

5. The usage of Thurston Library - our librarian, reports: 'Thurston Library over the past 5 years has become a busy thriving place where customers come in to not only borrow books but to sew, research family history, paint, and learn how to repair their bicycles. Our enthusiastic younger visitors attend our Minecraft, Lego, Coding and Sewing Clubs each week. We have become a model for other small libraries in the County hoping to emulate our success with these innovative activities and we are frequently asked for advice in setting up these Clubs. Participation in these activities has resulted in an increase in our visitor figures, particularly over the past year and an increase in new membership. Although book borrowing from libraries is declining nationally, Thurston Library bucked the trend in 2017 as borrowing figures were slightly up. Many of these activities are facilitated and supported by the Friends of Thurston Library and a group of dedicated volunteers. Thurston Library's monthly Friends' meetings are attended by an average of 16 which is the highest attendance figure across Suffolk Libraries.'

6. The Library's continuing success - thanks go to our librarian Cathy McDonald for her leadership of the library, to the Parish Council, District Councillors Derrick Haley and Esther Jewson and County Councillor Penny Otton for continued backing, to the Friends of Thurston Library, and to the community too for its support.

iii. Thurston Footpaths - the parish council appointed Footpath Warden, having previously submitted her apologies, drew the meeting's attention to the following report:

Thurston residents are very fortunate in having an excellent choice of footpaths to walk, either from Meadow Lane through to Sheep Lane and further on to Pakenham and then on to Great Green and back down part the Church; from Heath Road on to East Barton and the Mere coming back past the pumping station round by Nether Hall and back via Mere Lane. Suffolk Wildlife are busy re-routing the Blackbourne River that runs through the Water Meadows on the boundary of Norton and Thurston walkers will in time be able to walk a circular route from either Coopers Wood on the Tostock Road end of the village or by going down Wynards Lane or Gypsy Lane round to Norton and back again. The proposed closure by Network Rail on TH5 has not yet be done and just be aware if you are still crossing the line on TH11 the stile is extremely high. The permissive footway that comes out just under the Railway Bridge by the Fox and Hounds continues to the bottom of Old Heath Road and is used regularly by dog walkers, this is very evident by the amount of dog waste left by the owners. This is particularly noticeable along the stretch leading to Fishwick Corner and as this is a permissive path, we are allowed to use this courtesy of the landowner

and ought to be considerate in our use of it. The only way to can make sure these footpaths are passable is for members of the public to either inform the Clerk or the Footpath Warden, Mrs Jannette Service on 01359 230763 if there is a problem with brambles or a missing sign so that we can make good these items.

- iv. Thurston Tree Warden – the Parish Council appointed Tree Warden was invited to submit her report in which she drew the meeting’s attention to the following: Suffolk Tree Wardens have been caring for the trees of Suffolk for nearly 30 years. Suffolk was one of the first counties to set up a network of parish Tree Wardens. Throughout Britain, District Councils are finding they no longer have resources to support and train parish Tree Wardens, thus District Councils in Suffolk have had to withdraw their support for Tree Wardens. In response to this and with the support of Suffolk County Council the Suffolk Tree Warden Network was established. Their aim is to have every parish supported by a Tree Warden. The first event to celebrate and re-launch Suffolk Tree Wardens will take place on Saturday 14th April at Denham near Eye. I hope very much to attend this all-day event. During the afternoon there is to be a guided walk in David Mitchell’s ‘wonderful’ Redlingfield Wood. The Neighbourhood Plan will have an Environment Policy document which will help to add protection to Thurston’s green spaces, trees and hedgerows. The new developments will be required to plant more trees and shrubs and create green spaces but also should retain, where ever possible, our current trees and hedgerows. Thanks were offered to Mrs Morris for her work in advising the Parish Council on matters relating to trees and environment.

- v. Thurston Relief in Need Charity – (210828). The representative from the Thurston Relief in Need Charity was invited to submit her report and drew the meetings attention to the following:

The Charity dates back to 1662 and in its present form since 1986. The objectives of the Charity are to provide items, services or facilities for persons resident in Thurston in need or hardship. During 2017 two Thurston residents received a cash payment from the Charity. Further to the proposed options for the Charities 9-acre field on Heath Road, as was notified in the Thurston Newsletter and on the village web site, the Charities agents have engaged in pre-application discussions with MSDC. A presentation of proposed site plans has also been presented to Thurston Parish Council building committee in October 2017. Matters are very quiet at the present! The Charity will remain in existence following any changes to the site and the Trustees feel they will be in a better position to meet its objectives. The Trustees continues to welcome requests from Thurston residents who find themselves in financial hardship.

10. To receive reports from Village Organisations

- i. Thurston Community College – The Principal of Thurston Community College, having previously submitted her apologies, asked that the following report be submitted to the meeting:

I am immensely proud to be the Principal of an exceptional educational establishment, dedicated wholeheartedly to giving every young person the very best start in life. We firmly believe that every child matters. We are relentless in our pursuit of outcomes of the highest quality for every Thurston student. Whether success is measured by academic achievement, sporting excellence, brilliance in the performing arts or in creative design, Thurston Community College will deliver. Students are assured of acquiring the skills and qualities they will need to live a happy and positive life. Our students are taught to believe in themselves, to take ownership of their lives and to aspire to fulfil their dreams. We encourage every student to set high expectations for themselves, supporting them to set their own goals, inspired by the success of others within our College community.

At this time of year, I am compelled to mention our Year 11, 12 and 13 students who are readying for their GCSE and A Level examinations and assessments. I

have a perfect view point from my office of the Year 11 students lining up to go into their exams in the Sports Hall during exam time; their behaviour is always exemplary. I do hope that they each feel they had an opportunity to demonstrate all the hard work and commitment that they have put into their studies and I look forward to being part of their celebrations when they receive their results later this summer. During a recent interview process, a long serving member of staff was asked by a candidate: "What is it like to work at Thurston Community College?" The member of staff replied: "No two days are ever the same; the College is full of energy and is constantly changing and evolving." My experience confirms and contradicts this statement. On the one hand, there is always news of outstanding achievements by our students (and staff), highlighting the diversity of opportunity afforded by our College community. However, also contradicts the statement by demonstrating how consistently our students excel and complete these outstanding achievements. The list of triumphs last year seems endless and are not limited to student success either - I myself achieved a lifelong ambition by receiving a Blue Peter badge; being nominated by a student for being 'an amazing and inspirational Principal'! I was both thrilled and honoured in equal measure.

Achievements -

There are far too many to mention today but here are just a few of the achievements from the last year that we are proud of. Students Max Berry & Alex Richardson won the Energy category at the 2017 Teen Tech Awards with their E-Den, an innovative project for affordable and ecological micro-homes to help tackle the world's housing crisis. They collected their award from HRH Prince Andrew at Buckingham Palace. Another group of gifted Design Technology students took part in a competition held in conjunction with Smart Garden Offices in Thurston to design an ergonomic working desk for the interior of a Smart Garden Office which could be manufactured from MDF. The winner Isabelle Turpin saw her design made by the company.

Thurston Sixth hosted a lively debate with the BBC Radio 4 - Any Questions team presented by David Dimbleby. A fantastic opportunity for us to showcase Thurston Sixth, Beyton Campus and one that was well attended by all members of the community. Student Ruby Last picked up both The Rotary Club Service above Self Award and Suffolk County Council's Raising the Bar Award just before leaving Sixth Form and heading off to University and ex-student Phoebe Mercer received the prestigious Duke of Westminster Award and become the 'This Girl Can Ambassador'. Sixth Form student Luke Askew won the Aldeburgh Young Musicians, Young Composer Award, whilst a group of Year 10 students organised and presented the B Festival music event in the College auditorium in memory of their friend Ben Wragge and raising funds for the skate park in Thurston village. Our exceptional Performing Arts teams orchestrate productions that rival the quality seen in the West End. Our shows have won NODA (National Operatic and Dramatic Association) Awards for the last 3 years. This year's production of Oliver! achieved outstanding reviews and record-breaking ticket sales. In our second year of partnership with Jardine's School in Shanghai we welcomed their staff and students along with students from Yu Hua School in Shanghai. Activities including a leadership course and co-curricular projects were enjoyed by all who took part in this wonderful exchange programme.

Sporting Success

Our sports teams are highly successful, not only in the trophies and titles they win, but also in the quality of experiences provided for the amateur and the elite to train together and to challenge and support each other.

We have many students representing both County & Country in their sports: Thomas Clare (Swimming); Olivia Coe (Hockey); Oliver Griggs (Cyclocross); Fern McCarthy (Golf); Maisie Squire (Gymnastics); Aidan Gibson (Hockey); Connor Tweed (Jujitsu); Alana Finch (Karate); Jessie Sloan (Equestrian); Hallam de Cort

(Rugby) Aleksandra Popova, Esther Little & Kenzie Day (Basketball) to name just a few. Esther Little also picked up the Young Sports Personality of the Year Award at the West Suffolk Sports Awards in 2017.

In 2017 our girls handball team were crowned England Handball U15 National Champions and the same team are now competing in the U16 category. Our U19 netball team were crowned Suffolk Champions. We also have a brilliant sailing team who recently took part in the Suffolk Regatta with much success against a number of private schools in the area.

We were also incredibly fortunate to have had Andy Murray's Men's Wimbledon trophy visit the school. What makes the visit to Suffolk even more special was that Thurston were the only secondary school in the whole country to have had a trophy visit and the only venue selected from across the whole of the Eastern region where the trophy had been seen last year.

In addition to these outstanding individual and team achievements, the PE Department were awarded the 'School Games Bronze Mark'.

Exam Results

Students at Thurston had another successful year of examination performance in 2017. Thurston Sixth had another strong year with 100 students sitting A levels with 79 per cent of students achieving A* to C grades, down just one per cent on last year and an overall pass rate of 98 per cent. Of the 260 pupils at Thurston Community College, 63 per cent achieved the grade four or above benchmark.

Charity Fundraising

Students support many good causes over the year, most recently the Little Princess Trust with over £1700 raised; 15 students and 1 member of staff had their hair cut on stage in front of a cheering audience. Hair is donated to make wigs for children with cancer. Next Stop Symi, a charity based in Hoxne, Suffolk, benefited with donations of books to help Syrian refugees in Greece.

Student Support Officer Matt Boreham took 6 teams to the Swimathon this year raising money for CLIC Sargent, East Anglia's Children's Hospices and local charities and Jane Cooper, also a member of the Student Support Team, is raising funds for St Nicholas Hospice throughout this year.

The B Festival was organised by Year 10 students raising over £1,000 for the Ben Wragge skate park and the College Council arranged a non-uniform day and bake sale for Children's Cancer & Leukaemia Group raising over £1300. The Poppy Appeal contributed nearly £300 to the overall Thurston area collection.

Thurston Partnership

Our relationship with the Thurston Partnership goes from strength to strength, providing transition activities for year 6 students joining us in September. These include the very popular Tuesday Club, our Sports Festival and STEM festival are well received. Primary school students also visited us for a Christmas Carol concert and had a sneak preview of the College production of Oliver! New this year is a Maths project working with eight of our primary schools to coordinate Teaching, Learning and Assessment of Maths within those schools.

Extra-Curricular

The College remains a strong supporter of the Duke of Edinburgh Award with 37 students achieving their Bronze award last year and currently over 85 student have signed up for the National Citizen Service. Many students have also achieved their CREST awards this year, with 68 receiving their Bronze Award and 19 receiving their Silver.

We continue to support our students with many opportunities to meet with employers, Sixth Form Colleges and Universities at our Next Steps Events. Careers & Apprenticeship Weeks have recently taken place. Our Work Experience week during July of 2017 saw some 318 years 10 students out on placement.

Clinical Psychologist, Dr Beth Mosley joined Thurston Community College to encourage our students to talk openly about their emotional wellbeing and mental health. We strongly believe that a culture of openness will not only

contribute to educational success but will furnish our young people with a much better chance to lead a fulfilled life as a successful adult. We are extremely proud to be at the forefront of providing mental health support in this way.

Friends of Thurston College

The launch of Friends of Thurston College has been very successful. A number of events have taken place and are already helping to improve the courtyard areas of the College for students to use/study in. A stall was taken at the Beyton Village Fair and the Friends held a Festive Family Fayre at Beyton at Christmas time.

Thurston Sixth

It has been a fantastic year at Thurston Sixth; not only are our students on course to achieve excellent A Level results but there have been many incredible personal and group achievements.

The students have a wealth of destinations mapped out for next year, ranging from studying at Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, LSE, Ravensbourne or at some of the world's best Media, Drama and Art Colleges; taking part in national and international sports programmes; gap year adventures; undertaking social care related courses at UEA and the University of Suffolk; new and higher level apprenticeships, to Veterinary Medicine, Midwifery and Medical Schools and much more. These are exciting times.

Community

The ATC are building a brand-new building in the grounds of the College to house 863 (Thurston Squadron) and the community sports facilities in the Sports Education Centre continue to be well used by all.

The College would like to thank the Parish Council and all other members of the Community Forum for their continuing support within the community.

- ii. **Thurston Primary Academy – having previously submitted their apologies, the Co-Headteachers of Thurston Primary Academy asked that the following report be submitted to the meeting:**

Thurston Primary Academy continues to thrive, with 203 pupils on roll. Our teaching and support staff remain stable with continued opportunities for professional development. At present we are training two members of staff for Mastery Maths which we will then cascade to other staff. We hope the impact of this funded training will be evident in future results for our school. We are also training two further teaching assistants to become Higher Level Teaching Assistants. One of our Teaching Assistants is a Forest Schools Lead, taking classes and groups of children to our small wooded area to learn in the outside environment.

New perimeter fences have been fitted with gates locked with push button access codes. The gates are opened at 8.35 and 3.20 to allow parents access.

The co-headship arrangement between Mr Bayes and Mrs Lambert is in its second term. Mrs Lambert leads the school from Monday to Wednesday with Mr Bayes in charge on Thursday and Friday. The arrangement is working well with staff and parents able to talk to both members of the senior leadership team.

The SLT and governor representatives have had an initial meeting with Suffolk County Council Infrastructure team (education) and the proposed new site for the school has been discussed. We believe the school will be ready in 2021 and hope that the pupils will be fully involved with the building project and design of their school environment.

Our priorities for this term are to raise the focus of science, to promote reading for pleasure and to promote e-safety for pupils and parents in school and outside of school hours. We are also celebrating active learning with PE clubs and a 'Skip2BeFit' initiative which has proved very popular with our children. Our record skips so far are 259 skips in 2 minutes with Year 6 leading the way!

- iii. **St Peter's Church – the Vicar of St Peter's Church, having previously submitted her apologies, requested that the following report be presented to the meeting:**

Just to say that St. Peter's is the Parish Church, serving all the people who live in the parish. Anyone who either lives in the parish or has previous connections to the parish can be baptized and get married in the St. Peter's and have their funeral service there and be buried in the Churchyard. Thanks to a generous donation we have the new churchyard which we hope will be landscaped and prepared soon as the extension to the old churchyard has only got a few spaces left. We were delighted to have a great turnout for the Civic Service last year and numbers for festivals like the Flower Festival, Christmas, the Carol service and Christmas tree festival show that many people value traditions even though they don't come to Church regularly. Many people support the Church in other ways, either through financial donations or by helping with the work in the Churchyard, doing flowers, cleaning and other duties. We're also a Benefice with Holy Innocents' Church in Great Barton and last Sunday we started a Benefice Café Church which takes place at the Church Institute in Great Barton. We start with croissants, pain-au-chocolate and tea or cafetiere coffee followed by a short worship accompanied by the worship group. Despite the cold we had a great turnout and the next Café Church will be on 15th April. At St. Peter's we have an informal Praise+Prayer@7 time at The Rock on 2nd Sunday - at 7pm. Updates on Church news can be found on our website

<http://www.greatbartonandthurston.org.uk> and on the Church Facebook pages. The Church is open every day and we welcome visitors for informal visits or at our services.

- iv. Cavendish Hall - The Chairman of the Cavendish Hall Management Committee had submitted his apologies and asked that the following report be submitted to the meeting:

The situation regarding use of the hall remains much as it was a year ago, with weekday evenings mainly filled, but with several daytime sessions still available for booking. There has been some increase in one-off bookings, particularly over weekends, and we continue to receive enquiries from local organisations. With a view to filling some of the spare capacity, we will be holding an open day on Friday 23 March, an event that has been advertised in and around the village. One additional regular booking would enable us to balance the books. Hire charges have been reviewed recently, and a modest increase of £2.00 per session will apply as from April this year. Regular bookings for local organisations, etc; will cost £31 per half day or evening session for adults, and £25 for children. Despite this increase, the Cavendish Hall still offers very competitive rates with other local venues. Reference was made in last year's report to a grant from the Parish Council for replacing fire exit ironmongery, and this work has now been completed - our thanks again to the Parish Council for their support. Jannette Service stood down as Parish Council representative in the summer, and we welcomed David Moss as the new representative. Another project successfully completed during the last year is the replacement of the main hall lights with LED fittings, which will reduce running costs and reduce the likelihood of damage as we were experiencing with the diffusers on the old fittings. We are very grateful to Derrick Haley, Mid Suffolk District Council Chairman, and Penny Otton, our Suffolk County Council representative, for donating grant money from their Locality Award Budgets to cover the cost of this work. The annual work session in August saw a number of tasks undertaken to keep the building in good condition; other jobs carried out recently include the provision of new emergency lights over exit doors, and an extra light at the foot of the external staircase. Income has been boosted by two successful fund-raising events. In September we welcomed local sculptor Sean Hedges - Quinn, who gave a very entertaining talk on his work, using the Captain Mainwaring figure as his focal point. In October Bury Lions kindly returned to stage another Pig Race Night, which provided a lot of fun and a good profit. Plans are in the pipeline for a number of other events in the near future, including a farm shop talk on 23 March, a local choir performance on 28 April to be staged in

conjunction with Thurston Library, and the Blackheart Orchestra will be coming on 11 May. Over the coming year we intend to look at options for the installation of solar panels to further reduce running costs.

- v. **New Green Centre** – The New Green Trust Chairman had thanked the Chairman for the invitation to attend the annual meeting but as it was on the same night as the trustees meeting they would not be attending this year. As a way of update the centre continues to be well used by those in the village, and the current challenge is the heating system. They have replaced the boiler but the control system etc needs updating. They have appointed a new administrator, following the retirement of Jill Rood.
 - vi. **Thurston Evening W.I.** – the President of the Evening W.I. had thanked the Chairman for his invitation to the above meeting but was unfortunately unable to attend and had asked that the following report be brought to the attention of the meeting – Thurston W.I. meets in the Cavendish Hall on the 1st Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. It has met there for 99 years and is looking forward to celebrating our centenary next year. It has over 40 members from Thurston and surrounding villagers. At the meetings they usually have a varying range of interesting speakers or activities for the members to enjoy. Last Summer they held an afternoon tea event in the garden of one of its members, went to Wroxham and had a lovely boat trip and this year they had two outings planned, one to Rushton Lakes and the other to Ely Cathedral for a flower festival. They have a craft group that meets in people houses once a month for a ‘knit and natter’ session. This year they have supported village events by catering for 100 people at Derrick Hayley’s inauguration service. They had a stall at the New Green Christmas Fair and placing a tree in the church for the Thurston Christmas Tree Festival. All these things would not be possible if it wasn’t for the help and support of our small, hardworking committee.
 - vii. **1st Thurston Scouts** – this is a thriving organisation and has groups in all age ranges - Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. A number of new leaders have come forward to help, but more are also being sought as it is not possible to meet the demand from the village and the surrounding villages. There are not enough leaders to create a separate group in each of the groups to allow progression through all of the divisions. Leaders are dedicated individuals they cover not only Mondays and Tuesdays for the clubs but also provide many activities at weekends and during the holidays.
11. **To receive issues from members of the public present**
 - Most issues have been brought up at Parish Council meetings and although members of the public are always welcome it is disappointing that, so few attend the meetings.
 12. **The Chair closed the meeting by thanking once again every one of his colleagues for their support this year, the speakers from the varied organisations around the village, along with the County & District Councillors. He also thanked all for attending the night’s meeting. Finally, he thanked the ladies of the WI for once again serving the refreshments at the interval.**
 13. **Date of next meeting – to be confirmed but anticipated April 2019.**

Signed **Date**.....

Chairman of the Parish Council