



THURSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 18th November 2024 in the Conference Room at the Thursford Exhibition

Present: Cllr S. Eckworth (Chair), Cllrs J. Bolam, K. Crompton, R. Garrett, G. Pointer (Vice Chair), and Parish Clerk – K. Harris, Cllr J. Coles (from 24/77), 3 members of the Public

24/75 Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

24/76 To consider apologies and reasons

Apologies were accepted by All for Cllr Wilkes.

24/77 To. Co-opt a new Councillor to the Parish Council and sign the Declaration of Office

John Coles gave a brief introduction and was Approved unanimously as a Cllr. He signed the Declaration of Office and joined the Cllrs.

24/78 To receive declarations of Interest and request for dispensations in any of the agenda items

There were none.

24/79 To Approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9th September 2024.

The minutes were Approved by all and signed by Cllr Eckworth on a Proposal by Cllr Pointer and Seconded by Cllr Garrett.

24/80 Matters arising on the Minutes (for information only), not included on the agenda

Cllr Bolam asked about a Police Speed Check on The Street – Cllr Eckworth has contacted the local Beat Manager and she will arrange for a car to visit as a deterrent.

Cllr Bolam asked about clearing the ditch in Clarks Lane as this has not yet been done – Cllr Bolam will speak to Mr. H Cushing about this and about the hedge which is not yet cut.

Cllr Eckworth reported that she had heard from NARS regarding Defib and CPR training. A Saturday morning in January or February was suggested as a potential date. Thornage PC are also known to be interested – the Clerk will follow this up. As neither Parish has a Village Hall, Cllr Eckworth will investigate Hindringham Village Hall as a potential venue. A resident will send Cllr Eckworth contact details. NARS have suggested a £5 donation per person, but this is not an absolute requirement.

24/81 Open Forum for Public Participation

- i. Receive reports from NNDC Cllr Butikofer, NCC Cllr Aquarone

NCC Cllr Aquarone – No report had been received.

NNDC Cllr Butikofer had sent reports in October and November which contained the latest updates on Devolution – discussions are ongoing, Secon Homes Premium – District Councils want a 50:50 split or will refuse to collect it, Fakenham Swimming Pool – no final decision made, Toilets – ongoing discussions with private partners. Local Plan – further consultation on proposed changes, primarily to do with Housing.

Receive report from local Police Beat Officer - No report has been received. Cllr Eckworth will send her the dates of PC meetings for the coming year.

ii. An opportunity for members of the public to raise questions or concerns

A resident expressed concern about 5 vehicles now stationed on the old Sugar Beet pad at the far end of Clarks Lane, with 2 more vehicles inside. Cllr Bolam will investigate

24/82 Planning matters.

i. To receive an update on current planning applications

6 Clarks Lane – Pending consideration.

ii. Planning Applications since the close of the agenda

There are none.

24/83 To receive an update and Approve any Action on the Tyre Bundling Plant in the Parish of Fulmodeston with Barney

Concerns about noise and safety issues emanating from the site have increased significantly due to a large increase in the number of tyres and lorry movements on and off the site. It is also understood that there is an application with NCC (as a site dealing in waste) to expand the site. Lorries are blocking access to the bus stops on both sides of the road while waiting to access the site and blocking The Street and damaging the verge when backing onto the site.

Residents have contacted VOCSA, NCC and NNDC.

All Approved for Cllr Eckworth to NCC and to request that Fulmodeston with Barney PC do the same, for Cllr Eckworth to write to the owner of the site about the escalation of works and for the Clerk to contact NCC Highways regarding safety issues on a Proposal by Cllr Bolam and Seconded by Cllr Pointer.

24/84 Financial and Governance Matters

i. To Approve the Cashbook and Payments List and note actual spending against budget

The balance in the Community Account, balanced to the 11th October Bank statement, was £5,961.01 and £6,383.73 in the Deposit Account.

Receipts since the last meeting: £2,500.00 (2nd Precept payment)

The following payments are awaiting Approval: Fakenham Prepress - £33.00 (Newsletter), C. Harris - £174.00 (Payment for Cemetery Course for Clerk – Approved at the last meeting), D. Dann - £35.00 (Internal Audit), G J Bolam - £950.00 (Annual charge for Grass cutting). This was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Pointer and Seconded by Cllr Crompton.

ii. To note the Local Government Pay Award for 2024

Government Pay Scales had received a flat amount pay rise for 2024, which amounted to 5% for Thursford PC

iii. To receive an update on proposals to digitise Parish Council meetings and operations

The Deputy Prime Minister has announced that the Government is keen to allow local councils a choice regarding holding remote meetings. Emergency powers were granted during the pandemic to allow this, but those powers ended in May 2021. There is a consultation open until 19th December and everyone is encouraged to comment. The cost implications were considered and how this could be paid for. The Clerk read a report from Wales where this already happens: *“We have a TV set up in the corner of our chamber with a laptop plugged in via a HDMI cable. We use Zoom and have a camera positioned on the wall for a view of the whole chamber which also connects to the microphones.”*

This was noted

iv. To review and Approve the Reserves Policy

There were no questions and the Policy was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Bolam and Seconded by Cllr Garrett.

v. To Approve the Budget and Precept for the 2025 – 26 Financial Year

The Clerk explained her rationale for increases in the budgeted figures as likely increases in costs. She informed them that a Notice will need to be prepared for the cemetery giving contact and other information to visitors and that, due to the increases in the Living Wage she recommended that the Clerk be moved up a Spinal Point on the Local Government pay structure. Cllrs reviewed the budgeted figures on the Spreadsheet and Report and unanimously Approved a Precept of £5,300 on a Proposal by Cllr Garrett and Seconded by Cllr Pointer.

vi. To Appoint Mrs Di Dann as the Internal Auditor for the 2024 – 25 Financial Year

This was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Bolam and Seconded by Cllr Crompton.

vii. To receive an update on the purchase of an acrylic notice for the Village Green.

A resident reported that this should be ready by Christmas.

24/85 To receive an update on funding for the Defibrillator

Cllrs discussed whether the Defibrillator code could be shared openly with residents and whether the defib would be insured if the code was publicly known. It was agreed that no action would be taken at this stage regarding making the code more available. Cllr Eckworth will check with the resident who monitors it.

The Defibrillator needs to be replaced within 2 years.

An email has been received by residents from a charity offering a contribution towards the purchase of a replacement Defibrillator. This is being checked with the Community Heartbeat Trust by the resident who monitors the Defibrillator.

24/86 To receive an update on the Village Green (pampas grass and tree planning)

The pampas grass has been cleared. Cllr Bolam will update the next meeting with any further progress.

24/87 To consider the planting of wildflowers in the vicinity of the Church and Approve any action

The objective is to increase biodiversity in the area. This would involve cutting down some trees to open up the canopy and planting of wildflowers.

Cllrs noted that professionals would need to be employed to remove trees.

Concern was expressed that the PC did not own the land being discussed.

A resident will investigate whether it would be possible to get a grant for such work as the PC had no rights over the land. The result of these enquiries will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

24/88 To consider comments on flying the Ukrainian Flag and Approve any action.

An email and telephone calls had been received by the Clerk from a commuter through the village regarding the flying of the Ukrainian flag.

Cllrs agreed that the next Tablet would seek views from residents about which flags to fly. Cllrs Eckworth and Garrett will compose an entry for the Tablet.

The Chair reminded the meeting that the Flag had been stolen a few months ago and that if this happened again the theft would be reported to the police.

The Chair will compose a reply to the email, thank him for his communications and inform him that Residents are to be asked for their opinions on the flags to be flown from their flagpole.

24/89 To receive an update on the website

The Clerk informed Cllrs that both hosting and the domain name were now the responsibility of the Parish Council. She thanked Cllr Garrett and the resident for their help in getting this resolved.

24/90 To receive an update on Highways Matters

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that most incidents were resolved more quickly if they were reported on the NCC Highways portal.

Cllr Eckworth informed Cllrs that a car had been propelled through the hedge at the bottom of Station Road and protruding onto the B1354 at about 7am on Saturday morning (16th). No-one was hurt. The police were involved.

Cllr Eckworth will inform Highways so they may check the hedge

24/91 To request contributions for the Tablet before 26th November**24/92 To note any correspondence**

The following correspondence has been sent to Cllrs since the last meeting:

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| Police & Crime Commissioners Consultation | NCC Closure of Heath Lane 31 st Oct-4 th Nov |
| NNDC Sarah Butikofer reports | Email re flying of Ukrainian flag |
| Free tickets for Thursford Show | NPTS courses & Updates |
| Fakenham Police Priority meetings | NNDC consultation on Local Plan |
| Affordable Housing report | |

24/93 To note the dates of meetings for 2025:

Mondays, 7pm – Provisional dates - 27th January, 17th March, 12th May, 15th September – TBC November

The PC have permission to use the Pavilion if disabled access is required.

Annual Parish Meeting – Provisional date Monday 7th April 6pm at St Andrews Church

24/94 Any Other Business – for information only

Cllrs unanimously thanked Thursford for the offer of free tickets to see the Thursford Show this year.

The Clerk informed Cllrs that Thursford Parish Council had been required to provide data online for the Business Register and Employment Survey 2024 to the Office of National Statistics this year.

Cllr Eckworth asked if any Cllr had given permission for the addition of red paint to the Arch. No-one had been asked. This was noted.

24/95 To close the meeting – There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed

Date