



## THURSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

### The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in the Conference Room at the Thursford Exhibition

**Present:** Cllr S. Eckworth (Chair), Cllrs J. Bolam, K. Crompton, K. Drake (Vice Chair), G. Pointer, R. Wilkes, Parish Clerk – K. Harris, 4 residents

#### 1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 2. To consider apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies were accepted for NCC Cllr Aquarone, NNDC Cllr Butofiker.

#### 3. To receive declarations of Interest and request for dispensations in any of the agenda items

Cllr Bolam declared an interest in item 22.

#### 4. To **Approve** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September.

These were agreed by all and signed by Cllr Eckworth on a Proposal by Cllr Pointer and Seconded by Cllr Drake.

#### 5. Matters arising on the Minutes (for information only), not included on the agenda

Cllr Bolam asked about the remaining £250 in the Project pot. Cllr Eckworth said that SAV could apply for a further grant, but part of the funds may also be used for the 'phone box, replacement pots on the Green and other community projects.

#### 6. Open Forum for Public Participation

- i. Receive reports from NNDC Cllr Butofiker, NCC Cllr Aquarone if attending

NCC Cllr Aquarone had sent a written report:

Telephone Lines – Cllr Aquarone is offering to give a talk to communities on the decommissioning of traditional landlines and replacement with a digital system; Flood alerts – Cllr Aquarone has been working with agencies in areas where there has been flooding recently and notes that Government money is required for the area.

Cllrs decided to try to attend a meeting on telephones held in a local venue.

NNDC Cllr Butofiker had sent a written report.

She is Chairman of the Council for this year. Her Charity for the year is the 'Sir Norman Lamb's Coalition of Young People'. She suggested that businesses look at the 'Invest North Norfolk' initiative. The Council passed 2 motions in support of Blakeney Surgery. She also mentioned papers to be discussed at the next Council meeting on Council Tax discounts and Emergency phones along the North Norfolk coast.

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

A resident reported on the drainage works near Balls Lane – this is reported under item 12.1

#### 7. To receive an update on planning matters

- i PF/23/1806 – Erection of 2-storey side/rear extension – 2 North Lane, Thursford,- application withdrawn. Cllr Drake has suggested to the applicant that he contact NNDC Cllr Butokifer as he was dissatisfied with how the planning process has dealt with his application.

Planning Matters since the close of the agenda

- ii PF/23/2456: 2-storey replacement dwelling following demolition of existing bungalow, Church View Cottage

Similar plans for a 2-storey building had been approved in 2011, but not progressed. The building had originally been 2-storey. The PC supports the application but would like the following condition added to the planning application: no parking of contractors' vehicles on the triangle to the Church or the roadside in Church Lane or Heath Lane as the road is too narrow. This was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Pointer and Seconded by Cllr Drake.

## 8. Financial and Governance Matters

- i. To Agree the Cashbook and Payments List

The balance in the Community Account, balanced to the 13<sup>th</sup> October Bank statement, was £3,214.00 and £6,334.72 in the Deposit Account.

Receipts since the last meeting: £100 Bank compensation.

The following payments are awaiting Approval that have been made since the last meeting 6/10/23: Fakenham Prepress - £33.00 (printing of The Tablet); 17/10/23 Community Heartbeat Trust - £56.34 (Defibrillator electrodes); G J Bolam - £850.00 (Annual Grass cutting payment); C. Harris - £329.46 (Reimbursement for purchase of the Grit Bin £134.96 and the Dog Bin £194.50), 19/10/23: NNDC - £20.25 (Fees for Uncontested Election.

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

The Clerk informed the meeting that the annual Local Government pay award backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 had now been agreed and this increased her salary by £1.00 per hour.

- ii. To Approve the budget and Precept for 2024 - 25

The Clerk explained how she had drawn up the budget and where the funds had been allocated. It was noted that funds for the Lychgate need to be maintained.

She recommended a Precept of £5,000. This is an increase of 10% on the previous year and will add £4.69 to the annual Council Tax bill for a Band D household, making the annual Council Tax portion for the Parish of Thursford £46.90 (for 2023 – 24 the annual sum is £42.55). This was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Drake and Seconded by Cllr Pointer.

- iii. To receive an update on the Barclays Bank Account

Cllrs Drake and Crompton have taken a second Proof of Identity to Barclays Sherringham Branch as the Barclays hubs are not provided with any stamps to allow them any official verification of identity. This has all been sent to the mandate team, but no confirmation has yet been received.

The Clerk escalated the issues with the KYC team as this has been rumbling on for over a year and each time they have confirmed that all is resolved, another letter restricting the account arrives a couple of months later. She has now been informed that the PC Bank Account is now with the Historic Accounts Team and should be resolved this month.

There have been 2 complaints with Barclays. £100 in compensation was received by the PC in October and a letter arrived on the day of the meeting informing the PC that the second complaint was still being investigated.

- iv. To Approve the appointment of the Internal Auditor for the 2023 – 24 Financial Year  
Mrs Dann was Approved by All as the Internal Auditor for the 2023-24 Financial Year on a Proposal by Cllr Drake and Seconded by Cllr Bolam. The cost of the IA will be £35.

- v. To review and Approve the following policies: Risk Management, Lone Worker, Reserves  
These were Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Drake and Seconded by Cllr Crompton.

**9. To consider what the Parish Council can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the Parish**

The Clerk summarised the PC duties under the Act and some of the recently produced draft action plan that was relevant to the PC. This agenda item will be reviewed at each meeting.

It was proposed to produce some information about this for the website in the Spring to go on the website – this will be discussed at the next meeting.

**10. To receive an update on the website**

The new website is now operational. The Clerk is now updating the PC section of the website. The resident maintaining the website has asked for wildlife and local contributions to be sent to be added to the website.

**11. To review and Approve flags for the Village Flagpole**

It was agreed that the flagpole would continue to fly the Ukrainian flag as before. A replacement flag had recently been purchased. The PC noted that there were differing views on the flags to be flown in the village.

**12. To receive an update on Highways Matters**

The dog bin is now sited and is being used. The Clerk has received confirmation that the waste collectors have been informed. Cllr Drake has purchased some liners for the bin.

The 30mph signs on the Street have now been replaced.

i. To receive an update on the drainage works near Balls Lane

As a result of her FOI enquiry to NCC Highways, the Resident has been informed that the drainage works cost £25,000 more than budgeted. Cllrs and residents were not sure how much impact the works will have on the flooding and the squares need to be regularly cleared out. This will be added to the next agenda for an update. It is the responsibility of NNDC to clear gullies.

A further concern is potholes forming near the works. Cllr Eckworth recommended that residents contact NCC Highways online on their "Report a Problem" website where they receive direct notification of action – this, in addition to the reports made to Aylsham Depot by the Clerk.

**13. To receive an update on Thursford Cemetery**

Cllr Pointer has sprayed the brambles in the Cemetery and a Working Party will be arranged in the Spring. The date will be agreed at the next PC meeting. Cllr Pointer will try to arrange a trailer.

The diseased Ash Trees are on the border with the Pit which is owned by the District Council. The Clerk will contact the Tree Officer at NNDC.

**14. To receive an Update from the Volunteer Working Party**

The Telephone Box will be renovated in the Spring: it needs repainting and replacement windows. The budget is £100. Cllr Wilkes' details will be added to the website as contact for the Working Party and a poster will be produced.

**15. To note any correspondence**

The following correspondence has been sent to Cllrs since the last meeting: Town & Parish Forum agenda; NPTS Cllr Networking sessions; Highways visit; NCC online budget consultation; NNDC Cllr Sarah Butikofer October report; LGA Pay award; Thursford Show free tickets..

**16. To request contributions for the Tablet be sent to the Clerk before 29<sup>th</sup> November**

A Tablet will be published at the very beginning of January with PC news and advertising the souvenir Tablet.

**17. To Approve a colour edition of the Tablet: Thursford’s past in on photos**

Residents will be encouraged to lend photos and this will be produced in March -Approved by All on Proposal by Cllr Bolam and Seconded by Cllr Crompton.

**18. To note date and location of the meetings for 2024.**

The following provisional dates were agreed:

Parish Council Meetings – Mondays January 22<sup>nd</sup>, March 18<sup>th</sup>, May 20<sup>th</sup> (Annual Parish Council Meeting); September 9<sup>th</sup> and November 18<sup>th</sup>.

Annual Parish Meeting – Monday March 11<sup>th</sup>

**19. Any Other Business – for information only**

Concerns have been expressed by Cllrs and Villagers about speeding. The Chair will contact the new Beat Officer and ask for support.

The Clerk has received a call from the Repurposing Task Force for the Methodist Church who would like to arrange a meeting with the PC. Cllrs Bolam and Eckworth agreed to meet.

The Chair expressed thanks to the Thursford Collection for the free tickets to the Show offered to local villages and for the use of their Conference Room as a venue for this meeting.

**20. To consider excluding the public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the confidential nature of the items to be discussed (1. Personnel; 2. Grass cutting contract).**

This was Approved by all on a Proposal by Cllr Pointer and Seconded by Cllr Drake

**21. To Approve an amendment to the Clerk’s contract**

It was agreed to pay the Clerk for an additional half hour per week with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023.

This was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Pointer and Seconded by Cllr Drake

**22. To Approve the contractor for the 3-year Grass cutting contract for 2024 - 2027**

3 contractors had been asked to tender for the contract.

Tenders were received from 2 contractors with Tenderer A giving 2 different prices depending on the number of cuts. Cllrs reviewed the 3 options and decided to accept the tender from Tender B as it was cheaper than that of Tender A and better value for money for the PC

**23. To close the meeting – There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.37pm**

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Signed

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Date