



THURSFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 6th March 2023 at 6:00pm in Thursford Methodist Church

Present: Cllr S. Eckworth (Chair of the Parish Council), Parish Clerk – K. Harris,
14 Residents

1. Welcome and apologies

Cllr Eckworth welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for coming out on this freezing evening. Apologies had been received from 1 resident and NCC Cllr Aquarone.

2. Approve minutes of the meeting held on 11th May 2022

There were no questions at the meeting and these were approved as a true record of the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting and signed by the Chair.

3. Receive the Annual Report

Cllr Eckworth gave the Annual Report.

I am giving this report as I approach the completion of my first year in the Chair at Thursford Parish Council.

A Parish Council exists to serve the community in the villages for which they have a responsibility, and to support local organisations and to maintain local facilities.

This last year:

The Memorial Plaque for Covid was presented to the Parish Council and is now located on the Green, underneath the Village Sign, thanks to Chris for doing this.

The Parish Council joined local villagers for a party, celebrating the late Queen's Jubilee and paid for a commemorative Tablet in colour to mark the event.

The work on St Andrew's Church to make it into a Community Hall for the village was completed and now functions under the remit of the SAV committee and we are receiving a report from them later this evening, also reports from the allotments and other local groups.

We have reviewed a number of planning applications during the year, including the Exception Housing Scheme proposed for land adjacent to Station Road, to which the Parish Council submitted a formal objection. The District Council refused this development and the Parish Council have not heard of any further plans for this area.

I would like to thank all residents who have volunteered their time for the village over the past year – for specific activities mentioned above, but also for more regular activities, such as managing the website, raising the flag, the annual litter pick and for delivering the printed copies of the Tablet.

I would also like to express thanks to all Councillors for their efforts over the previous year.

4. Receive Reports from other organisations represented

Thursford Assist – Report given by Lance

Thursford Assist was started by 4 people trying to help people in need in the village. Fridge magnets with the team's telephone numbers were produced for the first year, and calendars for the second. They had also produced a list of Trusted Traders. Covid curtailed the original idea, but the aims of the group continued:

Short-term, emergency help. This has included helping when someone is ill with dog-walking or shopping, minor repairs, such as mending a gate or replacing a hard-to-reach lightbulb for an elderly resident.

The group would now like to go round the village in pairs and remind them of the original purpose and find out who is really in need and how to help.

The group would like to recruit additional volunteers. Contact the group for more information.

Allotments – Report given by Di

Despite advertising vacancies, it has been difficult to fill the site.

The Committee has spoken to the Landowner and it has been agreed to amalgamate the 4 allotments and for the remainder of the site to become "set aside"

SAV – Report given by Linda and Jeremy

The group's aim is to encourage the use of St Andrews as a community space. The group first met in February 2022 and the first event was a Ploughman's lunch. Events were also held to celebrate the Jubilee, 2 Film Nights were held, a Mexican Supper and a Quiz at the Chequers. From July 2022 a monthly coffee morning has also been held on the first Saturday of the month, to encourage residents and visitors to come. These have been well attended and thanks go to the volunteers who donate cakes and edibles. Funds are used for heating, lighting and towards the costs of worship.

Plans for the year to come include a Ploughmans on 15th March, the Open Gardens on 11th June and a Murder-Mystery event on 15th July.

The Open Gardens brings money and visitors to the village. The gardens are spread out all around the village and the Thursford Collection is providing car parking and will allow those coming to visit the Collection for free.

The Group are reconsidering the film nights because the Church is too cold in the winter for a 2-hour film and the heaters cause technical issues with the screen.

The Chair mentioned the Parish Council plans for an Afternoon Tea to mark the **King's Coronation** on Monday 8th May, along the same lines as the Jubilee event in 2022. The Parish Council will liaise with SAV.

Fuel Allotment Charity – Report given by Chris

This dates from the Enclosure of Thursford Common on 7th June 1833 as compensation to those villagers who would suffer hardship by losing their access to the Common.

The current situation is that rent comes to the Charity from renting out the Common and the Charity provides small grants to help cover winter fuel costs and in an emergency for people in the village to relieve hardship. In addition to fuel grants, the Charity has provided funds to cover requests for wheelchair access and a contribution to taxi fares for emergency medical

treatment. Usually there is approximately £1,800 available, last year this was topped up by an additional £4,000 from the Norfolk Community Foundation.

Applicants need to contact one of the Trustees for a grant application form and an advert is usually placed in the Tablet as winter approaches.

Parochial Church Council (PCC) – Report given by Bill

The Parish and Parochial Councils were separated in 1894. The PCC is legally responsible for the Church and its contents and to support the vicar and the broader needs of the Church.

James, the Vicar, retired last year and there is no incumbent in post, although Robin is providing temporary support and regularly attends the SAV Saturday coffee mornings in addition to providing monthly services. He is developing a group of retired priests to help, and Lance and Chris have been appointed by the Bishop to be able to conduct simple services at the Church. The PCC have 5 years to decide (along with the 5 other linked parishes) whether they wish to financially support a full or part time vicar in the future.

The Church is Grade II star listed and is in constant need of maintenance. Every 5 Years the Diocese funds an architect's inspection and report on the state of the building (the last was completed 18 months ago). This produces a list of required repairs. This highlights that there is a possibility that the Church Tower is no longer sound, so a structural engineer has been engaged to ascertain the seriousness of the problem, which may well lead to the need for a repair project.

There are 2 sources of funding available to the Church: firstly visitors to the Church and the local community; secondly applying for grants. The Church (as an organisation) will not contribute funds to repairs. They will need to apply for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other grant bodies if major repairs are required, but the PCC noted that such grants generally required some form of funding from the local community.

5. Open Forum: Public Opportunity for Questions to Councillors, comments from Electors/Members of the Public

The Chair thanked everyone for their reports.

She asked if there were any questions for Councillors, or any comments from the Floor.

Chris informed the meeting that he was investigating rebuilding the website and considering changing the host company so that delegated individuals will also be able to make amendments to the site. He would like it to be more interactive and perhaps have a blog.

Chris and the Parish Clerk will liaise on the next stage.

In response to a question on Grant Applications to the Parish Council, the Clerk reported that these which will be considered at the May meeting.

8-week closure of the road at the junction of Balls Lane – Karen informed the meeting that she has requested with Highways a sign to Thursford be located off the A148 into Little Snoring. She has also contacted Serco to ensure the bins are emptied.

A resident requested that the Parish Council investigate the wi-fi cabling work that is being undertaken around the village.

The Chair stated that this would be on the agenda of the meeting next week which all are welcome to attend.

6. Close Meeting

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.05pm

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Date