



THURSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present: Cllr S. Eckworth (Chair), Cllrs J. Bolam, K. Crompton, K. Drake (Vice Chair), G. Pointer and from minute 24/22 Rachel Garrett, Parish Clerk – K. Harris, 4 residents

24/19 Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

24/20 To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Apologies were accepted by all for Cllr Wilkes (work) and for NCC Cllr Aquarone, NNDC Cllr Butofiker.

24/21 To co-opt a new Councillor onto the Parish Council and sign Declaration of Office

Rachel Garrett was co-opted onto the Council by unanimous vote. She signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the Cllrs.

24/22 To receive declarations of Interest and request for dispensations in any of the agenda items

There were none.

24/23 To **Approve** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 22nd January 2024.

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

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

The Clerk had contacted NNDC Cllr Butikofer about the Sustainable Communities Fund. She confirmed that there was currently no funding available for this.

24/25 To receive an update on the website and to consider an option to upgrade to a premium site

The resident who looks after the website gave a short presentation –

Two things make a website successful: content and locating it to find that content. Due to the long email address the new website cannot be found. Thursford.org has been used by Thursford Village for 10 years and the SAV team believe the loss of this URL is causing them an issue. The cost for upgrading is £108 + the cost for the Domain of currently £18.98 every 2 years. He believes that Google cannot find wix sites.

It was agreed by All that the village and PC website should stay as a single entity.

The PC pay for the website. It was agreed that full ownership should be in its name – this will be facilitated. This will allow the PC to reclaim VAT on the costs.

Cllrs agreed that the Precept should not be increased to pay for the cost of the website. The Chair suggested that this cost could come from the fund allocated to Community costs.

The resident will make a duplicate copy of the site and run the two sites in tandem for a short while.

The Clerk and the resident will get together to sort out the administration. The upgrade to a Wix-Light site was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Pointer and Seconded by Cllr Bolam.

A resident left the meeting.

24/26 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 which was summarised by Cllr Drake:

Bank Hub – A site is to be found in Holt and shared by banks who will offer full banking facilities for the hours they are in situ; Liberal Democratic Cllrs are opposing a reduction in the Minimum Income Guarantee; Flooding – budget proposals include proposing hiring an additional Flood Risk Officer; A Cost of Giving fund of £200,000 is to be proposed to ensure unpaid carers are not penalized for giving up their time; Park & Ride Transport hubs are proposed to allow people to drive a few miles to out of town locations and use this to access town centre locations.

NNDC Cllr Butofiker had sent a written report which was summarised by Cllr Drake

Council Tax changes – NNDC will increase by 2.99% and NCC by 4.99% (the maximum allowed); Several discretionary services, including the Sustainable Communities Fund, have been suspended; Flood Reduction: the EA have announced 20% cuts in funding; Holt Bank Hub - NNDC support this and will expedite any full planning application for this purpose; Planning Appeals Delays are now at 58 weeks; Biodiversity Net Gain – from 12 Feb all large developments will have to deliver at least 10% net gain, this will also be required for small sites from 2nd April; Offshore Windfarm Construction Traffic – details have now been released by Orsted of large loads being driven through the area from now until December

- ii. Receive report from local Police Beat Officer, if attending

The new Beat Officer was not at the meeting but her contact details have now been circulated and will be put onto the Noticeboard.

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

A resident asked for information about the Village Archivist. Cllr Bolam will contact him to see if he still wishes to continue in this role.

A resident commented about the water coming off the field and flooding Clarks Lane – this has been an issue for over 40 years and it has not been possible to solve it – the issue being that the field is higher than Clarks Lane. The issue is currently exacerbated by the excessive rainfall this year and the field currently being temporarily closed to walkers for use as a diversion. As Parr's Wood is also temporarily closed there is nowhere in the village for dog walkers to go.

The following actions were agreed:

Cllr Pointer will speak to the Landowner to see if anything can be done to ameliorate the situation in the summer in time for next winter. He will also request that both areas are not temporarily closed at the same time again in the future.

Cllr Eckworth will speak to NCC Cllr Aquarone to ask him to walk the area to see if he can find funds to help.

It was noted that a longer-term solution would be to raise the height of the lane, but unlikely that the funds could be found to do this.

24/27 To receive an update on planning matters.

- i. To receive an update on current planning applications

Pending Consideration - 2 North Lane; Approved – Brambles, The Street and 10 Station Road.

- ii. To Approve a response to:

PF/24/0410 - Two-storey extension and replacement of the existing windows & doors; other external alterations, Driftend Farm, Walsingham Road

It was Approved unanimously to Support this Application on a Proposal by Cllr Pointer and Seconded by Cllr Crompton.

iii. Planning applications since the close of the agenda
There have been none.

iv. To receive an update on Lynden House – empty property on The Street
This was reported to the Empty Home Team at NNDC by the Clerk on 23rd January. There has been no response received since confirmation of the receipt of the form.

24/28 Financial and Governance Matters

i. To Agree the Cashbook and Payments List

The balance in the Community Account, balanced to the 13th February Bank statement, was £2,916.16 and £6,334.72 in the Deposit Account.

There have been no Receipts since the last meeting;;

The following payments are awaiting Approval: Norfolk Parish Training & Support - £55.00 (2024-25 Subscription); Fakenham Prepress - £60.00 (Colour Souvenir Tablet); C. Harris - £345.20 (Salary January-March); HMRC - £86.40 (Tax on Salary); C. Harris - £66.00 (Expenses January to March); C. Harris - £5.75 (Reimbursement for stamps).

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

ii. To receive an update on the Barclays Bank Account

Barclays have stated that it is not a concern that they have intermittently continued to address bank statements to an officer they were informed had left the Council's employ by 2020. The next step is to contact the Ombudsman.

iii. To Approve £100 towards the cost of 2 Replacement Planters on the Green

This was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Bolam and Seconded by Cllr Drake. The Clerk will liaise with the resident.

iv. To Approve payment of £25.50 as 20% contribution to the Clerk attending online "Risk" training session and travel to and cost of the NPTS Spring Seminar

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

v. To Approve the following Policies: Code of Conduct. Grants

The Code of Conduct was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Drake and Seconded by Cllr Bolam, Grants was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Drake and Seconded by Cllr Crompton.

vi. To note the Risk Assessments for the Litter Pick and Churchyard Working Party

These were noted and Cllr Bolam had a copy.

vii. To receive an update on the website and to consider an option to upgrade to a premium site.
See minute 24/27 (above)

24/29 To consider any action on the Village Green (pampas grass and tree planting)

Cllr Bolam is trying to ascertain ownership of the piece of land and will keep the PC updated.

24/30 To receive an update on the Polling Station

No update has been received from NNDC.

24/31 To receive an update on Highways Matters

Cllr Drake has reported the blocked drains in The Street; Cllr Bolam has sent in a report about Clarks Lane; Cllr Eckworth reported that the lines on the A148 near the Crawfish have still not been painted.

Cllrs agreed that they would continue to send reports to NCC about all issues.

24/32 To note any correspondence

The following correspondence has been sent to Cllrs since the last meeting: Hornsea 3 – Abnormal Loads; NNDC Planning Roadshows; Fakenham Police SNAP meetings; NNDC Armed Forces Covenant; King’s photo portrait; police priorities; Little Snoring Road Closure; Hindringham Rod road closure; NNDC Cllr February report; Invite to security briefings; Rural Business awards; Fakenham Police poster; Coastwise survey; Bin collection changes.

24/33 To note the date for the for the Annual Parish Meeting, Monday 13th May, 6pm at St Andrew’s Church - Local organisations are invited to attend. SAV have offered the venue at no cost and tea & coffee will be served.

Annual Parish Council Meeting, 20th May, 7pm - the Conference Room, Thursford Exhibition.

Provisional dates for later in the Year:

Parish Council Meetings – Mondays 7pm - September 9th and November 18th. Location - the Conference Room, Thursford Exhibition

24/34 Any Other Business – for information only

Cllr Bolam updated the map for the litter pick and the Parish is well covered.

A resident is to put together a working party for work in the Church: he will put an advert in the next Tablet.

The Clerk updated the PC on a webinar about the digital telecoms switchover: this is now scheduled to happen before end of 2025 and is unlikely to be extended due to the ageing analogue infrastructure. Telecare and other vulnerable customers will receive additional support including a battery back-up system. Anyone without a broadband link will be provided with a broadband connection which will connect the phonenumber (but support no other gadgets); it should be possible to plug most modern phones straight into the digital system.

Cllr Eckworth thanked the Clerk for getting the Tablet out in time for the March Working Parties and thanked all those who had contributed photographs.

24/35 To close the meeting – There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.34pm

Signed

Date