

THORNAGE PARISH COUNCIL

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The minutes of the Thornage Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd September 2025 at 6.30pm at All Saints Church, Thornage.

Present: Cllrs Dan Earp (Chairman), Teresa Anderson, Jerry Cox, Peter Hammond, Lisa Moor and Nigel Watchorn, Kerry Harris (Clerk), NNDC Cllr Andrew Brown, NCC Cllr Michael Dalby, 1 resident

25/49 To welcome those present to the meeting and to consider apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

Apologies from Cllr Pearce were accepted by All

25/50. To receive Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda and to consider any requests for dispensations

There were none.

Cllr Moor informed the meeting that she is now a Trustee of Thornage Hall.

25/51. To Approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st May

Cllr Earp requested would be changed to could in 25/41 ((vii)). This was agreed. The minutes were unanimously Approved on a Proposal by Cllr Anderson and Seconded by Cllr Cox.

25/52. Matters Arising

Cllr Moor requested further follow-up with NCC Highways in respect of 25/36 (ii) that there is a missing sign restricting long vehicles at the Holt end of the B1110.

25/53. Open Forum for Public Participation

(i) NCC Cllr Dalby

Cllr Dalby has sent a written report – Norfolk Community Fund: each County Cllr has a fund of £5,000 for community projects across their divisions; Local Government Reorganisation: Full Council will meet on 25th September prior to final submission to the Government. The Council will debate and vote for or against the proposed One Unitary Authority, Additional Hazard Waste Days have been announced, NCC has begun construction on a new connection between Norwich Airport and the nearby industrial estate to enable 2-way pedestrian, cycle and bus travel.

NCC Cllr Dalby confirmed that he had money remaining in his Community Fund. Thornage PC would need to state what they wanted the money for and how much they needed. Any sum greater than £500 needs to be match funded.

NNDC Cllr Brown

Cllr Brown has sent a written report: - this addressed changes to voting entitlement, to include 16 and 17 year olds; National Government funding for homelessness; best in Norfolk for Council Tax & Business rates; with other Norfolk councils, successfully bid for money from the Government Warm Homes Local Grant; advice on flagpoles and a local government reform update

He expanded the information on Unitarisation: there are currently 3 proposals – NCC prefers a single Unitary body, Broadland and South Norfolk prefer 2 Unitaries, the remainder of the Districts and Norwich favour a 3 Unitary system. There is a population of 930 000 in Norfolk and the Government's prefers a population of c. 500 000.

NNDC have used experts, funded by the Government to help in preparation of their bid. All Norfolk Councils are having their meeting to debate the bids in the week leading up to the submission date of 26th September.

(ii) Thornage Hall

Cllr Earp mentioned the Thornage Hall Summer Fair which is taking place on Saturday 6th September.

Friends of Thornage

Cllr Moor gave a report - An event had been held in the Church on Friday last which had been attended by many new people in the village. A number of events have been planned which are coming up soon and the Church is beginning to become known as a venue. The Friends of Thornage are manning a stall at Thornage Hall fete.

The site for the car park has been agreed.

The Church

A written report had been received from the Church Wardens.

Church council update - Life at Thornage all Saints continues to centre on building community in the village and ensuring that the church is valued as a village asset. The monthly 3 T's events and coffee mornings are proving popular and with some new faces appearing at these events as well as at the monthly church service on the 4th Sunday of every month. Other events, we have started to experiment with a periodic pop-up bar and a concert in early October. We have now signed an agreement with Lord Hastings and land for the church car park has been secured.

Interim Report on the £450 Grant – We are currently mid-way through the growing season and £330 has been spent so far on labour costs for cuts, equipment, petro and repair costs. It is anticipated that 2 further cuts will be needed entailing additional labour, petrol and equipment costs. All other work on the Churchyard this year has been undertaken by a small group of volunteers and we send them our thanks, who have allowed us to keep under the budget we have set ourselves this year, which was only to spend what the Parish Council had afforded us as a grant.

Cllr Cox informed the meeting that all tree work had been approved by NNDC.

(iii) Opportunity for Members of the Public to raise questions or concerns.

A resident offered to manage the area of land on which the bottle bank is located. Cllr Watchorn informed her that the land belongs to the Astley Estate who have stated that they will manage it. The resident will contact Cllr Cox and he will liaise with the Estate manager.

25/54. Chair's Report

The Thornage Tap and the Church clear-up are signs of the community coming together.

One of the reflective signs at the bridge has been driven over and broken.

The "Give Way" sign on the Hunworth Road has been obliterated.

Cllr Watchorn reported that the reflective sign had been reported to NCC Highways. He was concerned about reduced visibility due to the lack of hedge cutting by the bridge and asked Cllr Cox if he could find out who is responsible for cutting it.

25/55. Clerk's report

All local councils are going through a period of change over the next few years and this will include Parish Councils. There is most likely going to be elections for a Mayor for a combined Norfolk and/Suffolk in May 2026, with a system of Unitary authority being the tier above Parish Councils. New regulations are likely in order to facilitate this which are likely to impact on Parish Councils. The first of these is Assertion 10 in this year's Governance requirements from the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel requiring additional governance in respect of IT, websites and email addresses, which will be discussed later on the agenda.

25/56 Planning Matters**(i) To receive an update on current planning applications**

PF/25/0607 Hill House – partial alterations to existing loft accommodation – Approved

PF/25/1082 – Meadow Barn – external alterations, including garage and entrance – Approved

RV/25/1711 – Back to the Garden – change of use to outbuildings & variation to conditions regarding products from outside the region – Pending Consideration

(ii) To Approve the PC response on new Planning Matters

There are none

25/57 Highways Matters**(i) To consider the offer of Parish Partnership funding and Approve any action**

Cllr Moor would like to apply for Parish Partnership money and the Clerk was asked to resend the Parish Partnership offer email. An Extraordinary meeting could be arranged to discuss and Approve any action to meet the deadline.

Cllr Moor said that concern about the road was the most important result from the survey – residents wanted to walk through the village safely – the community needs to understand what the PC can do and its limitations: Focus Groups can come up with lateral ideas. Cllr Cox stated that the only solution was a 20mph speed limit. Cllr Anderson stated that it was not only Thornage residents concerned about the B1110, but also those in Brinton and Sharrington.

Cllr Moor said that there was an appetite in the community for a Speedwatch Group – this will go into the Newsletter

25/58 To receive an update on Green Spaces in the Parish and Approve any action

Cllr Watchorn informed the PC that large chunks of the Common had been left uncut with paths running through it – and despite the weather, there had been evidence of things growing. Most comments from residents had been positive. Thornage Hall has cut the grass and removed it – resulting in 50 bales.

Going forward there will be a pathway across the meadow giving access to the Common – a Working Party will be convened in the Autumn. Cllr Cox already has permission from NNDC to cut the trees on the Common as needed for 2 years. The Estate have confirmed they will install and retain responsibility for a Kissing Gate. They do not want to install a bench

25/59. To receive an update on the Volunteers Group

A litter pick is being arranged for Saturday 1st November. If there are enough volunteers, there will be a light sand of the telephone box as interim maintenance.

25/60. To receive an update on the Thornage Survey

Cllr Moor had sent a draft of the Survey to Cllrs today. She has received responses from approximately 140 villagers (out of 200) and is still waiting for the return of 4 – 6 surveys. The main results were discussed but she wants to report the results back to each organisation participating in the survey before circulating more widely

25/61. Finance and Governance Matters

(i) To Approve the Cashbook and Budget Update – The balance on the Bank Account from 31st July statement was £5,481.11. Since the last meeting: Receipts: HMRC (VAT Refund) £42.90; Payments: C. Harris (Clerk's Salary April - June) £648.16, HMRC (Tax on Salary) £162.00, Countrystyle Recycling (bottlebank collection) £21.00, Thornage All Saints PCC (hire of church) £20.00. C. Harris (Clerk's Salary July – September, including LGAward backdated to 1st April)

£689.76, HMRC (Tax on Salary) £172.40. These were Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Watchorn and Seconded by Cllr Cox.

Spend against budget was reviewed and seen to be in order. The grass cutting bill for the perimeter of the Common will be available in due course.

- (ii) To note the Local Government pay award of 3.2% backdated to April 2025- This was noted.
- (iii) To Appoint Mrs Di Dann as the Internal Auditor for the 2025 – 26 Financial Year – Mrs Dann was Approved as Internal Auditor on a Proposal by Cllr Anderson and Seconded by Cllr Cox.
- (iv) To Approve the following policies: Standing Orders, IT – Standing Orders was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Cox and Seconded by Cllr Moor; the IT Policy was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Cox and Seconded by Cllr Anderson.
- (v) To Approve Training costs for the Clerk (cost + mileage - 20% of total): SLCC Annual Conference £13.72, NPTS Autumn Seminar £17.94 – Total £31.66 – This was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Earp and Seconded by Cllr Cox.

NNDC Cllr Brown and 1 resident left.

25/62. To consider the recommendations in the Practitioner's Guide regarding the website and email addresses effective from 1st April 2025 and Approve any Action

The Clerk had brought 2 proposals to the meeting.

The first entailed a one-off cost to upgrade the website and obtain a single .gov.uk email address for the Clerk. The only additional annual cost would be for hosting the domain. The Council would be responsible for any further work on the website or additional .gov.uk email addresses.

The second option provides a full service including hosting and up to 20 email addresses for Councillors and the Clerk. Ongoing website maintenance and upgrades formed part of the package, but the annual charge was higher.

The Clerk will retain responsibility for uploading material to the website in both scenarios.

Cllrs considered the options and the first option was Approved by All on a Proposal by TA and Seconded by JC. The option agreed for the Clerk's address will be thornageparish.gov.uk

25/63. To Approve the publication of the next Newsletter

Cllr Earp would like to deliver the Parish Newsletter at the same time as the Church Newsletter – to meet this, the Newsletter will need to be printed at the end of the month – Cllrs will need to get information to the Newsletter to the Clerk for 9th September to meet this deadline.

25/64 To note any Correspondence

Holt Police Neighbourhood Meeting	Removal of Paper Banks
NPTS Newsletters	J Pearce thanks for grant
NCC Unitary Presentation	NNDC Unitary presentation
Resident email on church matters	Cllr Dalby report
Parish Partnership funding	Road closure for water leak
Surveys re access to cash	Local Plan modification consultation
MP S. Aquarone – Summer Tour posters	Community Outreach Officers
Recycling Centre Survey	Holt police meeting

25/65. To set the rota for the Bottle Bank

October – Cllr Anderson, November – Cllr Earp, December – Cllr Watchorn, January – Cllr Cox

25/66. Any Other Business (for information only)

Cllr Moor will instigate some focus groups based on the survey. An Extraordinary Meeting will be called if an application should be made to the Parish Partnership fund.

Cllr Watchorn suggested an open meeting facilitated by the Parish Council concentrated on the B1110 to inform the Parish of the facts and figures: what the Parish Council can and can't do and what the responsibilities and costs of NCC Highways action would be. NCC Highways Officers will be invited to any meeting that takes place.

25/67 Dates for future meetings; - Wednesday 3rd December 6.30pm – venue to be agreed

25/68. To close the meeting: The meeting closed at 8.17pm.

Signed

Date: