

THORNAGE PARISH COUNCIL

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The minutes of the Thornage Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 18th October 2023 at 6.30pm at All Saint's Church, Thornage.

Present: Cllrs Dan Earp (Chairman), Dany Pearce (Vice Chair), Teresa Anderson, Kate Dickson, Peter Hammond, Paul Hendrick and Nigel Watchorn, Kerry Harris (Clerk), NNDC Cllr Andrew Brown, 2 residents.

1. To welcome those present to the meeting

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

2. To consider apologies for absence

None.

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

There were none.

4. To Approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 13th July 2023

Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July were unanimously approved on a Proposal by Cllr Pearce and Seconded by Cllr Hammond.

5. Matters Arising

There were none.

6. Open Forum for Public Participation

6.1 Report from NNDC Cllr Brown

Cllr Brown's report had been circulated to Cllrs before the meeting:

Local Development Plan has been referred to the Government Inspector for examination; Glaven Valley Rural Conservation Area has gone out for further consultation in relevant areas; Peer Review – a LGA governance review of NNDC were impressed with their financial governance since 2019; Customer focus – Local elections in May involved 138 candidates for 40 seats in the District Council and 775 nominations for town and parish councils, 13 of which were contested, including Briningham. No significant issues were recorded with the introduction of Voter ID; East Runton, Mundesley and Sea Palling beaches have lost Blue Flag status; Affordable Homes – NNDC continue to encourage small sites for housing development but these have been affected by Nutrient Neutrality and measures to combat this are now at an advanced stage; the annual Monitoring Report confirms 314 against a target of 4010 dwellings were completed and 175 new dwellings received consent to build; House prices continued to increase last year; NNDC bid successfully for Local Authority Housing Funding to purchase 4 Temporary Homes, initially for refugees, but will later be added to the Council's housing stock for homeless families. Cllr Brown reported on the site meeting with MP Duncan Baker which CR had also attended to discuss the new damage on the B1110 road bridge and said that no new measures had been agreed.

6.2 Reports from Other Organisations

Thornage Hall

We are pleased to introduce Rosie as our new CEO, who will begin her full time role on the 23rd of October. Additionally, we are excited to welcome Michelle, who has joined our team as an HR & Executive Assistant. You are likely to interact with or meet both of them in the near future.

We are also delighted to announce that The Norfolk Christmas Fair will take place this year at Godwick Great Barn, located at PE32 2RJ. If you'd like to attend please mark the following dates on your calendar:

Wednesday 15th November from 4pm to 8pm; Thursday 16th November from 9am to 3pm: Entry to the fair is £5 at the door, proceeds will go towards supporting Thornage Hall.

Furthermore, Thornage Hall is seeking support workers and a Land assistant to join the team. If you are interested in these positions, reach out to Michelle at mridler@thornagehall.co.uk

FROTH

There was an enjoyable pop-up bar at Dany and Jerrys in August with some new village faces and tenants from Thornage Hall and the "Thornage Got Talent" evening on 16th October went well. There is a meeting at the end of October to finalise plans for the next few months, but FROTH need volunteers at these events to help them to run smoothly. FROTH run events and will also underwrite events run by and for the village as long as they comply with its constitution, whether in the Church or elsewhere, the recent music events building on the success of the Jubilee and the Coronation which also provides much needed funds for the Church from the hire. FROTH also provides ongoing financial support for the defibrillator.

Church

The Clerk confirmed that she had not received a report from the Vicar.

The Church Warden thanked Janet and Phil for all the help they give to the Church. The PCC is hoping to appoint a new member to its body before Christmas.

The PCC is seeing a local electrician on 20th October regarding electricity issues in the Church.

More events are being organised by the PCC in the Church: Thornage Talks, music, lectures and celebrations and he asked for people to support these: 3rd November: 6pm for 6.30pm -Hazel

Mindham: The people of Thornage who fought in the Second World War and what they did on their return; 15th November – 3pm-4pm: Angela Dugdale with Wyatt Earp playing music; 6th December 3pm – Valerie Wright (ex-professional soprano) singer with a Christmas feel.

The Church Warden stated that a Sunday Service was held monthly at 9.30am and most importantly residents should support the Church and attend this.

Discussion re advertising – the next Briston News is likely to be the last one due to cost – there is currently no information regarding whether it will go online; it was suggested that fliers could be distributed to advertise events – Cllr Pearce offered to help with this.

It was suggested that a Village WhatsApp Group would also help with dissemination of information: this suggestion will be included in the Newsletter.

6.3 Opportunity for Members of the Public to raise questions or concerns.

The Churchwarden suggested that there should be a Village Archive – to record history and current events (which would soon be part of history). This will go in the Newsletter and in the WhatsApp group.

Concern was expressed about the number of second homes in the village – this will be added to the next agenda. Cllr Brown said that the Levelling Up Bill will allow for a 100% increase in the Council tax levy on 2nd homes and NNDC officers can help with information on a neighbourhood plan.

A resident expressed concern about the Campsite and the 60 day rule as he understood that it was now due to be open for July and August. Cllr Brown confirmed that no permanent structures can be brought on site and the operator must be aware of noise nuisance and litter. He was asked to send a copy of the rules and regulations to the Clerk.

7. Chair's Report

The Chair thanked Cllrs and volunteers for the work they do for the Parish – a good team effort. There has been no new flooding around the bottle bank, but he has not received any information about work carried out. The pallets will need to be moved before they disintegrate.

He has contacted the Paper Bank collection company and they have agreed to empty it. The contact number is 01603 812898.

Another Thornage Got Talent event is being proposed.

8. Clerk's report

Clerk has attended the following training events: Course on the Freedom of Information Act, NPTS Autumn seminar giving updates on planning, semi-wilding of green spaces, defibrillators and Risk management policies. Training - £200 has been allocated in the budget and monies remain available for Cllrs to attend courses. There has been concern expressed in the local area about conduct between members of the public and Parish Cllrs. All Parish Cllrs need to be aware of the Nolan Principles (also known as the 7 Principles of Conduct) described in the PC's Code of Conduct.

The Chair reminded Cllrs that the Clerk should be copied into all email communication and fully informed of all other correspondence to ensure good governance.

9. Finance and Governance Matters

9.1 Approve the Cashbook and Payments list

The balance in the Barclays account is £5,414.17, balanced to the 29th September bank statement. Receipts: NNDC - £2,250 (second Precept payment);

Payments: Countrystyle Recycling £27.00 (30th September - Emptying of Bottle Bank); Mrs C. Harris £539.64 (Clerk's salary, July to September); HMRC £134.80 (Tax on salary); Thornage PCC £18.75 (Hire of Church – 18th October); Mrs C. Harris £30.00 (Clerk's expenses)

These were approved by all on a Proposal by Cllr Hammond and Seconded by Cllr Pearce.

9.2 Receive an update on Budget to Actual Spending in preparation for setting the Budget and Precept at the December PC meeting.

Based on payments made already this year there is likely to be a small overspend on Hall Hire and underspends on election fees (as the election was uncontested). There remain funds in the Training budget and the invoices for grass cutting have not yet been submitted. There should be a small surplus at the end of the Financial Year.

9.3 To receive an update on banking.

Cllrs are in the process of signing up to Internet banking – thanks to Cllr Pearce for enabling this. However, the PC is now under the KYC Team with Barclays who have placed restrictions on the account. Cllr Pearce will contact the team to resolve this.

9.4 To Approve the following policies

Grant Policy – this was Approved by All on a Proposal by Cllr Anderson and Seconded by Cllr Watchorn.

Risk Management Policy – this has been deferred to the next meeting.

9.5 To consider a request for a contribution towards publication of the book: Thornage Great War Dead

Hazel Mindham has produced a book for each of the villages in the benefice, costing £217 per edition for the publication of 50 copies. These are being sold at £5 each. The book gives a history of those involved in the 2nd World War. He suggested the PC give £50. The publication is not going to be available online.

The PC was concerned about spending precept money on this if it was not freely available to all. Cllr Hammond noted that the request was made after the booklet was printed. Cllr Earp suggested that the PC purchased a number of copies which the Village could access.

It was unanimously Approved that the PC would purchase 5 copies on a Proposal by Cllr Watchorn and Seconded by Cllr Dickson.

10. To receive an update on Planning Matters

10.1 To Approve the PC response to the GVCAA consultation

Ex Cllr Pugh-Smith had compiled a draft response for the PC to review. Cllr Dickson also noted that there were a large number of inaccuracies in the document, including changing the name and nature of the property she lives in.

The response by Mr. Pugh-Smith was Approved unanimously as the basis for the formal PC response on a Proposal by Cllr Dickson and Seconded by Cllr Watchorn. The Clerk was also asked to check that Cllr Dickson's email had been sent to the correct Planning email address to be included in the consultation.

10.2 To Approve the PC response to Planning Applications since the close of the agenda. There were none.

10.3 To receive updates on current planning applications. There were none.

11. Highways Matters

11.1 To receive an update on the SAM2

Nothing to report and there are no significant problems in the village.

11.2 To Approve any Action on the photo report on the Thornage/Hunworth footbridge repair. Concern was expressed that the structure was disintegrating already and depositing debris into the river even before the beginning of the winter which was already causing issues downstream. It was noted that there had been no communication or consultation on the design or the repair with the PC in advance. NNDC Cllr Brown said there should have been a hydrological assessment made to take into account the potential flow of water and he will follow this up with NCC.

The PC unanimously agreed that a letter should be written to NCC Highways regarding the footbridge.

11.3 To Approve any Action in respect of the bridge on the B1110

It was noted that, now that the hedge had been cut, visibility was significantly better and Cllrs expressed the view the road felt safer. Concern was expressed that the Research Report on which recommendations were made by the County Council about the bridge appeared to be solely urban based and referring to roundabouts. They did not feel able to comment further on the repair to the bridge as it was imminently due to start. This will be moved to the next agenda.

Concern was expressed about the piling up of sand and silt after the latest storm near the bridge and that this could slide into the river which could add to problems with silt build up further down stream.

12. To receive an update on the Volunteers Group

The Bench is finished and the phone box is started.

The date for the next litter collection will be arranged – Cllr Hendrick will liaise with NNDC Cllr Brown.

Cllr Earp thanked the Group for all their work.

13. To receive an update on the Working Party on Green Spaces in the Parish

Cllrs Watchorn and Dickson have been investigating leaving part of the Green without cutting in the Spring, with a first cut being in July. They have been speaking with the land manager at Thornage Hall who is prepared to do this and to remove the long grass from the designated area. The land manager also has contact with local botanists who may be interested and knows a local grower who grafts East Anglian apple and pear trees which could be used to form a small orchard.

The next step is to contact the Astley Estate to check this is ok.

14. To Agree the publication of the next Newsletter

Information should be included on: Thornage Hall Christmas Fair; an Archive for the Village; WhatsApp Group; Grants Policy; Litter Picking date; Budget setting.

15. To note any Correspondence

- 6.09.23 Town & Parish Forum agenda
- 6.09.23 NPTS Councillor networking sessions
- 7.09.23 MP Duncan Balker meeting on speeding
- 29.09.23 NPTS Training
- 28.09.23 Closure of The Street, Thornage on 11th October
- 6.10.23 Glaven Valley Conservation Area review Consultation
- 12.10.23 Closure of B1110 for bridge repairs 23rd October to 3rd November

16. To set the rota for the Bottle and Paper Banks

December – Cllr Anderson, January 2024 – Cllr Earp

17. Any Other Business (for information only)

Defibrillator Battery – FROTH will fund the replacement. Cllr Pearce reported that the battery showed half charged, but the ambulance service had confirmed this was fine. It was agreed that she should monitor and decide the best time for a replacement. It has to be replaced after 4 years.

The Thornage postbox has disappeared – presumed stolen,

It has been reported to the Royal Mail by Cllr Watchorn.

The PC would like a replacement postbox removed to the safer location on the Green next to the Village Sign. Cllr Watchorn will send the reference to the Clerk who will follow this up.

18. Dates for future meetings: Wednesday 6th December.

19. To close the meeting: The meeting closed at 8.29pm.

Signed

Date: