

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES MEETING held on Wednesday 22nd January 2025 commencing at 7.00pm in Thurston Community Library, Norton Road, Thurston.

Present: Cllrs. Dashper (in the Chair), Balham, Bond, Gerrish, Hamel-Cooke, Marsh, Morris, Moy and Rainbow.

Also in attendance: Mrs Waples, Parish Clerk and Mrs Gladwell, Deputy Parish Clerk. There were no members of the public in attendance.

1. **OPENING** – the Chair opened the meeting advising all that the Protocol adopted by the Parish Council for reporting at Parish Council Meetings, would be enacted for this meeting. A copy of the Protocol is available from the Clerk or can be downloaded from the website: <https://thurstonparishcouncil.uk/parish-council/policies-procedures-and-strategy/>.
2. **APOLOGIES** –
 - a) Council to receive apologies for absence – verified apologies were received from Cllrs. Allen, Smith and West.
 - b) Council to consent to accept apologies received – the submitted apologies were accepted and approved, aif.
 - c) Cllr. Millest was noted as absent.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM COUNCILLORS INCLUDING GIFTS OF HOSPITALITY EXCEEDING £50** –
 - a) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests; other registerable and non-registerable interests as detailed in Appendix B of the LGA Model Code of Conduct – there were no interests declared for the meeting.
 - b) To receive notification of gifts or hospitality exceeding £50 – there were none submitted.
 - c) To note the determination of requests for dispensations in accordance with Council's Dispensation Policy – there were none to be reported.
4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS** : (*all as previously circulated*) to receive and consider minutes:
 - a) Committees Meeting of 18th December 2024 – **it was resolved to approve the minutes as previously circulated and to give consent for the Chair to sign the approved minutes as true and accurate record of the proceedings that took place, in accordance with legislation, aif.**
5. **PUBLIC FORUM** –
 - a) To receive comments from members of the public in attendance on the agenda submitted – there were no members in attendance.
 - b) To receive comments from members of the public on matters relating to Thurston – no comments had been submitted.
6. **FINANCIAL MATTERS:**
 - a) To confirm the precept to be set for the year 2025 – 2026 (*Paper 6 – 08.01.25*) following confirmation of a nil change to the indicative tax base (as issued on 9th January 2025) – following confirmation that there had been no change to the indicative tax base issued in November, **it was resolved that the parish council would levy a precept of £201,497 which would give Thurston a Council Tax Band D amount of £108.26 which was an increase of 7.85% or £7.89 over that set for 2024-2025, aif.**
7. **TO CONSIDER MATTERS RELATING TO PLANNING:**
 - a) Planning Applications to be considered by the Council received from Mid Suffolk District Council – none had been received prior to the serving of the agenda.
 - b) To receive notification of planning applications determined by the LPA:
 - DC/24/04727 – Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/20/01716 - Condition 5 (Part M4(2) and M4(3)), Condition 8 (Bin Presentation and Storage), Condition 25 (Cycle Storage), Condition 26 (Fire Hydrants) and Condition 34 (Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Design Scheme). Location: Land to the north side of Norton Road.
 - DC/24/02330 – Planning permission for erection of 59 no. dwellings, open space and associated infrastructure. Location: Land to the west of Ixworth Road.

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- DC/24/04643 - Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/19/03486 - Condition 15 (Tree Protection Measures). Location: Land south-west of Beyton Road.
 - DC/24/03353 - Prior approval is required for the proposed change of use of Agricultural Buildings to Dwellinghouses (C3) and for building operations reasonably necessary for conversion. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q. - Conversion of barn to form 2 No. dwellings. Location: Barn at Moat Farm, Barrells Road.
 - DC/24/04801 – Planning permission for the erection of a two-storey rear extension, including 2 No. front dormer windows and conservation roof light; new roof tiles and render elevations. Location 26 Heather Close.
 - DC/24/05180 – Planning permission for the erection of a detached cart lodge with attached log store. Location Maple House, Church Road.
 - DC/24/04647- Planning permission under S73a for the removal or variation of a condition following grant of Planning Permission 1341/03 - Replacement dwelling - to vary the approved drawings condition to permit revised design, layout and appearance. Location Syringa, Wyards Lane.
- c) SN/24/00333/SNL – New Development at land to the west of Ixworth Road – council is asked to suggest a new road name(s) for the above development, a choice of 5-6 in order of preference would be appreciated, although it is noted that 3 street names are required for this development – **it was agreed that the parish council would suggest the surnames of those who had recently died and had had a significant impact on the community of Thurston, aif.** Once confirmation had been given by the LPA that these were acceptable, the Clerk would contact the relevant relatives to seek their formal approval for the names to be used in this manner.
- d) Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Update – to receive communication on this matter from the Acting Director of Planning – the meeting were made aware of an email communication in which it was stated that BMSDC felt that, given the introduction of new housing requirements for every District and Borough Council in the country (as issued in December by HM Government), BMSDC felt that there was no option but to formally review the Joint Local Plan, building on the work that had already taken place. The increased housing requirement in Babergh would now be 775 homes a year (up 86%), and in Mid Suffolk up to 734 (up 37%). To ensure the housing requirement can be met, councils must demonstrate there is a ‘housing land supply’ for the next five years. This is assessed every year, and the figures are published alongside their Annual Monitoring Report. Whilst the current housing land supply is determined against the adopted Joint Local Plan requirements of 416 homes for Babergh and 535 homes for Mid Suffolk respectively, the Councils needed to ensure that they maintained a plan-led approach to decision making whilst acting promptly to respond to the Government’s new policy and deliver what is expected of them. It was confirmed that Part One of the Joint Local Plan remained in place and would continue to carry statutory weight when planning decisions are made in the Districts, alongside Neighbourhood Plans and national policy.
- e) Mid Suffolk Town and Parish Liaison Meetings – to receive commentary from the clerk on matters covered in this meeting - Devolution and Local Government Reform & Planning Matters (including the revised National Planning Policy Framework) – the clerk gave a summary of the main points covered at the parish liaison meeting in relation to the Devolution deal: MSDC were of the opinion that any reorganisation needed to be proactive and that local authorities needed to have the necessary funding and autonomy to deliver services to its electorate. Whilst the abolition of district and borough councils will be profound, especially the merging of their planning authority functions to new Unitary Authorities, it was noted that this was being rolled out across the country and reference would be drawn from those authorities who had already managed the process: Cornwall, Herefordshire and Cheshire. Whilst it was stated that there would be no direct impact on parish and town councils, indirectly there would be the opportunity for close working. If Suffolk and Norfolk were chosen for fast-track devolution, there would be a directly elected mayor for the area with a mayoral strategic authority to take over strategic policy areas such as transport, economic development, health and blue light services. Timescales were as follows: late January / early February decision would be made for entry into the devolution programme; February decision as to whether the country elections are to be postponed until 2026; September 2025 detailed case on reorganisation of local government (not at parish level) to be submitted to the government. Although the government has stated that they will carry out a consultation programme for devolution as well as one for local government reform, it was unknown as to when this would take place. It was noted that if there were no district elections in 2027, then the full cost for any parish / town councils would be borne directly by those councils. The effect

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of devolution on planning matters was still work in progress although it was noted that there were no changes expected to the NPPF and adopted NDP status. Any new authority in planning terms would need to look at each local plan and merge them to have an overall plan for the county. With regards to planning matters, it was confirmed that the following were covered: changes to the NPPF (effective December 2024): brownfield developments; expansion of definition of previously developed land; strengthening of presumption of sustainable development; duty to cooperate for effective strategic planning; greater focus on social rent as a form of affordable housing; delivery of modern economic developments; net zero by 2050; changes to how flood risk is assessed; SUDs for all developments appropriate to the scale and nature of the scheme; removal of taking local character into account; removal of references to beautiful and beauty and de-emphasis on local design codes. It was once again emphasized that the local plan review would need to be undertaken to ensure that it aligned with national policy and that the BMSDC local plan period would extend to circa 2044. For new NDPs coming forward and for those looking to review their NDPs, the new standard method of housing numbers will be a material consideration for these plans and there will be an expectation that allocations will be required in all localities. It was confirmed that the district council were in live discussions regarding the provisioning for future growth in terms of infrastructure e.g. doctors / dentists etc.

- f) Persimmon Homes – Hakewill Mews – council to receive commentary on the meeting held with Planners at Persimmon Homes Suffolk in relation to the site located to the west of Ixworth Road – the following matters were discussed at the meeting held earlier that day: access being created that week; drawings were at design stage for the 20mph speed limit (implementation was to be prior to occupation or 4 months from date of planning permission); build programme would require an onsite time of 18 months – 2 years. The Construction Management Plan would be shared with the parish council although it was confirmed that it would cover: site access; route of build; route for deliveries (council preference is from the north); hours of deliveries (council preference is for this to be restricted for outside of education hours). All noted the conditions for a local connection for the open market houses for the first six months and for a LEAP to be added to the play equipment within Phase 1. It was agreed that the details of the site managers would be shared with the clerk and that the Community Champions Fund details would be shared with the Deputy to review. Agreement was forthcoming for Persimmon to consider the request submitted by the clerk, under a community fund initiative, for the provisioning of a number of refuse bins around the site with a commuted sum to be given to the parish council to undertake their maintenance and emptying. The next meeting was confirmed as 19th March 2025.
- g) Thurston Community College rebuild project – the clerk reported that it had been confirmed that whilst the School Rebuild Project had been approved, any work had been postponed until Easter. Design work had taken place with the proposal to move the Sixth Form back to the main school campus site.

8. TO CONSIDER MATTERS RELATING TO NETWORK RAIL:

- a) To receive an update on the feasibility study relating to the Thurston Station Level Crossing as submitted by the Professional Lead – Key Site and Infrastructure (BMSDC) – nothing further to note at this stage.
- b) To receive a copy of the OPP usage estimates of footfall data of East Anglia Station for the period 2019-2024 – council noted the following data relating to barrow crossing statistics as provided by Network Rail: there are nine (9) level crossings in Anglia that are foot crossings provided for station passengers and of these nine crossings, three, including Thurston, are fitted with warning lights which are activated to warn the users of approaching trains. The latest annual passenger footfall figures for Thurston were 114,330 passengers which was the second highest behind Marks Tey Station. Over the past five years (between 2019 and 2024), a total of 115 incidents were reported at these nine crossings (two had recorded none) and Thurston has recorded 14 incidents. The vast majority of incidents were classified as ‘level crossing misuse’, which included people crossing in front of stationary trains or in front of moving trains despite being able to see them approaching. It’s worth noting that only a minority of these incidents were declared to be ‘near misses’. Most of them instead involved members of the public putting themselves at greater risk than necessary by ignoring instructions and signage, but not putting themselves in significant immediate danger. In relation to the latest ORR footfall data, as made available in early December, the figures for Thurston at 114,330 47% growth (2019-24) and 19% growth (2023-4).
- c) To receive communication from CATS regarding Thurston Station site and access and parking provision – following research carried out by CATS in regards to the Thurston Station site sale documents, it was noted

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that whilst there might be a relevant clause for access to the railway station building, the clause did not appear to be restrictive with documents stating that there was a right of way at all times and for all purposes with or without vehicles subject to the payment of a fair share according to user of the cost of keeping the same in good repair and condition. It was also noted that there is room to park a few vehicles either side of the building, although access is very tight on both sides. The 1988 document mentions that a kerb would mark the boundary on the eastern side, but this is not visible now and a fence has been erected which effectively shuts off easy access into the available space. A similar fence has also been erected on the western side.

9. TO CONSIDER MATTERS RELATING TO THURSTON:

- a) Road signs in Thurston – to receive commentary / updates on works requested to road signs for Thurston – the clerk confirmed that this was slow work in progress but was pleased to report that three out of the 14 requested signs had been ordered and would be installed; three had been straightened and photos would be submitted of those that required further work. Of the 11 remaining road signs that required ordering and installing, the LPA was still to make a decision, and the Clerk was chasing this matter.

10. TO CONSIDER MATTERS RELATING TO LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT:

- a) To note Officers are dealing with any issues raised of a low or very low risk relating to the monthly risk assessment reports for Heath Road, Thedwastre Park, New Green and The Recreation Green areas – most areas had been assessed as low or very low. Main concern covered damage to the dugouts on the Recreation Ground on Church Road which had been reported to the Football Club. The club had undertaken remedial repairs and cleared some of the Perspex away. A request had been submitted for more action as further damage had been sustained. It was noted that discussions needed to be had with the Football Club as to how to move forward regarding the use of the dugouts / an alternative shelter. New sign (replacement) had been ordered for School Lane entrance onto the Recreation Ground along with a new bin to replace the one located by the play area within the grounds.
- b) To consider the design, commissioning and funding of an information board for the Wildlife Garden project – following receipt of the paper outlining the design and proposed wording for the lectern, **council resolved to commission Osis Display to design and supply a suitable lectern at a maximum cost of £1,964, aif.** Council were reminded of the funding sources that had been allocated for this project: Mid Suffolk “Pride in Your Place” grant of £400; £38 remaining of the original CIL bid towards the wildlife area with the balance of £1,526 Cllr Bradbury’s locality budget.
- c) To consider the draft action plan as submitted by the Biodiversity Action Plan Working Group which is to include any applicable amendments followed by adoption of the action plan – following a review of the action plan as submitted, **it was resolved to support the identified action contained within the report and to adopt the plan in its entirety.** Officers would now look to allocate resources from defined budgets to the actions for consideration by future committees once they had been established.

11. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS:

- a) Council Meeting – 5th February 2025 – commencing at 7.00pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.
- b) Policy & Resources Committee Meeting – 12th February 2025 – commencing at 6.00pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.
- c) Council’s Committees Meeting – 19th February 2025 – commencing at 7.00pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.

12. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING – there being no other business the meeting was closed at 20.21pm.

Appendix A - Glossary of Common Abbreviations used

Aif	All in favour
AGAR	Annual Governance and Accountability Return
APM	Annual Parish Meeting
ASB	Anti-social Behaviour
BACS	Bankers Automated Clearing Services
BUAB	Built Up Area Boundary
BMSDC	Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CC	Credit Card
CAS	Community Action Suffolk
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Chq.	Cheque
Cllr.	Councillor
CMP	Construction Management Programme
Cttee.	Committee
DC	District Council
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DD	Direct Debit
FOI	Freedom of Information
FR	Financial Regulations
GA	Greater Anglia
GPoC	General Power of Competence
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
LGBCE	Local Government Boundary Commission for England
LHB	Locality Highways Budget
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MSDC	Mid Suffolk District Council
NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play
NHS	National Health Service
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NR	Network Rail
PC	Parish Council
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
Pdf	Portable Document Format
PIIP	Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan
PROW	Public Rights of Way
RAAC	Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete
RFO	Responsible Financial Officer
SARS	Suffolk Accident Rescue Service
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SALC	Suffolk Association of Local Councils
SCC	Suffolk County Council
SID	Speed Indicator Device
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SNT	SaferNeighbourhood Team
SO	Standing Order
SPS	Suffolk Preservation Society
TCC	Thurston Community College
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
TPS	Thurston Primary School
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
VAS	Vehicle Activated Sign
VCSE	Voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations

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