

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL – Leisure and Environment Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on Wednesday 15th May 2024 at 7.15pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.

In attendance: Cllrs. L Bond, S Gerrish, B Morris, M Moy, P Smith, and T Welham.

Also in attendance: Mrs. P Gladwell (Deputy Clerk) one members of public.

1. **To appoint a Chair** - following acceptance of his nomination, Cllr. S Gerrish was proposed and approved by all to take the role of Chair, aif.
2. **Chair's Welcome** - 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/>
3. **To receive Apologies of Absence** – There were no applicable apologies as all were present.
4. **Declarations of pecuniary and local non-pecuniary interests:**
 - a) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other registerable interests and non-registerable interests as detailed in Appendix B of the LGA Model Code of Conduct – None received.
 - b) To note the determination of requests for dispensations in accordance with council's Dispensation Policy – None received.
5. **To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meetings:**
 - a) Minutes of the meeting of 28th February 2024 – approval of the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting that took place was given by all present, aif. The Chair signed the minutes in accordance with legislation.
6. **To receive comments from the members of the public present:**
 - a) On the agenda under discussion – None received.
Member of public entered the meeting.
 - b) On any other matters relating to recreational matters within the village of Thurston – Request from member of the public that the arisings from grass cutting at Heather Close be removed. Discussion around how best to manage the cutting and collection of arisings following the cut by MSDC on the Meadow Management areas.
It was suggested that inspections be conducted on the ivy burden of mature trees, especially the oaks in Heath Road.
It was suggested that council look at a policy around invasive species and consider how to inform the public about identifying things like three corner leek, Asian hornets, and fire ants without scaremongering.
7. **To receive and consider matters relating to the Monthly Risk Assessments Reports:**
 - a) **To receive updates on previous works highlighted in the Monthly Risk Assessments for action.**
 - **Heath Road Play area:** Grass cutting has reduced most of the mole hills. The pedestrian gate is now closing correctly. Rear corner fence post has had some remedial repair, this will be checked before payment is made. MSDC have been asked to ensure the bin lids are correctly secured following emptying. The swing seats have been raised to the recommended levels. Missing signage on MUGA now installed. Tree branch removed.

To be signed by the chair at the meeting of 19th June 2024.....

- **Thedwastre Play Park Area:** No updates.
- **New Green Open Space:** Damage to the Surface Matting under Rotator noted, a contractor to repair this will be sought. Broken sign at Trim trail has been replaced.
- **Recreation Ground Play Area:** MSDC have been asked to ensure the bin lids are correctly secured following emptying.

b) To consider matters on the Monthly Risk Assessment Reports for the following and agree appropriate actions arising:

- **Heath Road Play Area:** Excess chain links to be removed. Some erosion of the soil under the seesaw and around the swings, in front of the Muga to be addressed. Bark under the Multiplay needs to be topped up as a priority to cover exposed concrete foundations, quotes being sought. Broken board on the surround of the Multiplay to be replaced, quote being sought. Climbing net, worn cable, to be monitored. Missing rope on Multiplay noted, no action. Missing bar on Muga cost of £135 noted, tbc. Broken handle on Multiplay, replacement cost £28 each confirmed purchase of two handles and install. Swing seats to be cleaned.
 - **Thedwastre Play Area:** Damaged sign, Kompan to be asked to remove this whilst on site. Sleeve and closure dimensions on maintenance gate to be rectified by Kompan whilst on site. Swing seats to be raised and three-way spinner fixings and Multiplay fixings to be tightened by Kompan whilst on site. Annual Inspection recommendation relating to at height assessments for swings fixings was noted. Kompan costs to assess these noted at £200, requirement for these tests to be confirmed by Kompan.
 - **New Green Open Space:** Bin at Trim Trail has been refixed, note this has been uprooted again, agreed that this should be removed, and consideration be taken by Full Council on an alternative style of bin as a replacement. Annual Inspection recommendations relating to at height assessments for Giant rope swing and seat connection on the overhead rotator were noted. Kompan costs to assess these noted at £400, requirement for these tests to be confirmed by Kompan. Alternative ways of fixing the goal nets to be considered.
- Recreation Ground Play Area:** Swing seats to be raised, special tool needed, Kompan to be asked to provide whilst on site at Thedwastre Play Park.
- NOTE – all trip hazard groundworks areas, quote to repair £150 plus foc soil from Vistry.

8. Clerks report –

- a) Update on the position for Tree Warden – Following the advert in the newsletter one person came forward. Once confirmation is received of the willingness to take on the role the appointment will be referred to full council for approval.
- b) Inclusive play equipment – Contractors confirmed on site 16th May to install the roundabout and two replacement swing seats.
- c) The new bench at Woodside Close has been installed and the plaque transferred to the new bench.
- d) Bringing Back Nature – Biodiversity for parishes – The deputy clerk and two councilors confirmed attendance on this webinar. The video and slides have been circulated for others to watch together with the deputy clerks notes from the session.
- e) Footpath Leaflets – These have now been received and are available for circulation.

9. Wildlife Garden Project –

- a) To receive an update on the work schedule – it was confirmed that the tree work had been

completed, the Silver Birch planted, two bird boxes erected, and the bug hotel had been upgraded and refilled. It was noted that the balance of funds remaining was £637.00 + £400 Pride in your Place grant for the lectern.

- b) To consider the purchase of individual bee houses – it was agreed to make a recommendation to full council that two bee houses be purchased, one of each design from RSPB at a total cost of £50.00 with all in favour. It was suggested that a solitary bee refuge could be created in the bank of the depression, further information on the process for this would be sought.
- c) To consider the provision of a lectern and gate signage – consideration of designs for the lectern was deferred until any additional planting had been established. It was confirmed that TCC could not help with a student to design and make the gate signs. It was agreed to make a recommendation to full council to purchase two treated wooden signs as per the mockup design at a cost of £130, with aif.
- d) To consider the provision of seating – It was agreed that recycled single seat benches would be preferable in the garden. Costs and designs would be sought for consideration at the next meeting and a site visit would be arranged to consider placement and numbers. It was noted that funding would be needed to cover the cost of seating and a further CIL bid was suggested.

10. To consider a recommendation to Full Council to conduct a tree survey at The Recreation Ground. – It was noted that some branches had fallen from the Chestnut trees at the Recreation Ground, and one had dead branches in the canopy. It was noted that the last Urban Forestry tree survey was conducted in March 2021 with a reinspection recommended in summer 2023. Following support of the reinspection time recommendation by David Pizzey, Tree Officer at BMSDC it was agreed that a recommendation be put to Full Council to conduct a tree survey at The Recreation Ground, by majority decision. It was suggested that the Oak Trees at the new churchyard might be included in the inspection.

11. Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan –

- a) To consider conducting a biodiversity audit of council landholdings, other parish areas and to review any biodiversity plans already in place in the parish – Consideration was given to the costings of various professional audits. It was agreed that a recommendation be put to Full Council to engage SWT to conduct the audit, aif.
- b) To review the Biodiversity Action Plan and consider any actions/strategies needed to ensure compliance with the council's duty to maintain, improve and enhance biodiversity – It was noted that further consideration of the action plan would be taken following the completion of the audit. It was suggested that a working group be set up to take forward further consideration of Biodiversity enhancement, information on the remit of any such group will be sought. It was noted that the next biodiversity walk is arranged for Sunday 26th May.

12. To review 0 – 3 year goals – Further consideration of the 0 – 3 year goals was deferred. It was suggested that all completed goals be annexed to the plan and that items be prioritized by date.

13. Date of next meeting – 19th June 2024 commencing at tbc in the Thurston Community Library.

14. Close of meeting – there being no further business to transact the Chair closed the meeting at 9.10pm.