

## THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL – Leisure and Environment Committee

**Minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7.30pm 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) no members of public.

1. **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/>
2. **To receive Apologies of Absence** – There were no applicable apologies as all were present.
3. **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.
4. **To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meetings:**
  - a) Minutes of the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> June 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.
5. **To receive comments from the members of the public present:**
  - a) On the agenda under discussion – None received.
  - b) On any other matters relating to recreational matters within the village of Thurston – None received.
6. **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:** Bark under the Multiplay has been topped up. Replacement handles on Multiplay installed. Missing bar on Muga ordered. Order placed with contractor to carry out the following: Removal of excess chain lengths on swings. Filling in of eroded areas of the soil under the seesaw, around the swings and in front of the Muga. Replacement of broken board on the surround of the Multiplay.
    - **Thedwastre Play Park Area:** The erosion of soil around gate and benches will be filled in within the contractor order as above.
    - **New Green Open Space:** The erosion of soil around various items will be filled in within the contractor order as above. Damage to the Surface Matting under Rotator, High Bars and Giant Rope Swing repair ordered with Kompan.
    - **Recreation Ground Play Area:** The erosion of soil around various items will be filled in within the contractor order as above. Excess chains removed within the contractor order as above. Safety surface fire damage, repair has been ordered with Wickstead.

To be signed by the Chair at the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024.....

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

- **Heath Road Play Area:** Swing seats dirty. Single post on Multiplay is moving in the ground, needs checking for damage. Horse Chestnut tree showing signs of dying back, needs to be assessed.
- **Thedwastre Play Area:** No additional issues reported.
- **New Green Open Space:** No additional issues reported.
- **Recreation Ground Play Area:** No additional issues reported.

**7. Clerks report –**

- a) Update on the outdoor theatre production of Treasure Island – Very disappointing ticket sales. Promotion of the event will continue until Cambridge Touring Company make a decision on whether to cancel.
- b) Report from the Routine Play Inspection course attended by the Deputy Clerk and Cllr Bond – This part classroom, part practical course covered what to look for and how to record playground risk assessments, together with the legal framework for inspectors and applicable statute law. There was much emphasis on RRRM Report, Repair, Remove, Monitor and we learnt how to assess the risk of any defect we identified. One important lesson involved the calculation around risk. Likelihood multiplied by the Severity gives us a risk assessment and this is something that we need to incorporate into the recording of our play area monthly checks so that we can make action decisions based on low, moderate or high-risk assessments. Record keeping is a crucial part of any claim and to defend against claims our risk assessment process needs to be properly documented. The issue with closure of a piece of equipment when a defect is noticed was particularly important and we learnt that taping it off for example is not sufficient. It was suggested that we create a plan for each piece of our equipment to identify how we would isolate it if necessary. For those who carry out the routine inspections a new check list will be drafted with some information on how to assess and rate the risk when carrying out the checks. Interestingly there was a presumption by operational and annual inspectors that if a council didn't carry out the basic "low" risk recommendations such as removal of algae or replacing caps then the next time they came they would be looking more closely at "what else you are not doing!" The common outcome of risk assessment is to put the low risk to one side and to concentrate on any moderate risks, however we have a duty of care to deal with all risks. The recommendation on time limits is high risk deal with it immediately, moderate risk within two weeks and low risk within three months. The five steps to risk assessment is the rule to apply; Identify the hazard, Assess the likelihood, Assess the severity of a potential injury, Implement the control measure RRRM and then Review. If we use this process and document properly, including retaining inspection results for 21 years, we will reduce the risk for people using our play areas and negate any prosecution.
- c) It was confirmed that three quotes had been sourced for the work to trees on at the Recreation Ground recommended by the recent tree inspection and consideration of these would be added to a full council agenda.

**8. Wildlife Garden –**

- a) To review the forward plan for monitoring and management – The draft of the Wildlife

Garden Work Party Schedule was considered and amendments made to the timings of some of the tasks. It was agreed that this schedule would form part of a quarterly agenda item and work parties going forward. It was noted that grass cutting and hedge trimming would be required late August and the deputy clerk will arrange for this to be carried out.

- b) To consider the position of new seating – This was deferred until the grass had been cut and the new chair delivered.
- c) To consider the provision of a lectern – It was noted that a CIL bid would be required to fund the purchase of a lectern. Quotes will be sought for commissioning the artwork and purchase and installation of a lectern in order to have information in place for the next bid round in December. It was suggested that the possibility of a brick plinth be investigated.

9. **To consider conducting a community consultation process to establish what facilities might be required from new open space areas.** – It was noted that with the possibility of new open space areas coming forward from new development there was the opportunity to be involved with the decisions on what type of play and outdoor equipment could be provided. To ensure that what is provided will appeal to users of the open space community consultation will need to be carried out. It was agreed that the 12 – 16-year age groups in particular should be asked what their preferred facilities would be and the best way to target this demographic might be in schools. A stall at lunch time at the college, via the school council or an assembly at the primary school were considered. It was agreed that members should try and visit other exemplary playgrounds in the area for inspiration.

10. **Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan –**

- a) To receive an update on the biodiversity audit of council landholdings, other parish areas and to review any biodiversity plans already in place in the parish – It was noted that a report was awaited from Suffolk Wildlife Trust’s Wilder Ecology.
- 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.

11. **Date of next meeting –** 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024 commencing at tbc in the Thurston Community Library.

12. **Close of meeting –** there being no further business to transact the Chair closed the meeting at 8.50pm.