

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL – Leisure and Environment Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on Wednesday 19th June 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 15th May 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, quantities required to be calculated and an order placed. 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. Install replacement handles on Multiplay.
 - **Thedwastre Play Park Area:** The new equipment has now been inspected and signed off. The erosion of soil around gate and benches will be filled in within the contractor order as above.
A check of the at height internal components of the swing fixings has not been commissioned at this time, this was highlighted as a low risk on the Annual Inspection and the manufacturer could not confirm any recommendation of timescales for this type of inspection.
Whilst on site Kompan have removed the damaged sign, adjusted the gate closure dimensions, raised the swing seat height and removed the excess chains and checked and tightened fixings on the spinner as requested.

- **New Green Open Space:** Bin at Trim Trail/youth shelter has been removed.
A check of the at height internal components of the Giant Rope Swing and the Overhead Rotator seat has not been commissioned at this time, this was highlighted as a low risk on the Annual Inspection and the manufacturer could not confirm any recommendation of timescales for this type of inspection.
The goal nets have been secured with new ropes.
The erosion of soil around various items will be filled in within the contractor order as above.
 - **Recreation Ground Play Area:** The erosion of soil around various items will be filled in within the contractor order as above. Swing seats to be raised and excess chains removed within the contractor order as above.
- b) **To consider matters on the Monthly Risk Assessment Reports for the following and agree appropriate actions arising:**
- **Heath Road Play Area:** Bin lid not fixed correctly. No additional issues reported.
 - **Thedwastre Play Area:** No additional issues reported.
 - **New Green Open Space:** Damage to the Surface Matting under Rotator and other items noted, a contractor to repair this is being sought.
The recent quarterly Kompan inspection noted broken glass and food waste on the Sit Up station and gave a 12 yellow moderate risk rating, the glass was removed by the inspector and the rating reduced to 10 low risk. This risk has been identified to the Litter Picker.
 - **Recreation Ground Play Area:** Safety surface damaged by fire – details and cctv have been forwarded to the police. The recommendation from the supplier is to repair the damage to ensure the integrity of the surfacing, their quoted cost is £650, an insurance claim for this repair is not thought to be warranted and the costs will be met from the parish council's repair budget.

7. Clerks report –

- a) Update on Mid Suffolk District Council's Meadow Management – It was confirmed that the new meadow management trial at Heather Close and the delayed mowing at Maltings Garth had received some complaints. These areas have been found to have bee orchids and a request to cut the greens has been declined by MSDC with their Biodiversity Officer asking for residents to be patient with the trials and wait for the end of summer cut whilst ensuring that their comments are forwarded to MSDC to ensure any review of the management of these areas for next year is well evidenced. This MSDC position will be relayed to residents of Heather Close by letter.
A resident's correspondence regarding the MSDC cutting regime on the verges adjacent to School Road and the concerns that the abundance of wildflowers and grasses there had been cut down to the detriment of insects was noted.
- b) Update on the outdoor theatre production of Treasure Island – Posters are now going up and Facebook, website and newsletter advertising is ongoing. There are no ticket sales to date. It was noted that promotion of ticket sales by all is crucial to ensure the success of this event.
- c) Report from Engaging with Young People course and Designing Spaces for teenage girls webinars – the deputy clerk has circulated the video and notes from both webinars for information. Relevant points from the training included the necessity to engage virtually with youth age groups using social media, ensuring that teenage girls were properly represented in any consultation process, the importance of peer-to-peer engagement and finding an ambassador who this demographic can relate to, establishing relationships with

other youth-based stakeholders and improving the parish council's online presence with other platforms. Information gained from a rewilding play spaces webinar was shared which concluded that although wild play areas had many benefits and excellent play value from more natural play the negatives in high maintenance and safety concerns were major considerations.

8. **Wildlife Garden –**

- a) To review the forward plan for monitoring and management – It was agreed that a quarterly review of the wildlife garden will take place to monitor the bug hotel, bird and bee boxes and plant growth. It was noted that a cut of the grass areas would be required in late summer and the arisings from this would need to be cleared. It was agreed that a work party would be arranged to clear the arisings following the contractor cut. It was noted that consideration would need to be given to attracting more birds and insects and to promoting the benefits of visiting the garden. The provision of a bee bank was considered, this project needs a sunny exposed south facing area and it was agreed that the garden did not have a suitable site for this.
- b) To consider the provision of a lectern – It was agreed to defer commissioning a design for the lectern until a full year of monitoring could take place.
- c) To consider the provision of seating – It was agreed that a recommendation to full council be made to purchase one recycled single seat bench at the quoted cost of £237.50. Installation costs would be sought, and a suitable location would be confirmed during a site visit to the garden. It was noted that the balance remaining from CIL funds is £427 which would cover the cost of the seat.

9. **To review 0-3 year goals and consider any additional projects including potential facilities coming forward from developments sites –**

A review of the goals and action steps took place with progress and expected completion dates noted. Completed goals have been transferred to an appendix and remaining goals listed in date order of review or completion.

It was agreed that the Bug Hotel and Bird Boxes goals were complete and would be moved to the appendix.

Ethos report review goal was discussed with agreement that a review of the promised facilities on Denbury's Thurston Park site be prioritized now that this development was almost complete. It was suggested that a request for benches and seating for the open space be put forward. It was noted that there is a considerable amount of rubbish, in particular broken polystyrene, around the site that needs to be cleared and that there are at least two dead trees on the footpath to Sandpit Lane and two on the green area. It was noted that the allotment area is not yet complete for handover to the parish council. It was agreed that the other sites should be reviewed for promised facilities however none were allocated to particular Councillors to carry this out.

It was noted that the Biodiversity Audit had been commissioned.

It was noted that the Lindon/Vistry development at Cavendish View would have significant open space facilities including woodland and play equipment and the ongoing liaison meetings should be attended by members to monitor the progress of this.

It was noted that all other goals had a review date of 2025 and would continue to be monitored going forward.

It was noted that a consultation process should be initiated to establish what the community requirements might be for the open space coming forward from the Gladman site, east of Ixworth Road, the results of which could then be added to the 0-3 year goals.

It was acknowledged that forward thinking considerations will be needed for the open space

potentially coming from developments still to be determined and these should be added to the 0-3 goals as they are identified.

Cllr Welham left the meeting.

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 confirmed that Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Wilder Ecology had been commissioned to conduct the audit.
- 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 – 17th July 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 9.30pm.

DRAFT