

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL – Leisure and Environment Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee held on Wednesday 28th February 2024 at 7.00pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.

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

Also in attendance: Mrs. P Gladwell (Deputy Clerk) 0 members of public.

Election of Chair – It was agreed that Cllr Gerrish take the chair for this meeting, aif.

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** – Verified apologies were received from Cllr P Smith. The meeting was in agreement to approve the apologies received with aif. Cllr S Pott was absent.
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 18th October 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: The majority of issues raised where action was awaiting the annual inspection were raised by The Play Inspection Company in their report.
 - Thedwastre Play Park Area: Bin at Trim Trail is still to be refixed. Damaged sign still to be removed. Action on both will be chased.
 - New Green Open Space: Broken bar on MUGA, the welding work has been actioned and chased with deadline for work to be carried out given. Damage to the Surface Matting under Rotator where action was awaiting the annual inspection was raised by The Play Inspection Company in their report.
 - Recreation Ground Play Area: No works to be updated.

To be signed by the chair at the meeting of 20th March 2024

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

- Heath Road Play Area: Additional issues to those highlighted by the Annual Report. Climbing net, worn cable, agreed to seek quotes for repair. Broken fencing in far back corner, agreed this should be removed.
- Thedwastre Play Area: No additional issues.
- New Green Open Space: No additional issues.
- Recreation Ground Play Area: No additional issues.

c) To consider any recommendations resulting from the recent Annual Playground Inspections

- It was noted that those councillors who carry out the monthly inspections would like to consider a training course.

The following actions were agreed, aif

- clarification will be sought of the reports reference to 'failed to meet BSEN1176' but no action required.
- that quotes be sought to action the recommendations made for the 2 bay Swing at Heath Road.
- that quotes be sought to carry out all surface repairs recommended to remove any trip hazards.
- that a cost to replace the missing bar on the Muga at Heath Road be sought from the manufacturer.
- that a cost for replacement of the sign the Trim Trail be sought.
- Clarification would be sought regarding the requirement to have the maintenance gate at Thedwastre Park padlocked.
- that a precis of all other low risk recommendations be put together for consideration at the next meeting.
- Cllr Morris will check the weed growth on the surfacing at the Recreation Ground Play Area to clarify if this an installer issue.

It was noted that there is a recommendation for the goal nets at New Green to be refixed however it is thought that these are not as in the photograph, they will be checked.

7. Clerks report –

- a) Update on Thurston Walking Leaflet – The latest draft has been approved and the print run actioned. Costs for the 1800 hard copies was confirmed at £410.00. The leaflets will be available on the Discover Suffolk website and the hard copies will be made available at various locations around the village when they arrive.
- b) Update on Thermal Imaging Scheme – Cllr Rainbow and the Deputy Clerk carried out imaging for eight properties. The images have been forwarded to residents along with further information on how to improve the insulation in their home and the data will be forwarded to SCC.
- c) To confirm councillors attendance for online event 'Bringing Back Nature – Biodiversity Net Gain for Councils' Cllrs Morris, Moy and Gerrish confirmed their places are booked for this event.
- d) Update on vacant position for Tree Warden – It was agreed that the position would be advertised in the newsletter.
- e) Update on the 2021 and 2022 tree surveys – It was noted that Urban Forestry recommended reinspection of the trees on New Green in 2025 and at the Recreation Ground in 2024. It was agreed that consideration of a professional survey of New Green trees would be taken in 2025. It was

agreed that a quote be sought for the reinspection of trees at the recreation ground. It was suggested that advice be sought from MSDC tree officer David Pizzey on the recommended regularity of tree survey and inspection.

- f) It was confirmed that the inclusive play equipment for Thedwastre Park had been ordered and the replacement bench at Woodside Close would be delivered shortly. A quote is awaited for the installation of the new bench.
- g) It was noted that the two dead spruce trees on New Green have been felled under Clerks delegated powers for safety reasons. The trunks have been pollarded and left at approx. 12ft high for the biodiversity benefits.

8. Wildlife Garden Project –

- a) To receive an update on the work schedule and to consider the next steps including consideration of a quote to lift the crown of a tree and remove two small dead trees – It was noted that the recent site visit and work party had identified actions needed and carried out work to clear and cut back shrubs and trees and to plant a Silver Birch sapling. It was agreed that a quote be sought and work actioned to carry out the remaining work required to the trees which needs a chain saw. The soil test results showed a neutral ph with visual test confirming predominantly sandy soil. The recommendation from the site visit and confirmed by MSDC officer Richard Parmee is to leave the garden over summer and see what comes up before establishing a planting scheme in the autumn if its needed. It was agreed that at the current time no additional sub soil was needed. It was agreed that three bird boxes be erected and that examples and prices be sought for bee houses. It was noted that the bug hotel would need a material top up. Cllrs Welham and Bond will do this in the near future.
- b) 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 suggested that TCC be asked if they have a student who might design and make the gate signs for us.
- c) To consider the provision of seating – Following the site visit it was recommended that seating be concentrated on single occupancy and relaxed, comfortable seats be provided to supplement the existing benches. Price and examples will be sought for consideration at the next meeting.

9. Biodiversity Policy & Action Plan –

- a) To consider carrying out 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 further information was needed on the scope of any audit and advice would be sought from SWT on how they might have approached other similar audits. It was noted that prior to any audit being commissioned members would attend the SALC Bringing Back Nature – Biodiversity net gain for council’s event on 24th April.
- 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 existing projects such as the Wildlife Garden, bird boxes and recent tree and hedge planting should be included in the plan and that further consideration of the Action Plan and future projects would be ongoing.

Cllr Welham left the meeting with apologies.

- 10. To note BMSDC's The Great Big Green Week – 8th to 16th June 2024 and consider holding an event** – It was agreed that no event be planned at the current time.
- 11. Date of next meeting** – 20th March 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 21.00pm.

To be signed by the chair at the meeting of 20th March 2024