

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Office
New Green Centre
New Green Avenue
Thurston
IP31 3TG

Tel: 01359 232854

e-mail: info@thurstonparishcouncil.gov.uk

website: <http://thurston.suffolk.cloud>



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 16th March 2023 in the Cavendish Hall, Church Road, Thurston as prepared by the Clerk to the Parish Council.

The Chair of the Parish Council, Councillor (Cllr). Christopher Dashper, took the Chair for the Meeting.

In Attendance: Ms N Mattin, Headteacher of Thurston Community College; Mr P Wade, Chair of New Green Management Committee; Mr R Fawcett, Chair of Friends of Thurston Library; Rev Ben Edwards; Mr K Towers, Chair of Thurston Relief In Need Charity; Vikki Pryke (Cavendish Hall Management Committee). PC Martin (Stowmarket SNT); District Cllr. Harry Richardson; Councillors B Morris; J Hay; and L Bond; Councillor B Rainbow, Chair of Thurston Recreation Ground Charity Trust and eight (8) members of the public.

1. Opening and Welcome by the Chairman of the Parish Council – the meeting was declared open at 7.30pm and all were thanked for attending.
A statement was read out indicating that, in accordance with the changes in legislation, the public and councillors were permitted to film, record, photograph or use social media to report on the proceedings of the meeting.
A full transcript is available from the Clerk
2. To receive apologies for absence: District Cllr. Austin Davies; PCSO Beverly Swain; Mrs E Longman, Thurston Library Manager; Deputy Clerk Mrs A King; Mr Bayes, Headteacher of Thurston Primary Academy; Cllrs. G Balaam, S Cornell & J West and County Cllr. P Otton.
3. To confirm the minutes of the APM of 19th May 2022 – having been previously uploaded onto the website, these were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chair of the meeting, Chair of the Parish Council, Cllr. C Dashper.
4. To receive a report from Mid Suffolk SaferNeighbourhood Team - PC Martin was invited to submit the report on behalf of PCSO Swain in which he drew the meetings attention to the following: *(a full copy of the report can be seen at Appendix A starting at Page 18 of these minutes)* - whilst the statistics show an increase in crime across the board, all should be cautious of drawing direct comparisons with previous years and take into consideration that the village has grown over the last year with more properties to come. The Primary School has almost doubled in size with many more pupils, including those out of catchment, whilst the Community College is also expanding with the flexibility to take on additional students including out of catchment areas. These will impact upon the statistics as crimes committed in Thurston will be recorded within the overall data for Thurston.
For more information on Crime statistics in your particular area please visit www.police.uk .
5. To receive a report from the Chairman of the Parish Council Christopher Dashper - the Chairman of the Parish Council delivered his report which is as follows:

Good evening and welcome to the 2023 Thurston Annual Parish Meeting and the Chairman's report.

The Parish Council continues to work hard to support the community of Thurston. As ever, planning matters in particular continue to occupy a considerable amount of the available time and resource of the council, but also increasingly meeting the needs of a growing community through the provision and maintenance of leisure and recreational space and equipment, supporting local organisations and liaising with other organisations such as the district and county councils regarding highways and other public services.

Moving on into the main body of the report, this is always my opportunity for a number of important thank you's.

A thank you first to all the members of the council who have committed their time and energy to the parish this year.

Since my last report, councillors Jonathan Grant and John Priscott have left the council, while Michael Moy has very recently joined the council.

Derrick Haley who served both the parish council and Mid Suffolk District Council for many years also left the council this year. We will miss Derrick's experience and knowledge and I offer my thanks for his support both for me and to the council.

In May 2023 at the local elections the council will increase from its current eleven (11) members to thirteen (13) and there are likely to be some vacancies on the council for new members.

My thanks to Vice Chairman Brian Rainbow, for supporting myself and Vicky, Clerk to the Council and Antonia King, Deputy King to all the councillors, including Barbara Morris, Julian West, Sarah Cornell, Graham Balaam, Liz Bond and James Hay for serving as part of our committees including Planning, Leisure and Environment and the Emergency Planning committee.

To Steve, our litter picker for maintaining the public areas and to Bev Swain, our PCSO for the policing and safeguarding support for local residents. Funding has been agreed for a further two years.

Thanks also to our Suffolk County Councillor, Penny Otton and Mid Suffolk Councillors Harry Richardson and Austin Davies for their support on county and district issues including road infrastructure and planning.

And thanks, as always, to Vicky and to Antonia for continuing to manage the ever-growing range of subjects the council is involved. As the village expands and the council becomes responsible for more aspects of everyday life, our team continue to maintain the high standards of excellence, particularly in financial management, community and stakeholder engagement and planning. In every way, the council continues to exceed expected standards and to set the benchmark for others.

In planning and development matters, the community continues to grow as the current developments in the village build out and the houses are occupied. Where possible we continue to work with the developers of these areas for a collaborative approach to the provision of play areas, landscaping and tree planting and other aspects of the original planning applications. We want to ensure that the village has a good range of services, complimentary and attractive and accessible to all and offering a range of opportunities for all residents.

Last year, I reported that the High Court had initially ruled in favour of Thurston in the case against Mid Suffolk District Council's consent of planning for the construction of 210 homes by Bloor Homes on land south of Beyton Road. Following a further appeal, the decision has finally gone against Thurston, with a decision to rule in favour of the development. Reserve matters planning has also now been awarded to the development - as a council we are now concentrating on ensuring that the development is delivered to a high standard with minimal impact on residents. We have also stressed that the road improvements delivered as a condition of the application are re-assessed prior to commencement to ensure that they still fit for purpose before any houses are occupied.

The planning application for a further 210 houses on the land to the east of Ixworth Road, linked to the Bloor development due to a shared requirement for road improvements was originally noted as minded to approve by Mid Suffolk but has now been recommended for refusal due to the Mid Suffolk having more than a ten-year land supply and because of

concern over the traffic position at the Bunbury Arms crossing. The developer has indicated their intention to appeal, and we await further information on this.

We are pleased to be able to support local organisations each year with small grants so that they can provide services to support our residents. Organisations supported over the last year include Suffolk Accident and Rescue Service, £300; West Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau, £500; Thurston Childcare Ltd £2,000; Thurston Cavendish Hall £150; Thurston Table Tennis Club £500; Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau £200; Headway Suffolk £200; Tiny Toes £184. Organisations within the village who provide services to local residents, can apply for a grant using a simple application form available from the Clerk and the request will then be considered by the Parish Council. Requests for grant support from organisations based outside the village including regional groups may be considered where there is or has been a recognisable benefit to Thurston.

We have also continued to deploy our Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, supporting a number of community focussed projects in the village over the last year.

Thurston Parish Council has a number of responsibilities many of which have a financial implication, including maintaining the village sports, recreational and play facilities and equipment, some street lighting and general village maintenance and litter clearance. The village also fully funds its own Police Community Support Officer for Thurston, Beverly Swain. The combined cost of these services along with the core running costs of the parish council is supported by the annual precept, funded by the Council Tax paid by each household. For 2023/24 the Parish Council has agreed a small rise in the precept of £2.04 per annum or just under 4 pence per week for a Band D Property. This increase will support the continued investment in local services and the accompanying administration and will help to offset inflationary rises in goods and services.

Our monthly Parish Council meeting is held on the first Wednesday of every month at the library. Anyone can attend the Parish Council meetings and raise an issue or an area of concern in public forum. The public are also invited to attend our other committee meetings including Planning and the Leisure and Environment Committee, all of which are held at the library. The dates of all these meetings are advertised on the notice boards around the village and on the Thurston website. All papers including those relating to finance are uploaded to the website for perusal by Councillors and members of the public ahead of all meetings.

Questions raised by the meeting:

traffic road improvements – is there a way of securing information which details how much of the s106 monies have been drawn down by Suffolk County Council and where the money has been spent. There was circumspect about what improvements had been offered and why there was not a comprehensive to manage the traffic and have the issues pushed to the back of the developments.

The Chair confirmed that theoretically the junction improvements are still on the cards and the Clerk was actively chasing for information directly on this matter.

6. To receive a report from County Councillor Penny Otton, Thedwastre South Division – County Councillor Penny Otton had previously submitted her written report in which she drew the meeting’s attention to the following –

Ukraine: One Year Anniversary - A year has passed since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. It was on 24th March that Councillors cross-party shared a single motion in support of Ukraine. Our Group recommended the motion, condemning the actions of Putin, as well as committed to support and welcome refugees to become a part of Suffolk communities. The ‘Homes for Ukraine’ programme continue to provide hosts for refugees but is in dire need of more households to come forward and offer temporary accommodation. If you think you can still help, please visit: www.suffolk.gov.uk/Ukraine. Hosts are entitled to £350 per month, which increases to £500 after 12 months.

Highways: I have agreed to use my local highways budget to fund yellow lines on Norton Road and “H” markings at the new re-cycling centre. Verges and hedging on land north of Norton Road seems to have been resolved. I hope I have been able to assist in getting other issues sorted out.

Locality Budget: I have been happy to have been able to support the new lighting at the pavilion and the cost of the village notice boards.

Network Rail: I cannot politely express how yet again frustrated we all are at the extreme slow progress by Network Rail. We have insisted on a monthly update but even that we have to remind them of.

Ben Wragge Skate Park/New Community Area: with many others we have now received the information on the possible new community area, this will be a very pricey project, but if all work together and use all expertise available hopefully progress can begin with at least the planning stage.

Full Council: over the past 12 months my Group have submitted 6 motions – one for each Full Council meeting. In July, we asked this Council to declare a cost-of-living emergency in the county of Suffolk. With Winter looming, we believed more emphasis was needed on providing emergency support to the most vulnerable households. This was voted down by the Conservatives. In December, we ask the Council to commit further to Community Transport, as well as investigate further into why the council failed in their Bus Back Better bid. Rural bus services have been frequently cut, and the council's failed bid meant millions for investment in restoring the bus network was lost. Again, this was voted down. I am very pleased that the motion I put to promote cleaner rivers in Suffolk was agreed unanimously. We believe every community should have access to safe waters. The motion committed the Council to investigate further into what further work can be done to protect biodiversity and address polluting run-off in rivers, as well as working with farmers to encourage better practice.

Carbon Budget – SCC is Not on Track - importantly, the Council's progress towards achieving Net Zero by 2030 – a declaration made by SCC in 2019. Current forecasts show that SCC will still be producing 10,000 tonnes of CO2 in 2030. As SCC has had 31 new Cllrs since the original declaration, our Group will be asking Cllrs to redeclare their commitment to Net Zero by 2030 today.

2023/24 Budget Meeting: GLI Amendments Declined - At the beginning of February 2023, the Council's budget for 2023/24 was voted in. The Conservative budget will now increase tax by 3.99% - broken down into a 2% rise in the Social Care Precept and a 1.99% increase in general tax. My Group proposed to invest in a Carbon Budget Officer, to help develop a stronger pathway towards Net Zero. We proposed a review into Suffolk's speed limits. We proposed using £1m to actively recruit, retain and reward frontline staff in adult social care, as well as providing more for Suffolk Libraries to help maintain services through the cost-of-living crisis. In addition, we wanted to invest £1m in providing wider capacity of community transport to be used to help achieve Net Zero through EV vehicle usage. The administration voted against our budget amendments, saying our proposals were ill thought-out and not appropriate.

Suffolk Devolution: Big Deal? In 2022, the Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial 'County Deals' up for negotiation to devolve powers. A public consultation will now follow, asking residents if this is what communities want. The deal will look to install a directly elected leader, commonly known as a Mayor. Politically, there is a real risk of a stalemate in politics. Not enough information has been given to show how to prevent a gridlock if a Mayor from a minority party is elected. Overall, our Group will always welcome devolving more power to local authorities. The public will now need to decide whether this is something they want.

Failed Bids: Despite the Suffolk devolution deal aiming to bring us closer to Government. The Department for Transport confirmed in May 2022 that SCC will receive no funding for their Bus Back Better bid. The strategy aimed to improve and expand bus services in Suffolk, connecting rural areas to local and important towns. Government confirmed that the bid was unambitious, something that our Group criticised the strategy on frequently before its submission. Considering just how desperate many are **with the loss of many bus routes this was particularly disappointing.**

Questions raised by meeting: none raised from the floor.

7. To receive a report from District Councillors Harry Richardson and Austin Davies –

District Councillor Harry Richardson used the Mid Suffolk End of Term report for the years 2018-2022 as the basis for his report: a link to the report can be found [here](#)

He also drew the meeting's attention to the following prescient local matters:

Brief overview – MSDC is facing challenges such as inflation and cost measures but continues to project a surplus; has extended council tax discount scheme; is investing in services in Stowmarket (Shelf) and Newmarket; Gateway 14 is underway and will include a Skills and Innovation Centre. MSDC has supported a new Café in Needham Lakes which is one of the most popular free tourist centres in the area and is offering free children's activities in holiday and half terms.

Planning – Bloor Reserved Matters has now been passed; Gladman has been refused / intention to refuse, and they have advised that they will be appealing the decision.

Network Rail Station – a group is looking at ways to bring the building into use and whilst he cannot fund the feasibility study needed prior to investment, MSDC now has a Capital Investment Fund which may be able to assist. Associated Infrastructure in Thurston is actively being chased at both District and County level with conversations ongoing.

Locality Funding

He confirmed that his term of office is coming to an end with the elections in May 2023, but he would be standing again. If successful, he would look forward to serving the District again and if he was unsuccessful then he wished to say that it had been an enormous privilege to represent Thurston for the last four years.

Questions raised by meeting:

The Senior Planning Officer from MSDC made a comment at the Planning Referrals Committee Meeting of 8th March 2023 in which he stated that nearly all of the s106 monies taken from the "Thurston 5" has been spent. Can this be verified?

District Councillor Richardson stated that there appeared to be a disconnect between the funding that has been drawn down and the funding that has been allocated and the Clerk was actively seeking to obtain clarity on how monies are being spent and allocated.

District Councillor Austin Davies, having submitted his apologies, provided the Clerk with a summary of his report which was read out for the meeting. His report concluded that during the year he has been listening to and helping, where possible, residents and community groups find solutions to their issues which has been rewarding.

The full report, subject to rules covering publicity during an election period, is reproduced below:

MSDC Meetings - The Mid Suffolk District Council AGM was held in June. Our Officers presented the proposed council housing strategy. Although it is planned to add 65 new affordable homes each year our number of social homes is currently predicted to decline. Our current waiting list is above 500 persons. Plans to improve leisure and wellbeing facilities in Stowmarket are set to move forward following agreement from Mid Suffolk District Council to fund the next stage of development.

The draft masterplan outlines how new and improved facilities for a wide range of sports, leisure and health organisations can be brought together across a single site in Stowmarket. The proposals include a multi-agency wellbeing hub, a 4g football pitch and a multi-use 2g pitch, a mini athletics track, new multi-sports pavilion, a multi-use games area, four new indoor sports courts and new cricket square and nets. With the funding now agreed, Mid Suffolk District Council can develop detailed designs for the project.

The 4th review of guidelines for the investment of CIL District funds was presented by the officers. A cross party committee of Councillors had carried out the work and recommended the following changes:-

- New heating systems for community buildings to be included

- Up to 100% of the cost of installing charging point for Electric Vehicles
- Museums continue to be supported as are open spaces that do not change the public for admission.
- Schools, Health and rail projects have the highest priority.
- A pilot £100 k for a cycleway within the LCWIP strategy.

For capital projects Parish Infrastructure Plans (PIPs) are key elements in the decision-making process. Religious buildings can now be included. MSDC is now starting to review the CIL delivery plan. This was last carried out in 2020.

The Green Party motion to create economies of scale in improving the insulation and other carbon reduction technology in houses by combining our needs with other councils under the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders was passed.

There was no MSDC Meeting in September because of the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. The performance of the £49 Million retail property portfolio was reported. In 2021/22 a yield of 3.5% was made. Questions were raised as to the effect of the current economic conditions on its future performance. Within the overview committee it was resolved that Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Mid Suffolk Cabinet that, as part of the development of the electric bus project, local consultations to elicit unmet transport needs should be carried out – one covering an urban area and one covering a rural area.

Joint Local Development scheme 2022-25 – this was discussed and adopted. December was a short meeting. Our joint party motion was passed asking for Anglia Water to reduce the levels of sewage discharge into our local water courses. It also asked our Planning Dept to ensure that future developments also took account of this factor. Our Green Party pushed for clarification on the recently announced in Parliament devolution plans for Suffolk.

Mid Suffolk District Council was updated on the business conducted at the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee covering work on homelessness, refugee housing and cost of living support. The current lack of a formal link between Suffolk Association Local Councils (SALC) and MSDC was raised (the CEO later confirmed that MSDC are in discussion with SALC).

The Council has also changed the Council Tax Reduction (Working Age) Scheme and which will come into effect on 1st April 2023. Up to 100% maximum deduction for all legacy benefit households and introduce a simplified scheme for universal credit (UC) customers that will allow ‘passport’ claims to be automated based on the UC financial data without additional verification. Create a transitional protection scheme to support those households who would be worse off under the simplified UC scheme.

The financial position of the Council of the first 6 months of the year has recently been reviewed. It remains in a sound position with the overall debt reduced on £6 million. While other councils are being forced to put up bills in order to balance their books, Mid Suffolk is proposing to freeze its share of council tax – absorbing rising costs, rather than passing them on to residents.

Mid Suffolk District has agreed the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Working Group. Norton, Beyton, Tostock and Stowlangtoft Parish Councils are to remain unchanged. Thurston Parish Council will be increased from 11 to 13 councillors.

In February, financial officers explained that the 2022/23 predicted surplus would be reduced by approx. £1 million to £3 million. For 2023/24 the proposed budget was amended to include our Green Party proposal to make £2 million worth of grants for energy saving measures available for our district householders. Our project to make 2 electric buses available schedule services for rural villages continues. The budget was passed unanimously. There will be a zero increase in our District Council Tax element. However, rents on our council houses will be increased by 7%. Councillors argued that since benefits were being increased by approximately 10% our tenants would be able to manage. This decision was not passed unanimously.

It was decided to increase the budget of our Communities and Wellness section. So from April grants would be made available for local organisations and communities to develop, improve and expand their building and activities. These grants can also be used for appropriate feasibility studies.

Housing Revenue Account (Council Houses/Social Houses) - Mid Suffolk District Council tenant satisfaction survey initial results from 300 households have been shared.

- 77% thought that they were treated fairly.
- 74% were pleased with house repairs.
- 69% pleased with the quality of their homes.
- 53% thought that their views were listened to and acted upon.
- 51% considered MSDC complaint handling was good.

Our long-term Council Housing strategy has been presented. 65 affordable homes should be added each year. An action plan is in place to raise all Environmental Performance Certificates of our housing stock to at least a C level by 2030 by investing £14.5 million on improving energy efficiency. We are now installing new fire alarms and carbon dioxide detectors in each council house.

Council Tax - MSDC arranged for those eligible in bands A to D to receive their £150 central government payment, whether they pay by direct debit or cheque etc. There will be no increase in the 2023/24 council tax

MSDC ring fenced CIL - Officials briefed your Ward Councillors on the MSDC ring fenced CIL position. Of the £3.385 Million, only £2.215 Million is currently unallocated. Further extension to Thurston Community College is planned. Then there are 3 emerging bids. These are Thurston rail station improvement, Site for a MUGA and a suitable site for a skateboard park. It was explained that, where residents from surrounding communities use a facility, that communities CIL fund can be proportionally allocated to create this new infrastructure. Thurston Library has now submitted a CIL enquiry (sponsored by A Davies) with a proposal to expand its floor area to enable it to provide a public toilet, rooms for IT access groups (study areas, social meeting spaces, maker spaces). Thurston Library has recently invested in the children's area to great effect and would now wishes to invest in Teen areas and additional inclusion services. It has been a disappointing and frustrating year in trying to get either the MSDC or Suffolk County Council to invest the Thurston CIL/S106 funds in Thurston.

Ukrainian support - Members of our community have welcomed the first Ukrainian refugees into their homes. Their children are joining appropriate local schools. MSDC carries the responsibility for inspecting prospective homes whilst the SCC is responsible for all other aspects of our support.

Planning - MSDC passed the application for 54-unit extra care affordable housing scheme comprising 40 apartments, 14 bungalows and communal areas.

The Bloor Homes Supreme Court Case, which was refused permission to proceed further, will now have the reserved matters for the outline planning permission go before the Planning Committee for determination.

Planning officers are minded to refuse the Gladman Homes proposed development off Ixworth Road. This was supported by the decision at the Planning Referral Committee, the Parish Council and both ward councillors.

Highways (Suffolk CC) – the level of 'S106' being paid to Suffolk CC (from public records) by the various developers for highway related improvements is at least £900,000 in Thurston. Of the various tasks only those around the new primary school and the Ixworth Road cycleway have been 'actioned'. Safe pedestrian crossing points by Thurston Community College and additional car parking have not been carried out.

Gateway 14 - The ground-breaking ceremony has now taken place at the Gateway 14 site. The development is on track with all Councillors being briefed on progress and issues. All buildings have the capacity to have solar panels, however, the National Grid does the local capacity to accept the levels of electricity this site could generate. MSDC officers have been asked to explore possibilities including 'Green Hydrogen' generation. The 'Range' has paid our MSDC subsidiary the initial £30 million.

Environment - first step in developing a tree planting strategy for the district, which will allow us to best focus new planting in locations that deliver the greatest environmental benefits. Knowing what level of tree cover you have and where it is may help you to understand what increase is needed and identify opportunities for new planting to help deliver this. Our district now has a 'Climate Change Manager'. One of the roles for this officer is to develop a plan for Electric Vehicle charging points.

Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) unanimously agreed funding today to create a new Fuel Poverty Retrofit Team, helping those most affected by the rising cost-of-living. It will be part of the Warm Homes Suffolk scheme, which was jointly established by Suffolk County Council, Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils, West Suffolk Council, East Suffolk Council and Ipswich Borough Council in 2021. The scheme is a source of expert advice on reducing energy bills and in identifying benefits that residents may be entitled to. This winter, Warm Homes Suffolk extends its support further with the creation of a Fuel Poverty Retrofit Team: supporting residents in energy-inefficient homes, struggling most to afford rising energy bills. More than 62,000 properties in the county are thought to have the worst Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) of E, F or G. And an estimated 28% of homes - 95,000 households - are in fuel poverty, almost double the number in 2019. SPSL today pledged £366,000 to create the new team to tackle the challenges, with a further £390,000 of funding underwritten. Measures could include the installation of insulation, fitting air source heat pumps and replacing single glazing.

Thurston Community College/Beyton Sixth Form - meetings are ongoing with appropriate representatives of both sites exploring opportunities for improved community access to the above facilities such as meeting rooms, dance studios, football pitches, Netball courts, fitness studios and performance areas.

Locality Fund - assistance with finances for the refurbishment of the Thurston War Memorial. Helped with costs of AV in Cavendish Hall. Supported Thurston Scouts purchase of new tents. Some of the equipment needed to set up a pickle ball club was the last 2022/23 grant.

Questions raised by meeting: there were none raised.

8. To receive reports from Parish Council Representatives -
 - i. Recreational Ground Trust (304946) - Cllr. Rainbow as Chair of the Committee dealing with the trust matters on behalf of the Council (as sole trustee) was invited to submit his report on the works of the Trust in which he reported that:

The Charity is responsible for the Recreation Ground, Car Park & Pavilion on the Recreation Ground. Church Road. The pavilion is available for hire at competitive rates. The Football Club continue to use the recreation ground & pavilion for home matches. French for Tots & Mah-jong also continue to use the pavilion, Over the last year lighting in the pavilion has been improved to a more energy efficient system, which was jointly funded by County Councillor Penny Otton & District Councillors Harry Richardson and Austin Davis.

The charity has secured CIL funding for the provision of a twin EV charging point in the Recreation Ground Car Park. Internal decoration of the pavilion meeting room & lobby is also under consideration. The charity intends to make a CIL Bid in May to upgrade the heating in the pavilion.

An Outdoor Theatre will be taking place on the recreation ground on Saturday 24th June commencing at 4.00 pm. This has been arranged with Cambridge Touring Productions & Pantaloons Company will be performing Alice in Wonderland.
 - ii. Thurston Footpaths - Cllr. Barbara Morris, the parish council appointed Footpath Warden, was invited to submit her report in which she drew the meeting's attention to the following:

Thurston Tree Thurston is fortunate to have a wonderful network of footpaths leading to the countryside and neighbouring villages. For many years Jannette Service and her husband Barry have monitored these footpaths on behalf of Thurston Parish Council and were instrumental in compiling the current footpath map. The current footpath leaflet is available from the Parish Council office and the Library. This leaflet gives details of 5 circular walks, but these can lead into other parishes, including Pakenham, Norton, Tostock, Beyton. You can walk as far or as little as you wish. The Parish Council is still progressing with an additional footpath map leaflet which will contain information about footpaths that link to neighbouring villages' network of footpath walks. This leaflet will include circular walks from Thurston to neighbouring villages including Pakenham, Beyton, Tostock and Norton. The three walks have now been

walked and written up. They are due to be walked and checked by members of the Discover Suffolk team in March. At the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Black Bourn Valley Reserve to be found on the Great Green, Tostock Road, area of Thurston more ways are being marked through the area. The whole of this Reserve is to be rewilded and to help manage the site cattle will now be found in the area throughout the year. It is pleasing to see the footpaths in the village continuing to be well used. It is, however, important that users keep to the footpaths as well as keeping their dogs under control to avoid damaging farmer's crops, upsetting other walkers and causing distress to animals and ground nesting birds. There have been a small number of dog-related incidents during the past year. We need to remind users to make sure any litter is taken home including used dog waste bags so that we protect our valuable countryside. There are now a number of dog waste bins to be found in the village in addition to the normal waste bins to help with this ongoing problem. It is appreciated that a number of residents use the opportunity to pick up any litter when going for a walk. Should walkers come across a problem with footpaths please report the issue to either the Parish Clerk or direct to Suffolk County Council using their easy-to-use online facility.

iii. Thurston Tree Warden – Cllr. James Hay, the parish council appointed Tree Warden, was invited to submit his report in which he drew the meeting's attention to the following: during the past year the Parish Council has undertaken a survey to look at all of the trees on the New Green Open Space and along New Green Avenue. This was a comprehensive report and works have been carried out carefully balancing biodiversity and safety. The Council has committed to undertake a review of the trees within the pit on School Road to ascertain the health of a number of trees that are located within these grounds. Plans are also in place to remove a dead tree in Heather Close, which will be carried out by Mid Suffolk District Council. All were asked to please report any issues with trees to the Parish Council and it will endeavour to ensure that action is taken where appropriate.

iv. Thurston Local Recorder – Cllr. Barbara Morris, the parish appointed Local Recorder, was invited to submit her report in which she drew the meeting's attention to the following:

The role of the Local Recorder is to keep a record of events taking place in Thurston at the present time. The Thurston Newsletter is a good record of information and thus copies are kept. Reading old copies of this publication can prove very interesting. Newspaper articles relating to Thurston are also kept, in addition to flyers of social events. Official publications, such as, Thurston's Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting documents, are also kept as hard copies although these can be found online. The Local Recorder is also responsible for articles, photographs etc from times past. Thurston is lucky to have a wealth of information mainly because of the work achieved by two previous recorders. There are some wonderful photographs, including copies of some of the Spanton Jarman photographs and also photographs taken in the 1960's/1970's by a local professional photographer, Mr Wood. One of the previous Recorders took photographs of Thurston during the 1980's and produced a document comparing them with earlier photographs.

Photographs are a very valuable record showing the changes through the years. Thurston is changing very quickly with all the building taking place currently thus it is important these changes are recorded. Growth and change is nothing new to Thurston. With the coming of the railway in the mid 1800's development began more on the West of the village. During the 1960's saw the build of Heather, Genesta, Furze, Maltings Garth and Barton Road. Heath Road too but houses had been started to be built here before the War. Then the Maltings Farm area, Howes Avenue and New Green. Each of these periods of growth would have had a major impact with the New Green development being instrumental in bringing the two halves of the village together.

A group of residents (CATS) are working hard, to quote, "searching to bring life back into the Thurston Station Building". The building was designed by Frederick Barnes, an architect renowned for his work on railway stations in East Anglia. The building is a Grade 11 listed.

As a Local Recorder you are supported by the Suffolk Local History Council, which holds an annual Recorder's Day Conference that is very enjoyable as well as being informative. In April, I attended the annual Recorders Day Conference held at Elmswell, once again it was an excellent day and very well attended. No further work has been undertaken in producing a record of Thurston residents who fought in conflicts following WW2 due to person issues.

Questions from the floor:

Would it be possible to have a day displaying some of the information mentioned above?

9. To receive reports from Village Organisations

- i. 1st Thurston Scouts – the Group Scout Leader was invited to submit her report in which she stated:

January 2022's census stood at 47 invested members. This increased to 72 in January 2023's census. We are nearly back up to pre-Covid levels with a full Beaver Colony and Cub Pack - a few spaces currently remain in Scouts. We do have a Waiting List for Beavers and Cubs which may be problematic in the future as families with children already in Scouting who move into the village take priority over those who are brand new to Scouting. We also currently have 5 Young Leaders (14-18-year-olds) working across the Group. It is lovely to know that our young people don't want to leave us when they reach 14.

Group events:

Summer Term: In June 2022 we attended the first Woolpit Steam Rally since Covid. We managed to remember how to pitch our tents and had 5 Young Leaders and 9 Scouts camping both nights, 15 Cubs camping for 1 night and 8 Beavers helping on the gate on the Sunday. It was a busy weekend, and we were rewarded with a donation of £1,000 from the Woolpit Steam Committee. We held our Summer End of Term Family BBQ on the hottest day of the year. The sweltering temperatures meant that we stayed out of the sun within the New Green Centre. Family Archery & Air Rifles sessions were held during the summer holidays with thanks to the Leaders who hold Permits to run these activities - without them giving their own time this would not have been possible. 'Suffolk Punch' happened in August. Thanks to 2 Parents who took out Occasional Helper roles and were then able to come along to help as we were short of Leaders, our Cubs were able to attend a County-wide Fun Day where they were able to try out new activities – the Tomahawk throwing went down a storm. Our Scouts and Explorers camped there with the BSE District for 5 days. They tried Scuba diving and Clay Pigeon Shooting for the first time.

Autumn Term: Our Church to Church Sponsored Walk had been organised for the 11th of September. Sadly HM The Queen (the Patron of the Scout Association) had recently passed away. However we went ahead with this event and walked from St Peter's Church in Thurston to Holy Innocents Church in Great Barton wearing black ribbons to show our respect. We raised £781 which was split 50/50 between our funds and the Brain Tumour Charity (who we had been raising funds for throughout the year). This event will be repeated this year but in the opposite direction. We are also hoping that Gt Barton will join us. We held a Family Beetle Night in October – fun was had by all.

Remembrance Sunday arrived and I was unfortunately admitted to Hospital on the Friday and therefore had to hand the reins to 2 of my Leaders who stepped in at the last minute to manage this event in my absence. I watched the Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph for the first time on the television and stood beside my bed for the two minutes silence just as the Consultant arrived – she had to wait for me! Our Family Christingle Service in December was well attended. We were able to donate a cheque for £754.01 to The Brain Tumour Charity. We had a Christmas Tree displayed in St Peter's Church going along with the theme of 'Pantomimes'.

Spring Term: We are holding our End of Term Group event next week Planet Laser. All our members will have the opportunity of 2 sessions running around the maze with laser guns, followed by the moving up ceremonies.

The Planning for Summer Term 2023 is currently underway – starting with the Woolpit Steam Rally, and a 2-night Family Camp at the beginning of September.

Finances: On setting the Membership Fees for 2023, the Executive Committee decided not to increase them. In fact we took the unprecedented decision to reduce the annual fees by £15 due to the current economic climate. We know that this doesn't sound much, however every little counts. We received nearly £1,000 in grant monies in order to purchase several new tents (some of which have replaced some damaged tents) and we have now increased the number of tents that we have within the Group.

Leadership: In September we gained a new Beaver Leader thus enabling our Assistant Beaver Leader to retire. Our new Leader has various training modules to complete over the next couple of years and has just attended her first Beaver Sleepover. She has grabbed the role with both hands and is doing a marvellous job with the Beaver Programme utilising the guidance/advice from other Thurston Leaders as well as the other Beaver Leaders within the BSE District. We also gained two fully trained Assistant Scout Leaders: one who had taken a break from his previous Scout Group after moving away and decided to restart his Scouting journey with us, and the other who transferred from Red Lodge Group.

A massive THANK YOU to all of Thurston's Leaders and Executive Committee for all of their support throughout the year. I couldn't have done it without them.

- ii. Cavendish Hall – a report was submitted on behalf of the Cavendish Hall Management Committee in which it was commented:

The Hall continues to take its place in our village. We maintained all our regular hirers after lockdown. The Air Source Heating system and Solar Panels were installed last year and at the beginning of 2023 the Audio and Visual System. This has widened our appeal for bookings. Our very grateful thanks to grants from our Parish Council, and our local councillors, Harry Richardson, Austin Davies and Penny Otton our County Councillor for supporting us. We also replaced the flooring in the hall. This year we are updating our lighting system and decorating the hall. Future projects thought of are replacing the hall chairs and widening the doors into the chair cupboard. The hall constantly needs maintaining and kept up to date to ensure that it continues to flourish. We now have a replacement Treasurer and are seeking a new Secretary.

- iii. New Green Centre Management Committee – The Chair of the New Green Management Trust was invited to submit his report in which he drew the meeting's attention to the following:

Unlike last year this year life has returned to normal, with our hirers mostly returning, and occupancy levels returned to higher than pre-pandemic, and we are unable to meet the needs of all of them, for example the Table Tennis club are turning people away due to the hall being too small. We are frequently having to turn potential new hirers away due to lack of available slots, having said that, a note of caution two regular hirers have had to cancel courses due to low numbers probably due to the economic conditions.

Improvements during the year have continued, and the recycling centre is now operational, and the revamped website is now up and running, and over the next few months users hopefully will notice further improvements. These will include a new purpose-built sand pit, new blinds in the conservatory and the café area, both of which are on order.

It is the intention to install in the garden play equipment for slightly older children. Other improvements will hopefully include modernization of the sound system, option for soft lighting in the hall, new flooring in the café area, and a picket fence between the pavement and garden area, enabling a clearer and safer view and environment for those whose children are using the play equipment. With the tables and parasols mentioned in the report last year, the usage has proved that the village now has a unique facility, to be proud of and well used during the Summer.

The Centre celebrated the Jubilee, including a beacon sourced by the Parish Council. It is the intention to provide facilities to help the village commemorate the Coronation in May. As mentioned in the report last year Thurst CIC was created and commenced trading from 1st April 2022, and has had to register for VAT, it has been used for a

wedding and a few parties. During the year they promoted in conjunction with the local butchers various events which included entertainment, these are currently on hold. It has also provided free children's discos, however one of the most important features that it has added is that in conjunction with St. Nicholas hospice hosts a bereavement café every two weeks. The monthly Bingo has gained a regular following of varying ages. Once again the New Year's Eve party took place, and the group is already booked for this year. The creation of Thurston CIC has allowed the Trustees to focus on the New Green, rather than divert their attentions to the café.

The trustees have for 18 months being aware that the facilities are no longer fit to service the needs of a fast-expanding community, and the New Green is the logical place to develop. With this in mind certain repairs have been delayed, doors with gaps, toilet modernization needed etc., but the recent announcement about the offer to the council of the Freehold for the New Green to the Parish Council, will make provision of facilities to meet the future needs, a realistic proposal. However the structure of the Trust and the existing lease will mean considerable changes are needed to progress this. With this in mind, we enter the new financial year, with uncertainty of what lies in store for the future of the New Green Community Trust.

The Trustees would like to thank our landlord, and the Parish Council for their continued support, and on a personal note I would like to thank the Trustees for their work and efforts during a difficult period.

- iv. Friends of Thurston Library – the Chair of the Friends of Thurston Library was invited to submit his report in which he drew the meeting's attention to the following:

Since Ellie Longman came to Thurston Library as manager, she has transformed the Library for all age-groups; the Library is a welcoming place and a real community hub. It is an attractive, well-regarded Suffolk Library which the Parish Council and Friends Group support. The Library continues to serve Thurston and a wide area well beyond Thurston – many villages and parts of Bury St Edmunds.

Expanding activity – over the last year there has been a strong increase in all key areas: the number of books issued, visits made for all purposes, new users, and the number of volunteers in the Library: we now have five, including Duke of Edinburgh Award students. The Library continues to support people through a wide range of services, from borrowing books and the Home Library Service to a wide range of activities and clubs for all age groups on a weekly, monthly and ad hoc basis (see appendix below), to being Thurston's warm space with free tea and coffee and a range of free, warm coats.

Thurston Library is now too small statistically for the number of people served – *see further on for plans for expansion*. As the Friends Group, we support all the Library does, both helping in the Library and raising money for Thurston Library and Suffolk Libraries, working with others in the community - Cavendish Hall (12th Night Band Concert), the Church (Christmas Tree Festival) and Primary Academy (Village Quiz with the Friends of the School) and as a separate group - organising a range of activities – over the last year, an evening with Charles Garland (May), Bike Maintenance during the summer, the Platinum Pudding recipe book raising funds for the Suffolk Community Foundation, the Queen's Green Canopy, Gatehouse and Storehouse Foodbanks, a talk on The Medieval Green Man, Beering Up! – talk on the Greene family of Greene King and tasting Greene King's Speckled Hen beer, and, coming up, Posh or Not? wine tasting and a visit to Rougham Hall. We have just had Suffolk Libraries Day and organised Thurston's Clue Trail, Where's Wally? competition, and craft activities for children along with cake from The Last Tuesday in the Month Baking Club and Friends of Thurston Library. We continue to work with Suffolk Libraries on national events such as the Summer Reading Challenge, and "DiscoverReads".

On the immediate front: There is a group looking to create a sensory garden and Suffolk Libraries and Suffolk County Council are looking to possibly expand the Library and we have a public consultation underway in the Library and online. There is a display and survey of opinion in the Library or find the consultation on the web: everyone's views are very welcome.

Community Activity at Thurston Library: we currently have these activities and meetings in the library:

Weekly: Mondays: Mini Movers – movement group for toddlers; Tuesdays Chat ‘n’ chill afterschool club; Children’s Centre; Wednesdays: Baby Bounce; Watercolour Club; Bridge Club Parish Council Meetings (3-5 per month usually); Thursday: Children’s Centre; Twenty-minute tales; Fridays: Friday Sewcial – Sewing Group; Children’s Centre; Saturdays: Knitting Workshop; Sundays: Lego Club.

Fortnightly: Saturdays: Ancestry Club; Bike Maintenance – over the summer months

Monthly: Mondays: Card Making Club and Simply Sing (choir); Tuesdays: The last Tuesday Baking Club; Wednesdays: Thurston Library Book Group; Thursdays: U3A Book Club.

Variouly: Friends of Thurston Library monthly meetings and activities.

- v. St Peter’s Church – the Reverend of St Peter’s, Thurston was invited to submit his report in which he stated that:

St Peter’s Church remains at the heart of faith community in Thurston – to our knowledge the sole established religious community in the village. Reflecting on the engagement with community life in Thurston across the year, we have been blessed with many different events and relationships.

Many people came to St Peter’s to sign the book of condolence for Her Majesty the Queen’s death in September and showed not only the affection and devotion shown by Thurston for Elizabeth II, but also the acknowledgement that the Church played a central role in honouring her memory.

A strong village presence at the Remembrance Sunday service, both at the memorial and in St Peter’s, was perhaps a reflection of that affection for Queen Elizabeth, who herself had played her part in World War 2. We were pleased to see active and ex-servicepersons present as we both honoured those who gave the ultimate sacrifice and renewed our commitment to the pursuit of peace always over and above conflict.

Christmas time saw both the Christmas Tree Festival and Inspiring Angels land in Thurston – alongside the excellent and creative Christmas Trees that appeared in St Peter’s Church and the Library, angels and angel wings began appearing in various places, some hidden away, some quite obvious, like the wings visible in the window of Rossa Café. Thanks as ever goes to all those involved in the Christmas Tree Festival, particularly Richard Fawcett who, amongst many other roles in the festival, helped again with the lighting in St Peter’s – as Richard is taking a break from the festival this year, we shall review what is possible and hope we can untangle the lights!

Inspiring Angels was taken up by many in the village, including excellent and angelic efforts from Thurston Primary School.

Engagement with the school has been ongoing and excellent. Other than myself, we have another governor on the board at Thurston Primary in Pat Sadler, church warden at St Peter’s, who brings her experience and knowledge as well as a steadfast and gentle faith. The school have been actively involved with the Church in the services they lead in St Peter’s for Harvest and Christmas, and a wonderful fresh expression of church in their Christingle service – the roads were too dangerous in icy weather for the school to come to St Peter’s, so the teachers devised a service in the round, surrounding a fire in the centre, and was a beautiful moment in the life of the school and a wonderful way of celebrating Christingles, even if lighting all the candles of the Christingles was logistically difficult. We continue to work with head teacher Mr Bayes, deputy head Amanda Wigzell and all the staff at Thurston Primary, with a weekly collective worship led by the vicar, governance and assistance with SIAMS. Together Family Church services run mainly from the school hall every third Sunday of each month, bringing additional opportunities for children and families to gently explore the Christian faith. There will be two Together Family services running from St Peters for Mothering Sunday and Easter Sunday, and we hope to attract families to attend and discover more. We’re very much looking forward to welcoming the school to their own Easter services soon. The church has also begun to engage with Thurston Sixth Form college recently, providing assistance in an A Level philosophy class, where Fr Ben led a session on the Problem of Evil – how a loving, benevolent creator can allow evil to exist in our world.

A small class of very intelligent, engaging students discussed and debated various aspects of this subject, and certainly got Fr Ben thinking too. We do hope to be able to help again in this way.

The Church has made some decisions with regard to the way it responds to inclusivity. The benefice released a statement with regards to this last year, making clear our desire to include people from all backgrounds – race, gender, sexuality, identity, ability, neuro-diversity etc. This has been further strengthened by the churches joining the national network of Inclusive Church, an ecumenical organisation that seeks to promote and assist churches that are inclusive and wish to become ever more welcoming to people from a diverse array of backgrounds. This will include Prayers of Love and Faith for LGBT+ couples, as recently proposed and agreed by General Synod. These liturgies will be finalised in July of this year 2023 and will be actively offered after their approval. These statements and provisions would make us one of the only visible places of LGBT+ welcome in the village, and we hope to set example for other organisations and places of business to follow suit.

As we are all aware, the village community is expanding fast, and a diverse array of people are likely to come to live here. We hope that our work in extending welcome and acceptance of all people will mean that those that live here and those that come to live here will find that they are included in the life of this village.

An association has begun between 863 Thurston Air Training Corp Squadron and St Peter's, as Fr Ben begins the process of becoming their Chaplain (known as Padre in the ATC). Fr Ben will commit as much time as possible in being present for the young people who enjoy the vast array of opportunities that the ATC has to offer, including the formation of upstanding citizens from their growing number of cadets. Fr Ben is also petrified they will make him jump out of a plane or something but is willing to take the risk! It is hoped that the relationship will mean the church supporting the ATC and vice versa – a fantastic Carol service for the ATC was held in St Peter's this year, which we hope will become an annual event.

Plans are afoot for fundraising to upgrade various areas of the church building – we have been successful in a grant application to renew the church noticeboards in honour of the Platinum Jubilee – a bittersweet moment considering the death of the Queen last year. Also underway are resurfacing of the fairly treacherous pathway to the church; the replacement of curtains in the Lady Chapel. Fundraising will begin for renewal of the Children's Corner and redevelopment of the prayer corner, which we hope will become an area of rest (comfy seating, soft lighting) and hold prayer resources for younger folk. We also hope to explore solutions for heating within the church, which has been a perennial issue.

We look forward also to the Coronation weekend and are already unfurling plans for activities and celebrations surrounding a Coronation church service and will be encouraging all to attend.

Finally, of course, St Peter's Church continues to be the place where we can engage with our Christian faith and remain a prayerful community that keeps Thurston and surrounding areas lifted upon our daily prayers. The Church is out of the building more often than in, but our prayers do not cease. We are here for the village in joy and sorrow, in grief and in celebration. We have enjoyed overseeing the bonding of couples in Holy Matrimony; we have brought infants into the family of God in Baptism, and we have commended our departed loved ones to the arms of God at funerals. Amongst the prominent members of our community that have gone to glory, we recently said goodbye to Mr Alf Nightingale, a long-standing member of the Church and former church warden. May he rest in peace and rise in glory. He will be greatly missed.

It is never an easy task to lead a worshipping community. There are great joys and triumphs, and there are challenges and difficulties to work through and overcome. But the direction of travel for St Peter's Thurston looks good. We are shaping ourselves to be ready to serve the community that Thurston will become, as well as serving the faithful who are here already. I am proud of what our church is doing with very limited resources, and I commend our community of faith to you. Do please continue to

support all the good work that we do and engage with us in support or challenge. We are always ready to welcome everyone with the heart of Christ.

- vi. Thurston Community College – The Principal of Thurston Community College was invited to submit her report in which she drew the meeting’s attention to the following: Please to introduce herself as the Head of Thurston Community College having been in place since September 2021. She would like to echo the church’s message by stating that there have been and are challenging times as we exit a pandemic. The school sees itself as the 4th emergency services and often have to pick up the pieces in times of an economic downturn when resources and services are stretched or not readily available. She was proud to be the principal and confirmed that there were existing projects in the pipeline and that a number of projects had recently been completed or were underway: new security fence around the college on the Thurston campus thereby creating a secure site and ensuring that the pupils on campus were safe; conscious that transport issues relating to the College impacts on the local community in terms of access to the site but there is an ongoing project to purchase a parcel of land that sits between the school and the Persimmon site (College Park) which will create a new drop off car park and will in part alleviate the pressure on the current road. Part of the land is also to be used for a MUGA and there is a hope that both will come to fruition soon. Would like the community to enjoy these aspects. Whilst all are aware of the issues of transport along Norton Road she would like to re-emphasise the need for a crossing at Norton Road crossroads, at times this feels very dangerous. The new school block which is to include two science rooms, a science prep room and toilet facilities in a single storey is underway and will provide purpose-built teaching accommodation for 150 additional pupils. She shared with the meeting that in December it had been announced that Thurston Community College had been identified as a school that will be rebuilt under the Dfe School Rebuild Programme. There were no details yet but there is an expectation that the planned project could begin as soon as April this year and that it is likely to be a complete rebuild on the site. It was likely that there will be significant changes on the school site over the next 3 years. The roofing project ended last year but there is a new project underway for the ceilings, fire upgrades and change of lighting. At this stage she was unable to say what this would mean for the Library and whether it would impact on current plans, but she assured all that there was an ongoing commitment to have the Library on the school premises.
- Events that had taken place over the past year covered: High School Musical production – very inclusive event from performing and music to stage production and lighting; Last Choir Standing - choir Sing Off ; re-established a student body which has taken positive steps in taking such events forward; Enrichment Events are back up and running. 70 volunteers have come forward to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards – very important for young people to be involved in these events and the local community. Last summer the school went mobile free for a day – positive effect on socialising and communicating. She concluded by saying that Thurston Community College will turn 50 in 2023 and during the summer months the College is looking at planning 50th Anniversary Events and will use this opportunity to engage with the community.
- vii. Thurston Primary Academy – a written report had been submitted by Mr Bayes, Headteacher in which he drew the meeting’s attention to the following: It has been another exciting academic year for Thurston CE Primary Academy. With a successful move into the new building last academic year and an increase in pupil numbers from 205 to 310 (at time of writing), the school continues to expand in all year groups and is continuing to build on our good reputation. Pupils continue to enjoy the new curriculum that we can offer due to the facilities that the school now has. The specialist teaching area is being enjoyed by all, with pupils now being given greater opportunities to develop their skills in Design and Technology, Science and Art. Cooking has been a particular favourite for many. We are in the second year of a two-year cycle so that all pupils are taught a wide and balanced curriculum following the National Curriculum. Class teachers and support staff have, over time, used their professional judgement to adjusted the initial approach to deliver specific

parts of the curriculum to mixed age range classes. Due to the increase in numbers, Year 3 and 4 are now two form entry classes rather than mixed age classes. It is likely that all year groups will be two form entry by the next academic year, although I am waiting confirmation from the Local Authority.

Thurston CE Primary Academy is developing its links within the community. This academic year, during Harvest, pupils once again donated food to the local charity Gate House as well as collecting money for various larger charities such as Young Minds and Children in Need. As the Headteacher, I am very keen that the community uses the school so that everyone can benefit from it, not just the pupils. Local exercise groups hire out the hall for Yoga and Jazzercise and we are working closely with Reverend Father Ben Edwards to develop the monthly together family church held in the school hall. I am also working closely with supporting Thurston Pickleball Club and hope to have four outdoor courts for community use by the end of the summer term. The school has been developing links with Thurston library to ensure staff and pupils are making use of this fantastic local resource and working with them and the wider library service to develop our own school library. Our own library is a wonderful space which is heavily invested in to continue making a wider range of more recent texts to be available and enjoyed by pupils.

As a school, we are aware of the need to hire outdoor space to local sports clubs but require funding to develop an outdoor area that has a kitchen and toilet facility before this can be offered. This building will be used to increase availability at Breakfast and After school club and potentially be used during school hours for family support for the school community. Our vast outdoor space requires development in order for the pupils to become more active and stimulated during free time. There are plans in place to use the Sports Premium funding to develop the area but, like all funding, it is never enough therefore this will be an ongoing project for the next few years.

At the end of the Autumn term in the build up to Christmas, pupils enjoyed walking around the village to find the missing presents, something that we enjoyed working on with the parish council team.

At the beginning of the Spring term, each child had the opportunity to plant three trees in order to create an outdoor forest school area for the future. Approximately one thousand trees have been planted in total. Pupils understand that it will take many years before this area will be used for outdoor learning but get fulfilment out of knowing the work they have done now is for those of the future.

Staff at Thurston CE Primary Academy relish the challenges that we face as a growing school and will continue to put the pupils at the heart of everything that they do.

- viii. Thurston Relief In Need Charity (TRINC) – the Chair of the Charity was invited to submit his report in which he commented that:

The objects of the Charity are to make payments to relieve persons resident in the Parish of Thurston who are in need, hardship or distress or to provide items, services or facilities for such. The charity has made a financial contribution to seven requests for assistance in our last financial year (to December 2022). No emergency payments were made in the last financial year. All requests are considered in complete confidence. He confirmed that the nominative, co-optative and ex-officio trustees are unchanged.

The major asset of the charity is the area of land to the south of Heath Road. A decision was taken some time ago to review the use of this land and see if it could be improved. The land has now been taken out of agricultural use and part of it (approx. 3.5 acres) is to be leased to Housing 21 for the construction of an extra-care facility comprising flats and bungalows. The planning application for this scheme was submitted in August 2021 and was determined on 20th April 2022. The written confirmation of the Planning permission was not received by H21 until mid-December 2022. This has delayed the whole project. The charity now awaits confirmation from H21 that they wish to proceed in line with the contract. Our hope is that they will complete on the lease by the middle of the year. If for any reason that does not happen, then we will have to revisit our plans.

It is proposed, subject to the above, that the remainder of the land; which includes the small recreation area which is currently let to the Parish Council; will be dedicated to some form of communal/village use. It has been expressly stated, on a number of occasions, that it will not be used for open-market housing. The charity will continue to liaise with the Parish Council and other interested parties.

The charity continues to use the services of Hazells (Chartered Surveyors) and Greene & Greene (Solicitors) as its professional advisers. The charity will continue in its current form for the time being but is minded to conduct a thorough review during the course of this year. Please direct any queries via email to: thustoninneedcharity@btinternet.com

- ix. Thurston W.I. – the President of the W.I. was invited to submit her report in which the following were covered:

Thurston WI has now reached its 104th Birthday and have a party the following week. We continue to thrive, we now have 49 members. We try and participate in village events; we held a cream tea in August, participated in the Christmas Tree Festival and again collected for the food bank and Women’s Aid at Christmas. We are very proud of our Soup & Chat lunches we hold once a month here on a Tuesday, from September to March we average about 30 people each time, and with everybody having 2 servings that’s 60 bowls of home-made soup, plus cake and tea/coffee, the new kitchen at the hall making this so much easier. Now everything’s back to normal we are going on a trip to Elton Hall, having a craft workshop next month and continue to be part of the community.

Thanks were offered by the Chair to those who had taken time to attend and present their reports.

10. To receive issues from members of the public present – there were no issues raised.
11. As there were no further comments from members of the public in attendance, the Chair closed the meeting at 21.06pm by thanking all for attending.
12. Date of next meeting – to be confirmed but all were made aware that it would need to be between 1st March and 1st June 2024.

So approved and signed by the Chair of the Parish Council at the meeting of 18th April 2024

Appendix A



Stowmarket Team
Needham Road, Stowmarket,
IP14 2QX
Tel: 101

Thurston Annual Parish Council Report- March 2023

The Stowmarket team welcomed the New Year with a big move to a brand-new station. This is a joint site with the Fire Service. A modern, ground floor building where both Response teams and Safer Neighbourhood teams will be working together within the main hub. The new station is now situated on the Needham Road Stowmarket.

The following officers are now part of the Safer Neighbourhood team covering the Mid Suffolk locality:

A/Inspector for Stowmarket SNT: Inspector John Murray

Sergeants for Stowmarket SNT: Sgt Luke Allard 1813 and Sgt Adam Bennett 352

Community Engagement Officer (CEO): PC Stefan Henriksen 1443

Police officers for Stowmarket SNT: PC Sophie Buckle 1886; PC Harry Martin 982;

PC Courtney Price 131; PC Colin Gedney 663

PC Chloe Levett 1107; PC Joseph Sansiviero 44

PC Katie-Handley-Howard 856 (maternity)

Link PCSO's for Stowmarket SNT: PCSO David Harvey 3098; PCSO Abigail Durrant 3287 (maternity)

Fully funded PCSO for Thurston: PCSO Bev Swain 3354

Fully Funded PCSO:

PCSO 3354 Bev Swain has been in post for 1.5 years as the fully funded PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) for Thurston and is looking forward to the next two years. The PCSO's work alongside the regular officers to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour which will improve people's quality of life. As a crucial member of the Stowmarket Team, the PCSO's provide a neighbourhood policing service to local people which will include the following activities:

- Providing high visibility patrols, for public reassurance, reducing fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, on either foot, bicycle, or car.
- Community engagements to understand and address local needs, such as victims of crime, new and emerging communities. Assisting with inputs and support for Thurston Primary School and Thurston Community College in the absence of School Liaison Officer/Community Engagement Officer.
- Building working relationships with Partner Agencies to help identify solutions to prevent local crime and anti-social behaviour at the earliest stage by tackling the root causes.
- Identifying and reducing community issues, tensions, and fears, including multi-agency problem solving, evidence gathering and early intervention.

The PCSO reports to the Parish Council on a weekly basis with updates on issues raised to the Police by members of the public. A Police report is submitted each month for the Thurston Newsletter, this includes useful information relating to topics or areas of concern, which have included personal/property safety and changes to the Highway Code. The Council in turn can advise of any concerns which may have come to their attention, all crimes are to be reported via 101.

PCSO Swain will attend monthly Parish Meetings and the Annual Meeting, in their absence another Officer will attend depending on availability.

PCSO Swain will also hold a weekly "drop in" on a Wednesday morning between the hours of 1100-1300, this will give an opportunity for the residents to discuss any concerns or issues in person with the officer in private.

Street Surveys:

The PCSO will continue to deliver the Street Surveys in line with any issues or concerns in the village. Once the resident receives the survey it will give them the opportunity to log any issues or concerns, they wish to bring to the attention of the Police. The surveys can provide us with information that can assist us to identify what the local issues are and how we could prioritise them.

This form can also be filled out anonymously and emailed to stowmarket.snt@suffolk.police.uk or returned to Parish Council Office at New Green.

Street Surveys are not to be used to report a crime and may be shared with the Environmental Health, Housing, Parish Council or Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) where appropriate. Information is handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

Details on how we use this information, and your information rights please visit: www.suffolk.police.uk

Parking:

Suffolk Police focuses its resources based on an assessment of threat, harm, and risk. Dealing with parking offences is a lower priority and complaints of illegal parking will not automatically result in Police attending. They would allocate a unit in a situation where there is a clear offence that is a risk to public safety. If there is an issue with a particular location causing a community concern, the Safer Neighbourhood team will deal with it appropriately.

SNT receive many emails regarding the parking issues in the village mainly around the peak times around school pick up and drop off. There are no restrictions within the village except outside Primary School and Community College. These areas of concern will continue to be monitored to tackle any obstructions by PCSO Swain.

Police have powers to enforce:

- Dangerous or obstructive parking, including parking on the pavement and 10 metres from any junction. (Where two roads meet)
- Vehicles parked on a pedestrian crossing and zig zag lines
- Moving vehicle violations, such as speeding and going through 'no entry signs'

Speeding:

Thurston has 4 active enforcement sites, Barton Road (C691), Station Hill (C562), Ixworth Road (C562) and Beyton Road (C560). Below are the figures since 1st January 2022. Some of the sites are relatively new, the table shows visits where offences were committed.

Row Labels	Count of NOTICE NUMBER
C560	6
C562	36
C691	6
Total	48

PC 1443 Henriksen and PCSO Swain will continue to carry out speed checks in any area of concern in Thurston.

Anti-Social Behaviour:

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) covers many types of actions from low-level persistent nuisance to serious public disturbance which include personal, environmental and nuisance.

It is behaviour that:

- Is capable of causing nuisance and annoyance
- Is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress
- Creates significant and persistent problems in the neighbourhood
- Leaves communities intimidated and afraid

Examples of such behaviour would include:

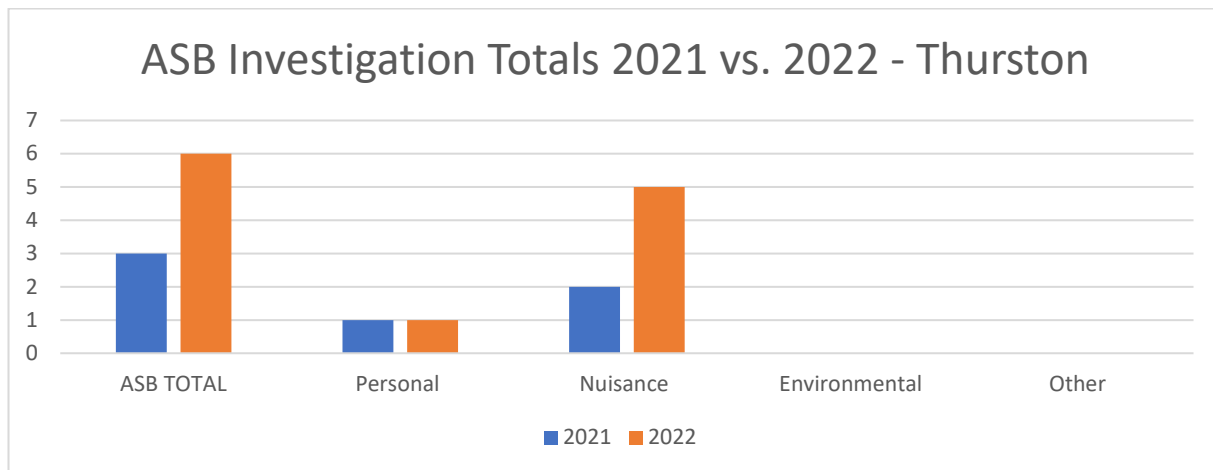
- Noise
- Harassment
- Vandalism
- Graffiti and fly tipping
- Nuisance neighbours
- Street drinking
- Intimidation and threats
- Violence
- Hate behaviours that target members of identified groups because of their perceived differences

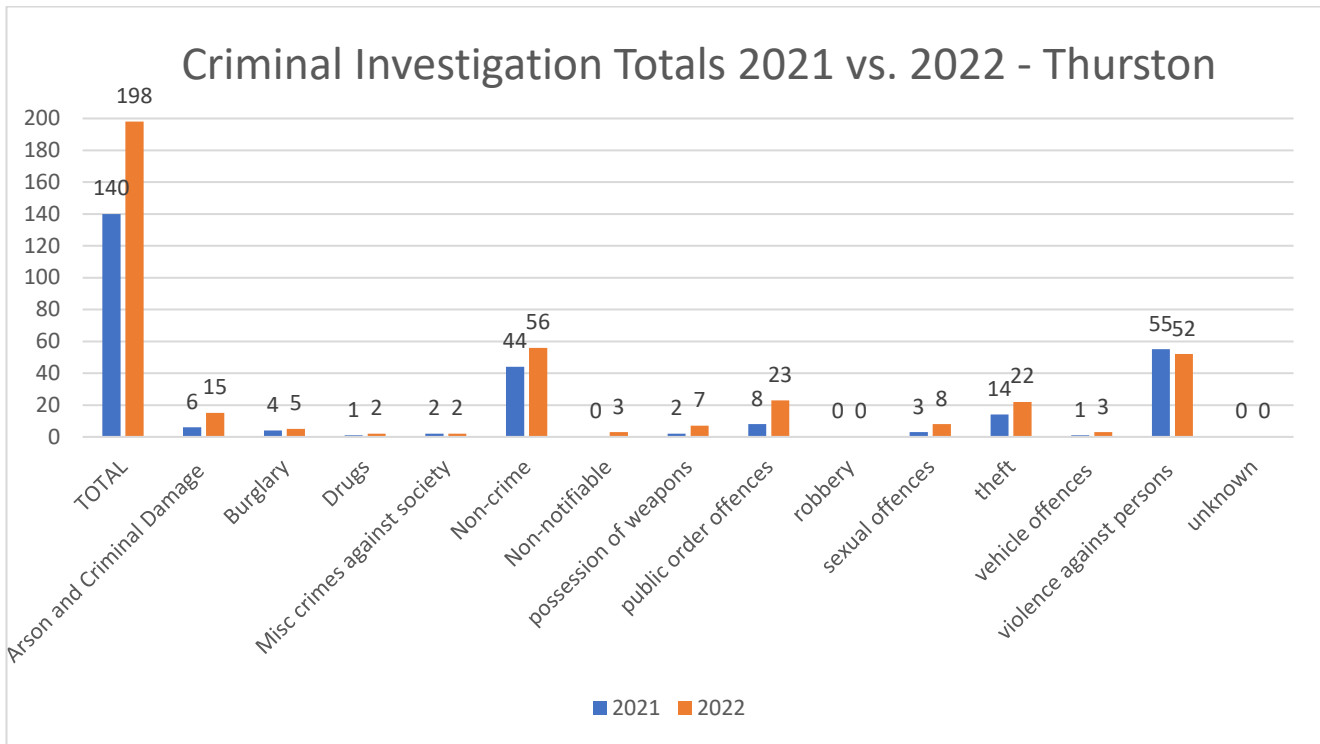
What we will do:

If ASB is affecting, you or your family we will listen to you and treat the problem seriously. We will involve other agencies, where necessary, to act to permanently address the problem, prevent it happening again and report back to you about what we have done.

Stowmarket teams will support PCSO Swain to monitor the village especially during lates and nights if they are not committed. PCSO Swain has also assisted with some of the late patrols within the village covering known hot spot areas such as Station Hill, Cavendish Hall/Church Road, Black Bourn Valley nature reserve and New Green Community area.

We also use the help of our Kestrel team which comprises of a Sgt and Police Officers who do overt and covert operations to be proactive in combating drug crime and other community issues.





CRIME STATISTICS:

The graph shows the Crime Statistics for Thurston from 2021-2022. There is a slight increase across the board, we need to take into consideration the village has grown over the last year with more properties to come. The Primary school has almost doubled in size with many more pupils, including out of catchment. The Community College is also expanding with the flexibility to take on additional students.

Please note crime statistics can be adjusted and reclassified and are only correct at the point of research, please contact crime admin team for official records. For an explanation on each crime category please visit www.police.uk

For more information on Crime statistics in your area please visit www.police.uk .

PCSO 3354 Bev Swain
Stowmarket.snt@suffolk.pnn.police.uk