

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 18th April 2024 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: Penny Otton, County Councillor Thedwastre South Division; Austin Davies, District Councillor, Thurston Ward; David Bradbury, District Councillor, Thurston Ward; Maeve Taylor, Principal, Thurston Community College; Cllrs. Stephen Gerrish, Bryan Rainbow and Tracey Welham; Richard Fawcett, Chair of the Friends of Thurston Library; PCSO Matt Brown; Keith Towers, Chair of Thurston In Relief Charity; Vicky Pryke, Chair of Cavendish Hall Management Committee; Melanie Johnson, Group Scout Leader, 1st Thurston Scouts and three members of the public.

- 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
- To receive apologies for absence** - Rev'd. Ben Edwards; Paul Wade, New Green Trust; John Bayes, Thurston Primary School; Sgt. Luke Allard; PC Colin Gedney from Stowmarket Community Policing Team; Ellie Longman, Library Manager, Thurston Community Library; Cllrs. Graham Balaam, Elizabeth Bond, Barbara Morris, Michael Moy and Julian West.
- To confirm the minutes of the APM of 16th March 2023** - 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.
- To receive a report from the Stowmarket Community Policing Team** - PCSO Brown was invited to submit the report 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 19 of these minutes)
- Suffolk Constabulary changed its local policing model in December 2023 to ensure we continue to provide the best possible service for the public. We understand it is crucial for officers to be where people need them to be, when they are needed the most.
The demands on neighbourhood policing have risen enormously over the last few years, increasing the pressure on our teams. Our priority will always be to do all we can to keep the public safe and bring criminals to justice. To achieve that we need to evolve.
This reshaping of our local policing structure has enhanced the way we respond to emergencies, deal with other incidents, investigate offences, prevent crime, and interact with communities across Suffolk.
The new model are comprised of three parts: Community Policing Teams, Response Investigation Teams, and a County Partnership and Prevention Hub.

Community Policing Teams - Community policing is the bedrock of all we do. There are 50 new Community Policing Areas with 80 Community Policing Officers. They will be more visible and have local ownership of the areas they serve. Officers, supported by Police Community Support Officers, will be embedded in their specific Community Policing Areas. This will enable them to understand better the public's concerns and target our activity where it is needed most.

The constabulary's existing Rural and Wildlife Team and Kestrel Teams, which proactively target neighbourhood crime across the county, will remain unchanged. They will support the Community Policing Teams.

The following officers are now part of the Community Policing Team covering the Mid Suffolk locality: A/Inspector for Stowmarket SNT: Inspector John Murray; Sergeant for Stowmarket SNT: Sgt Luke Allard 1813; Police officers for Stowmarket SNT: PC Colin Gedney 663, Named Officer for Thurston and surrounding areas; PC Chloe Levett 1107; PC Laura Shearwood 1026 and PC Adam Fegerson 808. Link PCSO's for Stowmarket SNT: PCSO David Harvey 3098 and PCSO Abigail Durrant 3287 (Both will be assisting across all of the areas covered by Stowmarket). Fully funded PCSO for Thurston: PCSO Matthew Brown 3362 (Match Funded for Thurston Parish Council).

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 2024 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 including infrastructure and transport.

Moving on into the main body of the report, this is always my opportunity for a number of important thankyou'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 James Hay, Sarah Cornell and most recently Simon Potts have left the council, while Philip Smith, Stephen Gerrish and Tracey Welham have joined. My thanks to Vice Chairman Bryan Rainbow, for supporting myself and Vicky, Clerk to the Council and Paula our Deputy Clerk and to all the councillors, including Barbara Morris, Julian West, Graham Balaam, Liz Bond and Michael Moy for serving as part of our committees including Planning, Leisure and Environment and the Emergency Planning committee. Those of you doing the maths will have worked out that there are 10 councillors in total, with three current vacancies - if anybody is interested in joining the council, or you know of anyone else who might be, please get in touch or encourage others to do so.

To Steve Taylor, our litter picker for maintaining the public areas and to Matt Brown, our new PCSO for the policing and safeguarding support for local residents.

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

And thanks to Vicky and to Paula, our new Deputy Clerk for continuing to manage the ever-growing and diverse range of subjects the council is involved with. As the village expands and the council becomes responsible for more aspects of everyday life, our team continue to maintain their high standards of excellence 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.

I am pleased to say that this approach to detail and the support for the community were recognised at the Suffolk Community Awards 2023 event held at The Food Museum, Stowmarket in September 2023, when Thurston was the joint winner, along with Kessingland, of the Large Village of the Year.

A further success story has been the taxi bus scheme led by the parish councils of Elmswell, Thurston, Beyton and Woolpit, which began as a trial service in June 2023, but now operates on a permanent basis. This service can be pre-booked, at least 2 days in advance, for travel between the villages and Bury St Edmunds. Full details were included in the April Newsletter and the service can be booked through Elmswell Parish Council.

In planning and development matters, the community continues to grow as the current developments in the village build out and the houses are occupied. The Parish Council has seen some success in working 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 that need to be delivered. 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.

The planning application for a further 210 houses on the land to the east of Ixworth Road was recommended for refusal due to Mid Suffolk having more than a ten-year land supply and because of continuing concern over the traffic position at the Bunbury Arms crossing. The developer has appealed this decision, with the appeal being successful. However Mid Suffolk lodged a Judicial Review against this decision which was heard at the High Court in January 2024. We are awaiting further news on this result.

We are conscious of concerns around the provision of essential infrastructure within the village, much of which was linked to the original large planning applications in 2017. Many of these improvements are scheduled to be delivered upon completion of the sites, but the council continues to press for the early completion of measures including vital safety crossings, particularly those adjacent to the Community College.

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 £500; Gatehouse Caring in East Anglia £500; West Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau £500; The Recreation Ground Charity Trust £1,450; Community Heartbeat Foundation £2,830; Stowmarket ASD Saturday Clubs £500; Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau £500; Headway Suffolk £500 and Mid Suffolk Croquet Club £500. 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 several community focussed projects in the village over the last year. These have included funding for our Police Community Support Officer, the Thurston Community Players drama production, the 2 EV charging points at the Recreation Ground car park, new safety matting for the play areas on New Green and the Recreation Ground play areas and items including new dog waste bins and parish noticeboards. Full details of the use of CIL funds can be found on the parish website and a report was included in the April edition of the village newsletter.

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 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 2024/25 the Parish Council has agreed a small rise in the precept of £7.43 per annum or 14 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.

6. **To receive a report from County Councillor Penny Otton, Thedwastre South Division** – County Councillor Penny Otton was invited to submit her report which is repeated as follows:

Flooding in Suffolk - From end of October 2023, Suffolk suffered a winter of repeated flooding, most notably Storm Babet, when the area around Thurston Road was particularly badly affected. I attended a meeting of local parishes in Beyton to see what we could do jointly to make improvements to prevent this happening again. It was agreed that all the agencies needed to work together and need to get the landowner to clear ditches.

Suffolk's total rainfall during October 2023 was 117.9mm (4.5in) which the Met Office report as being 90% more than the average expected rainfall for the month. The drainage systems in the county were unable to cope with the volume of water. Suffolk County Council have committed an extra £1m for flood investigations to try and prevent future incidents; where usually there are only three or four such investigations each year, for 2023 the number is likely to be near 100 investigations. The government offered funding to household affected by flooding, with many also able to access further money for preventative works and I'm pleased many were successful in getting this money. With the parish council we reported the flooding at Old Norton road.

RAAC/Condition of School Buildings - In September the council held a scrutiny session on the condition of school buildings, which was very timely as the news has just begun reporting on the number of schools with RAAC. RAAC, which stands for Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete, is a lightweight building material, cheaper than concrete, which was used extensively in buildings between 1950. However Thurston Community College is in line to be rebuilt anyway. The decision on the Beyton site has still not been confirmed but it is likely it will transfer to Thurston possible in stages. The site remains in the ownership of Suffolk County Council and has to be used for education.

Library - I am pleased that SCC have agreed that the 2 rooms will stay with the Library when the new school is built.

New Suffolk Fire and Rescue Control Centre - The Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) have recommended that the council leave the current control centre partnership with Peterborough and Cambridgeshire councils and open a new control centre in Suffolk by the end of 2024.. A new temporary site for the control centre was needed from December 2023, and work will now begin to find a more permanent site in the centre of the county close to major roads.

New Highways Contract - From 1 October 2023, Suffolk County Council entered into a new Highways contract with Milestone, following the end of the previous contract with Kier. The new contract promises better communication with councillors and Suffolk residents and contains incentives for the new contractor to work efficiently – for example, undertaking other works needed in the same geographical area when they are called out. The performance of the contract will be scrutinised after 12 months to assess Milestone's performance and is for an initial period of 10 years, with the option to increase it a further 10 years. At the same time, a new contract for street lighting was entered into with McCann. This contract is due to last for seven years.

Highway Issues - At last the yellow lines on Norton road are in place but there has been a problem with the use of the Library car park. I and Richard Fawcett are seeing what can be done. Ixworth road continues to be disaster despite all my, the parish council and residents effort the developer still has not done the work. Fishwick corner continues to be an accident black spot despite calling for further safety measures,

Locality Budget - I have allocated £2,000 towards new work at the Village hall and £500 to the girl guides trip to France.

Rail crossing and Network Rail - We are all finding extremely frustrating that we are still waiting for the feasibility study and estimates for the work. Network Rail fails to understand the urgency. The highways survey has been done and will be shared with Network Rail.

Budget Meeting - GLI Amendments Declined - In February 2024, the Council's budget for 2024/25 was voted in. The Conservative budget proposed an increase in council tax of the maximum 4.99%, which breaks down into a 2% rise for the Social Care Precept and a 2.99% increase in general tax. Council services have faced another year of spiralling demand and additional cost pressures, The proposed budget included a 100% cut to arts and museums funding, with a temporary fund set up for 2024-25 using the remaining Covid funding from the government to allow some time for these organizations to adapt and find other sources of income. It also proposed that all local archives and records be centralised to The Hold in Ipswich, a decision which has been vigorously opposed in both Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds, where communities want to keep their record office buildings in the area. I have given my support to the campaigners to retain the archives in Bury St. Edmunds.

My group acknowledged the difficulty of the council's financial position and proposed a minor amendment - that instead of using all of the leftover Covid funding for arts and museums, half should be allocated to supporting young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), a service the Conservatives were planning to cut.

We proposed that £250k of the 2024-25 funding for arts and museums be allocated from the council's core funding, as this is an important distinction for arts organizations when they are applying for other sources of income. This amendment was declined.

The Conservatives backed down on the 100% reduction in funding from April 2025 onwards, and shortly before the budget meeting announced a £500k funding pot which arts and heritage organisations can bid for in the 2025-26 financial year. This could mean the funding for arts and museums is spread more thinly, but means more organizations are likely to benefit. As budget decisions for 2025-25 will not be made until the February 2025 council meeting, this decision is not yet ratified.

Ofsted/CQC Inspection of Suffolk SEND (special education needs) Provision - Suffolk County Council and its NHS partners who provide SEND services (the 'Local Area Partnership') were inspected by Ofsted and CQC in November 2023, with the inspection report being published on 30 January 2024. The inspection found 'widespread and/or systematic failings' in the county's SEND provision and is the second poor inspection result since SEND inspections were introduced in 2016. As a result of the inspection, the two Cabinet Members for children's services and education at the council stood down, and new Cabinet Members have been appointed to these roles. A new full time and permanent Director for Children's Services (DCS) has also recently been appointed, who will start at the council in July.

Suffolk Devolution Deal - After much talk of devolution in the last few years, it looks like this may now happen in Suffolk. Devolution is a process by which regions or cities in the UK can have greater control over decisions in their areas. The government agrees a deal with the area which gives them more freedom to make local decisions about how to spend government funding. This is due to happen in Suffolk from 2025 in areas such as transport and adult education. There will also be a £16m annual investment fund for economic growth, a £5.8m lump sum to regenerate brownfield sites across the county, and a £3m one off investment in retrofitting homes to make them more energy efficient.

The devolution deal also means the leader of Suffolk County Council would be directly elected by the people of Suffolk, so every four years residents will have two votes, one to elect their local county councillor and the leader of the county council. That leader CANNOT BE A COUNTY COUNCILLOR. The first election for the directly elected leader will be in May 2025, which is the next county council election. There could be problems with having an elected leader if they are from a different political group to most of the other councillors; the leader can choose a Cabinet and control the council's agenda, but without the votes in the council chamber they might find it difficult to get things done.

There is a consultation being held about the deal right now, and you can find out more about it and fill out the survey here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/devolution>

Libraries Consultation - On Tuesday 25th March, Cabinet reviewed the results of the recent consultation about the Suffolk library service, which is due to go out to procurement in the summer. Broadly, the members of the public who responded to the survey agreed with

what libraries currently provided, including community and digital services, and the mobile library and home library services for people who were housebound.. It is also likely that mobile libraries will run from smaller vehicles in future. The successful bidder for the new libraries contract is likely to be announced in November, with the new contract starting from June 2025. The contract will be for six years with an option to renew for a further six years.

Motions to Council - My group passed one motion successfully during the year in May 2024, which was for the council to work with its partners to better signpost members of the public to benefits they may be entitled to. This motion was raised as a result of reports that over £15bn of means tested benefits are going unclaimed because people were not always aware of the support they could access to help them.

Other motions the group had been unable to bring forward or were voted down by the Conservative administration included solar power 'Roofs before Rural', to ask the council to commit to prioritise solar panels on buildings and brownfield sites over solar farms on good quality agricultural land, and to lobby the government to reduce barriers to community energy projects. Community energy projects enable local people to produce electricity (for example, by solar panels on schools) to reduce bills, with any extra electricity sold to the grid, making a profit which can be reinvested locally.

In July my group proposed a motion to make it easier for communities to lower speed limits on rural roads where the safe speed for driving is clearly lower than the current National Speed Limit, thereby reducing accidents and making roads safer for all users. This motion was voted down by the Conservative administration.

We also tabled a motion on flooding in December, which among other things, proposed to increase the frequency of clearing drains and gullies around the county; however, the Conservatives proposed an amendment removing this recommendation and passed a weaker motion which did not include any changes to the usual schedule of drainage works.

7. **To receive a report from District Councillors David Bradbury and Austin Davies** – the Councillors were invited to submit their report which is summarized as follows:

the detailed report can be seen at Appendix B on page 22

The new Mid Suffolk District Councillors continued the growth of Gateway 14 with 1600 new jobs created and more to come in 2024. It was agreed to invest £18.7million in building a skills and innovation centre on the Gateway 14 site. This will consist of office space and training areas. This will focus on providing a starting place for new businesses and the skills needed for the new 'Green Industries'. This will increase the skills level of our residents.

'Cozy Homes' initiative with £2million available for residents as grants for insulation to make their homes warmer and lower their heating costs.

The Joint Local Plan was approved. We have a land supply of over 10 years.

2024/25 budget was approved. The MSDC part of the council tax will be increased by 2% which is lower than most councils in the country. The MSDC part of the council tax bill is about 8% with the rest to Suffolk County Council and the Police. The council also approved changes to the second home and empty home council tax charges. There are more than 680 empty properties in Mid Suffolk, which councillors are keen to see used to meet growing housing need.

Councils already impose a council tax premium on the owners of properties that are empty and unfurnished for two years or longer, but under new legislation, the councils would be able to target empty properties after just one year from April 2024 – and impose a levy on second homeowners from April 2025. Both councils agreed a new joint policy that will see the owners of properties left empty for a year or more paying double, with a premium of up to 100% from April 2024; properties empty for five years or more seeing their council tax bills treble with a premium of up to 200%; and owners of properties left empty for 10 years facing quadrupled bills, with a premium of up to 300%.

Cllr David Bradbury became a member of the Licencing Committee and the Council representative of the Network Rail East West Rail Partnership. He agreed to take a special interest in all matters relating to railways and integrated transport within the Thurston

Ward. £100 thousand CIL funds was invested with Network Rail on a feasibility study to replace the Thurston barrow crossing. The final report is expected shortly. Council have agreed to set up a Community Rail Partnership with Anglia rail.

Following specific training support is now available for '20 is plenty'. Support was given to Tostock and the community wish to have a speed limit on Church Road. All £7,500 locality funds were invested within the ward during the year.

Cllr Austin Davies accepted roles as Director of the MSDC holding company and CIFCO, a member of the planning committee and the joint Audit Committee. During 2023 CIFCO added the Stanton Co-op to the 21 commercial real estate properties. MSDC originally invested £100 million. 2024 valuation has a further reduction in value to £80 million. A capital expenditure plan was created during the year. It has been agreed that MSDC, in the next 3-4 years, will not be making any further funds available. Rental income remains strong; however, higher interest rates are like to reduce the net income to £1 million. Established a plan to upgrade the Energy Performance Certificate to at least a C rating by 2027.

Worked with Gatehouse/CAB and Thurston Parish Council to set up a system of the provision of food parcels for those that are eligible. Please encourage families in need to contact either Gatehouse in Bury St Edmunds or CAB in Stowmarket.

By the end of 2023 helped (along with many other folks) to obtain community access to the Thurston Community College fitness suite. In addition, various clubs can now use the sports hall (pickleball) and the main hall. All £7,500 locality funds were invested within the ward during the year.

Questions raised by the meeting:

8. To receive reports from Parish Council Representatives –
 - i. **Recreational Ground Trust (304946)** – Councillor Bryan Rainbow, Chair of the Recreation Ground Trust was invited to submit his report in which he reported that the charity is responsible for the recreation ground, pavilion and car park on Church Road. Since the last Annual Parish meeting, new electric heaters have been installed in the pavilion, these were funded from s106 Community Halls fund. The new heaters are more efficient than the previous and are also able to be operated remotely. Two EV charging stations have been installed in the Recreation Ground car park which were funded by a CIL grant from the parish council. The safety matting in the children's play area has been upgraded again funded in part through s106 monies and Neighbourhood CIL grant. At present the Trust is obtaining quotes for decoration of the main meeting room and entrance lobby. On Saturday 23rd June 2023, the Recreation Ground played host to Pantaloons Theatre group for an outdoor production of Alice in Wonderland. This was attended by an audience of approximately seventy. This year on Saturday 10th August the Recreation Ground will play host to Dot Productions for an outside production of Treasure Island. The pavilion and recreation ground are used by the Football Club with the pavilion being used during term time by French for Tots and twice a month by the Mahjong Club. The pavilion is for hire at competitive rates and the Trust will, over the coming months, be advertising and actively engaged in attracting additional leisure hires to the pavilion.
 - ii. **Thurston Footpath Warden** – Cllr. Morris, the parish appointed footpath warden reported that Thurston was fortunate to have a wonderful network of footpaths leading to the countryside and neighbouring villages. The current footpath leaflet is available from the Parish Council office and the library. This leaflet gives details of 5 circular walks which can lead into other parishes, including Pakenham, Norton, Tostock, Beyton. You can walk as far or as little as you wish. I am pleased to report that an additional footpath map leaflet, which will contain information about two footpaths that link to neighbouring villages' network of footpath walks, is now available on the Discover Suffolk web page and a printed leaflet will be available soon. 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. The area at the bottom of Meadow Lane, leading to Footpath TH7, which at times can be very muddy, I am pleased to report the surface has been improved making it a far less muddy to walk through. Further along Footpath TH7, through the wooded area, it is planned to update the wooden bridge and also put in place a boardwalk on part of the walk that has been exceptionally muddy during this very wet winter. Footpath TH1 which also runs from the bottom of Meadow Lane to Ixworth Road is also to be resurfaced using sympathetic materials. All this work is due to take place during the summer. Another footpath that is currently being improved is TH6, which leads from Church Road to Norton Road. To avoid walking along Norton Road there are now excellent walkways, with entrances off TH6, through Denbury Homes, which can take you to Sandpit Lane or Norton Road near the zebra crossing opposite the Primary School. 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. 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 directly to Suffolk County Council using their easy-to-use online facility.

- iii. **Thurston Tree Warden** – Cllr. Morris, acting Tree Warden provided a written report in which it was stated that Suffolk Tree Wardens have been caring for the trees of Suffolk for over 30 years. Suffolk was one of the first counties to set up a network of parish Tree Wardens. The Suffolk Tree Warden Network's aim is for every parish to be supported by a Tree Warden. The STWN are a very supportive group. The STWN and the Woodland Trust joined forces a number of years ago to provide an opportunity to plant trees in local parishes and/or towns. An initiative that the STWN have introduced is asking tree wardens to collect local tree seed and establish a local tree seed nursery. I have started a small nursery and after a slow start have achieved success with a number of different species including field maple, horse chestnut, oak, guelder rose and hawthorn. STWN hold regular Zoom meetings where they can discuss their successes or otherwise and all the data is collected and recorded from each Parish. We would like to find a permanent site for a tree nursery within the parish and it would be good if someone interested in taking on this project could be found.

During the last few years, Thurston has lost a number of trees, including several mature trees. Hedgerows too have been removed mainly associated with the new developments. The new developments have however been required to plant more trees and shrubs and to create green spaces. The Thurston Neighbourhood Development Plan has an Environment Policy document which will help to add protection to Thurston's green spaces, trees and hedgerows. Future developments will be required to plant more trees and shrubs and create green spaces but should also retain, wherever possible, our current trees and hedgerows. In line with recent legislation all new building developments of 10 houses or more will have to provide 10% biodiversity net gain.

This year in Thurston a local landowner has obtained and planted trees from the STWN/Woodland Trust that require wetter growing conditions. Included were two black poplar trees. These trees are rare and difficult to propagate. Thurston does have two mature black poplar trees growing in the Great Green area and both trees are registered at the Ipswich Biological Centre. A new hedge has been planted once again around the new churchyard and I am pleased to inform that it has started to grow well and should prove more successful than the first attempt. Plants were obtained from STWN/Woodland Trust free of charge. Following the loss of a small number of trees on the New Green Open Space three small leaf lime trees have been planted on the 'triangle' area and a silver birch tree in the wildlife area.

The Parish Council now has a Biodiversity policy in place and as part of this an audit of all flora and fauna to be found in Thurston Parish will be undertaken. This will be a good opportunity for mature/veteran trees to be recorded, a project that is very overdue.

- iv. **Thurston Local Recorder** – the meeting was advised that the post was currently vacant. It was confirmed that the Suffolk Local History Council runs a Recorders Scheme throughout Suffolk. It administers a network of volunteers to ensure that the ‘present’ is adequately recorded at local level for the ‘future’. A Recorder will note significant happenings in their parish and collect their local parish magazines, leaflets, election pamphlets and newspaper cuttings. At the end of each year, they are asked to submit a short report summarising the activities of their parish. The reports are deposited at the Suffolk Record Office and available to future researchers together with the collected items. If you are interested, please look at the Recorders Pack by visiting www.slhc.org.uk to acquaint yourself with the guidelines of the scheme. You do not need to be a historian; you do not need any qualifications other than an interest in your parish. In return you will receive a copy of the SLHC Newsletter and be invited to the annual conference specifically for Local Recorders. To volunteer to help in this important work, please contact recorders@slhc.org.uk.

9. To receive reports from Village Organisations

- i. **Friends of Thurston Library** - Since Ellie Longman has been at Thurston Library as manager, she initially transformed the Library for all age-groups; made the Library a welcoming place and a real community hub; and now has pushed the limits of what is possible in the current space. It is an attractive, well-regarded Suffolk Library which the Parish Council and Friends Group support. And it now has the makings of a wonderful sensory garden – just an idea a year ago.

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 again 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: last year we had five, including Duke of Edinburgh Award students and now we have over twenty.

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.

Thurston Library has for some time been / is too small statistically for the number of people served – plans for expansion continue, with the timeline being the greatest uncertainty.

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

- a) *with others in the community* – such as the Primary Academy (Village Quiz with the Friends of the School) for the second year.
- b) *as a separate group* - organising a range of activities – over the last year running a sunflower-growing competition for children, a visit to Rougham Hall, a guided walk round Bury St Edmunds – in October an actual walk and in April an armchair walk (attended by over 50 people), a Christmas Festival Fortnight that included A Winter Evening of Wine and Song – a visit from Dominique Valente the children’s author, Twenty Minute Tales for children, Christmas crafts, and Christmas trees from groups and organisation that use the library and a play reading - *Spirit Level* - by Blackbourn U3A play reading group.

The Platinum Pudding recipe book is still raising funds for the Suffolk Community Foundation, and a visit to Rougham Hall. We will shortly be hosting an evening All About Gin led by the Heart of Suffolk Distillery, Bacton.

We continue to work with Suffolk Libraries on national events such as the Summer Reading Challenge, the Suffolk Libraries fundraising initiatives such as *Pawsitivity and Make a Difference with a Daisy* and DiscoverReads.

Coming up next year. Along with our usual programme of events and support for Suffolk Libraries, we will be opening the garden to the public and contributing to the planning of the hoped-for enlarged library.

For an example of community activity at Thurston Library please see Appendix C on page 26.

Thurston Library Manager - As the membership of Thurston Library continues to grow alongside that of our local community, we aim to reflect this in what we offer in both service delivery and events and activities.

The Library offers an activity or group each day from Mini Movers for Toddlers, Baby Bounce, The Last Tuesday Baking Club, Chat n chill afterschool group, Watercolour Club, Twenty-minute Tales afterschool storytelling, Lego Club, Friday Sewcial Sewing, Ancestry Club and the Knitting and Crochet Workshop and more!

To add to this, we have recently set up an Evening Book Club in response to customer requests and, with the help and support of the Friends group, we aim to start a Lego club for adults. Our most recent addition to the Library is a Book Drop Box so people can return books when the library is closed. This provides a convenient, much-needed extension to our service.

The Sensory Garden project was born out of a desire to do something with the Library garden that would benefit the community and provide further volunteering opportunities, and with the aid of CIL funding from the Parish Council, the Team have really been able to start to create something that will really add to the village. The Team that run this have done a mammoth amount of preparation as well as physical work have been so tireless and enthusiastic which has been wonderful to see, and I am truly grateful for all the work they have done and continue to do.

We have had a number of Author events over the last year which are always wonderful events to be part of with the latest being with cosy crime writer C L Miller and the next to be with Kate Sawyer. I aim to continue to grow this area of events as they are always so well attended, and the feedback is that customers would like 'more please'.

We have hosted Citizens Advice and Wellbeing Suffolk Community Team for the benefit of local people. One of our continuing regular bookings is by the Health Visitors (who come three times a week to see mothers with their young babies). The Library is also a base for dropping off items for The Moses Project, a volunteer-led initiative that supports new families who are struggling to fulfil the financial and practical needs of a new baby. Our recent Suffolk Libraries Day event on 23rd March saw us raise over £200 - with books and bakes kindly donated for others to enjoy as well as a number of crocheted daisies! Over and above all of this, the Friends of Thurston Library remain such a support to myself and my team and offer such a range of events and activities which enables the Library to enjoy a wonderful nightlife after the day-job is done.

- ii. **Thurston Community College** – the Principal of the College was invited to submit her report in which it was reported that Thurston Community College has been celebrating its Golden Jubilee, online and in person. A collection of photos and other memorabilia has been collected and displayed on site as well as on the school website. Recently, alumni have visited the school, including some of the original students from 1973, to be interviewed by current students about their memories; this day was enjoyed by all involved. These recordings will hopefully be available for viewing at a future open school event to which other alumni will be invited.

The history of the college continues to develop with the appointment of a new Principal, who joined in January 2024 following the retirement of Nicki Mattin. As part of my plans for the future direction of the school, I am keen to develop links with the local community. It has been exciting to see the site so busy in the evenings, weekends and during the school holidays with local groups using the facilities we have to share.

We have already established some new approaches to partnership working with our local primary schools and are keen to extend this to other local high schools, especially those without a sixth form who have students who may transfer to Beyton. Furthermore, sixth form students are exploring work experience links with local primaries, and this is

already underway at Thurston Primary School. This will build upon an excellent day in March which saw the Thedwastre Trust Schools come together to sing and make other music, supported by high school students, and featured on BBC Look East.

The school's student leadership team is keen to develop links with local businesses and other groups and this is in line with our whole college ethos. If anyone would like to be interviewed about the local area or host work experience visits or you have opportunities for individuals or groups of students to volunteer, please contact us. Our student principals and other student leaders are a real credit to the college and in addition we have a significant number of students undertaking Duke of Edinburgh Awards, at Bronze and Silver level, and are keen to ensure that the community can benefit from their volunteering time. Following a two-day visit, the College is pleased to announce the result of their Ofsted Report which states that Thurston Community College continues to be a good school. The Principal's letter to parents and governors is available to view on the college's website.

If anyone would like to make links with the college or visit then please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this further.

- iii. **Thurston CE Primary Academy** – a report was submitted on behalf of the Headteacher in which it was stated that Thurston CE Primary Academy is still gradually growing in pupil numbers throughout the academic year. With pupils numbers becoming more consistent between 320 and 330, the school has become two form entry in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Upper Key Stage 2. There are currently three classes of mixed age pupils in Year 3 and 4. New families continue to move to the area but there are also families out of catchment who want to be part of the school community. I often get told by perspective parents that they have heard good things about the positive Christian ethos of the school and the support and education that our pupils benefit from. The positive reputation of the school continues to grow.

Pupils continue to enjoy curriculum that we offer, and many adaptations have occurred due to moving from mixed age groups to teaching separate year groups. The specialist teaching area continues to be enjoyed by all, with pupils benefiting from the opportunities given to develop their skills in Design and Technology, Science and Art. Cooking continues to be favourite for many.

Thurston CE Primary Academy continues to develop 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 Red nose Day. 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 we continue to work closely with Reverend Father Ben Edwards to develop the monthly together family church held in the school hall. Thurston Pickleball Club have enjoyed the use of Thurston CE Primary Academy's facilities. With four courts available, the Pickleball club have once again asked to use the courts during Spring through to September.

As a school, we are continuing to try and find funding to achieve our long-term goal of having an outdoor space with a kitchen and toilet facility available. This building would be used to increase availability at Breakfast and Afterschool 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. Recently two foosball tables have been introduced, which have been a great hit, and many other resources / equipment have been purchased to stimulate activeness during non-structured time. Throughout the academic year, a reflective garden has been created ready for pupils to use when the weather gets warmer. Friends of Thurston have funded the project which consists of a large metal prayer tree, water fountains, planting areas and seating areas so that pupils can have time to reflect and have a quiet moment if needed. Members of the gardening club have been working hard and hope to create a herb area where parents will be able to take various herbs home and use in their cooking.

Links to Thurston Community College are beginning to be developed. Recently in the Spring term, staff and pupils of Thurston Community College worked with pupils from the four Trust schools to create a musical concert which was performed to parents at Thurston Community College. This was such a positive experience for everyone involved and was reported on by the local newspapers as well as the local radio and news station. This year it has been arranged that some students from Thurston Sixth Form are completing their work experience at Thurston CE Primary Academy. Even though we obviously focus on the education of primary aged individuals, it is great that our expertise can be used to support the older students and give them opportunities that will support them in their future.

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

Staff at Thurston CE Primary Academy continue to 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.

- iv. **St Peter's Church** - the meeting received the reflections from the Reverend Benjamin Edwards in which it was reported that this year we have looked to the future of our benefice, especially at the aspects of renewing the interior of St Peter's and focusing on engaging with younger people, particularly in our connections with schools. We look to build on this in the year ahead, including revitalising our Children's and Prayer areas, as well as introducing All Age services.

There are many positives that have come out of the past year, even though it had difficult patches. I am particularly enthused by the fellowship after services, which has really been something to look forward to after our worship. It is beginning to generate real joy which, as we know, is catching. Positivity shows through in our welcome and our invitation to others into the life of the church of St Peter's, and we are beginning to see people test the water, coming to services over Easter. We can most certainly build upon this in the years ahead. Great foundations were built this past year, and it will be good to discern a path as we build on those foundations. We remember that underpinning all that we do for the Kingdom of God is our prayer, our communication with God, the encouragement and wisdom we receive from Scripture and the nourishment we receive in the Eucharist. This is how God equips us for the mission ahead - to bring Good News to all people, that Jesus Christ was amongst us, died for us, rose from the dead in the Resurrection and is with us now. Deepening our knowledge and understanding of the faith will enable us to be better equipped for that mission as we look to feed and water what we have grown. We have maintained our pattern of worship for the most part this past year, with Sung Eucharist, Holy Communion and Evensong, as well as Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer. New service booklets have been produced for BCP Holy Communion and Evensong, to not only help those for whom the print in our BCPs is hard to read, but also for those who may chance upon these services to be able to easily engage and participate in them - there are large print versions available.

All Age services have started to become an established part of our service pattern - St Peter's will have a non-Eucharistic service every other All Age offering. This will allow the service to be lay led, by our Reader Kathy Drakes or others who are permitted to do so. The last Mothering Sunday service was non-eucharistic, and consideration will be given to other services such as Harvest Festival which may also be an occasion for a Service of the Word.

Christmas services were well attended across the benefice, particularly good feedback was given to me following the Crib Services we held, with really good engagement from Thurston families and other residents who consider the service "part of our Christmas". Easter services continue to be a mixed bag - our Palm Sunday Together Church service was well attended and great fun, but slightly less folk engage with Maundy Thursday and Good Friday offerings. There may be a variety of reasons for this. I am keen to emphasize the importance of travelling with Jesus during Holy Week, through the joys

and pain and despairs and sorrows, right through to the amazement and elation of the Resurrection. In Philippians 3:10-11 we hear Paul cry out. "I wish to know Christ and the power flowing from his resurrection likewise to know how to share in his suffering, by being formed into the pattern of his death. Thus do I hope that I may arrive at the resurrection from the dead."

For us to enter into the life, death and Resurrection of Christ, we must all take part in that journey! Perhaps we can encourage each other to enter into that journey together – some thought must go into perhaps an earlier Maundy Thursday service and a benefice Good Friday offering to make this even easier for people to engage in.

Finally, mention must go to not only our church wardens for their hard work in ensuring worship happens, but also our Reader Kathy Drakes, whose excellent preaching and insightful teaching has been invaluable not only to the congregations but also to me personally; not only to assist me but also to inspire me! Our retired clergy Reverend David Crawley and Reverend Mark Hunt, who have once again made themselves available for various worship and occasional office duties also deserve a thanks, as well as Rev'd Sharon Connell taking our Midnight Mass service. We look forward this year to The Rev Canon Stephne van der Toorn ministering to us, joining those excellent retired priests in their ministry to the benefice.

Our ministry to the wider community continues to be consistent, especially when it comes to our focus on investing in young people and families in our community.

The white-washing of some of the walls in St Peter's has been transformational – really lifting the atmosphere in the central body of the building and giving brightness and cheer – with thanks to some excellent fund-raising efforts, more on this later. This makes St Peter's a more inviting space, removing some of its previous gloom due to the darker colour of the walls – it looks and feels more welcoming.

We look forward to making plans to transform the Children's Corner and the area known as the Prayer corner – none of which would have been possible without the efforts of the fundraising committee and the events that they spearheaded – The Voice Squad Concert, the Walkathon around the Thurston Primary School field, the Teddy Bear Zipline, the online auction and the fantastic St Martin's Voices choir concert and workshops, arranged by stalwart champion of choral music Bridget Read; all of these events and more raised much-needed funds not only for church projects for young people, but also for the charity Nicky's Way, which supports young people grieving for the loss of loved ones. So many were involved in these excellent events, for which on behalf of the benefice I say a big 'thank you'.

Engagement with schools has been excellent – I attend Thurston Primary every week to deliver assemblies, and our Reader for the Benefice Kathy Drakes has also begun a ministry here. Pat Sadler is an active governor of the Primary School, and also helps to run the Together Church services which happen mainly in the school hall. I was also invited into the SENDAT Special Education school (Priory & Aspire) in Thurston to lead sessions about the major Christian festivals, which both the pupils and I thoroughly enjoyed; the pupils were full of questions and fun. I shall be working with their RE lead teacher to continue building a relationship between the school and St Peter's. I also have become the Chaplain (or Padré) to the 863rd RAF Air Cadets in Thurston, leading various sessions on a Thursday Evening, including ethics, meditation and teamwork (building a tower out of spaghetti and marshmallows!), and am settling in to becoming part of the team there.

Vicar visits have been a particular joy – I have been dedicating more time to visiting congregation members and others in the parish and have been bowled over by the warmth and welcome by many. I am keen for this to become a mainstay of my ministry here. We shall look to follow the lead of Holy Innocents in forming a small pastoral team, who can assist in discerning when a vicar visit might be desired as well as provide a contact with the church and a listening ear. These are all areas upon which we will continue to focus on and build on the foundations we have established. So much has become eroded with the years of pandemic, but we are beginning to see not just green shoots but young plants for us to tend to and care for as best we can.

Endings, beginnings and thanks - Firstly, I wish to thank wholeheartedly our church wardens for their continued hard work this year - your experience has been invaluable. I am pleased that our church wardens are happy to continue in their roles - good news for the whole church. We say goodbye to Anne Reeve who is stepping down as PCC member. Anne has served the PCC for many years, and I shall certainly be sorry to lose her insight and challenge (which every good clergy person welcomes, honest!). Anne will continue to be Electoral Roll Officer for St Peter's. We also say goodbye to Vicky Neale, who has been a more than capable PCC Secretary these past few years and has been at the centre of our finance committee and a major fundraising force for St Peter's as well as Nicky's Way. We thank Vicky wholeheartedly for all she has done for St Peter's. Christopher and Elizabeth Wells retire from the PCC this year too, after 30 years of service! We have all benefitted greatly from their wisdom and experience over the years and thank them wholeheartedly for their dedication to St Peter's and the PCC. Christopher has expressed that he'd still be prepared to share his wisdom and experience should our church officers require it. As a member of the Inclusive Church national family of churches - an organisation that helps signpost folk who may not find a welcome elsewhere to our churches, especially LGBT+ folk, differently abled, from any racial heritage, neurodiverse etc, we deliberated as to whether to offer the Prayers of Love and Faith - a suite of liturgies to affirm same sex relationships as part of our regular worship patterns (when requested), which we decided as separate churches. Both St Peter's and Holy Innocents made the decision to offer these services to our parishes, further cementing our welcome of people who identify as LGBT+.

Whilst we do not necessarily expect a stampede of folk looking to take up this offer, it is a further message to the rest of the communities in our parishes that we are a welcoming and inclusive church that wants to draw all people to God's love. I am very proud of both our churches for the time and deliberation they took, both at PCC and congregational level, to consider this, and also for the compassionate and Christ-like responses I received from many. It may not be a roaring fire of change in our parishes, but it is a spark - and it may only take a spark to light a flame that others can see God's love by. I'd like to offer another huge thanks again goes to Peter Robinson for his support and assistance. Thank you Peter for all that you do to support both churches and my ministry. This past year saw the licensing of our Reader Kathy Drakes, a woman of much holiness who is now blessing us with her insights in teaching and preaching, as well as her pastoral excellence. I know that we all have gained much from being ministered to by Kathy, and I pray that her ministry here will go from strength to strength. Kathy led the Remembrance service in 2023, and reports were that she did a wonderful job of leading the community in that time of solemnity. We sadly said goodbye to a wonderful Mother's Union leader, champion bellringer and committed Christian woman in Jill Rood, who died this year. Jill had been unwell for some time, but never let this dampen her passion for life or for the Mother's Union - she ensured that things would carry on after she left us and was truly inspiring; a model of how to face our final journey with dignity, peace and love. Thank you Jill for all that you gave to our community, both St Peter's and Thurston. The number of people who came to send you off at your funeral service a testament to all the lives that you touched. We also saw the funeral of Brenda Garrad, previous member of St Peter's choir.

- v. **Cavendish Hall** - a report was submitted on behalf of the Cavendish Hall Management Committee Chair in which it was stated that the hall continues to be well supported by its hirers and occupied for most of the week. Last summer we redecorated the inside of the hall, the results for all to see, we continue to refurbish the hall, we have replaced the carpet in the small meeting room and refurbished it as a usable space. The new chairs arrived on Tuesday, and we are replacing the entrance and toilet floors. The projector and sound system works well, as is our heating. we have a comfortable warm space much enjoyed by our hirers. There have been issues with the flooring, ongoing, with no easy solution. We are very grateful to Thurston Parish Council, Mid Suffolk District Councillors and Suffolk County Councillor Penny Otton for their continued support with our refurbishments. We are still experiencing difficulties with our flooring in the hall,

there is no easy solution that we can find. Our hall is run by volunteers, who work hard on our behalf. We desperately need new members and trustees on our committee, and we would like more people from our user groups to have representation to maintain Cavendish Hall and continue to flourish in the years to come.

- vi. **New Green Community Trust** – Charity 299140– a report was submitted on behalf of the New Green Community Trust Chair in which it was stated that It was their pleasure to be able to report that the past twelve months have seen continued increase in the use of the centre, up from the previous year by around 10%. Along with its wholly owned subsidiary Thurst CIC, improvements have continued to be made, and these include new blinds, new flooring in three of the rooms, new sand pit, play equipment, new commercial cookers are the significantly visible ones.

Events have been hosted throughout the year, and the one that stands out the most is the village Christmas Tree, which was appreciated by many, as well as providing us with many headaches, when the gales struck, and it decided to bow its head towards the church.

The building itself although it has been maintained over many years has also decided to show signs of its age, and is needing loving care and attention, problems with leaking rooves, drafty doors, and aging toilets are the core ones currently.

Coming up this year there are two family fun days both externally organized, and a D-day commemoration in June with the lighting of the beacon. The open spaces continue to be well used and pleased to say that the ~Watch conservation area" is currently receiving attention. In last year's report we stated that the Trust Status was uncertain due to the planning applications made by our landlord, I am sorry to report that this remains unchanged.

I think that it is fair to say, and if you have not experienced it just go and sit on the patio to take in the beauty of the blossom, activity and buzz, the Village has an amenity that it can be truly proud of. And although I am biased you would have to travel quite a distance to match it.

Finally may I express my thanks to the Trustees, volunteers, the councillors of both the Parish and District for their advice, support and assistance, and finally to the Thurston residents whose continued use of the centre makes it all possible

- vii. **Thurston Relief In Need Charity** – Charity 210828 - the Chair of the Charity had submitted a written report in which it was stated that the object of the charity were 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 a number of requests for assistance in our last financial year (to December 2023). No emergency payments were made in the last financial year. All requests are considered in complete confidence. 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 Rd. A decision was taken some time ago to review the use of this land and see if it could be improved. This includes the existing recreation area which has been let to the P.C. since the 1960's. The area of agricultural land has now been taken out of that use and part of it (approx. 3.5 acres) is leased to Housing 21 for the construction of an extra -care facility comprising flats and bungalows. The written confirmation of the Planning permission was received by H21 in mid -December 2022. The sale of the lease to H21 was completed in mid -August 2023 which allowed them to mobilise towards starting on site. Their appointed contractor Carters made a start in late September. The charity has granted them the temporary use of an additional area of land to facilitate parking and material storage to ensure that Heath Rd and environs are subject to minimal disruption. The development is now open for advanced registrations of interest. As at 9/4/24 we were advised that there were a total of 79 such enquiries. It is proposed that the remainder of the land, which includes the existing recreation area, 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 towards this end. These discussions are also

dependent on the outcome of the Charity review. The charity continues to use the services of Hazells (Chartered Surveyors) and Greene & Greene (Solicitors). The charity will continue in its current form for the time being but has commenced a far-reaching review of its constitution and aims. Legal advice is being taken to ensure that we comply with the requirements of the Charities Commission. Please direct any queries via email to: thustoninneedcharity@btinternet.com.

- viii. **1st Thurston Scouts** – We currently have 89 youth members - a few spaces currently remain in Scouts; however our Beavers and Cubs are full, and we have waiting lists. As families with children already in Scouting move into the village they will take priority over those brand-new to Scouting. We are unable to manage a Squirrels Drey at present due to lack of Leaders and meeting place. 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. We also take in young people doing their DofE volunteering experience – some stay with us afterwards. During the year May 2023 – April 2024 we awarded nearly 1,200 badges across the Group. We have also invested 46 members (some brand new to Scouting, some moving up between sections as they got older) - each Investiture involves 3 badges, a certificate and a Group T-shirt each. We also 'hosted' 2 American boys from Texas who were staying with their grandparents for 3 months.

Each Section provides a full programme of activities and events on a week-by-week basis – from visits to Elmswell Fire Station, Scouts had a visit to Mildenhall Air Base thanks to one of our Scout Leaders who is a serving USAF airman, as well taking part in District-wide and County-wide events & camps including quiz, bowling and archery & air rifles competitions. The Scouts had a very cold winter weekend camp and stayed at Belchamps in Southend for the week.

Group events: In Summer Term 2023 we again attended Woolpit Steam Rally – which is our largest fundraising event of the year. The Woolpit Steam Rally Committee allow us to camp there in order to sell programmes on the pay gate - we were rewarded with a donation of £1,100. We held our End of Term Family BBQ which was well attended. We again held our Family Archery & Air Rifles sessions during the summer holidays. Without our adult volunteers giving their time this would not have been possible. Autumn Term started the first Family Camp that I have ever organised. 24 families (over 100 people) took up the challenge of sleeping in tents with their families and taking part in various activities during the day. Archery, Air Rifles, Tomahawk/Angels throwing, Cresta Run, code-breaking, lighting fires. Cooking Bannock bread and S'mores. Going on a Nature Trail, Ballista making (with a competition on the last day – the competitiveness – Wow!) and finishing with an observation Quiz. I couldn't have managed it without the help from our Leaders – some were unable to camp but visited during the day to run activities. We attended the village Remembrance Service. Our Family Christingle Service was well attended at St. Peters Church.

Spring Term – and we held a very well attended 'Beetle' night. We finished the term off at Planet Laser with our End of Term Group Event. All our members had the opportunity of having 2 sessions running around the maze with laser guns, followed by the moving up ceremonies. 80 Members (& some Leaders) entered the maze for a bit of end of term fun during the course of the evening.

St George's Day is 23rd April (next Tuesday). St George is the Patron Saint of Scouting, therefore on Sunday 21st April Scouting members within the BSE District will be parading from Abbey Gardens to St. Mary's Church for the service where we all renew the promises that we made when we first joined Scouting, before parading back to Abbey Gardens to be dismissed.

Finances: On setting the Membership Fees for 2024, the Trustee Board decided not to increase them (last year we reduced them!) We received £1,000 in grant monies from the District Councillors which purchased a new camp fridge, some portable gas burners, 2 trollies and our own set of 10 Throwing Angels. Thank you to our Treasurer Lorna Freeman who does a wonderful job looking after our finances for us and reminding me when I have forgotten to pass my receipts over!

Leadership: Scouting is modernising – all of our role names (job titles) are changing – Group Leader, Team Leader and Team Members (instead of Group Scout Leader, Section Leader, Section Assistant). Locally we will continue with the old role names. During the year we gained Chris Timm and Doug Taylor who are now helping with Beavers/Cubs respectively. A massive THANK YOU to all of Thurston's current Leaders and our Trustee Board for all of your support throughout the year. I couldn't have done it without you all.

Finally, a plea for adult help. We do need you to support and help us. If you can spare 2 hrs a week and a little time to complete some paperwork for a DBS check please come and talk to me. As you have heard from this report Scouting is not just for the children – adults have fun too. It is more fun if we can share the workload between us. If you have Admin skills - we need you. If you have activity ideas – we need you. If you can source the materials for activities – we need you. If you can cook – we need you. The list goes on! If you have an interest in Climbing, Archery, Air Rifles, Tomahawk Throwing, Sailing, Hill Walking, Canoeing – Scouting can train you to do these and to become an Instructor to pass on your knowledge to the next generation – we just ask that you can be available to help us and other Scout Groups too and to share these experiences with the young people in the District. Our Trustee Board also needs you – to ensure that we are running Scouting safely and providing appropriate activities to ensure the young people are working towards and gaining badges that will set them up with the skills that they need in life. Please see me if you think you could help us.

- ix. **Thurston W.I.** – the President of the Thurston W.I. was invited to submit her report in which she mentioned that Thurston WI continues to flourish and last month we celebrated our 105th birthday with our normal party. We have about 50 members.

We continue to hold our monthly Soup & Chat lunches between September and March, much enjoyed by all who come.

We are holding our Cream Tea in July in aid of the My Wish Charity, who gave us a talk early in the year. We provided the refreshments for the Pantomime on the Cavendish Field and the one held at Thurston Community College recently. We planted a tree alongside the brownies at the entrance to the new churchyard, it was a pity our photos never made it to the cover of the newsletter!

We support Gatehouse at Christmas and donated £500.00 to the Cavendish Hall towards their Chairs.

Last Year we visited Elton Hall on our annual trip and participated in the village quiz. We also displayed our poppies over the church porch in memory of Remembrance Sunday. We try and participate within our community whenever we can.

- x. **Thurston Community Players** – on behalf of the Committee, Sarah Cornell had submitted a written report in which it was stated that they had started rehearsals in September and recruited 15 people to perform in our inaugural production of 'Cinderella'. They commenced weekly rehearsals in September, having been fortunate enough to have found a very funny script to work with. In January we started marketing the production via posters, leaflets, advertising in the Thurston Newsletter and also managed to gain a spot on Suffolk local radio and have a feature in the Bury Free Press. We eventually managed to sell 450 tickets for our 3 shows. We made useful links with the college and even managed to enlist the help of the WI for interval refreshments. The audience was largely made up of local people, so I really feel we have met the objective of creating a community theatre.

The cost of putting on the production totalled £5,583, and our revenue was £4,334. This production was made possible by the generous CIL money granted to us from Thurston Parish Council. However, assuming our next production has similar outgoings and income might begin to struggle to fund any subsequent productions. If we can retain the unspent CIL money, we would be able to continue with our next production and, assuming a similar expenditure and income, should be able to then move into a self-sustaining situation.

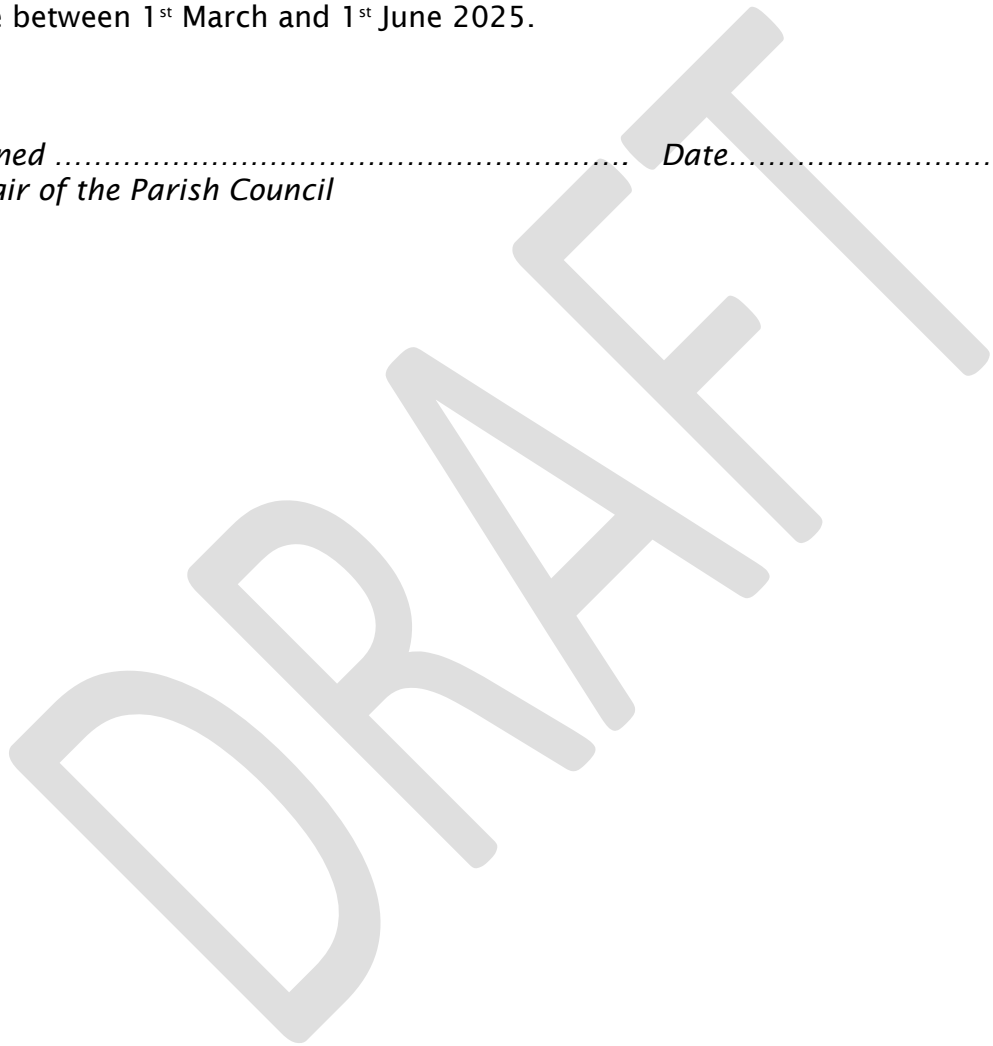
The whole project has been a huge learning curve and with the benefit of this experience and building upon the contacts made we should be able to increase our reputation and our audiences and thus become self-funding. With many thanks for all your support.

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 8.51pm 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 2025.

Signed *Date*

Chair of the Parish Council



Appendix A – Fully Funded PCSO for Thurston - Report

PCSO 3362 Matthew Brown has been in post for 9 months as the fully funded PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) for Thurston.

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 Community Policing 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.
- PCSO Brown also engages with a number of different agencies in the area as well as local businesses to try and achieve problem solving.

PCSO Matthew Brown 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. The PCSO will attend Parish Council meeting when able to and will look to attend the Annual General Meeting. The PCSO 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 cptstowmarket@suffolk.police.uk or returned to Parish Council Office at New Green. Street Surveys are not to be used to report a crime. These surveys maybe 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 Community Policing team will deal with it appropriately. The CPT 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 Brown.

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 have 4 active enforcement sites, Barton Road (C691), Station Hill (C562), Ixworth Road (C562) and Beyton Road (C560). Some of the sites are relatively new, the table shows visits where offences were committed.

The below are the camera speeding figures for 01/03/2023 to 31/03/2024

	Count
Thurston	99
C560	47
C562	30
C691	22
Grand Total	99

The figures in the box are from the Safety Camera Team and do not include those carried out by PCSO Brown. These are done as and when possible and driver spoken to or issued tickets (By a Police Officer if supporting PCSO Brown. PCSO Brown will continue to do Speed checks in the area in particular highlighted areas.

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 Community Policing Team will support PCSO Brown to monitor the village especially during lates and nights if they are not committed. PCSO Brown 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.

CRIME STATISTICS between 31st March 2023 and 31st March 2024:

Arson / Criminal Damage x 7

Burglary x 11

Drugs /possession/related x 9

Public Order x 17

Sexual offences (including sexting) x 1

Violence against a person x 77 (This is covering all assaults including Domestic related incidents).

Theft x 6

Possession of offensive weapon x 1

Non-Notifiable x 2

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

Appendix B - District Councillor AGM Report - Thurston Ward

MSDC meeting - First of this administration was on 22nd May.

Mid Suffolk District Council welcomed the newly elected Councillors. Rowland Warboys was elected Chairman and Councillor Andy Mellen as leader. A six-member cabinet was announced. Elections to all the appropriate MSDC posts was carried out. Presentation of long service awards was made following this meeting. A wide range of Councillor training was delivered. Cllr David Bradbury became a member of the Licencing Committee and the Council representative of the Network Rail East West Rail Partnership. He agreed to take a special interest in all matters relating to railways and integrated transport within the Thurston Ward. Cllr Austin Davies accepted roles as Director of the MSDC holding company and CIFCO, a member of the planning committee and the joint Audit Committee.

Mid Suffolk District Council held its July meeting in Elmswell at the Blackbourne Leisure Centre. A motion asking the Government to think again about the overland route of renewable energy from Norwich to Tilbury was passed. Reduction position of greenhouse gases by Mid Suffolk District Council was presented. Our Chief Executive reported on the conduct of the May elections and outlined the plan to ensure that the errors did not occur again.

At the August MSDC meeting 'Pride in your Place' initiative was launched. All Parish Councils were invited to apply for grants to help improve the look of all of our villages.

Mid Suffolk District Council meeting held in September. The State of the District report was considered at last month's Full Council meeting, which set out an overview of Mid Suffolk. This is part of the evidence base underpinning the new Corporate Plan. Mid Suffolk Cabinet will be endorsing the engagement strategy for the development of the new Corporate Plan. It is hoped to engage with as wide a section of the district as possible, including some groups which seldom get involved, as well as businesses and Town and Parish Councils. The CIFCO business plan was agreed which included a reduction in payment to the council. Given the change in administration this included a thorough review of operations prior to the next business case being brought to Council to inform MSDC's long term strategies.

MSDC discussed the Electric Bus project at Cabinet this month. They hope to bring forward the ringfenced £820k and agree to work towards a 'grant' scheme to enhance existing rural transport provision with set routes.

Mid Suffolk District Council meeting held in October. MSDC asked all residents views on what matters most to each of our communities completing the survey which was available on the website until the 15th November.

Working with Groundwork East MSDC provided help to local businesses to reach net zero.

CIFCO completed the purchase of the Co-Op building in Stanton.

MSDC will be launched its 'cozy homes' initiative in November which will make insulation available to appropriate households in our District. This was the £2 million special provision set aside in our Councils 2023/24 budget.

It is for:

- Residents of Mid Suffolk: Whether you are a private tenant, a homeowner, or a landlord with fewer than five properties, this scheme is for you.
- Financial Criteria: Your household income should be less than £60,000 per year, with savings not exceeding £16,000.
- EPC Rating: Your home should have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating between D and G.
- Council Tax Banding: Your property should fall within council tax bands A to E.

It covers loft insulation (including loft clearance), cavity wall insulation, draft proofing and possibly also other forms of insulation where appropriate.

Council passed a planning guidance note on Solar Farms. Applicants are encouraged to work closely with local communities before making an application. Weight is given to food production and also landscapes, however, there has been no response to the request to the Minister for guidance.

Mid Suffolk District Council meeting held in November and the BMSDC Joint Local Development Scheme and BMSDC Joint Local Plan was passed. This sets out the planning policy for the District. Joint Local Plan, Part 2 which included the settlement boundaries for all our towns and villages, is being prepared.

There was no Mid Suffolk District Council meeting in December.

Mid Suffolk District Council's cabinet approved a full business case for delivery of the first work package of the Stowmarket Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF) project. They accepted a recommendation to put £450,000 towards the £2.4million scheme, with the remaining funding already identified from a range of external sources alongside Section 106 contributions. The initial works also include an improved pitch for Stowmarket Rugby Club, community running track, cricket nets and additional paths and fencing.

Mid Suffolk District Council met in January and thanked our local volunteers and residents for their work during the flooding caused by storm Babet. About 300 homes and 40 businesses were flooding within our district. It was agreed that the MSDC chair would write to all Parish Councils asking them to revisit or create their flooding plan.

A new council strategic plan was approved and focuses on four elements (housing, residents, wellbeing, and environment).

The siting of polling stations was confirmed. (Beyton – All Saints, Norton and Stowlangtoff – Norton Village hall, Tostock – Village Hall, Thurston- New Green Centre and Cavendish Hall.

It was agreed to invest £18.7 million in building a skills and innovation centre on the Gateway 14 site. This will consist of office space and training areas. This will focus on providing a starting place for new businesses and the skills needed for the new 'Green Industries'.

Finally, Council agreed to create a Community Rail Partnership with Anglia rail.

Mid Suffolk District Council meeting in February. The budget was approved. The MSDC part of the council tax will be increased by 2% which is lower than most councils in the country. The MSDC part of the council tax bill is about 8% with the rest to Suffolk County Council and the Police.

The council also approved changes to the second home and empty home council tax charges. There are more than 680 empty properties in Mid Suffolk, which councillors are keen to see used to meet growing housing need.

The councils already impose a council tax premium on the owners of properties that are empty and unfurnished for two years or longer, but under new legislation, the councils would be able to target empty properties after just one year from April 2024 – and impose a levy on second homeowners from April 2025.

At meetings this week, both councils agreed a new joint policy that will see the owners of properties left empty for a year or more paying double, with a premium of up to 100% from April 2024; properties empty for five years or more seeing their council tax bills treble with a premium of up to 200%; and owners of properties left empty for 10 years facing quadrupled bills, with a premium of up to 300%. Owners of 542 second homes in Mid Suffolk will see their council tax bill double from April 2025.

The definition of a second home for council tax purposes would be a property which there is 'no one resident' but that is 'substantially furnished'. There will be exceptions, in line with Government policy, expected to include properties being actively marketed for sale or rent for a limited period, houses going through probate, caravan pitches or houseboat moorings (I can't think of many houseboats in the area)

Mid Suffolk District Council has launched a new rural transport grants scheme to help provide passenger transport routes across the district, connecting local communities and reducing emissions, by providing viable alternatives to solo car journeys.

MSDC have approved a grant to New Green Community Trust for new doors at Thurston's New Green Centre - £10,000.00

Mid Suffolk District Council meeting in March had a presentation and discussion on the proposed devolution bill with a new role of 'Mayor of Suffolk'. It is currently unclear how this new position would work and whether it would bring new funds to our county or just redirect existing moneys.

Community Infrastructure Levy was reviewed and approved for the coming year (Cllr Bradbury was appointed to the committee) as was the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. Our council continues to focus our services and network with other agencies to minimise the number of cases.

Gateway 14 – The building of the 'Range' warehouse was completed by the end of 2023. The Range has confirmed the creation of over 1,600 new jobs by early 2024. This is a major distribution hub. They envisage 3 shifts running 24/7. They will be running electric buses between Stowmarket station and Gateway 14 (considering visiting surrounding villages as well). We are exploring options for extending the route to the surrounding villages. A second company will move onto the site with their own dedicated building.

CIFCO - During 2023 the 21 commercial real estate properties were revalued at £82 million down 12% from £94 million. MSDC originally invested £100 million. 2024 valuation has a further reduction in value to £80 million. A capital expenditure plan was created during the year. It has been agreed that MSDC, in the next 3/4 years, will not be making any further funds available. Rental income remains strong; however, higher interest rates are likely to reduce the net income to £1 million. Established a plan to upgrade the Energy Performance Certificate to at least a C rating by 2027.

Planning - DC/19/02090 - Given the 10 years plus already approved housing supply MSDC decided not to give permission for these 210 houses in Thurston. Gladman took this case to a public appeal. The hearing was held on 4th July in Elmswell (no venue was available locally). MSDC lost the appeal DC/19/02090 (Gladman) for 210 homes to the North of Ixworth Road, Thurston, however, this developer will fund active traffic lights at the Bunbury Arms crossing, install two 'Tiger' crossing points on Norton Road by the Thurston Community College and an area for skate park/pods. MSDC lost the appeal DC/19/02090 (Gladman) for 210 homes to the North of Ixworth Road, Thurston, however, the council took legal action to overturn this decision. This case was heard in January 2024 and the outcome is pending.

MSDC lost the appeal (APP/W3520/W/23/3316136 - DC/22/0194) on 9 self builds off Ixworth Road, Norton, however, this developer will have to install a crossing point on Ixworth Road before first occupation.

Linden Homes Phase 3 application increased the number of homes granted under outline planning of 200 to a total of 261. Both Cllrs and Thurston Parish Council's objected to this application, however, it was passed by the planning committee. These homes will have heat pumps and provision for solar panels.

The Planning Inspectorate have finished the inspection of the BMSDC Joint Local Plan part 1 and reported that it is sound, so it now needs to be formally adopted by Full Council. Planning policy officers are now able to focus on Part 2 of the plan which will include the housing allocations. All the documentation is available on the website <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/jointlocalplan>

Supported the application for a new telco mast in Tostock (Ticehurst area).

Joint Local Validation List Consultation - Monday 22 January 2024 to Monday 4 March 2024
Since our Local Validation List (LVL) was amended last year, our new Joint Local Plan (JLP) has been adopted and the LVL has undergone further revisions as a consequence. These revisions are such that formal six-week consultation will be required, giving interested parties an opportunity to make any comments prior to the Joint LVL being adopted.

Target date has been re-set as 8th May for applications DC/23/02429 and DC/23/02430.

Wellbeing for younger and older residents - MSDC have supported an initiative with schools across the district to improve the well-being of young people. Thurston Community College, Stowmarket High School and Stowupland High School now have Youth Link workers to help pupils access community activities. This work will also spread to the feeder primary schools. MSDC is also supporting Silver Sunday Campaigns to help tackle loneliness for older residents. Events are being held in Eye, Stowmarket and Needham Market to bring young people into care homes for sing-alongs, games and fun.

CIL applications - Supported Norton Village Halls application for £100K towards its redevelopment. Cllr Bradbury and Cllr Davies continue to support the expansion project for Thurston Library. Details of the £100 k for the rail crossing feasibility study follows

Network Rail - Work has been carried out with SCC highways, Anglia rail, footfall work and investigation of the old tunnel and station building. The feasibility study should have been completed by 31st October 2023. It is still not available. Focus is now need on building a funding case to the Department of Transport. Thurston Parish Council's view on level of District CIL (which was supported by Cllr Bradbury and Davies) to be committed has been passed to the MSDC Cabinet.

20's Plenty - Cllr Bradbury attended a 20s Plenty seminar. Plenty of useful information is now available that will allow villages to request lower speed limits – for example, speed surveys should not be required these days as SCC has access to the “connected vehicle data” which shows the speeds for all roads in a parish also any new residential developments could be requested to have a 20mph limit applied as a condition of planning.

Flooding - The worst flooding in the villages (that we're aware of) was the road between Beyton & Thurston but if any properties have experienced flooding damage, grants are available from MSDC to assist. Apparently, this is the wettest February on record, so some locations are suffering from flooding despite not being affected previously.

Gatehouse/Citizen's Advice Bureau - Worked with Gatehouse/CAB and Thurston Parish Council to set up a system of the provision of food parcels for those that are eligible. Please encourage families in need to contact either Gatehouse in Bury St Edmunds or CAB in Stowmarket.

A14 - Supporting the Tostock campaign to have the village speed limit further along Church Road

Thurston Community College meeting - During a meeting with the College head, it was exciting to learn that Suffolk County Council have now acquired the additional land that is needed for both additional parking and new playing field area and the expansion/new school build. By the end of 2023 TCC gave community access to the fitness suite. In addition, various clubs can use the sports hall (pickleball) and the main hall.

Autumn Tree/hedge planting - Can you please consult with your communities on potential areas for tree/hedge planting and then contact us with the details. MSDC supplied plants for the boundary hedge to the new Thurston cemetery. Cllrs helped plant these specimens.

Thurston - BMSDC Chief Executive Officer was escorted by Cllr Bradbury on a tour of the village which involved visited to the various developments, the railway station with it Barrow crossing. Arranged for a meeting to be held at the Parish Offices with the strategic Planning Officers. The objective being to have a clear agreement that any future developments meets the needs of our community.

Locality grants - We have now been able to support Norton village hall. All funds have been allocated before this financial year end. This link gives the detail for both Cllr Bradbury and Cllr Davies. Applications from the 'Pickle ball club and the Thurston Parish Council to support the Local Bus project. Both David and Austin approved two applications of support from the Thurston Scouts for new recreational equipment. We have agreed to support Beyton Environmental Group in their sowing of a wildflower mix on the pond spoil area of the village green. We have agreed to support Thurston

Primary School as their request for Pickleball equipment. We have now been able to support Tostock village hall and the knitting/crochet club and Stowlangtoft variable speed signs and its village newsletter.

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/mid-suffolk/msdc-locality-awards-27-march-2024>

Appendix C - **Community Activity at Thurston Library**

We currently have these regular 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

Parish Council Meetings (3-5 per month usually)

Thursdays Children's Centre

Twenty-minute tales

Fridays Friday Sewcial – Sewing Group

Children's Centre

Saturdays Knitting Workshop

Sundays Lego Club

Fortnightly

Saturdays Ancestry Club

Monthly

Mondays Simply Sing (choir)

Tuesdays The last Tuesday Baking Club

Wednesdays Thurston Library Book Group

Thursdays U3A Book Club

Variously Friends of Thurston Library monthly meetings and activities