

Thurston Parish Council

Annual Report for 2010 - 2011

This report summarises the activities of the Thurston Parish Council for the period 6 April 2010 to 5 April 2011. It was presented initially at the Annual Parish Meeting in Thurston on 13 April.

Last year the Thurston Parish Council took the difficult decision to not raise the parish precept (the part of the council tax that pays for street lighting, grit bins, bus shelters, seats, recreation grounds maintenance, litter bins in the village). While this meant we had to reduce some of the donations we normally give to village organisations, we felt it was the right thing to do under the current economic climate. The Council has 2 bank accounts, one for the general running of its business and one for the Recreation Ground Charitable Trust. The annual reconciliations for these accounts are:

	General Account	Recreation Ground Account
Opening balance	£65,989.28	£ 173.523
Less unrepresented cheques	£ 1,196.00	£ 0.00
Plus receipts	£67,711.86	£4,663.00
Less payments	£66,757.57	£4101.88
Plus unrepresented cheques	£ 340.90	£ 109.50
Closing balance	£66,088.47	£ 844.14

Many of you will know that we match-fund our own Police Community Support Officer for Thurston. The money for half his salary is taken from the Thurston part of your council tax. During the year, we conducted a survey of the residents' views on this service. Although the number of respondents was low, we had to take the responses as being representative of the views of the village and the PCSO was retained. During the year, our first PCSO (Simon Myall) resigned to become a PC and this position was filled by Ben Ellis.

Achievements during the year:

On behalf of the village, we received an award from the Safer Neighbourhood Team of the Suffolk Police Service for working with the police and young people to reduce anti-social behaviour at our youth shelter.

Helping to ensure the youth group momentum is maintained.

The planning group upgraded its procedures, in consultation with members of the public, and assessed almost 50 planning applications for buildings in and around Thurston.

Road and junction gritting over the winter

Working with the Thurston Under Fives Group towards their new building on the Recreation Ground.

Provision of dog litter bag dispensers after a poster competition with the Primary School.

Installed a rabbit proof fence around the Heath Road playing field.

Working towards the provision of allotments on the old playground land at the end of Oakey Field Rd.

Completed the repairs to the Recreation Ground Pavilion after the burst water pipe last winter

The Parish Council has been co-ordinating the discussions with several interested villagers to try to work out the best way forward for our village library. Several meetings have been held and we need as much input into this work from as many people as possible to ensure our submission to the SCC on the ongoing use and role of our library is an accurate reflection of the needs and wants of Thurston.

Our second annual village litter pick was held on April 2.

Looking ahead:

- a) we are finalising all the detail of the lease agreement between ourselves and the Suffolk County Council so the TUFs can have their building on the Recreation Ground
- b) we are working towards achieving Quality Council status – a list of best practise criteria that exists for Parish Councils that need to be complied with before this status can be conferred
- c) further work on establishing a future for our village Library
- d) to represent the parish effectively in upcoming consultation and discussions on the Local Development Framework and the New Strategic Direction.

Grants made during the year include £100 to the Thurston Under Fives group, £1500 to New Green Community Trust, £100 to Thurston Methodist Church, £500 to St Peters Church, £100 to Thurston Newsletter, £100 to 1st Thurston Scouts, £100 to Ixworth Patients Group, £150 to the Thurston Youth Forum and £100 to the Suffolk Accident Rescue Service.

Stuart Campbell, Chairman of Thurston Parish Council