

Thurston Parish Council 3 Year Business Plan

May 2016 – May 2019

Vision:

Thurston Parish Council aims to provide a positive and reliable organisation to meet the needs of the parish through its commitment, its awareness of the needs of the parish and active communications within and for the parish.

It seeks to promote, maintain and improve a good quality of life by using the keen knowledge of the needs of groups and individuals within the parish and by making efficient and positive use of its income. It will also strive to be pro-active in the introduction of measures that will enable the community as a whole to live healthily and safely together.

To promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Parish and to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive community

To develop the role of the Council, under the concept of the Local Council Awards Scheme and to achieve appropriate awards.

Business Plan Objectives

1. **Parish benefit** – to represent Thurston Parish and to improve the facilities and infrastructure for the majority of parishioners within Thurston.
2. **Village administration** – to ensure the ongoing administration of Thurston Parish and the facilitation of the Parish Council activities.
3. **Council development** – to provide Councillors and the Parish Clerk with the education and knowledge to enable them to contribute to the advancement and improvement of Thurston Parish.
4. **Financial planning and control** – to ensure the ongoing financial viability of Thurston Parish Council ***and provide high quality, efficient, cost effective and sustainable services.***
5. **Strategic planning** – to ensure Thurston Parish Council has a long-range plan for the future.
6. **Communication and Engagement.** – ***To provide a channel for the views and expressions of the local community and to be responsive to its needs and aspirations.***

Thurston Parish Council Committees and Groups

Thurston Parish Council is the sole trustee of the Thurston Recreation Ground Charity. The Recreation Ground Committee has been established to formally manage and operate the Recreation Ground and the Pavilion.

The Policy & Resources Committee has been established to propose the budget each year and to monitor the routine expenditure and any investments. Also this Committee has delegated powers for managing, maintaining and improving the performance of the statutory powers and the functions and related work of the Parish Council which includes, ensuring the Quality Council certification requirements is of a satisfactory standard and for ensuring the Parish Council acts in a manner appropriate to this certification.

The Emergency Plan Group is responsible for ensuring the Thurston Emergency Plan is maintained and relevant on a yearly basis.

The Planning Group is a statutory consultee in the Mid Suffolk Planning process. All planning applications within the Thurston Parish are examined and commented on by this group for formal approval by the Thurston Parish Council. ***The Planning committee has been granted full delegated powers to make Council decision regarding responses to the appropriate authorities.***

The Library Group: Was established following the announcement by Suffolk County Council that it was not going to run the library service in the future. The function of the Library Group is to facilitate the ongoing provision of a library service for Thurston ***and provide support for improvements to the Library in order to encourage new and existing members into the Library.***

The Neighbourhood Planning Group was formed as part of the Localism Bill where Parish Councils are encouraged to develop their own formal, legal plan for the future of their village. ***As part of this, once the Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted, there will be an on-going review protocol.***

Individual members of the Thurston Parish Council are also represented in the management of several village and County organisations. These include the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, The Cavendish Hall and Thurston Relief in Need Charity. Other Council members are responsible for single issues including public footpaths, transport liaison, councillor training.

Business Plan Objectives

1. Parish Benefit

Action	Measure
Ensure continuing engagement with other Thurston village groups	Councillors to be involved at a management level with key village groups
Manage/monitor Village Website	Update as required
Ensure continuous <i>communication and</i> engagement with residents	Regular monthly surgeries and public meetings throughout the year.
Ensure Parish Councillor receive relevant training	Training requirements/records updated twice yearly
Donations to parish organisations	Donations considered on request

2. Village Administration

Action	Measure
Functional Council meetings in place	Hold 12 meetings per year and an Annual Parish Meeting
Council transparency to the Parish	Public sessions are available in all meetings, meeting minutes available on the village website and from the Parish Council office.
Ensure all actions from the Parish Council meeting are completed.	Completion is monitored at each meeting.
Meeting statutory obligations	Annual Parish Meeting held
Liaison with Suffolk County and Mid Suffolk District Councils	<i>County and District Councillors attend monthly Council meetings and give reports and answer questions.</i>

3. Council Development

Action	Measure
Ensure Parish Council Clerk has the relevant qualifications	The Parish Council Clerk must have at least the training listed as requirements for the Quality Council requirements.
Ensure all councillors have received Basic training as standard	Ensure all Councillors receive an individual training record. <i>To be updated by the appointed training officer</i>
Retain Local Council Award scheme foundation level	Achievement of Local Council Award scheme "Quality" status
Maintain links with SALC to ensure the Council has the best advice	Ensure representative attends SALC meetings.
Provide Councillors with the Education and Knowledge to enable them to contribute to the advancement and improvement of Thurston Parish Council	Provide individual Councillors with a training plan. Provide all Councillors with information packs to ensure compliance with statutory instruments and financial regulations.

4. Financial Planning and Control

Action	Measure
Set and manage annual operational budget	Annual budget to be submitted to MSDC by the deadline. Actual to budget reconciliations to be presented regularly to Council meetings.
Perform internal quarterly audits	Audit report to be signed and actions completed by next internal audit.
Ensure external audit submitted by the deadline	Ensure all external audit actions are completed
Develop investment strategy and manage investments	Best returns on funds invested to be reviewed at Policy & Resources committee meetings

5. Strategic Planning

Action	Measure
Ensure continuing engagement with SCC and MSDC	SCC and MSDC Councillor attendance and input at Parish Council meetings.
Ensure the Neighbourhood Plan is complete and updated	Plan <i>timescales updated and reviewed on a regular basis</i> . Once completed <i>Plan to be reviewed on an annual basis</i> .
Ensure succession planning for Chair, Vice Chair and Chair Rec Grd	Ensure Vice Chairs are encouraged to lead meetings throughout the year.
Update 3 year business plan	To be reviewed annually

Appendix 1: Thurston Parish Council – Summary of Accounts for 2015/2016.

	General Account	General Account	Recreation Ground Account	Recreation Ground Account
	2015	2016	2015	2016
Opening balance	61,959	63,374	1,535	1,770
Plus receipts	68,287	104,670	5,897	4,026
Less payments	66,872	104,411	5,662	3,560
Closing balance	63,374	63,633	1,770	2,236

Appendix 2.

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL BUDGET FOR 2016-2017

CATEGORY	ACTUAL 2014-15	BUDGET 2014-15	ACTUAL 2015-16	BUDGET 2015-16	BUDGET 2016-17
SALARY/CONTRACT					
Clerk's Salary	16277.72	9500.00	15096.86	11980.00	13240.00
PAYE	1402.02	1300.00	2302.53	1500.00	1790.00
Pension				0.00	3204.08
TOTAL	17679.74	10800.00	18074.39	13480.00	18234.08
STREETLIGHTING					
SCC Maint Contract	5605.87	7500.00	6122.04	8000.00	8000.00
Repair/Replace		2500.00		2500.00	1500.00
TOTAL	5605.87	10000.00	6122.04	10500.00	9500.00
SUNDRIES					
Tree Surgery	0.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	0.00
New Grit/Litter Bins	969.05	200.00	342.00	350.00	350.00
Servicing Litter Bins	0.00	380.00		570.00	665.00
Election Expense Fund	0.00	50.00	0.00	1404.00	0.00
Emergency Plan	0.00	3000.00	0.00	0.00	300.00
RoSPA Inspection	0.00	175.00	0.00	175.00	175.00
Play Equipment repairs	99.73	500.00	0.00	1000.00	500.00
Groundwork M'tenance	150.00	1500.00	186.12	1500.00	1500.00
Village Maintenance		1000.00		2000.00	3000.00
Traffic Calming					5000.00
TOTAL	1200.75	4405.00	7799.00	7799.00	13215.00
OFFICE ADMIN					
Admin Expenses	635.64	965.00	724.29	1065.00	1500.00
Cllr Expenses	47.80	400.00	0.00	200.00	200.00
Clerk & Cllr Training		400.00		200.00	500.00
Room Hire	25.00	175.00	60.00	100.00	200.00
Insurance	1502.09	1675.00	1343.09	1031.00	1031.00
Audit	607.00	600.00	616.40	600.00	600.00
Off Equipment	60.83	100.00	84.00	200.00	1000.00
Rent	2556.00	2556.00	3491.60	3400.00	3600.00
Computer Maint.	534.00	240.00	440.89	240.00	240.00
Telephone & Internet	502.07	1250.00	370.90	500.00	600.00
PCSO Funding	16507.32	15000.00	14737.00	15000.00	16000.00
PCSO Car lease		2000.00	1750.32	2000.00	2000.00
Chairman's Allowance	612.61	400.00	165.00	400.00	400.00
TOTAL	24104.92	25761.00	24637.38	24936.00	27871.00
HEATH ROAD					
Equipment Repairs	702.50	250.00		250.00	500.00
Heath Road Rental	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00
Grounds Maintenance	955.00	600.00	285.82	600.00	600.00
TOTAL	1712.50	905.00	340.82	905.00	1155.00

NP EXPENDITURE

Printing		300.00		300.00	300.00
Postage		32.00		100.00	100.00
Clerk's Salary	3490.28	3600.00		3995.00	4000.00
TOTAL	0.00	3932.00	0.00	4395.00	4400.00

SUBSCRIPTIONS**GRANTS & DONATIONS**

SALC	794.00	820.00	814.00	850.00	1000.00
Library	0.00	2750.00	2656.00	2656.00	2700.00
CAS	0.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00
Donations	1630.00	2500.00	1800.00	2500.00	2500.00
MSDC Street Cleansing		300.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Recreation Ground a/c		3765.00	2697.89	1000.00	0.00
TOTAL	2424.00	10165.00	7997.89	7036.00	6730.00

NON BUDGET ITEMS

VAT	4226.49				
Bank Charges	32.00		137.00		
New Office Expenses			158.52		
PCSO Bike M'tenance			59.08		
Dog Bags & Sigs			326.85		
ICO			35.00		
Transfer -Rec Grd Acct	4308.26				
Library & Rec Acct Exp			636.25		
Dog Litter Bag Dispensers	401.38				
RBL Poppy Wreath	30.00		30.00		
Printing	120.00		140.80		
DJ Expenditure	2618.00				
Fees re TUFS lease	2238.85		460.80		
Polycarb – Noticeboard	24.00		0.00		
TOTAL	13998.98		1984.30		

EXPENDITURE

65,489.46	62036.00	63,081.44	69051.00	81105.08
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Proposed	Precept Reserves	80,582.83
		522.25

RECREATION GROUND ANNUAL BUDGET FOR 2016-2017

CATEGORY	ACTUAL 2014-15	BUDGET 2014-15	ACTUAL 2015-16	BUDGET 2015-16	BUDGET 2016-17
Grounds Maintenance	1644.00	2000.00	828.00	2290.00	1300.00
Pavilion Maintenance	782.60	1000.00	648.71	1000.00	500.00
Equipment Maintenance	0.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00
Electricity	949.27	750.00	444.97	800.00	600.00
Water	363.74	550.00	203.41	550.00	500.00
Fire Inspection	128.94	40.00	120.54	60.00	60.00
Insurance	401.72	420.00	0.00	440.00	460.00
Cleaner's Wages	1284.00	1287.00	1287.00	1287.00	1287.00
Cleaner's Expenses	107.87	110.00	27.50	125.00	125.00
TOTAL	5662.14	6657.00	3560.13	7052.00	5332.00
MINUS					
Income	4214.12	2250.00	4026.45	5250.00	5250.00
Grant from PC	1682.50	3765.00	0.00	1000.00	0.00
NET TOTAL	234.48	-642.00	466.32	-802.00	-82.00

Appendix 3. Areas of Active Involvement for 2016 – 2019.

This business plan is to be reviewed annually in May. The areas of active involvement will relate to the budget which is set in December of each year and finalised the following January. This will also include projected expenditure for the forthcoming year as well as regular items of expenditure to ensure the smooth running of the Parish Council. Some of the projects and matters coming forth have arisen from the Engagement Surgeries held in 2015; Annual Parish Meeting; visits to the Parish Council Office and from matters identified in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council will continue to monitor the areas of active involvement for 2016 -2017 and will add any new matters as required during the year. As some of the areas covered in the business plan are ongoing and will cover more than one financial year, the parish council will review the business plan on a six monthly basis thereby ensuring that it is updated regularly and that any further appropriate actions identified during the six monthly period are included or, where appropriate, are signed off as having been completed actions.

AREAS OF ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2016-2017				
Issue Raised	Consultative Work Carried out	Result of consultative work	Budget	Review
Policing - December 2015 Parish Council informed of results of Suffolk Policing Review. Anticipated cuts to part funded dedicated PCSO role for Thurston – impact in Thurston on community safety; traffic issues and safety amongst vulnerable residents.	Public meeting called in January 2016, residents invited by means of a postcard invitation to discuss impact of no dedicated PCSO for Thurston. Residents to be asked via meeting whether they wished the funding of a PCSO to continue.	Agreement forthcoming for match-funding of a PCSO to continue for 2016-17	£16,000 + £2,000 car for 2016-2017	Quarterly reviews with Stowmarket SNT to discuss effectiveness of dedicated PCSO for Thurston – June 2016, Sept 2016. December 2016 formal review and decision at Council budget meetings – to be finalised at meeting of January 2017. Meeting scheduled for January 2017 with Suffolk Constabulary to discuss the ongoing contract for 2017- 2018
Libraries - January 2016 Council informed of SCC's reduction in funds to libraries of 11% over 2 years	Request from public at Thurston Library AGM for continual financial assistance from the Parish Council in ensuring the continuity of Thurston Library	Agreement by Parish Council at budget setting meeting of January 2016 to continue to support Library	£2700 for 2016-17	Formal review at Council budget setting meetings in December 2016 and January 2017

Suffolk Policing Review and community concern that speeding issues within the village will not be dealt with by PCSOs unless comprehensive evidence can be obtained.	At Public Meeting held in January 2016 to discuss the Suffolk Policing Review, residents to be asked whether they wish to fund a number of village projects such as traffic calming and village signs.	Agreement that a VAS should be purchased along with enhanced data collection & village entry signs to assist with traffic calming measures.	£5000 for 2016-17	One-off costs for 2016-17. Close liaison with Stowmarket SNT and Suffolk Road Safety Team on data collected
Concern at lack of funding available from Highways to ensure Hedgerows are maintained and kept clear of pedestrian footpaths	At Public Meeting held in January 2016 to discuss the Suffolk Policing Review, residents to be asked whether they wish to fund a number of village maintenance projects such as hedge cutting	Agreement that on-going maintenance around the village is to be carried out in 2016-17 – litter picking and pathway sweeping	Village Maintenance Budget - £3000	Ongoing review with Highways during grass cutting season. Formal review at Council budget setting meetings in December 2016 & January 2017
Asset maintenance	At the community engagement surgeries held in 2015-16, concern at the maintenance of the Council's assets such as play equipment	Agreement that on-going maintenance is carried out on an as and when basis	Play equipment maintenance budget - £2,000	Monthly internal inspection reports and Annual Inspection Report July 2017 Formal review at Council budget setting meetings in December 2016 & January 2017
Under Localism Act, agreement in 2013 given by community for the Parish Council to set up a Steering Group to take a Neighbourhood Plan forward.	Call for sites issued in December 2015. Public consultations held in March and April 2016 for comments on sites coming forward and criteria to be used.	Sites to be assessed and public to be engaged with on assessments and criteria used. Draft Plan to be produced	Part of Clerk's salary £4000 & grants to be sourced for professional partners assistance	Public consultations – site exhibition June – July 2016; Draft Plan August 2016
Concern at the level of localised flooding and effectiveness of dealing with localised emergencies	Issues raised by individuals at community engagement surgeries.	Review of the Emergency Plan	Budget for 2016 - 17 £500	Emergency Plan Group to meet in July 2016 and October 2016 & review existing procedures and plan

Parish Council Meeting October 2015	Achieve LCAS 'Quality' Award	February 2016 Application Made	Part of Clerk's salary	Review once initial findings are received.
Planning Applications submitted to Local Authority	Contribute to planning process for Thurston in conjunction with the Local Plan for Mid Suffolk	Ongoing process dependent upon Local Plan and planning applications	Part of Clerk's salary	For 2016 -17 the Council will continue to respond to all planning applications submitted relating to Thurston and surrounding areas. Ongoing discussions are being held with MSDC/BDC over the emerging new Local Plan
Parish Council and Village Website	Continue to ensure that the Parish Council and Village Website is updated on a regular basis	Ongoing on the part of the Parish Council in light of the 2014 Regulations and to ensure that the Council is open and transparent in its dealings as a public authority	Part of Clerk's salary and volunteering time from a member of the public	Review on a monthly basis to ensure information is updated and relevant. Formal review due September 2016 and March 2017
Engagement with Public	Community Engagement Surgeries	Community engagement surgeries to ensure continued engagement and communication with public	Parish Councillors; NP Steering Group Members; County & District Cllrs & PCSO Brill	Monthly surgeries to be held with Parish Councillors; NP Representatives; PCSO; County and District Cllrs. in attendance throughout 2016-2017
Good Governance of the Parish	Elections; SALC & NALC Membership; Policy & Procedures Review	All policies and procedures to be reviewed on an annual basis or as and when legislation requires. Councillors & Clerk to have own training	Part of Clerk's Salary. SALC& NALC Fee: £1,000; Election budget: £1404 £500	Formal review of all policies and procedures by Policy and Resources Committee September 2016. Annual review of training records October 2016

		records and to receive annual updates on changes in legislation		
Review of Parish Council Office Suite Rental Agreement	To ensure best value for money rental review is to be discussed on an annual basis	To endeavour to discuss with the New Green Trust the rental review for each year in a timely manner	£3,600	Formal review due March 2016 – Council to request on a regular basis for updates as to outcome of rental review
Accountability of Parish Council's finances	Review and monitoring of internal control systems	To ensure financial records are kept and produced in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Governance & Accountability Guide (2016)	Part of Clerk's Salary & 2 No. Parish Councillors	Quarterly reviews on internal control systems to be carried out by non-signatory Councillors: June, September and December 2016 and March 2017
Contractual and employment obligations	Council to ensure that its complies with employment law and health and safety issues	Ongoing as part of review of working environment and workload for the Clerk	Parish Council Chairman & Vice-Chairman	Six monthly review of working environment for Clerk – September 2016 Annual review of Health and Safety Policy and Lone Worker Policy – September 2016
Appropriate management of the Recreational Ground Trust	Trusteeship of Thurston Recreation Ground Trust	Ongoing	Own budget for the running of the land and pavilion belonging to the Trust £5,332	Quarterly meetings of Recreational Ground Committee to ensure any issues raised are dealt with accordingly.