

## Thurston Parish Council 3 Year Business Plan May 2017 – May 2020

### 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.

### What is Thurston Parish Council?

Thurston Parish Council is the first tier of local government closest to the community, with an important role to play in promoting the parish by representing its interests. Within its limited remit, it provides and monitors efficient services and amenities to meet local need, influences other decision makers and strives to improve the quality of parish life. The council represents the views of its community to improve or provide cost effective services and amenities. These can range from crime prevention measures, providing litter and dog bins, to maintaining bus shelters and recreational facilities to having the right to be notified of, and comment upon, planning applications.

Residents have the opportunity to elect 11 parish councillors every four years. The Council elects a Chairman and Vice-Chairman annually and reports to the electorate at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May. Councillors are unpaid and receive no allowance for their duties other than travel costs for duties beyond the parish. Full details of all councillors can be found on our website:

<http://thurston.suffolk.cloud/parish-council/>

### How the Parish Council operate.

The Parish Council will carry out its statutory duties as required by:

- Aiming to meet 12 times per annum to deal with the business of the Council, running these meetings within the Standing Orders of the Council. *One of these meetings will be the Annual Council Meeting of the Parish Council at which the Chairman for the coming year will be elected.* All full Council meetings are open to the public with a period set aside for members of the public to address the Council.
- The Council works to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, which lay down the rules by which we operate and conduct our business. Our Standing Orders are based on a model prepared by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).
- *All Parish Councillors are expected to adhere to the Suffolk Code of Conduct which has also adopted been adopted by the Council's Committees. Working Groups on which the Parish Council are represented are expected to work to terms of reference agreed in Council.*
- The Council will hold an Annual Parish Meeting in April each year to review the activities of the previous year and give an opportunity for residents to raise issues of concern.
- The Parish Council aim to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Parish and to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive community.
- The Parish Council also will work towards development of the Council under the concept of the Local Council Awards Scheme and to achieve appropriate awards for the benefit of the Parish of Thurston

## **Business Plan Objectives**

**Parish benefit:** – to represent Thurston Parish and to improve the facilities and infrastructure for the parishioners within Thurston. This will be achieved by being a professional and competent Parish Council, which is open and accountable and ensures sound financial management of Parish Council resources.

**Village administration:** – to ensure the ongoing administration of Thurston Parish and the facilitation of the Parish Council's activities. Be a good and fair employer by providing fulfilling work opportunities and conditions for staff. Continue to seek and improve established channels of communication and find new ways of engaging and communicating with the residents of Thurston.

**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. Ensuring Councillors have the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policies. Improve its services to the public by encouraging members and staff to develop their skills through appropriate training.

**Financial planning and control:** – to ensure the ongoing financial viability of Thurston Parish Council and provide high quality, efficient, cost effective and sustainable services. To ensure the Financial Budget is monitored on a regular basis to ensure any anomalies are highlighted to the Parish Council for appropriate action. A financial report will be presented to the full Council each month at its meeting.

**Strategic planning/Key projects:** – to ensure Thurston Parish Council has a long-range plan for the future the following objectives will be included in the Parish Councils 3-year Business Plan.

- Ensure continued communications with County and District Councils to agree areas for devolved powers to the Parish Council to include:
  - Road Verge maintenance.
  - Hedgerow maintenance.
  - Grass cutting.
  - Weed control on Pavements.
  - Edge maintenance or skirting of carriageway.
  - Cleaning of traffic signs and bollards.
  - Work with County and District Councils to ensure the maintenance of widely used but increasingly inaccessible Public Footpaths is delivered.
- Improvement of Communication and engagement by the Parish Council, by introducing social media streams such as Twitter and Facebook. This will provide a more professional approach by Thurston Parish Council to the community of Thurston and beyond.
- To continue addressing concerns by residents on speeding and continue to monitor the data from the Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) that is situated on Barton Road and Beyton road.
- Share the data provided by the VAS machine, with Suffolk Highways and Suffolk Constabulary.
- Consider the purchase of a second VAS machine to enable continued monitoring of Barton Road and Beyton Road without the requirement to continually move the machine.
- Investigate what steps can be taken to provide traffic calming measures in appropriate areas, when the Parish Council have Community Infrastructure Levy funds available.

**Communication and Engagement:** – To provide a channel of communication for the views and expressions of the local community and to be responsive to its needs and aspirations. The Parish Council will ensure that the Parish Clerk receives the relevant training on Desktop Publisher and social media (Facebook and Twitter). This will ensure the communication/engagement to residents is improved, whilst providing reports on the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan in a professional manner.

## Thurston Parish Council Committees and Groups

**The Recreation Ground Committee:** 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:** This group is responsible for ensuring the Thurston Emergency Plan is maintained and relevant on a yearly basis.

**The Planning Group:** The Parish Council 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 on behalf of 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

### 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 communication and engagement with residents	Regular monthly surgeries and public meetings throughout the year. Introduction of Facebook and Twitter accounts. Also provide professional reports through Desktop Publisher. Ensure Parish Council website is up to date at all times.
Ensure Parish Councillors receive relevant training	Training requirements/records updated on an annual basis.
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	County and District Councillors attend monthly Council meetings and give reports and answer questions.

## 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. This will be provided to Councillors each year.
Retain Local Council Award scheme foundation level	Achievement of Local Council Award scheme "Quality" status continues to be monitored to ensure compliance and work towards the Gold award.
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 all Councillors with information packs to ensure compliance with statutory instruments and financial regulations. Provide the opportunity for Councillors to request individual training requirements as necessary.

## 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 to Council meetings each month
Perform internal quarterly audits	The Parish Councils Internal Control Officer will provide an 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 timescales updated and reviewed on a regular basis. Continue with public communication on progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. Once completed Plan to be reviewed on an annual basis.
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. Please see Strategic Planning and Key Objectives above.

**Appendix 1: Thurston Parish Council – Summary of Accounts for 2016 / 2017.**

	General Account	General Account	Recreation Ground Account	Recreation Ground Account
	2016	2017	2016	2017
<b>Opening balance</b>	63,374	63,633	1,770	2,236
<b>Plus receipts</b>	104,670	97,304	4,026	4,550
<b>Less payments</b>	104,411	102,848	3,560	5,577
<b>Closing balance</b>	63,633	58,089	2,236	1,209

Appendix 2.

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL BUDGET FOR 2017-2018

CATEGORY	ACTUAL 2015 - 16	BUDGET 2015 - 16	ACTUAL 2016 - 17	BUDGET 2016 - 17	BUDGET 2017 - 18
<b>SALARY/CONTRACT</b>					
Clerk's Salary	17021.82	15975.00	17942.96	17240.00	17706.00
PAYE	3638.14	1500.00	1359.33	1790.00	1790.00
Pension			4342.19	3204.08	4428.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20659.96</b>	<b>17475.00</b>	<b>23644.48</b>	<b>22234.08</b>	<b>23924.00</b>
<b>STREETLIGHTING</b>					
SCC Maint Contract	4428.83	8000.00	5019.61	8000.00	5500.00
Repair/Replace		2500.00		1500.00	1500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4428.83</b>	<b>10500.00</b>	<b>5019.61</b>	<b>9500.00</b>	<b>7000.00</b>
<b>SUNDRIES</b>					
Tree Surgery	0.00	300.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
New Grit/Litter Bins	0.00	350.00	380.00	350.00	700.00
Servicing Litter Bins	0.00	570.00	0.00	655.00	770.00
Election Expenses	87.50	1404.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Emergency Plan	0.00	0.00	0.00	300.00	0.00
RoSPA Inspection	136.95	175.00	139.11	175.00	150.00
Play Equipment repairs	6563.29	1000.00	16834.41	500.00	1500.00
Village Maintenance	3288.68	2000.00	5836.94	3000.00	3000.00
Traffic Calming		0.00	2975.00	5000.00	0.00
Groundwork M'tenance	1168.00	2500.00	1168.00	1500.00	2000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11244.42</b>	<b>7799.00</b>	<b>27333.45</b>	<b>7799.00</b>	<b>8120.00</b>
<b>OFFICE ADMIN</b>					
Admin Expenses	1733.28	1065.00	1763.99	1500.00	1500.00
Cllr Expenses	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	200.00
Clerk & Cllr Training	236.25	200.00	24.75	500.00	500.00
Room Hire	66.00	100.00	215.00	200.00	200.00
Insurance	1051.98	1031.00	1135.54	1031.00	1031.00
Audit	485.00	600.00	585.00	600.00	600.00
Off Equipment	1592.39	200.00	274.35	1000.00	1000.00
Rent	3414.11	3400.00	3433.92	3600.00	3600.00
Computer Maint.	25.00	240.00	70.00	240.00	240.00
Telephone & Internet	439.03	500.00	707.81	600.00	600.00
PCSO Funding	8317.16	17000.00	17603.00	18000.00	34000.00
Chairman's Allowance	0.00	400.00	0.00	400.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17447.70</b>	<b>24936.00</b>	<b>25813.36</b>	<b>24936.00</b>	<b>27871.00</b>
<b>HEATH ROAD</b>					
Equipment Repairs	4329.00	250.00	835.00	5000.00	500.00
Heath Road Rental	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00
Grounds Maintenance	698.02	600.00	705.00	600.00	600.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5082.02</b>	<b>905.00</b>	<b>1595.00</b>	<b>1155.00</b>	<b>1155.00</b>

**NP EXPENDITURE**

Administration	2006.22	400.00	850.23	400.00	400.00
External Support Costs	3729.82		2442.00		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5736.04</b>	<b>400.00</b>	<b>3292.23</b>	<b>400.00</b>	<b>400.00</b>

**SUBSCRIPTIONS****GRANTS & DONATIONS**

SALC	855.00	850.00	899.38	1000.00	1000.00
Library	0.00	2656.00	2700.00	2700.00	2700.00
CAS	30.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	30.00
Donations	2930.00	2500.00	2860.00	2500.00	2500.00
Recreation Ground a/c		1000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3815.00</b>	<b>7036.00</b>	<b>6459.38</b>	<b>6730.00</b>	<b>6730.00</b>

**NON BUDGET ITEMS**

VAT Account	10409.17		7924.36		
Transfer to Rec Grd	1382.64		764.40		
Works to Pavilion	24205.00		0.00		
Queen's Jubilee Medals			1002.50		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35996.81</b>		<b>9691.26</b>		

**EXPENDITURE**

<b>104,410.78</b>	<b>69,051.00</b>	<b>102,848.78</b>	<b>81,105.08</b>	<b>95,959.00</b>
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**Proposed****Precept  
Grants****90959.00  
5000.00**

**RECREATION GROUND ANNUAL BUDGET FOR 2017-2018**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>ACTUAL 2015-16</b>	<b>BUDGET 2015-16</b>	<b>ACTUAL 2016-17</b>	<b>BUDGET 2016-17</b>	<b>BUDGET 2017-18</b>
Grounds Maintenance	828.00	2290.00	2692.00	1300.00	1700.00
Pavilion Maintenance	648.71	1000.00	152.00	500.00	500.00
Equipment Maintenance	0.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00
Electricity	444.97	800.00	786.41	600.00	600.00
Water	203.41	550.00	187.63	500.00	500.00
Fire Inspection	120.54	60.00	0.00	60.00	60.00
Insurance	0.00	440.00	426.04	460.00	460.00
Cleaner's Wages	1287.00	1287.00	1287.00	1287.00	1287.00
Cleaner's Expenses	27.50	125.00	46.46	125.00	125.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3560.13</b>	<b>6657.00</b>	<b>5577.54</b>	<b>5332.00</b>	<b>5732.00</b>
MINUS					
Income	4026.45	5250.00	4450.60	5250.00	5250.00
Grant from PC	0.00	1000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<b>466.32</b>	<b>-802.00</b>	<b>-1126.90</b>	<b>-82.00</b>	<b>-482.00</b>



**Appendix 3. Areas of Active Involvement for 2017 – 2018.**

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 during the financial year 1 April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017; 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 2017 -2018 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.

<b>AREAS OF ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2017-2018</b>				
<b>Issue Raised</b>	<b>Consultative Work Carried out</b>	<b>Result of consultative work</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Review</b>
<b>Policing - December 2016 Parish Council informed of the cessation of match funding dedicated PCSO role for Thurston – impact in Thurston on community safety; traffic issues and safety amongst vulnerable residents.</b>	<b>Public meeting called in January 2017, 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 to full fund a dedicated PCSO for Thurston.</b>	<b>Agreement forthcoming for full funded PCSO to be added to the Precept for 2017-2018.</b>	<b>£32000 + £2,000 car for year 2017-2018 With a yearly review, any percentage increase to be funded as part of percentage increase in precept.</b>	<b>2 year contract. Quarterly reviews with Stowmarket SNT to discuss effectiveness of dedicated PCSO for Thurston – June/July 2017, Sept/Oct 2017, Dec 2017/Jan 2018 and March 2018. Weekly reports by PCSO to Clerk which are presented on a monthly basis at Parish Council Meetings for review by PC as a whole.</b>
<b>Libraries - January 2016 Council informed of SCC’s reduction in funds to libraries of 11% over 2 years</b>	<b>Request from public at Thurston Library AGM for continual financial assistance from the Parish Council in ensuring the continuity of Thurston Library</b>	<b>Agreement by Parish Council at budget setting meeting of January 2017 to continue to support Library</b>	<b>£2700 for 2017-18</b>	<b>Formal review at Council budget setting meetings in December 2017 and January 2018</b>

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.	During 2016-17 a VAS was purchased along with enhanced data collection for location along Beyton Road and Barton Road. Data collected from both suggests that there would be a benefit to having one machine at each location.	£Nil budget for 2017 -2018.	Parish Council to discuss effectiveness of a machine at each location with Stowmarket SNT and Suffolk Road Safety Team.
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	On-going discussions with Highways as to devolvement of powers to deal with such matters. Litter Picker employed by Council and small maintenance works being carried out.	Village Maintenance Budget - £3000.  Litter Picker being part funded by claims against Mid Suffolk's Street Cleansing Grant.	Ongoing review with Highways during grass cutting season and ongoing discussions regarding devolvement.  Formal review at Council budget setting meetings in December 2017 & January 2018
Asset maintenance	At the community engagement surgeries held in 2016-2017, 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 – Thedwastre Park - £1,500; Heath Road - £500	Monthly internal inspection reports and Annual Inspection Report July 2017 Formal review at Council budget setting meetings in December 2017 & January 2018
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 work completed in 2016-2017 along with public consultations held for comments on sites coming forward and criteria to be used.	Currently Neighbourhood Plan Team involved with the Parish Council in responding to 6 significant planning applications for development in Thurston.	Part of Clerk's salary £4000 & grants to be sourced for professional partner's assistance	Ongoing public consultations – Draft Plan Autumn 2017

		Draft Plan to be produced once planning applications have been determined.		
Concern at the level of localised flooding and effectiveness of dealing with localised emergencies	Ongoing issues raised by individuals at community engagement surgeries.	Review of the Emergency Plan	Budget for 2016 - 17 £500 carried forward to 2017 - 2018.	Emergency Plan Group to meet in during 2017 to review existing procedures and plan
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 2017 -18 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 2017 and March 2018
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 Smith	Monthly surgeries to be held with Parish Councillors; NP Representatives; PCSO; County and District Cllrs. in attendance throughout 2017-2018.
Good Governance of the Parish	Elections; SALC & NALC Membership;	All policies and procedures to	Part of Clerk's Salary.	Formal review of all policies and

	<b>Policy &amp; Procedures Review</b>	be reviewed on an annual basis or as and when legislation requires. Councillors & Clerk to have own training records and to receive annual updates on changes in legislation	SALC& NALC Fee: £1,000; Election budget: £1404 held within Reserves.  £250	procedures by Policy and Resources Committee September 2017. Annual review of training records October 2017 to be carried out by Clerk to the Council.
<b>Accountability of Parish Council's finances</b>	<b>Review and monitoring of internal control systems</b>	To ensure financial records are kept and produced in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Governance & Accountability Guide (2017)	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 2017 and March 2018
<b>Contractual and employment obligations</b>	<b>Council to ensure that it complies with employment law and health and safety issues</b>	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 2017 Annual review of Health and Safety Policy and Lone Worker Policy – September 2017
<b>Appropriate management of the Recreational Ground Trust</b>	<b>Trusteeship of Thurston Recreation Ground Trust</b>	Ongoing	Own budget for the running of the land and pavilion belonging to the Trust £5,732	Quarterly meetings of Recreational Ground Committee to ensure any issues raised are dealt with accordingly.