

## THORPE MORIEUX PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE

### ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

### HELD ON 11 MAY 2023 AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Following the outcome of Local Elections on 4 May 2023: Cllrs Jules O'Brien, Ashley Simpson, Keith Lee, Garry Russell, Louisa Pepper, and John Squirrell (John Gagen co-opted at item 8 of the Agenda)

Parish Clerk, Nicola Sturgeon was present at the meeting.

District Cllr Deborah Saw and County Cllr Robert Lindsay were present at the meeting.

No members of the public attended the meeting.

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair:

Cllr Jules O'Brien confirmed that she would be happy to Chair the PC for one more year. Cllr Pepper proposed and Cllr Lee seconded that Cllr O'Brien be elected Chair. All Cllrs present agreed.

Cllr John Squirrell confirmed that he would be happy to be Vice Chair for one more year. Cllr Russell proposed and Cllr Simpson seconded that Cllr Squirrell be elected as Vice Chair. All Cllrs present agreed.

2. Signing of Acceptance of Office Forms:

All Cllrs completed their Acceptance of Office forms to be retained by the Parish Council. Register of Interest forms to be submitted to BDC were also completed and given to the Clerk for checking and counter signing.

3. Apologies for absence:

- i. No apologies all Cllrs present;
- ii. To consent/non consent to accept the apologies for absence – not applicable.

4. Members' Declarations of Interest:

- i. To receive disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for the agenda under discussion – none;
- ii. To receive declarations of gifts of hospitality received – none;
- iii. To consider requests for dispensation for pecuniary interests for the agenda under discussion – not applicable.

5. Minutes: - consider and approve Minutes of meeting on 9 March 2023.

Cllr Pepper proposed and Cllr Lee seconded that they were a true and accurate record of the meeting. All Cllrs present agreed.

Signed.....

Dated.....

6. Matters arising:

Planning Applications:

DC/22/05136 – Land to the West of Bury Road (Wheelwrights). Full planning application – erection of 1No detached dwelling (amended scheme to that approved under DC/20/04096) **Approved.**

DC/22/05374 – Potash Farm, Cockfield Road, Thorpe Morieux. Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an existing Use, Operation or Activity including those in breach of a planning condition. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended – continued use of The Stables as a Dwellinghouse.

Update: 09/03/2023 – Still ‘Awaiting Decision’. Following on from discussion at January PC Meeting a letter raising concern about due diligence was sent to Arthur Charvonia the Chief Executive at BDC.

Response as follows:-

“Although the law requires us to treat the different elements as standalone issues i.e to charge council tax and register electors to vote even if the property in question does not have planning permission, I have requested that we do a regular data check to flag if people are trying to register for such things as a property without planning permission so that we can take any necessary planning enforcement action.”

**Update: 11/05/2023 – Still ‘Awaiting Decision’**

At the meeting on 09/03/2023 Cllrs asked Clerk and County Cllr to seek clarification on “regular data check”. How often would this be?

Response from Arthur Charvonia:-

“We have not finalised the mechanics for this yet but my preference is for it to be automated so that it happens automatically when new properties are added to the council tax or electoral records rather than being a manual data matching exercise on a particular frequency.”

*Following discussion with Cllrs and new District Cllr Deborah Saw it was agreed that (a) Clerk would forward to Cllr Saw the email correspondence in this matter so she could get up to date; (b) Cllr Robert Lindsay would also brief Cllr Saw so that she was up to date; (c) Parish Cllrs agreed that there was concern that there was no final answer to this just a best suggestion which involved an update to an IT system which would cost significant money and would BDC do this given the current financial*

Signed.....

Dated.....

*climate. Given that Potash Farm is the second of these types of applications in the village, then the PC would like further clarity/confirmation from BDC. Clerk will email Cllr Saw who can then take the matter up with Arthur Charvonia.*

Manure smell near Water Hall. Several residents have mentioned this to Parish Cllrs and it was agreed that Clerk would make enquiries with Strutt and Parker. They responded promptly in March 2023 and explained that the product is Mushroom Compost from Stanton and S&P had received many requests from villagers for this product for their own gardens. They agreed that the smell is different and when it is fresh it can be overpowering and they will keep this in mind as they take deliveries. They are trying to be more sustainable, they use very little inorganic fertilizer as farming now has such bad press with the environmental concerns and they are trying to play their part in helping to protect the environment. Biosolids (human waste) would be much more odorous especially at spreading time. They have taken the Mushroom Compost product now for the last four years and are not aware of any Council complaints before now. They have a contract for the next three years and they will need to use the concrete pads around the whole farm which is logistically practical. The Birds Farm clamps have already got Mushroom Compost in this year at the back and manure from horses and cattle at the front.

7. District and County Cllrs reports:

The Parish Council welcomed the new District Cllr for the village. Cllr Deborah Saw. She had no report as she had only just been elected.

County Cllr Robert Lindsay was also present at the meeting. He provided an annual report for the meeting as follows:-

**Thank you for your support**

I have stood down as your Babergh District Councillor after four years but remain as your county councillor. I'd like to thank you for your efforts for your community and for the trust you have had in me as your representative on Babergh. I'm pleased that you have a new representative, Deborah Saw, just as conscientious as me. I'm confident that together we will be more effective than I could have been on my own.

**Floods and drainage backlog**

This has been a persistent problem in the Cosford division, and across the whole of Suffolk, as the impact of climate change takes its toll on ditches, rivers and highways infrastructure like grips and gulleys that also appear to be suffering from less maintenance than in times gone by. On the border of Thorpe Morieux with Cockfield I was able to get Highways to clear gulleys at the Stone which had been leading to flooding of that road, though it remains to be seen if that flooding will re-

occur. I expect flooding will continue to be an issue as the climate becomes more extreme and new solutions – such as allowing rivers and streams to flood or pond naturally in some areas away from roads – will need to be found.

**Roundabout**

I was pleased during the year to be able to help this community magazine continue in existence by contributing £4k to a new printer.

**Safer Speed Limits**

In both Bildeston and Lavenham I have obtained in principle agreement for moving most roads to 20mph limit from 30mph. The Conservatives who run the county a year and a half ago rejected my motion to move to a default 20mph limit in all residential areas. Since then, two Conservative run councils – Cornwall and Oxfordshire – have begun to do just this and I am convinced that safer speeds in Suffolk will happen eventually.

**Carbon budget – county not on track**

This year’s carbon budget shows that the county council is not on track to reach Net Zero by 2030. Current forecasts show that SCC will still be producing 10,000 tonnes of CO2 in 2030 – that’s still half of what we are emitting now. In addition, the Council’s calculations are not accurate enough to develop the full assessment of carbon impact our services have on the environment.

In March, the county redeclared their commitment to Net Zero by 2030 in a motion proposed by my political group.

**Report into SEND provisions: Review and Recommendations**

Back in 2021, an independent review of the county’s Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision found severe problems and recommended a string of measures to improve things.

In January 2023, our Group was informed that all recommendations outlined in the review are now fully completed. Their priorities moving forward continue to be the timeliness of EHC plans, the number of school exclusions, availability of provision, and the rise in demand for SEND services.

**Suffolk “Devolution”**

In December 2022, government met with Suffolk County Council to sign an initial county deal. Suffolk will get £16m extra a year (less than has been cut by the Government from the county’s funding over the years) but in return must have a directly elected “leader”, to be elected by all voting public probably in May 2025.

Signed.....

Dated.....

A public consultation will now follow, asking residents if this is what communities want.

## **Babergh**

### **New administration**

Following the elections, the political make up of Babergh has changed. Greens are now the largest group, growing from 4 to 10 (including Deborah Saw), they are followed by Independents with 9, Conservatives with 7, Libdems with 5 and 1 Labour.

To agree a leader and form a cabinet, under the cabinet system, requires the votes of a majority (ie 17) and no one group has this. This means that there will have to be negotiations between groups. The Greens are taking part in negotiations and will expect the support for the Green Party expressed by the electorate to be reflected in any combined administration.

### **Housing issue**

Last Christmas it became clear that there are severe problems in the council housing department with a huge and growing repair backlog and outside experts brought in to investigate. It later emerged that several hundred houses had not had legally required safety checks. This and the repair backlog will be a key issue for any new administration to address.

### **Joint Local Plan**

This also has not been a great success with the inspectors rejecting much of the plan, particularly over its housing allocations and the methods used to determine where they go, which they felt had not been adequately explained. However, it does now seem that part of the plan – involving basic strategy and rules and regulations – is now about to be approved.

#### 8. Public Forum:

John Gagen spoke in the public forum and stated that he would be happy to be co-opted onto the Parish Council. Cllr Russell proposed and Cllr Pepper seconded with all Cllrs present agreeing that John Gagen be co-opted. Register of Interest form etc duly completed by Cllr Gagen for Clerk to submit to BDC.

#### 9. Correspondence (all correspondence has been circulated to Cllrs ahead of the meeting)

10. Clerk's ReportIncome:

Precept (1 of 2 payments)	2061.00
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Items awaiting approval:

SALC	membership	chq436159.17 LGA1972
N Sturgeon	salary	chq437228.06 LGA1972

All Cllrs present approved the items awaiting approval and payment.

11. Annual review and approval of PC Standing Orders and Financial Orders

Clerk had reviewed the existing Standing Orders and Financial Orders against the SALC model documents to see if any relevant changes required for a Smaller Authority and there were none. Cllrs all agreed that no amendments need to be made to the Standing Orders and Financial Orders and should be reviewed again next year.

12. Annual Governance and Accountability Report 2022/2023

- i. To consider and approve Certificate of Exemption for 2022/2023.  
Gross income for 2022/23 was £3593.00  
Gross expenditure for 2022/23 was £5343.65  
Cllrs agreed these sums against the cashbook entries for 2022/23.  
Certificate was duly signed by the Chair and the Responsible Financial Officer.
- ii. To consider and approve Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23. Approved.
- iii. To consider and approve Annual Governance Statement 2022/23. Approved.
- iv. To consider and approve Accounting Statement 2022/23. It rounded figures the sum carried forward was 4625. With the income and expenditure for 2022/23 the balance carried forward to 2023/24 is 2874.

13. Cllrs reports

Cllr Gagen reported as the Chair of the Village Hall Committee. They would like to install a Charles III Coronation Bench in the village. Can the PC spend monies on this. Discussion followed. Clerk will make enquiries but Clerk did confirm that the PC no longer hold any CIL monies as they had all been spent on projects at the Village Hall (plus the PC had contributed a considerable sum of money in addition to the CIL monies to get those projects finalised. The PC had also made a donation at the time of Queen Elizabeths Jubilee so that each household in the village could

Signed.....

Dated.....

receive a commemoration gift). Clerk will report back the position on funding a bench at the next meeting.

Cllr Gagen also reported on the bridleway bridge by Little Home Farm, and it was agreed that Cllr Gagen will liaise with Cllr Squirrell about the map for the bridleway bridge so that Cllr Squirrell could then liaise with County Councillor Robert Lindsay on the matter.

There is a flooded footpath at The Drift (Birds Farm to the School). The water main has cracked in the middle. S&P had reported to Anglian Water but as it only serves 1 of their homes AW may not deem it to be a priority to them. Cllr Squirrell indicated that he would also report it to AW.

Cllr Pepper asked for the Parish Councils thanks to be minuted for Strutt and Parkers quick and full response regarding the muck heap/smell from it reported at the previous meeting. *Please see matters arising for the response/update.*

Cllr Squirell report that the village website pages (pages not controlled by the Parish Council) are still very out of date. Clerk will liaise with David Barrett to get the access codes for the other pages and then email to Cllr Squirrell as there is a parishioner who would be interested in keeping the website up to date but he needs the access codes to update the pages.

The valley to concrete road footpath sign has at long last been replaced. In the meantime the footpath sign at Green Farm Cottage has been knocked down and Cllr Squirrell will report it to SCC.

Potholes at School Lane have been reported.

Police report: February and March 2023 no reported crimes.

Chair Cllr O'Brien reported that the warm spaces grant given by BDC which enabled the VH to open up for some sessions over the Winter/Spring months finished in April but that the VH have been looking at how to fund sessions and it will continue to run from May through to September. Thereafter they will need to look at how to fund the sessions. Clerk will enquire with District and County Cllrs about their locality budgets to see if they can provide any funding.

#### 14. Planning

- (i) DC/23/01852 – Apple Mount Farnhouse, Apple Mount Farm, Lavenham Road, Thorpe Morieux – Full Application – siting of guest accommodation.

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Chair enquired of each Cllrs their thoughts of the application.

Comments included:

No objections

Liked the idea of something different

No connection to the village or village life

Not in keeping with the village (several Cllrs commented on this)

Strongly object – bright red structure not in keeping and concerns for the neighbours

May be able to see in the Autumn/Winter when foliage from trees drop

Following on from a vote: 4 Cllrs objected to the application and 3 Cllrs did not object to the application. Therefore, objection carried.

15. Date of next meeting: 13 July 2023 at 8pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed: 9.45pm