

## THORPE MORIEUX PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

#### HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2023 AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Chair Cllr Jules O’Brien, Vice Chair John Squirrell, Cllrs Louisa Pepper, Ashley Simpson, John Gagen and Garry Russell. Parish Clerk, Nicola Sturgeon was present at the meeting. District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay was present at the meeting. No members of the public attended.

1. Apologies for absence:

- i. Parish Councillor Keith Lee sent his apologies to the meeting due to work commitments;
- ii. All Cllrs consented to accept the apology.

2. Members’ Declaration 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.

3. Minutes:

Meeting on 3 November 2022 – Cllr Pepper proposed that the draft Minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. Cllr Gagen seconded. All Cllrs present agreed.

4. Matters arising:

Planning applications

DC/22/05208 – Conifers, Almshouse Green, Thorpe Morieux. Amendment details approved.

DC/22/05136 Wheelwrights, Land to the West of Bury Road, Thorpe Morieux. Full Planning Application – Erection of 1 No dwelling (amended scheme to that approved under DC/20/04096). Awaiting decision.

DC/22/05199 – Newsoms Farm, Bury Road, Thorpe Morieux. Full Planning Application – Erection of 20 No ground mounted solar panels. Permission granted.

DC/22/05366 – 4 Blacksmiths Lane, Thorpe Morieux. Householder Application – Erection of two storey side and single storey front and rear extension. Permission refused.

Signed.....

Dated.....

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. Awaiting decision. Cockfield PC have commented that they support Thorpe Morieux PC response to this application.

District Cllr Robert Lindsay had tried to obtain a response from the planning officer dealing with the matter but that had not been successful so he had escalated the matter to the head of the planning department who had confirmed that the Council Tax Department do not check with the Planning Department when they receive a new property council tax bill request.

Following discussion it was noted that the previous District Councillor had indicated that following the Chapel Farm Barn LDC application that these circumstances had led to lessons learned and would not be repeated but these circumstances have been repeated and the PC feel that due diligence has not happened at BDC. It would seem that the Council Tax Department just receive a request from an individual for a new council tax account and do not check that the building has approval from the planning department to be used as a residential dwelling. It could be as simple as the applicant for a new council tax bill (whether that be a developer or an individual) has to state the planning department application number on their request for a new account council tax bill and if that is not provided then the council tax bill is not created. It would stop these types of Lawful Development Certificate applications that rely on paying council tax for four years on as a residential property.

District Cllr has escalated the matter further to the Chief Executive of BDC. It was agreed that the PC would also send a formal complaint to BDC about this matter.

Green Lane – road reclassification

SCC Highways reference number 310889.

Latest update on 12 January 2023 stating:-

“Required forms are currently being compiled ahead of sending these of the DfT and GeoPlace...The forms are likely to be with them in the next few weeks, at that stage I am unsure how long it will take for the changes to be formally made to the national data set once GeoPlace are in receipt of the request, I will however keep you informed of progress.”

Footpath sign at Almshouse Green

This has now been reinstated.

Signed.....

Dated.....

Village Triangle

CLlr Keith Lee had spoken with Maggie Warner about the trees. Maggie had already contacted SCC Highways about the trees. They had come out to inspect them and said that they were not yet bad enough to cut back. Maggie has, however, indicated that she will privately arrange for someone to cut back the trees in due course. The PC would like to thank Maggie for her assistance in this matter.

5. District and County Cllr report:

**Road classification Green Lane**

You will have seen that Highways is now compiling the forms needed to change the classification of Green Lane, these will go to the Dept for Transport and GeoPlace for mapping. They need a copy of the consultation advert in the parish mag for the form. Chair Cllr Jules O'Brien provided Cllr Robert Lindsay with that at the meeting and he will forward it on to the SCC Highways Officer.

**Potash Farm Lawful Development Certificate**

I have asked the case officer about this and escalated to chief planning officer about policy and due diligence.

**Bus motion**

At the last full county council meeting (1<sup>st</sup> December) I proposed a motion to try to get a proper strategy in place for investing in buses in the county, the county having failed to win a penny in its latest bid for "Bus Back Better" money. The motion also asked for proper promotion with community bus operators of these services. A key part of the motion was to refer the county's failed Bus Improvement Plan to scrutiny committee to see how it could be improved for next time. Sadly it was voted down by the Conservative administration, though supported by all the opposition parties.

**Special Educational Need services – Update**

Last year, Suffolk CC's SEND services were criticised in a damning report conducted by Lincolnshire Council which contained 32 recommendations. This month our political group on the county was told that 22 of the 32 recommendations have been actioned, and the remaining 10 will be completed by the end of 2022.

The delivery of 1,317 new specialist school places by 2026 has been agreed and 826 of these places are now open. The number of Education Health Care Plans (EHP) has increased to 6,847 in September 2022, from 5,849 in September 2020.

### **Suffolk looks for more hosts for Ukrainian refugees**

New hosts coming forward to help accommodate guests that are already in Suffolk can sign up via the Suffolk County Council website, by completing our online form or emailing [refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk).

Accommodation must be available to guests for a minimum of 6 months. Hosts will be eligible to receive the £350 thank you payment for up to 6 months or more, depending on the date your guests arrived in the UK (12 months starting from the date your guests first arrived in the UK). If you know anyone that might be interested, please encourage them to visit Ukraine: Could you help a family in need?  
| Suffolk County Council

### **Suffolk to have a “Directly Elected Leader”**

Suffolk County Council’s leader has agreed to a deal with central Government that will create the post of directly elected leader of the county council. This person will be able to appoint their own cabinet from existing county councillors. This does not affect the district councils, it is essentially a reshuffle of county council governance. The county is being handed about £16m extra a year for next 30 years but a lot of this is ringfenced for particular items and is less than has been cut from grants over the years. It is hard to find a single firm promise of extra powers in the deal.

### **Measures to protect Waterways from sewage**

At the last Babergh full council I won unanimous support for a motion that would ask Anglian Water for details about the cumulative impact on its sewage treatment capacity of any major development in the district that was seeking planning permission. This is because we know that there were 288 sewage storm overflow spills into Babergh’s rivers in 2021. The council’s scrutiny committee will also be inviting Anglian Water and Environment Agency officials to answer questions about what they are doing to stop spilling sewage into our rivers. A similar motion was agreed by Mid Suffolk District Council a few days later.

### **Insulating council houses**

As a result of a motion proposed by Councillor Leigh Jamieson, Babergh agreed to collaborate with other councils in Suffolk and Essex to work out innovative ways of insulating council owned properties to reduce heating bills. By combining resources and finances it may be possible to increase the number of properties that can be retrofitted. Not only is this a good thing environmentally, but it ought to be good for the local economy, driving demand for local independent businesses that can do the work. Mid Suffolk Council agreed the same motion.

Signed.....

Dated.....

## County budget

The first proposals for the county council's 2023/24 budget is to increase their council tax precept by 4%, below the 5% cap they are allowed. There are growing pressures from inflation, social care and childrens' services.

### 40mph signs on Union Hill Semer

These were apparently put up without permission and Highways have removed them.

#### 6. Public Forum:

No members of the public attended the meeting.

#### 7. Correspondence:

All correspondence was circulated to Cllrs ahead of the meeting.

#### 8. Clerk's Report:

(i) Schedule of items awaiting approval;

N Sturgeon	salary	chq433	293.22	LGA1972
TMVH	hall hire	chq434	120.00	LGA1972

All Cllrs present approved the expenditure.

(ii) To finalise and sign BDC paperwork for Precept 2023-2024;

Further to the approve of a Precept Demand in the sum of £4122 at the meeting on 3 November 2022 the Clerk had now received the finalised tax base figures from BDC. The Clerk had provided these figures to Cllrs ahead of the meeting as follows:-

The 2022-2023 BDC tax base was 126.49 for Thorpe Morieux;  
In comparison the 2023-2024 tax base was 124.30.  
This is a percentage change of -1.7%

In 2022-2023 the tax base of 126.49 was applied to the Precept amount of £3,593 for that year which meant that a Band D property in the village paid £28.41 on their council tax bill as part of the village precept monies.

In comparison the Precept will increase in 2023-2024 to £4122 and the tax base of 124.30 will be applied to it which means that a Band D property in

Signed.....

Dated.....

the village will pay £33.16 on their council tax bill as part of the village precept monies.

All other council tax Band properties will pay proportionately but Band D is used to give a like for like comparison.

This means that a Band D property in the village will pay an extra £4.75 for the year for the parish precept monies. These monies help to pay for the Thorpe Times, magazine, grass cutting at the Church and at Whitethorn Ley, Village Hall hire costs, ongoing cost to insure the Village Hall and the maintenance costs of the defibrillator etc.

All Cllrs present approved once again the sum of £4122 and the BDC form was duly completed and signed by the Chair Jules O'Brien and the Clerk Nicola Sturgeon. Clerk will submit to BDC.

9. To consider and approve meeting dates for 2023:

Cllrs approved the following meeting dates for 2023:

9 March, 13 April (Annual Parish Meeting), 11 May (Annual Parish Council Meeting), 13 July, 14 September and 9 November 2023.

10. Cllrs reports:

Cllr Keith Lee had forwarded a short report regarding Anglian Water to the Clerk for the meeting. All the ecological digs have now been completed, and they are wanting to copen the hedge rows where the main pipe will run through, but not sure how they would get to such places on the land at the moment but they seem to be keen to cut down the hedging before nesting time. The hedge itself will be completely removed when installing pipe. Pipe works will begin this Summer so expect a lot of traffic movement and road closures.

Cllr Squirrel reported the following:-

There will be a village history event in 6 weeks times. Cllr Squirrel was looking for consent from the PC to use, at that event, the original chest used at the first PC Meeting in the village approximately 130 years ago and some of the handwritten minutes. All Cllrs present said that they consented to this.

Signed.....

Dated.....

Police report: since November 2022 there were no more reported crime on the Suffolk Police website for the village. This means that in the 12 months preceding this meeting there had been a total of 12 crimes which was the average for the village in a one year period.

Cllr Squirrell enquired whether the covid references on the village website could now be removed. All Cllrs present agreed and Clerk said that she would attend to this in due course.

With regards to Green Lane, Cllr Squirrell reported that it has been 2 years since the roadside nature reserve project and asked if there were any comments. Chair Cllr O'Brien indicated that she feels that the end of the reserve area is a little too close to the corner and does not help with visibility when the grass is growing, perhaps take it back 6 foot, otherwise she felt that the project is lovely and working very well. Cllrs agreed.

Cllr Pepper reported that West Suffolk Hospital (being the local hospital serving the village community) has planning permission for its new site. Whilst it would be several years before there was a new hospital this is something positive for the future of WSH.

Chair Cllr O'Brien reported that she had been contacted by a villager who enquired whether the Parish Council could/would become involved in lost dog incidents by way of the creation of an alert system that could connect the local community and neighbouring villages in some form to help deliver a positive outcome for owners of lost dogs. Have the PC considered this along the lines of a broader alert system off the back of the pandemic. *Following discussion Cllrs (upon the advice of the Clerk) felt that the PC did not have the power to spend public monies that they obtain via the Precept on this type of matter. The PC have very limited and specific powers under legislation. It was also noted that there items such as Air Tags that some owners use on their dogs collars that link to their phone, and there were already many facebook groups alerting users to lost dogs, and if people wanted to set up and run that type of alert system then it was for individuals but not something that the PC could become involved in.*

Chair Cllr O'Brien also reported that she had been asked by one household in the village if the PC would consider putting a grit bin at the two corners near Newsoms Farm. *Cllrs discussed this matter. No one felt that they wanted to progress the matter. Limited incidents of bad weather and people could drive carefully around the corners. At this stage the PC agreed that to install a grit bin would ultimately require consent from SCC, but be at the expense of the PC in purchasing the bin which under the SCC regulations had to be bright yellow plastic and they felt that this additional*

*street furniture was not in keeping with the rural nature of the village. Therefore, at this time, the PC agreed that they would not take this matter forward.*

Finally, Chair Cllr O'Brien and Cllr John Gagen reported the Warm Spaces grant had been approved by BDC and to date there had been three gatherings of the newly named 'Winter Warmer Coffee, Cake and Chat' sessions. There had been 14 people attend the first sessions, then 29 at the second session, and then 14 again at the third session. Residents who attended seemed to really appreciate not only the warm spaces but also getting out and socialising with other residents during the daytime.

- 11. Planning: (no new planning matters for this meeting)
- 12. Date of next meeting: 9 March 2023 at 8pm in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 9pm.