

## THORPE MORIEUX PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

#### HELD ON 13 JULY 2023 AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Chair Cllr Jules O'Brien, Cllrs Ashley Simpson, Keith Lee, Louisa Pepper and John Squirrell.

Parish Clerk, Nicola Sturgeon was present at the meeting.

District Cllr Deborah was present at the meeting.

County Cllr Robert Lindsay was unable to attend the meeting as he had a County Council meeting to attend that evening.

No members of the public attended the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence:

- i. No apologies – Cllr Russell sent his apologies and Cllr Gagen also sent his apologies as he was away on holiday;
- ii. Cllrs consented to accept the apologies.

2. Members' Declaration of Interest:

- i. To receive disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for the agenda under discussion – Chair Cllr O'Brien declared an interest in any discussion that may take place at the meeting in relation to Green Lane;
- ii. To receive declarations of gifts of hospitality received – none;
- iii. To consider requests for dispensation for pecuniary interests for the agenda under discussion – none.

3. Minutes:

Minutes of the meeting on 11 May 2023 – Cllr Pepper proposed and Cllr Simpson seconded that they were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising:

Planning Applications:

DC/23/01852 – Apple Mount Farmhouse, Apple Mount Farm, Lavenham Road, Thorpe Morieux. Full Application – siting of guest accommodation. *Permission has been granted.*

DC/22/05374 – Potash Farm, Cockfield Road, Thorpe Morieux. Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an existing Use, Operation of Activity including those in breach of a planning condition. *Still awaiting decision. Clerk has enquired what the delay is?*

Signed.....

Dated.....

*In the meantime, the due diligence issue had an update from District Cllr Deborah Saw. She states she is committed to following this through with BDC. The current IT system cannot do the cross checking and needs an update to be able to do this. Currently, each new application for a Council Tax account is checked manually. Also, now the District Cllr gets a list of applications each week in her parishes so she can see if they are being checked. District Cllr has raised this due diligence matter with the portfolio holder for planning and also the Green Cllr on the planning committee so that they are all aware of the issue.*

Green Lane – road reclassification

SCC highways reference number 310889.

Last update on 12 January 2023 stating SCC Highways submitted relevant forms to GeoPlace.

*Still awaiting decision. Clerk has contact County Cllr Robert Lindsay to chase the matter along.*

Water leak on The Drift footpath

Cllr Squirrell notified AW about the water leak. They were already aware of the problem. It is most likely not going to be a quick fix because it is on private land and there may be responsibility issues to be resolved. In the meantime, someone has gone into The Drift with a spade to make a temporary fix and made a shallow channel from the leak through the quagmire to the first point where it could be got into the ditch.

*Cllr Squirrell updated the PC at the meeting that the area is currently dry and so the leak has either been fixed or the temporary measure is working well in the current hot weather that we are experiencing.*

Bridleway to Thorpe Wood

Cllr Squirrell updated Cllrs following on from the last meeting with the definitive public right of way map showing the route of the bridleway from Home Farm to Thorpe Wood. What is also interesting is that the proper route crosses the corner of the field at the Home Farm end and is there any merit in restoring the path to the correct route? Does it suit residents and users for it to be as it is?

*Following discussion it was agreed to put the matter back on matters arising for discussion at the September meeting when Cllr John Gagen would hopefully be present as the PC would appreciate his views/comments on the matter.*

Funding for the “Coffee, Cake and Chat” Warm Hub Café to be able to continue

The “Coffee, Cake and Chat” Warm hub grant provided by BDC to the VH was used by April 2023. They have funding to be able to continue from May through to September 2023 but they are looking at ways of continuing the Hub over the

Autumn/Winter. It has been popular in the village. The last session had 20 users and 4 volunteers.

*Clerk contacted Robert Lindsay and Deborah Saw. Both has agreed to use some of their locality budgets (£285 each making a total of £570) towards the running costs of the Hub over this Autumn/Winter. Ultimately it will be for the VH Committee to complete the application form for these grants but Chair Cllr O'Brien indicated that she would be happy to work with them to get the forms completed and submitted as she had with the original grant.*

*[Following on from the meeting District Cllr Deborah Saw emailed the Clerk to advise that she had heard from the Committee regarding Warm Hubs Funding and it is there hope that BDC will continue to be able to provide funding for Warm hubs. Last year the Council used a combination of council grants and funding from the Public Health to create a Warm Hubs grant scheme. Discussions will take place shortly as BDC need to progress soon to ensure they have processes in place for the Winter. Cllr Saw thinks that the VH could still apply for the Locality Grant and a Warm Hubs Grant given the café is running all year around.]*

#### Funding of a Charles III commemorative bench in the village

The VH have enquired of the PC if they would fund a bench or make a contribution to the VH Committee to enable them to purchase a bench but the PC purchase and claim back the VAT.

The position with VAT is that if the PC purchase it has to be their asset to benefit from the VAT recovery, they cannot use their benefit of being able to recover VAT for other organisations by purchasing it and then being refunded the amount less the VAT.

The PC will have @£2800 in reserve but some of this will be used towards the additional grass cutting costs at Whitethorn Ley this year. The PC has a duty to remain solvent and to be mindful of it reserves. Currently it holds less than one years Precept in reserve.

The PC did hold CIL monies which can be used to purchase benches for the parish but the CIL monies were used as follows:-

£489.69 towards a road sign following a car accident in the village. This was a contribution to the total cost (Robert Lindsay budget paying the remainder of the total cost).

£1617.32 was given to the VH in order for them to update their lighting and also to install screening at the back of the VH by the toilet area. The total cost of those works was £1657.71 and the PC gave the remainder of the CIL monies but also contributed the £40.32.

In addition, the PC have granted the sum of £500 to the VH in 2022 to contribute towards gifts to each household in the village for the Queens Jubilee.

Signed.....

Dated.....

On discussion and considering the financial position of the PC and the fact that there are no CIL monies available to the PC at the current time, all Cllrs present agreed that they could not provide a grant towards a bench and the PC was not in a position to purchase a bench. However, the PC agreed that it would be a lovely item for the village at some point in the future and if they became in possession of CIL monies again then they would consider purchasing a bench at that stage. It was noted that the bench on the triangle where the village sign is, look worn and it would be a good place to put any new bench that was purchased in the future.

#### 5. District and County Cllr report

##### County Cllr Robert Lindsay

##### **Replacing the mains pipe on Bildeston High Street**

Some time ago I wrote to Anglian Water's CEO to ask when they would be replacing the ageing and continually leaking Victorian main on Bildeston High Street. The reply I got said that it was in the works but there appeared to be no timetable. I'm pleased to say that they are now planning to do it, from April next year. I have met on site with the project manager from AW, Nigel Plumb, and he assured me he will communicate with parish councils of the villages affected. It will mean four different road closures at different places on Bildeston High Street for a continuous period of about 16 weeks, over the four phases of the work. I have heard repeatedly from residents that they would put up with a lengthy planned closure and diversions if it meant the frequent unplanned closures due to leaks were avoided.

##### **Libraries funding – new contract to run them**

In June the county cabinet agreed to plug a £960,000 funding gap for the libraries service until the end of its contract on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024. It is this week (Tues 11<sup>th</sup> July) being recommended to agree to raise the annual funding of library service from £5.992m to £6.842m per year and to seek a competitive tender to run the libraries for the next six years with an option to renew for another six years. Officers have ruled out taking the service back in house or creating an arms length company to run it, as they say this will increase the running costs. There will be a public consultation for 14 weeks from October this year to January 2024. The existing contract will be extended for 10 months to allow time for the consultation and tender process which will begin June 2024.

##### **Coping with growing water demand as climate change strikes**

There have been mounting warnings about our water supply and the health of our rivers in Suffolk as climate change makes rainfall less predictable and as more and more housing, agricultural and industrial development increases demand. Water

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Resources East stated in November 2022 “Unless action is taken, increasing water scarcity will constrain agricultural production and curtail economic and housing development, impacting the region’s future prosperity and endangering the East’s iconic chalk rivers, peatlands and wetlands.”

Essex and Suffolk Water is currently consulting on a proposal for a moratorium on mains connections for new businesses until 2032 in the Hartismere area of north Suffolk. The water company objected to a recent application for new chicken sheds because it said it had no more capacity to supply extra water.

This month (16<sup>th</sup> May) the cabinet agreed to a new policy to guide its response to applications for reservoirs and desalination plants. The council’s officers said developers needed to see that the council had a clear position in relation to water and “climate adaptive infrastructure projects”.

My political group is concerned that building desalination plants will add to climate emissions and accelerate the problem. We believe a better way of tackling this issue is reducing water demand, rather than trying to boost supply.

### **Votes fill potholes!**

The Conservative county council leader used the council’s annual meeting following local elections in which Conservative lost control of four district councils across Suffolk, to admit that the council need to do more. He announced that they were spending an extra £10 million over the next 20 months, to try to fix potholes in side roads, outside the A and B category roads. The current annual roads maintenance budget, agreed with ne contractor Milestone which begins work on 1<sup>st</sup> October, is just £11 million. It did not form part of the county’s budget agreed in February this year and is likely to come from borrowing. It appears that this is a one off announcement made in response to what Conservatives heard on the doorstep in local district council elections. However, while welcoming news, our political group is concerned that a sticking plaster approach of occasional announcements will not be enough to address a continuing problem beyond 20 months.

### **Bildeston Food Bank**

The Bildeston food bank is a useful barometer of local need and the cost of living crisis. It is currently looking after 35 families – that is 103 people, 42 of them are under 16. Donations by individuals are down approximately 75%. They are receiving support from financial donations, the three local shops on our patch (Hicham, Bildeston and Monks Eleigh Community Shop), Morrisons and Suffolk County Council.

They delivered 500ltrs of heating oil to 14 families last winter and expect to do similar this coming winter.

It is now working in partnership with Social Services, Adult Social Care, Child Social Care and other agencies.

Signed.....

Dated.....

District Cllr Deborah Saw

**Joint Local Plan**

BMSDC's modified Joint Local Plan, Part One, was submitted for examination by the Planning Inspectorate and was discussed at hearings two weeks ago. The Part 1 Plan sets out the vision and objectives for development in the two Districts and it contains a set of strategic and local policies to guide development to 2037.

The hearings are on YouTube and can be accessed via the link below and cover the examination plus issues raised by groups such as Natural England, poultry farmers and developers, <https://www.youtube.com/@bmsdcjlp1676/streams>

Part Two of the Plan is critical as it will contain an up to date settlement hierarchy and a spatial distribution of any housing allocations. The Council is focused on obtaining Secretary of State approval by the winter of 2025.

**Due Diligence Issues between the Council and Planning Departments**

Following the previous Parish Council meeting I raised the above issue with the chief executive and asked if any progress had been made in automating data checks. There have been meetings between all the relevant officers and the Chief Executive. It has been confirmed to me that the systems are not compatible currently and they are working to fix these issues. In the meantime I have been assured that there are augmented manual checks taking place.

**Warm Hub Funding**

Following an enquiry from the Parish Clerk I have asked whether there will be any council funding for Warm Hubs this winter. I have not had an answer as yet, but it may be too early as funding will be provided by central government. I will follow-up. However, in the interim Councillor Lindsay and I do have small discretionary funds we can access. In my case this is the Locality Fund Locality-Awards-Guidance.docx(live.com)

My allowance is £2,000 for the financial year but it has to be shared amongst seven villages.

I will be able to make a contribution of £285 to the Village Warm Hub and will be in further contact with Jules O'Brien to complete the paperwork.

**Capital Grants**

The Council offers capital grants aimed at assisting community groups in making improvements and repairs to social infrastructure. This may include

- Village halls
- Play areas

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- Sport clubs
- Recreational facilities

Capital Grants are available to up to 100% of total project costs to a maximum grant of £10,000. Application windows will be open between 31<sup>st</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023, then between 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. Successful applicants will be required to deliver their project within eight months of an offer being accepted.

### **Tour of Britain, Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September**

Stage 5 of the Tour starts and finishes in Felixstowe. It will go through Manningtree and East Bergholt before reaching Hadleigh. It will then go to Bildeston and through Wattisham via Wattisham Road, Needham Lane, Bildeston and Hitcham Roads and Weir Road and then onto Battsford Tye, Barking, Needham Market and Stowmarket.

There will, of course, be road closures and parking restrictions but the tour organisers will be sending out estimated times of arrival to the Council which I will forward to you. You may have also noticed there is a lot of road work activity on the route to repair potholes and upgrade the road surface for the riders. The Suffolk Councils have launched a Taste of the Tour website which hosts a Toolkit for local businesses and an Interactive Bike Trail for cyclists and families.

### **EV Chargers**

BMSDC secured £300,000 from the Office of Zero Emissions Vehicles to site 28 further charging units in public car parks. New charging points in Babergh are at: The Cock Horse Inn, Lavenham; Magdalen Long Stay, Hadleigh; Girling Street and North Street, Sudbury.

### **Council-funded school holiday programme**

Family Fun days and activity events will be taking place from 24<sup>th</sup> July to 1<sup>st</sup> September. There will be a family fun day at East House Park, Hadleigh on 28<sup>th</sup> July and another at Belle Vue Park, Sudbury on 31<sup>st</sup> July and 19<sup>th</sup> August. As well as a football fun camp in Hadleigh and other summer holiday activities at Kersey Mill. These activities are free for children who are eligible for free school meals. Places need to be booked using a HAF code distributed via the school. Secondary school pupils don't need a code.

Activities include climbing wall, archery, sports, dance and cooking.

### **Funding for tree planting**

The UK Community Tree Planting Programme aims to support community projects that will:

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- Conserve, restore and protect indigenous trees and woodlands, forests, habitats, and associated biodiversity;
- Support community engagement in tree planting to promote reforestation and to increase awareness of the importance of trees and forests to environmental and human well-being;
- Encourage social cohesion and inclusion.

To be eligible, your organisation must be community based e.g a school, community group or non-governmental organisation.

There are two tiers of funding available:

- Small scale: A maximum of £1,000 is available for projects of up to 1 year in duration. This could be small community woodland, orchard, hedging projects, etc;
- Larger scale: Projects to range from 1000-10,000 trees, with a maximum price equivalent to £1.50/tree (inclusive of tree protection). Most suitable for community woodland or hedging projects.

6. Public Forum:

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

7. Correspondence: (all correspondence has been circulated to Cllrs ahead of the meeting)

8. Clerk's Report:

(i) Schedule of items awaiting approval:

BHIB	Insurance	chq438 424.43	LGA1972
N Sturgeon	salary	chq439 260.64	LGA1972

9. Cllrs Reports

Cllr Squirrell provided a report from the Suffolk Police website which confirmed that there had been no reported crime incident in the village in April, and one reported incident in May. That brought the total to seven reported incidents within the last 12 months.

Cllr Squirrell reported to the PC regarding Whitethorn Ley: the wildflowers had been excellent this year; residents seem happy with the extra area of land being cut short, providing an area for children to play; there will be a larger grass cutting bill this year as the grass has grown more quickly than last year due to the very wet weather early in the grass cutting season followed by sunshine.

Signed.....

Dated.....



Cllr Lee reported that the verges in the village are very bad at the moment (again the combination of lots of rain and sunshine), and it would be helpful if the County Cllr could update the PC as to when the verges are going to be cut.

Cllrs made the Clerk aware that a resident had not been happy about a letter that the PC had sent to him, it was apparently more the timing of the letter as it arrived after work had been done to the footpath. *Clerk showed Cllrs a copy of the letter that had been sent. It did include in that letter an acknowledgement that work may already have been carried out on the footpath. Clerk reminder Cllrs that at the meeting that the PC asked for the Clerk to send the letter it was stated that the work may have commenced they were unsure. The same letter also asked the resident to consider whether the position of the new hedgerow he had put in was too near to Green Lane roadway (it appeared to be within the 1.2 metres of the highway).*

PC asked the Clerk to write to the resident thanking him for the work that he had carried out on the public footpath.

10. Planning: (no new planning matters)

11. Date of next meeting: 14 September 2023 at 8pm.

Meeting closed: 9.30pm