

## THORPE MORIEUX PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2021 AT 8PM

*This meeting was held remotely by Zoom.*

Present: Cllrs Louisa Pepper, John Squirrell, Jules O'Brien, Garry Russell, Ashley Simpson and Keith Lee, and John Gagen, together with the Clerk, Nicola Smith. No members of the public present

1. Apologies for absence:

- i. None;
- ii. Not applicable.

2. Members' Declaration of Interest:

- i. Cllr Squirrell declared an interest in item 7 (i) planning on the land opposite Wheelwrights due to proximity to his own home;
- ii. No declarations of gifts of hospitality;
- iii. No requests for dispensation.

3. Minutes:

Cllrs had considered the draft Minutes of the meeting on the 7 January 2021. Cllr Russell proposed and Cllr Simpson seconded that the Minutes were a true record of the meeting.

4. Public Forum: no members of the public present.

Clerk had received an email from a villager regarding Braodband. Cllrs appreciated that this was an additional meeting, but a short discussion did take place. The Clerk had put the villager in contact with District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay, who in turn had spoken with the SCC Broadband Officer who stated:-

“Eventually, all of the remote premises in Thorpe Morieux should get a Gigabit-capable Broadband service as a result of the Government’s UK Fibre programme, but that is likely to be several years away. The best way forward in the meantime would be for Wash Cottage and other premises in the same direction from the fibre-enabled cabinet to come together to apply for an Openreach Community Fibre Partnership (CFP) Scheme – see [www.communityfibre.openreach.co.uk](http://www.communityfibre.openreach.co.uk) A CFP scheme would require a financial contribution from each of the premises that participate in the scheme, though they would also be eligible for some financial support from the Government’s Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme. This is something that the local community would need to organize for themselves (perhaps supported by their Parish Council, though we would be happy to advise and help in any way that we can.”

District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay has confirmed to the villagers that he would support the villager if they wanted to go ahead with the scheme, and had made

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enquiries as to whether they and other interested residents that are in the “same direction” from the cabinet, wanted to have a zoom call with him to discuss further. Cllr Russell also confirmed that he was trying to speak with one of his colleagues about this matter and once he had more up to date information he would update the Parish Council so that Cllr Lindsay and villagers could be informed.

Cllr Russell did confirm that the phone route from Cockfield down Perry Down Lane into Thorpe Morieux has not been upgraded to super broadband yet. Buttons Green has fibre to the premises but that ends, he thinks at Hill Farm. As soon as he is able to find out any further information he would advise, but if there are no plans to extend to those houses then potentially a case could be raised with the chief engineer office which could prioritise it but would again need a lead to take it on. Cllr Squirrell thinks that there may be as many as 43 properties in the village who have not yet got upgraded broadband.

Will update at the next meeting. It was agreed that a solution for the whole of the village was really what was wanted. A good broadband service in these modern times is very important.

5. To consider and approve revised draft precept for 2021/22:

The Parish Council had previously agreed a draft precept but since then BDC have advised of a Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Grant Allowance for this year from BDC. This is a grant handed down to local government from central government to try to ease the burden slightly at a parish level as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The LCTS Grant Allowance for the year for Thorpe Morieux is £110 for the village. This reduced the amount of Precept that the PC were seeking from Babergh from £3418 down to £3308. Cllrs Simpson proposed the precept demand at £3308 and Cllr O'Brien seconded, all Cllrs present agreed. Clerk will prepare paperwork and arrange to sign with Chair before submitting to BDC.

6. Quiet Lanes update:

Cllr O'Brien gave a further update as follows:-

As posted in the last edition of the Thorpe Times we are exploring the possibility of Green Road becoming a designated Quiet Lane as part of a county wide project, the investment coming from the Suffolk 2020 Fund and is ringfenced for this purpose.

The benefits are:-

- Encourage drivers to 'expect and respect' more vulnerable road users
- To allow non motorised users to enjoy rural lanes in greater safety
- Identifying the lane as a 'shared space'
- Help retain the rural nature and tranquility of country lanes
- Encourage sustainable and active travel options
- Connect to existing Public Rights of Way

- Enjoying the outside is recognized as an important way of coping with the ongoing pandemic.

It is NOT to be used for traffic calming or speed enforcement

We have registered Green Road with Suffolk County Council and it has now been verified as an appropriate quiet lane so if the village support this, the application can now be taken forward. It is important that a full public consultation is completed as part of this application. *A flyer with an invitation to a zoom meeting or for comments to be given by other means was sent to every household in the village. The Zoom meeting took place on 14<sup>th</sup> January and only 2 people (from one household) attended that.*

We have had 13 responses to date including, 10 supporting the application, 2 objecting and 1 suggesting a different lane in the village be considered.

### **The next steps**

- A signage and costing sheet to be submitted
- Publication of formal legal proposal notice in the press
- Formal notice issued to all residents and businesses directly affected, legal notices displayed
- Further open/public meeting
- Any written objections collated and minutes of meetings sent to SCC Highways
- SCC either approve or decline, install signs at entrance and exit to the lane

### **To be considered by the Parish Council at this meeting**

#### **Consultation**

Outcome of the consultation:

- 10 in favour
- 1 could we consider Blacksmiths Lane as Green Road is a quiet lane
- 3 not in favour – reasons including downgrading may lead to reduced maintenance, increased urban litter with signage, advertising leading to greater visitors numbers and traffic/litter etc, concern where signage going and risk on the junction, causing other routes to become busier not a fair system for those that don't live on the quiet lane.

#### **Signage/Cost**

Cllr O'Brien looked at where possible signage could go, with the help of Cllr Squirrel, and completed the signage costing. Cllr O'Brien is suggesting that, if we go ahead, we request a sign attached to the present post on north end junction with Bury Road and a new post with entrance and exit to quiet lanes sign attached placed on verge

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on southeast end of Green Road junction with Bury Road. The grant from the council is for £600 per lane and this would come in at £560-£325 dependent on whether a second post is required if we can't use the present post in situ.

Cllrs O'Brien's understanding was that there would be no extra cost to the Parish Council, as all costs would be met by the grant.

Cllr O'Brien asked the Parish Council whether it wanted to continue with the application, and if so were they happy with the costings, and would the PC like to make a voluntary contribution towards the costs?

Cllrs discussed this matter at some length. There were positives and negatives. Comments included the following:-

- As we now understand that the Quiet Lanes will be advertised there is concern that it will attract more people to Green Road, seeking somewhere to park up, walk their dog, or have a picnic. This would in effect defeat what the PC were aiming to achieve by registering Green Road as a Quiet Lane;
- Will it mean that people would park up at entrances onto farmers land causing delay in their working life. Some people park up and then go off for a walk for several hours blocking entrances for tractors etc to get onto the land;
- Disappointing that only 2 people from one household attended the Zoom consultation meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> January. Cllrs felt that it was a lot of work and time to achieve a Quiet Lane status and would have liked more whole hearted support from more people in the village, as an indication to the PC that the majority of the villagers wanted this;
- There have been 10 comments of support to Cllr O'Brien but there have also been 3 people who are against this and that equates to almost one third of those that are showing support. Parish is a small community and would need to consider if that one third is representative across the parish but people not confident in using technology etc to express their comments whether positive or negative;
- Whilst it is acknowledged that being outside for exercise is something that some people need to do during this pandemic, it was felt that people should not be driving from outside the village into the village to exercise/walk their dog;
- Cllrs considered that this was a long process, and was that worth the gain from having it designated a Quiet Lane with a sign at two points.
- Eventually, Cllrs voted against progressing the application for Green Road to be designated a Quiet Lane. ***However during this process the PC has asked the Clerk to obtain information about Speed Indicator Device for the village and that will be placed on the Agenda for the meeting on 4***

**March 2021. Cllrs also asked the Clerk to place on the Agenda an item so that they could discuss the possibility of changing Green Road from being the designated main route in the village to Bury Road. Clerk will also try to gain information from SCC Highways about whether this was possible and if so, the process.**

7. Planning:

- (i) Application DC/20/04096 – Land Opposite Wheelwrights, Bury Road, Thorpe Morieux, IP30 0NR. Erection of a detached dwelling (in lieu of the dwelling approved under DC/19/05766).

Following discussion Cllrs concerns were as follows:-

- Despite the reconfiguration on the new plans this proposed detached dwelling was still far too large and still not in keeping with its surrounding. It is located between two listed properties and will overshadow them. These are the same concerns as the previous application and it really has not been addressed in this application;
- It was noted that a fence has now been put in on these plans which seems to create what could become an additional plot for development. This is of concern to the PC, again because of the proximity to two listed buildings;
- Under the original application DC/19/05766, which was approved, the document named “Supporting Statement” set out in paragraph 6.19 that “...ensure that the special character of the building is preserved and, where possible, enhanced.” These subsequent applications to significantly increase the building means that it loses its special character. Further, paragraph 6.20 refers to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting. It is desirable to preserve the setting. The first application DC/19/05766 took into account these important issues, but subsequent application to extend have not. Feel that the first application is being treated as a stepping stone to try to get to a much more disproportionate large dwelling;
- Cllrs asked the Clerk to submit a response taking these comments into account and comments on previous application. They did not feel that the small changes made any difference – the proposed dwelling was still too large.

8. Date of next meeting: 4 March 2021 at 8pm (to be confirmed whether meeting will be held remotely). Cllr Squirrell gave a brief update in readiness for that meeting:-

- He has been pursuing a response from Royal Mail regarding the postbox as they should have made a decision by now. Agreed provide a further 10

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working days and if no response the PC will write to their Member of Parliament and copy in the District and County Cllr in order to try to get the postbox reinstated.

- Footpath signs that had gone missing are going to be replaced.

Meeting ended: 9.10pm

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