

THORPE MORIEUX PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON 3 MARCH 2022 AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Chair Cllr Louisa Pepper, Cllrs John Squirrell, Ashley Simpson, Jules O'Brien, John Gagen, Keith Lee and Garry Russell. Six members of the public present.

1. Apologies for absence:
 - i. Clerk was unable to be in attendance at this meeting due to ongoing treatment for health issue, and the Parish Council wished her well.
 - ii. Cllrs consented to the apologies.
2. Members' Declaration of Interest:
 - i. To receive disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for the agenda under discussion:
Cllr O'Brien declared an interest in item 14 planning matter for Chapel Farm Barn due to the proximity of her own home;
Cllr O'Brien declared an interest in item 8 as she was involved in the Thorpe Times;
Cllrs Gagen and Russell declared an interest in item 9, as they are both members of the Village Hall Committee.
 - 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 to consider and approve Minutes of meeting on 6 January 2022. Cllr Gagen proposed that they were a true and accurate record and Cllr Russell seconded.
4. Matters Arising:

Green Lane and Bury Road:

Ref CR310889 – road classification review/changing or road classification.

Green Lane is currently classified as the main road through the village, but SCC Highways have themselves prompted a review of this.

No update from SCC Highways since Summer 2021. Clerk has requested assistance from County Cllr. County Cllr Robert Lindsay has emailed Highways on 02/03/2022 to get an update. Will report further at next meeting.

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Postbox on Perrydown Lane

This was reported to Royal Mail under enquiry reference number 210526-000234.

This post box was damaged by a reversing RM van and was taken away. Incident happened on 01/03/2021.

Clerk had previously advised County Cllr Robert Lindsay of this matter and he had contacted RM, but still no response. Cllr Lindsay has recently chased them for an update requesting the postbox be reinstated quickly.

Letter to S & P regarding overgrown hedge between Greatfields and the Phonebox

Letter sent, and S & P agreed to look into this matter, and some work carried out, however there is a section that is the responsibility of Great Fields and Parish Clerk asked to send letter to housing association requesting management.

Flooding on Green Lane

- (a) Letter sent to S & P regarding managing the ditches. S & P agreed to look into this matter;
- (b) Cllr Russell reported to Highways for the chambers to be desilted under reference number 00349453. On the SCC Highways reporting tool it states that the report was closed on 03/03/2022. The request has been rejected again as SCC state it is not urgent and will be placed on their maintenance schedule. Cllr Russell will contact them directly to pursue further.

5. **District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay report:**

Painting village hall for jubilee

Basically alright so long as it's temporary, if permanent you will need to check.

Missing Post box

I have written to the chief executive of Royal Mail about the second missing post box, after there was no response to your clerk's formal notification. Let's see if it works again!

Road classification review Green Lane

Since your clerk has unfortunately not received a response from Highways. I have again chased highways about this review which I prompted about a year ago, following the parish council's query about why it was classed as a more major road than Bury Road.

Babergh Budget

At February's Full Council meeting, councillors agreed to increase Babergh's element of residents' council tax by 2% - meaning an extra £3.48 per year, an average Band D household.

Eight councillors voted against the increase in Council Tax, including myself, as it was felt that with the current cost of living increases this year was the wrong time.

Particularly as the increase could have been avoided this year with income from the administration's now ditched plan to charge for car parking.

Funding to support Rough Sleepers

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council have been awarded £324K to provide specialised emergency accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness. The funding will see the development of two new self-contained eco emergency accommodation units in Stowmarket and two self-contained units in Sudbury to house vulnerable adults at risk of living on the streets.

Council to down-size accommodation

Babergh Cabinet voted to give back one of the two floors they rent at Endeavour House from Suffolk County Council, saving approximately £338,000. The majority of staff are now home working with some office visits for meetings etc.

Empty homes funding

Owners of empty homes may be eligible to an Empty Homes Renovation Loan designed to help improve vacant properties across the districts which have been empty for over six months and in need of significant repairs. Empty Homes Renovation Loans of up to £20,000 are interest free and can help to carry out a range of major repairs including installing a central heating system, electrical rewire or fixing a leaking roof.

Suffolk Biodiversity Recommendations

The cabinet approved plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land by 2030. This was a result of a motion we proposed a couple of years back and a cross party panel. Examples include planting more hedgerows, improving highway trees, and developing nature-based flood management solutions. For more information, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/councils-commitment-to-further-enhancing-suffolks-natural-environment>

Bus Back Better

The Government has written to highways authorities, including Suffolk to advise it that it is cutting the pot available for investing in buses from £3bn to £1.4bn. It is not

clear whether this will affect the £77m bid for bus improvements from Suffolk county council.

Changes to Highway Code

Several new changes to the Highway Code are now in force as of the 29th of January. According to The Department for Transport (DfT) the new regulations are about recognising and protecting the most vulnerable road users and making the highway safer for everyone. Suffolk Roadsafe's Quiz helps illustrate the changes that are necessary to know and includes a link to further information - <https://www.quiz-maker.com/QG20TF8NL>. For more Government information on the changes you need to know, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>

Devolution "Deal"

The Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial 'County Deals' up for negotiation. A new deal will potentially give local leaders more powers to make decisions for their communities. Our Group welcomes the idea of bringing more power to the communities of Suffolk. However we are concerned about governance and whether all elected councillors will still have a say in how devolved powers are exercised.

County Council Budget Meeting

County Councillors met on the 17th of February to debate and vote on the Council's budget for 2022-23. My political group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care, as well as an innovative project to reduce the energy bills of those most vulnerable, considering the current energy and cost of living crisis. Both ideas were rejected by the Conservatives, but our Group will continue to champion more investment into our social care and green technology. For more information on Suffolk GLI's Budget amendment, visit:

[https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(17-02-2022\),%20County%20Council](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(17-02-2022),%20County%20Council)

Warmer Homes Suffolk

Suffolk residents who are struggling to keep their homes warm can contact a new project, named 'Warm Homes Suffolk', which offers funding and free advice. The project can offer expert advice on reducing energy bills, energy usage and identify benefits that residents may be entitled to, to help keep their homes warm. Visit: www.warmhomessuffolk.org.

6. Public Forum: 6 members of the public attended the meeting, including the owners of Chapel Farm Barn who were there to answer any questions that Cllrs may have about their planning application. Nearby neighbours were also present and commented upon the application in order that the Parish Council were aware of

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their views. Some members of the public had emailed the Parish Clerk with their comments requesting that it be read out at the PC Meeting, and the Chair duly did this.

7. Correspondence: (all correspondence has been circulated to Cllrs ahead of the meeting). Clerk had received an email regarding item 14 planning matter from parishioners who were unable to attend the Parish Council meeting . Clerk had forwarded that email on to Cllrs in order that they may consider the comments when considering the planning matter.
8. To consider additional funding for the Thorpe Times:
Cllr O'Brien informed the Parish Council of the present financial situation and the cost of producing the colour copy. Cost of colour copy £116.40 with 6 copies a year the annual cost if £698.40. Present income is £200 grant from the PC and £245 advert income, therefore total income is £445 so there is still a significant short fall. Discussion re potential options including asking for voluntary annual contribution or putting increased grant of £400 per year into the Precept.
Cllrs agreed that this should be factored into the future Precept. Proposed Cllr Squirrell and seconded Cllr Lee.
9. To consider making a payment to the VH Committee with regards to premises/facilities under s19 Local Government (Misc. Provisions) Act 1976:
Village Hall Committee are requesting that the Parish Council provide £1000 to support the funding of a gift to every household. Parish Council agreed to fund £500 towards this. Proposed Cllr Lee and seconded Cllr O'Brien.
Upgrade works to the lighting in the Village Hall cost of approximately £600 agreed in principle to apply to use the CIL money for this request that the VH Committee get further quotes for other external electrical work. Proposed Cllr O'Brien and seconded Cllr Lee.
10. To consider an Emergency Plan for the village:
Clerk has made enquiries with Vince Williams who is the Emergency Planning Officer at the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit, in order that the Parish Council can make an informed decision as to whether they would like to go ahead with an Emergency Plan for the village, including recruiting volunteers within the village.
Parish Council generally felt that this level of support in an emergency happens in Thorpe Morieux anyway. The village is community minded enough, country folk so formalizing this felt unnecessary. Agreed Cllr O'Brien to put a piece in Thorpe Times letting villagers know that they can contact one of the Parish Cllrs in an emergency if required.
11. To consider PC Meeting dates for 2022-2023
The following dates were agreed.

5th May 2022 – Annual Parish Council Meeting
7th July 2022 – PC Meeting
1st September 2022 – PC Meeting

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3rd November 2022 - PC Meeting

5th January 2023 – PC Meeting

2nd March 2023 – PC Meeting

6th April 2023 – Annual Parish Meeting

12. Clerk's Report:

Cllrs considered the following payments and approved them. Cllr Simpson proposed and Cllr Lee seconded.

Thorpe Morieux PCC grant	£200	chq417	Misc Prov LGA 1976
Thorpe Times grant	£400	chq418	Misc. Prov LGA 1976
I Gooderham grass cutting	£480	chq419	LGA 1972
N Sturgeon clerk salary	£470.40	chq420	LGA 1972

In addition, the PC approved a cheque (chq 421) for £500 to the Village Hall as agreed under item 9 of the Agenda.

13. Cllrs reports:

Cllr Russell raised his concern regarding footpaths being blocked after recent storms. It is the land owners responsibility to clear the footpaths. Parish Clerk to write to S & P requesting their clear their footpaths.

Footpath signs not been replaced. Request Parish Clerk formally report these Almshouse Green and Western End of footpath no 16.

Cllr Gagen reported litter pick and breakfast in village hall Sunday 13th March.

Cllr Squirrell – Police report 1 crime reported and investigated since the last meeting. Rolling 12 months 8 crimes in the village.

Cllr Squirrell – has spoken to some of the residents at Whitethorn Ley regarding the meadow. No reason to remove any of the trees having spoken to the residents.

Cutting more of the meadow for the younger children this season. Cllr Squirrell proposes the section nearer the road be cut shorter. Bee orchids now present on the wild flower meadow.

14. Planning

Cllr Jules O'Brien left the meeting at this stage as she had declared a pecuniary interest in this matter.

- (i) Application DC/22/00535 – Chapel Farm Barn, The Green, Thorpe Morieux, IP30 0NZ. Erection of 1no replacement of dwelling house, change of use of agricultural land to residential amenity (C3) and partial demolition of the

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existing dwelling house (barn conversion) and its return to use as a storage barn.

The applicants were present at the meeting. As they were unfamiliar with the Parish Council process, they had not taken the opportunity to present their views on this in the public forum. In order to be fair to all, the Chair afforded them the opportunity to address the Parish Council.

The applicants stated that they had received pre-planning consultation with the LPA. They felt that they had addressed all of the previous issues raised in their previous application DC/21/03714. They stated that it was their view that they had addressed the location of the proposed dwelling, had dealt with the highways issues and all other matters.

The Chair then invited each Cllr in turn to outline their views or observations:-

Cllr Squirrell – he has been following planning in the village for fifty years. He had hoped to have consensus but felt the LPA should step in and take the decision as to what should happen on this site, and as such his views at this time were neutral as he would like to leave it for the local planners to decide what was the right thing to do.

Cllr Russell – there were a number of mute points and the applicants had addressed most of them. He felt that it was not up to the PC to keep putting someone down.

Cllr Simpson – concerns that there was potential for another dwelling in the future with the retention of the current barn, but with regards to the remainder of the application he did not have any particular issues.

Cllr Gagen – he also has concerns that there will end up being two dwellings on the site. The barn was a barn and has then been given rights to be a dwelling and what would stop that from happening again. Not sure if the LPA can reverse this. He would prefer the dwelling to be a replacement for the one on the site.

The Applicants at this point said that the extra piece of land to be incorporated within the amenity land was the suggestion of the LPA. This would be offset with the boundary treatment. The existing dwelling on the site will lose its development rights and therefore whilst they would retain

two thirds of the current dwelling as storage, the new dwelling would be a replacement.

Cllr Lee - he has concerns about the position. The issue of a replacement has been covered during the conversation. He could not see why the barn has not been converted into a lovely building.

Chair Cllr Pepper – she felt that this application was an over development of the site. Not sure if the LPA could withdraw status once granted. Has concerns that the highways issues had not been addressed and also queried why two thirds of the barn and both floors needed to be retained for storage.

Some clarification with the PC Clerk would be sought and Cllrs were invited to collate their views thereafter.

15. Date of next meeting: Annual Parish Meeting on 7 April 2022 at 8pm in the Village Hall