

## THORPE MORIEUX PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**HELD ON 7 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, together with the Clerk, Nicola Smith, and the District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay. Two members of the public present at the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence:

- i. Cllr John Gagen sent his apologies to the meeting due to IT issues;
- ii. Cllrs consented to accept the apology.

2. Members’ Declaration of Interest:

- i. No disclosures of pecuniary interest for items on the Agenda;
- 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 19 November 2020. Cllr O’Brien proposed and Cllr Squirrell seconded that the Minutes were a true record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising:

- i. Burst Water mains in the village - Clerk had written to Anglian Water as per the request of the Parish Council in November 2020. Anglian Water said that they were “sorry to hear of the disruption the road closures are causing to residents. The road closures took place for the recent essential maintenance work that we had to carry out. We are aware of the difficulties that burst mains in this location create, and that is why we aim to reduce the period of time that the road closure is in place. We have no option but to close the road due to its narrow width. This is done to protect the public and the Anglian Water teams who carry out the work. I have passed the details of the recent burst mains (in 2020), and their associated issues to our asset enhancement team who will now consider all options going forward.”
- ii. Post box – Cllr Squirrell has been in contact with Royal Mail, and we are awaiting a definitive response as to if and when the post box will be reinstated. Matter to remain outstanding with the Parish Council and Cllr Squirrell will continue to liaise with Royal Mail on the Parish Council’s behalf.
- iii. Folly Farm Barn Permitted Development application – the application has been withdrawn for the second time. The matter raised which led to the withdrawal is the issue of noise from the working commercial farm at

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- Barleydale, Grove Farm, and the proximity of the proposed 5 dwellings to that noise. (See Cllrs reports at section 11 of the Agenda).
- iv. Wheelwrights planning application – the Parish Council have noted that following the Heritage Officers response and those concerns mirrored in the PC response the Applicant submitted revised plan 10e. PC have not been asked to comment on this revised plan which includes fencing (the Heritage Officer is also querying this). The Heritage Officer as consultee have been asked to comment on revised plans but the PC as a consultee have not. Agreed that Clerk would forward details to District Cllr Robert Lindsay so that he would make enquiries of the planning officer and revert to the PC.
- v. Potholes outside houses on Bury Road have once again appeared despite some repairs by SCC Highways. Clerk had made enquiries with SCC Highways about carrying out some repairs, again, as this is an unadopted road. SCC Highways have stated that on this occasion they would again carry out the repairs but this may not be the case in the future. Cllrs agreed for Clerk to draft a letter explaining the position to those residents that it is relevant to.

5. District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay's reports

**Folly Farm “prior approval” application withdrawn**

See discussion under item 11, Cllrs reports

**Babergh decision on charging for parking delayed**

This was due to come before the Babergh cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> January alongside the budget for 21/22 but the parking part of it will now be delayed in order that it go to full council at the end of January before cabinet make the final decision. The budget will be voted on at a full council meeting in February. Our Green group would like to see a proper timetable and firm plans to provide investment in cycling, walking and buses before car park charges are introduced.

**Biodiversity motion unanimously approved**

This was passed at full council on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, enhancing the measures already pledged by Babergh and other district councils around Suffolk. Suffolk owns all the rural verges and much county farm land so there is potential for far greater positive impact. The actions in the motion are

- Delivery of biodiversity strategy
- Assessment of how SCC can lead partner organisations in this field
- Adoption of biodiverse land management options in Suffolk council's own land
- A letter to the Secretary of State calling for a clear and ambitious national biodiversity strategy

**Green budget amendment for 2021-22 budget**

The County is currently preparing its budget for 2021-22 and my political group – LDGI – is planning a few amendments. We have chosen three key priorities for our

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budget amendment. Warm homes, supporting community groups and charities through the pandemic, and income generation and the climate emergency. We will be proposing multiple projects and policy decisions around these three key themes.

### **Views wanted on the new Suffolk Streets Guide**

The County is currently running a consultation on its proposed Streets Guide, which will assist with the design of new housing estates showing how best to create road layouts that promote walking and cycling. A new Street Guide has been commissioned to update guidance for residential streets. Comments on the draft guide are welcomed and there is a survey to complete. The consultation closes at 5pm on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

Link: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and0development-advice/suffolk-design-streets-guide/>

### **Consultation on the Suffolk Climate Change Action Plan**

In November and December SCC ran a series of six online workshops for invitees from the six sectors on the Suffolk Climate Action Plan. They were each video recorded and can be viewed online

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/initiatives/pledge-to-climate-emergency-declaration/>

The public are being asked to give their own feedback on online forms to each sector

- Sustainable Buildings
- Large Industrial & Commercial Energy Users
- Transport & Air Quality
- Small Industrial & Commercial Energy Users
- Energy & Planning
- Community Action & Schemes

### **Pavement parking – tightening up the rules**

Together with my political group, I have responded to a Government consultation which proposes three options for tightening up this rather grey area. We have stressed the need for a default ban on pavement parking altogether (“option 3”) in the paper, as has been the case in London since 1974. A default ban would still allow local authorities to create exemptions with a Road Traffic order, as is the case in London.

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6. Public Forum:

Two members of the public were present at the meeting in relation to the planning matter at item 10 of the Agenda – Apple Mount Farm, and the application for change of use of land to a wellbeing retreat and siting 5No guest pods. They explained that they planned to operate the business as a retreat where people could come and enjoy the tranquility of the surroundings. No children or pets would be permitted. They were trying to take on board any comments on the Babergh planning website as they were keen to get the business right for the area. Cllrs enquired as to whether they would have complete control of the pods/lodges as some business ran as a franchise and did not have overall control. The response was that was not the case here and that they would not be a glamping site and they would make it clear that the site is about peace and tranquility. They would not want noise themselves as they will be living at Apple Mount Farm. If people are being disruptive they will be asked to leave. Cllrs enquired as to whether the evergreen foliage would be retained and the response that yes it would be as it was important to them, and that they intend to add to the trees that are there as the neighbour had removed some, and tree and hedge screening was important to them. They have been taking advice from the Senior Environmental Officer at BDC on this matter. Cllrs enquired as to whether they were planning regular amplified music. The response was that they were not planning loud music, more background music depending on the time of day. They had already spoken with the local Yoga teacher who runs classes at the village hall about perhaps doing some yoga classes at the retreat. They felt it important to make local connections with people, and generally people on retreats tend to go to bed early and are not interested in loud music during the evening. The Site Management plan would stipulate any timing for music. Cllrs also enquired as to whether the Applicants were aware that they are surrounded by working farm land and that some times during the year there would be dust from harvesting etc. The response was that guests to the retreat would be advised that they would be surrounded by working farm land and that there may be some weeks of the year that they decide not to take bookings once they had experience of what the annual cycle was for the farmland.

Cllrs thanked the two members of the public for attending the meeting, and Cllrs would discuss the application further at item 10.

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

- (i) Final version of Babergh draft Local Plan. Cllr Squirrell had noted that the settlement boundary had changed since the previous draft. It had become more narrow/tight and whereas the previous draft accommodated for perhaps 5/6 new homes in the village this revised draft provided very little space within the settlement boundary for new homes to be built. Cllrs all agreed that they had no objection to the revised draft settlement boundary.

- (ii) The Parish Council have been contacted by BDC as a statutory consultee, as Brettenham Parish Council have begun the formal process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and, as the qualifying body, submitted an application to BDC to designate their plan area in December 2020. Legislation requires BDC to designate the whole parish area (Brettenham), without delay, and therefore this has now been done and Thorpe Morieux PC are being advised of that. A copy of the Area Designation Notice and a Map of the NP Area can be found on BDC website at [www.babergh.gov.uk/BrettenhamNP](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/BrettenhamNP). Parish Cllrs noted this and had a discussion as to whether Thorpe Morieux PC should look to put in place a Neighbourhood Plan. Discussion that the process needed a team of people with various skill sets, and the time, and the PC would need to raise monies. In addition the settlement boundary for the village was now so tightly drawn it would very much limit what new planning could be approved, unless BDC failed to achieve their five year land supply at any time in the future. Conclusion of discussion: the Parish Council will not conduct a formal Neighbourhood Plan at this time.

#### 8. Clerk/RFO's Report

- (i) Schedule of items awaiting approval:

PKF audit fee	48.00	chq402	LGA1972
N Smith (Clerk's salary)	176.40	chq403	LGA1972

Cllrs approved the payment.

#### 9. Quiet Lanes Update

Cllr O'Brien gave an update on the Quiet Lanes Suffolk scheme. She had attended the Zoom meeting that had been set up by the scheme organisers. She has put Green Lane forward for the first phase, at this stage. She has put a flyer in the Thorpe Times which will be delivered to every household in the village, and it advises that there is a Zoom meeting on Thursday 14 January for villagers to attend, if they want to, and discuss or raise any questions they may have about the Quiet Lane scheme. Already, she had 9 residents who have confirmed that they would support a Quiet Lane scheme for Green Lane. 1 resident wanted the Quiet Lane scheme for Blacksmiths Lane, and there have been 2 objections, so far, to a Quiet Lane scheme in the village.

Chair confirmed that she had also had enquiries as to whether the Quiet Lane would restrict agricultural machinery, and Cllr Lee also stated that he would like the position on that established before the PC go ahead. Cllrs agreed.

Cllrs reported both large commercial trucks, delivery drivers, but also residents own vehicles, driving too fast and churning up the verges. Yes, it is some traffic from

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outside of the village but it also some traffic from within the village as well, as people drive too fast on roads that people think they know because they drive them frequently.

Cllr O'Brien confirmed that one resident had asked whether a Speed Indicator Device within the village would be useful. *Clerk will obtain the criteria list for placing a SID in a village. Cllrs agreed that this matter could be followed up at the meeting on 4 March 2021.*

Cllrs also had concerns that by designating it a Quiet Lane it would attract more people to the village for walking or driving down the Quiet Lane network, although looking at the current map it would not seem that any Quiet Lane in Thorpe Morieux would be individual and not connect up to any others.

Cllr O'Brien indicated that it was a question for the PC as to whether going ahead with the Quiet Lane application had benefits that would outweigh any risks. Chair asked Cllrs whether they felt that they wanted to progress the matter. It was agreed that Cllr O'Brien would get some further information and of course do the public consultation event on Thursday 14 January to see what the feedback or other concerns were, and the matter to be discussed further at an additional Parish Council meeting.

#### 10. Planning

- (i) DC/20/05691 Apple Mount Farm, Lavenham Road, Thorpe Morieux, IP30 0NQ. Full planning application – change of use of land to a wellbeing retreat and siting 5No guest pods.

Cllrs confirmed that they had no objection to this application.

#### 11. Cllrs reports

Cllrs discussed the withdrawal of the permitted development application in relation to Folly Farm Barn (application DC/20/04686). Parish Cllrs expressed concern regarding the email correspondence (on the BDC planning portal) between Alice Hare of Belport Limited instructed by the Applicant and the planning officer, particularly the correspondence around the 17 and 20 December 2020 wherein the planning officer states:

“There has been some concern raised from the Parish and neighbours regarding noise from these agricultural units, and the resulting impact on the agricultural business should noise complaints be received. I asked our Environmental Protection Officer to have a look and he shares the concerns.

That being said, we are looking to impose conditions to secure noise attenuation measures on the building which we believe would mitigate against the noise”

Cllrs felt that this completely ignored the Parish Council, and indeed, the expertise of the Environmental Protection Officer and that BDC Planning seemed to be seeking to approve this application for prior approval “come what may”. It seemed very unfair and loaded in favour of the Applicant. It did not seem completely transparent as the conditions the officer thought could be imposed to get around this issue had not been discussed with the Environmental Protection Officer.

It was noted that the Environmental Protection Officer’s response dated 23 December 2020 (also on the planning portal under DC/20/04686) sets out quite clearly, his concerns about the noise issue and particularly states:-

“Depending on the required sound reduction needed the barrier could be of such height and extent that it would need planning permission or it may prove to be ineffective. Therefore a condition at this stay may not be appropriate in terms of it being able to be complied with in a satisfactory manner.”

Whilst Cllrs noted that the application has been withdrawn, they fully expected the Applicant to carry out a noise assessment report and submit a further application including that report. The concern was that the assessment would be carried out in January/February which are the quietest months for Barleydale, Grove Farm.

A further concern is that the company producing the report will get facts wrong about the workings of Barleydale, Grove Farm. The Environmental Protection officer clearly states in his email dated 23 December 2020:

“We would therefore require a noise assessment carried out with specific regards to noise from the farm building to the north of the site. The assessment should consider

The workshop use;

Loading operations as you describe, including vehicle arrival, loading/unloading operation and departure of vehicles;

The use of a mobile grain dryer at the site.”

Cllrs concerns about getting facts incorrect about the working of Barleydale, Grove Farm stem from the email from Alice Hare at Belport (acting on behalf of the Applicant) and her email to the Environmental Protection Officer dated 23 December 2020, to which the Officer replied later that day and as partly details above. Ms Hare’s email sets out Belport’s perception of how Barleydale, Grove Farm is run, and there are some serious inaccuracies in those assumptions. At no time has anyone

asked the owner of Barleydale, Grove Farm about his operations before sending that information to the Environmental Protection Officer.

Cllrs asked Clerk to draft a letter for approval, setting out there concerns about this application, and that it does not seem to be dealt with in an open and transparent manner, but instead the planning officer seems to be looking for reasons to approve the application instead of taking into account the nature of the noise volume, the frequency at certain times of the year and how long the working day can be for the owners of Barleydale, Grove Farm. It is appreciated that the current application has been withdrawn (for the second time), but the PC fully expect to see a further application once a noise assessment report has been carried out.

Cllr O'Brien reported a lot of potholes on Green Road, some of which have got very large. Some have been reported and are on the SCC Highways Reporting Tool [www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/report-a-highways-issue/](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/report-a-highways-issue/)

Clerk will go and inspect and take photographs and report any that are not yet on the highways reporting tool.

Cllr Squirrell reported that following on from the Parish Council raising the matter of items of rubbish being dumped on land behind the church, (land is owned by Strutt & Parker) that situation now seems to have improved.

Cllr Squirrell also reported that there are 2 finger posts that have been knocked down on the public footpaths within the parish. He will report them on to the SCC highways reporting tool. He has also had a few complaints from parishioners about the state of some of the footpaths which are rutted, but the soil is very clay heavy and there has been a lot of rain and at the current time people are using the footpaths more so than before and therefore they will, under all of those conditions, become quite rutted. The situation should improve when the weather improves and we enter into months with less rainfall.

Chair Cllr Pepper advised that there is a new lottery funding reviving communities grant for Village Halls, which has a value of between £1,000 and £5,000. If someone from the Village Hall Committee wanted to speak with her about that, she could let them have details of the scheme. Cllr Russell will speak with the VH Committee.

Cllr O'Brien advised that she will put an article in the Thorpe Times regarding the new defibrillator which is now mounted on the outside wall of the Village Hall.

Cllr Squirrell gave a "police report" with details from the Suffolk Police website. In October 2020 there were no reported crimes in the village. In November 2020 there

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was 1 reported crime. Therefore, in the 12 months to end of November 2020 there had been 11 reported crimes in the village, which was in keeping with the annual figures for previous years.

12. Date of next meeting: 4 March 2021 at 8pm (to be confirmed whether the meeting will be held remotely (Zoom) or in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed: 9.40pm