

Thorpe Morieux Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting

Held on Thursday 12th September 2024 at 7.30pm in Thorpe Morieux Village Hall

Attendance

Cllr John Squirrell (Chair), Cllr Louise Pepper (Vice Chair), Cllr John Gagen, Cllr Ashley Simpson, Cllr Garry Russell, Cllr Keith Lee, Sarah Headland (Clerk)

Robert Lindsey CC and Deborah Saw DC joined the meeting from item 4.

No members of the public were present.

1. Apologies for absence:

Cllr Jules O'Brien

The apologies were approved and accepted by the council.

Members' Declarations of Interest

- a. To receive declarations of interest – Cllr Gagen and Cllr Russell declared they are on the Village Hall Committee.
- b. To consider requests for dispensations - None
- c. To receive disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for the agenda under discussion – Cllr Lee declared a pecuniary interest in 3a.

2. To resolve that the minutes of the meetings of the council held on 18th July 2024 and the additional meeting on 8th August are a true and accurate record - APPROVED

Meeting held on 18/7/2024 - Proposed by Cllr Gagen and Seconded by Cllr Lee

Meeting held on 8/8/2024 - Proposed by Cllr Pepper and seconded by Cllr Russell

3. To receive progress reports and for information:

- a. Anglian Water strategic pipeline
No progress here, Anglian Water are currently at Hitcham, Thorpe site is still waiting for the topsoil to be replaced. Difficult to get hold of them and get an answer on when it will be done as multiple sites are all chasing them to get the work done.
- b. Footpaths and Public Rights of Way
The piles of soil have now been levelled off on the Avenue footpath from Water Hall to Bunters.
- c. Badger Sett – work on this is happening today! Over 30m of tunnels were discovered. The road will be repaired and open again very soon once the works are completed.
- d. SID update – Suffolk Highways have been in contact to say a license needs to be applied for at a cost of £160 since this is classed as street furniture, the form for this has been filled in and sent back. Awaiting a response.
- e. Bench on the village triangle has gone away to be restored. The Parish Council offers our sincere thanks and appreciation to Neville for facilitating this free of charge.
- f. Two fly tipping incidents – a fridge and some tyres were dumped in the village recently. These were reported via the Babergh District Council Fly Tipping Tool and subsequently were quickly removed.
- g. Potholes – nothing has been reported since the last meeting on the pothole reporting tool on BDC.

4. Public participation session to include District and County Councillors Reports.

Please see attached reports at the end of the minutes.

Points to note:

The Parish Council discussed the Lite Touch Neighbourhood Plan with Deborah. Thorpe Morieux does not have one currently and it is not mandatory, however, the DC encourages it. This would need to adhere to the new National Planning Policy Framework, which has just been reformed.

With regards to getting the 60mph Speed limit along Bury Road lowered - Robert provided a response to this:

Unfortunately getting a 60mph speed limit reduced to 40mph is very expensive and very difficult. Highways will not pay for a reduced speed limit, even if you get through all the hoops and they approve it. I have done it for Semer/Kersey on the A1141 but that has exhausted the last of my locality budget. The cost was £12k of which I contributed half and the two parish councils the remainder. In the early stages I also paid £1,500 for speed surveys and a report.

A question was put to Robert re the Country Councils responsibility regarding the maintenance of footpaths, the PC would like to know if a schedule is available of when footpaths are/should be cut because currently, some of the village footpaths get cut but and some do not. The Parish Council is grateful to residents and landowners who are helping to keep these at bay. Robert will find out and report back to us.

5. To consider and approve the following updated documents:

- a. Data Protection Policy - APPROVED
- b. Privacy Policy - APPROVED
- c. Retention Policy - APPROVED

6. Clerk's Report

- a. Schedule of items awaiting approval- APPROVED.
- b. Bank reconciliation awaiting approval – APPROVED.

Clerks finance report for meeting on 12th September 2024	
BFWD	£4,838.24
Expenditure (approved and paid):	
SALC - VAT training course	£36.00
Clerks Salary May/June	£396.00
Parish Council Websites - Website hosting and domain (2 years)	£386.64
HMRC - PAYE	£84.00
	£902.64
Income	
None	
Total income	£0.00
Bank balance as of 12th September 2024:	£3,935.60
Items to be paid awaiting approval:	
Clerks Salary July/Aug	£336.00
HMRC - PAYE	£45.00
	£381.00

7. 8th May 2025 - 80-year anniversary of VE Day Celebration Planning – Village Hall committee to discuss at their next meeting. Something will be put into The Thorpe Times regarding this asking for ideas from Parishioners.
8. Christmas Tree at Whitethorn Ley – residents of Whitethorn Ley have received the idea favourably. Maximum size tree that can be transported and potted is 6ft. Bigger ones would be too expensive and not necessarily survive according to a local expert. A suggestion was made to get a larger free-standing tree to decorate and place next to the planted one for a few years while the planted one grows. All Cllr's unanimously agreed to this.
9. Cllrs reports including police report.
 - A. An observation has been made that no verges on Bury Road have been cut yet and visibility is extremely poor. This will be fed back to the relevant authorities.
 - B. Warm Hub Coffee and Cake Café - We have continued to run the café monthly over the summer months including providing a café at the village Olympics. The morning cafes were held on either Monday or Saturday mornings had a stable attendance of on average about fifteen people. We are trialing an additional session early Fri eve 5.30-7.30pm to see if the opportunity to meet could be extended to more people in the village. The first session on 6th Sept proved very successful with 40-50 people attending, including several families.

The plan is to offer one morning and one early evening session a month through the winter months. Cllr Gagen and Jasmin are in the process of applying for a license for the bar from the council and I would like to thank them both for their support with this.

A report will be sent to the council re the cafes activity, including the policies that were developed by the village hall committee in the hope to be able to apply for a further grant this year.
 - C. There is a potential burst water main outside Sunnyside cottage. This will be reported to Anglian Water.
 - D. Police report – since last meeting two crimes reported and investigated, one anti-social behavior, one theft, this brings the total to eleven crimes in the last 12 months.
 - E. Whitethorn Ley wildflower meadow will be given its end of season trim soon, as usual. Many thanks to Cllr Lee for facilitating this.
 - F. The low fence Whitethorn Ley side will need attention soon, it is believed this is the Housing Associations responsibility.

10. To consider any new planning applications:

No new applications since last meeting.

11. Items for consideration for inclusion on the next agenda:

Budget and Precept for 2024/25

12. Date of Next Meeting is 14th November at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Meeting closed at 9.45pm

District Councillor's Report to Thorpe Morieux Parish Council

Thursday 12th September 2024

Council Issues

Changes to waste and recycling

The last government put forward plans in the Environment Act 2021 to require the same materials to be collected and recycled throughout England. If you travel anywhere in this country, you will know that currently there is no consistency as to what gets recycled, every area has its own rules.

Recycling rates have stalled over the years. The average for England is 42% . Babergh's is around 40-42% which isn't good enough. . The new recycling regime is focused on minimising waste and driving up recycling rates. By 31st March 2026, the Council has got to introduce new weekly food collections. This is a statutory requirement. We also have to collect glass, cartons, plastic, metal, and paper. This is dry recycling. It will include plastic film by 2027. By doing this the material in your black bin which cannot be recycled will be substantially reduced with 58% of what currently goes into it being recycled. The target for England is to reach 60% recycling by 2030.

Once ready to roll out, residents will receive a new 23-litre food waste bin, as well as a 5-litre caddy for their kitchens. Flats and houses of multiple occupancy will receive larger communal bins. You will also receive a bin, box, or bag to separate out paper and cardboard because paper manufacturers will not take it if it is wet and the same for plastics, glass etc

The previous government had agreed, "new burdens funding ," to help councils with this change. Babergh is set to receive just over £1m in new burdens funding but we did not believe this was sufficient and we are estimating an anticipated shortfall of £259K. We wait to hear but to make the deadline we have to proceed with plans as SCC has to negotiate with the operator of the Great Blakenham recycling plant which will have to be modified to take glass etc.

Manufacturers of packaging will have to label items as recyclable or non-recyclable and pay the full costs of dealing with the waste they produce so under the EPR proposals, packaging producers will be responsible for the entire cost of recycling the packaging they place onto the market, including the cost of collection, treatment, and recycling. Companies are already supplying data. Councils will receive these fees to cover the cost of collection and processing.

All Suffolk district and borough councils are working together to find the best solution to these changes. We expect to reduce emissions, put more green energy into the Grid and with the recycling of food waste improve the soil for farmers and growers.

Babergh Cabinet discussed the implications of these changes at its meeting this Monday 9th September. The recommendation is to move to 'twin stream ' recycling rather than the current co-mingled system of recycled material in the blue bin and everything else in the black bin. Twin stream means two containers (either wheeled bins or for exempted properties a reusable box and bag, or communal bins): one for paper and card, the other for plastics, metal, cartons inc. Tetra Pak and glass bottles and jars. We will be able to move to three weekly collections when we have a weekly food collection.

Changes to national planning policy

It is absolutely right that the new government has determined that housing is its number one priority. Young people cannot get on the first rung of housing ladder and are finding it increasingly difficult to find anywhere to rent. Homelessness is increasing even in a relatively affluent area like ours with families with young children coming to the council asking for help.

Average house prices in Babergh are over 10% more than average annual wages . Average monthly private rents increased by over 18% between December 2021 and April 2024.

The government wants to deliver more affordable and social housing so does the Council. In fact, we would like to build homes for rent and shared ownership. We certainly want to encourage developers to build more homes for shared ownership and rent. The new government has set the extremely ambitious goal of building 1.5 million homes over the life of this parliament that's 375,000 a year. Only one government in the last 50 years has done that, Harold Wilson's in 1969/70.

The government appears to be saying that the responsibility for the house building crisis should be laid at the doors of councils. There may be some councils who have been unwilling to approve applications but Babergh isn't one of them. We have exceeded our planning target but we have been informed that our new annual target for planning applications is increasing by 83% from 416 to 763.

Babergh has only once got close to this 763 target but that was the year after Covid where there was a backlog which came forward. We have very little brownfield land and can't call on Green Belt or even Grey Belt but what we do have is large areas of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Fortunately, unlike some councils we have completed part of our Local Plan and are well-advanced on the second part. Councils that are not so advanced can expect government intervention.

Government is being ingenuous when it ignores the contribution of developers to the present situation. Developers purchase large quantities of potentially developable land and "sit" on it rather than either applying for planning permission for development or, where planning permission has been granted, not building out that permission. Currently Babergh has 4,500 planning permissions which have yet to be built on.

On average, developers plan to make a minimum 20-25% profit on each site which explains why they are often reluctant to build affordable homes and in the current economic climate why they are not bringing planning applications forward. The Council will be responding to the government's consultation on planning before the deadline of 24th September.

[Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system)

Energy Efficiency

Last year we began work on policies to help listed building owners increase the energy efficiency of their properties and help preserve the fabric of those buildings. Last month both Babergh and Mid Suffolk Cabinets approved the measures.

The councils working closely with Historic England, will be the first in the country to introduce an ambitious package of measures to make sensitive improvements to listed buildings more quickly and easier.

The first is a Local Listed Building Consent Order, allowing Grade II listed property owners to upgrade or replace windows without having to make individual applications, subject to conditions.

The second is a Local Development Order, allowing solar PV and other renewable technologies to be installed on unlisted buildings within the curtilage of a Grade II listed property, also subject to conditions.

We believe this innovative action strikes the right balance between preserving our heritage assets and making sensitive energy efficiency improvements quicker and easier.

This is the most comprehensive package of measures for listed buildings in the country.

Details of the orders will now be drawn up in dialogue with Historic England, and subject to further public consultation, before they are officially adopted.

They will be reviewed annually, and the councils will ensure detailed guidance will be available for householders, as well as consultations offering advice.

Car Parking

Cabinet made the decision to charge for car parking with modest tariffs at the meeting held on 2nd August. The Cabinet rejected the suggestion of one hour free parking as it would cost too much, £644,000 over the next three years, and would have to be funded from reserves which is not possible.

We will be freezing the cost of a season ticket at £250, supporting workers who need to park all day. This is in addition to reducing all-day parking from £3 to £2.50.

The council also proposes strengthening how it reviews parking charges in the future, by benchmarking and monitoring data such as vacant high street properties and footfall numbers.

There will be refund arrangements for users of the council's leisure centres at Sudbury and Hadleigh, and also for customers to Roy's in Sudbury.

In addition, officers are exploring exemptions for users of nearby medical centres and mobile screening facilities, and possible means-tested permit schemes being explored for parents using council car parks for the school drop off and pick up

The new charges will be introduced in January.

The Big Weekend

The Big Weekend is all about celebrating The Heart of Suffolk's tourism and leisure offer and it will exclusively allow local Babergh and Mid Suffolk residents to bid and win free tickets from an array of places to visit and things to do on their doorstep, giving them the opportunity to explore local attractions that they might not have otherwise visited.

The Big Weekend takes place on 19/20 October, with residents living in either district able to enter prizes draws from Monday 16 September.

Prizes currently include:

- a VIP experience for four, including lunch at Jimmy's Farm
- 3 family tickets, including 12 months unlimited access to the Food Museum in Stowmarket
- an Essential Spa Day for two at Stoke by Nayland Resort
- a two-night staying in a Cabin at Constable Park for a family of four
- family swim and Playworld sessions at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre
- afternoon tea for two at the Mill Hotel in Sudbury

The Big Weekend is funded by money the Councils received from the national Shared Prosperity Fund

<https://heartofsuffolk.co.uk/explore/see-do-explore/big-weekend/>

Report for Thorpe Morieux PC by Robert Lindsay, county councillor

11.9.24

Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care

In August the inspection report for Suffolk County Council's social care services for children was published, following a visit from Ofsted at the end of May. The report found that social care services for children, which include fostering and adoption, safeguarding, child protection, youth justice and corporate parenting (children in care), 'require improvement to be good.' My opposition group are concerned by this as children's services were rated as 'Outstanding' the last time they were inspected in 2019, and the remarks on leadership – that leaders do not have 'sufficient grip' on all the services provided – are especially worrying.

You can read the full Ofsted inspection report here: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80565>

Free online courses for school transitions

The county is providing free online courses for children starting primary or secondary school and for their parents. You can access these using the link www.inourplace.co.uk/moving-up and register for an account using the access code WOLSEY.

Electric Car Hire

The county has won a bid for £7.3m Government funding for electric car infrastructure. £1.4m will go towards chargers in 63 community sites such as village halls, scout huts, while £5.9m will be spent on on-street charging. Also the county will be tendering for a company to provide an electric car rental service across eight locations in Suffolk including Sudbury, Needham and Stowmarket. Residents can book them by the minute, hour or day.

Launch of Solar Together Suffolk

The county is launching a group buying scheme for people wanting to install solar panels or battery storage. If you sign up to the scheme, an independent company will organise bids from installers to collectively install several schemes in your area. The winner is the cheapest bidder.

It is free to register at www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk, and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation.

Green Homes Grant – if no takers £5m will have to be returned to Govt.

This grant for full cost of insulation or home energy efficiency improvement is still available until March but the uptake has not been good. This may be because it is means tested or just not been promoted enough. Of the £8.3m available this year, only £3.3m is forecast to be spent and the remaining £5m will have to be returned to Government. The scheme in Suffolk is known as Warm Homes Suffolk.