

Thorpe Morieux Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting

Held on Thursday 14th November 2024 at 7.30pm in Thorpe Morieux Village Hall

Attendance

Cllr John Squirrell (Chair), Cllr Louise Pepper (Vice Chair), Cllr John Gagen, Cllr Keith Lee, Sarah Headland (Clerk), Deborah Saw DC until item 5.

1 member of the public present

1. Apologies for absence:

Cllr Garry Russell
Cllr Ashley Simpson
Robert Lindsay CC

The apologies were approved and accepted by the council.

Members' Declarations of Interest:

a. To receive declarations of interest

Cllr Lee declared a non-registerable interest in planning application DC/24/04733

Cllr Gagen and Cllr Squirell – declared an 'other registerable' interest in the Churchyard Grant

Cllr O'Brien – declared an 'other registerable' in Thorpe Times Grant

b. To consider requests for dispensations - None

c. To receive disclosures of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for the agenda under discussion – None

2. To resolve that the minutes of the meetings of the council held on 12th September 2024 are a true and accurate record.

APPROVED – Proposed by Cllr Pepper and seconded by Cllr Gagen

3. To receive progress reports and for information:

a. Anglian Water strategic pipeline

Anglian water has been working in Hitcham, they have now moved on to Dux Street. After that it will be Dakings Lane, Felsham/Cockfield road then onto Bradfield. After this the topsoil should be replaced but this cannot happen if the land is too wet. However, electronic soil testing is being done daily and everything seems to be very much moving forward. There should be no further road closures in Thorpe because of this.

b. Footpaths and Public Rights of Way

There is a Footpath sign still missing from outside Greenfarm Cottage but this case has disappeared from the reporting tool. Will be reported again.

c. Badger Sett – badgers are gone, road has been repaired. No further updates needed.

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

Both DC and CC reports can be found at the end of these minutes.

A observation was made to Deborah regarding the energy efficiency of old/listed homes. Not everyone is eligible for the warm home scheme since it is means-tested. The PC was informed that there will be information available from the DC website on how to make older homes more efficient and several other schemes that may be available instead.

Deborah also mentioned that she has some of her locality budget left.

MOP in attendance proposed the PC looks into having a small play park in a village. Somewhere that children can walk to rather than having to drive to another village. Please see agenda item 11 for further information.

5. Speed Indicator Device (SID) – To resolve how this is going to be funded bearing in mind that the precept is now being discussed for 2025-26. No update on progress of SID itself. With regards to funding, Robert will be contacted to confirm how much he can contribute to this. How to fund the rest is still under discussion. Fundraising in the village could be a viable option.
6. To consider and approve the annual grant payments for the PCC of St Marys Church and The Thorpe Times Village magazine.
 - a. PCC grant approved – remains the same at £200 per annum proposed LP seconded KL
 - b. Thorpe Times grant approved – increased to £500 per annum proposed LP seconded KL
7. To consider and approve the updated PC Grant Policy.
APPROVED
8. Clerk's Report
 - a. Schedule of items awaiting approval – APPROVED (TT grant increased to £500 – see 6b)
It was approved that the Clerk could start CiLCA training via SALC.
 - b. Bank reconciliation to be approved – APPROVED

Clerks finance report for meeting on 14th November 2024	
BFWD	£3,935.60
Expenditure (approved and paid):	
SID Street Furniture License	£160.00
HMRC - PAYE	£84.00
Clerks Salary July/Aug	£336.00
	£580.00
Income	
Precept 2 of 2	£2,462.50
	Total income £2,462.50
Bank balance as of 14th November 2024:	£5,818.10
Items to be paid awaiting approval:	
Clerks Salary Sept/Oct	£312.00
HMRC - PAYE	£39.00
SALC Training course (CiLCA Introduction)	£38.40
Grant for Thorpe Times	£500.00
Grant for PCC Churchyard maintenance	£200.00
Grass cutting (annual fee)	£780.00
	£1,869.40

9. To consider the 2025-2026 Draft Precept.
It was observed that many items in the budget have increased in cost and therefore the precept could increase by up to 29% for next year. The precept amount will be finalised at the next meeting as the deadline for submission is 31st January 2025. It should be noted that Thorpe still has one of the lowest precept amounts in Suffolk.
10. To consider renewal of subscription to Parish Online for Digital Mapping Software.
It was decided that this service is not needed at this time, it costs £40 per year so will be cancelled and removed from the budget.

11. To consider the possibility of installing some childrens play equipment in the village, following a recent request received from a parishioner.

This has been looked into previously and a few sticking points were that the PC do not own the land behind the VH which means they cannot apply for any grants on this field. Cost of equipment, public liability insurance and ongoing maintenance were also prohibitive. However, it was agreed that this all needs to be revisited again. There are now many more children in the village who would benefit from a play park and there is also the possibility of looking into putting it on to Whitethorn Ley instead which the PC does own. The play park could initially start off very small, then grow over time with ongoing funding. This will have to be largely funded by village fundraising. MOP was asked to write a piece about this to include in the next Thorpe Times to generate some interest, which they kindly accepted to do.

12. Cllrs reports including police report.

- a. Verges along Bury Road towards Cockfield have still not been cut by the CC and visibility is very poor in places.
- b. Coffee, cake and chat – new evening slots have been well attended. Dates for the rest of the year have been released and are in the Thorpe Times and on the Village website. Grant application has been sent to the Deborah DC so this can hopefully continue.
- c. The VH will soon be fully licensed to sell alcohol, so there will no longer be a need to apply for one-off events.
- d. Land registry for car park land is being finalised and we are still awaiting a reply from S&P regarding the playing field.
- e. A 2M Christmas tree for Whitethorn Ley has been ordered. Deborah has kindly offered to pay for this out of her locality budget.
- f. Police report - 1 crime in August, 0 crimes in Sept, Annual - 7 crimes in last 12 months.
- g. Coronation bench has been restored, many thanks to Neville.
- h. No outstanding potholes.
- i. Water leak outside Sunnyside again, road closure imminent while Anglian Water fix it.
- j. City fibre have been working overnight in parts of the village, so there might be a possibility of faster broadband in certain areas.

13. New items for consideration for inclusion on the next agenda.

Nothing new at this time.

14. To consider any new planning applications (up to and including any new ones submitted on or before 14th November 2024 which may not be listed here if submitted after agenda published):

DC/24/04557 - APPLICATION FOR PRIOR APPROVAL - AGRICULTURAL TO DWELLING - Manor Farm, Lavenham Road, Thorpe Morieux, IP30 0NH

No objections, but the Parish Council observed that the previous plan for 4 properties were more aesthetically in keeping with the rest of the village.

DC/24/04829 - APPLICATION FOR PRIOR APPROVAL - AGRICULTURAL TO DWELLING - Moat Farm, Bury Road, Thorpe Morieux, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP30 0NR

No objections

DC/24/04733 - APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - Householder Application - Erection of two storey side extension(following demolition of existing outbuilding) - Jennings, Bury Road, Thorpe Morieux, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP30 0NT

No objections

15. Date of Next Meeting is Thursday 9th January 2025 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 21:50.

District Councillor's Report to Thorpe Morieux Parish Council

Thursday, 14th November 2024

Babergh Council Cabinet has agreed **the fees and charges** for the financial year 2025/26. These decisions were brought forward to early November to enable town and parish councils to make their precept decisions in good time. The council has been moving to full cost recovery so that charges reflect the actual cost of delivering the service. When considering the budget, the council adjusts its fees and charges to account for rising service costs, such as employee costs, administrative expenses, and contract adjustments. However, we decided that this should be a gradual process to help parishes and residents plan. Items such as dog bins and litter bins are only charged at 80% of the full cost. The charge will go up to £83 for each. It is not the charge for the items but the charge for collecting and processing that is the major cost. Charges for brown garden waste bins will go up by £4 a year.

Together with all Suffolk councils, we've joined forces with **Suffolk Wildlife Trust** to help local communities to protect and restore nature as part of a new initiative. The **Wilder Communities Partnership** has received essential funding of £373,356 - to be distributed across the next three years - from the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group, which includes both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

These are funds that come from pooled business rates not council tax.

This support ensures that the programme can continue offering expert guidance and training to communities across Suffolk, allowing local groups to take proactive steps in nature conservation. [Find out more on our websites](#)

The Council has made a commitment to increase the number of **wildflower meadows** in the district to support biodiversity. If you want to plant a meadow in the village then please get in touch with our biodiversity manager, biodiversity@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

I am able to help community groups with a small amount of funding for projects and/or purchases through my **Locality Funds**. Please contact me if you would like to access this funding.

Deborah.saw@babergh.gov.uk

[Locality Awards - Babergh District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](#)

All the Council's **funds and grants** can now be seen on one page on our website to enable communities to access information quickly and easily- It can be accessed from the first page of our website with one click [Funding opportunities and support - Babergh District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk](#)

At the recent Town and Parish Council Liaison Meeting the changes to the national planning regime was discussed. The Chief Operating Officer stressed how important it was for communities to have up-to-date neighbourhood plans to protect themselves.

We have now had it confirmed that the government's preferred structure for devolution is a **combined authority led by a directly elected mayor** and we will get a white paper later this year or early next year on **English devolution**. The four Suffolk district councils and Ipswich borough remain committed to working in partnership with Suffolk County Council, neighbouring authorities, and the Government to get the best outcomes for all Suffolk's residents but district councils must have a role in any new structure.

The White Paper is likely to incorporate local government reorganisation (“to move to simpler structures that make sense for their local areas, with efficiency savings from council reorganisation helping to meet the needs of local people”). ‘ This may pose a threat to district councils with local government moving further away from local residents. This seems the opposite of devolution.

The government made a range of announcements to support its manifesto commitment to build 1.5 million new homes. Perhaps the most symbolically significant was the announcement that councils would now retain 100% of receipts from the sale of homes under right-to-buy.

There was a commitment to increase grant funding for councils and a move to multi-year settlements from 2026/27. The government announced that it would be increasing core spending power by approximately 3.2% in real terms in 2025-26 but the majority of this funding will go on adult social care and SEND.

Other announcements

- A £500m boost to the Affordable Homes Programme to build up to 5,000 additional affordable homes
- £3bn towards additional support for small builders and the Build to Rent sector, in the form of housing guarantee schemes, to support the private housing market
- the first steps in the Warm Homes Plan with an initial £3.4bn investment in heat decarbonisation and household energy efficiency over the next three years. This funding includes £1.8bn to support fuel poverty schemes, ensuring over 225,000 households will reduce their energy bills by over £200. The Boiler Upgrade Scheme in England and Wales will also see increased funding this year and next

Report for Thorpe Morieux PC by County Councillor Robert Lindsay 14.11.24

Road closure signs - “Tavern Street”

Following complaints I have asked that the signs on Bildeston High Street saying “road closed Tavern Street” are altered to make it plain the closure is in Stowmarket. Apparently Highways can not insist that utilities, as a matter of course, state the location of the closure in their roadwork signage.

White lines Newberry Farmhouse, Bildeston High Street

I am pleased to see the new road markings, funded from my locality budget, have been done to try to stop lorries hitting the medieval porch at this location. The scheme was arrived at after talks and meeting with myself, the home owners and Highways as the most cost effective potential solution. Speaking personally it certainly feels like the sudden change in markings, particularly driving south, does make one pay more attention and slow somewhat as you come past the porch. I hope it will have an effect.

Mains replacement - 20 week closure of Bildeston High Street - delayed until next year

The mains replacement that Anglian Water had scheduled for this summer has been put back until April next year at the earliest. The exact period has not yet been agreed with Highways.

Flooding prevention – Storm Babet a year on.

The county’s cabinet on November 5th allocated an extra £1.5m to deliver flood prevention work it has identified in the parish-based investigations it has by law to conduct (seven out of an estimated 50 total investigations done so far).

It is asking for another £20million from government. They had a ten year backlog even before Babet of drainage work that needed to be done.

Warm Homes

The council announced a new £3m fund for interest-free loans to home owners wishing to undertake energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps. The loans (up to £15,000) to be repaid over a maximum of seven years at 0% interest. The scheme will be open to homeowners across Suffolk from November, but you can register your interest now at <https://www.lendology.org.uk/warm-home-suffolk-loan>. Unlike the earlier Warm Homes grants, which failed to get adequate take up, these loans are not means tested.

Pavement safety and preventing trips and falls

At Council on 17 October my political group brought forward a motion that the county review its priorities for repairing pavement defects in order to ensure quicker interventions where tripping incidents are most likely. Currently, if there is a difference in the surface level of the footway of 20mm or more, this will be repaired, but we argued that in areas of high footfall or where a trip or fall had been recorded, this threshold was too high. Most members of the public who trip or fall are over 65, and it would make sense for the repair policy to be more flexible. The administration at the council voted down our motion. They claimed a review of highways processes was being undertaken. Our group will try our best to input into this. My feeling is that there ought also to be some flexibility over the maximum width of pavement that highways will clear of encroaching vegetation – currently no more than 50cm.

Some devolution after all

After the new Government scrapped Suffolk's plan for devolution, it is now "exploring" whether to put the county in charge of some £9.4million a year (60% of the £16m a year on offer in the original devolution deal) to have control of adult education schemes. That includes funding the three Suffolk further education colleges – currently directly funded by central Government. A cabinet report is recommending the council take up the offer of an annual "Adult Skills Fund" and officers have drawn up a "Strategic Skills Plan".

NB Part of this plan identifies that Babergh residents have the lowest median annual pay of any district in Suffolk (£30,901) and that unlike other Suffolk areas, that median rate fell from 2021 to 2022. Babergh also has the lowest proportion of adults with higher education certificate or above qualifications (equivalent to first year of a degree). The figure is 30.6%, compared to 37% for and 48% nationally.