

Minutes of the Thornham Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021  
at 7pm via Zoom.

Present: Cllr. C. Venes (Chair)    Cllr. A. Chesterman (Vice)    Cllr. A. Needham  
                  Cllr. S. Greef                    Cllr. B. Gulliver

Also present: Acting Clerk – Glynis Allen and 3 members of the public.

**1. To Elect a Chair for the Coming Year.**

Cllr. Chesterman proposed Cllr. Venes as Chair for the coming year, seconded by Cllr. Needham. The vote was unanimous so Cllr. Venes was elected as Chair to Thornham Parish Council (unopposed) for the coming year.

**2. To Elect a Vice Chair for the Coming Year.**

Cllr. Venes proposed Cllr. Chesterman as Vice-Chair for the coming year, seconded by Cllr. Greef. The vote was unanimous so Cllr. Chesterman was elected as Vice-Chair to Thornham Parish Council for the coming year.

**3. Declaration of Office from the Chair and the Vice-Chair.**

These would be signed electronically after the meeting. The Clerk will be asked to carry this out.

**4. To Elect Members to sit on the Finance and Staffing Committee and to Elect Chair.**

An e-mail had been received from Cllr. Barrett who had indicated his agreement to remaining on the Finance and Staffing Committee.

Resolved. (Unanimous). That Cllrs. Barrett and Chesterman were elected as members of the Thornham Parish Council Finance and Staffing Committee.

Resolved. (Unanimous). That the current vacancy on the Finance and Staffing Committee would be filled by Cllr. Venes temporarily.

Resolved. (Unanimous). That Cllr. Venes will ask Cllr. Barrett to Chair the Finance and Staffing Committee.

Cllr. Venes thanked Cllr. Barrett and Chesterman for their work throughout the year.

**5. To receive and consider apologies for absence.**

Apologies had been received from Cllr. Barrett.

Apologies had also been received from Cllr. Lawton.

**6. To receive Declarations of Interest.**

Cllr Needham gave a personal interest in anything concerning Thornham United Charities and P.C.C. Cllr. Greef gave a personal interest in anything concerning the Neighbourhood Plan and the P.C.C. Cllr. Gulliver gave a personal interest concerning the Neighbourhood Plan.

**7. Appointment of Parish Council Representatives**

**to serve on the following Committees/Organisations:-**

Church Committee – Mrs. J. Needham agreed to continue. Cllr. Venes thanked Mrs. Needham for her work on the Church Committee.

RSPB – Cllrs. R. Gulliver and Greef agreed to continued. Cllr. Venes thanked Cllrs. Gulliver and Greef for their work on the RSPB organisation.

### **Appointment of Parish Council Representatives continued.....**

Cattlegate Holders – Cllrs. Needham and Barrett had agreed to continue. Cllr. Venes thanked Cllrs. Needham and Barrett for their work on the Cattlegate Holders organisation.  
Village Hall and Playing Field Ltd. The appointment for the Village Hall and Playing Field Ltd was deferred until after the VH&PF A.G.M.

### **8. To Receive Reports from the following (Written reports circulated prior to the meeting).**

Church Committee – Mrs. J. Needham. The report had been circulated, placed on the PC noticeboard and on the PC website.

Parish Council Chairman – Cllr. Venes. The report had been circulated and is attached to these minutes. This will be placed on the PC website.

Cllr. Venes thanked the Councillors, the Clerk and the Acting Clerk for their work during the past year.

### **9. To Review the Standing Orders.**

Cllr. Venes proposed that, with the Government declining to extend the legislation allowing remote meetings, the Parish Council need to return to the pre-Covid 19 Standing Orders. These are meant to be reviewed annually at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May.

Cllr. Venes recommended that the Parish Council return to the 2018 model with the following amendments:-

- Revise the adopted date from May 2018 to May 2021.
- 3c. Delete all after 'OR (The minimum three... of the meeting)' – phrase unnecessary
- 3v. The quorum clause. Delete 'three' and replace with 'four'. This was agreed in October 2012 and again in May 2019 and it means a majority Council of seven is required to approve a resolution. This is generally regarded as good practice.
- 15b. Delete all after 'OR (Chairman or in...Planning Committee)' – phrase unnecessary.
- 23a. Delete all and replace with 'A legal document must be authorised by a resolution of Council and signed by two Councillors and witnessed by the Clerk' We do not have a seal and this alternative wording is recommended by NPTS.
- 24 a and b. Delete all after 'OR.....' Reference to Unitary Councils irrelevant in Thornham PC situation.

Resolved. (Unanimous). That Thornham Parish Council return to the 2018 Standing Orders with the above amendments and that the newly adopted Standing Orders are dated May 2021.

### **10. To Review Financial Regulations.**

Cllr. Venes noted the amendments agreed at the meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and advised that Councillors could now sign off electronically for payments as the mandate had gone through. Cllr. Venes proposed that the following amendment be made to the Financial Regulations:-

- Section 3. That 3.1 and 3.2 be reversed to put the sentences in chronological order.

Resolved. (Unanimous). That the above amendment was agreed.

### **11. To Review the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Staffing Committee.**

Cllr. Venes had circulated the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Staffing Committee and no amendments were required.

Resolved. (Unanimous). That the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Staffing Committee would stand as currently agreed.

**12. To consider adoption of revised Code of Conduct.**

The revised Code of Conduct had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr. Venes explained that this change in the Code of Conduct is a recommendation from Norfolk A.L.C. and had been devised by the Local Government Association. It explains the meanings of the subjects and gives examples.

Resolved. (Unanimous). That the new 2020 Code of Conduct is adopted for Thornham Parish Council. (This requires the old versions to be deleted from the website and for the new version to be uploaded.)

**13. To establish a schedule for reviewing council policies, procedures, insurance arrangements and assets.**

Cllr. Venes reminded the Councillors that the Thornham Parish Council Standing Orders state that review of documentation is required. Cllr. Venes suggested that the Clerk is asked to establish a schedule to include all the above documents with assistance from Councillors. Cllr. Chesterman suggested that the documents are listed on a spreadsheet with the dates. Resolved. (Unanimous). That Thornham Parish Council will establish a schedule for documentation reviews.

**14. Thornham Parish Council Annual Accounts 2020/2021**

The Accounts for 2020/2021 and the AGAR were deferred to the June 2021 meeting.

**15. Date, Time and Place of next Annual General Meeting.**

The next Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 7.00pm In Thornham Village Hall.

**16. Adjournment of Meeting to allow for public questions. (15 mins max – 5 mins per speaker)**

Members of the public posed the following questions and/or comments:

- Mulberry Cottage, Green Lane, might cause a problem with postal deliveries as that would be two Mulberry Cottages in Thornham. Cllr. Venes suggested that the member of the public might contact the owner of the second Mulberry Cottage with a possible view to changing the name of the property.
- Concerns were raised about the 20mph speed limit not being pursued as speeding down Green Lane had been worrying. Cllr. Venes explained that, when looking at speed limits, the accident history is investigated but also that a 20mph speed limit means no police speed checks. Cllr. Needham disagreed with the notion that speeding is a problem in the village. Cllr. Venes suggested that the Speed Watch team be asked to do Green Lane and Church Street. However, Cllr. Greef pointed out that the Speed Watch team are only allowed to work from the bottom of the Ringstead Road and near the phone box at Green Lane. Cllr. Needham agreed to consult with the Speed Watch team to see if permission could be obtained for other locations.
- Cllr. Needham reported that a number of complaints and queries had been raised about the closure of Staithe Lane and the lack of progress with the repairs and the fact that the finish date is open ended.
- The question was raised about the naming of The Pastures and Cllr. Venes confirmed it will be known as Pastures Court – Nos 1 – 9.
- Cllr. Chesterman reported that the 'no right turn' signs at the Orange Tree were in place but, when ignored, can cause gridlock when traffic is heavy. Cllr. Chesterman asked if official signs might be possible. Cllr. Venes agreed to ask Highways if the PC could have official 'turn left' signs. Cllr. Chesterman agreed to speak to the Orange Tree owner requesting they remind staff and customers not to park on the bus stop.

- The printed sign above the bus stop is missing so Cllr. Venes suggested asking the bus company to do replacement signs.

**17. To receive Councillor Reports.**

- 17.1. Cllr. Jamieson was not in attendance.  
17.2. Cllr. Lawton had sent apologies.

It was resolved for the meeting to return to closed session.

**18. 18.1 Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021.**

Resolved (Unanimous). That the Minutes of the Meeting of the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were agreed and would be signed at a later date when physically possible.

**18.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021.**

Cllr. Venes noted that he had not placed the advert in Link for Speed Watch volunteers but would do so for the next edition.

Cllr. Venes reported that the new contractors for the grass cutting had started and that he had been receiving good reviews.

Cllr. Chesterman reported that she had checked out the Solar Farm Planning Permission and had not been able to find out anything about the £1000 grant. Cllr. Venes agreed.

**19. Finance**

Cllr. Barrett had written a personal cheque for HMRC as payment for the Clerk's Tax (£224.80). Cllr. Barrett had reimbursed the payment to himself as agreed by e-mail protocol.

Resolved. (Unanimous). That this payment was agreed at this meeting.

Cllr. Barrett reported that he had transferred £30,000 from the community account to the Business savings account and that this required recording in the minutes.

Cllr. Barrett reported that the bank balances at the end of April were £5198.25 in the community account and £75,966.62 in the Business saver account. The CIL monies were yet to be received.

Payment of Clerk's wages were £899.18 using a flat quarter with possible adjustment at a later date.

Resolved. (Unanimous). That the Parish Council agree with the payment of £899.18.

Cllr. Barrett noted that the mandate was now fully operational for on-line banking with all four signatories set up.

**20. Village Matters.**

20.1 Streetlight Movement. There was no update on this matter as the Clerk was not in attendance.

20.2 Statement on Shore Road. Cllr. Venes reported no significant updates.

20.3 Defibrillator. It was agreed to defer this matter to the September 2021 meeting.

20.4 Bus Shelter. Cllr. Chesterman reported that the red bin had been removed.

Cllr. Chesterman added that she considered the bus shelter to be uninviting and suggested that bench seats each side might be a consideration.

Cllr. Needham suggested that, when the Parish Council were in a position financially, the bus shelter should be demolished and replaced with a new one. Cllr. Gulliver agreed and Cllr. Venes suggested getting some costs together. Cllr. Greef suggested fund raising.

20.5. Ditches and Drains Update. Cllr. Needham explained that the ditch at the bottom of Green Lane is only a metre from the road so belongs to Highways higher up the road it is four metres back.

Cllr. Needham had spoken to the owner of the field at the bottom of Church Street who had agreed to meeting to look at the situation later in the year. Cllr. Needham queried who would be responsible for the costs involved. Down Staithe Lane, on the right might be the responsibility of Highways.

Cllr. Needham queried whether Cllr. Jamieson might be asked to join him on a walk around these areas to obtain extra information from Cllr. Jamieson on funding for the works.

Cllr. Venes asked Cllr. Needham to set up a meeting with Cllr. Jamieson and to ask the local Highways engineer to join the meeting.

Cllr. Venes reminded the meeting that when Cattlegate Holders cut the reeds the Parish Council used to get a small income. Cllr. Venes asked if Cllr. Needham and Councillor Barret would raise the issue with Mr. Betts and Cllr. Needham agreed to sort this out. Renewed reed cutting might assist with drainage as well as the income element of the cutting.

#### **21. Governance**

Cllr. Venes noted the N.P.T.S. and the N.A.L.C. training schedules that would be starting up soon – some face to face and some on-line.

#### **22. Outside Agencies.**

Report from TVH&PF Ltd. There were no representatives in attendance.

#### **23. Planning Applications.**

21/00412/F. Mulberry Cottage, Green Lane. Extensions to dwelling.

After lengthy discussion a vote was taken but not before it was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan should be taken into account when considering applications.

Resolved. (3 Cllrs. for and 2 Cllrs. against) That Thornham Parish Council recommend approval of this applications.

21/00031/TPO. 6 The Pastures. The Parish Council are not consultees for T.P.O.'s

21/00554/F. Stonecroft, Ploughmans Piece. Construction of card shed to front of property. This revised application was deferred to e-mail protocol.

Quavers, High Street. Variation of condition 2 of 20/00871/F.

This revised application was deferred to e-mail protocol when the information is received.

Determinations.

21/00157/F. East of West End Cottages – Withdrawn

21/00137/F. Shires, Ploughmans Piece – Permitted.

#### **24. Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr. Gulliver reported that there had been no further news from the B.C.K.L.W.N. and that he would contact the officer after the elections had finished.

#### **25. Health and Safety and GDPR updates.**

Cllr. Greef reported that there are lampposts that have not been working for over a month.

Cllr. Greef requested a list of necessary contact numbers from the Clerk for all Councillors to enable contact with the necessary authorities.

**26. Highways**

Cllr. Venes reported that he had received a number of complaints about the closure of Staithe Lane. Cllr. Venes noted that 2 weeks without high tides were needed to carry out the repairs and that Highways appeared not to have any funding for the work.

Cllr. Venes would be prepared to write to Highways regarding the complaints being received and explaining that, although the Parish Council understand the constraints that Highways are under, Staithe Lane needs to be open as soon as possible.

Cllr. Needham offered to meet with the Highways representative concerning the heights of the tides.

**27. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence for consideration.

**28. Items for the Next Agenda**

Cllr. Venes will e-mail the Risk Assessment to Councillors for the next meeting.

**29. Date and Place of Next Meeting.**

Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.53pm.

## Chair's Annual Report to Thornham Parish Council

Following the discussion at a chair's Networking meeting a fortnight ago I suspect that every Chair in the county if not country will be writing something similar in their Annual Report to: 'This has been a very hardworking year for .....'.

Let me evidence the truth of the statement for TPC with some simple data. The PC has held 17 formal PC meetings since May 2020. Of these 11 were 'Ordinary' monthly meetings – we don't meet in August: of the 6 Extra-Ordinary meetings, 3 were held to discuss Planning or Licence applications which needed a response before the next regular meeting; 2 were issues of litigation re the on-going Shore Road case, both held in response to a request from our barrister; and one was a meeting with our consultant on the Neighbourhood Plan where an urgent response was needed from Council to the independent Examiner's Report. All of these meetings were held 'virtually' by Zoom which enabled us to continue the democratic function. There were initial teething problems and Zoom does present challenges of its own. I have however lobbied James Wild, our MP, to press government to extend the legislation and responded to the government survey noting the value of remote meetings.

As a council we faced the challenges of Covid 19, the Staycation boom with its associated problems and consequences and then flooding all in addition to the routine work of the council. I recognise that all of these issues had more severe impact on some individuals in the community but they also impacted on the workload of council. And as indicated above there seemed to be a local increase in both the number and complexity of local planning

applications. All of this while we had to function one councillor short of our full number as Covid did not allow the election requested to take place to fill the vacancy, nor could we co-opt.

Thus, you will understand my very sincere and deep thanks to all members of Council and the Clerk and the Acting Clerk for their hard work and commitment through this year. I am grateful to all of them for their contributions through their various roles and briefs, their support and challenge which I believe has enabled us to deal effectively with the issues we have faced. I also wish to thank all our partners and family who support us in doing this work. Both our Borough Councillor, Bob Lawton, and our County Councillor, Andrew Jamieson, give us great support, knowledge, help and encouragement in our work and our thanks go to them also. I should also note that the staff members we deal with at both borough and county are courteous helpful and informative.

My final thank you is to all those parishioners who contribute to the life and work of the village. It is the voluntary commitment of so many people in the various organisations in the village which make Thornham a lively and supportive community in which to live. I will also note the 25 people who responded so positively to the request for Covid volunteers willing to support the community – our grateful thanks to them all. The full list is truly too long for me to name individuals or even organisations but we do truly have a supportive village network for which I trust we are all grateful.

#### **A brief summary of Parish Council activity through the year.**

Individual councillors all have specific roles/duties which they perform without fuss throughout the year. These are frequently monitoring of various kinds, from streetlights, assets eg benches and noticeboards, to ditches, drains through to Finance and quarterly audit checks, led by F&S team. Planning is obviously a major item of work led by Cllr Chesterman who liaises with planners at KLWNBC, architects and developers to ensure council have as much information as possible when making their recommendations to Borough.

The Neighbourhood Plan has progressed through Inspection which generated some work for council to ensure our policies and priorities were maintained in the document. At time of writing we still await the date of the Referendum to enable the Plan to become a 'Made' plan should the vote succeed.

The 'mapping the village' scheme made significant progress and has finally resulted in a contractor being appointed to cut areas of grass within the village to continue the well-maintained appearance. The web-site for the council was revised and improved during the year. I trust parishioners now find it easier to navigate and locate the information they want in just a few clicks.

Two connected issues; speeding and parking have occupied council time and thinking. Papers on both issues were written and council came to the conclusion that due to the considerable cost, the high degree of uncertainty as to the result and the loss of Speedwatch and police speed monitoring there was no significant advantage in seeking a reduction in speed limits through the village. It is still possible that other work may reduce the speed limit on roads outside the villages in the AONB area.

The 'Staycation' tourist boom over a large part of 2020 may have been good for many aspects of the local economy and council recognise the importance of this but it also indicated, not only in Thornham, the limited infrastructure much of the coast has for dealing with such large numbers. Parking around the village was an obvious problem. Council sought to work with local landowners to provide some additional parking to meet needs rather than just attempt bans and restrictions, a stance that was subsequently recommended by both Highways and Norfolk Constabulary. Some success was achieved with TVHPF who are looking to allow some overflow parking on the field when ground conditions allow. A scheme near to the Lifeboat Inn remains a possibility.

Work outside of the parish council has seen the issue of erosion of salt marsh along Staithe Lane tackled with the co-operation of various official bodies and landowners. A good example of effective collaborative working.

This leads seamlessly into the two developments since May 2019. Inside the village 'Big Tent' meetings have been held at quarterly intervals. Big Tent is a shorthand term for joint meetings of Parochial Church Council, Thornham United Charities, Thornham Village Hall & Playing Field with Parish Council. The meetings are information sharing and discussion of common issues. The meeting has no executive powers but its effectiveness was surely demonstrated in the response to the church clock appeal. The TVHPF Newsletter raised £3,700 in a few days to ensure the restoration of clock and chimes to the village. I think most participants believe the meetings to be helpful and constructive.

Council also participates in the Saxon Shore Parish Council Forum. Again, a quarterly meeting which allows councillors in the benefice to discuss common issues, listen to information from guest speakers and see where common ground exists. Inevitably even when the problems are similar the responses may differ from village to village depending on circumstances but mutual understanding and advice is always helpful.

Council buys into support and training from both Norfolk Assn of Local Councils, NALC, and also Norfolk Parishes Training and Support, NPTS. Both regularly provide advice and guidance to council as well as model policies, webinars, Chairs and Clerks Network sessions and training.

Not everything has come to a successful conclusion. Progress on a second defibrillator has stalled for a variety of reasons. The Parish Notice-board is in need of renovation but this is

delayed until the summer recess. The Shore Road litigation is on-going much to the frustration of some parishioners and council but does seem slowly to be moving towards a possible resolution. We await a new date for the by election to fill the casual vacancy on council. This may incur a significant cost to council.

Looking forward we hope to participate in the Big Conversation led by TUC re the possible options for West Bottom Field. We must continue to address the threat from flooding by looking at local action where possible and meeting with Anglian Water to discuss more strategic responses. There are interesting prospects for the ELMS scheme noted by County Councillor Jamieson which I trust PC will be looking at. Thought must be given to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. I hope this will be a village led response. When the legislation allows we will I hope have an Open meeting in the hall to discuss issues that would have been aired at the annual parish meetings that have been cancelled these last two years due to Covid restrictions.

There is more that could be said but at that point I will call a halt. Council will look forward to working with the community both in Zoom and face to face when it is safe to resume public meetings. Parishioners are welcome to attend meetings, look for details on the website and the Notice-board.

Colin Venes

Chair, Thornham Parish Council

28<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Report from All Saints' Church. Since the last report, the coronavirus virus has meant that our services and fund raising activities have been curtailed and the church itself has been shut, only opening on Wednesdays and Sundays after the first lockdown for private prayer. We managed to have a socially distanced Christmas Day service but no more until the middle of April and now have a service fortnightly. Luckily all 8 parishes managed to have an Easter Day service, but sadly we still cannot sing hymns! We are currently waiting for contractors to come to the church to install the specially made indoor bat boxes in the hope that the bats will use them! This will be monitored and cameras will show the bats on a screen installed in the church. We haven't been able to carry out any fund raising in the church but hope the Gardens Open in June, the income of which is being shared with the Village Hall, will help us. We had a grant from the Parish Council of £2,750 to help with grass cutting in the churchyard and servicing the clock. Unfortunately we had a problem with the clock but thanks to the generosity of villagers and second home owners, the repair was crowdfunded and we raised enough to repair the chimes and have a sum left over. We paid our Parish Share in full and this, with our insurance, amounts to £800.00 per month In December we welcomed our new Team Vicar, Revd. Kirsty Allen to the benefice. She is a very enthusiastic and has settled with her family into the benefice and we all look forward to working with her alongside Rachael, our Rector.