

THORPE MORIEUX PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON 28 MAY 2020 AT 8PM

This meeting was held remotely by way of video conferencing as a result of the new Coronavirus Act 2020, and in accordance with advice from Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

The last Parish Council meeting before the Covid-19 pandemic was on 5 March 2020.

Present: Cllrs Ashley Simpson, Louisa Pepper, Jules O'Brien, John Squirrell, Garry Russell, together with the Clerk, Nicola Smith and District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay. No members of the public requested to join the meeting.

1. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman: Cllr Pepper was proposed as Chair by Cllr Russell and seconded by Cllr Squirrell. All Cllrs present agreed. Motion carried. Cllr Squirrell was proposed as Vice-Chair by Cllr O'Brien and seconded by Cllr Simpson. All Cllrs present agreed. Motion carried. Clerk will send Declarations of Office out in the post to Cllr Pepper and Cllr Squirrell.
2. Apologies for absence:
 - i. Cllr Gagen sent his apologies due to technical issues he was unable to join the meeting this evening. Cllr Lee was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments. Cllrs accepted the apologies for absence.
 - ii. Consent to absence - not applicable.
3. Members' Declarations of Interest:
 - i. Declarations of interest; Cllr Squirrell declared an interest in relation to the grant to the PCC, Cllr O'Brien declared an interest in relation to the grant to the Thorpe Times and Chair Cllr Pepper declared an interest in any monies being made available regarding the digitalisation of the historical records held by Cllr Squirrell.
 - ii. No declarations of gifts of hospitality received;
 - iii. To consider requests for dispensation –not applicable.
4. Minutes:

Cllrs considered the draft Minutes of 5 March 2020. Chair Cllr Pepper proposed and Cllr Simpson seconded that the Minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. All Cllrs present agreed. Clerk will send Minutes to Chair in order that she can sign, date and return.

Signed.....

Dated.....

5. Matters Arising:

Matter Arising	Update
Chevrons on the corner of Bury Road.	We now have confirmation from SCC Highways that the Operations Teams will carry out their operational checks within the next 2 weeks, thereafter the construction works and the contractors will have a maximum of 14 weeks to undertake the works but have indicated that they hope to complete it sooner than this.
Defibrillator	Clerk has checked with Cllr Russell – the cabinet is in situ and the VH Committee are still liaising with the Ambulance Service. VH will let PC know when they are ready to donate the equipment to the PC so that the PC can put it under their insurance cover.
Archiving of village records in digital format	Cllr Squirrell is liaising with a parishioner with regards to this. Clerk has confirmation from BDC that CIL monies can be used. PC to decide the amount that they use once they have paid half share of the costs of chevrons (County Cllr Robert Lindsay paying the other half out of his highways budget).
'Pothole' outside of "Flemings"	Cllr Squirrell has looked at this and confirmed that it is a Badger sett. No badgers in it at the present time. Photograph shows it is encroaching on the highway and Cllr Squirrell confirmed that it goes partly under the road way. Will need to ensure works carried out quickly to stop further damage and roadway collapse leaving much larger 'pothole' and also whilst there are no badgers inhabiting the sett. Clerk has reported and County Cllr is flagging matter up as urgent for repairs to be carried out.

6. Public Forum: No members of the public had requested to join the meeting.

Signed.....

Dated.....

7. Report from District and County Cllr Robert Lindsay

Bildeston Foodbank expands to neighbouring villages

This group (which emerged from the village community group helping shop for those isolating or shielded) is keen to work with villages such as Thorpe Morieux to reach anyone in need in the village. They have recently obtained a £2000 grant from Babergh. I also put them in touch with a supply of PPE from Suffolk County Council. I'm told the foodbank is having about three requests for help a week just from within Bildeston. I personally have reason to appreciate the work of the delivery volunteers.

Virtual SCC Meetings

SCC has cancelled its last two full council meetings. It will be holding cabinet meetings and next full council meeting virtually in July. If they are public meetings they can still be attended by members of the public. The link to the virtual meeting will be included on the agenda for the meeting.

Babergh virtual meetings

Babergh is following same procedures as the county. More planning applications will be determined by delegated authority unless controversial enough to make committee. The first online planning committee has already taken place. There are regular online meetings with chief executive and leaders of the political groups to keep up to speed.

Cifco – Council business investing in commercial property

This has been badly hit by the crisis with rents way below what they should be as tenants plead for rent forgiveness. The income for the March quarter was below where it should be from full rents and the next quarter is expected to be lower. They have to fall to 31% before Babergh has to dig into its own reserves to pay the interest rates on Cifco's loans. I have been suggesting that we scrap the deal to build a Premier Inn in Sudbury given the borrowing required and the financial insecurity of the tenant. The FT reports that the Govt is demanding councils cease investing in commercial property.

Supply of PPE

Suffolk County Council are supplying emergency PPE to all primary care providers who are unable or struggling to source their own supplies.

More information on who is eligible to order PPE, and how to make an order, is available at: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolks-response/personal-protective-equipment-for-frontline-workers/>

Questions about ordering PPE should be sent to PPE@suffolk.gov.uk

Funding from Government

Suffolk County Council has received £34.7m from the government to help with the council's coronavirus response.

Signed.....

Dated.....

However, the council is currently forecasting that the financial impact of the crisis will be at least £56m (due to both extra expenditure and lost income) by the end of March 2021, and so more support from the government will be needed. Babergh has received an extra £914,000. Although this is welcome it is not enough to cover their forecast hit.

Chevrons on Bury Road

The designs and locations for signs I think were shared with parish council from just before Christmas and advertised in the village. It appears officers had been waiting for the go ahead from me, but there had been a miscommunication. The matter is now resolved and work can now be ordered.

Traffic calming measures to protect walkers/cyclists exercising outdoors

The transport minister announced on May 11 that he was providing £250m emergency funding to local highways authorities to implement measures such as road closures, pop up bike lanes and 20mph limits during lockdown. This was to ensure there is room for 2m spacing as shops reopen post June 1st. Before this announcement I had already been encouraging Highways to take these sorts of measures to allow residents to safely get their daily exercise and maintain social distancing.

The county council Highways are currently looking at various measures though they have yet to communicate with town and parish councils.

Cost of post-16 Home to School transport increases by £90

The cost of mainstream post-16 school transport has been increased by £90, whilst the cost of post-16 transport for SEND students has increased by £30. This is despite the fact that a consultation on the proposed increase indicated that 75% of parents who responded felt that the increase would have an impact on them.

Increase in social worker pay

Suffolk County Council has agreed to increase the pay of children's social workers to match the remuneration offered by neighbouring councils, in order to attract and retain skilled social workers in Suffolk. It is estimated that the pay increase will cost £1.4m and will be funded from council reserves. I am pleased that the council has taken this step, because my group proposed this exact policy as part of our budget amendment in February.

Cllr Squirrell enquired as to when the Babergh Joint Local Plan will be approved. District Cllr Lindsay said that he would check with the relevant Babergh officer and let the Clerk and Cllrs have the up to date information.

8. Correspondence (all correspondence has been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting)

Signed.....

Dated.....

9. Clerk/RFOs Report:

- (i) Schedule of items awaiting approval;

Income received since meeting on 5 March 2020

Precept (1 of 2 payments)	1727.50
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Schedule of payments awaiting authorisation

100392	BHIB annual insurance	350.52	LGA1972
100393	SALC annual subscriptions	141.67	LGA1972
100394	N Smith (salary)	202.00	LGA1972
100395	HMRC (tax and NI)	33.20	Inc&Taxes Act

Parish Council to approve annual grants

Thorpe Times grant	100.00	Proposed: Cllr Russell	Seconded: Cllr Simpson
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All Cllrs present agreed. Motion carried.

St Mary's Church grant	200.00	Proposed: Cllr Simpson	Seconded: Cllr Pepper
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All Cllrs present agreed. Motion carried.

- (ii) Audit update: Clerk explained that there had been a delay from external auditors whilst they awaited guidance from UK Government and new legislation as to how audits would proceed. Clerk now had relevant information and would aim to present the audit to the PC at the meeting on 2 July 2020.

- 10.
- To review and approve Standing orders and Financial Orders:
- Cllrs had received these ahead of the meeting. Chair Cllr Pepper proposed and Cllr Russell seconded approval of the documents. All other Cllrs present agreed. Motion carried.

11. Cllrs Reports:

Cllr Squirrel provided an up to date Police report from the Suffolk Police website. In February 2020 there was 1 reported crime in the village and in March 2020 there were none. In the 12 month period prior to March 2020 there has been a total of 6 reported crimes in the village.

Cllr Squirrell reported that the road surface at the end of Blacksmiths Lane is wearing away, and this has already been reported on the Highways Reporting Tool.

Signed.....

Dated.....

Cllr Squirrell reported that the construction team at Whitethorn Ley were using a lot of the wildflower meadow and he hoped that the wildflower meadow would be re-instated to include some wildflowers sown there once the construction team left. *Clerk will email Orwell Housing and include Cllr Squirrell in that email so that he could liaise with them on this point.*

Cllr Squirrell reported that he had received 2 enquiries from villagers regarding the new homes being built at Whitethorn Ley. Clerk had provided contact details of person at Orwell housing for them to contact.

Cllr Squirrell reported his thanks to Mr and Mrs Warne for the repair works they had organised to the village Notice Board by the Church, in order that it may be minuted. Clerk confirmed that she had, in accordance with the Parish Council's instructions sent a letter of thanks to Mr and Mrs Warne.

Cllr O'Brien reported that the Thorpe Times had run an article asking anyone in the parish who may need help with shopping, collection of medication etc during the Coronavirus pandemic to contact them so that help could be organised. No-one had come forward to date, but it had been reassuring to learn that neighbours had been looking out for each other and helping each other, if needed.

Cllr Russell reported that Bury Road had a lot of potholes on it. He was unsure if Bury Road was a private road or came under highways repairs. It is an access road and Anglian Water also used it to get access to the treatment plant behind the back of the houses. *Clerk will go and take some photographs and look into the matter and report back at next meeting.*

12. Date of next Meeting: - 2 July 2020 at 8pm

Meeting closed at 8.55pm