

## **THORPE MORIEUX PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

### **HELD ON 1 JULY 2021 AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

Present: Cllrs John Squirrell, Jules O'Brien, Ashley Simpson, John Gagen, and Garry Russell, together with the Clerk, Nicola Smith. No members of the public present.

1. Apologies for absence:
  - i. Chair Cllr Louisa Pepper sent her apologies due to unforeseen circumstances. Cllr Keith Lee also sent his apologies due to work commitments. Vice Chair, Cllr John Squirrell agreed to chair the meeting.
  - ii. Cllrs consented to the to accept the apologies for absence.
2. Members' Declaration of Interest:
  - i. Disclosure of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest – none.
  - ii. No declarations of gifts of hospitality;
  - iii. No requests for dispensation.
3. Minutes of Meeting:

Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting on 25 May 2021 were proposed as a true and accurate record of the meeting by Cllr Russell and seconded by Cllr Gagen. All Cllrs present agreed.
4. Matters arising:

#### **Postbox**

Royal Mail have consulted BDC planning department with regards to a new lamp pedestal box at the land south of Sunnyside Cottage, Bury Road. BDC website confirms that they raise no objection. BDC issued their decision on 14 June 2021 and therefore hopefully the postbox will be in situ soon.

***Clerk has now reported the second missing postbox that it is believed was knocked down by the Royal Mail vehicle and then taken away. Clerk will now report to Robert Lindsay and James Cartlidge using that reporting number as the point of reference.***

#### **Planning Decision**

DC/21/02078 – Moat Farm, Bury Road, Thorpe Morieux. Application for prior approval of a proposed: Change of Use of agricultural buildings to 3no. dwellinghouses (Class C3) and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)

(England) Order 2015 (as amended) – Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q(a). ***Prior approval has been given.***

### **Green Land and Bury Road**

Ref CR310889 – road classification review/changing of road classification.

7 March 2021 email from SCC advising County Cllr Robert Lindsay that these roads needed a classification review regardless of any enquiry made by the Parish Council.

Clerk sent follow up emails in May and June but at present no further information.

***Clerk will continue to monitor and chase this matter along.***

### **Broadband**

Cllr Garry Russell has been chasing this matter along with Openreach and subsequently advised that phase 1 of fttp to Blacksmiths Lane is now well underway and this project now includes Wash Cottage and Elliston Farm. It is now ready to take orders, but will still only benefit as far as Blacksmiths Lane.

Cllr Russell is working with Openreach and the community fibre partnership and Strutt & Parkers to set up another scheme for the remainder of the village from Underwood's Cottage/Manor Farm and Perrydown Lane and will provide further update at the next meeting.

***Cllrs and the Clerk thanks Cllr Russell for all the time and effort that he has put into trying to ensure that every property in the village eventually has a good broadband connection. His efforts are hugely appreciated by the Parish Council.***

### **Speed Indicator Device**

Cllr O'Brien confirmed at the meeting on 25 May 2021 that an article had gone into the TT to gauge how villagers felt about a Speed Indicator Device, and that there had only been a few response ( positive and in favour of a SID). Cllr O'Brien updated at the meeting on 1 July 2021 that no further response to that article in the TT had been received.

***Clerk had previously emailed Cllrs criteria for where a SID can be located. She will update that information for Cllrs in order that they can discuss further at the meeting on 2 September 2021.***

### **Dog poo bin**

PC asked Clerk to gather information about (a) annual cost from BDC to empty a dog poo bin weekly, and (b) cost of bin and post.

***Clerk now had an email contract for a BDC Officer to get this information but the Officer had said that firstly the PC should provide details of the location(s) they***

*would like a bin before BDC could confirm whether they could empty a bin from that location.*

*Clerk explained to Cllrs that if the bin was located on private land then the land owner or some other person appointed by the landowner would have to empty the bin, and that this would not be an ideal solution. If the bin is located on land that is owned by SCC highways i.e the first one metre in from the verge then BDC could empty.*

*Clerk also confirmed that she had written an article for the TT in accordance with what the PC had discussed at its May meeting and that will go in the next edition.*

*Following discussion Cllrs agreed that for now they would wait and see if the article improved the situation. The BDC dog poo posters on the footpath sign posts would also be helpful. Clerk will seek to obtain more of those.*

*Matter to be reviewed again later in the year if it does not improve or gets worse.*

#### **Traffic cones left at Whitethorn Ley from construction work**

Clerk had contacted Orwell Housing who then contacted the contractors and the cones have now been removed.

#### **Letter to OBH School regarding the speed of “school run” vehicles through the village.**

A draft letter approved with some minor amendments. It was further agreed that because the school would soon be closing for the Summer holidays that the Clerk would not send the letter until September when the children were back at school. It was also agreed that the letter would be sent twice per year as a reminder for the headteacher to address with parents the issue of speeding and sensible driving through the village.

#### **Letter to BDC planning department setting out disappointment that the planning process seems to be less about consulting the Parish Council but more about it being a tick box exercise with the PC.**

A draft letter was approved with some minor amendments. Clerk to send letter by email to BDC Chief Planner, Babergh District Councillor Robert Lindsay and James Cartlidge MP.

5. **County and District Councillor, Mr Robert Lindsay’s report**  
**Cllr Robert Lindsay was not able to attend this meeting due to a prior commitment /meeting**

### **New look County Council**

I was re-elected last month along with eight other Green councillors across the county, making us the main opposition group to the ruling Conservatives and the only county in the UK that has Green as opposition. Thanks to all those who supported me. We have decided to again join forces with the 4 LibDems and 2 Independent councillors to make a 15 strong group. I am deputy leader of the group for the first year. While Greens increased from 3 to 9 the Conservatives increased from 50 to 55, so they are still overwhelmingly in control. Our larger group size means our political group will have a seat on every major committee. The first council meeting at the end of May took place at Wherstead Park outside Ipswich as apparently the only venue large enough. The next meeting in July has been cancelled and an extra meeting will instead be held in September in the hope that restrictions will have lifted and a venue can be found by then.

### **New cabinet**

The cabinet has been reshuffled and new roles created. **Matthew Hicks** is still the leader, his deputy is now **Richard Rout** who is also member for finance and environment, combining the two roles to hopefully ensure one does not hinder the other. Highways and young people's roles have both been split into two.

**Rachel Hood** is cabinet member for education, SEND and skills (schools and colleges);

**Beccy Hopfenspurger** is member for adult care;

**James Reeder** is member for children and young people's services – services provided to kids outside schools;

**Andrew Reid** has been put in charge of public health and public protection, including the fire service and CABS;

**Richard Smith** is economic development, transport strategy – including road safety and speeding, and waste;

**Paul West** is in charge of operational highways (including footpaths and pavements), flooding and Ipswich.

### **School travel and split villages**

Having been approached by both Cockfield PC and a resident of Thorpe Morieux over the issue of their siblings having to go to different schools, I have written to Rachel Hood as the relevant new cabinet member about the issue of split villages, asking if the policy could be reviewed. She has said that she will talk to the senior officer regarding this and get back to me. The other route is via the new education and health scrutiny committee, at which our group will be pushing to have a review of this policy on the agenda. It is something that the administration was warned repeatedly about by members of our political group when they were considering introducing the new policy back in 2017. The cabinet member who introduced the policy, Gordon Jones, stood down from office in May.

### **Special educational needs (SEND) review**

Rachel Hood's first act as education and SEND cabinet member is to order an independent review into the way parents and carers are communicated with by Suffolk County Council. The review will not look at the actual provision of SEND services itself. A SEND team from Lincolnshire County Council has been appointed to do the job. They started week beginning June 21 and will take six weeks. The report, with any recommendations, will be published on Suffolk County Council's website, shared with those who contributed to it and also scrutinized by the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Some parents and carers of children with SEND – known as the Campaign for Change (SEND Suffolk) – have called for a lawyer-led audit of the council's compliance with the legal requirements set out for the service. Suffolk County Council has refused since it says it is the role of Ofsted to inspect such aspects, as they have been doing. The SEND service has been criticized for failing or delaying to provide needs assessments for children that may have special needs, and then when they are drawn up, failure to provide the actual services that they need.

### **Bus Back Better**

Government has given Suffolk County Council a series of tight deadlines over the next few months if it wants to benefit from a pot for bus funding. It must agree "enhanced partnerships" with commercial bus operators by the autumn which details how they will invest to improve services. However, this does not appear to affect large parts of rural areas like ours where bus services are already non-existent or minimal and largely dependent on dial a ride services.

### **Babergh agrees funding to identify wildlife corridors**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have given the green light for £72K-£32,849 and £38,678 respectively – to go towards biodiversity mapping and a tree canopy survey across both districts. The work is based on outline costs agreed as part of the council's Biodiversity Action Plan. The mapping will determine suitable locations for tree and hedge planting, and identify wildlife habitats and local green spaces.

### **Council property venture delays £1.5m interest payments to Babergh and Mid Suffolk**

Cifco, the commercial property venture set up by Babergh and Mid Suffolk 4 years ago, is having to defer £1.5m of interest payments over the next three years. It reveals this in papers put before overview and scrutiny committee which meets on 28 June. The move is to ensure it has sufficient cash to service its properties and meet other running costs "as it continues to recover from the impacts of the pandemic". It revealed that six of its tenants have gone bust. Although replacement tenants have been found for some of these properties, they are paying a lower rent.

I have sent a question to scrutiny committee asking what guarantees we have that we will get the money back and when. The full council must approve Cifco's new business plan at its next meeting. In the year to May 2021, Cifco made an annual loss of £4.4m, £2m of which is the cost of acquiring properties with the rest is a write down of their value.

The £1.5m being withheld represents a percentage of the payments Cifco is intending to make to the councils over the next three years (13%, 11% and 6%). The council says the remaining repayments are still comfortably enough to allow it to pay back the interest on the Public Works Loan Board loans it has taken out.

6. Public Forum: no members of the public present.
7. Correspondence (general correspondence has been circulated to Cllrs ahead of the meeting)
- (i) Email from SALC dated 23 June 2021 regarding "The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022"
- Following discussion it was agreed that Councillors who were also members of the VH Committee would ask for this matter to be placed on the Agenda for the next VH Committee meeting. If they wished to go ahead with a celebration and required any assistance from the Parish Council then a request would be sent.***

8. Clerk's report

- (i) Schedule of items awaiting approval

Additional items previously approved at meeting on 25/05/2021 (and cheques signed) but not on Finance Schedule for that meeting:

|                               |        |               |
|-------------------------------|--------|---------------|
| PCC annual grant (churchyard) | chq411 | 200.00        |
| Thorpe Times grant            | chq412 | 100.00        |
|                               |        | -----         |
|                               |        | <b>300.00</b> |

Items awaiting approval:

|         |                  |        |               |
|---------|------------------|--------|---------------|
| N Smith | salary (LGA1972) | chq413 | 128.60        |
| HMRC    | tax and NI       | chq414 | 18.40         |
|         |                  |        | -----         |
|         |                  |        | <b>147.00</b> |

All Cllrs present approved.

9a Whitethorn Ley

Parish Councillor reported that Orwell Housing Association had received a complaint from a resident about the behaviour of children playing nearby and had subsequently written to all tenants' to explain their position. Councillor had also heard directly from residents and from a parent about their concerns regarding children playing in the area. Parish Council agreed to monitor the situation and to prepare an article for the village magazine about the meadow area that is owned by the Parish Council and the access arrangements to it.

Councillor reported that the area of the meadow used by the building contractors had not recovered well and the meadow was inspected by Councillors after the meeting. It was decided that the damaged area would benefit from cutting and the cutting contractor would be contacted to this end.

The bench on the meadow is currently being restored.

9. Annual Governance and Accountability Report 2020/2021

Clerk explained that unfortunately this had not yet been finalised and therefore it was agreed that an additional meeting would be organised in due course to consider and approve these documents prior to submitting to the external auditors.

10. Cllrs reports:

No further reports to those matters discussed earlier in the meeting.

11. Planning

Application DC/21/03314 – Householder Application – Erection of single storey rear extension. Woodview, Bury Road, Thorpe Morieux, IP30 0NR.

Cllrs discussed this planning matter. The proposed floor plan 0202 has been “flipped” by 180 degrees as it does not match the existing floor plan. Clerk had sought clarity from the Planning Officer but no response. Cllrs could reasonable consider that this was an error in the orientation of the drawings though. No objections otherwise.

12. Date of next Parish Council meeting: 2 September 2021 at 8pm in the Village Hall (unless otherwise advised)

Meeting closed: 9.15pm