

THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Thorverton Parish Council held at the Memorial Hall, Silver St, Thorverton on Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 7pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Andrew Foster (Chairman)
Cllr Andy Price (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr John Hodge
Cllr Colin Marshall
Cllr Stephanie Shelton
Cllr Graham Sims
Cllr Stuart Crang
Cllr Bryanna Uglow

ABSENT

None

IN ATTENDANCE:

D/Cllr Rhys Roberts, 11 members of the public
Jim Roberts (Clerk and RFO)

1 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman opened the meeting with a warm welcome back to a member of the public who had recently resigned as a Councillor who had been asked to reconsider her resignation and was now able to attend after a necessary period of absence.

The Chairman declared that he is the Chair of the Thorverton Community Land Trust Board on which Cllr Uglow is the Parish Council's nominated Board member. The clerk is also a member of TCLT Board.

Cllr Hodge declared he is an ordinary member of the TCLT.

Cllr Uglow is the nominated Councillor on the Thorverton Memorial Hall committee.

2 Apologies

None.

3 Minutes

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on [9th December 2024](#)

4 Public Open Session

The first speaker addressed item 9.2.1 asking for a delay to the Parish Council's comments. The speaker had spoken to MDDC Planning Officer who had indicated that, should the Parish Council seek an extension, this would be looked on favourably.

The second speaker asked if those who declared an interest would be excluding themselves from the discussion. Council confirmed that would not be the case on this occasion.

The third speaker asked about the purchase of the land at the cemetery and why a month's delay had been implemented since the December meeting where the purchase was agreed. He could see no reason why this delay was necessary and demanded that the Council pay the solicitors immediately.

The clerk and Chairman explained the process by which payments agreed at one meeting are listed at the next meeting. They also advised that the solicitor's full statement of costs had not been received until after the December meeting.

The third speaker asked about the planning permission and Cllr Hodge advised that he has contacted the Planning Officer for advice. The Chairman apologised for the delays to the second speaker but could not agree that these were the responsibility of the Parish Council, which had chased the solicitor on a monthly basis throughout the life of this project for any matters that required Parish Council decisions or payments.

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The fourth speaker asked Council whether proper practices had been followed when Cllr Nightingale had resigned as, if so, the co- option process would need to take place. Council will follow the relevant procedure and look to co-opt a new Cllr once the vacancy had been processed.

[One member of the public left at 7.25pm]

The second speaker stated that the letters sent to Council weren't being dealt with either in the right manner or promptly enough. His experience meant he knew how things should be done and he considered himself Thorverton through-and-through. He was pleased that the cemetery was progressing.

He considered his latest reply received from the clerk as a joke and the Parish Council cannot lend money to the Thorverton Community Land Trust (TCLT). Cllr Crang advised that this was not the case as it was a funding of a working group.

The second speaker rejected this explanation and said the loans are documented in the minutes and there are no funds in place to pay these loans on the TCLT website. There is nothing in writing telling people what is going on. He challenged whether the TCLT has a repayment method as payment of past invoices once a grant is received will be against the law. He has spoken to the Financial Conduct Authority and there is no payment vehicle to repay the £25,000. Cllr Crang repeated that the loans have not been made. Cllr Shelton agreed that some things weren't clear.

The Chairman answered that there was a brief discussion at the December meeting of using reserves to help the affordable housing project and Council was concerned about the relevant powers and asked the clerk to check into these.

The second speaker said the clerk was sarcastic and boring. He asked why the TCLT has insurance and why aren't they funding their own activities.

The clerk explained the Council's position that all payments were made in support of the Council's own working group on affordable housing that was initiated after several disgruntled parishioners attended a Parish Council meeting in early 2022 to make representations.

The spend to date, with exception of the most recent £77.84 was all committed prior to the incorporation of the TCLT.

A fifth speaker gave details of the experience of a neighbouring Council who had built affordable homes with that Parish Council and CLT working together.

D/Cllr Rhys Roberts explained that MDDC has had a significant uplift in its targets for new housing and affordable housing is a key component. He confirmed that MDDC had accessed grants for housing and Thorverton was one of two projects confirmed in the MDDC area.

5 Reports To receive reports from:

5.1 County Cllr Squires

C/Cllr Squires had sent apologies as she is unwell. Council **NOTED** Cllr Squires' written report previously submitted regarding Local Government reorganisation and the disposal of upholstered furniture.

5.2 District Cllr Roberts

D/Cllr Roberts reported as follows:

MDDC received confirmation of funding from national Government over the next 3 years. Grants vary and the gap prior to the announcement was £170,000 which has now grown to £450,000. MDDC are working hard to identify £450,000 savings (a total of £4m in the next 3 years). MDDC does have healthy cash reserves but would prefer not to use them.

Local Government reorganisation has been announced in a Government White Paper and this will see the end of District Councils. The District Council will be replaced with Unitary Authorities (UAs). This could be a Devon-wide scheme although Plymouth is already a UA and would resist being absorbed into Devon. Exeter wishes to be UA and may wish to expand into MDDC area. The District Councils will discuss this. The Government indicated that Devon & Cornwall would be a single authority with an elected Mayor, but he believed

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this would not be accepted by the existing authorities. The Devolution Deal for Torbay is still going ahead on 1st April 2025 and will have additional funding. The Government is funding Green Projects with grants up to £30,000 per application which MDDC will administer. Nappy collections are being trialled for 3 months from April 2025 which will include incontinence products. MDDC are arguing against a return to fortnightly bin collections as the 3-weekly collections have over 90% approval from the Mid-Devon community. Trial for collecting unusable metal pots is also proposed, more details to follow. MDDC is introducing a cost of £96 for new bins for householders.

5.3 Saturday Market

5.3.1 State of the road at the bottom of the Glebe path to School Lane.

The clerk will report this problem on the DCC Report-a-Problem website.

5.3.2 Cadbury to Thorverton road blind hump.

Council did not believe this could be pursued as the provision of a sign would be highly unlikely given the financial constraints on DCC Highways.

6 Projects

6.1 Affordable Housing

The Chairman gave the following report:

The update for this month can be kept brief as the project is likely to feature elsewhere in the minutes. The Board has set a date for an Open Meeting; this will be on Weds 26 Feb at 7.00pm in the TMH. Please note that a date of one week earlier was originally mentioned but the Board felt that it should be moved due to the school half term that week; it is hoped that this will mean more people can attend. More details will be in Focus and on the website as well as other media outlets. *[One member of the public left at 8:12pm]*

Council noted that the advice from DALC that the only funds that could be used to support Affordable Housing is the Section 137 authority. Council **RESOLVED** that they were unable to support TCLT by underwriting any further activity. Council discussed the current funds that were due to be received once the Stage 2 grant has been issued. Cllrs felt that the situation was confusing. The General Election also held up the allocation of grants. Council asked the clerk to chase up the allocation of the Stage 2 grant with MDDC, and Cllr Uglow will pursue the matter at the next TCLT meeting.

6.2 Sale of the Cemetery Land

Council **RESOLVED** that the clerk should use the form of words to attest the contract as he had used at another Council. Cllr Sims reminded the Council that the fencing contractor will need to be aware of the underground water pipes that cross the land to the reservoir.

[Two members of the public left at 8:25pm]

6.3 Thorverton Resilience Plan

Cllr Shelton presented her draft plan. The electricity supply to various parts of the village was discussed and some other queries were made and clarified.

Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the plan with minor amendments.

6.4 Barliabins

[One member of the public left at 8:26pm]

The Working Group will meet after the cold weather and begin the preparation work for Barliabins prior to the main contractor's availability.

6.5 Winter Warmth

It was hoped that another Councillor would assist/replace Cllr Shelton on this project. This would be welcome if she was later co-opted onto the Council.

6.6 Aftermath of the Storms

Council was extremely grateful to Paul Uglow and Tom Bedford for working so hard with Cllr Price to remove the fallen tree in the school field. The felled timber was donated to the pre-school to use in the Forest School.

Cllr Price will check with the school regarding the condition of the remaining trees.

[Two members of the public left at 8:33pm]

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6.7 Mending the Cobbles

Cllr Shelton advised that there were cobbles that are a problem on the path opposite the Exeter in Bullen St. Cllr Price and Crang have cobbles available to use. Council **RESOLVED** to accept the quote given for work in The Bury and on Jericho St.

6.8 Waste Bins

[D/Cllr Roberts left the meeting at 8:37pm]

Council asked the clerk to investigate the costs involved in providing new waste bins and any ongoing charges that may be incurred for MDDC to clear them. Council understand that MDDC has a policy for a number of bins allowed depending on population

6.9 Highways

Potholes cannot be filled during the cold weather and the Warden group will work on their own initiative. The clerk will advise the parishioner to report the pothole to DCC using the Report-a-Problem website (or he will do so himself if that is impossible) as Highways may be able to address the problem sooner. *[Two members of the public left at 8:33pm]*

7 Recreation Ground

7.1 Financial Report

No money spent in December

7.2 Repairs to the Rocker

Spares alone were £1000 + delivery. A replacement item would be £3-4k. Council **RESOLVED** to have the rocker repaired at a cost of £1700.

7.3 Basketball Hoop

Clerk apologised for not ordering this item and he had been busy with other work. He would chase this soon.

8 Grounds Maintenance

8.1 Contractor

Work for this month:

Cut the vegetation by the hall along the stream.

Clean the path at the bottom of the path from The Glebe to School Lane. The clerk will chase the drainage arrangement from the path to the school as advised by the Neighbourhood Highways Officer.

9 Planning & Consultations

Planning Decision

9.1.1 Council **NOTED** the following decision:

APPROVED 24/01528/HOUSE 57 Silver St Extension.

Planning Applications

9.2.1 [24/01727/FULL](#) & [24/01728/LBC](#)

The Post Yard, Bullen St Demolition and extension

This property is in the centre of the village and within the conservation area and the proposals will mean the loss of parking within the property.

Council **RESOLVED** to make the following comments:

Thorverton Parish Council objects to this proposal which will do significant harm to the historical significance to the wall that is the frontage onto Bullen St which is an important part of the streetscape of the village within the Conservation Area. Cllr Marshall voted against this resolution.

Consultations

9.3.1 **MDDC Community Risk Register** Deadline 28th February

Postponed to the next meeting.

9.3.2 **Devon Communities Together**

Cllr Shelton offered to view the survey and complete as appropriate.

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10 Budget for 2025-2026 Financial Year and setting of the Precept

Council **NOTED** the Quarter 3 results and the spending is on target to meet the budget when the exceptional items are noted.

Council worked through the budget planned expenditure and income as well as how the reserves were allocated. It was hoped that more money could be allocated to donations, play area equipment, additional maintenance costs for the new cemetery and Barliabins. Consideration was also given to the implications of any National Insurance contributions that could be incurred in the new financial year. Council **RESOLVED** to increase the Precept from £48.89 to £55.74 per Band D household per year (equivalent to 57p per month per household). This increase of £6.85 per year equates to a 14% increase since last year. The total precept for 2025-26 will be £24,089. (Appendix A)

11 Correspondence

11.1 Parish Council's Facebook page

The Chairman will take over the administrator role on the Council's Facebook page.

11.2 Parishioner's email on various matters

Most of these matters have been addressed at this meeting and the Clerk will send a further reply. Cllr Shelton requested the PC look at the Correspondence Policy again, as it was clearly causing concern for members of the public, and it was agreed to add this to the February agenda

12 Finance

12.1 Bank balance

Council **NOTED** the following balance (as at 31 December 2024) £ 63,427.12 (£37,204.58 + £26,222.54). The clerk asked the cheque signatories for two new chequebooks.

12.2 Payments:

Council **RESOLVED** to make the following payments:

12.2.1 Ben Fitch Invoice Number BF20240185	£ 103.98
12.2.2 GX Accountancy & Bookkeeping Services Payroll services Q3	£ 63.00
12.2.3 Thorverton WI Winter warmth expenditure (December)	£ 40.95
12.2.4 MDCC (cheque payable to "Post Office Limited") Play area insp.	£ 100.80
12.2.5 Donation to Citizens' Advice	£ 100.00
12.2.6 Donation to CHAT	£ 100.00
12.2.7 Gilbert Stephens Solicitors Purchase and costs re cemetery	£ 9,851.50
12.2.8 J P Roberts - clerk pay (Dec) £ 456.89 Printer cost £ 190.48	£ 647.37
12.2.9 HMRC Clerk PAYE for third quarter	£ 332.40

13 Next Meeting

13.1 The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 11th February 2025 and agenda items will need to be submitted by Tuesday 4th February 2025.

13.2 The Chairman invited the remaining members of the public to comment as he was about to close the meeting. Two members of the public enquired as to why no correspondence was listed on the agenda when at least 4 letters had been received for Council consideration prior to the agenda being published. The Chairman replied that all the queries raised had been covered during the meeting. The residents did not agree with this and asked the Council to be more open and transparent with future correspondence and general information as this could help reduce the number of letters being received and help with public understanding.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10:43pm.

Signed Date
Cllr Andrew Foster, Chairman

APPENDIX A

Thorverton Parish Council Budget 2025-26

	2019-20	2020-21		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25		2025-26	Notes
	Actual	Actual	Item	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Full Year Fcast	Budget	
Payments										
Salaries	£ 7,245	£ 9,205	Salaries	£ 6,618	£ 7,222	£ 5,780	£ 7,500	£ 8,250	£ 10,160	E722 c/f from 2
Home Working	£ 22	£ 158	Administration	£ 3,812	£ 1,437	£ 820	£ 1,500	£ 1,500	£ 1,500	Room hire, stat
Administration	£ 3,024	£ 2,822	Prsh Mntnce - cntrctr	£ 600	£ 3,509	£ 2,015	£ 3,000	£ 3,000	£ 3,000	Trees
Parish Maintenance	£ 1,641	£ 1,087	Prsh Mntnce - matris	£ 1,021	£ 2,971	£ 1,306	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 3,000	Gardening, Strn
Recreation Ground	£ 489	£ 285	Recreation Ground	£ 265	£ 933	£ 680	£ 1,250	£ 1,250	£ 1,250	Trees, seats, ir
Allotments	£ 280	£ 125	Allotments	£ 90	£ 255	£ 238	£ 250	£ 250	£ 250	Maintenance
Grants Given	£ 1,650	£ 900	Grant Giving	£ 100	£ 1,098	£ 875	£ 1,250	£ 1,300	£ 1,500	
VAT	£ 4,855	£ 5,503	Insurance	£ 590	£ 719	£ 746	£ 1,000	£ 832	£ 1,000	
Miscellaneous	£ 21,451	£ 31,809	Annual Subs	£ 86	£ 323	£ 440	£ 500	£ 500	£ 500	ICO, SLCC, DAF
Elections	£ -	£ -	Legal fees	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 500	£ 500	£ 500	
			Training	£ 89	£ 114	£ 402	£ 750	£ 750	£ 750	CILCA
			Garage rental	£ 668	£ 668	£ 668	£ -	£ -	£ -	
			New Cemetery	£ 775	£ 1,140	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
			Archaeological Dig	£ -	£ 2,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
			Elections	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
			Affordable Housing	£ -	£ -	£ 494	£ -	£ 7,099	£ -	
			New Play Equipment	£ -	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 2,500	£ 2,500	£ 2,500	
			Charging Points	£ -	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	
			General Reserves	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
			Defib donation	£ 2,371	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Total	£ 40,658	£ 51,893		£ 17,085	£ 24,389	£ 16,464	£ 22,000	£ 29,731	£ 25,910	

Income			Income						
Precept	£ 15,602	£ 15,739	Allotment rent	£ 220	£ 55	£ 280	£ 260	£ 280	
Cemetery	£ 23,340	£ -	Garage ground rent	£ 630	£ 140	£ 700	£ 1,100	£ 700	
Defibrillator	£ 1,250	£ 2,305	Wayleave	£ 41	£ -	£ 41	£ 122	£ 41	
Other Grants	£ 10,650	£ 3,265	Bank interest	£ 161	£ 494	£ 50	£ 510	£ 400	
Rents	£ 340	£ 1,060	Sale of mower/trailer	£ -	£ 200	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Deposits	£ 700	£ 50	CIL (S106)	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Bank Interest	£ 97	£ 20	Grant Funding credits	£ 2,310	£ 4,232	£ -	£ 5,046	£ -	
VAT refund	£ 1,725	£ 3,560	Any other income	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 73	£ -	
Miscellaneous	£ 529	£ 1,397	VAT reclaim	£ -	£ -	£ 400	£ 1,100	£ 400	
	£ 15,602	£ 15,739	Precept	£ 17,912	£ 17,426	£ 17,763	£ 20,529	£ 20,529	
Total	£ 69,835	£ 43,134	Total	£ 20,788	£ 22,884	£ 22,000	£ 28,740	£ 1,821	

Net Expenditure £ 24,089

Reserves	2019-20	2020-21		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
New Cemetery Funding	£ 31,487	£ 28,562	New Cemetery Funding	£ 28,562	£ 27,422	£ 27,422	£ 27,422	£ 27,422
Defibrillator Funding	£ 1,473	£ 2,341	Defibrillator Funding	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Night Landing Site Funding	£ 1,068	£ 1,068	Night Landing Site Fundi	£ 1,068	£ 1,068	£ 1,068	£ 1,068	£ 1,068
Covid Funding	£ -	£ 995	Covid Funding	£ 488	£ 488	£ 488	£ 488	£ 488
Play Equipment Funding	£ 4,000	£ 5,000	Play Equipment Fundin	£ 6,000	£ 7,000	£ 9,732	£ 9,732	£ 13,432
Tool Store Funding	£ 174	£ 1,500	Tool Store Funding	£ 2,700	£ -	£ 2,700	£ 2,700	£ -
Elections	£ -	£ -	Elections	£ 1,500	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 2,000
Ride-on Mower	£ 3,250	£ -	Allotment Deposits	£ 515	£ 515	£ 475	£ 450	£ 550
S106 Sheep Dip Purchase	£ 6,213	£ -	Arch. Dig Interp Board	£ 1,500	£ 1,500	£ 2,310	£ 2,310	£ 2,310
			Charging Points	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 2,000
			Affrdble Housing	£ -	£ 2,006	£ 2,006	£ 2,006	£ -
			Bank Balance 01-Apr-24	£ 57,537				£ 49,270
								General reserves 01-Apr-25
								£ 7,276

Precept for 2025-26

per Band D Household per year
Tax base (households)
Parish Council Income

To meet Budget

£55.74 increase + £6.85 per Band D
432.2 + £0.57 p/band d/mth
£24,089

Increase 14.00%

General Reserves at 31-Mar-25

£7,276

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