

THORVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Thorverton Parish Council held at the Memorial Hall, Silver St, Thorverton on Tuesday 13th May at 7pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Stuart Crang
Cllr Andrew Foster
Cllr John Hodge
Cllr Stephanie Shelton
Cllr Graham Sims
Cllr Bryanna Uglow

ABSENT

Cllr Andy Price (Vice-Chairman)

IN ATTENDANCE: District Cllr Rhys Roberts, one member of the public
Jim Roberts (Clerk and RFO)

1 Election of Chair

No Councillor was willing to be Chair of the Council for the coming year. Cllr Crang agreed to chair this meeting so that business could be transacted.

2 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Uglow is the nominated Councillor on the Thorverton Memorial Hall committee. Cllr Foster is the Chairman of the Thorverton Community Land Trust Board on which Cllr Uglow is the Parish Council's nominated Board member. Cllr Hodge declared he was a member of the TCLT.

3 Apologies

Cllr Price was unable to attend the meeting due to commitments elsewhere.

4 Councillor Changes including Co-option

Council **NOTED** Cllr Marshall has resigned since the previous meeting. The potential Cllr could not attend the meeting tonight. Council recognises the need for advertising as there are currently three vacancies. There have been some difficulties with the Facebook administration which Cllrs Shelton & Foster will resolve.

5 Public Open Session

A member of the public asked if there would be an advert and hoped the Council would seek younger people to have a more balanced group. Council advised that there was a regular advert in Focus and Facebook would be used as well. It is always hoped younger people will come forward but there has been little interest in joining the Council from any resident recently and there was unlikely to be a choice.

[One member of the public left at 7:20pm]

6 Minutes

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2025. The Chairman duly signed them. **Proposed** Cllr Foster **Seconded** Cllr Sims

7 External Reports

7.1 County Councillor

No Cllr present.

7.2 District Councillor

D/Cllr Roberts thanked Cllr Foster for the 4 years he had been Chairman through a difficult period. He recognised Cllr Foster's contribution and

.....
Chair
Initials

leadership and noted the achievements he had made.

D/Cllr Roberts suggested a 6-month tenure for Chairman and reaching out to the community to seek new Cllrs.

Following the DCC elections there is now no-overall majority. The LibDem party has the largest number of seats. Cllr Steve Keable is the new C/Cllr for this ward.

He thanked Cllr Foster for attending the multi-Parish meeting with D/Cllr Gwen Duschene, her sole role is to improve the lot of PCs and he encouraged the PC to develop this relationship.

For the third successive year the Governing Body have appointed a LibDem Chair to the scrutiny committee. This is against the usual practice where this committee's chair is usually independent of the ruling party of a District Council.

D/Cllr Roberts was sad to report the sudden death of Frank Letch, Chairman of MDDC. He had enjoyed working with him and they got on extremely well. The new Chair is Cllr Gordon Czapiewski who was Vice-Chair.

MDDC Financial Accounts for 2023-24 have been audited and signed off by Bishop Fleming.

Full-time carers are now invited to take up free membership of the Leisure Centres.

Council raised the issue of a dead tree at the edge of Lynch Close which is threatening to fall into a resident's garden. D/Cllr Roberts said he is right to be concerned and there is a risk to the property. He has emailed MDDC's Tree Officer and understands that the car park is DCC Land. Council advised that the car park used to belong to the Rural District Council so would now fall to MDDC. Council advised that the boundaries at the back of Broadlands is shared with the neighbouring landowner. D/Cllr Roberts will continue with this.

[D/Cllr Roberts left at 7:35pm]

7.3 Saturday Market

Council **NOTED** Cllr Price's report and will address the concerns about pavements below (contractor's work).

8 Projects

8.1 New Cemetery incl. Litter Bin

Council has previously been advised that Highways had no issue with hearses stopping in Dark Lane once or twice a year, although this advice dates back some years. There is now only one space left in the churchyard. Council confirmed the earlier resolution that the planning application will be submitted exactly as before.

Council **RESOLVED** the Working Group to speak to the NHO (copy to C/Cllr) to discuss the Highways impact of the new cemetery **Prop** Cllr Hodge **Sec** Cllr Shelton

Council discussed changing the bin type at Dark Lane to an 'any litter' and moving the dog bin to Lynch Close. This would incur additional cost for the Council both to buy and install the new bin and for the clearing of the bin each year. Clerk will ask MDDC what the criteria are for number of bins.

8.2 Subscription to Rural Services Network

Postponed to June so Cllr Price can address.

8.3 Website and email addresses

Clerk will research this with a view to identifying obligations and costs. Several suppliers will be researched.

8.4 Grants to Hospiscare & Millenium Green Trust & Jubilee Green

8.4.1 Hospiscare

Council **RESOLVED** to donate £100 to this cause. Cllrs Shelton and Uglow abstained as they believe that Hospiscare don't operate in our area (they believe our area is covered by Marie Curie). **Prop** Cllr Hodge **Sec** Cllr Foster

8.4.2 Millenium Green Trust

Council discussed the use and funding of the MGT. Due to the budget limitations on the Council for Grant Giving Council **RESOLVED** to donate

.....
Chair
Initials

£50 to this cause. Cllr Shelton voted against as she believes this cause deserves a larger donation. **Prop** Cllr Hodge **Sec** Cllr Foster.

8.4.3 Jubilee Gardens

Council is unable to give money to the school. Clerk will speak to the Jubilee Green volunteer to find a way to sort this out.

8.5 Litter Picking equipment

There are more litter pickers in the shed. The clerk will supply one to the volunteer. Council is very grateful for all the work that she does collecting litter (which is a lot).

8.6 Jubilee Green Barrier

Clerk will seek advice from a local supplier and a quote for the work on this barrier.

8.7 Dinneford St Water Trough

Council is confident that the trough does not belong to any of the houses. Clerk will seek a contractor to complete this work. Cllr Shelton will approach an appropriate person.

8.8 Hedge beyond Bullen St

Council asked the clerk to write to the owners of the Old Pound asking for them to indicate when they will be able to cut the hedge back.

8.9 Planning 25/00297/FULL Rull Orchard EX5 5LN Class Q Building APPROVED
Council **NOTED** this decision.

9 Recreation Ground

9.1 Financial Report

Nil expenditure for April 2025.

9.2 Basketball Hoop & Surface

Council approved of the start date and water can be accessed from the changing rooms or the WI Hut.

9.3 Damage from footballs & grant for nets

Council does not have an update at this time.

9.4 Lottery Bid

Council is encouraged that the new criteria that the National Lottery Communities Grant use makes funding more likely and looks forward to feedback on their previous refusal.

10 Grounds Maintenance

10.1 Contractor

Work for the next month: Grass cutting, including the verges to Leonard Square.

Cleaves Close needs cutting both sides and the circle.

Spraying the cobbles and do general weedkilling around the ring of Cleaves Close

There is a dead tree and a tree growing under the wall at the Old Rectory. Clerk will advise the management committee.

Path from Barliabins to Courbet Close is overgrown.

The cobbles will also be attended to this month.

11 Council Administration

11.1 Election of Vice-Chair and Allocation of Working Party Roles

Postponed to next meeting

11.2 Review of Council Orders and Policies

Postponed to next meeting

11.3 Financial Authorisation

The clerk will shortly have online access to the NatWest account to correct all the details for transfer to Unity Trust bank.

Council **RESOLVED** to raise the purchase threshold requiring three quotes to £3,000 in recognition of the difficulty getting quotes, particularly contractors. **Prop** Cllr Foster **Sec** Cllr Hodge

11.4 Dates and Times of Meetings

.....
Chair
Initials

Council **RESOLVED** to have meetings on the following days and start at 7:30pm to assist those who are working:

Tuesday 10th June 2025

Tuesday 15th July 2025

Tuesday 9th September 2025

Tuesday 14th October 2025

Tuesday 11th November 2025

Tuesday 9th December 2025

Tuesday 13th January 2026

Tuesday 10th February 2026

Tuesday 10th March 2026

Tuesday 14th April 2026

Tuesday 12th May 2026

12 Accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

12.1.1 Accounts for 2024-2025

Council will review the information for the next meeting.

12.2.2 Budget Review 2024-25

Council will review the information for the next meeting.

12.2-12.5 AGAR

Postponed to the next meeting

13 Finance

13.1 Bank balance

Council **NOTED** the current balance of £66,119.83 (1st May 2025)

13.2 Payments

Council **RESOLVED** make the following payments: **Prop** Cllr Hodge **Sec** Cllr Shelton

Council **RESOLVED** to thanks Cllr Marshall for all his work for the Council over so many years as handyman and councillor.

13.2.1 Mr C Marshall Tidy-Up Day expenses	£	90.60
--	---	--------------

13.2.2 Arthur J Gallagher Insurance Brokers Ltd Annual premium	£	843.07
---	---	---------------

13.2.3 Grounds Maintenance Work in April	£	615.34
---	---	---------------

13.2.4 22 Sports Ltd Basketball Hoop invoice 0160	£	1,990.20
--	---	-----------------

13.2.5 J P Roberts Clerk pay for April	£	517.66
---	---	--------

Reimbursement for play equipment repair materials	£	5.50
---	---	------

Reimbursement for 'No HGV' signs and fixings	£	83.24	£	606.40
--	---	-------	---	---------------

14 Next Meeting

The next meeting is due on Tuesday 10th June 2025 7:30pm

The meeting closed at 9:09pm.

Signed Date
Cllr Chair

THORVERTON RECREATION GROUND TRUST

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1 Annual Report - From the Chairman

Taken from the minutes of the year

Taken from the

2 Annual Financial Report

£2,761

3 Work for 2025-26

Ply Area revamp and

Declarations of Interest

The Chairman is the Chairman 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 was a member of the TCLT.

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

2 Co-option of Councillor

Postponed to the next meeting.

3 Apologies

Cllr Crang could not attend as he is overseas.

4 Minutes

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2025. The Chairman duly signed them.

Proposed Cllr Price **Seconded** Cllr Hodge

5 Public Open Session

No issues raised

6 Reports To receive reports from:

6.1 County Cllr Squires

C/Cllr Squires reported the following:

DCC has put forward 5 options for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) with a view to achieving the Government's suggested population size of 500,000+ for unitary authorities. Plymouth, Exeter and Torbay areas are looking to expand to achieve this

target as well. The issue of Council Tax varies across the proposed new unitary councils.

DCC Highways advise that white lines on the roads will be tackled across the County with priority for A roads and gritting routes. It helps considerably to report issues on DCC's Report-a-Problem webpage. All villages in her ward have the same issue. Leonard Square hasn't been adopted by DCC until the developer completes the necessary work. Pressure needs to be put on the developer to complete the white lines, ensure the lighting functions and the speed limit is moved.

Council asked about repairing a blocked drain that dates back to 2021 near the old railway bridge. C/Cllr Squires has been advised that this needs a big scheme to sort out the drainage connections between Silver St and Hulk Lane. She believes a scheme has been drawn up, but it is very difficult to predict the time this will take.

The Chairman presented a bouquet to thank C/Cllr Squires

6.2 District Cllr Roberts

D/Cllr Roberts reported the following:

Earlier today he was informed of the very sad sudden death of Cllr Frank Letch, Chairman of MDDC. There will be a condolence book set up.

He thanked the Chairman for attending the joint Parishes meeting which D/Cllr Gwen Duchesne attended. She will be a useful contact with her responsibility for Parishes. County Council elections will take place on 1st May, candidates will be notified soon.

A business drop-in day was held at MDDC which was successful

The leisure service Active Mid-Devon is now live which makes memberships and bookings much easier. Memberships are higher than they've ever been.

All Parish clerks will have enforcement training now that two Enforcement Officers have been appointed at MDDC.

The deadline for LGC is in November and the plans for Devon are not firm at the moment. Seven of the eight district Councils are in agreement with Exeter City Council being the exception. ECC would like to be a unitary Council but would need the populations of East Devon, Teignbridge and Mid-Devon

The expected future organisation is 3 unitaries for Devon:

Plymouth,

Torridge, west Devon, south Hams and Torbay,

Exeter, ND MD ED & Teignbridge

Government is very keen on Mayoral authorities and would prefer that Devon & Cornwall were a single authority. Mayors will have significant powers once installed

D/Cllr Roberts welcomes the change and looks forward to seeing how other regions of the country who are further along with their process.

There is no funding for these changes from national Government.

6.3 Saturday Market

No market since the last meeting (next one is in four days' time).

7 Projects

7.1 Affordable Housing & MDDC Call for Sites (CfS)

[Chairman called this item forward to before item 2]

D/Cllr Roberts gave details of the CfS which went to landowners in March. This is because a significant increase in the housing targets from Government (now 560 new homes per year for 5 years). There is no guarantee of planning permission but once the CfS is complete MDDC's Local Plan will be updated to reflect the increased housing target.

The Church Commissioners (ChCmrs) have advised of the sites they have put forward to MDDC. The sites they have put forward were shared with the meeting. Council is also aware that an option has been signed with one landowner to develop a farmer's field. Council cannot confirm that the full results of the CfS will be available, but D/Cllr Roberts will enquire.

Council will be ready to take do more as and when t he Local Plan is updated and when planning permissions are sought. Council has no powers in this matter, it is only a consultee to permissions. MDDC is currently the Local Planning Authority which makes the planning decisions.

Council understands that the proposed Culm Valley development near the M5 Junction 28 will meet a good proportion of the MDDC target.

D/Cllr Roberts reminded Council that the revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework would be key to ongoing development plans nationwide. He offered to help the village understand the issue in any way he could. He hoped that the message could be cascaded from Council meetings as this is regularly discussed.

[Two members of the public left at 7:14pm]

The Thorverton Community Land Trust AGM will take place on 16th Wednesday April.

7.2 Secure Cycle racks at Leigh Gardens

Council considered alternative locations and whether students could use the existing rack in the Quarry Car Park. Cllr Price will advise.

7.3 New Cemetery

Council has signed the contract and title deed and is waiting completion from the vendors.

[D/Cllr Roberts left at 8:05pm]

7.4 Rooks

Cllr Price has spoken to the school and local residents. The school do not have a problem with rooks during the school day at the moment. Council is concerned that pollarding trees would only lead to them nesting elsewhere in the village. If the school needs help from the Parish Council they should contact the clerk.

[Two members of the public left at 8:11pm]

Prop Cllr Crang Sec Cllr Uglow
Council reviewed this

8 Recreation Ground

8.1 Financial Report for March

£5.50 spent on materials for the tunnel

8.2 Signage

Cllr Price explained that he had seen information signs at other play parks giving important information. Council discussed the importance of dissuading dogs and there is no need for an address. Cllr Price and the clerk will revise the sign without the address and the reference to A & E.

8.3 Damage from footballs & grant for nets

Council that this project will be led by the Thorverton Football Club and use the s106 funds available at MDDC.

8.4 Basketball Hoop

Council **RESOLVED** to accept quote two as recommended by the working party. Cllr Sims abstained from this vote.

Prop Cllr Uglow Sec Cllr Price

8.5 Lottery Bid

Council location nothing on a Sunday, don't qualify for any of the Waste Contractors funding – geographically fall in the middle

8.6 Dogs

This needs to be reminded to the football club as the main offenders are away supporters. The Chairman will also remind residents to not bring dogs onto the Recreation ground.

9 Grounds Maintenance

9.1 Contractor

Work for the month:

Council thanked Cllr Marshall for organising the Tidy-Up Day which was success.

Grass cutting and spraying this month. The entrances to Cleaves close need doing and these will be on his list.

10 Finance

10.1 Bank balance

Council **NOTED** the balance of £58,364.27 (£37,776.43 + £20,587.84) at 28th Feb 2025.

10.2 Payments

Council **RESOLVED** to make the payments 10.2.1-4 and 10.2.6:

Prop Cllr Shelton **Sec** Cllr Marshall

10.2.1 Information Commissioner's Office Annual Fee (direct debit) £ 52.00

10.2.2 GX Accountancy Payroll services Jan-Mch 2025 invoice 6252 £ 63.00

10.2.3 DALC Annual subs incl NALC Affiliation invoice 6642 £ 418.58

10.2.4 Force Cancer Charity Donation £ 100.00

10.2.6 HMRC Clerk PAYE for January – March 2025 £ 400.77

Council **RESOLVED** to make the correct payment to the clerk of £546.46 (not £686.26 as listed on the agenda).

Prop Cllr Marshall **Sec** Cllr Hodge

10.2.5 J P Roberts - clerk pay (March)	£ 476.46	
Reimbursement MDDC Green Bin Renewal	£ 70.00	£ 546.46

11 Meetings

11.1 The next meeting will be the Annual Council Meeting on Tuesday 13th May 2025 beginning at 7pm and include the Recreation Trust AGM.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:56pm.

Signed Date
Cllr Andrew Foster, Chairman

.....
Chair
Initials