

THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING

Tuesday 23rd July 2024 at 7.30pm in The Norman Wodson Pavilion

PRESENT: Cllr Steve Bosson (SB); Cllr Deryck Dipper (DD); Cllr Lynn Palmer (LP);
Cllr Kim Saban (KS); Cllr Martin Spackman (MS) (Vice-Chair)
1 members of the public
Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

In the absence of the Chairman, Vice-Chair Cllr Martin Spackman presided. He welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm

ACTION

24.126 Apologies for absence

Parish Councillors: Chairman Cllr Brita-May Hawes: Unwell. Cllr Natasha Smyth: Holiday **ACCEPTED**
Others: Natalie Taylor (Foxley Group)

24.127 Declarations of Interest and dispensations

1. Interests: **None declared**
2. Written requests for dispensations for declarable pecuniary interests: **None**
3. Consideration of requests for dispensations: **None**

24.128 Approval of Minutes

1. **RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the 18th June 2024 Ordinary Parish Council Meeting as drafted.** The presiding Chairman signed the Minutes. **Clerk**
2. **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Electorate, 21st May 2024: Not available** **Clerk**
3. **Items not covered on the Agenda: None**

Public Forum: The meeting was not suspended for comments.

24.129 Police report

No report received. Cllr Martin Spackman said that commercial fly tipping remains a serious concern with up to 30-tonne loads being dumped on roads and elsewhere. Anyone witnessing suspicious HGVs, particularly at night or very early morning, should report immediately to the police. It was noted that PCSO Karen Broad is retiring from Hertfordshire and going to Norfolk this week.

Regarding a parishioner's complaint about WLFC attendees parking on the pavement, the Clerk said the police have been advised but no response received to date. It was noted that the Parish Council has no powers to police parking on public highways.

24.130 The Ware Charities

No report received.

24.131 Planning

1. **New applications: NONE**
2. **Applications received too late for the agenda and other planning matters**
 1. **Late applications: NONE**
 2. **Other planning matters:**
 1. **EHC request for High Cross S106 possibilities.** It was agreed to include as much as possible in the request: £10k land for car park at Wodson Pavilion; £7.5k for fencing same; £20k for groundwork same; £5k for drainage same; Wodson play area item "Ben Nevis" £8.5k; Thundridge VH £20k; HXVH £15k; AEDs £5k **Clerk**
 2. **1. Enforcement update AMLW:** Noted that Enforcement notice for No. 39 has been issued. No.1 to be followed up – Clerk to send Cllr Kim Saban information. Also noted that 8 Chestnut Grove has an Enforcement notice.
 2. **Enforcement investigation at Poplar Close:** It was agreed that the Clerk identify and pursue this further. **Clerk**

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3. **Stratstone Development:** Approach letter for land south of Cold Christmas Lane. Clerk
 It was agreed that the Clerk write to Stratstone to ask them to identify the specific piece of land they are enquiring about.

3. **Decision Notices.** *Noted as set out in the Planning Appendix A.* Clerk

24.132 Finance

Note: Copy of full Cashbook spreadsheets submitted for following items 1, 2 and 3

1. Cashbook Accounts to 30th June 2024

	Unity Bank	Saffron B/S	Total	
Cashbook Balance 31 st May	60,197.79	21,313.43		
Income to 30 th June	1,153.75	0.00		
Expenditure to 30 th June	2,404.40	0.00		
Transferred Unity to Saffron	30,000.00	30,000.00		
Cashbook balance 30 th June	28,947.14	51,313.43	80,260.57	Clerk

RESOLVED: To approve the Accounts as submitted to the Council.

2. Bank Reconciliation 30th June 2024

RESOLVED: To approve the bank reconciliation at 30th June 2024 as presented. Clerk

Cashbook and Unity Bank balance £28,947.14

Cashbook and Saffron B/S balance £51,313.43

Total £80,313.43

Cllr Marrin Spackman signed the reconciliation sheet

3. Performance against 2023/24 budget as at 30th June 2024

The Clerk presented a detailed breakdown of the performance against budget to 30th June.

Budget income: £53,105. Income to date £23,364. Year-end forecast £53,017

Budget net expenditure: £57,191. Net expenditure to date £6,537. Year-end forecast £62,916

Budget Year-end deficit: £-4,086 Forecast: £-9,899

RESOLVED: To approve the 2024/25 performance against budget to date as presented. Clerk

4. Payments for approval

All payments made under the General Power of Competence, LA 2011 s1(1)

	Gross	VAT incl
Valda Energy: Electricity 27/6-26/7	52.89	4.90
Clerk: Expenses July	23.05	
Clerk: Salary July	697.44	
HMRC: PAYE July	169.40	
HMRC: Employer's NIC contribution	15.02	
Broadmead Leisure: Play area inspection July	78.00	13.00
Everflow Water: Pavilion Water	34.64	
*Payplus: Payroll June (<i>invoice awaited – pay when received</i>)	36.94	6.16
*Zurich: street lights premium (<i>pay on receipt of invoice</i>)	92.95	
*HCC invoice 2020-21) <i>Agreed to offer to pay half, subject to</i>	1,177.41	196.23
*HCC invoice 2021-22) <i>Cllr Brita-May Hawes' arrangement at</i>	1,254.18	209.03
*HCC invoice 2022-23) <i>HCC meeting</i>	1,882.12	313.69
*HCC invoice 2023-24)	2,030.12	338.35

Clerk's note: Cllr Brita-May Hawes subsequently confirmed she is negotiating a nil or reduced payment with HCC.

See 24.132.7 below

RESOLVED: to approve payments as per the Clerk's list presented to the Council except for the six invoices* as noted.

5. Section 106 monies

1. Update on order for fencing and gates on Cold Christmas Lane Clerk
 Jackie Bruce said EHC appears to have lost the application and has requested it to be sent again so that the money can be paid to the Parish Council. The Clerk has resent the application and payment is now awaited.

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2. Additional quote for allotments improvements:
Farm & Country Fencing approach referred to Cllr Martin Spackman for additional quote. **MS/Clerk**
3. **Future S106 wish list:** Considered under 24.131.2.2.1 above

6. Highfield Nursery debt repayment status

Noted: The Clerk reported that £269 of the £4,165 remains outstanding. The debt continues to be paid off monthly, although financial difficulties resulted in only £10 being paid off in July. It was agreed to continue to accept these lower payments. The Clerk continues to follow up monthly. **RESOLVED: To accept the repayment position.**

Clerk

7. HCC Annual lighting outstanding invoices:

Cllr Brita-May Hawes met with Graham Baggott (Decreux) on 3rd July to discuss the issue of street light ownership and the outstanding HCC invoices. If the Parish Council do own the lights (still contested), then Graham Baggott to provide costs for transfer of ownership to HCC for the Parish Council to consider the way forward. Implications of lights ownership, insurance, maintenance etc vs transfer to HCC will then be considered by the Parish Council. Cllr Hawes has not agreed for the invoices to be paid yet and has suggested to Graham Baggott that a line is drawn under the outstanding invoices and that these are cancelled. Graham Baggott will discuss this with Peter Simpson and revert back to the council. Councillors agreed to offer to pay 50% of the outstanding total bill, subject to the outcome of Graham Baggott's response to Cllr Hawes suggestion.

**Clerk
BMH**

8. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

- 1. External Auditor:** The Clerk reported the AGAR was submitted on time and receipt has been acknowledged.
- 2. Exercise of Public Rights:** The Clerk noted that the period for the Exercise of Public Rights expires on Friday 9th August.

Additional items:

(i) It was noted that £30,000 had been transferred from the Unity Trust Bank current account into the Saffron Building Society savings account as agreed in June.

(ii) The Clerk reported that Unity Trust Bank has advised that a tariff review has been actioned because the value of transactions in 2023/24 exceeded the £100k threshold, meaning that in addition to the £6 per month service charge (tariff T1), every transaction will attract a £0.15 charge from 18th September 2024 (tariff T2). The Clerk said he has asked for this to be reconsidered because the high transaction activity was in a limited 2-3 month period in the summer of 2023 that was due to one-off refurbishment costs for the pavilion. It does not signal an ongoing change to the normal account activity. Unity Bank has agreed to reconsider the tariff change in light of an exceptional circumstance.

Clerk

24.133 Defibrillator ownership and maintenance

- 1. WLFC defibrillator installation:** This has been completed by WLFC at their liability.
- 2. Community defibrillators:** It was agreed to write to Carrie Smith to draw attention to the fact that the funds held on behalf of the community are being depleted and that more donations are required to keep the fund viable.

Clerk

24.134 Cuttlefish Website contract

The change to a .gov domain and email address is with Cllr Brita-May Hawes. She has asked for information from councillors to enable the change to be progressed.

**BMH/
ALL**

24.135 Norman Wodson Pavilion

1. Chair tubing inserts purchase and fitting: update

Cllr Steve Bosson reported that about 50% of the chairs have now been upgraded, which is adequate for immediate usage. The remaining chairs need to be done and for the screws to be checked for safety. This is quite labour intensive, and how and when to do this is to be reviewed at the September meeting.

SB

2. Fire Risk Assessment update

(i) Item 1: PAT Testing: With Cllr Natasha Smyth.

NS

(ii) Item 2: Heaters maintenance and testing: With Cllr Natasha Smyth for report on Manufacturer's instructions to be checked for maintenance and testing requirements.

NS

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(iv) Item 4: Fire blanket and extinguisher location: It was agreed to ask Ofstrand to resolve when they undertake the snagging issues. DD

3. RABI: acquisition of additional land:

The Clerk reported that he has received no further information or response to date from RABI. Clerk

Additional items:

- Quote from Gigaclear to put services into the Pavilion and obtaining an official post code for the Pavilion. With Cllr Natasha Smyth – no update received. NS
- The snagging list has been compiled for the meeting with Ofstrand on 30th August. Kevin Lake will be advised of the issues. DD/SB
- It was agreed to ask Cllr Natahsa Smyth to arrange for the floor to be cleaned. Concerns were expressed that the flooring is marked and looking scruffy. Care to be taken that the floor is cleaned in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Clerk/DD/NS

24.136 Recreation Areas

1. **Play area: Safety Report.** The Broadmead July report was received. It was noted that a "U" bolt on the Cradle seat chain was slightly bent and was repaired on site. The July invoice from Broadmead reflects the £15 cost of the remedial work.

2. **WLFC new lease.** Cllr Deryck Dipper reported that a site meeting with WLFC has been arranged in late August when the issues will be discussed. DD

3. **Replacement of broken gate and post:** Cllr Martin Spackman quoted £200 for the necessary work, which was agreed by the Council. MS

4. **Additional WLFC container:** This was agreed in principle but with the strict condition that the surface of the football pitches must not be damaged by the lorry conveying it into position. Cllr Martin Spackman emphasised that the ground is too wet and soft for that to happen this year and it should be deferred until conditions are suitable. This to be explained to WLFC with the understanding that any damage caused to the playing surface would have to be repaired at WLFC expense and that the repair could render the pitch unplayable for a football season. Cllr Deryck Dipper to convey this to WLFC. DD

Additional items:

(i) **Gigaclear:** It was noted that the Gigaclear has installed the flying cable across the corner of the field as agreed. Cllr Deryck Dipper asked that this be minuted. Clerk

(ii) **Safeguarding:** Cllr Deryck Dipper drew attention to the fact that Zurich's insurance quote for the street lights referred to a general clause regarding safeguarding policies and procedures. The Clerk said he had sought guidance from both Zurich and HAPTC. Zurich confirmed that the provision of facilities in a public space, eg the children's play area, does not constitute an activity or service provided by the Council and therefore there is no safeguarding obligation. HAPTC said the responsibility for safeguarding rests with each council for it to provide policies and training for any activity or service that might involve interaction with a vulnerable person. Since it is difficult to foresee and therefore cover any eventuality, it was agreed to adopt a general policy that the Parish Council will not provide a blanket safeguarding procedure, but will have a policy that anyone who considers themselves as vulnerable should make this known when interfacing with Council members and should preferably provide their own chaperon if necessary. This policy to be formalised at a later meeting as well as determining how it should be covered in the allotment tenancy agreement. Clerk

24.137 Allotments

1. 2024 Tenancy update

1. The current register position was noted. ALL

2. Plot 26 fence proposal: Noted that approval for the proposal was given and that SPACE's rent will be suspended for 2025 and 2026 in lieu of being unable to upgrade the access lane. The Clerk to advise SPACE and Plot 26 tenant. Clerk

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- Plot 35 & 36 extension proposal for Plot 35: It was agreed to grant the tenant's extension request. The Clerk to advise. Clerk
- Working Group update: Confirmed next on-site meeting is at 9.30am on 12th August. AWG

Additional item: The Clerk noted that he has not been advised of the latest plot arrangements, eg for Plot 11 back and front, and for Plot 41 and therefore the necessary invoices have not been sent. The Clerk to confirm the position with Cllr Brita-May Hawes and then raise invoices. Clerk/BMH

2. Tenancy issue update and course of action

At 9.20pm it was **RESOLVED: To exclude press and public under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, excluding press and public.**

- Update on legal proceedings and CMC meeting: The Council was updated on the current position for the rescheduled CMC meeting on 18th September.
- Delegated powers: Upon the request and advice of the solicitor it was **RESOLVED to grant delegated powers to the Clerk and under him, Cllrs Brita-May Hawes and Martin Spackman (being the Chair and Vice-Chair), to agree any necessary legal matters that the solicitor might raise over the August holiday period and before the next Parish Council meeting on 17th September.** Clerk/BMH/MS

The meeting was restored to normal order at 9.54pm

24.138 Highways, Footways and Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- North Drive resurfacing:
No definitive update. Loose inspection cover outside number 17 will be attended to. Clerk
- TRO 25478 road closure notice of High Road, High Cross was noted.
- Public Rights of Way. Noted: Nicholas Maddex's report that Bridleway 24 and 54 are now mown and that FP55 is on the mowing schedule.

Other matter: The Clerk noted that Cllr David Andrews has not yet responded to the request for his Locality Budget support for tidying the unkempt area opposite the White Horse. Clerk

Other matters:

24.139 County and District Councillor report

No report received.

24.140 Urgent and other matters not listed on the agenda

None noted.

24.141 Correspondence: noted as per the agenda

- Parishioner: Bridleways and Footpaths in need of clearing (24.138.3)
- Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership (HNRP): Engagement campaign
- Farm & Country Fencing: introduction (24.137.1.2)
- Stratstone Developments: looking for development land (24.131.2.2.3)
- Complaint about football attendees parking on the road (24.129)

24.142 Matters for future agendas

- North Drive:
 - Update: Removal of lamp post W3. *No progress to report.*
 - Update: Ransom Strip boundary/road kerb installation when road resurfaced.
- Other matters: To obtain an official postcode for the Pavilion and then to get a price from Gigaclear to get internet services laid on to the building. *This is currently in hand.* NS

Clerk

BMH
SB/EHDC

24.143 Date and venue of the next Parish Meeting

Tuesday 17th September at 7.30pm in the Norman Wodson Pavilion.

Future 2024 Ordinary Parish Council meetings: 22nd October; 19th November

Clerk

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The Vice-Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.03pm

Signed.....

Dated.....

APPENDIX A

Planning decisions and awaited notices

3/24/1012/HH	58 Ermine Street. Rear conservatory style extension. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
3/24/0587/HH 3/24/0588/LBC	Sawtrees Manor, Cold Christmas Lane. Replace existing single storey extension with new; Install flue for wood burner. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
3/25/0352/FUL	Land adj to Wellcroft, Wadesmill: Erect 3 three-bed dwellings. <i>The Parish Council objected to this application</i>	Awaited
3/24/0284/OUT	Land West of High Road, High Cross: Up to 36 dwellings <i>The Parish Council objected to this application</i>	Awaited
3/24/0091/OUT	Land East of High Road, High Cross: Up to 95 dwellings. <i>The Parish Council objected to this application</i>	Awaited
3/23/0981/FUL	Land Off Poles Lane: Change of use from stables and paddock to C3 residential. Erection of 1 detached 5 bedroom dwelling with detached triple garage. LPA Appeal: 24/00032/REFUSE <i>The Parish Council objected to this application</i>	APPEAL decision awaited
3/22/2406/FUL	Land North and East of Ware (Ware2): Hybrid application <i>The Parish Council raised serious concerns</i>	Awaited
PL/0343/23	Cemex Westmill Quarry - Variation. <i>Parish Council had no comment</i>	Unknown

Planning Enforcement notifications

E/24/0090/ENF	39 Arthur Martin Leake Way: Possible breach of condition 4 of 3/23/0109/HH use of garage as separate residential dwelling	Awaited
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