

THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING

Tuesday 19th March 2024 at 7.30pm in The Norman Wodson Pavilion

PRESENT: Cllr Steve Bosson (SB), Cllr Deryck Dipper (DD), Cllr Brita-May Hawes (Chair) (BMH),
Cllr Lynn Palmer (LP), Cllr Kim Saban (KS), Cllr Natasha Smyth (NS),
Cllr Martin Spackman (Vice-Chair) (MS)

4 members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.35pm

ACTION

24.040 Apologies for absence

Parish Councillors: None – all present

Others: Bruce Shearman

24.041 Declarations of Interest and dispensations

1. Interests: Cllr Martin Spackman: Pecuniary interest – payment for approval **ACCEPTED**

Cllr Brita-May Hawes: Non pecuniary re Land East of High Cross **ACCEPTED**

2. Written requests for dispensations for declarable pecuniary interests: **None**

3. Consideration of requests for dispensations: **None**

24.042 Approval of Minutes

1. **RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the 20th February 2024 Parish Council Meeting.**

The Chairman signed the amended Minutes.

Clerk

2. **Items not covered on the Agenda: None**

At 7.40pm the meeting was suspended for public comments

Two parishioners gave their reasons for opposing planning application 3/24/0352/HH at Wellcroft.

A parishioner asked for approval to smarten up the Parish Council's areas by the notice board in High Cross. Cllr David Andrews agreed to look at the nearby areas owned by HCC. In the current economic climate he thought it unlikely that HCC would make any contribution or that it would rank very highly on their priority list.

The comments were noted to be taken into consideration when the relevant subjects were considered later in the meeting.

At 7.50pm the meeting was called to order

24.043 Village Life Magazine

Cllr Kim Saban agreed to write a report for the May edition.

KS

24.044 Police report

The report for the area for February was received from PCSO Karen Broad.

Area Crime Report February 2024

*NO REPORTED CRIMES – Does not include reports for domestic incidents.

HIGH CROSS: Theft from dwelling x1; theft from motor vehicle x 1

THUNDRIDGE: Criminal damage x 2; theft x1.

WADESMILL: *NO RECORDED CRIMES.

PCSO Karen Broad, East Herts Rural

24.045 **Ware Charities:** Bruce Shearman had no report but hoped to have one for the April meeting.

BS

24.046 Planning

1. **New Planning Applications**

3/24/0284/OUT	Land West of High Road, High Cross: Up to 36 dwellings
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Signed Date

2. Bank Reconciliation 28th February 2024

RESOLVED: To approve the bank reconciliation at 28th February 2024 as presented.

Clerk

Cllr Martin Spackman signed the reconciliation sheet

3. Performance against 2023/24 budget as at 13th March 2024

The Clerk presented a detailed breakdown of the performance against budget to 13th March.

Budget income £50,951. Actual income to date £55,362. Forecast £55,412

Budget expenditure £220,241. Actual expenditure to date £217,183. Forecast £218,786

RESOLVED: To approve the 2023/24 performance against budget as presented.

Clerk

4. Finance Report

Cllr Deryck Dipper presented the following report

1. Introduction

This report covers:

- Final Budget 2024/25
- Electricity Tariff 2024/27
- Gigaclear Cable
- Insurance value of Wodson Pavilion
- Ware Lions lease
- VAT claims
- Wodson Field grass cutting

2. Final Budget 2024/25

The budget and precept for 2024/25 was agreed at the January meeting. Councillor Dipper and the Clerk have reviewed the figures again and have concluded there is no significant change required to the previously approved budget for 2024/25.

3. Electricity Tariff 2024/27

At the November meeting it was agreed that Councillor Dipper would place a contract* for electricity supply through the Council's broker Love Energy. This was duly completed on 14th December 2023. The details were duly circulated to all councillors and approved. The contract details are shown below for approval in the minutes and are with supplier Valda.

Your new tariff – Valda
Account number 218187
Customer Ref No. 158086

Tariff 1

Day Rate: 25.240 p/kWh

Standing Charge: 49.000 p/day

Meter Reference: S038012021012765601456

Supplier Name: Valda

Tariff Name: Valda Energy 3UR_2.10.36 Single Rate LSC

Fuel Type: Electric

Term Length: 3 years

Contract Start Date: 27/03/2024

Agreed payment method: Monthly Variable Direct Debit

Estimated Annual Consumption: 5839 kWh

Price shown does not include any pre-agreed direct debit discount

**The Clerk pointed out that a councillor signing the contract in the absence of the Clerk/RFO will have been in breach of the Financial Regulations. The Clerk to explain the circumstances to the auditor.*

Clerk

RESOLVED: To approve the Valda contract details as set out above.

There remains outstanding action on how to open an account with Valda in the name of the Council (not an individual) and telephone calls have been made to the broker Love Energy. An update to follow.

DD

4. Gigaclear Cable

Councillors will recall Gigaclear attended the October meeting to advise on their plans for roll out of faster broadband. When completing works in Thundridge they wish to string a cable across the NW corner of the Council's Wodson Field from the telegraph pole on the pavement opposite Maltons to the telegraph pole 30m down Cold Christmas Lane.

They wish the Council to sign an agreement but versions supplied so far are not acceptable as the Council retains some damage obligations. Gigaclear are prepared to negotiate so the three key points are:

- No vehicles to come on site.
- No lopping or cutting back any of the Council's trees.
- Council not to be liable for any damage to the cable howsoever caused – the Council cannot be responsible for any actions of its assignees or tenants or members of the public – this maybe a sticking point.

If Gigaclear are prepared to accept these terms Council is requested to approve the completion of such an agreement. A site map showing the line of the cable is attached.

RESOLVED: To approve the agreement subject to Gigaclear accepting the Parish Council's terms in full. It was noted that a peppercorn rent is actually a nil payment.

5. Insurance Value of Wodson Pavilion

Following the refurbishment works it is recommended that the Council reviews its insured values for Wodson Pavilion. Zurich normally recommend values are checked every 3 – 5 years. This can be done by reference to building quotes or by employing a surveyor. The Council did receive a builder's quote for a complete rebuild in 2021 but did not pursue it as it was too expensive. However it is a useful guide to a value for complete replacement as follows:

The estimate dates from June 2021 and may not include the canopy and Ware Lions door but that's probably minor detail. This estimate is within the Zurich 3 - 5 year timescale.

Estimate with VAT as below	£
Rebuild total cost with base	298,500
Add provision for canopy etc	6,500
Revised total	305,000
RPI 3 years Jan 2021 - Jan 2024 (378 - 294.6 ÷ 83.4 = 28.3%)	
Add 28.3%	<u>86,315</u>
Total at Jan 2024 prices	391,315
Add provision for demolition and clearance Say 30%	<u>117,395</u>
TOTAL INSURABLE VALUE	<u>508,710</u>

This sum does not include reinstating damage to the play area at the rear of the building and adding on the canopy and new external door and replacement the figure could become £550k? So as a round sum the Council should consider insuring for up to £600k as an extra provision for construction inflation?

Assuming Council agreement to an insurance value of around £600k the Zurich has been contacted for a quote and they have replied saying this value would increase the renewal premium by £115.46 to £1121.14.

The Council is requested to approve the insurance renewal with this higher value for Wodson Pavilion and the increase in insurance premium as above.

RESOLVED: To increase the pavilion insured value to £600k and to renew the insurance with Zurich for one year at the increased premium of £1,121.14

Clerk

6. Ware Lions lease

Ware Lions are seeking to pay the lease rent for Wodson Field for the current season. The

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current rent is £2,220 and is due to rise by RPI. The Council is requested to approve sending an invoice for the current season. Ware Lions also wish to start discussions in respect of renewing the lease. The current lease term is 5 years expiring September 2025, but the football club need a season's gap to ensure they have pitches available well in advance. The Council is requested to approve entering discussions after the end of this season.

RESOLVED: To cap the RPI increase on the 2024 Ware Lions lease at 5% as a one-off discount for 2024 only, ie £2,220 plus 5% = £2,331

Clerk

7. VAT reclaims

The outstanding three VAT claims for 2022/23, 2023 April to July and 2023 September to December have been posted separately to HMRC.

DD/Clerk

8. Wodson Field grass cutting

Bullards have submitted an invoice for 2023 and a proposal for 2024. The price per cut has risen by 6% from £111.39 to £118.07 plus VAT. The Council is requested to approve entering into an agreement with Bullards for the 2024 season.

RESOLVED: To enter into an agreement with Bullards for 16 cuts at £118.07 plus VAT per cut for 2024.

Clerk

5. Payments for approval

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

Clerk

	Gross	VAT incl
Stewart Bullard: Wodson Field 16 cuts 2023	2,138.69	356.45
E.ON: Electricity February	240.83	40.14
GovResources: Planning consultancy 3/24/0091/OUT	1,890.00	315.00
Chubb Fire & Security: Gold4Plan agreement	70.92	11.82
Clerk reimburse: MS365 licence (50% shared payment)	39.99	
Clerk reimburse: office stationery	16.00	
Tracy Clarke Tree Consultancy: Tree survey	864.00	144.00
Zurich Municipal: Insurance 2024/25	1,121.14	
Martin Spackman: cutting west boundary allotments hedge	120.00	
Clerk: salary March	776.04	
HMRC: PAYE March	90.80	
HMRC: NIC Employer's contribution	15.02	
Clerk: expenses March	17.20	
Everflow Water: Water 16/4 – 15/5	31.37	
Broadmead Leisure: Play area inspection March	60.00	10.00
GovResources: Planning consultancy 3/24/0284/OUT	900.00	150.00

RESOLVED: to approve payments as per the Clerk's list presented to the Council.

Clerk

6. Section 106 monies

1. Simon Young quotes for fencing and gates on Cold Christmas Lane

RESOLVED: To confirm with Jackie Bruce that gates and fencing can be ordered now and that the S106 funding can be applied for before the work is done.

Clerk

RESOLVED: Subject to S106 funding confirmation, check with Simon Young (i) his lead time for supplying and fitting the gates and fencing (ii) and that subject to him providing a full specification for the gates and fencing, together with his terms.

Clerk

2. Quotes for allotments improvements

RESOLVED: To present two quotes to Jackie Bruce for approval to accept the cheapest quote. Upon approval, Clerk to place order.

Clerk

7. Highfield Nursery debt repayment status

Noted: The Clerk reported that £314 of the £4,165 remains outstanding. The debt continues to be paid off regularly at £50 per month, although the March payment has yet to be received. The Clerk continues to follow up monthly. **RESOLVED: To accept the repayment position.**

Clerk

8. AGAR Internal Auditor

It was noted that HAPTC Internal Auditor, Monika Duong, has been re-appointed for this year. The Clerk has made arrangements to meet with her via Zoom on 22nd April. The Clerk said he will endeavour to have an AGAR compliant Asset Register completed for the audit, as agreed in 2023.

Clerk

Clerk

9.	HCC Annual lighting: outstanding invoices for 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 The Clerk has yet to pursue ownership question.	Clerk
24.048	Norman Wodson Pavilion 1. Replacement toilet door hinges: Broken hinges have been replaced. 2. Chubb Fire & Safety recommendations 1. RESOLVED: To accept and implement the Chubb recommendations. 2. RESOLVED: To raise an order the Fire Risk Assessment for the Pavilion from Black & White Fire & Security as per their quote No. 33284 22/11/23. Cllr Steve Bosson and Cllr Natasha Smyth to arrange a suitable time. 3. RABI: acquisition of additional land The Clerk reported that he had written again to the RABI CEO and is still awaiting a response.	Clerk Clerk SB/NS Clerk
24.049	Recreation Areas 1. Play area: Safety Report. The Broadmead March report was received and noted: No action required. 2. Cllr Natasha Smyth is arranging the purchase of some "No Dogs Allowed" signs. 3. Gigaclear broadband line request: Dealt with under 24.047.4.4 above.	NS
24.050	Allotments 1. 1. 2024 Tenancy Agreements It was noted that two tenants have yet to pay their rent. The Clerk to send reminders. 2. Working Group's inspection report, 16 th March The report was considered and it was RESOLVED: That the Clerk write to seven tenants requiring action to be taken on their plots. 2. Tenancy issue update and course of action Update on legal proceedings. RESOLVED: Under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, press and public to be excluded due to the confidential nature of this report and in the public interest. This item to be deferred to the end of the meeting.	Clerk Clerk
24.051	Highways, Footways and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) 1. North Drive resurfacing: Some potholes have been patched. 2. Broken Wadesmill village entrance sign: The Clerk to pursue Ian Hollinrake of HCC for an update. 3. Unkempt area opposite the White Horse: RESOLVED: To agree for the volunteer parishioner to tidy the Parish Council's small piece of ground opposite the White Horse in High Cross and to plant it with low growing flowers and/or shrubs. The Parish Council agreed to reimburse the parishioner for cost of the plants. Cllr David Andrews agreed to make a contribution of up £150 from his locality budget.	Clerk Clerk
24.052	Other matters 1. Fly tipping in The Pit. Cllr Martin Spackman reported no progress. 2. Tree survey. The tree safety survey has been completed and no action is required on any Parish Council trees.	MS
24.053	County and District Councillor report Cllr David Andrews provided confirmation that East Herts District Council has completed the report into its land supply. Its conclusion is that the Council has in excess of a 5-year supply.	
24.054	Urgent and other matters not listed on the agenda • Zurich Insurance: To be reviewed for 2025. • High Cross Conservation Area: Clerk to chase EHC for action. • The Clerk to provide definitive dates for the remaining 2024 meetings.	Clerk Clerk Clerk

- 24.055 Correspondence:** noted as per the agenda
- EHDC: request for High Cross S106 possibilities
- 24.056 Matters for future agendas** (as per this meeting’s agenda)
- Update on papers held by previous Clerk before considering committing to archive.
 - Website. April: Review new Cuttlefish arrangement (BMH to review). September: consider new Cuttlefish contract
 - Quarterly review of Neighbourhood Plan Appendix H outstanding action tasks:
 - Local history overview: *Add to website and/or village magazine.*
 - Promotion of the Turnpike and Doric columns beneath Wadesmill Bridge: *Add to website and/or village magazine.*
 - North Drive:
 1. Update: Removal of lamp post W3. *No progress.*
 2. Update: Ransom Strip boundary/road kerb installation when road resurfaced. *SB/EHDC*
 - To add other matters raised: *None raised*
- 24.057 Date and venue of the next Parish Council Meeting**
Tuesday 23rd April, 7.30pm at the Norman Wodson Pavilion
- 24.050.2 Clerk’s Allotments report with press and public excluded under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960:**
- Tenancy issue and course of action: The Clerk verbally updated the Council on the current position of the legal action and court’s Case Management Hearing on 10th April 2024.
- The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.44pm
- Signed..... Dated.....

APPENDIX A

Planning decisions and awaited notices

3/23/1207	Oakleys -Steel framed building to spray vehicles <i>The Council had no Comment</i>	GRANTED
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
3/24/0251/HH	16 Youngsbury Lane: Single storey front extension. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
3/24/0151/FUL	Campus & Co, High Cross: Canopy to rear. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
3/23/2123	Great Henirage Cold Christmas Lane Thundridge - Erection of detached garage. <i>Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
PL/0326/23	Land adj to Ware Recycling Centre: Temporary access (2 years) for construction traffic. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	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. <i>Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
PL/0357/23 (CM0081)	Westmill Landfill – construction and operation of solar farm and associated infrastructure <i>The Parish Council objected to this application</i>	GRANTED
3/23/1911/HH	Bourne House Cambridge Road Wadesmill - Ground floor side extension, basement side extensions and other works <i>The Council had no objection</i>	Awaited

Planning Enforcement notifications

E/24/0032/ENF	8 Chestnut Grove: Erection of a residential accommodation not incidental to main dwelling.	Awaited
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