

# THIRSTON PARISH COUNCIL

At the Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 16 June 2022.

**Present:** Cllrs S Allan, L Clarehugh, E Davidson, D Green and J Marshall.  
The Parish Clerk in attendance – Mrs L Hamlin

**18 Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Jackson and County Councillor Sanderson

**19 Declarations of interest in items on the Agenda** – None

**20 Public Questions (max 5 mins per person)** – None

**21 The minutes of the meeting 5 May 2022** were agreed as a true record.

**22 Matters Arising therefrom:**

**1) Matters arising there from (excluding outstanding actions in relation to NCC)**

- a) Noticeboard at Eshott – The Clerk has sent measurements to a local joiner for a quote.
- b) Tree Officer re checking of trees within the parish – no response – the two trees to be checked are the one by the bridge at Wintrick and one at the top of The Peth.
- c) Defibrillator needs registering with new “the Circuit” database – This has now been registered and two new sets of pads ordered.
- d) Response from CAA to email sent by PC – a response was sent by the PC but no reply has been received. One issue raised was the British Air Racing event where the runways were too short at Eshott to host this event. The British Air Racing has changed its runway length requirements to shorten the requirements so the airfield can be used which is concerning especially as the usable runway recently had a crash at the end of this runway into adjoining landowners field housing livestock.
- e) A1 dualling – concerns re footpaths – this needs to be raised with Costain at the next meeting with them.
- f) Scam Awareness session from Age UK – no response from Felton PC as yet.
- g) Meeting between Felton and Thirston PCs – no response from Felton PC as yet.
- h) Bottle Bank – one of the new bins has already been smashed open and more fly tipping taking place. One resident has had a meeting with NCC on site. Another resident was going to put a camera in situ which the Clerk advised against however he stated that there is already a camera there (along with new fly tipping signage) so the Clerk has contacted NCC to see if they have installed a camera and awaiting a response.
- i) Green Lane Access by vehicles – The Clerk has been in touch with Northumberland Zoo who has also raised concerns with NCC about the green lane as has Blackbrook Farm. Clerk has contacted Martin King and he has stated *“there is legal process called a stopping up order which would run via our Traffic and Road Safety Team who I have cc into this request. If the area is damaged and it is proven that it is dangerous to Highway Users we can use our powers to restrict access for 4x4s via a Temporary Traffic Road Order (TTRO). This is to allow the County time to program repairs whilst still allowing the road to be used by other Network Users and Residents”*. An NCC officer has walked the length of the green lane today and will report back his findings.
- j) Biodiversity and Climate Change Committee representation – no response from Felton PC as yet.
- k) Potholes on Wintrick Road – these have been reported to NCC.
- l) Potholes on road to Blackbrook Farm – these have been reported to NCC.

**2) Long-term Outstanding issues being addressed by NCC for information**

- a) Ditch on the Burgham Park Road blocked – On NCCs to do list
- b) Street light request for East Thirston – waiting on costings of alternative options
- c) Replacement bus stop sign – The Clerk met with an NCC officer. It is not possible to put in another post in the relevant place and the bus stop sign cannot be affixed to the BT pole so they are looking to get a sign made to attached to the light pole.
- d) Blocked drain and manhole cover at Wintrick – on NCCs to do list
- e) Give way signs onto the A1 from West Thirston and at Bockenfield have been knocked down – These has now been replaced.
- f) Kerb stone on the left hand bend into West Thirston off the A1 need resiting – the issue

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with this is that there will have to be a traffic works order to put in 4-way traffic signals which needs A1 Highways approval as well. NCC looking into this to also repair the road surface at the same time but it is a lengthy process to get the relevant permissions.

- g) Road from A1 to Longhorsley has raised iron works and the edges of asphalt badly broken away both of which can cause damage to cars
- m) Pathway improvements at riverside – no response to date
- n) Boundary Commission changes - concerns raised with NCC and waiting on confirmation from Mr Murfin as to what the situation will be going forward.

## 23 Report by County Councillor Sanderson

Lots of good things happening in the County including continuing improvement in Ofsted ratings for our schools = in 2016 we were amongst the worst now we are amongst the best in England.

Planning just given for a new factory producing cables in Blyth bringing almost 200 new jobs. Useful Ofgen report on Northern Powergrid - we publish our own review in a few weeks with our own recommendations about improvements they need to make after Arwen.

I have attached a copy of LGIU - which local government read - which briefly summarises the internal issues that I wanted to see corrected. It may take a little time but I will get there. Meanwhile all the frontline work continues and that's the most important thing.

## 24 Report back from Meetings and Representations on behalf of TPC –

Clerk had two meetings with internal auditor as reported under finance

Clerk met with NCC Highways and various feedback given under 22 – Matters Arising

**Cemetery Meeting** – Discussion took place about resiting the memorial benches in the cemetery. It was agreed that benches could be installed only if benches needed replacing but plaques can be put on existing benches.

**Recreation Field Meeting** – this meeting is again taking place the same night as the TPC meeting. It was agreed that TPC would attend meetings if requested but did not feel there was a need for representation at this meeting.

## 25 Potential Projects

- a) Footpaths/Rights of Way – Nothing to report
- b) Landscaping – Need to decide on the tree by June. Also the tubs were planted up by Cheryl Camm and Jamie Day as the Morton's were away. No receipts were kept but residents should be reimbursed and it was agreed to pay £25 for the plants. All  
Clerk
- c) Short term / Medium term / Long term projects – Clerk still to look into village gateways. Clerk

## 26 To report on any planning decisions:

**21/04659/FUL** – The Old Byer East Thirston - Erection of double garage, workshop, office space with storage above; new boundary walls/steps, shed, greenhouse, children's play area and water feature – GRANTED

**22/01312/FELTPO** – Tanglewood, Eshott Village – numerous tree works - PERMITTED

### Planning applications pending:

**20/04177/FUL** - Land North East of Felmoor Caravan Park - Extension to existing holiday comprising 139 no. pitches for holiday lodges plus ancillary features including water feature, play area and vintage vehicle museum – objections based on Neighbourhood Plan

**21/04280/FUL** - Paintballing Site Eshott Heugh - Hybrid planning application consisting of a detailed application for 30no holiday lodges, storage barn, parking and access and an outline application with access and all other matters reserved for the associated leisure building (Use Class E)

**22/00368/FUL** - 2 Eshott Heugh Farm Retrospective permission for a biomass boiler at the Zoo

**22/00708/FUL** – 7 Thirston Court West Moor Farm – Construction of garage and garden shed

**22/00875/LBC** – Bockenfield Manor - LBC request to use alternative material of block paving or concrete for edging of driveway. Timber edged board with retaining peg on driveway was

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suggested but quickly deteriorated

**22/01662/TREECA** – Thirston House - tree works

**22/01708/FUL** - Charleswood House Eshott - Proposed side extension creating double garage, store room and rooms in roof space above; single storey flat roof orangery to rear of property; new flat roof porch to front of property; summerhouse in garden; solar panels to west roof elevation; Internal alterations.

**22/01605/FUL** - Croft House West Thirston - Single storey front porch and bedroom over the garage extension.

**Planning Issues:**

Bockenfield Caravan Park – blue lights illuminating entrance – Clerk to speak to Enforcement  
 Eshott Airfield – viewing area and café and planning condition breaches – awaiting feedback from NCC.

Clerk

**27 Requested Agenda Items:**

**Policy Review**

**The following policies were reviewed:**

- Financial Regulations – rewritten – this was approved and adopted by the Council
- Standing Orders - minor amends – this was approved and adopted by the Council
- Disposal Policy - minor amends – this was approved and adopted by the Council
- Publication Scheme - minor amends – this was approved and adopted by the Council
- Risk Assessment - no changes – this was approved by the Council
- Virtual Meeting Policy - no changes – this was approved by the Council
- Complaint procedure - no changes – this was approved by the Council

**Recreation Field Group Meeting Attendance** – covered above in item 24.

**28 Correspondence:**

- NCC email re climate change website – introducing the town and parish council climate change toolkit which gives information on how to tackle climate change. It was agreed this should be undertaken as part of a larger group.
- NCC email re Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment – questionnaire to be completed by Clerk
- Costain email update on A1 dualing – for information
- Email from Tritlington & West Chevington PC - seeking news from adjoining parishes as to what our initiatives and priorities are as there may well be overlapping interests, aims, concerns and projects which they don't know about. There may be things we could be working on together. Perhaps there is something in relation to climate change. Clerk to ask the TWC PC if there is anything they are currently doing that TPC could be involved with.
- Email from resident re bottle bank – see matters arising
- Emails re airfield breaching flying hours – flying hours both in the morning and the evening have been breached and email complaints have been sent to NCC with the PC copied in.
- Emails re airfield breaching weight restrictions and accompanying fb post by airfield acknowledging the breach stating they will continue to do so among other comment has been sent to NCC with the PC copied in.

Clerk

Clerk

**29 Finance**

(a) **Financial Summary** was reviewed with no issues and the current balance stands at £13,360.60 TPC funds and £4,968.60 FCJC Funds totaling £18,329.20.

(b) **Payments** - The following list was put before members and was approved:

Payments this meeting:		
IB145	L Hamlin - 30 Hours at £16.10 (£483.00) Reimburse Overpayment (-£108.16) Defib Pads (95.88)	£496.11

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	Zoom Conferencing (£14.30) Home Working Allowance (£11.09)	
IB146	Northumberland Estates for leased land	£5.00

(c) **Income** – None

**(d) Report from Internal Auditor**

The Internal Auditor audited the restated 2020/21 accounts and the 2021/22 accounts and signed the relevant approval paperwork.

Report back from Auditor – the auditor raised a few questions with the following responses:

1. Minutes 24.06.21 – Cllr Marshall took the Chair when Minute 19 indicated apologies for absence. – *Cllr Marshall was at the meeting. Minutes to be amended.* Clerk
  
2. Minute ref 117 – Was wondering where the figure of 16% agreed on came from. Was it based on something? - *this was calculated based on the electoral register just for West Thirston numbers v all Felton number. Felton PC has 915 on electoral register and residents in West Thirston are 173 - on this basis then TPC would pay 16%*
  
3. Home working allowance e.g. IB132. Where are these rates obtained from? – *not been reviewed since 2014. To be reviewed.* Finance Group
  
4. IB124 – Legal fees £1200 (incl VAT). The invoice is in your name and what was the basis of this firm's selection? - *this was a case of a Councillor managing to find someone to take this on with 4 working days left before the council meeting. The firm required payment upfront so the Clerk paid and then claimed back for quickness.*
  
5. IB121 - £250.00 to P Brown. Is there any further backup to this e.g. a quote? - *only a verbal quote and I approached 3 people and despite arranging to meet with the other two neither of the contractors turned up.*
  
6. Is there evidence for the quotes in respect of the Rockery Maintenance work (IB133) please? - *Only one contractor was approached with a letter requesting a quote for the next two years and this was increased by £30. It is such small job that contractors are not interested and the contractor we have has done this for the last 8+ years.*
  
7. See Standing Orders 5.6.5. What is Regulation 10 (3)? - *something to look at when we look to review the policies at the next meeting.*
  
8. Are there any copy mandates or evidence who can authorise payments from Lloyds? - *It is two Councillors to authorise from the three who are on the Financial Group - Cllrs Green, Marshall and Allan. However due to the set up of the internet banking we have set it up for three to authorise as the person setting up the payments (ie the Clerk) has to be designated as a signatory to allow this process to happen so in practice we have three people authorising payments but I actually don't have the PCs authority to authorize. No information on on-line bank account, auditor to raise the issue with his audit group as to how to address this.*
  
9. Assertion 6 – Internal Audit – See 1.34 of JPAG. I'm wondering if this puts some onus on the council members themselves. Perhaps something for discussion? – *will raised with Councillors at next meeting.* All
  
10. Annual Salary – Based on what you were paid last year - £15.50 I couldn't tie the additional £0.66 ph to Scale 26. - *I am on scale 26 now so was on 25 last year which is (following the pay increase) a rate of £15.64. I therefore OWE the PC 52p/hour for 208 hours so need to take off £108.16 from next pay.*

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11. Is there an annual performance review for yourself? – *Not for some years – this needs to be discussed with Councillors.* This was discussed and it was felt that there is no requirement for a formal performance review.

(e) **Approval of Annual Governance Statement** was approved unanimously by the Council.

(f) **Approval of Accounting Statements** was approved unanimously by the Council.

### 30 Urgent Items

Two paving slabs on the steps down from the Peth are loose – Clerk to inform NCC as a Health and Safety risk. Clerk

### 32 Items for next agenda –

Update on Doctor's Surgery as no information has been forthcoming to TPC and a number of residents use the Felton surgery.

Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25pm

Date of Next meeting: 4 August 2022