

THORNHACKETT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 21st October 2026 at 7.00pm in Thornford Village Hall

Minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, they should give an indication of the topic being discussed and any outcomes or decisions made. Minutes should be as brief as possible and just convey the sense of the discussion. They should not contain names of specific contributors other than any proposer and seconder.

Clerk's Handbook

Attendees: Cllrs. Hillier (Chairman), Hoff, Thompson, Robins, Small.

Also in Attendance: Mrs S Hillier (Clerk), and 5 members of the Public.

1. **Welcome** to members and to members of the public and our guest speaker Laura Gowers Community Outreach Co-ordinator for Wessex Water
2. **Apologies for Absence** - these were received from, Cllrs Baxter, Bromell, Keene) agreed and accepted.
3. **Declarations Of Interest:** None declared.
4. **Wessex Watermark Award Presentation** – Councillors received a presentation from Wessex Water about their Town and Parish Council Watermark Award, where Wessex Water would support councils in water saving initiatives. Details to be sent across. Councillors expressed an interest in joining the project.
5. **Minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2026** – these had been circulated. The acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Hoff, – **agreed**.
6. **Matters Arising** – a) Blackberry Solar Farm – Nothing to report. b) Milestone, unable to locate missing piece. Clerk investigating whether any stonemason could provide a replacement stone. c) dog fouling signs – example signs were shown proposed Cllr Hoff, seconded Cllr Hillier that a sum of up to £50.00 be allocated towards purchasing adhesive and solid signs for Recreation Ground, Play area and streets. d) Rights of Way consultation document had been completed by Cllr Keene, this had been submitted to Dorset Council. Cllr Keene was thanked for his work on this.
7. **Public Forum** – A member of the public asked who the Monitoring Officer was for the Parish Council, they were told that it was the Monitoring Officer for Dorset Council.
8. **Finances** – a) Income and Expenditure since last meeting – a report had been circulated indicating the agreed expenditure, income received included the precept for the next six months of £8609.00 and the quarterly bank interest of £451.11 both had been transferred to the Deposit Account.
 - b) Future Expenditure – Routine expenditure of Service charges -£7.00, Grass Cutting - £101.70, Accounts package £37.20, SSE - £67.33, Play area Inspection - £102.00. In addition payments for a Remembrance Day Wreath - £27.50, Village Hall - £70.00, Web Site renewal £143.66, External Audit fee £252.00 – Cllr Hillier proposed Cllr Small seconded that this expenditure be approved – **agreed unanimously**, In addition expenditure of £69.00 for printing of questionnaire re Speed Limits in Thornford and the purchase of 2 litter bin liners (4) if suitable storage could be found for the extra could be found. Proposed Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Hoff -**agreed unanimously**. There followed a discussion regarding the tree surgery invoice which was higher than expected, this was due to extra work following a tree inspection, 2 trees needed removal and a willow tree required pollarding as it was considered dangerous by the tree surgeon. The extra expenditure was agreed and a sum of £600.00 be vired from reserves to cover the extra cost – proposed Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Small – **agreed unanimously**
 - c) Six monthly summary of expenditure – this was presented to Councillors summarising anticipate over and underspends against Budget with explanations. this report was **accepted**.
 - d) External Audit report – This was presented to Councillors, there were two minor comments in the letter from the Auditor and on the certificate four other matters not affecting their opinion. The opinion was itself an unqualified opinion

'Except for the matters reported below on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. - Box 11 in the Accounting Statements was incorrectly answered as 'No'. The Accounting Statements do not include any trust transactions and therefore the authority should have answered 'Yes' '

The Auditors report had been placed on line and had been displayed in the noticeboards. **The report was accepted by Council**

e) Draft Budget – A paper was presented indicating where guidance towards preparation of the Draft Budget for 2027-2028. An inflation rate of at present 3.5% was being used. Councillors were asked to respond in the next couple of weeks.

9. **Tree Safety Risk Assessment** – Papers had been circulated to Councillors indicating the risk trees presented to the Council and steps that required to be taken to reduce that risk. The position of the Allotment site was also discussed and where liability lay. Clerk to contact the insurers to clarify whether liability was passed on or not. It was agreed that the 5-Minute Tree Risk Compliance Check be passed to the Environment Working Group (EWG) to look at and be brought back to the next meeting. The Clerk was producing a Tree Policy and this would be circulated to Councillors in Draft form and taken to the (EWG) for them to look at prior to next the Council meeting.
10. **Environment Champion Report** - The report was received. The section of footpath that had been considered for tree planting was now thought to be inappropriate. It was agreed to take discussions off line as to who should be approached and where. The Wessex Water initiative had been taken on board as discussed under Item 4.
11. **DAPTC Emergency Preparedness Survey Report** – The report was received by Council and Members were asked to read as actions will be required in the future.
12. **Reports from Working Groups – EWG**- next meeting Monday 9th November **Audit & Risk** – There would be meeting in the next fortnight to discuss the Clerk's annual appraisal. **Play Area** – the group had met and discussions had taken place with parents/carers – the focus had changed to improving the access path as it was thought that this was deterring some from going to the path. To date one estimate had been received for approximately £10,500.00 this would alter the equipment that could be offered but it was agreed that improving the access was necessary.
13. **Reports from Councillors with Responsibility** – Cllr Thompson indicated that material for 'Contact' was about to be sent off.
14. **Planning Applications** – There had been no new applications since the last meeting.
15. **Communications and Urgent Business communicated to the Chairman in Advance** – Speed survey forms were being printed. Councillors were asked to help distribute the questionnaires to households, spare copies would be available in Ellwoods or would be available to download from the web site. Completed form could be returned to Ellwoods, the Clerk or to Cllr Robins at Minter House, Longford Road. Secondly, the door to the noticeboard outside the Kings Arms had collapsed when opened by the clerk, narrowly missing injury. The noticeboard needs to be replaced £200 had been identified in reserves this year but a new board similar to the one outside the village hall (but smaller) would cost approximately £700. It was proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Hoff that a new noticeboard be purchased and that the clerk vire up to an extra £500.00 from reserves - **agreed unanimously**
Communications – a) Letter from Wessex Water contractors indicating that subject to planning permission work on the water treatment centre would begin in September 2027, residents would be notified closer to the time. b) The latest police report had indicated a theft from an open garage. the clerk had also reported that there were individuals taking things from the fronts of houses so residents should be aware and report to the police any suspicious activity.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 18th November 2026 Thornford Village Hall 7.00pm

Signed:

Date: