# Grindon and Thorpe Thewles Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21st March 2023 at 6.30pm in Grindon Parish Hall, Thorpe Thewles.

NB: This meeting was originally planned for 14th March but was postponed due to lack of quoracy.

**Present:** Cllrs. Davies (in the Chair), Gillson, Lowson, McGee and Moffatt
**In Attendance:** M. Ireland, Clerk; 2 residents

Before the business began, the Clerk reminded Councillors that nomination papers for the forthcoming election needed to be with the Borough Council by 4th April and agreed to circulate the forms to all current Councillors. **Action:** Clerk to circulate nomination papers.

1. **Public Forum:** A resident raised concern about the apparent closure of the public footpath/Right of Way from Thorpe Thewles to Whitton, by a local landowner, Mr. Linley. The resident reported he had removed the official footpath signpost and tried to prevent her son crossing his land on the public footpath. Councillors were very concerned and advised the resident to inform Stockton Borough Council as soon as possible, as would the Clerk. **Action:** Clerk to inform SBC. *The resident left the meeting*.

2. **Apologies:** Cllr Rees – accepted.

3. **Declarations of Interest**: Cllr Lowson – Item 14 Planning Application 23/0329/FUL.

4. **Minutes of 14th February 2023**: Cllr Davies proposed, with Cllr McGee seconding, the approval of the draft minutes of 14th February. All concurring, it was **resolved** to accept the minutes as a true record.

5. **Matters Arising**: ***(i) Grit Bins*** – Cllr Moffatt reported the grit bins had now been filled.

6. **Maintenance Committee Report:** Cllr Gillson reported that Mrs. Smith had purchased plants, bulbs and compost for the flower tubs and had requested some sort of wheeled water butt be purchased to facilitate watering over the spring and summer months. He noted that a high level/pressure hose would also be needed for watering the proposed tower flower stands which were to be purchased. It was noted that these had been included in the budget for 2023/24. Mrs. Smith had also requested permission to create two crocus patches; Councillors **agreed** these would add to the visual impact in spring, and proposed they be established on the village green, near the bus stop, and in front of the Christmas tree.

7. **Personnel Committee Report:** Cllr Gillson reported that one application had been received for the post of Clerk/RFO. The resident present indicated he was the said applicant and he was requested to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed. *The resident left the meeting*. The Clerk informed Councillors that the applicant seemed eminently suitable and, as no other applications had been received, advised he be interviewed as soon as possible. It was **agreed** that the Personnel Committee should undertake the interview, with the Clerk in attendance. The resident was invited to rejoin the meeting. *The resident rejoined the meeting* and notified of the decision to invite him for interview. It was agreed this should take place at 10.00am on Wednesday 29th March at Grindon Parish Hall, provided a room was available.

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**Actions:** Cllr Gillson to book the room and advise Cllr Rees of the date and time. Clerk to formally extend the interview invitation to the candidate.

8. **Social Activities Committee report:** Cllr McGee reported that:
   - The annual Easter Egg Hunt had been arranged, to take place at 11.00am on Easter Sunday. Parents were to be invited to purchase an Egg for each child and, at as usual, a map would be provided for families, identifying venues where eggs had been hidden, each child having to seek the one with their name on it. The deadline for booking was Thursday 6th April. Volunteers would be needed to help at each of the venues.
   - Plans for celebrating the Coronation were well in hand – a street party was being organised for the Sunday 7th May 'Big Lunch'; bring your own picnic and drinks, but PC to provide a Coronation cake along with activities for the children, including, amongst other things, a royal themed Fancy Dress, a Make your own Crown, and a photo opportunity with the new King and Queen Consort. Application had already been made to SBC for the closure of Durham Road between School Lane and St. James Court for several hours from noon onwards. Residents would be asked to decorate their houses/gardens on a royal theme, and make a royal 'scarecrow'.
   - Monday 8th May was the 'Big Help' day, and it had been agreed that this would be a 'Clean Up the Churchyard' event, for which Rev Claire was very grateful.
   - The Thorpe Thewles History Group were to hear a talk being given on the topic of 'Edward VII and the Ladies' at 2.00pm on Thursday 24th March at Grindon Parish Hall.
   - The Next SAC meeting was to be held at 6.00pm on Tuesday 28th March.

9. **Financial Reports –** the Clerk presented the statement of Financial Transactions and the Actual against Budget Report, which were **approved**.

| **Receipts** | **£** | **Payments** | **£** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 0.00 | Grindon Parish Hall (room hire) | 80.00 |
| | | D.M. Ireland (salary Jan-March) | 645.60 |
| | | HMRC (PAYE) | 161.40 |
| | | H. Smith (garden supplies) | 45.78 |
| | | D.M. Ireland (Clerk's expenses) | 64.74 |
| **TOTAL** | **0.00** | **TOTAL** | **997.52** |

The Chairman noted the 'Welcome to Thorpe Thewles' sign at the Wynyard Road entrance to the village seemed to be in a poor state and in need of replacement. All agreed the stone on which is stood should be retained, and the possibility of having a sign with an arc over it or something similar, in order to make it stand out, was to be investigated.

10. **Training Opportunities:** The Clerk informed that the following training opportunities were available:
    - ***Mazars External Auditor briefing for 2022/23 AGAR completion*** – 6.00pm Tuesday 4th April 2023 via Zoom. **FREE**.
    - ***Chairmanship Training for Parish & Town Councillors*** – Friday 23rd June, 10-3pm (including lunch and tea/coffee) at the Thornley Village Centre, DH6 3EL **£24.00**
    - ***Engaging your Community*** – Tuesday 6th June at 6.00pm on Zoom
    - ***New Councillor Training*** – Wednesday 5th July at 6.00pm on Zoom
    - ***CiLCA induction***- Tuesday 11th July at 6.00pm.

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11. **Annual Parish Meeting**: The Clerk reminded Councillors of the requirement to hold an Annual Meeting of Electors, between March and June every year. After a brief discussion it was **agreed** this should take place at 6.00pm on Wednesday 24th May, with Wine & Cheese, and would focus on what the Parish Council does – e.g. Social Activities, Maintenance, etc. and would provide residents with the opportunity to meet the new Clerk and Parish Council members.

12. **Ward Councillor's Report:** None received.

13. **Correspondence:** (a) ***SBC*** - Stopping Up Order – the order related to the stopping up of the section of Durham Road near Henley Drive – No Objection. (b) ***SBC*** - Section 73 Application for Variation of Condition 37 to extend the life of Lambs Hill Wind farm to 40 years – No Objection. (c) ***Request from Mrs. L. Williams*** for use of the whole notice board at the Bus Shelter for use by residents – Councillors **unanimously agreed** that only 50% of the notice board would normally be made available, the other 50% being retained for PC information.
Cllr Moffatt noted the caravan had now been removed from Astral Park, though the container still remained in situ.

14. **Planning:**
**22/2542/FUL** – 29, Henley Drive – **No Objection**
**23/0086/FUL** – The Barns, The Granary, Blakeston Lane – Insufficient information to make a decision; issues raised – why do they wish to convert the stable block to a dwelling when this was only built on 2006? Why is there no Planning Statement? How does this fit with the Local Plan, specifically Policy SD3: Housing Clause 4?
**23/0181/FUL** – land adjacent to Thorpe Leazes Farm – **No Objection**

*Cllr Lowson left the meeting whilst his application was discussed.*
**23/0329/FUL** – Blakeston Croft Farm – **No Objection**
*Cllr Lowson rejoined the meeting and was informed of the decision.*

15. **Items of Concern to Councillors:**
- Cllr Rees Had submitted a photograph and concern about the appearance of mould on walls within the bus shelter. It was **agreed** to refer this to the Maintenance Committee for investigation and report back on the issue to the April meeting.
- Cllr Moffatt asked on behalf of a resident whether the PC had any objection to a skip being parked on Wynyard Road for a few days, whilst the resident moved out of his house opposite. He was informed this was not within the PC's remit and the resident would need to apply to SBC for permission.
- Cllr Moffatt raised concern that the street light near the Vane Arms car park, had been repaired again, but he light was now on from 7.00am to 4.00pm, which was of no use.
- Cllrs Moffatt and Gillson raised concern about a hump in the pavement which had appeared soon after Mandale Homes had undertaken some drainage work.
- Cllrs Gillson and Moffatt raised concern about the footpath from the church towards Astral Park, which seemed to be sinking.

**Actions:** Maintenance Committee to investigate mould in bus shelter; Clerk to contact SBC Care For Your Area to report the street light, footpath and pavement issues.

16. **Date of Next Meeting:** 6.30pm Tuesday 11th April 2023 at Grindon Parish Hall

*Meeting closed at 8.05pm*

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**Minutes Authorised By:**
**Minutes Seconded By:**
**Date:**

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