

THORNHACKETT PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

Also in Attendance: Mrs S Hillier (Clerk), and 9 members of the Public.

1. **Welcome:** The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.
2. **Apologies for Absence** - these were received from Cllr Bromell, Cllr Hoff and Cllr Keene and were approved and accepted.
3. **Declarations Of Interest:** Item 8 – Under Standing Orders a general dispensation for all Councillors while discussing the Budget and Precept was granted as all Members have a Disclosable and Pecuniary interest. No other Interests were declared.
4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2025** – these had been circulated, Cllr Robins asked for clarification regarding the clock mechanism. The Clerk stated that in the future it may need to be upgraded to be electrically wound and that a sum should be ring-fenced in reserves towards this end. Their adoption following this clarification was proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Baxter-**agreed unanimously**
5. **Matters Arising –**
 - a) **Blackberry Solar Farm** No further information had been received. It was noted that the application at Caswell Farm in Ryme Intrinsica was for a 40MW solar farm and 20Mw battery storage facility extension. The Environment Agency had objected on the grounds of possible groundwater pollution from the batteries in the event of a fire.
 - b) **Beer Hackett Speed Survey** – The Chairman reported that a village meeting had been held in Beer Hackett to inform villagers of the possible speed restriction options. This had been followed up with a questionnaire responded to by 72% of the villagers. The responses indicated in favour of a 30mph speed limit with repeater signs between the village signs. Other options had included 20mph and a speed limit with SID (speed indicator device). It was proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded by Cllr Baxter that Dorset Council be asked to implement a 30mph speed limit between the Beer Hackett village signs and that ‘Pedestrians in Road’ signs also be installed – **agreed unanimously**. Cllr Baxter also referred to a possible 20mph zone in Thornford and a questionnaire would be produced to gain feedback from residents on this .
6. **Public Forum –**
 - a) Would the Parish Council consider holding a Council meeting in the Church at Beer Hackett, the church being the only public venue in the village? This would help strengthen the community ties. Cllr Robins was concerned that those of other faiths may be concerned. This was noted.
 - b) Road resurfacing in Boot Lane was very poor – could the Parish Council express its concerns to Highways.
 - c) The state of the zig zag lines outside the school was raised as a concern.

d) Play Area was in the wrong place, could it be moved? Could it be signed better? Spending money in flattening the area for it to happen again was a possible waste of money. Signage was being included in the works. The surface needed to be levelled as a safety consideration and moving the area was not possible.

7. Finances – a) Income and Expenditure since November had been circulated.

b) With regards to future expenditure the position regarding the two invoices for SSE was explained as the Council had been in disagreement with the company regarding the renewed contract which they claimed not to have received, This had now been sorted and the 2 invoices covering 4 months were due. The 2 invoices to Southern Playground Services covered repairs to the swings. The manufacturer who had supplied the swings seemed to no longer operating in this country. Following considerable time and effort the company had managed to obtain other suitable replacements. The large invoice reflected the time trying to contact the Supplier in France and visits to the site. It was proposed by Cllr Hillier and seconded by Cllr Robins that the company be asked to replace the seats and chains to both swings and undertake the repair work – **agreed unanimously**.

The Clerk proposed a change of Internal Auditor for the accounts this year. Paula Harding was proposed,, she had audited the accounts for Bradford Abbas last financial year and had been particularly helpful, the fee was also less that we paid last year as it is based on Precept. To change Internal Auditor was **agreed unanimously** proposed Cllr Hiller, seconded Cllr Hoff.

c) Grant Application for repairs to the Millenial Seat had been received. Cllr Hillier explained that it did not strictly conform with the policy but that exceptional circumstances could approve the project using the grant funding provision and then vire money from Line 25 to cover the suggested £500 cost Cllr Robins proposed the virement, seconded Cllr Small - **agreed unanimously**. That the project go ahead was proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Small – **agreed unanimously**. It was suggested that when it came to purchasing the Topographical sign the Parish Council be approached in advance.

8. Budget 2026-2027 and Precept Following Draft Budget discussions in November a final Budget was circulated for approval that included the suggested changes. Cllr Robins raised concerns that the increase was still too great, it was explained that the majority of the lines had increased in line with inflation. The Budget be accepted was proposed by Cllr Axten seconded by Cllr Baxter – **agreed with one abstention**

The precept suggested had been circulated, this was based on the agreed Budget using the Dorset Council precept tool. It uses Band D properties as a guide. To cover the Budget total, the precept levied would need to be raised by £1.45 per Band D household per year to

a total of £41.37 **this would mean a total precept income for the year 2026-2027 of £17218.00** proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Axten - **agreed with one abstention.**

9. Draft Policy – a) GDPR policy withdrawn as already there as Data Protection Policy.

b) Safeguarding Policy – this was a new policy drafted from guidelines from Dorset Council it was necessary for grant applications. Cllr Hillier proposed, Cllr Small seconded approval subject to a review in May. - **agreed unanimously**

10. Environment Working Group - Met in December and meeting on 16th February where the work program will be looked at and updating the Green Action Plan .

11. Play Area Working Group – A grant had been applied for from Dorset Council. Estimates for work on the green areas had been received which were very varied. It was agreed that a written specification be prepared and circulated to the companies to see if some agreement could be reached. Castle Estates to be contacted regarding the state of the wall.

12. Environment Champion Report – This had been circulated and was on the web site. Actions would be discussed at the EWG.

13. Council Responsibility reports – Cllr Baxter fed back on the work so far regarding the stiles on the footpaths. He had contacted Yetminster PC for ideas and Castle Estates who favoured a particular style of gate. Stiles needed identifying and condition ascertained so that the worst could be replaced first.

14. Planning Applications – There were no new applications.

15. Communications and Urgent Business – there was no urgent business – Communications included Dorset Council devolution update.

A letter from Wessex Internet regarding fibre broadband in Beer Hackett – it was suggested that they be invited to a future meeting.

Letter received from Brotherwoods regarding flooding at the green triangle at Pillar Box corner on the road to Beer Hackett – they had cut a trench to carry flood water into the stream – a letter to be written to thank them.

Flood Wessex zoom meeting on Groundwater and Groundwater flooding.

Request from the Clerk to attend DAPTC conference – **agreed.**

Police Crime Reports for November and December indicated no reported crime in the Parish.

Weekly DAPTC newsletters, please look at regarding training.

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

Meeting closed at 9.15pm