

THORNHACKETT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 19th November 2025 at 7.00pm

Attendees: Cllrs. Hillier (Chairman), Hoff, Robins, Axtens, Baxter, Thompson, Bromell, Keene.

Also in Attendance: Mrs S Hillier (Clerk), and 8 members of the Public.

1. **Welcome:** The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.
2. **Apologies for Absence** - Cllr Robin Legg (Dorset Councillor) tendered his apologies.
3. **Declarations Of Interest:** No declarations were received.
4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 15th October** – these had been circulated, no issues were raised, their adoption was proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Hoff-**Agreed**
5. **Matters Arising** – a) **Blackberry Solar Farm** – Cllr Legg had presented a written report stating that having spoken with the case officer who had said ' If they were progressing this application in the usual manner she said that she would have expected a scoping opinion on the identified environmental matters to be made by now and that there were possibly grid connection problems owing to another application in Rhyme Intrinsica.'
- b) **Beer Hackett Speed Survey** – The Chairman reported that he was meeting with the officer along with the Clerk to discuss this and other Highways matters.
- c) **Dorset Transport Plan and Local Plan Consultations** – These had been submitted and receipt confirmed. Cllr Robins noted that it had been reported that Dorset Council had received over 10,000 comments on the Draft Local Plan.
- d) **Thornford Clock** – work was now completed. Council offered a thank you to the residents who had undertaken to paint the weather vane on the top and the upper door. Free of charge.
6. **Council Changes** – a) Co-Option a letter had been received from Mr Andrew Small indicating that he would like to be considered for the seat on the Council vacated by the resignation of Mr Whitsun-Jones. Cllr Hillier proposed and Cllr Robins seconded the proposal to co-opt Andrew Small to be a Member of the Council. **Agreed unanimously.** The papers were duly signed and he took his seat.
- b) Resignations- The Clerk had received a letter from Bev Taylor-Wade tendering her resignation from the Council. This was accepted and Dorset Council would be notified. The Chairman thanked Bev for her hard work over the years she had been a Councillor and she had been the longest serving member of the Council.
7. **Public Forum** – Questions were raised about the following: The road narrowing pedestrian crossing, not well signed for car users and a danger to pedestrians – this will be raised at the meeting with Dorset Council.
- b) Unclear speed signs on entry into the village.
- c) Could 20's Plenty signs be used or yellow signs on entry into the village.
- d) The Millennium Bench and sign on the footpath, a group of residents were willing to work on this, Castle Estates were also happy for the bench to be replaced – Council was asked whether they could donate some money towards costs – The Chairman stated that in principle not against the idea requested that costings be supplied before we could commit a sum – Proposed Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Hoff -**Agreed unanimously.**
8. **Finances** – a) **Income and Expenditure** – a paper had been circulated to Councillors, indicating invoices paid since the last meeting and invoices received that were due for payment before the next meeting in January. Invoices were checked by Cllr Hoff (Audit and Risk). Payment proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded by Cllr Robins. **Agreed unanimously.**
- b) **Draft Budget for 2026-2027.** Papers had been circulated showing a draft budget for discussion and amendment. The draft was in two parts, expenditure on the General Fund and expenditure of CIL monies (Community Infrastructure Fund. It was noted that the number of Playground Inspections this year was

fewer than planned. The Clerk to look at costs with other companies as this may affect the Budget. Grants to organisations had been reduced in the draft, Cllr Robins proposed and Cllr Baxter suggested this be maintained at £500 – **Agreed unanimously**. The invoices listed for the replacement noticeboard in this years budget, to be transferred to the CIL account. A sum to be included for a replacement noticeboard in the village- proposed Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Thompson – **Agreed unanimously**. Cllr Hillier proposed, seconded by Cllr Hoff that an amount be included for the printing and distribution of a questionnaire towards the development of a new Village Plan, it was decided that Beer Hackett should be included in this project. – **Agreed unanimously**. It was agreed to increase the possible donation to the Wriggle Bus to £400 and to remove the Clock Maintenance reserve for this next year. **Agreed unanimously**

c) CIL Budget – A paper indicating this year's expenditure had been circulated. It was noted that already there was a sum for the new street lights. It was also **Agreed** to include a sum for replacement benches once ownership had been identified and they would then be on our Asset Register. It was also agreed to put aside a sum for new equipment and upgrades to the Play area and the provision of an adult fitness area.

9. PSDI sign – Dorset Council had requested a response on the effectiveness of the signs at each end of the village. It was difficult to have a definitive answer as speeds cannot be measured. However, there was an anecdotal effect as they did act as a reminder and speeds at the western end of the village were better.

10. Environment Working Group – There had not been a meeting since the last Council meeting, the next meeting was on 8th December. As agreed the Flood Resilience sheet prepared by EWG member Mrs Popinchalk had been distributed inside CONTACT. Copies to be placed on the noticeboards. The reported blocked gullies had still not be cleared Clerk to chase.

11. Play Area Working Group – Another quote had been obtained for cutting hedges, tree care etc. Cllrs Axten, Hillier and Baxter along with a local resident to meet to look at improvements. A supplier within Dorset was suggested as they could also supply the Adult gym. They would be asked to come and look at the site and make recommendations.

12. Environment Champion Report – A written report had been circulated to members. Cllr Hillier noted that there was a need to formalise the position of Environment Champion. It was also suggested that there may be a need for a tree warden. The orchard on the proposed solar farm was also a concern as perhaps a copse of English species trees would be better, the Woodland Trust could possibly help. Following a discussion about stiles, Cllr Baxter volunteered to investigate the condition of stiles, whether they had disabled access, this was agreed and Cllr Baxter was asked to produce a paper for the February meeting. It was suggested that the Dorset Council leaflet 'Solar Together' be advertised on the Parish Council web site.

13. Reports from Other Councillors – **a) Communications** – a report had been sent for the CONTACT magazine. **b) Beer Hackett** – a fallen tree had been cleared within 13 minutes!

14. Communications – **a) Report on the Devolving Dorset Conference** – no immediate effect on Thornhackett as there were no Dorset Council assets or services. **b) Next Flood Warden zoom** on 27th November **c) Crime Report** of breaking and entering of an empty dwelling on Longford Road, theft of Diesel from the Water Treatment Works, in neighbouring areas there had been a number of thefts of equipment, tractors, 4x4's etc, all being investigated. A reminder letter re precept setting, tax base for 2026/2027 due 5th December.

The meeting closed at 9.03pm

Date of next Council Meeting Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 7.00pm Thornford Village Hall.