

THORNHACKETT PARISH COUNCIL

THORNFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Annual Parish meeting for Thornford held on Wednesday 3rd April 2024 at 7.00pm in Thornford Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs. B Taylor-Wade, J Axten, R Baxter, A Bromell, J Rogers. N Whitsun-Jones and seven (7) members of the public.

1. **Introductions and Welcome:** Cllr Taylor-Wade took the Chair and welcomed and thanked those present for attending this, the first, Parish Meeting for a few years owing to the Covid restrictions. Each Councillor then introduced themselves and gave a brief summary of how long they had lived in the village and their background.

The residents present were also invited to introduce themselves and indicate who they represented or a little about themselves.

2. **Apologies for Absence:** There were none
3. **Declarations of Interest:** There were none.
4. **Chairman's Report:** One of the busiest meetings of the year was when dog walking on the Recreation Field was discussed and the issue of not picking up after their dogs. This was closely followed by a meeting to discuss our opposition to the planned closure of the Hyper Acute Stroke Unit at Yeovil Hospital which had produced widespread media coverage. There were ongoing discussions regarding perceived speeding through the village, the next step was a speed survey and whether to install a Speed Indicator Device or 20mph speed limit. There had been a very successful picnic in the park to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles 111. Discussions around improving access to the Halt were on going, a project Brochure had been produced and there was an online survey. The Council had signed the Climate Declaration and was working towards a Green Action Plan devised and collated by Sustainable Thornford Group based on the results of a village survey. Councillors continued to be involved in looking at Planning Applications as consultees with Dorset Council. The Council had continued to provide monies to support the maintenance of the churchyard, grass cutting of the Recreation Field and maintenance of the Play Area, maintaining the clock tower and streetlights. The Council had also provided Grants for the Defibrillators, the Thornford Fete and the refurbishment of the Village Hall ladies toilets. On going works include investigating the possibility of a new footpath from Wingfield Place towards Lake. Looking to the future are the local elections in May and residents were urged to consider standing for election to the Parish Council and the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings party in the park on 9th June 2024
5. **Reports from Councillors:**
 - a) **Cllr Baxter:** Allotment Association – The Annual General Meeting is later this month. All the allotments have been taken, there is no waiting list. The majority of the plots have cropped well, but the soil is wet and preventing too much access to preparing for the current year. A seed swapping had been mooted and could be advertised on the noticeboard. It was hoped to get the cider press running this year and to hold a summer Bar-B-Q.
 - b) **Cllr Baxter** is also leading on the speed limit/SID project
 - c) **Cllr Whitsun-Jones** - The Extraordinary Meeting regarding the Hyper Acute Stroke Unit at Yeovil Hospital was well attended by local residents, there were also attendees from Yeovil Town Council, Quick Silver Group Cllr Legg from Dorset Council and Roger Marsh Chair of the Patient

Participation Group Grove Medical Centre. A letter had been sent to the Health Minister requesting a call in of the decision.

6. Reports from other Organisations:

- a) **Sustainable Thornford** – Ian Young is also the Council's Environment Champion which gives access to a number of Dorset organisation. There were 124 responses to the survey with 16 action points helping to develop a Draft Action Plan, The Sustainable Thornford group had been busy planting wild flowers and engaging with the community.
- b) **Gardening Club** – Another very successful year with the committee working hard on behalf of the 87 members. Two very successful plant sales had been held in April and October. There had been 5 very interesting evening talks and a visit to Castle Gardens. There had been trips to Bicton Gardens, 'The Newt' and Mapperton House. The Annual Flower Show had been a great success and more entries would be welcomed. Three trees had been purchased and planted around the Playing Field and a donation had been made to the 'River of Flowers' Project. The Thornhackett Christmas Lights competition is becoming more successful and 4 households were able to donate prize money to a charity of their choice. The Gardening Club meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month in the Village Hall and membership is £10 for the year.
- c) **Short Mat Bowls Club** - Meet on Tuesday afternoons 2pm-5.30pm and Thursday evenings 7pm - 10pm in the Village Hall, a thriving friendly club with 26 members and who welcome new members. TSMBC are members of the Blackmore Vale League and played 10 matches home and away during the season finishing 4th in the West Division league. This year we were saddened to lose a number of long serving members in particular Les Ledger, President and a founder member along with his wife. As some step back new members are welcomed – come and give bowls a try, there is no pressure to play in league games, enjoy the social aspect of inhouse matches.
- d) **Thornford Twinning Association** - The twinning with Hudimesnil, near Granville in the south-west corner of the Cherbourg peninsula, was started in 1995. There have been many activities over the years: exchange visits, football matches, a golf match, taking part in the Onion Competition at the Horticultural Show, walks in England and France every other year since 1998, and regular exchange visits in recent years (and on-going) by the older children from the two primary schools. We have been grateful for the occasional grants from the Parish Council. Sadly though, the twinning is now in abeyance as a result of difficulties experienced by our French friends in continuing their association after the death of their president, Gerard, and of course, COVID.
The residual funds from our association have been offered to the school for use on their continuing visits.
The legacy from the twinning are the memories we have of all the visits, experiencing another culture, and the friendships we made. The school exchanges have resumed after COVID and have been very successful. I am aware of only one other primary school in Dorset who do such exchanges. They are a very rich experience for the children.
- e) **Thornford WI** – The WI is thriving with over 50 members, a friendly welcoming group. We have had a programme of guest speakers covering a wide range of topics from Fuchsia growing, tom Reflexology and a talk on Antiques and valuation. In addition there is a Book Club, a Craft Club, a Lunch Club, a Walking Group and a Skittles Group, something for everyone. A big thank you goes to all of the ladies who have provided cakes for various events throughout the year, including the summer fete and the Coronation celebrations.

- f) **The Hub** - Established after the Covid lockdown as a means of getting the community together again continues to go from strength to strength, Some attend just to sit, chat and have a drink of tea and coffee, some play mah-jong. There is a book and jigsaw exchange, in season there is often some fresh produce plants and flowers available. The group also collects for the food bank and at present they are collecting tools for Africa.
 - g) **Tree Plantation** – This was started in 2012 when some 40 trees, mainly native and deciduous in nature. These have been added to in the past year and there is still some room for a few more.
 - h) **Bell Ringers** – This group will always welcome new members either with experience or as novices willing to learn. Several new members have just rung the bells for Sunday Service unsupervised for the first time.
 - i) **Made in Thornford Show** – An event held in the Autumn where products are available that have been produced and made in Thornford, by local residents. A good place to start Christmas shopping!
7. **Questions and/or comments from members of the public** - It was suggested that the organisations present give a brief summary of their organisation and contact details to the Clerk for uploading onto the Parish Council website. A big thank you was voiced for the Kings Arms and Ellwoods, the local shop, they are at the heart of the village and for the meals on wheels service and take away service that was offered by the pub during the Covid shut down.

The Clerk thanked retiring Councillors and reminded residents of the elections on May 2nd. The Annual Meeting of the new Council will be held on 15th May at 7.00pm in the Village Hall. In addition there will be Picnic in the Park with a small exhibition of memorabilia to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings with cakes provided by the WI to be held on 9th June at the Recreation Field and Village Hall..

The Chairman closed the meeting and thank those attending.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm