

THORNHACKETT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 16th July 2025

Attendees: Cllrs. Hillier (Chairman), Hoff, Whitsun-Jones, Keene, Robins, Bromell, Axten

Also in Attendance: Mrs S Hillier (Clerk), and 14 members of the Public.

1. **Welcome:** The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.
2. **Apologies for Absence** - Cllr R Baxter. Cllr. B Taylor-Wade, were accepted and agreed.
3. **Declarations Of Interest:** None were declared.
4. **Presentation by Wessex Water.** Andy Mears from Wessex Water spoke about rainwater and foul water disposal nationally, he then answered questions. This was followed by a more specific presentation on the Beer Hackett Pumping Station and the Water Recycling Centre at Thornford. It is hoped to arrange a visit to the Thornford WRC in the future.

At this point the Chairman moved Item 16 Urgent Business notified to the Chairman in advance of the meeting up the Agenda See below the resolution and approval in bold.

Motion to add **Cllr Matthew Hoff** to undertake to act as signatory on our accounts with Lloyds bank to facilitate the transfer of funds and closure of the accounts.

Proposed by Cllr Stephen Hillier, Chairman of the Council

Seconded by **Cllr Ian Robbins**

Approved **Unanimously by those present**

Dated **16/07/2025**

5. **Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 18th June 2025** These had been circulated to Councillors. Their acceptance subject to two small changes to Planning Officer and Press and Publicity Officer was proposed by Cllr. Hillier Seconded by Cllr. Robbins - **Agreed**
6. **Matters Arising from the Minutes:** a) Blackberry Solar farm. There had been no progress since the last meeting. It was noted that two recent appeals had been refused by the Planning Inspectorate b) Nature Recovery Strategy Response, The Chairman would produce a response to relevant sections and circulate to members. c) Beer Hackett Speed Survey – we are still awaiting some answers to questions from Dorset Council. d) Another quotation has been received, awaiting a third. e) The clockface has been removed, rusting was visible and the back of the face was in a poor state. The mechanism is still in place.

Public Forum – The Council was thanked for the report in the July Contact listing Councillors and their areas of responsibility. The fence alongside Blacksmiths Lane is in need of repair. The web site was temporarily down, the Chairman would investigate. There is some Himalayan Balsam growing near Bowe Bridge and it is causing a nuisance and is very invasive. Dorset Council and the Environment Agency would be notified.

7. Finance: a) New Bank Account – the Interest Bearing Account was now open and funds would be transferred as soon as available (see Item 16 above).

b) Payments paid and falling due – a list had been circulated approval. The Beer Hackett booklet invoice for £205 was more than originally requested. In future a quotation would be needed not an estimate. Approval of the payments was proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Hoff – **agreed.**

c) A application for funding from help with the grass cutting at Beer Hackett Church was discussed. It was agreed to request more information from the 'Friends' and an assurance that the communal area could be used by everyone.

8. IT Policy: This is a new policy, necessary for Assertion 10 in the Annual Governance Review. The template had been supplied by DAPTC from NALC (National Association of Local Councils) and modified to the Parish Council. Approval the Policy was proposed by Cllr Whitsun-Jones, seconded by Cllr Bromell – **agreed unanimously.**

Motions for Council

Cllr Whitsun-Jones requested that Item 12 be moved up the Agenda – The Chairman agreed.

12. To co-opt Claire Thompson to fill the casual vacancy on the Council. The vacancy had been formally advertised by Dorset Council and no request for an election had been received. Ms Thompson had expressed an interest in being co-opted onto the Council, a biography had been circulated to members and she is known to Councillors. Her Co-option was proposed by Cllr Whitsun-Jones, seconded by Cllr Taylor-Wade prior to the meeting - **carried unanimously**. Acceptance of office forms were duly signed and a Councillor pack was supplied.

9. Twinning Association : It was agreed that an approach to the Marie of Hudimesnil to see whether there was any interest in re-invigorating activity between the two villages. Proposed Cllr Hillier, seconded by Cllr Bromell – **carried unanimously**.

10. Finger Post: This is the post at Post Box corner, one arm in particular is in poor condition. Council was requested to make funds from General Reserve available for repair of the 'finger'. The matter would come back to Council for final approval when costs were known. Proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded Cllr Keene - **carried unanimously**.

11. Neighbourhood Planning Funding. The Government has withdrawn funding support for Neighbourhood Plans, NALC, SLCC and DAPTC were collectively organising an opposition to this. It was agreed to write to the local MP and the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government requesting increased and sustained funding to support the development of Neighbourhood Plans and to ensure that the funding is accessible to all communities, to promote inclusivity, and fairness in the planning process. Proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded by Cllr Hoff -**Carried unanimously**

13. Environment Champion Report. This had been circulated to members. There was a summary on drought effects and also a request to look at resident access to footpaths as too many have stiles making them non-compliant as regards DDA access which affects health and well-being of residents.

14. Councillor Reports Cllr Whitsun-Jones summarised a briefing he had attended on The Dorset Local Plan which would be consulted on probably in 2026. Housing numbers had increased from 1073 pa to 3246 pa.

15. Planning Applications. The current list had been circulated and published. One new application was for Lower Farm in Thornford to convert a barn into residential accommodation. Consultation closes on 6th August. Councillors were asked to send comments as soon as possible. To date comments regarding bee bricks, swift and bat boxes had been received and also possible concerns over parking. The resident was present and assured members that they did not park in the road and that the accommodation was for a relative (This is not a planning consideration) and members can only look at plans as presented and not possible future use.

16. Communications. a) Flood Wessex session on Thursday 17th on Flash Flooding had been circulated to members along with future training dates.

b) DAPTC Central/North Branch Meeting – new board structure had been explained, also devolution of some services etc to larger Towns and Parishes which seemed to have stalled. A Statement of Reasonable Expectations had been written by DAPTC which it is hoped Dorset Council will sign up to, to improve working relationships between Dorset Council and the Towns and parishes of all sizes.

c) A local resident had written in regarding work on the Play Area that needs to be investigated. Cllr Axten is to see if he can clean some of the equipment. It is checked for safety by an external company. The resident also offered help regarding a Neighbourhood Plan.

d) Monthly Police Report – no reported incidents.

Date of next **Ordinary Council Meeting Wednesday 17th September 2025 at 7.00pm in Thornford Village Hall**

The meeting was declared closed at 9.30pm