

THORNHACKETT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Wednesday 19th March 2025

Attendees: Cllrs. S. Hillier (Chairman), J. Axten, R. Baxter, M. Hoff, I. Robins, J. Rogers, B. Taylor-Wade, N. Whitsun-Jones

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. It was explained that the Agenda was lengthy and so Councillors were asked to keep to the topic in hand.
2. **Apologies for Absence** - Cllrs. A. Bromell, B. Keene apologies were presented and accepted by Councillors. Cllr. Legg (Dorset Councillor) also gave his apologies.
3. **Declarations Of Interest:** None were declared..
4. **Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 15th January 2025.** These had been circulated to Councillors. Their acceptance as a true record was proposed by Cllr. Hoff seconded by Cllr. Robins - **Agreed unanimously.**
5. **Matters Arising:**
 - a) Wriggle Bus – Grant for this financial year had been sent and a letter of thanks received.
 - b) Blackberry Solar Farm- Application expected April/May, delay due to need for an Environmental Impact Assessment. At the meeting on 15th January it was indicated that some traffic would be along Bradford Road as junction on A30 originally identified was an accident blackspot.
 - c) Trees and Hedges. One of the trees accidentally damaged during hedging had been replaced and the Hornbeam was to be replaced on 20th March. The Horticultural Society and Gardening Club had indicated a willingness to maintain a space around the circumference of the trees. Cllr. Whitsun-Jones proposed and Cllr. Rogers seconded that this offer be taken up. It was also suggested that the stakes be painted white so that they can be seen. In future this area will have to be hand cut and budgeted for (estimated £500).
 - d) SID, the traffic speed along Longford Road and Pound Road did not meet the criteria and the Council could not provide its own. Dorset Council had supplied 'Slow Down' signs free of charge on an experimental basis for up to 3 years.
 - e) Addendum on minutes reducing the precept by 2.0% to 6.8% increase was raised and Councillors voted to accept the amended Budget and Precept.
 - f) Cllr. Legg had indicated via e-mail that a site for the Grange Park street sign had been identified on Highways land.
6. **Public Forum:** None of the members of the public present raised any concerns or questions.
7. **Planning Update:** **P/HOU/2025/01164**

Location: 4 Baylands Longford Road Thornford DT9 6QL

Proposal: Erect single-storey rear & side extension and replace existing porch. (Demolish existing conservatory). The item was discussed. Councillors recommended that the applicant be asked to include bee bricks within the development.

P/FUL/2024/06276

Location: Lower Farm, Beer Hackett Road DT9 6QP

Proposal: Erect an agricultural Building

No decision: The application has been removed from list

8. Financials:

a) **Payments Due** – the list had been circulated and there were no questions. Cllr. Whitsun-Jones proposed and Cllr. Taylor-Wade seconded that they be accepted **-agreed unanimously**.

b) **Allotment Rent**. Castle Estates had raised the rent to £850.00 per annum. This information had been passed on to the Allotment Association.

c) **Accounts package**, this has been ordered and is being installed. The Clerk also raised the the bank account which had been changed to a Community Account by the Bank and was incurring a monthly charge of £4.25 per account per month plus charges for cheques issued and deposited. Other Banks had been investigated. Unity Bank was recommended, Unity Bank specialises in Parish Councils and Community Organisations. Monthly charges of £6.00 per month but other transactions were free. Savings account paid a much higher interest rate of £2.25% as opposed to 0.9%. A current account had to be in place for a savings account to be opened. Cllr. Taylor-Wade requested that the new bank be an ethical bank which Unity Bank is. That we change to Unity Bank was proposed by Cllr. Whitsun-Jones, seconded by Cllr. Robins – **agreed unanimously**.

d) **Hire of Field** – A request to hire an area of the Recreation Field for a Wedding Reception had been received. The area concerned was alongside the Village Hall. Cllrs. expressed concern over litter and possible broken glass, it was agreed that the hirers be asked to pay £100 plus a refundable deposit of £50 against the possibility of a need for litter picking. They were also be asked to used plastic ‘glasses’ for drinks consumed outside and to cordon off the area. Proposed by Cllr. Hoff, seconded by Cllr. Whitsun-Jones **-agreed unanimously**.

e) **Requests for funding** – Beer Hackett had requested £150 for the reprint of the village handbook Proposed by Cllr. Hillier, seconded by Cllr. Robins - **agreed unanimously**. The Clerk also raised the matter of the Council owned Village noticeboard in Beer Hackett which is in need of maintenance. A villager had quoted £180 to clean down and re oil the wood, service the locks and hinges – proposed by Cllr. Hillier seconded by Cllr. Hoff – **agreed unanimously**.

f) A **new Domain name** for the Council had ben ordered from Hugo Fox our website supplier, with 5 e-mail addresses. The domain was to replace the thornhackett@dorset-aptc.gov.uk e-mail as DAPTC would no longer be supplying this address and there was a need for parishes to have a .gov.uk domain. Thornhackett-pc.gov.uk had been ordered.

g) **VE/VJ Day** there was a sum in the budget for these celebrations. Was the Council going to recognise the event? Cllr. Taylor-Wade to put a notice on Facebook to see if anybody was interested in helping.

9. Petitions Policy – Comments had been requested , those received were around typographical errors. Why was a name, address, postcode and e-mail address necessary? To ensure that petitioners lived in the area. With changes indicated the Policy would be brought to the Annual Meeting for adoption.

10. Risk Management Policy – comments were concerning typographical errors and request for clarification such as the meaning of bi-annually (every 2 years). Cllr. Hoff was thanked for his work on this. The Policy would be brought to the Annual meeting for adoption.

11. Member Responsibilities – These were unremunerated positions where Councillors take an overarching look at various aspects of Council work, such as Village Hall rep, Tree Officer, Footpaths Officer, Audit & Risk, Recreation Field and Play Area, etc. Reports would not be required every month, but on an ‘as and when’ there was anything to report basis. This again would come to the Annual Meeting for adoption and nominations for posts agreed. Cllr. Whitsun-Jones was thanked for his input into this area.

12. Traffic Issues –

a) New Signage had been installed by Dorset Council reminding drivers to slow down through the village. Speed survey results had indicated that speeds did not satisfy the requirements for a SID (Speed Indication Device). Cllr. Whitsun-Jones raised concerns about the bend by the Kings Arms which was quite dangerous.

b) Beer Hackett petition – a speed survey outside the church was underway.

13. Environment Working Group Report – There were 4 requests. 1) That the area that could be covered by a 20mph zone be investigated but held in abeyance until the effect of the new signage is known. 2) That the Parish Council escalates the problem of excessive water on the roads to Dorset Council and the Dorset Councillor. 3) That information concerning Dorset Council's Flood Resilience Plan be requested 4) The Parish Council write to Wessex Water expressing concern over the volumes of effluent being discharged into local rivers from Beer Hackett and Thornford Pumping Stations. Following discussion the Clerk was requested to write to these organisations on these matters.

14. Environment Champions Report – Previously circulated. Main points include:-

Last Climate Action and Nature Support Group included a presentation on Dorset Council's Nature Recovery Plan, which includes maintaining grassland and enhancing verges with a 'Love Your Verge Campaign' why then do we have to pay £85 a verge? There had been no progress on the EV Charger. A water discharge event was recorded between 20th and 28th February, a cause for concern. Sustainable Thornford had arranged a litter pick on 15th March which had been well attended.

15. Meeting arranged by Cllr. Legg for Parishes on Highways: This had been attended by the Cabinet Member, Officers and a large number of Parishes. Items discussed included A30 hazardous junctions, especially at Over Compton, Signage and Markings, 20mph zones, Mud on the Road and Pot Holes and their repair. The next meeting for Parishes was likely to be in May and would be on Flooding.

16. Report on Future Planning Conference attended by Cllr. Whitsun-Jones and Cllr. Hillier. Topics included the new National Planning Policy Framework, Dorset's Local Plan development, the transformation programme for planning and building control enforcement. There was a breakout session on Neighbourhood Plans and their importance.

This would take a lot of commitment and cost in its preparation but grants were available.

17. Thornford Clock – This item had been postponed from the previous meeting. The cost was about 10% more now than the previous quote. More delay will increase cost. The Clerk gave information on Smiths of Derby who had recently restored the clock in Yetminster. Damage was difficult to see from ground level. Cllr. Robins indicated that he was now more aware of the position and was happier with the proposal. Cllr. Whitsun-Jones asked if funds could come from Community Infrastructure Levy. Cllr. Baxter asked if they gave a warranty on the work. The Clerk would contact Smith's. Cllr. Robins proposed and Cllr. Whitsun-Jones seconded that Council proceeds with the repairs – **agreed unanimously.**

18. Ratcombe Wood Bench Motion – Proposed by Cllr. Whitsun-Jones

'To discuss the replacement of the bench at the lookout point on the edge of Ratcombe Wood, the current bench being in a state of disrepair, including whether Council monies could be used for such a purpose.' Discussion followed, woods owned by Castle Estates, gamekeeper was aware of the problem and had removed dangerous parts. A resident had knowledge of the bench and was willing to help. This would be pursued. Seconded by Cllr. Axten – **carried nem con.**

Cllr. Hillier proposed that **'A vote take place to raise the guillotine so as to complete business.'** – **carried unanimously**

19. Correspondence received – a) Sherborne Area Directory b) Litter at station layby. Clerk to contact Network Rail and if this failed, Dorset Council re providing a litter bin. c) Great Water Blitz 25th -28th April when volunteers could obtain kits to test the water quality in local rivers. d) Newsletter from Campaign for Rural England new campaign to get agricultural land reclassified. e) Response from Charge Ahead Dorset – only option now is to look for an on street site.

20. Thornford Recreation Ground: Motion proposed by Cllr. Whitsun-Jones.

To discuss the general state of the Recreation Ground and to propose that Council monies be used to carry out necessary improvements, repairs and tidying up.'

Subsequently amended by Cllr. Hillier and agreed by Cllr. Whitsun-Jones. Substantive motion reads: 'To work with other organisations in Thornford such as Sustainable Thornford, the Thornford and Beer Hackett Allotment Association, the Thornford Horticultural Society and Gardening Club, the Thornford Cricket Club and other interested parties to produce a sustainable management plan for the Recreation Ground and to propose that Council budgets to provide funds to carry out necessary improvements, repairs and tidying up and if necessary vires monies from reserves to cover 2025/56 expenditure to a limit not exceeding £250.'

Discussion followed and it was agreed that the Clerk contact possible interested parties.

Proposed Cllr. Whitsun-Jones, seconded Cllr. Hillier – **carried unanimously**.

21. Thornford Recreation Ground: Motion Proposed by Cllr. Whitsun-Jones

'To discuss the recent damage to trees and grass at the Recreation Ground.'

Motion withdrawn.

22. Date of next meeting – Thornhackett Parish Council - Thornford Annual Meeting 16th April 2025 at 7.00pm in Thornford Village Hall. All residents welcome and local organisations invited to give an update on their work.

Next **Thornhackett Parish Council Meeting is the Annual Meeting of the Council and will take place on Wednesday 21st May at 6.30pm in Thornford Village Hall.** The meeting will begin at 6.30pm with a presentation by the Environment Agency on Flood Wardens. This will be followed by the Annual Meeting at approximately 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 9.30pm.