

THORNHACKETT PARISH COUNCIL

THORNFORD ANNUAL PARISH VILLAGE MEETING

The Annual Thornford Parish meeting was held on Wednesday 15th April 2026 in Thornford Village Hall at 7.00pm

In Attendance: Cllrs. Stephen Hiller (Chairman), Matthew Hoff, Abigail Bromell, Roger Baxter, Ian Robins, Claire Thompson, Andrew Small and 7 members of the public

1. **Welcome** – The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting.
2. **Apologies** – none
3. **The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of 16th April 2025** had been circulated, their adoption was proposed by Cllr Hillier, seconded by Cllr Hoff – carried.
4. **Chairman's Report for the year 2025-26** – It has been a busy year, unfortunately we had received the resignations of Bev Taylor-Wade, Nicholas Whitsun-Jones and Jonathan Axten, we thank them for their service to the Council and we welcomed Cllr Andrew Small (representing Thornford Parish). During the year several new policies were adopted, Expenses, Safeguarding, Risk Management and IT Policies. In addition several other policies were reviewed. The Parish Council had paid for a speed survey in Beer Hackett and Highways has been asked to implement a 30mph speed limit through the village at the request of residents. The Clerk had requested that the white lines by the Kings Arms and a SLOW sign be painted on the road. The Dorset Draft Local Plan and Draft Transport Plan were discussed and comments submitted. The Transport Plan had little to offer the village, the Draft Local Plan identified two sites a preference (with conditions) for the Longford Road site was offered but neither were really desirable. Development of the Play Area is ongoing with discussions with several different companies being undertaken. Several benches around the area have been identified and some require repair but they do not appear on the Asset Register for the Council, work is ongoing to regularise the situation. The clock face and chapter ring have been repaired and upgraded. Sadly Cyril Taylor who wound the clock for more than 20 years for which we were extremely grateful, passed away. We are now looking towards getting an automatic winding mechanism installed. The Environment Working Group has been looking at causes of flooding and possible remedial action, also sewage discharges into the local rivers, as well as keeping an overview of the possible Blackberry Solar Farm application. Acceptance of the report was seconded by Cllr Thompson – **carried unanimously**
5. **Reports from Councillors** – Cllr Thompson reported that there were now regular reports being sent to the Contact magazine. Cllr Hoff a new Risk Management document was developed and being used.
6. **Reports from Local Groups and Organisations**
Allotment Association - A difficult growing year but there was still a good show of fruit and vegetables at the Annual Show. A Bar-B-Q was held and the Manor Farm Cider Press was

used again. Minor improvements have been made, old tyres removed and a register of assets being compiled.

Village Hall – A new sound system as been installed, along with improvements to the heating control system. The kitchen area has been upgraded. A grant was received from the Gardening Club. A new notice board has been installed with help from the Parish Council. Fund raising has included a cream tea and Treasure Hunt In the future there are to Saturday breakfasts, 70's Disco and Barn Dance. It is hoped to purchase a photocopier.

Bell Ringers – We meet Thursday evenings 7.30-9.00pm and are looking for more volunteers. We rang at Christmas and Easter and have rung at a wedding and funerals.

Cricket Club – The decision was made to leave the league but there are a number of friendly fixtures in place. We are attracting a number of younger players. At the AGM it was decided to spend money on the outside and re-lay the wicket area. We are on Facebook and always looking for new players.

Gardening Club and Horticultural Society – It has been a good year and the Annual Show attracted over 150 entries. The annual membership has stayed at £10 and there are over 100 members. The club is supported by Castle Gardens. We were able to make a donation to the school towards their gardening club. The Annual Plant Sale is on 2nd May.

Generation Game – A group of over 65's residents visit the school once a month and interact with the children by chatting, playing games and working with them.

Made in Thornford – At the last show in November there were 15 tables selling hand made products like jewellery, knitwear, dried flowers and many more, the WI provided teas, coffees and cakes. The next event will be on 21st November.

Short Mat Bowls – We meet on Tuesdays 2-5pm and Thursdays 7-10pm, we have 33 members and welcome anyone who would like to have a go! We hold a range of internal competitions and hold an Annual Presentation Dinner in November. We also have a dedicated Safeguarding Officer. We continue to field a team in the Blackmore Vale Evening League and the club is a member of the Dorset Short Mat Bowls Association. We also hold friendly matches with neighbouring villages.

Sustainable Thornford – A growing group looking at sustainable initiatives, like habitat protection to encourage wild flowers and wildlife, setting up bird and bat boxes, recording hedgehog sightings and developing the Spinney. We have been lobbying on water pollution, co-ordinating the local river watch and attended events held by other environment groups. We continue to follow up actions on the community Green Action Plan and we have held stalls at the Plant Sale and School Fete. In the future we will be reviewing interest in a presentation on a renewable energy installation bulk buying scheme. New members and ideas are always welcome

The Hub – Runs from the Village Hall on Wednesday Mornings 10-11.30am. There are a range of activities or you can just attend for a drink and a chatter! There have been talks on Crime Prevention, craft sessions, book swop, Mah Jong and a whole lot more.

Defibrillator – There are two in the village, one outside the Kings Arms in the telephone box and the other outside the Village Hall. They are checked regularly. They are now 8 years old and we may have to think about their replacement, there is money in the pot and the Parish Council is supporting them. There are collection boxes in the Kings Arms and Ellwood's shop for donations.

Women's Institute – We have welcomed members for 78 years, we meet on 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm. The evening usually includes a speaker or activity and ends with tea, coffee, a biscuit and a chat! Speakers this year have included Oxford Bakery (involving cakes of course), Somerset & Dorset Air Ambulance, the Police talking on cyber-crime, Hearing Dogs for the Deaf and an open meeting with a speaker talking about his time in the Red Arrows. There are several other groups including a craft group, a book group, skittle players and a lunch group.

Ellwoods Stores – Finally we were told that the shop would be changing hands on 27th May and Luke and Lizzie would be replaced by Rob and Chrissy. Luke thanked the community for their support and custom over the last few years.

7. **Questions and Comments** – Tim Beer from the Mile Stone Society asked about the damaged milestone as a large piece was missing and if it could be located it would be possible to repair it. If anyone has any information please contact the Parish Clerk. Paul Hollins gave an update on the campaign to improve the water quality and stop sewage discharge into the River Wriggle. He had met with the MP Edward Morello and also Managers at Wessex Water. He spoke about a special project being investigated for Brister End to divert rain water to the allotments. There is ongoing testing of the water quality which does not show any E.coli or Ammonia. There were no questions.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

The next Council meeting is on **Wednesday 20th May at 7.00pm**. This is the **Annual Meeting of the Council**, it will be followed by a shortened **Ordinary Council Meeting**