



Minutes of Parish Meeting held on 7th May 2024

Present – Neil Armstrong-Nash, Jim Brierley, Jane Stollery, Wendy Hoare, Lesley Zimmerman, Yvonne Wilman, Guy Wilman, Carol Calder, Rob Calder, Alison Farrar, Keith Farrar, Michael Colver, Jan Buczak, Vicky Buczak (Chair)

Apologies – Sue Sharp, Andrew Sharp, Caroline Booth-Burke, Paul Booth-Burke, Cecilia Colver, Sarah Whitney

Vicky Buczak (Parish Clerk) chaired the meeting. Meeting commenced at 18.30.

1/ Agree last minutes (27 September 2023)

Agreed.

2/ Formal approval of pro bono appointment of internal auditor

AGAR (see point 3) requires an internal auditor if the Parish is to be exempt from external auditing. Neil offered to take on this role. The Meeting approved his appointment and recorded their gratitude.

3/ Presentation of Annual Return

Vicky presented a summary of Parish accounts to financial year end, covering itemised income and expenditure, as prepared by an external accountant.

Our Parish is required by law to complete an “Annual Governance and Accountability Return” (AGAR) form after the end of the financial year, and to follow the publication and Parish Meeting approval requirements specified.

To this end the Parish Clerk Vicky read out the declarations of the Annual Governance Statement. The Parish Meeting agreed that all the provisions had been satisfied.

Furthermore, no objections to the related Accounting Statements for AGAR were raised.

Neil (Chartered Accountant and now Internal Auditor) has some recommendations for handling the budget, e.g. having a formal balance policy. He also assured the meeting that our exposure to risk is negligible.

4/ Appoint additional signatory for Thornton Steward Parish Meeting bank account

At present, both Jim and Vicky must approve payments from the account (electronically). Delays occur when either is away. A third signatory would alleviate the problem: only any 2 of the 3 signatories would be required to approve a transaction. Keith Farrar volunteered to become third signatory, and his appointment was gratefully approved.

5/ Discuss any objections to planning application ZD24/00093/FULL (Back Lane)

Vicky informed the Meeting that a new and effective Planning Enforcement Officer Pat Patterson caused this planning application to be issued. Vicky also noted that the Design and Access Statement forming part of this application is factually incorrect: permission for the rear lean-to extension (2010) was REFUSED.

Carol and Rob, whose property is adjacent to the application property, are concerned about various discrepancies in the plan documents, and between plans past and the reality on the ground. One of the most important relates to waste management. This could affect their property severely as their land is lower. Another relates to use of the static caravan. There is also doubt as to whether the plan application land has been used for agricultural purposes over the last 10 years, this being a pre-requisite to applying for conversion to a residential dwelling.

The Meeting voted unanimously that the Parish should formally object to this application. Rob, Neil and Vicky noted the long history associated with the development on this land, and the mass of information related to it which will aid the Parish cause. Anyone with relevant documents or other info is asked to pass them to the Parish Clerk in the first place. Neil has volunteered to collate the information and present the Parish Clerk with a proposed letter for approval and submission. He will also seek to gather Statements of Truth in support. In view of the complexity and importance of this case, Vicky, Rob and Neil will press for the application to be tried by a formal Planning panel, rather than being delegated to just one Officer. Vicky will also request a further extension of submission deadline to 29th May (she has already had it changed from 8th to 22nd May).

6/ Vote on proposals from the social group re Parish events notice board

Votes at the last Meeting (27 September 2023) had already established that the Parish wanted a permanent notice board in the same location area as the present one.

On behalf of the Social Committee, Vicky presented 3 options:

- a. Keep current board, but using sticky letters (as for recent Spring Fair notice)
- b. A0 size waterproof clipboard for DIY or printed posters
- c. A0 size unframed chalkboard

11 out of 14 present voted for option a. Several present praised the vastly improved legibility of the sticky letter solution. This board still needs some attention to make it look more pleasing: re-setting vertically and a guide for letters to ensure they are in line.

7/ Vote on grant of £550 for the Institute

The Meeting voted approval. This grant can be viewed as a payment in lieu of rent.

8/ Update on Thornton Steward Parish Website - www.thorntonsteward.org.uk

This has been maintained single-handedly by Wendy for years. The Meeting congratulated her on performing a sterling job.

Wendy informed the meeting that our website hosting company, which now charges some £90 - £95 per annum for hosting, domain name and SSL certification, is upgrading their software. For an additional £10 per annum we will have access to a more modern, mobile-friendly web design tool. Wendy has started upgrading our old site to the new software, but has come across quite a few aesthetic and useability problems, which she is laboriously fixing. Some of these fixes involve changing the look and feel of web pages.

She is asking for volunteers to try out the new design and suggest changes and improvements before it goes live. Anyone willing to help with this should contact Wendy directly.

Longer term, she would like to share the burden of maintaining and upgrading the website with other willing volunteers.

9/ Discuss any action required to stop visitors from parking on grass at entrance to the village

There have been some isolated incidents. The Meeting did not consider any action necessary at this stage, other than monitoring future infringements.

10/ Update on D-Day celebration 06/06/2024

This event is kindly being hosted by Sue and Richard Calver in their garden. Paul Booth-Burke and his farmer contact will light the beacon on Arklow Hill at 9.15 pm.

Alison and Keith ask that anyone owning a chafing dish get in touch with them please.

REMINDER: IT IS IMPORTANT THAT EVERYONE RSVP TO THIS EVENT INVITATION!

11/ Discuss honorarium

This sum, paid to the Parish Clerk annually in recognition of services rendered for free, has been £500 for several years. A proposal to raise it to £600 was overwhelmingly approved. The Meeting expressed their gratitude to Vicky for her excellent work in this role.

12/ Would anyone like to take over the role of Parish Clerk?

No! Neil believes that this task will become more complex with time, as governance rules are tightened. In the future he suggests we consider hiring a professional part-time Clerk.

Additional Info

Alison would like to use some of the proceeds from social events to acquire a dehumidifier/humidistat fan for the Institute to solve the condensation problems. She will discuss this proposal with Institute Trustees.

Thanks to all who attended, especially to the volunteers.