

The Parish of Thropton Management Plan 2022 – 2025

This document is for the purpose of discussion by the Parish Council.

1. Introduction and Aims

The Parish Council serves a community of approximately 450 electors in what is entirely a rural environment. This number will increase substantially over the next few years as new housing comes on stream. The parish has a number of young families, whose children attend the local First School, together with a range of age groups, including several elderly residents. The community is therefore a fairly diverse one and the Parish Council is concerned to be sensitive to the different needs and priorities of its client groups.

Thropton is one of a number of parishes which rely on nearby Rothbury for many essential services.

The Parish Council Management Plan is designed to set out the Parish Council's vision for the Parish, its purpose, its values its objectives and key priorities for the next four years.

The aim is to give local residents a clear understanding of what the Parish Council does and what it is trying to achieve. It will also serve to focus the minds of Councillors as they establish the Council's priorities and monitor progress.

An agreed strategy provides a framework within which the Parish Council will work, enabling it to operate in a consistent, cohesive and co-ordinated way and so be more proactive rather than reactive in its decision-making.

At the same time, the Management Plan will help the local community to have a clearer understanding of what the Parish Council does and also does not do as it works alongside other statutory bodies, for example the County Council and other parish councils where appropriate.

The Plan details what it is that the Parish Council intends to focus on over the next few years. It will be reviewed annually and used to drive the budget process as well as to help plan activities for the coming year.

The Plan will be regularly updated and will be publicly available so that residents are aware of the Council's objectives.

2. Overview of the Council

There are two tiers of local government in Northumberland: Northumberland County Council(NCC) and local Town and Parish Councils such as Thropton. Northumberland County Council together with Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside Council are also supported by the North of Tyne Combined Authority(NTCA) which works directly with the Government to promote economic development within our region. The NTCA is led by a directly elected Mayor.

Thropton Parish Council is the first and local tier, with an important role to play in representing the interests and supporting the work of different groups within the community.

Residents elect five Parish Councillors from within the community every four years. The Council

elects a Chair and Vice-Chair annually and the Council reports to the electorate at the Annual Parish Meeting held in May. Councillors are unpaid and commit their time to supporting the improvement and maintenance of the Parish as a safe, pleasant, attractive and sustainable place to live and work. All households in the Parish support local services by paying an annual Council Tax which has four elements: Northumberland County Council, Adult Social Care, Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner and Thropton Parish Council. The Parish Council sets the amount it collects (known as the 'precept') on an annual basis.

The Council meets on the third Tuesday in January, March, May, July, September and November in the Memorial Hall. All meetings are advertised and are open to the public.

The Council works to its published Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which lay down the rules by which it operates and conducts its business. The Council also expects Parish Councillors to adhere to the Thropton Parish Council's Code of Conduct.

The Council currently employs a part-time Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The Clerk administers the Council Business and carries out all the functions required by law.

The Parish Council also uses contractors for tasks such as grounds maintenance services and general maintenance.

The Parish Council looks to reflect the views of the community through engagement with other public bodies and commenting on key strategic issues such as housing, planning, highways, social services and education.

Administering Parish Council business, managing council finances, project managing, keeping residents informed of decisions and proposals that may affect them and dealing with enquiries are core function. The Parish Council will communicate with the community through various media including its website, local notice boards, meetings and a regular newsletter.

Northumberland County Council is the second tier and its responsibilities include education, health, transport, planning, fire and public safety, social care, libraries, highways, public rights of way, housing and environmental services such as recycling and rubbish collection.

3. Parish Council Governance

Thropton Parish Council aims to be a professional, competent and caring Parish Council, to be open and accountable in all it does and to ensure the sound financial management of Parish Council resources.

The Parish Council is a secular, inclusive organisation. There is no connection between the statutory Parish of Thropton and any parish associated with any church.

The Parish Council aims to be well informed about the needs and opinions of the parish's residents, to deal with their enquiries and complaints speedily and effectively and to improve services to the community.

The Council aims to be an effective custodian of the Council's property and documents.

4. Parish Council Responsibilities

The Parish Council provides, maintains and supports the following:

- The Thropton Children's Play Park
- A number of benches around the Parish
- The ongoing maintenance of a defibrillator within the parish.
- The provision and maintenance of various waste bins
- Two bus shelters within the Parish

An important part of the Parish Council's work is to review and comment upon local planning applications.

The Parish Council also sends representatives to various bodies dealing with issues of concern to our local community, such as the Neighbourhood Planning Group and the Rothbury Area Flood Warden Scheme.

The Parish Council recognises that our local community's greatest asset is its residents and acknowledges and appreciates the work done by the many local voluntary groups who work to achieve our shared aim of:

“supporting the improvement and maintenance of the Parish as a safe, pleasant, attractive and sustainable place to live and work”.

Groups working to enrich the life of the community include:

- The Memorial Hall Trust
- Thropton Together
- The Thursday Coffee Morning Group
- W.I.
- Carpet Bowls Club
- Thropton First School
- etc.....
- etc.....

5. Objectives

In addition to the ongoing maintenance and management of the Council's existing assets, one of the biggest issue for the area will be the impact of the building of up to 100 new houses at the western end of the village.

The Council will monitor this development and aim to understand the impact on the Parish and

identify the needs of the expanding population. To this end, the Council will work with and support new and existing voluntary groups within the Parish.

The Parish Council will work with the County Council as the planning authority to ensure that the existing and changing needs of the community are taken into account and satisfactorily met. One example will be the changing pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns following the building of the new housing and the Spar Shop and Filling Station.

Objectives for future focus will be identified, discussed and approved by the Parish Council.

These can be added to/amended over time as needs change or new issues arise.

A record of progress will be kept (in an appropriate level of detail) so that work towards the achievement of outcomes are transparent and easily monitored.

SUMMARY OF CURRENT OBJECTIVES (Provisional):

FOCUS	ACTION	OUTCOME/FINANCE	TIMESCALE
To maintain the Play Park to a high standard	To regularly review the condition	Delegate work to appropriate contractors	Ongoing
To improve the Park and its facilities	To consult with user groups to discuss needs	Engage professional designers/installers. Investigate funding sources	2022-25
Improve the natural environment	Plant trees/shrubs/flowers etc. as appropriate	Investigate potential sources (e.g. NCC) and locations	Ongoing
To provide community benches at strategic locations	To regularly review condition and assess usage and future development	Maintain/replace/add as necessary	Annually
To provide dual purpose waste bins	To regularly review condition of bins	Replace as necessary	Annually
To maintain the grassed area for which the Council has responsibility (i.e. the Play Park)	To regularly review the condition of these areas	Delegation of this work to an appropriate contractor. Pay appropriate rate from Council Budget	Ongoing during season each year
To monitor the Winter Salt Bins.	To regularly review condition and contents. To assess use and further development.	Report to County Council as necessary.	Ongoing annually
To pursue a cleaner environment policy.	To support community volunteers in litter picking.	Purchase of appropriate equipment where required.	Ongoing
To pursue a safer environment policy.	To monitor the Parish environment for issues	Report defects and disrepair to appropriate	Ongoing

	that might affect public safety.	authority.	
To maintain financial propriety.	To set a judicious annual precept and budget.	Monitoring to show effective use of finance in order to achieve planned objectives.	Ongoing annually