

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – THORNDON

Minutes of Meeting held at 7.00pm, Thorndon Village Hall on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022

### 1. Election of Chairman and apologies for absence:

As the Chairman of the Parish Council was present, Cllr Ravenill chaired the meeting.

Apologies: Robert Jenkins, PC Simon Green, Suzie Edwards, Micheal Supple, Tim Rowe

### 2. Approval of minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021

The minutes were agreed as a true & accurate record of the meeting & signed by the Chairman.

### 3. Actions & matters arising from minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021

None

### 4. Reports

#### 4.1 Parish Council Chairman's Report

Cllr Ravenhill started her report by thanking Cllrs and members of the public for their attendance at meetings and support over the past year. The Parish Council has undertaken a number of activities in the past year:

- 3 new Cllrs were co-opted.
- A locum Clerk was appointed.
- The Parish Council supported an objection to a planning application for poultry units at Castle Hill. The Council submitted documents to the planning inspector when the decision was appealed and the appeal was subsequently dismissed. Thanks were extended to Stradbroke Parish Council for their help and support in this matter, as well as thanks to Thorndon Councillors, in particular James Hayward who organised a petition and leaflets.
- The Queens Green Canopy planting of saplings has been completed, the care and maintenance will be ongoing.
- CCTV has been installed at the play area and reduced the instances of vandalism, alongside owners clearing up after their dogs.
- A steel gate was installed at the playing field.
- There was a substantial amount of work undertaken on the Neighbourhood Plan which was adopted by Mid Suffolk following a referendum in the parish. Thanks to James Hayward and Stephen Page and all those involved.

#### 4.2 Police

Total recorded investigations for Thorndon addresses between 01/03/21 & 25/04/22 – 24, consisting of;

11 x Violence & Sexual Offences

1 x Anti-Social Behaviour

2 x Theft

6 x Criminal Damage & Arson

2 x Burglary

1 x Other Crime

1 x Possession of Offensive Weapon/s

This compares with the same period in 2020 /2021 when there were 12 recorded investigations for Thorndon. The preceding twelve month period was during much more stringent Covid lock-down restrictions when crime reduced nationally.

Crime trends in the Halesworth policing locality most recently have seen an increase in theft offences where items which have seen their value escalate in recent weeks have become especially attractive to criminals. These include the theft of domestic heating oil, catalytic converters and scrap metal. Heating oil theft in particular is an offence which usually occurs at the beginning of the winter season when oil tanks

are full. With the increase in the cost of heating oil, it is now worth the time of criminals to steal smaller quantities.

The lighter evenings are now seeing an increase in ASB and the Halesworth policing locality has launched an internal operation in an attempt to curb increases before the summer months when ASB traditionally reaches its peak. We are trying to ensure ASB incidents are dealt with speedily and their investigation incorporates all means at Police and partner agency disposal to deal with them.

#### **4.3 Community Council**

Community Council activities over the past year have, like many other organisations, been thwarted by the Covid pandemic. It has however, with the excellent work and support of its members continued to produce the Village Life magazine on a monthly basis.

Looking forward strong planning is well underway with events to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and further for a couple of social events later in the year.

##### **Financials:-**

While the position on the financial accounts of the Community Council remains in a positive state, they continue to reduce as a result of the lack of revenue being generated, again this is as a result of the restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic.

##### **Potential Risks:-**

The re engagement, post Covid, of the local community to support future social and fund raising events. The ability to financially support the production of the Village Life magazine if revenue does not increase and publication costs rise.

##### **Opportunities:-**

The engagement of the many new residents into Thorndon. This is important so as to ensure the 'community feeling' is maintained and to provide support for future social activities.

#### **4.4 Village Hall Management Committee**

Cllr Ravenhill reported that the bookings have started to pick up – day time bookings are great, but the weekends are slower. A lot of the revenue is historically generated at the weekends with parties etc through the bar. The management committee are pleased with things at the moment as they knew it would be slow to pick up after COVID.

#### **4.5 Community Shop**

Cllr Ravenhill reported that the shop continues in its 11<sup>th</sup> year and continues to do very well. We have seen through COVID an increase in online shopping which has led to a change in income but on the whole all is fine. Well supported by the village and by volunteers – with the first get together taking place on 4<sup>th</sup> which was the first for some time due to COVID. Thank you for all the people who support the shop.

#### **4.6 All Saint's Church**

Church Warden Tim Rowe submitted the following report which was read at the meeting:

Covid-19 and the enforced lockdown restrictions in the UK which began in March 2020 continued to have a fundamental and limiting impact on the life of our church in 2021. Periodic cancellations, curtailments and restrictions applied to all elements of church life, church services and gatherings, PCC meetings (including the APCM), home-groups and T Plus (to name the most obvious), cleaning and the placing of flowers, and church life learned to operate under various restrictions whilst the world adjusted to living with Covid-19.

In May, restrictions were slowly eased allowing an increased number of attendees at regular church services, funeral services, weddings, and baptisms. The introduction of the recovery rota offered Actsof Worship at least once per month in the Parish whilst protecting the vulnerable in the ministry team. Covid secure measures remained in place, face masks were worn and singing returned in those circumstances where it was felt safe to do so. TPlus restarted in September, although it was paused just prior to Christmas due to a new strain of the variant as the PCC took the decision to protect the volunteers and to reduce any risk of any of them needing to self-isolate over the Christmas period.

Church continued to have an on-line presence with on-line mid-week and Sunday morning worship. Track and Trace processes remained in place, hand gel and surface wipes used regularly, and we operated under continually changing Risk Assessments as restrictions ebbed and flowed. The Connect team started a

weekly event within church for families and all from across the Benefice, in a Covid-secure way on a Sunday afternoon at 4pm. The Act of Remembrance took place outside at the Lychgate. At Christmas, the Living Nativity, arranged by members of the Connect team, took place outside at various locations in the village outside and finished at the stable (Lych-Gate) and the Christingle and Christmas Day service took place within the church building itself.

We have to express our enduring thanks to the Rev Canon Julia Lall and all in the Ministry team for their time, effort, patience, and unwavering faith, energy and commitment to work tirelessly, almost to the point of exhaustion, to maintain worship in all forms in 2021.

**Fabric** – Most physical work on the planned maintenance of the church building continued to suffer from delay due to the unavailability of contractors to start the most pressing work on the repointing of the external vestry walls. The Site Committee meetings took a back seat whilst we focused on the most urgent and priority meetings. Progress was made on the Glass door proposal and costs and designs of 3 options were laid before the PCC for agreement on the next steps.

**Churchyard** - The Community Payback Team never returned in 2021 and continued to cancel all grounds maintenance at the churchyard due to COVID-19. We funded several cuts, but the cost was prohibitively expensive. We lost another Cherry tree, this time due to the high winds in December, although I believe that honey fungus had infected and weakened the roots.

**Fund raising** – Thanks to those in the village, "The Friends of Thorndon Church" scheme provided a small income to assist with fabric repairs. The income from T Plus was significantly reduced due to Covid-19 restrictions. With the cessation of most regular activities and worship, the PCC continued to reach out to all members of the congregation and electoral role to encourage everyone to continue to give what they could through Standing Order or signing-up to the Parish Giving Scheme. The continuing impact of the loss of income in 2021 may well have a long lasting and reaching impact on All Saints Church and beyond. The Parish Share which covers the costs of mission and ministry has generally been increasing over time. It is more important than ever that we meet this expense. Regular giving helps the management of these expenses, and we encourage anyone not already doing so to consider giving by Standing Order or through the Parish Giving Scheme (which pays us back Gift Aid each month).

#### **4.7 Village Life Magazine**

The magazine continues to be printed on a monthly basis with 10 issues per year, January and August being the missing months. The number of copies continues to rise and is now 410 copies, the number has risen from 350 over the past few years and is expected to continue to increase over the coming years due to the development of additional housing. Over the past few years it has become increasingly difficult to secure interesting articles and features in fact the pandemic has exacerbated the situation as many regular events have not been undertaken. Hopefully, this will ease and the pre COVID normality or similar will return. Sedoku seems to continue to be popular and along with the puzzle page with a bottle of bubbly prize – the contributor who creates the page is having a short break but the return to the page is imminent (I hope). The production of the magazine is funded by subscriptions for advertising. Over the past few years this has always produced a positive result with a small profit – the pandemic resulted in a number of advertisers withdrawing their support and a loss resulted. The cost of advertising was raised by 5% in an attempt to mitigate the continued rise in printing. In recent months the printing costs has escalated to increase by 24% - this will obviously create a loss to be made going forward. It is hoped it can be sustained with the reintroduction of events at the village hall. Finally, thanks to the advertisers, the contributors etc etc.

#### **4.8 Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator's Report**

The Circulation of my e-mails now goes out to 403 addresses. The main areas covered by my e-mails are: All of **Thorndon, Hestley Green and Braiseworth**.

Whilst not on my Patch, there are:

32 in **Rishangles** (12 not seen), 14 In **Stoke Ash**. Who still wish to remain on my list although Cllr Valerie Lane is now acting as the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for Stoke Ash. And 9 in **Occold**.

There are 32 Residents that are not on a Computer and 5 who have declined. 3 in Braiseworth and 2 in Thorndon. 18 Residents have left the Village during the year and have therefore been removed from the list. During the year May 2021 to May 2022 I have signed up and Welcomed 38 New Residents to Thorndon. 18 replacements and 20 new residents.

There are 28 Properties in the new **Kerrison Gardens** IP23 7JQ.

**23. Seen. 4. To be Seen. 1. Declined. = 28.**

**All new Residents from outside the area are given a 12 Page "Welcome Pack"**

E-Mails are sent out Blind Copy to 403 Addresses.

**Items sent out include.**

Thorndon Parish Council Agenda's and Minutes of Meetings, plus short notice Information and Items of local interest for various organisations, also, copies of District and County Councillors Reports to the Parish Council.

Crime prevention and awareness are also Circulated and published in Thorndon Village Life.

**Animals and Items** that have been **Lost and Found** are also circulated.

**In January an E-Mail was sent out Re; Parcels delivered to the wrong addresses.**

Quote

"We have recently had a few parcels that have been left on the Doorstep of Properties that is not for them.

Not all delivery Driver's Knock, they just leave it, Take a Picture and run. A recent example was the subject of my recent e-mail

If this should happen to you and you are not sure of the name or property location, please contact me with the details. As Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for Thorndon and the surrounding area, I have a register of **every** Property in Thorndon, Hestley Green and Braiseworth, with Names, Phone Numbers and Postcodes. We can then quickly resolve the problem".

**End Quote.**

**Calls to the 101 police non-emergency number are still experiencing long waiting times.**

The Free phone service, which receives around 30m calls annually, connects the public to their local police force or one of their choice. *The service has not got any better so be prepared for a wait, and always ask for a report or an incident number. Then let me know.*

**Quarterly Locality meeting for Parish Councillors.**

Last one that I attended on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022 was attended by 8 councillors

Inspector Mark Jackson has moved to Lowestoft, his role at Halesworth being filled by Inspector Aaron Connolly. Sgt Dan Peck has moved from Eye to Bury.

Aaron was unable to attend, therefore the meeting was with Sgt Chris Shields and PC Simon Green There is no agenda, just a free discussion. The usual subjects were discussed ie. Speeding, local crime trends etc. I pointed out that the Website "**Meet the Team**" was out of Date regarding Team movements and it still is today!

**Litter Picking.**

I would like to thank the team of 17 or so Pickers who do this all through the year.

Also, I thank the **Community Council** for allowing me to purchase a further 6 Picking Sticks in March, at the cost of £103.14 .

I have since got 2 more volunteer Pickers, and therefore have 4 spare sticks, if anyone is interested!

If you see a problem area where litter needs picking, please let me know of the location.

If it's a large dump then report it as a Fly Tip.

**Finally.**

I would like to thank all the Villagers that have assisted me with information during the past Year.

Also James Hayward and the Community Council for providing space in the Village Life, for my NW and other items of information.

Thanks also, Thorndon Community Shop for allowing me to Display Relevant Posters.

I hope you have found the information that I circulate has been helpful, and as always my closing remarks are.

**Remember! Crime cannot flourish in a community that cares.**

#### **4.9 Thorndon Toddler Group**

Thorndon Parent and Toddler Group (Thorndon Under Fives) reopened at the Village Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021, having closed due the pandemic in March 2020. During the period of closure, although we were not able to meet in person, we maintained contact with existing families through a WhatsApp group. When outdoor groups were permitted in June 2020, we met at the Children's playground and All Saints Church

allowed us to relocate there for a few sessions once the weather got colder while the village hall remained closed.

Since reopening we have been fortunate to welcome back many previous families and welcome lots of new families. We would like to thank the Village Hall Management Committee for allowing us to reopen at the Village Hall and for their support with changing COVID regulations, requirements and restrictions. The last year has required a different approach to ensure that families felt safe during our sessions while still having fun. While some measures such as mask wearing and strict play zones have stopped, we have maintained the regular use of hand sanitiser, lots of ventilation and handwashing before snack time.

We now regularly welcome over 13 families weekly with an average of 16 children. These families are from Thorndon and the surrounding villages with some traveling from Diss and Stradbroke.

There have been many highlights this year with shared birthdays, new experiences and most recently the planting of trees for Thorndon's Jubilee Wood. However, the greatest pleasure has been to see the children return once again to the hall and grow in confidence in playing with each other.

In March 2020, the Parish Council very kindly donated £400 for us to buy new toys and equipment. To date, we have purchased a new play kitchen, a shop till and new craft supplies. Having consulted the group, we also plan to buy vets and doctors role play kits, additional baby toys and an A frame with crash mat.

The next year will see some changes with Suzie Edwards leaving in July 2022 after 5 years of leading the group and 8 years of being a member. Gemma Harris, who has been organising the group alongside Suzie since November 2021 has agreed to take on the lead role and additional support is being confirmed.

We hope that group will continue to grow and be supported by the local community. We look forward to the adventures ahead!

#### **4.10 County & District Council reports:**

Full copies appended to the minutes.

There were no other comments from the public and the **MEETING CLOSED at 7.50pm**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

## District Councillor Report

- Governance: The Green party had a very successful result a by-election in the Thurston Ward, so the Council remains hung. Many decisions are still being decided on the Chairman's vote.

Council meetings are now being held in person, but virtual platforms continue to be used for briefings and internal meetings. It is hoped that the Council will in future be able to hold 'hybrid' meetings where voting Council members need to be physically present at meetings, but some officers and members of the public will be able to make presentations and representations online.

- Budget and investments

Mid Suffolk's general fund budget continues to be in a healthy condition, and next year's council tax will be frozen. The council agreed the proposal from the Green and Liberal Democrat group to spend some of the Growth and Efficiency Fund to provide 2 electric bus services to help residents get into Stowmarket for a 2 year period. The Council's £50,000,000.00 investment in CIFCO continues to provide rental revenue, despite the value of the assets deteriorating since being purchased from government loan board borrowing.

- Climate Change and Biodiversity

The Council has recently adopted the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan to encourage more residents to travel sustainably in the district.

As part of the Tree and Hedgerow planting scheme over 200 trees and c2,500 hedgerow plants have been delivered to parishes. Over 250 trees were given to celebrate births during 2021 as part of the 'Tree for Life' scheme.

The construction of a solar carport is well underway at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre and the new visitor centre at Needham Lake will be opened this summer.

The waste freighters are now all operating on hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) which should cut carbon emissions by 90%.

MSDC adopted a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit as technical guidance for both developers and homeowners to help reduce the carbon footprint in new and existing buildings.

- Housing

The Housing Revenue budget was agreed by full Council, and as the Government have now lifted the rent cap, Council tenants will see a 4.1% increase in their rent. The HRA business plan is to be developed and hopes to include a programme of improvements to existing Council stock as well as building and acquiring dwellings.

Part of the housing development on the old HQ site in Needham Market has been completed and this included 3 new council homes, and a further 15 affordable homes were acquired across the district in 2021. Over 100 residents were prevented from becoming homeless and the Council provided 16 dedicated beds for Rough Sleepers courtesy of grant funding.

As part of the response to the Ukraine crisis, MSDC officers will be carrying out housing checks on the properties which will be offered to Ukrainian refugees, once the applications have been processed by the Home Office.

- Planning

Following the inspector's report on the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local plan, the Councils have decided to proceed with a 2-part local plan. This will enable the important social, economic and environmental objectives to be published in a Part 1 Joint Local Plan which will be adopted first, whilst the remaining work on spatial strategy matters and housing allocations will be addressed in a Part 2 Joint Local Plan. MSDC currently has over 9 years housing land supply.

This year we managed to get clarity on the status of Neighbourhood plans in the decision making process, where a Neighbourhood Plan has an up to date allocations policy, this plan coupled to the National Planning Policy Framework, becomes the document with the most weight in decision making. This clarification was the result of many legal rulings, and decisions from the planning inspectorate.

Thorndon also had their Neighbourhood Plan "made" this year after a successful referendum.

We also had a Peer Review into our planning service, Councillors and officers from outside Suffolk spent many hours questioning and looking at footage of our meetings, The report found some major challenges as well as opportunities.

We are about to draw up a plan of changes to our practises that should make the whole planning experience a more understandable and worthwhile experience.

- Wellbeing

The council adopted its first Wellbeing Strategy this year. A number of initiatives across the district took place during the year including Family Park Cooking session in Stowmarket, free Christmas Holiday activity sessions, Our Parks (free outdoor fitness sessions) in Stowmarket and the Active Schools programme. Mid Suffolk District Council together with Suffolk County Council and Stowmarket Town Council supported the launch in July of the Chilton Fields parkrun held every Saturday morning.

- Economy

The Council continues to support its development of Gateway 14 which is now part of Freeport East. The business case has now been agreed by Cabinet. Almost 200 young people attended the Careeriosity event focussing on STEM and cultural industries. The Council held it's first Local Energy Showcase which attracted over 200 visitors and several local businesses. BMSDC's Virtual High Street project won a Gold IESE award.

- Communities

Almost £240,000.00 was allocated from the Community Infrastructure levy pool, to fund the extension of Mendlesham Surgery,

I would like to thank the Parish Council for all their work done throughout the year.

### **County Councillor report:**

#### **GLI Group becomes Official Opposition**

Since last year's County Council Elections, the 15 members of the Suffolk Green Liberal Democrat & Independent Group have been tasked with trying to hold the Conservative administration to account. The Conservatives having a strong majority with 55 seats out of 75, but we have been able to bring forward questions & motions throughout the year and challenge them to do the best for Suffolk.

#### **Budget Meeting: GLI Amendments Declined**

Suffolk County Council voted in their budget for 2022-23. Our Group were concerned that the budget relied too heavily on transformation savings, and that the Conservative's did not take the maximum social care precept to fund adult care allowed by Government.

Suffolk GLI Group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care, as well as an innovative project to reduce the energy bills of those most vulnerable, considering the current energy and cost of living crisis. Both ideas were rejected by the Conservatives, but our Group will continue to champion more investment into our social care and green technology that can lower bills.

#### **No Scrutiny for Carbon Budget**

The administration brought forward the first Carbon Budget for Suffolk, but it wasn't part of the main budget. So wasn't put through the usual Scrutiny process. The Carbon Budget is aimed to help us understand the level of emissions the Council are responsible for and helps to achieve the Council's ambition of being carbon-neutral by 2030. It is important the Carbon Budget is scrutinised, as there are many issues with data collection and performance measures that weren't addressed. Our Group raised concerns about this and has been assured that this will form part of the general budget process for next year.

#### **Levelling Up: A Devolution Deal for Suffolk?**

[The Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial 'County Deals' up for negotiation. A new deal will potentially give local leaders more powers to make decisions for their communities for the first time. Our Group welcomes the idea of bringing more power to the communities of Suffolk. However, we are concerned about a potential Mayoral position created in Suffolk and the effect this may have on marginalising districts in Suffolk.](#)

### **Report into SEND Provision: Review & Recommendations**

Suffolk County Council commissioned an independent review into Special Educational Needs and Disability provision. The report found severe failings in the delivery of Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans for children, serious issues in communicating with parent/guardians, as well as an inefficient work environment within the service.

The scrutiny committee have met since the report to listen to lead officers within the service and parents, debate necessary changes, and submit recommendations for improvement. [This included extended training, newly appointed managerial posts, and new accountability structures to help deal with the issues outlined in the previous report.](#)

### **Bus Back Better: Initiative from the Department for Transport (DfT)**

The Bus Back Better scheme was launched this year, aimed at updating, expanding, and improving our bus services in Great Britain. The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council approved a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) submitted to Government, the DfT has confirmed the final funding, and Suffolk had failed to secure any funding at all in this round. All proposals of the BSIP that were passed by Cabinet can be viewed here: [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(12-10-2021\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(12-10-2021),%20The%20Cabinet)

### **Biodiversity Recommendations**

Suffolk County Council will be doing more for the county's natural environment, as it confirmed plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land by 2030. Our Group had a major influence in providing recommendations to SCC which are now a part of the Council's ambitions moving forward to enhance biodiversity. Examples include planting more hedgerows, improving highway trees, and developing nature-based flood management solutions. For more information, visit:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/councils-commitment-to-further-enhancing-suffolks-natural-environment>

### **Sizewell C: Where are we now?**

Our Group has asked searching questions regarding this project, arguing the environmental and socio-economic impacts on local communities are far too great. [The Government announced their strategy to retain investors, by shifting the costs of Sizewell C onto consumers, in the form of a taxpayer subsidy known as a 'Regulated Asset Base' funding strategy.](#)

Our Group rejected this strategy, and strongly recommended that the Government reconsiders before it puts the burden of cost onto our local communities, and instead looks into investing in cleaner, cheaper, and quicker forms of renewable energy available to Suffolk. [Suffolk County Council have announced their general support for Sizewell C but have taken up 'important concerns' to the Secretary of State.](#)

### **New Investment in Drainage and Footway Infrastructure**

The Cabinet approved £10m to replace broken pipes and new installations, as well as an additional £10m to increase the maintenance of selected footways in Suffolk.

### **Lorry Route Map Review in Suffolk: Interactive Map to be Published**

Suffolk County Council undertook a review of recommended lorry routes across the county; the first major review of the network since 2011. Suffolk County Council invited parish and town councils for their views, and to provide up to three routes where they believe HGV traffic has the highest impact on their communities. The review will be completed in Spring 2022 where the County Council plan to publish a new interactive Lorry Route map. For further information, please contact [lorry.routes@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:lorry.routes@suffolk.gov.uk),

### **Local Electricity Bill: Suffolk GLI Motion Passed by Council**

A motion submitted by our Group ask Suffolk County Council to support the Local Electricity Bill, which is a proposed Bill waiting to be debated in Parliament for its Second Reading, was passed unanimously by the Council. The Bill seeks to localise energy supply, making local electricity cheaper, more reliable, and community based. Details of the motion and Local Electricity Bill can be found here:

<https://powerforpeople.org.uk/local-electricity-bill-briefing-for-councillors>

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**Website** - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](#)