



Thurlaston Parish Council

Minutes of Thurlaston Parish Council Meeting 2/2023/2024 held on Monday 13th March 2023 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors:

John Bretherton (JB) Chair

Keith Boardman (KB)

Stephen Lewington (SL)

Justin Owen (JO)

Brian Coleman (BC)

Parish Clerk:

Sylvia Jacques (SJ)

Residents attending: Four

Rugby Borough Councillors: None

1. JB welcomed all to the meeting.
2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests. None.
3. Apologies and Acceptance for Absence. Gary Smith, Steve Brown, Lee White.
4. Borough and County Councillors report. No report and no visit.
5. Residents Matters: None
6. Approval of Minutes – meeting held on Thursday 5th January 2023. Proposed by SL and seconded by KB. Approved.
7. Finance & Clerk (SJ)
 - (a) To note I/E transactions on spreadsheet 2022/23.
 - (b) Cheque payments and signatures – formal proposal to pay invoice. Proposed SL and seconded by KB.
 - (c) 2021.039: Clerk to produce list of main contacts in her work. Clerk requested that councillors pass their contacts to her. Some contacts received, SJ added contacts and more to follow.
 - (d) Action 2022.006: Clerk to contact Poors Plot for paperwork and dates. SJ has received some minutes and their clerk is working on report for the APM Meeting. This action can be closed; KB to make the application form generic and publish it on the TPC website
 - (e) Action 2022.023: Clerk to enquire if an alternative supplier of Street Lighting is less expensive (after receipt of the next invoice). SJ has checked costs with two different suppliers and Npower is still the cheapest. Close this item. Sylvia has also received a quote to switch the lights off at midnight. Expensive. Sylvia will ask the question: what is the least expensive means to achieve this. The response has been the same, the quote given is the cheapest. WCC contacted again, await reply.
 - (f) Action 2022.036: Clerk to find a company to supply a plaque for the Jubilee Tree. SJ has placed an order with Timpson's. Close this item.
 - (g) Action 2022.039: Clerk to contact STW for an update on the workings on a water pipe at the end of Stocks Lane. Consider surfacing the area. SJ contacted STW and their response is, no action on their part as it is not their land. TPC asked clerk to send without prejudice letter and

check on future workings in this area and their commitment to maintain and be responsible for their own pipe. Maybe check with workmen to see if they will repair the damage.

- (h) Action 2022.040: Clerk to check for latest Code of Conduct policy with WALC. SJ to check policies and send to KB.
- (i) Grass cutting in 2023: WCC contacted and they are not willing to take back the grass cutting and they said it would be very expensive for us. Decision: SJ to ask the current contactor for a copy of their grass-cutting maps for SJ to review against TPC’s own revised map and JB to adjust accordingly. Once we have agreed a revised map with the contractor, SJ to confirm rates for the coming year using that map and TPC will renew with the current contractor, subject to the rates being deemed acceptable. SJ confirmed that WCC has not increased the grant given each year for the grass cutting. New actions added to the action list.
- (j) Propose that the present Councillors agree that the present signatories continue to authorise payments for the sake of business continuity, until the bank mandate has been changed and two new signatories set up for online banking. It was confirmed that this is a compliant arrangement that is often necessary for a transition period when new councillors are elected and TPC decided to adopt the proposal as presented. Proposed by SL and seconded by BC.
- (k) Greenshoots payments policy and completion of the Beech Drive project. SJ contacted Greenshoots and they want all the invoices sent in together to claim the whole of the grant in one. KB pursuing plan of area and grass seeding and shrubs required. Decision: TPC decided that the remaining Green Shoots allowance should be spent on work and materials for the preparation and planting organised by KB and BC with residents on Beech Drive. JB highlighted that the receipts for the total Green Shoots amount should be submitted to Green Shoots quickly, to enable any surplus cost to be calculated asap.

8. Planning Subcommittee (KB)

- (a) Collaboration with neighbouring parishes. KB proposed this action should be amalgamated with the activities of the WALC Rugby Area Group. (KB)
- (b) Traveller Sites and Local Plan Policy DS2. KB reported that RBC is currently consulting with various bodies to identify potential future additional traveller & gypsy pitches within the borough.

Inappropriate occupancy of local fields should be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk who will make representations to Rugby Borough Council. (SJ)

In the meantime, TPC was advised that RBC’s consultation timetable is as detailed below:

Options preparation	Jan 23 – May 23
Public consultation	June 23 – July 23
Plan preparation & sustainability appraisal	Aug 23 – Sept 23
Plan public consultation	Oct 23 – Nov 23
Submission to Secretary of State – appointment of independent inspector	Feb 24
Public examination	June 24
Inspector’s report	Aug 24
RBC adoption	Sep 24

- (c) RBC Planning Application R22/1275 (Draycote Hotel & Whitefields Golf Course). Waiting for RBC decision.
- (d) RBC Planning Applications RBC R22/1298, R22/1299 & R22/1335 (Draycote Water). Waiting for RBC decision.
- (e) RBC Planning Applications RBC R22/0853, 350 dwellings, land north of Station Farm Cottage. Following legal advice, a TPC submission to RBC was lodged on 7th October 2022 with a recommendation that approval should be denied. TPC considerations are primarily based on the following topics:
 - (a) Transport and Highways
 - (b) Open space
 - (c) Air Quality
 - (d) Public Paths and Rights of Way

- (f) RBC Planning Applications – R20/1030 & R21/0152 Thurlaston Care Home Ltd. It was noted that various amendments have been made to the original planning applications, most notably that the number of bungalows has been reduced to 35 and that new drawings show the cumulative impact of both applications (e.g. shared infrastructure). TPC's recent dialogue with RBC's planning officer explained the scope of the applications has been revised, inter alia, this has had an impact on planning process and associated timescales. RBC's ambition is to make decisions on both applications by 30th June 2023.

KB was given authority to engage with TPC's legal adviser with a view to seeking his personal representation at the relevant RBC Planning Committee meeting(s). Our instructions would also include writing to all Planning Committee members prior to the meeting(s). It was also agreed that the Chairman of the Planning Subcommittee would arrange a letter-drop to all village residences to explain the current situation and how residents may, if they wish, make their own representations to the RBC officers.

- (g) RBC Planning Application – R22/1061 – enhancements to NCN 41 from Windmill Lane to Symmetry Park along the south side of Coventry Road B4429. Councillors noted the proposals and looked on them favourably as the 'off-road' route would be a positive contribution to the area.
- (h) RBC Planning Application – R23/0172 – indicative road remodelling along Coventry Road as a part of Tritax Symmetry meeting R16/2569 Planning condition No 19. The drawing details the 'stopping up' of the extant Coventry Road and the design of the new layout.
- (i) BC to organise a meeting with Tritax and Winvic before the APM.

9. Future Parish Council Changes 2023/2024 (JB/SJ)

New Council changes discussed. Elections take place on 4th May when future Councillors will be voted in. Four of the present committee will be leaving, one remaining until September. Advice will be ongoing to the new councillors from the outgoing councillors. Appropriate handovers will be given.

10. Trees Update (JO/SJ/JB)

(a) Beech Drive Trees (BC/JB/KB).

- Funding details for Arboreal Work (& VAT Reclaim)
- In line with TPC's Tree Management Policy – to confirm that it will take responsibility for future maintenance of the Beech Drive Copse from 1st February 2023 (including the grass cutting contract).
- Preparation for planting & Green Shoots Funding (approach), expenditure to date. JB will look into more grant money.

Decision: JB summarised the content of the *“TPC Beech Drive Copse Audit Note (13th March 2023”* (attached as Appendix 1 of these minutes), which had been circulated to TPC prior to the meeting, and TPC decided that this was an accurate summary of the TPC's position on the progress made to date, including TPC decisions made, work completed, and associated funding.

(b) Tree(s) in Stocks Lane (SJ) Tree pollarded and the rest will be inspected by WCC in due course. To Close.

11. Village Design Statement (All)

(a) Progress on submitting the latest draft to Martin Needham (RBC) for review/approval. (JB)

JB confirmed that the latest draft of the VDS has been dispatched to Martin Needham at RBC for his review/feedback.

12. Policy and Procedures (KB/SJ)

- (a) Action 2022.047: Clerk to obtain WCC Retention and Disposal Policy document. Remains open. See also 7(g). On going, project for new council. SJ to visit records office. There is unlikely to be further progress on this before May – a plan is needed to define the approach to archiving records going forwards. SJ established that WCC provides a storage service for archives, but this requires that submitted materials are accompanied by catalogue information. The new council will need to decide who will handle this going forwards.
- (b) Action 2022.048: Clerk has obtained the Code of Conduct details from WALC and RBC and will pass to KB. As above under Clerk, Action 2022.40: Clerk to circulate new Code of Conduct policy template for all to review – close completed actions related to this.
- (c) SJ to review TPC Documents & Policies summary catalogue and updates and review schedule (version 10). Trees Policy has been updated. The register is not on the website – SJ and KB to make sure the catalogue is up to date and ready to hand on to the new council (it is anticipated that one of the new councillors will be responsible for maintaining the catalogue going forwards and will trigger timely reviews/amends when due).

13. ICT (KB)

To consider the ICT implications of:

(a) Planning Subcommittee - laptop handover to the Subcommittee chairman – details of the modus operandi for its use. (KB).

(b) TPC website – maintenance and potential migration to another platform. To be reviewed by the new TPC.

- (c) The TPC website hosts Village Hall information and a calendar for booking the Village Hall. Following the passing of Village Hall website representative there is currently no formal website representative. It was proposed the new TPC Village Hall liaison officer should pursue the matter with the Village Hall Chairman. (SJ to action).
- (d) It was expected that the new TPC will nominate it ICT Policy representative. The role will assume responsibility for ICT security: website, email accounts, computer accounts, backup devices, various ICT, and data related policy documents.
- (e) It was noted that the website has specific 'technical' requirements for the publications of document, photos/images and drawings. KB explained website information has been documented and he will make this available to the relevant TPC Officer(s).
- (f) If details of new Councillors are made available to KB, he will upload information shortly after the May elections. This should include Councillor profiles, roles, portrait photos (preferably taken against a light background).

14. Councillors' reports – for any other items not covered elsewhere on the agenda (All)

15. Items for Future Consideration (All)

Agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) on 20th April. In St. Edmonds Church. SJ to prepare and circulate the first draft.

Funding the printing of the Thurlaston Chronicle. Decision: TPC will fund printing the Chronicle, but prefers its publication to be after the Annual Parish Meeting on the 20th April. Proposed by JO and seconded by SL.

Training courses for new councillors after election in May. SJ has list and will circulate.

Meeting closed at 21.05pm.

The next Parish Council meeting will be the AGM to be held at 7pm, on Monday 15th May 2023.

Signed by.....Chair John Bretherton Dated.....

Current Open Actions List.

Ref	Due By	Owner	Action	Progress	Status
2021.039	Nov-22	SJ	Clerk to produce list of main contacts in her work.	Ongoing	Open
2022.006	Jan 23	SJ	Contact clerk to Poors Plot for paperwork and dates	Clerk was going to contact WALC but after email to their clerk received minutes of the last meetings. This action can be closed	Close
2022.023	Dec-22	SJ	Street Lighting: to enquire if alternative supplier would be less expensive	Contact made with two suppliers, Npower and Clear Utilities. Awaiting further details and the bill from Npower for Q4 2022 which should reflect latest increases. Details from WCC to switch off lights at midnight were expensive, so to ask the question: what is the least expensive way to achieve this. Reply received and this is the cheapest way to convert to midnight switch off. Another letter sent.	Open
2022.025	Jan 23	KB	To speak with Sustrans contact for an update on the Sustrans/Potsford Dam Link Road progress and their preferred solution.		Close
2022.026	Dec-22	KB	To speak with Cawston Greenway contact for an update on Sustrans/Potsford Dam Link Road progress.		Close
2022.033	Dec-22	SJ	To contact WCC regarding retention and storing of TPC documents	To contact WCC regarding retention and storing of TPC documents. Information received from WCC. This is a project for the new council. SJ to visit WCC storage office.	Close
2022.036	Dec-22	SJ/JO	To find a company to supply a plaque for the Jubilee Tree	Timpson's used; SJ placed order.	To close
2022.039	Dec-22	SJ	To contact STW for an update on the workings on a water pipe at the end of Stocks Lane.	STW will not repair damage as, they were not involved with the work. Letter to be sent to CEO regarding future work.	Open
2022.040	Dec-22	SJ	Code of Conduct policy to be checked with WALC for latest update.	SJ has sourced from WALC and RBC, check and pass to KB. A revised policy will be uploaded onto the website.	Open

				Formal approval required from TPC.	
2022.056	Jan-23	SJ	To apply to Cllr Howard Roberts for a grant to cover the costs for a cobblestone kerb at the junction of Church Lane and Main Street (progress will have to wait until HR's grant budget is available.	SJ has enquired when the grant money is available. No information yet.	Open
2022.059	Dec-22	KB	Currently KB has contributed to Rugby Area Committee liaison especially regarding the Rugby Local Plan and Rugby's cycle route strategy.	A TPC nomination is required for the Rugby Area Committee.	Open
2023.001	April 23	SJ	Commemoration of the Coronation of King Charles III	TPC will purchase and plant a tree and will consider dedicating one of the trees planned for the Beech Drive Copse for this purpose	Open
2023.004	Mar 23	All	Provide the Clerk with a listing of their contacts and associated details	Some contacts received	Open
2023.010	Mar 23	KB	KB to make Poors Plot application form generic and publish it on the TPC website		Close
2023.011	Mar 23	SJ	SJ to circulate Poors Plot meeting minutes to TPC		Close
2023.012	Mar 23	SJ	SJ to ask current contractor for a copy of their grass-cutting maps for SJ to review against TPC's own revised map and JB to adjust accordingly.		New
2023.013	Mar 23	SJ	SJ to confirm the current contractor's grass-cutting rates for the coming year, once we have agreed a revised grass-cutting map with the contractor, and to renew with the current contractor, subject to the rates being deemed acceptable.		New
2023.014	Mar 23	JB	A handover on the future for the archiving needs to be completed. JB will discuss this with Holger Allroggen (the new council will need to decide who will handle the going forwards.)		New
2023.015	Mar 23	SJ/All	SJ to circulate new Code of Conduct policy template for all to review		New

2023.016	Mar 23	SJ/KB	SJ and KB to ensure the policy documents catalogue is up to date and is handed on to the new councillor who is to be responsible for maintaining it.		New
2023.017	Mar 23	SJ	To produce a first draft of the APM agenda		New
2023.018	Mar 23	JB	To produce a first draft of the APM TPC Chairman's report.		New
2023.019	Mar 23	KB	To produce a first draft of the APM TPC Planning Subcommittee Chairman's Report.		New
2023.020	Mar 23	JB	To produce a first draft of the TPC Chairman's Letter for the Chronicle.		New
2023.021	Mar 23	KB	To produce a first draft of the TPC Planning Subcommittee Chairman's Letter for the Chronicle.		New
2023.022	Mar 23	SJ	SJ to circulate available dates of the training courses to the new councillors		New

Appendix 1: PC Beech Drive Copse Audit Note (13th March 2023)

Background:

The current Thurlaston Parish Council ("TPC") has received a number of resident complaints over the last four years about the Beech Drive Copse that runs for most of the length to one side of Beech Drive and falling mainly within the Thurlaston Conservation Area. TPC archives show that it has received such resident complaints dating all the way back to at least 1990. This piece of land was neglected for many years: it lapsed out of private ownership after the houses on and around Beech Drive were built and the builder became insolvent; the land was never lodged with HM Land Registry and has no recorded ownership therefore. TPC has endeavoured to keep the area safe, as some of the trees are very large and at times, vegetation has encroached onto the roadway, obscuring clear sight and creating inconvenience and hazard. The challenge was for TPC to obtain permission to carry out the initial work and establish a basis to assume responsibility for maintaining the Copse going forwards.

Legal Basis for TPC Taking Responsibility for the Beech Drive Copse:

In 2022, Cllr Keith Boardman recorded the legal basis for TPC to take responsibility for the Beech Drive Copse going forwards in his document: "Management of Copse on the North Side of Beech Drive, Thurlaston, CV23 9JT", Dr Keith Boardman, Chairman Planning Subcommittee, Thurlaston Parish Council (July 2022). In this Cllr Boardman catalogued legislation with which local authorities, such as TPC and other parish councils, must comply, including:

- The Health & Safety Work Act 1974
- The Care Act 2014, which establishes that TPC, Rugby Borough Council ("RBC") and Warwickshire County Council ("WCC"), as a local authority, have a 'duty of care' to members of the public and that it is

unacceptable for such authorities to knowingly recognise a public area as potentially dangerous without taking steps to make the area safe.

- The Commons Act 2006 (section 45) which provides local authorities with powers over unclaimed land that is registered as common land or a town or village green, where no person is registered in the register of title as the owner of the land and it appears to a local authority in whose area the land or any part of it is situated that the owner cannot be identified.

Planning Permission (R22-0546) & Initial Tree Management Works:

Cllr Justin Owen submitted a planning application to RBC on behalf of TPC (Rugby Borough Council R22-0546), which allowed for significant tree management work to establish a baseline of healthy stock and to plant several new trees, leaving the area in a suitable state for TPC to take responsibility for future maintenance and upkeep of the site. After meetings and feedback from arboreal specialists and RBC and WCC tree experts, RBC approved R22-0546 in June 2022.

Soon after obtaining planning permission, Cllr Boardman wrote to Warwickshire County Council (“WCC”) Legal Department to highlight their responsibility for maintaining safety and, in lieu of this, they completed some of the work described in R22-0546 to make the area safe in August 2022. WCC did not charge TPC for this work; implicit with this is that WCC had assumed responsibility.

TPC determined that the cost of £1,990 for a contractor to complete the remaining R22-0546 tree management work should be funded through contributions from residents living in close proximity to the Copse, which was as follows:

Resident Contribution Summary	Amount
B & B Coleman	£284.29
J & G Wood	£284.29
R & J Douglas	£284.29
J & M Bretherton	£284.29
K & K Boardman	£284.29
M Parkin	£284.29
J & M Bretherton*	£142.13
B & B Coleman*	£142.13
Total	£1,990.00

* Due to unfortunate circumstances, one of the original resident contributions was not collected, so J & M Bretherton and B & B Coleman contributed the shortfall between them.

The remaining initial tree maintenance work was completed by Beechwood Trees & Landscapes Ltd on 9th to 11th January 2023.

Future & Ongoing TPC Responsibility for the Beech Drive Copse:

TPC agreed at its October 2022 meeting that it would take responsibility for the site once initial tree management work was completed and the site was ready for the planting new trees and ongoing grass-cutting and tree maintenance (the Copse has been added to the TPC grass-cutting map).

This document serves as a record of TPC’s approval of the work carried out to date, the legal basis and funding for the project, and the TPC decisions made to proceed with the initial work and to take on future responsibility for maintaining the Beech Drive Copse. TPC formally approved this document at its meeting on 13th March 2023.

Vision & Outcome:

The key aims of the project were to rejuvenate a neglected plot, provide local children with an educational point of interest and promote biodiversity by enhancing foraging and habitat opportunities for indigenous wildlife. It is hoped the outcome will be an improvement of the local environment for all residents and visitors that might encourage other projects of this type with similar benefits.

In October 2022, Cllr Bretherton prepared an application to WCC for a “Green Shoots” grant towards establishing the Beech Drive Copse as a “Pocket Park”. In early December 2022, WCC confirmed an award of £740 towards costs for planting new trees and installing bird/bat boxes and feeders, which will be used as source of funding in the coming months. Local residents have worked together during January and February 2023 to tidy up the area and they plan to complete planting new trees and fitting wildlife-encouraging boxes and feeders by April 2023. TPC will continue to facilitate progress and to manage draw-down of the Green Shoots money.

Progress made to February 2023 has seen involvement from local residents as well as from TPC. All members of the current Council helped to move this forward with the Planning Subcommittee taking a lead in obtaining planning permission and liaising with WCC regarding the safety of the site. Local residents have been encouraged to take an active role in the remainder of the project and are already engaged.

For the future, trees and shrubs will require ongoing maintenance and the grass will need to be mowed during the growing seasons. WCC should maintain the trees and shrubs to an extent, particularly to ensure the safety of the large trees and around the roadside verges. TPC will cover the costs for mowing the grass and carrying out other necessary general maintenance work; where appropriate, volunteer help should be welcomed. TPC has already taken into account costs for this maintenance in its budget for 2023-24, and the estimated costs involved are relatively low. TPC should monitor and assess the post-project benefits and report on these during its regular meetings.