



THURLASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting Thursday 20th April 2023

Attending from the TPC, John Bretherton, Chair, Keith Boardman, Stephen Lewington and Brian Coleman. Plus 20 residents.

Minutes of the last APM held on 22nd April 2022: Approved at the Parish meeting held on Monday 3rd October 2022, proposed by KB and seconded by SL

Report from the Chairman of Thurlaston Parish Council – John Bretherton

Title Slide

Good evening, everyone. I would like to start by welcoming you all and saying what a pleasure it is to meet with you at this Annual Parish Meeting 2023.

Agenda Slide

Tonight, we will hear reports from

The Chairman of Thurlaston Parish Council
The Chairman of Thurlaston Parish Council Planning Subcommittee
Councillor Brian Coleman
The Chair of the Village Hall
The Dunchurch Boughton School Trust
St Edmund's Church
The Poors Plot Charity
The Newcombe and Spears Almshouses
The Village Fete Committee and
The Thurlaston Chronicle.

But to start with, Sylvia Jacques, our Parish Clerk, will cover
Apologies for Absence – Justin Owen, Ev and Steve Murphy, Barbara Coleman, Robert Ashford, Sue Winton and Rev. Pat Townshend.
Rugby Borough Councillors Report – No report and no attendance.

Thurlaston Parish Council Chairman's Report (JB)

Tonight, as well as the general reporting on the PC for the past 12 months, I want to tell you about the significant councillor changes there will be for the coming year.

May 2023 marks the end of the current four-year parish council term, when elections take place and a new Council is elected or appointed unopposed.

This time around we will see significant personnel changes, with four of the five current parish councillors stepping down in May – those being Justin Owen, Keith Boardman, Brian Coleman and myself.

Our fifth current councillor, Stephen Lewington, will remain on the Council and provide some continuity during the transition to September this year, when he too plans to step down.

The process of finding new councillors tends to be difficult; my experience has been that we struggle to find people who are prepared to become councillors, and there is always a worry that failing to do so will result in us losing our PC altogether.

I am therefore very pleased to report that we have been fortunate in finding a number of willing and very able individuals this time around – in fact we are in the enviable position of having a full complement of councillors for the AGM on the 15th May, as well as several reserves, one of whom is likely to replace Stephen when he steps down.

Since the deadline for standing in the election has passed, the councillors who will take up the reins in May will be appointed unopposed, and so we are already working with them on handing over. In addition to Stephen remaining on the Council and Sylvia Jacques continuing as Parish Clerk, Keith Boardman, Brian Coleman and I have also agreed to provide support in the early months to make the transition as smooth as possible.

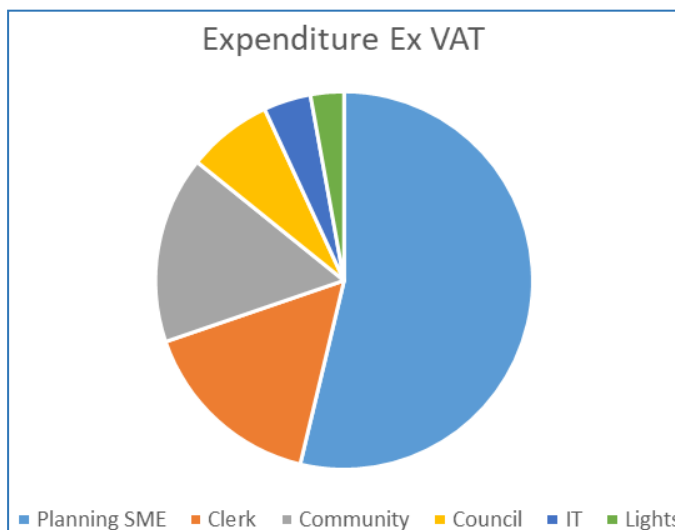
The formal decisions on the new Council's structure and roles will be taken at the TPC AGM on the 15th May, but based on recent discussions, I expect that:

- Holger Allroggen will be the new Chairman of the Parish Council
- Robert Ashford will Chair the Planning Subcommittee
- Gary Smith will Chair the Staffing Subcommittee, and
- Lee White will take on IT/Website

Last Year's Cost Breakdown (2022-23)

I want to move on to say a few words about PC expenditure for the last 12 months (2022-23) – how we spent the money you paid in Council Tax.

The total expenditure for 2022-23 was £28,363.57 - the table and pie-chart below showing the breakdown by expense type.



Expense Type	Expenditure Ex VAT	Inc. VAT	%-age
Planning SME	£13,261.50	£15,913.80	56.1%
Clerk	£3,951.78	£3,957.78	14.0%
Community	£3,957.30	£4,660.37	16.4%
Council	£1,799.54	£1,896.20	6.7%
IT	£999.11	£1,191.94	4.2%
Lights	£708.07	£743.48	2.6%
Total	£24,677.30	£28,363.57	100.0%

Just over 56% was planning-related, with costs for the Parish Clerk (14%) and for community projects (16.4%) making up the majority of the remainder. Note that £4,800 of the Planning SME total (£15,914) was an advanced payment for benefit that we will see in 2023-24.

The Budget for Next Year (Precept) (2023-24)

The Precept is the funding we all pay for directly through our Council Tax. This forms the vast majority of our incomings, it must cover our total costs, and it should leave a healthy end-of-year balance to cover unforeseen expenses.

Having seen a very low closing balance at the end of 2020-21 (£3,317), we increased our budget requirement significantly in 2021-22 (£27,750), partly to restore the Reserve and partly for anticipated legal and consultancy planning-related costs. Since then we have reduced the budget year-on-year, while still allowing for planning-related costs and aiming for a prudent end-of-year balance.

When setting the Precept each year, we take into account

- Our estimated balance at the end of the year (the “Reserve”)
- Regular annual costs (electricity for lighting, grass cutting, etc.)
- Anticipated one-off costs for specific purposes
- Potential costs to renew/replace our parish assets (which were estimated at c. £70,000 for at 31st March 2023)
- Estimated planning-related costs – typically for legal advice and consultancy for responding to major planning applications
- The impact of inflation, which has been far more significant recently (over 10%)

For 2023-24, we included the following allowances for one-off specific purposes:

Specific Budget Allowances for 2023-24	Incl. VAT
Grass Cutting, Tree & Community Assets Maintenance	£2,400.00
Allowance for Small Community Projects	£871.88
Legal Expertise (for planning advice)	£5,000.00
Planning Consultancy (SME advice)	£1,000.00
Website Migration (at end 2023-24)	£3,000.00

Based on these factors and a healthier Reserve, we set the Precept for 2023-24 at £18,000, marking a 10% year-on-year reduction.

Why is the Reserve Important?

The “Reserve” is the unspent, closing cash balance in the bank at the end of the year. It is prudent to maintain sufficient Reserve to cover ad-hoc expenses that are not budgeted for specifically. The types of factor taken into account when deciding our Reserve requirement include:

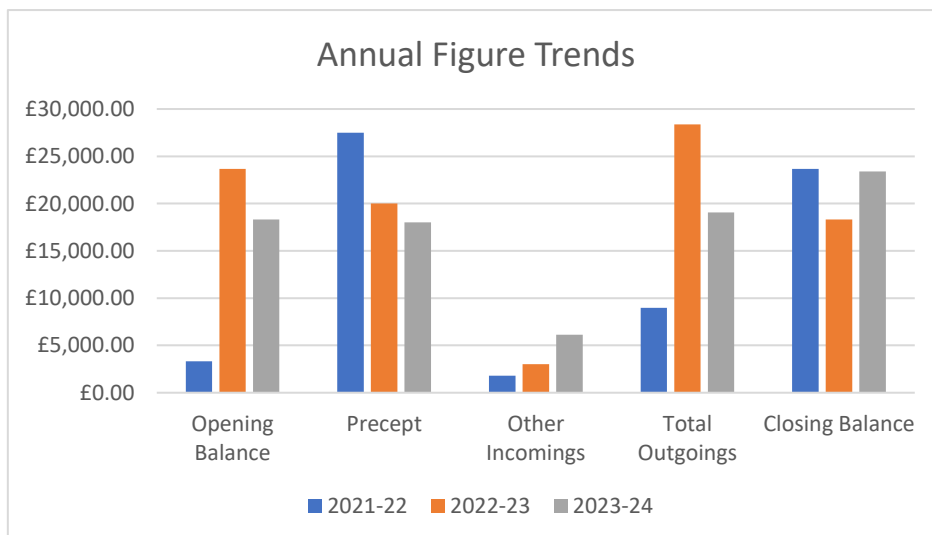
- The replacement value of Parish Assets that have a finite lifetime, but no clear expiry date; unless there is reason to budget for replacing a specific asset, no replacement budget is set, and the Reserve is maintained to cover a degree of unplanned asset replacement cost.
- Planning Legal and Consultancy Expertise: The need and cost is often difficult to pre-estimate accurately – need may arise suddenly and without warning, and the cost involved varies significantly, depending on the case specifics.
- Other unanticipated expenses, for example, support for ad-hoc community projects.

Forecast:

Since I am stepping down in a few weeks, I don’t want to pre-empt how our new council might approach future budgeting, but I will point out several factors that have changed the landscape adversely since last December when we set the budget for 2023-24:

1. We had a significant planning expense in early 2023, which was paid effectively from contingency funds, rather than direct budgeting
2. The likelihood of further advice expense in 2023-24 is higher, as a major planning application near the Village centre is in review.
3. Initial plans and related budget for changing the TPC Website Contract will only be clear when a more detailed plan is defined.
4. The ongoing rate of inflation remains higher than predicted 12 months ago.

In early 2023, the £4,800 of unplanned planning expense I referred to earlier, from which benefit is not realised until 2023-24, pushed the closing balance at 31st March 2023 to a lower than anticipated figure of £18,312.64. The Reserve plus budgeted Precept should be quite adequate to cover 2023-24 total expenditure, but an increase in Precept for 2024-25 might be prudent to maintain an adequate Reserve.



Annual Summary Figures	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Opening Balance	£3,317.01	£23,651.78	£18,312.64
Precept	£27,500.00	£20,000.00	£18,000.00
Other Incomings	£1,801.64	£3,024.43	£6,130.00
Total Outgoings	£8,966.87	£28,363.57	£19,056.78
Closing Balance	23,651.78	£18,312.64	£23,385.86

Parish Assets Replacements Cost	£62,600.00	£70,298.20	£75,939.63
Balance as % Assets	37.78%	26.05%	30.80%

Note that Thurlaston Parish Council has always taken the management of council funds extremely seriously: all spending is sanctioned formally at Parish Council and the accounts are published on the Parish Council Website.

Beech Drive Pocket Park

One significant positive in the past year has been the restoration of a strip of neglected land that runs down one side of Beech Drive. It falls mainly within the Thurlaston Conservation Area, but had lapsed out of private ownership after the surrounding houses were built and the builder became insolvent, and was never lodged with HM Land Registry thereafter.

TPC has received repeated resident complaints about it over the last 4 years, and archives show complaints dating back beyond 1990 - some trees are very large and growth often encroaches onto and over the road and bordering properties creating inconvenience and hazard. TPC has endeavoured to keep the area safe, but the challenge has been finding a legal basis for ongoing responsibility and regular maintenance.

Last year, Cllr Keith Boardman identified and documented legislation that obliges local authorities, such as TPC, Warwickshire County Council (“WCC”) and Rugby Borough Council (“RBC”) to take responsibility for the safety of such areas, including

- The Health & Safety Work Act 1974
- The Care Act 2014 (which establishes that TPC, RBC and WCC have a ‘duty of care’ to the public), and
- The Commons Act 2006 (which provides local authorities with powers over unclaimed land)

In parallel, Cllr Justin Owen submitted a planning application to RBC on behalf of TPC (R22-0546), detailing significant tree management work to make the area safe, establish a baseline of healthy stock and plant several new trees, bringing the site up to a standard suitable for future upkeep. After input from several arboreal specialists and RBC & WCC tree experts, this application was approved in June 2022, and TPC confirmed it would take responsibility for future maintenance once this initial work was completed and the site was ready for planting.

Cllr Boardman also wrote to WCC Legal Department to highlight their legal responsibilities for safety and, in lieu of this and the planning application approval, WCC completed a large slice of the work at no cost to the Parish in August 2022. The WCC focus was on the safety-critical aspects - the remaining initial work was funded by the residents living in close proximity.

In October 2022, Cllr John Bretherton submitted an application to WCC for a “Green Shoots” Grant, from which we received an award of £740 towards planting new trees and installing bird/bat boxes and feeders. Since the beginning of this year, remaining works have been completed and local residents have tidied up the area and started the planting.

All members of the current Council, along with several local residents, helped to move this forwards with the Planning Subcommittee taking a lead in finding a way forward and obtaining planning permission. The key aim was to make the site safe, but it has been an opportunity to rejuvenate and create what WCC refers to as a “Pocket Park” – an attractive corner for leisure, educational for children, with enhancements for wildlife biodiversity, foraging and habitat. It is hoped the outcome will encourage local residents to unearth projects of a similar type and benefits.

Village Design Statement (“VDS”)

The VDS is a formal document that must be approved by RBC, providing design information that planning applicants may use as a reference point to determine if their proposal is in line with the Village’s design. The original Thurlaston VDS was produced in 2003, since when it has been updated several times. Note that while a VDS provides useful reference information, it cannot define planning restrictions or prescribe whether an application should be approved or rejected, and applicants and RBC planning officers are at liberty to disregard its content.

This is due for renewal and a new draft has been produced, which was submitted to RBC recently for initial review. The Senior Planning Officer’s feedback was generally positive:

“I’m of the view the VDS is well written and is very informative of the design considerations for Thurlaston. The statements it makes about design features are explained in detail and are helpfully supported by photographs and maps where appropriate. The cross-referencing to the Conservation Area Appraisal is also useful in highlighting important evidence from this document. Overall I believe it will significantly help inform consideration of development proposals by planners, potential developers and members of the public.”

To enable RBC to endorse it, he has suggested some limited adjustments, mainly where the Design Principles wording strays towards defining planning restrictions, and exceeds the remit of a VDS therefore. These changes will be made before the AGM in May for the new Council to review/resubmit.

End of the PC Term

This four-year Parish Council Term has been a highly unusual period due to the COVID Pandemic and the swathe of temporary and permanent changes it brought. I joined the PC with no previous local government experience and have certainly benefitted from learning a great deal, and from working with some great people, who I would like to take a little time to thank.

Brian Coleman kindly agreed to become a councillor at very short notice two years ago, joining at the AGM in May 2021. He is very well known in and around Rugby, having a long history of involvement in charitable projects. He has used his contacts to improve our liaison with RBC and Tritax, and in other cases established new lines of communication – for example, to keep in touch with Winvic’s progress with the warehouses. Latterly, Brian also demonstrated a previously hidden talent for “scrounging”, managing to persuade Winvic’s site manager to deliver some of their topsoil to Beech Drive, and to level it in preparation for planting. Please show your appreciation for Brian by joining me in a round of applause.

Justin Owen also joined the Council at the AGM in May 2021. I first met Justin when we needed to build a credible response to a planning application for 40 bungalows over Christmas 2020; he joined the working party we had hurriedly put together, provided good analysis for the response, and managed to enlist his brother, Adam, to write a biodiversity/arboreal appraisal of the proposed development in very short time. Justin’s initial focus was on planning, providing insightful analysis and working collaboratively with Keith, which he continued to do throughout, but he has also willingly taken on a variety of other actions beyond planning. I certainly appreciated having a fellow who had to strike a balance with family, career and childcare pressures. I hope Justin won’t mind me describing him as a Northerner, who is very good at cutting through the “mist” to the heart of the issue to quickly achieve clarity. Please show your appreciation for Justin by joining me in a round of applause.

Stephen Lewington joined the Council in May 2019 when he and I were the two new boys! He was responsible for renewal of the Emergency Plan, completed in 2020, and has chaired the Staffing Subcommittee for the last two years, bringing our HR responsibilities and policies up to date. Stephen can be relied upon to give robust, sensible and honest input to frank discussion, but always very politely. He also kindly agreed to extend his time on the Council through to September to support the new councillors as they settle into their roles. Please show your appreciation for Stephen by joining me in a round of applause.

Sylvia Jacques became our Parish Clerk long before I joined the PC, back in July 2015. She is very well known locally and participates in many Village activities. You will find her initials against a large proportion of the PC actions, which she takes on willingly, and completes diligently. I am thankful that we have had an experienced clerk who is aware of what is happening around the Parish, who has a stake in the Village, and who genuinely cares about outcomes. Sylvia will continue as Clerk into the new Parish Council Term that starts in May. Please show your appreciation for Sylvia by joining me in a round of applause.

Keith Boardman has consistently taken responsibility for far more than his fair share of the work. He has run every aspect of our Website throughout the four years – a contribution that would have been enough on its own. In addition, he chaired the Parish Council in 2019-20, he chaired the Planning Subcommittee from 2021-23, and has been the key Planning SME who has penned initial drafts for most of our planning application responses, large and small. Keith’s biggest failing, of course, is an inability to keep his head down when we are looking for a volunteer! Keith has been on the Council since early 2019 and certainly deserves a round of applause for everything he has done over the last 4 years.

Finally, I would like to finish by remembering and appreciating the support given by the wives, husbands and families of the Council members over the last four years. Everyone on the council

is aware of the personal sacrifices involved, but these are people who are never thanked individually, even though the part they play is essential, so please show your appreciation for them by joining me in a final round of applause.

(Closing Remarks)

In closing, I will have completed 4 years on the Parish Council in May, the last three as Chairman, and would like to say what a privilege it has been to serve as your representative. Being a councillor has certainly taken a significant amount of my time, and I am sure the same goes for my fellows, but there are up-sides as well:

I have a great deal of respect for and have learned a lot from all of the individuals who have been part of the Council in the last 4 years,
I have learned a great deal about the mechanisms of local government and planning, and
I have met many local people who I wouldn't have met otherwise

The handovers and transition planning for the new Council should provide them with a very good start towards taking up the baton as smoothly as possible, but I expect they will still face difficulties and a steep learning curve as they settle into their new Council roles. I certainly wish the new team all the very best for the coming term, and hope they too will enjoy upsides amongst the challenges.

Next, I will hand over to Keith Boardman, Chair of TPC's Planning Subcommittee, who will talk about the implementation of RBC's Local Plan in more detail.

Report from the Chairman of the Planning Subcommittee - Keith Boardman

From a planning perspective the past 12 months has been a very busy period. It is also probably the most important activity we undertake. The role of our Parish Council is to represent local views and should:

- Provide local knowledge
- Raise areas of concern
- Inform, debate, and add value to the process
- Involve Rugby Borough Councillors if required
- Make our representations known to Rugby Borough Council Planning Dept

Parish Councils are statutory consultees in the planning process and must be informed of all parish planning applications, and any amendments to those applications. TPC can only comment on these planning applications in the same way as any other member of the public. However TPC does occasionally take professional advice on planning and legal matters, most notably on major planning applications within the parish. The length of time taken to determine a planning application is governed by Rugby Borough Council, not the Parish Council.

Recently TPC planning consultation activities have focussed on:

South West Rugby Local Plan

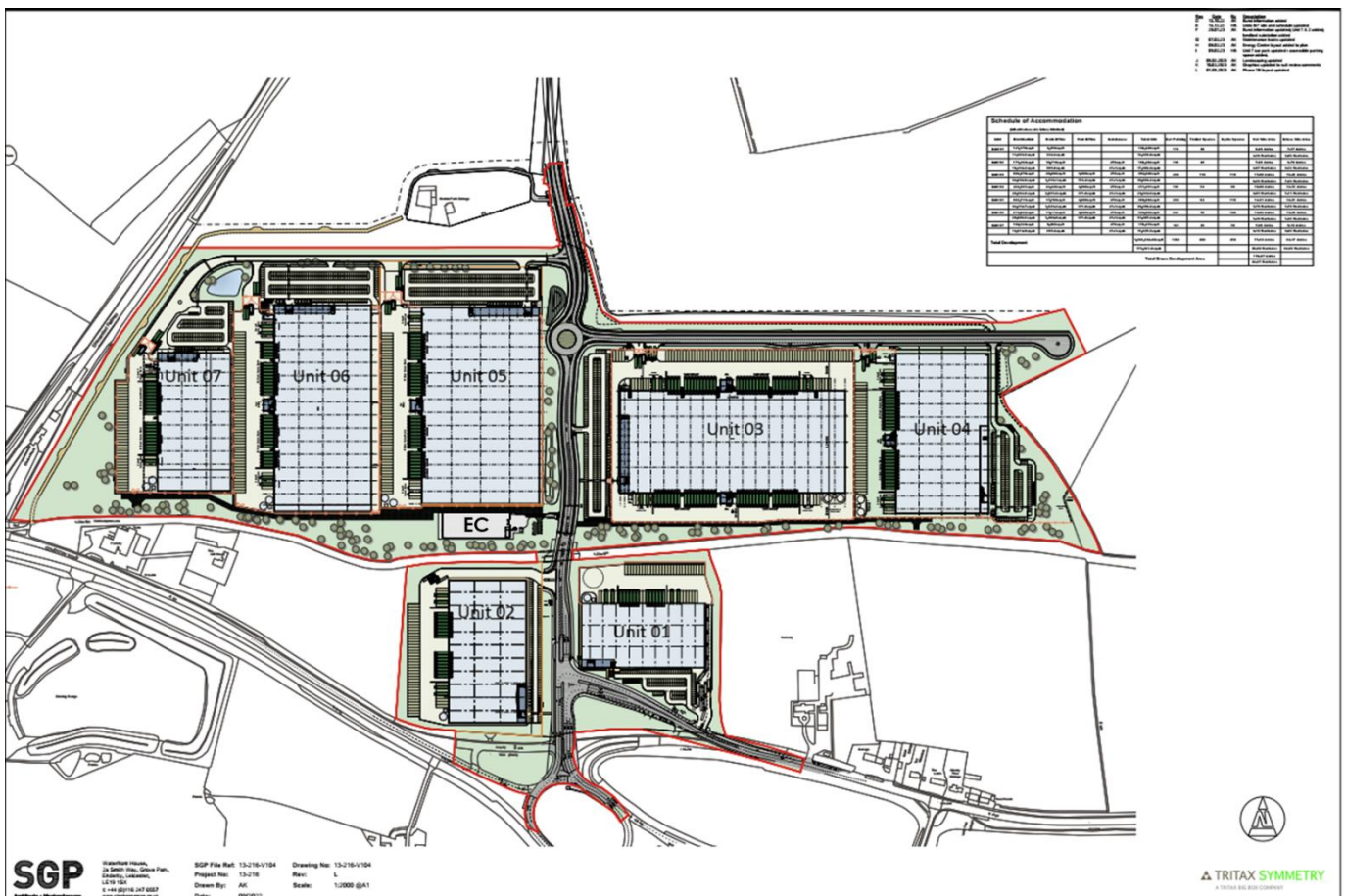
TPC's particular interest in the past session are:

- Over 50 Tritax Symmetry planning applications that have been lodged with RBC

- Warehousing - Tritax Symmetry (7 main buildings)
- Cawston Farm 1 – Tritax Symmetry (275 dwellings)
- Cawston Farm 2 - Tritax Symmetry (350 dwellings)
- Development of green sustainable transport corridors for people, cyclists, wheelchair users
- Rugby's Transport and Travel Strategy (there is still no published Rugby Travel Plan!)
- Gypsy & Traveller sites consultation (Local Plan Policy DS2)

A significant number of Tritax planning applications are being considered under reserved matters as conditions associated with the approval of RBC's R16/2569. Currently Units 1 and 2 are being constructed and due for commissioning this summer, followed by the commencement of building of Units 3 & 4 in the second half of this year. These four Units will provide 1m sq.ft of floor space and be leased to Iron Mountain for a period of 15 years. TPC's main activity is one of liaison with Tritax and their agents. We are all very grateful for the time and effort that Cllr Brian Coleman (see his New Horizons report) has put into nurturing relations which have proved very beneficial in terms of understanding the impact to our lives during the building of both warehouses and the remodelling of roads.

Recently planning applications have also been received for Units 5 to 7 on the north side of Northampton Lane. It total approximately 2m sq. ft of floor space will be provided across the warehouse complex. The approved warehouse site plan and road changes are shown below:



TPC considers Tritax's Cawston Farm Phase 2 is of particular significance to our parish because of the likely impact on local traffic volumes; for example could the Potsford Dam Link become a 'rat-run'? Currently no funding has been identified to link the Potsford Dam Link to the Western Relief Road; this short link road may be expensive due to the high elevation of the old railway route.

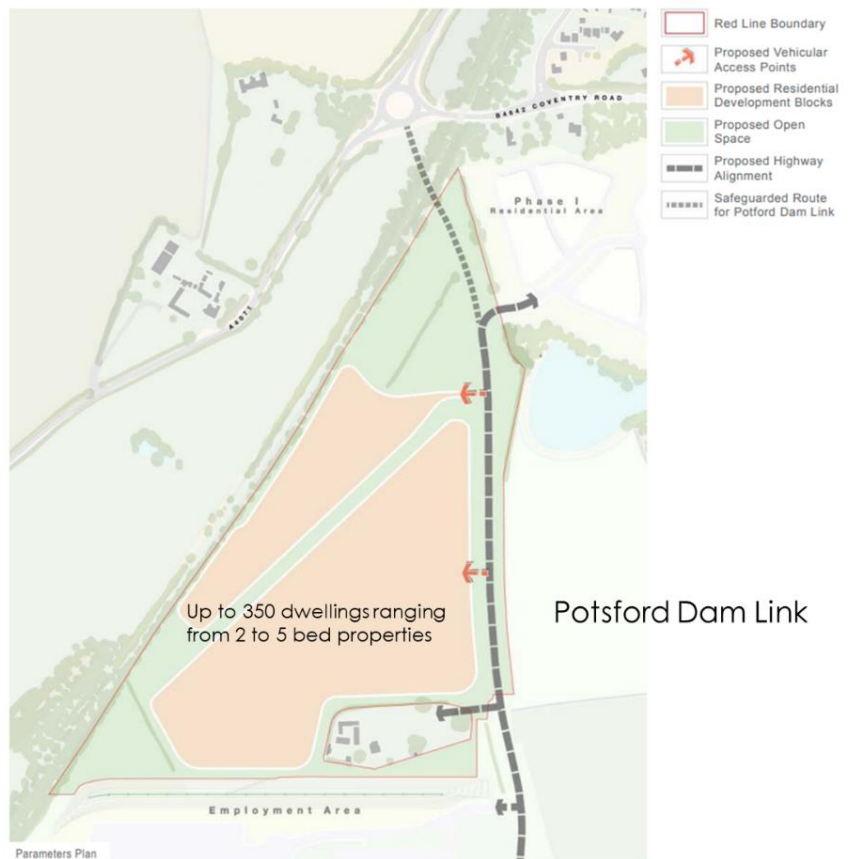
TPC has also made representations on Cawston Farm Phase 2 regarding inadequate open space provision and the potential impact on air quality.

Consultation continues on green sustainable routes to and from Dunchurch and further afield. Tacit with this will be additional connections on to the National Cycle Network Route 41.

Tritax have made proposals (R22/1061) for enhancements along the south side of Coventry Road pedestrian path, known locally as 'Sullivan Way', between the Dunchurch Baptist Church and Main Street. TPC considers the proposals will significantly improve the existing path.

The lack of an approved Rugby Transport Plan hampers constructive consultation regarding the travel and transport impact that may result from the Tritax Symmetry warehouse scheme, Warwickshire County Council's Minerals Plan (located along the Frankton Straight Mile) and numerous housing developments – most notably over 600 dwellings located immediately to the north and north-east of the Tritax warehouses.

Various indicative solutions have been provided to help alleviate traffic congestion problems such as the linking of the Potsford Dam Link to the Rugby Western Relief Road (shown opposite).



Other Major Parish planning applications:

There are currently two major undecided parish planning applications. TPC's representations are available on our website. These are:

- Thurlaston Meadows Care Home & Patricks Field – bungalows scheme, care home extension, remodelled site access & infrastructure (Two applications R20/1030 and R21/0152).

- Draycote Hotel & Golf Club - replacement club house, meeting/conference rooms, additional car parking. (R22/1275).

Two Listed Building planning applications:

The Mill – building renovations and air source heat pump (Three planning applications)

The Old Forge – new access drive and additional dwelling on the site (Two planning applications)

Minor Planning Applications: During 2022 there were 12 minor applications across the Parish.

Gypsy and Traveller Sites:

A new development by RBC is consultation for the provision of Gypsy & Traveller sites. This is being undertaken as part of a national requirement. Details are available in the Rugby Local Plan policy DS2. The indicative timetable is detailed below:

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

TPC has had dialogue with the land owner of fields along the south side of Coventry Road and we do not consider them suitable traveller/gypsy sites. However, if any villager sees suspicious activities by or on any of the field, please inform our Parish Clerk as soon as possible; if necessary she can escalate the issue with RBC.

Archives Report: presented by Brian Coleman Curator of the Village Archives.

New Horizons

If you are new to the village you might like to know that over the years major changes have taken place to the format and future of the village. The Enclosure Act of 1770’s, the construction of the M45, the creation of the Draycote Reservoir and Country Park and currently, the introduction of ‘mass employment’ and additional housing on the periphery of the Parish.

It is fair to say none of these came with the enthusiasm of the residents. All of which needed the parties involved working together to mitigate the worst and create the good outcomes. The latest development came to significance with the Independent Inspectors report on the Rugby Local Plan being published 7th May 2019. Residents from Thurlaston had participated in the consultation, as they did with the opening public meeting with the developers Framptons on in 2017.

With that background the creation of a logistics park, part of which is in the Parish, commenced with the objective of ultimately delivering 2500 jobs and approximately 500 homes.

Many objections by the village to the development included perceived damage to the biodiversity of the area, pollution airborne/light/sound/particulates etc., traffic congestion and the list went on.

The Parish Council has sought to mitigate the negative impact of the development through direct contact with RBC, and more latterly with the Developers, Framptons, the logistics business owners Tritax, plus the on-site constructors Winvic. Broadly speaking of the 7 planned warehouse units 2 and 3 are well advanced and a third is under way. These units will be used by Iron Mountain for data storage and should be operational this year and the remainder are up for let.

The overall management of the site is being led by Tritax for the foreseeable future and in conjunction with an energy company they are maximising energy security and deliver the most efficient energy methods using pv panels etc.

The largest impact in the near future, will be the reconstruction of Coventry Road by the M45 /A45 roundabout which is likely to occur in the next few months.

The companies involved are working to minimise impact on residents and road users.

The issue of using trees to screen the site for sound and vision is a current discussion with Tritax and their developers, a number of options are under review.

Perhaps the top issue is the transport/access and routes around the existing, proposed and future needs of the area. The lack of a cohesive plan for the SW Rugby is a concern and is being highlighted.

The Parish Council continues to present the views of the residents and to consider the overall strategic development of road systems and cycle networks, the latter through Sustrans, Railway Paths Ltd, Rugby Borough Council, and those responsible at County, National levels.

Village Archives

If you are new to the village you might like to know that some of the rich heritage of this place dating from the Domesday Book has been recorded by residents and kept as a social 'diary'. Such documents as the 'Beer Tree' book, a 'Hundred Years' of Parish Meetings, potted histories of properties, family trees, entries in the Thurlaston Chronicle etc., have been retained for reference and general interest.

Long term residents especially can, metaphorically 'wander down memory lane' as they view the records and newer residents can muse on what might have happened where they live.

It is interesting to think that possibly Scandinavian 'visitors' initiated the settlement, that medieval monks expanded the hamlet, that Scottish farmers worked the land that 'noblemen' claimed ownership, that millers, a blacksmith, basket makers, labourers, artisans, a police constable all lived in this community.

History/Heritage groups have worked tirelessly over the years to acquire and collate stories, photos, documents, maps, to not only enjoy the activity of exploring and recording but to consider how this piece of social history might be made ready for future generations. Last year a

number of people expressed their interest in this activity however it requires someone with a passion and maybe some knowledge to plan a way forward.... if that is you please get in touch.

And now, something for everyone... we have some records of the great plague in this area for the 1600's, particularly the numerical outcome with the names of people affected.

We have all just experienced in the last few years a dramatic upheaval to the lives of this country and around the world and I would like to enter something into the Archives that reflects the experience thoughts and feelings of residents over the past 2 years (and maybe longer). How did the Covid pandemic and consequent lock down affect you? Please consider writing a (say) 500-word reflection. You can do it anonymously if you wish. It would be a good addition to the Archives, but it might also be a helpful piece of therapy for us all to have a go at writing it down.

The Archive documents are held safe, waiting to be seen, or maybe to be translated into a book, artwork, digital format, but mainly to be enjoyed and understood. If you have time, skill, ideas but essentially a passion for this please contact me via the Parish Clerk. Thank you.

Brian Coleman - Custodian Thurlaston Archives.

Thurlaston Village Hall Report: Mary Cook, Chair of the Village Hall

Nic Payton, a valued member of the Village Hall committee and a respected lifelong resident of Thurlaston, sadly passed away in early January this year. He will be greatly missed by his fellow members on the village hall committee and by his many friends in this village. Nic was instrumental in computerising the village hall systems.

Nic's passing came at a time when the hall was once again fully open for events and bookings after the Covid shutdown. He was working hard to ensure that our village asset was being effectively utilised for the benefit of all residents.

Many of the village events take place in the Village Hall and we are very grateful for the support we receive from Thurlastonians.

The Village Quiz is back on our post Covid calendar and took place in February with great success. The contribution to our village funds is gratefully received.

Another popular event is the progressive supper which took place on the 25th of March. Thanks to the organising team for their hard work and the contribution to village hall funds.

We are planning a BIG CORONATION TEA PARTY on Sunday May the 7th to celebrate the coronation of King Charles the third which takes place on Saturday the 6th of May. We plan to make this a free event but will gratefully accept donations towards our funds and a local charity. We had a similar event last year for our late Queen's platinum jubilee and thanks to generous donations raised a substantial sum for Hope4 and village hall funds. Please put Sunday the 7th of May in your diaries and invite friends and relatives. As usual we will be appealing to the bakers of Thurlaston who have always been very generous in the past. The cakes have been scrumptious.

If anyone has any ideas for fundraising and is prepared to organise an event, please let the village hall committee know.

To ensure that our village hall remains an asset for Thurlaston, we need to work very hard to maintain this old building. As with all old buildings we need to be constantly vigilant, last year we decided to refurbish the parquet floor. This was a major expenditure but we hope that you will agree that it was money well spent.

Our treasurer for many years had been Simon Knowles who has done a sterling job of keeping our finances in good order and is a valued member of the committee. Simon and his family have now moved away from this village and he will be resigning from the committee. All the committee would like to thank Simon for his hard work and we wish him and his family all the best in their new home.

We are delighted that Bridget Rothwell has agreed to join the committee and she will be taking over the role of treasurer. We are delighted to welcome two more new members of the committee. Selina Larque is a returning member and Sarah Poirier who is new to the village.

The Village Hall is now a fully registered charity thanks to Sally Wise who steered us expertly through the complex registration process.

Our quaint little hall is the hub of our community. All of us on the committee, Bridget Rothwell, Shirley Hall, Sally Wise, Judy Douglas, Selina Larque, Sarah Poirier and myself are very grateful for the support we receive from the village and we look forward to continuing to maintain this asset.

Mary Cook. Village Hall Chair

DUNCHURCH BOUGHTON TRUST

Trustees

Phil Freeman

Celia Jones

Chris Sarson

Rebecca Shields

Tim Wainwright

Clare Cherrett

Fiona Stevenson

Thank you for inviting me to submit a report for the Dunchurch Boughton Trust of which I was appointed a new trustee, representing Thurlaston, in November 2022.

Activity

The Trust has continued to provide financial support to Dunchurch Boughton Junior School by administering the Trust established by Frances Boughton. Most recently this has been through creation of **The Haven**.

The Haven is an outdoor learning area with pond, seating area, fire pit and wildflower planting. Its creation has allowed more learning to be conducted outdoors with development of a forest school and plans for Dunchurch Infant School also to be able to access the area.

The Trust has agreed to fund any maintenance costs.

There have also been general improvements made to the fabric of the school with work on the toilets, and provision of IT equipment for staff including iPads/tablets.

In the future the school plans to update the libraries. Whilst the school plans to fund purchase of books through existing budgets and PTA fundraising, transforming the existing IT suite into a library may be supported by Dunchurch Boughton Trust.

Trust Accounts

There has been a reduction in the total value of funds, as expected by the current economic climate. However, the Trust is still receiving income from the funds, therefore are still in a good position to be able to continue to support the school.

St. Edmunds Church: report by Reverend Pat Townshend

Following the Covid disruptions, it was pleasing to return to a normal year. We held services of Holy Communion and Evensong as well as special services such as the Christmas Carol service and the St Edmund's day service, graced by the ever-welcome presence of the St Andrew's Community Singers, who inspired us with their singing and boosted our joint hymns. We also had a baptism and one funeral service. The November Remembrance service was held outside by the Cross with attendance from the Care Home. In addition, we continued to hold half hour Reflective Prayer meetings every Wednesday mornings, attended by 3 to 7 villagers. Everyone is welcome to join in with this. It is a peaceful and reflective service and a beautiful way to start the day.

Gill Wood, who played organ and piano for our services for 30 years, decided it was time to hand over to someone else, and in order to show our thanks and appreciation for her dedication, she was presented with a token for a flowering bush. The role was taken by Richard Copeland, the organist at St Peter's, but unfortunately, he has now returned to Denmark and St Edmund's is left having to use recorded music for services until such time as we manage to find another organist.

Our small but dedicated church committee work hard to maintain this church and we give thanks for the many villagers who are active in their support as well.

Patricia Townshend, Vicar

Poors Plot Charity: report by Cat Sabine, Clerk to Poors Plot

As previously explained, I've been unable to get a volunteer to present a report at your upcoming meeting despite making numerous requests. I spoke to a parish councillor last night (Brian I believe?) & explained this. I offered to provide you with the list of grants given in the last 12 months so that you have something from Poors Plot. List is below. Also, just as some extra information, trustees are planning to upgrade the allotments this year, once nesting season is over. The plan is to create a hardstanding car park, remove a few trees & give it a general tidy up to make it more accessible for further allotment holders & also possibly create an area that can be used by the parish in some way. We can hopefully report more on this next year. I've also attached draft minutes from Feb – these have not yet been approved so please mark them as draft.

Grants:

Young person grants x 3 £900

Confidential Poors Plot grant £600 (to help with heating & transportation)

Newcombe and Spears Almshouses: report by Walter Harvey.

Report of the trustees of the Newcombe and Spier Almshouse Charity 2023

For those who are not aware, the local Almshouses are a terrace of six small houses in Dunchurch between the Dun Cow and the Church, opposite the Scott statue and Mops. The charity was founded in 1690 and has run continuously since then. It is for the benefit of Dunchurch and Thurlaston residents and Thurlaston Parish Council nominates one trustee. As with all old buildings last rebuilt in Victorian times there is a constant requirement to repair and refurbish.

The major activity in 2022 was to replace the flat roofs at the rear of the houses with slated roofs and better insulation. The contractor that we had selected in the autumn of 2021 was unable to start the work in the spring of 2022 but we were able to find a replacement contractor who began work in July 2022. The work was effectively completed by early December 2022. We have two new trustees joining us this year, Mrs Joan Wade and Mrs Kathryn Fowler, both local residents.

Two residents left the Almshouses this year, one moving to Leamington Hastings and the other joining her daughter in New Zealand. Both vacancies were taken up by June 2022.

Routine maintenance continued throughout the year with the upper floor windows being repainted and the fence being replaced.

The residents report that the new roof insulation in both the kitchen and bathroom definitely makes them both feel warmer in daily use. However, we still seem to be getting some small patches of damp in the main body of some of the houses and we are getting specialist attention to determine the cause.

The Charity funds remain in good order and enable the trustees to maintain comfortable albeit limited accommodation for the residents.

Village Fete: presented by Sylvia Jacques Organiser of Fete Group.

Village Fete 2022:

2022 still saw signs of Covid being around and we decided we wanted to have a Fete but to keep to the smaller version which seemed more sensible and most people said how much they had enjoyed the slimmed down version.

We had stalls all along Church Lane; Books, Bric a brac, Raffle, the children had a stall selling used toys, Water and wine, Plants and produce, Ladies Club stall and we used the Church for the cake stall and strawberries and cream, teas in the Village Hall as usual, Pimms and music outside the Church by Paul Jacques.

The date of the Fete was 2nd July 2022, with the theme "Mini Fete". This was also a celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, so lots of bunting and flags were all around the area.

Although the Fete was smaller and the takings down, we gave the Church and the Village Hall £550 each.

It was very successful and residents how much they enjoyed the day but for the first time in my experience there was a heavy downpour from 2pm until 4pm when the sun came out. Never mind!

The Church has kindly allowed us to be here tonight and a donation in the tray as you go out would be appreciated.

STOP PRESS! Watch out for details of the 2023 Fete, bigger and better and in MAIN STREET!

If you can support us in any way, please say and see contact below. We are still looking for helpers for some of the stalls.

Fete Team: Mary, Ronnie, John, Robert and Sylvia.

Thurlaston Chronicle: report by Paula Irish

Our annual village publication is due out again at the end of April 2023 and as ever will be a celebration of all things Thurlaston and what makes our village a special place to live.

Thank you in advance to all those who have contributed to this year's edition, including our key organisations such as the church, village hall and parish council, and the individual villagers who have kindly taken the time to also share stories and photographs.

A big thank you also goes to the Parish Council for their support in funding the printing of the Chronicle. The format changed a little last year to make it A4 size, which was well received in feedback on the village net. Local printing firm Steers have again agreed to print the Chronicle: the quote for 150 copies, 20-pages full colour, was £265 in 2020, £270 in 2022 and for this year is £285.

The editorial team comprises Sue Winton, Gill Dakin and Paula Irish – we are grateful to everyone who supports their efforts when asking for reports and photographs, and very much hope you will again enjoy this year's Thurlaston Chronicle!

If you would like to get in touch, or know of someone who has moved to the village and might like to see a copy, the team is contactable at: thurlastonchronicle@gmail.com

Open Forum:

A resident put forward a suggestion to form a protest group to discuss the planning applications in the village and put more weight behind the opposition to schemes. This was discussed and interest was shown at the meeting.

Residents invited to participate in Wine and Nibbles.

Any Future Business:

For some time, the verges at the corner of Church Lane and Main Street have been destroyed by heavy vehicles driving over this area. A number of solutions have been tried or discussed. Cllr Howard Roberts said at last year's meeting that he had a similar problem in his own village and this was solved with laying cobblestones. He is willing to assist with the cost from his Councillors grant but this has not been forthcoming in spite of repeated requests.

The meeting closed at 10.30pm

The date of the next APM will be during April 2024.

Minutes by Sylvia Jacques.

Parish.clerk@thurlaston-pc.gov.uk

Signed by Chair..... Dated.....