

THURLASTON PARISH COUNCIL



Annual Parish Meeting Thursday 8th May 2025

Attending from the TPC, Holger Allroggen (Chair), Robert Ashford (Chair Planning), Lee White, Gary Smith and Andrew Fairgrieve plus approx. 26 residents.

Thurlaston Parish Council Chair, Holger Allroggen welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.

- 1. Apologies:** RBC Cllrs John Keeling, Walter Harvey, Mary & Colin Cook, Brian Bowsher.
- 2. Minutes of the last APM held on 9th May 2024:** Approved at the Parish meeting held on Monday 23rd September 2024, proposed by GS and seconded by HA.
- 3. Report from the Chair of Thurlaston Parish Council (Holger Allroggen)**

The new Parish Council has completed its second year; I can report that we have settled into a good working routine with proceedings kept under tight control by our long-serving Parish Clerk Sylvia. For those who (still) don't know who we are:

Holger Allroggen (Chair), Robert Ashford, Andrew Fairgrieve, Gary Smith, Lee White.

Whilst costs have been rising (including budgeting for expected planning legal costs) we managed to request a slightly smaller precept from RBC, which means the TPC share of your council tax has decreased by 24% - the projected balance end of year remains stable when compared with previous years (thanks once more to Meenaxi Patel for her accounting expertise).

Most time and effort recently has been spent on dealing with planning matters, in particular compiling our response to RBC's Local Plan consultation having taken advice from an expert planning barrister (which Robert Ashford has summarised separately in this edition of the Chronicle together with other past planning application matters).

We finally received a payment of ca. £28K from Tritax's community grant, which will pay for community projects carefully chosen in collaboration with many residents (digitisation of Village Archives, Village Hall kitchen refurbishment and pergola, new Parish noticeboards, new bus shelter on Coventry Road).

We have been in correspondence with both Tritax and our County Councillor in relation to mitigating the visual and noise impact of the Tritax warehouses; a key suggestion being explored is the planting of trees or even a wood in strategically placed locations between the village and Tritax (making use of a large sum of money that has been paid by Tritax to Warwickshire County Council (WCC) for a biodiversity offsetting scheme to mitigate the development's impact - so far we have seen nothing).

We have been in constant contact with Severn Trent regards the situation at the pumping station at the bottom of our village, working towards ensuring earliest possible completion of necessary work and repair to verges etc caused by the permanent movement of tankers along our narrow lanes. Regrettably this will be a long drawn-out process.

Finally, the new website is almost ready to "go live"; a link for you to explore will shortly appear on the existing website.

The remainder of the 2025/26 financial year will see significant planning challenges in relation to the Local Plan. We will try our best to keep you up-to-date with important developments. Thank you for your support!

4. Report from TPC Planning Sub Committee Chair (Robert Ashford)

1. Government Changes

Since the last meeting there have been political changes to both local and national government:

May 2024: Control of RBC passes to Labour with supply agreement from LibDems.

July 2024: Labour form new UK government.

May 2025: Conservative control of WCC lost, Reform UK have the most seats (23 out of 57) and there is no overall control.

The new UK government has stated its intention to merge district, borough and county councils into larger unitary authorities by January 2027. It has asked for proposals from the largest councils in each county. WCC has proposed a single unitary authority - effectively taking over North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council - or two unitaries with a north/south split.

So Rugby Borough Council will likely cease to exist in January 2027. There will no longer be any borough councillors and it is likely that whole county will be run from Shire Hall, Warwick. Decision making, especially on planning matters, will become more remote.

2. The Current Local Plan

The current Local Plan runs from 2011 to 2031 and the last update was adopted in June 2019. It should be refreshed every five years and RBC is in process of preparing update for period 2024-2045.

Thurlaston's main concern is with the SW Rugby Masterplan which provides for up to 186,500m² of large warehouses and up to 3,943 dwelling houses. To date permission has been granted for 167,311m² of B8 warehousing and 835 dwelling houses (outline permission only for 625 of them). No applications have yet been received for 3,108 dwellings. No dwellings at all have been built yet.

3. Tritax Symmetry

Tritax have made 64 planning applications for the development of Symmetry Park starting with R16/2569. They have built 7 large warehouses with 167,311m² of floorspace, 5 of which have now been let to Iron Mountain and XPO Logistics. They have been granted outline permission only for 625 dwellings.

They have made numerous applications to relax original conditions of R15/2569 involving raising height of units 1 & 2 by 3m, delaying construction of cycleways, ignoring the new mandated speed limit, etc.

Tritax have two sites for residential development. Cawston Farm Phase 1 has received outline planning permission for 275 dwellings (R18/0995, 16th Aug 2023). 30 were scheduled for completion in 2023-2024. Cawston Farm Phase 2 has received outline planning permission for 350 dwellings (R22/0853, 29th Sept 2022) and was scheduled for a 2023-2024 start.

The neighbouring site of Cawston Lane is being developed by L&Q Estates, who received outline planning permission for 210 dwellings (R18/0936, 18th March 2021) and detailed planning application R24/0971, 6th November 2024. 20 were scheduled for completion in 2022-2023 and 40 were scheduled for completion in 2023-2024

4. Updating RBC’s Local Plan

The current update is for the planning period 2021-2041. If it is not adopted before 2027, then the plan fails and it is likely that WCC will begin the process afresh in an environment with looser regulations, and larger housing and employment targets.

There may be no local plan in the interregnum which would impose fewer constraints on developers, or (technically) RBC could just self-certify that the existing plan is sound until 2031.

RBC called for proposals at the ‘Consultation on the Issues and Options’ stage of the update process and has evaluated those proposals. It has put forward some as ‘preferred options’ in its ‘Preferred Option consultation’ in which we are now engaged. It will then reconsider those preferred options and begin consultation on (a possibly new set of) options, after which it will revise its plan and submit a version it believes to be sound to the Secretary of State for evaluation and approval. The Secretary of State will appoint an inspector who will review it and may demand changes.

RBC’s update is currently driven by two reports on the region’s needs: the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (C&W HEDNA) of 2022 commissioned by the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Authorities and prepared by ICENI; and the West Midlands Strategic Employment Sites Study (WMSESS) of 2023/24 commissioned by the West Midlands local planning authorities and the West Midlands Combined Authority. This was prepared by Mace Ltd, ICENI, Knight Frank and MDS Transmodal. These reports set targets for residential and industrial development until 2045. They also set targets for strategic B8 warehousing.

Rugby’s residual (i.e. when approvals are deducted) requirement for industrial need is 739,559m² (202.5ha), but RBC seems to want to also include the entirety of Coventry's unmet need of 180,000m² (45ha). This gives a total industrial need of 919,559m² (247.5ha). It should be noted that such need could be met from a combination of other neighbouring councils: Solihull Metropolitan Borough; North Warwickshire Borough; Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough; and Warwick District.

5. RBC’s Preferred Industrial Options

Site	ID	Size 000's m ²
Coton Park East	64	115
South West Rugby employment phase 2	17	130
North of Ansty Park	14	75
Crowner Fields Farm and Home Farm, Ansty	95	275
Prologis Park West and Mountpark	328	350
TOTAL		945

Many options remain as 'potential options' even if not currently preferred.

6. TPC's Response to Preferred Options Consultation

TPC has taken legal advice from barrister Ashley Bowes. We oppose site ID17 and 3 other sites that are still 'potential options'. We are currently preparing detailed response document which we will publish.

It is worth looking at these sites in more depth.

Site ID 9: Thurlaston Meadows for 34 bungalows: has been rejected.

Site ID17 (South West Rugby Employment Phase 2) is one of RBC's Preferred Options. It was proposed by Tritax and comprises 130,000m² of B8 warehousing. This would nearly double the size of Symmetry Park, taking it from 167,000m² to 297,000m². TPC are opposed. There are 4 good grounds for rejecting it.

- The transport links are poor: it has a congestion level 2 (scale 1-6, 1=most congested); there has been no demonstration that impacts can be cost-effectively mitigated contrary to 115(d) of the NPPF; and it has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 0 (scale 0-6, 0=least accessible).
- It is assumed, as safeguarded land, to have been previously committed, but the Inspector did not address the suitability of it for any purpose, so it is not committed in any sense.
- It is being improperly used to facilitate road construction, specifically to fund the Potsford Dam link - which should have been funded and delivered the SWR Employment phase 1 development.
- Lastly, alternative sites have not been properly considered in breach of Regulation 12(2)(b) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Site ID133: Richborough Promotion

This is still a potential option, but not a preferred one. It was made by Bryson (owner), Howkins & Harrison (agent) and Richborough Commercial (developer) and would deliver 43,000m² of B8 Commercial warehousing. The village survey conducted last year elicited 96 replies from 83 separate households. All strongly opposed it. TPC oppose it on grounds of: access; visual impact; and poor transport links.

Site ID18: Barnwells Barn Farm

Again, this is still a potential option, but not a preferred one. It was made by Warwickshire Property & Development Group Ltd which is owned by WCC and investment companies. It would deliver 97,000m² of B8 Commercial warehousing. This would have a similar impact on the village as the Richborough promotion. TPC again oppose it on grounds of: access; visual impact; and poor transport links.

Site ID77: Land West of Symmetry Park

Again, this is still a potential option, but not a preferred one. It was made by Tritax Symmetry Limited and would deliver 45,000m² of B8 Commercial warehousing. It may be regarded as the baby brother of site ID17. TPC again oppose it on the same grounds as site ID17 and its being in the Green Belt.

TPC are actively opposing the preferred option site ID17 and the potential options of sites ID133, ID18 and ID77. We are acting under legal advice and remain optimistic.

7. Other Planning Matters

The Malthouse Development involves the building of 6 dwellings. Planning variations R25/0090 were approved 26th March. These involve more windows and small orientation changes, but the principal trees preserved and it is less Stalinesque than the original design. Work has now started on clearing the site.

The Old Forge has received a planning variation R25/0397, which is essentially a formal archaeological investigation scheme. Work has (almost) started on this.

8. Wood at Barnwells Barn Farm

WCC has received £474K from Tritax under the section 106 agreement “for funding long term conservation projects in the area surrounding the Development which will deliver biodiversity gain”.

We suggest planting a wood on part of the Barnwells Barn Farm site. This is a site that WCC own, although it is presently committed to farming uses. Funding contributions are available from the Forestry Commission (for 10 ha: c.£160,000 + £4,000 p.a. Maintenance) which make it financially viable.

It would absorb both pollution and noise, greatly enhance the site’s visual appearance and provide public amenity.

WCC are currently pushing back on this because it is still in RBC’s view a ‘potential option’ for commercial development. However, this is a breach of its own rules and possibly unlawful. For, if WCC were to be accused of preferential treatment of its own development company, it would be vulnerable to legal assault by competing developers.

Open Forum – A proposal to have structures similar to the Eden Project was suggested to help with pollution of air. Another discussion was for Electric buses. A request that haulage lorries are not allowed to travel through Dunchurch.

5. Report from Councillor for Website and ICT (Lee White)

New Website: A demonstration of the new website was given by Lee White and Danny Jones. This will be made available on the old website and residents are invited to try it and report back to Lee with feedback.

6. Rugby Borough Councillors Reports

Cllr Jill Simpson-Vince

This year has been working with Cllrs Dale and John Keeling across the area.

It feels like the Coventry Road has had roadworks on it for ever, however the roundabout work is progressing well, despite the disruption. I drive through it all most days.

I have had meetings in last 12 months with Tritax, Taylor Wimpey and Old Laurentians concerning the South West Rugby development. I am also keeping in contact with the planning officer regarding the Homestead Link road.

Having last year lobbied officers and councillors for a parcel of land of Coventry Road to not be included in the local plan consultation, we then had a change of leadership at Rugby Borough Council.

The current local plan consultation has 2 sites on Coventry Road for housing. Given there will be several thousand homes across the road in South West Rugby this piecemeal development of housing is not helpful. My personal view is that if the safeguarded site needs to be developed, it would be better to have housing on that rather than the big warehouses.

I voted against the current local plan consultation at Rugby Borough Council. I did not have any information ahead of the plan being published as to what would be in it when the Cabinet papers at RBC were published in March. From my perspective the plan feels rushed, and I will be submitting my response to the consultation this week.

Councillor John Keeling

The Local Plan

In March, Rugby Borough Council launched a consultation on preferred options for a new Local Plan, for Rugby Borough. The Local Plan sets out planning policies and proposals for new development for the borough. It is prepared in consultation with residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

The Local Plan defines many things, including:

Where housing can be built.

Which land can be used to provide employment.

How vital infrastructure needs can be met, such as schools, green spaces, health care facilities and transport links.

How the borough will mitigate and adapt to climate change.

For all of the details on the consultation, and to share your views, go online to rugby.gov.uk

The consultation will close on 19th May for officers to consider residents views.

County Councillor Dale Keeling

The recent County Council election results have given no political party overall control. I understand at this moment talks are taking place between local party leaders to decide on the best way forward on who takes the leadership role of the County Council.

Political makeup is now: Reform 23, Lib Dems 14, Conservatives 9, Green 7, Labour 3, Whitnass residents association 1. 57 seats altogether.

A decision may have already been reached by the date of the Parish Council AGM.

7. TPC New Horizons Report & Archives (Brian Coleman)

The last 12 months have been exciting and frustrating in equal measures.

But going back to the beginning it was 1992 following the visit of an archivist from Rugby School to Thurlaston Village that inspired Jess Cummings to start a group to collect and collate material to track and record the history of the village. Upwards of 30 people volunteered to help with this. Jess moved back to Scotland in 2005, and I volunteered to act as *temporary* coordinator.

We have had some interesting developments over the years ending up with a collection that has been recently commended by the Warwickshire Records Office.

The last twelve months has been a time spent considering the options for the future of the Archive asset. Contact has been made with other local village heritage groups (e.g. Cotesbach, Braunston, Stretton-on Dunsmore) Rugby and Dunchurch history groups, Warwickshire CAVA (volunteer agency) and fleetingly with Rugby High School. We had 3 students volunteer from RHS but due to school rules and Safeguarding Regulations we were unable to pursue their offer of using the girls for our Timeline Project.

So where are we now?

I am in the process of completing the final filing of documents, and jointly with the Parish Council and Warwickshire County Records Office pursuing the possibility of digitising the asset. There is a possibility that we can outsource the storage of the documents we currently hold in the Village Hall with the hope that one day a leader and team will have the time and passion to revitalise this historic record.

Two projects that still require input is the "*village timeline*" project and the "*Telling our stories*" project where we are proposing to record the memories of our long-term residents. Ownership of the asset remains with the Thurlaston Parish Council.

Many thanks to everyone down the ages who have contributed to this worthy venture.

8. Report from the Village Hall Committee (Sally Wise)

The Village Hall continues to be used regularly by groups within the village including Ladies Club, Church Group, pub night, the fete, for fund raising, meetings and other village or villager activities. External hirers include the Dunchurch Guides, various charities, RBC, the Police Hub, educational establishments and other ad hoc individual or group bookings.

Historically, some village groups have used the hall facilities without payment and without making a donation towards costs. This along with limited external bookings and increasing costs resulted in the hall running at a loss in 2 of the last 3 years which has been funded from reserves. The remaining reserves are invested in a high interest account which helps to fund the hall. To address the shortfall, in 2024 we changed our pricing structure in line with other comparable halls in the area. This included charging residents for their own use and for their use of the hall to raise funds for other charities at a discounted rate to help to cover the costs of use. Whilst this was not a problem for most hirers it did upset some villagers who felt that the hall should continue to be free to residents and that the committee should find alternative income to cover costs.

The committee took this on board and appealed to the Parish Council for an annual contribution of £1,000 towards costs which was approved to start in 2025. The VH committee have agreed to revert to a donations policy for villagers (personal/group use) instead of fixed charges. We will however still need to rely on donations to cover costs and would also welcome villagers to set up their own fund raising activities for the hall. Aside from the usual utility, servicing and insurance costs there are many other costs involved in running a public building. These include the costs of music licences, regular fire, safety and electrical checks and safety equipment replacement. Our terms of insurance include the requirement to spend money periodically on rebuilding cost estimates, and full electrical and roofing inspections. In addition, the hall built of wood and close to 80 years old requires ongoing maintenance. In 2024 we replaced some of the rotten cladding on the south side, repaired the sheds and extensively cut back the hedging which had encroached on the buildings risking damage. The accounts are displayed on the village hall notice board between March and June.

Maintenance costs in 2025 will include the replacement of 4 broken heaters, repairing the shed roof which was damaged in the recent storm, staining the exterior of the hall which is down to bare wood in many places and repainting the railings which are down to bare metal in many places.

We will also start a kitchen upgrade and modernisation project. The Parish Council kindly approved our request to use some of the Tritax grant for this and it has now been agreed by Tritax. We expect the project to be completed this year.

Trustee changes: Mary Cook stepped down as Chairperson in 2024 but continues to support the hall in the capacity of Booking Manager. Judy Douglas now chairs the VH committee meetings and the rest of the role is shared amongst the other trustees. Other changes include Anna Buckland who we welcomed to the committee, however the resignations of Sarah Pourier who is returning to Canada and Selina Larque due to work pressures still leaves the committee short of 2 members. Despite numerous appeals to the villagers we are unable to fill the open positions. Our sincere thanks and appreciation go to Mary, Sarah and Selina for their time and dedication over the years.

9. Dunchurch Boughton School Trust (Rebecca Shields)

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 trustee, representing Thurlaston, in November 2022.

Activity

The Trust has continued to provide financial support to Dunchurch Boughton C of E Junior Academy by administering the Trust established by Frances Boughton. Since federation of the Infant School with the Junior School the Trust now includes both schools within its remit.

Most recently this has been through provision of funding for a Pastoral mentor within the Junior School. Ms Donnellan, Headteacher reported "We cannot thank you enough for the funds to secure an additional pastoral mentor. This has made a significant difference to the school; identified pupils have transformed their behaviour (their parents are beyond delighted). One parent has asked if the appointed colleague can be with their child next year too, as he has made such a positive impact on their life in school. We have additional capacity at break and lunchtime, meaning safeguarding is more secure as a school. It has made such a difference...THANK YOU!"

The Trust has also committed to updating the library within the Infant School by transforming the existing IT suite into a library and area for quiet small group learning. The

school hopes this will continue to encourage a love of reading and the practice of reading for pleasure which may have decreased following COVID restrictions. Additional books and equipment have already been funded through PTA fundraising.

The Trust continues to support the maintenance of the Haven, an outdoor learning area with pond, seating area, fire pit and wildflower planting.

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 both schools.

10. Report from St Edmunds Church (Brian Bowsher Deputy Churchwarden)

A year in the life of our village church

St Edmund's is part of the Church of England parish of Dunchurch with Thurlaston, and has enabled us to share a vicar with St Peter's in Dunchurch. In July 2024, the Vicar Pat Townshend retired, and we entered a period of vacancy. We particularly thank her for her dedication and enthusiasm in the post over 7 years, very ably supported by her husband Graham. As we await a new appointment, the pattern of services has been altered slightly, recognizing the support and skills available to us, and we have been able to run a Holy Communion service at 9.00am on the first Sunday of each month supported particularly by retired Vicar Hilary Iredale, for which we have been very appreciative. On the third Sunday of the month we have run a 6.30pm Evensong service, assisted greatly by Alan Leach on the piano. Special services were held for Easter, St Edmund's Day, Carols, Compline and Remembrance, and Christmas was supported at St Peter's. On months with a fifth Sunday, we have joint services with the two congregations, alternating venues. In total 18 Holy Communion services and 6 Evensong services were held, with a typical attendance of 12. The most popular services were the evening Carol service with 55 attending, and the St Edmund's Day evening where we were joined again by the St Andrew's Community Singers, which boosted the attendance to 47 and enhanced the communal singing. The half hour Reflective Prayer meetings at 9.00am on Wednesday mornings continued to be popular with 3 to 7 people attending.

On the financial front, we finished the year with a surplus of £1,886. Notable receipts were £6117 for covenanted gifts plus collections and donations, and the Church House rent of £6,904 and the village fete donation of £900, very much appreciated by the church. Notable payments were the St Edmund's share of parish costs of £8,280, which covers approximately 17% of the parish costs associated with having a vicar and being part of the Church of England. The running cost of St Edmund's was £13,549 in 2024, which equates to £1,129 per month. Church Reserves stood at £11,671 at the end of the year.

In addition, the church and village raised £756 at a coffee morning in St Edmund's for a donation to Myton Hospice. Coffee mornings continue to be run in the Village Hall on the third Friday of every month for the benefit of villagers and passers-by, and profits are used to aid the church.

The £603 monthly income from letting Church House has been very beneficial, and the installation in the previous year of secondary double glazing in the tower has been very successful in improving comfort levels. Further expenditure may be needed to overcome jamming of the front and back doors.

The church buildings are in a reasonable state. During the previous year, we repaired the worst areas of potential falling ceiling plaster using villager skills and time, which continues to be quite successful. Flaking of small amounts of plaster still occurs on occasion, but nothing serious since our repairs. We called in a roofer to repair several broken or shifted tiles, and this will need to be repeated. The only long-term solution is the re-roofing of St Edmund's. In April 2020, the Church Architect Stephen Oliver obtained an outline estimate for this work from Croft Building and Conservation of £117,312 and suggested we add 15% for contingency and a further 15% for professional services, totalling £155,145. VAT would also be payable, but probably reclaimable. Inflation in the period since would increase this figure considerably. The letting of the Church House has given us some leeway, but no further planning on this issue has been put in place. The last Quinquennial Architectural Inspection took place in November 2018, and therefore the next is imminent. In 2025 the 5 yearly electrical inspection has taken place, as has the 3 yearly lightning conductor inspection, and the yearly check on fire extinguishers. The St Edmund's church committee met 6 times during the year, and are to be congratulated for their dedication in maintaining this very special church within the village, with support from retired Vicars, the Parish, and the many villagers who are active in their support of this unique Butterfield designed church-cum-school. It should be noted, however, that we are entering uncharted waters: the village committee that helps to run the church is of a certain age, as is most of the congregation, and change is inevitable. A new vicar is awaited, and he or she is expected to be concerned particularly with the needs of the huge increase in housing in the South West of Rugby and support of the new young families. The role of St Edmund's in this future is unclear, and will always be limited by lack of parking in the village. Although a cherished building within Thurlaston and the largest community resource, it is not ideal for outreach to the wider community, and does not attract sufficient church attendance from within this small village. We await with great anticipation the arrival of the new vicar.

11. Report of the Poor's Plot Charity (Paula Irish)

Thurlaston Poor's Plot – your village charity

Although it may not always seem like there is a lot going on with the Thurlaston Poor's Plot charity, we are as ever busy behind the scenes. The charity has its origins in a grant of 43 acres of land set aside in 1728 to relieve the poor of Thurlaston and enable villagers to grow food for their families.

Today, just over an acre is used as allotments located off the Coventry Road, while the remainder is rented by two local farming families, which provides an income.

The charity has modest reserve fund built up over the years and is currently working with a land agent to update the land registration and leases.

Historically, many of the grants made by the charity were to help householders buy extra coal for the winter months, at a time when Thurlaston was an agricultural village rather than the affluent place it is now.

Nevertheless, the mandate of the charity remains the same - to support those in need or hardship in the village - and grants continue to be made on this basis.

Individual grant applications are confidential to the trustees who look at each case on its merits. This information is not made public, so if you are in need of support please do get in touch to see if the charity is able to help.

The trust also provides educational grants of £300 to young people leaving school and moving on to the next stage of their education or training, which they are able to then put towards books or equipment for their studies or apprenticeships.

Additionally, requests for the general benefit of the community are considered and in recent times have included supporting the upgrading and accessibility of the toilets in the village hall.

Other outgoings for the charity include looking after the maintenance of the allotments, subsidising the water rates, and over the last year creating a hard standing for car parking, clearing rubbish, tidying and tree work.

The allotments are all currently in use but if you are interested in taking one, please get in touch as there may be existing holders who would like to either move on or share a plot.

To find the allotments, turn right out of Thurlaston towards Dunchurch – they are on the left just past the cottages. At the far end is a small area of trees, which villagers are welcome to visit to enjoy the location. Get in touch if you'd like the gate code and also if you have any suggestions for making it an amenity for the village, such as adding a bench or forest play ideas.

The current trustees for the Poor's Plot charity are Roland Robinson (chair), Jenny Cooper, Paula Irish, Selina Larque and Nick Glasheen.

Further information and a grant application form is available by emailing the clerk catsabine@outlook.com and can also be found on the Thurlaston parish website under the Community Info tab at: www.thurlaston-pc.gov.uk

12. Newcombe & Spears Almshouses (Walter Harvey)

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. I have been trustee since September 2009 and wish to pass this interesting and rewarding job to another. Polly Hall volunteered and has now been nominated by Thurlaston Parish Council to be the new trustee.

As with all old buildings last rebuilt in Victorian times there is a constant requirement to repair and refurbish.

Certain works identified in the quinquennial inspection of the prior year were satisfactorily undertaken and completed. These works included replacement of roof tiles, repointing of chimney brickwork, and replacement of some kitchen doors. Minor repairs and maintenance continued.

Heating of the Almshouses is by electric storage heaters. One of these was replaced by a more modern, more controllable equivalent and this year we are doing a survey of all the heaters to establish if improvements can be made throughout.

The six Almshouses have been fully occupied throughout the year with no indication that any of the residents intend to move out of their accommodation.

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

13. Report of Village Fete Plans (Sylvia Jacques)

We decided to stay in Main Street and Church Lane for 2024.

We had stalls all along Main Street as well as in 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 and homemade cakes in the Village Hall, Pimms in the grounds of the Church. Music outside the Church by

Paul Jacques and not forgetting Thurlaston Meadows allowing us to use their garden for the Children's play area, which was a great success. The Thurlaston Meadows joined in this year and took on the BBQ, jacket Potatoes and Ice Cream selling. Unfortunately the weather deteriorated towards the end of the day so sales were down.

We had some "outsiders" who gave a donation to have a stall and gave a raffle prize. These were popular, miniature gardens in glass domes, ceramics ware, a woodturner with lots of interesting items and of course, the Toft Alpacas.

The date of the Fete was on 6th July 2024, with the theme "Celebrating 50 years of Abba and The Paris Olympics". There were a few scarecrows around the village to support the theme.

We had lots of handmade bunting from the previous year with some extra made this year. The Rugby Ukelele Bungalow Group Band in Main Street, creating a very jolly atmosphere. The local group After Dark played in the Village Hall for the evening social event.

We gave the Church and the Village Hall £900 each.

It was very successful and residents said how much they enjoyed the day and although the forecast was not promising, the sun came out ready for the Fete.

Watch out for details of the 2025 Fete, we are changing the date to 6th September so we are not competing with all the other Fetes around here. Will it be a success? It depends on you to give help, setting up beforehand, during and afterwards for the clearing up on the Sunday. Would you like to help with one of the stalls? Everyone welcome.

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

14. Thurlaston Chronicle (Paula Irish)

Thanks to the support of the Parish Council, the Thurlaston Chronicle was again published in 2024 and is due out again this Spring.

As ever the team is grateful to all those who contribute their stories, photographs and reports from the various groups in the village.

Whether it is one photo or many, 50 or 500 words, it all adds up to a fantastic celebration of the village and those who live here, and it's a great way to raise awareness each year about activities and what is happening in Thurlaston.

In 2024, the Chronicle was 16-pages full colour, with the Parish Council funding the printing costs of £240 for 150 copies, enough for each household.

The Chronicle is printed by local firm Steers who are always helpful and despite the rising costs of everything, manage to keep any increases each year to a minimum.
A big thank you to Gill Dakin, who leaves the editorial team after having been a vital part of the Chronicle over many editions. Sue Winton and Paula Irish have continued with the Chronicle and are currently working on the 2025 issue.
We hope you all once again enjoy this year's Thurlaston Chronicle!
If you would like to contribute or join the Chronicle team to help produce this annual publication, please do get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

Email: thurlastonchronicle@gmail.com

15. Close of Meeting (Holger Allroggen)

The meeting closed at 21.00.

The date of the next meeting will be April/May 2026.

Minutes by Sylvia Jacques

Parish.clerk@thurlaston-pc.gov.uk

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