

Thorpe St Andrew Town Council
Minutes of the Town Council meeting
held on 6 November 2023 at 7:30pm

1 Present:

Mr F Bowe (Town Mayor)	Mr J Fisher
Mr S Snelling (Deputy Town Mayor)	Mr D Wiseman
Mr D Buck	Ms J Bailey
Mr C Eden	Ms L Skinner
Mr J Ward	Ms L Barrett
Mr P Berry	Mr S Court

Apologies: Mr T Garner, Ms M Friend, Mr J Emsell, Ms C Ferris and Mrs R McCarthy (RFO/OM)

In attendance: Mrs M Barron, (CEO), Mrs D Wheatley (Administration & Communications Officer), Mr J Calver (Parks and Estates Manager), Mrs L Weston (Administration and Committee Officer) and 8 members of the public.

2 Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

Cllr Snelling declared an interest in matters relating to item 6a on the agenda.

3 To confirm the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 2 October 2023.

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2023 were signed and approved as a true record.

4 Announcements (For information only)

(i) The Town Mayor prior to the announcements, wished to address the wholly unacceptable attack the staff were subjected to at the last meeting. Although the Council encourages the open free exchange of ideas, issues and problems for our residents; however, to raise unsubstantiated accusations and personal attacks is completely unacceptable and cannot be allowed at future meetings. If the Chair believes any points are becoming a personal attack it will be addressed. Council staff investigated all issues that were raised, as unsubstantiated as they were and found no substance in any. It's not the question, it is the manner in which it is being asked, when it becomes a personal attack. In future, residents are asked to raise questions, that require investigation, directly with the Councillor for their ward, or a member of staff, in advance of the meeting.

The Town Mayor was pleased to open the Poppy Appeal at Sainsbury, given the trying times, residents are just as generous, and so far the appeal seems successful.

Discussions with the CEO about potential future plans for play equipment, budgets and weekly meetings continue.

The Town Mayor personally thanked all staff for their substantial efforts to ensure the Fireworks event was as successful as it was and thanks also to the councillors

and volunteers who helped. In Cllr Emsell's absence, as events lead, his personal thanks were passed on to staff, councillors and volunteers by the Town Mayor.

(ii) The CEO – Residents may have noticed the sewer connection pipe to Thorpe Island is currently in progress and should be rectified soon, works are being supervised by Broadland District Council.

5 Public Participation – To consider a motion to suspend the meeting to allow members of the public the opportunity to address the meeting limited to 3 mins each

5.1 Norfolk Constabulary – No report

5.2 County and District Councillors – Members noted the report from Cllr Ward. Cllr Bailey

asked Cllr Ward if there was any known future roadworks planned on the diversion routes around the Heartsease roundabout works, which causes further disruption. Cllr Ward advised that there was nothing else planned.

Cllr Berry attended the Broadland Economic Success and Development Panel, discussing developing facilities and design of a visitor kiosk at Broadland Country Park. He also sat on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approving a Public Space Protection Order for the next 3 years, recommended for approval by cabinet. Cllr Berry also attended the Broadland Community at Heart Awards at the Space venue, sharing a table with Avril Thomas who volunteers for Norfolk Knitters and Stitchers. Avril also volunteers at St Williams Way Knit and Natter group in Thorpe St Andrew, making items for Norfolk and Norwich Baby Unit, St Martins Trust and refugees. Congratulations to Avril, who was nominated and won the Volunteer of the Year award, and the Thorpe St Andrew Team, including our own Cllr Barrett.

5.3 Members of the public – A member of the public asked for an update on the Staithe and what appears to be an abandoned boat moored. The CEO was able to respond to these issues.

A member of the public speaking on behalf of Thorpe History Group raised concerns over the condition of the railway bridge and asked the Town Council to make representation to Network Rail. The CEO was able to give an update, having already taken this forward and the lack of response from Network Rail. Cllr Court mentioned some businesses that have received correspondence from Network Rail, which may be worth checking. A collaboration from all interested parties to progress this matter was suggested.

Father James update - Firstly, Father James is grateful and expressed thanks to the Town Council and the Thorpe Branch of the Royal British Legion for all the preparations ahead of the Remembrance Day Parade and Service. Secondly, a thank you to the Town Council for the wonderful Town Fireworks and all the work that was put into that event and the upcoming event planned for 2 December. The Christmas Tree festival will be launched on 3 December at the parish church and thanks to the Councillors for their support to enable the switch on of the Christmas lights. Finally, in response to an earlier point raised, a working group has been set up to co-ordinate events to mark the 150th anniversary of the railway disaster next year.

A member of the public, in response to an incident at the Morse Park, asked the Town Council to consider some improvements to the position and signage of local defibrillators.

As a result of this incident 'Fifty for Thorpe' has been created with the aim to get 50 members of the community trained in CPR and the use of defibrillators. They have teamed up with the East Anglian Air Ambulance to offer this training free of charge. Based on knowledge gained since the incident, a detailed proposition was put to the Town Council to make improvements to ensure future incidents like this one, has the best chance of a positive outcome. The CEO thanked the member of public for explaining what was required and if it is possible to make things more accessible, the Town Council would fully support this move.

A member of the public informed the Town Council of a local Tennis Coach, who is planning to coach local residents with mental health issues and asked if there's any possibility of using the Morse Tennis Courts and if there's any plans to renovate the courts. Mr J Calver updated the room on the progress made so far and options for booking/locking the courts.

On a separate issue comment was made regarding the residents' upset at Thorpe St Andrew Hospital being destroyed by fire, another historical building which is lost and what can be done. The Town Mayor responded that it seems to be a result of buildings that are left abandoned for far too long, due to delays from the developers, resulting in vandals entering.

6 Events Update

- (a) Remembrance – The CEO and Cllr Snelling walked the new parade route for this year and are confident it will work well. A new security firm is being used, the same as used for the Firework event. All the local neighbours have been written to and the event is ready to go. Cllr Snelling is satisfied the problems from last year have been resolved.
- (b) Fireworks – The CEO gave full credit to the team that worked tirelessly on this event and gave thanks to all the volunteers and Councillors that also helped on the day. Overwhelming positive responses received with significantly less issues than previous year. Observations and recommendations from this year were discussed with the members, what worked well, what didn't and suggestions from Councillors for next year will all be reviewed.
- (c) Christmas – Number of craft stalls booked is 30 and 25 caterers, a smaller fair is also booked. A Christmas light walk is planned with a view to keep it open for a week, after school time 3 to 5pm, if volunteers can be found. The Christmas Grotto will have a cost this year of £2.50 and is bookable in advance.

Action – Mrs D Wheatley to set up a rota for volunteers to cover the light walk.

7 Finance

7.1 Payments List – report attached and noted, no comments.

7.2 Bank Reconciliation Statement - report attached and noted.

7.3 Quarter 2 budget monitoring report - report attached and noted

7.4 Budget for 2024-2025 - report attached. The CEO gave a brief overview of the draft budget to Councillors and asked for any comments, prior to taking it back to the Finance and Staffing Committee. Cllr Ward questioned the Newsletter budget line but also mentioned that the latest newsletter received was excellent, well laid out and one of the best.

Cllr Fisher proposed that the Budget 24/25 returns to the F&S Committee, before coming back to full council, with a range of percentage and amounts of increases, seconded by Cllr Berry and by a show of hands all in favour.

7.5 Outsourced verge cutting - report attached. Mr J Calver gave an overview of the report to Councillors.

Cllr Snelling proposed that the verge cutting remains in house, seconded by Cllr Fisher and agreed by a unanimous show of hands.

8 Neighbourhood Plan - for consideration and resolution

A brief explanation was provided by Cllr Fisher, as to why the plan has taken over 6 years to get to this point. No questions.

9 General Power of Competence - for consideration and resolution

The CEO gave an overview to Councillors, with a recommendation to adopt this power.

It was proposed by Cllr Buck, seconded by Cllr Snelling and with a show of hands and all in favour **RESOLVED** to adopt the General Power of Competence.

10 To Exclude the press and public in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) 1960, due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the items to be discussed.

All members of the public left the meeting.

11 Staithes Report – for consideration and resolution

The confidential report was tabled after the public had left the building, giving Councillors a first look at the report to consider. A brief outline was given by the Town Mayor and the CEO, into the background and legal case, and the report is the reply.

It was proposed by Cllr Ward, seconded by Cllr Fisher and with a show of hands and all in favour **RESOLVED** to end this dispute.

12 River Green – for consideration and resolution

The CEO gave a brief outline to update members and discuss setting up a company to manage River Green and its moorings. Due consideration and discussion followed.

Cllr Snelling proposed for the Council to explore the setup of a new company to manage the River Green in future, seconded by Cllr Buck and agreed by a unanimous show of hands.

Future Agenda Items

Street Plan - Cllr Ward made a request for Thorpe St Andrew to consider having a street plan in the future.

Meeting Closed at 9.26pm

Chairman _____

Date _____