

**Thorpe St Andrew Town Council
Minutes of the Town Council meeting
held on 13 January 2025 at 7:30pm**

Present:

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

In attendance: Mrs S Bristow (Locum CEO/RFO), Mrs L Weston (Administration and Committee Officer) and 8 members of the public.

- 1 Apologies considered:** None received.
- 2 Declarations of interest in items on the agenda –** Cllr Skinner declared an interest in item 9.4 and Cllrs Eden and Wiseman declared they would be speaking on item 17.
- 3 Temporary appointment of Mrs Sarah Bristow as Locum CEO/Town Clerk/RFO/Proper Officer.**

Mrs Sarah Bristow introduced herself to members. It was **RESOLVED** by a unanimous vote to appoint Mrs Sarah Bristow to the temporary position of CEO/Town Clerk/RFO/Proper Officer.

- 4 Adjournment of meeting to allow for public questions. (15 mins, max 3 mins per speaker)**

The meeting was adjourned to allow members of the public to speak. A member of the public raised the following: i) for the minutes of the last 3 meetings to be made available; ii) for the new permanent CEO/Town Clerk to work regularly from the office when appointed and have a pleasant personality; iii) to restore harmony amongst the councillors and iv) is the precept ready? - the Town Mayor confirmed it was on the agenda.

Another member of public mentioned past press cuttings and dismissal from a previous role for the newly appointed temporary member of staff. Stating the many roles incorporated in this temporary position, including the RFO role, which was thought to be occupied. Also, that the 'Meet the Team' document on the website needs updating and the difficulty downloading items from the website for the meeting this month.

- 5 To Receive Councillor Reports**

- 5.1** Cllr Ward gave a verbal report (report attached) to members.
- 5.2** Cllr Berry conveyed his disappointment that a couple of recent district meetings were cancelled, therefore nothing to report.

- 6 Announcements (for information only)**

- 6.1 The Town Mayor has been involved with finding a replacement Clerk and other staffing issues. Also, conveying the sad news that Ray Parke, one of our long-standing veterans passed away at the weekend and sends condolences to his family and friends.
- 6.2 The Locum Town Clerk's immediate focus has been on financial matters and informed members of an 'open door' policy.

7 Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 4 November 2024.

- 7.1 The minutes were considered, concerns discussed, and several mistakes noted for amendment. Due to the many amendments, it was **RESOLVED** to amend the original minutes and duly signed by the Mayor as a true and accurate account.
- 7.2 Matters arising – nothing received to note.

8 Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 2 December 2024.

- 8.1. The minutes were considered, and it was **RESOLVED**, with one abstention, to approve and sign the minutes of the 2 December 2024, as a true and accurate account.
- 8.2 No matters arising but clarification given by the Locum CEO of the process for adding items to the agenda.

9 Finance: (Reports attached)

To review and consider any action necessary

- 9.1 **Monthly Accounts for Payment** – All invoices were circulated prior to the meeting. Payments were approved for payment by members, excluding the Gas and Cozens invoices which need investigation. Cllr Court asked if we could look at the Direct Debit policy.
- 9.2 **Money Received** – Receipt list **approved**, Invoices processed for Nov and Dec and a few event funds to be chased.
- 9.3 **Bank Rec October–November 2024** – The statements were approved and signed as a true record.
- 9.4 **Hirers Agreement/Hirers Rent** – Cllr Skinner left the room. Long term hirers such as the Nursery and Cafe, deferred for later. It was approved to accept the increase of 50p per hour, for the hire of a hall, commencing from 1st April 2025.
- 9.5 **Outsourcing of Wages** – To ensure continuity for payment of wages, it was proposed by Cllr Fisher and seconded by Cllr Snelling, with 14 in agreement and one against, it was **RESOLVED** to outsource the wages.
- 9.6 **Bank Signatories** – As an additional financial control the Locum RFO proposed having a third person, a councillor, involved in the payment process. Providing a 3 step process - creating the transaction, verification of the transaction and finally authorisation. It was proposed by Cllr Buck and seconded by Cllr Snelling, with a unanimous show of hands, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the proposal put forward.

- 10 Budget Setting for 2025-26** – The Budget went through the Finance Committee twice and approved. Post approval some additional costs have materialised for a Tree Management survey, replacement of IT equipment for windows 11 compliance and funds to upgrade the Town Hall locks/security, therefore the budget was amended and brought to Full Council. Clarification was requested by Cllr Bailey for the Events, Building and Street Light budget estimates.
- 11 Setting the Precept for 2025-26** – It was proposed by Cllr Ward and seconded by Cllr Emsell and with a unanimous show of hands, it was **RESOLVED** to accept a 5% increase to the precept, an annual increase of £5.84 per household in a Band D property.
- 12 To agree Terms of Reference for Staffing Committee**
Cllr Bailey expressed concerns with the new Terms of Reference and the process taken when setting up the new committees. Feeling unable to vote for the reasons expressed to members. It was proposed by Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Ward, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the Terms of Reference for the Staffing Committee, carried by the following recorded vote.
- Cllr Ferris and Cllr Bailey recording not to vote
Cllr Skinner abstained
Cllrs Bowe, Snelling, Fisher, Barrett, Eden, Wiseman, Emsell, Friend, Court, Ward, Buck and Berry, all voted to accept.
- 13 To agree Terms of Reference for Finance & Governance Committee**
Cllr Bailey advised that no agreement was made for Governance to be taken out of full council as it effects all councillors. It was proposed by Cllr Ward, seconded by Cllr Buck, with a show of hands and one abstention, it was **RESOLVED** to move Finance and Governance back to Full Council until May 2025.
- 14 To agree IT/GDPR contract**
The Locum CEO informed members that an IT audit is urgently required, to ensure the equipment can support Windows 11 going forward, meet GDPR requirements and to include IT support. It was proposed by Cllr Buck, seconded by Cllr Ward and with a unanimous show of hands, it was **RESOLVED** for the Locum CEO to proceed with the IT audit and report back at the next meeting.
- 15 Trees**
- 15.1 To vote to appoint a Tree Contractor** - The Locum CEO asked for this item to be deferred as she had not been able to evaluate the quotes.
- It was **RESOLVED** for appointment of a Tree Contractor to be taken at the next meeting.
- 15.2 Tree Survey** - The Locum CEO advised members of the need for a tree survey.
- It was proposed by Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Snelling and with a unanimous show of hands, it was **RESOLVED** for the Locum CEO to go out to tender re the Tree Survey, in the meantime treat any tree works required on an adhoc basis.
- 16 Events 2025**
Cllr Emsell will arrange a meeting with the Locum CEO to discuss, set dates and how the events will be managed going forward.
- 17 Parkrun – Grant Form Signed**
Cllr Wiseman made a request to the Council to facilitate the application for a £300 BDC Grant. This was agreed by Council with a unanimous show of hands.

18 Any urgent Planning Applications and Determinations:

Applications:

None received at time of Agenda

Determinations:

None Received at time of Agenda

Cllr Fisher advised members that a planning application has been received for Thorpe Woods and will be discussed at the February meeting.

19 Governance:

19.1 Any Training Requirement – Councillors would like to know what training is available, the Locum CEO will provide a list.

20 Correspondence: (see associated papers) To review and consider any action necessary.

Two items received since the agenda was produced.

- 1) A vehicle hit and killed a cat during the morning school run – TSATC hold two speed devices, new locations would require approval from Highways; Cllr Fisher to contact.
- 2) The Bowls Club Wifi - ongoing security issue.

It was proposed by Cllr Snelling, seconded by Cllr Fisher, with a unanimous show of hands it was **RESOLVED** for the Bowls Club to install a CCTV Camera at each end of their building.

21 Items for Next Agenda

Cllr Wiseman - Bishy Boats Window

Cllr Bailey - Minutes of Oct 7 Town Council meeting and Dec 4 Extraordinary meeting.

Consider Full membership of Norfolk Parish Training and Support.

George Morse Working Group

Complaints Policy.

22 Next meeting: Town Council Meeting Monday 3 February 2024 7.30pm at Roxley Hall

23 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was RESOLVED: “That by virtue of the provisions of Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded during discussion of the following business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted”.

All members of the press and public left the meeting.

24 Staffing Issues

As the meeting exceeded 2 hours, it was **agreed** by a unanimous vote to extend the meeting by 30 minutes.

The Locum CEO asked members for an update on any staff issues. The Locum CEO informed members that all staff have been co-operative and welcoming. Cllr Wiseman asked for clarification on the position of the RFO.

The Locum CEO will check if the HR Service provision offers any online 'Well Being' for staff to access.

A discussion took place around staff contracts and subsequently it was proposed by Cllr Buck, seconded by Cllr Fisher and with a unanimous show of hands, it was **RESOLVED** to pay staff as per contract, in arrears, also for an external forensic audit to be undertaken.

The Locum CEO has received 3 Subject Access Requests (SAR) and will write to all councillors concerning those.

Meeting Closed at 10.07pm

Chairman _____

Date _____