

THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the THUNDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING

Wednesday 18th February 2025 at 7.30pm in The Norman Wodson Pavilion

PRESENT: Cllr Andrew Harris (AH); Cllr Deryck Dipper (DD); Cllr Lynn Palmer (LP);
Cllr Kim Saban; Cllr Natasha Smyth (NS); Cllr Martin Spackman (MS) (Chair)

Four members of the public

Police officers PCSO Rhona Blackham, PC Ryan Willis, PCSO Glen Stanway

Clerk: Colin Marks

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm

ACTION

25.024 Apologies for absence

Parish Councillors: None – all present

Others: None

25.025 Declarations of Interest and dispensations

1. Interests: Councillors Deryck Dipper, Lynn Palmer and Martin Spackman – all having reimbursement payments to be approved.
2. Written requests for dispensations for declarable pecuniary interests: **None**
3. Consideration of requests for dispensations: **None**

Public Forum:

The meeting was suspended at 7.35pm for public comments.

An allotment tenant explained the position on attending his plots.

Dave Blowers explained the current position regarding the Thundridge Old Church Action Group (TOCAG). There has been positive progress over the last couple of years. Historic England are very supportive of efforts to preserve the site with new information coming to light. A very substantial grant has been awarded to come up with a schedule of work for repairs, which could start within a matter of weeks. A remarkable level of interest has been shown. The Group is very small and lacks the necessary experience required to take on tasks that have a 6-figure sum. The Group is a registered charity and publicity is key and community engagement is important. Ideas are needed for obtaining the skills and means to achieve the objective of preserving the tower and the site.

The Chairman thanked Dave Blowers for reporting TOCAG's efforts to the Parish Council.

The meeting was called to order at 7.55pm

25.026 Casual vacancies due to resignations of Cllrs Steve Bosson and Brita-May Hawes

The clerk advised that should there fail to be an election request made by ten High Cross Ward electors by 28th February, the Parish Council will be free to co-opt as soon as practicable.

Clerk

25.027 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the 22nd January 2024 Ordinary Parish Council Meeting as drafted. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

Clerk

25.028 Neighbourhood Police Team report

A written Crime Report for January was received as follows:

ALBURY No reported crimes

BRAUGHING: 1 X Business burglary; 1 x Garage burglary

COLLIERS END: 1 X Garage Burglary

EASTWICK & GILSTON: No reported crimes

HIGH CROSS: 1 X Outbuilding burglary; 1 x Theft from a vehicle

HUNSDON: No reported crimes

LITTLE HADHAM: 1 X Theft from motor vehicle

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MUCH HADHAM: 2 x shed burglaries; 1 x burglary of an unoccupied property

STANDON & PUCKERIDGE: 1 X Theft from a motor vehicle; 1 x criminal damage to a motor vehicle;
1 x attempted burglary; 1 x dwelling burglary; 1 x shed burglary; 2 x garage burglary

WADESMILL: 1 x Theft of number plates

WARESIDE: 1 X Theft of number plates; 2 x shed burglaries; 1 x attempted shed burglary

WIDFORD: No reported crimes

Other news and updates:

There has been a significant increase across the county in crimes of burglaries and vehicle crime. Please always ensure doors and windows are always closed and locked, and do not leave any valuables on display or tools in vans.

If you need to report a crime in progress, please call 999, for all other please use 101 or online reporting <https://www.herts.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

The Herts Connected system delivers Hertfordshire police's crime alerts. Registered local residents can receive the latest crime or emergency updates and alerts, as well as information about policing events in your area. Local residents can get involved in helping to make their local area a safer place, tell us what police should be doing in their area, shape the initiatives that help to keep people and property safe, and tell us what matters are causing local communities harm.

The more residents that register, the better informed and safer our communities will be. We would be most grateful if you could continue to share the link below in any parish communications, and especially on social media, to encourage as many local residents as possible to sign up.

<https://www.hertsconnected.co.uk/>

Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Additional Crime Prevention Advice can be found via this link: <https://www.herts.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/>

Thank you

The three police officers present gave a verbal overview of the current crime position. Although crime across the region generally has increased, the situation in Thundridge Parish is quite good. It was noted that local PCSO Paul Dearman has retired and has been replaced by PCSO Rhona Blackham.

The Chairman thanked the officers for attending and they left the meeting.

25.029 The Ware Charities

No report presented. The next report will be in March

25.030 Planning

1. New applications:

3/25/0194/ASDPN Hillcrest, High Cross: Erect additional storey to increase height of the house.

RESOLVED: *To object to this application on the following grounds:*

Whilst recognising that the proposed extension falls with the specification that does not require specific planning permission, the Parish Council believes that other factors must be taken into consideration:

The proposed increase in height of 2.5m would detrimentally impact views of the nearby church. The Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan, made in 2021, identifies that views of the church should be protected. Policy THE4 Important Views, Views 9 and 10 specifically refer to views of the church.

The extension would not be in keeping with the street scene and would be in breach of The East Herts District Plan 2018 Policy VILL2 V (b), (c), (d), (f).

The building is also in close proximity to the nationally and locally important treasure, the grave of Arthur Martin-Leake, and would negatively impact its location. Thundridge Neighbourhood Plan Policy THE3 Non-Designated Heritage Assets, paragraphs 5.6 - 5.9 specifically refer to the importance of the grave.

2. Applications received too late for the agenda and other planning matters

1. Late applications: NONE

Clerk

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2. Other planning matters:

1. **Call for Sites:** The publication of the latest Call for Sites list was noted, with 11 sites identified in the parish despite them being opposed by the Parish Council when previously identified. It was agreed that Cllr Deryck Dipper would raise planning issues and other parish concerns with the MP when he visits the parish in a few days time. DD
2. **Waste Transfer Station:** an update was received and an invitation to send a representative to attend a site visit on 20th February. It was agreed to ask Bruce Shearman if he would consider attending on behalf of the Parish Council. Clerk

3. Decision Notices. *Noted as set out in the Planning Appendix A.* Clerk

25.031 Finance

Note: Copy of full Cashbook spreadsheets submitted for following items 1, 2 and 3

1. Cashbook Accounts to 31st January

	Unity Bank	Saffron B/S	Total
Cashbook Balance 31 st December	21,677.02	51,989.38	73,666.40
Income to 31 st January	1,203.23	0.00	1,203.23
Expenditure to 31 st January	3,924.80	0.00	3,924.80
Cashbook balance 31 st January	18,955.45	51,989.38	70,944.83

RESOLVED: To approve the Accounts as submitted to the Council. Clerk

2. Bank Reconciliation 31st January

RESOLVED: To approve the bank reconciliation at 31st January as presented. Clerk

Cashbook and Unity Bank balance £18,955.45

Cashbook and Saffron B/S balance £51,989.38

Total £70,944.83

3. Performance against 2023/24 budget as at 31st January

A detailed breakdown of the performance against budget to 31st January was presented to the Council.

Budget income: £53,105. Income to date £60,847. Year-end forecast £65,645

Budget net expenditure: £57,191. Net expenditure to date £48,977. Year-end forecast £69,666

Budget Year-end deficit: £-4,086 Forecast: £-4,021 Clerk

RESOLVED: To approve the 2024/25 performance against budget to 31st January as presented.

4. FINANCE REPORT January 2025

A financial report was not submitted.

5. Payments for approval

All payments made under the General Power of Competence, LA 2011 s1(1) Clerk

	Gross	VAT incl
Broadmead Leisure: Playground inspection February	60.00	10.00
Everflow Water: Water 16/3-15/4 (Nil – account in credit)	0.00	
Payplus: Payroll January	38.78	6.46
Valda Energy: Electricity February	551.90	91.98
EHDC: May 2023 election recharge	54.15	
Brita-May Hawes: Reimburse FOI expenses	66.99	
Steve Bosson: Reimburse FOI expenses	38.78	
Lynn Palmer: Reimburse FOI expenses	20.95	
Clerk: expenses February	27.10	
Clerk: Reimburse Sky mobile office phone February	8.38	
Clerk: salary – including extra FOI hours	1,132.66	
HMRC: PAYE	278.20	
HMRC: Employer's NIC contribution	90.09	
Deryck Dipper: Reimburse Printing legal papers	49.30	
Unity Trust Bank: Monthly bank charges - approx	9.00	

RESOLVED: to approve payments as per the Clerk's list presented to the Council.

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6.	Highfield Nursery dept status The Council reviewed and approved the current position showing £159 outstanding with £10 being paid in February.	Clerk
7.	Section 106 applications status	
1.	New item for Play Area: Jackie Bruce has now agreed to add the £310 cost of the Wodson Field gate repair to the £7,800 Ben Nevis Tower, a total of £8,110	Clerk
8.	Fixed Asset Register This has now been updated on the cashbook by Cllr Deryck Dipper.	DD/ Clerk
25.032	Cuttlefish Website and email provider There are no outstanding issues.	
25.033	Norman Wodson Pavilion	
1.	Fire Risk Assessment report and action	
1.	PAT testing: In hand with an electrician for £150 net.	NS
2.	Reinstatement of signage: Completed. Cllr Natasha Smyth to send receipts to the Clerk.	NS
3.	RABI: acquisition of additional land update: No response received from RABI. It was agreed to remove this from future agendas.	Clerk
25.034	Recreation Areas	
1.	Play area: Safety Report. The Broadmead February report was received. No action required.	
2.	New WLFC Lease: Amended wording for new lease has been sent to WLFC. A revised quote for grass cutting is in hand. Anticipated to be agreed and ready to go in September.	AH
3.	Additional play area item from S106 funds: Application for £7,800 with Jackie Bruce but verbally Agreed (Ben Nevis Tower). £310 cost of gate and rail repairs agreed to be added to grant. It was agreed that any unused S106 allocation should be transferred to local projects such as Ware Lido, as suggested by Jackie Bruce.	Clerk
25.035	Allotments	
1.	2024 Tenancy update	
1.	1. The final version of the 2025 Tenancy Agreement with revised wording was agreed and will then be sent out with the invoices and 2026 rent increase notices.	Clerk
2.	2. Applications/Waiting list: To be agreed once status of current tenants is finalised.	
2.	Update on Plots 47F & 48F and plots 47B & 48B and others Following the 8 th February Working Group inspection, the following action was RESOLVED: First warning letters to plots 8, 23/33, 34; Second warning letters to 35/36, 47F/48F. Cllr Kim Saban to speak to plot 9. Cllr Martin Spackman to speak to tenant landlord to get the state of the lane improved.	Clerk
3.	Plots 35 & 36 update: See previous item	MS Clerk
4.	A report of the 8 th February Working Group inspection: See action above.	AWG
5.	A complaint regarding the moving of an allotment boundary is with the Working Group. Response to be drafted by Cllr Natasha Smyth and approved by the Working Group and Parish Council. The Clerk to send to both parties once agreed.	NS/ AWG/ Clerk
6.	Allotments Risk Assessment and H&S Policy: Cllr Andy Harris provided a final draft. RESOLVED: To approve final draft.	AH/ Clerk
7.	The date of the next AWG site inspection was agreed as 5 th April at 10am	AWG
8.	Poly tunnel request Plot 22. RESOLVED: To grant permission as proposed.	Clerk
25.036	Highways, Footways and Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	
1.	North Drive resurfacing: With EHC. No update.	
2.	Overgrown verge at Chestnut Grove/North Drive/Church car park lane: Work completed	MS

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25.037 Street lights updates

1. Addition of street lights to the fixed asset register: Completed
2. Transfer ownership to HCC under a S270 agreement (requiring stock upgrade to adoptable standard): Transfer deferred. Agreed to remove from future 2025 and 2026 agendas .

Other matters:

25.038 Equality Policy review

Policy and Procedure section to be amended and reviewed again at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May:

Points 1-3: Guidance required for identifying, assessing and recording actions to be taken.

Point 2: The above to be reviewed annually

Point 3: Duty to provide services to be reviewed annually to ensure compliant with current legislation.

Point 4: Protocol to be adopted for reporting and actioning breaches.

Point 5: Incident record book required.

Concluding paragraph: Remove reference to contractors from disciplinary action.

The Clerk noted that the Council's policy and procedure should stay within the bounds of its ability to act.

25.039 County and District Councillor report: No report received.

25.040 Update: Archive papers: Currently now held by the Clerk. It was agreed to source a filing cabinet that could be locked and kept in the pavilion.

25.041 Clerk's Appraisal: Cllr Kim Saban and Cllr Natasha Smyth reported that the appraisal had taken place earlier that evening and that everything was satisfactory.

KS/
NS

25.042 Thundridge Old Church Action Group (TOCAG)

Following Dave Blowers excellent update earlier in the evening when the Group's current position was explained, it was agreed that the Parish Council is very supportive of supporting the Group in principle, but also noted that its resources are very stretched at present due to an exceptionally busy work load.

25.043 Receipt of FOI dissatisfaction

At 9.37pm it was **RESOLVED: In the public interest, to exclude press and public under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, for consideration of this item.**

It was noted that this had been received and that the Clerk would be dealing with it by 7th March deadline.

Clerk

At 10.19pm **the meeting was restored to order.**

25.044 Urgent and other matters not listed on the agenda:

1. A glass panel in the phone box by Ermines has been broken. Also, it is being used as a storage space for the shop.
2. The glass/perspex in the notice board opposite Maltons has been broken
Both repairs need to be done asap to prevent water damage. It was agreed that Cllr Natasha Smyth would try to source a handyman to make the repairs
3. WhatsApp Group: It was noted that when the Group was set up, an auto 7-day retention time was set but not confirmed by full Council. It was therefore **RATIFIED that the WhatsApp Group set a 7-day auto retention limit.**

NS/
Clerk

25.045 Correspondence: noted as per the agenda

- Parishioner: FOI dissatisfaction
- EHDC: S106 funding approval
- HAPTC/MHCLG: Reorganisation of local government structures in Hertfordshire
- HCC: Statement on local government restructuring in Hertfordshire

22.046 Matters for future agendas

1. Consider new insurance company (March PC meeting)
2. Update: Ransom Strip boundary/road kerb installation when road resurfaced
3. Programme to fit balance of chair tubing inserts and chair safety check.

Clerk

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25.047 Date and venue of the next Parish Meeting

Clerk

1. Tuesday 18th March at 7.30pm at High Cross Village Hall
 Other meetings: 22 April (Pavilion); 20 May (Pavilion); 17 June (High Cross VH) 22 July (Pavilion);
 August: No meeting; 23 September (Pavilion); 21 October (Pavilion); 18 November (Pavilion);
 December: No Meeting; 20 January 2026 (High Cross VH)
2. The draft calendar of Meetings 2025: Approved

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.29pm

Signed.....

Date.....

APPENDIX A: Planning decisions and awaited notices

3/24/1728/HH 3/24/1729/LBC	Mill House, 62 Ermine Street: wrought iron railings to existing front steps. <i>The Parish Council had no comments.</i>	GRANTED
3/24/2278/FUL	Oakleys. Erect four single storey workshop extensions and a two storey showroom and office building. <i>The Parish Council had no objections</i>	Awaited
3/24/2312/HH	6 Anchor Lane Cottages. Demolish single storey lean-to. Erect two storey rear and single storey front extensions. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	Awaited
3/24/1012/HH	58 Ermine Street : Rear conservatory style extension Appeal reference 24/00092/ REFUSED	Appealed
3/24/0284/OUT	Land West of High Road, High Cross: Up to 36 dwellings <i>The Parish Council objected to this application</i>	Awaited
3/24/0091/OUT	Land East of High Road, High Cross: Up to 95 dwellings. <i>The Parish Council objected to this application</i>	Awaited
3/23/0981/FUL	Land Off Poles Lane: Change of use from stables and paddock to C3 residential. Erection of 1 detached 5 bedroom dwelling with detached triple garage. LPA Appeal: 24/00032/REFUSE <i>The Parish Council objected to this application</i>	APPEAL decision awaited
3/22/2406/FUL	Land North and East of Ware (Ware2): Hybrid application <i>The Parish Council raised serious concerns</i>	Awaited
PL-0425-24	HCC recycling centre. <i>The Parish Council had no comments</i>	GRANTED
PL/0343/23	Cemex Westmill Quarry - Variation. <i>Parish Council had no comment</i>	Unknown

Planning Enforcement notifications		
E/24/0090/ENF	39 Arthur Martin Leake Way: Possible breach of condition 4 of 3/23/0109/HH use of garage as separate residential dwelling	Unknown