

**Minutes of Thompson Annual Parish Meeting  
held in Thompson Village Hall at 7.00pm  
on Tuesday 16 May 2017**

**Present: Kate Winslow, 6 members of Thompson Parish Council and 9 members of the Thompson electorate.**

- 1. To sign as correct the minutes of the last meeting held on 17 May 2016:** The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were approved and signed as correct by Kate Winslow Chair of Thompson Parish Council
- 2. Report from the Chair of Thompson Parish Council:** Kate Winslow reported that One Councillor resigned this year and Mr Roy Shovellor was co-opted onto the council.  
We have had several planning applications, requiring decisions during the year. The results of the village appraisal carried out in 2016 have been delivered to every household in the village. The results of this appraisal will help the Council when discussing planning applications, settlement boundaries, future growth and other matters that the village would like to see implemented/improved or changed. The booklet is also available on the website together with the actual breakdown of the results.  
The Council signed the lease for the land for the new village hall over to the Trustees for a peppercorn rent.  
Again, the Council held 2 litter picks during the year, in October and again in April; in and around all the approach roads to the village and the village itself. These prove very successful with several parishioners helping. Thank you to all who helped but it would be nice to see more people. They are now a regular event.  
I would like to thank Ann Keen for keeping our planters on the bus stop site looking magnificent all year.  
Several grants were given out this year, to Thompson Hearts for new fridge magnets, for church maintenance and to the Millennium Green, Wayland Partnership  
Please continue to use the glass recycling bin at the Chequers as we again received a cheque for just over £200 from Breckland Council for village funds.  
This is my last year as Chair I would like to thank all fellow Councillors' and the Clerk for their hard work and their support to me during the last year.
- 3. Reports from local organisations:**
  - 3.1. Thompson Millennium Green Charitable Trust:** Jean Kaye, Treasurer reported that the year since the last Annual Parish Meeting has been a busy one.  
The Chairman and Treasurer were newly appointed at the time of the last meeting. A programme of work to remove vegetation from the pond and maintain the Green was agreed in May 2016. Conservation Works, who gave a quotation some months earlier to carry out work were asked to start the work. This included spraying to kill the reed mace, removing the willow stumps clearing vegetation around the pond and removing silt. The work started with spraying the reed mace in the summer before the vegetation died back. A working party in September cut back the willows and the growth around the pond. A second working morning was devoted to cutting the lower branches of small trees in the "wild" area of the green and clearing nettles and brambles in the middle of the Green. Further working days have been devoted to continuing clearing the nettles and brambles, cutting the lower branches of the trees which were planted when the Green was created and coppicing the hazels. As a result of this work, the daffodils, primroses and bluebells could once again be seen in the little wood this spring. The bench around the black poplar has been removed temporarily as the supports were becoming embedded in the trunk of the tree. It is hoped that this can be returned when a better method of securing it has been found.  
The contractors came back in December to complete their work on the pond. The willow stumps were removed, the reed mace was cleared from the pond and surplus silt removed.

We have found out that the pond had a brick bottom and would have been used to wash the horses in years gone by, as well as cattle and other animals using it as a source of drinking water.

Thompson Live was once again held on the Green last August. The success of the event was spoiled by the bad behaviour of some of the attendees at the end of the evening. There will be no Thompson Live this year.

The Thompson 5 & 10 Km Run was not held last year as many of those who had previously organised it were moving from the village. It will be held again this year as new faces have joined the organising team.

The Lottery is continuing to be a success, with all 59 numbers allocated. A few numbers will be available shortly, so we will be looking for new participants.

The children's play area continues to be a success being used by children after school and at weekends and school holidays.

**3.2. Thompson Parish Church:** Katharine Wolstenholme reported that the church year has continued with united worship rotating between the six churches of Breckles, Caston, Gt Hockham, Griston, Stow Bedon & Thompson and we have continued to benefit from the generous support of everyone in the other five parishes in these times of financial difficulty. Since October 2016 we have held our services at other churches in the benefice due to the closure of St Martin's.

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting we have been fortunate to secure a grant from Heritage Lottery Funding to repair the nave roof which our Quinquennial report stated was 'is in a perilous state, it needs urgent structural repairs'.

We have appointed an architect and had an Opening Up Day in October when the extent of the project became clear. The roof is in a far worse state than we had anticipated and we have had to, regretfully, close the church for the time being. We are now in the process of getting quotes for the work and hope to start the roof repairs in early 2018. The project is much bigger than we had anticipated and we need another £100,000 to secure the nave roof. For those of you that don't know, our church is a unique and largely unmodernised gem of historic importance; a Grade 1 listed mediaeval building, said to be the finest example of the Decorated style in East Anglia. It has a rare 5 cant scissor-braced nave roof and it has many unusual mediaeval and Jacobean features which need to be preserved.

The PCC consider it is vital to try and maintain Thompson Church not just as a historical monument, important as that is, but as part of a growing and thriving united benefice for the needs and service to the people of Thompson now and in the future.

Plans are progressing well for the second Blossom & Yarn festival taking place in six of our churches in the benefice. The festival will run for 4 days from 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> July and it is hoped that as many people as possible will come along and show support for the huge effort that has been made to stage this ambitious festival. Special thanks must go to the many ladies of Thompson who have been knitting madly for the festival. We would be grateful for any help manning St Martin's over the weekend. The porch will be decorated with knitting & flowers and there will be a market place at the back of the church selling all sorts of things like plants, china, tea towels etc.

Father Bob retired in May 2016 and we have been very fortunate to have Adrian Bell as first our interregnum minister and now our Interim minister while we recruit a new rector. Adrian is being formally licensed on at 7.30pm on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June and everyone is welcome to attend the service.

Over the last year the Friends of St Martin's Fund Raising Team have held the following events and would like to take this opportunity thank everyone who has come along and supported these many events:

July 2016 Midsummer merriment – a family picnic and entertainment in the Church

July 2016 Art & Flower Festival

September 2016 Lavender's Lunch

September 2016 Harvest Lunch in the church following our Harvest Festival.

October 2016 Storytelling by candlelight at St Martin's

November 2016 Lighting of the Christmas Tree & Carols at St Martin's

December 2016 St Martin's HLF Information Evening with Cheese & Wine & Carol Singing

The PCC would like to thank the Parish Council for their generous donation which goes towards maintenance at the church, eg, hedge cutting, lawnmower costs (petrol & repairs), the mole man and general maintenance. We are still hoping to buy a bench and landscape an area at the back of the church for people to have somewhere to sit quietly in the graveyard. This is subject to permission from the Diocesan faculty department which has not yet been agreed and will be investigated further when we tidy up the churchyard after our building project has finished.

**3.3. Thompson Village Hall Committee:** No report.

**3.3.1. Coffee mornings:** Lynn Callnon said that this could be the last report we make on our fundraising efforts for this current Village Hall? We certainly hope so, and that by next year we'll be reporting on the success of our coffee mornings in the new Hall.

Since last year's annual meeting we have raised over £500; of which the far greater part has come from outside the village, as our refreshments are greatly appreciated by the rambling group who walk our Thompson footpaths once or twice a month.

Do drop in, if you're not otherwise occupied, for a cuppa and a chat (sometimes cake); the dates are advertised each month in *The Waylander*.

**3.4. Thompson Parish Land:** Bronwen Tyler reported that this year has seen some changes, most significantly with the sad death of Nigel Parrott, who had been tenant of the land for a number of years. Nigel's son Michael has taken over the tenancy for this year and it is due for review and tender by Michaelmas.

We are aware of our responsibilities to the Town Land Charity and to the requirements of the Charity Commission. This means we need to review the costs and terms of the tenancy in line with current charges and practice. We are currently undertaking this with advice from the relevant bodies and any changes, if necessary, will be in hand in time for the tender process. We have continued our practice of donating a sum of money each Christmas to the retired living alone who do not own their own home or who we are informed are in need. However, the charity is there for all needy of Thompson at any time so please think of applying or suggesting to someone you know that they apply if a need arises. We cannot, of course, contravene benefit rules and put anyone in a potential fraud situation, but there are many temporary areas where we can help. One which comes to mind is the cost of travel and parking to visit a loved one in hospital or attending frequent appointments - we may be able to make a donation to help.

**3.5. Thompson Women's Institute:** Kate Winslow reported that As usual we had a varied mix of speakers throughout the year. One evening we had enjoyable hands on making "fork flowers". At other meetings we learned how to make patchwork bags, and had an interesting talk on "anything woollen" and trying to spin wool, which was not as easy as it looked; we had a film night with popcorn and hot chocolate; and a very interesting talk by the East Anglian Air Ambulance Service. We entered the Centenary Challenge cup for the first time and although we did not win our entry was slightly too modern for the judges. the patchwork element of this went on to win a prize at the Wayland Show. In September the WI held a sports week and in a mad moment we challenged Watton WI to a game of rounder's". None

of us had played for a good few years and all credit to our members as we beat Watton. We will challenge them to something slightly less energetic next year.

Our members enjoyed a very pleasant trip to Beales Roses in Attleborough, where we had an interesting talk and as is usual with our WI events having coffee and cake this was followed by a guided trip around the gardens and of course followed by lunch in their café. Instead of our usual event in July we held a Quiz and Chips evening as our main fundraiser of the year. We entered 3 teams to the group quiz hosted by Caston this year and came 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. We again entered darts and ten pin bowling competitions. Our darts teams was not as successful this year and our bowling team did not manage to make the play offs but again we moved up the table slightly!

Our membership still continues to be steady losing some members but gaining others. Again, there was no election at our AGM and the main officers continue in their posts

- 3.6. Stitches Group:** Bronwen Tyler said we have had a good year with a steady regular membership. We attract people from outside Thompson which is great, and they have organised a lift system so that those who no longer drive can still join us. The wider group also means we hear of and go to other craft events.

At Christmas we had a change of scene and had a meal at the Crown in Gt Ellingham which we all enjoyed very much. As always Secret Santa was a great success and some of the other diners at the Crown asked to buy some of the items! No one was happy to part with them though.

We continue to share expertise and ideas. The friendships created mean that small groups of us can share like interests and arrange visits, days out and so on. Three of us had quite an eventful trip to Birmingham in November. Several of us also make quilts for the Linus and Nelson's Journey charities for Norfolk children.

We have now been going for over 20 years, so here's hoping Thompson ladies (and gents) will still be crafting and creating in another 20.

- 3.7. Thompson Community Hall CIO:** Martin Kaye reported that This time last year the Chairperson reported that all funding was in place and that the architect had been appointed. We've had a busy year since then – it may have seemed like the swan, smooth sailing on the outside but a lot of paddling was going on behind the scenes. The main events of the year have been obtaining planning permission, appointing a builder and getting the lease signed. I'll talk a bit more about these below. Other than that we held three major fundraising events – the open gardens on 25/26 June 16, a Mexican evening here in the Hall in March and a 'starters and finishers' evening in May. All were successful although the weather gave us some challenges for the open gardens. Thanks should go to all the volunteers who helped at all the events.
- Back to the main theme. The architect prepared a design based on our brief, but the estimate that came in was far too high so we had to revise the design to better meet the budget. Electrical, mechanical and structural planning was going on in parallel and by mid-June we were in a position to apply for planning permission. There were a few objections, both from the Council and individuals, which we responded to and permission was granted in mid-August but with 20 conditions attached. Most of these were fairly standard – for instance, we had to provide samples of external finishes like bricks and roofing material and confirm our landscaping and water removal plans. But one, to provide suitable protection for great crested newts that a prior survey had found were present in the pond on the Green, gave us a lasting headache and actually held up the start of the build. This was finally solved by the preparation of a mitigation statement which we submitted to the Council and which required us to build two hibernacula (newt 'hotels') on the Green. A team of us accomplished this over a very snowy weekend in February. Coupled with this, we had to remove a small section of hedgerow to provide a new entrance by the end of February in time for the start of the bird nesting season, but we couldn't until the newt issue was sorted as the hedge had to be inspected to ensure there were no over-wintering newts. Almost a Catch 22 situation, but we made it in the end.

Once planning permission was achieved, the task of appointing a builder commenced. We went to tender in October to four local builders. The one we all liked and conveniently had the lowest price was Draper & Nichols who we appointed just before Christmas. We held a turf-cutting ceremony on 9<sup>th</sup> February when two pieces of turf were cut, one by Betty Norris and one by the youngest child in the school Billy Jones. Building finally started late February after a final kerfuffle with the erection of special fencing to stop newts getting onto the site. The steelwork has proved to be the critical path and this was delayed, but as you can see today, the steel frame is now erected.

In the background, negotiation on the lease for the land with the Parish Council went through many iterations, but came to a satisfactory conclusion in mid-January.

Tasks for the coming period are centred on monitoring the build, finalising the design of the kitchen and making decisions on a myriad of finishes and fittings from paint colour on the walls to crockery in the kitchen. Throughout we are taking care to meet all the requirements for disabled access so that when complete, access will be open to all.

Completion is due mid-November and we look forward to welcoming the village to an opening event, probably in the new year.

**3.8. Wayland Partnership: Bronwen Tyler reported that we** continue to be very busy and successful in many areas. The Breckland presence office is open on Wednesdays and Fridays and always has a steady stream of visitors seeking advice on a huge range of Breckland services. The serviced offices in Wayland House are fully taken up and also mean a steady stream of clients through reception, not least those seeking the services of the two physiotherapists based in the building!

The Dragonfly Gallery has had a series of wonderful exhibitions throughout the year and the exhibition time was slightly extended by having a shorter winter closing period. We never cease to be amazed by the wealth of local talent on display and the work of the various artists and craftspeople make super individual gifts. One fairly new venture is the Wednesday swap shop for crafters of all types held on Wednesday mornings from 10am to 1pm. All you need is to take in something of a craft nature you no longer use and you can take away something you do need free of charge. If you have nothing to give we welcome a small donation. All crafts from sewing to knitting, card making to painting are represented, although it is of course pot luck. The room is a hive of activity on Wednesdays and we find people not only swap items but meet like-minded crafters or learn of clubs and classes, especially great for newcomers to the area. One spin off has been sewing classes by volunteers using machines donated to the partnership. The Gallery also has Watton Festival tickets on sale.

We are involved in so many local activities it is hard to detail them all. The Men's Shed got off to a slow start but is now a big success in its premises off Dereham road. The Happy Project, dealing with some areas of Wayland identified as deprived, has also gone very well, as has the Growing Together project. The latter held a successful exhibition in the Queens Hall and is currently conducting a series of churchyard surveys. The Dementia Café continues to be a welcome service and has obtained some funding and donations to help. The annual photographic challenge is taking place this year and entry forms are available at Wayland House reception or Gallery.

The Big Lunch will take place in Chaston Place on June 11th.

We were invited to take part in Watton Town Council's plans for change within the town which are looking very exciting.

Perhaps the saddest event for us will be the departure of both Susan Hollingworth who runs the Gallery and Suzanne Rhind our Development Officer. Susan and her husband have long wished to live in their property in France full time and are now realising that dream.

Suzanne's husband Alistair has been offered a job in Aberdeen and the chance to return to his Scottish roots so they are relocating. We interview for both posts this week. We shall miss them both for their skills and lovely personalities but have decided to embrace their departures as an opportunity for change, so the posts are not exactly as before. Hopefully,

the new Development Officer to replace Suzanne will soon be able to introduce themselves to you all at a parish council meeting.

On May 20th we are holding an open event at the Queens Hall Watton where we can showcase all that the people of Wayland do, as well as consult on what the area's needs are. This will help us in future bids to enable these needs to be met but you may also learn of activities and events you might like to join. We will also be presenting the volunteer awards during this event to people nominated by their communities.

The Heritage Group completed a very successful project on the impact of WWI which was funded by Heritage Lottery. We published a book, which continues to sell steadily, and also trails leaflets around the memorials of Wayland. We learned a surprising amount about how the war impacted on such an isolated rural community.

This is but a taster of all we do, and we could do more with the right amount of funds. As a charity, we are totally dependent on funding bids while the office rentals mainly enable us to keep the building running and employ our small number of staff. The majority of staff are volunteers and we always welcome more. If you are interested in knowing more please ask or drop in to Wayland House. We are actively seeking additional trustees so if you feel you have a real interest in being involved at the forefront of activities which benefit this area we would love to hear from you.

4. **Any other business:** None

The meeting closed at 7:30pm.