

# Minutes of the Thompson Annual Parish Meeting held in Thompson Community Hall at 7.00pm on Tuesday 15 May 2018

**Present:** Jean Kaye in Chair, 16 members of the public.

- 1 **To sign as correct the minutes of the last meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017:** Kate Winslow proposed and Irene Smith seconded approval of the minutes of 16 May 2017 meeting and they were signed as correct by Jean Kaye, Chair of the meeting.
- 2 **Report from the Chair of Thompson Parish Council:** At the time of the last Parish Meeting the new Community Hall was in the early stages of construction. The building was completed and handed over to the Thompson Community Hall CIO in early December and opened for hire in February. During the year 4 planning applications were considered compared with 12 during the previous year. The Chair, Parish Clerk and a Parish Councillor met with our MP Liz Truss to bring to her attention matters affecting the village, in particular the lack of progress in bringing acceptable broadband speed and quality to the village. While Liz was well briefed and knowledgeable about the subject there has been no improvement.  
At the end of February, the Chair and Parish Clerk attended a meeting with Matt Hancock, the Secretary of State for Culture, Digital, Media and Sport, which had been arranged by Liz Truss for parishes in her constituency. At the meeting were two people from Open Reach and one from Better Broadband for Norfolk. We were informed that installation of fibre to the home is scheduled for this year for the western end of our village. The area by the church would be upgraded at a later date. We have not been able to get any further information.  
The village sign fell over last autumn, damaging the sign, which had already been showing signs of deterioration. The post had rotted close to the ground. One of the parishioners has kindly mended and refurbished the sign so that it can be put back. We are considering ways of fixing the post. We are looking at options for replacing the sign, and ways of funding this.  
The Parish Clerk, who has been in post for a number of years, has decided that he wishes to step down. We have appointed a new Parish Clerk, who will take over at the beginning of July.
- 3 **Reports from local organisations:**
  - 3.1 **Thompson Millennium Green Charitable Trust:** After many months of planning the pond could be seen and there were concerns about its safety. The committee decided to erect a low-level post and rail fence to counter act any problems. Also plans for notices and other safety measures eg ropes and the risks were discussed, as well as possible written warnings on the village web site. One new disappointment with the pond is that the rain water from the road, now coming in via the cleared drain, has petrol/diesel residue so that it has stifled any pond life.  
The cost of restoring the pond £2380 of which there was a grant of £500 from Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Another £250 was spent on covering and piling up the roots.  
Money, £500 was received from Breckland Outdoor Sport and Play Fund towards placing mats under some play equipment. This was dually installed by John Scott. The play area equipment is checked by ROSPA every July.  
Norfolk County Council have asked us to dig out the ditch along the Tottington Rd, we are considering any more ditches around the green. The hedge by the Sewage works needs care, may be layering/cut down Consider cutting down the Ash Trees that have dieback in the Hallfield Rd hedge and on the Green The large bramble patch between the two fields is to be controlled To look at the hedge on Hallfield Rd, The other two hedges are cut every year. The brambles and nettles in the wooded copse need to be cut down every year Look into creating bog area near pond or near the point of the green. Consideration is being given whether to replace the deteriorated M6 plaque from the wall near the bus stop.  
Our local school has been given permission to use the Green for its outdoor learning.  
Nearly 130 people ran either 5 or 10K around the village in October. It made a profit of £400 for the green. Many thanks to all those people who helped in any way. This year we hope to have up to 300 runners on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September.  
These will be every two months usually on the first Sunday - on July 1st, September 16<sup>th</sup>, November, January and March.

## MILLENNIUM GREEN LOTTERY

This is steadily contributing to the funds for the green. We have 5 spare numbers at the moment which I hope to "sell" soon.

Our long-term committee member John Scott retired as Project Manager this year, we thank him for all his hard work. Luckily, we recruited Geoff Winslow to take over as Project Manager. I would like to thank all the Management Committee Members, the Run Organising group, the lottery collectors and participants, plus the volunteers for "Work Days" and those helping with the run to provide funds and look at all aspect of the maintenance Our long-term aim is to make the green as sustainable as possible for the villagers of the future.

**3.2 Thompson Parish Church:** 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.

As reported at the Annual Parish Meeting last year we secured a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to repair the nave roof at St Martin's. The project started on site on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and should be completed by the end of June 2018.

Because the roof was in a far worse state than we had anticipated the project has taken longer than anticipated and the scope of the work has altered as more problems were discovered as the work has progressed.

The PCC and their subcommittee overseeing the project on a day to day basis are passionate about saving and maintaining St Martin's 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.

We are pleased to report that with the help of our interim minister, Adrian Bell, we are once again worshipping as a group of seven parishes rather than the six & one as it has been in the past. Our next service for St Martin's will be held here in the new community hall on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May and everyone is warmly invited to come along.

We took part in the Blossom & Yarn festival last year, even though the church was closed, and it was a very successful event raising much needed funds for all our churches.

Adrian Bell has been asked by the Bishop of Lynn to extend his ministry as our part time interim minister for another two years and we are very fortunate that he has agreed to stay. He will then help us find a new minister towards the end of his term in 2020. Adrian is available for anyone that needs him at any time of day or night and he is keen to increase our congregation and welcome anyone who wants to get married or baptised in St Martin's.

Our fund-raising events have been a bit sparse this last year due to the building project but the Friends of St Martin's Fund-Raising Team have held a few events and would like to take this opportunity thank everyone who has come along and supported these events. Our first quiz in aid of the restoration was a great success & we hope to repeat this again in the autumn.

Looking forward we have some new fund-raising events which include:

Summer BBQ at College Farm on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May

Lavender's Lunch on 2<sup>nd</sup> September

The Bishop of Lynn is rededicating St Martin's at 4.30pm on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October followed by tea in the church. Everyone (church goes or not) is very welcome to attend.

We hope to share carol singing with the village again in December in the new community hall.

The PCC would like to thank the Parish Council one again for their generous donation which goes towards maintenance at the church, e.g. hedge cutting, lawnmower costs (petrol & repairs), the mole man and general maintenance. We are still planning 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 Parish Land:** This year the Town Land lease was due for renewal. The land had not been valued and advice sought on the rent for a few years so the trustees put this into action. Following this the tenancy was put out for tender. We now have a new tenant with a 5-year lease who has prepared and seed the land ready for working horses.

As a result of the advice to increase the rental sum we continue to have a healthy bank balance, despite having to spend money on the surveys and legal advice.

In December we paid out sums to the elderly living alone who do not own their own home or whom we know to be in need of a little extra help at Christmas.

With the recent lengthy power cut and the increased use of portable home phones which rely on electricity we have become concerned about the more vulnerable among our community who would lose contact with the outside world without a phone. We are therefore considering purchasing some of the older style phones which can be plugged straight into the phone network and which will still work despite no power. These would be loaned to any vulnerable villager. If you know of anyone who might be in need of such assistance please contact either of the trustees or the parish clerk. For those new to the village, the Town Land Charity is an ancient charity which was set up several centuries ago to assist the poor of Thompson. Its income is derived from the rental of the land situated on the left as you leave the village for Watton. Defining poor is increasingly difficult and assisting those in need fraught with difficulty in order to avoid benefit fraud or reducing a person's overall access to government support. However, we can help in many situations and especially at times of short term or one-off need. An example might be when a loved one is in hospital for a period and the cost of travel and parking becomes difficult to meet. Or the individual themselves might be having to travel to hospital on a frequent basis for treatment and again finding the costs hard to meet. One instance of this might be daily radiotherapy treatment. The money belongs to Thompson residents and you have a right to support if you need it. We don't, of course, means test – that would be way beyond our remit as trustees – meaning each approach is taken on trust. We do treat all approaches in strict confidence. The present trustees are Kate Winslow and Bronwen Tyler and we are appointed by the Parish Council.

**3.4 Thompson WI:** During the year we had the usual mix of speakers. We had an interesting demonstration of how to make fabric boxes, and any profits made are given to charity, Wiltshire Foods came along with many samples for us to try and I know of at least one member who now uses them; in a token bid to keep fit we had an armchair lesson of Pilates, we were taken through a bee keepers year and an interesting talk on the making of jams, chutneys of how a hobby turned into a thriving business. We started off in 2018 by having a film night with hot chocolate and popcorn, and our February meeting was to the Gt Ellingham Observatory, the weather was not kind to us and although we did not see any stars, we did have an interesting talk and saw many fantastic photographs taken through their telescope. In February we moved to our new venue and made full use of the AV equipment at our first meeting with a talk on the Blicking Belles, this followed in April with All things nettle.

We again challenged Watton WI, this time to boules; they won, but only on a technicality within the scoring system.

We had an entry in the Norfolk Show of a scarecrow, sadly not winning the "public best in show vote". We again took part in the annual group quiz, the ten pin bowling and darts. We surpassed ourselves with the ten pin bowling reaching the final of the plate completion. We hosted the group carol service in December in Merton Church and also hosted the group meeting in April. We gave ourselves a pat on the back for this as we were told it was the best ever!

We are celebrating our 65<sup>th</sup> birthday this year and looking forward to the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Norfolk Federation next year. Our membership still hovers at just over 20

Again, there was no election at our AGM and the main officers continue in their posts.

**3.5 Stitchers Group:** We have had a good year with a steady number of people meeting together to share a love of crafting and to socialise. We have shared trips out and taken part in local events. We displayed items in the Dragonfly Gallery Christmas exhibition and sold a few of them. The most recent has been taking part in the Craft Group Showcase exhibition in the Dragonfly Gallery. The purpose of this was to promote local craft groups, which not only help people share and develop craft skills but perhaps more importantly provide a social outlet. The exhibition showed an amazing range of talent.

On June 30th we are sharing a stand with Wayland Quilters and the Linus Project at the Engaging Communities event in the Queen's Hall to promote local groups.

At the very end of January we met for the first time in the new Community Hall, ahead of the official first use, in order to try out the facilities. We continue to meet every Wednesday evening from 7.15 in the small hall. We welcome newcomers, even if you only want to chat and socialise rather than stitch. Nor are we exclusively female. We began as a social group and that is still our primary

purpose. Currently we have people coming along from Watton, Lt Cressingham, Scoulton and other surrounding villages. Do give us a try.

**3.6 Thompson Community Hall:** What a fantastic year this has been. At the last Parish meeting we were barely above ground but we now have a fully functioning wonderful new facility for the village. The journey has not been without its ups and downs – mostly ups - with lots of decisions to be made along the way. There were some slight delays with installing the septic tank, with the steel work and the roofing materials, so that we had to accept a delay on the expected completion date. However, we were finally given the keys on December 9th 2017. Although this meant the main building work was finished we still had a great deal of work to do to make the hall ready for use. We had a very busy time choosing and buying the furniture, the crockery and cutlery and other kitchen equipment, installing the AV equipment, telephones and WIFI for example. Christmas also got in the way in terms of deliveries and even having the time to visit suppliers. However, we were sufficiently equipped to open on February 1st.

Not all tasks were complete by the time we opened and some needs only came to light with usage, which was what we expected. So, we have still had an ongoing programme of improvements and additions based on our own experiences and on feedback from users. We now have new notice boards inside and out and still have to do the fitting of blinds, paving to enable disabled access and pushchairs from the road, continued landscaping, and raise funds to furnish the patio area as well as more minor tasks.

Bookings are going well and steadily increasing. So far we have hosted a christening party and a funeral wake – (we just need the wedding to complete the trio!) – birthday parties; a Starters and Finishers evening; a thank you afternoon tea for the Wayland Partnership Happy project as well as a private tea; a very successful quiz night for the church; a weekend of scouting activity; several workshops and more. As well as family events we have bookings in hand for business training days, craft workshops and a church service. In addition, we have our own programme of events taking shape. We have been asked to take part in a large book sale jointly with Griston and our own church on July 14th and September 22nd. We began a monthly lunch session today, May 15th, and plan weekend afternoon teas. We have our regular groups such as Stitchers and WI but have also attracted Wayland Quilters to hold their regular meetings in the hall. Further enquiries from other groups to meet in the hall regularly are underway. We have begun a games night on the first and third Thursday evenings with the opportunity to develop this as interest grows. For example, we hope that short mat bowls or table tennis will develop as well as the table games. One young mum has begun holding sessions from the foyer after school each Thursday selling ice creams, lollies, soft drinks and teas to Mums and children using the play area during the summer months. The licence issue seems to have been sorted so we are in the process of planning our first film night. Suggestions of the type of film which would be popular are welcome.

We have sufficient reserve funds to allow for running costs for the first months of the hall's life but clearly it needs to pay its way as time goes on. We have been fortunate to obtain an RHI towards the heating costs due to the air source heating pumps which will make a big difference. However, the most effective way in which the hall can be supported is with usage. We need support for events and activities which are put on, and for people to think about hiring the hall for their own events, not just from Thompson but from the wider area. The more it is used the more ambitious we can be about what the hall can host - for example arts events and larger scale village events – and that can only benefit village life. For example, the increased capacity of the Thompson 5 and 10k run. All events are published in the Waylander, the Facebook page Thompson Village Norfolk and on our website [thompsoncommunityhall.co.uk](http://thompsoncommunityhall.co.uk) and on posters at the hall and around the village.

As a village we have an exciting future, with a facility which will enable us to come together more and more as a community. If you wish to join the management group you would be most welcome or you might even consider becoming a trustee as we have capacity to recruit more. Our AGM is on June 14th and all are welcome. Our meetings are open if you wish to learn more about the running of the hall.

**3.6.1 Coffee Mornings:** The tradition of Tuesday Coffee Mornings, started in the old village hall, has now moved to the more spacious new Community Hall and has changed from two or three times a month to every Tuesday morning. This hopefully makes it easier to remember which week to turn up - the answer now is: every week.

It's a good opportunity to meet with your friends over a cuppa, to meet new people and to have a good mardle.

A number of people make a regular appearance, and people have come from surrounding villages to swell the numbers. Of course, the members of the walking group still turn up for their walks around our lovely Thompson lanes every three weeks or so; they appreciate their cup of tea or coffee after their exertions and are very impressed with the new facilities here.

If you're already a convert, thank you for your support. If you haven't tried it yet, come and see us any Tuesday - you'll be very welcome. New people have come forward to be on the serving rota, for which we're very grateful. The money raised goes towards the upkeep of the Hall.

**3.6.2 Games nights:** It was reported that games evenings had started in Thompson Community Hall. These are currently held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays every month and start at 7.30pm and if they prove popular enough will be held more frequently. All sorts of games from cribbage and scrabble to short mat bowls. We also have a table tennis table and equipment. Come along and give it a try.

**3.7 Wayland Partnership:** It has been a year of change for the partnership team. Suzanne Rhind, our development manager, had to leave when her husband got a new job in Scotland. With a slightly changed job description we were able to increase the hours available and appointed Richard Ottaway as her replacement, who had previously worked for the Samaritans. He was keen to pursue a role in community work and also wanted to relocate to a rural area and Norfolk in particular. Along with Richard we have therefore acquired office dog, his friendly gentle Vizsla called Ozzie. In his first few months with us Richard has been attempting to visit Parish Councils and other local organisations in order to become familiar with the people and places of Wayland. He is working on a number of projects and funding bids including a partnership between the town councils of Watton and Swaffham, the Icen Partnership and the Wayland Partnership to improve the stretch of Peddars Way which runs through the two areas. One aim is to improve signage and information to the facilities just a short walk off Peddars way such as B&Bs, places to eat, places to visit so that we all benefit from increased tourism opportunities. If you would like Richard to give a presentation about his role and that of the Partnership today then please ask.

At the same time that Suzanne left, Susan Hollingworth, who had managed the Gallery and organised workshops, also left. She and her husband have relocated to Scotland to be near Suzanne, who is her daughter, and the grandchildren. In addition to Richard we appointed Charlotte Howard as admin assistant to replace Susan.

We continue to have a wonderful group of volunteers who man the Gallery and Tourist Information as well as reception in the main building. We are always seeking additional volunteers. We also offer work experience and a number of these volunteers have developed the skills and confidence to obtain paid jobs. We also host school work experience for yr 10 pupils.

Among our more recent initiatives have been: a jobs club in the Acorn training room; the Happy project; and the Memory Garden. The jobs club is aimed at helping those seeking work to develop skills, apply for jobs etc. The Happy Project managed by Jean Williams was aimed at rural isolation and reached a highly successful conclusion, celebrated recently with a thankyou tea party in our new hall. The Memory Garden is the result of a funding bid following on from the success of the Dementia Café which we launched a couple of years ago. The fund enabled us to appoint Charley (Charlotte) Brown as project manager. In case anyone is wondering what is behind the fence between Wayland House and the library then this is where it is situated. It uses a small part of the car park and the redundant yard at the back of Wayland House. The aim is to provide a place of quiet sanctuary for those with dementia and their carers and stimulate memory through the senses. It will not, of course, be solely for those with dementia. Access will be via the car park and through the Gallery, enabling us to extend the Gallery facilities. Plans are to have music and other performance in the garden and outdoor art such as sculpture. Mark Lyons and his team have created a series of winding paths to what will become zones in which to sit, and the top soil is now being added ready for planting.

We continue to hold a very varied range of exhibitions in the Gallery to suit all tastes. The Gallery also houses the TIC and can promote local events and activities.

We currently have some office vacancies in our serviced office space and welcome applications. In addition to ongoing projects, Richard and the Partnership members and trustees are continually seeking new funding streams and projects to benefit Wayland. Plans are in hand for a new Heritage project focused on WW2 for example.

On June 30th we are holding our annual Engaging Communities event in the Queens Hall from 10am-1pm where local organisations can showcase and promote all that happens within Wayland.

If you would like to volunteer or take part in any of the projects, become a volunteer or simply learn more please contact Wayland House. We are also seeking additional trustees.

**4 Any business not already notified: None**

**There being no other business the meeting closed at 7:43 pm.**

DRAFT