

# Minutes of the Thompson Annual Parish Meeting held in Thompson Community Hall at 7.00pm on Tuesday 7 May 2019

**Present:** Jean Kaye in Chair, 6 Parish Councillors, the Parish Clerk and 3 members of the public.

Meeting opened at 19:06.

**1 To accept apologies for absence**

RESOLVED to accept apologies from Cllr. Roy Shovelar who had family commitments.

RESOLVED to accept apologies from Fabian Eagle who had other work commitments.

**2 To agree Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (Annual Assembly) held on Tues 15 May 2018:**

Kate Winslow proposed and Duncan Gregory seconded approval of the minutes of 15 May 2018 meeting and they were signed as correct by Jean Kaye, Chair of the meeting.

**3 To discuss any matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising.

**4 To receive Chairman's report:**

The main event is that fibre broadband has eventually arrived in the village. Geoff Winslow, Alan Dujon and Jean Kaye all lobbied MP in 2017. They also met with Elizabeth Truss who had joined fellow fellow MP Matt Hancock (Minister for Culture, Media & Sport at the time), representatives of OpenReach and from Better Broadband for Norfolk at a meeting which was held at Wheeting. Fibre has not reached the church and some properties in that area are still struggling although some do benefit from WiSpire which can provide an alternative broadband service. Should have fibre connections to the church area by Jan 2020. If not implemented the Parish Council may have to have another go and get involved.

Thompson has had a fair amount of new planning applications over the last year, most of which have been rejected. The latest one, that Armstrong Rigg Planning (ARP) recently presented at a Parish Council meeting was withdrawn soon after. Have a feeling it will re-emerge after the Local Plan is finalised. PC will produce coherent objection if they re-apply.

There have been two litter pick events and well done to Kate Winslow who applied to CPRE and who has managed to get 20 sets of litter pick equipment and Hi Viz jackets etc. Needs to be marked as Thompson PC property. May keep in the Community Hall.

**5 To receive reports from County and District Councillors**

**District Councillor report (Phil Cowen) All Saints and Wayland Ward**

In writing this report, I am conscious that owing to a long-standing commitment I, Phil Cowen, may not be able to attend all the Parish Council Meetings in the ward for which I give my apologies. Sarah Suggitt and I will aim to attend as many Parish Council meetings as practical in the coming months and years and we shall work as a team to represent the interests of all residents and businesses in this part of Breckland that we call home.

Looking back over the year 2018-2019 it is appropriate to reflect on some achievements that your council, officers and members alike, have delivered in our key objective of serving the various communities throughout the District

**We have established a Community Reserve of £1.4 million that is committed to help support our residents, via:**

The development of Breckland Innovation Den to support entrepreneurs

The preparation of leisure feasibility studies for Swaffham and Attleborough

The development of support services for young people struggling in employment and housing

Supporting a start-up scheme for businesses and entrepreneurs on the high street businesses

This will enable councillors to invest £1.4m in 2019/20 into projects which directly support communities across the district and follows on from the £1.7m fund in 2018/19 for similar initiatives.

### **Market Town Initiative**

The market towns initiative makes funding available for projects that focus on: "Supporting market towns in the district to be attractive to new businesses and visitors to the area whilst meeting the needs of rural communities and businesses". Therefore, we have set aside £250,000 in 2018/19 to support this initiative that will allow us to lever in additional funding from other sources including the Local Enterprise Partnership. Whilst aimed at the five market towns in Breckland this will benefit our rural communities as villages use towns as hubs. Thus, strong, vibrant towns mean more employment and leisure opportunities locally.

#### **Funded projects include:**

Improvements to Swaffham Buttercross, Batten Island and murals in Thetford

Purchase of the Glutton to improve street cleanliness

'On the Green' activities at Thetford Riverside

New Market stalls in Watton and Swaffham

Helped establish a new Park Run in Watton and Swaffham

ShopAppy and 12 Elves of Christmas Campaign - promoting local traders and enabling people to choose to shop local / see what's available on our high streets

We have developed the BreckWorld App - driving visits to our attractions and towns via films and an interactive treasure hunt in an app.

### **Innovation Den**

After receiving applications earlier this year, the Breckland Innovation Den invited 10 potentially promising businesses and new start-ups to pitch for a share of £100,000 business development funding. The applicants had to demonstrate how the funding would help them to deliver products or services within the district, drive employment, and explain how the grant would help them make their business sustainable for future growth.

### **Breckland Lottery**

Breckland Lottery continues to grow and provide a way for communities to support important local good causes. We now have over 60 good causes signed up, selling over 1,200 tickets per week and are projected to raise £40,000 for good causes in the first year.

### **Breckland Landlord Forum launched**

We are committed to engaging with local landlords to support them and encourage improvement in local housing options

### **Co-Location of Department of Work and Pensions**

Following the successful co-location of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) into our offices at Elizabeth House in Dereham we have moved DWP into our Breckland House office in Thetford. This has created greater efficiency for our residents who use both services.

### **National Awards Shortlist**

- **Best Local Authority Arts Initiative in the 'Heart for The Arts 2019 awards'** - Silver Social project. An arts programme to engage rural, socially isolated people to engage in the arts and make new friends.
- **Innovation Award at the Local Government Chronicle Award 2019** - finalist for commercialisation of Breckland Training Services and unique service offer across the country

Even though we are setting aside funds to help to drive the economy of the District in an upwards direction I am delighted to report that the Council is in a sound financial position going forward. Our prudent management of our budgeting process, innovative ways of providing our core services and our continued investment in our commercial property portfolio all help to generate the finance necessary to carry out these initiatives

There were a couple of questions for Phil. Kate Winslow asked if the Silver Social project could come to Thompson ? No reason why not. Only held at Ashill because it is an area of significant loneliness, due to its isolation. Thompson has great facilities, as too does Little Ellingham. Need to speak to the chair, Linda Turner.

Alan Dujon said he was concerned about the lack of funds from the government. The District Council has restructured so that they have no reliance on any money from the government and can continue without it, should it be removed or reduced. Took on a financial portfolio and asked, what is our

income ? Biggest income is from business rates. Want to bring better quality employment to Breckland. Bring power to businesses from the Norfolk to Cambridge to Oxford corridor.

## 6 Reports from local organisations

### 6.1 Thompson Millennium Green Charitable Trust (Jane Fensom, Chair, Management Committee)

**POND** The pond was at a very low level last summer and had even more willow and rush taken out by hand. This looks as if it will have to be completed every year. Consultation is continuing over placing safety notices and equipment. This spring a leak occurred on Hallfield Road and the pond was filled with tap water. We are not sure what effect this will have on wildlife, but it looks like some flowers are growing on the top of the pond, so we are hopeful the wildlife has not been too damaged.

**PLAY AREA** As a result of the ROSPA annual inspection, bird deterrent strips were placed on various pieces of play equipment, strimming took place round goal posts and various bolts tightened. We hope to have some adult fitness equipment placed in the spinney next to the children's area. also, some more tables with benches are planned.

**MAINTENANCE** As Norfolk County Council asked us to dig out the ditch along the Tottington Rd this was carried out as well as one leading down from the pond. The hedge by the Sewage works needs care, so may be layered or cut down this coming autumn. Many of the ash trees that have die-back on the green have been cut down, though there are still more to do. We hope the ash trees with die-back in the Hallfield Rd hedge and any left on the Green will be dealt with this next year. The large bramble patch between the two fields is being controlled and may be grassed this autumn. The committee is looking at layering 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. We may be looking into creating a bog area near the pond or near the point of the green. Consideration is still being given whether to replace or mend the wall where the deteriorated MG sponsors plaque once hung. Part of the wild area has been bush cut and is under more control. we are still in consultation on how to use or run this area.

Serco no longer cuts the grass, instead, a local outfit is doing a good, cheaper job. It has been difficult to get other quotes for mole eradication, so we are still staying with the same firm.

**THOMPSON SCHOOL** Our local school continues to use the Green for its outdoor learning.

**THOMPSON RUN** Nearly 170 people ran either 5K or 10K around the village in October. It made a profit of £1000 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 22nd September.

**WORKING DAYS** These should be every two months usually on the first Sunday- in July, September, November, January and March. Due to illness these have not all taken place, but we hope to catch up in the next few months.

**MILLENNIUM GREEN LOTTERY** This is steadily contributing to the funds for the green. We have 1 spare number at the moment which I hope to "sell" soon.

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.

### 6.2 Thompson Parish Church (KWo)

In Katharine's absence, Bronwen and Angus gave an update. The Heritage Lottery funded project has now closed and the work has been completed. Need to look to the future as to how the rest of the church can be maintained/restored. Cannot re-apply to the Heritage Fund for 18 months. The majority of funding for churches would come from them. The good news is that the cap on funding has been removed so bigger applications can be made but the not so good news is that the money for churches etc. is no longer ringfenced so applications now in competition with everything else. If we can show good use of funds, it will put us in good stead for another grant in the future. The chancel is in worse condition than the nave. Jacobean woodwork needs restoring. Walls need redecorating. 2021 before more work starts.

### **6.3 Parish Land (Bronwen Tyler)**

The Parish land was let to a new tenant who has laid it to grass for working horses. The increase in rent was initially absorbed into the fees for surveying the land and creating the new tenancy agreement but will now provide additional income to aid those in the village who may need financial assistance in times of hardship.

At Christmas we again provided additional funds for those living alone on low incomes who do not own their own home or those whom we know find the costs of winter hard to meet.

For those new to the village it should be explained that the funds were provided for the poor of the parish. Defining poverty is increasingly difficult in the modern age and we are also bound, as trustees, not to contravene any benefit rules which may apply to individuals so that we avoid putting them in a fraud situation. However, there are a number of occasions when we may be able to help, including those who might feel they do not qualify. For example, even for people with an income which can normally provide for daily living, the cost of travel to and from hospital and the parking fees for regular treatment might be proving difficult, either for the patient or for family transporting them or visiting them during a hospital stay. There are many other unexpected events which might leave a village resident struggling to meet costs. Please do contact us via the parish council or directly to the two trustees, Kate Winslow and Bronwen Tyler to enquire if we can help with a donation. This is the village's money and residents are entitled to apply to the fund. Strict confidentiality is applied, of course.

### **6.4 Thompson WI (Kate Winslow, President)**

We had our usual varied range of speakers during the year. Tarts, Toffs and Traitors was the title of one talk this was followed by Pets as Therapy, the speaker brought along her dog who was extremely well trained and patient. This is a charity that trains dogs who then go into hospital wards. July saw an evening with birds of prey. In August as it was our 65<sup>th</sup> birthday year we celebrated by having a "posh" afternoon tea complete with celebratory cake. Our next speaker was a lady town crier, and as would be expected had an extremely loud voice. We continued to celebrate our 65<sup>th</sup> birthday by going out for a meal, and November saw our AGM with a talk on an introduction to Tibetan Buddhism and of course at Christmas we again celebrated with yet another meal. We started off in 2019 by having our first film night in the new hall with the usual hot chocolate and popcorn. The speaker let us down for our February meeting, but this led to a fascinating evening with our longest serving member telling stories of her life in Thompson. In March our speaker again had to cancel but was replaced by very interesting talk and with amusing anecdotes entitled my time in the Met. March saw an ex local florist making up small arrangements following the WI theme of Friendship bouquets these were all raffled at the end of the meeting.

We again took part in the annual group quiz, the ten-pin bowling and darts. As mentioned last year we reached the final of the plate and to our surprise we won the competition, unfortunately this year we were not so successful. This was followed by our team winning the group quiz (again) and the darts team won through to the finals again. The Norfolk Federation booked our hall for an Auditions Day in December. They were so impressed by the hall and of course our organisation of the day they have booked our hall for one of their Autumn Federation Meetings in October. A feather in our cap. Our membership is around twenty and we have some new members. Again, there was no election at our AGM and the main officers continue in their posts.

### **6.5 Stitches Group (Bronwen Tyler)**

We continue to meet in the new Community Hall each Wednesday evening and our numbers remain good. There is, of course, always space for new people to join us. We celebrated 25 years in February and most of the group, plus a few former members, were able to celebrate with a lunch at the Stag in Attleborough. We must be one of the longest running of such groups in the area. The aim of the group is to provide a social outlet for those from the village and beyond. It is considered important now to develop mental wellbeing and provide ways in which people can have an outlet which is good for mental health. 25 years ago, this was not so talked about but we were being suggested by local doctors as a place which could provide support and companionship, laughter and the development of therapeutic crafting skills so we consider ourselves ahead of the times! Crafting in its widest sense is our secondary purpose. We should also emphasise that we do not exclude men. We are happy to

teach new skills, as there is usually someone who can pass on their knowledge. One person who has been attending for quite a short time has learned to make patchwork quilts with the help of some of us and is now putting us to shame with the number of beautiful quilts she has produced. We have developed new friendships and support in a number of ways, from getting together to go to an event we might not want to go to alone, or sharing a common interest, to arranging lifts for those who are unable to drive to meetings. We share laughter and tears and try to be there when members are having less happy times in their lives.

We are non-profit making and our subs are only to cover the cost of the hall. We try to keep them low and supplement funds by holding occasional workshops open to all. It is more important that people of all incomes feel able to join us. If you would like to get to know more people. Learn a new skill or develop one why not come along. Details are always in the Waylander, but we meet each Wednesday from 7.15 for a charge of £1 per evening payable monthly, which we think is excellent value for money.

## **6.6 Thompson Community Hall (Bronwen Tyler)**

It is hard to believe we have been open a little over a year. It has been a very busy time for the committee and those who help with events. We have had a big range of private bookings, from children's birthday parties and significant birthdays to wakes as well as our own events. The feedback has been how much people enjoy the new hall and its facilities.

The committee has tried to put on events and activities to suit all tastes and needs, but of course the first year has been very experimental. Some, such as the French Evening, have proved exceptionally popular, while others have only attracted a small number. However, we are learning what the village wants and will respond to suggestions. Our film nights are proving popular and we are extremely grateful for the sponsorship we have received for these. We get a steady number at coffee mornings but games afternoons are less well supported. Ice Cream Thursdays are proving a hit with the children after school and we are thinking of ways to provide activities when the weather means they can't use the play area. The most successful events in terms of numbers attending, money raised and community working are the Book Sales. Each sale so far has seen numbers increasing as well as takings, providing a real boost for the Hall, Thompson's church and Griston's church.

We have a number of hirers putting on regular activities such as the weekly Fitsteps Dance class and YogaVision. The local quilting group once called hackers Tackers and Stuffers but now Wayland Quilters, has taken up a booking for their twice a month meetings, and of course we have our own Stitchers and WI. Norfolk Association of Local Councils have booked us for a number of training sessions for parish councillors. Norfolk WI had an audition day for new speakers, with another booking in October, and Norfolk Quilters have a workshop day with us shortly.

Once the hall was built and open, we knew we still had work to be done. We have created an access from the road to the hall entrance to enable those in wheelchairs and with pushchairs to find it easier to reach the hall if not arriving by car. We have put solar lights at the gates to make the entrance more visible on dark nights. We continue to respond to the needs of hirers and our own events by adding to our equipment range. We obtained a grant to build a Petanque terrain and it will be formally opened on May 18<sup>th</sup> with an exhibition match by Gt Ellingham players and an opportunity for the village to 'have a go', and of course refreshments. We have planted a hedge to screen the rather unsightly septic tank site.

We have a programme of events planned for the coming year. May 17<sup>th</sup> we have the jigsaw challenge. Teams of four will have a light two course supper and then choose a wrapped 500piece jigsaw to be completed in a given time. The winners will receive a prize. On May 18<sup>th</sup> is the Petanque event. On June 2<sup>nd</sup> we have a plant and table top sale with teas. Tables can be hired at £5 each. On June 14<sup>th</sup> we have a film night showing The Favourite. On July 13<sup>th</sup> we have our next Book Sale. On July 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> we have a whole weekend devoted to a Heritage Event. This is due to popular demand for an opportunity to share family history, expressed at our open day. We will have displays of local and family history, the opportunity to share research or learn how to begin, refreshments all day and much more. On September 7<sup>th</sup> we have a showcase day hosted by the Parish Council to enable all users of the Hall to promote their activities. The opportunity to have a table or pitch is free. The third book sale of the year is on September 14<sup>th</sup>. The annual 5k/10k run is on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

More is planned for the autumn, including the return of the popular music afternoon with the Diss guitar Ensemble on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, so look out for details on posters, Facebook, website and Waylander.

It is exciting to see two younger members of the community booking the hall to put on a family fun day on the Green on June 29<sup>th</sup>. They have some great plans and we wish them good weather and every success.

As chair I would like to take the opportunity to say a huge thank you to the team of trustees and committee members and volunteers who give up time to put on events and manage the day to day running of the hall from weekly safety checks to planting and watering hedges and beyond, including responding to panic calls that a user has set the alarms off. There are times when we have felt we needed to take our beds up there but it is worth it to see the increasing use and appreciation of this wonderful building made possible by such a generous legacy. I would also like to thank Thompson community for their support by attending events and hope we will see more of you in the future. We know not everything will suit everyone and we try to be diverse, but please tell us if you have any ideas and do continue to support your community hall.

#### **6.6.1 Coffee Mornings (Bronwen Tyler)**

These now form part of the regular events hosted by the Community Hall and are no longer a separate entity. Numbers continue to be a little disappointing apart from the days when the walking group end their walks with us for coffee. We are attracting people from the wider area who do not live in Thompson. In future the report will be a part of the Community Hall report.

#### **6.6.2 Games nights (Bronwen Tyler)**

Due to several requests Games Nights were changed to Games Afternoons and now take place on the first Tuesday of each month from 2pm - 4pm. We charge £1 to attend. Table games available to play at the moment are, cribbage, Scrabble, Rummikub, Yahtzee, cards. There is a regular group, of attenders but numbers are very low. If they are to continue we need more participants. Now that we have our new Petanque terrain it is hoped that some people will take advantage of this, especially during the summer, and join us. We will have sets of boules available in the hall to borrow, or you can bring your own. We have a set of rules if you wish to learn how to play the game 'properly'.

#### **6.7 Wayland Partnership (Bronwen Tyler)**

It has been an interesting and eventful year, not without its difficulties, but also with some exciting challenges ahead. Our Chair, Jan Godfrey, not only had to spend more time caring for her husband but then had to have an operation on her knee, which, of course, has meant a considerable recovery time. This has prevented her visiting the office as she would like but, thanks to modern technology, she can still manage the finances and many other tasks via computer from home. Our trustee meetings have had to decamp to her home temporarily though.

We lost our admin assistant Charlotte in late 2108. In addition, our Development Manager, Richard Otterway, was recently offered a new post which would further his career. We took the opportunity to take a fresh look at the management of Wayland House. As a result, we changed the job descriptions to create three roles which better meet the demands of Wayland House and the workings of the Trust. We now have Amanda who currently works each morning in the reception office and has taken on some of Richard's former tasks so that she is much more than an admin officer. She is a real asset, liked by Wayland House tenants and visitors alike for her friendly and professional approach and has an excellent understanding of the workings of the Partnership as a whole.

After many discussions with our Dragonfly Gallery volunteers and patrons we took another part of Richard's former role and created the post of Gallery co-ordinator. Currently this is a part time post, but we plan to develop it further, particularly via arts grants, to be able to increase the working hours and offer new opportunities in the arts to Wayland residents. Our newest staff member appointed to this role is Ruth. She comes with an arts background and is keen to develop the range of what the Gallery has to offer, especially in improving youth involvement in arts activities and exhibitions. She will also be manning the reception office on her days with us so

that we can extend our opening hours. The Gallery has a range of exhibitions planned for the rest of the year and a full programme of workshops. Look on the Dragonfly Gallery website or contact Wayland House for more details. Workshop flyers are available in the Community Hall foyer. As our third change, we have just appointed Paul as a part time site manager who will take care of minor repairs and general maintenance.

In 2018 we completed the Sensory Garden project and the garden is open to all during Gallery opening times (10-4 on weekdays and 10-1 on Saturdays). It looks great and will look even better as the plants mature.

We have a number of funding bids in the pipeline or being investigated. We work in partnership with the team who are engaged on a joint Watton/Swaffham project, where the funding gained is aimed at improving facilities in both towns which will in turn make them a better facility for the villages surrounding them.

We could not manage without our wonderful team of volunteers. The Gallery staff in particular have helped steer the Gallery through some very changeable times in the last year with some really good ideas and a lot of hard work. We continue to need volunteers in many areas. We need people to join the rota of gallery volunteers who man it each day, even if you can only commit to an occasional stint such as once a month; we need volunteers to help keep the Sensory Garden looking neat and tidy; we need volunteers who could help man the reception office to meet and greet the many people who come to the window each day with so many queries. In addition, we would welcome enquiries to join our small band of trustees. If you are interested in volunteering in any capacity, please email [amanda@wayland.org.uk](mailto:amanda@wayland.org.uk) or telephone 01953 883915.

## **7 To receive comments from the public**

There were no comments from the public

The meeting closed at 8:10pm