

THORNER PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Electors

held at the Bungalow, Main Street, Thorne, on 7th May 2025.

In attendance - Some 26 residents, including 6 members of the Parish Council and Ward Councillor Sam Firrth

(1) Chair

In the absence of the Chair of the Parish Council, the Vice-Chair, Cllr Angela Wallis, was appointed as Chair (S17(1) Local Government Act 1972)

Steven Wood agreed to record the minutes of the meeting

(2) Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 29th May 2024

Cllr Wallis narrated the Minutes of the previous year's Annual Parish Meeting, and these Minutes were approved

(3) Matters arising

3.1 Cllr Wallis confirmed that the Local Authority had been unwilling to consider any amendment to the 20mph zone

3.2 A resident complained that the speed limit was not being respected through the village – Cllr Wallis confirmed that members of the Parish Council have agreed to monitor the speed, using the Speed Indicator Device (SID) and would take further action if necessary

(4) Litter

4.1 A resident asked why the annual litter pick usually held in the spring had been discontinued

4.2 Another resident questioned the cause of the problem – although better education of children was suggested, the greater responsibility rests with older people, not children.

4.3 It was suggested residents might individually be more proactive e.g. picking up litter as they are out and about, and disposing of it appropriately. Residents were reminded the Parish Council did have a supply of bags, and litter pickers

4.4 It was suggested there should be more publicity, on the web site and in the Newsletter – perhaps residents might be asked to display notices in their windows emphasising the pride we have in the village and the need to keep it tidy. Perhaps the school children could be invited to draft a suitable notice?

(5) Precept

5.1 Residents had questioned the substantial increase in the Precept for the current year (11.8%)

5.2 Cllr Wallis explained the main reasons for the increase were the increase in the costs of employing the Clerk (salary increase and the increase in NI contributions) and the increased cost of maintaining the village, following a change in the arrangements.

5.3 Previous Newsletters had been produced on heavy glossy paper, and it was suggested savings might be made by reducing the quality slightly. Cllr Wallis confirmed that future Newsletters would be in hybrid form – published on line, with a limited number of paper copies for those who were unable to access it on line. The paper copies would be available from various locations e.g. the Bungalow, and the Doctors' surgery.

5.4 It was suggested residents might be surveyed to ascertain whether they were willing to pay more for improved services

5.5 The Clerk's salary was queried – the cost of employing the Clerk was in the year just gone was in excess of £12,000. It was suggested this was disproportionate to the amount of the Precept (£30,720) and disproportionate to the amounts paid to the Clerk by other Parish Councils

(6) Footpaths

- 6.1 The resident who had requested this item on the Agenda believed there were parishioners who would be willing to contribute to the task of keeping the rural footpaths accessible
- 6.2 Cllr Wallis referred to the Agreement with Leeds Council, whereby the Parish Council received an annual grant in return for maintaining 3 paths. Other paths might be added, if Leeds would agree to increase the grant – to date there had been no response from Leeds. Cllr Wallis confirmed the Parish Council was willing to support the Volunteers who maintained the footpaths.

(7) Cycleway

- 7.1 A resident referred to the saga of the proposed Greenway along the disused railway line. The original proposal had been to open up the old line, from Thorner through to Cross Gates station. That proposal was now impractical
- 7.2 Later this year, as part of the establishment of two new football pitches on the land behind the Arium, a new footpath link would be opened up connecting up with the footpath along Miry Carr. This provided a footpath link, from the village, firstly along the line of the old railway, and then along Miry Carr to the Arium, and beyond that the new Country Park and the facilities of ELOR. It was suggested that this route might later be upgraded to a cycleway
- 7.3 One resident did not think the owners of a certain section of the route would agree to give up land for the wider track that would be required.
- 7.4 Other residents raised concerns about security and mis-use
- 7.5 There was little support for the proposal

(8) Pride in Thorner

- 8.1 A resident suggested we might do more to encourage residents to take pride in our village, and the importance of preserving its heritage. Litter, dog fouling and weed growth on the road edges, detracted from the village appearance.
- 8.2 It was suggested more might be done to improve the appearance of the village e.g. the pavements along Main Street. Some residents kept the pavements in front of their property tidy and free from weeds – but this was not universal
- 8.3 Ward Councillor Sam Firth explained street cleaning was difficult because of the cars ordinarily parked along Main Street

(9) Communications

- 9.1 There was concern at the lack of effective communication
- 9.2 Until the last couple of years a Newsletter had been produced several times a year on glossy paper and hand delivered to every property in the village. This required the support of various people, to provide material for publication, and to help with delivery, and this support was lacking
- 9.2 Various residents complained that insufficient notice had been provided, and the deadline too strictly applied.
- 9.3 It was suggested that the whole issue of communications – of promoting the work of the Parish Council, and seeking feedback, should be addressed. Perhaps investigate how other Parish Councils communicate, and engage with those (residents) who were up to date with all methods of communicating, including social media.
- 9.4 On the question of communication, a resident raised the Ironman competition, which is likely to result in the complete closure of the village for most of the day, on Sunday 27th July. There appears to have been no consultation, and very little information about the event was available. Ward Councillor Firth explained that little notice had been given to Ward Councillors, but that a representative of the organisers would attend the May Parish Council meeting

9.5 It was almost 20 years since a survey of residents was undertaken – to inform the Village Design Statement. This had provided valuable guidance as to what residents valued, and wanted developing or preserving. A similar exercise now would guide the Parish Council strategy, and support their aims of making the village a better place.

9.6 The consensus was that there needed to be better/different system of communication

(10) Local Council Award

10.1 A resident queried why the Parish Council had withdrawn from this scheme. Holding the Award was a sign that the Parish Council complied with good practice

(11) HGVs

11.1 A resident enquired of Ward Councillor Firth why HGVs were still allowed through the village and why Thorner could be used as a Test route, and for training purposes

11.2 Cllr Firth explained that the matter had been referred to Highways, who had undertaken their own review, and concluded that there were no criteria to merit restrictions being imposed on HGVs. Cllr Firth would bring the information which had been made available to him, to the May meeting of the Parish Council.

(12) Flood Survey

12.1 A resident questioned when the report, following investigations more than a year ago, would be released. Cllr Wallis confirmed the investigations had been by the Environment Agency, and that the Parish Council had very little influence

12.2 Another resident referred to the fact that the village of Thorner is in a basin, and has always been prone to flooding in certain areas. Nonetheless development had been allowed which had exacerbated the problems.

12.3 Another resident expressed a view that recent problems were the result of an old drainage system being unable to cope.

The meeting then closed, with residents expressing their gratitude to Cllr Wallis for the way she had chaired the meeting.

Signed

Date.....

Chair of the meeting.