

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL – Open Space & Leisure Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Space & Leisure Committee held on Wednesday 16th July 2025 at 6.00pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.

In attendance: Cllrs. B Rainbow (Chair), J Allen, Y Hamel- Cooke, D Millest, B Morris and M Moy.

Also in attendance: Mrs. P Gladwell (Deputy Clerk) no members of public.

1. **Chair's Welcome** - the Chair opened the meeting advising all that the Protocol adopted by the Parish Council for reporting at Parish Council Meetings, would be enacted for this meeting. A copy of the Protocol is available from the Clerk or can be downloaded from the website: <https://thurstonparishcouncil.uk/parish-council/policies-procedures-and-strategy/>
2. **Apologies:**
 - a) To receive apologies for absence – verified apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Smith. Cllr Marsh was absent.
 - b) To consent to accept apologies received - **the meeting consented to accept the apologies submitted, aif.**
3. **Declarations of pecuniary and local non-pecuniary interests:**
 - a) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other registerable interests and non-registerable interests as detailed in Appendix B of the LGA Model Code of Conduct – None received.
 - b) To note the determination of requests for dispensations in accordance with council's Dispensation Policy – None received.
4. **To consider and approve the minutes of the previous meetings** – None available as this is the first meeting of a new committee.
5. **To receive comments from the members of the public present:**
 - a) On the agenda under discussion – no members of the public present.
 - b) On any other matters relating to recreational matters within the village of Thurston - no members of the public present
6. **To receive and consider matters relating to the Monthly Risk Assessments Reports:**
 - a) To receive updates on previous works highlighted in the Monthly Risk Assessments for action.
 - **Heath Road Play area:** Dying horse chestnut tree felled following assessment by a tree surgeon. Broken dog signs removed. Wire on the maintenance gate repaired. Pedestrian gate adjusted for finger traps. Back fencing repaired with new posts and wire. Swing chains adjusted. Swings cleaned and bird deterrent installed. Erosion of the surface beneath the seesaw infilled. Broken glass on basketball surface cleared.
 - **Thedwastre Play Park Area:** Equipment cleaned and bird deterrent installed. Fencing posts reset and new fencing sharp corners removed. Excess bolt threads on the bench removed. Three-way springer fixings tightened by Kompan.
 - **New Green Open Space:** The erosion of soil around various items infilled to remove any trip hazard. Surface matting beneath Rotator, High Bars and Giant Rope Swing repaired. Goal posts reorientated and surfacing infilled. Picnic tables cleaned. Paint graffiti removed

on youth shelter.

- **Recreation Ground Play Area:** New litter bin to be installed. Weeds on surfacing treated. Equipment cleaned and bird deterrent installed.

b) To consider matters on the Monthly Risk Assessment Reports for the following and agree appropriate actions arising:

- **Heath Road Play Area:** Swings, surfacing coming away from the surround, monitor and infill holes. Dog fouling sign faded and dirty, consider replacements. Multiplay, ramp chain removed, price for replacement, step block missing, price for replacement. Bark low in places, redistribute and monitor, missing inserts and loose post, monitor. Low canopy on some trees, refer to Environment & Biodiversity Committee to consider rewinding strip or price to lift of canopy.
- **Thedwastre Play Area:** Bird deterrent loose, refix and monitor.
Kompan Operational Inspection of 2nd June 2025 noted and matters raised considered including; Surfacing lifting at edges, monitor under guarantee. Fixings missing on fencing, assess. Springer, inaccessible fixings loose, monitor. Junior Multiplay slightly loose in foundations, monitor. Senior Multiplay ropes and net worn, monitor.
- **New Green Open Space:** Signage on Monkey bars torn, monitor. Graffiti on Youth Shelter, scratched not paint, assess for method of removal. Multiplay in garden, potential finger trap, monitor. Goal nets not secured at the back.
Kompan Operational Inspection of 2nd June 2025 noted and matters raised considered including; Multiplay in garden, damaged fixings assess and repair. Graffiti on signs and youth shelter, remove.
- **Recreation Ground Play Area:** No additional issues reported.

c) To appoint assessors to carry out monthly risk assessment checks on play areas and consider training courses – Cllr Moy agreed to continue to carry out the routine visual checks for Thedwastre Play Area and New Green Open Space. Cllr Millest agreed to take on the checks for Heath Road beginning in September and Cllr Hamel- Cooke agreed to take over the Recreation Ground Play Area risk assessments. All will take up the training offered by SALC in 2026.

7. Clerks report –

- a) Update on the proposed round of community consultations in September 2025 as part of the Parish Infrastructure and Investment Plan (PIIP) – it was noted that any consultation would feed into any review of the Neighbourhood Plan and the process was yet to be confirmed. It was noted that resident consultation on leisure facilities would be required by this committee in order to take forward any recommendations for provision or future development of open spaces. It was noted that the Ethos Open Space and Play Strategy report of 2021 was a valuable aid going forward however a resident survey to update feedback on existing provision and the priorities going forward should be undertaken. This could target the demographic that uses or would use the open space and leisure facilities as opposed to a full consultation on all aspects of PIIP and NDP. This survey should take the form of a short questionnaire placed in the newsletter, on noticeboards, signage on sites and online. Officers would create a draft of the survey for circulation.
- b) Proposal to visit other play facilities – Various locations are suggested for members to visit that are exemplary examples of play facilities. Botesdale Playground has won recent awards. Bury St Edmunds Abbey Gardens and Norton Play Park have examples of challenging play for older children. It was suggested that Marham Park and Nowton Park are worth visiting and further away King Georges Playing field in Brentwood. Investigation

into the contractors and the funding streams used should be undertaken.

- c) Reports to council - members were reminded that a short report alongside the minutes of committee meetings would be required at full council meetings going forward.

8. **To receive an update on the provision of picnic benches at New Green Open Space and to agree the sites for installation** – it was noted that Neighbourhood CIL had been approved for the purchase of two picnic benches. It was agreed that the accessible picnic bench should be close to the path and that both should have good sight lines for the play equipment. It was proposed that the two picnic benches be installed in a triangle formation with the existing one to the east and rear of the play park with aif.
9. **To receive an update on the Wildlife Garden and to approve a forward plan for monitoring, management and enhancing** – it was noted that the information lectern had been installed, the bench top replaced and the chair resecured in its foundations. Several roof tiles on the bug hotel had been smashed and would need replacing. The Work Party Schedule was considered and biodiversity led items would be referred to the Environment and Biodiversity Committee. It was agreed that this schedule would form the basis of work parties going forward. It was noted that grass cutting and hedge trimming would be required late August and the deputy clerk will arrange for this to be carried out.
10. **To consider and review the Site Assessments for Recreational Facilities and Open Space and make recommendation to full council of any additional sites to be taken forward for further assessment** – it was noted that this document was awaiting update by officers and any consideration and review was deferred until this had been completed.
11. **To consider and review 0 – 3-year goals for open space and leisure** – it was noted that the Leisure & Environment Committee 0–3-year goals working document would be amended to ensure projects relevant to Open Space & Leisure were considered and reviewed within a new document. A review of the goals and action steps took place with progress, expected completion dates and completed goals noted. It was suggested that public consultation to update resident aspirations and compliment the Ethos Open Space and Play Strategy report of 2021 would be undertaken. It was noted that the open space and Sud's areas on Thurston Park were maturing well and additional litter and dog bins were planned. The allotment area has been handed over and tenants are working the plots. It was agreed that a 'guardian' take on each of the other developments as they progressed to monitor any promised open space, leisure facilities and community benefits coming forward. Cllr Millest would monitor Grange Park and Cllr Hamel-Cooke would look at College Park and Hakewill Mews. Thurston Grove and St Peter's Chase would be allocated to members as they build out. The play area provision and woodland coming forward from Cavendish View would be kept under review and the ongoing liaison meetings should be attended by members to monitor the progress of this. It was noted that events to draw the community together would need to be identified. Existing public open spaces would be monitored and reviewed for management and enhancement however it was noted that this would need to be in conjunction with any Environment and Biodiversity Committee goals. Heath Road play area would be reviewed for any potential upgrade of facilities and a review of the potential for additional recreational facilities at Heath Road would be ongoing. It was acknowledged that forward thinking considerations will be needed for any open space potentially coming from developments still to be determined and these should be added to the

0-3 goals as they are identified.

- 12. To consider the provision of information signage on New Green Open Space** – It was noted that coppicing work to the poplar trees had resulted in stumps being left, one of which was showing major internal decay and would be unlikely to recover. It was suggested that this stump could be incorporated into a totem type information/directional signpost. Other suggestions included a sundial. It was agreed that further consideration of signage enhancement would be needed with examples and suggestions coming forth from members.
- 13. Date of next meeting** – 15th October 2025 commencing at tbc in the Thurston Community Library.
- 14. Close of meeting** – there being no further business to transact the Chair closed the meeting at 7.20pm.