

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL – Open Space & Leisure Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Open Space & Leisure Committee held on Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 7.30pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.

In attendance: Cllrs. B Rainbow (Chair), Y Hamel-Cooke, P Marsh, 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 and Cllr. Allen.
 - 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 of 17th September 2025 and inquorate meeting of 19th November 2025** - approval of the minutes as an accurate record of the meetings that took place was given by all present, aif. The Chair signed the minutes in accordance with legislation.
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:** Multiplay, ramp chain replaced, cracked swing seat, replacement ordered. Broken bird deterrent, removed. Broken fence, repaired.
 - **Thedwastre Play Park Area:** Broken bird deterrent, removed. Swing chain wear, replacement swings ordered. Roundabout base lifting, Kompan to replace under warranty. Climbing frame movement in the slide, monitor. Surfacing lifting trip hazard, Ranger has infilled.
 - **New Green Open Space:** Graffiti on Youth Shelter, repainting scheduled. Graffiti on signage, removed. Giant rope swing overgrown vegetation, removed. Picnic table burns, monitor.

- **Recreation Ground Play Area:** Surfacing debris and conkers, removed. Dirty benches, cleaned. Litter bin sharp edge on hole in the lid, monitor. Climbing frame sharp edges on net fixings, filed down.
- b) To consider matters on the Monthly Risk Assessment Reports for the following and agree appropriate actions arising:
 - **Heath Road Play Area:** General site rubbish, multiple dog waste bags and several golf tees removed. Handwritten signage removed. Swing seat cracking, replacement swings on order. Seesaw pinch hazard, aged equipment, no action required, monitor.
 - **Thedwastre Play Area:** Gates, fencing and benches paint flaking and rust evident, to be repainted. Swing chains worn, replacement swings on order.
 - **New Green Open Space:** Graffiti on Youth Shelter, scratched not paint, to be repainted. Roundabout base lifting, Kompan to replace under warranty.
 - **Recreation Ground Play Area:** Climbing frame sharp edges on net fixings remains, suggested that this joint requires rubber washer capping or mastic/silicon repair.

7. Clerks report –

- a) Update on the installation of picnic benches at New Green – Sites have been agreed with New Green Management and benches have been delivered. The logistics of the installation require a contractor to be engaged. Quotes are awaited for this.
- b) Report from the recent Wildlife Garden work party – The work party planted three trees on New Green however did not continue with wildlife garden maintenance due to inclement weather. A new date will be scheduled for February to carry out pruning of the buddleia and blackthorn on the bank, tidying of the bug hotel, checking seating and bird/bee boxes and some new planting.
- c) Update on the design competition for the renewal of dog control signage at public open spaces and playgrounds – Thurston Primary School have confirmed that the competition is up and running for January, some entries have come in and children will be reminded to enter their designs before the closing date of 30th January. A winner will be chosen and the new signs approved by full council. Certificate suggested for prize.
- d) It was noted that Ladygreen woodland consisted of two distinct types of woodland which will dictate its uses. With a view to information gathering and familiarisation with similar projects, initial investigations have been made into Level 1 training options for the forest school ethos. It was noted that Suffolk Wildlife Trust and some local trainers hold these courses and available dates are being sought. An information seeking visit has also been arranged to the Green Light Trust woodland.

8. To receive an update from councillors on any visits undertaken to other local play facilities –

None to report. Cllrs were asked to continue to investigate other playgrounds and report back on any exceptional or unique designs seen. It was noted that Needham Market and Botesdale would be worth a visit.

9. To note the responses to the recent Village Open Space Survey and consider residents aspirations for leisure facilities –

Following the initial collation of responses it was noted that many comments were more relevant to development and highways and the poor return rate was disappointing however some suggestions were worth further investigation. The return rate for younger age groups was positive. It was agreed that reporting of the results should include information on where to access services that were already in place such as footpath maps. The

high number of positive responses to more natural play, additional seating, more planting and nature areas and more facilities for older children were all noted. Consideration of the responses will be included in planning for any future projects.

- 10. To consider the provision of totem pole type signage showing directions to the wildlife garden, play areas, and community facilities and to consider the design process, commissioning and funding** – It was agreed that this project would not be pursued at this time.
- 11. Date of next meeting** – 25th March 2026 tbc in the Thurston Community Library.
- 12. Close of meeting** – there being no further business to transact the Chair closed the meeting at 8.20pm.