

## THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL – Open Space & Leisure Committee

### Minutes of the meeting of the Open Space & Leisure Committee held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 7.30pm in the Community Library, Norton Road.

In attendance: Cllrs. B Rainbow (Chair), Y Hamel-Cooke, B Morris. M Moy and P Smith.

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 Cllrs. J Allen, P Marsh and D Millest.
  - 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 meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026** - 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:** General site has large holes being dug, Ranger has been asked to fill these where possible. Swing seat cracking, replacement swings have had chains altered and can now be installed. Seesaw pinch hazard, aged equipment, monitoring.
    - **Thedwastre Play Park Area:** Roundabout base lifting, Kompan replaced this under warranty. Swing chains worn, replacement swings have had chains altered and can now be installed.
    - **New Green Open Space:** Rotator, fixing missing from one of the suspensions on one of the arms. Annual inspector taped item off at time of inspection. Spare parts and install ordered from Kompan have been cancelled as the missing fixing has been replaced. This item has passed the quarterly Kompan inspection carried out on 31<sup>st</sup> March.
    - **Recreation Ground Play Area:** Grass areas wet and muddy, especially around the

pavilion. Weather improvements have negated this risk. Litter bin sharp edge on hole in the lid, monitoring.

- b) To consider matters on the Monthly Risk Assessment Reports for the following and agree appropriate actions arising:
- **Heath Road Play Area:** MUGA - some graffiti with possible attempt at removal, requires further cleaning. Seesaw - pinch hazard, aged equipment, monitoring.
  - **Thedwastre Play Area:** Spinner Bowl – loose strap, Ranger asked to assess.
  - **New Green Open Space:** New picnic bench – fixing bolts snapped, contractor asked to refix correctly.
  - **Recreation Ground Play Area:** Litter bin sharp edge on hole in the lid, monitoring.

## 7. Clerks report –

- a) Update on the provision of a web page for Recreation facilities – a draft webpage and accompanying photographs was noted. Each site will be given a subpage with its merits outlined, together with visuals, to make the pages more appealing. A short history of the Recreation Ground would be included and a bio for the Wildlife Garden. It is hoped that some public engagement can be added via a feedback facility on the page.
- b) Wildlife Garden – It was noted that a March/April work party has not been required however seating has been checked and the tree and shrub condition assessed. The current weather conditions prevent any additional planting at this time and further consideration of this will be taken in the Autumn. It was agreed no supplementary bird feeding is required. It was noted that community engagement included an update of the Biodiversity website pages to include an article on the wildlife garden. Monitoring and management for June/July would include checking the need for pruning at the south entrance gate and noting that the Biodiversity Open Day Wildlife Garden stand will promote community engagement. It was noted that flower deadheading should not be carried out.

8. **To discuss the potential of woodland to the northeast of Cavendish View** – consideration of the potential public facilities that the woodland could provide with public access resulted in positive suggestions for how the space could be utilized and it was agreed that the woodland would be an asset with the potential maximised. It was noted that any insurance stipulations for open water should be confirmed. It was noted that future management and maintenance of the woodland would require the creation of a volunteer group of people with relevant experience and enthusiasm similar to the groups that run other local community woodland such as Lukeswood and Lawshall Woodland. Publicity and engagement would be needed as soon as possible to facilitate this. It was noted that the upcoming Biodiversity Open Day could be used as a platform to seek people who might be interested in getting involved in such a project. Recommendations indicate that the pond area and more ancient part of the woodland should be excluded from public access on safety grounds. It was noted that the more open areas could be enhanced and managed for public use, possibly including more challenging natural play equipment and facilities to encourage forest school pursuits. Other suggestions included understory planting, glade creation, benches, signage, open meadow areas, wildflowers, camp building. It was acknowledged that there is no current timeline on the offer of this asset, however it was noted that a site visit would be useful.

9. **To discuss the provision of community events for 2026** – It was noted that the external outdoor theatre event had to be cancelled last year and therefore would not be repeated, it is

understood that a local amateur theatre group may want to perform an outside play in 2027. Further investigation into what High Street Safari currently offer was suggested together with other similar activities with a view to organizing this type of event for the end of the year. Members were keen to facilitate the repeat of a Big Weekend type of event for 2027 with the aim to integrate new and existing residents and bring the ever increasing community together. It was agreed that an initial invitation be sent to other community groups and organisations to determine any enthusiasm for coming together to plan and stage such an event. Consideration of the format such an event takes would be down to any group created from the initial meeting with the intention that this be a collaborative undertaking and not a parish council run event.

10. **To consider any enhancement of existing play areas taking into account the conclusions drawn from the recent Open Space Survey** – consideration of this item was deferred due to time limitations.
11. **Date of next meeting** – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2026 7.30pm in the Thurston Community Library.
12. **Close of meeting** – there being no further business to transact the Chair closed the meeting at 8.45pm.