



North Thoresby, Grainsby & Waithe Parish Council

North Thoresby Village Hall, The Square, North Thoresby, DN36 5QL

Minutes of the Meeting on 8 April 2024 at 7pm

Present:

Acting Clerk	Lynne Gale (Chair)
Councillors	Colin Goodwin (Vice), Helen Willerton, Mick Orrill, Keith Butters
District Councillor	Terry Aldridge
Public	17 members of the public

1. Chair's Welcome

- a) **The meeting will be recorded.**
- b) **Safety announcement.**
- c) **The meeting minutes to be prepared from the recording.**

NOTED: Chair announced that the meeting would be audio recorded to facilitate preparation of the minutes.

2. Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies sent to the Clerk from Members not able to attend the meeting.

NOTED: Apologies were received from District Councillors Steve McMillan and Daniel McNally, who have both tendered their resignation from the council, now that it is quorate. Apologies were also received from County Councillor Hugo Marfleet.

3. Declarations of Interest

- a) **To record declarations of interest by any member of the council in respect of the agenda items listed below. Members declaring interests should identify the agenda item and type of interest being declared.**
- b) **To note dispensations given to any member of the council in respect of the agenda items listed below.**

NOTED: No declarations of interest.

4. Adoption of Previous Minutes

To adopt the minutes of the meeting on Monday 11 March 2024.

RESOLVED: The council adopted the minutes and these were signed by the Chair.

5. Public Open Forum – 30 Minutes

Members of the public can ask questions or make short statements to the council. Open Forum shall not exceed 30 minutes unless directed by the Chair. If possible, please forward questions to the clerk before the meeting.

NOTED: A resident asked for feedback on various maintenance issues in the Play Park. Councillor Goodwin agreed to meet the resident to review the issues.

NOTED: A resident enquired who would be preparing the minutes. Councillor Gale stated the council are using locum clerk services at present and one of a number of experienced clerks may do this.

NOTED: A resident asked a question about Councillor Gale's recent court case. Since this was a personal matter, Councillor Gale agreed to speak to any interested residents following the close of the meeting.

6. District Council Update

To receive updates from any attending District Councillor.

NOTED: District Councillor Terry Aldridge provided a brief verbal update.

7. County Council Update

To receive updates from any attending County Councillor.

NOTED: No one in attendance.

8. Co-option

To consider an application for co-option from Mr Ian Bunn.

RESOLVED: Council agreed to co-opt Mr Ian Bunn and he signed a Declaration of Office, before taking up seat as a Councillor.

9. Clerk's Report

To receive an update from the (Acting) Clerk on any matters progressed since the last meeting.

NOTED: Email Access

- GOV.UK email accounts have been created for all councillors and published on the council's website.
- These are the gold standard for all local government organisations.
- This was achieved at no cost to the council because ex-councillors had paid the annual invoice for 2023-24, before choosing to move to an alternative email setup.
- Access has been gained to some email accounts previously used. These contain useful information that was thought to have been lost.

NOTED: Payroll

- Payroll information for the full year 2023-24 has been obtained.
- Had the ex-clerk remained in post for 2024-25, this data shows that the council's wages bill would equate to 84% of its precept income.
- This leaves only £6,000 to spend on the village for the entire year, of which the gross contract is approximately £3,500.

NOTED: Council Laptop

- No password was left for the council's laptop but access has been gained.
- Historic council documents covering the period up to March 2023 have been recovered.
- There is no evidence that this laptop was used by the ex-Clerk and so documents relating to the period of his employment (June 23 to Feb 24) are still missing.

NOTED: Invoices

- Several unpaid invoices have come to light, including:
 - Lincolnshire County Council - £400 – unpaid invoice from March 2023. This was for installation of posts on Station Road to accommodate speed signs.
 - KC Landscapes (grass contractor) - £3,500 – unpaid invoice for the 2023 cutting season.
 - Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) - £109.12 - unpaid invoice for membership of LALC between 1 April 2023 and 21 July 2023, when the council withdrew. There was also a late payment fee of £60 which LALC have agreed to waive as a gesture of goodwill.
- It was also noted that an invoice of £86 was paid for ex-Chair Billy Buckenham to be shown how to burn a still image from the council's CCTV. Only the police should have access to do this.

NOTED: Bank Access

- The council do not have access to its accounts at present.
- Unity Bank requested signatures on a mandate from Billy Buckenham and Victoria Marshall, who are both existing signatories.
- Both were approached and asked to provide this for the good of the village. One declined and one didn't respond.

Signed:

Date:

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- The Chair stated concerns that Standing Orders may still in place for the ex-Clerk's wages and the council has no means at present to stop these payments.

NOTED: Accounts

- A locum RFO has started building a set of accounts from various financial records, including Lloyds Bank Statements found on the council's laptop.
- It is anticipated these accounts will be completed in time for the council to fulfil its annual return (AGAR).

NOTED: Council Assets

- District Councillor Daniel McNally has been unable to secure return of the council's assets (email accounts, passwords, financial accounts and invoices from the ex-Clerk. This has been referred to the police as theft and the council will now move forward with a range of measures to put itself in an operational state as soon as possible.
- An FOI request has been submitted to ELDC for a copy of the email conversation between the ex-Clerk and Councillor McNally.

NOTED: Website

- The council has access to maintain its own website.
- The Chair made a proposal to pay Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) approximately £180 for their Website Maintenance Service, as backup support.

RESOLVED: Council agreed to join the Website maintenance Service at an approximate cost of £180.

NOTED: Facebook

- A new facebook page has been created to enable regular engagement with residents.
- The link to this is: [North Thoresby, Grainsby & Waithe Parish Council](#)

NOTED: HR Committee

- The council needs a HR Committee to deal with any staffing matters.
- The Chair proposed the formation of a HR Committee.

RESOLVED: Council agreed the formation of a HR Committee with members: Councillor Willerton (Chair), Councillor Bunn and Councillor Gale.

NOTED: Post Box

- The Clerk invited Councillor Goodwin to provide an update on the closed Post Box, at the old Post Office.
- Councillor Goodwin is in conversation with a senior representative of Royal Mail, who has pledged to carry out an urgent review into its closure. There is hope this could be re-opened.

NOTED: Calendar Competition

- The Clerk relayed a resident's question about resurrecting the Calendar competition.
- Council supported the idea of holding a photo competition with a view to producing a 2025 Calendar. All funds from selling the Calendar to be used for a good cause, to be agreed at a future date.
- Councillor Goodwin will take the lead on organizing this.

10. Finance

- a) **To receive an update on access to the council's bank accounts.**
- b) **To approve a Schedule of Payments.**
- c) **To discuss a request for £140 from the ex-Clerk (Simon Baxter) to provide a PIN code, which will give the council access to its email accounts and electronic files. This has been quoted as 4 hours @ £35 per hour.**

NOTED: a) The council is waiting for Unity Trust to action a mandate, providing new councillors with online access to its accounts.

NOTED: b) The council has had no paperwork returned by the ex-Clerk, or access to the Clerk email account that was being used. At present it is unable to identify outstanding invoices until the locum Clerk has contacted known suppliers.

NOTED: c) The request from the ex-Clerk for a payment to release a PIN code, necessary for access to the council's email account and cloud storage, was discussed. There was no support for this course of action.

11. LALC

- a) **To consider a proposal to join Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) for 2024-25 at a cost of £310.86.**
- b) **To consider a proposal to join the LALC Annual Training Scheme at a cost of £180.**
- c) **To discuss and agree any immediate training requirements.**

RESOLVED: a) Council agreed to join LALC at a cost of £310.86

RESOLVED: b) Council agreed to join LALC's Annual Training Scheme at a cost of £180.

NOTED: c) The Clerk will send all councillors a link to available training courses.

12. Defibrillators

To receive an update from Cllr Goodwin.

NOTED: In addition to the two operational defibrillators the Parish Council own, two further defibrillators exist. Life Pack CR2 requires a battery and pads, Life Pack CR requires pads.

NOTED: Councillor Goodwin proposed that both defibrillators are serviced at a cost of £618.00+vat. Once serviced, these would be placed with guardians in Waithe and Grainsby.

RESOLVED: Council approved the servicing of two defibrillators at a cost of £618+vat.

NOTED: Councillor Goodwin is arranging training on the defibrillators and CPR. This is likely to be part of the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 13 May, but will be confirmed.

13. Village Hall Fencing

- a) To receive an update from Cllr Goodwin.
- b) To consider quote(s) for the work.

NOTED: Lottery grant money of £8,786 was awarded to the council in December 2022, for fencing at the Village Hall and new noticeboards. Quotes have been sent to the Clerk.

NOTED: Councillor Goodwin requested quotes be sent to the Clerk for:

- a) for the installation of fencing, behind the wall of the Village Hall.
- b) 5 noticeboards, 3 to be attached to the fencing and 2 for the bus shelters.

NOTED: Fencing Quote A is £7,687.80. Quote B is £7245.00 + £2,650 installation, total cost £9,895. Quote C is £4,930.86

NOTED: Notice Board Quote A is £3,576.70. Quote B £4,237

RESOLVED: Council agreed to accept Fencing quote C (£4,930.86) and Notice Boards quote A (3,576.70) at a total cost of £8,507.56

14. Village Hall Working Group

To discuss the formation of a Village Hall Working Group which will explore funding opportunities and identify projects.

NOTED: Councillor Orrill has reviewed health and safety at the Village Hall and identified several issues, including:

- The emergency lights are wired in to the mains with no battery backup.
- The wrong Fire Safety book is being used.

NOTED: Resident correspondence has been received, to ask whether the public toilets could be re-opened.

NOTED: Council will create a working group, where resident participation will be very welcome. The remit of the group will be to investigate ongoing issues, suggest solutions and raise ideas for improving the Village Hall as a facility. The group will also look at funding opportunities.

NOTED: Councillor Orrill volunteered to lead the working group and it was suggested an inaugural meeting of those people who have already expressed an interest, take place on Wed 10th April at 7pm in the Village Hall.

15. Best Kept Village Competition

To consider a proposal to enter the Best Kept Village competition.

RESOLVED: Council agreed to enter the Best Kept Village Competition at an approximate cost of £40. Councillor Willerton to take the lead.

16. Next Meeting Date

- a) To note the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 13th May**
- b) The Annual Parish Meeting will commence at 6pm. All Parish Groups are invited to attend and talk about their activities since the last meeting in 2023.**
- c) The Annual Parish Council Meeting will commence at 7pm.**

NOTED: Councillor Gale will contact local community groups, organisations and businesses to invite them to participate in the Annual Parish Meeting.