**MINUTES OF THEYDON MOUNT PARISH COUNCIL OGM - HELD AT MOUNT FARM CONFERENCE VENUE CM16 7PX ON MONDAY 18 DECEMBER 2023.**

1. **In Attendance:**

Peter Connell (Chair), Hilliard Brewitt, Heather Brady and Rod Angood (Clerk)

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Keith Farrow and Patrick Bamford due to illness.

1. **Declarations of Interest:**

None

1. **Minutes of the last OGM:**

Were ratified – Action - RA to post to web site and notice board.

1. **Actions From Last OGM**

Gateway Signs– RA reported that Applications for Gateway Signs and Bulb Planting Licences sent on 16 October 2023 had been subsequently returned with extensive corrections commentary – Action - RA to prepare second submission. RA to report progress to next OGM.

***Post Meeting Note*** – Revised gateways submission was completed and mailed to Olive Porter – TMPC awaits any feedback.

1. **Business**

**6.1 Finger posts, Gateway Signs and footpath signposts**

**6.1.1** Gateway Signs – RA provided an update on his progress to prepare a revised set of applications to Essex Highways following Olive Porter’s responses to the original submission. He expected the revised submission to be sent to Ms Porter after Christmas. TMPC offered its full support to get the new submission concluded.

**6.1.2** Finger Posts - HB reported that all Finger Posts were in place but that the one at the bottom of Banks Lane had developed a “lean” following an earlier RTA. HB noted that although not in our parish, notification had been sent to the Forest Rangers who had agreed to reset it to the vertical.

RA reported that having checked with the insurer, the Finger Posts and Gateway signs would be insured under existing (furniture) clauses in the insurance schedule.

**6.2 Local Highways**

**6.2.2 Collecting and Collating evidence of RTA’s - ALL**

PC reported that a comprehensive dossier of RTA’s had be compiled by KF and sent to Councillor McIvor. Councillor McIvor’s response had lacked sufficient promise of positive action on our behalf. HB agreed to discuss the way forward with Councillor McIvor. It was noted that a parishioner had expressed the desire to organise a lobbying effort to Alex Burghart to intensify the need for positive action. It was agreed that TMPC would provide the first lobbying letter to Alex Burghart with the aim of intensifying the pressure for a resolution which could be followed up in the new year by the parishioner in question organising, collecting, collating and transmitting such lobbying letters to Alex Burghart. PC agreed to initiate this activity by writing to Alex Burghart and copying that communication to Councillor McIvor.

1. **Parish Event(s) 2024**

**7.1** Litter Pick 14th January 2024 – HB confirmed the date and arrangements made.

**7.2** TMPC determined that there should be a Summer event for parishioners. A Summer Bar-B-Que and Beer Festival was proposed and agreed. HB offered his field in which to stage the event. RA would be tasked to organise Portaloos for the date (yet to be determined) and that the next OGM should include a section on more substantial planning and tasking for the event.

**8**. **Finance**

* **Approval of any invoices/payments due** – Held over due to PB’s absence through illness.
* **Budget Update** – Held over due to PB’s absence through illness.
* **Precept – 2024 –** RA reported that he had received the documentation from EFDC relating to our requirements for the next financial year and had passed these to PB.
* TMPC then discussed what level of Precept should be sought to cover the coming year**.** An appropriate figure was agreed and PB agreed to prepare the Precept submission, get it countersigned and submitted.
* ***Post Meeting Note*** – Precept submitted and acknowledged by EFDC

TMPC suggested that PB be encouraged to prepare:

* Brief statement of accounts showing expenditure and income
* Statement of outstanding/unpaid bills
* Confirmation or otherwise that refuse collection of Litter bin by telephone box had been paid for.

1. **Communications**

PC updated TMPC on progress made in respect of previously discussed water leaks in the parish. He added that Alex Burghart had been helpful but that Affinity Water had replied that following extensive testing of the main along the length of Mount Road no water leak associated with their supply infrastructure.

HB reported that Affinity water testers had been observed along Mount End and discussion turned to whether Affinity Water had got the location of our reported leaks wrong.

**Parish Notice Board** – RA had reported that the location of the notice board was dangerous given the minimal length and breadth of the adjacent layby and that the notice board surface was so hard that it was almost impossible to pin notices to it.

TMPC discussed the options and determined that a new board should be acquired boasting adequate weather protection and surface covering (Glass /Perspex) and that a case should be made to the local Highways panel for a deepening and lengthening of the adjacent layby. It was noted that the Post Office also use to layby to collect mail from the postbox at the location.

RA provided a synopsis of his analysis of the current communications channels, their deployment, purposes and usefulness. Each of two strands (communication with our parishioners and communication amongst TMPC members) had been assessed.

RA’s perspective was that current methods for communicating with parishioners were something of a mixed bag, and thus inefficient and wasteful of valuable human resource time in an age of digital communications ubiquity.

The lively discussion that ensued resulted in there being little favour for RA’s expressed perspectives and TMPC determined to continue with current practices.

RA then presented a summation of earlier discussions about communications amongst TMPC members and the debate concluded that present practices should remain unchanged.

TMPC approved the suggestion that there should be:

* + - * 2 x Newsletters per year
      * Additional news communications to utilise available and suitable electronic channels.
      * A parish wide collection iniatiative to gather all email addresses from willing residents to support electronic communications by dividing up electoral addresses amongst councillors for engagement with parishioners.

1. **District/County Councillor Report**

HB briefly reported on the status of major development plans across the district. Rising construction costs and falling house prices have generated a signific gap in the financial assessment.

1. **Correspondence**

RA noted that there had been no reportable correspondence but was pleased to announce that TMPC had been informed of funding success for its proposal to refurbish the telephone box.

1. **Planning**

PC noted that all Planning Application notices (PAN’s) established a 30 day response period following date of publication of the PAN. He argued that unless all councillors submitted their assessments of each PAN then he felt exposed in preparing a response on behalf of TMPC.

He thus suggested that a more systematic approach to each PAN should be adopted - engaging each councillor in a duty of response and assessment - that was submitted in a timely fashion thus allowing him to compile a coherent and truly representative response to EFDC.

1. **Clerk Matters and Questions**

None

1. **DONM’s** – next meeting date was set to be 19th February 2024.

TMPC agreed that the follow on dates suggested by Clerk for the remainder of 2024 be circulated as an item in the minutes and discussed at the next OGM

Those dates were:

Monday 19th February 2024

Monday 15 April 2024 – TMPC AGM & ANNULA PARISH MEETING - (HTB in US)

Monday 10 June 2024

Monday 12 August 2024 – RA in Spain

Monday 14 October 2024

Monday 16 December 2024.

**Signed A black rope in the shape of a heart

Description automatically generatedPeter Connell Chair of TMPC Dated 24/01/2024**