

Thornley with Wheatley Parish Council

DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 13 May 2024 commencing at 7 pm in Thornley School

Present:

Mr M Hayhurst (Chairman)

Mrs C Ansbro (Clerk)

Mrs G Airey (Responsible Financial Officer)

Mr P Hallett

Mr H Roper

County Councillor R Swarbrick

Councillor R Ray

Councillor K Spencer

32 Members of the Public (MOPs)

The Chairman introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the Thornley with Wheatley Annual Parish Meeting. The Chairman explained that items submitted to the PC prior to the Parish meeting were outlined at item 4 on the Agenda. Cllr Roper would read a statement which would address most of the issues that had been raised. Questions already put in writing would then be run through, followed by a questions and answer session. If a question had not been covered MOPs would be invited to raise their question for discussion.

Parish 24.1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

Parish 24.2 Minutes of the Parish Meeting held in May 2023

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Parish 24.3 Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman read his Annual Report as follows

"After moving into Longridge to enjoy a more sedate lifestyle our May meeting in 2023 saw the retirement of a very long serving Parish Council member Mrs Jean Faraday. Jean had served on the Parish Council and been the Clerk for many years.

Ribble Valley Parish Council elections were held in May 2023 and the following Councillors for Thornley with Wheatley were re-elected, myself, Mrs Gill Airey, Mr Peter Hallett and Mrs Carol Ansbro. Mr Harry Roper was newly appointed as a Parish Councillor. Harry has lived in Thornley all his life and now runs the family farm in the Parish. We welcomed Harry to the Parish Council and I am sure he will have all the residents aspirations in mind when attending PC meetings.

After mourning the death of his Mother, Queen Elizabeth II, the country enjoyed the coronation of King Charles III on Saturday 6th May.

At our November meeting we welcomed two Members of the Public who were very keen to set up a local Neighbourhood Watch Group. Maybe setting up a community Whats App Group so that information could be distributed quickly to all participants. It was discussed in detail and the Parish Council members all thought it was a good idea. The PC are happy to support and help out with the scheme although it would not be administering it. The two Members of the Public said they were happy to do more research and look into putting the scheme in action.

Early 2024 Lancashire County Council closed the Chipping Road in between Ferrari's Restaurant and Four Acre Lane for a week to repair the culvert under the road that has caused the road to flood over the last few years. The Parish Council has reported this problem on several occasions and thankfully the problem now seems to be resolved.

At our February 2024 meeting two representatives from Thornley Community Space came to update us on their progress with the refurbishment of Thornley School. They talked about the work they intend to do in the future but that it was hard trying to raise the funds. Subsequently a PC Working Group was arranged to revisit what work had been undertaken at the School and to consider what support we can give TCS in the year ahead to continue to make improvements. Recommendations from the Working Group will be made to the Parish Council meeting in May 2024.”

Parish 24.4 Summary of Items submitted for discussion prior to the Parish Meeting

- a) Letter received from a member of the public (MOP) regarding activity around the old quarry area on Four Acre Lane. The letter quotes extracts from an open letter posted on the Council's website which talks about “the World is facing a climate and ecological emergency; we see its impact in our own Ribble Valley”. The writer has misunderstood who produced the open letter. Ribble Valley Parish Councils were asked to bring this letter to public attention on behalf of the Ribble Valley Climate Action Network. This has been made clearer now on the PC's website. Other issues raised by the MOP include
 - Disappearance of bridleway, public footpath and Quiet Lane signs, could the PC expedite replacement?
 - Does the landowner have permission to fell trees? Are there any tree protection orders?
- b) Email re Japanese Knotweed on Four Acre Lane
 - What's the PC's appraisal of the situation in regard to possible spread of knotweed and methods used to eradicate it?
 - What representation has the PC made to landowners and statutory bodies?
- c) Email regarding felling of trees on Four Acre Lane
 - The felling of trees on Four Acre Lane has left significantly fewer numbers of trees what steps has the PC taken to ensure the flora and fauna have been protected?

- d) Email regarding “unlicensed dumping of waste on Four Acre Lane,...“the felling of trees at Bluestone Wood and consequent impact, including on a long-standing badger set and bluebell woods, as well as damage caused by heavy goods vehicles to local roads”.
 - What powers does the Parish Council have, what representations has it made and what plans does it have with regards to these issues?
- e) Email regarding traffic issues
 - Speed of cars on Chipping Road
 - No signage regarding sharp bend before the School
 - Building on discussion at a previous PC meeting could the PC explore the Highways Team completing a safety audit assessing the speed in the area?
 - Does the PC know more about the definition of Quiet Lanes?

Cllr Roper read out his statement to address issues raised in writing, as follows:

“It’s been brought to my attention that a number of items raised for discussion for tonight’s meeting fall under the holding of Lyme House Farm. I want to take this opportunity to assure all residents of Thornley that I’m working with the relevant Authorities in a positive manner on all matters. All wildlife is always respected and protected in accordance with guidance and the Law. Weeds and species are monitored and treated at the appropriate time. We have a felling license in place and a Woodland Management Plan with a re-stocking schedule. At the present time I am unable to comment further”.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Roper for providing responses to the majority of issues that had been raised in writing, prior to the meeting. The summary of issues raised was further reviewed to address any outstanding items.

The letter from a Member of the Public who had indicated he was a resident of Chipping referred to the disappearance of Bridleway, Footpath and Quiet Lane signs. As the writer had not provided any contact details it had not been possible to clarify where the signs had disappeared from but it was confirmed that a Bridleway and Footpath sign were in place off Four Acre Lane. The writing/graphics on the Quiet Lane signs on Hope Lane had disappeared over time this had now been reported to Highways Authority for investigation. Cllr Swarbrick encouraged Residents to use the Love Clean Streets Report It on-line reporting system for a range of issues including damaged road signs, potholes and gritting as a means of raising awareness of issues that need Highways attention.

Three MOPs raised further queries regarding the “dumping of waste” in a quarry area on Four Acre Lane. This had ceased currently whilst Cllr Roper was working with the relevant Authorities to achieve a positive outcome.

A MOP asked for further clarification regarding the management of Knotweed. The Clerk explained that Knotweed was not a notifiable plant. Recommendation regarding controlling the weed was to treat it systemically with an appropriate product after flowering generally late Summer/early Autumn for the best results. Cllr Roper had voluntarily agreed to do this and to continue to monitor the situation.

A number of MOPs expressed concern regarding the sudden closure of a section of Chipping Road earlier in the year during heavy snowfall and diversion routes not being gritted resulting in dangerous driving conditions. Cllr Swarbrick

apologised and acknowledged that there had been a problem with prioritising gritting routes and he would be attending a meeting shortly to discuss the “rights and wrongs” for the future. 3 MOPs referred to requests for the provision of Grit Bins. Cllr Swarbrick explained that the Authority received many such requests but that he would consider any request forwarded to him directly.

A MOP explained that he had taken part in the Open Gardens scheme last year and had donated funds to Thornley Community Space (TCS) for renovation of the School. He was intending to do the same this year. The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council, which only had a small precept, did support TCS when funds allowed and he was sure the Charity would be very grateful for any donations it received.

A MOP raised her concern regarding the impact from felling of trees on flora and fauna. The Chairman confirmed that the harvesting of trees was part of a Woodland Management Plan and there would be a replanting scheme of native trees in the future. It was anticipated that woodland plants would re-establish over time.

Discussion followed on issues of road safety on Chipping Road. The Clerk explained that the Department of Transport definition of Quiet Lanes was *“Quiet Lanes are minor rural roads or networks of minor rural roads appropriate for shared use by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and other vehicles. It is recommended that designated Quiet Lanes should have no more than about 1000 motor vehicles per day. Vehicle speeds should be kept to levels appropriate to the mix of uses and activities expected to take place, usually with the 85th percentile speed below 35 mph”*.

Residents did have concerns about the speed of traffic on Chipping Road. It was, therefore, proposed that enquiries be made about the possibility of a traffic safety audit being undertaken with a suggestion about signage to indicate the sharp bend near Thornley School. This would be further discussed at the following Parish Council meeting to determine the way forward.

Councillors and Members of the Public were thanked for their attendance and participation and the meeting closed at 7.40 pm

Parish 24.5 Date and Time of Next Meeting - The next Parish Meeting would be scheduled for May 2025.

Signed

Date