

# Thurlestone Parish Council

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## Minutes of the Meeting of Thurlestone Parish Council held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 7.30pm in the Thurlestone Parish Hall

**Present:** Councillors Rhymes (Chair), Mitchelmore, Hurrell, Munn, Marshall and Goddard

**Apologies:** Councillor Zaffiro

**In Attendance:** Helen Nathanson (Parish Clerk), County Councillor Gilbert, District Councillors Pearce and Wright, 34 members of the public

1. To receive apologies.

Councillor Zaffiro gave her apologies and these were accepted.

2. To receive any amendments necessary to Members' Registers of Interests.

There were no amendments.

3. To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018. Minutes are available at [www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk](http://www.thurlestoneparish.co.uk)

The Minutes were approved and signed.

4. To consider any matters arising from the Minutes.

The following matters arose:

No reply has yet been received by the local police about the problems with school parking, so the Clerk will pursue this.

The SHDC Inspection Report on the school field has not yet been supplied.

5. To discuss the provision of community-led housing within the Parish, an initiative which is supported in the Neighbourhood Plan. This was an initial discussion and Rob Ellis, SHDC, attended to speak to councillors and members of the public about what support and guidance is available from SHDC.

The meeting was adjourned to allow Rob Ellis, SHDC, to speak to the meeting and to allow members of the public to ask questions. The Chairman introduced the session with the following statement:

“Community led Housing is an initiative which helps local groups to create new and affordable homes to buy and/or rent. These are homes built to meet clearly identified local housing needs.

In Thurlestone Parish, we have supported the initiative in our Neighbourhood Plan so as to keep local working people in the area and secure the sustainable future of the parish.

The Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group has started looking into the initiative (on behalf of the PC) and has established that there are three possible sites where landowners are prepared to consider making land available.

These are at North Upton, East Buckland and West Buckland, opposite the Old Chapel. Of the three sites, we understand that SHDC planners favour the West Buckland site owned by the Bantham Estate.

Aside from its planning role, SHDC plays a vital role in facilitating these projects as it has a Community Housing Fund of nearly £2m available for areas like ours, which have high numbers of second homes and where house prices are beyond the reach of local working people.

We have therefore invited Rob Ellis, the Community Housing Lead Officer at SHDC, to talk to us about the initiative and find out exactly what help and support SHDC can provide.”

Rob Ellis then spoke and covered the following points:

Housing is an increasingly challenging problem for people on local incomes. SHDC aims to assist in addressing this through community housing programmes. This means that communities decide what housing is needed for their

community and are then very involved in the design of that housing and its allocation. It is built for the community by the community and is not a case of people from outside the area coming in to occupy the houses.

SHDC is presently supporting well-organised neighbourhood groups which are progressing with their own agendas and provides soft support in the form of guidance and limited financial support. They are also working as an enabler with other communities and in this case there are benefits of financial assistance and a standardised approach which make the developments more cost effective and efficient.

The starting point with any community housing scheme is demonstrating the need. A housing needs survey was undertaken a couple of years ago and it identified 8 families in need of housing in Thurlestone Parish. Help to Buy South West deals with 'Buy at discount' housing and Devon Home Choice deals with rented. As any scheme develops and more people become aware of it and therefore interested, this can be adjusted.

In Thurlestone, development land is very expensive so community housing would be on exception sites that would not normally be allowed planning permission. These sites must be suitably sustainable locations and need cheaper land values.

The build design and quality is very important and SHDC is working carefully on this in other schemes in terms of design and materials used.

SHDC can use grant money and in some situations can cross subsidise the affordable housing with open market units which can bring the cost of the development down. The economics have to work: this is not a profit-making exercise – it is to help communities provide housing for their local people and deliver what the community wants.

The houses must be affordable in perpetuity and a legal S106 agreement is put in place to prevent someone buying a house at a discount and then selling it on the open market.

SHDC is keen to collaborate, if that is what the community wants. There are other schemes in progress across the South Hams, so if Thurlestone doesn't want to go any further, then SHDC will concentrate its efforts elsewhere.

Members of the public then asked the following questions:

*Is there a guarantee that any open market homes will not be second homes?* Yes - there is a principal residence requirement in the NP.

*How far advanced is SHDC's plan in Thurlestone because there is a lot of speculation and it sounds as though some things have already been decided?* Informal discussions have taken place about the concept of a community housing scheme and whether it is something that Thurlestone wants. Initial enquiries have been made about the land but no detailed discussions yet.

*Is the preferred location West Buckland?* There were 3 possible sites looked at by the planning team at SHDC and the feedback was that West Buckland site was preferred because of its sustainable location, transport and access.

*Could you assure us that the Parish Council will be involved in any discussions as SHDC seems to be partly down the road already and this is the first time the PC has been involved?* Yes – Rob explained that he understands that there is a core group of people from the NP Advisory Group and that this needs to expand to ensure that there is a coordinated body of people and a line of communication which draws together the different interests of the community.

*Should the site not go to public consultation?* No - it is important for opinions to be heard but the final decision is a professional one.

*Has SHDC met with the Bantham Estate and is it true that the estate would want to put open market housing on any site it brings forward?* Yes, SHDC has had one meeting with the Estate. SHDC has 3 options to encourage landowners to bring forward suitable land: 1) pay the landowner a nominal sum for the land; 2) give the landowner development plots and 3) give the landowner development plots plus a contribution towards building a property.

*Have there been any discussions with the landowners of the other 2 sites?* No.

*Has SHDC taken into consideration the infrastructure in West Buckland once these houses are built ie more cars in a very small lane that is already becoming over-subscribed with cars?* The review was undertaken by SHDC planners but the Highways authority would be consulted before any permission is given.

*Are the plots of any proposed development within the defined boundary of West Buckland?* No, they are all outside and that is the nature of exception sites because otherwise they would be able to command a significant land value.

*Can the open market houses be built in a different location from the community housing?* No

*At what point is an option agreement formalised?* This happens at a stage where there is sufficient clarity that a scheme is coming forward but ahead of too much money being spent on the scheme.

*What is an Option Agreement?* This allows a developer to identify a parcel of land and gives them the right to purchase that land on planning permission being granted, so the full value does not have to be found at the outset. There are certain requirements to meet during this process such as that the developer must get planning permission within a defined period.

*What are the criteria for choosing who gets the housing that has been built?* There would be a nomination group set up within the Parish and the community will decide as part of the process. Those chosen are likely to include people who either: currently live in the Parish; work in the Parish; or who have close family members living in the Parish but have had to move elsewhere because of the cost of housing.

*Why has SHDC only had discussions about the West Buckland site when South Milton is closer to facilities and a road and there have been no discussions with landowners?* SHDC is trying to find a suitable site which is close to the school and suitable for local people.

*What is the difference between community led housing and the Village Housing Initiative (VHI)?*

The VHI is guidance and is not enshrined in current SHDC planning policy but will become more linked through the JLP process. The project in question for Thurlestone is community led housing and not a VHI.

*How can you guarantee that the value of the land on which the houses are built will remain suppressed in the future?*

The land value is not an issue beyond initial purchase but after that the price of the house is suppressed in the following way: if a 3-bed house in the scheme costs £160k and the equivalent house on the open market in the Parish costs £350-400k then the price is set at that % of the market value. If the owner then has to move, they must sell to local people and the buyer will purchase it at the same % of market value – so if it has increased in value to £200k this is because it is the same proportion below market rate. In Thurlestone the differential between community housing and values on the open market is much bigger than in other areas. Anyone buying the property must have a mortgage and there are an increasing number of lenders who will lend on community houses. If when a unit is resold there is no interest within the Parish, then it must be offered first to neighbouring parishes and then district wide. The S106 agreement would ensure that they cannot be second homes.

*Can a landowner purchase one of the properties for an employee?* No – this contravenes the principal residence requirement.

The Chairman ended the discussion and asked how we now move forward on this. Rob assured the Parish Council that no plans would be made without its involvement. He explained that it will be entirely down to the Parish to decide whether or not it wants to go ahead now or pause for a few years and he reiterated that this is a community scheme. He also said that the Parish could identify other possible sites. It was agreed that the process must be progressed in a transparent way and that a follow-up public meeting would be arranged for late January to talk about this in more detail.

**6. To receive a report from County Councillor Rufus Gilbert.**

A discussion was had about the issue of parking around the school at pick up/drop off times and Councillor Gilbert will speak to the school governors to ask for action from them to improve this.

**7. To receive reports from District Councillors Judy Pearce and Simon Wright.**

Councillor Pearce gave the following updates:

The SHDC budget process has started and there is a £660k deficit to close before the end of Jan. She is confident that this will be achieved but next year will be very difficult when the same reduction will need to be made again.

A new Council Tax relief grant policy is being finalised which will place households in bands, rather than assessing each claim on a case by case basis. There will be some winners and some losers in this but overall she considers it to be a fair system.

There is now running a consultation on the JLP which will be the final one.

SHDC and West Devon have started a private lettings agent – Seamoor Lettings – aimed at people who would find it difficult to have a let through an ordinary estate agent. The Council will help people who need their first tenancy to get them on the ladder. There is a shortage of affordable housing so this is a way of helping local people.

Evidence from around the country shows that high streets are declining. The South Hams is in a better situation than other areas but the situation is fragile – there is high occupancy at the moment but this can change quickly. The reduction in business rates will help but SHDC is looking at other ways to help High Streets remain vibrant.

There has recently been a successful prosecution for removal of trees without permission. The couple involved pleaded guilty and got a maximum fine of £2k each.

8. The following planning applications were discussed:

3040/18/HHO 1 Avonside, Bantham, TQ7 3AR  
Householder application for single storey rear extension to dwelling

Thurlestone PC supports this application.

The relevant NP policies are as follows:

Policy TP7.2 (i) Extensions This policy supports extensions provided they meet the requirements of Policy TP1 and are subordinate in scale and form to the existing dwelling. This is a single storey extension to the rear of the property (adjacent to the Bantham road) and is subordinate in scale and form to the existing dwelling. The extension will provide for a new kitchen.

Policy TP1.1 Residential amenity So far as we are aware, the proposed extension does not have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties – such as, loss of privacy or overlooking, overbearing or dominant impact, loss of daylight or sunlight, noise or disturbance, odours or fumes.

Policy TP1.2 Design In terms of its style, scale and character, the only concern that has been raised is its proximity to the Bantham road.

Policy TP1.7 Traffic and Transport There is adequate parking on site.

3203/18/FUL Chucka Cheese Farm, Bantham, TQ7 3AD  
Erection of steel framed shed 27.5m by 12.2m, 6m high for storing farm machinery

Thurlestone PC supports this application.

The relevant NP policies are as follows:

Policy TP14 Storage Space Policy TP14 supports proposals for the development of more storage space for local business or commercial use provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy TP1. The site is part of a cluster of buildings which include a new agricultural barn granted planning permission in 2008, and another barn granted permission for change of use for the storage of boats in 2004.

Policy TP1.5 Natural Environment Proposals should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and this is relevant given that this shed will be erected in the open countryside. It is, however, located towards the rear of a cluster of such buildings. It is not visible from the Bantham road because the land falls away, nor is it likely to be visible from the road leading out of Thurlestone, as it is tucked away behind the other existing buildings.

3120/18/HHO Buckland Lodge, Road to Pear Tree Cottage, West Buckland, TQ7 3AH  
Householder application for proposed alterations and extensions to existing dwelling

Thurlestone PC supports this application subject to production of a construction management plan: the lane and area surrounding the property is very narrow and constricted and this may cause problems.

This application does not take into account the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan (page 3 of the Design & Access Statement). The relevant NP policies are as follows:

Policy TP7.2 (i) Extensions This policy supports extensions provided they meet the requirements of Policy TP1 and are subordinate in scale and form to the existing dwelling. There is no plan to show that the proposed extensions are subordinate, but having compared the existing and proposed drawings, the overall increase in the footprint of the ground floor appears to be negligible (due to the demolition of the conservatory, bedroom 3 and garage on the northern elevation). However, the accommodation on the first floor has more than doubled. The existing dwelling has 2 bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor, the proposed dwelling has 4 bedrooms (3 en-suite), a bathroom and 2 further rooms (one containing bunks/cot and another marked as “room with a view”). We are satisfied that they are subordinate overall, but comparative drawings would have been helpful.

Policy TP1.1 Residential amenity. The extended dwelling will be more prominent than the existing dwelling due to the first floor extension, which will substantially change the appearance of the dwelling. However, it is unlikely the

proposed alterations and extensions to this dwelling will have an unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity, given the size of the plot, the position of the dwelling on the plot/distance from neighbouring properties, and substantial landscape screening.

Policy TP1.2 Design This policy requires proposals to be locally distinctive, reflecting the style, scale and character proportionate and appropriate to the coastal and rural location of the parish within the AONB. Natural building materials are encouraged. There is some debate about cladding (natural timber is encouraged) but there are other properties within West Buckland (and the parish as a whole) which have this type of cladding. The existing building is not attractive and, aesthetically, the proposal may be regarded as a welcome improvement. This is all the more important given that the site is on the edge of the West Buckland Conservation Area and clearly visible from Footpath 5. Policy TP.6 Historic Environment Although the property is on the edge of the West Buckland Conservation Area, it is barely visible from the lane and its Grade 2 listed buildings, being tucked away behind Broadacre, which has had a similar renovation.

9. To note that a decision is still awaited on planning application 1715/18/FUL The Downs, Thurlestone. The determination date was 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

This was noted and the PC will write to SHDC to enquire.

10. To decide the future of the Thurlestone public toilets.

It was agreed to inform SHDC that the PC will take on the running of the toilets. This will be subject to an in-house survey by SHDC (they are not prepared to pay for an independent survey).

Jack has spoken with the Golf Club. They do not want the toilets to close and have offered to help with the cleaning and with maintenance of the immediate outside area. The roof of the adjoining building needs further discussion and the survey should help to identify any problems.

In the meantime, the Clerk was asked to write to the Golf Club about making safe the adjoining building to ensure people cannot enter.

11. To receive updates about the following Parish matters: Parish Hall; Trees; and Highways.

The Clerk was asked to contact the school to ask to have the trees behind Glebe Field houses reduced in height.

A request was made for a supply of grit in Bantham.

The potholes in Glebe Field have worsened substantially and the Clerk was asked to contact Highways. The works to the kerb/wall in West Buckland are still not completed.

12. To discuss the provision of a new dog litter bin in West Buckland.

This item was moved to the December meeting.

13. To note the accounts to date 30/09/18 with a closing balance of £17,642.77 and to approve payment of the following invoices:

Sue Crowther NP Costs	NP Assets Map production	£75
	Printing Costs and Stationery	£99.10
Parish Clerk:	Salary 27/08/18 – 4/11/18	£707
	Stationery	£29.95
	Mileage	£142.20
	DALC Conference	£25
Thurlestone Parish Hall	Meeting Room Hire	£35
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,113.25</b>

The accounts were noted and the payments above were approved to a total of £1,113.25. It was noted that the NP payments are still covered by grant funding.

**14.** To note that an application has been submitted by the NPAG on behalf of the Parish Council to request that the garage site in Thurlestone be listed as an Asset of Community Value.

This was noted.

**15.** To note that a consultation is now taking place on the Main Modifications to the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. The consultation runs from 22<sup>nd</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018.

This was noted.

**16.** To note that there will be a Town and Parish Council Event on Monday, 10 December 2018 at 6.30pm in Follaton House, Totnes. The agenda will include: Devon County Council Budget 2019/20 Update; South Hams District Council Updates on Budget 2019/20, Commercial Property Strategy, Public Conveniences – Future Service Proposals and Joint Local Plan Progress.

This was noted.

**17.** To note the date of the next Council Meeting on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 at 7.30pm.

This was noted and the meeting closed at 9.28pm.

Councillor Jack Rhymes  
Chairman