

# Thurcaston & Cropston Parish Council

Memorial Hall Anstey Lane Thurcaston Leicester LE7 7JA  
Telephone 0116 2367626 Email clerk@thurcastonandcropston.org.uk

Parish Clerk: Mrs. M. Lane

## Minutes of annual meeting of electorate on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 6.15pm

- 1. Chairman's Welcome – Chairman welcomed 2 members of the public.**
- 2. To confirm the minutes of Parish Meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 Minutes confirmed as correct.**
- 3. Chairman/Borough Councillor Report.**

Chairman's Report and Borough Councillor's Report – Annual Parish Meeting of electorate Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 6.15pm

It has been another challenging year within the parish and borough with the ongoing war in Ukraine, the problems in Gaza, the cost of living crisis, high inflation and high energy costs.

All of these factors have added to increasing pressures on council budgets and the many issues faced by not only the council but by all the residents of the borough. The council has set out to do everything it can to support residents whilst balancing the books and maintaining current services.

The budget was recently approved by council and owing to higher interest rates on invested monies and the ability to use business rates, pool income, the council finds itself in a stronger financial position than was expected, whilst many councils are struggling financially, it is good to see that Charnwood will be able to budget with a limited use of reserves that have been built up over many years of shrewd fiscal management.

There are potential risks on the horizon, particularly with the housing benefits subsidy and we wait to see what changes can be made to assist the general fund through additional income or reduction in expenditure.

In respect of the local plan, the council have received a letter from the independent inspectors setting out the next steps, we will move forward to consultation on the main modifications that are required to make the local plan sound. It is considered that the council will be looking to adopt the local plan towards the end of 2024.

It is worth noting that this year, Charnwood will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The borough was created in 1972. To celebrate its golden anniversary, Charnwood will be highlighting everything that is great about the borough including its landmarks, open spaces, businesses and its residents.

And finally, I would like to personally thank the residents of the Parish and borough for their support over the past year.

Cllr. Mark Charles

- 4. Police Report.**

### 01/04/2023 – 01/04/2024 Crime Figures:

	Thurcaston	Cropston	
Vehicle Crime	3	4	
Theft	8	1	
Burglaries	6	5	
Criminal Damage	4	2	

This report does not include other crimes such as domestic incidents, violence and public order offences that have been investigated by Leicestershire Police in the last 12 months. Further information on these reports can be found on the Police.uk website.

## What have the beat team been up to the last 12 months?

- Held monthly beat surgeries in Thurcaston and Cropston. Engaging with members of the public to discuss their neighbourhood concerns.
- Attended village events, such as the Christmas fair at the King Richard Primary School.
- Regularly patrolling Thurcaston/Cropston and the surrounding villages and “hot spot areas”.
- Working with partnership agencies and developing intelligence to help tackle ASB and crime in Thurcaston/Cropston.
- Regular Speed Operations

This is just a selection of what the beat team have been doing. The beat team also cover surrounding villages and we assist with operational demand across Charnwood.

### Upcoming Beat Surgery:

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April between 1600 – 1700 – Cropston (Station Road, near to Bradgate Road junction)

## 5 Memorial Hall Charitable Trust Report.

Thurcaston and Cropston Parish Councillors make up the group which manages the Thurcaston Memorial Hall on behalf of the Memorial Hall Trust. The group meets three monthly to deal with all matters related to the Hall. Parishioners will have noticed a number of changes to the Hall during the past two years. The building is now regularly cleaned and the chairs and curtains have a fresher appearance. The Latimer Players made good use of a Parish Council grant, to purchase and install a new back-curtain for use at their performances. The old film projector, which used to be at the rear of the main hall, has been replaced by a new, up-to-date model which has been suspended from the proscenium arch in front of the stage. As a result, regular Friday-night film goers have commented on the improvement in picture quality.

Redecoration of the Hall's interior began in 2023, when the walls of the main hall and stage areas were painted in white, whilst all doors, skirting boards, other woodwork, and window frames were painted in mid-grey. This made the Hall appear to be much brighter and complemented the red, window and stage, curtains. The second part of this process, which involves repainting inside the front entrance, the gents' and ladies' toilets, the meeting room behind the stage, and the lobby and toilet for visitors with disabilities, will be completed in the first half of 2024.

In the interests of efficiency (and to provide even better lighting), main hall ceiling lights are now LEDs. Parishioners may also have observed, that the damaged coloured lights on the gable, above the front entrance, have been replaced, giving the Hall a more welcoming appearance. To the right of the gable, the leaking flat roof has been repaired, opening the way for the water-damaged floor, in the lobby, by the accessible toilet, to be repaired in the near future.

A building which is 100 years old is bound to need constant care and attention. The responsibility of the Memorial Hall Trust is to ensure that this happens. Rising energy and staffing costs have meant that the Trust has had to seek additional income to cover recent increases. It seems likely that similar annual increases in hire costs will be necessary into the future. It is, however, important to note that these booking fees are still favourable, when compared with similar local venues. Needless to say, the Trustees are constantly on the lookout for potential new users.

The Hall has a number of regular users: The Dance Academy; the Thurcaston and Cropston Gardening Club; the Thurcaston and Cropston Local History Society; the Friday Film Group; the Multiple Sclerosis Support Group; the Parish Council; the Neighbourhood Development Plan Group; and the very longstanding and well-regarded, Latimer Players Amateur Dramatic Group. In addition, local individuals and groups book the Hall on a one-off basis, often for parties or other events, for which use of the kitchen facilities is usually much appreciated.

In an average week, occupancy of the main hall is approximately 26%. However, the Back Meeting Room is very under-used and efforts are now being considered to promote it more widely in order to increase its letting income in the next year.

A final, and very significant recent addition to the Hall is a group of six black and white sketches by well-known local artist, Bert Manton. The originals for these were generously donated by his daughter, long-term parishioner Audrey Geary. Local printer Phil Highton printed enlarged copies of the pictures on canvas and, with the addition of grey frames, they now add lots of interest to the walls of the Hall. Each drawing is of a local Thurcaston or Cropston historical landmark and they have attracted lots of interest from Hall users. Audrey, now aged 90, joined a recent Parish Council meeting to receive the Chair's thanks, to view her dad's artwork in all its splendour and to receive a card and flowers for her co-operation and generosity.

Councillor Sylvia Cole

## 6. Opens Spaces Committee Report.

## **Overview**

The Open Spaces Committee was set up in April 2021 to focus on how the immediate environment of our Parish can be improved for both residents and wildlife alike. Today, the Committee comprises four Councillors who contribute ideas and practical help to various projects, including Sandham Bridge/Mill Race Bridge, on the Rothley Brook between Thurcaston and Cropston, Jubilee Park off Latimer Road, Cropston and a Wildflower Verge near at the junction of Latimer Road and Leicester Road, Cropston.

The Committee is regularly coming up with new ideas and volunteers are always welcome to get in touch to help out with tasks such as tree planting, pond clearance, wildflower meadow maintenance and wildlife surveys, to name but a few.

### **Sandham Bridge / Mill Race Bridge Area**

This area has recently come into Thurcaston and Cropston Parish Council ownership. One of the first tasks has been the professional restoration of Sandham Bridge which dates back to medieval times and was badly in need of re-pointing. This work was duly completed, using traditional lime mortar, in-keeping with the original structure.

The surrounding area, including Mill Race Bridge was weeded and a narrow margin on either side of the footpath was strimmed to keep the area tidy, but also to protect as much of the plant and insect life as possible.

A portion of the Mill Race Pond was also cleared of Irises and rushes to provide clear water for frogs, newts and other aquatic organisms to thrive.

A self-setting willow tree in the pond has been earmarked for cutting back/removal to further enhance the amount of water available.

Bug hotels have been created in a nearby hedge to encourage bees and other insects.

An old Ash tree that fell next to Sandham Bridge in a recent storm was made safe for public access across bridge. The remainder of tree trunk does not appear to be causing any harm to the bridge but will be removed once the current high-water levels subside sufficiently. A clearer assessment of damage to the bank will also be made after the trunk has been fully removed and any essential repairs carried out.

### **Jubilee Park**

Following a successful LCC SHIRE Grant application in 2022, a biodiversity project was instigated on Jubilee Park, land which is leased to Thurcaston and Cropston Parish Council by Charnwood Borough Council.

Following public consultation, a new planting scheme was designed by the Committee, incorporating over 100 native trees supplied free of charge through the Woodland Trust. Wildflower meadow areas were created by close-mowing grass paths in between throughout the spring and summer months. A prolific growing season saw the natural emergence of a rich variety of grasses and wildflowers, after which the vegetation was cut down to promote fresh growth in Spring/Summer 2024. The areas around each of the newly planted tree saplings were cleared and mulched. Over 90% of the saplings survived their first year of being planted. Additional saplings were obtained free from Leicestershire County Council as replacements. Sturdy tree guards (funded through the SHIRE Environment Grant) have given the trees added protection going forward.

The Committee has liaised with the Richard Hill Primary School in Thurcaston to encourage involvement by school children. Future projects may include wildlife garden creation, bug hotels and making bird boxes.

New display boards have recently been installed the Park, again with funding through the SHIRE Grant, giving information about the wildlife that can be found here.

Ongoing maintenance of the park will be required to care for the trees and upkeep the meadow areas, but it is envisaged that in time, Jubilee Park will develop into a much richer area of biodiversity and interest to visitors.

### **Wildflower Verge**

An area of grass verge at the junction of Latimer Road and Leicester Road, Cropston is currently being maintained for wildflowers through a scheme organised by Leicestershire County Council and Nature Spot. Maintenance involves a single cutting per year at the end of summer and removal of the risings, allowing wildflowers to flourish and insects to thrive. Initially we are waiting to see which species of plants will emerge naturally, before considering whether to introduce any additional wildflowers to the verge. Surveys have already been conducted by Nature Spot and local volunteers, revealing a substantial number of species already, thus helping to increase the biodiversity of the Parish.

### **Future Projects**

The Committee is continuing to work on existing and new projects. Offers of help and new ideas are always welcome.

To get in touch, please contact Marianne Lane, Parish Clerk in the first instance on:

Tel. 0116 236 7626 email [clerk@thurcastonandcropstonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@thurcastonandcropstonpc.org.uk)

or

Clr. Sue Graham, Chair of Open Spaces Committee on: [clr.sgraham@gmail.com](mailto:clr.sgraham@gmail.com)

**7. Local issues brought to the meeting by electors. No issues**

Meeting closed at 6.45pm

Mark Charles  
Chairman of Thurcaston & Cropston Parish Council.