

Threapwood Parish Council
Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th September 2025
at 7.30 pm in Chorlton WI Hall

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Item | Present Cllr David Cheshire, Cllr Stephen Croasdale (Chairman), Cllr Brian Holmes, Cllr Miles Lewis, Cllr Louise Rees, Clerk Ruth Shackleton. Two members of the public attended. |
| 1. | Apologies Cllr Steve Chewins (work); Cllr Hugo Bourne (work). Ward Cllr Rachel Williams. |
| 2. | Declaration of Interests There were no interests declared. |
| 3. | Public Participation A member of the public spoke to the meeting regarding maintenance obligations and the state of Footpaths 11, 12 and 13 located in the parish. He is in the process of clearing several trees that were located on his land and had fallen onto Footpath 13. Cllr Holmes responded to the resident. |
| 4. | Minutes Approval Cllr Holmes stated that he was did not agree with the wording on items 5.2 and 11.2 of the minutes; he requested that the draft minutes be circulated sooner. Resolved:- The Council agreed to amend item 5.2 and remove 'Peter Seargent (owner)' as he did not attend the meeting. The Council then agreed to accept the minutes for the parish council meeting held on 30 th July 2025. Proposed by Cllr Croasdale and seconded by Cllr Lewis. |
| 5. | Planning 5.1 <u>Register:-</u> This was previously circulated. 5.2 <u>The Queens Head, Sarn Road, Threapwood:-</u> Cllr Holmes updated the meeting regarding communications with CWaC regarding the planning application and the request that has been made to the owner to submit the amended plans o CWaC for consideration. It was noted that the ACV expires on 30 th June 2026. 5.3 <u>Consultation:-</u> Cllr Holmes informed the meeting that he has been the lead Councillor on planning consultations for the Council for the past 25 years; he informed the meeting of his intention to stand down from the role and for the Clerk to co-ordinate the Council's responses to planning applications. Resolved:- The Council agreed for the Clerk to co-ordinate the Council's responses to planning applications. Proposed by Cllr Holmes and seconded by Cllr Cheshire. On behalf of the Council, Cllr Rees thanked Cllr Holmes for his endeavours and successful outcomes with planning. |
| 6. | Accounts and Payments 6.1 <u>Accounts:-</u> The Council noted the accounts as circulated 6.2 <u>Wreath:-</u> Resolved:- That the Council purchase a wreath for Remembrance Sunday and to make a donation of £50.00 to the Royal British Legion. Proposed by Cllr Rees and seconded by Cllr Lewis. 6.3 <u>Payments:-</u> The Council considered the following payments:- |

| Chq No | Payee | Details | Amount |
|--------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------|
| 473 | R Shackleton | Clerk's Salary (Sep) | £ 189.98 |
| 474 | R Shackleton | Clerk's Salary (Oct) | £ 189.98 |
| 475 | HMRC (Jul - Sep) | PAYE | £ 142.20 |
| 476 | Chorlton Village Hall | Room hire | £ 30.00 |
| DD | The Accounts Centre | Payroll | £ 12.00 |
| 477 | R Shackleton | Clerk's Running Costs | £ 34.76 |
| 478 | Royal British Legion | Donation | £ 50.00 |
| 479 | R Shackleton | Backdated pay | £ 42.97 |
| 480 | A Corbett | Repairs to noticeboard | £ 328.60 |

Receipts:-

None received.

Bank Account:-

Reconciled balance of the Current Bank Account as at 1st September 2025:-
£6,361.03

Reconciled balance of the Deposit Bank Account as at 1st September 2025:-
£1,951.17

Resolved:- The Council agreed to the following:-

- To approve the above payments;
- To accept the accounts as previously circulated;
- To increase the Clerk's hourly rate of pay in accordance with the updated NALC SCP payscales for the 2025 – 2026 financial year
- To pay the backdated salary to 1st April 2025 as recommended by NALC.

Proposed by Cllr Rees and seconded by Cllr Croasdale.

6.4 External audit:-

The AGAR for 2024-25 has been returned to the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn.

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities the Council has published the following documents on the website:-

- (i) Certificate of Exemption (page 3 of the AGAR);
- (ii) Annual Internal Audit Report 2024 – 25 (page 4 of the AGAR);
- (iii) Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024 - 25 (page 5 of the AGAR);
- (iv) Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024 – 25 (page 6 of the AGAR);
- (v) Analysis of Variances;
- (vi) Bank Reconciliation;
- (vii) Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and other information required by Regulation 15 (2) Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn, has sent an automated message to notify the Council that the AGAR has been received and logged the notification of exempt status for the year ended 31st March 2025.

Highways

7.1 Threapwood Traffic Calming Group Speedwatch:-

Cllr Holmes updated the meeting:- no Speedwatch sessions have taken place since the last meeting; he is to co-ordinate a couple of sessions next month.

Cllr Holmes updated the meeting about the Speedwatch signs; the police were looking to produce signage, subject to CWaC approval. Cllr Holmes is to follow this up with the police; if there is no progress then he will take it up with CWaC.

| | |
|----|--|
| | <p>Cllr Holmes expressed his frustration with CWaC restricting Parish Councils to carry out improvements within their parishes.</p> <p>Resolved:- The Council agreed for Cllr Holmes to pursue the request for Speedwatch signage with CWaC if the request made by the police to CWaC for the signage is refused.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Croasdale and seconded by Cllr Rees.</p> <p>7.2 <u>Damaged Fingerpost Sign:-</u></p> <p>The Clerk has contacted CWaC who have clarified they are making an insurance claim; costings are being collated and a further review of suitability of repair vs replacement is currently underway. The Clerk is to pursue this with CWaC and request that the original sign be repaired and reinstated.</p> <p>7.3 <u>Community lead minor highways improvements:-</u></p> <p>Cllr Holmes prepared the following list of requests to be included in Community lead minor highways improvements pilot scheme which has been submitted to CWaC:-</p> <p>Several roadside signs in Threapwood are poorly placed, no longer functioning, looking unsightly or redundant. These could have maintenance undertaken, be removed and / or replaced.</p> <p>1 England / Cheshire sign approaching on B5069 from Wrexham a poor replacement of damaged original. By contrast Wrexham sign across the road much more attractive and a proud welcome. CWaC may have a better replacement.</p> <p>2 Signs at Junction Shocklach Road with B5069 a mess and in disrepair. Reposition and remove debris.</p> <p>3 Threapwood village sign on B5069 approaching from Wrexham obscured in hedge for much of year- reposition.</p> <p>4 Many signs in hedges, completely obscured, serving no purpose and preventing proper hedge cutting resulting in untidy appearance.</p> <p>5 Remove 40 mph repeater signs on back lanes. Signs suggest 40 mph acceptable when it is not. Signs often in hedges, now damaged and preventing hedge cutting. Apart from safety aspect, understand the requirements for distance between repeaters has been relaxed.</p> <p>6 A number of unauthorised signs could be removed.</p> <p>7 Some road / Lane name signs are in poor repair and could be straightened or place new ones.</p> <p>8 On the wish list is to install two timer gates at 40mph signs on B5069 approaching from Malpas to give impression of narrowing of road and entering village speed reduction area.</p> <p>7.4 <u>Highways Volunteer Scheme:-</u></p> <p>Cllr Holmes updated the meeting regarding the relaunch of the Volunteer Scheme (details have been shared with Cllrs).</p> <p>7.5 <u>Updates:-</u></p> <p>The road surface deterioration at the layby at the bottom of Greaves Lane – this work has been completed.</p> <p>The roadside condition with deep side drop on Sandy Lane - this work has been completed.</p> |
| 8. | <p>Footpaths</p> <p>8.1 <u>Update:-</u></p> <p>Please see below report prepared by Cllr Holmes regarding Threapwood Public Rights of Ways.</p> <p>Resolved:- The Council resolved that the local footpaths and bridleways should be considered an asset of community value and measures taken to ensure the public</p> |

| | |
|------------|---|
| | <p>to have unrestricted access to Public Rights of Way are met. This may include discussion with landowners and the PROW Officer of CWaC to meet their obligation. Where appropriate, the Parish Council may engage directly in initiatives to have work undertaken to improve access but with limited resources this will be focussed on strategic paths considered of most value to residents.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Croasdale and seconded by Cllr Rees.</p> <p>8.2 <u>Communication with CWaC PROW Officer:-</u></p> <p>Resolved:- The Council resolved to confirm their position to PROW Officer regarding strategic footpath priorities v less used paths (FP4 (Back L – Sandy L), FP6 (Back L – Greaves L v Lansdale), FP17 (Back L – Sandy L), FP18 (Back L – Greaves L v Paradise B steps), FP13 (Oldcastle L – Tinkwood)).</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Lewis and seconded by Cllr Rees.</p> <p>8.3 <u>Village footpath walk 12th October:-</u></p> <p>Cllr Holmes volunteered to carry out the work to ensure the footpaths are passable to enable the village footpath walk to take place. Cllrs expressed concerns as no one was able help clear the footpaths at short notice nor was anyone able to attend the village footpath walk on the proposed date. It was suggested that the village footpath walk be postponed to enable help to carry the work that is required to clear the footpaths and for Cllrs to be able to attend / support the event.</p> <p>Cllr Holmes informed the meeting that he would carry out the work to FP 13 as a resident and not as a Cllr.</p> |
| 9. | <p>Dog Waste Provision</p> <p>Cllr Holmes informed the meeting about the new signage and to advise that he has been in communication with CWaC to request a new litter bin at the common. CWaC has declined the request due to the lack of litter at the site but suggested that the bin at Middlewood Farm could be relocated to this site. The Council agreed that they did not wish for the bin to be relocated.</p> <p>The Council is to gather evidence of the litter which is to be submitted to CWaC to back up the request for an additional bin.</p> |
| 10. | <p>Police</p> <p>The Police Cluster meeting took place on Monday 11th August; the notes of the meeting were circulated previously. Cllr Holmes represented the Council.</p> |
| 11. | <p>Village Appearance</p> <p>11.1 <u>Noticeboard:-</u></p> <p>Andrew Corbett has carried out the repairs required to the Noticeboard.</p> <p>11.2 <u>Bench:-</u></p> <p>The Clerk reported that she has spoken with CWaC about siting a bench at the layby at the bottom of Greaves Lane. CWaC expressed safety concerns regarding the suggested location.</p> |
| 12. | <p>2026 Meeting Dates</p> <p>The Council are to hold meetings on the last Wednesday of alternate months as below:-</p> <p>Wednesday 28th January Wednesday 25th March Wednesday 27th May Wednesday 29th July Wednesday 30th September Wednesday 25th November</p> |
| 13. | <p>Upcoming Meetings and Events</p> <p>Cllr Holmes updated the meeting regarding the following meetings / events:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Threapwood History Group Walk - CWaC Rural West Partnership Meeting – Cllr Croasdale is to represent the Council. |

| | |
|-----|---|
| | - Meeting with Cheshire Policing and Crime Commissioner |
| 14. | Clerk's Report There was no consideration of this item. |
| 15. | Correspondence The list was previously circulated. Cllr Holmes announced his resignation from the Council after 25 years of service to the community. The Council formally thanked him for his commitment and efforts to make improvements to the parish. |
| 16. | Date of next Meeting The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 26 th November 2025 |

Threapwood Public Rights of Ways - Report to Parish Council meeting 24th September 2025 by Cllr Holmes

A: A communication was delivered to all Threapwood residents on 11th September detailing the Parish Council – Parish Footpath Walk to be held on 12th October and stating:-

“As a result of representation from residents about the condition of some local footpaths, the Parish Council has resolved that our local footpaths and bridleways should be considered an asset of community value and measures taken to ensure the legal obligation to have unrestricted access to Public Rights of Way are met. This may include discussion with landowners and the PROW Officer of Cheshire West and Chester to meet their obligation. Where appropriate, the Parish Council may engage directly in initiatives to have work undertaken to improve access but with limited resources this will be focussed on strategic paths considered of most value to residents.”

B: A number of emails have been exchanged with the CWaC PROW Officer and one on 11th August stated:-

Threapwood Parish Council have resolved: 1 PROW's are a community asset and they should be made / kept accessible for the benefit of the community. 2 All public right of ways should be kept accessible without blockage. 3 Some routes should be identified as strategic where they offer a meaningful recreation value linking circular routes or access to more extensive destinations and avoid hazardous road walking. 4 Strategic routes should be identified and prioritised for effort and the limited resources available to enable access and comfortable onward progress. 5 The Parish Council will propose to the CWaC PROW Officer and require public footpaths and bridleways are kept open and suitably maintained. Where deemed appropriate the Parish Council will liaise with the appropriate parties to initiate and undertake maintenance if this is considered necessary to achieve its objectives in a timely manner.

C: Action: Does the Parish Council agree the minutes for the meetings 28th May and 30th July adequately state / resolve the policy agreed and support the action to be taken?

28th May minutes detailed report on condition of paths with some proposed actions and agreement to spend £150 on FP1 sleeper-bridge.

30th July minutes recorded Cllr Holmes discussed the two actions agreed at the May meeting and confirmed work to the bridge now completed. Statement all PROW should be kept accessible and listed routes proposed as strategic – FP18 - FP1 / FP17 /FP18 - BR15 / FP16 / FP8 – FP13 / FP3. (There is no record of the PC resolution or agreement to this policy even though it was tabled again at the meeting as referenced) (Email to PROW Officer detailing PC policy copied to Clerk and Chair requesting “I hope my reference to what the PC resolved reflects what you noted for the minutes of the last PC”). (Email to Clerk 10th September with attachment of flyer to residents stating PC policy) (Request by Cllr Holmes at PC meeting 30th July for draft minutes to be sent out shortly after meeting to confirm and prompt actions and provide early opportunity to comment on minutes if appropriate.) The proposed activity is potentially sensitive and needs to be supported as the policy of Threapwood Parish Council. Minutes record £100 to fund FP1 bridge – already reported as completed and £150 sanctioned at 28th May meeting.

D: The PROW Officer has confirmed the following footpaths are on or have been added to the Annual Maintenance Contract (but not clarified when this takes place).

FP4 (Back L – Sandy L), FP6 (Back L – Greaves L v Lansdale), FP17 (Back L – Sandy L), FP18 (Back L – Greaves L v Paradise B steps), FP13 (Oldcastle L – Tinkwood)

(Other paths and bridleways considered strategic routes locally are not covered. Suggest FP6 and possibly FP4 and FP17 are not strategic?)

Action: Confirm our position to PROW Officer re Strategic footpath priorities v less used paths.

E: Action: The Parish Footpath Walk is scheduled to take place on Sunday 12th October, starting at 3pm. (Will be cancelled in the event of severe weather). Will cover 3.8 miles with conditions as described in communication to residents. This should be an official Parish Council event (managed by and insurance cover?) To be led by Cllr Brian Holmes. Other Cllrs are required to help escort and manage the walk. Work will need to be undertaken to make the route of the walk fully accessible – which it is not at the moment.

F: Action: The PC to sanction and a working party of councillors to undertake the footpath clearance and maintenance required to undertake the walk and make accessible for use by residents. (An indication of support to do so was given at the PC meeting 30th July)

FP13 (Oldcastle Lane – Tinkwood / FP3) – Clear path through dense undergrowth and overhanging trees blocking the route through to bridge over Flennen’s Brook. Consider maintenance / replacement of steps up minor bank to PF3. Consider clearing path leading down bank to bridge from adjoining FP9. Ownership of the track is not known (could fall to CWaC?). Issue of minor ditch alongside path route carrying grey water but hazard should be avoided by clearer path route.

FP8 (Alongside Wych Brook) – Clear drainage gulley and lay two sleeper bridge with mesh covering by kissing gate. Lightly level base of footpath along steep slope by badger set and into field. Cut to low level the route of path through boggy reed section to expose route and observe over winter any further work required. (Possible future requirement for sleepers or board walk to be placed over 10m + section?)

Have spoken with land owner of this section and agreed action. Lay reclaimed sleepers in short boggy area (5m?) with attention to drainage within wood. Agreed in principle with land owner – detailed arrangement to be confirmed.

FP3 (Sandy Lane – Boundary L) Cut back and clear entrance through hedge to access stile.

FP3 (behind Topwood Farm) The landowner has cleared a rough route through the impassable plantation to bridge for FP4. Following further conversation it was agreed the base of the path would be cut and improved and the broken step for the stile would be replaced.

A cost estimate will be provided depending on the work agreed.

It should be noted that Section 43 of the Highways Act 1980 gives a power but not a duty to a Parish Council to repair and maintain footpaths and bridleways or restricted byways. However this does not empower a Parish Council to improve an existing right of way. Work should only take place having consulted with the relevant PROW Officer and respective Land Owners. Tattenhall PC has undertaken a commitment to try and replace all stiles (some 70) in the Parish with Kissing Gates to provide equal access as have some other PC's in the CWaC area. Shropshire have a Parish Paths Partnerships and Wardens Scheme to encourage and support Parish Council footpath maintenance work.

G: History:

Agenda item at PC 29th November highlighted issues raised by residents relating to FP3 off Sandy Lane blocked by deposited debris, PF3 behind Topwood Farm inaccessible, FP5 Mill House – definitive map consideration, FP8 alongside Wych Brook almost impassable through boggy ground and better way marking required. Cllrs cleared obstruction on FP3.

CWaC PROW Officer invited to address Annual Meeting 29th May 2024 – no obvious action as a result? (Cllr Holmes did request some further specific clarification – received)

Following representation by a number of residents re access to footpaths at village events, Cllr Holmes prepared and presented a report on the condition of footpaths in the Parish to the PC on 28th May. A summary of proposed policy was tabled by Cllr Holmes at the meeting. Minutes recorded report in full and agreed £150 expenditure on FP1.