

THORNCOMBE VILLAGE TRUST

Minutes of a committee meeting held in Thorncombe Village Hall on Tuesday, 26 February 2013

Present:

Sheila Moreland (President); John Whitbread (Chair); Ruth Jacobson (Secretary); Lynn Kinsey (Treasurer); Mark Shelley; Rachael Whitbread

Minutes clerk: Eve Higgs

- **Apologies for absence**

Not applicable.

- **Minutes of meeting held on 29 January 2013**

Approved and signed by Chair.

- **Democratic period for Trust members**

JW explained that in response to a request from the Magdalen Trust Project (MTP), Peter Darch, Chair of the Trustees and Giles Aspinall had been invited to attend the meeting during the democratic period and welcomed them. GA explained that the reason for requesting a meeting was to explore ways of improving communications between the MTP and the TVT, as it was felt that the two organisations share many common aims and that given the MTP's proximity there should be more contact.

He went on to explain how the MTP was organised and outlined how it has evolved since its inception in 1990. It seeks to promote a better understanding of the environment and sustainable living through the application of bio-diverse principles. MTP's landholding consists of 132 acres of organic farmland, which meets Soil Association standards. Its pigs, fruit and vegetable are used as ingredients in the 22,000 meals per annum which are cooked on site. Part of the farm is also designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). Links with outside groups include the Dorset Wildlife Trust, West Dorset AONB, Natural England and the East Devon Water Vole Project.

The MTP runs educational residential courses for schools. Children and adults with special needs and the disadvantaged also attend Care Farming courses to address therapeutic needs and provide personal development skills. Those attending courses tend to come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, from urban areas as well as from Dorset and neighbouring counties. Clients include local authorities, housing associations and the Refugee Council. There is also a programme of day courses on rural skills, crafts and cookery for small groups. MTP's commercial activities include corporate days and weddings which are approx 2% of its business. Average annual attendance is 5,000, although in 2011 it was an exceptional 7,000. Open days attract up to 150 depending on the weather.

In addition to group residential accommodation for up to 30 people, there is a campsite which can accommodate up to 50 people. This campsite is advertised on commercial websites. There are also self-catering facilities for individual family groups. Discipline and the regulation of group behaviour is a matter for group organisers with MTP staff providing backup. Ratios of staff to students are laid down by regulation. The Trust currently has an outstanding planning application with WDDC to develop the farmhouse to provide further accommodation for groups of up to 13 people. This expansion represents an essential element for their financial viability. The MTP recognised the Trust's concerns about increased traffic movements but stated that these would be addressed by ensuring that groups were ferried in by minibus.

Following a discussion during which PD and MA clarified various points of detail relating to MTP's work in response to questions from individual committee members, it was agreed that there is commonality between the two organisations with regard to conservation and preservation of wildlife. JW undertook to liaise with GA and organise a visit to the Magdalen Project shortly, to enable TVT members to see for themselves the changes which have taken place since the TVT's 20th anniversary tea party which was hosted by the MTP in 199?. PD and GA welcomed the suggestion and thanked the committee for agreeing to meet them. **(JW)**

PD and GA left the meeting at 20.10h.

- **Matters arising**
- Future Family Friendly Walks – an event before the Bluebell Walk?

Following a discussion it was agreed that in view of the continuing inclement weather the Bluebell Walk will be the first event in the projected Family Friendly Walks programme and to defer fixing a date until the bluebells come into bloom. LK undertook to recce the wood immediately prior to the March meeting, which will potentially inform when the walk will take place. **(LK)**

- Tree maintenance/Tree Preservation Orders etc

JW reported that the maintenance programme remains on hold until the weather improved. He had been in touch with the Tree Preservation Officer who has a 'historic' map which shows which trees have TPO status but not whether due to a successful application by the landowner to remove protection, which ones currently retain their TPO status. MS undertook to visit DCC Offices to examine the map and report back to the meeting. **(MS)**

- March members' meeting

JW confirmed that he has booked the founder of the South West Deer Rescue and Study Centre for the members' talk on Thursday, 21 March. Arrangements were discussed and agreed in terms of the checklist **(Committee - copy of checklist available from RJ if required)**

- Parish Plan

MS announced that the plan is now complete, subject to final approval by the Parish Plan Sub Committee and will be presented to Councillors at the next full Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday, 5 March. The Plan will be posted up on-line on the parish website and hard copies will be available on loan by request to those parishioners who do not have access to the internet.

- **Village hall hedge**

JW reported that following a discussion with the Chair of Thorncombe Village Hall (TVH) Committee, a contribution of £100 from the TVT has been agreed and that the plants are on order. The total cost of the project will be approx. £700. The committee agreed to JW's proposal to pay for two more trees on the bank in front of the village hall. EH informed the committee that she had nothing to report as no meeting of the TVH committee had taken place since the last TVT committee meeting.

- **Copy for Parish Magazine**

JW reminded members that they were welcome to submit items for inclusion and reminded them that the copy deadline is noon, on the 11th of the month preceding that of publication.

There was some discussion about whether these items should contain information about the deaths of individual TVT members but the Committee felt that this was not appropriate.
(Committee)

- **Finance Report**

See Appendix 1.

- **Thorncombe Parish Council Review**

RJ attended the February parish council meeting on behalf of the TVT.

She reported that:

- There had been a discussion about flooding in Chard Street, however there are insufficient funds to undertake remedial work.
- Cllr Higgins reported that DCC Highways Department has the replacement of the bridges in the Dungeon (FP28) in hand.
- Cllr Higgins has compiled a list of fire hydrants in the village.
- There were no planning applications on the table for consideration.

JW agreed to represent the TVT at the next parish council meeting.**(JW)**

- **Current planning applications**

JW reported that the only outstanding planning application relates to listed building consent for building work on Upperfold in Saddle Street. It was agreed that no action on behalf of TVT members was necessary.

- **Plans for members' meetings 2013-2104**

JW reported that given the TVT is an affiliated member of the Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England, Dorset Wildlife Trust and The Ramblers, he will be approaching each organisation to explore whether they could field speakers for the 2013-2014 talks programme. Plans for the 18 May AGM were discussed. It was agreed to show Jim Ede's film recording village life in the 1970s. A post-show audience discussion might be facilitated and filmed for archive purposes. A working title: 'Forty Years on' was agreed. MS undertook to organise that part of the evening. **(MS)**

- **AOB**

LK reminded the committee that the deadline for the spring newsletter was imminent and appealed for additional material. She agreed to signpost new material on the website.
(Committee)

- **Date & venue of the next meeting –**

Tuesday, 26 March 2013, 7.30pm, Thorncombe Village Hall