

THRAPSTON TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor: Cllr Andrew McGovern

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Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting Held on Tuesday 8th April 2025 at 7.00pm at the Plaza Community Centre

Present: Councillor McGovern (Chairman) Councillor Storey
Councillor Glover Councillor Wilcox
Councillor Latimer Councillor Winter
Councillor Severn Councillor Worley
Councillor Shortland-Ford

Also Present: Linda Brodier (Town Clerk)
Debbie Garland (Events & PR Manager)
Emma Dugdale (Administrator)
Janis Zakis (Facilities Manager)

Apologies: Councillor Bellamy
Councillor Hawkins
Councillor Wheeler

Chairman's Welcome, Report & Reflection

Cllr McGovern welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr McGovern presented his report, together with a slide show. A copy of Cllr McGovern's report is attached at Appendix 1.

Guest Speaker: Justine Cheadle, Northamptonshire Health Charity

Justine gave thanks to the Mayor and Councillors and the community of Thrapston for their support with the Northamptonshire Health Charity. She proceeded to speak about what the charity, what it does and its projects which go above and beyond what is already provided by the NHS. Funds raised at the Council's party in the park, fireworks, various quiz nights and all other fundraising events have gone towards a giraffe incubator, pull down beds for parents and other things. Their current appeals include the Children's Playground Appeal, the Daisy Suite (Northampton Hospital) and Twinkling Stars (Kettering Hospital). There is a charity ball the August bank holiday weekend – tickets £48.50 each. There is a fun day at Chester House the late bank holiday weekend in May. A cheque presentation followed with photos.

Guest Speaker: Fiona McGill, Chair of Governors, Thrapston Primary School

Fiona McGill spoke about the role of a governor at Thrapston Primary School, including the challenges and the pleasures that it brings. She advised that the school is a proud member of the Brooke Weston Trust who provide strategic leadership and accountability. Fiona McGill spoke of the make up of the board of governors, being 1 x staff, 2 x parents and 5 x co-opted governors. She advised that there is a vacancy which they are looking to fill. To be a governor you don't need an educational background – you need to be passionate and want to make a positive impact on the education of children. It is good to have a breadth of experience on the board – there needs to be a willingness to listen and work as part of a team. There are generally 6 meetings a year and there will be visits to the school at other times. In terms of commitment required, attendance at the meetings, reading meeting papers and

preparing any questions is considered necessary. Getting to know the school and attending events is an added bonus.

Presentation of Town Awards 2025

Cllr McGovern presented Town Awards to:-

Josephine Butler for her work at the Co-op.

Barbara Peacock for her work at Clanfield Residential Care Home.

Matthew Ellmer for his work with the RBL and the community.

June and Vincent Davy for their work with Plaza Opera, Charter Fair, Primary School, Churches, Thrapston Life and the community.

Update from the Nene Valley Park Project

David Manning addressed the meeting and gave an overview of the work of the community group since he first brought the idea to the Town Council back in January 2022. He spoke of the work that has been undertaken in turning the gravel pits and waste land into a park for residents and visitors to enjoy and an area for nature to thrive. When asked what they wanted, residents responses: litter free walks, somewhere to sit, access to the river. To date they have removed over 2 tonnes of rubbish, installed benches and signage, created a stepped woodland walk alongside the town walk and created natural habitats for wildlife to thrive. He said that they have built good relationships with adjacent land owners and local businesses over the last couple of years. He said that such work cannot be undertaken without such dedication of their volunteers. David advised that he is now stepping down and handing over the reigns to Craig Wilcox – but what he takes from it is: they have been building a legacy for today and for future generations to enjoy, but he has learnt that you cannot please everyone. Going forwards the group are looking to clear the car park of litter and overgrowth, create a picnic area, install bird boxes, install play equipment, create a bridge in Washington Woods, create a path down Meadow Lane and a portage point for access to the river. The group are always looking for volunteers. David expressed his thanks to the council and to the volunteers.

Craig Wilcox gave thanks to David Manning for his vision and passion.

Guest Speaker: Neil Mercer, Thrapston Charter Fair

Neil addressed the meeting, saying how he had been welcomed to the community. It strikes him what a strong sense of community there is in Thrapston.

Having joined the Charter Fair Committee, he advised that several longstanding committee members had left and there is now a new committee which is supported by the town council. He spoke of the Charter Fair Day at the end of June, and asked businesses and the community to get involved. He thanked the Town Council for the grant, and the National Lottery. He advised that there has been some renegotiations with businesses and it is shaping up to be a great event. He concluded that Thrapston has so much to offer – but if you're not involved in Charter Fair – why not! It is a great community event which sees around 4000 people pass through.

Update on the Thrapston Neighbourhood Plan

Daniel Worley addressed the meeting – saying he was here 2 years ago talking about a Neighbourhood Plan for Thrapston. He explained to the meeting what a Neighbourhood Plan is, and that a Steering Group is formed, made up of members of the community, who will gather information and draft a Neighbourhood Plan for Thrapston. It sits outside of the North Northamptonshire Local Plan, but it must align with it. He continued to explain that a Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document which must be used by councils when they decide on local planning applications. It helps local people shape the type of development they want, in the places they want, and to have a say on the design of new buildings / development. It can protect and improve the vitality of the local High Street and preserve local green spaces and heritage. He advised that there will be consultations with the community – so everyone gets a chance to have a voice on matters that are important to them. He said that the Steering Group needs volunteers, so if you are interested, please reach out. It's approximately a two-year project. There will be regular meetings which they hope to host remotely to ease pressures.

Request from Member of the Public

To discuss concerns regarding availability of site to facilitate a traveller community along the A14 close to Thrapston.

David Brackenbury, NNC Ward Councillor, addressed the meeting in response to the query raised: There are no proposals for the establishment of a Gypsy and Travellers site anywhere near Thrapston. As part of the Statutory preparation of the Gypsy and Traveler Local Plan, there will be a call for sites later in 2025, but we have no indications that any site will be proposed in the Thrapston area. Any site that is proposed anywhere in North Northamptonshire would be subject to planning permission, at which full consultation would be carried out as part of the process.

NNC are considering the establishment of a Temporary Stopping site, at which Gypsies and Travellers passing through the area could stay for a period of up to 28 days. Gypsies and Travellers who are occupying an unauthorised encampment can be directed by the Police under Section 62A of the Criminal Justice Public Order Act 1994 to go to the stopping site, where they could stay for up to 28 days. If they refused, the Police, under the same powers, could direct them to leave North Northamptonshire and not return for a period of 12 months. All users of a stopping site would have to pay a security bond refundable on leaving the site in good condition and would also have to pay rent for the duration of their stay.

Any stopping site proposal that is made anywhere in North Northamptonshire would also be subject to planning permission and consultation as above. No decision has been taken by NNC to progress this matter and no site has been looked at in the Thrapston area.

Open Question and Answer Session

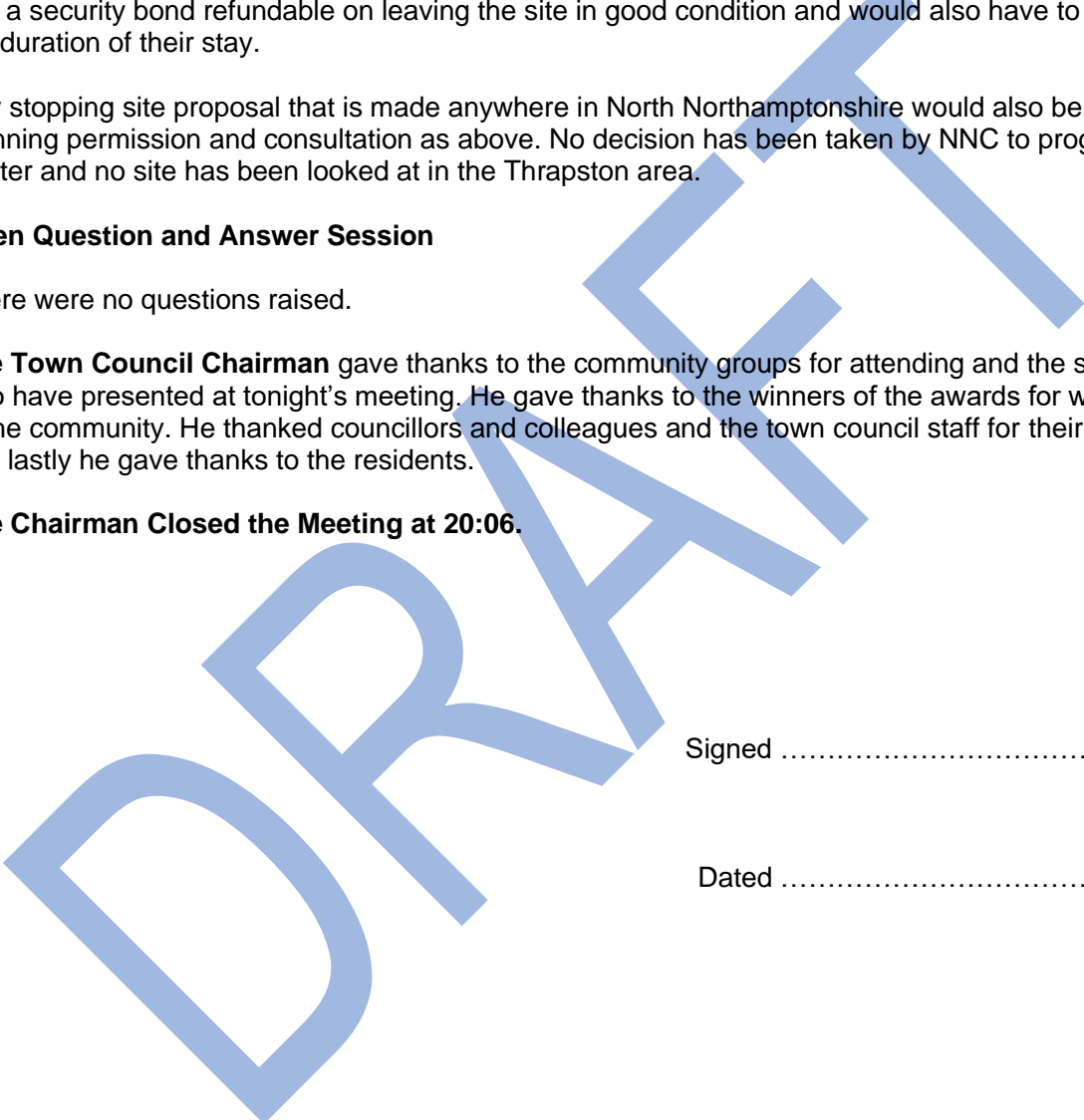
There were no questions raised.

The Town Council Chairman gave thanks to the community groups for attending and the speakers who have presented at tonight’s meeting. He gave thanks to the winners of the awards for what they do in the community. He thanked councillors and colleagues and the town council staff for their support – and lastly he gave thanks to the residents.

The Chairman Closed the Meeting at 20:06.

Signed

Dated



APPENDIX 1

Chairman's Report, Cllr McGovern

Good evening and welcome to our Annual Town Meeting, it's great to see you all here this evening.

It only seems like yesterday that I attended the May meeting of the full Town Council where I was elected to serve as Chairman and Mayor for the year 2024-2025. Since then we have done so much as a Council and I have met some amazing people all committed to making Thrapston the vibrant and welcoming community it is.

Early on in 2024 we held our annual strategy meeting where we agreed three objectives for the coming year which were:

1. Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability
2. Community Engagement and Quality of Life
3. Effective Governance and Resource Management

And I'd like to tell you about what been happening and what we've done in terms of each of these three objectives.

Starting with Environmental Stewardship and sustainability. We have continued to support the amazing Friends of the Peace Park volunteers in their work to make the park look so fantastic and colourful as well as putting sustainability into action by creating their own leaf mould compost! and our heartfelt thanks go out to the team for what they have done and what they continue to do.

We also support the excellent Nene Valley Project who continue to do so much to enhance the experience for us all on the land around the Town Walk and the Lake. This has included the steps just off Meadow Lane Car Park improving access to the woodland paths around the lake. There is still so much more to do and I know the team would appreciate the support. So if you're interested in getting involved, giving something back and getting a bit of light exercise in as a bonus then both these worthy projects will give you a warm welcome.

I'm going to go slightly out of order here and move to objective 3 and talk about Effective Governance and Resource Management next. As a Council we have remained focussed on the effective use of our resources, maintaining those resources in good order and managing our finances. Over the last 12 months we have re-decorated the Plaza which as a Community Hall is in constant use. We have carried out work on the office to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose and we have renovated the toilets which have been out of use for some time and we will be re-opening them very soon so watch this space. Additionally, we are about to have the St. John Ambulance building transferred to us, with plans to develop it as another community building and the new Council will be sharing more on this exciting development over the coming months. All this work has been delivered on budget and we continue to maintain sufficient reserves to continue to plan for the future and maintain our assets for the benefit of our community

Moving to Community engagement and quality of life. There have been a number of events over the last year that I would like to reflect on with you.

In June we commemorated the 80th anniversary of D Day when the beacon was lit by 99 years old veteran James (Jim) Gardner. It was humbling to stand with someone who had done so much to preserve our freedom. We also of course, as we do every year alongside our friends in the Thrapston Branch of the Royal British Legion commemorated all those who have fallen in conflict or served our country on Remembrance and Armistice Day.

The 2024 Party in the Park was a great success and great time was had by all. This event brings the community together to have fun with activities for the whole family as well as an opportunity to showcase our local talent. The weather this year was good and everyone left happy!

The Fireworks display at the Sports Association ground in November last year was great as always and raised an amazing £2130.83 for my chosen charity for the year Northamptonshire Health Charity and you will hear more about the work that they do later. I am always so amazed by and appreciative of the generosity of those attending. Thank you to everyone who made it possible, particularly those who manned bucket collections and to the staff and Councillors for their support. Our Christmas Festival was again a great success and thankfully, the weather was kind to us. There was, as always, a mix of the traditional and the modern and something for everyone within the community. As I walked around I was amazed by the number of people who came up to me to say how much they were enjoying the event. We continue to listen and learn and the Council will be looking at how we can make this coming years' events even better!

I am so pleased to announce that the total raised for my chosen charity is £4,797.92 and I would like to record my sincere thanks to everyone who has donated this year.

So what of the future? This is one of my last duties as Chairman, Mayor and Town Councillor as I have made the decision to not stand for re-election. However, I am very pleased to announce that there are 15 candidates for the 13 seats on the Council which means you will get the opportunity to vote for your new Council when you also vote for your North Northamptonshire Councillors on Thursday 1 May. There remains lots to do and I wish the new council well and feel certain that they will continue to live up to the legacy of past Councils by caring for the Town's assets and making Thrapston such a great place to live and work.

I want to finish with a few thank you's:

Firstly to the members of Thrapston Town Council:

- Daniel Worley
- Steve Bellamy
- Stuart Glover
- Jerry Hawkins
- Lindsay Latimer
- Jason Lewis
- Mark Severn
- Chris Shortland-Ford
- Micelle Storey
- Craig Wheeler
- Craig Wilcox

Thank you all for your service and for those standing for re-election I wish you the very best of luck. The more astute of you will have noted that I missed someone off the list of Councillors. Alan Winter is stepping down from the Council after 14 years' service and I wanted to particularly thank him for all that he has done and to wish him well for the future. You won't know what to do with your free Tuesdays!!!

Our office and support staff always go above and beyond to ensure we have supported our residents, dealt with maintenance issues and supported the Council in delivering its objectives. A Big thank you to Linda, Lauren, Debbie, Janis, Mark, Emma, Steve and Karen. In addition, I'd like to thank our Grounds Maintenance contractor Nigel and his team for their ongoing support in maintaining the open spaces in our town. They do an amazing job making the town look great. My wife and I moved to Thrapston almost 5 years ago and we felt so welcome and a real sense of community despite it being at the height of the Covid Pandemic. The last four years as a Councillor and this last year as Mayor have been amazing but I couldn't have done it without the support of my wife Kathryn, our friends, the Council staff and Councillors.

It's been an honour and a privilege to serve and I leave you with these words that I now know to be true:

Help others and give something back, I guarantee you will discover that while public service improves the lives and the world around you, its greatest reward is the enrichment and new meaning it will bring to your own life.

Thank you.

**Andy McGovern, Chairman
Thrapston Town Council**

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