

THORPE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

FIRST AGM OF THORPE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM HELD ON 16TH NOVEMBER 4.45PM – RUTHWYKE ROOM, THORPE

List of apologies and Forum members attending attached

1. Welcome

Linda Gillham, Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all present and gave a brief history going back to two years ago after attending training seminars that it became obvious Thorpe was in a unique situation. It was and is proposed to remove Thorpe from The Green Belt and we wanted to ensure its continued protection. It could benefit from having a designated area with its own Neighbourhood Plan. Inaugural meeting was in April 2016 with the formal designated area agreed by RBC on 24th August 2016. Feel it is on track, especially when looking at RBC and their proposals for a new Local Plan 2015 – 2030.

We have to decide what we want for Thorpe's designated areas and be realistic that there may be some small amount of development.

2. Constitution

Some copies of Constitution were distributed.

It was agreed that there be two Vice Chairs. Simon Barrett was proposed by Mary Abrahams and seconded by David Huggett.

Nigel Robbins was proposed by Linda Gillham and seconded by Mary Abrahams.

Relevant points were raised by Carole James and these were noted to be amended and then signed off accordingly at next meeting.

3. Election of Officers

Linda Gillham was proposed by Nigel Robbins to continue as Chair. This was seconded by Simon Barrett

Elaine Gill was proposed by Maggi Jillard to continue as Secretary. This was seconded by Mary Abrahams.

Ian Patenall was proposed by Carole James to continue as Treasurer. This was seconded by Mary Abrahams.

All proxy votes submitted were used accordingly

Eric Peacock acted as scrutineer and all were re-elected.

4. Reports from Officers

Linda, Chair of TNF had read her report in the welcome.

Elaine Gill, Secretary read her Report. It was confirmed that eleven meetings had taken place since the formal designation was agreed in August 2016. These were between October 2016 up to September 2017 and also a two day Open Event on 31st March and 1st April 2017. There has been close liaison with Runnymede Officers and those attending meetings included Richard Ford, now retired, Georgina Pacey, John Devonshire and Anna Murray. Ian Maguire, Head of Planning attended the Open Event.

There has also been telephone consultations with AeCom regarding reports/assessments – Character and Heritage, Housing Advice and Design codes. Aecom wanted to use two specific sites for example purposes for development and design codes in designated area, these being Woodcock Hall Farm and Croft Farm (Coltscroft) and this report is awaited.

Ian Patenall, Treasurer apologised for non attendance but submitted a comprehensive report regarding the two grant applications made which assist with formation of the Plan. He reminded those present that monies from the second Grant totalling £1785.16 must be utilised by middle of January or it must be reimbursed to facility via RBC.

4. Agree timeline for Neighbourhood Plan Progress

Elaine Gill produced a rudimentary timeline suggestion commencing from submission of all documents relating to The Neighbourhood Plan approved on 24th August 2016 to the current time where we are awaiting further reports from AeCom and also the AGM meeting. The next stages will be producing the evidence based policies and then the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Simon Barrett has kindly agreed to look at this and report back. RBC are also requesting sight of a timeline to complement their own.

5. Policies drafted – reports from sub groups

Business Links – Andrew Cordery, Nigel Robbins and Simon Barrett form this group. It was stated that businesses represent at least 58% of the designated area and therefore their input is vital but again it is stressed MUST be evidence based policies. Three policies, E1....., E2 Fostering Links and E3 Infrastructure. These covered many salient points such as improving and maintaining vitality of local existing businesses, especially as rural based. Also Broadband important with regard to home working etc.

Traffic – Fr. Damian Miles, Chris Edge, Jan Hitchcock, Carole James and Elaine Gill form this group. Areas investigated are with regard to speed restrictions within village down to 20mph. Gateways to be introduced into Thorpe village at all entrances. Would need approval from SCC/RBC and money would come hopefully from developers contributions.

Improved street lighting was another point raised with special attention to Ten Acre Lane. Ideally expansion of the Heritage Lighting programme although Elaine Gill said they are very costly – easily £2000 each plus fitting and supply being fed to them in Ten Acre Lane.

Car parking is another topic. St. Marys Thorpe need is for improved parking to increase viability of the Church especially with funerals, weddings and other large events. TESIS do allow congregation members to use their car park on Sundays with special permits provided but not long term solution due to security requirements of the TESIS Campus.

Again it is stressed evidence based policies have to be included in Plan, not just a wish list.

Village/Heritage/Housing – Jill and Richard Williams, Ian Patenall, Margaret Roberts, Maggi Jillard, Mary Abrahams, Paul Nevin and Simon Barrett form this group. Areas covered included the historic boundary wall and their sympathetic renovation. Also included is help with flood prevention, pathside hedges, kerbing gutters and riparian responsibilities with maintenance of hedges etc.

Also existing footpaths to be kept cleared and maintained with no new cycle links to detriment of existing footpaths.

Regarding design – 90% at Open Event wanted sympathetic development to replicate older dwellings in Thorpe such as red brick. New buildings have suitable vehicle access and be energy efficient.

42 listed buildings in Thorpe but not Red Lion!
Remove non relevant street furniture and have uniformity with those already in position and take responsibility for maintenance.
Green spaces very important to those who attended Open Event especially Frank Muir Memorial Field.
Improve landscaping in Fleetway/Gower.

Environment – Linda Gillham, Nigel Robbins, David Huggett, Neil Jeppeson and Margaret Harnden form this group. As Thorpe village proposed to be removed from Green Belt, felt important to keep a Green Belt buffer around the village (a doughnut shaped buffer has been suggested).

Civic pride to be encouraged within area. Special mention made of Thorpe War Memorial

Frank Muir Memorial remains largest green space within designated area but with the River Thames Relief scheme this could potentially change.

Access to water facilities within the designated area

Concerns with regard to flooding always relevant and so RTS (River Thames Scheme) must integrate and minimise **all** flooding/drainage issues.

Green energy important to include electrical points for vehicles, ground source water pumps, solar panels on new buildings, if not detrimental to surround vicinity.

6. AeCom Report – Housing

The two sites chosen by AeCom for their example study of housing were Woodcock Hall Farm and Croft Farm (Coltscroft) It was stressed that these are purely examples. Both sites remain in Green Belt and any applications put forward imminently would have to show very special circumstances for development within Green Belt. Within the draft Local Plan, they are recommended to be removed but TNF would prefer some of Coltscroft to remain to form part of the required buffer around designated area.

7. Open Event – January 2018

Date proposed for this is 19th/20th January with afternoon session on Friday, carrying into Saturday.

New display boards will be required and sub groups will need to meet to agree board content for each subject matter.

8. Views/comments from Forum members/attendees

Questions were raised about possible rail link from Chertsey to airport going through Thorpe. Linda confirmed she attended FLAME meeting where Steven Costello spoke as he is one of the consultants for proposals. There are 10 different suggestions but this will be whittled down to three in near future. One possibility would be to go underground but to get over Glanty Loop causes a problem. The project though is fully funded which makes it attractive to central government and also remedies the situation of removing vehicles off highway and people onto trains. It does seem worse case scenario is that Runnymede will not benefit as possibly not stopping at Chertsey station. Just building line and then transfer over to relevant bodies. No advantage for Thorpe. Also local area not consulted. DCO very structured.

Barry Huxley raised at meeting that additional street lighting required down Coldharbour Lane to Norlands Lane.

A question was asked about future of Cemex HQ. It was advised a consultation is forthcoming.

Promotion was also made of website – www.thorpeforum.org.uk

One resident said he found that the policies could be confusing and really needed to be studied so they are concise and do not conflict or overlap. This was noted.

Information was also given about boundary review where the whole of Thorpe Ward is being proposed to be joined with Spelthorne for parliamentary elections. Everybody was invited to look at website <https://www.bce2018.org.uk> and express dissatisfaction with this proposal.

It was confirmed that Anna Murray, one of the Planning Officers at RBC had used as part of her Masters a study of Neighbourhood Planning with Thorpe Neighbour Plan as her focus. She was very successful with her results and congratulations were asked to be passed on.

Paul Nevin asked about Planning sub group and if all applications relevant to the designated area could be distributed to all Forum

members for their responses. This was agreed and Nigel Robbins will investigate about setting up the configuration of the mailboxes to allow this.

An invitation was given for new Forum members to join and thank you to the six new faces who agreed. Welcome on board!
They are Barry Huxley, Graham Basset, Andy Burton, Jill Collinson, Eric Iliopoulos and Elaine Brindley

Future meetings agreed as below:-

Thursday 14th December 4-6pm - Rutherwyke Room
Wednesday 3rd January 2018 4-6pm - Rutherwyke Room
Friday 19th January and Saturday 20th January 2018 – Open Event
in Rutherwyke Room