



THORPE ST ANDREW TOWN COUNCIL

THORPE ST ANDREW ANNUAL PUBLIC TOWN MEETING

ALL WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND

Town Hall, Pound Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, NR7 0UL
Tel/Fax: (01603) 701048 Email: office@thorpestandrew-tc.gov.uk

Agenda of Annual Public Town Meeting

You are hereby invited to attend the Annual Public Town Meeting of Thorpe St Andrew to be held at the Roxley Hall on 13th May 2024 from 6.00pm for the purpose of transacting the following business.

M Barron

Michelle Barron
Chief Executive Officer

AGENDA

- 1 To confirm the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 17th May 2023 **page 1-3**
- 2 Annual Report of Thorpe St Andrew Town Council from the Town Mayor, Councillor Fraser Bowe **page 4-5**
- 3 Finance
 - i. Finance Statement 2023/24 **page 6**
 - ii. Variance Report 2023/24 **page 7**
- 4 Update from Local Organisations
 - a) Norfolk Police **page 8-9**
 - b) Thorpe St Andrew Parish Church **page 10-11**
 - c) Royal British Legion **page 12**
 - d) Thorpe History Group **page 13**
 - e) Thorpe Dementia Support **page 14**
 - f) Dussindale Centre
 - g) Community Groups – verbal
- 5 Public Participation
- 6 Close

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Chief Executive Officer – Michelle Barron

Thorpe St Andrew Town Council, Town Hall, Pound Lane, Thorpe St Andrew, NR7 0UL

Tel: 01603 701048 Email: michelle.barron@thorpestandrew-tc.gov.uk

Website: www.thorpestandrew-tc.gov.uk

VAT No. 107 2921 9

**THORPE ST ANDREW TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
OF THE ANNUAL PUBLIC TOWN MEETING
HELD ON 17TH MAY 2023 AT 7:00PM**

Present

Miss S Lawn (Town Mayor)	Mrs J Fisher (Deputy Town Mayor)	
Mr F Bowe	Mr S Snelling	
Mr J Fisher	Ms J Bailey	Mr T Garner
Mr J Ward	Ms L Barrett	Mr D Moore
Mr D Buck	Mr J Emsell	Ms L Skinner
Ms C Ferris	Mr S Court	
Mr D Wiseman	Mr C Eden	

Apologies:

Mr P Berry

In attendance:

Dr T Foreman (Locum Chief Executive Officer)
Mrs R McCarthy (OM and RFO)
Mr J Calver (Parks and Estates Supervisor)
Mrs D Wheatley (Administration Officer)
Ms L Weston (Committee Officer)
Twelve members of the public were present

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Public Town Meeting held on 9th May 2022 were agreed as a true record. Proposed by Miss S Lawn, seconded by Mr J Fisher.

2 ANNUAL REPORT OF THORPE ST ANDREW TOWN COUNCIL FROM THE TOWN MAYOR, COUNCILLOR SUE LAWN

Miss S Lawn provided an overview of the civic year 2022/23. She presented the Deputy Mayor, Mrs J Fisher with flowers as a token of appreciation for her support during the year. A comprehensive update of the widely successful platinum jubilee celebrations was given, followed closely by the sad passing of HM The Queen in 2022. Details of how this sad event was marked were outlined by the Town Mayor. The wide range of projects undertaken by the Town Council throughout the year were described, and a special thank you was given to the Town Clerk and his team who had achieved significant efficiencies and improved the overall service of the Town Council.

Finally, the Town Mayor described the wet but extremely well received coronation celebrations which has recently taken place at the Fitzmaurice Park. It was confirmed that a time capsule had been buried and that a new portrait of HM The King had been unveiled.

3 FINANCE

(i) Financial Statement 2022/23 – members noted the Financial Statement for 2022/23.

(ii) Variance Report 2022/23 - members noted the Variance Report for the period 1/4/22 to 31/3/23.

4 UPDATE FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

(a) Thorpe St Andrew Parish Church – The meeting welcomed the report of Fr James Stewart relating to the parish church. The report provided an overview of the events which had taken place throughout the past year, including the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. Further updates included the change of service times, the Eco Church initiative, the Warm and Wellness Hub, and Café Church.

(b) Norfolk Police – The meeting welcomed PC Jennings and PC Chambers who provided a detailed update on the work which had taken place during the past year to reduce anti-social behaviour, speeding, and other Safer Neighbourhood priorities throughout the past year. A number of questions were fielded by the officers and Councillors expressed appreciation for the work which had taken place during the past year. Dr T Foreman explained that the relationship with the local policing team had been exceptional, and they had assisted greatly within the town over the past 12 months.

(c) Royal British Legion – Mr Snelling, as Chair of the Thorpe Branch, provided a detailed annual report of the excellent work of the Royal British Legion locally. There will be further updates in due course about the Remembrance Parade, following discussions with relevant partners.

(d) Thorpe History Group – A report was received by the meeting from Thorpe History Group which provided an overview of the fantastic work which was undertaken in the preceding year. A number of events and talks had taken place, which were very well attended demonstrating the interest local people have in the history of the community.

(e) Thorpe St Andrew Town Council Dementia Support Champion – Mr Snelling provided an update on the Dementia Support Group. A special mention was given to the volunteers, without whom the Dementia Support Group would be unable to function.

(f) Dussindale Centre – A written report from the Dussindale Park Community Trust was provided. The Trust continues to operate the Dussindale Centre successfully and, despite increases in costs in recent years, continues to thrive with a varied user group.

(g) Community Groups – Mr F Bowe provided a verbal update on the fantastic work being undertaken in the community as Armed Forces Champion. This included the 'Models for Heroes' group which meets regularly at the Sir George Morse Park. The group has received significant amounts of Airfix models which veterans are assembling and painting. The group is open to all veterans and those who have served in the blue-light services.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident asked about the sewage pipe repair at River Green. The Town Clerk advised of the progress made by Broadland District Council to date in resolving the issue, which is being done in default of an enforcement notice.

A resident raised the issue of weedkiller use in the town and the impact this has on wildlife and the local ecology. It was confirmed by the Town Clerk that the Council continues to look at options to stop weedkiller use. Unfortunately, the cost was significant for many alternatives, but trials elsewhere in the country were being monitored for their viability. The Thorpe St Andrew app allows residents to suggest their roads to be included in any trials for weedkiller free zones. The more this option is used, the greater information the Council will have to make decisions on maintenance of street furniture.

A number of residents raised concerns related to the condition of verges on Hillcrest Road. Work undertaken by a contractor on behalf of Norfolk County Council had left the verges unsightly and the standard expected of work on the highway had not been met. The residents explained that the County Council were no longer willing to engage in a repair programme and had diverted the resident to the County Council complaints process, which he had not proceeded with.

There were comments made relating to an underspend by the Town Council in its verge budget and that this should be used for repairing the verge on Hillcrest Road.

It was confirmed that the Councillors present understood the concerns being raised and that verge maintenance encompassing the issues raised at the meeting would be considered by the Town Council in the coming months. The Town Clerk explained that as this was not a decision making meeting and the matter did not appear on the agenda of the Annual Town Council meeting, the Council could not be bound by any views expressed during this meeting. A resident raised the prospect of holding a parish poll on the issue of verge maintenance, but the resident declined to progress this to a vote. Therefore, the item was concluded.

The meeting closed at 8.17pm

Signed:

Dated:

Mayors AGM Item

Councillor Fraser Bowe

Seen a very busy introduction to the mayoral role with recruitment and appointment of a new CEO

- Just to mention that Thomas Foreman was a hard act to follow but in Michelle we have found someone who is not only as competent and as motivated as her predecessor, but also someone who has and is making the role her own.
- Add my thanks and appreciation for her support and for making my role as enjoyable as it has been; and thanks to the whole officer team, who have always had time to help and chat to me, from Rachel, Jason, Debbie and Linda in the office to the grounds team who I see out and about making the most out of Thorpe St Andrew's green spaces and facilities.

The neighbourhood plan has writ large too this past year especially, finally reaching the referendum stage, which we had last week; I'm very pleased to be able to thank the Thorpe St Andrew community for their overwhelming support as the result was 89% in favour of the neighbourhood plan and 11% against. It's been 6 long years of work from the working group and our community who contributed to the several consultations over those 6 years. I'd like to put on record my thanks to the working group which consisted of councillors and members of the community, I'd also like to thanks the former and current CEOs for their hard work and our consultant who made sure we got the plan over the line. It's been a slog but hopefully we will see its reward over the coming years as that extra level of CIL contributions is realised and we can put the much delayed, costly improvements to our community facilities in place.

Talking of those much delayed community facilities, I was determined on taking on this role that we should at least see some progress on improving play facilities at the Fitzmaurice Park, after recent needed investments to play equipment at the Morse. This was especially important to those families living on the Dussindale area of Thorpe St Andrew and the users of the nursery at the Town Hall. I'm very pleased to say that work is about to begin on updating and increasing the play equipment at long last, thanks to the hard work of the CEO and the support of all Councillors.

Work on the River Green Lease and the mechanisms around that are ongoing with the CEO and solicitors working closely to draw up robust proposals for council to consider.

Work is also continuing on renovating the council's workshop space and after success in being awarded grant monies to improve the Morse Pavilion and make it more of a useable asset to the whole community, work is ongoing with builders to draw up plans and proposals. Council will consider those when they are ready.

We are only weeks away from the 80th anniversary of D-day and our events scheduled for the purpose of commemorating and marking this important date in world history. Firstly, the commemoration event on the evening of 6th June, then our community event on 8th June. I would urge as many of you as possible to support these events, think of

those that made the ultimate sacrifice to secure the freedoms we take for granted today and who still fight the good fight today through injuries received and the passing of time.

Talking of veterans, it would be remiss of me to use this opportunity to update you on one of my other roles as the council's lead on the Armed Forces Covenant – our promises to support those that serve and served in defence of our country.

The models for heroes group is going strong is consistently well attended, meeting fortnightly at the Morse Pavilion on a Tuesday evening for 3 hours, which is an increase on the original offering, to meet monthly for 2 hours. We've further expanded our group sessions by meeting on the other Tuesdays online via Zoom. These sessions improve wellbeing based on the shared activity of making, and interest in, modelling and on the comradeship of service in the military. I'd like to put on record our thanks to the National Models for Heroes organisation and especially to Paddy and Paul, the volunteers who run the sessions each week and make sure we have what we need for the hobby.

We've also been looking at how we can go to the next level of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. This scheme shows that the council will "pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align our values with the [Armed Forces Covenant](#). We currently do this at the Bronze Level and council have asked us to look at achieving the Silver level, for which we await the next opening of the window for applications, which is controlled by the MoD.

I'm always looking for what we can do to support the lives of our armed forces and veterans' community within Thorpe St Andrew, either directly from the council or in partnership with other organisations, such as Models for Heroes, Help for Heroes and the Thorpe branch of the Royal British Legion, on whose committee I serve, along with the dep Mayor. I will continue this work and hope to widen and improve opportunities for partnership working in TSA. I hope to have some further news later this month, which will be reported on, to council, in June.

If anyone would like to talk to me about the models for heroes group or my more general work for the AF & V community, please do get in touch either directly with me or through the council's office.

THORPE ST ANDREW TOWN COUNCIL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2023/2024

	Actual 22/23	Budget 23/24	Actual 23/24	Budget 24/25
INCOME	£	£	£	£
Verge Cutting	18845.00	19000.00	21370.23	22000.00
Sir George Morse Park & Pavilion	27308.84	18900.00	20457.68	16900.00
Events	39716.81	20000.00	38311.90	22500.00
Fitzmaurice Park & Town Hall	22659.00	17000.00	16305.44	15550.00
Allotments	7080.29	6000.00	8697.49	6000.00
Community Infrastructure Levy	10224.97		2983.52	
Precept	534569.00	550654.00	550654.00	605870.00
Business Sponsorship	673.33	450.00		1000.00
Town Hall Office	3108.13	400.00	5897.78	2400.00
Roxley Hall	15568.98	12000.00	16069.17	14000.00
River Green	2473.05	1500.00	2299.59	2500.00
Grants	1766.65		3195.00	
Street Furniture	143.07		1006.65	
Tree Management				
Legal Fees	15387.93			
Section 106	52457.65			
Neighbourhood & Town Plan	3300.00			
Capital Spend/Building Maintenance	97.13		219.70	
TOTAL INCOME	755379.83	645904.00	687468.15	708720.00
EXPENDITURE	£	£	£	£
Verge Cutting	6206.59	8500.00	10921.17	9800.00
Sir George Morse Park & Pavilion	46206.30	55600.00	60442.66	60000.00
Events	32487.27	21500.00	35107.99	28000.00
Fitzmaurice Park/Town Hall	15428.00	21000.00	12236.97	14200.00
Allotments	5949.72	4900.00	4924.08	5500.00
Town Council Office	28035.91	30900.00	31888.23	34350.00
Legal fees	18498.10	8000.00	7897.68	8000.00
Business Sponsorship	1713.61	1000.00		500.00
Cemetery	229.93	2250.00	707.56	
Building Maintenance	31263.99	21000.00	24004.19	21000.00
Loan Repayment	25622.15	26807.00	26806.50	26346.00
Leases	4401.76	5200.00	4073.52	4100.00
Neighbourhood & Town Plan	3750.00	1000.00	3600.00	1000.00
Street Furniture	2024.23	2200.00	3322.91	2800.00
River Green	6621.41	7100.00	11493.49	15200.00
Capital Spending	140191.22	33500.00	30614.42	64750.00
Street Lighting	60650.13	44000.00	78020.99	59000.00
Roxley Hall	11568.24	11500.00	16687.79	16800.00
Salaries	254404.31	314447.00	291692.97	309924.00
Newsletter	4431.00	2500.00	2846.00	3000.00
Grants	1320.96		446.00	
Section 137	550.00		280.89	450.00
Youth Council		1000.00		
BDC Elections	4772.97	7000.00	15050.16	9000.00
Website	1420.00	1000.00	625.00	1000.00
Tree Management	9174.07	9000.00	3433.20	9000.00
Contingency		5000.00		5000.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	716921.87	645904.00	677124.37	708720.00

Total Expenditure	Actual 22/23	Actual 23/24
General Fund 1 April	138368.94	184722.07
Add total income	755379.83	687468.15
Deduct expenditure	-716921.87	-677124.37
Transfer to (-) or from (+) Reserves	7895.17	-16090.10
Balance at 31 March	184722.07	178975.75

Represented by:		
General Fund Balance	184722.07	178975.75
Capital Reserve	55415.03	56005.13
Earmarked Reserves	160600.00	176100.00
Total Net Assets	400737.10	411080.88

THORPE ST ANDREW TOWN COUNCIL : FINANCIAL VARIANCES 2023/2024

INCOME	Budget 23/24	Actual 23/24	Difference	Difference	Explanation of Variance	Earmarks
	£	£	£	%		
Verge Cutting	19000.00	21370.23	2370.23	12.47%		
Sir George Morse Park & Pavilion	18900.00	20457.68	1557.68	8.24%	Increased payment received from NCC	1000.00
Events	20000.00	38311.90	18311.90	91.56%	Increase in lettings from Football & Café	
Fitzmaurice Park & Town Hall	17000.00	16305.44	-694.56	-4.09%	All events bar Coronation exceeded budget. Fireworks (£30,130), Book Sale (£1,182)	1200.00
Allotments	6000.00	8697.49	2697.49	44.96%		
Community Infrastructure Levy		2983.52	2983.52		Increased deposits payable from £25 to £100	5200.00
Precept	550654.00	550654.00				
Business Sponsorship	450.00		-450.00			
Town Hall Office	400.00	5897.78	5497.78	1374.45%	New sponsorship project to start 24/25	
Roxley Hall	12000.00	16069.17	4069.17	33.91%	High bank interest (£5,418)	
River Green	1500.00	2299.59	799.59	53.31%	Increased lettings	
Grants		3195.00	3195.00		Includes payment of electricity charged	
Street Furniture		1006.65	1006.65		Received from Anglia in Bloom & BDC members	1750.00
Tree Management					Bench purchases	
Legal Fees						
Section 106						
Neighbourhood & Town Plan						
Capital Spend/Building Maintenance		219.70	219.70			
Total Income	645904.00	687468.15	41564.15	6.44%		
EXPENDITURE	Budget 23/24	Actual 23/24	Difference	Difference	Explanation of Variance	Earmarks
	£	£	£	%		
Verge Cutting	8500.00	10921.17	-2421.17	-28.48%		
Sir George Morse Park & Pavilion	55600.00	60442.66	-4842.66	-8.71%	£2000 earmark spent on grass seed & planters	-2000.00
Events	21500.00	35107.99	-13607.99	-63.29%	Cleaning company deployed (£6,599) & high football maintenance costs (£7,443)	
Fitzmaurice Park/Town Hall	21000.00	12236.97	8763.03	41.73%	All events bar St Georges exceeded budget. Grid Matting (£915) & Walkie Talkies purchased (£1,622)	-2000.00
Allotments	4900.00	4924.08	-24.08	-0.49%	No cricket maintenance & field maintenance taken in-house	
Town Council Office	30900.00	31888.23	-988.23	-3.20%		
Legal Fees	8000.00	7897.68	102.32	1.28%	Insurance exceeded budget (£862), officers ROSPA (£2580) & Chapter 8 (£1750) trained	
Business Sponsorship	1000.00	0.00	1000.00	100.00%		
Cemetery	2250.00	707.56	1542.44	68.55%	New sponsorship project to start 24/25	
Building Maintenance	21000.00	24004.19	-3004.19	-14.31%	Moving to S137	
Loan Repayment	26807.00	26906.50	0.50	0.00%	Town Hall, Morse Pavilion & River Green all exceeded budget by just over £1,000	
Leases	5200.00	4073.52	1126.48	21.66%		
Neighbourhood & Town Plan	1000.00	3600.00	-2600.00	-260.00%	Reduced cost due to age of truck	5000.00
Street Furniture	2200.00	3322.91	-1122.91	-51.04%	Overspend necessary to get to referendum	
River Green	7100.00	11493.49	-4393.49	-61.88%	Cost of benches purchased	
Capital Spending	33500.00	30614.42	2885.58	8.61%	Cleaning company deployed (£6,896)	
Street Lighting	44000.00	78020.99	-34020.99	-77.32%	Town hall roof replaced (£23,000)	
Roxley Hall	11500.00	16687.79	-5187.79	-45.11%	Increased energy costs (£53,920) and repairs (£19,300)	
Salaries	314447.00	291692.97	22754.03	7.24%	Cleaning company deployed (£6,896)	
Newsletter	2500.00	2846.00	-346.00	-13.84%	No in-house cleaner	
Grants		446.00	-446.00		Increased printing costs	
Section 137		280.89	-280.89			
Youth Council	1000.00		1000.00			
BDC Elections	7000.00	15050.16	-8050.16	-115.00%		
Website	1000.00	625.00	375.00	37.50%	Additional election	
Tree Management	9000.00	3433.20	5566.80	61.85%	Less work required	
Contingency	5000.00		5000.00		Less work required	
Total Expenditure	645904.00	677124.37	-31220.37	-4.83%		

SUGGESTED EARMARKED RESERVES MOVEMENT	10150.00
RESERVES AVAILABLE	10344.00
REMAINING RESERVES AVAILABLE TO EARMARK	194.00

Thorpe St Andrew AGM

Current Safer Neighbourhood Team Members

Inspector Mike Austin.

Sgt Ollie Ketteridge.

PC Al Jennings.

Engagement Officer PC Arvinder Bhogal.

Email: sntthorpestandrew@norfolk.police.uk

Current Policing Priorities

Road Safety – Speed checks. Parking outside schools.

I have carried out speed checks on St Williams Way, Thunder Lane, Spinney Road and Yarmouth Road. I have issued Speeding tickets and words of advice/education to drivers.

I have patrolled our schools at the start and the end of the school day.

Schools patrolled are: Dussindale Primary School, Hillside Avenue School and Thorpe St Andrew High School.

I have spoken to lots of parents outside schools regarding their parking. Particularly when they have been parked on the single yellow lines on Vane Close, Hillside Avenue and School Avenue. I have highlighted to the parents there is no parking during the restricted times, and I have asked them to move on. However, as I have mentioned before I no longer have the powers to issue tickets for these offences it is only the Council Traffic Enforcement Officers now.

I have carried out patrols with Colin our Traffic Enforcement officer for Broadland and will continue to do so when possible.

Anti-social Behaviour in Open Spaces:

High Visibility foot patrols carried out at Fitzmaurice Pavilion, Sir George Morse, Cary's Meadow.

I have received and investigated ASB reports at Sir George Morse park. Youths causing minor damage around the Little Park Café on several occasions. Youths gathering and fighting at Fitzmaurice.

I have dealt with a group of youths causing ASB on Vane Close. Youths identified and issued with Stage 1 ASB letters. All youths' parents spoken to and very pro police. No Further issues since the letters were issued.

I am continuing to work with Broadland Council to have the Oasis Leisure Centre demolished. In the meantime, we have looking to have it properly secured with metal shutters.

Significant Crimes since the start of 2024

There have been 233 crimes reported to the Police since the turn of the year.

- Business Burglary at the Bowls Club at Thorpe Recreation Ground. No suspects identified.
- 4 x Burglary Dwellings.
- 2 x Possession of Cannabis. 1 x Possession of Class A drugs.
- 10 x Public Order offences.
- 1 x Robbery. This was Domestic related.
-

Thorpe St Andrew events

Our team attended the Bonfire Night Fireworks. I worked with the town council regarding the previous parking issues on Laundry Lane and Pound Lane. From a Policing point of view the one-way system worked well. Hopefully we will work together again to combat the parking in Dussindale.

We attended the Christmas event at Fitzmaurice.

My team and I are looking forward to attending the D-Day event on the 8th June and the Summer fireworks in July.



The Parish of Thorpe St Andrew

REPORT for ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – May 2024

Introduction

Thorpe St Andrew is bright, vibrant, independent and diverse and our parish and churches form part of this strong community. Our aim is to serve and love as Christ has loved and served us – and, whilst some may feel that we live in a secular society, this wide variety of contributions we make to our community disproves this year after year. It is my huge privilege to lead this parish as Rector with so many like-minded and committed people in our community. 2023 was a year marked with joys and sorrows, as most years are, yet amidst all these events our churches remained resourcing points of community life and love, with each person being a 'living stone' of this inspiring endeavour, radiating the light and love of Christ.

General Activities

We have continued with our changed service pattern of 9.00am at the Church of the Good Shepherd and 10.30am for Sung Holy Communion at the Parish Church. We continue to stream live on Facebook and it is amazing to hear how many people access this across our parish and further afield. We have held some very well attended services in all the seasons of the year, particularly at Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas. Christenings, Weddings and Funerals have taken place throughout the year and we offer this to all who live in Thorpe St Andrew or who have some connection with us. Koffee and Kompany, our bereavement coffee morning is growing and is a very popular place for people to come and chat once a month with coffee and a lunch at the Cottage. Junior Choir continues – and we have recruited some new members! The Fundraising Committee (FunCom) under the chairmanship of Victor Scrivens, has done a tremendous job in bringing us together and raising vital funds for our churches this year and is an opportunity not just to raise funds but to come together in fun and fellowship, with quiz nights, fetes and other exciting activities. The Pastoral Care and Bereavement Group has met throughout the year to support our pastoral ministry and its work is much appreciated, with many attending our Annual Memorial Service at the beginning of November each year. The Gardening Team, Cleaning Team, Flower Team and many more teams help keep 'our show on the road' and have the remarkable effect of bringing people together too.

Coronation Weekend

Following the success of our planning for the Platinum Jubilee we were able to present a very full programme of events and activities for the Coronation, beginning with an excellent talk from Phyllida Scrivens, the Ringing for the King initiative on the Saturday afternoon and a super day on the Sunday with a Service of Thanksgiving and The Big Coronation Lunch with picnic boxes prepared by The Rivergarden Pub. We were entertained to an excellent concert by the Norwich City Concert Band, with Fr James conducting an impromptu item at the end!

The whole day was a great success. Fr James also participated in the evening concert at Fitzmaurice Park on Coronation Day, notwithstanding the (by then) very inclement weather. We then hosted, a few weekends later, our Coronation Plant Sale, which concluded our Coronation celebrations.

Kitchen

The kitchen at the St Andrew's Centre was becoming very old and tired and so when Adam Wegg came forward with a way of refurbishing the kitchen at cost price with the generous donation of a considerable amount of his time I was very grateful. I am full of admiration for Adam, who in the month of August coordinated this project and used his skill to deliver this, and for all those who came to help with many different tasks. This was truly a 'community engagement piece' *par excellence*.

Christmas Lights

We began Advent and the countdown to Christmas with the Christmas Tree Festival and welcomed many organisations in our community to display Christmas Trees in the Parish Church. With the help of members of Thorpe St Andrew Town Council, the lights were switched on at River Green, with the countdown being given by Rob Setchell of ITV Anglia. We welcomed many people (young and old) into our church, who all received a warm welcome and kind hospitality. Father Christmas was a great success!

Ministry to young people and families

We continue to welcome new young families to our informal worship (Café Church) which takes place once a month at the St Andrew's Centre. We began a trial of the time of 3.00pm on a Sunday afternoon and this continues successfully into 2024. Many of our Café Church family now help with prayers, crafts and refreshments. Our Fun Days at Easter and in the Summer were also well received.

Parish Life

Parish Life – the Next Generation began in March 2023. Whilst the magazine before looked beautiful it was costing the parish too much and we had to come up with a cost-effective alternative. We are already making a small profit and have received many positive comments – so a huge thank you to those who have helped put it together and to those who have distributed this.

Thank you

The work of the Church of England in Thorpe St Andrew is very much a team effort. I am very grateful to Nicole King and Adam Wegg who share in ministry with me and to John Ward and Andrew Hayden who are excellent churchwardens – and to the Parochial Church Council and all who share in our body of Christ. May God bless you all!

*The Revd James Stewart
Rector of Thorpe St Andrew
May 2024*

Royal British Legion - Thorpe Branch

Report to Town Council May 2024

Thorpe Branch of the Royal British Legion celebrates its 75th Anniversary on 8th Oct 2024. Prior to 8th Oct 1949 the branch was known as Thorpe Ex Service Men's Association.

Two Ex Service Men who live locally and both served in WW2, led our Remembrance Parade in November 2023.

David Johnson 98, (aided by Tom Stocker) laid his wreath for the Royal Norfolk Regiment. Ray Parke 98, (aided by Fraser Gambling) laid a wreath for the Royal Air Force. Nearly 20 wreaths were laid in total with over 100 crosses planted by our youth.

Fr James led the service of Remembrance at the War Memorial and directly afterwards in the Parish Church. We thank him for all his support and assistance, not only at Remembrance, but throughout the whole year.

The Remembrance Parade last year started and finished at Whitlingham Lane for the first time in over 20 years. There were regrettably a few issues with road closure notices, but Norfolk County Council came round to the correct way of thinking in the end. We wish to thank Thorpe St Andrew Town Council for its support, especially with the new format 2023 Remembrance Parade. In addition the raising and flying of commemorative flags during the year.

There was an issue regarding children in the front of the parade being filmed. From 2024 onwards children will parade to the rear, in areas less likely to be filmed. This Parade is on the public highway, it's only natural that people wish to film our brave veterans parading.

In February the RBL - Thorpe Branch Chairman and Secretary attended the Norfolk Royal British Legion Conference. The previous year we won the award for the largest branch, with 5 years continuous improvement. Sadly Thorpe's RBL membership has dropped last year so no award for us.

Mr Barry Stephenson, our Thorpe RBL Poppy Appeal Organiser, has reported donations now stand at over £18,000 from a Thorpe population of 11,500 adults. Thorpe is a very generous community, but also has a great team of volunteer helper. They ensured every hour of 2 weeks of daytime shopping at Sainsbury's were covered with a volunteer collector. We also collected at Aldi. We especially thank Sea Scouts, Norwich Sea Cadets and Army Reserve who turned up in large numbers and in uniform to help us. A brilliant community achievement for RBL Poppy Appeal by all.

The RBL Thorpe Branch meets at the Cottage Pub on the 2nd Tuesday of alternate months, with regular social gatherings, lunches and entertainment. For more information please contact the undersigned.

We are extremely proud and grateful for the support Thorpe St Andrew community gives to veterans, in these very troubled times. We will remember them.

Chairman – Royal British Legion, Thorpe Branch.

Clr Stuart Snelling 07798-516906

Thorpe History Group 2023/24

The group have had another busy which includes a new website which was launched just before Christmas. We had several successful walks including one about the Thorpe woods and Plantations, one about River Green and one about Dr Hills and his time at Thorpe Asylum. All three will be repeated this year due to a healthy demand.

We also did two walks about the Red Cross in Thorpe which will be added to this year with our first afternoon talk on 30th May 2024 about Sister Monica. The Dr Hills walk was part of Heritage Open Days and was over subscribed by three times the original number of participants.

Our talks went well and we ended the year with a well-attended evening with Adrian Odell telling us about the Polish Community in Norfolk. This year we have already had two well-attended talks about the Norfolk Record Office and Ketts Heights.

We have a strong committee with everyone contributing with a variety of skills including long standing and hard-working secretary Nick Williams. Our Facebook page now has 1800 members and still showing no signs of these numbers slowing down. There appears to be a healthy interest in many aspects of local history and the group, and Malcolm Martins has been engaged in this year's Neighbourhood Plan, alongside the Town Council.

The group is fully committed to the 150-year Train Crash project this year by putting on a display at the church, a talk by Phyllida Scrivens and two walks all happening in September. THG are also now actively involved in Remembrance Parade in November alongside the Royal British Legion, Thorpe Branch. These local links are reflective of many the community projects that benefit the Town alongside a strong and active history group.

There is further information about the Thorpe History Group on our new website at <http://www.thorpe-history-group.org>.

Dale Wiseman

THG committee member

Thorpe Dementia Support Group

Report to Town Council May 2024

The Group, (born out of the dementia cafe), celebrates its 7th birthday on 17th July 2024.

Last year we sadly lost many of our first dementia couples to respite care, nursing care, hospital and sadly a number are no longer with us. It's been an emotional and heart breaking roller coaster of a year. We have lost true characters, the group comedian, group singer and my number one heckler. The old characters of the group we all loved. Very demotivating to our volunteer team and myself.

On the positive side, we have held 24 twice monthly dementia meetings at Roxley Hall, plus 6 group outings/events. (A trip on the Broads Mississippi Boat with lunch and singing, a coach to Cromer Pier Summer Show, a Seaside Coffee morning at Gorleston Cliff Hotel, and a Christmas Coffee morning at Highways Nurseries. Not to forget 2 Roxley Tea dances with singing from Charlotte). Plus 12 sessions of Roxley Singers and extra entertainment added by Thorpe Players. Forty Two events in total for the last year.

Hope you agree the volunteer team have done an absolutely brilliant job this year. They've adding quality of life to sufferers while they care for them and entertain them. In so doing enabled carers to separately and confidentiality share their greatest concerns, privately next door in the Ivy Room. Cheryl Day, Senior Dementia Adviser for Norfolk Alzheimer's Society, loves the special work we do for carers, which is rare for a Dementia Group in Norfolk. Cheryl has introduced a number of new local couples to the group.

New couples are joining us, they have quickly built new meaningful and true friendships, with our existing group of similar minded people. They are so delighted to find people who understand them, listen to them, most importantly, give mutual support and practical advice freely and confidentially. A new carer joined last week and left 2 hours later with knowledge of a £1200 claim she had not made.

Volunteers are now responsibly managing more and more of the group functions. This I started and reported on last year. A new craft section and increased singing section has developed this year. Hopefully it will build longevity to the group and future security to the organisation. Both Fiona and I have played senior roles for many years, it's important the volunteer group increases its share of responsibility. The Dementia Support Group is now secure in its structure, thanks to the council's umbrella of "custodian support" over it.

Our couples all greatly appreciate the council's support, the brilliant help of our skilled volunteers, not forgetting the public who have donated money to our group. The public have given £1000s to aid the volunteers to help more carers and loved ones. A true voluntary community project. A place where tears of sadness are turned to tears of joy.

Thank you one and all. It's been a privilege to be elected Thorpe Dementia Champion for last year. A seventh year volunteering with a really great team. We've experienced some heartache, but so much joy. Our couples are so grateful for everybody who has helped them.

Dementia Champion – Thorpe Dementia Support Group.
Cllr Stuart Snelling - 07798-516906