

Thorncombe Village Trust

Minutes of a committee meeting held at 7.30 pm on Tuesday the 30th January 2007 in the Community Room of the Thorncombe Village Hall.

Present : Linda Timms (Chairman), Ruth Jacobson, John Whitbread, John Dalziel, Tony Smith, and Terry Bennett. Also present was Tony Ford (TVT member)

- 1: Apologies received from: Rachael Whitbread & Peter Moreland.
- 2: Minutes of meeting held on the: 28th November 2006 were approved without amendment.
- 3: Matters Arising:

a) *Trees.*

i. Maintenance. John Whitbread confirmed that the majority of the work listed on the schedule of tree maintenance has been completed by Richard Taylor. He had also carried out some maintenance work on the TVT trees which are located at the Sports Club.

ii. Commemoration Oaks. These have now been planted. The question of whether a commemoration plaque should be obtained to accompany the trees was raised, but was **not resolved**.

iii. Terry Freeman Commemoration Tree. John Whitbread reported that the replacement tree had been planted in the memorial area of the Sports Club grounds. The matter of a commemorative plaque was raised. Such a plaque could be attached to an existing memorial column or to the actual tree. **It was agreed that the chairman should ascertain from June Freeman which method she would prefer.**

iv. Johnsons Wood. John Whitbread reported that In the opinion of the Dorset Wildlife Trust the wood is too dense and should be subject to some coppicing within the next year or two. **He proposed that members should be encouraged to become involved in the maintenance and management of the wood and to that end an attempt should be made to form a 'Members Tree Group'. The committee unanimously approved the proposal.**

v. St Mary's School. John Whitbread said that he had raised the question of the need for pruning with Richard Taylor, but they had been unable to identify the tree which John Dalziel had in mind. John Dalziel explained where the tree was located and **the matter will now be reviewed by John Whitbread.**

b) *TVT Publicity.* The chairman explained that unless entries submitted to local papers were paid for there was no guarantee that they would actually be published. She also pointed out that entries for the Marshwood Vale magazine had to be submitted well in advance. **It was agreed that the Chairman assisted by the Secretary will continue to provide the local press with reports of members meetings and forthcoming events, for inclusion in the free section,** in the hope that they will be published.

c) *Members Questionnaire.* Tony Smith reported that to date 17 responses had resulted from the 250 questionnaires issued. He provided the committee with copies of a written analysis of the responses. His detailed analysis is attached to the signed

copy of the minutes of this meeting.

The committee agreed that the size of the response was disappointing. It indicated a degree of apathy amongst members and such a small sample made it difficult to reach reasoned conclusions from the data received. However, it was noted that those who had replied had expressed a general satisfaction with the topics provided at members meetings and the majority wished to retain evening meetings.

Whilst suggestions for future topics had been limited there was a strong interest expressed in local history. There had been appreciable support for the provision of special interest workshops, again with an emphasis on local history as a topic. The responses to the 'are you aware questions' re planning, the environment and trees were overwhelmingly positive.

In view of the very limited response the committee decided to continue to pursue completed questionnaires from members. It was agreed that, at this time, the analysis of the small number of responses which had so far been received should not be published. ***Instead, those members who had not replied should be urged, using the parish magazine and the quarterly newsletter, to return their responses in order to provide sufficient data to allow the committee to glean informed conclusions from the survey.***

The interest in local history expressed through the survey and in other ways had led Tony Smith to identify a likely need for a 'A Local History Group' in Thorncombe. He had circulated a hand bill to the committee prior to the meeting in which he outlined his proposal for such a group. His suggestion was that Trust members and non members should be encouraged to join the group which would have as its principal aim the raising of an awareness and appreciation of the history of Thorncombe and its environs. Its principal objective would be to allow local people to collect, analyse, interpret and collate historical data relating to the parish and to arrange, on occasions, for the public presentation of that data, possibly culminating in a public exhibition in the winter of 2007. He suggested that an open public meeting to explain the proposal and to seek the views of those who may be interested in the project should be held within the next month or so and he offered to produce a pamphlet on the subject.

The proposal to form a Local History Group was discussed and accepted by the committee. ***It was agreed that Tony Smith should write an explanation of his proposal and e-mail it to the Secretary so that it can be included in the TVT report for the March edition of the joint Parish Magazine.***

It was also agreed that start up funding for the project will be provided by the TVT and any further funding will be considered following the establishment of the group.

- d) *Dorset History Centre.* It was reported at the meeting held on the 28th November that a letter seeking the Trusts views and proposals had been received from the History Centre and that the letter should be forwarded to Tony Smith for his consideration. Tony Smith said that he could not recall having received the letter but he would initiate a search for the missing document.
- e) *Members January Meeting (Magdalen Project).* The chairman informed the meeting that the audience totalled 22. The general reaction to the presentation by Gyles Morris was that it was very interesting and informative giving an insight into the work of the Magdalen Project and its impact on the children and students that took part. She believed that the meeting had served to bring the two organisations closer together and

it had been suggested that the Trust may find ways of working with the Project, to the benefit of both. It was hoped that Gyles Morris can be persuaded, in some 18months time, to give a second presentation describing the progress of the project.

f) *Memorial Ceremony for John Gordon.* The memorial seat had been positioned at the edge of a footpath adjacent to Coggans Farm. Some twenty people consisting of Johns family and his friends in the TVT had attended the unveiling ceremony on the 16th December. It was generally agreed that the seat had been beautifully made. The present plaque is not suitable, because it had to be obtained in a short time span. A new plaque can be obtained which will be made from good quality bronze, will be the correct size for the seat and will cost about £ 40.00. ***It was agreed that the plaque should be purchased.*** Several photographs of the ceremony were circulated amongst the committee. The chairman commenting on the event said that the weather had been excellent, the morning had been a happy sociable time and that family members had expressed their appreciation of the Trusts action in presenting the seat. She pointed out that the location of the seat would make it possible for those who wished to do so to visit the memorial by car, providing she received prior notice.

g) *Planning Application 1/ W/06/00992 Forde Grange Farm.* The Secretary reminded the committee that the Trust, whilst not objecting in principal to this development proposal, had expressed its concerns regarding its environmental and visual impact on the AONB and also the possibility that it may introduce a negative impact on road safety.

The Planning Authority had approved the proposal whilst attaching a condition requiring the applicant to submit a landscaping and tree planting scheme for its approval, before the development was commenced. This was in the interest of visual amenity. The question of road safety was, as had been expected, ignored.

h) *Dorset Wildlife Trust Pastures New Appeal.* A copy of a letter sent by the chairman to the DWT with a donation of £50.00 towards the appeal, had been circulated to members. The chairman confirmed that a letter of thanks had been received from the DWT.

4: Finances

The Treasurer presented a financial report as at the 30th January 2007.

Income: £143.40	Expenditure: £ 788.00
Assets.	£
Current A/C	1202.60
Nationwide B/S	4234.09
	Total 4792.09
Alliance & Leicester Shares	2737.50

Ruth Jacobson wondered whether the financial performance of the investment in Alliance & Leicester shares could be improved by moving it elsewhere? ***It was agreed that Ruth should investigate market opportunities and report back at the February meeting.***

The financial report was then accepted .

5: TVT Challenge 2007.

It was agreed that a challenge will take place in 2007. Tony Smith suggested that the challenge could take a slightly different form and could perhaps become a project for the History Group, should one materialise. If not he was prepared to organise it himself with the support of committee members. John Whitbread said he would like to involve the school in the project and that was also agreed by the committee, although the nature of the involvement of the school would rest on what happened with the History Group. It was noted that the timing of the challenge was a critical factor in its success or otherwise.

6: Verge Cutting.

The Chairman reported that she had been approached by a member on various occasions wanting to know if the Trust had been made aware of the Dorset CC proposals for verge cutting in 2007. She had therefore spoken to the Dorset Wildlife Trust, who act as a communication link with DCC, and had been informed that a system of coloured poles was to be used. The arrangement was that Red poles would indicate early verge cutting (April /May), Yellow poles (June/July) and Blue poles (September).

It was pointed out that very few of the verges in Thorncombe parish, of which there are many, had any coloured poles at all which led the committee to fear that once again uncontrolled cutting and subsequent damage to the wild flower crop would again occur.

At the June 2006 meeting the committee had decided that a letter, reminding the DCC of the need for a protective programme of verge cutting in Thorncombe, should be issued prior to the finalisation of the 2007 cutting programme. ***The committee agreed that the letter should now be sent.***

7: Members Meetings Programme 2007/2008.

John Dalziel circulated a list of possible topics and speakers for 2007/2008. The committee ***agreed that the following topics should be used to construct the programme. 1) More of 'My Dartmoor'. 2) Dorset Nightlife, Nightjars, Owls etc. 3) Mary Anning, Fossil Pioneer. 4) Role of Fungus in the Environment. 5) History of Hawkchurch.***

It was suggested, with future programming in mind, that an approach should be made to Kate Saunders, Mark Agnew (Restoration of Glebe House) and the Across the Divide organisation (Tony Ford will investigate)

It was agreed that the colour of the programmes will be yellow and printing will again be undertaken by Creeds.

8: Any Other Business.

Thorncombe Thorn. Sadborow Estates management has refused the request from Eve Higgs to be allowed to plant a replacement thorn tree on its land.

St Mary's School. Ruth Jacobson proposed that she attempt to reinstate the relationship, which had started to develop through the 'Bat Walk' organised by the Trust, with the village school. ***The committee agreed with the proposal.***

Peter Moreland. The chairman informed the meeting that Peter Morland had requested that the committee should consider the feasibility of persuading individual members of the Trust to keep a watching brief on activity and developments within the world of local flora and fauna and to provide information on those matters to other members of the Trust. ***It was agreed to include this item for discussion to the agenda of the February meeting.***

9: Date & Venue of Next Meeting.

Tuesday the 27th February 2007 at 7.30pm in the Community Rom of the Thorncombe Village Hall.

.....Chairman
.....Date