

Thornborough Annual Parish Assembly 2023

Report from the Chair of the Parish Council

We have changed the name of this meeting to Annual Village Assembly after considerable thought. It is your meeting; the Parish Council hosts it for you. It is your opportunity as residents to catch up on what has happened in the village over the last year and an opportunity to talk to Councillors about your village.

For those who do not know me I am Mary Taylor and current Chair of the Parish Council. May I introduce you to my fellow Councillors. Ray Goodger is a long-standing member; I believe I am right when I say man and boy because he was still a teenager when he joined. Carol Lawrence who has been on the Council for some years. Lynn Morgan and Richard Dove are two recent appointments who in a very short time have become extremely active and valued members of the Council. You will see them out and about the village and will be hearing from them shortly.

There have been some big changes on the Parish Council in the past year. Firstly, there was the resignation of our Chair, Steve Tribe. Steve led the Council at a difficult time, through covid, zoom meetings and beyond. We would like to say a huge thanks to him. He put a lot of time, effort and dedication into our village and the delightful lamp beside the pond will always be a burning memory of him!

Very recently Charlotte Moore resigned. Charlotte has been on the Council for a number of years. She has supported the village tirelessly and has been an active voice when issues involving flora and fauna have arisen. The Council was joined, all too briefly, during the year by Mark Woodstock. Mark, as a recent resident, was a new pair of eyes and worked on planning requests on behalf of the Council.

We are now, however, a councillor short and once we go through the legal steps required there will be a second vacancy – so if this evening inspires you, please speak to Alison our Parish Clerk.

Finally, I would like to introduce you to Alison Robinson, our Parish Clerk. You may already have met her at village events. She is regularly in the village at celebrations and volunteer occasions helping out. The Council would not function as successfully as it does without our Parish Clerk. There is a surprising amount of legalese and following rules that all local councils have to respect. We as Parish Councillors are county officers, we are unpaid on the lowest rung of local government, but once we have accepted office, we are legally committed to follow the rules. Alison makes sure we do this. She also manages our books, answers emails and as well as disseminating and dealing with information for the Unitary Council and other bodies.

There are lots of other thank-yous that must be said. Please forgive me I will do this briefly, so much has happened in the last year, but we don't want to be here all night! There are lots of people in the village who give their time tirelessly so that all of us can celebrate and enjoy occasions.

- We have all come together to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee, the High Street was closed and tables set out.
- We marked the Queen passing with a moving Memorial Service in the church.
- We have celebrated the crowning of King Charles.

Without the Sports and Social Club, Steve, Richard, Peter et al we might not have enjoyed those occasions in the same way. So, many thanks to The Sports and Social Club members and to Bernard Garb too, who retired from the role this year. Thanks, Bernard, for all your work on behalf of the village.

Thanks too, to the WI who step up with tea and cake and so much more on such occasions. We now have a very active group of people putting the Village Hall back together – thanks to them for all their hard work. The Coronation Big Help Out was well supported, despite the weather – thanks. Not to forget that all these things cost money and the Fund-Raising Group has worked exceptionally hard with a program of outstanding events, drama, comedy, culture, auctions and much more -thanks everyone. Ray Goodger has done a Sterling job this year, both keeping the clock ticking and the flag flying – thanks.

And all the other people in the background – sorry not enough time to mention you but you are appreciated -thanks.

Compared to many years this has been a quiet year for the Parish Council. We completed the Streetlighting project. The previous lanterns have been replaced with low energy devices - much better for the environment - and an elegant lamp has been installed down by the pond. At least now, if you do fall in you will be able to see your way out. We had to do emergency work to various trees that decided to come down or were presenting a danger. This has preempted us to do a tree survey so now we have a visual and verbal record of the trees the Council is responsible for and a plan for their ongoing upkeep. We continue to manage the allotments and would like to thank the allotment holders for their hard work that makes them a credit to the village. Literally a lot of back breaking work has gone on there.

At this point I would like to refer to the village map showing which parts of the greens are registered to the Parish Council on the Land Registry. Obviously, we care for these and pay to have them cut regularly. The Sports Field and Pavilion is also our responsibility to maintain. The maintenance of other parts of the village is the responsibility of Buckinghamshire Council or homeowners. Maintaining the Children's Playground is a big commitment, both keeping the weeds at bay and ensuring that it is safe for children to use. Thanks to Kompan the gazebo at the centre of the playground has had a comprehensive refurb – next job is to give it a coat of varnish to protect. Many thanks to the residents who respond and turn out in all weathers to help us keep it safe and clean. And thanks to the residents who give us free use of their water and electricity to keep the area clean and weeds at bay.

We are all aware that Gigaclear entered the village this year. The Parish Council coffers benefitted because Gigaclear had to pay wayleave for crossing ground managed by the Parish Council. Because of lack of due process on their part Gigaclear crossed village lands without permission. The Council was able to arrange compensation for this in the form of a fibre community hub in the village hall. There will be no connection fees and so long as it is well used there will be no ongoing internet charges!

Before I became a member of the Parish Council, I had only attended one meeting – and that was when I was applying for planning permission from Bucks County Council. I have now been a Parish Councillor for over ten years and know that Parish Council work is much more than discussing planning application consultations. Many villagers do not know what the Parish Council does, I certainly didn't. This raises the question - how does the Council know what the village wants unless people tell us! Please contact us, directly or by email, attend our meetings or contact our Parish Clerk. All that info is on the Parish Council's website or our noticeboard. A big issue for us is that people often raise things that are not the Parish Council's responsibility, which generally means we're unable to help with.

And before we answer any questions that you have let me try to preempt the questions that come up most frequently. The majority of issues raised to us are road related, tipping, dumping and verge upkeep. The answer is FIXMYSTREET – it is a phone app – very easy to use – and covers all things that are 'broken or dirty or damaged or dumped and need fixing, cleaning or clearing.

And finally, the display boards prepared for the Assembly set out the Council's 2022/3 income and expenditure – see attached Appendices.

The Councillors leading the pond project then talked about it – see separate report.

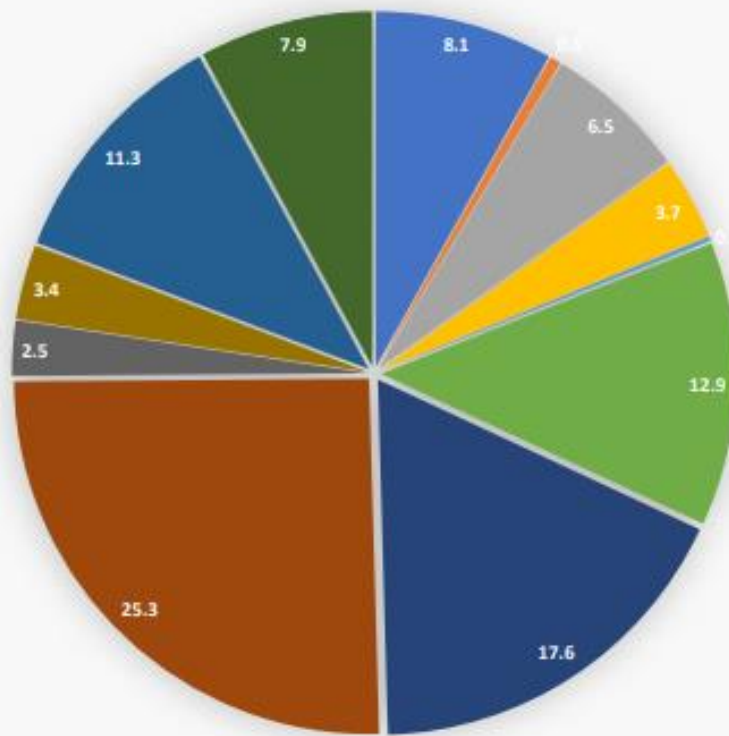
Cllr Mary Taylor
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Appendices

Income 2022/3	
Precept	£23,000.00
Rents	
· Allotments	£ 300.00
· Pre School	£ 1,684.00
· Thornborough Cricket Club	£ 1,499.41
· Track Training	£ 42.50
Grants	
· Street Light Project	£11,982.70
· Donations	£ 100.00
· Christmas Tree	£ 120.00
· Bench	£ 496.25
· Pond	£ 3,070.00
Gigaclear	£ 967.20
VAT Recovery	£ 6,227.90
Other incidentals	£ 102.04
	£49,592.00

Expenditure 2022/3		% of income
Admin + office	£ 4,036.00	8.1
Allotments	£ 233.00	0.5
Donations/subscriptions	£ 3,239.00	6.5
Grass cutting	£ 1,831.00	3.7
Playground	£ 105.00	0.2
Sports Field + Pavillion	£ 6,413.00	12.9
Staff	£ 8,745.00	17.6
* Streetlighting project	£12,540.00	25.3
Streetlighting	£ 1,251.00	2.5
Maintenance	£ 1,680.00	3.4
Reserves	£ 5,590.00	11.3
VAT	£ 3,929.00	7.9
* supported by a grant	£49,592.00	100.0

TPC Expenditure 2022/3



- Admin + office
- Allotments
- Donations/subscriptions
- Grass cutting
- Playground
- Sports Field + Pavillion
- Staff
- Streetlighting project
- Streetlighting
- Maintenance
- Reserves
- VAT