

Thornhill Open Village meeting on Zoom 17 August 2020

Why did we meet? To see how we're all doing begin to make a plan for a brighter, better future after the pandemic.

Where/when did we meet? Zoom Room 7.30 – 9.53!

Who was there? Event was arranged and hosted by Thornhill Community Trust (TCT) and was open to anyone in the village - 35 asked to attend and on the night 30 people were present.

What was on the agenda?

Introduce your self – let us know what challenges the pandemic has brought? Will your group or local business be viable going forward? – What help do you need from the rest of us, if any? – What opportunities has the pandemic brought?

What do you love about Thornhill and what main idea do you have to improve village life?

Village survey or questionnaire for all residents – what do you think about this idea? Can you commit to help with the proposed consultation of village and district residents? Is this something we can do ourselves?

What did people say?

Feedback from Groups

Thornhill Views community newsletter, Roddy Anderson: We've had to work differently since lockdown using Zoom to meet both to plan and produce the newsletter. Editions 37 & 38 were distributed via email with only a limited print run available at the shop. Latest edition 39 had full print run and was distributed by house to house as before.

Thornhill Primary School Parent Council, Collette Ashworth: The Parent Council hasn't been affected much so far with everyone helping each other. A virtual meeting will be needed shortly to work out how future fundraising will be tackled if required.

9th Callander & District Scouts, Adam Basset: Beaver colony of 12 boys with good adult support was established in Thornhill Community Hall six weeks before lockdown. This group is part of 9th Callander & District Scouts. The road map for re-opening is in preparation with hoped for re-start mid-Sept/October.

Thornhill Community Hall, Bryn Coulthard: The Hall closed on 23 March and the committee are now preparing to open with all the new safety requirements in place. They are not only finding out what is required to re-open but the things you have to do to keep a building shut e.g. heat/run water/flush toilets. The priority is to open for Playgroup as currently they are only group eligible to use Hall.

University of the Third Age (U3A), Myra Cumming: Callander & District branch of University of the Third Age – an organisation to promote learning and socialisation for retired people. Pandemic made members improve their tech skills so they could meet remotely but looking forward to full meetings re-starting. Looking for more members from Thornhill so there could be satellite meetings in the Thornhill Halls or Pub. Very successful badminton group for example was established last winter.

Lodge Blairhoyle 792, Duncan Kinloch: Lodge Blairhoyle does not have many members living in Thornhill at present. However the Lodge has a long history of supporting groups such as Playgroup and the School with funds for projects. If any groups are currently in need of support they are encouraged to drop a letter into the Lodge or contact Duncan on duncan.kinloch@hotmail.com and they will see what they can do.

Norrieston Parish Church, Reverend Ellen Larson Davidson: Last service in Thornhill was on 22 March, Mothering Sunday and they are currently filing all the necessary paperwork to begin re-opening. Zoom worship and bible study sessions arranged during lockdown with Ellen supporting parishioners to make connections via the internet. Trying to establish virtual T’N’Chat sessions with small groups. Ellen is able to refer to Start Up Stirling for those who may benefit from food parcels.

Paths Group, Alison Wallis on behalf of Gary Richardson: Traffic in Main Street needs to be managed differently with a 20 mile an hour zone and other creative solutions to improve flow and safety.

Thornhill Village Help, Laura Williamson: Thornhill village help has a pool of 30 volunteers. They did shopping for elderly residents at the height of the lockdown but that has stopped now since things have eased. They have kept the Old Phone Box stocked with store cupboard items, personal care thanks to a grant from Stirling Council and donations from the public. It has been well used throughout. There has also been a book and toy box for people to access. She wondered how long we will need to keep this community cupboard going and is happy to continue as long as there is a need. The Phone box currently needs cleaned up.

Thornhill Community Website, Alison Wallis: Alison described Thornhill as a swan with a lot more going on below the surface. Thornhill community website is not just for TCT but for all groups to use as a way of sharing what they are doing. It is hoped more groups will use the community calendar for example.

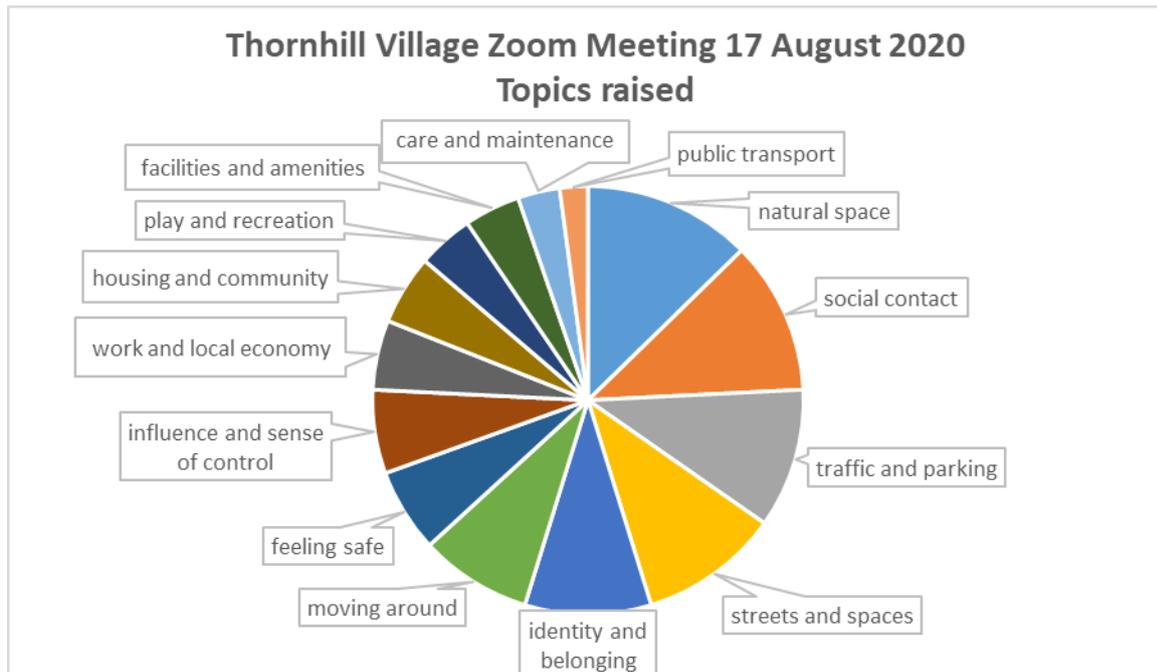
Community Council, Elaine Young: The CC has not been meeting due to Covid 19 and members have not been willing to meet via Zoom for example. They have been receiving emails and are aware of attending to pressing matters such as the 20 mph speed limit and other street management plans to improve safety and traffic flow which were underway before lockdown. They are due to have an AGM by September.

North Common Trust, Elaine Young: The North Common has been well used during lockdown but complaints have been received about insensitive cutting regime in the area. As many of North Common Trustees have been shielding a meeting has not been possible and so matters such as urgent drainage repairs have not been actioned.

West Moss-side Farm, Kate Sankey: Lockdown meant there were more people cycling and walking on the road down to West Mosside than normally also being part of the Thornhill Village Help group meant she got to know many more people in the village than before. The reduction in traffic made it easier to build more connections with the village. Re-opened for business in mid - July with 2 instead of 3 yurts and now very busy as people are desperate to get away for a break.

Thornhill Community Trust, Kate Anderson: Opportunity to collaborate differently – joint AGMs and Village Meeting tonight. As the Thornhill Community Action Plan is now some years out of date this seems the right time to reach out to others along the same lines as before.

Individual contributions: Everyone had a chance to speak at the meeting. To help capture the wide range of comments that were made they were matched against the topics found in the Scottish Government’s Place Standard Tool. This provides a simple framework to structure conversations about both the physical and social elements of a place. A count was made at the end of the meeting of how often a topic was raised and totals summarised in the graph below. This is not the classical use of the tool but helps provide a snapshot of what was being raised at the meeting.



The full descriptor of each topic is shown in italics below and some more detail of what was said at the meeting is recorded here.

Moving around – *(Walking and cycling are good for our health and the environment. Pleasant and safe routes can encourage walking and cycling.)*

Paths and safe walking and cycling routes were mentioned 9 times and the contrast between the open roads of lockdown versus the concern about using those same roads now was raised repeatedly.

“Being here during the day and at weekends gave us more opportunity to enjoy walks in the small friendly community always with someone to talk to.”

“Fighting a battle to get a footpath into the village”

Public transport – *Access to an affordable, reliable and well-connected public transport service is important for all communities. Good public transport encourages people to get around in ways that are better for the environment.*

Accessing the bus service from outside the village on a safe path and a suitable stopping point for service busses were mentioned.

Traffic and parking: - *Too much traffic can cause problems for people who live in, work in, or visit an area. Traffic and parking arrangements that allow people to move around safely can help people to get the most out of a place.*

Traffic was mentioned 10 times with concerns about speed of traffic, congestion in Main Street and safety for cyclists and pedestrians, especially children using village streets and routes into the village from outlying hamlets.

“Encouraging safe routes from the extremities of the village into the village is really important on many levels. Maybe these can be informally created with support of the local land owners?”

“The B822 should be designated as a safe walking route to Flanders Moss with safe sharing of road space.”

“People first, highways second”

A suggestion was made to develop a Thornhill Car Club.

Streets and spaces – *(Buildings, landmarks, greenery, views and natural landscape can all help to create an attractive, distinctive place that people enjoy. These features can also help people to find their way around.)*

This topic was raised 10 times in terms of appreciating the village’s place in the natural landscape.

Natural space - *(Natural space includes parks and woodlands, fields, streams and rivers, green space alongside paths and roads, and tree-lined streets. These can be good for wildlife, improve air quality and benefit our health and wellbeing)*

Natural space was mentioned 13 times with both a keen appreciation of what the village offers.

“I love the birdlife and the sunsets”

“The open space was very beneficial to me in lockdown.”

Play and recreation – *(Good places encourage children to play and allow adults to enjoy leisure and sporting activities. Opportunities for play and recreation can improve the quality of our lives and our health).*

Play and recreation was mentioned 5 times but as restrictions due to the pandemic continue these have been curtailed

“Could we have bowling green in Thornhill?”

“Could we have a Gala week with more range of activities for whole community rather than just one day for children?”

Facilities and amenities – *(Facilities and amenities are the things that we need to live and enjoy life. This can include shops, schools, nurseries, libraries, GP surgeries and places to eat, drink and meet friends. Access to facilities and amenities is important to support healthy, fulfilling lives.)*

Facilities mentioned 5 times with concerns raised about poor rural Broadband affecting our capacity to make connections at this time.

“Unreliable Broadband has meant some hiccoughs in the Zoom worship and bible study sessions arranged during lockdown.”

Thornhill Community website has proved to be really useful source of information and was commended to others - <https://thornhillstirling.org/>

There was appreciation of groups like Toddlers & Playgroup, PO van, Village Store.

Work and local economy – *(Good-quality work offers important benefits through income, activity, social contact, sense of identity and job satisfaction. A thriving local economy can provide work opportunities and help create lively places where people want to spend time)*

Work and economy mentioned 5 times with reference to home working and needs of home workers to make contact outside of the home raised several times.

Housing and community – *(The homes that are available locally will affect who lives in an area and how a place looks and feels. Good places have a mix of quality homes for families and people of different ages and incomes)*

5 mentions were made of housing especially in relation to the proposals from Dunsire & partners.

Concerns were raised that 70 houses would be too many for the infrastructure of the village to support. Comment was made that areas in the village are already zoned for housing but remain undeveloped.

Social contact – *(Feeling isolated can be damaging to our health and wellbeing. Good places provide a variety of spaces to meet and spend time with others.)*

This was mentioned 11 times with comment about the friendliness of the community and always someone to speak to in the shop or on the street. However the lack of possibility to meet up due to pandemic was noted and a suggestion made that outdoor seating areas need to be increased to allow people to meet but outside socially distanced.

Concern about elderly lonely in the village and hopes activities such as T’N’Chat can begin soon.

Concern raised that there are no places for teenagers to congregate in a dry shelter.

Set up a lunch club/home workers hub in Thornhill for home workers to have a social meet up.

Identity and belonging - *(How a place looks, its history and what other people think of the place can affect how we feel. A strong local identity can help us feel pride in our place, our community and in ourselves as a result.)*

Identity and belonging was mentioned 9 times especially in relation to community spirit and welcome.

The pandemic has meant people have spent more time in the village and so we must exploit and build on that sense of belonging.

Should we make Thornhill famous for something – Cycle friendly village?

Feeling safe – *(How safe a place feels can affect people’s wellbeing and how they spend their time in the place. Well-designed places can help make places feel safer and reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.)*

This topic was mentioned 5 times and all negatively in relation to road traffic.

Care and maintenance – *(Do I feel able to take part in decisions and help change things for the better?)*

This was mentioned 3 times as a concern that more members of the community are needed to need to help maintain local assets. It was felt more members of the community are required to help with the upkeep of assets such as the North and South Commons and the paths network to ensure they remain available for all.

Also that as the CC is not currently meeting there is no forum to raise issues with the way Stirling Council is looking after areas such as the South Common.

“Toilets need smartened up – outside doesn’t reflect facilities within”

Influence and sense of control – *(Do I feel able to take part in decisions and help change things for the better?)*

There were several concerns raised that as the Community Council had not been meeting important representation of village matters to Stirling Council was not being made.

“Rural communities must adapt and change.”

“Change shouldn’t be imposed on a community”

“It’s important the community decides its own future rather than waiting for things to happen.”

Village Survey

Consensus at the meeting was that a village survey was a good idea however there were several considered comments about the process and delivery of the survey.

The main themes were:

1. Establish a clear purpose for the survey and what we want to achieve from it.
2. Clarity and transparency of delivery and results.
3. Involve a representative focus group/reference group to develop content.
4. Consider various methods to avoid missing people we need to seek the views of the silent majority
5. To be completed anonymously but with an option to add your contact details
6. Make use of existing assets ie community spirit & Thornhill Views.
7. Thornhill Community Hall requested “As there is some uncertainty about what new normal looks like the Hall is looking for feedback about when/how people would see themselves using the Hall again. Would be good if questions about Hall usage appeared in the in survey.”

Dunsire & Partners development proposals

Towards the end of the meeting a question was raised asking if the Community Council are not meeting how can they respond to the developer's proposals? In the discussion that followed it was advised that people with views on the proposals should send them to the secretary of the Community Council as they are the body with statutory remit to respond to planning matters. Email - Gabriela.ingle@yahoo.com

What happens next?

- A quick up-date message went out 18 August sharing Rev Ellen Larson Davidson's email so that people could get together immediately about helping lonely elderly.
- The message also included a copy of last Thornhill Community Action plan for reference.
- Duncan Kinloch from Lodge Blairhoyle 790 wrote after the meeting asking for his contact details be shared so people can approach the Lodge for consideration for support duncan.kinloch@hotmail.com
- TCT Trustees meeting 1 September to consider report/notes

28 August 2020