

THE THAXTED SOCIETY



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

The Thaxted Society

The Guildhall

Thaxted

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AGENDA
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2024

Pam's Place

1. Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes of the last AGM 2023
4. Appointment of the Hon President
5. Election of the Committee
6. Treasurers Report and accounts for 2023-2024
7. Questions from the floor
8. Any other Business.
9. Closing Remarks

RECEPTION

With thanks to the Committee and volunteers at Pam's Place

CONTENTS

- *Chairman's Letter*
- *Annual Report*
- *Membership Report*
- *Treasurers Report*
- *History Project Report*
- *Society online Report*
- *Points for the future.*

NOTES TO THE REPORT

- *Advisors and Compliance*
- *Minutes of last AGM 2023*

SOCIETY ACCOUNTS

- *Accounts 23-24*
- *Appendix/ policies*

OUR THANKS

*The Society is grateful to the Parish Council for their ongoing support.
Thanks to Essex County Councilor Martin Foley
Kemi Badenoch MP for her interest and care for Thaxted.
UDC and its Officers for their cooperation and assistance.
And UDC District Cllr Martin Foley and Cllr Richard Haynes for their support.
The Thaxted Fayre Trust for their support.*



*“What we do and then what we achieve may often be done quietly and without fuss.
For the Society, Thaxted comes first and any recognition of our work, last!”*

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER AGM 2024

I doubt anyone reading this today would have predicted at the last AGM that a second war would be underway this time in Gaza. Or that we would have such a tumultuous change of government. Whilst we may rest easy here, our democracy having functioned, we must all feel some sadness for the suffering on the ground elsewhere.

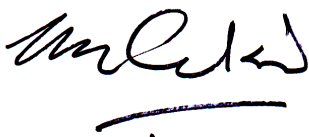
The new government has already begun moving goal posts, grey belt for green belt is just one example. For Thaxted a reviewed Neighbourhood Plan will play an important role. However, what is vital is that we take charge of any growth at a local level. Your Society will work with any party, for the good of Thaxted. Our AGM takes place on the same night as the Extraordinary UDC meeting to adopt the new Local Plan. If that occurs, then we will all have an opportunity to comment and hopefully move forward.

We now know that every public body is under serious financial constraint. The hiccup of our vanishing rubbish collection was not only a 'silly' inefficiency but also a result of the dwindling finances for public services. The same may be said of our bus service, vital as it is, someone has to run it and they may well be a business trying to make ends meet. One may wonder where our taxes go and whilst a good question it misses a simple point, there is always the money, it's where it is spent that alters with changes in governments and policy.

On our MP's initial election to parliament, I was invited to meet her and encouraged by one single repeated idea. That if we were to have development we must also have 'infrastructure'. In fact, this has become a repeated mantra ever since. But politics being what it is, here in Thaxted and across the county, the argument has become who provides said infrastructure. Essex County Council may insist it's Uttlesford's job and vice versa, meanwhile the 'job' like the ubiquitous pothole simply gets worse, and worse!

Your Society has been forthright, in insisting that we must not be the victim of political football. The Society on behalf of all Thaxted has made crystal clear what there is on the 'to do list'. It is firmly stuck on the political fridge door and will be both updated and underscored until action in response may be celebrated.

*I want to thank you all here today and elsewhere who are members. Your membership is vital in giving a professional and respected voice to Thaxted! I am also indebted to my fellow officers and the committee.
Thank you all.*



Michael Culkin. Chair.

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

A challenging year of climate and turmoil.

- We submitted our response to the draft Uttlesford Local Plan, particularly Chapter 7 and received an encouraging response from UDC.
- We republished our Building Design Guide 2023 (available here tonight)
- We published a guide to the work of the Thaxted Society. (available here tonight).
- We continued to manage Thaxted Online and Thaxted Society FB pages.
- Work on the Thaxted History Project continues with the publication of Vol III later this year. A launch event is planned at Thaxted Library.
- We reminded our MP re her commitment to infrastructure at Thaxted.
- We continued to work with the PC Chair and Councilors.
- We contributed to discussions on the future of the Guildhall and accepted an invitation to join the Management Committee.
- We wrote a letter of support for the proposals by Hunt's Charity to refurbish the Thaxted Alms Houses.
- We raised funds for the restoration of our town signs in partnership with the Parish Council, Cannon Architectural, and Thaxted Fayre trust.
- We met with Ann Mason of the John Webb Windmill restoration and offered our support for this important initiative.
- Ben Allen our Vice Chair now serves on the Windmill Trust as our representative.
- We remain committed to the Thaxted Archive, and continue to work closely with Mike Goatcher, Hon Archivist.
- We continue to support the work of the Thaxted Community Land Trust and supported their planning application for 4 affordable homes.
- We offered congratulations to both our MP and the new Prime Minister.

PHILLIP LEEDER

We are saddened to note the death of a long serving Committee member, Parish Councillor, and enthusiastic Thaxtedian Phillip Leeder. Phillip joined the management of the Society on retiring as a Parish Councillor. He brought with him a wealth of local knowledge as well as the viewpoint of a long-time farmer, oft overlooked in considering a future for Thaxted which remains a rural community. Perhaps careful in speaking up, Phillip, when he did speak, was always on point and often revelatory. Thaxted will miss him, as will your Committee and the Society as a whole.

Such as these are gone not to be remade in time...

RIP.

MEMBERSHIP

The Society has a current membership of 135 voting members and all Thaxted's residents are non-voting members unless they wish otherwise. The Society has among its members, subscribers from overseas, and those who no longer live in Thaxted but still have connections here.

IN MEMORIAM

*In the past year, we have lost friends of the Society whom we remember fondly:
**Michael & Patricia McCook Weir. Phillip Leeder. Robin Lee. Janie Stagg.
R.I.P.***

Membership dues payable at the AGM or up to two months thereafter remain unchanged. We consider this an appropriate contribution to our work.

- our lobbying on planning, conservation and legislation.
- our interface with ECC, UDC, and Westminster via our MP
- our work in outreach via the Welcome Pack and the Town map.
- our monitoring of planning applications at Thaxted
- publication of Thaxted Society NEWS in the ABC&U.
- publication and maintenance of our online presence. FB
- Commissioning, design & publication of the Thaxted History Project.
- Work with the Thaxted Archive.
- Our support for local 'public realm' initiatives including the TCLT.

Single £10.00 per year - Couple £15.00 per year

Angela Clarson
Membership Secretary



TREASURERS REPORT

Due to generous support, subscriptions to the History Project, constrained spending, a committed membership and the support of the Thaxted Fayre Trust, I can report that our finances remain in good shape if somewhat reduced. We send thanks to the Fayre trust for their grant in 2024 and to Cannon Architecture for their contribution to the Thaxted signs restoration.

It remains Society policy to fund projects on a project-by-project basis. This year we have raised funds for:

- The Thaxted New History project, Vol III. *(public subscription)*
- AGM hospitality fund. *(Committee Members)*
- Thaxted Fayre welcome tent. *(sponsorship)*
- Town signs restoration. *(Fayre Trust, Cannon Architecture)*

Membership dues are ring-fenced against running costs and core activities as set out in the Constitution.

Angela Clarson's work attracting new members with our Welcome Pack, and gathering dues is much appreciated. Dues may be paid here tonight, and members, current and new, are encouraged to do so.

There are accounts attached to this Report and I will be happy to answer any questions through the Chair.

Dame Kate Barker

Hon Treasurer



THAXTED HISTORY PROJECT REPORT

Thaxted has a rich and varied history. Most of you will be aware of more recent events, Conrad Noel and Gustav Holst. You may be less aware that for a period of about 50 years towards the end of the 14th Century, Thaxted was a national centre for the cutlery trade, or that the son of a Thaxted mercer (cloth merchant) was a member of Henry VIII's privy council.

It's a bit of a trite observation, but you only get to find out by looking. That process got easier in the last year. Thaxted's archive has been opened up and is currently being catalogued by Mike Goatcher. He has already come up with two interesting documents from the 16th Century, one of which deals with the history of the chantry (aka the alms house), the other a plea from a young man for the return of his inheritance, which had been confiscated by the then mayor of Thaxted who was in dispute with his employer.

Meantime, I have been looking for some time at the Ancient Borough of Thaxted, which existed from 1556-1686. It was a fraught history. Local towns folk sought and gained legal freedom (borough status) from the lord of the manor by taking advantage of a charge of treason against their then lord, Sir John Cutts. His son (also Sir John Cutts) tried to get his powers back. The result was an armed uprising led by the deputy mayor and the town clerk. Later, the cash strapped borough rigged the charter of Yardleys charity to get hold of its profits, an event which led through twists and turns to a riot in Thaxted church.

The Thaxted Society has generously supported the history project over the past ten years or so, publishing two volumes. It now plans to publish a third, on the Ancient Borough, for which I am most grateful. We hope to have it available this year. In the meantime, should you be interested in the riot at Thaxted church, an article appears in the Spring edition of Saffron Walden's Historical Journal.

Richard Till

With thanks to THP subscribers: Cannon Architectural. Mike Goatcher. Miriam Phillips.



SOCIETY ONLINE

The Society's popularity on line grows weekly, and those who follow any of our pages will note the numbers of posts from all over the globe. This represents the very best aspects of social media and how it allows many ex-Thaxtedians to stay in touch with their friends, family, and the town, which they clearly love and miss.

Our reach on social media now has combined likes and followers in excess of eleven thousand. By this outreach we are able to spread the message of conservation, care, and community at Thaxted, far and wide.

Our own FB page is also a valuable source of district, county, and national news as it affects Thaxted and most especially planning. Despite our local Planning Department at UDC and other departments at Essex, often what may affect or change our town begins with National Government and such articles and news feeds are a valuable resource for all Thaxted.

Meanwhile our website at ThaxtedSociet.com is our record-office online and has all our Annual Reports as well as policies and the constitution. By having this combined presence, we are truly a twenty first century Society caring for the past and its future!

Ben Allen

Vice Chair
Online Coordinator



POINTS FOR THE FUTURE

We remain committed to '**raising our town's status**' as one of the surest methods of creating protection for the town. Our policy published on our website thaxtedsociety.com and available here today attests to this.

- Reinvigorating our campaign to discourage pavement parking within the conservation area as per the Neighbourhood Plan, with the support and cooperation of Cllr Martin Foley and the PC.
- Encouraging the installation of charging points in all Thaxted's car parks.
- Commissioning research into the impact of B184 through Thaxted. Lobbying UDC for changes in Local Plan to reflect this.
- Working with our MP to insist on adequate infrastructure with development.
- Consulting on proposals for a National Cutlery Museum at Thaxted, whilst supporting and contributing to the Thaxted Archive.
- Lobbying for the retention of the Thaxted Guildhall as a community asset and forming part of its Management Committee going forward.
- Ensuring building regs compliance in all Thaxted's new build and ensuring compliance with the Neighbourhood Plan and UDC Design Guide.
- Continuing our ongoing support for the Thaxted Community Land Trust
- Supporting the Thaxted Windmill Trust with the Vice Chair representing the Society on the Trust.

We intend to develop and maintain our productive working partnership with the Parish Council, whilst energetically holding them to account.



Until we exert the influence such a remarkable town merits we are at risk.

NOTES

ADVISORS - THANKS

The following deserve of our thanks for their assistance throughout the year.

- *To Pellys, who via Andrew Arnold remain legal advisors to the Society.*
- *To all the very generous "Thaxted History Project" subscribers.*
- *To Electric Footprint for their ongoing maintenance of the website.*

THAXTED SOCIETY GOVERNANCE

The Thaxted Society is constituted under guidance of the Charity Commissioners and this AGM is one of the requirements of that guidance as set out in our adopted constitution. The following are standing for re-election or appointment at this year's AGM.

Honourary (appointment)

Bruce Munro Esq. Hon. President.	2017
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Executive Officers

Michael Culkin	Chair.	2013
Ben Allen	Vice Chair.	2018
Kate Barker	Treasurer.	2018
Maggie Catterall	Secretary.	2014

Executive Committee Members

Brian Smith	Editor THP	2004
Angela Clarson	Membership Sec.	2013
Richard Till	Thaxted History.	2015
Trevor Haynes	Building Regs.	2018

Philip Leeder	Life	RIP
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Co Opted Member-Advisors

Andy Frater.	Parish Council rep	2023-25
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We currently have vacancies on the Management Committee and would be pleased to hear from you if this was of interest. The Committee meets quarterly including this AGM.

MINUTES OF LAST AGM 2023
Held at the Pam's Place June 6th 2023

- Chairman Michael Culkin welcomed all to this 'Thaxception'
- Apologies were received from Richard Haynes, Fran & John Morgan, Trevor Haynes, Tom Cannon, Suzanne & Robert Walker, Ann Pickhaver, Fr Gerwyn.
- Minutes from 2022 AGM approved unanimously.
- Appointment of Bruce Munro as Hon President. Appointment of Ben Allen as Vice Chairman of the Society. Appointment of Executive Committee as set out in the report.
- Treasurer's report and draft accounts for 2022-2023 Income £300 down on last year likely as a result of Covid but optimistic of generous gifts to facilitate the work of the ongoing g History Project which has generated much interest.
- Andy Frater Chairman of Parish Council and their representative on Thaxted Society Executive Committee spoke briefly on the importance of the two bodies working synergistically in the interests of making Thaxted a kinder welcoming and special place.
- Bruce Munro then introduced our speaker Richard Till to talk about "The Cutlers Thaxted's Golden Era".

Richard began by congratulating Bruce on his own publication. He then spoke about the Thaxted Archive which was started in the 1920's around the time of Conrad Noel. In 1980's much material was submitted to the Records Office; the remainder being housed in the attic of the Chantry. Mike Goatcher is working studying these documents and has passed some on to Richard.

Richard talked about two of these firstly a Rental document from 1763 of a building in the Bull Ring called the Hard. He has discovered the presence of Crispy Brooke (in front of present chip shop). This was crossed from Park Street over Kents Bridge into Town Street. There was also a drawbridge around the site of pedestrian crossing. Pubs, of which there were many were rented NOT freehold.

The other document was dated 2nd December 1551 at the time of our country becoming Protestant when Catholic symbols were removed and wall paintings in churches painted over, saints were removed from niches and Chantry was closed. 20/30years later Thomas Crosby had acquired the Chantry (the building we know as the almshouses) and in 1600 he gave it to the town. These documents have gone to Records Office and, in due course, copies will be returned for Thaxted's records.

- Thanks were expressed to Brian Smith for all his work over the years in connection with the production of The Thaxted Society Bulletin.
- The evening ended with the social part of the event giving a chance to mix with familiar faces and meet new ones.

SOCIETY ACCOUNTS 2023-2024

THAXTED SOCIETY April 2023-March 2024

OPENING BALANCES		DETAILS			
Current a/c	1201.73	Membership		Bank Interest	
Premium a/c	567.13	Apr-23	£40.00	Jun-23	1.18
Total	1768.86	May-23	£75.00	Sep-23	1.52
		Jun-23	£585.00	Dec-23	2.66
		Jul-23	£90.00	Mar-24	4.10
		Aug-23	£40.00	Total	9.46
		Sep-23	£10.00		
		Oct-23	£100.00		
		Nov-23	£50.00		
		Dec-23	£30.00		
		Jan-24	£0.00		
		Feb-24	£15.00		
		Mar-24	£65.00		
		Total	£1,100.00		
		Books/pins	£80.00		
			£40.00		
			£60.00		
			£75.00		
		Total	£255.00		
		Cross-check			
		Income-exp	359.33		
		Opening-closing		-359.33	
		History project			
		Opening	1460.13		
		Books -in	0.00		
		Expenses	0.00		
		Closing	1460.13		
		Free cash	668.06		

INCOME

Membership	1100.00
Books/pins	100.00
Interest	9.46
Donations -signs	1500.00
Donations AGM	600.00
Total Income	3309.46

EXPENDITURE

History project	0.00
Web-hosting	296.24
Venue hire	60.00
CPRE sub	36.00
Thaxted Fayre	80.32
AGM expenses	408.07
Village signs	1575.00
Expenses - misc	494.50
Total Expenditure	2950.13

CLOSING BALANCES

Current a/c	1051.69
Premium a/c	1076.50
Total	2128.19

APPENDIX

Thaxted Society Adopted Policy 2024

- i. To: oppose all building outside the current development limits ref NP 2019. (Except: where the accepted and recognised harm is outweighed by enforceable and contractual benefit provided by the developer, builder, landowner or applicable part.)
- ii. To: encourage actively the use, protection, and designation, of Thaxted's public open green spaces in perpetuity for the benefit of all.
- iii. To: resist the creeping urbanisation of Thaxted and vigorously the Historic Core [Clarson Clause]
- iv. To: discourage parking on pavements, ancient pathways, and ancient cobbles.
- v. To: oppose all planning for the conversion of garages, carports, and parking in any form resulting in the loss of parking.
- vi. To: resist and oppose change of use from commercial/business to residential.
- vii. To: encourage the use, style and form, of hanging signs in the conservation area.
- viii. To: discourage the use of concrete kerbstones and asphalt pavements and pathways.
- ix. To: defend vigorously and seek conservation of our original gas light lamp-stands and to robustly discourage installation of modern unsympathetic public lighting.
- x. To: oppose all Outline Planning applications which: impinge, abut, or affect, in any manner the Historic Core including the Conservation Area.
- xi. To: insist that reserved matters, respond adequately to both Thaxted's historic and local vernacular as well as those details designated unique and particular whilst complying with the Essex design guide and the Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan.
- xii. To oppose all Outline Planning applications which: impinge, abut, or affect, in any manner, the Historic Core including the Conservation Area of Thaxted.
- xiii. The Society expects reserved matters and their conditions to respond adequately to both Thaxted's historic and local vernacular as well as details designated unique, whilst complying with the Essex design guide and the Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan.
- xiv. To support the development and use of solar panels and allied climate change mitigation at Thaxted including their appropriate use within the conservation area.
- xv. To encourage public bodies to install electric charging points throughout Thaxted to meet growing demand and encourage the change to cleaner power.
- xvi. To urge the removal of publicly displayed posters, and notices after advertised event.
- xvii. To support and assist in the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan through its detail, conditions, and intent and thereafter to so monitor effect and compliance.
- xviii. To discourage the use of plastic: plants, trees, flowers, shrubs, and grass, outside reducing the polluting effects of plastic particles upon the soil and groundwater.
- xix. The Society expects and encourages the proper care and maintenance of all listed buildings at Thaxted without the need of intervention by the Conservation Officer.
- xx. The Society is resolved to object to all 'split-planning' applications, where the evident purpose is to avoid Low-Cost Housing contribution or other legal requirements.
- xxi. The Thaxted Society discourages the use of non-drained land hard standing/parking at properties where adequate flood run off mitigation is not in place

**(Adopted unanimously by the Executive Committee on April 26th, 2018)*

*** (adopted unanimously by the Executive Committee on the 27th June 2019)*

**** (adopted unanimously by the Committee on January 23rd 2020)*

***** (adopted unanimously March 30th 2023)*

NOTES



PRINTING OF THIS REPORT ALSO KINDLY SPONSORED BY ANONYMOUS