

**MINUTES OF
THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL
FACILITIES COMMITTEE
THORNLEY VILLAGE CENTRE
1ST SEPTEMBER 2014**

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs. J. Unsworth, (Chair), Mrs. P. English, Mrs. P. Maddison, M. McCoy,

APOLOGIES

No apologies were recorded.

69. Thornley Village Centre

The Parish Clerk reported that the lease had been signed in accordance with Council policy and occupation of the premises had begun on Monday 18th August 2014.

A number of snagging issues had been identified which were to be notified to Durham County Council for rectification.

A verbal report was presented on the current status of the Centre.

Resolved: *That the information be noted.*

70. Welfare Park

The Parish Clerk gave a verbal report on a meeting between the Chair and Vice Chair and representatives of the 2 Football Clubs using the Welfare Park as their Home Ground for the 2014/15 season and on the current status of the facility.

It had been pointed out that that the Parish Council would, in the near future, be considering if an increase in the hire fees for the 2015/16 season was appropriate and if maintenance regime should be reviewed in an effort to reduce the net expenditure deficit at the facility. Proposals for developing football facilities and a Multi-Use Games Area on the site of the new Village centre were also outlined.

Members were informed that the lock on the roller shutter of the referees changing room had been damaged.

Resolved: *That the information be noted.*

71. Allotments

The Parish Clerk gave a verbal report on a meeting between the Chair and Vice Chair and representatives of the Allotment Association when it had been pointed out that the Parish Council would, in the near future, be considering if an increase in the annual rents for 2015/16 was appropriate.

Members were informed of the number of man hours it had taken to date to clear the gardens of 3 tenants who had been served Notice to Quit, in order that they could be re-let to persons on the waiting list.

A suspicious substance (thought to be asbestos) had been discovered whilst clearing one particular allotment. In accordance with Health & Safety legislation clearance work had been halted in order that this substance could be analysed. This would take time and depending on the test results (if it was proven to be asbestos) the final cost of clearance could increase substantially. This was because a specialist removal firm would need to be contracted to remove the material. As a result this allotment could not be offered up for tenancy at this time.

Final accounts would be calculated as soon as possible, to include transport and skip hire costs and invoices would be forwarded to the individuals concerned for settlement. In accordance with existing policy failure to pay would result in legal action being taken in the County Court to recover the debt. Any unrecovered sums would be reflected in the allotment accounts. If subsequently determined by the Parish Council that debts were to be written off, this may need to be recovered by rent increases in future years for all remaining tenants.

Members considered a proposal to impose a "bond" on new tenants to offset some of the cost of clearing allotments at the end of a tenancy if required.

It was reported that an allotment tenant had approached the Parish Council with regard to locating a "Citizen Band" radio antenna on his allotment. It was pointed out that there was no specific clause in the allotment agreement to allow or prevent such equipment.

Resolved: *That the information be noted & that Finance Committee be requested to determine the level of bond required from new tenants and that providing tenants complied with the appropriate Planning Legislation relating to the positioning of radio antenna no objections be raised.*

72. Youll House

The Parish Clerk explained that no further bookings were being taken for Youll House and that it had been "mothballed" pending a decision of its future.

Members considered a proposal to seek advice and estimated costs from an Architect on what changes would be necessary to convert the premises into a suitable storage facility to replace the current depot.

Resolved: *That the advice of an architect be sought regarding the cost of converting the premises to a suitable storage facility.*