

**MINUTES OF  
THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL  
FINANCE 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.*

**73. Financial Planning – Precept Setting 2015/16**

Members were given advance information provided by Durham County Council in relation to the Council Tax Support Grant and possible impact this may have when setting the Precept for 2015/16.

**Resolved:** *That the information be noted.*

**74. Welfare Park Review of Hire Fees 2015/16**

Members considered the desirability to provide a suitable recreational facility for the residents of Thornley against the financial resources required to maintain it to the required standard and determine the extent of any increase in hire fees for 2015/16.

**Resolved:** *That the hire fees for 2015/16 be increased from £350 to £400 per team.*

**75. Allotment Gardens and Rent Review 2015/16**

*Councillor Mrs. P. Maddison declared a personal interest in this item and took no further part in the discussion or voting procedure that followed.*

Members considered the legal requirement for Parish Council's to provide allotment gardens for the residents, against the financial resources required to administrate; maintain or improve them and to determine the extent of any increase in rents for 2015/16.

The Parish Clerk reminded members that the current rent, set in 2011, was £30.00 irrespective of the actual size of the allotment.

It was reported that in accordance with an earlier decision of the Council<sup>1</sup> attempts had been made, with the assistance of the Allotment Association, to audit the allotments and measure them accurately in order that rents could be calculated on price per square metre. This exercise had proven difficult to complete because entry to all allotments could not be gained without some difficulty.

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<sup>1</sup> *Meeting of the Facilities Committee held 30th August 2013 minute 70 refers.*

Members were of the opinion that to achieve a more equitable rent structure the use of digital mapping technology should be employed initially to assess the size of each plot so that the estimated annual rent, to be charged from April 2016 could be calculated.

Tenants disputing the sizes of their garden(s) could request that they be measured in their presence and the rent recalculated accordingly.

Consideration was also given to a request from the Facilities Committee to determine the amount of Bond new tenants should be required to deposit with the Parish Council to offset the potential costs of clearing their allotment should they leave it in an unacceptable condition when their tenancy ended.

**Resolved:** *That the annual rent for 2015/16 be increased from £30 to £35 per annum and thereafter they be determined on a cost per square meter based initially on measurements obtained from digital mapping and the bond for new tenants be set at £50.*

#### **76. Cemetery Fees & Charges 2015/16**

Members were asked to determine if the fees and charges for Thornley Cemetery should be increased on 1st April 2015

**Resolved:** *That all charges be increased by £5.00 with the exception of the Transfer of Exclusive Rights of Burial which would remain at £50.00 per grant*

#### **77. Request for Donation (Ref: 7186)**

Hartlepool & District Hospice requested a donation to help provide palliative care for patients with incurable diseases.

Members were asked to recall that a donation of £100.00 was granted previously at the meeting held on 4th September 2013.

**Resolved:** *That the Council in accordance with its powers under sections 137 and 139 of the Local Government act 1972, should incur the following expenditure which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure of £50.00.*

#### **78. Request for Donation (REF: 7223)**

Members considered a request from Keith Newton of the Lanpang Camp Muay Thai boxing club for a donation to fund sending 3 junior competitors to an event which would give them the opportunity to become part of the England Squad.

**Resolved:** *That in accordance with existing council policy not to make donations to individuals, this request be refused.*

#### **79. Letter of Thanks (REF: 7212)**

A letter of thanks has been received from East Durham Community Transport for the Parish Council's recent donation.

**Resolved:** *That the letter be received.*

#### **80. Finance & Budgetary Control Reports**

The Finance & Budgetary Control report detailing all income and expenditure since the last meeting and the current budget position was considered.

**Resolved:** *That the report be accepted and that the Parish Clerk makes arrangements to settle any outstanding accounts.*