

**MINUTES OF
THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
PARISH OFFICE
12TH DECEMBER 2014**

PRESENT

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

APOLOGIES

No apologies were recorded.

137. Parish Precept 2015/16

The Parish Clerk reported that it was appropriate at this time to consider the budget for 2015/16 and set the precept to be raised via Durham County Council. The Precept for 2014/15 was £131,887 plus an LCTSS grant of £19,578. Taking into account national wage settlements and other increases notified by Government (2.2%) the total estimated expenditure budget requirement for 2015/16 had been calculated at £167,950.

Examples provided by Durham County Council of possible precept amounts and how they would impact on budget proposals were presented to members.

To meet the increased demands the minimum Precept required would be £133,197 (an increase of £1,310) plus an LCTSS Grant of £19,095 (a reduction of £483.00).

This would equate to an overall increase of 1.99% equal to a £4.57 pence increase per annum on Band "D" properties.

Resolved: *That the Parish Precept for 2015 be increased by 1.99% to £133,197 plus LCTSS Grant of £19,095 and that Durham County Council be advised accordingly.*

138. Contract for the Installation of Hand Dryers Thornley Village Centre

The Parish Clerk reminded members that 2 estimates had been considered previously but neither had been acceptable.

To progress matters PHS Hygiene had been approached and they had submitted an estimate for installing 3 Airstream dryers (including electrical cabling and repair & maintenance for £1,170.00 on a 5 years lease.

Resolved: *That a 5 year lease be entered into with PHS Hygiene for the provision of 3 hand dryers.*

139. Allotment Clearance Costs

The Parish Clerk referred to previous meetings¹ and reported that he had now received a report from a specialist firm stating that dangerous asbestos was not present on A1 Coopers Close Allotments. As a result the remaining debris could be removed by the Parish Council adopting appropriate precautions.

The cost of clearing the 3 allotments was currently £1,154.32.

It was pointed out that whilst the Parish Council had determined that costs be recovered from the individuals concerned, (through the courts if necessary) historically this had proven not to be cost effective as eventually the unpaid debt had had to be written off.

It was proving difficult (for various reasons) to re-let two of the three vacant plots leaving 4 names (effectively) on the waiting list.

Resolved: *That clearance costs be charged to the allotment account and that overall expenditure be taken into account when determining future rents and that the vacant allotments be withdrawn from service, returned to grass and no longer be offered up for tenancy.*

140. Village Notice Board

As requested, the Parish Clerk provided an estimate for the provision of a Noticeboard to be erected at the Village Centre. Costs ranged from £1,800 to £2,000 depending on exact specification required.²

Resolved: *That an order be placed for a notice board as determined by members.*

141. Request for Donation (REF: 7382)

Mr T. Young requested a donation to establish a Karate Club to operate from within the Village Centre.

Members were mindful that this was a new venture that it may take time to become self-sustainable and therefore considered that any donation should only be to cover hall hire charges of 1x2 hour session per week for a maximum of 15 weeks.

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 £300.00.*

142. Request for Donation (REF: 7384)

The Real Choice College based in Consett who provide care and education to students and young people requested a donation for their “together we achieve” group.³

Resolved: *That the request be received.*

¹ 26th June Minute 30, 1st September Minute 71 and 30th October Minute 107 refers.

² Brochure made available to members

³ Application letter providing additional information was given to members.

143. Staff Christmas Bonus.

The Parish Clerk explained that for a number of years it had been the practice of the Parish Council to consider the payment of a Christmas bonus to members of the workforce.

Following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair it was suggested that a similar gesture is made once again.

Resolved: That the action of the Parish Clerk be endorsed and that the 3 members of staff receive a Christmas bonus of £50 pro rata.