

**MINUTES OF
THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL
THORNLEY VILLAGE CENTRE
13TH JANUARY 2015**

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs. J. Unsworth, (Chair), Mrs. P. English, J. Luke, Mrs. P. Maddison, M. McCoy, T. Unsworth J. Williams, J. Wilson.

APOLOGIES

<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Reason for Absence</i>	<i>Resolved</i>
<i>K. Mawson</i>	<i>Working</i>	<i>Approved</i>

County Councillor Morris Nichols.

PUBLIC

No members of the public were present.

144. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4th November 2014 were accepted as a true record.

145. Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th November 2014 were accepted as a true record.

146. Minutes of the Finance Committee

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th December 2014 were accepted as a true record.

147. Public Question and Answer Session

A member of the public questioned the need to transfer the Exclusive Rights of Burial from the name of the deceased into the name of the surviving next of kin in order that a headstone/memorial could be placed on the grave.

The Chair gave a brief explanation indicating that this was in accordance with the Burials Act. Only the owner of the Exclusive Rights of Burial can be granted permission to place memorials on a grave. Any person can seek to have the Exclusive Rights of Burial transferred into their name by agreement with the owner of the Exclusive Rights (if surviving) or on production of the Last Will & Testament of the deceased naming them as trustees. Alternatively Letters of Administration are acceptable or as a last resort by the swearing of a Statutory Declaration in the presence of a Magistrate or Commissioner of Oaths. It is at the discretion of each local authority to determine what charge it makes for transfers.

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

148. Police Report

As the Police were not present a report was unavailable.

Resolved: *The information be noted.*

149. Unitary County Councillor

On behalf of Councillor Nichols the Parish Clerk reported that Durham County Council was still endeavouring to identify service areas where savings could be achieved in order to meet the strict financial guidelines imposed by Central Government. This was however proving extremely difficult.

He also expressed his thanks for being asked to perform the opening ceremony of the Thornley Village Centre.

Resolved: *That the report be received.*

150. Risk Assessments – Revisions

The Parish Clerk reported that no revisions were necessary at this time.

Resolved: *That the information be noted.*

151. County Durham Association of Local Councils

It was reported that no meeting had taken place.

Resolved: *That the information be noted*

152. CDALC Medium & Small Councils Forum

It was reported that no meeting had taken place.

Resolved: *That the information be noted*

153. EDAP&TC

It was reported that the Parish Council had not appointed representatives to this association because of the difficulty of attending meetings at the times they were being held.

It was understood that the starting times had however recently been reviewed thus making it more likely that representatives (from all Parish Councils) could attend. In the interim Councillor Mrs. P. English and J Luke volunteered to attend whenever possible.

Resolved: *That formal appointment of representatives be deferred until the Annual General Meeting of the Council in May 2015*

154. New Thornley

Councillor T. Unsworth reported that no meeting had been held recently.

At previous meetings members of the Partnership had expressed the view that their main objective (the construction of the Village Centre), had been achieved and that in accordance with its Constitution the Partnership should be dissolved.

Resolved: *That the report be received.*

155. Thornley Village Centre Management Group

On behalf of the Management Group Councillor Mrs Unsworth reported that the official opening by County Councillor Morris Nichols and local resident Mrs. Bartram had been extremely successful.

Bookings were on the increase and a program of activities was slowly being introduced.

Discussions were being held with various agencies to fund the employment of a Development Support Worker.

Resolved: *That the report be received.*

156. Request to Lease Youll House (REF: 7371)

An application from Miss Laura Laidler to rent Youll House from the Parish Council was considered.

The Parish Clerk provided background information as to previous decisions of the council regarding its condition and possible sale, renovation or alteration as a depot facility.

Members expressed the view that until estimated costs had been obtained to relating to the possible renovation/alteration cover and all other avenues had been explored no further decision on the future of Youll house should be made¹.

Resolved: *That a decision on this application be deferred and the applicant be advised accordingly.*

157. Standing Orders/Media Policy

The Parish Clerk referred to information previously circulated to members and advised that the media policy produced by N.A.L.C. should be adopted and that Standing Orders of Council be amended as required.

Resolved: *that the N.A.L.C. media policy be adopted and Standing Orders of Council be amended as required.*

158. Thornley Residents Group ((REF: 7380)

The Parish Clerk reported that a response from the Residents Group stated that there was no longer a need for the Parish Council to send a representative to their meetings. Any Councillor wishing to attend in their capacity as a resident would however be welcomed.²

Resolved: *That the information be noted.*

159. Buckingham Palace Royal Garden Party

The Parish Clerk reported that the Lord Chancellor has issued an invitation to the County Durham Association of Local Council's to forward the names of 4 persons to attend the Queen's Garden Party to be held on 12th May 2015.

In line with usual practice all nominations will be put into a hat and drawn at random by the CDALC Chairman or Vice Chairman.

All nomination must be received by the association by Friday 6th February 2015.

¹ See also minute 159 Community Right to Build.

² See also minute 163 P.A.C.T. Meeting

Resolved: *That the names of Councillor Mrs. J. Unsworth & Councillor Mrs. P. Maddison be forwarded to the County Durham Association of Local Councils for consideration.*

160. Community Right to Build

The Parish Clerk referred to information previously circulated to members and reported that a free to attend Community Right to Build workshop was being arranged by N.A.L.C. in London on 28 January or in York on the 18 February 2015 to provide Councillors with more insight into this topic.

Members were asked to consider if they should send representatives to the workshop as it may produce an alternative proposal to the sale, demolition or renovation of Youll House (as a depot), for example as single person accommodation, from which the Parish Council might derive income.

Resolved: *That places be reserved for any member able to attend.*

161. Society of Local Council Clerks Practitioners Conference

Approval was sought to attend this very worthwhile annual event being held in Stratford on Avon on Thursday & Friday 5th & 6th March 2015 as it provides up-to-date information via hands-on practical sessions.

Cost for Clerks and Councillors is £235 per delegate.

Resolved: *Following a show of hands (5 to 3) it was resolved that approval be granted for the Parish Clerk and Councillors attend.*

162. Request for Donation (REF:7399)

The Community Counselling and Support CIC based in the Dawdon Youth & Community Centre requested a donation to aid the work of the unit in 2015.

Resolved: *That the application be received.*

163. Any Additional Urgent Items of Business

In accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to information) Act, 1985, section 100B (4)(b), the Chair following consultation with the Proper Officer, agreed that the following items of business not shown on the agenda, be considered as a matter of urgency.

164. P.A.C.T. Meetings

Members highlighted the fact that the Parish Council had no representation at the P.A.C.T. meetings which were normally held immediately before the Residents Group Meeting as a result the Parish Council were unaware of what topics were being discussed or what action was being taken to resolve issues raised by residents in this forum.

Resolved: *That the Parish Clerk ascertain if it is possible for the Parish Council to appoint a representative to attend this forum in an official capacity.*

165. Coopers Close Allotments Fence

Councillor Wilson reported that there had been a number of break-ins at the Coopers Close Allotment Site and suggested that estimates be obtained to install a boundary fence where appropriate.

Resolved: *That the Parish Clerk obtains estimates for consideration by the Finance Committee.*

166. Electronic Summonses

The parish Clerk referred to information previously circulated to members and reported that it would be possible as from 30th January 2015 for summonses to Councillors to attend Parish Council meetings could be sent via electronic means.

Members considered that while this was an important step forward in reducing the council carbon footprint it could only be effective if all councillors had access to the internet and a printer.

Resolved: *That Parish Councillors continue to receive summonses to attend Parish Council meetings in hard copy delivered to their home address.*

167. Parish Polls

The Parish Clerk referred to information previously circulated to members that gave background information on current trigger criteria on Parish Polls and changes being proposed by Government.

Councils were being asked to provide any comments on the proposed changes by 30th January 2015.

Resolved: *That the information be noted.*

168. Internal Auditor's Report of Accounts 1st April 2014 to 30th September 2014

The Parish Clerk reported that the Internal Audit of accounts from 1st April 2014 to 30th September 2014 had been completed by W.J. Smith.

The accounts were in order and with the exception that of some minor points required clarification.³

Resolved: *That the report be received.*

169. Application to Purchase Youll House

The Parish Clerk reported that Mr. George Miller Hambleton House, The Rookery, Thornley DH6 3ET had made a verbal application to enter into negotiations with the Parish Council to be allowed to purchase Youll House⁴.

Resolved: *That a decision on this application be deferred and the applicant be advised accordingly.*

170. Development Worker - Grant Application

In view of the pending dissolution of the New Thornley Partnership in accordance with its Constitution, the Chair of the Thornley Village Centre Management Group made a verbal request that the funding, allocated to the New Thornley Partnership⁵ to appoint a Development Worker, be now paid to the Thornley Village Centre Management Group as they were to oversee the appointment and manage the person employed.

³ *A copy of the report was made available for members.*

⁴ *See also Minute 159*

⁵ *Minute 36 refers.*

Resolved: *That the funding previously awarded to the New Thornley Partnership to appoint a Development Worker now be paid to the Thornley Village Centre Management Group for the same purpose.*

171. House Fencing Repairs

Mrs Alison Stones the tenant of 100, Coopers Close, Thornley requested the Parish Council's assistance to have the boundary fence repaired/erected on the property. Whilst sympathetic to Mrs Stones concerns it was pointed out that this property was owned and administered by East Durham Homes, as a result the Parish Council they could do little to resolve matters or to erect the fence.

Resolved: *That the resident be advised accordingly and that they should contact their landlord.*