

**MINUTES OF
THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL
THORNLEY VILLAGE CENTRE
7TH MARCH 2017**

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs. J. Unsworth (Chair), Mrs. P. English, Mrs. A. Kelly, Mrs. P. Maddison, M. McCoy, D. Smith, T. Unsworth, G. Wilson.

APOLOGIES

Councillor	Reason for Absence	Resolved
Mrs. .K. Huntington	Work Commitments	Approved
Ms. J. Grant	Work Commitments	Approval

PUBLIC

One member of the public was present.

Meeting Commenced 7:00pm

166. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th January 2017 were tabled, approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

167. Police Report

On behalf of PCSO Kelly Hyde the Parish Clerk stated that the following incidents had been reported to the police since the last meeting: -

Anti-social Behavior 4
Burglary 8
Theft from Vehicles 2

In addition, approximately 100 horses had been seized.

Resolved: That the report be received.

168. Unitary County Councillor

As County Councillor Morris Nichols was not present no report was available.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

169. Public Question and Answer Session

A member of the public highlighted the recurring problem of fly-tipping on land to the rear of the Library and asked if the barrier gate to the allotment site could be re-located to prevent access and (or) in addition if a height restriction barrier be installed.

The Parish Clerk provided additional background information and explained the difficulties that may arise if all vehicles were prevented open access.

It was also stated that despite numerous requests being made to Durham County Council over a period of 12 months, street lighting columns nos: 271, 272 and 361 were still not working.

Resolved: *That a quotation be obtained for the provision of a height restriction barrier and that Durham County Council be advised of the Parish Council's concern over the failure to repair the light columns.¹*

Action: *the Parish Clerk.*

170. Draft Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

The draft minutes of the Finance Committee held on 2nd March 2017 along with the Income & Expenditure report were tabled for the information of members.

Resolved: *That the information be noted.*

171. Matters Arising - Progress Report of the Parish Clerk & Councillors

The Parish Clerk referred to minute 140 and reported that repair of the War Memorial Lighting was still outstanding² and that no response had been received from D.C.C. in relation to properties in the Rookery.

Resolved: *That the information be noted.*

172. Theft of Equipment (Incident Number 211)

The Parish Clerk reported that on 2nd January 2017 an item of maintenance equipment had been stolen from site. C.C.T.V footage of the incident had been passed to the police.

Resolved: *That the information be noted.*

173. Village Centre Managements Group

Formal Notification was received from the Village Centre Managements Group stating that a "winding-up" letter had been submitted to the Charity Commission to cease trading on 31st March 2017.

Resolved: *That the information be noted.*

174. Risk Assessments

The Parish Clerk reported that no alterations or amendments were required.

Resolved: *That the information be noted.*

175. Delegates Report on CDALC Medium & Small Councils Forum

Delegates reported that no meeting had been held

Resolved: *That the information be noted*

¹ These lights were subsequently repaired by D.C.C.

² These lights were subsequently repaired by D.C.C.

176. Delegates Report on Thornley Village Centre Management Group

Delegates reported that no meeting had been held

Resolved: That the information be noted

177. Councillor Williams – Overdue Payment

The Parish Clerk referred to the comments made in the Internal Auditor's report pertaining to the outstanding debt and to the Parish Council's previous decisions. Whilst members accepted the reasoning behind the Auditors comments it was noted that no cash advancements had been given to Mr. Williams.

Mr Williams had accepted the nomination to attend conference and in addition had specifically requested the Parish Clerk to book a supplementary night's hotel accommodation. He subsequently failed to notify the Council that he would not be attending conference. Had he done so the conference place could have been offered to another Councillor. Notwithstanding the conference fee, the Parish Council considered Mr. Williams to be totally responsible for the repayment of the cost of the supplementary night's hotel accommodation.

The Parish Council had endeavoured to recover what it considered unnecessary expenditure brought about by Mr. Williams actions.

Resolved: That on advice received from the Monitoring Officer, Council Standing Orders had been changed to prevent a similar occurrence happening in future and that pursuing legal action to recover the debt may result in a greater financial burden on Council Tax payers.

178. Decommissioned Allotments

Following the meeting held on 6th September 2016, Councillor Smith proposed that all decommissioned allotment gardens be recommissioned and offered to persons on the waiting list.

Resolved: On a show of hands 5 to 3 the existing policy be maintained.

179. Request for an Extension of Allotment Tenancy.

A tenants request that a Notice to Quit served upon him for non-cultivation of his allotment be withdrawn was considered.

Resolved: That the Notice to Quit be rescinded.

180. Village Centre Administrative Assistant

A proposal to ensure that the administrative functions of the Village Center were maintained following the handover of the management of the facility from the Village Centre Trustees to Thornley Parish Council was considered.

Resolved: That the wages of the Administrative Assistant be financed by the Parish Council until a revised staff restructure could be implemented.

181. War Memorial – Awarded Listed Building Status

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport advised that the Thornley War Memorial had been added to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The memorial is now listed at Grade II.

Resolved: *That the information be noted*

182. 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.

183. Coopers Close Allotments

Councillor Smith reported that two allotment tenants had stated to him that they no longer wished to accept the tenancies of redeveloped allotment gardens because of the ground conditions. In addition, it was alleged that the contractor appointed to undertake the clearance works had buried asbestos and other materials on site thus making it uncultivable.

The Parish Clerk reported that prior to the commencement of works a qualified firm of inspectors had been commissioned to carry out an asbestos survey. Their report had stated that the (suspicious) material was inert cement based and not hazardous waste.

Resolved: *That the allegations be investigated.*

Action: *The Parish Clerk.*

184. Vacant Allotments

The Parish Clerk reported that there were two vacant allotments were available for tenancy by people on the waiting list.

In accordance with existing policy, it would be necessary to convene a member's panel to allocate the gardens.

Resolved: *That Councillor's Mrs. P. English, Mrs. P. Maddison, T. Unsworth, and D. Smith be nominated to serve on the panel.*

Action: *Parish Clerk.*

Meeting Terminated 8:45pm

NOTE

Due to the Council Elections taking place on Thursday 4th May 2017, it will be necessary to convene the Annual General Meeting and subsequent Parish Council meeting in Thornley Village Centre, High Street, Thornley on 9th May 2017 at 7:00 p.m.