

**MINUTES OF
THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL
THORNLEY VILLAGE CENTRE
14TH JANUARY 2020**

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs. J. Unsworth (Chairperson), Ms. J. Grant, Mrs. A. Kelly, M. McCoy, Mrs. P. Maddison, David Smith, Davy Smith, T. Unsworth.

APOLOGIES

<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Reason for Absence</i>	<i>Resolved</i>
<i>Mrs. P. English</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Approved</i>
<i>G. Wilson</i>	<i>Other Business</i>	<i>Approved</i>

PUBLIC

- *One member of the public was present.*

Meeting Commenced 7:00pm

101. Draft Minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting

The Parish Clerk pointed out that Councillor David Smith (as well as Davey Smith) had been present at the last meeting but his attendance had not been recorded. Having noted this omission the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5th November 2019 were tabled, approved and signed by the Chairperson as an accurate record.

102. Police Report

No police report was made available.

Resolved: That the information be noted

103. County Councillor Report

County Councillor Grant reported verbally on issues she was involved with relating to Thornley.

Resolved: That the report be received.

104. Public Question and Answer Session

No questions were asked by the public

Resolved: That the information be noted.

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

The Parish Clerk that:-

- the 50th Anniversary Event Thornley PIT Closure had taken place and it had been well received by all that attended.
- further action had been initiated through the County Court to recover the outstanding fees from a Stonemason for a Memorial tablet in Thornley Cemetery.
- Reports provided by Councillor David Smith following his attendance at recent EDAT&PC meetings were tabled for information.

- As a result of recent heavy rain and poor ground conditions the recently erected perimeter fence at the Welfare Park had become unstable. A meeting had therefore been held with the contractor who had erected it to determine what remedial work was required. He had agreed to re-fix the posts and stabilise the fence largely at his own expense if the Parish Council was prepared to contribute an additional £200.

Resolved: That the information be noted and the expenditure of £200 to stabilise the Welfare Park fence be authorised.

106. Allotment Clearance Policy

This item was deferred at the Extra Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 8th October 2019.

Resolved: This item be deferred until the Partnership arrangement with the Thornley Allotment Associations is formalised.

107. Decommissioning of Vacant Allotments

This item was deferred at the Extra Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on 8th October 2019.

Resolved: This item be deferred until the Partnership arrangement with the Thornley Allotment Associations is formalised.

108. Internal Audit Report of Accounts April to September

The Parish Clerk reported that W.J. Smith had completed the internal audit of accounts from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 and provided a report stating that they were in order.¹⁵

Resolved: That the report be received.

109. Staff Christmas Bonus

The Parish Clerk reported that after seeking the Chair's approval a Christmas bonus payment of £50 (pro rata) had been made to staff in accordance with previous practice.

Resolved: That the action of the Parish Clerk be endorsed.

110. Parish Precept 2020/2021

Members considered a proposed budget for 2020/21 prepared by the Parish Clerk.

Resolved: That the Parish Precept for 2020/21 be increased by 2.0% to £157,519 plus LCTSS Grant of £8,739 and that Durham County Council be advised accordingly.

111. Report of the Facilities & Community Officer

The report of the Facilities & Communities Officer was tabled for discussion.

Resolved: That the report be received.

¹⁵ A copy of the internal auditors report was made available to members.

112. Planning Matters

The Parish Clerk reported that the following applications had been submitted to Durham County Council.

- DM/19/03506/RM - Application
- DM/19/03354/FPA - Application
- DM/19/03891/FPA - Application
- DM/19/03732/RM - Application
- DM/19/03761/RM – Application

Resolved: That no objections be raised

113. Donations

The Parish Clerk sought endorsement of his action to make a payment by way of a donation to Parkside Community Association for the loan of stage lighting. A letter of thanks was received from the Great North Air Ambulance.

Councillor David Smith declared an interest in the following item and took no further part in the discussion or voting procedure that followed.

Thornley Craft Group requested a donation to aid the operation of their group over the next 12 months.

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.

114. Training and Development

The Parish Clerk reported that The S.L.C.C. Practitioners Conference was to take place at Chesford Grange, Kenilworth on 26th & 27th February 2020 at a cost of £299 per delegate (early bird rates)¹⁶.

Resolved: That the Chair of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk be authorised to attend subject to workload.

115. 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 settles any outstanding accounts.

116. 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.

¹⁶ Current Policy determined on 9th January 2018 minute 170 refers

117. Thornley Allotment Association

The Chair and Parish Clerk had an initial meeting with the Newly Constituted Thornley Allotments Association. The outline of a Partnership arrangement had been discussed and it was anticipated that this collaborative approach could be developed to improve the overall management of the Council's allotments.

It was suggested that the Parish Council convene an Allotment Advisory Panel.

Resolved: That an Allotment Advisory Panel with appropriate Terms of Reference be convened and that officials of the Thornley Allotments Association be co-opted members on that panel.

118. Planning Matters

The Parish Clerk reported that the following applications had been submitted to Durham County Council.

- DM/19/002450/RM – Application
- DM/19/03172/RM - Application

Resolved: That no objections be raised.

119. Letter of Thanks

A letter of Thanks was received from Alice House Hospice for the Parish Council's recent donation.

Resolved: That the letter be received.

120. Invitation

CDALC invited members to attend a Community Energy Workshop at The Greenhouse, Annfiled Plan DH9 7 XN on Monday 27th January 2020.

Resolved: That the invitation be received.

121. EXEMPT ITEMS NOT FOR PRESS OR PUBLICATION

In accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 the press and public be excluded from the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 1 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act

122. Personnel Committee

The Parish Clerk outlined the reason for a Personnel Committee being re-established.

Resolved: That Councillors Mrs. J. Unsworth, Mrs. Maddison, Davey Smith and M. McCoy serve on the Committee and that Councillors Ms. J. Grant, Mrs. A. Kelly, David Smith and 1 other Councillor not serving on the Personnel Committee serve on the Appeals Panel.

Meeting Terminated: 8:15pm

**THE MEETING
OF THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL
ALLOTMENT ADVISORY PANEL
VILLAGE CENTRE, THORNLEY
ON
11TH FEBRUARY 2020**

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs. A. Kelly (Chair), David Smith, Mrs. J. Unsworth

Officials of the Thornley Allotment Association R. Cairns, K. Earl, W. Frost.

APOLOGIES

➤ None

Meeting Commenced 4:30pm

123. Appointment of Chairperson

Councillor Mrs. Amanda Kelly was elected.

124. Appointment of Vice Chairperson

R. Frost was elected

125. Terms of Reference

The Allotment Advisory Panel shall comprise a minimum of 3 Councillors determined at the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council to ensure a quorum.

In addition the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the Thornley Allotment Association will be invited to participate in order to develop best practice processes for the effective management or improvement of the allotments to include:-

- a) *Recommendations on changes to allotment agreements.*
- b) *Recommendations on appropriate courses of action to resolve any issue or prevent any activity on the allotment sites which has been reported to the Parish Council which is a matter of concern or which is not covered in the allotment agreement.*
- c) *Working in conjunction with the Allotment Association, Statutory organisations or other relevant bodies to explore funding opportunities to develop projects for the purpose of improving the allotment sites.*
- d) *In conjunction with a member of the Parish Council staff, undertake allotment inspections in accordance with the council's schedule.*
- e) *To interview prospective tenants.*

General Note

All recommendations of the panel must be ratified at a subsequent meeting of the full Parish Council before implementation.

All those serving on the Allotment Panel must comply with the Governments General Data Protection Regulations.

126. General Data Protection Regulations

The Parish Clerk outlined the purpose of the regulations and a copy was distributed to the representatives of the Thornley Allotment Association. All signed a form acknowledging that they understood the regulations and would abide by them in the performance of their duties whilst serving on the panel.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

127. Waiting List

The current waiting list for an allotment was tabled for discussion.

Resolved: That the information be noted

128. Allotment Agreement Revisions

Members were informed that to ensure tenants utilise the allotments for the intended purpose or to improve standards overall, it is essential that allotment agreements are reviewed or revised periodically.

A copy of the latest Allotment Tenancy Agreement was tabled for information.

Suggested new clauses be inserted into the agreement were as follows:-

- *Before a prospective tenant's name is added to the allotment waiting list they must provide suitable evidence that they reside in Thornley and have done so for 24 months¹⁷.*
- *If it appears to the Parish Council that a tenant, no longer resides in the village their tenancy will be terminated by the serving of a Notice to Quit upon them.*
- *The Tenant must show evidence of use/occupation with the first 3 months of a tenancy. Twelve months is allowed to bring and keep the allotment into a good state of cultivation, fertility and compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement. Failure to do so will be advised with a 'Notice to Improve' giving 15 working days to respond and 28 days to show evidence of improvement. Noncompliance could result in termination of the tenancy unless a valid explanation can be given. This is discretionary on the condition of the plot at the time of commencement of tenancy agreement and the time of year the plot is let.*

Resolved: That the above Clauses be added to the Allotment Tenancy Agreements

129. Items for next Agenda

Requests were made for the following to be discussed at the next meeting:-

- *The transfer of buildings & structures*
- *That Audit of allotments to determine the current situation*

¹⁷ *A tenancy agreement, utility bill or similar document.*

130. **Dates & Time of the next Meeting**

Resolved: That the next meeting takes place on Wednesday 19th February 2020 commencing 4:00pm.

Meeting Terminated: 5.30pm

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**THE MEETING
OF THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL
ALLOTMENT ADVISORY PANEL
VILLAGE CENTRE, THORNLEY
ON
19TH FEBRUARY 2020**

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs. A. Kelly (Chair), David Smith, Mrs. J. Unsworth

Officials of the Thornley Allotment Association R. Cairns, K. Earl, W. Frost.

APOLOGIES

➤ None

Meeting Commenced 4:00pm

Apologies for Absence

➤ None

131. Draft Minutes of the previous Meeting

W. Frost referred to item 2 and pointed out that R. Cairns had been appointed of the Vice Chairperson not himself.

Councillor Unsworth referred to item 6.2 and pointed out that it should read that “if a tenant moves out of the Village their tenancy will be terminated. Referring to item 6.3 she pointed out that it should read “The Tenant must show evidence of use/occupation within the first 3 months of a tenancy. Twelve months is allowed to bring and keep the allotment into a good state of cultivation, fertility and compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement. Failure to do so will be advised with a ‘Notice to Improve’ giving 15 working days to respond and 28 days to show evidence of improvement. Noncompliance could result in termination of the tenancy unless a valid explanation can be given”.

Having noted these amendments the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as an accurate record.

132. Transfer of Structures

Resolved: That the Parish Council be recommended to include minute 137.5 (below) in the Allotment Agreements and that the transfer of structures on allotments to new tenants be permitted if, in the opinion of the Parish Council, they are of an acceptable standard.

133. Allotment Clearance Policy¹⁸

Resolved: That in the event an allotment is vacated it shall be offered, in its existing condition, to the person whose name appears on the top of the Waiting List. If it is refused, it will then be offered, in turn, to the remaining persons whose name appears on the waiting list. If it is not accepted by anyone on the list it must be cleared by the outgoing tenants at their own expense ready for re-letting. If the outgoing tenant fails to do so and it becomes necessary for the Parish Council to undertake the work, the outgoing tenant will be liable for all costs incurred.

134. Notices to Quit¹⁹

Resolved: That because of the time that has elapsed since the initial decision of the Parish Council to serve Notice to Quit on specific tenants they be withdrawn on the strict understanding that for the effective management of the allotments they must now comply with instructions issued under the revised allotment inspection procedures.

135. The decommissioning of vacant allotments²⁰

The Allotment Association pointed out that they were opposed to the decommissioning of any allotments and would like to see those that had been decommissioned reinstated and allocated to persons on the waiting list.

The Parish Clerk pointed out that the Parish Council had incurred high levels of expenditure to decommission allotments and that if these gardens were then recommissioned it could become a contentious issue with Council Tax payers.

It was suggested that the panel could request the Parish Council to consider the recommissioning of gardens in the future but only if there was a clearly identified need.

Resolved: That the Parish Council be requested to overturn its decision to decommission allotments on the end of a row if they become vacant.

136. Proposed Allotment Agreement Revisions

- 1) The Tenant shall use the Allotment for growing vegetables, fruits and/or flowers and shall not permit the Allotment to be used for the purpose of any overnight accommodation, trade, business or any activity incompatible with allotment gardening.
- 2) The Tenant shall not bring or leave any other animal onto the gardens at any time – apart from those specified in the agreement. Whilst pet dogs can be brought onto site by the tenant they must not be kenneled or housed overnight or allowed to roam or cause a nuisance to other tenants or visitors to the site. Defecation (dog dirt) must be removed and deposited in a bin off site designed for that purpose.

¹⁸ Meeting of the Extra Ordinary Parish Council held on 8/10/2019 refers.

¹⁹ Meeting of the Parish Council held on 3/09/2019 Minute 64 refers.

²⁰ Meeting of the Parish Council held on 8/10/2019 minute 81 refers

- 3) The Tenant must show evidence of use/occupation with the first 3 months of a tenancy. Twelve months will be allowed to bring and keep the allotment into a good state of cultivation, fertility and compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement. Failure to do so will be advised with a 'Notice to Improve' giving 15 working days to respond and 28 days to show evidence of improvement. Non-compliance could result in termination of the tenancy unless a valid explanation can be given.
- 4) The Tenant shall keep their shed, greenhouse and/or other structure(s) in a proper state of repair to the satisfaction of the Council failing which the Council may require the Tenant to remove such structure from the Allotment at the Tenant's own cost.
- 5) The Tenant shall observe any additional rules imposed or any revision to the Allotment Agreement made by the Council for the regulation and management of the allotments.

Resolved: That the recommendations be considered for inclusion in the Allotment Agreements

137. Audit of Allotments

Resolved: That a representative of both the Allotment Association and the Parish Council along with a member of staff undertakes an Audit of all allotments as soon as practicable.

138. Items for next Agenda

No other items were proposed.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

139. 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.

140. Date & Time of next meeting

The next meeting to be held in Thornley Village Centre on Monday 2nd March 2020 commencing 4:00pm.

Meeting Terminated: 5:10pm

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**MINUTES OF
THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL
THORNLEY VILLAGE CENTRE
3RD MARCH 2020**

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs. J. Unsworth (Chairperson), Mrs. P. English, Ms. J. Grant, Mrs. A. Kelly, M. McCoy, Mrs. P. Maddison, David Smith, Davy Smith.

APOLOGIES

<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Reason for Absence</i>	<i>Resolved</i>
<i>T. Unsworth</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Approved</i>
<i>G. Wilson</i>	<i>Illness</i>	<i>Approved</i>

PUBLIC

- *Six members of the public was present.*

Meeting Commenced 7:00pm

141. Draft Minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting

It was pointed out that there were a number of minor “typo” errors in the minutes that the Clerk said he would correct.

Having note this remark, the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2020 were tabled, approved and signed by the Chairperson as an accurate record.

142. Draft Minutes of the Allotment Advisory Panel

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2020 were tabled, approved and signed by the Chairperson as an accurate record.

143. Draft Minutes of the Allotment Advisory Panel

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th February 2020 were tabled, approved and signed by the Chairperson as an accurate record.

144. Police Report

A report provided by the PCSO was tabled for information.

Resolved: That the report be received.

145. County Councillor Report

County Councillor Grant reported verbally on issues she was involved with relating to Thornley.

Resolved: That the report be received.

146. Public Question and Answer Session

The Chair, Councillor Mrs. J. Unsworth declared an interest in this item and although she continued to Chair the meeting she took no part in the discussion or voting procedure that followed.

The members of the public present expressed concern that a planning application had been submitted to Durham County Council to convert the Thornley Methodist Chapel into a trading outlet and asked if the Parish Council were to object.

Councillor Grant suggested that, if possible, the D.C.C. Planning Officers be requested to meet with invited members of the public to provide additional information.

Resolved: That a decision on Planning Application DM/20/00379/FPA be deferred until a meeting between the Planning Officers and invited members of the public had taken place²¹.

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

The Parish Clerk provided a progress report on:-

- Fencing at the Welfare Park – Repairs delayed because of weather.
- Youll House – estimates being sought for refurbishment prior to letting
- Sponsorship of the Redhills – only 3 negative responses from Councillors
- Councillors feedback from attendance at meetings.
 - D. Smith Report – CDALC & Smaller Councils Forum
 - J. Unsworth - Turners Shows regarding Village event.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

148. Miners Gala Band Event in Village Centre

Following the success of the event to mark the 50th Anniversary of the closure of Thornley Pit, it was proposed that a Band Event be arranged in the Village Centre on Thursday 2nd July 2020 prior to the Durham Big Meeting. Proceed from ticket sales to be donated to the Thornley Banner Society.

Resolved: That an estimated budget for the event be prepared for consideration by members at the next Parish Council meeting.

149. Thornley Village Centre Phase II Outside Development

The Parish Clerk reported that because Believe Housing had withdrawn its offer of land on which it was proposed to construct the Skate Park, work on the development proposals had been delayed as an alternative site would now have to be identified. It was anticipated that the relocation would lead to increased costs.

Resolved: That a decision on whether to proceed with the development of the Skate Park be deferred pending revised budget proposals.

150. Selective Licensing Consultation

The Parish Clerk gave a brief outline on the potential benefits of Selective Licensing (of landlords) and suggested that members attend a meeting to be held in Thornley Library on 23/3/2020 commencing 2pm

Resolved: That the information be noted.

²¹ See Minute 153 below

151. Training & Development

The Chair provided a verbal report following her attendance at the S.L.C.C. Practitioners Conference and highlighted a number of village improvement projects that could be undertaken by the Parish Council.

The Parish Clerk reported that places had been booked for Councillor Mrs. J. Unsworth and Councillor David Smith to attend a Playground awareness course.

Councillor David Smith pointed out that he was to attend a New Councillor Training event arranged by Shadforth Parish Council.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

152. Report of the Facilities & Communities Officer

The report of the Facilities & Communities Officer was tabled for consideration.

Resolved: That the report be received.

153. Planning Matters

- DM/20/00131/FPA
- DM/19/03732/RM
- DM/19/03761/RM
- DM/19/03354/FPA
- DM/19/03506/RM

Resolved: That no objections be raised to the above and that a decision on DM/20/00379/FPA be deferred until a meeting between the Planning Officers and invited members of the public had taken place.²²

154. 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 settles any outstanding accounts.

155. 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.

156. Planning Applications

Durham County Council advised that the following application had been received after the agenda had been printed.

- DM/20/00462/RM
- DM/20/00510/RM

Resolved: That no objections be raised

157. Outstanding Grave Payment – County Court Action

The Parish Clerk reported that outstanding payment plus accrued interest had now been recovered from the Stonemason and the issue closed.²³

²² Minute 146 refers

²³ Minute 91 and 105 refers

Meeting Terminated: 7:50pm