

**MINUTES OF THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MONTHLY MEETING**  
**THORNLEY VILLAGE CENTRE**  
**13 JANUARY 2026**

**Present:** Parish Councillors Mr. D. Smith (Meeting Chair), Ms. E. Bramfitt, Mrs. A. Galley, Mr. K. Joyce, Mr. G. MacPherson, and Mr. T. Unsworth.

**In attendance:** C. Llewelyn, Parish Clerk; J. Walter, appointed Parish Clerk.

**Public:** two members of the public were present for part of the meeting.

**Meeting Commenced: 6:35pm**

**460. To receive apologies for absence**

As the Chair and Vice Chair were not present, a vote took place to appoint a Chair for the meeting.

**Resolved (1): Councillor D. Smith to chair this meeting.**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Mrs. J. Unsworth (Chair) and Mrs. P. Maddison (Vice Chair).

**Resolved (2): that the apologies from Councillors Mrs. J. Unsworth (Chair) and Mrs. P. Maddison (Vice Chair) be received.**

Apologies had also been received from County Councillor N. Craggs.

**Resolved (3): that the apologies from County Councillor N. Craggs be noted.**

**461. To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda**

No declarations of interest were made.

**Resolved: the information is noted.**

**462. To confirm the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 4 November 2025 and the minutes of the Special Meeting held on 25 November 2025**

The draft minutes of the above meetings had been circulated.

**Resolved: that the minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 4 November 2025 and the minutes of the Special Meeting held on 25 November 2025 be approved, confirmed and signed as an accurate record.**

**463. Public question and answer session**

The members of the public raised safety regarding the A181, and provided their details so the Clerk could keep them informed of any update.

**Resolved: to add to a future agenda to undertake some research on potential courses of action available to the Parish Council, including possible public consultation.**

**464. To receive the report of the Unitary County Councillor**

County Councillor Craggs had sent apologies and requested that any issues raised be passed on.

Parish Councillors requested the Clerk to advise County Councillor Craggs that they wish to escalate the matter of problems with the A181 for which responsibility lies with Highways England and Durham County Council.

**Resolved: the Clerk to contact County Councillor Craggs to raise the problems with the A181.**

**465. To receive the Police Report**

No Police report had been received.

**Resolved: to note the information.**

**466. Financial and Governance Matters**

**a) To approve the finance report and payment schedule**

The Clerk advised that the Council's bank balances at 28th November 2025 were **£288,735.63**.

October

| No. | Payee  | Description  | Amount   |
|-----|--|--|----------|
| 1.  | Tesco Mobile   | Mobile Phones x3                                   | £21.00   |
| 2.  | Asda   | Refreshments Thornley Village Centre (TVC)         | £1.20    |
| 3.  | Sainsburys   | Refreshments TVC                                   | £1.20    |
| 4.  | The Range  | Craft Resources                                    | £7.97    |
| 5.  | Lidl   | Refreshments TVC                                   | £1.20    |
| 6.  | Asda   | Postage Stamps                                     | £27.84   |
| 7.  | Douglas Associates                                       | Wreath Workshop                                    | £132.00  |
| 8.  | A. Local Government Pension Scheme<br>B. NEST<br>C. HMRC | Employer Liabilities and Pension Contributions     | £4578.53 |
| 9.  | Document Solutions                                       | IT Maintenance & Email Accounts                    | £232.70  |
| 10. | Co-operative Bank  | Sweep Fee  | £30.00   |
| 11. | SW Enterprises   | Event Deposit                                      | £100.00  |
| 12. | Amazon   | Fridge Thermometer                                 | £5.28    |
| 13. | Mark Allon   | Window Cleaning TVC                                | £15.00   |
| 14. | British Gas  | Electric Thornley Village Centre (TVC)             | £140.11  |
| 15. | Lidl   | Stationery   | £3.00    |
| 16. | Post Office  | Postage Stamps                                     | £17.40   |
| 17. | Post Office  | Postage  | £3.60    |
| 18. | Aston Store  | Refreshments TVC                                   | £1.30    |
| 19. | Screenprint  | Double sided large Pump Track Sign                 | £196.80  |
| 20. | ITC Services Ltd   | Printing & Photocopying                            | £36.46   |
| 21. | ITC Services Ltd   | Website Domain & Hosting                           | £32.40   |
| 22. | Isle of Boogie   | Halloween Mini Boogie Session                      | £50.00   |
| 23. | Durham County Council                                    | Street Light Charge as per Service Level Agreement | £86.48   |
| 24. | Glorious Prospect Ltd                                    | Office Chair                                       | £54.95   |

|     |                                 |  |           |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 25. | Society of Local Council Clerks | Additional Invoice for Annual Membership   | £2.00     |
| 26. | Sainsburys                      | Refreshments   | £1.85     |
| 27. | Aldi                            | Wooden Trike (Toddlers)  | £29.99    |
| 28. | Scott Bros Ltd                  | Topsoil  | £480.00   |
| 29. | Alpha Events & Entertainment    | Halloween Disco Balance (grant funded)   | £180.00   |
| 30. | Staff                           | Mileage x2   | £27.00    |
| 31. | Staff                           | Wages (October)  | £8,339.75 |
| 32. | British Gas                     | Electric Welfare Park (monthly)  | £27.16    |
| 33. | Aldi                            | Halloween Refreshments (grant funded)  | £47.16    |
| 34. | Tesco                           | Halloween Refreshments (grant funded)  | £10.70    |
| 35. | British Gas                     | Gas TVC  | £136.08   |
| 36. | Godfreys IT Ltd                 | Post Hole Digger   | £38.96    |
| 37. | T & G Training                  | Emergency First Aid at Work Training x4 (x2 places paid by Easington Village Parish Council) | £390.00   |
| 38. | Sainsburys                      | Refreshments   | £1.20     |
| 39. | Asda                            | Refreshments   | £1.18     |
| 40. | See The Sign Ltd                | Chalk Board  | £34.90    |
| 41. | New Viking Revolution           | Chalk Pens   | £13.98    |
| 42. | Home Bargains                   | Paint Roller Sleeves   | £0.99     |
| 43. | M & M Theatrical Productions    | Pantomime  | £1,798.80 |

#### November

| No. | Payee  | Description                                    | Amount    |
|-----|--|--|-----------|
| 1.  | Party Time Inflatables                                   | Halloween Inflatable (grant funded)            | £126.00   |
| 2.  | Tesco Mobile   | Mobile Phones x3                               | £26.00    |
| 3.  | Your NRG   | Diesel for Machinery                           | £446.26   |
| 4.  | Document Solutions                                       | IT Maintenance                                 | £227.16   |
| 5.  | Gamer Entertainer  | Gaming Truck October Half Term                 | £240.00   |
| 6.  | A. Local Government Pension Scheme<br>B. NEST<br>C. HMRC | Employer Liabilities and Pension Contributions | £4,322.33 |
| 7.  | Regal Print  | Cemetery Official Receipt Books                | £114.00   |
| 8.  | British Gas  | Electric Thornley Village Centre (TVC)         | £193.53   |
| 9.  | Mark Allon   | Window Cleaning TVC                            | £15.00    |
| 10. | Thornley Post Office                                     | Refreshments TVC                               | £1.60     |
| 11. | Gordon Fletcher  | Interim Internal Audit                         | £100.00   |
| 12. | Home Bargains  | Christmas Events Resources                     | £144.77   |
| 13. | Information Commissioner's Office                        | Annual Data Protection Fee                     | £47.00    |
| 14. | ITC Service Ltd  | Website Domain & Hosting                       | £32.40    |

|     |                            |   |           |
|-----|----------------------------|---|-----------|
| 15. | ITC Service Ltd            | Printing & Photocopying                               | £31.12    |
| 16. | Trimdon Concert Brass Band | Payment for Bugle Player at Remembrance Ceremony 2025 | £35.00    |
| 17. | Asda                       | Refreshments TVC                                      | £1.18     |
| 18. | Post Office                | Registered Post                                       | £3.60     |
| 19. | Post Office                | Postage Stamps  | £15.50    |
| 20. | Asda                       | Refreshments TVC                                      | £1.18     |
| 21. | Horn's Garden Centre       | Flowers   | £29.00    |
| 22. | Anderson & Co              | Payroll Sept to Nov                                   | £270.00   |
| 23. | British Gas                | Electric Welfare Park                                 | £110.46   |
| 24. | Staff                      | Mileage x4  | £73.08    |
| 25. | Staff                      | Wages (November)                                      | £8,551.97 |
| 26. | Amazon                     | Toddler Group Toys and Resources                      | £120.20   |
| 27. | British Gas                | Gas TVC   | £261.77   |
| 28. | BT                         | Landlines & Broadband                                 | £529.85   |

Costs generally include any applicable VAT.

#### Future Dated Purchases

| No. | Payer                 | Description                           | Amount          |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | Durham County Council | Contribution to stones for pump track | £6,000.00       |
| 2.  | ADT                   | CCTV                                  | Up to £1,700.00 |

#### Monies received over £100.00

| No. | Payer                            | Description   | Amount     |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|------------|
| 1.  | Durham County Council            | Precept and Local Council Tax Support Scheme (half) | £91,454.65 |
| 2.  | Co-operative Bank                | Interest  | £659.87    |
| 3.  | HM Revenue and Customs           | VAT Claim 01.07.25-30.09.25                         | £15,320.65 |
| 4.  | Easington Village Parish Council | First Aid Training x2 places                        | £140.00    |
| 5.  | National Lottery                 | Community Grant Funding                             | £11,500.00 |

#### Resolved:

(1) to note the bank balances.

(2) to approve the payments in the schedule and the future dated purchases.

(3) to note the monies received over £100.00.

(4) to note the Financial Services Compensation Scheme has increased its protection levels.

#### **b) To note the detailed income and expenditure**

Resolved: to note the detailed income and expenditure report.

**b) To receive the Interim Internal Audit Report 2025 to 26**

The Clerk had circulated the report.

**Resolved: to receive the Interim Internal Audit Report 2025 to 26.**

**c) To approve the Internal Auditor for the year 2026 to 27**

The Clerk recommended that Gordon Fletcher be appointed as Internal Auditor having received confirmation that he meets the requirements.

**Resolved: to approve Gordon Fletcher as Internal Auditor for the year 2025 to 26.**

**d) To approve expenditure towards the requirements of the new Assertion 10 for Digital and Data compliance**

**Resolved: (1) to approve up to £1,500 for the website to be updated if required.**

**(2) to note that there are requirements for the new Assertion 10 which will be brought to Council.**

**f) To consider Parish Council fees for Allotments, hire of Welfare Park sports facilities and Thornley Cemetery**

**Resolved: (1) to defer this matter to the March meeting to allow the Clerk to investigate fees charged by other Councils.**

**(2) to increase the charges for allotment key deposits, including replacement, to £30 for all tenants at both sites from now, with details being sent to all tenants with the rent letters.**

**467. To determine the budget and the Parish precept for 2026 to 27**

**a) To consider the impact of and any response to Durham County Council on the proposal to remove the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grants to local councils**

**Resolved: (1) to note the proposed removal of the above Grant.**

**(2) to note that the proposal of Durham County Council to remove the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grants to local councils reduces Thornley Parish Council's ability to undertake projects on behalf of the community.**

**b) To approve the budget for 2026 to 27**

**Resolved: (1) to note the Council's reserves position, and that it will continue to monitor and maintain its reserves.**

**(2) to note the Council's earmarked reserves.**

**(3) to approve the draft budget for 2027 to 27.**

**(4) to approve the Clerk and Officers, in consultation with the Chair, to implement further cost saving measures and to consider price increases for the Village Centre.**

**(5) any funds remaining at 31 March in budget code 1979 will be placed back into general reserves and not into an earmarked reserve.**

**c) To determine the Parish precept for 2026 to 27**

**Resolved: to agree the Parish precept for 2026 to 27 at £192,182.00, an increase of 5.2% for a Band D property.**

**468. Progress Reports from Officers and Councillors**

**a) Parish Clerk's Report including correspondence**

i) Update on request to take the freehold of Thornley Village Centre

**Resolved: to note the update provided.**

ii) Nominations for Buckingham Palace Royal Garden Party

**Resolved: (1) to note the information and the Clerk's Report.**

**(2) to thank the outgoing Clerk C. Llewelyn and welcome the new Clerk J. Walter.**

**b) Reports from Parish Councillors**

i) County Durham Association of Local Councils Smaller Councils Meeting

**Resolved: to note the information provided regarding the above Smaller Councils Meeting.**

**c) Community Development Worker's Report**

**Resolved: (1) to note the report.**

**(2) to thank the Community Development Worker for all the work she has done.**

**d) Grounds Officers' Report**

**Resolved: (1) to note the Grounds' Officers' Report.**

**(2) to pass on thanks to the staff as Councillors appreciate their hard work.**

**469. To consider any response to Durham County Council regarding Planning Matters**

**a) To consider any response to Durham County Council regarding planning applications**

1. [DM/25/03097/FPA](#) 2 Fairview Thornley DH6 3BL

**Resolved: planning application [DM/25/03097/FPA](#) is noted.**

2. [DM/25/03147/RM](#) Land To The West Of Belavista (Plot 53) Dunelm Stables Thornley DH6 3BN

**Resolved: planning application [DM/25/03147/RM](#) is noted.**

**b) To consider any planning applications received after the agenda was issued, to be dealt with by the Clerk using delegated authority**

**Resolved: to note no planning applications had been received after the agenda was issued.**

**470. To consider matters relating to Parish Council Allotments water supply, consultation and drainage**

**Resolved: (1) the first three options in the report are to be investigated.**

**(2) the Clerk and Councillor Ms. E. Bramfitt will liaise about this matter.**

**(3) the Clerk is authorised to undertake the fourth action in the report if the first three options have been exhausted without improvements.**

**471. To consider an update and expenditure at the pump track and surrounding area**

Councillors agreed the preferred outcome is to keep quad bikes off the pump track and surrounding area.

**Resolved:** (1) to agree that target hardening takes place in the preferred methods presented by the Police and County Council Officers who have been working with the Clerk.

(2) to approve the measures in the report.

**472. Members' issues and suggestions**

No matters were raised.

**Resolved:** to note the information.

**473. To consider items for the agenda of a future meeting**

**Resolved:** Councillors requested that the A181 be added as a standing item on future Council ordinary meeting agendas.

**474. Date and time of the next meeting of the Parish Council**

To confirm the date and time of the next meeting as 6.30pm on Tuesday 3 March 2026

**Resolved:** to confirm the date and time of the next ordinary meeting as 6.30pm on Tuesday 3 March 2026.

**475. To consider a resolution that the following items are classified as being of a confidential nature in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; at this point, if agreed, all members of the press and public would be asked to leave the meeting**

**Resolved:** to ask all members of the press and public to leave the meeting in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

**476. Receive update and agree action regarding horses on Parish Council land**

**Resolved:** to approve the actions in the report presented by the Clerk.

**477. To consider various staffing matters**

**a) Recruitment to Parish Council posts, including confirmation of the appointment of the Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer**

**Resolved:** (1) to confirm the appointment of J. Walter as Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

(2) to agree to recruit to the post of Lead Hand, with the advertisement and documents to be issued as soon as practicable.

(3) to arrange a Special Meeting of the Council for Tuesday 3 February at 6.30pm to further progress recruitment matters.

**b) Approval of working hours for C Llewelyn**

**Resolved:** to approve the working hours presented, for C. Llewelyn.

**Meeting closed: 8.20pm.**