

**MINUTES OF  
THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL  
THORNLEY VILLAGE CENTRE  
11TH MAY 2021**

**PRESENT**

**Councillors Mrs. J. Unsworth (Chairperson), Ms. J. Grant, Mrs. P. Maddison, David Smith, T. Unsworth.**

**APOLOGIES**

**County Councillors Lucy Hovels, Chris Vardy, Jake Miller.**

**PUBLIC**

- *No members of the public commented.*

**Meeting Commenced: 7:00pm**

**1. Draft Minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 were tabled, approved and signed by the Chairperson as an accurate record.

**Resolved: True record.**

**2. Chairpersons Statement**

Councillor Mrs. J. Unsworth tabled her report on the activities of the Parish Council over the previous 12 months for information

**Resolved: That the report be accepted.**

**3. Police Report**

No police report was available.

**Resolved: That the information be noted**

**4. County Councillor's Report**

The Parish Clerk reported that because the local elections had only recently taken place it was not possible for the new County Councillors to attend however all 3 had offered their apologies.

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

**5. Public Question and Answer Session**

No questions were raised by members of the public

**Resolved: That the information be noted**

**6. Co-option:**

Parish clerk reported that following the local election on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 only five councillors had been elected and therefore the five remaining seats would need to be filled by Co-option.

**Resolved: That arrangements be made to fill the vacant positions in accordance with normal procedure in due course.**

**7. Matters Arising - Progress Report of the Parish Clerk & Councilor's**

The Parish Clerk updated Councillors as follows: -

The Lead Hand had been involved in a motor cycle accident and as a result of injuries sustained he would be off work for a minimum period of 6 weeks. Members had been consulted who agreed that an additional member of staff be employed on a temporary basis.

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

**8. Refuse at rear of 47 Hartlepool Street, Thornley**

The Parish clerk informed members that the current owner of the property had passed away and the administration of his estate was a matter of probate. Whilst members understood the difficulties this caused they expressed the view that for health & Safety reasons Durham County Council take some action to remedy the situation as it would only get worse.

***Resolved: That the Parish Clerk raises the issue with Senior Officers at Durham County Council to investigate what action could be taken.***

**9. Application to Site Storage Container at the welfare Park.**

The clerk informed members that one of the football teams have asked permission to site a steel shipping container at the Welfare Park.

***Resolved: That the Parish Council obtain a quotation to extend to the building to provide additional storage for use by the football teams.***

**Lease/License Policy (Previously Circulated)**

A draft policy for the future use of Council premises was tabled for consideration.

***Resolved: That the Policy be adopted and implemented as necessary when Leasing or Licencing Council premises.***

**10. Community of Hope Licence to operate in Youll House**

The Parish Clerk reported that to protect the Council's interests a draft Licence had been submitted to the council's solicitors for comment.

If no changes were necessary it would be forwarded to the Community of Hope and the Parochial Church Council for consideration.

Councillor Grant asked if a security system was being installed as part of the refurbishment and who would be responsible in the event of activation.

The Parish Clerk informed members that an alarm system would be installed and levels of responsibility would be set out in the Licence.

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

**Community of Hope – Steering Group:**

The Community of Hope requested that any Councillor wishing to become a member of a Steering Group to oversee their operation in Youll House contact them directly.

The Chairperson pointed out that being on the Steering Group could be a conflict of interest.

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

**11. Death of a Royal**

In view of the recent death of the Duke of Edinburgh, members considered what arrangements would be made in the future to mark the death of HRH Queen Elizabeth II.

It was suggested that the Pit Wheel memorial be designated the official location at which residents place floral tributes.

***Resolved: That at the appropriate time the Parish Council place a framed picture of the Queen at the Pit Wheel memorial and residents be requested to place wreaths and other floral tributes there throughout the National period of mourning***

**12. Appointment of Solicitors**

The Parish Clerk informed Councillor that he had received various communications from a resident and their solicitors relating to the access track to the Welfare Park and suggested that to avoid any ambiguity or misinterpretation the Parish Council appoint a firm of solicitors to represent them in dealing with this raised.

***Resolve: That an appropriate firm of Solicitors is appointed to represent the Parish Council in this case and that they take instructions from the Parish Clerk.***

**13. Training and Development:**

The Parish Clerk informed members that they and any Co-opted members will be given the opportunity to attend training and development event being organised by County Durham Association of Local Council's.

***Resolved: That the Parish clerk will circulate information to members as it becomes available***

**14. Anti - Social Behavior:**

Wheatley Hill Parish Council requested the Council to support an joint initiative with neighbouring parishes to forward a letter to the Chief Constable to attend a meeting to discuss the ever increasing instances of anti-social behaviour.

The members expressed the view that it is seen as symptomatic of a wider social problem that should be tackled by higher levels of Government and the Police not Parish Councils who do not have the necessary enforcement powers. It was suggested that residents are reluctant to contact the police fearing that they would become a target for reprisals.

This was seen as a manifestation of the growing problem and the widely held belief that many reported crimes are not investigated adequately.

***Resolved: That whilst wholeheartedly supporting appropriate measure being taken to eradicate this menace on society they resolved not to send a letter to the Chief Constable on this occasion.***

**15. Request for donation:**

Wheatley Hill Parish Council requested a contribution to repair and reinstate the Pit Pony sculpture on the A181 roundabout.

Whilst not being opposed to making a contribution members expressed the opinion that in view of the fact that the Pony had been vandalised on a number of occasions over the years, it might be an appropriate time to consider replacing it with a more modern/substantial/sustainable structure.

***Resolved: That Wheatley Hill Parish Council be asked to provide estimated costs of the project and details of the financial contributions being made by any neighbouring authorities.***

**16. Annual Governance & Accountability Return Ending**

The Parish Clerk reported that the accounts had been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234).

Members were requested to approve Section 1 and then Section 2 of the Governance & Accountability Return and to authorise the Chairman to sign it on behalf of the Parish Council.

Members were also advised that arrangements had to be made to inform residents of their rights to inspect the accounts etc., in accordance with the statutory regulations.

***Resolved: That Section 1 and Section 2 the Annual Governance & Accountability Return be approved and that Annual Governance & Accountability Return be it signed by the Chairperson on behalf of Thornley Parish Council.***

**17. Account Balance Sheet 2020/21**

The Balance Sheet for the financial year ending 31st March 2021 was tabled for consideration.

***Resolved: That the Balance Sheet be accepted and signed by the Chairperson and Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer.***

**18. Planning Matters**

Members considered all applications provided by Durham County Council.

***Resolved: That no objections be raised.***

**19. Unused Leave Entitlement**

The Parish Clerk reported that he had consulted both the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson and they considered it only fair and reasonable that the staff should be recompensed for annual leave they had not been able to take because of in order to maintain council services during the Covid Pandemic.

***Resolved: Action of the Parish Clerk agreed***

**20. Report of the Facilities & Community officer**

No report available

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

**21. 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.***

***Meeting Terminated: 8:30pm***