

**MINUTES OF
THORNLEY PARISH COUNCIL
THORNLEY VILLAGE CENTRE
11TH JANUARY 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs. J. Unsworth (Chairperson), Ms. J. Grant, J. Hughes, Mrs. P. Maddison, David Smith, G Ismail, L Howells.

APOLOGIES

| <i>Councillor</i> | <i>Reason for Absence</i> | <i>Resolved</i> |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Mr T Unsworth</i> | <i>Other commitments</i> | <i>Approved</i> |

PUBLIC

No members of the public present

90. Draft Minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting

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

Resolved: True Record.

91. Resignation of Councillor Mrs J Gaffney

The Parish Clerk reported that Durham County Council had been informed and the vacancy advertised. Co-option could then take place if an election was not called for.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

92. Police Report

No police report available

Resolved: That the information be noted.

93. Unitary County Councillor

Cllr Jake Miller tabled a plan of Coopers Close and reported as follows:-

- The cost of placing boulders around Area 1 to combat anti-social behaviour was £32,750, around Area 2 it would be £7,442 and around Area 3 £15,757. Believe Housing had been approached to see if they would enter into a partnership with Durham County Council to fence the area. The Chair asked Councillor Miller to continue raising the issue of damage caused by quad bikes in Thornley as all open spaces were being ruined.
- Children from the local home have been volunteering at the food bank and are keen to be involved in community projects.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

94. Public questions and Answers

No members of the public present

Resolved: That the information be noted.

95. Matters Arising – Progress report of the Parish Clerk & Councillors

The Parish Clerk updated members on the following issues:-

- Welfare Park storage containers permanent containers would cost over £3,000 whilst a demountable container would be in the region of £1,250. If agreed teams would be responsible for any equipment they stored.
- It was reported that the recent storm had damaged the fencing at the Welfare Park. A claim had been submitted to the Council's Insurers along with a quotation from Peart's for the cost of repairs and re-erection. The clerk reported that the existing fencing would benefit from reinforcement. Councillor Miller suggested applying to D.C.C. for funding to upgrade the existing fencing.
- D.C.C. had advised that they were still progressing the transfer of the shrub bed areas in Thornley and the Licence to occupy the site of the former Thornley Community Centre to the Parish Council.
- The Chair had responded to a resident from Wingate regarding Anti-social behavior but had not received a reply.
- The renovation of Youll House was nearing completion and it was anticipated that the Community of Hope could sign a 15 Year Lease in the near future.

Resolved: That the installation of storage containers be delayed until the fencing is re-erected and that a formal complaint be submitted to Durham County Council if no significant progress was made to address the transfer of shrub beds or Lease of land.

96. Defibrillator

Councillor Maddison reported that an application for funding had been submitted to the AAP.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

97. Wildflower Area

Councillor Mrs Unsworth reported that she had met with Gary Shears of D.C.C who had offered advice on the project and had suggested that a firm with experience in the development of wildflower areas be requested to provide a quotation.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

98. Half yearly Internal Audit Report 2020/21

The report of the Internal Auditor for accounts from 1st April 2021 to 30th September 2021 was considered.²

Resolved: That the report be received.

99. Member Basic Allowance Policy

The Parish Clerk reported that whilst elected Councillors were entitled to claim a basic allowance to undertake their duties members had previously agreed would not claim it.

Resolved: That existing decision remain in place but members reserve the right to claim it in the future.

² Copy of the report was made available to Councillors

100. Emergency Planning Meeting

The Parish Clerk reported that following storm Arwen the Parish Council had been invited to attend a meeting called by County Councillor Jake Miller to discuss the feasibility of creating an Emergency Plan that could be initiated to co-ordinate responses should similar emergencies occur in the future.

Resolved: That the Parish Council agree to the proposal in principal and would await further updates.

101. Chairman's Allowance

Members acknowledged the dedication exhibited by the Chair over many years and the innumerable hours of voluntary work she had undertaken on behalf of the Council.

Resolved: That a vote of thanks be recorded in the minutes and that she be paid a Chairman's allowance of £1,500 for 2021/22.

102. Parish Precept & Budget 2022/23

The Parish Clerk presented a budget for 2022/23 for consideration by members. Members expressed the view that because of the continuing Covid Pandemic and the economic impact on residents there should be no increase in the Precept.

Resolved: That the budget be approved on a precept of £156,512 plus LCTSS Grant of £11,038 which would result in a Band "D" charge of £251.87

103. Request to Provide Dog Waste Bags

A Thornley resident requested that the Parish Council provide dog waste bags free of charge.

Members expressed the view that it was the responsibility of dog owners to look after the needs of their pets.

Resolved: That the request be refused.

104. Civility and Respect³

The Parish Clerk referred to information provided to members.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

105. Planning Matters

Members considered the Planning Applications provided by D.C.C.

- DM/21/03543/FPA
- DM/20/00688/FPA
- DM/21/04099/RM
- DM/21/04109/FPA

Resolved: That no objections be raised.

106. Request for Donations

The Parish Clerk reported that the Alice House Hospice and Wheatley Hill Community Nursery had applied for a donation to support activities over Christmas period. Because of the timescale the Parish Clerk consulted the Chair and Vice Chair to consider donations of £50.00 per organisation to ensure funding was received before Christmas.

³ Information previously distributed to members by email on 24/11/2021

Resolved: That the action of the Parish Clerk be endorsed and that 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 per organisation.

107. Staff Christmas Bonus

To ensure staff Bonus were received by staff prior to Christmas Festivities the Parish Clerk had consulted the Chair and Vice Chair.

Resolved: That the action of the Parish Clerk be endorsed and bonus amounts be paid in line with previous practice on a pro-rata basis.

108. Letter of Thanks

Letters of thanks were received from Alice House and the Great North Air Ambulance.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

109. Covid Risk Assessments

Councillor Mrs Unsworth reported that the Council's Covid Risk Assessments were being reviewed in line with Government guidelines and that staff were now doing lateral flow test twice a week.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

110. Report of the Facilities and Community Development Officer

The report was tabled for consideration. Councillor Mrs Unsworth reported that she was in consultation with the Development Officer to plan an event to celebrate the Queens platinum anniversary.

Resolved: That the information be noted.

111. Welfare Park Access

The Parish Clerk gave a progress report to members and explained that additional questions for information had been requested by the resident.

It was suggested that further advice be obtained from the Council's solicitors with a view to bring matters to a close.

Resolved: That the Parish Clerk consults the solicitor and reports back to members.

112. Allotment Panel Meeting

The Parish Clerk requested an Allotment Panel be convened to interview a prospective tenant.

Resolved: Prospective tenant to attend an Allotment Panel meeting to be held on 25th January 2022.

113. Finance and 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 the Parish Clerk settles any outstanding accounts.

114. Urgent Items of Business

Councillor Mrs Maddison requested that consideration be given to starting future meeting of the Parish Council at 6.30pm.

Resolved: Resolved that in future Parish Council meeting would commence at 6.30pm

Meeting terminated: 8.30