

APPROVED

## **Midridge Parish Council**

### **Minutes of Council Meeting**

**Village Hall,  
Midridge**

**Monday  
7<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Time: 6.45 pm**

**Present:** Cllrs H Howe (Chair), P Dicker & T Towers.

**In Attendance:** Cllrs D Sutton-Lloyd & M Stead (DCC).  
Mrs M Jeffery & Mr R Howe (Midridge Allotment Association).  
Mr P Makinson (Midridge Village Association).  
Mr D Batey.

**Official:** A Jordan (Clerk)

#### **97/22 NOTICE OF MEETING**

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read.

#### **98/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr R Carr, Cllr E Hayman, and Cllr T Stubbs (DCC)

#### **99/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **100/22 MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

There was a short Presentation by members of Groundwork regarding their work, and possible funding opportunities for the Parish Council, the Allotment Association, and the Village Association. Groundwork are keen to work with the Allotment Association on some form of Community Garden Plot.

#### **101/22 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 were accepted, and signed by the Chair as a true record.

#### **102/22 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

None.

#### **103/22 MIDDRIDGE QUARRY**

The Wards' repairs to the existing Quarry Fencing have been damaged, and are clearly inadequate. Cllr T Stubbs continues to press this matter.

No Wards Planning Application has been submitted to date, although there is some evidence that this is still being worked on.

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### 104/22 ROAD TRAFFIC

The Northside Bus Shelter was completely demolished by a car in the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> November; roadside tests indicate that the driver was under the influence of drugs (although this remains to be confirmed by further tests). The Police have provided the driver's insurance details, so the Parish Council's Insurance Company should be able to claim for a suitable replacement Bus Shelter, and possible repairs to the Village Green..

**Action:** Cllr T Towers

Cllr D Sutton-Lloyd was finally able to arrange a Meeting with the DCC Highways Department, and it has been agreed that:-

- (a) The C35 Middridge road from the Greenfield Way roundabout through the village is to be resurfaced, and new signage, and improved "Rumble Strips" installed. Work is due to commence on 25<sup>th</sup> November, and will involve a three-day road closure.
- (b) Once the C35 road has been brought up to the latest standard, a full DCC Traffic Survey will be undertaken to establish the volume and type of traffic using the road. The DCC Highways Department will then present their proposals to deal with any problems.

The new Speed Awareness Art signs have now been installed; new messages will be displayed every 6 weeks. The Chair thanked the Artist (Suzie Devey), Greenfield Arts, GAMP and our County Councillors for their work on, and support for, this Project.

### 105/22 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR & POLICING

Nothing to report.

### 106/22 "THE PADDOCK" WILDFLOWER GRASSLAND

The Allotment Association reported that work on the improvements to the existing Allotment area are progressing, and that the Tree maintenance is now complete. The problem of the new Lease to cover the proposed extension of the Allotments is still not resolved. This, and a slow down in house sales at the "Eldon Whins" developments, means that the availability of Section 106 monies to fund further work on the Allotments may be delayed.

Mr D Batey complained about rats, which he claimed are coming from the Allotments. Mr R Howe said that this was a periodic problem, which the Allotment Association took seriously. The new access lanes between plots, and the deployment of new rat traps, are expected to improve the situation. However, he also pointed out that the rats in question were not necessarily all coming from the Allotments.

The Chair stated that Cllr E Hayman is producing jams and chutneys from the provisions kindly donated by the Allotment Association, which are available free to those in need. He stressed that this was entirely voluntary, and that the anonymous donation she has received to help with the costs of this work was not from the Parish Council.

Cllr P Dicker has now been able to make contact with Tammy Morris-Hale from the DCC Ecology Department. Work on the proposed Windflower Grassland is due to commence in the spring, and arrangements to consult Residents about this are in hand.

**Action:** Chair & Cllr P Dicker

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**107/22 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS**

(a) **Village Green Maintenance**

A further number of old substandard Tubs are being replaced.

**Action:** Chair & Cllr T Towers

(b) **Parish Paths**

Payment for the Second Cut of the Parish Paths has been received.

(c) **Southside Bus Shelter**

A suitable replacement Southside Bus Shelter is still being actively investigated.

**Action:** Cllr T Towers & Clerk

(d) **Tree Maintenance**

A Tree Surveyor (Andrew Jackson) has been found, and is to be supplied with maps of the areas of concern, so that he can recommend what Maintenance work is required, and likely costs. Possible sources of funding will then be investigated.

**Action:** Cllr T Towers & Clerk

**108/22 CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA**

Further information from Kompan is still awaited. Unfortunately it is now apparent that the provision of Section 106 funding is likely to be seriously delayed (see **106/22** above), so it will almost certainly be necessary to obtain new quotations.

**Action:** Cllrs P Dicker & T Towers

The Clerk's Monthly Inspection Report was approved.

**109/22 ELDON WHINS DEVELOPMENTS**

Cllr D Sutton-Lloyd stated that the agreed arrangements with Keepmoat for the installation of a Defibrillator, and provision of a Parish Noticeboard, are progressing well.

Cllr M Stead reported that the DCC Highways Department have established that the Persimmon Roundabout has not been constructed according to the Planning Permission, and the builder will need to make the necessary alterations.

**110/22 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NP)**

The main area of outstanding work on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is the 'Area of Separation' intended to prevent any extension of the "Eldon Whins" developments, or at the Newton Aycliffe and Shildon)boundaries. Shaun Hanson has supplied a Map with alternative suggestions, which will need to be agreed before a Policy can be produced. The other two Policies in the NP are very straightforward. It is expected that a Draft NP should be available by end December/early January.

Further support will be needed to get the NP to the Pre-Submission stage of the process. Shaun Hanson will provide Budget prices so the Parish Council will have some idea as to what additional funding may be necessary in the next financial year.

**Action:** Clerk

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### 111/22 ACCOUNTS

The payment to the Royal British Legion for Wreaths and Crosses for Remembrance Sunday was discussed. As usual the Parish Council will pay for all of these, and the Village Association will reimburse the Parish Council for their share.

**RESOLVED** that the payment to the Royal British Legion will be £50.

**Action:** Clerk

The Chair stated that Cllr T Towers is now an authorised signatory for the Parish Council's Bank Accounts.

### 112/22 GAMP & CDALC

GAMP – nothing to report.

CDALC – the Clerk attended the AGM, and produced a report for Councillors.

### 113/22 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Nothing to report.

### 114/22 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

Nothing to report.

### 115/22 OTHER MATTERS

(a) Remembrance Sunday – all the necessary arrangements are complete.

(b) EV Charging Points – installation at the Village Hall approved by DCC, but subject to the Village Association doing a fair amount of work on the project, which was completely unexpected. The Clerk is currently investigating with DCC whether the Village Association's involvement can be reduced in anyway. If not, the project will not proceed.

**Action:** Clerk

(c) 'Warm Space' provision – following discussion, it was agreed it will be easier for the Parish Council to submit an Application to the County Durham Community Foundation (DCC) for a £1000 Grant to cover the costs of additional Energy and Food for the possible use of the Village Hall as a 'Warm Space'.

**Action:** Clerk

### 116/22 ADDITIONAL ITEMS

The Chair stated that the main Sewer in Eden Grove had been relined.

### 117/22 NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023, at 6.45 pm. The Chair closed the Meeting at 8.50 pm.