

APPROVED

Midridge Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting

**Village Hall,
Midridge**

**Monday
9th January 2023**

Time: 6.45 pm

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

In Attendance: DCC Cllr M Stead.
Mr D Batey.

Official: A Jordan (Clerk)

01/23 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read.

02/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr R Carr, and DCC Cllrs D Sutton-Lloyd & T Stubbs.

03/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

04/23 MIDDRIDGE QUARRY

Wards submitted a Planning Application for the Midridge Quarry just before Christmas, and Mr D Batey gave a report on the work of the Action Committee, which includes Parish Council representation, which has been formed to fight this proposal. To date:-

- (a) It has been established that there is no need for additional Sites for the disposal of Inert Building Waste in County Durham. Thus this Planning Application is contrary to both national and local (County Durham Plan) Waste Policy.
- (b) There have been 95 Objections to this Planning Application submitted.
- (c) A Petition with 266 signatures has been produced.
- (d) A Presentation is to be given to Meetings of Great Aycliffe and Shildon Town Councils, to solicit their support.
- (e) A Meeting has been organised with the DCC Planning Officer to discuss arrangements for the Planning Meeting which will decide on this Application.

Cllr H Howe expressed the Parish Council's appreciation for the excellent work of the Action Committee. The Parish Council's own Objection was discussed; it was agreed that this would be prepared by:-

Action: Cllr P Dicker & Clerk

Possible objections from the DCC Ecology Department (Tammy Morris-Hale), and regarding the risk to the Quarry SSSI, are to be investigated.

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05/23 MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

None.

06/23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of 7th November 2022 were accepted, and signed by the Chair as a true record.

07/23 ROAD TRAFFIC

The Messages on the new Speed Awareness Art signs are becoming detached (due to weather?); suitable alternatives are being investigated.

Action: Greenfield Arts.

The C35 Middridge road is to be closed for resurfacing on 20th – 22nd January, and the usual free Taxi Service will be provided to replace Buses. The work to replace the water supply pipe which runs along Middridge Road is currently expected to continue until 3rd February. All Parish residents have been informed by a notice delivered to properties.

Further works to repaint the road signs, and install improved “rumble strips”, are due once the above works are complete. It is not yet known when the necessary modifications to the Persimmon roundabout are planned.

The DCC Highways Department appear to have completed their electronic Traffic Survey; and our DCC Councillors are to be asked to see if the results can be made available.

Action: Cllrs D Sutton-Lloyd & T Stubbs

08/23 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR & POLICING

Nothing significant to report.

09/23 “THE PADDOCK” WILDFLOWER GRASSLAND

Improvements to the existing Allotment area are progressing slowly.

10/23 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS

(a) **Village Green Maintenance**

There have been yet more instances of damage due to vehicles driving onto the Village Green in places.

(b) **Bus Shelters**

Arrangements for the replacement of the demolished Northside Bus Shelter have now been agreed with the driver’s Insurance Company responsible. These require that the Parish Council pay the VAT involved (~ £5,000). which would have a significant effect on the Parish Council’s future finances; the feasibility of reclaiming this money earlier than is normally the case is to be investigated.

Action: Clerk

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

Action: Cllr T Towers & Clerk

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(c) **Tree Maintenance**

Still under investigation.

Action: Cllr H Howe

Due to the major gas pipe running across the triangle of Village Green in front of the Village Hall, there are potential safety issues regarding the removal of the dead tree stump; these are being investigated with Northern Gas Networks.

Action: Clerk

11/23 CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA

Updated quotations are being obtained. The situation regarding the availability of Section 106 funding is being investigated.

Action: Cllrs P Dicker & T Towers

The Clerk's Monthly Inspection Report was approved.

12/23 ELDON WHINS DEVELOPMENTS

Nothing significant to report.

13/23 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NP)

The main area of outstanding work on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) continues to be the 'Zone of Separation' intended to prevent any further extension of Newton Aycliffe (or Shildon) into the Parish. There are a number of possible options, and a Meeting has been arranged with the DCC Planning Department to discuss these.

Action: Clerk

14/23 ACCOUNTS

The Parish Council's Precept for the 2023-24 Financial Year was discussed.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council's Council Tax Rate be unchanged (for the second year running).

Action: Clerk

RESOLVED that the following Accounts for Payment are authorised:-

Payee	Purpose	Sum
D Johnson	Christmas Tree	£354.00
Complete Weed Control	2022 Village Green Maintenance	£2486.40
Harold Howe Electronics	Xmas Lights Repairs	£149.20
	TOTAL	£2989.60

15/23 GAMP & CDALC

GAMP – DCC are having to fund much of their expenditure from their financial reserves, and thus plan to increase their Council Tax Rate by 4.9%.

Our Police & Crime Commissioner is currently consulting on her Council Tax proposals.

CDALC – nothing to report.

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16/23 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Nothing to report.

17/23 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

Nothing to report.

18/23 OTHER MATTERS

- (a) 'Warm Space' provision – the Parish Council's Application for £1000 was rejected, for unspecified reasons. Groundworks are prepared to help prepare another Application, but following discussion it was agreed to investigate whether there was sufficient demand for such a facility to warrant this.

Action: Cllrs E Hayman & T Towers

- (b) Christmas 2023 Event – some "Eldon Whins" residents with young children have complained that they do not receive a Santa Claus visit, as occurs all over Newton Aycliffe. It was suggested that we could pay GATC to extend their Santa Claus visits to include the "Eldon Whins" Developments, but unfortunately GATC are unable to do this for "logistical reasons". It is not practical for the Parish Council to organise such an event, but a Christmas Grotto in the Village Hall is a possible alternative.

Action: Cllr T Towers

The general problem of "Eldon Whins" residents feeling that they get little for their Council Tax payments, and how to get them involved with the Parish Council, was discussed. There is apparently some form of Young Mothers Group, and attempts will be made to contact this

Action: Cllr T Towers

Another possibility is to organise an "Open Day" in the Village Hall to inform "Eldon Whins" residents of what the Parish Council does on their behalf; this is to be considered.

Action: All

19/23 ADDITIONAL ITEMS

None.

20/23 NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday, 6th March 2023, at 6.45 pm. The Chair closed the Meeting at 8.30 pm.