

APPROVED

Midridge Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting

**Village Hall,
Midridge**

**Thursday
13th May 2019**

Time: 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs W Mellors (retiring Chair), H Howe (new Chair), S Smith & P Makinson

In Attendance: Cllr J Clare, S Durham & P Howell (DCC)

Official: A Jordan (Clerk)

39/19 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read.

40/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr H Alexander.

41/19 ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL 2019/20

Cllr W Mellors stated that he was unable to continue as Chair, and Cllrs S Smith, P Makinson and H Alexander were unable to fulfil this role due to their work commitments. Cllr H Howe said he was reluctantly prepared to be Chair, but subject to Cllr S Smith continuing as Vice-Chair; this was agreed.

RESOLVED that Cllr H Howe be appointed Chair of the Council for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

42/19 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF CHAIR

Cllr H Howe signed a Declaration of Acceptance of the Office of Chair in the presence of the Clerk, and then took the Chair for the remainder of the Meeting.

43/19 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL 2019/20

RESOLVED that Cllr S Smith be appointed Vice-Chair of the Council for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

44/19 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF VICE-CHAIR

Cllr S Smith signed a Declaration of Acceptance of the Office of Vice-Chair in the presence of the Clerk.

45/19 THANKS TO OUTGOING CHAIR

Cllr H Howe thanked Cllr W Mellors for his work as Chair during the previous year.

46/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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None

Cllr S Smith mentioned that she was changing her job, and would need to update her Declaration of Interests form. It was agreed that it would be sensible if all Councillors were to review their Declaration of Interests forms.

Action: Clerk

47/19 MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

None

48/19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of 4th March 2019 were accepted, and signed by the Chair as a true record.

49/19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

50/19 POLICING ISSUES

There have been a number of incidents of Arson by the entrance to Middridge Quarry. The Police are aware of this problem, and are increasing their patrols.

51/19 "ELDON WHINS" DEVELOPMENTS & THE COUNTY PLAN

The rejected proposal to close Middridge Road for 6 weeks in order to build a new Roundabout to provide access to the new Keepmoat Homes "Elder Gardens" Housing Development was discussed. Cllr P Howell mentioned that there was a new proposal to close Middridge Road for 1 week in July in order to install the necessary Drains for the new Development, and he kindly agreed to forward details of this Proposal to the Parish Council. Cllr J Clare mentioned that a possible alternative to this Closure was being investigated. Parish Councillors expressed their concern that yet again a Road Closure was being proposed which would affect Middridge, and the Parish Council was not being informed, or consulted.

RESOLVED that the DCC Highways Department should be contacted, and concern expressed that the Parish Council was not being informed, or consulted, about Road Closures that would severely affect Middridge.

Action: Clerk

Concern was expressed about the amount of mud being spread on Greenfield Way due to the new Keepmoat Homes "Elder Gardens" Housing Development.

RESOLVED that the DCC Planning Enforcement Department should be contacted, and concern expressed about this matter.

Action: Clerk

The availability of future Section 106 monies from the new Keepmoat Homes "Elder Gardens" Housing Development was discussed. The Parish Council plan to use some of these funds to transform the "Paddock" into a "Wild-flower Grassland". Cllr J Clare again stressed that these funds were available on a "first come, first served" basis.

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RESOLVED that the DCC Planning Department should be contacted, to establish when these Section 106 monies will become available, so the Parish Council can ensure that the proposed "Wild-flower Grassland".Project will receive the necessary funding.

Action: Clerk

52/19 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS

(a) **Street Light Removal**

The SLA has ben signed by both parties.

(b) **Walkers Lane Road & Parking**

A second Application for the proposed Parking restrictions in Walkers Lane near the Village Hall had to be made, because of problems with another restriction in Newton Aycliffe. The Notice Period for this new Application has expired.

(c) **Parish Paths**

A Metal "Kissing" Gate has been discovered on Path 4, which serves no useful purpose, and it had been suggested this could potentially be used to replace the arson-damaged wooden "Kissing" Gate on Path 7. However, following discussion it was agreed that Path 7 would be better if this "Kissing" Gate were not replaced, and the Metal "Kissing" Gate could be more practically used at the entrance to the proposed "Wild-flower Grassland". The DCC Parish Paths Partnership are to be contacted to establish whether they know who owns the Metal "Kissing" Gate.

Action: Clerk

(d) **Tree Maintenance**

Oliver's Trees have completed the Tree Maintenance on the Dock and the Play Area, funded by our Ward County Councillors' Neighbourhood Budgets.

(e) **Dog Litter**

The Clerk had a useful Meeting with Colin Curry, one of the two DCC "Clean & Green" Team Leaders, and raised a number of Issues, including moving the Dog Litter Bin from "the Dock" to Northside Close. Progress on these Issues is to be monitored.

Action: Clerk

(f) **Village Green Maintenance**

It was noted that someone has been dumping rubbish by the top right-hand side of the Play Area, and someone has broken through part of the hedge between "the Dock" and the adjacent field.

Millennium Hedge – Jonathan Pounder is prepared to do more Maintenance, but doesn't run as many Training Courses as he used to, and hence may not have the opportunity. Northumbrian Water are currently offering Grants for Environmental Projects, and the possibility of them funding this work is to be investigated.

Action: Clerk

RESOLVED that Ian Hayman's Quotation for Village Green Maintenance be accepted.

Action: Clerk

53/19 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

None

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54/19 CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA

The Clerk's Monthly Inspection Report was approved.

The rubberised surfaces under the Swings are again beginning to be affected by moss. Ian Hayman is to be contacted to see if he is able to do the necessary cleaning.

Action: Clerk

55/19 ROAD TRAFFIC

The Police were in the Village today monitoring Traffic with a "Speed Gun".

56/19 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NP)

Progress has been delayed by two issues:-

- (a) Anne Clarke has unfortunately resigned as Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, although she and John intend to continue as Members. Finding a suitable replacement is in hand.
Action: Cllr H Howe
- (b) It was decided to wait until the start of the new Financial Year before submitting a claim for the remaining Government Grant Funding, so this money is available for as long as possible.
Action: Clerk

57/19 ACCOUNTS

The Parish Council considered their 2018/19 Accounts.

RESOLVED that the following be formally approved, and (where appropriate) signed by the Chair and the Clerk:-

- (a) The Parish Council's 2018/19 Accounts, as approved by the Internal Auditor (who has completed the usual Annual Internal Audit Report).
- (b) The usual Annual Governance Statement.
- (c) The usual Accounting Statements.
- (d) The Certificate of Exemption, which means the Accounts will not be externally audited.

Councillors considered a Schedule of Accounts for Payment. It was noted that:-

- (a) The MVA have requested the usual permission to use the Village Green for the Annual Village Fête.

RESOLVED that the MVA be given permission to use the Village Green for the Fête.

Action: Clerk

- (b) Npower Northern have added a substantial Administration Charge to this year's Invoice for Electricity for the Christmas Lights. The Clerk was reluctant to raise this issue, because there was a second Invoice for £0.0, and he was concerned that if these Invoices were drawn to Npower Northern's attention, the result might well be a second substantial Administration Charge. It was decided to pay the Invoices as submitted.

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- (c) The Parish Council again need to pay a Fee to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to be registered as a "Data Controller".
- (d) The normal Defibrillator Pads are now two years old, and need to be replaced as previously agreed.

RESOLVED that the following Accounts be approved for payment:-

Payee	Purpose	Amount
'John the Handyman'	Playground Bench Repairs	£100.00
Midridge Village Association	Fête Raffle Prize	£50.00
Zurich Municipal	2019/20 Insurance	£934.32
CDALC	Annual Subscription	£60.32
Npower Northern Limited	Electricity for Xmas Llights	£88.01
Woodham Village Community Association	Defibrillator Pads	£159.00
Colin Gray	Internal Auditor Honorarium	£70.00
A. D. Jordan	Clerk's Apr – Jun Salary	£240.00
HMRC	Clerk's Apr – Jun Tax	£160.00
Olivers Tree Services Ltd.	Tree Maintenance	£1,812.00
	TOTAL	£3,713.65

Councillors considered the Clerk's Annual Salary.

RESOLVED that the Clerk's Annual Salary be increased by £50 to £1650 per annum.

Action: Clerk

58/19 GAMP & CDALC

GAMP – the agreed Project Applications for the 2018-19 Older Persons Social Isolation Fund (£25,000), and the Youth Fund Grant (£12,242), are undergoing final Appraisal, and for the Welfare Reform Fund (£10,000), are under consideration.

Notices have been displayed in the Local Media requesting Project Applications for this year's three Area Budget Project Priorities; potential Applicants have until Friday 31st May to submit their Proposals.

CDALC – Cllr W Mellors has not been invited to any Executive Committee Meetings recently; this is to be investigated.

Action: Cllr W Mellors

It was agreed that Cllr W Mellors would continue to represent the Parish Council on the GAMP Local Councils Forum, and hence as their Representative on the CDALC Executive Committee.

59/19 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

A Letter has been received from Citizens Advice County Durham requesting support from the Parish Council, as was agreed last year.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council give a donation of £50.

Action: Clerk

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60/19 OTHER MATTERS

(a) **Village Hall Wall**

Cllr S Smith expressed concern regarding part of the Village Hall Wall which retains the bank to the upper Car Park Area, which is beginning to lean badly.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council write to the Middridge Village Association expressing their concern about this matter.

Action: Clerk

61/19 ADDITIONAL ITEMS

The Chair raised the issue of Cllr H Alexander, who is now frequently unable to attend Parish Council Meetings due to her work commitments, although she continues to be involved with Parish Council business by email. It was noted that should she fail to attend three Parish Council Meetings in succession, she would automatically be disqualified as a Parish Councillor. It was agreed to monitor this situation, and if necessary she should write to the Clerk requesting a Dispensation, which it was agreed the Parish Council would grant.

Action: Clerk

62/19 NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday, 1st July 2019. Cllr P Howell gave his Apologies for being unable to attend this Meeting. The Chair closed the Meeting at 9.10 pm.