

## **Middridge Parish Council**

### **Minutes of Council Meeting**

**Eldon  
Parish Church**

**Monday  
3<sup>rd</sup> September 2007**

**Time:6.45pm**

**Present:** Councillors Mrs A.Clarke (Chairman);, W.J. Clarke and P.Makinson .

**Apologies for absence** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Howe and Mellors.

**Official:** N.Hart (Clerk);

#### **31/07 NOTICE OF MEETING**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

#### **32/07 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2007 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **33/07 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

##### **i) Parish Paths-Map/Notice Board (Minute 23/07 refers)**

It was noted that DCC would feature progress on the digital mapping of the County's Parish Paths at their open event on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

##### **ii) Finger Signage-Eldon Crossroads (Minute 23/07 refers)**

It was noted that DCC had confirmed that they had carried out the recent maintenance of the Finger Signage post however, they had been unable to provide funding for the replacement of the missing 'arm' of the sign due to budget constraints.

##### **iii) Accounts for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 (Minute 25/07 refers)**

Members were advised that notification had now been received from the external auditors confirming that the accounts for the above period were in order and contained no issues that they wished to raise with the

Parish Council. An appropriate notice to this effect had therefore been displayed at the Village Hall.

**RESOLVED** that the decision of the external auditors regarding the Parish Council accounts for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007, be accepted.

**iv) Eden Grove-Tarmac Works (Minute 29/07 refers)**

It was requested that DCC confirm the completion date for the remainder of tarmac works at Eden Grove.

**v) Proposed Disposal of Allotments (Minute 29/07 refers)**

It was noted that DCC had advised that there had been no further progress regarding the proposed disposal of the allotments at Middridge; which had first been suggested over a year and a half ago.

It was suggested that; in the interests of best protecting the current users of the site; and in an effort to secure the long term stability of the site, this Council formally request that DCC consider investing the responsibility as allotment authority to Middridge Parish Council.

**RESOLVED** that the Parish Clerk write to DCC to formally request that they consider investing the responsibility as allotment authority to Middridge Parish Council for the management and ownership of this particular allotment site.

**34/07 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Members considered a schedule of Accounts for Payment; together with the following additional invoice:-

-CE Walker	Grasscutting August	£246.75
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**RESOLVED** that the following accounts be approved for payment, together with the additional invoice presented above:-

CE Walker	Grasscutting-May	£246.75
Hoppers Ltd	Mayor's Chain-Repair	£42.00
N.Hart	Salary	£175.00
N.Hart	Postage	£4.20
Sedgefield Borough Council	Award for All Fund	£4,618.00

**35/07**

## **GROUNDNS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS**

### **i) Bus Shelters**

Further to the previously reported condition of the two existing bus shelters within the Parish, the Clerk advised that JWS had carried out an updated inspection regarding the condition of the stone shelter in the presence of members and that members be informed so as to be in attendance and had provided an estimate for the necessary works to each shelter. It was proposed that this estimate be approved and the works be carried out at their earliest convenience.

Members also referred to a missing wooden plank from the bench adjacent the stone shelter; and asked that this repair be also carried out by the contractor.

**RESOLVED** that the estimate provided for necessary repairs to the two existing bus shelters be approved; and JWS be also asked to carry out essential repairs to the wooden bench adjacent the stone bus shelter.

**36/07**

## **CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA**

The Chair reported on developments regarding the reinstatement of the Play Area following the installation of new equipment.

It was noted when the works commenced, it became evident that the site was not suitable for the proposed cycle ramp and therefore this element of the works had not been undertaken.

Whilst some concerns had been expressed by a resident regarding the disposal of soil around the site, this had been the subject of discussion with the Borough Council; who had confirmed that they were satisfied that this measure was an environmentally friendly way of dispersing the excess soil. This had also been confirmed as such by the Environment Agency.

There still however remained one or two minor reinstatement works that still remained to be completed before the Parish and Borough Council were prepared to 'sign off' the works as complete; and the SBC Project Officer was to speak to the contractor to ensure that these works were completed to all parties satisfaction.

The Clerk advised that the Council's Insurers (Zurich) had been advised of the additional pieces of equipment installed on the site; and Zurich had indicated that they would undertake a formal inspection of the site in September and update this Council's insurance schedule accordingly. The Clerk had also requested that Zurich undertake a twice yearly inspection of the equipment; as opposed to the current annual inspection. The National Association of Local Councils had also advised that, in addition to the formal insurance inspections, the Parish Council could consider undertaking its own recorded inspection programme as a means of ensuring the facilities were maintained and safe for use. It was proposed that the Clerk undertake a monthly inspection of the facilities, advise members of any necessary essential works and present the results to members at each meeting.

With regard to any official opening of the refurbished facility, it was noted that SBC had advised that the equipment be allowed to first settle before any such ceremony was undertaken.

Insofar as the facility was concerned generally, Councillor Makinson reported that a neighbour and child had recently been concerned when trying to use the equipment only to find dogs on the play area off their lead; one of whom had behaved a little aggressively towards the neighbour. This had had the effect of putting the neighbour and child off from using the facility since; and it was questioned what action could be undertaken to prevent dog owners allowing their dogs to exercise on the site whilst off their lead. It was proposed that the Clerk consult with the Borough Council and that an appropriate article be placed in the Residents Newsletter asking that people refrain from such practices in the vicinity of the play area.

**RESOLVED** that:-

1. The report of the Chairman regarding the on-going reinstatement works at the play area be noted.
2. The Clerk undertake a monthly inspection of the facilities and advise members of any necessary essential works and present the results to members at each meeting.
3. The Clerk contact the Borough Council regarding appropriate action they would recommend be taken to curb dog owners allowing their dogs to be allowed off their lead on the play area.

4. An appropriate article be placed in the Residents Newsletter asking that people refrain from allowing their dogs to be allowed off their lead on the play area.

**37/07**

**GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

- (i) Durham Policing Authority-Policing Plan 2007-2008
- (ii) Invitations:-
  - SBC Mayors Civic Service-9<sup>th</sup> September 2007  
Councillors A & J Clarke to attend.
  - DCC Parish Paths Partnership-29<sup>th</sup> September 2007  
Councillors A & J Clarke to attend.
  - Shildon Town Council Charity Night-2<sup>nd</sup> November 2007
  - Shildon Civic Carol Service-9<sup>th</sup> December 2007
  - SBC Centenary of Wedding Gowns-10<sup>th</sup> October 2007  
Councillor Mrs Clarke to attend.

**38/07**

**REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY-11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2007**

It was proposed that the Parish Council donate £25 towards the cost of a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

**RESOLVED** that the proposed donation be approved.

**39/07**

**CHRISTMAS 2007**

It was suggested that, as the works to the Village Hall were nearing completion, it would be an idea to coincide both Christmas celebrations and the opening of the Hall at the same event if possible. Sedgefield Borough Council were understood to be keen to promote the works undertaken to the Hall; and it may be possible to for the Mayor of the Borough Council to be present to mark the occasion.

The Parish Clerk advised that DCC had quoted for the cost of dressing/undressing a Christmas tree (£278 + VAT); and it was suggested that this work be confirmed and an order be placed with Lyndhurst Nurseries for an appropriate tree.

**RESOLVED** that:-

1. The Parish Council write to the Village Residents Association in support of an official occasion marking the opening of the Village Hall ; to be staged if possible around any Christmas celebration event.
2. The Parish Clerk confirm orders for an appropriate Christmas tree; and its subsequent dressing/undressing, with the relevant contractors.

**40/07**

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

- (i) Bulb Planting-Trees Outside 2-14 Eden Grove

It was suggested that Sedgefield Borough Council be requested whether they would provide crocus bulbs to the Parish that could then be planted around the base of the trees in the above area. This under-planting was a practice common amongst some authorities and it was felt that it would help to brighten the environment during the Winter months.

- (ii) Oak Tree-Village Green

Reference was made to the condition of the Oak Tree on the Village Green, which was reported to have elements of fungal growth on it. It was noted that the growth of the tree, which was planted some 15 years ago, was adjacent a Horse Chestnut tree. It was suggested that members inspect the tree; and should any concerns be noted, contact be then made with Hamsterley Tree Surgeons who had previously carried out work for the Council.

- (iii) Millennium Hedge

It was reported that the hedge could now benefit from an inspection with a view to encouraging its future growth. It was requested that contact be made with Sedgefield Borough Council to request that an inspection be carried out on site, in the presence of members.

- (iv) Hire of Eldon Parish Church

In lieu of the use of the above premises for the purpose of this meeting, it was proposed that a donation of £15 be made to Eldon Parish Church.

- (v) Dog Litter Bin-Proposed Siting

It was noted that a request had been received for a dog litter bin to be sited on the grassed verge area, opposite No 1 Walker Lane. It was suggested that this request be submitted to Sedgefield Borough Council.

**41/07**

**NEXT MEETING**

Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2007 at 6.45pm