

APPROVED

Middridge Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting

Village Hall,
Middridge

Monday
2nd March, 2015

Time: 6.45 pm

Present: Cllrs A Clarke (Chairwoman), J Clarke, W Mellors, H Howe, P Makinson.

In attendance: Cllrs J Clare, J Gray (Durham County Council - DCC).

Official: A D Jordan (Clerk)

22/15 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read. It was noted that owing to a recent change in Government Regulations, in future the Agenda and the previous Meeting's Draft Minutes **MUST** be published on the Village Website.

Action: Cllr P Makinson & Clerk

23/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

24/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

25/15 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5th January 2015 were signed by the Chairwoman as a true record.

26/15 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

(i) Planning Applications (10/15 refers)

Following contact with Tracey Bellas, the new Shildon Town Clerk, it was established that the article in the Northern Echo suggesting that Persimmon are planning to extend their 'Middridge Vale' Development, was a misunderstanding, and in fact refers to a separate Development on the other side of the Railway.

27/15 PERSIMMON "ELDON WHINS" DEVELOPMENT & THE COUNTY PLAN

- (a) A detailed objection to the Persimmon Planning Application has been composed and lodged with the DCC Strategic Planning Office.
- (b) A 'Flyer' was circulated to all Village Residents informing them that there is still time for them to lodge an Objection to the Persimmon Planning Application.

RESOLVED that it be established whether any new Objections to the Persimmon Planning Application have been lodged.

Action: Clerk

- (c) A Letter was sent to Stuart Timmis (Head of the DCC Planning Department), detailing the Parish Council's opposition to the inclusion

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of any development at "Eldon Whins" in the Draft County Plan, and requesting that he represent our views to the Government Inspector.

- (d) Cllr W Mellors has established that his personal Objection to the Draft County Plan including any development at "Eldon Whins", has in fact been recorded as being an Objection to any future "Eldon Whins" Planning Application.

The Government Inspector's Interim Report on the Draft County Plan criticises it as overambitious, and offers three possible ways forward, all of which would be very time consuming. DCC have indicated their opposition to this Interim Report, but at present are awaiting the outcome of the forthcoming General Election before deciding on any plan of action.

In the meantime, the Planning Committee have been instructed that in future they are **NOT** to give any weight to the emerging County Plan in their decisions on Planning Applications, which will have to be largely judged against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). With respect to the Persimmon Planning Application, this is serious because the Draft County Plan contains specific Policies to protect the Green Belt between Newton Aycliffe and Middridge, whereas the NPPF, and the old Sedgefield Borough Plan, which in any case carries little weight owing to its dating back to 1990, are both much vaguer in terms of their protection.

RESOLVED that the NPPF be studied to establish what Green Belt Protection it provides; Anne Rawlinson (DCC Planning Officer) may be able to help with this.

Action: Cllr W Mellors & Clerk

RESOLVED that, subject to the outcome of the above, a new Objection to the Persimmon Planning Application should be lodged as soon as possible.

Action: Cllr A Clarke & Clerk

28/15

GROUND MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS

(i) Parish Paths Maintenance

DCC are considering improvements to the Paths in the Newton Aycliffe/Shildon area, and the Parish Council have completed a Survey, and attended a Meeting, on this matter. Apparently the possibility of Verge Paths is being considered.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council should be represented at a Meeting to be held at the Locomotion Museum on 18th March, to further consider this matter.

Action: Cllr A Clarke & Clerk

(ii) Parish Noticeboard

Repairs to the Parish Noticeboard are now complete, and Elaine Crowe, the Parish Paths Partnership Chief Ranger, has kindly arranged for the Parish Council's costs to be reimbursed.

The Parish Paths Display needs replacing, as it does not show the new 'Locomotion Way', and the Map has faded badly (although some temporary repairs have been effected). Unfortunately neither DCC nor the Parish Council possess an Electronic Master of this Display, and Elaine Crowe is trying to establish who made it, in order to see whether they have such a Master. Cllr P Makinson stated that there is a Map on the Parish Website which could be useful, which he will provide to the Clerk.

(iii) Tree Management

There has been no further progress on the Draft Tree Management Policy. Cllr H Howe and the Clerk again undertook to complete this Policy, which will be circulated to all Councillors for comment, with a view to its being adopted at the next Meeting.

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(iv) Bus Shelter

“John the Handyman” has provided a Quotation of £2, 087 to replace the Bus Shelter Roof using Fibreglass; this was considered excessive.

RESOLVED that an alternative Quotation be obtained for a new Bus Shelter Roof; the Shincliffe Garden Centre may be able to help.

Action: Clerk

(vi) Millennium Hedge

Work on the Millennium Hedge is now complete, apart from a small end section, which Jonathan Pounder was unsure whether to leave as it is, or to undertake further work. It was generally agreed that at present the Hedge looks unfinished.

RESOLVED that the proposed additional work be undertaken.

Action: Clerk

RESOLVED that the possibility of the Council providing an Honorarium of up to £200 to Jonathan Pounder, perhaps in the form of equipment, be investigated.

Action: Clerk

(vi) County Durham Big Spring Clean

It was agreed that the Parish Council will participate in the annual County Durham Big Spring Clean as usual, on the weekend of the 28th/29th March. Rubbish Sacks and Fluorescent Safety Jackets will be required, although we have the rest of the necessary equipment. This Event is to be publicised on the Village Website, and the 'Middridge Mercury'.

Action: Cllr W Mellors, Cllr P Makinson & Clerk

29/15

PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF ALLOTMENTS BY DCC

The Pre-Planning Application to change the Registered Use of the “the Paddock” (and if necessary the Allotments) to “Allotments” indicated that a Planning Application **WOULD** be required, and would probably require considerable expenditure to widen the new Access Road, provide additional Car Parking and Site Access Roads, and to provide screening for the Site. In view of this, and the fact that the Parish Council does not own the land, this option to prevent the Site from being sold for Housing Development seems impractical.

Cllr W Mellors has still to locate the photograph in the County Archives which he believes proves that the Land in question was used as Allotments in the past, which is disputed by DCC.

Action: Cllr W Mellors

Alternative options for “The Paddock” are being considered.

Action: Cllr A Clarke & Clerk

30/15

COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID

The Parish Council's Application for the Allotments to be registered as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act's Community Right to Bid Scheme has been successful. The situation with regard to “The Paddock” is being investigated.

Action: Clerk

31/15

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

No new Planning Applications have been submitted since the last Council Meeting.

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However, the new on-line Planning System did report that a previous Planning Application for Tree works at 35, South Side had been granted. This was missed because the Owner of this property lives in School Aycliffe, and the old Weekly Lists reported this Planning Application as referring to Newton Aycliffe rather than Middridge, Civil Parish (CP). It is believed that the delay in the new on-line Planning System reporting this Planning Application was due to a new feature having only just been implemented, and hopefully this situation should not occur again.

32/15 CHILDREN'S' PLAY AREA

Our Insurer's Annual Inspection Report indicated two problems requiring action:-

- (a) The Bushes which hold the Swing Chains on the large Swings require replacement. Cllr J Clare offered to see whether Great Aycliffe could help with this. Details of suitable Bushes and a Supplier are available, so 'John the Handyman' should be able to do this work if necessary.
- (b) There is a loose Top Panel on the Kompan Climbing Frame which needs to be secured. The Clerk has been unable to identify this problem, and is unable to climb up onto this piece of equipment; Cllr P Makinson offered to investigate.

The Clerk's Monthly Inspections show no further problems, and were approved.

33/15 C35 NEWTON AYCLIFFE TO SHILDON ROAD-TRAFFIC CALMING

Letters were sent to Arriva, Live-in, Garnetts and International Waste Metals, complaining about their Vehicles speeding. All have responded by investigating, and reminding their drivers that they must obey the Speed Limit, apart from Garnetts.

Speeding remains the PACT Priority. Our local Police are still not trained in the use of the new Speed Guns, but this is expected shortly.

34/15 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Minutes of the previous Working Group Meeting have been circulated.

RESOLVED that a further Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group be organised as soon as practical, to particularly consider Areas for Protection, Improvement & Development.

Action: Cllr W Mellors

Grants towards the costs of developing a Neighbourhood Plan are now available, and the requirements need to be assessed at the forthcoming Meeting.

35/15 GATC COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

No further developments.

36/15 STATUTORY POLICIES

RESOLVED that the following new Draft Statutory Policies should be adopted:-

- (a) Financial Regulations
- (b) Publication Scheme
- (c) Standing Orders
- (d) Risk Assessment Register

37/15 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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Councillors considered a Schedule of Accounts for Payment.

RESOLVED that the following Accounts be approved for payment:-

Payee	Purpose	Sum
Hayfields Contracting Ltd.	P7 Gates & Stiles Modifications	£780.00
John the Handyman	Parish Noticeboard Repairs	£330.00
A. D. Jordan	Oct 14 – Mar 15 Clerk's Salary	£420.00
HMRC	Oct – Dec 14 Income Tax	£140.00
HMRC	Jan – Mar 15 Income Tax	£140.00
DCC	Christmas Tree Lights	£409.80
	TOTAL	£2,219.80

Cllr J Clarke noted that DCC had fixed the problem with the Christmas Tree Lights.

RESOLVED that Colin Gray be asked to act as Internal Auditor for the Accounts.

Action: Clerk

38/15

GAMP & CDALC

The next Great Aycliffe and Middridge Area Action Partnership (GAMP) Board Meeting will be on 10th January; the Clerk will attend.

A recent County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) Meeting reported:-

- (a) DCC are undertaking a Project to record all the 'Open Spaces' in the County, which Local Councils are asked to support.
- (b) DCC are asking Councils to consider buying Cameras to detect Fly Tipping; GAMP are buying 2 such Cameras, so the Parish Council need take no action.
- (c) The new National Council Award Scheme may be of interest.
- (d) Durham Ask – the Parish Council may be able to be paid to undertake Grass Cutting (but NOT Tree Maintenance) for DCC; the Clerk will investigate.

The next CDALC Meeting is the inaugural NE regional County Association Event at County Hall on 28th March.

There will be a Consultation Event on the Combined Authority Proposal at County Hall on 17th March, at 6.00 pm; participants must register.

39/15

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

A Letter from DCC regarding Parish Council Managed Allotment Sites was received; the Clerk responded that the Parish Council does not manage any such Sites.

40/15

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

It was decided that the Parish Council not participate in the new 'Streetlife' Social Media Site.

41/15

NEXT MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting, on Monday, 11th May 2015 at 6.45pm.

Chair _____