

Middridge Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting

**Village Hall,
Middridge**

**Monday
24th August 2009**

Time:6.45pm

Present: Councillors Makinson (Chairman); Mrs A.Clarke, W.J. Clarke, H.Howe and W.Mellors.

Official: N.Hart (Clerk);

33/09 NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

34/09 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2009 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35/09 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

i) Erection of Dwelling, Land Adjacent 38 Southside, Middridge (Minute 21/09 refers)

It was confirmed that approval for the above application had been granted by Durham County Council on the 12th June 2009. Work had since commenced on site..

ii) Middridge Website (Minute 21/09 refers)

Councillor Mrs Clarke advised that she would seek to provide the content requested regards the history of the Village for inclusion within the website as soon as was possible.

iii) Christmas Tree (Minute 21/09 refers)

Councillor Clarke advised on the outcome of his enquiries regards sourcing an appropriate tree that could be planted on the Village Green and used as the Village Christmas Tree each year. This followed member concern at the year on year cost of providing a one off tree and dressing it with lights.

GATC had indicated that it would be advisable to purchase and plant 3 appropriate trees, at approximate one foot high, and these would hopefully grow at 2ft per year. Many however failed to take; hence the suggestion to plant more than one.

It was suggested that Councillor Clarke enquire further regards the cost of securing the trees and report back to the next meeting.

iv) Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2009 (Minute 21/09 refers)

The Clerk advised that notification had been received from the external auditors that no matters had come to their attention during their audit of the Parish Council's accounts. An invoice for the cost of their audit would be presented as part of the Accounts for Payment item.

v) Village Fete (Minute 29/09 refers)

The Clerk advised that the Council's current public liability insurance extended to cover for £2M, and that should the Council wish to increase it to the proposed £5M, it would require an additional premium of £23.31.

Councillor Clarke advised that the matter of use of picnic tables on the green outside of the Bay Horse had been raised with the landlady; who promised to investigate the matter with the brewery.

vi) Chains of Office

Consideration was given to the need to provide the required number of additional links to the Chains of Office. It was proposed that the Chairman approach Hoppers of Darlington and request a price for providing a further four links, and report back to the next meeting.

36/09

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Members considered a schedule of Accounts for Payment; together with an additional invoice received from B.D.Hoy Stayward for £166.75 in respect of the external audit.

RESOLVED that the following accounts be approved for payment:-

N.Hart	Salary	£208.34*
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N.Hart	Postage	£2.34
Stockton on Tees BC	Printing Costs	£80.00
Complete Weed Control	Parish Paths	£1,035.00
BDO Hoy Stayward	External Audit 08/09	£166.75

* backdated to May 2009.

37/09 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS

i) Grounds Maintenance or General Repairs Issues

The Working Party responsible for maintaining the War Memorial had now obtained the necessary materials and would commence work soon.

Members noted the generosity and community spirit of a resident of the village, Mr Arnold Miller, who had very kindly carried out works to repair the seat adjacent to The Meadows. It was proposed that the Council place on record its thanks to Mr Miller, and that Councillor Mrs Clarke personally convey this message to Mr Miller.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council place on record its appreciation to Mr Arnold Miller for the work he undertook to repair the village seat, and Councillor Mrs Clarke personally convey this message to Mr Miller.

38/09 PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF ALLOTMENTS BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, MIDDRIDGE

The Clerk advised on correspondence received from Durham County Council following concern expressed by this Council as to the freehold valuation placed on the site. DCC confirmed that they believed the valuation to be realistic using open market comparables. Consideration was also given to advice obtained from the National Association of Councils (NALC) regarding the legal costs and procedures associated with allotment acquisition.

Councillor Mellors referred to the legislation available under the Power of Well-Being, which allowed DCC to give the facilities to the Parish Council for free, as it was of continuing community value. This was particularly evident as people from Newton Aycliffe and Shildon, in addition to residents from Middridge, had allotments within the Middridge site. It was suggested that Councillor Mrs Clarke refer the matter to the Great Aycliffe & Middridge Partnership (GAMP) for consideration at their next meeting, with a view to obtaining their support for the proposal

that DCC transfer the allotments to this Council for free. Notwithstanding this, a further meeting should be sought with the relevant officer from DCC regarding the proposed terms of the disposal.

With regard to final clarification of the maintenance responsibilities and costs incurred, it was suggested that Councillor Makinson obtain the relevant information from the Allotments Association and inform them of progress to date regarding the proposed transfer of ownership .

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. Councillor Mrs Clarke be authorised to request that GAMP support this Council's proposal that DCC should consider transferring the ownership of the site to the Parish Council for free, given that it would continue to be of community value.
3. A further meeting be arranged with the relevant officer from Durham County Council to discuss the proposed disposal further.
4. Councillor Makinson contact the Allotments Association to advise them of progress regarding the proposed disposal and seek confirmation of all aspects of their maintenance agreement.

(Councillor Makinson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the above item as a result of being a current allotment holder.)

39/09 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Clerk advised that enforcement action had been taken by DCC to remove the luminous advertisements from the public telephone box.

No comments were considered necessary on the planning applications presented.

40/09 CHILDRENS' PLAY AREA

Consideration was given to the Clerk's monthly inspection report regarding the condition of the play area and equipment.

It was noted that there was a degree of moss on the floor area of the swings, which required cleaning, and that the two seats on the older childrens swings should now be replaced.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

41/09 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was noted, together with a letter of thanks from Bob Fleming, Leader of GATC, following condolences sent in respect of the recent loss of his wife Angela :-

- a) Durham County Council Charity/Social Events.
- b) Shildon Town Council-Mayor's Charity Evening.
- c) Durham County Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
- d) Shildon Town Council-Future Civic Events.

42/09 G.A.T.C./MIDDRIDGE AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor Mrs Clarke advised that Councillor Brian Hall had been appointed as Chairman of the Great Aycliffe & Middridge Area Action Partnership (GAMP), and that the following priorities had been identified by GAMP for continuing work during the first year:-

- Environmental & Street Cleansing;
- Support to Community & Voluntary Sector;
- Activities for Young People.

The next meeting of GAMP was to be held on Tuesday 29th September 2009 at 6.00pm at the Agnew Community Centre.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

43/09 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY-8TH NOVEMBER 2009

Consideration was given to arrangements for commemorating Remembrance Sunday. It was proposed that a wreath be purchased to the value of £25, and Councillor Mrs Clarke discuss arrangements for the event with Tracy Bellas at Shildon Town Council.

44/09

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 2nd November 2009 at 6.45pm