

Middridge Parish Council

**Village Hall,
Middridge**

**Minutes of Council Meeting
Monday
8th January 2007**

Time:6.45pm

Present: Councillors Mrs A.Clarke (In the Chair) , W.J. Clarke, W.Mellors and P.Makinson.

Official: N.Hart (Clerk);

In Attendance:- Mr Taylor (Resident)

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Howe.

43/06 NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

44/06 MINUTES

- i) The Minutes of the meeting held on 13TH November 2006 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

45/06 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

i) Parish Paths-Map/Notice Board (Minute 35/06 refers)

Members were informed that the Parish Paths Officer (Victoria Lloyd) at Durham County Council had advised that she was to leave her present position at the end of the month. Victoria had expressed her gratitude to the work of all Councillors and officers that she had worked alongside; including those from Middridge Parish who she had worked successfully with as part of the Parish Paths Partnership.

Progress on the development of a suitable application to Awards for All for lottery funding to produce leaflets promoting the use of the public footpaths in and around Middridge Parish, would now be incumbent upon the workload of the new postholder once they were in place.

ii) Condition of Bus Shelters (Minute 35/06 refers)

The Clerk advised that he had obtained the identity of a contractor who had been responsible for work on behalf of Stockton Borough Council; and who might be

interested in tendering for required works to the two bus shelters within the Parish. Attempts would be made by the Clerk to contact the contractor, with a view to ascertaining whether they would be interested in inspecting and tendering for the work. No further details had been received from DCC with regard to contractors that they may be prepared to recommend; and it was suggested that a reminder be sent in this regard.

iii) Sedgefield Borough Council-Road Signage and Litter Bins (Minute 35/06 refers)

It was noted that the Walker Lane road sign, previously reported as missing, was now in place. The Eden Grove sign was however in poor condition; being 'white bleached' in appearance, and should therefore be replaced by Sedgefield Borough Council.

The Borough Council had also requested clarification as to where the Dog Waste bin should be relocated; the original having been removed from Walker Lane due to it causing an obstruction to farm vehicles using this road. It was suggested that Councillor W.J.Clark consult with both dog owners in the area and Mr Hayman, who resided nearby, with a view to identifying a suitable location.

iv) Play Area (Minute 35/06 refers)

Councillor Mrs Clarke advised that members had met with Joanne King, Play Area Development Officer at Sedgefield Borough Council, on Monday 20th November 2006 to discuss the next stage of the proposed play area redevelopment application. The proposals would form part of an application to the Awards for All Lottery Fund; and the Borough Council intended to 'showcase' the proposals in the Village Hall some time in the future. The estimated cost of the scheme was £30,000; the total cost of which would be sought from the Borough Council/Lottery Fund.

v) Christmas Tree/Celebrations

It was noted that the tree was to be removed by the contractor on the 9th January 2007. Members expressed their gratitude to Councillor W.J.Clark for his efforts once again in arranging the erection and dismantling of the tree. No approach from residents had been received regarding participation in any Christmas celebrations.

vi) East Thickley Farm

Councillor Mrs Clarke advised that Sedgefield Borough Council had advised that the reported development in the area had nothing to do with outline planning permission granted for the area; and was more likely to be as a result of statutory works or an archaeological dig. The person who had raised the matter had therefore been informed.

vii) Sustainable Energy

Details of Sedgefield Borough Council's Sustainable Energy Policy had been received and were forwarded on to the resident concerned.

46/06 EXTERNAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2006

The Council was advised that the results of the external audit of accounts for the period ending 31st March 2006 had been received and there had been no matters identified that had required further attention. The Annual Return and Conclusion of Audit Notice had therefore been displayed on the notice board of the Village Hall.

RESOLVED that the results of the external audit of accounts be noted.

47/06 PARISH PRECEPT 2007/2008

Consideration was given to the setting of the Parish Precept for 2007/2008. It was noted that expenditure during the last year had continued to exceed the income from the Parish precept, and therefore it was proposed that the precept be increased for 2007/8 to £4,750.

RESOLVED that the Parish Precept for 2007/2008 be set at £4,750.

48/06 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Members considered a schedule of Accounts for Payment.

RESOLVED that the following accounts be approved for payment:-

BDO Stoy Hayward	External Auditors	£141.00
D.Johnson/Lyndhurst Nurseries	Xmas Tree	£75.00
N.Hart	Salary	£166.67

49/06 REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Consideration was given to requests for financial assistance received from the following organisations:-

- a) Durham Wildlife Trust
- b) Victim Support, County Durham

RESOLVED that the applications be noted.

50/06 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

- i) To consider the award of the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2007/2008

Consideration was given to a quotation received from C.E.W. in respect of the above contract.

RESOLVED that the quotation received be noted and the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2007/2008 be awarded to C.E.W.. in accordance with the terms submitted, and C.E.W. be advised accordingly.

- ii) Parish Paths Partnership 2007/2008

Invoice details were submitted by T.W. for the cost of works undertaken as part of the Parish Paths scheme for 2006/2007; for which 100% grant funding had been approved by DCC. It was proposed that payment to T.W. be approved and the Parish Council seek reimbursement from DCC. An estimate was also provided from T.W. for the cost of carrying out similar works for 2007/2008 and members considered participation in the scheme for this period.

RESOLVED that:-

- i) Payment be approved to T.W. in respect of the cost of works carried out as part of the Parish Paths scheme for

2006/2007 and the Parish Council seek reimbursement from DCC in respect of the 100% grant funding.

- ii) The quotation received from T.W. for the estimated cost of carrying out works in respect of the Partnership during 2007/2008 be noted and an application be submitted to DCC in respect of this Council's further participation.

The meeting then continued in public session.

- iii) Celebration of the Centenary of Scouting

Consideration was given to a request received from the Bishop Auckland District Scout Group regarding how this Parish might wish to participate in events to celebrate the centenary of Scouting in 2007. One suggestion submitted included the possible use of flowerbeds as a visual commemoration of scouting, however, this Parish did not have such facilities to accommodate this proposal.

RESOLVED that the request be noted.

- iv) Anti-Social Behaviour-Area towards the Quarry, top of Walker Lane

Members were advised that instances of fly tipping and other anti social behaviour by youths in the area had been witnessed in recent weeks. It was noted that the Parish had in the past enquired with DCC about the possibility of providing a gate to stop the abandonment of unwanted vehicles and other problems of vandalism/damage in the area however, the County Council had stated that they had no budget for this work and no agreement could be reached amongst the owners over who would pay for such a gate; estimated to be in the region of £300+. It was requested that the problems be again raised with the relevant authorities as demonstration of their continued existence and the justification for some gating/security measure to be in place to restrict unauthorised access in the area.

RESOLVED that the relevant authorities be informed of the instances of fly tipping and other anti social behaviour by youths in the area, that had been witnessed in recent weeks, and DCC be advised that this was further demonstration of the justification for some gating/security measure to be in place to restrict unauthorised access in the area.

The Clerk advised that the problems had been reported to the Traffic Management Section of Durham Police, via DCC, and that Mr Straughier (Traffic Management Officer) had reported that he would look into the matter and had indeed already contacted the resident principally affected by the problem.

It was noted that the problem had improved slightly since the last meeting in terms of the overall number of vehicles in situ however, problems continued with regard to access by emergency vehicles in the area. It was suggested that appropriate advice should be issued to residents in the future regarding the parking of vehicles, but that advice should come from the Traffic Management Officer when received. Members were also identified to other car parking problems that had become apparent in the area to the rear of The Meadows, including the area of properties adjacent to Council garages. It was suggested that this problem be raised with Sedgfield Borough Council.

The Clerk advised that no Residents Parking Scheme existed within Durham County that would assist in considering how this problem might be resolved. Discussions had been held with Hurworth Parish Council, who had similarly considered the benefit of having such a scheme, however, they were only at the preliminary stage of discussing this issue, and had not yet determined whether it would be appropriate.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) Advice be sought from the Traffic Management Section of Durham Police regarding the parking of vehicles, with a view to this advice being given by the Traffic Management Officer to residents in the future, either in person or via inclusion of an appropriate article in the Residents Newsletter.
- (ii) The Clerk contact Sedgfield Borough Council regarding other car parking problems that had become apparent in the area to the rear of The Meadows, including the area of properties adjacent to Council garages.

52/06

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- i) Durham County Council Environment Awards
- ii) Durham Police Authority-Development of Policing Plan Priorities 2007/2008

Members referred to the above Policing event and the fact that the public telephone box in the Village had

recently been vandalised; and this together with the instances of anti-social behaviour in the area of the Quarry, should be taken up by Councillor Mellors when attending this event.

- iii) Durham County Council-Local Government White Paper-The Role of Town and Parish Councils-Saturday 13th January 2007

53/06

ADDITIONAL ITEM

- (i) C35 Shildon to Newton Aycliffe-Road Safety Concerns

Further to DCC's response to the petition submitted in respect of the above road safety concerns, consideration was given to this Council's continued position on the subject. A proposed letter was submitted, to be sent to DCC including specific observations in the light of DfT Circular 01/2006.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write once again to DCC enclosing the submitted observations.

54/06

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 5th March 2007