

Middridge Parish Council

Minutes of Annual Council Meeting

**Village Hall
Middridge**

**Monday
9th May 2005**

Time:6.50pm

Present: Councillors Mrs A. Clarke, W.J. Clarke, H. Howe , J.Morland & W.Mellors

Official: N.Hart (Clerk);

01/05 NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

02/05 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED that Councillor W.J.Clarke be appointed as Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2005/2006 .

03/05 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman of the Council was made by Councillor W.J.Clarke.

04/05 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED that Councillor J.Morland be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2005/2006 .

05/05 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Vice Chairman of the Council was made by Councillor J.Morland.

06/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2005 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

07/05 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Retiring Chairman-Cllr W.Mellors

Members of the Council expressed their appreciation for the excellent work undertaken by Councillor Mellors during his term of office.

Development Proposals-Land to the East of Spout Lane, Shildon (Minute 52/04 refers)

The Clerk advised that no reply had been received from Sedgefield Borough Council regarding the status of the above development.

It was proposed that a further reminder letter be sent; and that the matter be reviewed again at the Parish Council's next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to Sedgefield Borough Council, referring to this Council's earlier letter expressing dissatisfaction regarding consultation on the latest stage of the above development; and requesting that a response to this original letter be sent at the earliest opportunity.

Parish Paths (Minute 52/04 refers)

It was noted that two estimates had now been received for the contract for works to the Parish Paths; as part of the grant funded Durham County Council scheme.

Clarification was requested as to the responsibility of the contractor to have in place appropriate insurance cover against any liability they might have in respect of works they had carried out; and it was suggested that the Parish Paths Officer be requested to clarify this position and confirm whether this Parish Council would be entitled to receive grant funding for the scheme this year to the sum quoted by each of the contractors.

Reference was also made to the possibility of additional works, over and above that specified in the original contract document, being carried out during the year; eg to repair styles, walls etc; and it was suggested that, if pursued, this element of work would have to be re-negotiated with the contractor(s).

Public footpath No 7 (20 Old Eldon) was also identified as in need of reinstatement work, although the majority of the footpath was within the parish of Eldon. It was suggested that Eldon Parish Council be contacted and invited to consider reinstating the footpath to an acceptable use for the public, and they be advised of the existence of the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme as a possible source of funding.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Clerk contact the Parish Paths Officer to clarify the responsibility of the contractor to have in place appropriate insurance cover against any liability and to confirm whether this Parish Council would be entitled to receive grant funding for the scheme this year to the sum quoted by each of the contractors.
2. Eldon Parish Council be contacted and invited to consider reinstating public footpath No 7 (20 Old Eldon) to an acceptable use for the public, and they be advised of the existence of the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme as a possible source of funding.

Litter Bins (Minute No. 52/04 refers)

The Clerk advised that Sedgefield Borough Council had indicated that the cost of installing a litter bin, and emptying it for the first year would be £469.00 and £289.00 per annum thereafter plus inflation costs. Emptying would be carried out once per week.

Members queried whether this Council had to pay for the cost of emptying as it was understood that up to two litter bins could be collected from without the need for an additional revenue payment being made to the Borough Council. It was proposed that the Borough Council's position on this be clarified before any further action was taken on this issue.

08/05 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Members considered a schedule of Accounts for Payment.

RESOLVED that the following accounts be approved for payment:-

N.Hart	Salary	£141.67
N.Hart	Postage	£2.10
Durham Assoc. of Parish & Town Councils	Affiliation	£29.32
Zurich Insurance	Local Insurance Policy	£490.21
Zurich Insurance	Engineering Inspection	£293.75

09/05 ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2005

Consideration was given to the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2005.

It was suggested that, by way of an internal audit and third party validation, the accounts be passed to Mr Bill Harding (Retired Bank Manager) for consideration in accordance with the procedure adopted in previous years.

RESOLVED that the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2005 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the suggested third party validation.

10/05 REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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

- (a) Victim Support
- (b) Middridge Village Fete 2005
- (c) Durham County Council Benevolent Fund

RESOLVED that:-

1. The applications in respect of Victim Support and the Durham County Council Benevolent Fund be refused.
2. A donation of £30 be given to the Middridge Village Fete Association for their event in 2005; and they be authorised to use the Village Green as part of their activities.

11/05 Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils

Consideration was given to the following documents provided by the Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils:-

- New Model Contract
- New National Agreement
- Guidance on Good Employment
- New National Pay Scales

It was proposed that the documentation be the subject of further discussion with a view to the existing contract of employment of the Clerk being reviewed to align with the 'best practice' identified above.

RESOLVED that members examine in more detail the guidance received from the Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils and the matter be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

12/05 DRAFT REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING (SCI)

Members gave consideration to Sedgefield Borough Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) ; which were the first documents to be developed within the Local Development Framework (LDF) which would replace the Borough Local Plan.

These changes arose from the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which brought about major changes to how the forward planning system operated.

The LDS sought to inform people how the Council would develop the LDF over the next three years and:-

- provided the starting point for the local community to find out what the Council's planning policies were for the area as it would set out the development plan for planning of the area;

- set out the programme for the preparation of the Local Development Documents over the three year period.

In summary, the LDS would have the following affect on Middridge and surrounding areas:-

- bring conservation policy up to date;
- bring open space policy into line with national policy (affecting allotments, recreation area, wood at edge of Eldon Whins);
- Edon Whins development would no longer be delayed awaiting the Cobblers Hall scheme;
- merging of policies H2 and H9, with no change in policy leaving Eldon Whins as planned for development;
- bring landscaping policy into line with national policy;
- merge planned footpaths and cycleways;
- bring quarry policy on protecting SSSI's up to date;
- bring policy on roads (New Shildon/Aycliffe link road along railway) up to date.

The SCI set out to strengthen communities and the involvement of interested parties in the planning system by setting out how the Council would involve them in the planning process. Concern was expressed that the development of such policies should include full and timely consultation with the Parish Councils, which had been demonstrated to be lacking in the Borough Council's recent handling of the Spout Lane development.

Reference was also made to the responsibilities of the Parish in terms of its Conservation Area and it was requested that a resume of the duties and benefits to be gained from this policy be provided by the Borough Council.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The content of the LDS and SCI documents be noted.
2. The Borough Council be advised that the development of such policies should include full and timely consultation with the Parish Councils, which had been demonstrated to be lacking in the Borough Council's recent handling of the Spout Lane development.
3. Guidance on the duties and responsibilities of the Parish in terms of its Conservation Area policy be requested from the Borough Council.

13/05 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

Consideration was given to the following correspondence received:-

- Darlington Borough Council-Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement
- Durham County Council Response to Proposed 40mph Limit on C35 Road
- ODPM Discussion Documents
- Citizen Engagement and Public Services-Why Neighbourhoods Matter
- Great Aycliffe Town Council-Response to ODPM discussion documents
- Sedgefield Community Safety Partnership 2005-2008

RESOLVED that the content of the above correspondence be noted.

14/05 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND GENERAL REPAIRS

Reference was made to the condition of the Millennium Hedge in terms of its ongoing maintenance.

It was requested that the relevant officers from Sedgefield Borough Council be requested to inspect the hedge in the presence of members from the Parish, in order that its future maintenance needs can be ascertained.

RESOLVED that the relevant officers from Sedgefield Borough Council be requested to inspect the hedge in the presence of members from the Parish, in order that its future maintenance needs can be ascertained.

15/05 ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Members referred to the work undertaken by Alice McGeechan, who had, for a number of years now, worked tirelessly cleaning the War

Memorial in the Village. It was suggested that this Council should now recognise these efforts and their appreciation be extended to Alice once again for her work in enhancing the Village's appearance and reputation.

Reference was made to the Sedgefield Town & Parish Councils Liaison Forum; and it was requested that the dates of future meetings of this Forum be obtained and forwarded to Cllr Mrs A. Clarke.

16/05 NEXT MEETING

Monday 4th July 2005 at 6.45pm.