

i) Christmas Tree (Minute 75/08 refers)

The Clerk reported that advice had been received from Lyndhurst Nurseries regarding a suitable tree to be erected on the Village Green as an alternative to the provision of a 'one off' Christmas tree each year; which was reported to be quite expensive in terms of both its purchase cost and its 'dressing' with Christmas lights.

Reference was made to other species of trees which may also be suitable, including one type located near Byerley Park Junior School. Residents views on the subject had been invited via the Residents Newsletter, however no consensus of opinion was reached. Consideration was also given to alternative means of securing the dressing of the tree, rather than continue to commit funds to a third party to carry out this work.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Councillors J.Clarke and Howe contact Hamsterley Tree Surgeons with a view to obtaining a 'second opinion' on the most suitable permanent tree that could be planted on the Village Green, suitable for future use as a Christmas tree.
2. Members preference to carry out works to 'dress' any permanent Christmas tree in house, be noted.

ii) Grounds Maintenance & General Repairs (Minute 77/08 refers)

It was noted that works to repair the wooden seat adjacent to the bus shelter had now been completed.

RESOLVED that thanks be recorded to Councillor J.Clarke for his efforts in repairing the seat.

iii) Erection of Dwelling, Land Adjacent 38 Southside, Middridge (Minute 75/08 refers)

It was noted that DCC Highways had indicated that they satisfied with the access and parking issues surrounding this application. The final opinion of the Design and Conservation Manager would be sought; which would

dictate whether the application would be amended or recommended for approval.

iv) Middridge Website (Minute 81/08 refers)

The Chairman advised of progress regards establishing a website for the activities of both the Parish Council, the Residents Association and the Village generally. The cost of the website was £5 per month. Amendments to the page layout were proposed and it was suggested that an appropriate article be placed in the next Residents Newsletter advising people of the new website facility. Councillor Mrs Clarke advised that she would provide further content regards the history of the Village, in consultation with a local historian.

v) Chairman's Evening (Minute 85/08 refers)

To be held on Tuesday 19th May 2009

09/09 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Members considered a schedule of Accounts for Payment; together with an additional invoice received from C.E.Walker for £379.50 in respect of grasscutting.

RESOLVED that the following accounts be approved for payment:-

N.Hart	Salary	£183.33
N.Hart	Postage	£3.20
Zurich Insurance	Local Council Policy	£556.64
Zurich Insurance	Engineering Inspection	£287.50
C.E.Walker	Grasscutting	£379.50

10/09 ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2009

Consideration was given to the final accounts for the period ended 31st March 2009 following consideration by the internal auditor, and prior to submission for external audit.

It was requested that for future years, a breakdown be given to illustrate the Grounds Maintenance costs to this authority, excluding any monies obtained via the Parish Paths Scheme.

RESOLVED that the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2009 be approved and the accounts be referred to the external auditor for inspection.

11/09

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS

i) Grounds Maintenance or General Repairs Issues

It was noted that work would shortly commence by the Working Party to carry out improvements to the area surrounding the war memorial.

Works to repair the wood seat adjacent the bus shelter had now been completed. It was suggested that an inspection of the other seat was now necessary to establish whether any damage had occurred.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business only on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

ii) Contract for Bus Shelter Maintenance

Consideration was given to two quotations received in respect of quarterly cleaning of the two bus shelters in the Village.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contract in respect of maintenance of the Parish bus shelters be awarded to JWS.

The meeting then continued in public session.

12/09

PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF ALLOTMENTS BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, MIDDRIDGE

No further progress had been reported regarding this proposal.

13/09

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Clerk advised of the new protocol adopted by Durham County Council regards circulation of a weekly list for planning applications based on each geographical area. There were no applications received on this occasion for Middridge.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

14/09 CHILDRENS' PLAY AREA

Consideration was given to the Clerk's monthly inspection report regarding the condition of the play area and equipment, along with both an independent report on the condition of the facility provided by Tyne and Wear Play Association and an Examination of Play Equipment report provided by Zurich Insurance.

Reference was made to access for the disabled and it was considered that existing provision was suitable. With regard to signage advising of who to contact in the event of an emergency, it was suggested that an appropriate notice be put in place in each of the Parish notice boards. The Clerk would also review other play area facilities within the area to clarify what other provision is made.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the Clerk arrange to display an appropriate contact notice regarding the play area facilities and review alternative facilities.

15/09 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was noted:-

- a) DCC-Invitation to Attend Civic Service-Saturday 30th May 2009 at 2.00pm
- b) Co Durham & Cleveland Training Partnership-Training Opportunities

16/09 G.A.T.C./MIDDRIDGE AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor Mrs Clarke reported on the outcome of the inaugural meeting of the Area Action Partnership attended by Councillors Mr & Mrs Clarke and Mellors.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

17/09 ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- (i) Middridge Village Association-Village Fete, 4th July 2009

Consideration was given to a written request received from Middridge Village Association for a donation towards a prize for a raffle for the Village Fete; as well as permission to use the Village Green for the same event.

RESOLVED that a donation of £30 be made towards a raffle prize for the Village Fete, and permission be granted for use of the Village Green.

(Councillors J.Clarke, Makinson and Mellors each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of this item, each being a member of the Middridge Village Association.)

18/09

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 6th July 2009 at 6.45pm