

APPROVED

## **Middridge Parish Council**

### **Minutes of Council Meeting**

**Village Hall,  
Middridge**

**Monday  
2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019**

**Time: 6.45 pm**

**Present:** Cllrs H Howe (Chair), S Smith, W Mellors & P Makinson

**In Attendance:** Cllr J Clare (DCC)

**Official:** A Jordan (Clerk)

#### **83/19 NOTICE OF MEETING**

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read.

#### **84/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr H Alexander and Cllr P Howell (DCC)

#### **85/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None..Cllr H Alexander has submitted Requests for Dispensations to cover:-

- (a) The possibility she might miss three Parish Council Meetings in succession, and thus be automatically forced to stand down as a Parish Councillor.
- (b) To enable her to speak on matters relating to the Middridge Allotment Association, for which she is now the Treasurer.

**RESOLVED** that these Dispensations be approved.

**Action:** Clerk

Cllr S Smith indicated that she will need to update her Declaration of Interests.

#### **66/19 MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

None

#### **87/19 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 were accepted, and signed by the Chair as a true record.

#### **88/19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

None

#### **89/19 POLICING**

It was noted that an unmarked Police Car has recently been operating in the Parish, and some vehicles have been stopped..

## APPROVED

### 90/19 "ELDON WHINS" DEVELOPMENTS & THE COUNTY PLAN

The proposed two week Middridge Road Closure from 23<sup>rd</sup> September to 6<sup>th</sup> October was discussed. It was noted that the Contractor's Application for this Closure states that:-

- (a) No Bus Stops will be affected, whereas in fact the Bus Stops in Middridge Village and at "Six Houses" will have no Bus Services during this Closure. However, arrangements for an alternative Taxi Service for those Residents dependent on Public Transport are being made, although the details are not yet known.
- (b) Notification will be made to Residents prior to works starting; this did not happen last time.

Royal Mail have also been contacted to try and ensure Postal Collections are not suspended as they were last time; a response is awaited. It was agreed that those Residents most affected will be contacted once details of alternative arrangements are available.

**Action:** Clerk

However, Councillors were not convinced that all the alternatives to Road Closure had been thoroughly considered, nor that the effects of the Village being effectively "cut-off" for 2 weeks on Residents and Businesses (the Bay Horse and the Caravan Site) were being given sufficient weight.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) An On-site Meeting with the DCC Highways Department should be requested to discuss these issues.

**Action:** Clerk

- (b) The Northern Echo should be contacted to publicise these concerns.

**Action:** Cllr H Howe & Clerk

Another official complaint has been lodged with the DCC Planning Enforcement Team regarding the amount of mud on Greenfield Way.

Following an examination of the Draft County Durham Plan (CDP) submitted to the Secretary of State for Government Inspection, it was concluded that nothing of consequence for Middridge Parish has changed.

### 91/19 "THE PADDOCK" WILD-FLOWER GRASSLAND

Following a Meeting with Tamara Morris-Hale of the DCC Ecology Department, it was clarified that the Section 106 Money is for the proposed Wild-flower Grassland Project, and not for simply tidying-up "the Paddock". She also undertook to carry out a Survey of the existing Plant and Wildlife, and produce a Report of the impact on these of the proposed Project; these are awaited.

A Notice regarding the proposed Working Group was delivered to all Households in the Parish. A Meeting of those who have indicated an interest will be arranged once the Survey and Report are available.

**Action:** Clerk

## APPROVED

### 92/19 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS

#### (a) Street Light Removal

The first SLA Payment has been made, but there has been no work to date; Cllr J Clare kindly offered to investigate.

**Action:** Cllr J Clare

#### (b) Walkers Lane Road & Parking

The Double Yellow Lines have now been painted, but there is some question as to whether Notices are required; Mrs Avril Haines has kindly agreed to investigate this. Although the Parking Restrictions are generally being obeyed, they are sometimes ignored by people using the Village Hall. It was agreed that the Village Association should be contacted, with a view to them drawing the attention of Hall Users to these Restrictions.

**Action:** Clerk

#### (c) Parish Paths

Tommy Walton has complained that “Quad-Bikes” have damaged some of his crops by accessing part of his Land via where the “Kissing Gate” on Path 7 (the “Tramway”) used to be before it was destroyed by Arson, and is demanding Compensation from the Parish Council. However, Parish Paths are not the responsibility of the Parish Council, but of the DCC Parish Paths Partnership (PPP), who funded the installation of the “Kissing Gate”. Peter Crinnion of the PPP is investigating this incident, but the PPP have indicated that the legal responsibility for the provision of fencing along, or adjacent to, Parish Paths lies with the respective Land-Owners.

Notwithstanding this, to meet Tommy Walton’s concern the Parish Council arranged for a temporary Metal Fence to be erected blocking access to Path 7 where the “Kissing Gate” used to stand; thanks are to be expressed to Ian Hayman who kindly undertook this work at very short notice.

**Action:** Clerk

#### (d) Dog Litter

Despite Cllr J Clare’s kind endeavours, there has still been no response from DCC to the proposal to relocate a Dig Litter Bin to Northside Close; he is chase this.

**Action:** Cllr J Clare

#### (e) Village Green Maintenance

Volunteers have now been organised to maintain all the Village Green Tubs, which are now labelled to indicate who looks after them. Thanks were expressed to Cllr P Makinson for organising a replacement for one of the Tubs.

Millennium Hedge – Jonathan Pounder has agreed to carry out the necessary maintenance.

### 93/19 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

None

### 94/19 CHILDREN’S PLAY AREA

As agreed by email, a new Noticeboard for the Play Area has been ordered and delivered, and arrangements are in hand for its installation. This will display a Notice regarding Age Limits for the Equipment, and that the Play Area is designated a “Smoke-free Zone”.

## APPROVED

The Clerk's Monthly Inspection Report was approved, and it was noted that the repairs to the Picnic Table are now complete.

No action to date on the cleaning the rubberised surfaces under the Swings.

**Action:** Clerk

### 95/19 ROAD-TRAFFIC

The poor response to the Parish Council's Notice regarding the availability of Training to allow Volunteers to use Police "Speed Guns" was discussed (only Arnold Miller and the Clerk have volunteered). Cllr W Mellors kindly agreed to include this in the forthcoming issue of the "Midridge Mercury".

**Action:** Cllr W Mellors

### 96/19 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NP)

The final Government Grant has been received..The Clerk has produced a number of Draft Assessment Forms to assist Shaun Hanson working on the proposed Policies.

### 97/19 ACCOUNTS

The Public Inspection Period for the 2018/19 Accounts is now complete, and the Clerk has submitted a VAT Repayment Claim.

As agreed by email, the Parish Council are to become Corporate Members of the Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (FSDR).

**RESOLVED** that the following Accounts be approved for payment:-

Payee	Purpose	Sum
Durham County Council *	Walkers Lane SLA	£6,788.47
John the Handyman	Picnic Table Repair	£155.00
A. D. Jordan	Tub Labels & Noticeboard	£85.99
Philip Makinson	New Village Green Tub	£50.50
FSDR	Corporate Membership	£50.00
A. D. Jordan	Clerk's Jul – Sep Salary	£250.26
HMRC	Clerk's Jul – Sep Tax	£166.40
	TOTAL	<b>£7,546.62</b>

\* Cheque already issued, so formal authority granted is retrospective.

The Clerk pointed out that due to the SLA payment, as expected the Parish Council was now in deficit for this Financial Year.

### 98/19 GAMP & CDALC

GAMP – The Parish Council's "Community Road Watch" Project Application was unsuccessful. The Clerk has discussed the reasons for this with GAMP, and it should be possible to submit a suitably modified Proposal for the GAMP Youth Fund (£9,902).

## APPROVED

CDALC – a Meeting of the GAMP area Local Councils Forum was held, and it was agreed that Cllr W Mellors will continue to represent this on the CDALC Executive Committee, a Meeting of which is due shortly.

### 99/19 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

A letter of thanks for the donation of a Fete Raffle Prize was received from the Village Association.

### 100/19 OTHER MATTERS

(a) **Flooding**

There have been a number of further instances of Flooding in the neighbourhood of 28, Southside. DCC have responded quickly to these reports, and a number of problems have been identified and rectified; the situation will continue to be monitored. The Parish Council expressed their thanks to DCC for the great amount of work that has been undertaken over the last two years to try and deal with this problem.

(b) **Livin Draft Business Strategy**

It was agreed that Parish Councillors would be free to complete the Survey on the Livin Draft Business Strategy at their discretion.

The unsatisfactory state of the Livin-owned Flowerbed adjacent to 8, Northside was discussed. The Clerk stated that he was aware of this issue, and intended to raise it with the local Livin Manager at the forthcoming GAMP Board Meeting. However, Cllr J Clare suggested we try the Livin on-line 'Contact Us' facility, which in his experience normally produces good results.

**Action:** Clerk

(c) **Village Survival Guide**

This document was noted.

(d) **Parish Council Responsibilities**

A number of recent events have shown that Residents are often not aware of what the Parish Council is responsible for, and what it is not. The possibility of providing a Notice to all Households about this was discussed. It was suggested that the "Good Councillors Guide" could provide a good basis for this, and the Clerk agreed to provide the latest version of this to Councillors.

**Action:** Clerk

### 1011/19 ADDITIONAL ITEMS

(a) **FSDR**

Cllr J Clare mentioned that Trish Pemberton of the FSDR gives excellent Presentations on the forthcoming Bi-centenary of this historic Railway. Cllr P Makinson suggested this would be a good idea for one of the future Meetings of the Middridge History Society.

**Action:** Clerk

(b) **"Paperless" Parish Council Meetings**

Cllr S Smith suggested that the Parish Council could reduce its environmental impact by holding "Paperless" Parish Council Meetings, subject to the legal requirements to keep some paper records; this suggestion is to be studied.

APPROVED

**102/19 NEXT MEETING**

The next Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019, at 6.45

p  
m

.

T  
h  
e

C  
h  
a  
i  
r

c  
l  
o  
s  
e  
d

t  
h  
e

M  
e  
e  
t  
i  
n  
g

a  
t

9

.

0

0

p  
m

.