

APPROVED

## Middridge Parish Council

### Minutes of Council Meeting

Village Hall,  
Middridge

Monday  
6<sup>th</sup> November, 2017

Time: 6.45 pm

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

**In attendance:** Cllrs S Durham, P Howell & J Clare (DCC)

**Official:** A D Jordan (Clerk)

#### 102/17 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read.

#### 103/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

#### 104/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

#### 105/17 MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

None

#### 106/17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were accepted, and signed by the Chair as a true record.

#### 107/17 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

##### **(i) Defibrillator (88/17 (i) refers)**

A Training Session was held in the Village Hall. The position with regards to Training for the "Bay Horse" Staff and Registration Documents is to be investigated.

**Action:** Clerk

#### 108/17 "ELDON WHINS" DEVELOPMENTS & THE COUNTY PLAN

HCA have appointed Keepmoat Homes to develop their Site, and Public Consultation Events have been held in Newton Aycliffe and Middridge regarding their Proposals. Concern was expressed regarding the lack of provision of Housing for the Elderly (Bungalows or "Houses for Life"). It is understood that Keepmoat Homes will be submitting a Full Planning Application shortly, and the Parish Council will consider its response at that time.

No further progress on the Persimmon "Eldon Whins" Planning Application. Cllr J Clare commented that if this is approved, the size of the combined Developments would be such that a second Access Roundabout would be required. The DCC Case Officer (Laura Eden) is to be consulted to establish the current situation.

**Action:** Clerk

APPROVED  
**GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS**

**(i) Middridge Quarry Safety Fence**

No progress. DCC have served the Quarry Owners (Wards) with a Statutory Nuisance Notice; if they take no action, DCC can then erect a Safety Fence, and charge Wards for the work.

**(ii) DCC proposed Street Light Removal**

DCC have provide a Quotation of £38,241 for the Parish Council to retain Street Lights where it is proposed to remove them; there was general agreement that this seems excessive. Cllr S Smith again expressed her concern regarding the Safety of Pedestrians using Walkers Lane at night, and that No's 1 -10 Middridge Farms Residents would feel isolated from the Village. It was agreed that:-

- (a) DCC should be requested to provide a detailed breakdown of their Costs.
- (b) A Site Meeting should be organised to look at each individual Street Light location.

**Action:** Clerk

**(iii) Parish Council owned Trees**

Following a Survey of the Parish Council owned Trees with a DCC Tree Officer (Simon McGinney), it was recommended that the majority of the Trees on the Village Green require a combination of Crown Lifting and Reduction and Shaping. He also expressed serious concern about the large Ash Tree at the entrance to the Play Area. A Tree Register has been prepared; the Parish Council own over 120 Trees in the Village.

Three Quotations for the specified work were obtained from Approved Contractors, and following consultation with Parish Councillors, that from Oliver's Trees, for a total of £2320 plus VAT, was accepted. Work on the large Ash Tree can start immediately, but a Planning Application is required for the Village Green Trees, which Oliver's Trees will prepare. Ian Hayman has stated that Oliver's Trees have a good reputation, and has offered to inspect their work when completed.

**Action:** Clerk

**(iv) Skill Mill**

Following a Site Visit, the Skill Mill provided a Quotation of £350 for improvements to Parish Path 7 (the Tramway) and the Footpaths crossing the Village Green, which following consultation with Parish Councillors, was accepted. There was general agreement that their work to date has made a vast improvement, but it was noted that the following is outstanding:-

- (a) Clearing Path 7 alongside the Quarry, and down to the Railway Path 6.
- (b) Clearing the Footpath near the "Bay Horse". Due to the nature of this Path, only Weedkiller can be used, and Skill Mill require Training before they can do this.

**Action:** Clerk

**(v) Parish Paths**

No progress in reporting the Parish Path 6 Potholes to the Parish Path Partnership.

**Action:** Clerk

Ian Hayman has expressed serious Health & Safety concerns for his Employees when Strimming the Parish Paths due to the substantial amounts of Dog Waste which they encounter, and states that he may have to consider terminating his Contract for this work if the situation does not improve. Following discussion this appears to be a general problem. It was agreed that suitable Notices should be posted at the Entrances to all the Parish Paths informing Dog Owners that it may be impossible to maintain the Paths unless they behave responsibly.

**Action:** Clerk

## APPROVED

Cllr J Clare kindly offered to inform the Dog Wardens of the Dog Waste problem. Cllr S Smith mentioned that it is possible to spray something to inhibit Dog Fouling; this possibility is to be investigated.

**Action:** Clerk

Out of the Stone Style Posts on Path 7 has been knocked down, but as this is not obstructing the Path, no corrective action is planned.

### **(vi) Regular Litter Picking**

10 Residents turned out for the first of the planned Regular Litter Picking Events, an excellent response, and a substantial amount of Litter was collected, although DCC have failed to remove the Sacks as promised. The next Litter Picking Event will be held on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January at 10.00 am.

**Action:** Clerk

It was also noted that DCC arranged to pick up Litter the day after our Litter Picking Event, which was consequently unproductive; better liaison is required.

**Action:** Clerk

### **110/17 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Nothing to report.

### **111/17 CHILDREN'S' PLAY AREA**

The Clerk's Monthly Inspection report was approved.

Cllr H Alexander has done an excellent job of repainting the Goalpost.

Play Area Equipment Suppliers indicate that they do not fit Bird Repelling devices for Swings to prevent fouling of the Seats for Health & Safety reasons.

### **112/17 ROAD-TRAFFIC**

The DCC Highways Department have cleared the Pavement on the corner of the Main Road near the Village Hall, so People with Prams and Pushchairs no longer need to step into the Road to get past one of the Bollards.

### **113/17 "THE PADDOCK"**

Since Keepmoat Homes are now actively developing the HCA "Eldon Whins" Site, Section 106 money will be available to turn "The Paddock" into a "Wildflower Grassland" in a reasonable timescale. Consequently, our DCC Councillors no longer consider it appropriate to use part of their Neighbourhood Budgets to fund the Proposal for immediate improvements. Moreover, Cllr J Clare expressed concern at the Parish Council's ability to fund the necessary Annual Maintenance Costs, which will be much more affordable once the Parish Council's Precept increases as people move into the new Houses at "Eldon Whins". However, he also noted that should anything occur to affect the availability of Section 106 money, this Proposal could be resurrected.

### **114/17 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NP)**

The NP Working Group have agreed the Questionnaire and Arrangements for the proposed new Community Engagement Exercise. Progress on setting up the Questionnaire on "Survey Monkey" has been delayed due to pressure of other business.

**Action:** Clerk

### **115/17 ACCOUNTS**

## APPROVED

Councillors considered a Schedule of Accounts for Payment.

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

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Sum</b>
A.D. Jordan	Clerk's Jul-Sep Salary	£232.70
HMRC	Clerk's Jul-Sep Tax	£154.80
Hayfields Contracting Ltd.	Village Green Grass Cutting	£2256.00
Hayfields Contracting Ltd.	Parish Paths 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cut	£504.00
Royal British Legion	Wreath and Crosses	£30.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£3177.50</b>

Following a recent Press Report of substantial Damage to a Local Authority Play Area, it was discovered that neither the Parish Council's Play Area Equipment, nor the Bus Shelters, were covered by our Insurance Policy. Replacement Costs for existing or suitable equivalent Equipment were obtained, and our Insurance Company (Zurich) have provided a Quotation of £158.48 for the additional Premium required to provide this Cover.

**RESOLVED** that this Quotation be accepted.

**Action:** Clerk

**116/17**

### **GAMP & CDALC**

GAMP have decided which of the Project Grant Applications will be funded from the available £100,000 Budget, although this has yet to be approved by the GAMP Board. Grant Applications for the £10,000 Budget for Welfare Reform have been sought, and are to be considered shortly.

The Clerk was unable to attend the recent CDALC AGM as he was on holiday, and unfortunately Cllr W Mellors was unable to attend due to illness.

**117/17**

### **GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

A Letter was received from the Learning Library requesting the Parish Council's support, but no action is planned.

**118/17**

### **OTHER MATTERS**

#### **(i) Remembrance Sunday Arrangements**

Someone from the Salvation Army will conduct this year's Remembrance Sunday Service on 12<sup>th</sup> November. Unfortunately Tracey Bellas (Shildon Town Council Clerk) has been unable to find a Bugler for the Service, but it is understood that recorded Bugle Calls will be available. The Clerk has the usual Wreathes and Crosses (including those for the Middridge Village Association).

#### **(ii) DCC Budget Consultation**

Details of the proposed DCC Budget Proposals to meet the required Cuts are available on the DCC Website. All are urged to look at these Proposals, and register their Opinions and suggestions.

#### **(iii) Christmas Arrangements**

Quotations have been received from Lyndhurst Nurseries for the provision of a Christmas Tree, and Ian Hayman for the Erection and Removal of the Tree; this show a slight increase on last year.

APPROVED

**RESOLVED** that these Quotations be accepted, and the necessary Arrangements made.

**Action:** Clerk

**(iv) Revised Code of Conduct**

CDALC have finally agreed their proposed new Code of Conduct, and this was circulated to Parish Councillors, together with the existing Code of Conduct, for their consideration. The main changes relate to the reintroduction of a Councillor's Obligation not to act in a manner likely to bring the Council into disrepute, and the necessity for Councillors to Declare an Interest at a Meeting when this is appropriate (rather than relying on the Register of Member's Interests).

**RESOLVED** that this proposed new Code of Conduct be accepted.

**Action:** Clerk

119/17

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

**(i) Shildon Carol Service**

Cllr H Howe will represent the Parish Council at the Shildon Carol Service on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

**(i) Village Green Grass-cutting**

Ian Hayman has volunteered to provide an additional Cut of the Grass on the Village Greens free of charge.

**RESOLVED** that the Parish Council express their thanks to Ian Hayman for this decision, and his continued efforts in maintaining the Village Greens.

**Action:** Clerk

120/17

**NEXT MEETING**

The next Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2018, at 6.45pm.

**Chair** \_\_\_\_\_