

Middridge Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting

Village Hall,
Middridge

Monday
6th July 2009

Time:6.45pm

Present: Councillors Makinson (Chairman); Mrs A.Clarke, W.J. Clarke, H.Howe and W.Mellors.

Official: N.Hart (Clerk);

19/09 NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

20/09 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th May 2009 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

21/09 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

i) Christmas Tree (Minute 08/09 refers)

Councillor Clarke reported on advice received via contact with Hamsterley Tree Surgeons which identified potential tree suppliers and planters. It was suggested that Councillor Clarke follow up the initial enquiries made; and seek advice from Andrew Bailey (GATC), with a view to reporting back to the next meeting.

RESOLVED that an update report be submitted to the next meeting.

ii) Erection of Dwelling, Land Adjacent 38 Southside, Middridge (Minute 08/09 refers)

Clarification was requested as to whether planning approval had been granted for the above application.

iii) Middridge Website (Minute 08/09 refers)

Members noted the progress made by the Chairman in building up the content of the Middridge website. Councillor Mrs Clarke advised that she would provide the content requested regards the history of the Village for inclusion within the website.

RESOLVED that thanks be recorded to Councillor Makinson for his time and effort devoted to the development of the Middridge website.

iv) Chairman's Evening (Minute 08/09 refers)

Councillor Mellors to provide receipts for cost of above event in order that consideration could be given to his reimbursement for costs incurred.

v) Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2009

The Clerk advised on further information requested by the external auditor to explain differences incurred between expenditure and income during 2008/9, as compared with 2009/10, together with an explanation of the approved precept increase.

A written explanation of the above had been forwarded to the external auditor for consideration.

22/09 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Members considered a schedule of Accounts for Payment; together with an additional invoice received from C.E.Walker for £253.00 in respect of grasscutting.

RESOLVED that the following accounts be approved for payment:-

N.Hart	Salary	£183.33
N.Hart	Postage	£1.20
C.E.Walker	Grasscutting	£506.00
Nat. Assoc. of Cllrs	Membership	£74.75
JWS Power Wash	Bus Shelter Cleaning	£60.00

23/09 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS

i) Grounds Maintenance or General Repairs Issues

It was noted that work carried out by the contractor in respect of the Parish Paths scheme had now been completed; although the contractor had kindly indicated he would carry out one further cut free of charge if it was considered necessary.

24/09

PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF ALLOTMENTS BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, MIDDRIDGE

The Clerk advised on correspondence received from Durham County Council confirming completion of their freehold valuation of the allotment site; as well as proposed terms should the Parish Council wish to enter into a long term lease of the site. In respect of the latter, it was noted that all maintenance liability and management of the site, would be the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Members requested clarification from DCC of what these maintenance responsibilities consisted of; and what their current cost were. Concern was expressed by members that the freehold valuation was excessive and not realistic for community value.

Notwithstanding the above concern, members retained their interest in continuing negotiations regards acquiring the site, subject to further clarification of the maintenance responsibilities and costs. Consideration was also given to the potential legal costs facing the Parish Council should acquisition proceed; and it was suggested that the Clerk seek advice from the National Association of Local Councils regards potential costs.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. Durham County Council be advised of this Council's concerns regarding the amount of the freehold valuation placed on the allotment site.
3. Durham County Council be requested to confirm what the maintenance responsibilities associated with the management of the site consisted of; and what these current cost were.
4. The Clerk seek advice from the National Association of Local Councils regarding the potential legal costs involved in acquisition of the site.

(Councillor Makinson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the above item as a result of being a current allotment holder.)

25/09

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Concern was expressed by members at the sight of a large luminous advertisement that had appeared on the side of the

public telephone box. It was requested that the Clerk clarify with Durham County Council the planning approval status of such an advertisement and advise members accordingly.

RESOLVED that the Clerk investigate the above matter and advise members accordingly..

26/09 CHILDRENS' PLAY AREA

Consideration was given to the Clerk's monthly inspection report regarding the condition of the play area and equipment.

In addition, and following consideration of the 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, the Clerk advised on the outcome of his inspection of other play area facilities in the area insofar as the provision of general information was concerned..

With regard to signage advising of who to contact in the event of an emergency, consideration was given to the wording and siting of such an appropriate notice. It was proposed that a detailed account of the Parish Council's arrangements for the management of the facility be posted on the website; and that a briefer notice containing contact details in the event of any injury sustained while using the facility, or reporting of a problem with any of the equipment, be displayed on the Parish Council's notice boards.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the Clerk carry out the necessary action in respect of the display of appropriate notices.

27/09 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was noted, together with details of a Keep Britain Tidy campaign and a request from the Butterwick Hospice for financial assistance:-

- a) Proposal to Establish a Federation of St Joseph's RC Primary School and St Mary's RC Primary School, Newton Aycliffe.
- b) Co Durham Local Development Framework-Preparation of a Core Strategy and Three Area Action Plans.
- c) Changes to the Statement of Community Involvement for Darlington.
- d) Shildon Town Council-Future Civic Events.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Chairman be authorised to make appropriate charitable donations on behalf of the Parish Council at civic events attended by him/her on their behalf and seek reimbursement retrospectively at the next available Council meeting.
2. A donation of £20 be made towards the Butterwick Hospice.

28/09

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

Councillor Mrs Clarke advised that she had been appointed as a Community Sector representative on the Great Aycliffe & Middridge Area Action Partnership (GAMP).

The next meeting of GAMP was to be held on Tuesday 21st July 2009 at 6.00pm at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre. It was also confirmed that Brian Riley had been appointed as the AAP Co-ordinator for GAMP.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

29/09

VILLAGE FETE 2009

Consideration was given to the health and safety stipulations aired by Durham County Council in their discussions with the Residents Association prior to the staging of the recent Village Fete on the Village Green; as authorised by this Council.

It had been suggested during such discussions that an appropriate level of public liability insurance for such an event would be in the region of £5M, and it was proposed that the Clerk report back to the next meeting on the options available for this Council increasing its insurance protection to this amount. However, in respect of future use of the Village Green for events such as the Village Fete, it would be necessary for the Residents Association to have adequate provision and for this Council to be satisfied that this was in place. In addition, it was suggested that the Bay Horse also needed to ensure that its use of the green for picnic tables was also suitably insured, and that Councillors Mr & Mrs Clarke instigate discussions in the first instance.

RESOLVED that the proposed action be approved and a report be submitted to the next meeting.

30/09 PARISH CLERK'S SALARY 2009/2010

Consideration was given to the Parish Clerk's salary for 2009/2010.

RESOLVED that the Parish Clerk's salary be increased by £50 to £1,150 per annum with effect from 11th May 2009.

31/09 ADDITIONAL ITEMS

(i) Parish Public Footpath No.7- Adjacent the Quarry

Members discussed concerns identified regarding the fencing adjacent to the above footpath, which was now destroyed in places and afforded little protection to the public against slipping in the quarry area. It was suggested that the matter be raised as an area of concern with Elaine Field, Parish Paths Officer at Durham County Council, and that she be invited to meet with representatives of the Parish Council to discuss the potential for further funding being obtained to reinstate fencing adjacent to the footpath.

RESOLVED that the Clerk contact Elaine Field, Parish Paths Officer at Durham County Council to raise her awareness of the issue, and invite her to attend a meeting with representatives of the Parish Council to discuss the matter at the earliest opportunity.

(ii) Post Box

Councillor Mellors reported on matters surrounding the damage caused to, and subsequent repair of, the post box in the Village.

(iii) Chains of Office

Consideration was given as to whether all necessary engraving had been carried out to the Chains of Office to insert the names of all Chairmen appointed by the Parish Council. It was proposed that the Chairman and Councillor Mrs Clarke identify all necessary engraving required and arrange for the works to be carried out.

32/09 NEXT MEETING

Monday, 24th August 2009 at 6.45pm

