

## Middridge Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting

Village Hall,  
Middridge

Monday  
4<sup>th</sup> January, 2016

Time: 6.45 pm

**Present:** Cllrs A Clarke (Chair), W Mellors, W J Clarke, P Makinson, H Howe

**In attendance:** Cllrs M Dixon & J Clare (DCC)

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

### 1/16 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read.

### 2/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr J Gray (DCC).

### 3/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

### 4/16 MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

None

### 5/16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015 were accepted, and signed by the Chair as a true record.

### 6/16 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

#### (i) Dog Fouling (113/15 refers)

Problem resolved after a Member of the Public spoke with the Dog Owner.

#### (ii) Police Speed "Sculptures" (114/15 refers)

The new Police Speed "Sculptures" have still not been re-used.

#### (iii) Remembrance Sunday (119/15 (i) refers)

This went well, although the Bugler was rather late. It was noted that the Regiment will **ALWAYS** supply a Bugler on request.

#### (i) Memorial Bench (119/15 (ii) refers)

This has now been installed, and looks very smart..

### 7/16 PERSIMMON "ELDON WHINS" DEVELOPMENT & THE COUNTY PLAN

It is expected that a new County Plan will be adopted by the end of the year; however, some Housing Developments may go ahead earlier.

### 8/16 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS

#### (i) Parish Paths Maintenance & Modifications

APPROVED

A Quotation of £840 + VAT has been received from Ian Hayman for next year's Parish Paths Maintenance Contract. Further progress on this matter is dependent on what next year's Parish Paths Partnership Budget can afford.

**RESOLVED** that this Quotation be accepted in principle.

A Quotation of £750 + VAT has been received from Ian Hayman for cutting back the Bushes obstructing Parish Path 7.

**RESOLVED** that the Parish Paths Partnership be approached to see if they can fund this work from this or next year's Budget.

**Action:** Clerk

**(ii) Bus Shelters & Benches**

The South Side Bush Shelter putty has now been painted; maintenance is complete. The Bench in front of 8, North Side has blown over, and needs re-erecting.

**Action:** Clerk

**(iii) 2016 Village Greens Maintenance Contract**

A Quotation of £1880 + VAT has been from Ian Hayman, a 4.4% increase on last year. It was noted that this cost had not risen for several years, and the Parish Council expressed their satisfaction with the quality of Ian Hayman's work.

**RESOLVED** that this Quotation be accepted.

**Action:** Clerk

**(iv) DCC Roads, Pavements, Walls & Street Lights**

Following discussions with a DCC Lighting Foreman, it is reported that DCC have a Budget to replace **ALL** the Street Lights in the Village with modern ones, but suitable replacements for the remaining Street Lights have yet to be decided upon.

Many parts of the Top Dressing of the section of South Side Pavement between the Bus Shelter and 33, South Side, have worn away, and need replacing. This problem has been reported to the DCC Action Line, but nothing further has been heard. Cllr M Dixon agreed to chase this matter.

**Action:** Clerk

It was noted that the Road Surface in Walker's Lane also needs attention.

**9/16 COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID**

Nothing to report.

**10/16 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Planning Application for Side and Rear Extensions to 20, Eden Grove has been approved, although some details of the original Proposal were modified.

**11/16 CHILDREN'S' PLAY AREA**

Urgent repairs to the Senior Swing Seats, Table Top, and Bench Legs complete. The Annual Insurance Inspection revealed **NO** problems.

Our Handyman proposes to clean the Moss from the Senior Swings Base with a portable Power Washer, before applying a Moss Inhibitor. Concern was expressed that this might damage the Base; the advise of Colin Curry of DCC is to be sought.

**Action:** Clerk

**12/16 C35 NEWTON AYCLIFFE TO SHILDON ROAD-TRAFFIC CALMING**

APPROVED

DCC propose to move the 40 mph Speed Limit on the C35 at the western edge of Shildon towards Middridge, so that Traffic Lights can be installed on the staggered Cross-Roads. The Parish Council considered that this would be an opportunity to move this 40 mph Limit to the 30mph Limit in the Village, and accordingly objected to the DCC Proposal. DCC made a number of criticisms of this Objection, and requested that it be withdrawn, but after consultation it was decided to sustain it.

It was agreed that the current status of the DCC Proposal be investigated, and details are to be provided to Cllr M Dixon so he can investigate this matter.

**Action:** Clerk

**13/16 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

DCC made some comments on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, particularly that it would be better if based on an already Adopted Neighbourhood Plan. The Working Group accepted this recommendation, and work to modify the Draft Plan is in hand.

**Action:** Cllr W Mellors

Cllr W Mellors has found a Consultant willing to provide a Quotation for Consultancy Services, so the Council can apply for a Government Grant. Concern was expressed that this must **NOT** commit the Council to any Expenditure at this stage.

**Action:** Cllr W Mellors

**14/16 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Councillors considered a Schedule of Accounts for Payment.

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

Payee	Purpose	Sum
John the Handyman	Play Area Repairs	£36.00
DCC	Village Green Registration	£13.00
Alan Jordan	Clerk's Salary	£217.30
HMRC	Clerk's Income Tax	£145.20
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£411.50</b>

Councillors also considered the Parish Council's 2016/17 Precept. It was agreed that with the uncertainty about available Grants, the Council needed to build up a Financial Reserve to cover the likely future cost of replacement Play Area Equipment.

**RESOLVED** that the Parish Council's Band D Council Tax be increased by 3%.

**Action:** Clerk

**15/16 GAMP & CDALC**

Cllrs J & A Clarke attended the recent GAMP Annual Forum, which was combined with a Christmas Fair, and proved an excellent evening.

Cllr A Clarke attended a CDALC Executive Meeting, which raised the following:-

- (a) NALC Constitution – the question as to whether Local Councils are **DIRECTLY** represented on the NALC, or represented **BY** CDALC, is under review.
- (b) Membership Fees – CDALC Fees will **NOT** rise next year. NALC Fees will **RISE**, and they are proposing a change to the Fee System, which could increase the Parish Council's Fees substantially; CDALC are opposing this.
- (c) Transparency Code Funding – the Government has established a Fund to support Small Councils in meeting the requirements of the new Transparency Code. The possibility of the Parish Council receiving a Grant from this Fund is to be investigated.

**Action:** Clerk

APPROVED

- (d) New Auditing Arrangements – in future Small Councils will **NOT** need to have their Accounts formally audited, but they **MUST** appoint an Auditor who will adjudicate if a Member of the Public lodges an Objection to their Accounts. NALC are proposing to provide a suitable Auditor service, charging an Annual Fee. The possibility of Colin Gray (our current Internal Auditor) performing this role is to be investigated.

**Action:** Clerk

**16/16 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

A letter was received from Durham Cathedral requesting a donation from the Parish Council. However, it is the Council's policy to only support Charities in the immediate local area.

**RESOLVED** that **NO** Donation should be made.

**17/16 OTHER MATTERS**

**(i) Parish Council Records**

The Clerk has contacted the County Archivist regarding the possibility of transferring some or all of the Parish Council's Records to the County Records Office. A Meeting has been arranged which will establish what Records we **MUST** keep, what Records the County Records Office would be interested in having, and the arrangements to access Records held at the County Records Office, if necessary. It was stressed that **NO** Records will be transferred to the County Records Office without the prior **AGREEMENT** of the Parish Council.

**Action:** Clerk

**(ii) Christmas Tree**

The Christmas Tree Light Sockets are gradually failing, and the Lights will need to be completely replaced at some time in the not too far distant future. Suitable replacements to be investigated.

**Action:** Clerk

The problem of the Christmas Tree Light Sockets getting soaking wet when stowed in the Christmas Tree Base is to be investigated.

**Action:** Clerk

**18/16 ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

**(i) Queen's Garden Party**

**RESOLVED** that the names of Cllrs J & A Clarke, and Cllr W Mellors & daughter, be submitted for the Ballot to attend the Queen's Garden Party.

**Action:** Clerk

**19/16 NEXT MEETING**

Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at 6.45pm.

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