

Middridge Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting

**Village Hall,
Middridge**

**Monday
2nd November 2009**

Time:6.45pm

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

Official: N.Hart (Clerk);

45/09 NOTICE OF MEETING

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

46/09 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2009 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

47/09 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

i) Middridge Website (Minute 35/09 refers)

Reference was made to a recent article re the Village's history which was published in the Northern Echo. It was suggested that Cllr Mrs Clarke attempt to obtain a copy and forward to Cllr Makinson for inclusion on the Parish website.

ii) Christmas Tree (Minute 35/09 refers)

Councillor Clarke advised that no further progress had been made regarding the procurement of appropriate permanent trees appropriate for Christmas decoration; apart from advice received that indicated March/April would be an appropriate time for planting.

iii) Village Fete (Minute 35/09 refers)

The Clerk advised that the Council's current public liability insurance cover had now been extended to £5M and that no additional premium had been deemed necessary by the Council's insurers.

iv) Chains of Office (Minute 35/09 refers)

Councillor Makinson advised that he had sought the advice of Hoppers Ltd regards provision of engraved plaques and had been quoted £240 for three. It was proposed that this estimate was acceptable and that the order should now be confirmed.

RESOLVED that Councillor Makinson confirm the order for three engraved plaques with Hoppers Ltd at the quoted price.

v) Grounds Maintenance and General Repairs (Minute 37/09 refers)

Councillor Mrs Clarke requested that contrary to the decision taken above, she felt on reflection it would now be more appropriate for a formal letter of thanks to be sent to Mr Miller from the Clerk, which Cllr Mrs Clarke would personally deliver.

RESOLVED that the Clerk draft an appropriate letter, to be forwarded on to Cllr Mrs Clarke for delivery.

vi) War Memorial (Minute 37/09 refers)

Members of the Working Party advised that all of the required works to clean and repair the Memorial and surrounding area had now been completed in time for Remembrance Day. It was suggested that people responsible for maintaining the boxes should in future be reimbursed their costs in accordance with the practice currently adopted for the flower tubs.

vii) Parish Paths Partnership

Cllr Howe advised on the good condition of both footpaths No 2 and 7, following his recent inspection of them. It was proposed that the Parish Council may wish to consider increasing the number of cuts on each path to three for 2010/11, and that the Clerk 'flag up' this issue with the relevant officer at DCC.

48/09

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Members considered a schedule of Accounts for Payment; together with additional invoices received from CE Walker for £126.50 and £253.00 in respect of grasscutting for July and October.

RESOLVED that the following accounts be approved for payment:-

N.Hart	Salary	£191.67
C.E.Walker	Grasscutting-Aug/Sept	£632.50
C E Walker	Grasscutting-July	£253.00
C E Walker	Grasscutting-Oct	£126.50
JWS Power Wash	Bus Shelter Cleaning	£30.00
Mr C.Gray	Internal Audit	£65.00

49/09 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1,2 & 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1985.

50/09 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS

i) Grounds Maintenance or General Repairs Issues

Consideration was given to the invitation for contractors to submit quotations for the Parish Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2010/11.

RESOLVED that quotations be invited from the following contractors as per the existing contract specification; and submitted quotations be considered at the next meeting:-

-C.E.W.
-I.H.
-S.E.

The meeting then continued in public session.

ii) Millennium Hedge

Reference was made to the possibility of works being undertaken to fund the maintenance of the Millennium Hedge. It was noted that GAMP had been advised of the need for such works to be carried out and the relevant officer had indicated that funds may be made available under the agreed expenditure for environmental works. A decision would be made known to the Parish Council in due course.

51/09

PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF ALLOTMENTS BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, MIDDRIDGE

Further to the informal discussions held on the 26th October 2009 with Joanne MacLean from DCC re the disposal of the above allotments, Cllr Mrs Clarke advised that a formal letter had been sent to Great Aycliffe & Midddridge Partnership (GAMP) requesting that DCC formally transfer the ownership of the allotment land to the Parish Council for no charge as it was felt that the allotment usage clearly promoted the social and environmental well-being of the area as provided for in Circular 06/03 of the Department of Communities and Local Government, and it therefore could not be right to charge the Parish for land used for the well being of the community. Cllr Mrs Clarke would inform the Parish Council of any further progress.

It was suggested that a formal letter confirming the Parish Council's request be also sent to Joanne MacLean at DCC.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. The Parish Council confirm its preference to acquire the future ownership and maintenance responsibility for Midddridge Allotments from DCC, subject to the transfer being at no charge, on the basis that allotment usage clearly promoted the social and environmental well-being of the area and it therefore could not be right to charge the Parish for land used for the well being of the community.

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

52/09

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Consideration was given to the following planning applications received:-

-Proposed Development of Residential Dwelling Adjacent Cumbank House, 38 Southside, Middridge .

Concern was expressed that development on the site had already commenced prior to any approval being granted, and that it had been noted that the brick wall around the perimeter of the Bay Horse car park had been demolished, and two gate posts erected. Concern was expressed as to how this had been permitted, particularly as it was believed that the planning policy regards the determination of planning applications in a Conservation Area required a public notice to be displayed in the local press. It was requested that DCC confirm such a policy and, if so, confirm whether such a notice regarding this application been published.

The Parish Council further wished to reiterate its objections provided by e-mail on the 4th November 2008 on the original application. In particular, members considered that the insufficient shared pavement access to the rear would cause problems in terms of easy access to, and collection from, the wheely bins of each property. Members also requested that Building Inspectors take notice of the drains underneath the dwelling; which did not appear to be illustrated correctly on the submitted plans. Concern was also expressed that the rear windows of the proposed dwelling would result in it overlooking the properties opposite.

-Proposed Erection of Stable Block on former industrial land (Middridge Industrial Estate) between Shildon and Old Eldon Village ;

No objections.

-Eldon Moor Farm-Conversion & Extension to Farm Bldgs to create extension to Existing Farm House & 2 NO. Additional Dwellings with Associated Access, Parking & Landscaping

The Parish Council did not wish to make any objections but simply to comment that the proposed new access road into the farm may cause traffic safety implications particularly for vehicles travelling from Eldon, and therefore appropriate road marking/signal information should be provided. It was also noted that the dwelling currently had 3 separate sewerage treatment facilities to the rear of the property, which did not appear to have any vehicular access to them?

RESOLVED that DCC be advised of the Parish Council's comments as outlined above.

53/09 CHILDRENS' PLAY AREA

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

It was noted that work to remove the moss on the floor area of the swings, and replacement of the two seats on the older childrens, remained outstanding.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and a Working Party of members attend to the moss clearance when weather permitted.

54/09 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was noted:-

- i) Shildon Town Council-Mayor's Charity Evening-Friday 13th November 2009;
- ii) Co Durham Association of Local Councils-AGM-Saturday 31st October 2009 at 10.30am;
- iii) Durham County Council-City of Culture bid 2013;

It was agreed that this Parish Council endorse support for Durham's City of Culture bid.

- iv) Electoral Review in Co Durham-Consultation-Closing Date 7th December 2009;
- v) Co Durham Plan: Core Strategy Issues Paper
- vi) Durham County Council-Civic Events

55/09 GAMP- AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIP-FEEDBACK

Councillor Mrs Clarke reported on further progress following the identification of priorities by GAMP for continuing work during the first year:-

- Environmental & Street Cleansing;
- Support to Community & Voluntary Sector;
- Activities for Young People.

3 Sub Groups had been formed to identify tasks and projects following a period of consultation, and these would be considered at the next GAMP meeting on the 1st December 2009. It was noted, as had been mentioned earlier at this meeting, that a bid had been submitted regarding the possibility of works being undertaken to maintain the Millennium Hedge, and that GAMP had also proposed environmental works for the

play area, including the possible provision of a new bench. It was suggested that a letter be sent to GAMP by the Clerk giving them the permission of this Parish Council to carry out environmental improvement works to both the Millenium Hedge and the Play Area.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to GAMP advising them that this Council was happy for them to proceed with the proposed environmental works to both the Millenium Hedge and the Play Area, funding permitting.

**56/09 GATC & MIDDRIDGE LOCAL COUNCILS COMMITTEE-
FEEDBACK**

Councillors Clarke, Mrs Clarke and Mellors reported on their attendance at the recent meeting of the above forum. It was noted that Cllr Bob Fleming from GATC had been nominated as the forum's representative on the CDALC's Executive Committee.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

57/09 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY-8TH NOVEMBER 2009

Arrangements for the above event were confirmed. It was proposed that the Parish Council provide a WH Smiths gift voucher for £10 as a gesture of appreciation for the bugler.

RESOLVED that the provision of a £10 WH Smith voucher be authorised.

58/09 CHRISTMAS 2009

It was noted that an estimate had been provided by DCC for the cost of decorating the tree (£300 + VAT) and that an order had been placed with Lyndhurst Nurseries for the supply of an appropriate sized tree. It was proposed that the erection and decoration of the tree take place on Tuesday 1st December 2009.

RESOLVED that the proposed arrangements for Christmas celebrations 2009, be confirmed.

59/09 ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Reference was made to suggested articles for the Village Newsletter, including celebration of the aspiring success of a young golfer in the Village who was seeking a scholarship in the

United States, and good health wishes to be sent to Jean Valks, who had recently had to spend time at a nearby Nursing Home.

An incident of failure to control an aggressive dog within the Village was also noted, the matter having been reported to the Police for them to deal with.

60/09

NEXT MEETING

Monday, 4th January 2010 at 6.45pm