

APPROVED

## Middridge Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting

Village Hall,  
Middridge

Monday  
3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2014

Time: 6.45 pm

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

**In attendance:** Cllrs J Clare & J Gray (DCC). Cllr W Dixon (DCC) was present for a short time at the start of the Meeting.

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

### 107/14 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read.

### 108/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

### 109/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr W Dixon declared that he was a Member of the DCC Strategic Planning Committee, and consequently could not be a party to discussions regarding the Proposed Persimmon "Eldon Whins" Development

### 110/14 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014, and the Extraordinary Parish Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014, were signed by the Chairwoman as a true record.

### 111/14 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

#### (i) New Path to Shildon (89/14 i refers)

Cllr A Clarke has established contact with the London and Economic Properties Ltd (LEP) Forestry Manager responsible for the Shildon Community Woodland.

#### (ii) Locomotion Way (102/14 ii refers)

The walk to officially open the Locomotion Way was thoroughly enjoyed by the Middridge Residents who took part.

**RESOLVED** that a further attempt be made to obtain improved Cycle access to the Locomotion Way, particularly at the end of Walkers Lane.

**Action:** Clerk

### 112/14 PROPOSED PERSIMMON "ELDON WHINS" DEVELOPMENT

The Persimmon Planning Application for "Eldon Whins" has been accepted by the DCC Strategic Planning Office after "validation"; Application No. DM/14/03153/OUT, Case Officer – Anne Rawlinson.

Cllr A Clarke expressed concern that the Parish Council had not received a formal Notice of this Planning Application, but had only heard of it via our DCC Councillors.

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**RESOLVED** that an official complaint be made about this lack of formal Notice.

**Action:** Clerk

Cllr J Clare stated that he would object to the Persimmon Proposal when it was heard by the DCC Strategic Planning Committee. He believed that there was a good chance of the proposed Development being rejected on the basis that:-

(i) Both the current DCC County Plan (basically the 1996 Sedgefield Borough Plan) and the new Draft DCC County Plan state that the Land in question is part of a Green "Barrier (or "Wedge") intended to maintain the existence of Middridge as an entity distinct from Newton Aycliffe.

(ii) The Persimmon Development "leaps over" the "Eldon Whins" Development incorporated in the Draft DCC County Plan, which is contrary to the principle of "phased Development".

There is a time limit of 21 days for Formal Objections to be made to the Persimmon Proposal, and it is important that as many Objections as possible should be lodged.

**RESOLVED** that a "Flier" be sent to all Villagers asking them to lodge an Objection to the Persimmon Proposal as soon as possible. Whilst Residents should be free to write their own letters, they should be urged to mention the fact that the Proposal is not covered by the current or new Draft DCC County Plans, and threatens the buffer that prevents Middridge being "swallowed up" by Newton Aycliffe.

**Action:** Cllr A Clarke & Clerk

**RESOLVED** that Anne Rawlinson be contacted to arrange for a Planning Officer to present the Persimmon Proposal to the Parish Council, and to discuss their intended Objections. It is important to ensure that the time limit for Objections be extended to allow this Meeting to take place, and for the Parish Council to subsequently submit their Formal Objection.

**Action:** Cllr A Clarke & Clerk

As a general point, Cllr H Howe stated that he felt that the Planning System was biased in favour of the Applicant, and against any Objectors.

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### **GROUND'S MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS**

#### **(i) Parish Paths Maintenance**

Payment for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (and final) authorised Cut of the Parish Paths has been received. The Clerk undertook to continue to press Ian Hayman to complete the agreed modifications to the Stiles on Path 7 (Tramway).

#### **(ii) Village Green Maintenance**

Ian Hayman has now completed the Cuts of the Village Green for this year, including one authorised additional Cut.

Cllr A Clarke mentioned the Flower Bed in front of 29, North Side, which is not being maintained by the current occupants. Technically this Flower Bed is part of "the Dock" (a registered Village Green), but there was no objection to this Flower Bed provided it is adequately maintained.

**RESOLVED** that the occupants of 29, North Side be contacted with a view to their agreeing to maintain this Flower Bed, or the Parish Council will arrange for it to revert to being part of "the Dock".

**Action:** Cllr A Clarke

#### **(iii) Tree Management**

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There has been no further progress on the Draft Tree Management Policy. Cllr H Howe and the Clerk undertook to complete this Draft Policy, which will be circulated to all Councillors for comment, with a view to its being adopted at the next Meeting.

Attempts to contact Rodger Lowe from DCC have failed.

It has been established that a Tree in Eden Grove is the only Tree in the Parish subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

The question of the Parish Council's participation in National Tree Week was discussed.

**RESOLVED** that no action be taken.

**(iv) Pavement Maintenance**

Following a complaint by the Occupants of 2 & 3 Northside regarding the state of the Pavement in front of their properties, it has been established that this, and a number of other Pavements around "The Meadows", are **NOT** included in the DCC Map of "Adopted" Pavements in Middridge. It is likely that this situation has arisen by accident during one of the past Local Authority Reorganisations. Cllrs J Clare and J Gray agreed to raise this problem with the DCC Highways Department, with a view to ensuring that **ALL** Pavements in the Village are "adopted", but warned that this could be a lengthy process.

The Clerk agreed to chase the situation regarding completion of the work on the Millennium Hedge as part of a Training Course.

**Action:** Clerk

**114/14 PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF ALLOTMENTS BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, MIDDRIDGE**

Following a Meeting with all interested parties, it appears it may be possible to resolve the question of future Ownership and Use of the Allotments and "the Paddock", if the Registered Use of the Land in question can be changed to "Allotments". This would require a formal Planning Application, and it was suggested that the first step should be to submit a Pre-Planning Application, in order to establish the scale of any likely problems. This involves a Fee, which would have to be borne by the Parish Council.

**RESOLVED** that the expenditure of £50 on a Pre-Planning Application is approved.

**Action:** Clerk

**115/14 COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID**

Applications to register "The Paddock", the Allotments, the Bay Horse and the Village Hall, as Assets of Community Value under the Localism Act's Community Right to Bid Scheme, have been submitted to DCC. A response is expected by the end of November.

**116/14 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

No new Planning Applications have been submitted since the last Council Meeting.

Mrs Upton has stated that she and her husband are now reconciled to the new Store in the garden of 38, Southside.

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DCC have considered the situation regarding the breach in the Stone Wall between the Bay Horse Car Park and the garden of 38, Southside. They are not prepared to take any action, as they consider it unfair to penalise the current occupants, who were not responsible for the problem, and consequently no further action is possible.

**117/14 CHILDREN'S' PLAY AREA**

Final repairs to the Play Area Equipment have been completed satisfactorily; no further action planned.

**118/14 C35 NEWTON AYCLIFFE TO SHILDON ROAD-TRAFFIC CALMING**

The Parish Council's Application for a Grant from the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Safety Fund for two Driver Feedback Signs was unsuccessful, possibly because the second round of such Grants was focussed on Anti-Social Behaviour, although the Clerk is attempting to clarify this. It should be possible to make another Application next Financial Year.

**RESOLVED** that the Repairs to the Fire-damaged Road be chased.

**Action:** Clerk

**119/14 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Cllr W Mellors has done further work on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, which is now largely complete, apart from the Section on Housing Development.

**RESOLVED** that the new Draft Neighbourhood Plan be circulated to Councillors.

**Action:** Cllr W Mellors

The establishment of a Neighbourhood Plan is now considered urgent owing to the protection it can provide against unexpected Planning Applications such as the Persimmon "Eldon Whins" Proposal.

**RESOLVED** that a Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group be organised in the Village Hall as soon as practical.

**Action:** Cllr W Mellors

**120/14 GATC COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

It has been established that there is no time limit on GATC producing a 'valid Petition'. In view of a lack of response to their On-line Petition, GATC have now given responsibility for obtaining sufficient signatures for the Petition to their Town Clerk, and authorised any necessary expenditure.

**121/14 WEBSITE**

The 2013/14 Parish Council Accounts are now published on the Village Website.

**122/14 STATUTORY POLICIES**

The Clerk has produced Draft new Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment Register, Publication Scheme, and Standing Orders.

**RESOLVED** that the new Draft Policies be circulated to all Councillors for their comments as soon as possible. Comments to be collated, with a view to some at least of the new Statutory Policies being adopted at the next Council Meeting.

**Action:** Clerk

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**123/14 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Councillors considered a Schedule of Accounts for Payment.

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

J W S Powerwash	Bus Shelter Cleaning	£ 30.00
Hayfields Contracting Ltd.	Village Green Maintenance	£ 2280.00
Durham County Council	Pre-Planning Application Fee	£ 50.00

**124/14 GAMP - AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIP – FEEDBACK**

The Annual Forum will be on 8<sup>th</sup> November in the Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre.

**125/14 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

**126/14 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

The Remembrance Sunday Parade will start from the Village Hall at 11.45 am as normal. It is not clear who is responsible for paying the Bugler this year.

**RESOLVED** that the Parish Council pay £10.00 for the Bugler if it is their turn to pay.

**Action:** Clerk

**127/14 CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS**

**RESOLVED** to accept Quotes from Lyndhurst Nurseries for the Christmas Tree, and DCC for its Installation/Removal. Tree to be ready in the Week 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> December.

**Action:** Clerk

**128/14 ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

The Presentation to our DCC Councillors in thanks for their support with the new Allotments Access Road, the War Memorial refurbishment, and the Village Hall Rendering will be on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November at 10.00 am.

**129/14 NEXT MEETING**

Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 6.45pm.

Chairwoman \_\_\_\_\_