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## **Middridge Parish Council**

### **Minutes of Council Meeting**

**Village Hall,  
Middridge**

**Monday  
2 July 2012**

**Time: 6.45pm**

**Present:** Cllrs A Clarke (Chairman), W Mellors (Vice Chairman), WJ Clarke, H Howe, P Makinson,

**Official:** CA Stenger (Clerk)

#### **25/12 NOTICE OF MEETING**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

#### **26/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies received.

#### **27/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Makinson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the agenda item dealing with the allotment transfer as a result of being a current allotment holder.

Cllrs Makinson and Howe declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of the agenda item dealing with the Olympic Torch event as a result of being part of the 'Events Committee' that organised the event.

#### **28/12 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May were signed by the Chairman as a correct record with 2 minor amendments.

#### **29/12 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

i) Declaration of acceptance of office (min 6/12 refers)

Cllr Mellors signed the declaration of acceptance of office as Vice Chairman.

ii) Insurance renewal (min 13/12 refers)

The Clerk reported that, after requesting further information, the insurance premium with Zurich had been agreed for a 3 year period.

iii) Youth Offenders Project (min 14/12 refers)

Cllr A Clarke reported that the participants in the Youth Offenders Project had weeded paths around the village and it was possible that they could undertake more maintenance.

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iv) Queen's Diamond Jubilee (min 20/12 i) refers)

The weather vane had been procured and erected at a total cost of £220. Cllr A Clarke gave out 7 mugs to children residing in the village who did not attend schools in the GAMP area, on behalf of GAMP. The £5 souvenir coins were no longer available to purchase therefore Cllr A Clarke procured Jubilee books from Waterstones/Amazon and these were given out to resident children under 16 that had requested them. The lighting of the Jubilee Beacon was very well supported by residents.

v) Olympic Torch (min 20/12 ii) refers)

It was agreed that the Olympic Torch event was very successful, very well attended and an asset to the village. Ian Hayman was very supportive of both the Jubilee Beacon and Olympic Torch events, arranging last minute grass cutting.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk draft a letter of thanks to Ian Hayman, and pass on thanks to all involved in the organising of the event.

30/12

**ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

i) Members considered a schedule of Accounts for Payment, including a request from Middridge Events Committee for a donation to cover expenses from the recent Olympic Torch celebration (Salvation Army and Paul Gittins).

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

SE Landscaping	Grass cutting x 2 (May)	£212.50
Robert Simpson	Weather vane	£220.00
C Stenger	Wages - April to June	£230.10
HMRC	Tax liability - April to June	£ 57.40
C Stenger	Reimbursement CDALC subscription	£ 51.20
Cllr A Clarke	Reimbursement for Jubilee souvenir books	£ 92.15
Salvation Army	Donation for support - Olympic Torch	£ 60.00
Paul Gittins	Donation for support - Olympic Torch	£ 40.00
Middridge Village Ass.	Donation for Village Fete raffle prize	£ 40.00
Walworth Castle	Chairman's Dinner	£154.75
C Stenger	*Wages amendment - April to June	£ 33.27
HMRC	*Tax liability amendment - April to June	£ 8.40

(\*due to the increase in the Clerk's wages)

31/12

**GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS**

i) Flowering Cherry

The flowering cherry tree near The Close is not flourishing and looking unwell. The Clerk had contacted Rodger Lowe who advised that all flowering cherry trees in the county were not doing very well, and stated he would look at the tree when next passing the village.

ii) Grass cutting

There had been a problem with grass cutting due to the wet weather, which resulted in a long gap between cuts. A letter of complaint had previously been sent to SE Landscaping regarding the standard of the grass cutting, and a response had been received giving reasons for the problems, such as wet weather and frequency of cut, with a recommendation that the grass be cut weekly rather than fortnightly. Information had also been received from Altogether Greener regarding grass cutting services.

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**RESOLVED** that the quality be monitored and the Clerk keep details of Altogether Greener on file for future tenders.

**32/12 PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF ALLOTMENTS BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, MIDDRIDGE**

An email response from Fiona Bullen, advising of an offer of the transfer of the paddock area at market value, was discussed.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk write again to Gerard Darby, Planning & Investment Manager at DCC, advising of members' dissatisfaction with the short response that provided no clarification of issues raised, and reiterating that all land should be transferred to the Parish Council at no cost.

**33/12 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

There were no new applications to be noted. The Middridge Meadows application had been approved with conditions regarding the removal of basal growth and certain trees.

**34/12 CHILDREN'S' PLAY AREA**

Consideration was given to the Clerk's monthly inspection report regarding the condition of the Play Area and equipment – the Clerk reported the following issues:

- Graffiti on the climbing structure and picnic table
- Tree branches had been broken off and were littering the ground
- The goal net was loose at the top
- There had been reports of anti-social behaviour by youths at the Play Area

The behaviour of youths at the Play Area was discussed at the preceding PACT meeting - the Neighbourhood Wardens and Community Police are aware of the situation and would be monitoring it.

**RESOLVED** that Cllrs A Clarke and WJ Clarke would inspect the Play Area further and remove the graffiti if possible.

**35/12 C35 NEWTON AYCLIFFE TO SHILDON ROAD-TRAFFIC CALMING**

A report had been received from GAMP regarding traffic in the area - Speedwatch had reported that there were no problems with speeding in Middridge.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr A Clarke draft a document regarding lower speed limits.

**36/12 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Parish Council discussed the need to formally register their intention to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, and request that the Parish of Middridge be designated a Neighbourhood Area.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk contact DCC to request that the Parish of Middridge be designated a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of developing a Neighbourhood Plan.

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**37/12 LOCAL COUNCIL DOCUMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The new Code of Conduct was discussed with a view to adoption. New 'Register of Interest' forms were completed by all Councillors.

**RESOLVED** that the Code of Conduct be adopted and that the Clerk send the completed 'Register of Interest' forms to DCC.

**38/12 G.A.T.C./MIDDRIDGE AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIP FEEDBACK**

Cllr A Clarke reported that there would be no formal forum meeting this summer but GAMP would like individuals to try and recruit more members.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**39/12 CLERK'S SALARY**

The Clerk's salary was reviewed and a raise in pay considered due to extra responsibilities undertaken by the Clerk.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk's salary be raised by £250 to £1400 pa from 1 May 2012, and that the Clerk inform John Harron of the change in order that he could recalculate quarterly payments.

**40/12 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

The Council considered the following correspondence:

Letter from Planning Directorate.

**RESOLVED** that the correspondence be noted.

**41/12 ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

The problem with dog dirt had been raised again. At the preceding PACT meeting, the Neighbourhood Wardens had stated that they need someone to step forward and report the offenders where known.

Cllr A Clarke had arranged to walk the 6 mile circular walk with Elaine Crow (nee Fields) at 10am on Thursday morning.

**42/12 NEXT MEETING**

Monday, 3 September 2012 at 6.45pm

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_