

## **Middridge Parish Council**

### **Minutes of Council Meeting**

**Village Hall,  
Middridge**

**Monday  
2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009**

**Time:6.45pm**

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

**Official:** N.Hart (Clerk);

#### **73/08 NOTICE OF MEETING**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

#### **74/08 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to a correction in respect of Min 62/08 vi) to indicate the event was a Charity Evening, and not a Civic Service; and a correction to Min 64/08 iii) to indicate that the request for a copy of the Parish footpath maps had been received from the landowners; and not the Caravan Club.

#### **75/08 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**i) C35 Road Traffic Safety Concerns (Minute 62/08 refers)**

The Clerk advised that DCC apart from regular visits by their Speed Management Assistant with a mobile speed visor; no other traffic surveys had recently been carried out by the authority. The results of these types of survey were not generally recorded as they were done purely to alert drivers if they were travelling too fast.

**ii) DCC National Tree Week (Minute 62/08 refers)**

Advice was still awaited from Lyndhurst Nurseries regards a suitable permanent tree to replace the need for an annual Christmas tree erected each year. Initial views on the proposal had been sought from the Residents Association. Subject to confirmation from Lyndhurst of a suitable tree, it was hoped that the views of residents

could be sought through an article placed in the next Residents Newsletter.

**iii) Erection of Dwelling, Land Adjacent 38 Southside, Middridge (Minute 62/08 refers)**

The Clerk advised that the Probation Service had, whilst not confirming that the above property had been proposed for use as a bail hostel, had confirmed that they were not considering any proposal for residential premises to be approved as bail hostels within the South West Durham area.

Members referred to the initial planning application submitted to Sedgefield Borough Council for the erection of a dwelling and requested confirmation of the planning decision.

**76/08 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Members considered a schedule of Accounts for Payment; together with additional invoices received from CDALC for £47.88 in respect of 2009/10 Subscription; and in lieu of payment made by Cllr Clarke in respect of wood and paint in order to carry out repairs to wooden seat adjacent bus shelter.

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

T.C.Walton	Parish Paths Works 8/9	£1253.50
D.C.C.	Decoration of Xmas Tree	£334.65
Lyndhurst Nurseries	Supply of Xmas Tree	£172.50
N.Hart	Salary	£183.33
N.Hart	Postage	£1.80
CDALC	2009/10 Subscription	£47.88
Cllr Clarke	Wood/Paint-Repair of Seat	£72.64

**77/08 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS**

**i) Grounds Maintenance or General Repairs Issues**

It was noted that no further progress had been made by the Working Party to the condition of the railings around the war memorial due to bad weather. The materials had however now been purchased in respect of the wood seat adjacent the bus shelter; and work would commence on this as soon as the weather allowed.

Members referred to the contract for carrying out maintenance to clean each of the bus shelters; and suggested that both the existing contractor and I.H. be invited to submit a quotation for the works for 2009/2010.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk invite quotations from both the existing contractor and I.H. in respect of bus shelter cleaning works for 2009/2010.

### **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business only on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

ii) Parish Paths Partnership Scheme 2009/2010

Consideration was given to two quotations received in respect of participation in the contract for undertaking works as part of the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme on behalf of Durham County Council for 2009/2010. A grant of 100% funding for the works from DCC was available upon application.

**RESOLVED that:-**

1. The contract in respect of works on behalf of the Parish Council as part of the DCC Parish Paths Scheme for 2009/2010, be awarded to I.H., in accordance with the terms submitted.
2. The Clerk submit an appropriate application to DCC for 100% funding in respect of the works based on the estimate provided by I.H. and, subject to confirmation of the funding from DCC, I.H. be invited to commence the works, to be accompanied by Cllr Howe as part of an initial 'walk through' of the paths.

The meeting then continued in public session.

**78/08**

### **CHILDRENS' PLAY AREA**

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

The outcome of the independent inspection of the facility arranged by Sedgefield Borough Council was awaited and it was

suggested that progress on this be sought and, upon receipt of the report, members consider the findings and determine whether any action, including possible replacement of junior swing seats, is necessary.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted and the Clerk enquire about publication of the outcome of the independent inspection of the play area facility; arranged by Sedgefield Borough Council.

**79/08**

## **DISPOSAL OF ALLOTMENTS-DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

Consideration was given to the outcome of the informal meeting members held with Joanne MacLean, Estates Officer, Durham County Council on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009 to discuss proposals put forward by DCC around options to dispose of their interest in the allotments in Middridge to the Parish Council.

It was noted that currently DCC had an arrangement in place whereby they managed the site in return for an annual fee in the region of £250 from the Allotments Association.

Options considered at the meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> February included:-

-Transfer of the freehold title to the site to the Parish Council (with relevant restrictions for development imposed) subject to an open market valuation to be carried out by DCC;

-A 99 year lease granted to the Parish Council for management of the site; subject to a peppercorn rent.

With regard to each of the above options, all liabilities and management would fall to the Parish Council; and each party would pay their own legal fees.

Members queried both the likely freehold market value; and questioned the value of a 'peppercorn' rent. Confirmation was also required as to both the ownership and future maintenance responsibility for the surrounding fence.

Initial soundings from the Allotments Association had been taken in regard to the proposal; and no objections had been indicated by their Chairman and Vice Chairman.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The Parish Council approve in principle the proposed acquisition of the allotment site in Middridge from DCC; subject to further consideration of all options available

regarding the method of acquisition, and subject to the outcome of consultation with the Allotments Association.

2. DCC be requested to confirm both the freehold market valuation of the site and the extent of the proposed peppercorn rent; as well as ownership and responsibility for the surrounding fencing.

**80/08 MEETING WITH PHIL WILSON, M.P.-DCC PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor Mrs Clarke advised on the outcome of a meeting both she and Cllr Howe had held with Phil Wilson, M.P. and County Councillor Mrs Bowman to discuss this Parish Council's concerns that children from this parish had been unsuccessful in obtaining places at Byerley Park Primary School.

Mr Wilson agreed to take up the Parish Council's concerns with the Director of Children, Education & Social Care at DCC; and would advise the Council of any response received.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**81/08 WEB SITE**

Cllr Makinson advised on the outcome of members enquiries into the best available options for the Parish Council hosting its own web site.

It was proposed that a joint Middridge Parish Council & Middridge Residents Association web site be created; which would achieve a broader coverage of all matters affecting the parish. This would entail a community web site being created; which Cllr Makinson was willing to oversee and administer.

It was estimated that the cost of such a site would be in the region of £5-15 per month. It was therefore proposed that Cllr Makinson confirm the web site arrangements and that the Residents Association be consulted on the proposal, their views obtained and they be invited to consider whether they wished to make a contribution to the monthly costs of its maintenance.

It was noted that once established, it would be necessary to put in place an appropriate security policy to oversee publication of all content.

**RESOLVED** that:-

1. Consultation be undertaken with the Residents Association regarding the proposed joint community web site venture; and they be requested to consider making a contribution towards all associated costs.
2. Cllr Makinson be invited to confirm all costing and web site address and space arrangements and advise both the Residents Association and the Parish Council.
3. Subject to Recommendations 1 and 2 above, future consideration be given to an appropriate security policy to manage the content of the proposed site.

**82/08**

### **GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

The following correspondence was noted:-

-(i) CDALC Special General Meeting-Area Action Partnerships

Members noted the revised date of Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at 10.30am at County Hall.

-(ii)NALC Power of Well Being;

-(iii) DCC-Double Taxation Grant for 2009/2010;

Members noted that DCC had awarded this Parish Council a grant of £130; to be paid as part of the Council's precept, in respect of a double taxation grant awarded for payment against the cost of allotments, bus shelters, cemeteries and public conveniences. This Council's award was in respect of the cost of its maintenance of its two bus shelters.

**RESOLVED** that the award of double taxation grant be noted.

-(iv) Sedgefield Borough LSP Celebration Event-6<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Cllr Mellors to attend.

-(v) Voluntary Transfer of Council's Housing Stock to Sedgefield Borough Homes

Consideration was given to the report considered by Sedgefield Borough Council in respect of the proposed large scale voluntary transfer of its housing stock. This would involve the transfer of responsibility for ownership of areas of open space land; a small area of which in Middridge would be affected

adjacent The Meadows. The Borough Council had now approved the transfer.

-(vi) Sedgefield Borough Council-End of Year Report

**83/08 PLANNING APPLICATION**

Reserved Matters following Outline Approval for Erection of 270 Dwellings with Associated Works on Land to the East of Spout Lane, Shildon

Consideration was given to the above application. Members expressed concern that no bungalows or OP accommodation was proposed as part of the development and questioned whether the service provision in respect of water services had been adequately catered for so that the effect of the additional dwellings did not have an adverse affect on water pressure within Middridge.

Members also questioned the future role of the North East Community Forest Park; as it was understood that the company involved had gone into liquidation.

**RESOLVED** that Sedgefield Borough Council be advised of this Parish Council's comments/concerns, as outlined above.

**84/08 APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Consideration was given to an application for financial assistance from Great North Air Ambulance.

**RESOLVED** that a grant of £25 be approved.

**85/08 ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

(i) Chairman's Evening

An appropriate date for this event was to be determined by the Chairman.

**86/08 NEXT MEETING**

Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at 6.50pm

