

Middridge Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting

**Village Hall
Middridge**

**Monday
4th July 2005**

Time:6.45pm

Present: Councillor W.J. Clarke (Chairman), Councillors Mrs A. Clarke & W.Mellors

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Howe and Morland.

Official: N.Hart (Clerk);

17/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2005 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

18/05 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Parish Paths (Minute 07/05 refers)

It was noted that the Durham County Council's Parish Paths Officer had advised that Eldon P.C. had approached them regarding the possibility of re-instating Public footpath No 7 (20 Old Eldon).

Litter Bins (Minute 07/05 refers)

The Clerk advised that Sedgefield Borough Council were prepared to supply a litter bin, on behalf of the Parish Council, to be sited on the Village Green outside of the public house at a cost of £250, on the basis that collection would be carried out once per week in accordance with domestic collection arrangements. The Wolverhampton & Dudley Brewery had previously indicated a willingness to pay for the cost of such provision, and it was requested that this quotation be supplied to the brewery in the hope that the order could be placed and a bin sited at the earliest opportunity.

Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2005 (Minute 09/05 refers)

The Clerk advised that, on behalf of the Council, he had approached Mr Colin Gray, a retired Accountant from Stockton on Tees Borough Council, about the possibility of him carrying

out an internal audit of the Parish Council's accounts. Mr Gray had indicated a willingness to perform such a role; and it was therefore suggested that he be invited to the next meeting of the Council with a view to confirming arrangements, and that appropriate travel expenses be paid to him.

Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (SCI) (Minute No. 12/05 refers)

Clarification was awaited from the Borough Council regarding the responsibilities and advantages of the Parish being within a Conservation Area; and it was suggested that once a reply had been received the relevant officer from the Borough Council be invited to attend a future meeting of the Parish to present a resume of the obligations of a Conservation Area.

Grounds Maintenance and General Repairs (Minute 14/05 refers)

The Clerk advised that Great Aycliffe Town Council had referred to this Council's earlier correspondence regarding the maintenance of trees on the Village Green and had advised that they would no longer be in a position to carry out future maintenance, previously supplied on a voluntary basis as and when time was available.

It was suggested that Sedgfield Borough Council be asked whether they would be prepared to carry out future maintenance; and that any future works should include the Ash Tree presently overhanging Nos 13,14 & 15 Northside.

19/05 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Members considered a schedule of Accounts for Payment.

RESOLVED that the following accounts be approved for payment:-

JWS Power Wash	Cleaning of Bus Shelters	£54.00*
Durham County Council	Erection and Decoration of Xmas Tree	£269.80*
C.E.Walker	Grasscutting	£345.45*
C.E.Walker	Grasscutting	£230.30
N.Hart	Salary	£141.67
N.Hart	Postage	£3.30

*invoices authorised and paid at Chairman's Civic night.

20/05 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND GENERAL REPAIRS

Further to the offer of awarding the contract for the Parish Paths to Tommy Walton, confirmation had now been received from him that he had adequate insurance cover in place to satisfactorily undertake the contract. Members were therefore happy that the award of the contract to him be confirmed.

Members made reference to the flower tubs located around the Village Green, which were maintained by residents of the village. One such resident was no longer able to continue this role for the time being and therefore alternative arrangements were required. The Chairman indicated that he would be willing to maintain it for the remainder of the year in liaison with the resident.

Councillor Howe advised members of the outcome of his meeting with Tammy Casey, of Sedgefield Borough Council, on the 21st June 2005 regarding the future maintenance of the Millenium Hedge. Tammy advised that she thought the hedge was developing satisfactorily but was becoming overgrown with weeds. She advised that the hedge should be addressed with a herbicide 'Spot Spray'; with care taken not to over-spray. Strimming or pulling out the weeds was not considered viable as it could disturb the formation of the roots of the hedge. Tammy indicated that she would be prepared to carry out work in the future to prune the plants (Jan/Feb next year) and ultimately would wish to 'lay the hedge' to provide a satisfactory base for a box hedge. Members concurred that they would keep a watchful eye on the hedge in the meantime and maintain as necessary.

Councillor Mrs Clarke advised members that two residents of the village wished to kindly donate to the Parish a Millenium Oak tree sapling. It was suggested that the site of the Rowan tree, which had just died, near the Village entrance sign, may be a suitable location. The Chairman offered to inspect the location prior to the next meeting of the Parish, when further consideration could be given to the matter and the possible display of a 'Millenium' sign on the trees.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Confirmation of the appropriate insurance cover be noted and the contract for the Parish Paths be confirmed with Tommy Walton.
2. The report on the condition of the Millenium Hedge be noted.
3. The kind offer of a donation of a Millenium Oak tree sapling be gratefully received and members consider the issue of siting of the tree at the next meeting.

21/05

DURHAM ASSOCIATION OF PARISH & TOWN COUNCILS (DAPTC)

Further to the last meeting, further consideration was given to the guidance received from the Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils on:-

- New Model Contract
- New National Agreement
- Guidance on Good Employment
- New National Pay Scales

Members were satisfied that the Clerk's current contract of employment was in line with that suggested by the DAPTC. However, it was suggested that enquiries be made with the Inland Revenue regarding the preferred method of deduction of income tax from the Clerk's salary and that this advice be considered at the next meeting; together with any implications that this would have on the actual salary itself.

RESOLVED that the Clerk undertake the enquiries outlined above and report back to the next meeting of the Council.

22/05

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

Consideration was given to the following correspondence received:-

- Land to the East of Spout Lane-Response from Sedgefield Borough Council
- Durham Association of Parish & Town Councils-NALC Information
- County Durham Registered Trader Scheme
- Darlington Local Development Framework-Core Strategy Issues

RESOLVED that:-

1. The content of the response from Sedgefield Borough Council be noted; and all future planning applications received be referred to the Chairman of the Council for consideration with other members of the Parish Council.
2. The availability of free publications from the National Association of Local Councils be noted and Councillor Mellors be requested to order those relevant to this Parish be e-mail.
3. The County Durham Registered Trader Scheme be noted and members gather further information on the scheme

from the organisations website with a view to encouraging its use, if appropriate, via the Village Newsletter.

4. The content of the Darlington Local Development Framework-Core Strategy Issues report be noted.

23/05

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Reference was made to the impending Golden Wedding Anniversary of Mr & Mrs Smith, who lived within the Parish. It was suggested that it would be appropriate for the Chairman of the Parish Council to present a bouquet (to the value of £10) to Mr & Mrs Smith to congratulate them on their Wedding Anniversary; and that this be reimbursed at the next meeting.

Members referred to the newly completed Chilton By-pass which unfortunately, on the new signs put in place, did not contain any reference to advise motorists on how to access Middridge from this point. Councillor Mrs Clarke had tried unsuccessfully to raise this matter with DCC Highways staff and it was proposed that a formal notice be forwarded outlining this Council's disappointment at the omission, particularly as a similar error had occurred previously and had later been rectified by the County Council.

Members queried the existing refuse collection arrangements which seemed to cause confusion as to whether collections were being made on a Tuesday or a Wednesday; with the result often that rubbish was left out for collection over 24 hours. The matter had been mentioned to the Borough's Ward Councillor (Hall) in the hope that the situation could be clarified.

Reference was made to the possible benefits of this Council devising its own Parish Plan should it facilitate access to additional funding for use by the Parish. It was suggested that initial contact be made with Vicki McCourt of Sedgefield Borough Council for further details and the matter be considered at the Parish's meeting in November.

The Chairman circulated details of press coverage of Sedgefield Borough Council's intention to make funding available in the Borough in the next two years to improve play areas. It was suggested that the Clerk obtain more information on this initiative from the Council's Head of Leisure Services and report back to the next meeting of the Council.

Details of forthcoming civic engagements hosted by Great Aycliffe Town Council were submitted.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The suggested donation to commemorate the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Mr & Mrs Smith be approved.
2. The Clerk be authorised to contact DCC to outline this Council's disappointment that Middridge had been omitted from the signage erected as part of the Chilton By-Pass scheme.
3. The situation regarding the collection of refuse be monitored in conjunction with Councillor Hall from Sedgfield Borough Council.
4. Further details on the advantages of devising a Parish Plan be ascertained by the Clerk in discussion with Vicki McCourt from Sedgfield Borough Council.
5. The Clerk obtain more information on the initiative to improve the Borough's Play Areas from the Council's Head of Leisure Services and report back to the next meeting of the Council.

24/05

NEXT MEETING

Monday 5th September 2005 at 6.45pm.