

Midddridge Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting

Village Hall,
Midddridge

Monday
7th March, 2016

Time: 6.45 pm

Present: Cllrs A Clarke (Chair), W Mellors, W J Clarke, P Makinson

In attendance: Cllrs M Dixon, J Gray & J Clare (DCC)

Official: A D Jordan (Clerk)

20/16 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read.

21/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr H Howe

22/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

23/16 MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

None

24/16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of 4th January 2016 were accepted, and signed by the Chair as a true record.

25/16 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

(i) Police Speed "Sculptures" (6/16 (ii) refers)

Two of the Police Speed "Sculptures" have been in place for several weeks, and the others should be in place shortly.

(ii) South Side Pavement (8/16 (iv) refers)

It was agreed that this would be looked at as part of DCC Councillor Ward Inspection to be held on 12th April at 2.00pm, starting from the Village Hall.

(iii) Transparency Code Funding (15/16 (c) refers)

Funding will be sought for new Website Software for use by Cllr P Makinson.

Action: Clerk

(iv) Christmas Tree Lights (17/16 (ii) refers)

Replacement Christmas Tree Lights have yet to be investigated.

Action: Clerk

26/16 PERSIMMON "ELDON WHINS" DEVELOPMENT & THE COUNTY PLAN

The new Draft County Plan is to be considered by the DCC Cabinet in April.

APPROVED

The proposed "Eldon Whins" Housing Developments are likely to be rejected if it can be shown that the Agricultural Land in question is Grade 3A (**NOT** 3B). The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) may be able to help with this.

RESOLVED that the CPRE be contacted urgently to see if they can help in determining what the Grade of the Agricultural Land at "Eldon Whins" is.

Action: Clerk

27/16 GROUND MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS

(i) Parish Paths Maintenance & Modifications

There has been no communication regarding next year's Parish Paths Maintenance Budget, or the proposed Parish Path 7 (the Tramway) improvements.

(ii) DCC proposed Street Light Removal

The Parish Council have sent a Letter objecting to the proposed DCC Street Light Removal programme for the Parish, and several Objections from Residents have also been forwarded. A response is awaited.

(iii) Trees adjacent to 28, South Side

The Owner of 28, South Side has asked that Crown Lifting should be carried out on the DCC owned Trees in the small triangular Copse adjacent to his property (so as to improve the amount of light in his Garden). Cllr J Clare stated that owing to staff reductions in the DCC Tree Maintenance Department, there is currently a backlog of work, so any progress is likely to be slow.

Action: Clerk

28/16 "THE PADDOCK"

Nothing to report. This Item to be removed from the Agenda in future.

29/16 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

None

30/16 CHILDREN'S' PLAY AREA

Advice regarding cleaning the Moss from the Senior Swings Base still to be sought.

Action: Clerk

Our Insurance Company always recommend that Notice Board(s) should be provided in the Play Area advising Users of Equipment Age suitability, the nearest Telephone, Parish Council contacts etc. It was agreed that an Inspection be undertaken to investigate the feasibility of providing such Notice Board(s).

31/16 C35 NEWTON AYCLIFFE TO SHILDON ROAD-TRAFFIC CALMING

Our DCC Councillors have investigated the proposal to move the 40 mph Speed Limit on the C35 at the western edge of Shildon towards Middridge, so that Traffic Lights can be installed on the staggered Cross-Roads. There are two options:-

(i) Extend the 40 mph Limit to the 30 mph Limit at the western edge of the Village.

This would seem to be the common sense approach, and is favoured by our DCC Councillors and the Parish Council, but the DCC Highways Department object. This option is to be considered by the DCC Highways Committee; the Parish Council and our DCC Councillors will have an opportunity to put their views to the Committee when this is considered. It was suggested that this option would carry more weight if it were supported by the local MPs concerned (Sedgefield and Bishop Auckland).

RESOLVED that our local MPs be contacted to seek their support for this option.

Action: Clerk

- (ii) As an alternative the DCC Highways Department have suggested removing the Village 30 mph Limit, but extending the 40 mph Limit from Shildon to just past “Six Houses”, with small 40mph roundels fitted on Lamp Posts.

The DCC Highways Department state that there is evidence to show that a 40 mph Limit is more effective in reducing excessive Vehicle Speed than a 30 mph Limit; Cllr M Dixon is to investigate this claim.

It is also suggested that a “Pedestrian Refuge” should be installed at a suitable point in the centre of the Village, but this raises a number of problems:-

- (a) Owing to the lack of a Pavement on the north side of the Village Road, there are only a few points where the “Pedestrian Refuge” could be installed.
- (b) It would be necessary to use part of the Village Green so the road could pass either side of the “Pedestrian Refuge”. Whilst this is possible, we are legally required to replace the lost Village Green land elsewhere, which is impractical.
- (c) The “Pedestrian Refuge” would cost ~ £30,000, and whilst our DCC Councillors are prepared to provide financial support, the Parish Council would be expected to make a substantial contribution. It was suggested that our Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Safety Fund might be able to help.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council will pursue option (i), and only consider option (ii) if option (i) is rejected.

32/16 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan has been sent to a Consultant for his comments.

The Housing Questionnaire is to delivered to all residents as soon as practical.

Action: Cllr W Mellors

33/16 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors considered a Schedule of Accounts for Payment.

RESOLVED that the following Accounts be approved for payment:-

Payee	Purpose	Sum
Derek Johnson	Christmas Tree	£180.00
DCC	Christmas Tree Lights etc.	£371.66
Alan Jordan	Clerk's Salary	£217.70
HMRC	Clerk's Income Tax	£144.80
Alan Jordan	Clerk's 2015-16 Expenses	£37.46
Thirsk Community Care	Clerk's Salary Administration	£61.00
	TOTAL	£1012.62

It has been established that Colin Gray is still willing to act as our Internal Auditor.

RESOLVED that Colin Gray be appointed Internal Auditor for the 2015-16 Accounts.

Action: Clerk

The requirements for appointing External Auditors under the new Regulations which come into force from the 2017-18 Financial Year are more complex than originally envisaged. Consequently, the proposed NALC's Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. (SAAAL) Scheme appears the only practical option.

APPROVED

RESOLVED that no action be taken, which means that the Parish Council will be automatically opted in to the NALC SAAAL Scheme for five years.

34/16 GAMP & CDALC

The Clerk has been appointed as a Partner on the new GAMP Crime & Community Safety Task Group.

Cllr Anne Clarke has been reappointed as Vice-Chair of the Local Council's Committee, and will represent GAMP on the CDALC Executive Committee.

35/16 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

A letter was received from The Children's Foundation requesting a Donation, but it is the Council's policy to only support Charities in the immediate local area.

RESOLVED that **NO** Donation should be made.

A letter was also received from the Chief Constable reporting that the Durham Constabulary have again been found the best Police Force in the Country.

36/16 OTHER MATTERS

(i) Parish Council Records

After a Meeting with the County Archivist, the Chair of the Parish Council (Cllr A Clarke) agreed that the majority of the Parish Council's Records could be transferred to the County Records Office, for retention or destruction as appropriate. Cllr W Mellors was concerned as to what Records may be destroyed, and will contact the County Records Office.

(ii) Queen's Garden Party & Birthday Celebrations

Cllrs J & A Clarke, were successful in the Ballot, and will be attending the Queen's Garden Party. The Parish Council will consider paying reasonable Expenses.

The Parish Council will also consider supporting the Middridge Village Association in any Event they may organise to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday.

(iii) Big Spring Clean

This will be held on Sunday, 13th March, meeting at the Village Hall at 10.30 am.

37/16 ADDITIONAL ITEMS

None

38/16 NEXT MEETING

Monday, 9th May 2016, immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting at 6.45pm.

Chair _____