

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14th MARCH 2023
AT 7:00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

Cllr. Julian Cusack - Chair
Cllr. Roy Dowding
Cllr. Steve Thorpe
Cllr. Graham Lacey
Cllr. Charles Macdowell
Cllr. Lynda Whitbread
Cllr. Chris Reynolds

Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Lesley Taylor – written and accepted

In attendance:

Melanie Thurston – Locum Clerk
District Cllr. Russ Rainger
District Cllr. Tom Daly
4 members of the public

2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest. None

3. Public Forum

A member of the public expressed concern that the main village green in Middleton has suffered over the years. She would like to brighten up the area around the edges with wild flower seeds and some bulbs around the sundial and bench. It would bring nature and pollinating benefits to the green and would make it a nicer place to sit, would also help to reduce parking issues. It would be nice to involve the local children with the planting. She has canvassed the residents around the green and many are enthusiastic about this proposal. The Parish Council all agreed that this would be a great idea and suggested considering that the whole of the green be planted with wild flower seeds to make a meadow effect and to have pathways mown across.

Cllr Thorpe would recommend that she canvass again to ask the residents if they support the whole of the green being planted. He would also like to know how they propose to maintain the area once planted. Member of the public advised that volunteers have offered to help with mowing and cutting pathways

Cllr Whitbread may be able to locate a source of free seeds. Cllr Rainger informed that ESC In Bloom is providing bulbs free of charge if needed.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would invite interested residents to form a "Village Green Group" to take these proposals forward.

Member of the public informed that the Give & Take at the telephone box is doing really well, it is used by all age groups.

Member of the public asked who it is best to contact regarding parking on the recreation ground? The Chairman advised that it is a public carpark, however, if it is required to have the gates open for additional parking then contact Cllr Reynolds.

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ESC Cllr Tom Daley reported that now is the time to apply for bundles of bulbs, suitable for

planting next spring. The UK Shared Prosperity Scheme has funding set up for community pantries and grants of up to £4500 are available, closing date 15 March 2023. Photo ID will be needed at the May elections.

ESC Cllr Russ Rainger encouraged participation in the Community Litter Picks – British Spring Clean. Equipment including picks and sacks are available from Suffolk Norse. From 16 March the moratorium pre-election period will commence. He will not be standing for re-election, but thanked the Parish Council for their support.

4. Vacancies

a) To consider any applications received for the Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer vacancy.

The Chairman informed that advertisements have been placed but as yet no applicants.

b) To consider any applications received for the Councillor vacancy. None received.

5. Minutes

a) To approve as accurate the minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2023.

The Council approved the minutes as an accurate record.

d) Matters arising from all meetings. These will all be covered in the agenda.

6. Sizewell C - To review the draft letter to EDF and the Local Authorities circulated with this Agenda and discuss arrangements for a second meeting with adjoining Parishes.

Cllr Macdowell reported that following on from the meeting with surrounding parish councils he has circulated the draft letter of response to EDF to the parishes. The letter relates to issues arising during the Early Years of the project before the Sizewell Link Road is operational. This is a key risk period when the existing road infrastructure - not just the B1122 - is being asked to take considerably more traffic than it ever has before, bringing significant new safety hazards to residents. Concerns relate to speed limits, pedestrian footpaths, highway maintenance and incident management. Cllr Thorpe reported that B1125 residents have also asked for a 20mph speed limits from Reckford Bridge to Yew Tree Corner. Cllr Macdowell suggested that this could be included for but may encounter push back from the Highways Authority.

Cllr Dowding stated that general reaction to a 20mph limit is not all favourable but all would like more control of the 30mph limit.

The Chairman read an extract of the draft letter “We call for a significant extension to the routes covered or proposed to be covered by speed limits. The routes for which we request speed limits are set out in Schedule 1. We also call for a significant commitment to the enforcement of existing and new speed limits, especially during the Early Years, and call upon EDF to make funds available to the Police Authority for this purpose”.

A member of the public reported that residents have already faced 6 months of heavy traffic to and from Sizewell, ahead of the 2 years, when does the 2 years start? Cllr Macdowell advised that the 2+ years of further heavy Sizewell traffic is expected to start when the SZC project is finally approved which could be in 18 months, following which we are likely to see 600 trucks a day travelling through Middleton.

The Chairman suggests waiting for the responses from the other Parish Council regarding the

EDF letter. It was also suggested that we ask for Fordley Road to be 30mph or that this be extended to all the Quiet Lanes which could include Littlemoor Road, Fordley Road and Hawthorn Road. The Chairman thanked Cllr Macdowell for his efforts.

7. Trees

The Chairman advised that the so-called 'Umbrella' tree (a large sycamore) on the boundary of Middleton Moor, was taken down by the landowner. The Chairman also informed that he had recently done a walk of the village along with a member of the public and made a list of some of the notable trees with tree protection orders on them (TPOs) and those without. On the face of it there are some trees in the village that need to be protected. He suggested that, after the elections, the Parish Council compile a definitive list of those trees which may need to have a TPO. It was suggested that at this stage applications for TPOs should only be made with the support of the relevant landowner.

8. Administration

a) To conduct the annual review and approval of the Asset Register.

The Asset Register had been forwarded to all prior to the meeting. No major changes, therefore approved by all. The Chairman advised that the PC own a filing cabinet which is located in Yoxford Village Hall and that Yoxford Parish Council wish to purchase it. All agreed to sell it to Yoxford PC for £120.00.

b) To conduct the annual review and approval of the Internal Controls Statement.

The internal controls statement had been forward to all prior to the meeting. Approved by all.

9. Finance

It was agreed to:

- a) note the latest financial position and verify the transfer of last month's authorised payments.
- b) note the LGA 1972 s.137 expenditure limit of £8.22 per elector for the financial year 2022-2023 and £9.93 per elector for the financial year 2023-2024.
- c) approve the purchase of a replacement battery for the defibrillator costing £280 plus VAT.
- d) authorise the following payments:

| Details | Payee | Amount | Power |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Drop In Centre Hall Hire | Middleton Village Hall | £54.00 | LGA 1972 s.137 |
| Council Meetings Hall Hire | Middleton Village Hall | £233.00 | LGA 1972 s.111 |
| Locum Clerk Services (Feb) | Melanie Thurston | £93.00 | LGA 1972 s.111 |
| Defibrillator Pads | Active Med Supplies Ltd | £76.74 | LGA 1972 s.111 |

10. Any Other Business

a. Elections. The Chairman encouraged all members of the Council to consider standing for re-election. The elections will be held on May 4th. The last date for nominations is April 4th. Contact the Chairman or another Parish Councillor for details and nomination forms.

Cllr Dowding informed that after being a parish councillor for 16 years he had decided not to reapply for re-election. The Chairman and the Council thanked him for his huge contribution to the Council and the Parish over this time in particular in relation to Sizewell C.

Cllr Whitbread also informed the Council that having completed the 4-year period, she is unable to commit further and will not reapply. The Chairman and the Council thanked her for her work for the Council over this period including with the Drop-In Centre. Cllr Whitbread said she is prepared to continue to help out with the Drop in Centre.

b. HASTO Housing. Cllr Thorpe reported that the maintenance team have planted a laurel hedge on the roadside hedgerow boundary fronting the housing development. This appears to be in breach of a planning condition to plant a native hedge. He has written to HASTO to inform them of this and ask them to comply with the approved landscaping plan.

11. Items for the Next Agenda. None proposed.

12. Next Meeting

The Council agreed the date and time of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 11th April 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.