

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

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

Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Chris Reynolds – written and accepted
County Cllr. Richard Smith
District Cllr. Tom Daly
District Cllr. Tony Cooper

In attendance:

Melanie Thurston – Locum Clerk
District Cllr. Russ Rainger
2 members of the public

2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest. None

3. Public Forum

A member of the public explained her detailed concerns and issues regarding building works which are being carried out to her neighbouring property. Cllr Lacey suggested that material amendments or variations of condition may have been granted.

The member of the public advised that she has looked on the ESC planning portal and seen no approved amendments.

Cllr Lacey offered to meet with the member of the public and to look in more detail at the planning application and pay a site visit. If variations have been made without approval by ESC then the planning enforcement team should be advised. The member of the public accepted Cllr Lacey's offer.

ESC Cllr Rainger said that he is also happy to help with planning enforcement, if required.

District Cllr Russ Rainger summarised his previously circulated report. Highlights included: the UK Shared Prosperity Funding to be invested in levelling up improvements, support for community pantries and ESC Bloom which is encouraging groups to apply for free flower bulbs for planting in communities.

The Chairman reported that District Cllr Tom Daley had sent his apologies and a report that included advice that photo ID will need to be shown when voting at the forthcoming elections.

4. Vacancies

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

The Chairman informed that the previous Clerk has agreed to continue as RFO until the end of the current financial year and to prepare the accounts for audit. No applications have as yet been received for the vacancy. He sought the approval of the Parish Council to advertise the vacancy on a recruitment website recommended by SALC, this will cost £75.00.

The rate of pay will be advertised as the top of the scale to help make the position attractive to a wider audience. The Parish Council approved the cost of £75.00.

b) To consider any applications received for the Councillor vacancy.

No applications have been received as yet. But it is hoped that as elections take place in May, there may be more candidates for the Parish Council coming forward.

5. Minutes

a) To approve as accurate the minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2022.

The Council approved the minutes as an accurate record.

b) To approve as accurate the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 3rd January 2023.

The Council approved the minutes as an accurate record.

c) To approve as accurate the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 27th January 2023.

The Council approved the minutes as an accurate record.

d) Matters arising from all meetings.

The Chairman confirmed that the budget has been uploaded to the website. ESC has been sent the precept request for 2023-2024. Cllr Taylor asked if the precept was set to include the increase in the Clerks salary? The Chairman advised that the budget had been set with the previous Clerks pay and it is too late to change the precept request now. However the Parish Council does have adequate reserves to fund the increased salary, if required.

6. Councillors' and Clerk's Reports

a) Sizewell C

Following on from the last meeting of the B1122 working group, two "surgeries" were held by the Parish Council on January 7th and 14th to which residents who live along the B1122 and the B1125 had been invited. The surgeries were well-attended and the Parish Council now has a better view of the range of residents' concerns. The Chairman suggested that neighbouring Parish Councils should also be invited to a second meeting to formulate a joint approach to common issues including speed limits and their enforcement and traffic incident management. It was agreed that a 2nd version of the previous draft letter to be sent to EDF, ESC & SCC would be circulated with an invite to Parish Councils to a meeting on 4th April.

Cllr Taylor reported that she has talked to some of the Middleton Moor residents and been informed that long term residents had been promised mitigation when Sizewell B was built, however it never came. The road is very dangerous for pedestrians to cross.

The Chairman will check if any deadline dates have been given regarding the proposals received from EDF at the last Working Group meeting.

Cllr Macdowell informed that close board fencing and double glazing to mitigate noise are not in the current proposals. He had been told that HGV movements will not be permitted overnight.

He has also raised with EDF the possibility of financial support for permissive paths to help reduce risk to pedestrians.

Cllr Thorpe has followed up with residents along the B1125 who have concerns at speeding traffic. A police van often monitors speeding traffic at the top of the brow before Ambleside, however this is not usually at peak times when traffic is travelling to and from Sizewell.

The Chairman would like to see a more comprehensive speed enforcement plan in place.

b) Highways/Footpaths. Nothing additional.

c) Village Hall/Drop-In Centre. Cllr Taylor reported that this is going along nicely, 12 residents usually attend the session which is held from 11am to 1pm on a Thursday. The Chairman thanked Cllr Taylor & Whitbread for all they are doing.

d) Village Greens/Green Issues/Trees. The Chairman reported that the so-called 'Umbrella' tree (a large sycamore) which is on the eastern boundary of Middleton Moor (but not on the common land) is rotten at the base and in poor condition. The owner of the land on which the tree grows is concerned at the risk to members of the public walking on the moor and had asked for a site meeting with the Chairman. Following this meeting the Chairman sought advice from a tree surgeon who has advised that the tree should be felled on safety grounds. The landowner has been informed.

The access path from the village green to the Church has been discussed before with improvement works likely to cost up to £10,000. The Chairman acknowledged that this was a Parish Council matter but also noted that the Church authorities, while concerned, are unable to help financially for this work to be carried out. The Parish Council does not have the funds to pay for the work. Residents have complained how unsafe the path has become, due to it being uneven and slippery when wet. Cllr Lacey suggests that a cheaper repair could be looked at, however as the path is on a gradient, any remedial work may get washed away. He will take another look at the path to see if costs could be cut.

e) Middleton Moor. Cllr Taylor reported that someone has driven over the moor, leaving heavy tyre marks and have cut off the corner just past the dog bin. Another driver who visits one of the houses on Moor Road also parks on the moor, which is also causing damage and erosion. The Chairman will note this in the newsletter.

The Chairman informed the Council that the Rural Payments Agency has offered an extension of the existing subsidy agreement for 5 years to October 2028. This has been accepted and the Parish Council will continue to receive payments which will help to maintain the habitat and conserve the currently healthy population of Great Crested Newts.

7. Parish Matters. To consider a request to convert the telephone box to a seed and book swap venue for residents.

Cllr Thorpe informed that this is now in place and working well. The Council recorded its thanks to the residents for taking this forward.

8. Finance

a) The Council noted the latest financial position and verified last months approved payments.

b) The Council approved the bank reconciliation for Quarter 3 2022-2023.

c) The Council authorised the following payments:

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Drop In Centre Hall Hire	Middleton Village Hall	£81.00	LGA 1972 s.137
Drop In Centre Expenses	Lesley Taylor	£49.01	LGA 1972 s.137
Drop in centre Expenses (Jan)	Lesley Taylor	£88.99	LGA 1972 s.137

9. Administration

- a) The Council has reviewed and approved the annual review of the Model Standing Orders.
- b) The Council has reviewed and approved the annual review of the Financial Regulations.

10. Correspondence

The Council has reviewed correspondence received between 9th December 2022 and 8th February 2023 and the appropriate action has been taken.

11. Items for the Next Agenda. The Chairman welcomes any items.

12. Next Meeting

The Council agreed the date and time of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 14th March 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

