

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11th OCTOBER 2022
AT 7:00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

Cllr. Julian Cusack - Chair
Cllr. Roy Dowding – Vice-Chair
Cllr. Chris Reynolds
Cllr. Graham Lacey
Cllr. Lynda Whitbread

Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Lesley Taylor – written and accepted
Cllr. Steve Thorpe – written and accepted
District Cllr. Tony Cooper

In attendance:

Sharon Smith – Clerk/RFO
County Cllr. Richard Smith
District Cllr. Russ Rainger
District Cllr. Tom Daly
Three members of the public

2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Public Forum

a) District Cllr. Tom Daly summarised the monthly ESC report. Highlights include a funding boost of £2.5 million from central government over three years to end rough sleeping in the district and there is a call for more homes for Ukrainian refugees. Cllr. Daly outlined the Ease the Squeeze initiative and informed the Council of the Leiston town centre masterplan consultation.

b) District Cllr. Russ Rainger informed the Council about a supplementary planning document consultation about designing developments which better support health and wellbeing.

c) With reference to the Ease the Squeeze initiative, the Chairman informed the District Councillors about the Council's intention to resume the Drop-In Centre at the Village Hall for elderly and isolated residents from now until the end of the year. The Council accepted Cllr. Lesley Taylor's previously circulated suggestions to begin warming the hall earlier, to start slightly later and to extend the session through to an early lunch serving not only tea/coffee and cake but also the option of hot, homemade soup and a roll. Cllr. Taylor wrote that there are some funds leftover from last year's grant but she hoped the warm room and lunch would qualify the service to apply for an Ease the Squeeze grant which would cover the increased energy costs. District Cllr. Russ Rainger replied that the Council should apply for funding from the scheme and he would check his remaining Enabling Communities Budget.

ACTION: Clerk to progress funding with District Cllr. Russ Rainger.

d) County Cllr. Richard Smith reported that the Judicial Review led by Together Against Sizewell C, and supported by Stop Sizewell C, has been accepted by the court but a date for the hearing has not yet been announced. A second Judicial Review was submitted by RSPB but this was rejected by the court as it was lodged one day late. Cllr. Smith said that if the Judicial Review fails, EDF will progress its Final Investment Decision which is more likely to need £30 billion than the £20 billion previously stated. If funds are secured, EDF aim to start by summer 2023 which will be the start of misery for many communities. Cllr. Smith said he will work hard to get as much community compensation as he can.

County Cllr. Smith reported that next financial year's budget will be for £625 million with £58 million alone due to inflation. The County has until February 2023 to present a balanced budget and there will be tough decisions made to get there.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Cllr. Smith said he did not have any information about Investment Zones but he will attend a briefing tomorrow and will give a more detailed report next month.

e) Luca Riccio, the Regional Sales Manager from County Broadband briefed the Council about the fibre-to-premises project proposed for the parish. The infrastructure surveys will be completed by the end of the month and testing will begin in November. They have reached the minimum threshold of residents signed up to make the project viable so they intend to proceed. They need another 20 or 30 households to sign up but they have no concerns about reaching that number. There will be additional fees if households do not sign up at this pre-stage. As a gesture of giving back to the community, Mr Riccio said that County Broadband provides a free connection for Village Halls. They also offer a grant scheme called Hypercharge Foundation which may provide funding for the Drop-In Centre. In response to a question from Cllr. Graham Lacey, Mr Riccio confirmed that the scheme is proposed for all of the outlying areas within the parish boundary, not just the village centre and to properties with short driveways.

ACTION: Clerk to provide contact details for the Village Hall Management Committee.

4. Minutes

The Council approved as accurate the minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2022.

5. Casual Vacancies

No applications were received.

6. Councillors' and Clerk's Reports

a) Sizewell C – the Chairman informed the Council that the first meeting of the B1122 Working Group is scheduled for 18th October. The Chairman, Cllr. Lesley Taylor, Cllr. Lynda Whitbread and Cllr. Steve Thorpe will attend. The B1125, between Rackford Bridge and the B1122, will be included in the discussion.

b) Highways/Footpaths – Cllr. Graham Lacey reported that he forwarded a pack of reports and photographs of the flooding in Fordley Road to County Cllr. Richard Smith.

c) Village Hall – the Clerk reported that the Saxmundham Sub-Postmaster declined the request for an Outreach Post Office service due to high cost of installing the equipment and the perceived low demand.

d) Primary School – the Council noted that the school is recruiting for a new Head Teacher next term.

e) Hastoe Housing – the Chairman informed the Council that he is unable to attend the rescheduled opening event on 21st October, however past Chairman, Nigel Smith, who was instrumental in delivering the housing would attend as the parish representative and say a few words. It was noted that Hastoe had improved the landscaping in time for the event.

f) Middleton Moor – the Chairman reported that Natural England may offer an extension to the current Stewardship Agreement for three years in December. He said the updated SWT Management Report will prove timely as evidence that the Moor has been managed in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

g) Ease the Squeeze – Cllr. Lynda Whitbread reported that she attended this informative briefing from the District Council. It was agreed to circulate information in the newsletter and noticeboards.

h) Outstanding Actions List – the Council reviewed and updated the list.

7. Parish Matters

a) The Council considered Cllr. Steve Thorpe's previously circulated note that residents have reported that the amount of dog fouling on the footpaths increases during the holiday season. The Council accepted Cllr. Thorpe's suggestion to request that holiday lettings include a reminder in their information pack for dog owners to use bags and bins provided and to provide them with a map of the location of dog bins.

ACTION: Cllr. Steve Thorpe to progress.

b) The Council authorised the service and repair of the brushcutter used by the Summer Wine Group.

8. Public Forum Resumed

Bryony Peall from the IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme briefed the Council about the ways the scheme could assist Middleton cum Fordley residents during the cost of living crisis.

ACTION: Clerk to forward Cllr. Lesley Taylor's contact details to Ms Peall.

9. Administration

a) The Council agreed to defer the strategic objectives meeting until after the election in May 2023.

b) The Council conducted the annual review of the insurance policy and ensured the terms of the policy remain acceptable and that all known risks and assets are adequately protected. The Chairman queried why the sum of £60,000 was shown as insurance for buildings.

ACTION: Clerk to contact the insurance provider.

10. Finance

a) The Council noted the latest financial position, including receipts, and verified last month's approved payments.

b) The Council agreed a donation of £35 to the Royal British Legion for a poppy wreath.

ACTION: Cllr. Chris Reynolds to provide the Clerk with payment details.

c) The Council ratified the following payments which were made during the period of National Mourning:

Details	Payee	Method	Amount	Power
Clerk's Salary	Sharon Smith	Transfer	£306.00	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Expenses	Sharon Smith	Transfer	£58.80	LGA 1972 s.111
HSBC	Bank Charges (Jul/Aug)	Direct Debit	£20.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Insurance Premium	Business Services at CAS	Transfer	£446.84	LGA 1972 s.111
Moor Management Plan	SWT Trading Ltd	Transfer	£1,380.00	OSA 1906 s.10
Laptop Repair	Aldeburgh Computers	Transfer	£200.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Stephen Baggott	Village Green Maintenance	Cheque	£50.00	OSA 1906 s.10
Realise Futures CIC	Talking Bench Installation	Transfer	£120.00	OSA 1906 s.10

d) The Council authorised the following payments:

Details	Payee	Method	Amount	Power
Clerk's Salary	Sharon Smith	Transfer	£379.00	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Expenses	Sharon Smith	Transfer	£23.15	LGA 1972 s.111
HSBC	Bank Charges (Sep)	Direct Debit	£8:00	LGA 1972 s.111

11. Correspondence

The Council reviewed the correspondence received between 8th July 2022 and 5th October 2022.

12. Next Meeting

The Council agreed the date and time of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 8th November 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8:15 pm.