

# MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022  
AT 7:00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

## 1. Attendance and Apologies

### Attendees:

Cllr. Roy Dowding – Chair  
Cllr. Chris Reynolds  
Cllr. Lesley Taylor  
Cllr. Graham Lacey  
Cllr. Lynda Whitbread

### Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Julian Cusack – written and accepted  
Cllr. Steve Thorpe – written and accepted

### In attendance:

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

## 2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

## 3. Public Forum

a) A resident reported to the Council that there is an overgrown hedge on the Causeway which is encroaching the highway to a depth of around six feet. The Council agreed to ask the Chairman to speak to the property owner to request that the hedge is cut back.

**ACTION: Clerk to ask Cllr. Julian Cusack to contact the property owner.**

b) District Cllr. Tom Daly summarised his previously circulated report.

c) District Cllr. Russ Rainger reported that the District Council's Chief Executive, Stephen Baker, intends to retire at the end of the year and the recruitment process has begun. Cllr. Rainger said that the District Council has been instrumental in helping the University of Suffolk to open a new dental school which will provide an NHS service. Studies show that many dentists stay where they train so it is hoped that in two years many more dentists will be available locally. Cllr. Rainger concluded by informing the Council that a range of activities and meals are being provided for children over the summer break.

## 4. Minutes

The Council approved as accurate the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

## 5. Casual Vacancies

a) The Council noted the resignation of Cllr. Colin Whitbread.

**ACTION: Clerk to inform the District Council.**

b) The Council considered an application for the other vacancy and agreed to meet the applicant to discuss the requirements of the role.

**ACTION: Clerk to arrange a meeting.**

## 6. Sizewell

a) Cllr. Roy Dowding reported that the DCO decision has been postponed until 20<sup>th</sup> July due to the current political situation. The Council discussed whether it is appropriate for a decision to be taken with a caretaker Prime Minister and there is currently no minister in the department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to make the announcement. Cllr. Dowding said that Stop Sizewell C intends to send a

letter to Secretary of State in this regard. Cllr. Dowding said the Secretary of State cannot make the decision as he is guilty of pre-determination and all of this is paving the way for a judicial review. Cllr. Dowding also informed the Council that the Anglian Energy Planning Alliance has arranged a virtual meeting to discuss the DCO decision. Cllr. Dowding, Cllr. Lesley Taylor and Cllr. Graham Lacey agreed to attend. Cllr. Dowding referred to the comments made by Julia Pyke, Sizewell C Director of Financing, who in reply to Lord Deben's comments about the proposed development said that anyone living in the area affected by Sizewell C should not have an opinion and that the term NIMBY is one she could probably use fairly. Cllr. Dowding said this makes a mockery of the years of public consultation and shows that EDF have not been listening.

b) The Council decided not to respond to planning application DC/22/2273/FUL - creation of wetland habitat for wildlife on land in the vicinity of Lower Abbey Farm within the EDF Sizewell Estate. District Cllr. Russ Rainger said EDF are trying to accelerate the project from two years to one year and the proposal for parking for 55 cars at Bentwaters for the workforce may change.

c) The Council decided not to appoint a member to the Sizewell A & B Stakeholder Group.

## **7. Public Forum Resumed**

County Cllr. Richard Smith reported that in a recent meeting, EDF said that only £180 million will be available rather than the £250 million previously stated. Cllr. Smith referred to the recent planning application for the wetland habitat at Eastbridge which is another in a series of late applications. He said it will require buses to service it to ferry workers to and from the site which concerns him as there is currently a lack of bus drivers as they are being lost to the HGV industry and they will be to EDF who will offer higher wages. He does not know where the backfill will come from for local bus services. Cllr. Smith reported that EDF are being nationalised by the French government and it is rumoured that they will take a 20% stake in Sizewell C. Cllr. Smith also reported that the County Council's budget was underspent by £9 million last year due to a cut in services during the pandemic. In this year's budget, the County Council estimated that inflation would rise by 2%, whereas it is currently at 9%, so the £9 million in reserves will help to cover this. The budget process for next year has begun and it is expected to be the most difficult budget to balance in the last 10 years.. The message from central government is that expenditure must be reined in so Cllr. Smith is pessimistic about the level of government subsidy this year. He said the County will not raise their portion of Council Tax therefore they will be investigating ways to fill the hole in the budget.

Cllr. Graham Lacey reported the issue of flooding on Fordley Road to Cllr. Smith. Cllr. Lacey said the recent work by Highways on the B1122 did not come near Fordley Road and the ditch clearing undertaken two years ago did not alleviate the problem. Cllr. Lacey said a long stretch of the road floods during persistent rain which is of particular concern if EDF do not take flood risk into its assessment. Cllr. Smith said there is an extra £10 million of funding to tackle flooding. He said flooding may arise from complex problems which require complex solutions. He asked for a written report to enable him to follow the matter up. Cllr. Lacey replied that he could provide him with photographs and correspondence from the Environment Agency and Highways. Cllr. Smith added that priority will be given to flooding in areas where properties are at risk.

**ACTION: Cllr. Graham Lacey to provide the Clerk with details and photographs for forwarding to Cllr. Smith.**

## **8. Councillors' Reports**

a) Village Hall – Cllr. Lynda Whitbread said the Hall Management Committee understood that there would be no income from providing an Outreach Post Office but they are still interested in providing this service for the community, particularly if Sizewell C goes ahead. Cllr. Whitbread also reported that the internal decorating will start in August.

**ACTION: Clerk to progress Outreach PO service.**

b) Primary School – the Council discussed a resident’s concern, submitted to Cllr. Lynda Whitbread, about the problems caused by school staff parking inconsiderately and sometimes dangerously along Rectory Road. The number of cars makes it difficult for residents to exit their driveways safely and for deliveries to be made. The resident asked Cllr. Whitbread if she could have an informal word with the Head Teacher but Cllr. Whitbread said that she rarely sees any senior staff during her visits to the school. The Council noted that the school term will shortly end and a large cohort of children are leaving for high school and moving to other primary schools. The Early Years teacher has resigned and is not expected to be replaced therefore the number of staff cars may be reduced. It was decided to hold this matter in abeyance until the new school term in September and to monitor the situation. The Council also discussed the dangerous parking on the bend leading from The Street to Rectory Road and also decided to monitor this situation next term.

c) Village Greens – the Council discussed a resident’s request for the village greens not to be cut during the summer to allow grasses and other perennial plants to flower and provide habitat for the insect population. It was decided to continue to maintain the neat and tidy appearance as this is wanted by the majority of residents who live adjacent to the village green. The Council agreed to compensate for this by rewinding additional open spaces in the parish to improve biodiversity and habitat. This includes the plans to create a wildflower meadow at the Burial Ground in Title Road and to improve access for residents and visitors to enjoy the space. The Council also agreed to consider creating a wildflower area at the Recreation Ground.

d) Burial Ground – the Clerk reported that she had received a quotation from the solicitors for the first registration of title from HM Land Registry. It was agreed to hold the decision to proceed with this project in abeyance until the meeting to discuss the Council’s strategic aims.

e) Hastoe – the Council noted that there will be no Community Infrastructure Levy arising from the development as affordable housing is eligible for relief.

## 9. Consultations

The Clerk and Cllr. Chris Reynolds agreed to review the ESC Consultation: Draft Housing in Clusters and Small Scale Residential Development in the Countryside Supplementary Planning Document and, if necessary, to circulate a draft response for comments and approval.

**ACTION: Cllr. Chris Reynolds and the Clerk to progress.**

## 10. Finance

a) The Council noted the latest financial position, including receipts.

b) The Council reviewed the report for the financial year 2021-2022 from the Internal Auditor. The Council noted that in accordance with the Practitioners Guide, it is recommended that smaller authorities should use secure e-mail systems and gov.uk addresses which are owned by the authority rather than relying on the use of personal email addresses that can change regularly. This reduces the risk of correspondence going astray or being delayed. After due consideration, the Council considered the risk was minimal and the cost of approximately £66 per annum per email address was not justifiable.

c) The Council approved an annual donation of £300 to the village newsletter and agreed to ringfence £150 to be drawn down if required later in the year. (LGA 1972 s.142).

d) The Council accepted a quotation for £200 to repair the Council laptop. (LGA 1972 s. 111)

e) The Council noted the budgeted versus actual income and expenditure for Qtr 1 2022-2023.

f) The Council noted the bank reconciliation for Qtr 1 2022-2023.

g) The Council authorised the payments below.

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk’s Salary (July)	Sharon Smith	£244.80	LGA 1972 s.112

Clerk's Salary (August)	Sharon Smith	£244.80	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Expenses	Sharon Smith	£16.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Internal Audit Fee	Suffolk Association of Local Councils	£193.20	LGA 1972 s.111
HSBC	Bank Charges	£10.00	LGA 1972 s.111

## 11. Correspondence

The Council reviewed the correspondence received between 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

## 12. Next Meeting

The Council agreed the date and time of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8:00 pm.

# MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL AS SOLE TRUSTEE OF THE MIDDLETON RECREATION GROUND TRUST

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1. The latest monthly play equipment safety inspection report was not available.
2. Cllr. Chris Reynolds reported that the flooring in the pavilion toilets has been fitted. A slightly different type of flooring to the type ordered was supplied therefore Cllr. Reynolds is negotiating a discount to the cost.
3. The Clerk summarised the report from the recent meeting of the Recreation Ground Working Group.  
**ACTION: Clerk to add purchase of two new picnic tables to next month's agenda for consideration.**
4. The following payments were authorised:

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Electricity	British Gas	£28.52	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19
Monthly Play Equipment Inspection	Eastern Play Services Ltd	£132.00	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19

The meeting closed at 8:20 pm.