

## **MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7pm AT THE VILLAGE HALL

### **1 Attendance and Apologies**

#### **Attendees:**

Cllr Julian Cusack – Chair  
Cllr Graham Lacey  
Cllr Lesley Taylor  
Cllr Charles Macdowell  
Cllr Michele Kendall

Cllr Katheryn Rowe  
Cllr Giles Piercy  
Cllr Steve Thorpe  
Cllr Chris Reynolds  
District Cllr Katie Graham

#### **In attendance:**

Rachael Salcombe – Parish Clerk  
One member of the public

#### **Apologies: No apologies**

### **2 Councillors' Declarations of Interest. None.**

### **3 Public Forum**

- a) A member of the public presented the council with an invitation to attend the Air Cadets presentation evening, taking place in Leiston on Friday 24 November. Cllr Macdowell has kindly accepted the invitation on behalf of the PC.

Regarding the recent flooding, it was reported, by the member of public, that Fordley Road has always flooded and that worse conditions have been seen prior to recent events. Furthermore, cleaning ditches by the Environment Agency (predecessors to the Internal Drainage Board) was personally unhelpful and that he would prefer his land to flood as the clearing of ditches leads to an increase in water speed and thus loss of land. It was further commented that the pipe running beneath the B1122 is the reason why nothing could be done, about flooding, in the past. It was agreed that professional advice needs to be sought regarding these matters.

- b) County Councillor report. None.
- c) District Councillor Katie Graham was welcomed to the meeting. It was confirmed that the Leader's Monthly Bulletin and Parish Report had been received and circulated.

Flooding. Cllr Graham requested feedback regarding the recent storms and subsequent flooding. Cllr Lacey gave an account of Fordley Road; seven stranded cars, one of which ended up in the ditch and one left for over a week before being recovered. Cllr Lacey advised that he has opened up/cleared the roadside grips (dug out verges adjacent to the road). The flooding has made evident (again) a lack of maintenance; an issue previously raised with Highways but with no response to date. It was agreed that this matter does need addressing. Cllr Cusack visited The Mill House property, following the storm, which suffered extensive flooding in the back garden and fields, and it was noted that the ditch was full of debris. It was also noted that the Causeway was surprisingly not flooded, and that water was flowing fast and freely.

The resident of Mill House pays a drainage rate to the Internal Drainage Board, and it was agreed that the IDB are the appropriate people to speak with regarding responsibility for this waterway, but it is unknown whether they are responsibility for any other waterways in the area. Cllr Cusack reported that, as far as he is aware, there was no damage to homes in the village, but that some gardens (backing onto the main

river) flooded at a higher level than normal (these gardens are part of the flood plain). Cllr Lacey provided Cllr Graham with photographs of the flooding in Fordley Road.

Cllr Graham confirmed that she will feed back this information and advised that there is government relief for homes and businesses effected. The council were further advised that ESC would like to be better prepared for such events in the future. To this end ESC are urging town and parish councils to put plans forward in preparation for storm events. She enquired whether we would want to do this and, if so, whether we need any help. Cllr Cusack advised that the process of creating an emergency plan was started five years ago but did not get finished. Cllr Graham confirmed that necessary training will be provided by the council. In addition, two places will be made available to each town/parish council for rest centre training on 23 November at East Suffolk House, Melton.

Sealink. Although the parish is not directly affected by Sealink, it is affected by Lionlink and it was agreed that both projects should be recognised by each other thereby creating a more coherent consultation process. Cllr Macdowell highlighted this issue by reporting that the Lionlink consultation maps do not show any of the other proposed energy projects and thus give no indication of how each proposal would in any way coordinate or conflict with other projects; is there any potential for one hearing for approval and consideration rather than separately (this would help the Government to move the planning process forward faster by reviewing, considering and approving, or not, in one sitting)? Cllr Cusack has spoken to the portfolio holder for energy, councillor Tom Daly urging him to include in the SCC letter to the Secretary of State a request for the public examinations to be held jointly. Cllr Graham agreed to reinforce this message and confirmed that ESC is asking for a proper review of the offshore options and the coordinating of these two projects together, along with better coordination of the consultation processes to reduce the quantity of work and strain put on town and parish councils.

New Oil and Gas Licenses. In response to the government's decision to issue new oil and gas licenses following the King's speech, East Suffolk Council have confirmed that they will no longer accept any tenancies from companies dealing with oil and gas and that green energy companies will be put to the forefront for business opportunities. ESC will only accept business from companies dealing solely in renewable energy.

#### **4 Minutes**

a) The Council approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

b) **Matters arising.**

A donation of £500 has been made towards the Parish Newsletter.

An agreed date was reached for the B1122 Working Group meeting; Wednesday 15 November 2023.

Causeway Farm tenancy renewal. Cllr Piercy has agreed to pursue this matter regarding SCC's intentions for the farm. This is a publicly owned farm, and it was agreed that, as a village, we are entitled to a point of view. **Action: Cllr Cusack to provide Cllr Piercy with relevant correspondence to date.** (Subsequent to the meeting Cllr Cusack has provided Cllr Piercy with relevant documentation and Cllr Piercy has been in touch with Richard Smith at SCC requesting that the parish residents be involved in some way in determining the future of the farm.)

#### **5 Councillors' Reports**

a) **Village Hall.** Nothing to report.

b) **Middleton Primary School.** Nothing to report.

- c) **Energy Projects, including Sizewell C.** Cllrs Cusack and Macdowell will be attending the B1122 Working Group meeting tomorrow afternoon, with Theberton PC, SCC and Sizewell C. Plans will be shared regarding footpaths and signage. The noise mitigation process will also be raised (double glazing, to the front of buildings). Cllr Cusack previously wrote to Richard Knight regarding the noise mitigation process, and it was confirmed at the 8 Parishes meeting (19 September) that EDF would be flexible regarding the 50-metre distance from road to property requirement. Cllr Macdowell reported that the planning process, for those that qualify, is vague but believes that the onus is on the homeowners to obtain two quotes from approved providers and go through the application process personally, rather than being carried out by EDF (the deadline for submissions has passed). Additionally, there will be planning issues for listed buildings regarding equipment that may need to be attached to the buildings. It was felt that EDF should reimburse the planning fee and any relevant reports that need to be created. Advice from EDF to residents appears to be inconsistent, with no one from the company able to give a definitive answer on the process. (Cllr Macdowell has received a request from a local resident on Mill Street to take up her case.)
- d) **Highways, footpaths and trees.** Cllrs Cusack, Macdowell and Thorpe to meet for a discussion on permissive paths (mentioned in previous minutes). **Action: Cllr Macdowell to provide dates for meeting with Cllrs Cusack and Thorpe.** Cllr Cusack updated the council regarding the pothole in the Causeway (beyond the cottages) and that it is still untreated.
- e) **Middleton Moor.** Cllr Taylor is in possession of the drainage reports but has been unable to get hold of Crispin Walker and furthermore advises that since our last meeting a tree has fallen into the pond and as such needs to be added to the job list for the area. In view of the time constraints and difficulties getting hold of Crispin Walker it was agreed to consider other contractors, sympathetic to the issues. **Action: Cllr Cusack to forward Barry Day's details (known to have worked for the RSPB) to Cllr Taylor. Action: Cllr Taylor to liaise with Barry Day and/or other possible contractors.** Cllr Lacey suggested drainage contractor, Les Cotton as another option.

Cllr Taylor has been in correspondence with local resident, Jane Etheridge, who has requested a meeting with residents and the parish council. She has offered her home as a meeting place. It was agreed to attend the meeting, with the PC being represented by Cllr Cusack and/or Cllr Taylor. **Action: Cllr Taylor to advise Jane of the PC's agreement to meet.**

The dangers surrounding HGVs and the B1122 was raised again, and it was agreed to reinstate the speed camera to collect some meaningful data. **Action: Cllr Taylor to arrange.** (Subsequent to the meeting Cllr Taylor has been in touch with Paul Collins requesting assistance in setting up the speed camera and recording application so that we may extract meaningful data.)

## 6 Finance

- a) The latest financial position was received and accepted by all.
- b) Actual Vs Budget Q2 was received and accepted by all.
- c) Finance Group for 2024/25 budget. Cllrs Taylor and Piercy will join Cllr Cusack to form a finance working group to produce a budget for 24/25 and thus raise a precept based on an up-to-date inventory of the properties in the village. This process needs to be completed by the end of December; therefore, the working group meeting must take place before the December PC meeting to allow for the recommendation to be approved by all before submission. **Action: Clerk to organise a convenient date for all attendees and research supportive information regarding the procedure.**

## 7 January 2024.

The postponed Sizewell C presentation will now take place on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at the Village Hall at 7pm. Cllr Cusack is unable to chair due to a previous commitment and the meeting will be overseen by Cllr Taylor as Vice Chair.

## 8 Correspondence

- a) Advertising signs. (One double sided sign close to the highway facing west and one recruitment poster outside the entrance of Norwood House.) A village resident has written to the PC stating that the signs are inappropriate for displaying on common land and that we, as a PC, should arrange for their removal. This raised the question about which signs/posters are acceptable and which ones are not e.g., Stop Sizewell C signs and/or advertisements for village fairs and open gardens etc. Cllr Cusack reiterated previous correspondence with the proprietor of Norwood House regarding these signs, who too raised the question of all signs or no signs for fairness. There is business advertising, temporary advertising, village advertising, location of signs and size of signs to consider; how does one differentiate? Cllr Taylor reported of a personal issue whereby visitors to Norwood House mistakenly enter her driveway and suggested that existing signs need to be relocated or new signs (of the brown variety) located in a better place (this problem has been raised with and acknowledged by the owner of Norwood House. There have been no problems since). It was agreed to write to the owner and invite him to replace the temporary sign with a permanent sign giving clear directions to the property. It was agreed that a brown sign, albeit expensive, would blend into the environment nicely, although there is a question as to whether a brown sign (normally associated with tourism) can be used for this purpose. **Action: Cllr Cusack to put this request to Norwood House.**
- Fordley Road. Unsuitable for HGV signs. The initial reaction from Suffolk Highways was positive but more recent correspondence has been received advising that evidence for the need of these signs is required by way of surveys, at a cost of £615. (The PC noted that we can also provide photographic evidence.) The possibility of sharing this cost with Kelsale PC was considered and agreed. In the meantime, it was agreed to request a contribution from EDF. **Action: Cllrs Cusack and Macdowell to raise at the B1122 working group meeting to be held tomorrow (Wednesday 15 November). Action: Cllr Cusack to write to Kelsale Parish Council.**

## 9 Items for Next Agenda. None

## 10 Next Meeting

The date and time of the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

The meeting closed at 8pm.