

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2024 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 Chris Reynolds
Cllr Giles Piercy
Cllr Kathryn Rowe
Cllr Steve Thorpe

Apologies:

District Cllr Katie Graham

In attendance:

Rachael Salcombe – Parish Clerk
County Cllr Richard Smith
One member of the public

2 Councillors' Declarations of Interest. None

3 Public Forum. A member of the public enquired after the disposal of spoil from the proposed Middleton Moor pond works. Cllr Taylor advised that the spoil will be disposed of in the clay pit where it will rot down/decompose.

4 Minutes

a) The Council approved the minutes of the previous meetings held on 12 December 2023 and 9 January 2024.

b) Matters arising and Action Points.

12 December

- Cllr Cusack has written to Norwood House re: advertising signs. No reply received to date.
- 20mph speed limit request to County Cllr Richard Smith – see 5 Sizewell C below.
- Cllr Cusack reported that the use of CIL money for works to the pond may not be consistent with the aims of CIL to encourage development within the parish and it was, therefore, decided not to pursue this avenue of funding.
- The Clerk reported that research into grant possibilities was disappointing with the National Lottery Grant being the only viable option to date.
- The old PC laptop is not suitable for refurbishment, and it was agreed to ask PC Wakeup Ltd to recycle it.
Action: Clerk to contact PC Wakeup and make the request.
- The Clerk has submitted the 2024/2025 precept to ESC.
- 2024 meeting dates have been put onto the village website.

9 January

- Clerk has been unable to load Sizewell C presentation slides onto village website.
Action: Clerk to speak with HugoFox (website provider) for assistance.

Action: Clerk to upload Northern Transport Forum slides onto village website.
Action: Clerk to create a new section within the village website for Sizewell C.

7.25pm, County Councillor Richard Smith was welcomed to the meeting and shared his intentions to discuss the budget, Sizewell C and Causeway Farm.

The total net spending in the next financial year, by Suffolk County Council is £753 million, 77% of which will be allocated for social care needs. Everything else that the council is responsible for, including Highways, will be funded out of the remaining 23%. A 4.99% council tax rise is planned.

5 Sizewell C

Cllr Macdowell reported back on various Sizewell C matters.

- The Northern Transport Forum that took place on 6 February was disappointing, with the meeting being badly organised and Sizewell C representatives ill-prepared.
- We are now in the Early Years Phase (2/3 years) triggered by the DCO. An increase in traffic has been noted, without sound and vibration mitigation put into place, nor new speed limits.
- Resurfacing of the B1122 will commence in March/April, this will take place at night. Mill Street to Leiston (East) will be resurfaced. The works should include fixing of flood areas. It is understood that resurfacing will produce less traffic noise.
- Construction of the Yoxford roundabout will commence at the end of this year and will take approximately 9 months to complete. It is intended that the current junction will continue to be used alongside construction.
- Construction of the Sizewell link road will commence at the end of 2025.
- Darsham Park and Ride will be implemented at the end of the Early Years Phase, starting in 2025 and will take 12/15 months to complete.
- Procedures for dealing with traffic calming and speed measures is very slow and it is felt that Suffolk County Council need to make this a much faster process.
- The PC reiterated that a 20mph speed limit needs to be introduced through Middleton Moor. Although we have not had the speed camera in operation for long, speeding figures are high from data collected to date. A 20mph temporary speed limit has been agreed for Theberton. Cllr Smith has agreed to consider the same for Middleton, once relevant data and a traffic report professionally prepared has been received. Cllr Macdowell asked that SCC instigate the necessary process.
- Eleven properties are struggling with the mitigation scheme and Cllr Taylor is assisting residents with this process. It was confirmed that there is no end limit to residents applying for noise mitigation. The PC are challenging the use of double glazing over acoustic glass. (It was noted that mitigation was scheduled to happen three months before the Early Years Phase.)
- Surveys concerning vibration damage will be carried out prior to and after completion of Early Years. The closing date for residents on the B1122 to put themselves forward for this was the end of January.
- There are three back/rural roads in our parish that will become dead ends (stubs). These roads will be cut off by the link road and there is concern that they will attract flytipping. A request has been made to Sizewell C to provide gates to combat this potential problem. Cllr Smith advised that a legal order would need to be made before erection of gates may be carried out.
- HGV's will be issued with a tracker to ensure the use of the B1122, rather than the backroads. SZC are claiming that it is not possible to monitor speeds. The public are welcome to report speeding, although it was agreed that this will be difficult to

prove. Cllr Reynolds advised that there is technology available to monitor speed.

Action: Cllr Reynolds to furnish Cllr Macdowell with relevant information.

- Progress is being made to ensure that all Sizewell C vehicles, including private workers, are provided with an identifiable vehicle sticker (back and/or front).
- It was mentioned that Sizewell's online works tracker did not mention two major upcoming large movements. Cllr Macdowell enquired after this and was advised that the information was available on the Sizewell website under 'News'. It was further noted that the weekly notification of the wide load movements merely states Monday to Friday; no dates or times are provided.
- SZC have stated that they are working on creating a roads incident management plan for accidents and floods, based on 'Operation Herald' used at Hinkley.
- Cllr Taylor reported that the level crossing sign, damaged some time ago, due to two large vehicles meeting each other has been repaired. However, the sign has since been taken out again.
- It was noted that there is no working group to cover the Sizewell link road.
- It was agreed to continuing working with surrounding parish/town councils.
- Acknowledgement was made of the mental health impact.
- It was agreed that the administration of meetings and forums is appalling and that the interface between local committees, district and county councils and Sizewell C is poor and badly managed.

6 Councillors Reports

- a) Village Hall. Cllr Lacey will be attending a meeting on Monday 19 January 2024.
- b) Middleton Primary School. None
- c) Highways, footpaths and trees. All actions still open, but currently on hold.
- d) Middleton Moor.

- i) Pond. Cllr Cusack received a 'glowing' reference from Suffolk Wildlife Trust for Barry Day & Sons and thoroughly recommended them as the right contractors for this type of sensitive conservation work. Cllr Cusack has been in contact with the Rural Payments Agency, who act on behalf of Natural England, to give notification of the intended works and to seek confirmation that it is in line with our HLS (Higher Level Stewardship) agreement, following which a formal sign off will be given.

Action: Cllr Taylor to contact Barry Day & Sons to confirm their approval as contractor and that we are waiting for confirmation of compliance.

Cllr Lacey provided information regarding Great Crested Newts, confirming that Barry Day & Son will require a license from Natural England before carrying out the works (The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). Skilled Ecology Consultancy Ltd provided Cllr Lacey with this information and are able to deal with the licensing process, if required. Works need to be carried out in June/July.

It was agreed to pursue the National Lottery for a grant. **Action: Clerk to begin the application process.**

- ii) Meeting with Jane Etheridge. **Action: Cllr Cusack to liaise and advise PC.**
- iii) Speed camera data feedback. See 5 Sizewell C.
- iv) Advertising Signs – see 4b Matters Arising.

Cllr Taylor raised the problem of verge damage through Middleton Moor, caused by the increase in traffic, rat running and wet weather. The question was raised whether there is some form of protection that can be put in place. Several options were discussed; however, it was noted that the first metre (give or take) of land is council owned and we would, therefore, be unable to do anything to the verge. The damage is a direct result of Sizewell C and it was suggested that they fund any improvements/ preventative measures needed.

e) Causeway Farm.

It was agreed by Cllr Smith that village/community views may be shared with the council via the PC. Although current policy states that the property can not be sold, in whole or in part, this can be changed. Cllr Cusack confirmed the parishes' strong desire for the land not to be developed and that it is indeed prime biodiversity land. Cllr Smith acknowledged the community interest and confirmed that he will attend our PC meeting in March with further/updated information. Cllr Piercy advised that the PC would like to get a communication out to the villagers and share their views with Cllr Smith at the March PC meeting. It was agreed, as a matter of courtesy, to make the current tenants aware of our plans.

8.15pm Cllr Smith left the meeting.

7 Finance

- a) The latest financial position was received and accepted by all.
- b) The Actual vs Budget Report for Q3 was approved.
- c) Authorisation was given for payment of i) village hall heating £10, ii) stationery £12.876 and iii) Uncontested Election fee for 2023 £67.32.

8 **Laptop.** See 4b Matters Arising.

9 **Deed of Covenant with Sizewell.** Explanatory notes were circulated, and the document signed by Cllrs Cusack and Taylor and witnessed by the Clerk. **Action: Clerk to return to solicitors Herbert Smith Freehills.**

10 **Working with other parishes on Sizewell.** Cllr Lacey reported that Kelsale PC are funding 'unsuitable for HGV signs' using CIL money. It was also reported that they would welcome the opportunity to combine funding with Middleton PC and the signage request is presented as one. **Action: Cllr Lacey to liaise with Kelsale PC and confirm our agreement to combine funds and work together.**

11 **Flooding/maintenance/Emergency Plan.** Cllr Lacey advised that he has been unable to obtain any form of assistance from either the Highways Department or the Environmental Agency, other than confirmation that there is no money available. A question was raised as to whether the PC should consider commissioning a survey of the drainage challenges within the parish, the results of which may encourage the better management of water coming off farmland. It was considered beneficial for the PC to understand where the problem areas are. The PC already have photographic evidence to support the problems. **Action: Cllr Lacey to seek initial advice/costs from relevant professionals.**

12 **Correspondence.**

Cllr Graham, who was unable to attend the meeting, has confirmed with Cllr Cusack that she will get the responses to questions raised by Cllr Taylor to him via email.

An anonymous thank you letter has been received regarding the home cooked meals provided to residents this winter by Cllr Taylor. This letter will be used to support any request for future funding.

13 Items for Next Agenda. None.

14 Next Meeting.

The date and time of the next PC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 12 March 2024, at 7pm, at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.