

Report of the Parish Council for the year ended 31st March 2023

Sizewell C

The potential impact of the Sizewell C (SZC) project on the Parish has continued to take up much of our time in Parish Council meetings. The Development Consent Order (DCO) was approved by the Secretary of State on July 20, 2022, but funding for the project has not yet been secured and no final decision to proceed has yet been taken by EDF or the UK Government.

The Parish Council remains opposed to SZC but has taken part in meetings of the B1122 Working Group established under the DCO. This Group's purpose is to consider what can be done to provide relief from the impacts of construction traffic through Middleton Moor and Theberton in the 'early years' of the project before the proposed Sizewell Link Road is operational. We are also working with neighboring Parish Councils to work out how best to respond.

Planning

The Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications for land and buildings in the Parish. Middleton cum Fordley is classified as a 'Small Village' in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan which means that new housing will normally be restricted to 'Small groups of new housing and infill within Settlement Boundaries'.

The Parish Council ensures that all planning applications are considered at a duly convened meeting held in public and has normally been supportive of proposals to improve the existing housing stock.

Finances

The Parish Council receives income mainly from Council Tax, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other occasional grants. CIL is levied on all new housing developments and can only be used for improvements to local infrastructure.

During the year we also continued to receive support from East Suffolk Council to continue the operation of the Drop-in-Centre at the Village Hall.

At the end of March 2023, the Parish Council had general reserves of approximately £6,800. This is approximately 80% of the annual Council Tax received by the Council, which is at the high end of our financial planning guidelines. This gives us scope to consider environmental or infrastructure projects (subject to our limited powers) within the Parish and the Council would welcome proposals from residents.

Recreation Ground Trust

Successive generations of residents have always taken care of and valued the 'playing field' which is owned by the Recreation Ground Trust and operated by the Parish Council. The orchard planted by Middleton WI has continued to thrive. Use of the facilities for community events and private parties continues to grow. Regrettably, the wooden supports for the zip wire have reached the end of their safe life and this facility is currently closed pending a decision on its future.

Elections

There were only six nominations for the nine Parish Council places which means that all six were elected unopposed on May 4, 2023. The Council has the power to co-opt residents to fill the vacancies and would welcome applicants.

Parish Clerk

Our Clerk, Sharon Smith, resigned during the year to pursue her career elsewhere and her expertise and diligence will be missed.

**Julian Cusack, Chair Middleton cum Fordley Parish Council
May 11, 2023**