

## **MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 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 Chris Reynolds

#### **Apologies:**

Cllr Giles Piercy  
Cllr Kathryn Rowe  
Cllr Steve Thorpe  
District Cllr Katie Graham  
County Cllr Richard Smith

#### **In attendance:**

Rachael Salcombe – Parish Clerk

- 2 Councillors' Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Cusack advised of an interest in purchasing the old PC laptop (see below).

- 3 Public Forum.** None.

### **4 Minutes**

- a) The Council approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 November 2023.

- b) **Matters arising.**

Cllr Cusack provided Cllr Piercy with relevant information regarding Causeway Farm. 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.

In Cllr Piercy's absence, Cllr Macdowell updated the PC, following an informal meeting with Richard Smith, SCC. The Causeway Farm lease expires in April 2024 and SCC are happy for the parish to be involved in discussions on its future. SCC are considering several options, including 1) selling and 2) working with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The land is not suitable for arable farming, only livestock (not dairy). The land is also divided into three sections, rather than one plot. Concerns were raised at the meeting that the land and property may get sold for new build. It was agreed that research and networking must be undertaken in anticipation of an April lease termination. The PC acknowledged and welcomed the opportunity to be part of this venture.

Action for Cllrs Cusack, Thorpe and Macdowell to meet for permissive paths discussion remains open.

Cllr Taylor has been in touch with Jane Etheridge (following a request for a meeting between residents and the PC). This matter has been put on hold until the latter part of January.

Advertising Signs. Action to write to Norwood House remains open (Cllr Cusack).

Fordley Road. Unsuitable for HGV signs. See below.

## 5 Councillors' Reports

- a) **Village Hall.** Nothing to report.
- b) **Middleton Primary School.** Cllr Reynolds presented the PC with a Christmas card received from the primary school along with an invitation to attend the school Christmas play tomorrow (Wednesday 13 December) at 5.30pm and a carol service at the church on Thursday 14 December at 6pm. Cllr Reynolds offered the purchase of raffle tickets to the PC.
- c) **Energy Projects, including Sizewell C.** Cllr Macdowell is meeting with the government department responsible for Sizewell C tomorrow (Wednesday 13 December) and advised that the government now owns more of SZC than EDF. There is a review process in place to consider the double glazing / noise insulation program for residents who fell out of the 50-metre boundary limit, allowing them a second attempt at qualification. Cllr Macdowell will advise applicable residents. EDF are scheduled (not yet started) to survey every property, within a certain distance of the B1122, for vibration damage, with a re-survey taking place in two and a half years' time. Cllr Macdowell will raise both these issues again at tomorrow's meeting.

The request for a 20mph speed limit on the B1122 was raised again with Richard Smith, SCC, who was reluctant to commit but did advise of a process that is available for our request to be reviewed and a case to be made on the back of traffic data. It was agreed, at the meeting, that enforcement cameras would be needed and/or happy/sad face signs. It was previously suggested, through the 8 parishes initiative, that EDF finance this, via the police authority. Furthermore, it was agreed that traffic management in the area needs to be addressed and financed by EDF/police. Cllr Lacey advised that EDF contractors will be erecting permanent fencing on the SZC link road in early 2024. **Action: Cllr Macdowell to prepare a letter to Richard Smith reiterating the PC's request for a 20mph speed limit and to be part of the review process previously mentioned. (To be signed and issued by the Clerk).**

Following the B1122 meeting that took place on Wednesday 15 November, Cllr Cusack advised that there are four forums coming up, where we may raise further issues (e.g. not considering the road system holistically and lack of response from the County Council).

Various upcoming forums were noted for the diary. It was agreed by all that Cllr Macdowell will attend these events on behalf of MPC.

Main Site Forum - Tuesday 16 January 2024.

Northern Transport Forum - Tuesday 6 February 2024.

Annual Sizewell C Forum – Tuesday 2 April 2024.

It was reported that the government are going to invoke the DCO without finance being in place. Questions were raised over the legality of this move.

- d) **Highways, footpaths and trees.** i) burial ground, ii) no parking signs and iii) permissive paths. Issues remain open.
- e) **Middleton Moor.** Cllr Taylor met with Tim Day of Barry Day & Sons Ltd, regarding pond work. (The company have carried out work at the RSPB, Minsmere, Sizewell and Darsham marshes and Suffolk Wildlife Trust.) A quote of £5,580.00 (inc VAT) has been supplied. The works will include the dredging of the pond to its original bottom, removing reeds and fallen ash tree. Cart spoil to be taken to 'the pit' on the opposite

side of the road. Works will start in August/September of next year when water levels are at their lowest. The pond will fill naturally. Cllr Cusack reported that the company had carried out extensive groundwork at Nonsuch Farm and done a good job. Cllr Cusack has spoken with two Moor residents, and they agree that this suggested work may be the best solution. It is understood that the quote falls under the limit where the PC are obliged to seek another quote. It was agreed, by all, that the figure given is a reasonable one. Middleton Moor funds available stand at £3,800 plus CIL at £3,200 and thus the PC can afford the works with existing resources. It was advised that confirmation be sought that the PC may use CIL for this project. **Action: Clerk to make enquiries regarding use of CIL funds.** If we cannot use CIL funds, we may be able to obtain an appropriate grant. **Action: Clerk to research suitable grants available.**

It was further agreed that the PC should obtain a formal reference for Barry Day & Sons Ltd from the RSPB or Suffolk Wildlife Trust. **Action: Cllr Cusack to obtain appropriate reference.** **Action: Cllr Cusack to contact Natural England (who finance Middleton Moor) to advise them of the planned works.** **Action: Cllr Lacey to obtain a formal view from an ecologist for timings, regarding the lifecycle of newts.** Acceptance of quote provided to be given after these actions have been undertaken.

Cllr Taylor confirmed that the speed camera has been refurbished and is up and running. The camera will record for 20 days, followed by a 10-day downtime (a legal requirement). During the downtime Paul Collins will download the data (onto Cllr Taylor's laptop) and produce spread sheets for regular reports at the PC meetings.

Cllr Taylor also reported back on an incident on the B1122 where two large HGVs met, by Thatch Cottage, causing a tailback and on a separate occasion two escorted wide loads coming from Yoxford met an HGV that could not pass and subsequently demolished the electronic signs for the railway crossing.

- f) Causeway Farm. See above.

## **6 Finance**

- a) The latest financial position was received and accepted by all.
- b) Payment of £137 for the refurbishment of the old PC laptop was agreed. **Action: Clerk to arrange refurbishment and payment.**

Cllr Cusack declared an interest in purchasing the refurbished laptop. Cllr Taylor, as Vice Chair, chaired this part of the meeting and it was agreed by all that Cllr Cusack would purchase the laptop for £137.

Cllr Taylor requested a further £50 be added to the Christmas meal budget and this was agreed by all. Twelve residents are currently receiving meals and the service has received a positive response. Cllr Taylor takes this opportunity to note any well-fare issues that may need addressing.

- 7 Report from Finance Working Group, Budget for 2024/25.** The recommendation for approval of the 2024/25 budget and for the precept to be raised to £9,804 (representing a 10% increase) was agreed and accepted by all. **Action: Clerk to submit to ESC.** It was noted that the budget does not provide for a cost of living increase but it was agreed that this should be considered next year when the national settlement has been agreed. Funding currently stands at five hours per week, and it was agreed that the clerk should advise the PC if the workload increases beyond this. Cllrs Taylor and Piercy were thanked for their contribution to the Finance Working Group.

- 8 Deed of Covenant with Sizewell, signing thereof.** As part of the DCO and establishment of the B112 Working Group, the lawyers for EDF/Sizewell C produced a Deed of Covenant for MPC to sign (and a similar one for Theberton). The PC are essentially agreeing to be part of the B112 Working Group and to send a representative to the meetings. The document was executed some time ago, but subsequent to this a Deed of Variation was issued (which did not change anything of substance for MPC) with a requirement for MPC to re-execute the covenant as varied. The Clerk requested an explanatory memorandum with the documentation for signing, in order that it can be shared with councillors describing/detailing the purpose of the covenant. This request was chased up by the clerk in preparation for today's meeting, but nothing has been received to date and it was agreed to note that the covenant has not been presented for approval and we will continue to await a response.
- 9 Working with other parishes on Sizewell. Fordley Road. Unsuitable for HGV signs.** Cllr Lacey agreed to take this matter on from Cllr Cusack and will liaise with Kelsale Parish Council regarding the possibility of sharing the costs involved with providing evidence for the need of the signs.
- 10 Flooding/maintenance/Emergency Plan.** It was agreed that the PC should get an overview of flood risk problems in the parish as part of the background to emergency planning. The drainage infrastructure within the parish is complex with several agencies involved and the PC should establish responsibilities, what the maintenance program should be, along with a general understanding of the mechanics. Cllr Macdowell suggested a starting point whereby we enquire as to whether ESC/SCC are planning on providing any relevant information that could act as a starting point. It was suggested that the Environment Agency may be the first point of contact. **Action: Cllr Lacey to investigate.**
- 11 Agree 2024 meeting dates.** Agreed. **Action: Clerk to put on village website.**
- 12 Correspondence.** None.
- 13 Items for Next Agenda.** None
- 14 Next Meeting**

A special meeting to take place on Tuesday 9 January 2024, at 7pm at the Village Hall for a Sizewell C Project Presentation.

The date and time of the next PC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 13 February, at 7pm, at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.