

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2024 AT 7pm AT THE VILLAGE HALL

1 Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

Cllr Julian Cusack – Chair
Cllr Graham Lacey
Cllr Michele Kendall
Cllr Giles Piercy
Cllr Kathryn Rowe
Cllr Steve Thorpe
Cllr Lesley Taylor

Apologies:

Cllr Charles Macdowell
District Cllr Sarah Whitelock

In attendance:

Rachael Salcombe – Parish Clerk
Two members of the public

2 Councillors' Declarations of Interest. See Middleton Moor, below.

3 Public Forum. A member of the public, representing the Village Green Group, addressed the PC requesting approval to employ a grass cutter for the village green. It was agreed to pay for four cuts at £20 per cut, spread out over a reasonable period. Should more cuts be needed, it was agreed that the Village Green Group will notify the PC. Invoice and bank details to be supplied to the clerk.

The PC agreed to the reimbursement of £20 to Sue Peel for the first grass cutting of the year.

Action: Clerk to make payment.

The 'no parking' signs for the village green was raised again. The PC agreed to the purchase of six signs for the village green and three for Middleton Moor. Size 240mm x 360mm @ £14 each.

Action: Cllr Thorpe to send details to the clerk for ordering.

4 Minutes

a) The Council approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2024 and the extraordinary meeting held on 26 March 2024.

b) Matters arising and Action Points.

- An email has been issued to Cllr Whitelock re: 30mph speed limit for the B1122.
- Steve Merry, SCC has been emailed re: speed limit implementation and stub roads/fly tipping.
- The speed indicator has come to the end of its useful life and now needs replacing.
Action: Clerk to research speed indicator devices. The purchase of a speed gun was discussed, and the safe use thereof; it was agreed that this would also provide valuable data. **Action: Cllr Taylor to source.**
- The Suffolk Wildlife Trust have been contacted regarding the pond at Middleton Moor, awaiting reply.
- CIL has been sent to ESC and is on the village website.
- A donation has been made to Lighthouse Women's Aid.
- Defibrillator. The clerk reported that the current pads are unused. They will need replacing February 2025 (if not used before). The current battery will need replacing

February 2027. (Pads need renewing every two years, batteries every four years.) The clerk advised the PC of a free reminder service available through defibshop.co.uk and it was agreed to sign up to this. The clerk has sourced an Automated External Defibrillator course and will complete this in due course. **Action: Clerk to join the PC to the free reminder service.**

- The Bell Pub, Village Community Asset. The clerk has been in correspondence with both ESC and Adnams. Currently waiting to hear back from ESC, following their request to undertake further research.

5 Sizewell C

Cllr Macdowell provided the PC with an up-to-date report, summarised below.

B1122 Resurfacing. Communication from Sizewell C on this has proved inadequate, putting residents to a great deal of inconvenience.

From the Theberton Hall Farm entrance, the works have taken place in haphazard sections with no warning, and with second 'visits' to lay down a second layer of asphalt. One holiday letting cancelled after the first night, resulting in a monetary loss to the accommodation owner.

Works Tracker. Information placed by Sizewell C on their much-vaunted works tracker website has proved valueless, with vague or deceptive information. Working with Theberton PC on an almost daily basis pressuring Sizewell C to improve this has been slow. The Tracker is intended to be the main day-by-day information source for residents throughout the Sizewell C project.

Diversions. Despite stating that residents would be able to access their properties under escort throughout the works, this has been a lottery at best. One was forced to make a 20-mile diversion having been turned away twice from different checkpoints. Staff manning the checkpoints have been largely ignorant of local routes and options and have not been issued with maps.

Speed limits. We continue to lobby Suffolk County Council and Sizewell C. Even though the number of HGV movements have increased significantly, promised new speed limits including 30mph from the A12 to Leiston Abbey have not yet materialised. SCC have advised besides implementing the speed limits, they are liaising with SZC and the Suffolk Constabulary to see what can be done to encourage compliance. Whilst this is still work in progress it is likely to be a mix of measures starting with softer educational ones, such as staff induction and enforcement of speed limits for SZC HGVs to potential police enforcement by officers or mobile cameras.

Creation of a temporary 20mph zone through Middleton Moor. The PC will be applying for this, guided by SCC's existing policies and scoring process. The process will be challenging, not least because, unless in exceptional circumstances, locations will not be considered for 20mph schemes where the road is classed as A or B and/or they have existing mean speeds above 30 mph.

Stopped-up side roads (or 'Stubs'). These will be created as the new Sizewell Link Road is built and threaten to become fly-tipping 'honeypots'. SCC agree that some form of restriction is necessary but would prefer demountable lockable bollards to prevent unauthorised access and the risk of tipping or other antisocial behaviour. They would avoid using gates where they would obstruct pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders. The location will be a matter for detailed design and discussions with adjacent landowners.

Traffic Volumes. Following a request for an update on HGV and other traffic, we have been advised that a running commentary on the number of HGV movements is unavailable (outside of the process when reporting back to SCC and ESC). The number of HGV runs are reported on the ESC website

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/national-infrastructure-and-energy-projects/sizewell-c-nuclear-power-station/governance-groups/> (clarification has been requested, as the data is not visible). It was agreed that there has been an increase in the number of HGV movements, but this is well within the cap of 600.

An acknowledgement and thank you was made to Cllr MacDowell for his daily efforts regarding SZC.

Cllr Lacey is meeting with Cllr Weaver from Kelsale PC on Tuesday 16 April. (Unsuitable for HGV signs, Fordley Road and flooding issues.)

6 Councillors Reports

- a) Village Hall. No report.
- b) Middleton Primary School. No report.
- c) Highways, footpaths and trees. No report.
- d) Middleton Moor.

Substation. The replacement of the existing substation (due to aging transformers and a risk of power cuts in the area) was addressed. A Parish resident has offered land for siting the substation, which would be hidden and much less intrusive than the location proposal by UK Power Networks. Cllr Cusack has presented this offer to the surveyor, who will, in turn, liaise with his engineer colleagues for comment. If this new site is agreed upon UK Power Networks would like to purchase the land on which the substation would sit.

Pond. Cllr Cusack has been in contact with Natural England, with whom we have a higher-level stewardship agreement, they have, in turn, advised that we contact Suffolk Wildlife Trust requesting comment/advice on our options. This has been done and Cllr Cusack is awaiting a reply. Cllr Taylor has been in touch with another possible contractor, Peter Frizzle, to carry out the pond works. It is anticipated that they will complete their survey and give advice at the end of April. The Clerk advised that the grant application with the National Lottery has a shelf life of 22 May. It was agreed to amend the works start date to the end of the year (not June) and submit the application. **Action: Clerk to submit National Lottery application.** It was reiterated that the undertaking/commencement of the works is a slow process due to the nature of the job and ensuring that all requirements are met.

Cllr Cusack temporarily left the meeting and Cllr Taylor, as vice-chair, continued.

Moor Maintenance. Causeway Farm will be vacating this year, the actual tenancy coming to an end in October. For a number of years Middleton Parish Council have had an agreement in place with this farm that the Moor is cut once a year with payment as the hay crop. This arrangement has proved adequate but has not really maintained or improved the Moor in respect of ecology. At a recent Moor Management Meeting, residents voiced concerns that areas of the Moor were not attended to and requested clarification for a longer term plan. In late 2022 MPC engaged Suffolk Wildlife Trust to prepare a 10 year Management Plan for the 8 acres, including pond, that make up the Moor. This has recommended a change in the way that the grassland in particular is managed and suggests other methods to improve biodiversity whilst maintaining the habitat for the Great Crested Newts for which we receive a small grant from English Nature. They supplied a list of possible rotational maintenance which includes mowing different sections of the Moor less frequently, management of verges and hedges, coppicing and allowing buffer strips next to hedges.

It is anticipated that the value of any hay crop will be unlikely to fully cover the additional works desired and therefore there will be a regular charge to MPC. As the only revenue

received is in a small annual grant from English Nature, MPC are keen to keep such costs to a manageable figure. It was agreed that a number of possible local residents be approached who may possess the necessary land management skills and equipment to invite them to tender for the works with any hay crop as partial payment. In the interests of impartiality, it was agreed that a number of parties need to be invited, one of which may include Nonsuch Farm.

Action Point: Councillor Taylor to research and write to suitable parties.

Cllr Cusack returned and resumed the meeting.

- e) Causeway Farm. Following the meeting on 18 March, Cllrs Piercy and Thorpe and Jack Rosenthal produced a paper which was featured in the village newsletter, inviting responses; one was received questioning the recording of villager’s thoughts on the possible development of Back Road. The report will be issued to SCC tomorrow, along with an invitation to meet with County Cllr Richard Smith to discuss further. Cllrs Piercy and Thorpe and Jack were thanked for their work to date on Causeway Farm.

7 Church Access from Village Green

The quote and specification received has been scaled down from a driveway to a pathway that will accommodate a wheelchair with ease. The path size will be approximately 14m x 1.5m at a cost of £4,000. It was questioned whether funding may be sought through the SZC Community Fund or a contribution from the church. **Action: Clerk to write to the PCC for funding or a joint grant application.**

8 Finance

- a) The latest financial position was received and accepted by all.
- b) The purchase of a handheld speed gun for Middleton Moor was agreed. **Action: Cllr Taylor to source.**
- c) The following payments were authorised.

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Payroll Services 6 months to 31.3.24	SALC	£54.00	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk Expenses – ink cartridges	cartridgesave.co.uk	£155.64	LGA 1972 s.111
Clerk Overtime – March 2024	Rachael Salcombe	£272.00	LGA 1972 s.112

9 Administration

It was agreed to update the Personal Data Audit to reflect that all and any information relating to the PC is no longer kept in a filing cabinet. **Action: Clerk to update document accordingly.** To be approved at May’s meeting.

- 10 **Flooding/maintenance/Emergency Plan.** Cllr Lacey is meeting with Syntegra Group later in April to discuss the village’s flooding issues.

- 11 **Correspondence.** Dealt with above.

- 12 **Items for Next Agenda.** There will be two meetings in May. 1) Annual Parish Meeting at 6pm, where annual reports from various village organisations will be presented. **Action: Clerk to issue invites for reports** and 2) Annual Parish Council Meeting at 6.30pm where elections/re-elections shall take place.

- 13 **Next Meeting.**

The date and time of the Annual Parish meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 14 May 2024, at 6.00pm, at the Village Hall. This will be followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 8pm.