

# MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2020 AT 6:00 PM VIA ZOOM MEETINGS

## 1. Attendance and Apologies

### Attendees:

Cllr. Nigel Smith - Chair  
Cllr. Roy Dowding - Vice-Chair  
Cllr. Julian Cusack  
Cllr. Lynda Whitbread  
Cllr. Colin Whitbread  
Cllr. Graham Ingham  
Cllr. Lesley Taylor  
Cllr. Chris Reynolds  
Cllr. Steve Thorpe

### Apologies for absence:

County Cllr. Richard Smith  
District Cllr. Terry-Jill Haworth-Culf

### In attendance:

Sharon Smith - Clerk/RFO  
District Cllr. Jocelyn Bond  
Two members of the public

## 2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

## 3. Public Forum

District Cllr. Jocelyn Bond asked the Councillors to let her know if there is anything more she and Cllr. T-J Haworth-Culf can do to support them. Cllr. Nigel Smith said there are still no satisfactory answers from the District Council about sanctions against fraudulent or incompetent architects who submit inaccurate or misleading planning applications. Cllr. Bond agreed and said she had noted plans with inaccurate street scenes and misleading relationships with the environment. Cllr. Bond said she will raise these concerns with the planning department and report back.

## 4. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020 were approved as a true and accurate record. There were no matters arising.

## 5. Finance Advisory Group

Cllr. Julian Cusack tabled a draft budget for the financial year 2021/2022 for the Council's approval. The Finance Advisory Group recommend that the parish precept is increased to £8,131, which is a 25% increase on the current year's precept. For a Band D property, this is equivalent to an increase of 15p per week from 63p to 78p. The increase is necessary to meet expected expenditure over the next financial year and to rebuild the Council's reserves to allow for any necessary, unexpected expenditure. Cllr. Julian Cusack proposed the Council accepts the budget and the precept increase of 25%. Seconded by Cllr. Nigel Smith. All in favour.

**ACTION:** Clerk to request precept from East Suffolk Council and upload the budget to the website.

## 6. Planning Advisory Group and Hastoe Housing

a) The Council considered planning application DC/20/4646/FUL - Hybrid application for up to 9,500 square metres Gross External Area (GEA) to provide administration, storage, welfare and canteen facilities and a visitor centre of up to 1,000 square metres GEA. Detailed planning permission is sought for demolition of some existing structures and redevelopment to include a training centre and interim visitor centre, an outage store, lay down area, car and cycle parking, landscaping, associated infrastructure

(including utilities, plant and highway works), tree felling and other relevant works - Sizewell B Power Station Complex And Adjoining Land.

Cllr. Roy Dowding referred to his previously circulated draft response and proposed that the Council objects to the application on the grounds that the work should form part of EDF Energy's application for a Development Consent Order for Sizewell C. Seconded by Cllr. Nigel Smith. All in favour. Cllr. Jocelyn Bond said she may have an opportunity to speak at the planning meeting when the District Council considers the application and she will put forward the views of the Parish Council and vote against it.

**ACTION: Cllr. Roy Dowding to send the final response to the Clerk for submission to the planning department. Clerk to send a copy to District Cllr. Jocelyn Bond.**

b) The Council agreed there were no objections to planning application DC/20/4621/FUL - Extension and alterations - Larch House, Mill Street.

**ACTION: Clerk to inform the planning department.**

c) Cllr. Nigel Smith agreed to review the ESC Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Initial Consultation and respond if necessary.

## **7. Highways, Footpaths, Trees and Green Issues**

a) Cllr. Steve Thorpe reported that he attended a SALC training module which was very informative. As a result of this training, he identified that it would be beneficial to make himself known to residents and raise awareness of the Council areas he is responsible for. This will enable residents to raise any concerns they may have, or make their views known to him, about highways, footpaths, trees and green issues.

**ACTION: Cllr. Steve Thorpe to write an article for the newsletter.**

b) The possibility of the footpath from Rectory Road to Reckford Bridge was discussed.

**ACTION: Cllr. Nigel Smith to assess the footpath and investigate solutions.**

b) Cllr. Chris Reynolds reported that the previously identified lanes have been officially nominated for the Quiet Lanes Scheme. Cllr. Reynolds and Cllr. Julian Cusack identified sites for the signage and the OS grid references and photographs have been submitted. Cllr. Reynolds has requested that the parish is included in phase 1 of the consultations which will taken place early next year. The next step is to distribute a public notice to communicate the project locally however this may be on hold while checks are carried out to ascertain whether the plans for Sizewell C will have an impact on the Quiet Lanes project. Cllr. Reynolds said Hawthorn Lane was under review. In response to a question from Cllr. Julian Cusack as to why Sizewell C issues are being considered, Cllr. Reynolds explained that this is due to the QLS working with County Council Highways who are providing funding. It was agreed to progress the project for the nominated lanes, with the exception of Hawthorn Lane, with a view to inserting a public notice in the January village newsletter.

**ACTION: Cllr. Chris Reynolds to create a public notice flyer.**

## **8. Recreation Ground and Village Green**

a) Cllr. Julian Cusack reported that the Working Group met virtually and discussed a range of projects to improve and maintain the Recreation Ground for further consideration next year. These included replacement of the kitchen floor in the pavilion, repairing a section of rabbit fencing on the northern boundary, repairing or replacing the football goals, upgrading the CCTV system, routine repairs to the play equipment and landscaping the area behind the pavilion. Cllr. Chris Reynolds suggested that the landscaping could be carried out in conjunction with the primary school and Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

b) Cllr. Nigel Smith informed the Council that a resident is organising a communal carol singing event on the village green on the evening of 22<sup>nd</sup> December. The event will follow the government guidelines on social distancing. The Council welcomed this proposal.

## **9. Public Forum Resumed**

The Chairman of Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council, Stephen Brett, joined the meeting. The Chairman invited Mr Brett to speak. Mr Brett explained that he and Mr Nat Bacon of Theberton Hall Farm recently met with a representative from the Environment Agency to discuss the condition of the New Cut from Rackford Bridge in Middleton to the Eel's Foot Inn at Eastbridge. They walked the length of the footpath which was flooded due to the recent wet weather. The EA representative explained that their policy was not to dredge the New Cut for environmental and funding reasons but they proposed to maintain the watercourse by putting a reed cutting boat along its length every two years. The reeds will be cut to form a wavy channel to ensure the water flows. In the EA's opinion, the houses along the Minsmere River are not under any threat of flooding and there have been no incidences of flooding in the last 20 years. Cllr. Nigel Smith said the gardens were flooded in 2000. Cllr. Colin Whitbread said the trees at Reckford Bridge will prevent access for the reed cutter boat therefore the Summer Wine Group were cutting them back. Mr Brett said that, after negotiation, the EA representative concluded that some dredging needs to be carried out and he will ask his superior to conduct a site visit in January 2021 for a further assessment.

#### **10. Middleton Moor**

Cllr. Julian Cusack said there has been no progress since the last meeting.

#### **11. Summer Wine Group**

Cllr. Colin Whitbread reported that the Summer Winers had cleared three bonfires and tree planting would commence next week. Cllr. Whitbread and Cllr. Julian Cusack agreed to meet to discuss the work the Summer Winers can do on the Recreation Ground.

#### **12. Energy Projects**

a) Cllr. Roy Dowding reported that he attended the Joint Local Authorities Group meeting about the Sizewell C fifth round of public consultation. Cllr. Dowding participated and felt obliged to say that a Community Forum has not been held for over a year and this was an example of EDF's poor engagement with the community. After the meeting, he sent a message to JLAG to point out that every Town and Parish Council that took part objected to Sizewell C in one way or another, some vehemently and some with specific problems mostly related to transport. Cllr. Julian Cusack asked if the Council should consider rebutting the BBC news article 'New nuclear plant at Sizewell set for green light' which claimed that 'some residents of the surrounding picturesque and well-heeled villages' were opposed to the project due to NIMBYism. Cllr. Dowding replied that the Stop Sizewell C group had taken the editor, Simon Jacks, to task and had explained that local opposition is much more widespread than he described. The Council agreed to approve the final response to the Sizewell C public consultation by email.

**ACTION: Cllr. Roy Dowding to circulate a draft response for comments and/or approval.**

#### **13. Village Hall and Primary School**

a) Cllr. Lesley Taylor reported that initially the opening of the Drop In Centre was postponed due to the county moving into Tier 2 restrictions. However, after a careful review of the rules and the Village Hall's existing COVID-19 risk assessment, she proposed that the centre could open providing there was table service, good ventilation and people observed social distancing when not part of the same family or bubble. This approach is in accordance with cafes which are open locally. Cllr. Taylor recommended that the centre opens for at least one session before Christmas as the residents have been out of contact during November and it is an important period leading up to Christmas when people feel vulnerable and may be in need of some support or practical help. Cllr. Julian Cusack said he had confirmed that the Village Hall Management Group were happy with this approach. The Council agreed to open the Drop In Centre. Cllr. Cusack said the £500 grant had been received to support the centre and an arts and crafts competition. Cllr. Roy Dowding reported that the Village Hall had received a Local Restrictions Support Grant for £1,334 to cover lost income during the second lockdown. Cllr. Lynda Whitbread reported that the Committee Room has a new carpet.

b) Cllr. Lynda Whitbread said she was still unable to go into the primary school due to the coronavirus restrictions however she will drop in a box of biscuits and a Christmas card to both the primary school and the nursery school on behalf of the Council.

#### 14. Finance

- a) The Council noted the latest financial position.
- b) The Council authorised the payments below:

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk's Salary	Sharon Smith (December)	£218.40	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's PAYE	HMRC (December)	£6.00	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Salary	Sharon Smith (January)	£263.30	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's PAYE	HMRC (January)	£17.20	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Expenses	Sharon Smith	£19.27	LGA 1972 s.111
Pavilion Electricity	British Gas	£17.33	PHA 1936 s.87
Repairs to Play Equipment	Eastern Play Services Ltd	£84.00	PHA 1936 s.87

#### 15. Correspondence

a) The Council noted the correspondence received between 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020.

**ACTION: Cllr. Graham Ingham to check whether a resident requires a 'Grandpad' from ESC.**

b) The Council postponed the decision to hold an event to help residents complete the Census 2021 form in March 2021 until nearer the time.

#### 16. Questions to the Chair/Items for Next Agenda

a) Cllr. Roy Dowding agreed to review the latest Scottish Power Renewables public consultation and to inform the Council if a response is required.

b) Cllr. Colin Whitbread and Cllr. Julian Cusack are to discuss a request to buy an additional chainsaw for use by the Summer Wine Group.

#### 17. Next Meeting

The Council confirmed the date and time of the next virtual meeting of the Council which is scheduled for Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 6:00 pm.

The meeting closed at 7:10 pm.