

# MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2022  
AT 7:00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

## 1. Attendance and Apologies

### Attendees:

Cllr. Julian Cusack – Chair  
Cllr. Roy Dowding – Vice Chair  
Cllr. Colin Whitbread  
Cllr. Lynda Whitbread  
Cllr. Chris Reynolds  
Cllr. Lesley Taylor  
Cllr. Graham Lacey

### Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Steve Thorpe – written and accepted  
Cllr. Dennis Peel  
District Cllr. Tom Daly  
District Cllr. Tony Cooper

### In attendance:

Sharon Smith - Clerk/RFO  
County Cllr. Richard Smith  
District Cllr. Russ Rainger  
5 members of the public

## 2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Roy Dowding declared an interest in item 8c.

## 3. Public Forum

a) The Chairman made the following statement – members of the public who attend and speak during the Public Forum, as is their right, are requested to address the meeting in a polite and respectful manner. Haranguing the Council or using bad language will not be tolerated and, if this is not respected, members of the public will be asked to leave or the meeting may be adjourned.

b) The Council and members of the public exchanged views about EDF's proposal to close Fordley Road if Sizewell C goes ahead.

c) County Cllr. Richard Smith reported that the Planning Inspectorate has concluded its hearings on Sizewell C but due to late items raised by EDF, not least a desalination plant, the Planning Inspectorate is not able to abide by the three month timetable to submit its report to the Secretary of State. The government is also not good at keeping to a timetable therefore Cllr. Smith expects a decision by June at the earliest. He said there is a good chance the government will approve it due to external forces such as rising energy prices. If the project is approved, Cllr. Smith said he will remain against it but his stance will change to try to get adequate mitigation for the community. Cllr. Smith asked for his praise for the excellent work done by Stop Sizewell C to be put on record.

Cllr. Smith also reported that the County Council's budget for next financial year continues to make its way through the process and the final decision will be taken in two weeks. Cllr. Smith said the proposed 2.99% increase is likely to be approved and this is the maximum the County Council can increase its precept without calling a referendum. 75% of the County Council's total budget is spent caring for the elderly, disabled and vulnerable and on safeguarding children. The County Council do not intend to cut any services this year as central government has been more generous than expected which has helped to balance the budget with only £1.5 million drawn from reserves. However Highways still has a relatively small budget of £15 million.

Cllr. Smith concluded his report by informing the Council that £3 billion of funding under the government's national 'Bus Back Better' strategy has been cut to £1.2 billion. The County Council has applied for funding of £1.7 million but the fund has been hugely oversubscribed. Cllr. Smith said some may be given the full grant, some part of the grant, and some none, so they will need to reprioritise. He hopes to hear if the funding bid has been successful by the end of the month.

d) District Cllr. Russ Rainger summarised the Ward Members' previously circulated report. People are being encouraged to report any parking issues via the District Council's website to enable parking enforcement to target problem areas. Cllr. Rainger asked the Council to respond to the Community Transport Survey for Aldeburgh, Leiston and surrounding villages. Cllr. Rainger informed the Council that the Customer Services team will be available for face-to-face community engagement at Leiston Library on Fridays.

#### **4. Minutes**

The Council approved as accurate the minutes of the meetings held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

Cllr. Graham Lacey asked for a correction to item 3a of the minutes from 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Cllr. Lacey said that he has no engineering background. His professional background is Construction, Quantity Surveying, Construction Project Management and Construction Law. He is also a Chartered Builder. The Council noted the amendment.

#### **6. Energy Projects**

a) Cllr. Roy Dowding reported that he, Cllr. Lesley Taylor and Cllr. Colin Whitbread conducted a site visit of the B1122 with Andy Mower from EDF, Steven Merry from SCC Highways, a representative from EDF's transport consultants WSP, and a representative from the District Council. Cllr. Dowding said EDF and the WSP consultant seemed amenable to suggestions about interventions for the B1122 during the Sizewell C early years' construction phase.

Sizewell Link Road - Cllr. Dowding said the current proposal to construct the SLR appears to be completely impractical. The SLR will be built initially as a haul road to take 90,000 tons of spoil from the cuttings to the main site. Cllr. Dowding said this plan will encounter difficulties, for example, with the concurrent construction of the Pretty Road bridge. The problems remain unresolved and if EDF cannot haul the spoil to the main site they will be unable to complete the construction of the SLR.

Footpaths - EDF and the WSP agreed with the Councillors' request to create a footpath in front of the properties closest to the Moor. The footpath will be a metre wide which will be taken from the highway, the highway will be moved into the layby, and a new layby will be created where the pile of earth was left when the B1122 was widened for Sizewell B. Cllr. Dowding said this will enable residents to walk safely and will improve sight lines for vehicles exiting onto the B1122. The road beyond this point towards Mill Street becomes a canyon therefore there is no potential for a footpath without creating it on private land. Cllr. Dowding said a footpath will also be created from Yoxford, across the level crossing, down to the houses in the dip. A footpath beyond this point will become difficult.

Littlemoor Road – Cllr. Dowding reported that EDF appear keen to keep Littlemoor Road open by means of a level crossroads with the SLR. No signalised pedestrian crossing, or refuge island, is proposed due to the space required for Abnormal Indivisible Loads. Cllr. Dowding suggested a Bailey Bridge could be temporarily constructed and refuge islands put in when the AILs have been delivered to site. A member of the public opposed the idea of Littlemoor Road remaining open for reasons of pedestrian safety and he opposed the suggestion of a Bailey Bridge on his land. Cllr. Dowding said the Highways representative believed strongly that Littlemoor Road should remain open and his idea of a Bailey Bridge was only a suggestion for consideration.

Mill Street – WSP said that it is not possible to remove the hump in the B1122 to the right of Mill Street. As they cannot improve visibility at this junction they may impose exit restrictions allowing vehicles to turn left but not right.

Title Road – WSP said due to the proposed exit restrictions on Mill Street, improvements will be made to Title Road to make this the primary exit from the village to the B1122.

Speed Limit – a 30 mph limit will be implemented along the B1122 from Yoxford to the main site. Cllr. Colin Whitbread asked how this will be enforced and he received the reply that the B1122 was not considered to be an accident blackspot. Cllr. Graham Lacey asked if a 30 mph speed limit could also be implemented on Hawthorn Road and Fordley Road. Cllr. Dowding said the consultants did not appear to have any parameters to speeding and they were in listening mode.

Cllr. Lesley Taylor said the Councillors attended in an observatory capacity only and were invited as a courtesy. Cllr. Taylor said the visit would merit being conducted again in the summer season, when tourist and agricultural vehicle numbers are higher, and when the trees, shrubs and hedgerow are in full leaf which affects visibility.

The Chairman advised the Council to digest this information carefully and said that the Council needs to better understand the proposals before taking a view. He said that if the DCO is approved, the Council will call a public meeting to consider these proposals, hear the residents' views, address all the issues, consult with neighbouring Parish Councils, and then make a unified push for design changes and mitigation.

b) The Council agreed to object to planning application DC/22/0078/FUL - permission for the geotechnical trails for the enabling works of the proposed Sizewell C power station – on the grounds that EDF should have determined years ago whether the site is capable of taking a twin reactor.

**ACTION: Clerk to submit objection.**

## **7. Councillors' Reports**

a) Highways/Footpaths – the Council discussed a resident's concerns about speeding on Rectory Road. The Clerk reported that permission to site the Speed Indicator Device is unlikely to be granted by Highways as their criteria states that it must not be placed in a 20 mph zone with many driveways. The Council considered other traffic calming measures such as speed humps or chicanes but it was decided in the first instance to write to the Primary School, the Nursery School and the Bell Inn to request that they ask parents and delivery drivers to moderate their behaviour and be mindful of the 20 mph speed limit. The Council again discussed siting the Speed Indicator Device on the B1125 and asked the Clerk to complete the Highways' application form.

**ACTION: Clerk to write letters and apply for B1125 SID permission.**

b) Village Hall – Cllr. Graham Lacey reported that the roof repairs were underway. The Health and Safety Executive has been notified about the asbestos and a site visit is expected. Cllr. Lacey will see the project through to completion.

c) Hastoe Housing – Cllr. Lesley Taylor reported that there are external lights in each garden which can be switched off by the householder when the houses are occupied. The lights are currently switched on for security reasons.

d) Summer Wine Group – Cllr. Colin Whitbread reported that the group will soon be clearing bullrushes from the Moor pond. The cuttings will be left at the side temporarily to dry out and allow wildlife to return to the pond. Cllr. Whitbread asked the Council for suggestions of further work the group could undertake in the parish. The Chairman suggested that they could cut the wildflower meadow at the Recreation Ground at the end of the summer.

e) Village Green/Green Issues/Trees – the ESC Treebilee free oak tree will be available for collection later this month.

## **8. Parish Matters**

a) The Council discussed a resident's concerns about difficulties for residents and visitors with restricted mobility accessing the Church from the Village Green. Cllr. Graham Lacey offered to inspect the site and to report back with suggestions at the next meeting.

**ACTION: Clerk to add to next month's agenda.**

- b) The Council noted the call, in the recent newsletter, for members of the community to form a committee to arrange an event to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- c) The Council agreed to support a resident's request to raise awareness of modern slavery in rural areas. The seriousness of the subject was noted and the resident was commended for her research. The Council noted that no information on Modern Slavery is cascaded to Parish Councils from any of the bodies involved. The Council supports the resident's view that people in rural areas should be made aware of this problem, what to look out for, how to identify at risk people, and how to report suspicions.  
**ACTION: Clerk to respond to the resident and ask to be kept up-to-date on her research.**
- d) The Council agreed to respond to the ESC Community Transport Survey and to await the County Councillor's report on possible government funding to support rural bus services.  
**ACTION: Clerk to respond to survey.**
- e) It was agreed that Future Projects will remain as a standing agenda item. Councillors can bring forward ideas at any time.

## 9. Consultations

The Council considered the ESC Community Governance Review and decided not to respond.

## 10. Finance

- a) The Council noted the latest financial position, including receipt of £0.07 of bank interest.
- b) The Clerk informed the Council that HSBC has a new schedule of charges for Community accounts and her efforts to find another bank offering free services was not successful. To avoid cheque charges and to improve efficiency, the Chairman proposed that the Council moves to online banking and allows the Clerk to authorise online payments. The Council will continue to authorise all payments at monthly meetings and will regularly scrutinise bank statements and bank reconciliations. The Council's records are also audited every financial year. All were in favour of moving to online banking.  
**ACTION: Clerk to arrange online banking and revise the Council's Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment.**
- c) The Council authorised expenditure for SALC online Councillor training.
- d) The Council noted the bank reconciliation for Quarter 3 2021-2022.
- e) The Council noted the budgeted versus actual income and expenditure for Quarter 3 2021-2022.
- f) The Council authorised the payments below:

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk's Salary	Sharon Smith	£277.05	LGA 1972 s.112
Pavilion Electricity	British Gas	£41.89	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19
Pavilion Electricity	British Gas	£46.29	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19
Bank Charges	HSBC	£21.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Hedge Cutting	BE & EF Boden & Son	£225.00	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19

## 11. Administration

- a) The Council conducted the annual review of the Model Standing Orders.
- b) The Council conducted the annual review of the Model Financial Regulations.  
**ACTION: Clerk to revise when online banking arrangements are operational.**

## 12. Correspondence

The Council reviewed the correspondence received between 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022.

## 13. Next Meeting

The Council agreed the date and time of the next meeting of the Council which is scheduled for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Village Hall.

**MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL AS SOLE TRUSTEE OF  
THE MIDDLETON RECREATION GROUND TRUST**

**1. Recreation Ground**

The Council authorised expenditure from the Trust account to replace the sign at the Recreation Ground.

**ACTION: Clerk to obtain a quotation from Leiston Press.**

The meeting closed at 8:50 pm