

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY 2026 AT 7pm AT THE VILLAGE HALL

"Please note that the Parish Council will be pleased to consider adding additional items suggested by residents please do so via the Parish Clerk on parishclerkmiddleton@gmail.com".

1 Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

Cllr Julian Cusack (8pm)
Cllr Steve Thorpe (Chair)
Cllr Charles Macdowell
Cllr Chris Reynolds
Cllr Giles Piercy
Cllr Kathryn Rowe
Cllr Michele Kendall

Apologies accepted for absence:

Cllr Ian Widginton

In attendance:

County Cllr Richard Smith
District Cllr Katie Graham
Parish Clerk
Members of the public x 3

2 Councillors' Declarations of Interest. None.

3 Public Forum. It was confirmed, upon request, that the parish council are now in receipt of the answers to the questions raised by residents to SZC at the end of last year. **Action: Clerk to arrange for submission of the document in the next parish newsletter.**

A member of the public has, again, raised the issue of i) resurfacing on the B1122 out the cottages on the Moor, ii) white lines repainted, and iii) placement of cats' eyes; all promised before Christmas and still yet to be delivered. It was noted that a pattern is emerging whereby apportionment of responsibility is directed on SZC by SCC and on SCC by SZC. The meeting was advised that SZC, generally, contracts the work, occasionally to SCC. **Action: Cllr Thorpe to seek further information from Richard Knight, SZC.**

Dist Cllr Graham reported on a recent ministerial visit to the district by Lord Vallance, Minister for Nuclear at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. East Suffolk Council has urged the Government to improve coordination and strategic oversight of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). East Suffolk Council will continue to advocate for improved coordination and collaboration between projects and developers and will keep pressing for communities affected by nationally important infrastructure to receive appropriate benefits for hosting them.

County Cllr Smith reported that SCC Highways received a 'red' rating from The Department for Transport. However, it is understood that the statistics provided were incorrect and SCC have lodged a complaint and asked for a formal retraction. A press release has been issued today by SCC giving the correct statistics.

Local government reform continues. It should be known by the end of March whether the government will approve the one unitary council option or the three. SCC have been invited by the government to give their thoughts on May elections this year regarding 'capacity matters' and whether an election would affect such. It is a government decision as to whether elections go ahead; SCC believe that if the elections go ahead there will be a period of three months where SCC will work at a sub-normal level; six weeks before and six weeks after the election. It is anticipated that SCC will hear from the government by the end of the first week in February. If elections do take

place in May, County Councillor Richard Smith, will not be seeking re-election. It was also noted that should the elections take place, electoral boundaries will change; boundaries from Saxmundham, Kelsale and Carlton will no longer go north, as they currently do, up to Blythburgh, they will go south down to Orford and will therefore not be in the same electoral area as they are presently. The boundary changes will not apply if there are no elections.

4 Minutes

a) The Council approved the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10 December 2025.

b) Matters arising and Action Points

- * Repairs to noticeboard by The Bell Inn – ongoing.
- * Precept request submitted to ESC.
- * The contractor has been instructed to carry out further works to the village path approach to the church. Note, this work is weather dependent.
- * Re-adopted documents. Anti-harrassment & Bullying Policy, Information Protection Policy and Document Retention Policy have been uploaded onto village website.
- * Moles Meadow planning appeal – The Planning Inspectorate has been advised accordingly.

5 **Causeway Farm.** County Cllr Smith provided the meeting with an update. On Monday of this week SCC secured vacant possession of the farm. A planning application for dwellings on Hastoe Field was also submitted on Monday. SCC chose not to consult MPC regarding this application, in advance, as it may have led to inappropriate discussions regarding the farm tenant. MPC are now aware of the application and SCC are happy to engage in conversation. Furthermore, it was confirmed that SCC are prepared to donate half of Hastoe Field to MPC. The meeting was provided with a contact at SCC regarding this matter and it was agreed that MPC will meet to discuss further, followed by a face-to-face meeting with SCC.

An opportunity was taken to voice MPC's disappointment at not being included in the proposal for the abovementioned planning application for 13 dwellings on Hastoe Field. To be excluded is disempowering and leaves the PC questioning its purpose. MPC's plea moving forward would be that nothing happens further, without talking to the parish council first. County Cllr Smith confirmed that officers would meet with the parish council to discuss further, and if unhappy with the outcome/response then Cllr Smith will 'step in'. In the meantime, Cllr Smith has agreed to share our thoughts with the planning officers.

6 **Sizewell C and other Energy Projects.** Following the last Northern Transport Forum, Cllr Macdowell had a meeting with SCC Highways and SZC. Three possibilities were proposed: 1) extending Westleton 30mph average speed camera to the B1122 junction and/or extending the 30mph limit to the B1122 junction. 2) Flashing speed cameras near Middleton garage, facing both ways, with pinch points in a similar location, perhaps part of the new pedestrian crossings that are going to be put in by SZC early next year? or chicanes. 3) Vehicle activated speed warning signs and additional chevrons at Yewtree Corner. Whilst chasing a response to the above, SCC were also asked about issues facing Fordley Road; 1) passing spaces, 2) 30mph speed limit, and 3) 7.5 tonne weight limit. Following a third communication with no reply, these requests were hand delivered to SCC and SZC this evening at the Main Site Forum in Leiston, being attended by Cllr Cusack on behalf of MPC. Upon Cllr's Cusack's arrival at the parish meeting, it was confirmed that the correspondence was handed over.

A joint parish council meeting took place, before Christmas, between Blythburgh, Westleton, Darsham, Walberswick, Theberton and Middleton to discuss the B1125 and problems being experienced now and those anticipated in the future. As a result of the meeting, the joint parishes are writing a letter to SCC, ESC, SZC and the police with the abovementioned recommendations. The B1125 Action Group also attended this meeting. It was reported that Darsham PC would be happy to donate towards the cost of banners that may be erected by the B1125 Action Group to

reduce the speed and volume of traffic on the B1125. MPC offered similar financial assistance, following sight of the banner.

It was confirmed that the rats now being positioned along the B1125 are there to draw attention, particularly from the press to the problems being experienced and on the back of written correspondence to SZC and SCC by residents, being ignored.

It was noted that a new policy, agreed by SCC, addresses 20mph speed limits in built-up areas and that this could be advantageous to the area, following further discussions with SCC.

Cllr Cusack reported back from the MDS Forum in Leiston, held this evening. Urination in laybys - SZC will be introducing facilities at the northern park and ride and at the construction area (main site). They will also be providing appropriate signage for the laybys on the B1122, as seen on the A12. It was acknowledged that there is a problem with speeding along the B1125, and that SZC would be able and willing to invest in a speed indication device and will work with MPC to achieve this. The police acknowledged that this is an area where enforcement is needed. It was also reported that more traffic monitoring will take place in April. SCC confirmed that a response is being drafted to our three requests for Fordley Road (see above). Finally, the outstanding plans for landscaping of the SLR will also be made available.

Lionlink public information exhibitions are now scheduled; dates as follows: -

Saturday 24 January, 11am-4pm, Fromus Centre, Saxmundham IP17 1AL

Saturday 31 January, 11am-4pm, Walberswick Village Hall, IP18 6TZ

Friday 6 February, 2-7pm, High Lodge Leisure, Darsham IP17 3QT

Saturday 21 February, 11am-4pm, Westleton Village Hall IP17 3AD

Saturday 28 February, 11am-4pm, Yoxford Village Hall IP17 3HN

A member of the public thanked the parish council for their efforts to date regarding the energy projects and resulting problems.

- 7 Approval of SZC Community Fund contract.** MPC have been successful in securing a £120,000 grant for the recreation ground. The contract has been received and shared amongst the councillors. A 30% increase in the use of the recreation ground has been predicted. It is the aim of the parish council that the pavilion will be running at a surplus by the end of the grant period and that the changes/additions made will benefit the wellbeing of the residents. Surveys will take place before, during and after the grant period to demonstrate we have met our intentions. The PC are obliged to create a ring-fenced fund commencing year one, to pay for the replacement of equipment in the future. The newly reformed Recreation Ground Group met to discuss this further. In 25 years' time we would want to have the equivalent of £80,000 sitting in a ring-fenced fund, given the lifetime of the equipment. That would mean 1) putting aside surplus from running of the pavilion, 2) increasing the precept and 3) further grants. The PC anticipate saving £3,000 - £4,000 per year, this figure will be given to SZC. The parish council gave their approval, and it was confirmed that the contract will be signed on Thursday 15 January 2026.

It was noted that amongst the listed purchases for the recreation ground is adult fitness equipment. Since choosing this, a preferable option has become known to the Recreation Ground Group who will seek approval from SZC to purchase the better option, over that submitted on the application.

8 Emergency Planning Group – c/f

9 Councillors Reports

- a) Village Hall Management Committee. Following works at the pavilion last year, it was understood that an arrangement had been made for unwanted soil to be transported to the

village hall, at a cost of £50. The soil did not arrive. **Action: Clerk to look through accounts to establish whether payment was made.**

- b) Middleton Primary School. Nothing to report.
- c) Highways, footpaths and trees. Nothing to report.
- d) Middleton Moor Management Group. The meeting was advised that the Moor Management Group would like to participate in the meeting between MPC and Natural England regarding the pond.

10 Finance

- a) The latest financial position was received and accepted by all.
- b) The following payment was authorised.

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
NI Contributions P30 Q3	HMRC	£107.15	LGA 1972s.112

11 Planning Application. DC/25/4744/CLE. Use of land as a domestic curtilage. Brookside Lodge, Yoxford Road. MPC have no objection to this planning application. **Action: Clerk to advise ESC Planning.**

12 Village Path approach to Church update. See above.

13 Document Re-adoption. The Donation Policy has been reviewed and was re-adopted at the meeting. **Action: Clerk to upload onto village website.**

14 Correspondence. Many emails have been received from residents supporting a 20mph speed limit on the B1125, following SCC's new policy (mentioned above).

15 Items for Next Agenda. IT Policy, Assertion 10 and MPC debit card.

16 Next Meeting. Agreed for Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 7pm, at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.