

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL 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 clerk@middletonparishcouncil.gov.uk".

1 Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

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

Apologies accepted for absence:

Cllr Ian Widginton

In attendance:

Parish Clerk
Members of the public x 9

2 Councillors' Declarations of Interest. It was noted, with regards to Planning Application DC/26/0116/OUT, that Cllr Cusack lives on Back Road.

3 Public Forum. District Councillor Katie Graham reported the following.

- Suffolk's District and Borough Councils welcome the Government's decision on the future shape of local government in the county by way of three unitary authorities. Under the new arrangements, the new councils will come into operation in April 2028, with elections scheduled for next year to establish the shadow authorities responsible for shaping and overseeing the transition. Our area will be known as Central and Eastern Suffolk.
- The examination process for SeaLink closes on 5 May.
- Lionlink is still in pre-application. Consultation closed on 8 March. The next stage will be environmental surveys and data collection to inform the environmental impact assessment, which is required before the submission of a DCO.
- Landscaping will now take place at both the new Yoxford roundabout and Friday Street roundabout. The Orwell logistics park in Felixstowe is open. The green rail route is making progress with first trains operational.
- Scottish Power works are now underway, with substation and civil ground works started in early March.

4 Minutes

a) The Council approved the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11 March 2026.

b) Matters arising and Action Points

- * The purchase of a speed indicator device costs between £1,500 and £2,500, paid for by MPC. Westleton Parish Council have agreed to lend MPC their SID.
- * Planning Application DC/26/0548/TPO. At the planning meeting held on 17 March the parish council felt unable to make an informed decision regarding this application as it was unclear as to whether the owners were aware of the request (the application applicant is not the owner of the tree). Following the meeting and upon enquiry with ESC it was confirmed that the owners are aware of the application. No further submission was made to ESC by MPC.
- * The parish clerk has completed all necessary elements for becoming the primary user on the parish account. Confirmation from HSBC awaited.
- * Re-adopted documents have been uploaded onto the village website.

- * ESC Planning have been advised on application DC/26/0489/FUL.
- * Newsletter contact details supplied to resident for notifying village residents of works to their property.

5 Causeway Farm. The house is going on the market, with an option to purchase one of the fields to the north of the property. There will be an application made to build houses on the existing footprint of the barns. The part of Hastoe Field not included in the new development has been offered to the parish council. The land to the north of the causeway which goes down to the Minsmere River is marsh land and is being considered by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust for management. SCC are interested to hear views from the village residents regarding the 39-acre field around the village hall, in terms of what we would like to see happen to the land. A meeting is due to take place on 11 April amongst residents that surround the field to discuss further. It has been agreed with SCC, in principle, where footpaths will be placed on the land, but this will be dependent on what happens to the land. SCC are also in discussion with a care farm, to be located on the land, following full support of the village. Any meeting regarding this will not take place now until after the local elections. A community woodland has also been suggested for the land. It was agreed at this meeting to include Causeway Farm in the Annual Parish Meeting in May.

A MoP mentioned the underground tanks on the farm that house farmyard water and a slurry pit. It was agreed at the meeting that this needs to be raised with SCC as a potential problem. **Action: Cllr Piercy to write to SCC.**

6 Sizewell C and other Energy Projects. Once the SLR is built, the B1125 will continue to be used in a similar way as it is now. The B1122, on the other hand, will become a quiet back road, used to access the properties along it. SZC have agreed to MPC's footpath requests. There will still be a lot of work taking place on the B1122 this year, along with the level crossings in Leiston and Darsham and the park and ride. The level crossing at Lovers Lane junction is and will continue to be a major place of works for a long time, with many closures. Suffolk County Council run a website called One Connect which details closures relating to SZC works, and other works across the county.

MPC is in receipt of two emails from Fordley Road residents regarding both rat-running and the SLR. What happens between now and when the SLR opens? Fordley Road will be closed, thus putting an end to the rat running completely. Fordley Road will not reopen until the SLR is operational, at which point Fordley Road will join the SLR on the southside and the northside will be blocked off. Once the SLR is open the residents along Fordley Road will be looking for better passing places and speed limits, which MPC will continue to support. Contact was made with SCC regarding these issues, before Christmas, and for which MPC have been chasing a response since. It was agreed that Cllr Thorpe will raise again at the next SZC main site development forum, to include bringing forward the 30mph limit, adopting proper passing places and erecting 'unsuitable for HGVs' signs (all noted in February's minutes).

Speeding continues to be a problem along the B1125. SCC have confirmed that MPC must purchase their own speed indicator device. Westleton Parish Council have offered to loan MPC their SID. To insure the item (based on a value of £2,500) there would be no increase if it were fixed (infrastructure) but if it were to be moved around it would come under 'all risks' at a cost of £44 per annum. **Action: Cllr Thorpe to contact Westleton Parish Council to arrange loan of SID. Advise Clerk so that insurance may be arranged.**

7 Emergency Planning Group – c/f

8 Councillors Reports

- a) Village Hall Management Committee. Nothing to report.
- b) Middleton Primary School. Nothing to report.

- c) Highways, footpaths and trees. A large report has been received, today, from SZC regarding B1125 footpaths. This will be digested and reported upon at May's meeting.
- d) Middleton Moor Management Group. In December of last year MPC received £1,261.51 as the annual instalment under our agreement with the Rural Payments Agency, this is an increase of some £400 on the previous year. We have another three years for the agreement to run. Cllr Cusack is in receipt of a claim form for the current year which states that we are in keeping with the agreement. Permission was given to Cllr Cusack to make the claim. **Action: Cllr Cusack to complete as necessary.**

Upon enquiry, it was confirmed that attempts would be made to carry out works on the pond next winter. A MoP confirmed that the pond is neglected. It was confirmed that the previous contractors will not be returning to carry out further works. Natural England will respond to suggestions made by us in terms of pond maintenance, but they do not suggest works to be done nor indeed carry out the works. It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged with the Moor residents when and if there is anything to report regarding the pond.

9 Finance

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

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Cler Expenses	Parish Clerk	£206.53	LGA 1972 s.111
Overtime for March 12.5 hours	Parish Clerk	£241.50	LGA 1972 s.112
Village Hall Hire 25/26	Middleton Village Hall	£220.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Donation for photocopying	Middleton Village Hall	£5.00	LGA 1972 s.137
P30 NIC Q4 (ending 5.4.26)	HMRC	£98.53	LGA 1972 s.112

- 10 **Internal Controls.** This document is now up to date and was signed off at the meeting. **Action: Clerk to upload onto the village website.**

- 11 **The Bell Inn.** The pub is now in the control of Adnams and is for sale. The village has expressed an interest in acquiring the pub (as an asset of community value). Following the expression of interest, there is now a six week period in which to confirm an interest in bidding. From the date at which the pub went on the market there is a six-month period whereby Adnams are prevented from selling the pub. At the end of the six months Adnams may sell the property to whomever they want. The pub is worth around £300,000, including land. Change of use is unlikely. There is an appetite in the village for community ownership, which would require raising the funds, including running costs. The pub does run at a profit of around £30,000 per annum. **Action: Cllr Piercy to create a letter (from the Chairperson) to Adnams advising of the village's intention to put in a bid for the pub (this will not be from Middleton-cum-Fordley Parish Council).** A Community Benefit Trust will need to be established, which is a vehicle that would be ideally placed to run a pub. Those that are interested put money in and thereby own a share in the pub. Votes would be the same regardless of how many shares are owned. There is an option to exit from the scheme and retrieve funds that were put in. In terms of legal fees, it would be helpful to have a financial commitment from MPC. Middleton Community Council are prepared to offer £300 if MPC can match fund their figure. It was proposed at this meeting that MPC offer £2,000 towards the course and this was agreed.

The Bell Inn will be added to the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting in May.

12 Planning Applications

- a) DC/26/0116/OUT. Outline application (all matters reserved) – proposed outline scheme for 14 dwellings. Land off Back Road, Middleton. Views and comments were invited and the following concerns noted:

- * The area is technically countryside, outside the village boundary and in normal circumstances this application would not be supported by the local planning authority as set out in the Suffolk Coastal local plan.
- * It is thought that possible ways around this for ESC would be to say that it is an exception site, as defined in the Suffolk Coastal local plan, meaning that it is a site outside of the planning boundary of the village but is adjacent to the village and a good place for social housing. However, this application is not for social housing, but for market housing.
- * This application could be presented as a 'cluster', which are sometimes allowed in the countryside.
- * To approve this application would set a precedent for allowing building outside of the village envelope.
- * Errors were noted in the application, as follows: two miles n/e of Saxmundham – it is 6 miles. Land that cannot be farmed - this is not true; the land has not been farmed out of choice. Four miles from Woodbridge – it is 20 miles.
- * The layout is suburban in nature and not in keeping with the village.
- * It was also noted that Minsmere Rise was approved for three dwellings, when in fact seven dwellings were built. A repeat of this would be unacceptable.
- * Acorus, the council's agent who are making the application, are relying on the fact that ESC does not have enough designated residential building land to meet its obligations.
- * Residents bought properties on the understanding that a development such as this would not take place.
- * Should the development go ahead, there is no social parking.
- * Existing residents would be overlooked
- * Development would lower existing property values.

The parish council do not approve this application on the grounds that it does not comply with the current plan policy.

Residents were encouraged to make their own submissions of objection to ESC. It was also suggested that Hastoe Housing Association be encouraged to write an objection. **Action: Cllr Thorpe to write to Hastoe Housing Association accordingly.**

Dist Cllr Graham offered to contact the planning officer on this application to discuss further.

Action: Cllr Cusack to advise the clerk of wording for the objection to be submitted.

b) DC/26/0910/FUL. The provision of a rear single storey extension. 3 Minsmere Rise, Middleton. MPC support this application. **Action: Clerk to advise ESC Planning.**

c) DC/26/0754/LBC. Listed Building Consent for an oil boiler on the west wall of the property. The Stone House, The Causeway, Middleton. MPC support this application. **Action: Clerk to advise ESC Planning.**

- 13 Village Noticeboard.** Quotes have been sought.
- 14 Correspondence.** MPC are in receipt of a request for a bench to be placed on the playing field, in memory of a resident. It was agreed to offer a space for a bench to be erected, of a similar standard to the WI bench by the church. **Action: Clerk to advise accordingly.**
- 15 Items for Next Agenda.** Annual Parish Meeting - Causeway Farm, The Bell Inn and Q&A. **Action: Clerk to write to village groups for annual reports. Action: Clerk to create a piece for the newsletter to advertise.**

16 Next Meeting. Annual Parish Meeting agreed for Wednesday 13 May 2026 at 6pm, at the Village Hall, followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.