

## Midridge Parish Council

### Minutes of Council Meeting

Village Hall,  
Midridge

Monday  
19<sup>th</sup> May, 2014

Time: 7.05pm

**Present:** Cllrs W Mellors (Chairman), A Clarke, W J Clarke, P Makinson, H Howe

**In attendance:** Cllr J Clare and Cllr J Gray (DCC), plus 3 Members of the Public.

**Official:** A D Jordan (Clerk)

#### 40/14 NOTICE OF MEETING

The Notice convening the Meeting was taken as read.

#### 41/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

#### 42/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

#### 43/14 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL 2014/2015

Cllr A Clarke was proposed by Cllr W J Clarke, seconded by Cllrs P Makinson and H Howe.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr A Clarke be elected Chairwoman of the Council for the 2014/2015 Municipal Year.

#### 44/14 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF CHAIRWOMAN

**RESOLVED** that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office be signed by Cllr A Clarke and received by the Clerk.

Cllr A Clarke then took over as Chairwoman for the rest of the Council Meeting.

#### 45/15 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL 2014/2015

Cllr P Makinson was proposed by Cllr WJ Clarke, seconded by Cllr H Howe.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr P Makinson be elected Vice Chairman of the Council for the 2014/2015 Municipal Year.

#### 46/14 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF CHAIRWOMAN

**RESOLVED** that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office be signed by Cllr P Makinson and received by the Clerk.

#### 47/14 THANKS TO OUTGOING CHAIRMAN

Cllr A Clarke proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Cllr W Mellors, for the duties carried out during his term of office. Cllr J Clare noted that the Mayor

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of Great Aycliffe had expressed her thanks and appreciation for Cllr W Mellor's representation of Middridge at Great Aycliffe civic functions.

**RESOLVED** that the thanks of the Parish Council be recorded.

**48/14 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014 were signed by the Chairwoman as a true record.

**49/14 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**(i) Dog Litter Bin (25/14 i refers)**

The new Dog Litter Bin is delayed. The Council will almost certainly have to pay for this when it is delivered.

**(ii) New Path to Shildon (25/14 iv refers)**

At a recent Meeting, the Clerk to Shildon Parish Council indicated that he did not know who owned this Path, but would investigate.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk to Shildon Parish Council be contacted to determine whether he has been able to establish the ownership of this Path.

**Action:** Clerk

**(iii) DCC Christmas Tree Invoice (26/14 i refers)**

The Clerk reported that the DCC Christmas Tree Invoice had not in fact been paid, but this has since been sorted out.

**(iv) Authorised Signatories (26/14 ii refers)**

The Clerk reported that the necessary action had been taken to ensure that **ALL** five Parish Councillors are Authorised Signatories for the Council's Bank Accounts.

**(v) Millennium Hedge (27/14 i refers)**

It was noted that it is hoped to complete the work on the Millennium Hedge in the Autumn.

**(vi) Tree Management Policy (38/14 i refers)**

The Clerk reported that he had contacted the GATC Clerk (Andrew Bailey) regarding obtaining a copy of the GATC Tree Management Policy, but this was still being worked on.

**RESOLVED** that the Council develop its own Tree Management Policy, based on the DCC Tree Management Policy Document.

**Action:** Cllr H Howe & Clerk

**50/14 2013/14 ACCOUNTS**

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's provisional 2013/2014 Accounts had been inspected and approved by the Internal Auditor (Colin Gray), and Sections 1 & 2 of the Audit Commission's Annual Return had been completed on this basis.

**RESOLVED** that the Audit Commission's Annual Return Accounting Statements 2013/14 (Section 1) and Annual Governance Statement 2013/14 (Section 2) be signed by the Chairwoman and Clerk as a true record, and forwarded to the External Auditors (BDO).

**Action:** Clerk

The question of the Internal Auditor's Honorarium was discussed.

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**RESOLVED** that the Internal Auditor (Colin Gray) be paid an Honorarium of £65.

**Action:** Clerk

The question as to whether Colin Gray would be prepared to act as Internal Auditor for next year's Accounts was raised, and the Clerk stated that he was. It was noted that, due to changes in Legislation, the Council should not need to submit an Audit Commission Annual Return next year.

51/14

**GROUND'S MAINTENANCE & GENERAL REPAIRS**

**(i) War Memorial**

Cllr P Makinson reported that a Quote be of £414 had been obtained from "John the Handyman" for Cleaning and Painting the War Memorial, and repairing the Fence.

Cllr W J Clarke had established that Grants for half the cost of such Repairs were available from the War Memorials Trust (WMT). The Clerk reported that the WMT had acknowledged receipt of a completed Grant Pre-Application Form. The Council would like the work completed before 5<sup>th</sup> August (first day of WW1), but decided to delay further consideration until the next Council Meeting in July.

**(ii) Parish Paths Maintenance**

The Clerk reported that DCC Parish Paths Maintenance Budget has been approved, but this only allows for 2 Cuts per year, as opposed to 3 last year. Ian Hayman will determine the optimum time to make these Cuts.

The Modifications to the Stiles on Path 7 (Tramway) have been approved; Ian Hayman will inform the Clerk when he proposes to do the work.

It was reported that part of the East-West Section of Parish Path 2 has been ploughed up. Mr A Wilson mentioned that he might be able to find out whether the person who ploughed the field had been advised about the Parish Path by the Landowner.

**RESOLVED** that this damage to Path 2 be reported to Peter Crinion (the Rights of Way Officer).

**Action:** Clerk

**(iii) Village Green Training Course**

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk attend the forthcoming CDALC Village Greens Training Course.

**Action:** Clerk

It was noted that although the Village Green has been registered, it is not on the DCC Village Greens Register. The Clerk may be able to establish what needs to be done to rectify this on the Course.

52/14

**PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF ALLOTMENTS BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL, MIDDRIDGE**

Cllr A Clarke reported that at a recent CDALC Small Councils Meeting, other Parish Councils had mentioned difficulties in dealing with DCC with regard to the purchase of Community Assets. Cllr J Clare mentioned that Roger Goodes has been given responsibility for improving liaison between DCC and Parish Councils, and might be able to help.

Cllr W Mellors reported he had been unable to obtain an Affidavit regarding previous use of the "Paddock".

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**RESOLVED** that the Allotments and the "Paddock" be registered as Assets of Community Value under the Localism Act's Community Right to Bid Scheme.

**Action:** Clerk

**53/14 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Planning Application for modifications to 3, Meadows Edge has been approved, despite the Clerk having registered the Parish Council's objections. No other Planning Applications received.

**54/14 CHILDREN'S' PLAY AREA**

It was reported that youths had been seen interfering with the Climbing Frame, and a subsequent inspection revealed that the "Vertical Corkscrew" was rotating; it was established with the Manufacturers (Kompan) that this should be fixed. Kompan recommended we contact Active Playground Maintenance Ltd., who are their preferred agents for Repairs and Maintenance of their equipment, in our area. An inspection by Active Playground Maintenance Ltd. was organised, which confirmed this problem, but also found a number of problems with other items of Play Area equipment; a Quotation of £758 for the necessary repairs was provided.

**RESOLVED** that the Quotation from Active Playground Maintenance Ltd. for repairs to the Play Area equipment be accepted.

**Action:** Clerk

Active Playground Maintenance Ltd. also provided a Quotation of £75 for an Annual Maintenance Inspection, which is considerably less than the Inspection Contract price of £260.12 included in the Zurich Mutual Insurance Policy. It was noted that the Active Playground Maintenance Ltd. Inspection found a number of problems not identified in last year's Zurich Mutual Inspection, which arguably should have been. However, it was also noted that this year's Zurich Mutual Policy Premium was overdue for payment, and it was not clear whether their Inspection Contract was an essential part of their Insurance cover.

**RESOLVED** that this year's Zurich Mutual Insurance Policy Premium be paid, but that the possibility of using Active Playground Maintenance Ltd. for subsequent Annual Maintenance Inspections be investigated.

**Action:** Clerk

It was also suggested that it may be worth considering Aviva or AON as alternative Insurance Providers to Zurich Mutual in future.

**55/14 C35 NEWTON AYCLIFFE TO SHILDON ROAD-TRAFFIC CALMING**

Only 3 of DCC's Speed Matrices are currently working, due to vandalism. Another 16 are to be ordered, but it is likely to be July or August before these are available.

The Training for the Community Police in the use of Speed Guns has been delayed.

An Application for a Grant from Durham's Police and Crime Commissioner for a Speed Gun, and training in its use, has been acknowledged.

**56/14 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Following a Meeting with DCC, the Parish Council submitted a new Application for the whole of Middridge Parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area, a necessary first step in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. Details of this Application are now on display in the Village Notice Boards, and an edition of the 'Middridge Mercury' has been circulated; these provide a link to the DCC Website,

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where Comments may be registered. DCC have circulated details of the Application to local Councils and DCC Councillors, but it was noted that the Email from DCC confirming this refers to the wrong local Councils.

**RESOLVED** that DCC be contacted to ensure that the appropriate local Councils and DCC Councillors are notified of the Neighbourhood Area Application.

**Action:** Clerk

It was decided that Cllr W Mellors should continue as Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party. He intends to circulate a new version of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan shortly. It was mentioned that some Villagers might be willing to join the Working Party.

57/14

**GATC COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

DCC have informed the Parish Council by letter that they are not prepared to progress Great Aycliffe Town Council's (GATC) Community Governance Review request to take over the Eldon Whins area of Middridge Parish, until a valid Petition signed by at least 10% (2088) of the GATC Electors has been received.

The Newton News has reported that a group of GATC Councillors are actively working to raise such a Petition, details of which can be found on the GATC Website; it was noted that the area of the proposed GATC takeover is much larger than was previously understood. The Newton News also requested a Statement from the Parish Council, and a suitable Draft was agreed by Councillors.

**RESOLVED** that the agreed Statement be sent to the Newton News.

**Action:** Clerk

It was suggested that concerned Middridge Residents need to make their views known to the Newton News over the next few weeks.

It was noted that the DCC Letter states that they are prepared to arrange a Meeting with the Council to discuss how the Community Governance Review process works, how the Parish Council can be involved, and what would be the most effective way of opposing the GATC Proposal, after a valid Petition has been accepted.

58/14

**WEBSITE**

The situation with regard to Council paying for Website Hosting of the Village Website is still unclear, and the Clerk is continuing to investigate.

It was also agreed that the Newton News Press Statement, and the notice regarding the Neighbourhood Area Application, should be placed on the Village Website.

59/14

**VILLAGE FETE**

requesting A Letter has been received from the Middridge Village Association (MVA) that they be allowed to use the Village Green for the Annual Village Fête.

**RESOLVED** that permission be given for MVA to use the Village Green for the Annual Village Fête.

**Action:** Clerk

The question of the customary Donation for a Fête Raffle Prize was also discussed.

**RESOLVED** that a Donation of £40 for a Fête Raffle Prize be made.

**Action:** Clerk

**60/14 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Councillors considered a Schedule of Accounts for Payment.

**RESOLVED** that the following Accounts be approved for payment:-

JWS Powerwash	Bus Shelter Cleaning	£ 36.00
Zurich Municipal	Insurance	£ 879.24
Middridge Village Assoc..	Hall Rendering Grant	£ 1500.00
Middridge Village Assoc..	Raffle Prize	£ 40.00
Colin Gray	Auditors Honorarium	£ 65.00
CDALC	2014-15 Subscription	£ 58.39
nPower	Electricity for Xmas Tree Lights	£ 0.22
Alan Jordan	Clerk Wages (Jan-Mar 2014)	£ 210.00
HMRC	Tax Liability (Jan-Mar 2014)	£ 140.00

**61/14 GAMP - AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIP – FEEDBACK**

The last GAMP Forum Meeting voted that its future Priorities should be:-

- i. Activities for Young People.
- ii. Support to Community and Voluntary Sector including Older People.
- iii. Employment, Enterprise, Education and Training.

**62/14 GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

Nothing to report.

**63/14 ADDITIONAL ITEMS****(i) Dispensations**

The question as to whether Dispensations should be an Item on the Agenda was briefly considered, but it was decided that no change was necessary.

**64/14 NEXT MEETING**

Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at 6.45pm.

Chairwoman \_\_\_\_\_