MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 9 JULY 2024 AT 7pm AT THE VILLAGE HALL

"Please note that the Parish Council will be pleased to consider adding additional items suggested by residents to future agendas. If you would like to make such a request or contact the Parish Council on any other matter, please do so via the Parish Clerk on parishclerkmiddleton@gmail.com".

1 Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:
Cllr Julian Cusack
Cllr Lesley Taylor
Cllr Graham Lacey
Cllr Giles Piercy
Cllr Kathryn Rowe
Cllr Charles Macdowell
Cllr Michele Kendall
Cllr Steve Thorpe

Apologies:
Cllr Chris Reynolds

In attendance:
Rachael Salcombe – Parish Clerk
Members of the public x 16

Note Minute 6d)i) was addressed first at this meeting.

2 Councillors' Declarations of Interest. None.

3 Public Forum

A member of the public advised the PC that the entrance to the playing field, through the gate, near the pavilion, has become hazardous due to exposed matting and needs immediate attention.

It was confirmed, upon enquiry, that the Declaration of Trust 1986 relating to the village hall is still current and legally binding (the document includes that three MPC representatives should attend village hall meetings). It was reported that the village hall committee is dwindling and in need of assistance. Cllrs Thorpe, Rowe and Kendall offered to attend the village hall meetings, held four times a year. The next meeting is in September.

4 Minutes

a) The Council approved the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11 June 2024.

b) Matters arising and Action Points

* Removal of Stop Sizewell C signs. Middleton Moor Group advised that these have been removed because they had become unsightly.
* Flowerpots behind water pump. Ongoing.
* Information regarding the Well Minds East Suffolk publication have been put on the village website.
* SZC wide load communications are now accessible on the village website.
* Nonsuch Farm provided a quote for a 5-year fixed contract (retracted at this meeting).
* Advertisement placed in village newsletter for volunteers to cut the village green.
* Internal Audit Report, AGAR and Exercise of public rights dates put on village website

* Certificate of Exemption sent to the External Auditor.
* Information Protection Policy updated.
* Clerk has been provided with an image showing The Bell Inn boundaries and this has been forwarded to ESC.
* Clerk has been supplied with possible contractors to carry out works to village path approach to church.
* Clerk has written to SCC Highways, following a request from a village resident, regarding poor/ambiguous/out of date and obscured road signs.
* Clerk has written to SCC Highways, requesting that warning be given for road closures in the village.
* c/f Cllr Cusack to make enquiries with the Summer Winers regarding annual donation and possible volunteer(s) for village green grass cutting.

5 Sizewell C

Cllr Macdowell reminded the meeting of the upcoming Main Site Forum (16/7/24) and the Northern Transport Forum (7/8/24). Each Parish is entitled to ask two questions at the Main Site Forum, and these were agreed, as follows: 1) What enforcement measures, in detail, are currently being undertaken to enforce the 30-mph speed limit on the B1122, and with what results? 2) How can the promised average speed camera system for the B1122 be accelerated so that it is in force significantly earlier than a full year after the start of the 'Early Years' phase?

The issue of wide load notifications was raised again; are these helpful, given that they are supplied with such short notice and often not necessarily a wide load? A member of the public advised the PC that notifications are provided on the SCC Highways Facebook page a week in advance and that this link is a better option than the SZC website.

The average speed cameras will not be in until the end of the year. It was agreed that driving along the B1122 can be intimidating for drivers, especially those with small vehicles because of tailgating by HGVs. Impatient drivers are overtaking vehicles travelling at 30mph (mostly in areas of the B1122 that have always been 30mph). Blue SZC badges on vehicles are slow to appear and it was agreed that, ideally, they are placed on the front and back of vehicles. A double white line was suggested, to make overtaking a legal offence. A member of the public advised that unmarked police vehicles have been patrolling and booking offenders. Cllr Macdowell confirmed that drivers found to be driving badly are dealt with appropriately, highlighting an incident where a driver was asked to be removed, by SZC.

Construction of the link road starts this summer, commencing with archaeological works. The road is scheduled for completion January 2027 and the Yoxford roundabout is scheduled for completion six months prior to this date. The official start date for SZC was January 2024 (the early years).

Sealink. Cllrs Cusack and Macdowell will be attending virtual PC briefings. Other Councillors are welcome to attend. Sealink is not planned to come through Middleton village, however, Lionlink is.

It was agreed that a member of the PC attend the SZC Community Fund Meet the Funder Event.

6 Councillors Reports

a) Village Hall. Cllr Lacey apologised for sparce attendance at the village hall meetings (and advised that he has been the representative for one year only).
b) Middleton Primary School. No report.
c) Highways, footpaths and trees. No report.
d) Middleton Moor.

Substation. UK Power Networks have rejected the location of the substation proposed by the PC, advising that unless they are able to place it on the Moor in line with their original request, they will not place it at all.

Pond and Moor Maintenance. Cllr Cusack advised the meeting that Nonsuch Farm have withdrawn their expression of interest in the Moor, consequently allowing him to take the matter 'back' as Chair of the PC. Cllr Taylor was thanked for the work she had done, to date, as Vice-Chair.

A brief back story was provided detailing PC efforts (see previous minutes) to ensure that the pond is returned to its original condition and that the Moor is managed in a sympathetic and appropriate manner, following the end of Causeway Farm's involvement. An opportunity was then given to the public to voice their thoughts and concerns regarding the moor and pond, following which it was agreed that the Moor Management Group will continue to manage the Moor.

Pond work will be carried out, as scheduled, by Peter Frizzle, an experienced conservation contractor. The work will fit in with the GCN lifecycle. Notice will be given to Cllr Taylor when works commence. This will be the first of annual maintenance works.

The PC's bid for National Lottery Funds was unsuccessful.

Members of the Middleton Moor Group voiced their disappointment at the lack of representation of the MPC at their meetings. The same was said of the Middleton Moor Group attending MPC meetings.

Members of the public were reminded that the PC meetings are always open to the public, and that minutes of the meetings are available both online and in the parish newsletter, thus keeping residents informed and up to date.

e) Causeway Farm. Our understanding (to be confirmed by Suffolk Couty Council) is that the farm is to be lotted up with the likely sale of farm buildings and different plots of land. The process will, we hope, involve Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Recommendations will soon be made by Suffolk County Council (SCC) officers to elected members. They will then update the PC with their proposed plans. The expectation is that this will happen within the next 2/3 weeks.

The PC would like to take ownership of Hastoe Field for rewilding and picnic spots, although there are no clear plans to date. Cllr Cusack advised that there is a possibility of the housing development on Hastoe Road being extended, acknowledging mixed feelings amongst village residents.

7 Finance

a) The latest financial position was received and accepted by all.

b) Cllr Taylor advised that the existing speed camera has been re-erected on the B1122. It still works, in that it indicates speed, however, it does not collect data. It was agreed that this is acceptable because of the average speed cameras scheduled to be erected along the B1122. The possibility of a speed camera along the B1125 was mentioned again, although questions were raised as to whether a location along this road would meet specification and if not, the purchase would be a waste of funds. It was agreed not to upgrade the existing speed camera or to purchase a new one. Cllr Taylor to provide Cllr Thorpe with the handheld speed gun with a view to collecting data along the B1125.

c) The following payments were authorised.

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Data Protection Registration Certificate	ICO	£35	LGA 1972 s. 142
Norton Virus Protection Subscription Renewal	Cllr Cusack (ratify)	£89.99	LGA 1972 s. 111
P30 Q1 Income Tax	HMRC	£99	LGA 1972 s. 112
Clerk OT – June 24	Rachael Salcombe	£136	LGA 1972 s. 112
Internal Audit Service 2024	SALC	£212.40	LGA 1972 s. 111

8 Village Path approach to Church

It was agreed to contact the companies supplied by Cllr Piercy to seek quotes. Action: Cllr Lacey to provide Clerk with the specification. Action: Clerk to supply specification and request a quote from the contractors.

9 Review of Asset Register

All councillors were asked to consider the Asset Register and let the Clerk know of any changes/updates before September, when the insurance comes up for renewal. Upon request, Cllr Cusack confirmed that the PC does not pay for the village hall insurance. PC insurance covers fixtures and fittings, such as play equipment and bins. The pavilion is insured separately, under a different policy. Action: All to review the Asset Register and contact Clerk with any amendments/updates.

10 Flooding/Maintenance/Emergency Plan

It was agreed that despite previous unsuccessful attempts to seek advice/assistance regarding flooding the PC need to consider an emergency strategy plan (a statutory duty of the PC). Efforts regarding this have been made in previous years but are yet to be completed. Action: Cllr Cusack to locate existing paperwork, with a view to the PC reviving the work.

11 Correspondence

It was agreed to donate £500 to the Yoxmere Fisherman. Action: Clerk to make donation.

The PC were made aware of bin collection problems experienced by a village resident, this was noted, and it was agreed that Fletchers Lane vegetation needs to be kept clear.

Cllr Rowe advised the PC of correspondence received from the existing village green volunteers, stating that they are no longer able to undertake this work. There has been no response from the advertisement in the village newsletter for volunteers to cut the grass.

The no parking signs on the green are too numerous and some are broken. Cllr Thorpe agreed to investigate replacement or repair and consolidate as appropriate to the sympathetic layout of the green. Action: Cllr Thorpe.

A member of the public referred to the large plant pots on the Moor (see Matters Arising above), advising that unless growth is kept under control, they are not worth doing.

12 Items for Next Agenda

13 Next Meeting

The date and time of the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 10 September 2024, at 7pm, at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8:40pm.