

## **MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2024 AT 7pm AT THE VILLAGE HALL

### **1 Attendance and Apologies**

#### **Attendees:**

Cllr Julian Cusack – Chair  
Cllr Graham Lacey  
Cllr Charles Macdowell  
Cllr Michele Kendall  
Cllr Giles Piercy  
Cllr Kathryn Rowe  
Cllr Steve Thorpe

#### **Apologies:**

Cllr Lesley Taylor  
Cllr Chris Reynolds

#### **In attendance:**

Rachael Salcombe – Parish Clerk  
District Cllr Sarah Whitelock  
County Cllr Richard Smith  
One member of the public

### **2 Councillors' Declarations of Interest. None**

### **3 Public Forum.**

Cllr Whitelock was thanked for the Energy Projects Update and ESC Councillor Update issued earlier today. It was reiterated that the District Council are against all energy projects proposed for the area, with current mitigation and compensation inadequate. Suffolk County Council, however, are not against the energy projects and thus causing a divide in opinion.

The confirmed Lionlink (UK/Netherlands) route runs through the parish of Middleton, into Saxmundham (location of proposed converter station site), onto Friston and west of there. The route will cross between the B1122/B1125 junction (just before Middleton Moor), representing the narrowest part of the route. It is believed that this route has been chosen because the Aldeburgh to Thorpeness route has been 'taken' by Sea Link (Suffolk/Kent) and is, therefore, effectively full. However, it is also understood that the chosen route is due to offshore conditions and the direction that Lionlink approaches the coast compared to that of Sea Link. Richard Rout of SCC wrote recently in the EADT that the council have not been provided with sufficient evidence of this.

Lionlink's first report back from consultation reflected that they should consult more and work closely with the other energy providers and yet this has not happened. Nothing has been said about how this route would work in conjunction with the Sizewell link road, which runs diagonally across it.

Unlike Sizewell, it was acknowledged that both Lionlink and Sea Link are 'faceless', providing no regular forums or monetary compensation.

Cllr Cusack confirmed that Middleton residents have raised concerns regarding Lionlink and the impact to the village.

It was noted that some of the landowners on the original route to Friston, adjacent to the substation site, were persuaded to sign non-disclosure agreements resulting in opposition being suppressed. As a result, it is felt that we, as a PC, should caution our landowners to think carefully before they enter into any agreements with Lionlink.

Cllr Cusack advised the PC that we need to prepare our representations, in readiness for the public enquiry. (This will need to include detailed research on impact.)

Cllr Whitelock reminded the council of the SZC MDSF on Tuesday 16 April. Cllr Macdowell will have submitted two pre-prepared questions and confirmed that more can be asked on the day.

The District Council are having regular meetings with SZC, which provides an opportunity to raise issues, such as the speed limit problems on Lovers Lane, which have now been resolved. (It was noted that the County Council are reluctant to reduce speed limits.) **Action: Cllr Macdowell to email Cllr Whitelock the need for a 30mph speed limit for the full length of the B1122 (as stated in the DCO).** The next meeting of the DC and SZC should be within the next couple of months and Cllr Whitelock is happy to take questions.

Cllr Whitelock left the meeting at 7.15pm.

#### **4 Minutes**

a) The Council approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 February 2024 and the extraordinary meeting held on 27 January 2024.

b) **Matters arising and Action Points.**

- The clerk has contacted PC Wakeup and request they dispose of the laptop.
- Northern Transport Forum slides are now available on the village website.
- A new section has been created on the village website for Sizewell C.
- Cllr Reynolds to furnish Cllr Macdowell with speed monitoring technology information, carried forward to next meeting.
- A meeting with Jane Etheridge has been agreed. Waiting for confirmation of date, time, and location.
- The Deed of Covenant with Sizewell has been returned to solicitors Herbert Smith Freehills.
- Advertising signs/Norwood House - no reply received to date.

7.30pm, County Councillor Richard Smith was welcomed to the meeting.

Cllr Smith spoke of Lionlink affecting Walberswick, as one of the two possible sites for landfall, the other one being north of Sizewell. Saxmundham, home of the converter station, are far from pleased with this proposal. The CC will be having a debate at its meeting next Thursday (21 March) regarding the accumulative effect of all these developments. The debate will be webcast live if anyone is interested. Cllr Smith confirmed the council's disappointment with Lionlink and their decision to remain the way that they are and that we must continue to fight.

#### **5 Sizewell C**

The B1122 will be closed for re-surfacing from 18 March to 14 April, 7pm – 6am. Particularly noisy machinery will not be used after midnight. Access will be possible for residents and an escort will be provided when and where necessary (emergency access will continue throughout). There will be one-way traffic lights during daylight hours. It is currently unknown which end of the B1122 work will commence, however, it is understood that a works tracker will be produced by the end of next week, which will then be updated daily. The PC will share these details with residents. The works will be undertaken between Mill Street junction with the B1122 to the south of Theberton. SZC were unable to confirm where traffic will be diverted when the works reach the B1122/B1125 junction and whether there will be a diversion from Westleton across to the A12, rather than the traffic being directed through Middleton.

The question was raised to SZC whether the resurfacing works will include tackling drainage issues along the B1122/25, unfortunately, this opportunity appears to have been missed by SZC. Cllr Smith agreed that this was a suitable opportunity to tackle drainage problems (budget dependant) and will investigate further with Steve Merry, SCC.

A letter was issued by SZC to 700 residents giving details of the official diversion, although it was questioned whether all village residents were issued with the notification. The official diversion is through Leiston to Saxmundham, south from Tesco's onto the A12 towards Yoxford.

The implementation of a 30mph speed limit between Yoxford and Leiston was raised again. Cllr Smith confirmed that if this requirement is in the DCO it will happen. This then raised the question, when will it happen? There is already an increase in traffic. Cllr Smith confirmed the PC should contact Steve Merry for further discussion. **Action: Cllr Macdowell to write to Steve Merry re: speed limit implementation.**

Earth moving machinery has been seen on the B1125, are these SZC vehicles? Although SZC have been asked to identify their vehicles with stickers, it is yet to happen. The B1125 is not the agreed route for these vehicles.

Cllr Macdowell raised the issue of stub roads and whether he should write to Steve Merry on this matter also. Cllr Smith agreed to this and asked that he be copied in on the correspondence. **Action: Cllr Macdowell to write to Steve Merry re: stub roads/fly tipping.**

Cllr Cusack reported, on Cllr Taylor's behalf, that she has been unable to download the second period of data for recording speeds along the B1122 and that there may be a problem with the memory bank. **Action: Cllr Taylor to investigate further.**

## 6 Councillors Reports

- a) Village Hall. Cllr Smith advised the PC that £400 has been donated to replace the external doors of the village hall.
- b) Middleton Primary School. None
- c) Highways, footpaths and trees. All actions still open, but currently on hold.  
The hedging along Littlemoor Road is scheduled to be cut to 150mm in height by EDF to allow access for archaeological works.
- d) Middleton Moor.

Pond. Barry Day & Sons Ltd are 'standing by' to carry out restoration works. However, following a response from the Rural Payments Agency advising that draining the pond should be a last resort (and if drainage is necessary an application to Natural England would need to be made), it was agreed that further advice needs to be sought before instructing the contractor. **Action: Cllr Cusack to contact Suffolk Wildlife Trust.**

It was agreed to continue with the National Lottery application for funding but to move the date back and increase the quoted figure by 10%.

It was agreed that should the PC be unsuccessful in obtaining a National Lottery grant, funds may be sought via the EDF Suffolk Community Foundation, once it is open.

- e) Causeway Farm.  
Cllr Smith confirmed that he has had discussions with colleagues about a range of options for the farm and that the council's position is that all options are open, except they must produce money. He further confirmed that a care farm would not be supported by SCC as there is already one near Beccles and the CC do not have the capital to fund one. Cllr Smith is happy to listen to the village residents and their preferences and to continue discussions following the meeting on 18 March. Cllr Smith was questioned about the SCC

policy stating that they actively endorse care farm initiatives, to which Cllr Smith replied that the finance is not there, there is already a care farm in the area and that we do not necessarily need more. The member of the public stated that the Beccles care farm comes under Norfolk County Council, to which Cllr Smith agreed, stating that SCC contract to send several people there. The member of public also shared that it is his understanding that the Norfolk County Council tenant provided much of the investment for the Beccles care farm.

Cllr Smith confirmed that he would be totally against having all or part of the farm used for new build, although he would be happy with a small area of social housing. It was reiterated that SCC have no plans to build on the land. When asked what Cllr Smith thought capital generating might be, he advised that they (SCC) need to test the market.

Cllr Smith reiterated that, although SCC policy is against selling off land, they do 'chip' away at it for social housing. The farmhouse and associated barns could have some beneficial use, with the land being let separately.

When asked about maintaining the land after the tenant vacates in October of this year, Cllr Smith advised that he assumed it would be left during the winter months and it is hoped that by Spring there will be vacant possession and the land re-let.

Cllr Smith left the meeting at 7.55pm.

## 7 Finance

- a) The latest financial position was received and accepted by all.
- b) The Community Infrastructure Levy Statement for 23/24 was approved by all and signed by the Chair and Clerk. **Action: Clerk to send to ESC and put on village website.**
- c) It was agreed to donate £500 to Lighthouse Women's Aid. **Action: Clerk to make the donation from PC funds.**
- d) It was agreed to purchase new defibrillator pads. **Action: Clerk to order new pads and investigate defibrillator training.**
- e) The following payments were authorised.

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk Expenses	Rachael Salcombe	£224.61	LGA 1972 s.111
Clerk Overtime for January & February 2024	Rachael Salcombe	£360.00	LGA 1972 s.112
Defibrillator Pads	Active Med Supplies	£76.74	LGA 1972 s.111

The question of whether the PC should adopt a Donation Policy was raised and agreed. To be actioned later in the year, when considering the next budget.

## 8 Administration

The following documents were re-adopted by the PC.

- a) Model Standing Orders
- b) Financial Regulations
- c) Internal Controls
- d) Code of Conduct
- e) Risk Assessment
- f) Insurance Review
- g) Asset Register

It was agreed to review the Risk Assessment as an agenda item in June (add flood risk/drainage issues).

It was agreed that values need to be updated on property owned by the PC. To be completed in time for the next insurance renewal (September '24).

- 9 Working with other parishes on Sizewell.** Cllr Lacey has spoken with Cllr Traci Weaver from Kelsale PC and both have agreed to meet to discuss i) the provision of unsuitable for HGV signs for either end of Fordley Road and ii) flooding problems.
- 10 Flooding/maintenance/Emergency Plan.** Cllr Lacey has spoken with both Mason, Navarro Pledge and Price & Myers, large structural engineering companies with suitable equipment for drainage/water management, however the fees are considered too high. Cllr Lacey has sourced a company that work on a smaller scale and therefore more suitable for our requirements. Currently awaiting information on costs.
- 11 Correspondence.** Nigel Smith, previous Chair to the PC, has made contact to advise that the Bell Pub, a village asset, may need to be re-registered/renewed. **Action: Clerk to investigate further and renew.**
- 12 Items for Next Agenda.** None.
- 13 Next Meeting.**

The date and time of the next PC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 9 April 2024, at 7pm, at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.