

Report of the Parish Council for the year ended 31st March 2022

Sizewell C

The potential impact of the Sizewell C project on the Parish has taken up much of our time in Parish Council meetings and at times the debates have been somewhat heated. This is only to be expected given the prospect of construction traffic travelling through Middleton Moor in the early years and the simultaneous construction of the Sizewell Link Road (SLR) through open countryside in the south of the Parish.

A decision on approval of the Development Consent Order (DCO) is expected from the Secretary of State on May 25, 2022. If, as widely expected, the DCO is approved, the Parish Council plans to hold a public meeting in the Village Hall to debate the implications for our area. We will also continue to work with neighbouring Parish Councils to work out how best to respond.

Planning

The Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications for land and buildings in the Parish. Middleton cum Fordley is classified as a 'Small Village' in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan which means that new housing will normally be restricted to 'Small groups of new housing and infill within Settlement Boundaries'. The only significant exception to this is the development by Hastoe Housing of affordable housing on what is now known as Roke Drive. This was supported by the Parish Council and we were pleased to welcome the new residents to the village.

The Parish Council ensures that all planning applications are considered at a duly convened meeting held in public. In the last financial year, we considered planning applications in respect of 10 properties. In each case we either recorded our support or made no objection.

Finances

The Parish Council receives income mainly from Council Tax, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other occasional grants. CIL is levied on all new housing developments and can only be used for improvements to local infrastructure.

During the year we also received a grant of £500 from East Suffolk Council to continue the operation of the Drop-in-Centre at the Village Hall. This has been suspended for the summer months but may resume from November onwards, subject to attendance.

At the end of March 2022, the Parish Council had general reserves of approximately £3,900. This is approximately 50% of the annual Council Tax received by the Council, which is in line with our financial planning guidelines. In the current year we expect to receive £8,270 from Council Tax (up 2%) and we have a budget to spend about £8,000 including £2,000 allocated for special projects one of which is to improve access to the green space on Title Road known as the Burial Ground.

Elections

Parish Council elections will be held in May 2023 when all the current Councillors will stand down and, if they choose, stand for re-election. If you think you might be interested in standing, please do come and talk to us. We welcome new blood and training can be provided if necessary.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to my fellow Councillors, our brilliant clerk Sharon Smith and all who have volunteered their time and expertise in service of the community over the last year.

**Julian Cusack, Chair Middleton cum Fordley Parish Council
May 3rd, 2022**