

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14th DECEMBER 2021
AT 7:00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

Cllr. Julian Cusack – Chair
Cllr. Roy Dowding – Vice-Chair
Cllr. Lesley Taylor
Cllr. Lynda Whitbread

In attendance:

Sharon Smith - Clerk/RFO
District Cllr. Tom Daly
10 members of the public

Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Dennis Peel – written and accepted
Cllr. Chris Reynolds – written and accepted
Cllr. Colin Whitbread – written and accepted
Cllr. Graham Lacey – written and accepted
Cllr. Steve Thorpe – written and accepted
County Cllr. Richard Smith
District Cllr. Russ Rainger
District Cllr. Tony Cooper

2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Public Forum

a) A resident asked the Chairman for an update on meetings with EDF and SCC Highways about transport matters. The Chairman explained that he and Cllr. Lacey eventually met online with EDF and SCC Highways on 7th December 2021. The Chairman summarised the following matters which were discussed at the meeting:

1. Mitigation measures for the B1122 through Middleton Moor during the 'early years'.
2. B1122 configuration after the SLR comes into use.
3. Footpath crossings of the SLR including signage and protection for pedestrians.
4. Connectivity vs rat-running risk along Fordley Road, including connection to the SLR.
5. Landscaping along the SLR, including the attenuation ponds.
6. Engagement with residents and landowners in Hawthorn Road.

A resident asked for more detail about the footpaths which she uses daily to exercise her dogs and children. The Chairman said there was a lack of unanimity between EDF and Highways about the footpath crossings on the SLR. Highways are in favour of central reservations but the movement of Abnormal indivisible Loads makes this impossible during most of the construction phase. The resident expressed concern about crossing the SLR. The Chairman said he shared those concerns but EDF has ruled out footbridges. Highways said they would consider footbridges but they would be visually intrusive. The resident suggested that pedestrian underpasses could be provided similar to those under the A14. The Chairman replied that EDF said this is not possible but the SLR has not yet reached the final design stage. The resident asked the Chairman to force EDF to reconsider this as they gave the farmers' agricultural access when forced to do so. The Chairman replied that the Council made strong representations to the Planning Inspectorate about the lack of pedestrian access and safety and would continue to do so.

A resident asked if the Council had taken any professional advice on options for keeping Fordley Road open. The Chairman said the Council had considered this but it was well beyond the remit of the precept. He has asked EDF what provision could be made by them for financial support with this and EDF had said that they would only (where detailed design issues were still undecided) be willing to draw up detailed plans on which they would consult us. The resident asked if the Council had obtained any quotes for detailed plans and the Chairman replied no. The Chairman said that EDF's standard reply is that an underpass is not in the DCO proposals, and if they receive consent, the proposals are what they are consented to deliver.

The Chairman said that the process has been that EDF came up with proposals which were submitted for examination. The Parish Council and members of the public submitted their representations and objections. As a result, EDF made some changes to the DCO application. In Middleton these included shifting the junction of the SLR and Fordley Road slightly east. Following this, changes to the DCO were closed off. If the DCO is approved, there is a process to allow EDF to negotiate the detailed designs for the SLR with Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council. The resident asked why Cllr, Lacey has not presented a report to the Council about his representations on behalf of the parish. Cllr. Lesley Taylor replied that Cllr. Lacey was not tasked to present a report and that the Chairman is following due process and reporting the outcome of the meeting to the Council and the members of the public present. The resident asked for the Council's stance about the Fordley Road underpass. The Chairman replied that EDF said that it did not form part of its proposals and Highways said regrettably it cannot be done. The resident asked if the Council put forward that the majority of residents want Fordley Road kept open. The Chairman replied that he had done so but that in light of EDF and SCC's position on the underpass option, the only solution now is for SZC not to proceed or for the SLR not to be built on the proposed route.

The resident said he has invested a lot of money on behalf of the community drawing up plans for the underpass and he has not received any feedback from the Council. He said he spoke to Highways who gave a different response to the one reported by the Chairman. He said Highways said there were technical difficulties with delivering the underpass which was the same response they gave during the examination. The resident said the Council were not pinning down EDF and Highways and by doing so they were allowing Fordley Road to be severed. He asked the Council to represent his views strongly.

The Chairman replied that his views had been heard and that the Council were also representing the wider community, particularly the Moor residents. The resident asked if they were more important than the Fordley residents. Cllr. Taylor said it was not just the Moor residents being considered. She explained that Highways were not always supportive and that the Council has to go through them and EDF. She said the Council has little clout with either. The Chairman said he raised concerns about traffic passing closely to properties on the Moor during the early years. EDF are only now undertaking topographical surveys and boundary reviews to ascertain if a footpath can be put in. A resident asked what can they do to get their voices heard. Cllr. Dowding replied that the Fordley residents are the same as the Moor residents and all are being represented.

Cllr. Roy Dowding explained that the next trigger will happen if DCO consent is given. He said everything that has been raised at this meeting has been forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. He said the purpose of the recent meeting with EDF was to discuss how to move forward if DCO consent is given and it was not a detailed planning meeting. The Chairman said that EDF said they would come back and discuss these matters and that the Council had agreed to enter into a Deed of Covenant which obligated EDF and the Local Authorities to consult with the Council in relation to mitigations for the B1122 in the early years.

A resident asked why the parish only has a working group for the B1122 and that she did not feel represented by anyone. The Chairman said that the B1122 Action Group had not been set up by the Parish Council and also included residents of Theberton. The resident said she did not know it existed until now. Cllr. Dowding said it was advertised in the newsletter when it was formed. The resident said she knew the B1122 could be used for Sizewell C but they did not know that the SLR would be constructed and she is worried that they will become a little island in between and she will not be able to access the countryside. The Chairman replied that he shared her concerns, it was terrible for everyone, but asked what did she want from the Council. The resident replied that she wanted representation. She said the B1122 Action Group were the cause of the SLR as they did not want the traffic going down the B1122. Cllr. Dowding replied that there was an alternate view that EDF want the SLR as they need the rubble for the construction site and that the SLR was not the route the B1122 asked for as they wanted the D2. A resident said that EDF has not made any contact with them but they have made contact with the Council and the B1122 Action Group. The Chairman agreed that there has been a lack of sufficient engagement on EDF's part with residents and landowners. Cllr. Dowding said the lack of engagement was raised with the Planning Inspectorate. Another resident asked if the B1122 Action Group has a Statement of Common Ground with EDF. Cllr. Dowding replied that it has but they have disagreed on every point. The resident asked if the B1122 Action Group was mentioned in the Deed of Obligation. Cllr. Dowding said it was permitted to engage with EDF. The resident asked if the B1122 Action Group was backed by the Council.

Cllr. Dowding replied that if was not. Cllr. Dowding suggested that a group of residents could form an SLR Action Group if it wished and that it does not need to be formulated by the Council nor have a Council member on board.

A resident asked the Council to hold a public meeting to engage with the community and to find out what the residents want so that it can represent them. The Chairman agreed with this and said, if the DCO is approved, it would be sensible to call a public meeting.

A resident said that a farmer is needed on the Council. She said the Council co-opted a resident of Fordley but he is not a farmer and he does not understand the issues. Cllr. Lesley Taylor said this observation was not appropriate. She said a line needed to be drawn and agreement reached about how to move forward. She agreed that, if the DCO is approved, then there needs to be a public meeting to try to reach some common ground.

A resident said that keeping Fordley Road open was the majority view and that they do not have a voice and feel unrepresented. She said that EDF are putting in an attenuation pond and car park next to her house but that they cannot put in a footpath. The Chairman replied that he raised concerns about the attenuation ponds as he fears they will be practical and cheap and out of keeping with the landscape. A resident said the ponds will have access but the community will not. He said that we cannot wait until a decision is made and we need to make a plan now. He said EDF and Highways had raised queries about the underpass but the answers had never been considered. He said he has made a considerable investment so he could have proper representation at Council and EDF meetings. He said the only constraint to the underpass is money not engineering. He said EDF have money and we only need to get Highways to agree. The resident asked if there was a particular Councillor actively promoting the underpass option. The Chairman replied that the Council does not operate that way. The resident asked which group of Councillors is representing Fordley residents and who has contacted his consultants to discuss his underpass proposal. The Chairman responded that he had found the plans difficult to follow. The resident offered to explain the plans to the Council. The Chairman said he would take up that offer. The resident said that Cllr. Lacey was selected for his engineering background and asked if he will also attend the meeting. The Chairman replied that he could not speak for Cllr. Lacey. The resident said he has spent a great deal of money on the plans and he left the meeting. Another resident said there is a personal rift between the resident and the Council but the other residents do not want the same outcome, they only want access. She said that the Council wanted people from Fordley so that they could represent them. The Chairman replied that the Council had wanted a resident of Fordley to join the Parish Council.. and that Cllr. Lacey has involved himself with all aspects of the parish, particularly the Village Hall roof. The resident replied that Cllr. Lacey had led the discussion with EDF and Highways about Fordley Road. The Chairman agreed that he was part of the discussion.

The Chairman said that there is a fear about property blight if the DCO is approved. The Clerk explained that many residents of Theberton and Eastbridge were arranging to have their properties valued now in order to substantiate a claim for blight in the future. The Chairman said this made sense so there is documented evidence of house values rather than anecdotal evidence.

Cllr. Dowding said the meeting with Declan Burke, Director of Nuclear Projects for BEIS, was unfortunately cancelled due to illness. The intention is to reschedule the visit for early next year. The Chairman said he and Cllr. Dowding will attend the meeting which comprises site visits and a lunch at Snape. The Chairman said two representatives from Town and Parish Councils, as well as NGOs, had been invited but it was not a public meeting.

A resident said that congestion can be managed in London therefore EDF can manage congestion on small roads. He asked if the Council has consulted with other parishes about how to manage congestion. Cllr. Dowding explained that congestion will not be caused by Sizewell C traffic but by local traffic. The Chairman said the Council has consulted with Kelsale Parish Council and they share the concerns about rat-running and he had consulted with Yoxford and Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Councils. The Chairman said he would also consult with Councils on the B1125. The resident said that a shared solution is needed to prevent Sizewell C traffic rat-running. Cllr. Dowding said that Highways reply was that rat-running in one parish is only a resident of another parish trying to get home. Another resident said there was a lot of conversations about rat-running but there has only been one incidence of congestion in many

years. She said there are lots of incidents on the A12 and they do not all create rat-running in Fordley. She said EDF wants everyone to argue when all she wants is to be part of the village and it is wrong to completely sever the parish. She said the residents of Fordley Road do not feel they are being represented and she asked the Council to co-opt another resident to represent them. The Chairman replied that another resident can only be co-opted if a further vacancy arises and that another position cannot be created. The resident again raised the perceived rift between a resident and a certain Councillor. Cllr. Taylor said that this was not proper Council business and it was impossible for the Council to represent individual views as they had to represent everyone. The resident asked if the Council had put the majority view forward. The Chairman replied that it did put the majority view of the Parish Council forward in its written representations and at the Issue Specific Hearings. The resident said she did not know there had been a variation to the junction of the SLR and Fordley Road and it would have helped if this had been reported to the Parish. The Chairman replied that it was reported at this meeting and the meeting with EDF and Highways had only taken place last week.

b) District Cllr. Tom Daly said he understood how the residents felt and that he wished he could contribute more to the discussion but he could not. Cllr. Daly referred to the previously circulated monthly report from the Ward members. He reported that land agents for National Grid Ventures will be contacting local landowners early next year seeking permission to conduct ecological surveys in connection with the Nautilus Interconnector. He said the surveys do not mean that the land has been chosen for development but the implication is there.

4. Minutes

The Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2021.

5. Finance Advisory Group

a) The Council noted the report from the Finance Advisory Group and agreed to move all the Recreation Ground expenses to the Trust which has significant funds. This will enable the Council to rebuild reserves. The Council considered the draft budget for the financial year 2022/2023 as recommended by the Finance Advisory Group. It was agreed to accept the budget subject to an increase to the newsletter contribution to £450 to reflect the Council's share of the newsletter printing costs.

ACTION: Clerk to upload the budget to the website.

b) The Council agreed to set the parish precept for the financial year 2022/2023 at £8,270.22 which is an increase of £138.97 on the current year's precept. This is a charge of £40.10 per annum for a Band D property and will show as a 0% change on the Council Tax bill against the Parish element.

ACTION: Clerk to inform the District Council.

6. Planning

The Council agreed to support planning application DC/21/5337/FUL - extension to the existing dwelling. Comprising of a one and a half storey kitchen and bedroom extension to the rear, garden room to the side, and porch to the front - Valley View Cottage, Leiston Road.

ACTION: Clerk to inform the planning department.

7. Councillors' Reports

a) Drop-In Centre – Cllr. Lesley Taylor reported that the centre will be open this week and then close for the Christmas break. Cllr. Taylor was authorised to use Drop-In Centre funds to send a Christmas card and a gift to a small number of vulnerable residents. Thanks were given to Cllr. Taylor for this initiative.

b) Village Hall - Cllr. Lynda Whitbread reported that the Committee are finalising the contract to repair the roof and work is expected to begin at the end of January/early February. Thanks were given to Cllr. Graham Lacey for his assistance with negotiating the terms of the contract,

c) Hastoe Housing – Cllr. Lesley Taylor reported that one Middleton resident had been allocated a house. The road is scheduled to be closed for three weeks in mid-January to surface the accessway, connect the drainage and realign the overhead wires.

d) Village Green – the Clerk reported that she is waiting for a response from District Cllr. Russ Rainger about a replacement bench.

8. Future Projects

Due to the lack of Councillors present, the Council postponed the discussion of future projects and the provision of a bus service in the parish.

ACTION: Clerk to add to next agenda.

9. Finance

a) The Council noted the latest financial position, including receipt of £0.13 of bank interest and £809.80 from the Rural Payments Agency.

b) The Council approved the Community Infrastructure Levy report.

ACTION: Clerk to submit to ESC and upload to the website.

c) The Council authorised the payments below:

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk's Salary (December 2021)	Sharon Smith	£228.40	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Salary (January 2022)	Sharon Smith	£251.20	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Expenses	Sharon Smith	£52.54	LGA 1972 s.111
VAT Advice	CRASL Accounting Services	£34.50	LGA 1972 s.111
Drop In Centre Supplies	Lesley Taylor	£108.93	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19
Pavilion Electricity	British Gas	£25.89	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19

10. Administration

The Council agreed meeting dates for 2022.

ACTION: Clerk to circulate and upload to the website.

11. Correspondence

The Council reviewed the correspondence received between 3rd November 2021 and 8th December 2021.

12. Next Meeting

The Council agreed the date and time of the next meeting of the Council which is scheduled for Tuesday 8th February 2022 at 7:00 pm.

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL AS SOLE TRUSTEE OF THE MIDDLETON RECREATION GROUND TRUST

1. The Council accepted the budget for the financial year 2022/2023.

2. The Council considered two quotations to replace the infant swing. It was agreed to accept the lower quote from Eastern Play Services Ltd for £2,869.95 plus VAT. It was also agreed to accept any reasonable increase to the quote as it is beyond the 30 day deadline.

ACTION: Chairman to progress.

The meeting closed at 8:50 pm.