

# MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022  
AT 7:00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

## 1. Attendance and Apologies

### Attendees:

Cllr. Julian Cusack – Chair  
Cllr. Roy Dowding – Vice Chair  
Cllr. Colin Whitbread  
Cllr. Steve Thorpe  
Cllr. Chris Reynolds  
Cllr. Lesley Taylor  
Cllr. Graham Lacey

### Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Lynda Whitbread – written and accepted  
Cllr. Dennis Peel  
District Cllr. Tony Cooper

### In attendance:

Sharon Smith - Clerk/RFO  
County Cllr. Richard Smith  
District Cllr. Tom Daly  
District Cllr. Russ Rainger  
1 member of the public

## 2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

## 3. Public Forum

a) District Cllr. Russ Rainger summarised the key points from the Ward Members' report which will be issued shortly. The government's Levelling Up White Paper has offered Suffolk a county deal which will include some devolved powers. The details are still being negotiated but there will not be a unitary authority nor a mayor. Cllr. Rainger informed the Council that Scottish Power Renewables are conducting tree surveys in a number of local parishes. He also reported that the District Council has declared a climate emergency and has created a new Officer role with responsibility to embed environmental concerns into all streams of Council activities. Cllr. Rainger concluded his report by explaining the reasons for recent disruptions in the refuse collection service.

b) District Cllr. Tom Daly reported that the government is looking at ways to reduce the impact of offshore wind projects in the area.

c) County Cllr. Richard Smith spoke about the conflict in Ukraine and the great sympathy in this country for Ukrainians. He explained that the County Council's gas supply is from Gazprom, a Russian company, as it was the cheapest deal. Around 1,000 public buildings are heated by gas but the County Council took the decision to end the contract with Gazprom. They will risk the legal outcome and an increased cost of around £1.5 million to heat the buildings next year but feel they must stand united with the people of Ukraine. The County Council has also reviewed the Russian investments in its pension funds. The pensions funds are currently valued at £33 bn with Russian investments of £4 bn. These have been written down to zero and will be sold in due course at a reduced value. The Chairman asked about the government's obligation to resettle Ukrainian refugees and asked if there are plans to make homes available. County Cllr. Smith replied that the country has done its best for Afghanistan refugees and there are still some Afghans in hotels waiting for homes. Cllr. Smith said there was a national monetary appeal for Ukraine and the appeal was discouraging the collection of clothing and blankets. Cllr. Daly said the Green, Liberal Democrats and Independents group of Councillors was bringing a motion to the next District Council meeting asking what arrangements were being made for refugees, under the 1951 Refugee Convention, in terms of visas, vetting and local communities sponsoring and homing refugees. Cllr. Rainger said the Council was working with other counties, helping with transport links, and recognising the importance of maintaining cultural groups.

Cllr. Smith continued his report by informing the Council that the budget was passed at the recent Cabinet meeting and the County's share of the precept will rise by 2.99%. The increase has been kept lower than inflation due to a generous government settlement however the Highways grant will be £11.5 bn less than expected.

Cllr. Smith also referred to the new county deal and said Suffolk, along with Norfolk, was one of nine counties to be offered the deal. Negotiations will carry on until September and will be led by the County Council. There will be no mayor as it is believed that this does not work well in rural areas. It is hoped the deal will result in more joined up thinking and improved working practices, particularly in health and social care.

Cllr. Smith reported that the County has purchased 10 ANPR speed cameras and these will be available in July 2022 to parishes to loan for one week. Suffolk Constabulary will review the data and the worst offenders will be sent a letter. If the behaviour persists, there will be a visit from the police asking the offender to moderate their behaviour.

**ACTION: Clerk to apply for an ANPR camera.**

#### **4. Minutes**

The Council approved as accurate the minutes of the meetings held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

a) The following two changes to the minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 were noted:

i) Item 3b – change 'EDF's proposals to close Fordley Road' to 'EDF's proposals to stop up Fordley Road on the north side and create a junction with the Sizewell Link Road on the south side'.

ii) Item 7a – change '20 mph zone' to '20 mph speed limit'.

b) Cllr. Graham Lacey said he inspected the restricted mobility access to the church from the village green. He recommended that an interlocking system of geotex matting is laid, infilled with shingle, which is a permeable system allowing water to drain and it will create a better surface compared with the grass and mud. The system could be extended to include a defined area for parked cars to ensure the accessway to the church is kept clear. Cllr. Lacey will write up a specification with examples and an indication of costs. Cllr. Lacey and the Chairman will then consult the nearby residents and the Church Wardens for their views.

**ACTION: Cllr. Graham Lacey to progress.**

#### **6. Councillors' Reports**

a) Energy Projects – it was agreed to invite EDF to attend the Council's public meeting in June 2022 to brief the Council about the Deed of Obligation.

b) The Council made minor changes to the Clerk's draft letter asking EDF to confirm the Council's understanding of the concerns and possible interventions raised during the recent site visit to the B1122. Cllr. Roy Dowding reported that the Secretary of State for BEIS appears to have unilaterally decided that the government will put up 20% to support Sizewell C despite the project still being undecided. EDF will also put up 20% with the remaining 60% presumably to be raised under the Regulated Asset Base model.

**ACTION: Clerk to invite EDF to the June meeting and send letter.**

c) Highways/Footpaths – the Clerk agreed to report the fallen school sign at The Street/Rectory Road junction to Highways.

**ACTION: Clerk to report.**

d) Village Hall – Cllr. Graham Lacey reported that the new roof is complete, subject to minor snagging which is in hand, and the scaffolding will be removed shortly. Cllr. Lacey said he will prepare an operating and maintenance manual for future reference.

e) Hastoe Housing – the Chairman said that residents are starting to move in. Cllr. Steve Thorpe agreed to contact Hastoe to ask when the agreed landscaping plans will be undertaken to replace the hedgerow on the boundary and to plant along the perimeter at the back of the gardens. Cllr. Thorpe also agreed to enquire about the necessity of the unsightly chain link fence as the gardens have fencing. Cllr. Lesley Taylor agreed to draft a welcome letter to be sent from the Council to all new residents of the parish.  
**ACTION: Cllr. Steve Thorpe to contact Hastoe and Cllr. Lesley Taylor to draft letter and circulate.**

f) Summer Wine Group – Cllr. Colin Whitbread reported that the Moor pond has been cleared and the cuttings will be removed in the next few weeks. The group has also helped residents to clear trees blown down in the recent storms.

g) Middleton Moor – Cllr. Colin Whitbread questioned whether a resident had been granted permission to plant 4 or 5 native, semi-mature, trees on north side of the Moor near the junction of the B1122/Moor Road. The Chairman explained that the Moor is common land and managed by the Parish Council therefore any planting would require Parish Council approval. The Chairman said the stewardship agreement with Natural England is to maintain the rare grassland habitat however it was reasonable to think that planting a few trees in a corner of the Moor would not cause a particular detriment. The Chairman said that Suffolk Wildlife Trust has been commissioned to produce a management plan and it would be premature to consider any planting before this report has been received and considered. Also, the consent of the residents, who would be visually affected, would need to be sought as well as the opinion of the hay cutter. Consideration would also need to be given to the drainage ditch and the sight lines for traffic. The Council agreed to wait for the revised management plan and then to consult residents before granting permission.

## 7. Future Projects

a) Cllr. Colin Whitbread asked for the New Cut to be dredged from Rackford Bridge to Eastbridge. The Chairman said the first step was to ask the Environment Agency to brief the Council to better understand their management of the New Cut.

**ACTION: Clerk to contact the Environment Agency.**

b) The Chairman said that the land on Title Road, known as the Burial Ground, was offered to the Parish Council many years ago. It was agreed to obtain First Registration of the Title from HM Land Registry. The hedgerow on the roadside is regularly cut but the inside has not been cut for many years and is now advancing into the field. The interior of the field generates a succession of wild flowers and is alive with insects but, due to the restricted access, parishioners are not able to enjoy what is there. The Chairman recommended that public accessibility to the burial ground could be improved by replacing the heavy five-bar gate with an pedestrian entrance and sections of fencing and a path mowed to a central area in the field where a bench could be placed. It was acknowledged that reaching the burial ground requires a certain level of fitness and there are no footpaths and narrow verges.

**ACTION: Clerk to obtain a quote from Birketts for the first registration and Chairman to obtain costings for a fence and pedestrian gate.**

## 8. Finance

a) The Council noted the latest financial position, including receipt of £0.06 of bank interest and £536.11 of recovered VAT.

b) The Council noted the Local Government Act s.137 expenditure limit for 2022/2023.

c) The Council agreed to donate £50 to the Coastal Accessible Transport Service (LGA 1972 s.137).

d) The Council authorised the payments below:

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk's Salary	Sharon Smith	£416.75	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's PAYE	HM Revenue and Customs	£12.00	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Expenses	Sharon Smith	£2.90	LGA 1972 s.111

Pavilion Electricity	British Gas	£49.54	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19
Hall Hire	Middleton Village Hall	£150.00	LGA 1972 s.111
Christmas Hampers	Lesley Taylor	£59.33	LGA 1972 s.137

## 9. Administration

- a) The Council reviewed and approved the Asset Register.
- b) The Council reviewed and approved the Internal Controls Statement.
- c) The Council reviewed the Suffolk Local Code of Conduct.
- d) The Council adopted an Equality and Diversity Policy.
- e) The Council adopted an Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.
- f) The Council adopted a Safeguarding Policy.  
**ACTION: Clerk to ask Cllr. Lynda Whitbread if she is willing to be appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.**
- g) The Council adopted a Grievance Procedure.

## 10. Correspondence

The Council reviewed the correspondence received between 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.

## 11. Questions to the Chair

A member of the public asked the Council if they knew who the bench on the village green was dedicated to and was this a previous Chairman of the Council. The Council did not know.

**ACTION: Clerk to follow up application for a Talking Bench.**

## 12. Next Meeting

The Council agreed the date and time of the next meeting of the Council which is scheduled for Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Village Hall.

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

1. The Council authorised Suffolk Anti-Pest Services to conduct mole-catching on the Recreation Ground.  
**ACTION: Clerk to progress.**
2. The Council accepted a quotation from Cadman Flooring for £820 to replace the flooring in the pavilion toilets.  
**ACTION: Cllr. Chris Reynolds to accept the quote and to remove and replace the toilet cubicles to enable a better fit.**
3. The Council agreed to appoint Eastern Play Service Ltd to conduct monthly safety inspections of the play equipment. The arrangement will be reviewed annually as part of the budgeting process.  
**ACTION: Clerk to obtain an updated quotation.**

The meeting closed at 8:45 pm. The Chairman gave thanks to all the Councillors and said he appreciated all that they do and hoped that they would put themselves forward again for election in May 2023.