

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8th JUNE 2021
AT 6:00 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

Cllr. Julian Cusack - Chair
Cllr. Lynda Whitbread
Cllr. Colin Whitbread
Cllr. Steve Thorpe
Cllr. Chris Reynolds
Cllr. Lesley Taylor

Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Roy Dowding – written and accepted
District Cllr. Tony Cooper

In attendance:

County Cllr. Richard Smith
Sharon Smith - Clerk/RFO
7 members of the public

2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Public Forum

a) The Chairman invited members of the public to address the Council about Sizewell C matters when the item is discussed later in the meeting. The Chairman varied the order of the agenda to allow time for members of the public to join the meeting later.

b) County Cllr. Richard Smith reported that following the County Council election, the Leader of the Council asked him to re-join the Cabinet with responsibility for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste. Cllr. Smith said Economic Development was important coming out of COVID and Transport Strategy concerned the future of roads and rail in the county, but not operational matters. Cllr. Smith reported that he took part in the Sizewell C Open Floor Hearings. He concentrated his remarks on the D2 route being preferable to the Sizewell Link Road and the bare concrete domes and stacks which will be noticeable landmarks. Cllr. Smith listened to the other contributions and said they were of a very high standard from knowledgeable and experienced people. He said he hoped they had some effect on the Examining Authority. Cllr. Smith said he wished to use his Locality Budget 2021/22 to mark in a permanent way the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 and offered the Council a contribution of £500 to mark this event with a small but significant memorial should they choose to do so.

ACTION: Clerk to add Queen's Platinum Jubilee to next month's agenda.

c) The Council noted District Cllr. Tony Cooper's written report.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting held on 4th May 2021 were approved.

5. Casual Vacancy

Cllr. Julian Cusack said there was currently two vacancies for Councillors. A group of Councillors recently interviewed Dennis Peel and they recommended to the Council that he is co-opted to fill a vacancy. All in favour. Dennis Peel signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Clerk, and joined the Council with immediate effect.

ACTION: Clerk to inform the District Council of the appointment.

6. Highways

a) County Cllr. Richard Smith reported that the County Council has purchased 10 portable ANPR cameras for loaning around sites in the county for a period of one week to discourage speeding. The

Council identified potential sites for ANPR cameras on the B1122 and the B1125.

ACTION: County Cllr. Richard Smith to ascertain the application process and report back.

b) Cllr. Lynda Whibread reported that data has not recently been downloaded from the Speed Indicator Device sited on the B1122. The volunteer who manages the SID took Cllr. Whitbread through the steps to download the data but it is complicated. It was agreed to contact Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council for further advice about downloading and reporting data.

ACTION: Clerk to forward contact details of Theberton and Eastbridge Councillor to Cllr. Lynda Whitbread.

c) Cllr. Steve Thorpe agreed to seek Highways permission to site the Speed Indicator Device on the B1125. Cllr. Thorpe raised the idea of starting a Community Speed Watch team in the parish.

ACTION: Clerk to send details of CSW to Cllr. Steve Thorpe.

d) Cllr. Steve Thorpe reported that there was a good turn-out of suggestions to name the new drive to the Hastoe development. 'Roke Drive' was a clear leader in the poll, taking twice as many votes as the next suggestion. The Council supported 'Roke Drive'.

ACTION: Clerk to inform the District Council.

e) Cllr. Chris Reynolds reported that all the nominated Quiet Lanes in the parish were approved. The County Council must reply in writing to any objectors before an official announcement is made. Highways will then proceed with the signage.

7. Recreation Ground

a) Cllr. Chris Reynolds agreed to obtain further quotes to replace the flooring in the pavilion.

b) The Council agreed to apply to the District Council for a Restart Grant for £8,000, subject to confirmation of eligibility from East Suffolk Council.

ACTION: Clerk to progress.

8. Village Hall

Cllr. Chris Reynolds reported that he was still waiting for further quotes regarding the inspection of the village hall roof. One initial quote found that there could be some rot in a corner. The repair cost will depend on the type of timber replacement but could be around £9,000 to £11,000. This cost will increase by around £2,000 to £3,000 if asbestos is found. Cllr. Reynolds recommended that the Council pays for a test costing £50 to ascertain if asbestos is present. All in favour. Cllr. Julian Cusack asked if there was any indication of an immediate safety risk. Cllr. Reynolds replied that the building is over 100 years old therefore there may be some tile slippage.

ACTION: Cllr. Lynda Whitbread to inform the Management Committee of the further inspection.

9. Annual Accounts/Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Council approved the following:

- a) the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the AGAR.
- b) the Accounting Statements (Section 2) of the AGAR.
- c) the Certificate of Exemption.
- d) the report from the Internal Auditor.
- e) the period for the exercise of public rights from 14th June to 23rd July 2021.

ACTION: Clerk to send the Exemption Certificate to the external auditor and add an Accessibility Statement to the website.

10. Finance

- a) The Council noted the latest financial position, including the receipt of bank interest of £0.10
- b) The Council authorised the payments below:

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk's Salary	Sharon Smith	£230.60	LGA 1972 s.112
Clerk's Expenses	Sharon Smith	£8.55	LGA 1972 s.111
British Gas	Pavilion Electricity	£29.72	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19
Drop In Centre Hall Hire	Middleton Village Hall	£56.00	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19
Eastern Play Services Ltd	Play Equipment Repairs	£1,806.00	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19
Middleton Newsletter	Annual Donation	£300.00	LGA 1972 s.142

11. Sizewell C and Public Forum

a) Cllr. Cusack said the proposed Sizewell Link Road (SLR) had caused a lot of discussion and debate in the parish and it was difficult for the Council to reach an agreed position which reflected all the opinions of the residents. The results from the recent survey provided the Council with the views of many residents and showed it was worth contacting residents and asking for their opinions. Cllr. Cusack summarised the preliminary results from the survey. The full survey results will be published in the newsletter.

b) Cllr. Cusack said Fordley Road was now causing a lot of discussion. EDF's proposals are to close Fordley Road on the north side and provide a junction to the SLR on the south side. Cllr. Cusack said he had received written representations from residents about this and the opinions were evenly balanced for and against keeping Fordley Road open. Cllr. Julian Cusack invited the members of the public present to speak if they wish:

- A resident said that the Link Road dissects Fordley from the parish and access to Saxmundham. He is in favour of keeping vehicle access along Fordley Road and is not in favour of a pedestrian bridge which he felt would not be attractive.
- A resident referred to the proposed T-junction to provide access to Saxmundham along Fordley Road south of the SLR. Cllr. Cusack said that the residents' survey did not specifically address that issue but he had received objections to access on that side due to the potential for rat-running including from most of the residents of Fordley Road.
- A resident said the point of the SLR was to allow communities to function as they used to and residents should be able to access villages without tackling a busy road. He said EDF should seek to reduce the impact on communities and if Pretty Road and Fordley Road are linked to the SLR this could provide opportunities for rat-running. He said Pretty Road and Fordley Road needed to be kept open for existing communities but not to provide junctions to the SLR. This was the same situation with the B1125 link to the Link Road at Westleton.
- A resident replied that the positive from the B1125 link would be to take the traffic out of Theberton however Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council agreed that the junction should be removed. He said the one community who would benefit most from the junction do not support it.
- A resident said he lived through the construction of Sizewell B and the rat-run traffic from Westleton was horrendous. EDF said they could not control the traffic as they were private individuals in private cars.
- A resident said the parish should strongly oppose severing the parish for those residents who value living here. He said if there was an option of retaining roads as they currently are this should be pursued. He said if an underpass at Fordley Road was possible, the Council should push for this with EDF.
- A resident said an underpass at Fordley Road was the right option as the road will be raised anyway.
- A resident said that if the parish supports stopping up Fordley Road and a bridge is provided over Pretty Road then over 70% of people living here will be using one road. She said Theberton residents would not be happy taking Fordley Road traffic too.
- A resident said that EDF have sought to divide and conquer as everyone is focussed on the best outcome for themselves. She said the best option for Fordley Road is an underpass so Fordley is not severed. She said a footbridge is not desirable as the road will already be at bedroom window height and a footbridge would be 6 metres higher. She said the community should push to remain as a community and should work together to be stronger. EDF should build an expensive underpass.

- A resident said that the parish needs to be united and questioned why anyone should be affected and have to compromise. He said EDF should build an underpass so the parish is not divided and the impact on residents should be limited.
- A resident asked if a bridge was being provided at Pretty Road because Theberton had presented a united front and had been more demanding.
- A resident said that the SLR should have a speed limit of 60 mph and the parish roads should have a reduced speed limit to make the rural roads less attractive to workers. This could be enforced by speed cameras.
- A resident said the SLR should be sound-proofed and concessions should be made for those who live next to the road.
- A resident said neighbouring parishes should be asked for their opinions on Route W (D2) with a view to presenting a united front. Cllr. Cusack replied that Middleton, Theberton, Yoxford and Kelsale might agree but perhaps not Saxmundham. County Cllr. Richard Smith said he did not think Saxmundham was in favour of the D2, although personally he is. He said the County Council do not support his advocacy but he told the Examining Authority that he believes EDF should have considered D2 properly.

Cllr. Cusack reminded those present that he had received written representations from residents of Fordley both in favour of closing Fordley Road as well as in favour of providing a bridge or an underpass. He said all views needed to be heard and weighed in the balance. EDF's proposals are to close Fordley Road and the newly issued public consultation does not ask for views on Fordley Road however the Council could ask for the Fordley Road junction to the SLR to be removed as this is broadly supported. Cllr. Cusack asked the Councillors for their views:

- Cllr. Steve Thorpe agreed that the B1125 will become a rat-run for traffic from Blythburgh if the junction to the SLR remains. He agreed that EDF are dividing the village by mischief and that the Council should stand up to EDF and say they prefer the D2 route.
- Cllr. Chris Reynolds agreed that the village needs to be kept together and vehicular access along Fordley Road needs to be kept open. He said an underpass was preferable to a bridge and it is his first choice even if it is only a pedestrian footpath.
- Cllr. Lesley Taylor said Middleton Moor is adversely affected by both the early construction traffic and the SLR. She said EDF have provoked debate as a smoke screen and any offer of amelioration is a bribe, such as if a bridge is offered at Fordley Road. She said the parish needs to present a united front but the Council carries little weight. She has mixed views on Fordley Road but said that during the survey a resident suggested that Fordley Road could be temporarily stopped during the construction period and then re-opened. She agreed that the junction to the SLR was not a good idea.
- Cllr. Colin Whitbread said EDF have divided and conquered with the question on the legacy of the SLR. He said the SLR must be built to an engineering standard so it becomes the direct route to Sizewell. EDF, the Highways Authority and the police could then use enforcement to ensure all Sizewell workers use it. The B1122 is a country road built for Sizewell A and B but now with the expansion of Leiston and Sizewell it is not capable of taking the capacity. He agreed that there should not be a junction from Fordley Road to the SLR and country lanes should be left open.
- Cllr. Lynda Whitbread said she enjoyed hearing the views of residents during the survey. She said the primary fight of the parish is against Sizewell C and she supports the work of Stop Sizewell C and their new posters. She said if Sizewell C goes ahead that communities should not be divided and EDF have drawn a line across the countryside and have not considered the impact to communities. She said we should collectively fight for D2.
- Cllr. Dennis Peel said he was new to this level of detail but he agreed that splitting communities would not be good.

Cllr. Cusack proposed the following position for the Council's response to the latest consultation:

- Reiterate strong opposition to Sizewell C;
- Oppose the Sizewell Link Road and advocate a review/reconsideration of a more southerly route;
- Object to the junction between Fordley Road and the Sizewell Link Road on the south side;

- Remove the B1125 link to the Sizewell Link Road;
- In favour of supporting the Pretty Road bridge.

Cllr. Cusack said that the Council could perhaps not reach a consensus view on Fordley Road without dividing and inflaming opinions in the village and he asked for the Councillors' views. Five Councillors were in favour of keeping Fordley Road open and one Councillor abstained. Cllr. Cusack said as this was the majority view, the Council's position would be that Fordley Road should be kept open.

- b) The Council noted the submission of the Written Representation made at the Open Floor Hearings.
- c) Cllr. Julian Cusack reported on his discussions with neighbouring parishes on Sizewell C matters.

12. Progress Reports

a) Footpaths – Cllr. Steve Thorpe raised a concern about dog waste on the footpaths and suggested that additional dog waste bins are provided. It was agreed to ask Suffolk Coastal Norse if outside the churchyard on Back Road and outside the Farm Shop are suitable locations.

ACTION: Clerk to progress.

b) Trees and Green Issues – Cllr. Julian Cusack reported that the wildflower meadow area near the Recreation Ground was developing and will continue to do so over the years. It will be mown in late summer.

c) Middleton Moor – Cllr. Lesley Taylor agreed to organise an outdoor meeting for Moor residents.

d) Summer Wine Group – Cllr. Colin Whitbread reported that a commemorative event was arranged for tomorrow to remember three founding members. Three plaques will be affixed to trees followed by refreshments at The Bell. The Clerk offered the Council's annual donation of £200, which was not taken last December, towards this event.

ACTION: Cllr. Whitbread to provide receipts for the plaques and refreshments.

e) Village Hall – Cllr. Lynda Whitbread reported that the Management Committee held their AGM and appointed Richard Turner as Chairman. Cllr. Whitbread said the constitution stated that three Parish Councillors should serve on the Management Committee therefore a third Councillor was required. Cllr. Dennis Peel volunteered for this role. The drop-in centre continues to be successful with a steady 12—20 members. An application for a grant may be required to ensure its continuation.

f) Swift Nesting Boxes - the Clerk reported that the Dedham Vale AONB 'Leiston Loves Swifts' project bid to the Galloper Wind Farm Fund was successful. They secured £447 for Middleton which will pay for 18 swift nesting boxes and 3 callers. They usually look to distribute community sets of 6 boxes and 1 caller at each location. A volunteer from SOS Swifts has arranged a Swift Walk/Talk to identify suitable locations for the community sets in Middleton on the evening of 6th July.

ACTION: Clerk to email Councillors with exact time to ascertain availability to attend the Swift Walk/Talk.

13. Correspondence

The Council reviewed the correspondence received between 29th April 2021 and 2nd June 2021.

14. Next Meeting

The Council confirmed the date and time of the next meeting of the Council which is scheduled for Tuesday 14th July 2021 at 6:00 pm at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8:30 pm.