

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8th NOVEMBER 2021
AT 7:30 PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

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

Apologies for absence:

Cllr. Dennis Peel
County Cllr. Richard Smith
District Cllr. Tom Daly
District Cllr. Russ Rainger
District Cllr. Tony Cooper

In attendance:

Sharon Smith - Clerk/RFO
No members of the public

2. Councillors' Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Public Forum

None.

4. Minutes

The Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2021.

5. Sizewell C

a) The Chairman reported that the Council has been asked to enter into a Deed of Covenant with NNB Generation Company (SZC) Ltd, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council. The Clerk reported that Theberton & Eastbridge Parish Council have also been asked to sign up to a similar Deed. The Chairman explained that the Deed binds the Council to participate in the B1122 Early Years Working Group which will be established by the Sizewell C Transport Coordinator if Sizewell C goes ahead. The purpose of the B1122 Early Years Working Group is to address the road safety and environmental transport impacts of construction traffic likely to arise prior to first use of the Sizewell Link Road on the B1122 between and inclusive of Middleton Moor and Theberton. The Council agreed to authorise the Clerk to execute the Deed on behalf of the Council.

b) Cllr. Roy Dowding reported that he attended a meeting of the Anglian Energy Planning Alliance. 24 Town and Parish Councils were represented. Stop Sizewell C presented and reinforced their standpoint that Sizewell C is the wrong place, the wrong company, the wrong reactor and the wrong deal for the community. Cllr. Dowding said there are now nine other offshore energy schemes proposed for the area and there is no joined-up thinking from all the companies involved. However, the overriding message from the meeting was that the fight is not over and there are many powerful arguments not to build Sizewell C. Cllr. Dowding reported that Declan Burke, Director of Nuclear Projects and Development at the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, will visit Suffolk on 29th November. He will be given a guided tour of the areas affected by the proposed energy projects culminating with lunch at Snape with representatives from Town and Parish Councils. The Chairman and Cllr. Dowding will attend this event with Cllr. Lynda Whitbread attending if a third member is permitted.

ACTION: Clerk to advise AEPA of attendees.

6. Councillors' Reports

- a) Highways – the Council agreed not to respond to the County Council’s HGV Route Review consultation. Cllr. Lynda Whitbread reported that she and Cllr. Lesley Taylor have now uploaded the software necessary to download data from the Speed Indicator Device.
ACTION: Clerk to add SID data as a standing agenda item.
- b) Footpaths – Cllr. Steve Thorpe reported that the footpath from Reckford Bridge to Eastbridge is overgrown.
ACTION: Clerk to report to Highways via the online reporting tool.
- c) Village Hall – Cllr. Graham Lacey reported that he evaluated the quotes to repair the roof and reported to the Management Committee. Cllr. Lacey said the Committee had chosen a contractor and he will offer his assistance to put together a proper contract. Cllr. Lynda Whitbread thanked Cllr. Lacey for his expertise and support.
- d) Primary School – Cllr. Lynda Whitbread reported that visitors are no longer allowed in school due to the rising COVID-19 infection rates.
- e) Middleton Moor – the Chairman said he expects to hear shortly from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust that they are ready to write a new Management Plan following their field work carried out in the summer.
- f) Summer Wine Group – Cllr. Colin Whitbread raised the issue again about the need to dredge and clear part of the New Cut. A landowner has cleared trees near Reckford Bridge but more trees, particularly willow, need to be cleared before they self-root. The Chairman replied that some residents would prefer the New Cut not to be dredged as it may harm wildlife. He said it was important to understand the Environment Agency’s management plan and the reasons why dredging work is not currently being carried out.
ACTION: Clerk to contact the Environment Agency and invite a representative to attend a Council meeting.
- g) Green Issues – the Chairman reported that the verges along Title Road, Moor Road and Littlemoor Road have been cut after an 18 month interval. They are due to be cut again next September. The agreement with the County Council to leave the verges uncut in early summer needs to be amended to improve visibility on the bend in Moor Road.
ACTION: Cllr. Julian Cusack to contact Suffolk County Council.
- h) Trees – the Council declined an offer of 150 free trees due to lack of sufficient public open space to plant them.

7. Queen’s Platinum Jubilee 2022

The Council agreed to consider offering themed refreshments at the Recreation Ground pavilion to coincide with the Open Gardens Event to mark the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. It was also agreed to request funding for a new bench, with an engraved plaque, for the Recreation Ground from County Cllr. Richard Smith’s Locality Budget.

ACTION: Clerk to submit a funding request.

8. Finance

a) The Council noted the latest financial position, including the Community Infrastructure Levy receipt of £1,197.52. The Council agreed to ring-fence this amount and consider CIL expenditure as part of next financial year’s budget.

ACTION: Clerk to arrange a meeting of the Finance Working Group.

b) The Council authorised the payments below:

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk’s Salary	Sharon Smith	£228.20	LGA 1972 s.112
Poppy Wreath Donation - 2022	Sharon Smith	£35.00	LGA 1971 s.138b
Pavilion Electricity	British Gas	£27.66	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19

Dog Bin – The Street	Suffolk Coastal Norse Ltd	£286.38	LGA (MP) 1976 s.19
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9. Administration

- a) The Council conducted the annual review of the Risk Assessment and agreed minor changes.
- b) The Council approved the continuation of the Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer.
- c) The Council agreed to appoint the Suffolk Association of Local Councils as internal auditor.
- d) The Council conducted the annual review of the insurance policy to ensure the terms of the policy remain acceptable and that all known risks and assets are adequately protected.

10. Correspondence

The Council reviewed the correspondence received between 7th October 2021 and 2nd November 2021.

11. Next Meeting

The Council agreed the date and time of the next meeting of the Council which is scheduled for Tuesday 14th December 2021 at 7:00 pm.

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

1. Status and Finances of the Trust

The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk received initial legal advice from Birketts about the operation of the Council and the Trust's finances. The Chairman proposed that the Council accepts Birketts offer to fully review the Trust Deed and other documentation and advise the Council on the following:

- a) Whether VAT can be recovered for capital and operating expenditure on the Recreation Ground and Pavilion if the expenditure is incurred by the Council (in its capacity as Trustee) even when the invoice is paid from Trust funds, with the reclaimed VAT payable to the Trust.
- b) Whether all the operating expenses for the Recreation Ground should be paid by the Trust and, if there is a shortfall of funds in the Trust, the Council has the power to make a contribution to the Trust.
- c) Whether the Trust can charge hire fees for the Pavilion without risking the 100% business rates relief status.
- d) Whether the Council, when exercising its powers as a Trustee, can carry out the business of the Trust in private which may be helpful if a decision needs to be made urgently.

The Council agreed to obtain legal advice in this regard with an expected expenditure of £150.

ACTION: Clerk to instruct Birketts.

2. Maintenance

- a) The Chairman informed the Council that he obtained a quote to replace the infant swing set as the play equipment safety inspection identified that the timber posts are rotten. The quote to replace the swing set with steel ground fixings, guaranteed for 20 years, was £1,784.25 plus VAT. Following a recommendation from the Clerk, the Council agreed to obtain further quotes for comparison purposes.

ACTION: Clerk and Cllr. Graham Lacey to obtain further quotes.

- b) Cllr. Chris Reynolds informed the Council that he obtained a quote for an awning for the pavilion. Cllr. Reynolds said an awning can only extend to 1.5 metres due to the low height of the building and two would be required to allow clearance at the doorway. The quote for two manually operated awnings was £5,360 plus VAT and the quote for two electrically operated awnings, which automatically retract in high

winds, was £6,770 plus VAT. Following a discussion about alternative ways to provide cover for serving refreshments, the Council agreed not to purchase awnings at this time particularly as there are other considerations for expenditure.

c) The Council agreed to replace the floor covering in both toilets in the pavilion.

ACTION: Cllr. Chris Reynolds to arrange.

d) The Council agreed to replace the damaged sign in the car park. The new sign will show the contact details of the operator of the playground as the Clerk's email address and will incorporate the 'clean up after your dog' sign.

ACTION: Clerk to order from Leiston Press.

The meeting closed at 9:20 pm.