

MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 16TH MAY 2023 AT 6.30pm AT THE VILLAGE HALL

1 Election of Chair

Cllr Taylor proposed Cllr Cusack, Cllr Reynolds seconded. There were no other nominations and Cllr Cusack was duly elected as Chair.

2 Election of Vice Chair

Cllr Cusack proposed Cllr Taylor who was further nominated and seconded by Cllr Reynolds and Cllr Macdowell. There were no other nominations and Cllr Taylor was duly elected as Vice Chair.

3 Attendance and Apologies

Attendees:

Cllr. Julian Cusack – Chair
Cllr. Steve Thorpe
Cllr. Lelsey Taylor
Cllr. Graham Lacey
Cllr. Chris Reynolds
Cllr. Charles Macdowell
District Cllrs. Tom Daly and Katie Graham

Apologies for absence:

District Cllr. Sarah Whitelock
County Cllr. Richard Smith

In attendance:

Rachael Salcombe – Parish Clerk

4 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations

The online register of Parish Councillors 'interests' was last revised, by our Parish, in 2019 and, therefore, needs to be updated.

Action: Clerk to seek advice from SALC and report back to Councillors.

5 Public Forum – n/a

6 Minutes

- a) The Council approved as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting on 11th April 2023.
- b) Matters arising.
 - (i) Cllr Macdowell confirmed that Planning Permission has been approved for the work at Valley Farm discussed at the last meeting (and in respect of which Cllr Macdowell declared his interest as the applicant).
 - (ii) County Broadband cabinet. Cllr Cusack has objected, on behalf of the Parish Council, to the placement of the cabinet (on the Moor). The application states that the land is owned by East Suffolk Council (it is in fact common land) and it was agreed that the Council should have consulted

with the Parish Council regarding the location, since it is the Parish Council which is charged with management of the Moor. The Openreach cabinet is better located. Cllr Thorpe mentioned a letter received by residents from County Broadband, concerning rights across properties; Cllr Cusack advised that the letter was to establish land ownership and that he had communicated to the Company that the letter was confusing.

District Councillors Tom Daly and Katie Graham were welcomed to the meeting and, in turn, thanked everyone for their participation in the recent election and invited the Parish to raise any issues with them. Cllr Daly advised that a representative will regularly attend the Parish meetings thus allowing the opportunity to address any issues. Cllr Daly also advised of three specific areas of support: assistance for anyone wanting to start a business or have started one in the past 12 months, a digital springboard to advertise company presence and support for low carbon emissions.

7 Councillors

- a) Councillor's responsibilities agreed as follows:
Cllr Lacey – Village Hall Management Committee
Action: Clerk to advise Richard Turner that Cllr Lacey will be representing the Parish Council
Cllr Reynolds – Middleton Primary School
Cllr Thorpe – Summer Wine Group
Cllr Taylor – Middleton Moor Management Group
- b) Cllr Cusack and Clerk - Finance
Cllr Reynolds – Recreation Ground
Cllr Macdowell – Energy Projects
Cllr Thorpe – Highways, Footpaths and Trees
- c) The model Code of Conduct 2020 which has been distributed with the Agenda was adopted.
- d) It was noted that there are three vacancies on the Parish Council. Cllr Cusack confirmed that we can operate with six Councillors but ideally we would have more. It was confirmed that anyone who lives in the Parish is eligible to be co-opted. It was also highlighted that aside from Cllr Cusack there is no Councillor from within the village centre. Cllr Macdowell offered to draft an advertisement for the Newsletter to try and drum up some interest.

8 Sizewell C

Cllr Cusack reminded the Council that the B1122 Working Group has had two meetings and plans have been produced by the highways engineers showing some improvements to footpaths and road signage. One meeting with adjacent parishes has been held. In terms of traffic impact, Kelsale is concerned with rat running, Walberswick is concerned with speeding and Yoxford is concerned about increased traffic through the High Street. A letter has been drafted regarding these and other concerns and requesting an enforcement of speed limits (funded by EDF).

Action: Cllr Macdowell to organise the next meeting within the parishes.

Each parish will feed into the process individually, as well as collectively.

It was noted that traffic is already diverted from the A12, due to accidents, incidents and/or roadworks, the impact of which will only worsen with the increase in HGVs, and the personal vehicles of Sizewell workers. There is also the issue of sharp corners on the country roads coupled with the Government's latest approval for longer HGVs. Cllr Cusack asked Cllr Macdowell that this concern be added to the above-mentioned letter.

9 Finance

- a) The Annual Accounts for 2022/2023 were approved.
- b) The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was approved including the Annual Governance Statement, the Accounting Statements and the Certificate of Exemption
- c) It was agreed to set the period for exercise of public rights from 5 June 2023 to 14 July 2023
- d) The Community Infrastructure Levy Statement 22/23 was approved.
- e) The Internal Audit Report 22/23 was discussed and approved.

Cllr Cusack advised that outgoing Clerk Smith has set up online banking that requires only one user/signature. The responsibility has been temporarily passed to Cllr Cusack to control the accounts until such a time that it is passed onto Rachel Salcombe, as Responsible Financial Officer.

In line with the Internal Audit recommendation, it was recommended that bank statements are circulated to the Councillors each month to demonstrate clearly that all payments made have been duly approved by the Council.

All payments, as detailed in the Agenda, have been agreed plus £84.52 to Cllr Taylor for the Drop-in Centre and £140.80 as an advance to the Clerk for wages due for April. It was agreed that the Council should engage SALC to operate its payroll function at a cost of £8 per month plus an annual charge of £38. It was further agreed that the Council would purchase a mobile phone for the use of the Clerk at a cost of £134.

10 Planning application DC/23/1113/LBC

See 6b (i) above.

11 Correspondence

- a) LionLink (previously EuroLink)
National Grid are requesting access to private land within the Parish to carry out ecological investigations in the form of non-invasive surveys. Cllr Macdowell reported that National Grid have agreed to share the results of their surveys with the landowners.

Cllr Daly meeting with Graham Stuart (minister) tomorrow (Wednesday 17th May) to discuss how most affected communities can be helped. Cllr Daly will push for the offshore option and Cllr Cusack asked that Cllr Daly reflects the views of the Parish in opposition to cable corridors through our area.

Cllrs Daly and Graham were thanked for their input and left the meeting.

b) Replacement Bench

Cllr Cusack advised the Council of an email received from Trish Cooke regarding a broken bench on the village green. She has enquired as to whether the Parish will provide a plaque (In memory of Alec Robert Smith) for fixing to the new bench.

Action: Cllrs Reynolds and Thorpe to investigate.

Action: Clerk to advise Trish Cooke

Cllr Lacey shared photographs of a large tree that is leaning over Fordley Road. There is concern that once the tree goes into full leaf, coupled with possible high winds, it will come down. Cllr Cusack advised Cllr Lacey to log the concern on the County Council's Highways Reporting Portal. Cllr Lacey also enquired whether funds were available for additional signage on Fordley Road to read Unsuitable for HGVs. It was agreed that the Parish would write to the local authority.

Action: Cllr Cusack/Clerk to request new signage for Fordley Road.

Cllr Macdowell reported that several signs have fallen within the Parish. Cllr Cusack advised that he take photos and upload onto the Highways portal.

Action: Cllr Macdowell to take photos of fallen signs. Cllr Thorpe to enter onto portal. Cllr Thorpe to circulate Highways link to the Councillors.

Cllr Macdowell enquired whether the Councillors would like to set up a process for permissive paths. Cllr Cusack indicated that he was in favour of committing funds (irrespective of whether Sizewell C goes ahead).

Action: Cllr Cusack to open a discussion with local landowners.

12 Schedule of meetings

It was agreed to continue to hold the monthly Parish Council meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm

Date of next meeting Tuesday 13 June 2023, 7pm, Village Hall