



Middleton St George Parish Council
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Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held at 6.30pm on Monday 12th September, 2016 in the Parish Council office.

Present: Councillor Mrs. E Robertson (Vice Chairman)
 Councillor Mrs. M Beadle
 Councillor C Everett
 Councillor Mrs. V Greenwell
 Councillor M Robertson
 Councillor M Wilson

Absent: Councillor S. Crowther

In attendance: Councillor Mrs. D. Jones
 Alan Macnab, Clerk
 5 members of the public.

62. Chair of the Meeting

Councillor Mrs. E. Robertson, the Vice Chairman, chaired the meeting in the absence of the Chairman, Councillor C. Pease, who was on holiday. The Vice Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

63. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from the Chairman, Councillor C. Pease, Councillor Mrs. C. Gilsenan, Councillor A. Hill and Councillor S. York.

64. Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interests were made.

The following issues were to be addressed first to enable members of the public to address the Parish Council and to leave if they wished to do so.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

65. Playground

a. Complaint of anti-social behaviour in the playground and on the playing field

The Clerk reported that a resident's complaint had been received about anti-social behaviour in the evening in the playground and foul language used by players at a football match on the playing field. The complaint about anti-social behaviour was referred to the police and the language was referred to the Team Manager of the football team using the playing field. The Team Manager had replied that efforts would continue to be made to get footballers to moderate their language when on the playing field. The Parish Council agreed that if there are any further complaints the complainant should be asked to contact the police for incidents of anti-social behaviour and the Team Manager of the football team using the playing field for incidents involving footballers. **Action: Clerk.**

b. Health and safety check

The Clerk confirmed that he had carried out a health and safety check in the playground and he would let the Vice Chairman have the completed form. **Action: Clerk.**

c. Maintenance issues

The following maintenance issues were raised:

A complaint about the zip wire had been received. The complaint was investigated and no problems were found.

The sign in the playground needed repairing. The Clerk was asked to contact Mr. Mally Schott to repair the sign. **Action: Clerk.**

The broken fencing had now been repaired.

A letter from the Fighting Cocks FC about the maintenance of the playing field. Councillor Mrs. Greenwell indicated that she was examining the maintenance issues of the football pitch and the letter will be passed to Councillor Mrs. Greenwell. **Action: Clerk.**

It was emphasised that the keys for the goal posts needed to be found.

The Parish Council **agreed** to note the report and the action which was being taken.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

66. Water Park and Ground Maintenance

Councillor M. Robertson gave the following report on the Water Park.

a. Water Park and Ground Maintenance Committee 30th August, 2016

The meeting on the 30th August, 2016 had discussed the problems with litter and fishing hooks being left behind and the reinstatement of the use of pond 3 for organised fishing. Mr. S. Osborne had addressed the Committee giving his ideas for setting up an angling club, to use ponds 2 and 3 on a lease from the Parish Council, the maintenance needs to bring ponds 2 and 3 back into use and the security needs to prevent unauthorised use of the pond. The Committee had given agreement in principle to set up the Middleton St. George Fishing Club and had given the organisers three months to get the club set up and then to come back to the Parish Council with their proposals. There would probably no revenue in this financial year from fishing but the organisers were very keen to bring ponds 2 and 3 back into use and there was a need for the Parish Council to agree the way forward and the help it can give the organisers.

Mr. S. Osborne who was present at the meeting addressed the Parish Council. He circulated to the Parish Council the operating proposal for the angling club and its rules, terms and conditions. Mr. Osbourne emphasised the need for equipment to clear the weeds in ponds 2 and 3 for which he would organise working parties to carry out the task and a fence from one side of pond 3 to the other side. All members of the club would ID cards to enter the area. Concern was expressed about the footpath around pond 3, the cost of providing a fence and the possibility that the fence would be vandalised.

It was suggested that the CCTV on the boat club building be focused on ponds 2 and 3. Mr. Osborne stated that the priority would be for equipment to be provided to clear the weeds in ponds 2 and 3. If a fence could not be provided theft and vandalism would still occur.

An investigation would be carried out to see if the funding left over from developers of housing sites in Middleton St. George which had been earmarked for young people in the village could be used to help towards the total cost of fencing. **Action: Councillor Mrs. D. Jones.**

The Parish Council considered the provision of equipment to clear the weeds in ponds 2 and 3. It was proposed by Councillor Mrs. Beadle and seconded by Councillor M. Robertson that £440 be allocated to provide equipment to enable the angling club to clear the weeds in ponds 2 and 3. The Parish Council **agreed** that an allocation of £440 be made for equipment to enable the angling club to clear weeds from ponds 2 and 3. The equipment would be owned by the Parish Council and the angling club would give the Clerk the additional two quotes for the equipment. The angling club would supply details of the club to the Parish Council for insertion on the new website and in communications with residents. **Action: Clerk.**

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

b. Maintenance Plan Update

Councillor M. Robertson reported that Councillor Mrs. Beadle had donated a post which would be installed at the top of the ramp at the earliest opportunity. There were a small number of outstanding issues which would be dealt with. There was also a need to consider emergencies. The Clerk reported that Darlington Borough Council was considering installing a bin in the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) which would be emptied on a regular basis by the Litter Picker.

The Parish Council **agreed** to note the report and the progress which was being made.

67. Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting held on the 8th August, 2016

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 8th August, 2016 were presented. The Parish Council agreed that they were a true record of the proceedings.

68. Matters arising

a. Review of utility costs

The Clerk reported that the review was on going and he hoped to submit a report as soon as possible.

b. Northumbria in Bloom

The Parish Council expressed concern that the organisers were unable to put planters on the Dinsdale Station railway bridge without a risk assessment.

c. War Memorial and Access to the Garden of Remembrance at St. Laurence's Church

Councillor Mrs. D. Jones reported that when Councillor Brian Jones was Chair of the Parish Council in 1997 he raised funds for the refurbishment of the war memorial.

Councillor Mrs. Doris Jones pointed out that neither the War Memorial nor the Garden of Remembrance are the responsibility of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council expressed concern about the lack of access to the Garden of Remembrance at the church and the church should make the Garden of Remembrance accessible.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the maintenance of the War Memorial and the access to the Garden of Remembrance should be referred to the Parochial Church Council. **Action: Clerk.**

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

d. BDO External Audit – Submission and Outcome

The Clerk reported that BDO had informed the Parish Council that it intended to qualify the Parish Council’s accounts for the 2015-16 financial year. The internal auditor would be carry out an audit in November and December this year to examine the progress which was being made to implement the action plan which he had drawn up.

e. Insurance Claim- Water Park

The Clerk reported that the Zurich Insurance had informed the Parish Council that they had denied the claim and the Parish Council were not negligent in any way. The Clerk had notified all Parish Councillors of the outcome as soon Zurich Insurance had informed him. The Parish Council asked Clerk to inform the claimant of the outcome. **Action: Clerk.**

f. Fly tipping

Councillor M. Robertson reported that the fly tipping had now ceased.

The Parish Council **agreed** to note the matters arising reports.

69. Presentation of a gift to the Parish Council

Mrs. Holmes, the Secretary of the Middleton St. George and District Allotment and Gardens Society presented a gift of a picture of Low Dinsdale Parish Church to thank the Parish Council for supporting the Society.

The Parish Council thanked Mrs. Holmes for the gift and agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr. and Mrs. Braithwaite for donating the gift. **Action: Clerk.**

70. Planning Matters

a. Miller Homes Development, Sadberge Road, Middleton St. George

The Clerk reported that residents had complained about the nearness of the development to The Whinnies Nature Reserve, the removal of hedges, the lack of health and safety signage, Sunday working and the need for information on how Miller Homes will engage with the community. He had referred the complaints to the Managing Director of Miller Homes who had passed the complaints on to the Site Manager at the Sadberge Road development. As a result, a meeting with the Site Manager will be held on Wednesday 14th September at 3 p.m. at the entrance to the site.

Chairman’s Signature..... Date.....

The Parish Council raised the issue of Sunday working on the site. The Parish Council **agreed** that the Clerk write to the Principal Planning Officer of Darlington Borough Council to point this out and if it is contrary to the planning conditions on working to take action.

b. Second Field at the bottom of Chapel Street

It was reported that hedges in the second field at the bottom of Chapel Street had been pulled out. This had been referred to Councillor Mrs. D. Jones. Councillor Mrs. D. Jones reported that she would be discussing the removal of the hedges with the Borough Council's Parks and Countryside Officer and would report back. **Action: Councillor Mrs. D. Jones.**

c. Planning Applications Received

The Clerk gave the report in the absence of the Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor C. Gilsenan.

The following applications were received and considered the by the Planning Committee at its meeting held on the 7th September, 2016.

Application Reference No. 16/00775/FUL. 49, Fairfax Road, Middleton St. George. Erection of single storey extensions to the front and rear elevations. This application had been received between meetings of the Planning Committee and it was decided that the Parish Council should make no comment on the application. This was confirmed at the Planning Committee meeting on the 7th September, 2016.

Application Reference No. 16/00818/LBC. Low Middleton Hall, Low Middleton. Listed building consent for the demolition of wc/utility room and erection of single store extension with cupola to side of main building, erection of garden wall, railings with gates and alternation to a window over main entrance and door surround to main entrance.

Application Reference No. 16/00817/FUL. Low Middleton Hall, Low Middleton. Planning permission for the demolition of wc/utility room and erection of single store extension with cupola to side of main building, erection of garden wall, railings with gates and alternation to a window over main entrance and door surround to main entrance.

Application Reference No. 16/00841/OUT. Oak Tree Farmhouse, Yarm Road, Oak Tree. Outline application for the erection of 1 No. two storey detached dwelling (with all matters except access reserved).

Application Reference No. 16/00653/DC. ST. George's CE VA Primary School, Neasham Road, Middleton St. George. Extension to existing staff room and kitchen, construction of 3 No. classrooms with associated toilets, breakout space and meeting room and creation of 5 No. car parking spaces.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

The Committee decided that no comment be made on the above four applications.

d. Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036

Councillor Mrs. D. Jones reported that the three Ward Councillors had met with Darlington Borough Council’s Planning Officers to set up a Scoping Committee to consider the infrastructure issues, to give a voice to the Parish and to influence the development of the Local Plan for the Parish. Although the Neighbourhood Development Plan had stopped, valuable information, knowledge and expertise had been built up which should not be lost. The Plan also included parts of the Parish which were now in Neasham Parish.

The Ward Councillors had secured three places on the Scoping Committee for the Parish Council and suggested that the former Chair of the Neighbourhood Development Plans, Mr. D. Sheen, be invited onto the Scoping Committee as the resident’s representative because of his knowledge and expertise in preparing the former Plan. An invitation had also been made to the Chairman of Neasham Parish Council to be a member of the Scoping Committee because part of the former Middleton St. George Parish Council was now in Neasham Parish.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed**:

- i. to note the decisions taken by the Planning Committee on the planning applications received; and
- ii. that its representatives on the Scoping Committee will be the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council and Councillor Mrs. M. Beadle and an invitation be made to Mr. D. Sheen to be the residents representative.

e. Meetings with Peel Holdings and Jenny Chapman MP

Reports on the meetings with Peel Holdings and Jenny Chapman MP were circulated prior to the meeting. The Parish Council **agreed** to note the reports of the two meetings.

71. The Whinnies Nature Reserve

The Parish Council was informed of a rumour about the nature reserve. No information had been given to the Parish Council. The Parish Council therefore **agreed** to await information from Darlington Borough Council.

Chairman’s Signature..... Date.....

72. Financial Matters

a. Budget Review 2016-17 and Progress against the budget

The Chair of the Finance Committee, Councillor Mrs. Beadle, explained that a budget review for the 2016-17 financial year had been necessary because the amounts initially allocated in the budget were unrealistic. Councillor Mrs. Beadle went through each budget heading in turn.

The Clerk explained that the year end surplus was anticipated to be £28,904.39 in the Community Account.

b. Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk circulated the financial statement as at the 5th September, 2016 and the bank reconciliation as at the 31st July, 2016 to the Parish Council prior to the meeting. The Clerk explained that a bank statement for August 2016 had not been received therefore the reconciliation could only be completed for the period up to the 31st July 2016.

The Parish Council had two Saver Accounts with Barclays Bank. Interest is paid on both accounts annually for the period 31st December 2014 to 30th December, 2015.

Saver Account 1 had a balance of £21,235.15 and Saver Account 2 had a balance of £16,210.29 on the 5th September, 2016.

The two Saver Accounts are the Parish Council's contingency.

The Parish Council had an account with Darlington Credit Union which had a balance of £5,068.78 which is the Parish Council's reserve.

The Parish Council's Community Account had a balance of £47,485.09 on the 5th September 2016.

The bank reconciliation for the Community Account in the Parish Council's accounts spreadsheet and the bank statements for the period from the 1st April to the 31st July, 2016 gave an explanation of the variances in April, May and June 2016. Both were in balance in July 2016.

Councillor M. Wilson reported that he had carried out an internal audit of the accounts and found that all income and expenditure had been accounted for and a signed statement to this effect was passed to the Clerk.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

c. Payments received and outstanding

The Clerk circulated the payments received and outstanding statement to the Parish Council prior to the meeting.

The following payments had been received:

| Date | Supplier | Amount |
|-------------|---|---------------|
| 08.07.16 | Darlington and District Model Boat Club. Rent. | £995.42 |
| 12.07.16 | Darlington Borough Council Contribution to the Litter Picker April to September 2016 | £2,800.00 |
| 15.07.16 | HM Revenue and Customs. VAT | £787.99. |

There were no invoices issued and no outstanding payments.

d. Payments for approval

The Clerk circulated the payments for approval statement to the Parish Council prior to the meeting.

The following payments were submitted for the Parish Council's approval.

| Date | Customer | Amount |
|-------------|---|------------------|
| 12.09.16 | Refund to Cllr M. Robertson (Water Park materials) | £87.16 |
| 12.09.16 | Refund to Cllr M. Beadle. Gift to the retiring school crossing patrol officer and cleaning materials for the Parish Council offices | £21.59 |
| 12.09.16 | Inspirar – Website design final payment. | £600.00 |
| 12.09.16 | Refund to Clerk for postage paid | £1.28 |
| 12.09.16 | Zurich Insurance – Additional Premium for new play equipment | £110.62 |
| 12.09.16 | Scottish Power – Electric monthly payment | £1.00 |
| 12.09.16 | Materials for cleaning pond 3 to be subject to three quotations see Minute No. 66a above. | |
| 25.09.16 | BT Hub monthly payment | £34.49 |
| 30.09.16 | J. D. Lynn – Litter Picker's pay | £489.60 |
| 30.09.16 | C. I. Wood – Cleaner's pay | £70.00 |
| 30.09.16 | A. W. Macnab – Clerk's pay | £699.60 |
| 30.09.16 | M. Palfreyman – Grounds Maintenance | £653.00 |
| | Total | £2,768.34 |

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

e. Budget for 2017-18 and 2018-19

The Clerk circulated a budget statement for the 2017-18 financial year and emphasized that this was the first attempt to construct a budget for the year and budget statements would have to be prepared for the following two financial years in accordance with the Financial Regulations. More work would be carried out on the budget statement for 2017-18 before it and the financial statements for 2018-19 were presented to the Parish Council in November to enable the precept to be set.

f. Audit Action Plan

Councillor Mrs. Beadle reported that the internal auditor would be called back to carry out a mid year audit to determine the progress which was being made to implement the action plan. The Parish Council considered the number of accounts and **agreed** that the two Saver Accounts be combined into one account. **Action: Clerk.**

73. Standards

a. Approval of documents

The Clerk reported that the Standards Committee meeting on the 17th August, 2016 had agreed that the following documents be forwarded to the Parish Council for approval. The documents had been circulated to the Parish Council prior to the meeting.

- i. Standards Committee Terms of Reference.
- ii. Members Code of Conduct.
- iii. The Parish Council's Standing Orders.
- iv. Risk Assessment.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the Standards Committee Terms of Reference, the Members Code of Conduct, the Parish Council's Standing Orders and the Risk Assessment be approved. **Action: Clerk.**

b. Assets Register and Insurance

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's assets which were covered by insurance were being compared with the Assets Register and both documents were being brought up to date. **Action: Clerk.**

c. Leases

The Clerk reported that the only lease was the one for the Darlington and District Motor Boat Club to use one of the ponds in the Water Park.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

74. Community Liaison

a. Community Liaison Committee Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the Community Liaison Committee had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Parish Council agreed to approve the terms of reference for the committee.

b. Residents Survey

The Clerk circulated to the meeting the draft residents' survey which had been prepared by the Chairman of the Parish Council for comments.

The Parish Council considered that the survey should not be sent to every household in the Parish, but that paper copies should be placed in all shops, hotels/public houses, the cricket club, Dinsdale Court and the Community Centre with a notice placed in each outlet to catch people's attention. The survey should be placed on the website and Facebook for electronic completion

The Parish Council was satisfied with the survey questions, the survey should be distributed on the 1st October but that a closing date of the 31st October be inserted.

The Parish Council suggested that a modified version of the survey be discussed with the Headteacher of St. George's CE VA Primary School to obtain the views of children living in the Parish.

The Parish Council **agreed** that:

- i. the questions in the resident's survey were acceptable;
- ii. the survey should be distributed on the 1st October with a closing date of the 31st October.
- iii. paper copies of the survey should be placed in placed in all shops, hotels/public houses, the cricket club, Dinsdale Court and the Community Centre with a notice placed in each outlet to catch people's attention;
- iv. the survey should be put on the Parish Council's website and Facebook page for electronic completion; and
- v. discussions be held with the Headteacher of St. George's CE VA Primary School to draw up a modified version of the survey for school children.

Action: The Chairman of the Parish Council and Clerk.

Chairman's Signature..... Date.....

c. Website

The Vice Chairman reported that approximately 80% of the website was now complete. The Chairman has been passing information to Inspirar in recent weeks. All Councillors have been sent a link to view the website off line. Parish Councillors need to see and get used to it. Any comments should be passed to the Chairman and he will check and pass to Inspirar. Training on the new website will take place during the last week of September with the. The Website would go live on the 1st October.

d. Facebook

The Vice Chairman reported that she was now the editor of the Parish Council’s Facebook page.

The intention was to close the old Facebook page account and open a new one which Inspirar will set up.

The Parish Council **agreed** to note the reports on the website and Facebook.

75. IT Support

The Vice Chairman reported that the Chairman had requested a projector and screen be purchased and installed in the Parish Council Meeting Room linked to the laptop to help guide Parish Councillors through the reports at meetings.

Parish Councillors advised that a projector and screen exists possibly in the attic of the Parish Council building or been stored somewhere and this needed to be investigated.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the location of the projector and screen be investigated and if the projector and screen cannot be found three prices for the equipment will be sought.

76. Christmas Tree

The Clerk reported that a quotation had been received from Elvedon Estates for the provision of the Christmas tree.

The Parish Council **agreed** that two further quotations be obtained for supplying the Christmas tree.

77. Date of next meeting

The Parish Council **agreed** that the next meeting will be held on Monday 10th October, 2016 at 6.30 p.m. in the Parish Council Meeting Room.

Chairman’s Signature..... Date.....