



Middleton St George Parish Council

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DRAFT

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held at 6.30pm on Monday 13th March, 2017 in the Parish Council Meeting Room

Present: Councillor C. Pease (Chairman),
Councillor Mrs. E. Robertson (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. M Beadle,
Councillor S. Crowther,
Councillor C Everett,
Councillor Mrs. C. Gilsean,
Councillor Mrs. V. Greenwell,
Councillor A. Hill,
Councillor M. Robertson,
Councillor M. Wilson,
Alan Macnab, (Clerk)

In attendance: 1 Member of the Public
Two representatives from Middleton Carp Fishery.

The meeting started at 6.30 p.m.

164. Chairman's Opening Address

The Chairman reported that a letter had been received from the Chief Executive of St. Teresa's Hospice thanking the Parish Council for its donation of £100 for the Christmas Tree collection service.

The Chairman asked the Parish Council to consider changing the date of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council which was scheduled to take place on the 8th May 2017 because some councillors were unavailable and it was important to have a full attendance. It was **agreed** that the Annual Meeting be changed from Monday 8th May to Monday 22nd May, 2017.

165. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillors B. Jones, Mrs. D. Jones and S. York.

166. Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interests were made.

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

167. Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting held on the 13th February, 2017

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 13th February, 2017 were presented. The Parish Council **agreed** that they were a true record of the proceedings. The Chairman signed the minutes.

168. Matters Arising

a. Keyholders and Signing in Procedures

The Clerk reported that the new lock had been fitted to the gate entrance to the Parish Council Meeting Room and new keys had been given to four Parish Councillors and three outside users. The signing in and out procedures had been explained and was in operation. The keys for the old lock had been returned to him.

b. Employee Pensions

The Chairman reported that the Litter Picker had indicated that he would like to make an 8% contribution from his pay to his pension. The Parish Council as his employers were not required to make any contribution. Following a discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Mrs. Greenwell and seconded by Councillor Mrs. Beadle that the Parish Council contribute 2% as the employer's contribution to the Litter Picker's pension.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the employer's contribution towards the Litter Picker's pension be 2% and that the starting date for the pension be the 1st April 2017.

e. Insurance Claim

The Chairman reported that an email had been received from the Parish Council's insurers, Zurich, which stated that they advise settling the claim and will subsequently recover the excess of £100 from the Parish Council. By settling the claim without an admission of liability, Zurich would protect the Parish Council's position in regards to any future claims and any succeeding claims would be handled and reviewed on their own merit. Zurich maintained that they do not consider any action could have been taken to foresee or prevent this incident, however it would not be cost effective to allow the claim to go to Court. If the case had gone to court it would not be economical to proceed to court and would cost in the region of £1,500 for a claim for £272.00.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council voted by a majority and **agreed** to accept the advice of Zurich Insurance and settle the claim without the Parish Council accepting liability. The Chairman will inform Zurich of the decision.

169. Water Park and Ground Maintenance

The Chairman stated that a meeting of the Water Park and Ground Maintenance Committee was held on the 29th January, 2017 which had considered the following matters:

a. Terms of Reference for the Committee

The amended Terms of Reference for Water Park Committee were circulated with the papers for the meeting and took account of the split responsibility for Ground Maintenance by area.

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The Parish Council **agreed** the amended Terms of Reference for the Water Park Committee.

b. Fishing Club Update

The Chairman reported that the Fishing Right Agreement had been drawn up and sent to Parish Councillors and Middleton Carp Fishery who were present at the meeting. The Chairman asked if there were any issues with the agreement and none were raised. The agreement was signed by both parties at the meeting and was now in effect.

The representatives from Middleton Fishery gave an update on the work they were carrying out around the pond they were using.

c. Model Boat Club

The draft three year lease with the Darlington and District Model Boat Club was circulated to Parish Councillors before the meeting. Since distribution a further clause had been added to allow termination by either side with one years notice.

The Chairman reported that the Model Boat Club had requested that several leylandi trees which were next to pond 1 be removed by the club because it was causing cracking to the parapet to pond 1.

The Parish Council **agreed**:

- a. The three year lease agreement with Darlington and District Model Boat Club. The Chairman would issue and sign the agreement.
- b. Agreement be given to the Model Boat Club to remove the leylandi trees which adjoined pond 1.

d. Blocked Culverts

The Chairman reported that culverts along the water park access road and in front of the Parish Council office had been cleared by Drain Devil a specialist drain cleaning company. However, during the clearing process damage and blockages were evident deeper down the pipework. On request, Drain Devil had submitted a quote for further work on the drains which would necessitate them being dug up and repaired. The price quoted for the work was £1,475. Three quotations were normally required for works in excess of £1,000 by the Financial Regulations. However, rather than re-offer the work to other bidders, which would require them to conduct additional investigation work, it was proposed that the existing company continue with the project.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the quotation from Drain Devil of £1,475 for further work on the gullies in the Water Park be accepted.

e. Water Park Maintenance and Improvements

The Chairman reported that:

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Difficulties were being experienced with the Grounds Maintenance contractor in clearing debris from tree and bush trimming. He had been contacted and chased-up about completing the work. The contractor now has a monthly schedule which he must follow and be monitored. Further transgressions to the schedule or quality of work would result in reviewing the payment arrangement.

The Grounds Maintenance contractor had asked for two posts at the Station Road entrance to the playing field be opened to allow him to get his machinery in to trim the trees and bushes. Unfortunately the keys could not be found and a locksmith was to be contacted to facilitate the removal of the bollards and provide a replacement key.

Two contractors, so far, had been approached to quote for resurfacing parking areas and installing a path around the ponds. A third is planned. Once the quotations have been received the council will try to acquire funding for the work through developers S106 contributions or grants.

The Parish Council **agreed** that:

- a. The clerk would inform the Grounds Maintenance Contractor that he must follow the schedule which had been agreed with him. He must send an invoice detailing the work he has carried out and once confirmed payment will then be made. The existing direct debit payments will be cancelled.
- b. Quotations for work on the paths around the three ponds and parking area be sent to the Chairman who will report to a future meeting of the Parish Council.

170. Planning Matters

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reported that a meeting of the Planning Committee was held on the 8th March, 2017 and gave the issues which had been considered and the decisions taken at the meeting.

a. Planning Applications Received

The following planning applications had been received and the decisions taken by the Committee.

17/00049/FUL. Erection of 5 light industrial/storage units and offices including demolition of existing sub-station and re-routing of cables to main existing sub-station, Land Adjoining Technology House Durham Tees Valley Airport, Middleton St. George.

The Committee **agreed** that no comment be made on this application.

17/00069/FUL. Siting of portable building to provide a temporary medical centre, construction of a car park and associated highway works, Middleton Hall Retirement Village, Middleton St. George.

The Committee **agreed** the following response: Before any permission is granted for this application, the transport issues concerning this site must be addressed. The Parish Council agrees with the recommendations made by the Sustainable Transport Officer regarding Public Transport (the bus service particularly needs improving due to its current inadequacy) and Walking and Cycling. However, The Parish Council does not think

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that a separate bus turning point needs to be constructed close to the proposed site, since the bus could turn around at the existing roundabout at the airport just past the Oak Tree Inn, which is no more than 400 yards down the road.

17/00083/FUL. Erection of single storey extension to the front, 62 Middleton Lane, Middleton St. George.

The Committee **agreed** that no comment be made on this application.

16/01256/FUL. Residential development comprising 12 No. dwellings (Revised scheme) Field To The East Of Oak Tree Inn, Yarm Road, Oak Tree, Middleton St. George.

The Committee **agreed** the following response: The Parish Council objects to this application on the following grounds: a) Lack of education provision (this development was not accounted for in the section 106 contribution to St George's Academy extension – revised maximum capacity of the school, as it cannot expand any further); b) Over-development of the village; c) Lack of adequate bus service to that end of the village.

17/00117/FUL - Erection of a detached garden room to the rear, 4 Ashdale Close, Middleton St. George.

The Committee **agreed** that no comment be made on this application.

17/00147/ADV Display of 2 non-illuminated V Boards and 5 No. flagpoles (retrospective), Land at Station Road, Middleton St. George.

The Committee **agreed** that no comment be made on this application but expressed concern that this application was "retrospective".

b. Update on Middleton Lane – 27 houses

The Chairman of the Parish Council had requested copies of the correspondence on the call in to the Secretary of State, but it had not been received and the Clerk was asked to follow this up.

c. Possible Plans for new Church Centre

The PCC Secretary and Churchwarden were unable to attend the Planning Committee meeting, but an email had been received from the PCC Secretary reporting that as future plans did not involve building a church the Diocese would not be involved in the matter.

d. Other Matters to Report

Consultation was taking place on the Government's White Paper on Housing. The CPRE guidance had produced helpful guidance which was circulated to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council **agreed** the response to the CPRE.

e. Sadberge Road Housing Development

The resident who was present at the meeting outlined the problems which were being experienced with

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weekend working outside the permitted times at weekends and during the week and deliveries to the site at 6.30 a.m. during the week.

It was reported that the permitted working hours on the site were 8:00am and 6:00pm Mondays to Fridays, 8:00am and 1:00pm on Saturdays and no working on Sundays or Public Holidays. The developers had also been served with a warning notice by Darlington Borough Council for infringements of the planning conditions.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the Clerk will write to the Borough Council's Enforcement Officer to ask him to investigate the issue of deliveries to the site at 6.30 a.m. during the week.

171. Financial Matters

The Chairman of the Parish Council reported that a meeting of the Finance Committee had been held on the 6th March, 2017 and he gave details of the issues discussed.

a. Financial Statement, Progress against the Budget and Bank Reconciliation

i. Financial Statement

The Financial Statement gave the income, expenditure and balances in the Parish Council's accounts as at the 28th February, 2017 were:

Barclays Saver Account 1: £21,313.08.

Barclays Saver Account 2: £16,269.78

Darlington Credit Union Account: £5,068.78

Barclaycard: £500 limit. £4.00 expenditure in February 2017 for photocopying at Durham Records Office £4.00 and one payment of £42.20 for purchasing 200 wheelie bin black bags on the 6th March, 2017

Community Account as at the 7th March, 2017: £38,853.73

ii. Progress against the budget

The Progress against the Budget Statement as at the 7th March, 2017 showed that the projected carry forward from the 2016-17 financial year to the 2017-18 financial year of £29,034.93. The Chairman reported that progress was £10,000 under budget as several projects planned for the current year would now roll into FY 17/18.

The expenditure for Christmas 2016 had exceeded the budget by £472.40 and that alternative plans needed to be out in place for next Christmas.

iii. Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliation on the 7th March, 2017 showed that the balance of the Community Account held by

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the Parish Council was £38,853.73 and the balance of the Community Account at the bank was £38,999.15. A difference of £145.00. This was due to three cheques for £16.04, £125.00 and £4.38 not being cleared by the bank.

b. Payments Received and Outstanding

Payments Received:

Date	Customer	Amount
31.01.17	Nil	

Payments Outstanding

Date	Supplier	Amount
13.03.17	Drain Devil. Cleaning gullies in the Water Park	£385.00

Payments for Approval:

Date	Supplier	Amount
13.03.17	Drain Devil. Cleaning of gullies in the Water Park	£385.00
13.03.17	Councillor C. Everett. Purchase of signs and materials	£9.16
13.03.17	Darlington Borough Council. Installation and removal of Christmas Tree	£206.40
13.03.17	Scottish Power Gas Monthly	£32.00
23.03.17	BT Hub Monthly	£35.89
31.03.17	Cleaner – C.I. Wood	£70.00
31.03.17	Litter Picker – J. D. Lynn	£489.60
31.03.17	Clerk – A. W. Macnab	£559.80
31.03.17	Grounds Maintenance M. Palfreman	£653.00
	Total	£2,440.85

Community Account as at the 7th March, 2017

Income		Outgoing	Balance
Carried forward	£49,527.95		
Precept	£41,659.00		
Other	£20,201.91		
Total	£111,388.86	£72,535.13	£38,853.73

c. Annual Statutory Return and Internal Auditor’s audit of accounts

The Chairman reported that the Internal Auditor will carry out the audit of the Parish Council’s 2016-17 accounts on the 24th April, 2017 as part of the Annual Statutory Return.

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d. Budget Review 2017-18 and 2018-19 Financial Years

The Chairman reported that the Finance Committee had reviewed the budgets for 2017-18 and 2018-19 at its meeting on the 6th March, 2017. The increase in the precept for 2017-18 was the result of the loss of the Council Tax Support Grant and he anticipated that there would be a further small increase in the precept in the 2018-19 financial year.

The Parish Council **agreed** the proposed budgets.

172. Playground

Councillor Everett reported that a meeting of the Playground Committee was held on the 27th February, 2017 and gave the issues which had been considered.

a. Health and Safety Check

Health and Safety checks were continuing to be carried out by the Clerk. The issue of training for the Clerk to carry out this work was considered by the Committee. The Parish Council considered that there was no need for special training.

b. Maintenance Issues

There was a need for further repairs to be made to the fencing. Councillor Everett will assess the maintenance needs and obtain prices.

The Parish Council **agreed** that maintenance work be carried out after the RoSPA inspection in May.

c. Dog fouling

Dog fouling signs had been purchased and erected.

d. Terms of Reference with regard to the Use of the Playing Field

The Committee considered that there was a need to put in its Terms of Reference that the use of the football pitch by village clubs and any organisation is managed on a fair and equitable basis, and only with the authority of the Parish Council, and by liaising with, and monitoring clubs' use of facilities.

The Chairman proposed that after the football season finished that the goalposts be removed and pitch repaired. Over the summer five-a-side goals be purchased and sited across the football pitch to continue sporting activity.

The Parish Council **agreed** that:

The Playground Committee arrange for the removal and storage of goalposts, pitch repairs and obtain prices for 5-a-side goals.

The revised Terms of Reference were accepted.

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173. Village Flag

The Parish Council considered condition of the Union Flag and possible alternatives for specific events.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the flag flown should be the Union Flag and the Clerk was asked to purchase a new Union Flag.

174. Village Coat of Arms

The Chairman aired the possibility of having a village coat of arms or emblem resulting from discussions with Northumbria in Bloom representatives.

Following a heated and split discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** that the Chairman would consult the History Club and Primary School for design ideas prior to taking the matter further.

175. Standards

Councillor Mrs. Gilsean gave the key points from the meeting of the Standards Committee on the 27th February, 2017.

a. Councillor audit of accounts

The Committee agreed that the accounts be audited by the two named Parish Councillors quarterly and the Financial Regulations be amended accordingly.

b. Timetable of Controls

The Timetable of Controls spreadsheet was circulated to the Parish Council before the meeting. The Chairman reported that the financial parts of the controls were in place. The Clerk was asked to complete the Timetable of Controls and provide a copy of it to the Internal Auditor.

d. Important Documents List

The Important Documents List was circulated to the Parish Council before the meeting. The Chairman explained that the list gives the Parish Council documents which are in place and the date when they were approved by the Parish Council. The Chairman will update it after this meeting.

e. Membership of the County Durham Association of Local Councils

The Clerk reported that he had written to the Secretary of the County Durham Association to ask for the cost of the Parish Council joining the Association. The subscriptions were based on the number of electors and this information had been sent to the Secretary. He was awaiting a response from the Secretary.

f. Committee Terms of Reference Change

The Committee had agreed that the meetings be held as and when required but at least once each year and the Terms of Reference were amended accordingly.

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The Parish Council **agreed** the Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee with the amendment.

g. New Procedures

The following procedures were circulated to the Parish Council before the meeting:

- Communications Policy.
- Employee Welfare Policy.

The Parish Council **agreed** the Communications Procedure be accepted but more work was required on other procedures.

176. Northumbria in Bloom

The Chairman reported that he had met with the village Northumbria in Bloom Team and offered help and support to the team. There will be a fund raising event on the 18th March which had been advertised in the noticeboards. Spring Judging will take place during week commencing the 24th April, 2017.

The Parish Council **agreed** to note the report.

177. Request for financial assistance from Middleton St. George Cricket Club

The Chairman reported that a request was received from Middleton St. George Cricket Club for financial assistance or advice regarding repairing damage to the roof of its building.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** that Cllr Everett would investigate the request in more depth and report at the next meeting.

178. Request for financial assistance from Middleton St. George and District Allotments and Gardens Annual Show

The Chairman reported that a request for financial assistance from the Middleton St. George and District Allotments and Gardens Association towards its annual show on the 19th August, 2017.

The Parish Council **agreed** that a Section 137 donation be made at the same level as last year. The Clerk was asked to find out the amount which was given last year and make arrangements for the same amount to be paid.

179. Parish Council Offices Fire Safety

Councillor M. Robertson reported that he had completed the Fire Risk Assessment for the Parish Council offices and had placed fire safety notices and torches in the building to be used if the lighting failed. The assembly point in the event of a fire was outside the building.

180. Parish Council Maintenance

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The Chairman reported that quotations had been received to decorate the interior of the Parish Council offices but they were expensive and as a result the decorating will be carried out on a self-help basis.

The external painting of the Parish Council offices cannot be carried out because the wooden soffits were found to be rotten and need to be replaced. A quote (£1,000) had been received for the preliminary repair work.

Quotations were being also being obtained for external decorating of the Parish Council offices once the soffits had been replaced.

The Parish Council **agreed** to:

- a. Internal decoration on a self-help basis.
- b. Action the work for the soffit repairs.
- c. Obtain quotes for the external decoration.

181. Projects

The Chairman referred to the initial list of projects which he had sent to Parish Councillors for consideration. Further, that they should add any ideas for improvement projects to the list for future consideration and budgeting.

182. Community Liaison

Councillor Mrs. Gilsenan reported that she will arrange the next meeting of the Community Liaison Committee.

183. Date of Next Meeting

The Parish Council **agreed** that the next meeting will be held on **Monday 10th April, 2017 at 6.30 p.m. in the Parish Council Meeting Room.**

The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.

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