



Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 22nd May, 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. Gilsenan,
Councillor Mrs. V. Greenwell,
Councillor A. Hill,
Councillor M. Wilson.
Alan Macnab, (Clerk)

In attendance: 2 Members of the Public

The meeting started at 6.30 p.m.

214. Welcome and Updates

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Council Meeting and thanked the Chairs of Committees for their reports.

The Chairman gave the following updates on the issues which had been raised at the Parish Council Meeting on the 15th May, 2017.

a. Flag

The new Union Flag was now flying from the flagpole.

b. Village Emblem

Progress has been made with designing the Village Emblem. He will be visiting St. George's CE Academy on the 26th May to collect the children's art work which will be judged at the next Parish Council Meeting.

c. Seating on The Front, Middleton One Row.

A meeting has taken place with Mike McBride of the Friends of the Front on the 18th May, 2017. It was agreed at the meeting that the seating needed to be jet blasted to clean them up and then assess remedial action needed. Mr. Holmes who had offered his services to the Parish Council at the meeting on the 15th May, 2017 will be obtaining quotes for jet washing the seats.

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

d. Water Park Maintenance

A response was awaited from Mr. Spence who will be laying new car parks and footpaths in the Water Park.

215. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M. Robertson and Ward Councillors Mrs. D. Jones, B. Jones and S. York.

216. Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interests were made.

217. Chairman’s Report

The Chairman presented his report to the Parish Council. A copy of the report is given in Appendix 1 of the minutes of this meeting.

A vote of thanks was given to the Chairman for his comprehensive report and leadership during the first year of the new Parish Council.

218. Election of Chairman of the Parish Council

Councillor C. Pease was proposed by Mrs. M. Beadle and seconded by Councillor C. Everett as Chairman for the 2017-18 year. No other nominations were made.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** that Councillor C. Pease be elected as Chairman for the 2017-18 year. Councillor Pease accepted the proposal and thanked the Parish Council for their backing. However, he requested more active support from other councillors in the forthcoming year.

219. Resignation of the Vice Chairman, Councillor Mrs. E. Robertson

Councillor Mrs. E. Robertson informed the meeting that she had decided to leave the Parish Council with immediate effect because of her work commitments and handed her letter of resignation to the Chairman.

The Clerk explained the procedures that a casual vacancy now existed. The Elections Officer of Darlington Borough Council must be informed who will produce public notice which will be displayed in Darlington Town Hall and in the Parish Council’s three noticeboards for a period of 14 working days (excluding weekends and public holidays). If 10 electors indicate to the Elections Officer that they require an election to be held to fill the vacancy the election must be held. If at the end of the 14 working day period there is no demand for an election, which would be paid for from parish funds. the Parish Council will be free to co-opt to the vacancy.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed**:

- a. to declare that a vacancy existed for a Parish Councillor; and
- b. that the Clerk will inform the Elections Officer of Darlington Borough Council to arrange for the public notice to be drawn up and posted in Darlington Town Hall and the three Parish Council noticeboards.

Chairman’s Signature..... Date.....

220. Election of Vice Chairman

Councillor Mrs. C. Gilson was proposed by Councillor S. Crowther and seconded by Councillor Mrs. V. Greenwell for Vice Chairman for the 2017-18 year. No other nominations were made.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** that Councillor Mrs. C. Gilson be elected as Vice Chairman for the 2017-18 year.

221. Consideration of Reports from Committees

The meeting received reports from the Chairs of the following committees:

Finance Committee.
Planning Committee.
Water Park Committee.
Standards Committee.
Community Liaison Committee.
Health and Safety Committee.
Playground Committee.

The reports are given in Appendices 2.1 to 2.7 to these minutes.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting thanked the Chairs of the Committees for their reports.

222. Review of Delegation Arrangements to Staff

It was reported that the Parish Council had agreed that the Clerk's delegate spending limit for administration was £500 on its Barclaycard.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting agreed that the Clerk's delegated spending limits for administration on Barclaycard remain at £500.

223. Committees

a. Appointment of New Committees

The Chairman proposed and Councillor Mrs. M. Beadle seconded that the Playground and Water Park Committees be merged to form a Parks and Grounds Committee.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** that the Playground and Water Park Committees be merged to form a new Parks and Grounds Committee.

b. Frequency of Meetings

The Annual Parish Council reviewed the frequency of Committee meetings and **agreed** that:

The Finance and Planning Committees continue to meet monthly.
The Standards and Community Liaison Committees to meet 6 monthly.

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

The first meeting of the Parks and Grounds Committee will decide the frequency of its meetings.

c. Terms of Reference of Committees

The terms of reference of the Committees had been circulated with the papers for the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** that the terms of reference be reviewed at the first meetings after the Annual Parish Council Meeting and the Chairman will draw up the terms of reference for the Parks and Grounds Committee.

d. Membership of Committees and Representatives

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** that membership of Committees in 2017-18 will be as follows:

Finance
Councillor Mrs. M. Beadle - Chair
Councillor C. Pease
Councillor Mrs. V. Greenwell
Councillor M. Wilson
Councillor M. Robertson

Planning
Councillor Mrs. C. Gilsenan - Chair
Councillor C. Pease
Councillor S. Crowther
Councillor Mrs. M. Beadle
Councillor M. Wilson
Councillor A. Hill

Parks and Grounds
Councillor C. Pease - Chair (Provisional)
Councillor M. Robertson
Councillor M. Wilson
Councillor Mrs. M. Beadle
Councillor C. Everett
Councillor Mrs. C. Gilsenan
Councillor Mrs. V. Greenwell
Community Centre Representative
Boat Club Representative
Fishing Representative

Community Liaison
Councillor Mrs. C. Gilsenan - Chair
Councillor C. Pease
Councillor Mrs. M. Beadle
Councillor Mrs. V. Greenwell

Standards
Councillor Mrs. C. Gilsenan - Chair
Councillor C. Pease
Councillor A. Hill
Councillor Mrs. M. Beadle

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** that the Parish Council’s representatives in the 2017-18 year will be as follows:

Association of Parish Councils
Councillor C. Pease

Allotments
Councillor M. Wilson

Traffic Monitoring
Councillor M. Wilson

Committee Auditor
Councillor A. Hill

Chairman’s Signature..... Date.....

Durham Tees Valley Airport
Councillor M. Robertson

Health and Safety
Councillor S. Crowther
Councillor M. Robertson

Northumbria in Bloom
Councillor Mrs. M. Beadle

224. Review and Adoption of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** that the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations will be reviewed at the August 2017 meeting of the Parish Council for the Financial Regulations and the Standing Orders will be reviewed at the September 2017 meeting of the Parish Council.

225. Appointment of Signatories for Payment Statements, Cheques and the Barclaycard

The Clerk reported that the signatories for payment statements, cheques and the Barclaycard was the Chairman of the Parish Council or the Chair of the Finance Committee in the Chairman’s absence and the Clerk.

The Parish Council agreed that the signatories for payment statements, cheques and Barclaycard will be the Chairman of the Parish Council or the Chair of the Finance Committee and the Clerk.

226. Approval of Procedures

The following procedures were circulated to the Annual Parish Meeting:

- Health and Safety Procedures.
- Employee Welfare Procedures.
- Freedom of Information Procedures and Publication Scheme.
- Complaints Procedures.

Following a discussion, the Chairman proposed and Councillor Mrs. Beadle seconded that the Freedom of Information Procedures and Publication Scheme and the Complaints Procedures be approved.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** that the Freedom of Information Procedures and Publication Scheme and Complaints Procedures be approved and the Health and Safety and Employee Welfare Procedures be referred to Councillor S. Crowther for redrafting.

227. Representation on and working with external bodies

Representatives had already been allocated to various external bodies such as:

- The Association of Parish Councils.
- Durham Tees Valley Airport.
- Allotments Association.

Chairman’s Signature..... Date.....

In addition, the Council has established better integration with:

Darlington Borough Council through Planning Workshops.

Campaign to Protect Rural England.

The MSG Community Association, St George's Academy School and various clubs and activities.

228. Review of Pay of the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, Litter Picker and Cleaner

The Annual Parish Council meeting considered the pay of the Clerk, Litter Picker and Cleaner.

The Clerk informed the meeting that he was satisfied with the pay he was receiving, the Litter Picker received the National Minimum Wage which had been increased from the 1st April, 2017 and the Cleaner's pay had been fixed for a number of years.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** that no increases in pay be made to the Clerk, Litter Picker and Cleaner.

229. Assets Register

The Assets Register was considered. The Chairman reported that the Assets Register was reviewed twice in the last year and the next review will take place at the November 2017 meeting of the Parish Council.

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

230. Insurance

The Clerk reported that the current insurance policy with Zurich Insurance was due to expire on the 18th June, 2017. He had received a renewal quotation from Zurich Insurance for £1,381.72 for one year, £1,318.25 for three years or £1,258.82 for five years. The current payment to Zurich Insurance was £1,402.27.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** that the Clerk will obtain two further insurance quotations and to bring them to the next meeting of the Parish Council on the 12th June, 2017.

231. Accounts and the Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March 2017

The Annual Internal Audit Report and Sections 1 Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements for the 2016-17 financial year were presented to the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

a. Annual Internal Audit Report

The Internal Audit Report stated that there were no recommendations for the audit and gave the Parish Council his Full Assurance on its internal controls. There would be no need for a further audit until the end of the 2017-18 financial year.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **agreed** to note the Annual Internal Audit Report.

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

b. Annual Governance Statement

The Clerk reported that he had circulated to Parish Councillors a report giving how the Parish Council was complying with the requirements of the Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return.

The Clerk then read out the conditions in the Annual Governance Statement.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **approved** the Annual Governance Statement

c. Accounting Statements

The Clerk gave the calculations of the amounts in the Annual Governance Statement. The Statement consisted of the balance carried forward from the previous financial year at the beginning of the 2016-17 financial year, the precept, receipts, staff costs, all other payments, the balances and total cash and investment balances at the end of the 2016-17 financial year and the value of the total fixed assets.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting **approved** the Accounting Statements and asked the Clerk to send the Annual Return to the external auditors, BDO, as soon as possible.

232. Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Annual Parish Council **agreed** that Gordon Fletcher be re-appointed as its Internal Auditor.

233. Open Forum

A resident asked if the WIFI connection in the Parish Council office could be extended to the Community Centre. The Chairman responded that permission for the extension was granted through the Mens’s Sheds organization in December 2016 and passwords provided. The Community Centre had been informed.

Concern was expressed about number of weeds along the path at the rear of Mount Pleasant Close and the Play Area in Station Road leading to Woolsington Drive. The Chairman responded that the path was the responsibility of the Borough Council and not part of the Parish Council’s Grounds Maintenance Contract. However, clearing it would be looked into.

234. Dates for Parish Council and Committee Meetings in 2017-18.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting agreed that primarily the Finance Committee Meeting will be held on the first Monday in each month, the Planning Committee on the first Wednesday in each month and the Parish Council meeting will be held on the second Monday in each month in the 2017-18 year unless extenuating circumstances apply.

235. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 12th June, 2017 at 6.30 p.m. in the Parish Council Meeting Room.

Chairman’s Signature..... Date.....



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Chairman's Report

The Elections in May 2016 incorporated the parish boundary change and the inclusion of what was the northern part of the Low Dinsdale Parish into Middleton St George. Ten councillors were elected, of which 3 were new to the role of Parish Councillor, including myself. I should remind you that we are unpaid volunteers giving up our time to look after the village and its interests. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank residents who similarly commit to various clubs and activities to improve and enhance the village. Your help is very much appreciated.

Thinking back to last May, it was a tortuous start having to deal with external audit issues and the recruitment of a new Parish Clerk. However, these were dealt with, and the new Parish Council was soon on a firm administrative, organizational and financial base.

One of my key objectives was to ensure we established an open and consultative Council. A new Website and Facebook Page have been introduced and kept up to date to ensure all interested parties are aware of news on local village issues. We have also held a Residents Meeting to discuss our approach to development problems, as well as a Residents Survey to elicit your views on matters that concern you the most. I regularly walk the Parish, including One Row and the Virginia Estate, so that I can see any problem areas and listen to residents' concerns. It would be nice to see more resident attendance at our Parish meetings to see and hear what we are up to on your behalf.

Planning

Quite rightly the hottest topic with residents. We suspended work on the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). It was clearly going nowhere, especially given the fact that the Darlington Borough Council Local Plan was not up to date, and even the consultants, when questioned, could not offer a positive outcome. We have attended NDP workshops but, with the pace of development, don't see how we could produce a plan, agreed by a village referendum, and supported by DBC, that wasn't constantly overtaken by events.

Over the past year we have reviewed and commented on a plethora of planning applications; mostly minor but also some larger proposed developments such as those at the airport. I regret to say under the current target-driven push to build houses (due to National Planning Policy) we have had little success. In all, 3 applications were 'CALLED IN' to the Secretary of State for review but with no success. In addition to raising objections where there were reasonable grounds, we have also been strongly lobbying the Borough Council to change the way planning applications are assessed. Our strategy has been to direct them to assess the overall cumulative impact on the village of all the developments, rather than as individual sites. Also, to ensure that developers have a responsibility to contribute towards the infrastructure and amenities commensurate to the size of their proposed developments.

This strategy has gained some support in the borough council planning department and a workshop was convened to look at a Masterplan for the village. I am still sceptical of success, particularly as this view does not seem to have been adopted by the DBC Planning Committee who seem to continue to approve applications regardless of any objections however reasonable.

Financial

Having resolved 2016 audit issues we are now on a stable footing and have incorporated controls to ensure we remain so. We have taken on a new Auditor to assist in the process, and have now received a much-improved clean bill of health on our accounts prior to submission to the External Audit Authority later this month when signed off at the Annual meeting.

We have prepared our budget initially for the next 2 years. I am sure you are aware of a small increase to your Council Tax covering the Parish Precept. This has been due to the withdrawal of the Council Support Grant by DBC and merely makes up the shortfall. I would like to promise no further rises but as more council services are reduced we may well have to take up the slack.

Nevertheless, finances are sound and will be managed within budget, including emergency and contingency funds for unforeseen problems. Progress against budget, updated quarterly, is on our website for your perusal.

General

We continue the never-ending maintenance and repairs to existing facilities and attempt to get the best value for money. We have entered into agreements with the Model Boat Club and new Fishing Club to use the Water Park facilities on the stipulation that they maintain their areas and provide income to the parish. Further work is planned in the Water Park to resurface car parks and part of the road. Also, to install a footpath around the reservoirs to provide year-round access without getting covered in mud.

We have also supported various initiatives and clubs to maintain their activities and will continue to do so where it is of benefit to the village as a whole.

Summary

As my first year as a Parish Councillor and Chairman comes to an end I must say that I was not expecting to be so busy. However, it has been a rewarding for me to be able to do what I can for the village and also to get to know many more residents. On the other hand, it has been very frustrating with the limited authority and funds we have to effect change. Nevertheless, we will push on and continue to do our best to try and keep MSG a safe and pleasant place to live, despite the development onslaught. I welcome any ideas, initiatives or projects you care to put forward and we'll do what we can to support them going forward.

Cllr Colin Pease
Chairman



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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee Annual Report 16/17

We had a healthy balance of £36424. 91 carried forward from 2016 to 2017 but in order to cover the loss of the grant from DBC we had to increase the precept by approximately 7%, thus making a precept of £45182.00

We ring-fenced the two savings accounts of £21313.08 and £16,271.66 to cover major contingencies in the waterpark and on the land owned by the PC on the front at Middleton-One-Row.

The credit union account containing £5068.78 will cover election costs currently estimated at approximately £3500.

A new internal auditor was employed and to ensure that we were on track for the audit requirements we requested a midterm audit. The recommendations from this audit have enabled us to improve our systems so that further midterm audits are no longer necessary.

The timetable of controls will ensure that we maintain good standards of administration to meet audit requirements.

The annual audit has been submitted to the BDO.

The budget for this financial year has been circulated and monies identified for village projects whilst ensuring sufficient funds are available for routine maintenance and normal expenditure. We are still awaiting information about the availability of S106 monies and how they can be used. The chairman has requested of DBC that such monies are not restricted to the site from which they originated but can be used for the general improvement of village leisure activities and amenities.

Our income is derived mainly from the precept, boat club and fishing pond rentals and, after some concerns about the future of the fishing, is reasonably stable. We currently receive a grant towards the litter pickers wages, whether this will continue in the future is uncertain.

As per financial regulations monthly accounts are available at the Parish Council meetings.

Maggie Beadle
Chair of Finance Committee



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Planning Committee

2016/2017

Chair's Report for the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 22nd May 2017

The newly constituted Parish Council set up a Planning Committee so that sufficient time could be allocated to discuss and respond to planning applications and other planning issues. Terms of Reference govern how meetings are conducted, and there are full minutes available.

The Committee meets monthly, and reports to the Parish Council meetings, where it gives account of its responses to straightforward planning applications (under delegated authority), and also refers more significant planning applications (such as major housing developments) to the full Parish Council, as well as providing updates and making recommendations on other planning matters (under advisory role).

All meetings are open to the public, and residents are welcome to address the Committee and bring any concerns to its attention.

It was agreed by the Parish Council that the Planning Committee would also oversee what was happening with the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), as the Parish Council has responsibility for this. It has been decided that the NDP should be put on hold for now, due to DBC not having an up to date Local Plan, but it will be under constant review.

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on Planning Applications, and therefore the Local Planning Authority (DBC) notifies us and invites us to respond within a period of 21 days, unless we ask for an extension, and we are allowed a few days more. In cases where there is likely to be a significant effect on the village, the Committee recommends public consultation (therefore, we held a public consultation meeting in October 2016 regarding 3 applications: 350 houses at DTVA (16/00578/OUT), Middleton Lane (16/00972/FUL) and Station Road (16/00976/OUT)).

In the last year, we have received notification of around 50 planning applications.

The large majority of planning applications (householder) are straightforward, and although some have been in Conservation Areas, they have been dealt with appropriately. For these, there have been relatively few neighbour objections, and permission is usually granted. The one contentious one was for 64 Middleton Lane "Mown Meadow", which went to DBC Planning Applications Committee to be determined. Applicant had submitted various applications for this site over the years. The Parish Council raised concerns due to it being in a Conservation Area, and due to archaeological remains in situ. At DBC Committee on 08/03/2017, however, permission was **granted** due to the affordable housing element.

Major Planning Applications - Decisions:

Applications submitted prior to the new Parish Council being set up in May 2016:

Doctors Surgery and 26 Houses, Yarm Road, 16/01006/OUT

DBC Planning Decision dated 27/06/2016 (**granted** subject to conditions). Decision of the Department for Communities and Local Government dated 22/06/2016 not to “call in” the Application.

High Stell/Grendon Gardens Development, 16/00976/OUT

DBC Planning Decision dated 01/07/2016 (**granted** subject to conditions). Decision of Department for Communities and Local Government dated 19/04/2016 not to “call in” the Application.

Applications submitted to the new Parish Council:

8 Apartments and 12 Dwellings next to Oak Tree Inn, - 16/00059/FUL – Permission Refused (August 2016).

Reasons: design, density, access, and no affordable housing provision.

16/00578/OUT – 350 houses, Land to the East of Oak Tree Farm, DTVA. Despite presenting strong grounds for opposition, and a supported proposal from DBC Planning Committee for a deferral due to lack of detailed information on pupil figures and financial information demonstrating how Peel would invest the capital to ensure the viability of the airport, the application was approved. SAVE Teesside Airport Campaign requested a Call In, but the Secretary of State decided not to do so.

16/00972/FUL – 27 Houses Middleton Lane. (Granted subject to planning conditions 08/02/2017). Planning Officer had recommended refusal based on Conservation Area, design and density, and flood risk. However, it was granted due to the affordable housing element. The Ward Councillors, supported by the Parish Councillors, requested it be Called In, but the Secretary of State decided not to do so.

16/00512/TC - Description : - Erection of a 15m monopole mast with 2 No. dishes, 3 No. cabinets and associated works Location Proposed Base Station Neasham Road MSG. This was **refused** planning permission in June 2016 due to proximity to houses and scale of mast.

17/00069/FUL – Siting of Temporary Building to house Surgery, Middleton Hall (Decision 18/05/2017, Delegated Report 16/05/2017). (Granted subject to conditions). The Parish Council raised concerns that there was not a suitable bus service. In the decision notice, there is **no concrete undertaking** for a suitable frequent bus service, although this is mentioned in the conditions. **Post meeting note. It was agreed that the Parish Council would write to DBC regarding this planning application not following the establish procedure.**

Major Planning Applications – Decisions Still to be Taken:

16/00976/OUT Outline application for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of up to 226 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), primary school (Use Class D1) and associated access, landscaping and engineering works with details of appearance, layout, landscape and scale reserved. Following the public consultation and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, an objection letter was sent on 6th November, together with a letter regarding cumulative impact on the whole village.

16/01256/FUL - Residential development comprising 12 No. dwellings (Revised scheme) Field To The East Of Oak Tree Inn, Yarm Road, Oak Tree, MSG . (This is a revised application to the one for 14 dwellings which the Parish Council objected to in its letter dated 18th January 2017 – enclosed for reference). The Committee agreed the following response: The Parish Council objects to this application on the following grounds: a) Lack of education provision (this development 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) Overdevelopment of the village; c) Lack of adequate bus service to that end of the village.

Others

There has been a pre-application consultation of some residents for a revised application of 43 houses on the Yarm Road/Killinghall Row site which had received planning permission previously for 26 houses and a doctor's surgery.

A word about Criteria for Calling In Applications by the Secretary of State

Anyone can request the Secretary of State to Call In an Application, at any stage of the process, giving clear grounds for such a request.

However, there are certain criteria (such as whether the development proposed would have a more widespread, or national effect*), and therefore he rarely decides to Call them In. We had hoped that the airport development would be one such case, but in the event it was not Called In.

*Such cases may include, for example, those which in his opinion:

- may conflict with national policies on important matters;
- [may have significant long-term impact on economic growth and meeting housing needs across a wider area than a single local authority];
- could have significant effects beyond their immediate locality;
- give rise to substantial cross-boundary or national controversy;
- raise significant architectural and urban design issues; or
- . may involve the interests of national security or of foreign Governments.

However each case will continue to be considered on its individual merits.

(House of Commons Briefing Paper SN00930 – Calling In Planning Applications, 11 July 2016)

Issues due to Development Sites

There have been a number of issues related to the building work at the Sadberge Road site, some of which has affected the Whinnies. Thanks to speedy notification to the Clerk by residents, these matters have been raised at Planning Committee, and we have dealt with them by communicating with the relevant bodies. We would ask residents to continue to notify us of such issues if they arise.

Darlington Local Plan

Our response to DBC and Consultation with regard to the Local Plan is to push for the DBC to see the effects of housing developments in the village as a whole, and to avoid the piecemeal targeting of various areas. We have written several letters to DBC emphasising what is needed in terms of infrastructure if, due to National Planning Policy and DBC's approach to "calls for sites" for development in order to satisfy the housing need, we are to accept such development. We are now starting to have meetings on this basis. However, there will be public consultation before any major decisions are taken, and we will still respond to each application on its own merits.

St Laurence's

The PCC approached the Parish Council about the possibility of building a church meeting room and associated offices on land next to the Parish Council building. Hazel Bullock and Alistair Mathieson attend Committee meetings to discuss any progress. This is still in the early stage of planning, and the Community Association are aware.

Our Responses to other Consultations

- NALC's Consultation on the Government's Neighbourhood Planning Bill (response sent 10/10/2016)
- Government Housing White Paper Consultation (April 2017) (Emphasising the importance of local consultation on housing need)
- Tees Valley Strategic Plan (17/01/2017) (Emphasised the importance of the airport, and of a decent bus service)
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Draft Local Plan (January 2017) (Supported the fact that they had a policy on safeguarding land at the airport)

Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) – Darlington and District Branch

Where possible, at least one of us has attended the monthly meetings, and we regularly keep in touch regarding planning applications. CPRE, like Parish Councils, are a statutory consultee. This has proved very helpful.

Middleton St George War Memorial

The Parish Council applied for its Listing, and was successful (December 2016). The Memorial has also been restored.

During 2017/2018, we will continue to:

- Approach planning issues in the same conscientious and accountable manner
- Work with DBC to try and achieve a better outcome for the village
- Take up concerns raised by residents, and aim to resolve these with everyone concerned.

Cllr Catherine Gilsenan
Chair of Planning Committee
21/05/2017



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Water Park Committee Annual Report

The Water Park report covers all amenities within the site, which includes the Parish Council office and MUGA as well as the Water Park area itself.

Parish Council Office

The office has required considerable refurbishment this year. The rotting fascia boards have been replaced and external decoration completed. Car parking for up to 3 cars has also been installed to alleviate the bottleneck at the entrance to the park. The old obsolescent CCTV system in both the office and Model Boat Club has been replaced and has been used on several occasions to provide information to the police. The heating system has been serviced and has needed repairs. Only an internal redecoration is now required. The addition of planters has been arranged through the Northumbria in Bloom team.

Park

MUGA. Rubbish has been a problem in this area. An additional bin has been provided. Fencing repairs have also been carried out.

Maintenance. A new schedule has been introduced to ensure the Ground Maintenance is carried out as per the contract. Automatic payment has been stopped until the work has been satisfactorily completed and an invoice submitted. In addition to the routine maintenance the committee has conducted tree trimming and tidying as required.

Model Boat Club. A 3-year lease has been agreed and signed with the club. They continue to maintain Pond 1 satisfactorily.

Fishing. Has been a problem this year with the Ferryhill Fishing Club being released from their contract. Uncontrolled fishing for a time had to be banned. A new club has been introduced and an agreement signed. Progress has been good so far.

Future Project. As agreed at the April Council Meeting the project to resurface the car parks by the Boat Club and Fishing area, and provide an all-weather footpath around the ponds has been initiated. Work will start soon.

General

From personal observation, and feedback from residents, the changes made have resulted in a cleaner more pleasant environment. The area is becoming increasingly popular with residents, fishermen and the boat club. We have also invited members of the Community Association, Fishing Club and Model Boat Club to join our committee. Anti-social behaviour is still an occasional problem but the Police have been asked to conduct random checks in the evenings, particularly at weekends.

Cllr Colin Pease
Chair Water Park Cttee



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Standards Committee

2016/2017

Chair's Report for the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 22nd May 2017

The newly constituted Parish Council set up a Standards Committee to ensure that the Parish Council continually review and update all required documentation, and also to assist the Parish Council, its Committees, Members and Staff, to adhere to standards and procedures. In this way, there will be good governance, and the Parish Council will continue to be open and accountable to the residents.

We have held two meetings (August 2016, and February 2017).

Our priorities have been:

- To ensure the Parish Council have up to date Essential documentation such as Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- That Committees produce Terms of Reference and that these have been agreed at Parish Council meetings
- To draft Policies (such as Health & Safety, Freedom of Information, and Communications), and that these are agreed and adopted by the Parish Council
- That the recommendations of the Internal Auditor's Reports have been carried out
- To keep updated on any legal or regulatory changes

To help us achieve these objectives, the Committee set up:

- A Timetable of Controls
- An Important Documents List, on which is recorded the dates the documents are adopted and reviewed by the Parish Council

It has been very worthwhile setting up the Standards Committee. We now have a good monitoring and review system in place. During 2017/2018, we will continue to review current documentation and procedures, and draft any documents that may be outstanding.

Cllr Catherine Gilsenan
 Chair of Standards Committee
 21/05/2017



Middleton St George Parish Council

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Community Liaison Annual Report

This year has seen the introduction of a new Parish Council Website and facebook page to provide news items, diary events and links to other clubs, societies and activities. Both seem to have been well received and the usage is rising.

We have carried out an open meeting to brief the community on our strategy regarding housing development. The meeting, covered by TV and radio, went well and we have received numerous positive comments from residents. To back this up a Residents' Survey was completed to ideally clarify our needs to DBC planning staffs. Regrettably, response was poor, nevertheless, in conjunction with a previous Neighbourhood Development Plan Survey gave us a firm idea of the platform to carry forward.

The Parish Council have become more actively involved with the Community Association, the Primary School through the Village Emblem competition, St Laurence's Church, and several other groups and activities during the year. Contact from residents through various means has been addressed promptly, honestly and positively.

Feedback has been positive and I am sure we are seen as much more approachable. We need to continue to build on this and consider additional means interact and inform. A biannual Newsletter is being considered.

CLlr Colin Pease
Chairman Community Liaison Cttee



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Health and Safety Committee Annual Report 2016-2017

The focus of the work of the Committee in the past year has been on maintaining a safe environment in the play park.

To this end a monthly inspection is undertaken of the equipment to ensure that no damage or wear is occurring that would endanger the children who use it. A record of these monthly inspections is kept for reference, which is signed off by the Chair of the Committee.

The installation at the end of last year of a wire rope ride created some concern over noise from the equipment, but refurbishment of this has eliminated the issue.

To date there have been no concerns regarding the safe condition of the play equipment or the surrounding area.

Stuart Crowther,
Health & Safety Representative



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PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE REPORT 2016-17

The new equipment caused a few complaints initially from a couple of local residents but has died down now with repairs to the zip wire and the fact that the novelty has worn off.

Grass and soil in a poor state because of traffic, odd litter and damage, dog mess but nothing too bad.

Football league has ended posts to come down and goal mouth repaired. Looks like new bins have been turned down by DBC.

Grass cutting and maintenance carried out to the specification. Looking for small soccer posts for summer months. Look to replace wooden fence at car park area.

Councillor Collin Everett,
Chair Playground Committee