



Middleton St George Parish Council

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DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN THIS SCHEDULED MEETING COULD NOT TAKE PLACE IN PERSON. A REMOTE VIRTUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING WAS HELD USING ZOOM UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020.

Minutes of the Remote Virtual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 11th January, 2021

Present: Councillor Mrs. C. Gilsenan (Chairman),
Councillor S. Crowther (Vice Chairman),
Councillor A. Blacklee
Councillor H. Bullock,
Councillor L. Foggett,
Councillor S. l'Anson,
Councillor A. Jones,
Councillor A. Marshall,
Councillor D. Whitfield
Alan Macnab, Clerk.

No members of the public were present.

The meeting started at 6.32 p.m.

1571. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the New Year.

1572. Public Participation Session

The Clerk reported that no requests had been made to address the Parish Council.

1573. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence because all Parish Councillors were present.

1574. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Marshall declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 15 Killinghall Row Allotments Rent. Councillor Foggett declared an interest in Agenda Item Nos. 13 Save Fighting Cocks Community Pub Group. 14 Grounds Maintenance Contract and 15 Killinghall Row Allotments Rent.

1575. Minutes of the Virtual Parish Council Meeting held on 14th December, 2020

The minutes of the Virtual Parish Council meeting held on the 14th December, 2020 were presented.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on the 14th December, 2020 were a true record of the proceedings of the meeting. The Chairman signed the minutes after the meeting and returned them to the Clerk.

Chairman's Signature..... *C. Gilsenan* Date..... *08/02/2021*

1576. Parish Councillor Vacancy

The Clerk reported that he had contacted Councillor Laing and had sent the resident who had made an enquiry about the vacancy details of the Parish Council but no reply had been received.

The Parish Council **agreed** that a further advertisement for this post, with a closing date of 26th February 2021, be placed in the three noticeboards and the Parish Council's website and Facebook page.

1577. Coronavirus Update

The Clerk reported that Darlington had been placed in the highest tier but that Government guidance was that the play area and the Water Park should remain open. Darlington Borough Council's Litter Pickers were working normally and the Parish Council's Litter Picker would also work normally. The Clerk confirmed that the Litter Picker had a risk assessment which included protection measures for Covid-19 and he had been given wet wipes and hand sanitiser.

1578. Community Safety

1578.1 Community Speed Watch

Councillor Foggett reported that once again the weather conditions were against any Speed Watch operations being held but the Covid-19 restrictions meant that Speed Watch operations could not be held until the restrictions were lifted.

1578.2 Speed Monitor

Councillor Foggett reported that the Speed Watch Co-ordinator had replaced the battery and was fitting the solar panel to the Parish Council's Speed Monitor. He had contacted Darlington Borough Council to ask them to advise on the suitable locations for the three Speed Monitors and to supply poles for them, but a reply had not been received. The poles in the existing three locations of St. George's Gate, Middleton Lane and Killinghall Row were too small for the solar panel Speed Monitors. Councillor Foggett confirmed that the Speed Monitors can measure the speed of motorists on both directions and the Speed Monitors could be rotated to enable motorists to see the speed of their vehicles.

Concern was expressed about the speed limits at the roundabout at the foot of Yarm Road and the access from the A67. Councillor Foggett responded that the speed limit will change when the bungalows on the Yarm Road development have been completed.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the Clerk will contact the Highways Officer to request a meeting with Councillor Foggett to discuss the supply and locations for the Speed Monitors.

1578.3 Traffic Safety

a. Speed limit signs at St. George's Gate

The Clerk also reported that he had written to the Highways Officer about the speed limit signs at St. George's Gate but a reply had not been received.

b. Speeding motorist concerns in St. George's Gate and Station Road

The Clerk reported that a reply had been received from the Highways Officer which gave the procedures for reporting speeding motorists to the police as the enforcing authority through the PACT meetings. If the Neighbourhood Policing Team consider whether it ought to be a PACT priority. They will attend the site within

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48 hours with laser equipped speed measuring equipment to assess the actual speeds and either escalate the complaint to the Road Policing Unit (RPU) for formal enforcement action or report back to the PACT meeting if there is no speeding issue.

If an issue is found the Borough Council as the Highway Authority will review the information received from the Police and also review the accident data to ascertain the extent of any remedial measures required or advised by the Police.

The Highways Officer also reported that he would arrange for one of their speed cameras to be put out on Station Road to get a feel for the background traffic speeds and volumes and he will pass these results onto the Police for their review and additional enforcement if they feel it meets with their criteria.

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

Financial Matters

1579. Financial Report as at the 4th January, 2021

The Clerk gave the financial report for the 2020-21 Financial Year as at the 4th January, 2021. The report gave the reasons for the Contingency Accounts and the reserves.

a. Parish Council Accounts

Contingency - Saver Account 1 – Barclays	- £21,453.04
Contingency - Saver Account 2 – Barclays	- £16,376.62
Reserves - Account with Darlington Credit Union	- £5,095.42
Barclaycard December 2020.	Nil CR £77.99
Community Account:	
Income	- £142,372.11
Expenditure	- <u>£ 30,934.15</u>
Balance as at the 4th January, 2021	£111,437.96

b. Progress against the Budget and Budget Pressures

The income as at the end of the 2020-21 financial year was expected to be £146,590.62 and the anticipated expenditure £61,298.95 which would result in a surplus carry forward of £85,291.67 to the 2021-22 financial year.

The budget pressures report gave the expenditure which would occur to the end of the financial year which were clearance work for the south facing bank side work £22,756.80, tree work on Parish Council land £1,350.00, new fencing panels for the MUGA £558.00, solar panel for the existing speed monitor £50.00 which will be taken from transfers between and within budget headings. However budget headings could not be identified for purchasing two new speed monitors £4,397.59, if the Parish Council agreed in the meeting to backdating the rent for Killinghall Row £1,875.00, repairing the retaining wall to the War Memorial £3,864.00 and repairing the steps to the eastern end of The Front at Middleton One Row £912.00. This expenditure would result in the surplus carry forward to 2021-22 of £74,243.08.

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c. Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliation as at the 4th January 2021 showed that the Community Account spreadsheet balance held by the Parish Council was £111,437.96 and the Community Account balance held by the bank was £111,455.96. The reason for the difference was the payment of £18.00 to Direct Signs for the Woodlands Green Car Park sign sticker had not been taken from the bank account.

d. Accounts Spreadsheet and Bank Statement

The Spreadsheet of all the accounts including the transactions in the Community Account and the bank statements for the period up to and including the 4th January, 2021 were presented.

1580. Payments received and payments for approval

Payments In:

Date	Customer	Amount
	Nil	

Payments for Approval:

Date	Supplier	Amount
07.01.2021	Scottish Power. Electricity Monthly	£5.00
07.01.2021.	Scottish Power. Gas Monthly.	£30.00
11.01.2021	Rennyco Limited. New Fencing panels for the MUGA	£558.00
11.01..2021	HMRC. Clerk's PAYE. January 2021	£168.20
11.01.2021	NEST Pension. J. D. Lynn, Litter Picker £47.44 and C. I. Wood Cleaner £5.60. January 2021	£53.04
24.01.2021	BT Hub Monthly	£31.99
29.01.2021	Cleaner – C. I. Wood Pay	£66.50
29.01.2021	Litter Picker – J. D. Lynn Pay	£563.31
29.01.2021	Clerk – A. W. Macnab Pay	£673.00
	Total	£2,149.04

The Parish Council agreed that the payments listed in the table for January 2021 be paid.

1581. Timetable of Controls for January 2021

The Timetable of Controls for January 2021 was submitted to the Parish Council.

The Clerk reported that:

- Two Parish Councillor audit checks have been carried out this year. A request will be made at the meeting for one of the auditors to carry out their audit from the 1st October to the 31st December, 2020.
- The statement of receipts and payments to date and progress against the budget statement was presented at this meeting.
- The banking arrangements were given in the appendix to the report to enable them to be reviewed.
- The schedule of payments which required authorisation was included as part of the agenda for this Parish Council meeting. Invoices were provided to support the schedule of payments.

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- e. A list of regular payments was presented at its meeting. No cheques are being drawn up during the Covid-19 pandemic and they were replaced by standing orders and bank transfers.
- f. There were no losses, liabilities or damage which could lead to claims in December 2020 to date.
- g. The Risk Management Policy and Risk Register and will be reviewed at this meeting.
- h. The Clerk asked if the Financial Regulation can be reviewed at the Parish Council meeting on the 8th February, 2021.

The Parish Council **agreed** that:

- i. It was satisfied that the activities in the Timetable of Controls were being completed.
- ii. To defer the review of the Financial Regulations at the meeting on the 8th February, 2021.

1582. Review of the Banking Arrangements

The Parish Council agreed that it was satisfied with the proper conduct of the banking arrangements.

1583. Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessments

The Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessments were circulated with the papers for the meeting. The Policy and Risk Assessments were reviewed by the Parish Council on the 14th September, 2020. The Clerk confirmed that the Policy and Risk Assessments included assessments for the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessments satisfactorily covered the risks which may occur during all of its operations.

1584. Councillor's Audit of Accounts

Councillor Foggett agreed to carry out the audit of the accounts for the period from the 1st September to the 31st December, 2020.

Planning Matters

1585. Planning Decisions taken by Darlington Borough Council

The Chairman reported that the planning decisions were given in Appendix 2 of the Agenda and were as follows:

19/01008/FUL Erection of a detached dwelling. 18 Middleton Lane, Middleton St. George. Planning permission Refused.

20/01027/FUL. Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension, replacement flat roof with increased height to existing garage, additional window to ground floor side elevation and associated internal alterations. 13 Palm Tree Villas Station Road, Middleton St. George. Planning permission granted with conditions.

20/01129/CON. Approval of details reserved by condition 2 (Management Plan) and 3 (Bird & Bat boxes) attached to planning permission 19/01125/FUL dated 10 June 2020 (creation of water dependent habitat comprising of 4.No ponds and 5.No scrapes), Mill Lane Woods, Middleton St. George. Approval of discharge of conditions.

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

20/01148/FUL. Erection of single storey rear extension at 64 Heathfield Park, Middleton St. George. Planning permission granted with conditions.

1586. New Planning Applications

The following new planning applications were submitted for consideration:

20/01147/TF. Works to various trees protected under Tree Preservation Order (No. 7) 1980 – Felling of 1 No. Sycamore tree (T897)(W1/2), 1 no. Pine tree (T506)(W1), 1 no. Horse Chestnut (T899)(T11) and pruning works to 2 no. Pine trees (T896,T898)(T8, T13) as per arborist's report. Almora Hall, Middleton Lane, Middleton St. George.

The Parish Council **agreed** to make no comments on this application except to support the Arborist's report that new trees which will replace the trees which are felled must be protected against damage from grazing animals and existing trees might also need protection from damage from grazing animals.

20/01155/TF. Works to various trees protected under Tree Preservation Order (No. 11) 1980 – Felling of 1 no. Pear tree (T2)(T21) and 1 no. Goat Willow tree (T4)(T9), reduce canopy up to 1m on 1 no. Pear tree (T3)(T22) and shorten branch up to 2m on 1 no. Pear tree (T1)(T20). Pear Tree Lodge, The Paddock, Middleton St. George.

20/01172/TF. Works to 4 no. trees protected under Tree Preservation Order 1982 (No. 2) – Sycamore (T1) removal of sucker and crown lift up to 3m, Sycamore (T2) crown lift up to 3m, Horse chestnut (T4) up to 2m crown reduction (no more than 20% of leaf cover to be removed), Sycamore (T7) removal of sucker. 24, Church Lane, Middleton St. George.

20/01219/FUL. Conversion of existing integral garage into habitable space, infill canopy to front elevation to form porch and widening of existing driveway to create additional car parking. 46, High Stell, Middleton St. George.

The Parish Council **agreed** to make no comments on the above three planning applications

1587. Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Chairman reported that Jo-Anne Garrick, the Consultant, was updating the Neighbourhood Development Plan to reflect the changes proposed in the response table which she had drafted following the Consultation during Autumn 2020.

1588. Platform One Public House/Save Fighting Cocks Community Pub Steering Group

1588.1 Oral Report on the Steering Group Meeting on the 5th January, 2021

The Chairman reported that the Steering Group Meeting on the 5th January, 2021 was busy writing the draft business plan for the community benefit society and the rules for the society which will be submitted to Companies House. A Facebook page had been established and people were asking to join through the Facebook page. Councillor l'Anson will be added to the Steering Group. The next meeting of the Steering Group will take place on the 26th January, 2021.

1588.2 Request to use the Parish Council building as a temporary Registered Office

The Clerk reported that a request had been made by the Steering Group to use the Parish Council's building as a temporary registered office for the Community Benefit Society. Companies House required that a registered office must be somewhere in the village and could not be a residence. It was pointed out that the Parish Council building did not have a letter box nor was it registered to receive post.

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The Parish Council **agreed** that the Parish Council building be used by the Community Benefit Society for its registered office for a temporary period and the Clerk will purchase a lockable post box which will be affixed to the front of the building and register the building with Royal Mail for postal deliveries.

Other Matters

1589. Grounds Maintenance Contract Update

Councillor Foggett reported that the hedges on the two of the allotments had been cut but the hedges on the Sadberge Road Allotments had not been cut because the road was being resurfaced at the time when the contractor was due to cut the hedges but that the hedges will be cut. The edges to the path in the playing field between Station Road and Woodlands Green had also been cut.

1590. Killinghall Row Allotments Rent

Councillor Marshall declared a pecuniary interest in this item and took no part in the discussions and the decision.

The Clerk reported that at the last Parish Council meeting on the 14th December, 2020 a request was made from the Partners of St. George's Medical Practice for the rent for Killinghall Row Allotments to be backdated to the 1st December, 2012 when the Partners bought the land which included Killinghall Row Allotments. Consideration of the request was deferred to this meeting in order to obtain the Agreement between the Parish Council and the Middleton St. George Allotments Association dated the 1st April, 2012 for the Parish Council to pay rent to the owners of the Belle View and Killinghall Row Allotments. The Agreement was circulated with the papers for the meeting.

A request was also made for the rent for Killinghall Row Allotments to be paid for the period 1st April to the 30th November, 2012 when the land was owned by Mr. Ward.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** to pay the backdated rent for Killinghall Row Allotments from the 1st December, 2012 to the Partners of St. George's Medical Practice and the rent for the Allotments from the 1st April to the 30th November, 2012 to Mr. I. Ward who owned the land in this period.

1591. Parks and Grounds

1591.1 Water Park

a. RoSPA Safety Inspection Report

The RoSPA Safety Inspection Report in 2015 was circulated with the papers for the meeting to enable the Parish Council to determine if there had been any changes since this report to warrant a new report being carried out. The email from the local PCSO asking for consideration to be given to providing lifebuoys or throw ropes and guidance from the Council's insurers on the implications of not providing lifebuoys or throw ropes were also circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Parish Council discussed the safety measures in place. A risk assessment for the Water Park had been completed but it needed updating. Signage had been placed at the entrance to the Water Park and the entrances to the ponds which stated clearly that there must be 'no swimming' and 'deep water' signs had also been erected at the entrances to the Water Park and ponds. There was need for two warning signs were needed at the back of the Water Park and once they were erected all access points will have warning signs in place. It was pointed out that a number of 'deep water' signs were ripped out and thrown into the undergrowth within hours of them being erected.

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The Parish Council considered that there should be a greater use of pictograms on warning signs and more robust installation of the signs.

The Parish Council received a request from the Model boat Club for a handrail to be provided down to Pond 1.

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

- i. The Clerk will write to Darlington Borough Council and the Health and Safety Executive to ask for legal opinion that the Parish Council currently complies with health and safety legislation in respect of the actions it has taken to reduce the risks, including the risk of drowning, were adequate and the further action which will be needed to fully comply with legislation.
- ii. The Clerk will update the risk assessment for the Water Park.
- iii. A survey of the signage needs be carried out as soon as possible and new signs include pictograms and better installation by a signage contractor.
- iv. The request from the Model Boat Club be deferred to the next meeting on the 8th February, 2020.

b. Request by the Angling Club for the yellow barrier to be brought back into use

The Parish Council received a request from the Angling Club for the barrier in front of the Model Boat Club building to be brought back into use as a result of recent incidents and to prevent fly tipping in the park. Consideration was given to the views of the Model Boat Club. The Angling Club offered to install a digital lock on the barrier.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** to the Angling Club's request that the barrier be lowered and the installation of a digital lock on the barrier and the code to open and close the barrier be supplied to the Model Boat Club.

1591.2 Play Area and Playing Field

a. Health and Safety Report

The Vice Chairman reported that the play equipment was not being used at present and there was no uplift on the floor of the play area.

b. Leaning Tree

The Clerk reported that the Borough Council's Grounds Maintenance Manager will arrange for a brace to be installer around the tree.

1591.3 The Front, Middleton One Row

a. Woodland Management Project Update

Councillors Jones and Marshall submitted a written report on their meeting with the Head of Planning at Darlington Borough Council to discuss progressing the Woodland Management Project.

The Head of Planning stated that If a tree was dead, dying or dangerous then it is no longer considered to be covered by the TPO. To remove or fell a tree an evidenced based report would be required. Even if a tree is dead, dying or dangerous it would be in the Parish Council's best interests to submit evidence to the Head of Planning or the Planning Department for agreement to ensure the Parish Council was covered legally, as

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regards the blanket TPO. Pruning was considered good management and would be supported by the Planning Authority. Low level clearance, ground clearance would be acceptable and was not covered by the TPO. Again any plans the Parish Council has can be submitted to Planning to ensure the Parish Council is covered. The blanket TPO (and all TPO's) are judged to cover any tree with a trunk of 8cm or greater. The blanket TPO does not mean that the trees would be untouchable. Submissions to the Planning Department needed to have strong expert evidence to remove or change trees. This expert evidence should be well weighted and balanced. The Head of Planning supported the narrative that the woodland at the Front should be to ensure public access and use is maintained.

The Parish Council discussed the on-going Woodland Management at The Front and considered that there was a need for the low level cutting back of overgrowth and undergrowth was necessary. In this connection, two quotations had been received for this work.

Following consideration of the quotations, the Parish Council **agreed** that the quotation of £480 (including VAT) from 4nature be accepted for the clearance work on The Front. Councillors Jones and Marshall to arrange for the work to be carried out.

b. Steps at the eastern end of The Front repair work

Councillors Jones and Marshall reported that two quotations had been received for the repair work to the steps at the eastern end of The Front.

Following consideration of the two quotations, the Parish Council **agreed** that:

- a. The quotation of £458.86 (including VAT) from Mr. A. Bailey be accepted for repairing the steps.
- b. Councillors Jones and Marshall will arrange for the work to be carried out.
- c. Councillors Jones and Marshall will discuss the Woodland Management Project with Groundwork.

1592. War Memorial

1592.1 Centenary 8th April, 2022

The Clerk reported that the centenary of the dedication and unveiling would fall on Friday 8th April, 2022 and asked for the Parish Council's guidance on the suitability of this date for the commemoration or if it was more appropriate to hold the commemorations on another day for the invitation to the Bishop of Durham.

The Parish Council **agreed** that Councillor Bullock will ask the Church Wardens of St. Laurence's Church for their views on a suitable date and to invite the Bishop of Durham.

1592.2 Stonemason's Report on the stability of the War Memorial

The Stonemason's report on the War Memorial was submitted to the Parish Council with the papers for the meeting.

The report stated that the memorial base and cross was in good solid condition with only one lead letter missing to the east face. The memorial had however subsided to the west not due to the on going construction work but to the failure of the retaining wall to the east. This wall was deformed by 125 mm over its height of 1 meter (including coping stones) and was in danger of collapse onto the footpath.

The Parish Council **agreed** that Councillor Bullock will discuss with the Church Wardens of St. Laurence's Church to identify the ownership of the retaining wall.

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1593. Police, Crime and Victim Commissioner's Precept 2021-22 Consultation

The consultation on the precept was submitted with the papers for the meeting.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the consultation be noted and individual Councillors comment on the precept if they wished to do so.

1594. Councillors Training

No training issues were raised.

1595. Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

No reports and items were raised for future meetings.

1596. Date of next meeting

Monday 8th February, 2021 at 6.30 p.m.

Chairman's Signature.....*C J Gibson*..... Date.....*08/02/2021*.....