



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 8th March, 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. Marshall,
Councillor D. Whitfield,
Alan Macnab, Clerk.

In Attendance: Ward Councillors. D. Jones, B. Jones and D. Laing and 76 Members of the public were present

The meeting started at 6.32p.m.

1635. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone and explained the procedures for the meeting. It was essential to update residents on the issues in relation to the clearance of the south facing bank side in the Water Park which had resulted in widespread concern and upset in the community. The Parish Council was aware of the strength of feeling which the clearance work had engendered. A report on the contract for the clearance work from the specification to the work being carried out and the future work to the bank side will be presented to the Parish Council meeting on the 12th April, 2021.

Requests for residents to speak had been sent to the Clerk and each will be called to speak in the Public Participation Session.

1636. Public Participation Session. Clearance work on the South Facing Bank Side

a. Resident 1

Resident 1 stated she was representing other residents and expressed concern that the Parish Council had not given any response to the concerns of residents. Volunteers will help with the work when the restoration work after the re-seeding has taken place. If the hedgerow was more than 2 metres in height permission had to be granted for any hedge removal. There was also a need for more transparent communication by the Parish Council.

b. Ward Councillor D. Laing

Ward Councillor Laing stated that she posed questions at the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on the 15th February 2021 and she would still like some answers. She referred to the notes of the two Water Park Working Group meetings. The Reservoir Engineer's report was referred to which recommended that the trees

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be pollarded but they have been removed. Ward Councillor Laing was concerned that the Parish Council had paid £22,000 for two days work. There was a need to clarify the duration of the work with the contractor.

c. Chairman of the Parish Council's Response

The Chairman responded, and stated that the questions would try to be answered during the meeting. The Working Group minutes were still in the initial draft form, and had not been presented to the Parish Council for approval or signing as yet. The Working Group could not decide any actions to be taken (only full Parish Council meetings can do this), but only make recommendations. The report she was writing, which will be presented to the Parish Council on the 12th April, 2021, would address the pollarding issue as well as the other issues which arose at the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting and this meeting.

d. Ward Councillor B. Jones

Ward Councillor B. Jones asked why the Water Park Working Group meetings on the 22nd February and the 1st March, 2021 did not allow members of the public to attend. He reminded the Parish Council that the public were allowed to attend all Parish Council meetings including Working Groups. The Chairman responded that – that Working Group meetings were not always open to the public, but that proceedings should be recording in notes/minutes) and provided to the next full Parish Council meeting

e. Ward Councillor D. Jones

Ward Councillor D. Jones asked where in the Reservoir Engineer's report was there a reference to removing the hedgerow. Why was the hedgerow removed? The specification referred to removing saplings and pollarding trees. Councillor D. Jones was concerned that one of the contractors quotations kept increasing and asked why the Parish Council did not take professional advice on the work which needed to be carried out.

Councillor D. Jones reported that when the ponds were handed over from the Water Company to the Parish Council in 1945 the ponds were solid. They were lined and would not overflow. There was an outflow to the stream to the north of the Water Park.

f. Parish Council Response

Councillor Crowther replied that the Parish Council was informed by the Reservoir Engineer that there was a very real risk if any leakages from the ponds could not be seen on the southern bank side and that was why it was cleared.

The Chairman reported that until all the facts have been checked and this was being done in the form of a report which will be presented to the Parish Council on the 12th April, 2021. The contractor's clearance work was checked, the Parish Council was satisfied that the contractor had carried out the work he was asked to do and as a result he was paid.

The Chairman thanked the Ward Councillors and residents for their contributions.

1637. Apologies for absence

The Clerk reported that Councillor A. Jones had submitted his apologies for family reasons.

The Parish Council **agreed** to accept Councillor A. Jones's apologies.

1638. Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interests were made.

Chairman's Signature..... *CJ Gibson* Date..... *12/04/2021*

1639. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on the 8th February, 2021

The minutes of the last Parish Council meeting held on the 8th February, 2021 were presented.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the minutes were a true record of the proceedings and the Chairman signed the minutes after the meeting had ended.

1640. Water Park South Facing Bank Side Work

The Chairman reported that the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on the 15th February, 2021 were not available yet.

The Chairman then read out the following questions which had been submitted to the Parish Council from the Zoom meeting Chat which were different to those already raised. Where the Parish Council offered clarification or a response this was provided in italics below. The Chairman stated that the questions had been submitted to the Parish Council on the 7th March, 2021.

- Q. Did the Parish Council revisit the ecology report at that point? *(A. This was the Ecology Report commissioned by the Applicant of the "High Stell" development. Whether the report had any relevance to the clearance work would have to be determined).*
- Q. Has the work been done in line with the hedgerow regulation act?
- Q. How much did the contractor and sub-contractor get each from the works? The high price could be because it has been subcontracted out. *(A. It has been ascertained that the work was not subcontracted out)*
- A scope of works should have been discussed at a pre-start meeting including all method statements and signing off risk assessments.
- you need a snagging meeting onsite with the contractors, to discuss what has happened and agree actions going forward of how they could help re-create a nature friendly bank for wildlife and nature could be an exciting village opportunity
- We have a group of residents willing to work with the Parish Council around what we can do to try and rectify the damage done. Obviously, this would need input of experts in reservoir safety and from a conservation/ecological point of view. *(Thank you. This is very much appreciated. The work carried out is as recommended by the qualified Reservoir Structural Engineer. Once the Parish Council determines the nature of the re-seeding work, etc. to be done, assistance from the community would be welcome where appropriate).*
- Q. Therefore did the contractor break his contract with the PC by sub-contracting? *(A. It has been ascertained that there was no subcontracting).*
- No-one has asked why the Hedgerow Regulation 1997 wasn't followed. Any hedge over 20 m that has been in place for 30 years enquires planning permission to be granted.
- Q. Re Hedgerow Regulations - Was planning permission granted by LPA?
- Q. But who will maintain the grass? *(A. The Parish Council will discuss and address this in due course).*
- Q. You would have to have had a tree survey. Have you had one to determine the condition was this contractor qualified to do a tree survey and if so is it available for public view?

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- Q. Who showed the contractor which trees were to be removed and which were to stay?
- Q. Why did someone not ask Leighton if he was doing the work himself or sub-contacting? (A. See previous answer re subcontracting)
- Wild flowers are not a problem for inspection, as the state of the ground can continue to be assessed. The flowers can be planted in patches.
- Q. A wildflower meadow would be cut down in September at such time you could do a survey in the Winter and then it regrows the next area. Can I suggest you look at the Wildflower Bank at Rievaulx Terrace NT - would not be difficult? (A. Thank you for that suggestion. We will look into that).
- Q. Did anyone ask the surveyor whether that was the only option or could there have been a different approach that wasn't so destructive to the wildlife habitat?
- The safety issue is the bank failing, whether it floods a house or fails whilst somebody is walking on top of it. It is unrelated to the planning.

Questions and Points sent to the Clerk by email

(Where the Parish Council can offer clarification or a response, this was provided in italics)

- It would be a good idea to commission an ecology report on the Waterpark during the summer months, so that we can protect it better in the future for the benefit of all. *(Thank you. This is something the Parish Council could consider going forward).*
- Q. Could a longer, more inclusive meeting could be called, whereby a raised hand or typed questions in turn, villagers could be more engaged. The whole meeting to be devoted to this subject alone and its resolution. *(A. The Parish Council is still carrying out ongoing investigations, and a full comprehensive report, which will include suggestions and recommendations going forward, will be drafted and reported – hopefully at the Parish Council meeting on 12th April. We will need a little time to complete this work, so it will not be possible to have a meeting before then. However, the Parish Council will consider how the results of the investigations can be made public)*
- Q. Will there be an update on the hedgerow situation with full answers to the questions that were asked, prior to & also the questions that arose during & as a result of the extra-ordinary meeting?
- Q. What were the findings of the survey carried out by the fishing club and why did they carry out a survey? *A. The survey commissioned by the angling club concurred with the recommendations with those of the qualified Reservoir Structural Engineer).*
- Q. If the two other quotes were so significantly higher, what was the specific description of the works required on each quote – for the chosen quote to be half the price of the rejected quotes, there must have been either a massive difference in the works described or it was offered by someone ill equipped (by machinery and expertise) to carry out the works – so, please share the specific words on each of the three quotes
- Please share the specific works instructions given to the contractor that formed the basis of the contract.
- Q. What checks were carried out on the contractor's previous work, ability to carry out the required work, what specific qualifications, licences did they hold..... What licences did they need?
- Please share all references in minutes and meetings of the PC that formed the basis for moving forward with the works – so date/meeting title (i.e. PC/committee meeting etc.) and how the works were described as there seems to be some discrepancy as to whether thinning or clearance or pollarding or

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tree removal or hedgerow or undergrowth was detailed – I would like to know how it progressed and grew into the nightmare that resulted. *(Thank you. The information is in the minutes of Parish Council meetings which were uploaded onto the Website. However, this will also be provided in the forthcoming Report).*

- Q. What is the experts views on the root systems that are clearly established under the surface – will they rot and become unstable – will they be allowed to resprout and therefore continue to inflict damage that is alleged will happen?
- Q. What specific help did the PC seek from DBC, what help was given?
- Q. I note the parish council agenda for Monday makes mention of two working group meetings (22 Feb & 1 March) and “site meetings” ref the water park issue – please can we have info on where to find the minutes of these meetings, who was on them and what exactly their remit is?

The Chairman stated that the clearance work was not sub contracted to another company. A site visit with the Managing Director of Homes by Carlton had discussed the boundaries. Homes by Carlton had secured its site with fencing. The boundaries will be resolved in due course. The Chairman apologised on behalf of the Parish Council for the distress which had been caused by the work. The Chairman also stated that she was producing a full and comprehensive report which will give the facts, answer residents concerns and queries and the lessons which will be learnt which will be submitted to the Parish Council meeting on the 12th April, 2021. The requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act will be answered. The Parish Council was seeking advice from the Reservoir Engineer on the correct type of grass seed to be sown on the bank side.

The Parish Council discussed if a hedge existed at the foot of the bank side but there was no consensus on whether the hedge existed or not. Councillor Blacklee stated that a hedge had always been there.

Ward Councillor D. Jones asked to speak and it was proposed by Councillor Bullock and seconded by Councillor Blacklee that Councillor D. Jones be permitted to speak. The Chairman explained that the procedures did not allow for further speakers at this point in the meeting, but as this had been moved and carried, Ward Councillor D. Jones was asked if she wished to say something. However, Ward Councillor D. Jones then raised an issue which was not on the Agenda, so the Chairman asked her to put the points she wished to make in writing to the Clerk.

The Parish Councillors considered the clearance work which had been carried out. The Vice Chairman emphasised that the instructions to the contractor was that the trees would not be pollarded and only the diseased trees would be taken out. The healthy trees would be left.

The Parish Council considered the re-seeding work including if a wildflower mix should be included on the bank side. As much research as possible was being undertaken and guidance sought from the Reservoir Engineer.

The Parish Council agreed that:

- a. It needed to investigate what the Parish Council agreed with the Contractor regarding the second phase of the works.
- b. It needed to investigate and research the various different methods of re-seeding and their impacts
- c. It needed to examine the issue of timing of when this second phase of work could be carried out
- d. Report to the next Parish Council meeting on 12th April

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1641. Financial Report

The Clerk gave the financial report for the 2020-21 Financial Year as at the 2nd March, 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	
February 2021.	
Nil	CR £54.04
Community Account:	
Income	- £144,049.98
Expenditure	- <u>£ 63,616.65</u>
Balance as at the 2 nd March, 2021	£ 80,433.33

b. Progress against the Budget and Budget Pressures

The income as at the end of the 2020-21 financial year was expected to be £146,849.98 and the expected expenditure £76,829.65 which would result in a surplus carry forward of £70,020.33 to the 2021-22 financial year.

The Clerk reported that:

- i. invoices had been sent to the Darlington and District Model Boat Club for the annual rent and electricity. An invoice had also been sent to Darlington Borough Council for its half yearly contribution for the Litter Picker. An early claim would be made to HM Revenue and Customs for the VAT refund for the period January to March, 2021.
- ii. Darlington Borough Council had not submitted any invoices for the Grounds Maintenance contract work since the Parish Council paid the last invoice on the 10th November, 2020 which covered the period from April to July, 2020 and that he had asked the Borough Council to send an invoice for August to February 2021 minus the overpayment in the last invoice which was due to the late start of the contract. The Grounds Maintenance budget allocation was £12,000 whereas the total cost of the contract with Darlington Borough Council was £5,366.44 for 2020-21.
- iii. There was confusion if the contribution of £1,932 to St. Laurence's and St. George's Church PCC to pay for the repair to the retaining wall to the War Memoria should be paid in the current financial year or the 2021-22 financial year. Because of the urgent need for the work to be carried out the payment was made in this current financial year.

The Chairman reported that the Friends of the Stockton and Darlington Railway had asked the Parish Council to consider allocating £1,000 from its budget for activities in Middleton St. George in the lead up to the 2025 bicentenary of the railway,

The Parish Council agreed that:

The Clerk will ask the Borough Council's Parks and Open Space Manager for a remote meeting with the Chairman, Councillor Foggett and the Clerk to discuss the compliance with the schedule of work which is

Chairman's Signature..... *CJ [Signature]* Date..... *12/04/2021*

required to be carried out in the 2021-22 financial year, regular reports of the work completed to the Parish Council and the payments for the work during the year.

The payment of the contribution of £1,932 to St. Laurence's and St. George's Church PCC be noted.

The allocation of £1,000 be considered early in the 2021-22 financial year.

c. Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliation as at the 4th March, 2021 showed that the Community Account spreadsheet balance held by the Parish Council was £80,433.33 and the Community Account balance held by the bank was £105,122.13. The difference was £24,688.80 which was the result of the bank transfers to t. Laurence's and St. George's Church PCC grant of £1,932.00 and to the contractor for clearing the bank side £22,756.80 not being cleared by the bank.

d. Accounts Spreadsheet and Bank Statement

The Spreadsheet of all the accounts including the transactions in the Community Account held by the Parish Council and the Community Account bank statement for the period up to and including the 2nd March, 2021 were presented.

1642. Payments received and payments for approval

Payments In:

Date	Customer	Amount
	NIL	

Retrospective Payment for Approval February 2021

Date	Supplier	Amount
05.02.2021	Scottish Power. Electricity Monthly	£60.00
02.03.2021	E & M Leighton. South facing bank side work clearance work	£22,756.80
	Total	£22,816.80

Payments for Approval March 2021

Date	Supplier	Amount
07.03.2021	Scottish Power. Electricity Monthly	£46.00
07.03.2021.	Scottish Power. Gas Monthly.	£30.00
08.03.2021	HMRC. Clerk's PAYE. March 2021	£168.20
08.03.2021	NEST Pension. J. D. Lynn, Litter Picker £47.44 and C. I. Wood Cleaner £5.60. March 2021	£53.04
08.03.2021	Eddie Bailey. Repair to steps at the eastern end of The Front	£482.38
24.03.2021	BT Hub Monthly	£31.99
31.03.2021	Cleaner – C. I. Wood Pay	£66.50
31.03.2021	Litter Picker – J. D. Lynn Pay	£563.31
31.03.2021	Clerk – A. W. Macnab Pay	£673.00
	Total	£2,103.42

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Councillor Marshall reported that Mr. Bailey's invoice had to be increased from the quote as agreed at the 11th January, 2021 meeting, because he needed more gravel to complete the work on the steps at The Front.

The Parish Council **agreed** the retrospective payments for February and the payments for March, 2021.

1643. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020-21

The following documents were circulated to the Parish Council with the papers for the meeting.

1643.1 Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Controls

The Clerk explained that the Parish Council must satisfy itself that its financial management was adequate and effective and that sound systems of internal controls were in place. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 required that a review of the effectiveness of the systems of internal controls must be carried out each year and will inform the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

The report gave the purpose of the systems of internal controls, the internal controls which were operated by the Parish Council and the Clerk and its risk assessments and risk management which were reviewed each year. The report then gave the Statement which gave the systems of internal controls for the cash book/bank reconciliation, its Financial Regulations, the order/tender controls, legal powers for each item of expenditure, payment controls, Section 137 payments, VAT reclaims, income controls, financial reporting, budgetary controls, payroll controls, office and Clerk's expenses, assets controls, the internal audit and external audit procedures which were followed by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council reviewed the effectiveness of its internal controls and **agreed** that its financial management was effective and sound systems of internal controls were in place.

1643.2 Draft Annual Governance Statement

The Clerk gave details of the preparation work for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the Parish Council's 2020-21 accounts. The draft Annual Governance Statement for the 2020-21 gave details of the systems of internal control and the arrangements to comply with the statements given in the Annual Governance Statement part of the AGAR and the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England Practitioners Guide March 2019. The Annual Governance Statement would be reviewed by the Internal Auditor, it would then submitted with the Internal Auditor's report to the Annual Parish Council meeting in May, 2021 and then to the external auditor.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the Annual Governance Statement for 2019-20 gave a true representation of the systems of internal controls and compliance with the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England Practitioners Guide March 2019.

1643.3 Assets Register Review

The Parish Council received the Assets Register as at the 2nd March, 2021. The Clerk explained that the Tommy statuette which was purchased to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First War had been transferred to the PCC of St. Laurence's and St. George's Church and had been deleted from the Assets Register. The value of the assets held by the Parish Council as at the 2nd March, 2021 was £172,402.99 and this amount would be entered on the AGAR for 2020-21.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the Assets Register including all the assets which it held.

Chairman's Signature..... *C.J. Gibson* Date *12/04/2021*

Planning Matters

1644. List of Darlington Borough Council Planning Decisions

It was reported that the following planning decisions had been taken by Darlington Borough Council since the 8th February, 2021 for information:

20/00906/FUL. Erection of first floor extension to front and side elevation, erection of single storey rear extension, alterations and enlargement to roof, replace rear door with window and associated internal alterations. 41 The Front, Middleton St George. Planning Permission Granted.

20/00995/CON. Approval of details reserved by conditions 8 (tree protection), 9 (construction management plan), 16, 26, 27 (surface water drainage), and 33 (finished floor levels) attached to planning permission 17/01175/FUL dated 29 May 2019 (Residential housing development consisting of 61 No dwellings together with car parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure) (description amended following receipt of additional construction management plan 22 January 2021 and e-mail confirming omission of condition 14 from application dated 24 February 2021). Field at OSGR E435292 N513607 Yarm Road, Middleton St George. Notice of Approval of Discharge of Conditions (two Decision Notices).

20/01072/TF. Felling of 4 no. trees protected under group Tree Preservation Order 1980 (No.7) (W2) - 2 no. Horse Chestnut trees (T892 & T894), 1 no. Larch tree (T893) and 1 no. Beech tree (T895). Almora Hall Middleton Lane, Middleton St George. Permission granted subject to conditions.

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 arborists report. Almora Hall Middleton Lane, Middleton St George. Permission granted subject to conditions.

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. Planning permission granted with conditions.

20/01175/TFC. Notification to carry out works to 1 no. Pine tree (T900) in a designated conservation area - remove minor leader (as per arborists report). Almora Hall Middleton Lane, Middleton St George. Notification of Consent to carry out the work.

21/00017/TF. Works to 2 no. trees protected under Tree Preservation Order (no.13) 2007 Sycamore Tree (T.3);(T4) fell, Pine Tree (T.4);(T3) cap off southern limb at 3.000-meters, plus further works to 1 no. Lime Tree (T.2); (T1) protected under Tree Preservation Order (No.5) 1997:-Prune back from adjacent building by approximately 2.000-meters (amended description 10/02/2022). 75 Middleton Lane, Middleton St George. Permission granted subject to conditions.

21/00018/TF. Felling of 2 no. trees Horse Chestnut (T652)(T1) and Cypress (T590)(T2) protected under Tree Preservation Order (No.13) 2007. 74 Middleton Lane, Middleton St George. Permission granted subject to conditions.

21/00047/TFC. Notification to carry out works to trees in a designated conservation area - felling of 2 no. Sycamore trees (T9,T10), 1 no. Cypress tree (T11) and works to 1 no. Horse Chestnut (T1), 1 no. Sycamore (T5) as per arborists report. 75 Middleton Lane, Middleton St George. Notification of Planning Consent.

21/00048/TFC. Notification to carry out works to trees in a designated conservation area - felling of 3 no. Sycamore trees (T303,T593,T101) and 1 no. Horse Chestnut (T441). 74 Middleton Lane, Middleton St George. Notification of Consent to carry out the work.

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21/00049/HPD. Prior approval for the erection of single storey rear extension projecting 4.82m for the original dwelling house, 3.44m in height to ridge, 2.56m in height to eaves | 21 Goosepool Way, Middleton St George. Prior approval not required.

21/00053/NMA. Non Material Amendment of planning permission 17/01175/FUL dated 29 May 2019 (Residential housing development consisting of 61 No dwellings together with car parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure) to permit change in house type on plot 60 - HT9 to HT7 & 61 - HT7 to HT9, alterations to internal layouts, revisions to brickwork detailing and window size/positions on all plots and flat roof to pitched roof on HT12. Field At OSGR E435292 N513607 Land To West Of Oak Meadows Yarm Road, Middleton St George. Approved. (NB. Decision Notice not uploaded to Planning Portal at time of writing).

1645. New Planning Applications

The following new planning applications were submitted for the Parish Council's consideration:

21/00020/FUL. Erection of porch to front elevation, extension to existing garage to create enlarged garage/workshop/plant room with 1 no. roof light, part single storey, part two storey rear/side extension, enlargement and conversion of attic including dormer windows and installation of 5 no. roof lights to create additional 2nd floor habitable space, alterations to windows, doors and associated internal works. 1, Castle Close, Middleton St. George.

21/00094/FUL. Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension. 18, The Meadows, Middleton St. George.

21/00082/FUL. Erection of single storey infill extension to de/rear elevation with installation of glazed roof lantern and 2 no. roof lights and associated internal works. 37, The Front, Middleton One Row.

21/00142/FUL. Modification of Section 106 Agreement attached to planning permission 15/00976/OUT dated 01 July 2016 Outline planning permission for residential development up to 200 dwellings including highway improvements, public open space, landscaping and associated works (Revised application) delay S106 payments due on 1st occupation to 40th occupation 2.1.1, 2.4.1, 2.9.1. Land at Rear of High Stell, Middleton St George. This application had been listed on the Borough Council's planning portal, but it appeared that the Parish Council had not been asked to comment. it was regarded as just for information. Post meeting, the Clerk received official consultation letter, so this will be considered at the 12th April, 2021 meeting.

21/00187/FUL. Demolition of outbuildings and yard walls, erection of part single storey rear infill extension with roof terrace above and part two storey rear extension, including new access doors, additional windows, glazed balustrade, roof lanterns and associated internal alterations. 24 The Front, Middleton St George.

The Parish Council **agreed** that no comments be made on the above planning applications with the exception of 21/000142/FUL.

1646. Parish Council Planning Committee

Councillor Marshall expressed concern that there was little information on which decisions on planning applications can be based and suggested that the Planning Committee be reconvened to consider planning applications in detail and to make recommendations to the full Parish Council meeting.

Following a discussion, the Parish Council **agreed** in principle to consider whether to reconvene the Planning Committee, and therefore this will be placed on the next meeting Agenda for discussion.

Chairman's Signature..... *CJ Gibson* Date..... *12/04/2021*

New planning applications and documents relating to the planning applications can be viewed on Darlington Borough Council's Planning Portal: <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-application-and-permission/view-planning-applications-online/>

1647. Development Applications and sites- issues arising. 17/01195/OUT – 330 houses plus space for school and retail units (“High Scroggs”)

The Chairman reported that it seemed that the landowners had started clearing this site in preparation. This application only had outline permission with reserved matters application still to be submitted. The Chairman enclosed correspondence with the Planning Officer which indicated that the planning permission had lapsed but the developer had an 18 months month limit for submitting the reserved matters. The agent for the site contacted the Planning Officer during the course of the last six months and was in the process of putting together the information required for the Reserved Matters application and a discharge of conditions application. This would be submitted before 1st May 2021 and the Parish Council will be consulted.

The Parish Council had received unconfirmed reports that the school had been removed from the plans for the site and **agreed** that a watching brief would be kept on this planning application.

1648. Darlington Borough Council Local Plan

A report on the Darlington Community Groups Zoom meeting on the 12th February, 2021 was submitted with the papers for the meeting. The Chairman gave an oral report on the Community Groups meeting on the 5th March, 2021. The Inspector's second note giving the dates for the hearings to examine the Local Plan was also circulated to the Parish Council. The Chairman indicated that she had informed the Inspector that the Parish Council wished to take part in the hearings and to give evidence to the Inspector, in line with what had been agreed at the time of the September 2020 Consultation.

1649. Platform One/Fighting Cocks

It was reported that pre planning consultation to convert the property to a convenience store was taking place by leaflets to every household in the village.

Councillor Foggett that the Save the Fighting Cocks Pub Steering Group had established a business plan, a leaflet had been produced for distribution to households making a case for the Community Benefit Society to purchase the property and for it to be used for the benefit of the community. A Facebook page had been established. The Steering Group was pushing ahead to distribute its publicity making a case for the community ownership of the property despite the fact that it had been sold which would be subject to planning permission.

The Parish Council agreed that the Clerk will put the application consultation info on Parish Council Website, when officially notified.

Other Matters

1650. Trees on Parish Council Land

The Clerk reported that no quotations had been received for work to the trees in the Water Park which overshadowed the rear of 58, High Stell and in the Playing Field which overshadowed the rear of 21, Woodlands Green and one contractor declined to submit a quotation.

The Parish Council **agreed** that:

- a. Councillor Bullock will seek quotations for the work to the trees to the rear of both properties with the work taking place in the Autumn of 2021 after the bird nesting season.

Chairman's Signature..... Date..... 12/04/2021

b. The quotations will be considered at a future Parish Council meeting.

c. The Clerk will explain to the owners of the two properties that the tree work will now have to be delayed until the Autumn of 2021.

1651. County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) Smaller Councils Forum

The Chairman's report on the Smaller Councils Forum meeting held on the 18th February, 2021 was circulated with the papers for the meeting.

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

1652. Councillors' reports and items for future agenda

1652.1 Siting of Speed Monitors

Councillor Foggett reported that he was seeking a meeting with the Highways Engineer and the police to discuss the siting of the speed monitors and the supply of poles for the speed monitors.

1652.2 Planning Committee

Reconvening the Planning Committee be considered at the next Parish Council meeting on the 12th April, 2021.

1652.3 Saved Zoom Chat from Public Participation Session

Councillor Foggett agreed to send this to the Chairman and Clerk.

1653. Date of next meeting

Monday 12th April, 2021 at 6.30 p.m.

The meeting ended at 8.47 p.m.

Chairman's Signature..... *CJ Gibson* Date..... *12/04/2021*