

**Minutes of a Meeting of Middleham Town Council held in Middleham Key Centre on Wednesday, 11 December 2019 October at 7.00 pm. (SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING)**

**Present**

Vice Chairman Cllr Mrs H Byford, Cllr Mr M Cade, Cllr Mrs L Stocker, Cllr Mr S Wheeler, Cllr Mr G Fortune and Cllr Mr N Hopper.

Clerk, Mr D Keep

There were no members of the public or press present.

**Action**

**1. Open Forum.**

No members of the public were present.

**2. Apologies.**

Cllr Mrs S Fairhurst. All other Councillors were present.

County Cllr Mrs K Sedgwick was also unable to attend.

**3. Declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda.**

Cllr Cade declared an interest as an immediately adjacent neighbour to Hill House whose application would be considered under planning matters. No interests other than those previously notified were declared in matters on the agenda.

**4. Minutes.**

**4.1 Minutes of the previous council meetings**

**IT WAS RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Council meeting held on 30 October 2019 as a true and accurate record to be signed by the Chairman.**

**4.2 The schedule of agreed actions.** The following matter was noted:

4.2.1 The organisation granted permission to ring birds near Pinkers Pond had advised they had subsequently deemed the area to be unsuitable so this project would be cancelled.

**5. Confidential and Urgent Items.** There were no urgent or confidential matters for consideration at the current meeting that required recording in the confidential minute.

**6. Town Council - Information/Decision Required**

**6.1 Councillors' report of meetings attended and actions undertaken (standing item).** The Christmas tree lighting up event had been very successful and would be repeated. Consideration might be given to closing the road in future years,

**6.2 Land Management Issues (standing item)**

6.2.1 Resident's proposal to plant trees in Town centre: The matter was fully discussed, noting the visual and environmental benefits of tree planting. A wide number of factors were considered, including: impact on the historic appearance; consistency with conservation area guidance; potential difficulty of digging through the cobbles and impacting upon utility lines and drains; problems with invasive roots; reduction of parking spaces; fallen leaves creating slip risk and drain blockage; cost of initial purchase and

ongoing maintenance costs; were there alternatives such as flower tubs and hanging baskets?	<b>Action</b>
Council agreed to ask the resident to submit a more detailed proposal which would be considered at a future meeting following which Council could seek residents' views either through a 'straw poll' or an RDC community surveys. The final decision however would lie with the Council.	<b>Clerk</b>
On other matters, several residents had commented on the late removal of bunting which was due to the small band of volunteers being unavailable. It could be avoided if more people came forward to help. The banners had now been taken down and washed.	
Again, other residents were unhappy that banners had been erected on the walls of the Black Bull, in possible contravention of conservation area guidance. Rather than involve the planning authority at this stage, a Councillor would seek agreement on its removal.	<b>Cllr Hopper</b>
The Clerk would seek removal of a redundant sign for MKC on East Witton Road which was unsightly.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>6.3 Police Report (standing item).</b> The report was noted.	
<b>6.4 Website:</b> The 2020/21 budget included £1k to introduce a new website and additional costs of ongoing maintenance. Council asked for data on visits to the website and Councillors would look at examples of websites for similar Councils to compare with Middleham's. Cllr Fortune outlined how a typical platform might operate and agreed to seek a quotation and options from Mr Davies, from whom assurances should be sought that it would be compliant with data legislation. The Clerk opined that as parish council websites were specific in terms of statutory content and regulatory obligations, it may be preferable to seek a quotation for a website specific to the sector. It was agreed that Cllr Fortune and the Clerk should collaborate regarding statutory and regulatory issues.	<b>Cllr Stocker All Cllr Fortune Cllr Fortune / Clerk Cllr</b>
<b>6.5 Town Guide.</b> Samples of the three guides currently in use were reviewed. Cllr Hopper would collate new photographs and liaise with the Clerk to redraft the Town Guide, to be available in both digital and paper formats. The walks in the Town Walks guide had kindly been checked by Mr Rollinson.	<b>Cllr Hopper / Clerk</b>
<b>6.6 NHS Matters</b>	
6.6.1 Closure of Leyburn Minor Injuries Unit. The formal response was reconsidered. Whilst disappointing that the closure would not be reversed, it was agreed that there was little to be gained from further communication. A watching brief would be maintained on the impact upon the local community.	
6.6.2 Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). The merger of NHS Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby CCG, NHS Harrogate and Rural District CCG and NHS Scarborough and Ryedale CCG to become the North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group effective from 1 April 2020 was noted	
<b>6.7 Selection of contractors for building maintenance purposes.</b> An extract of MTC's financial regulations were reviewed. Whilst smaller commitments did not require either a formal tender process or obtaining 3 quotations, it was deemed appropriate to consider a selection of local contractors. Normally, these smaller works were undertaken by R A Wheeler, often at short notice. Councillors would suggest local firms to be considered as 'approved contractors'.	<b>All</b>
<b>6.8 Office closure over festive period.</b> It was agreed that the office would be closed from Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> December and reopen on Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> January. The Clerk would monitor emails over the break.	
<b>7. Review of Health &amp; Safety and Environmental Matters (standing item).</b>	
<b>7.1 Play Area inspection reports.</b> Noted. Mr Robertson would power wash the	

surface algae before Christmas. The Clerk would look into an improved surface suggested by Cllr Wheeler.

**Action  
Clerk**

**7.2 Street Lighting.** Lighting in Park Lane between MKC and the corner and in front of the south Plantation were suggested as likely to benefit from improved lighting. The Clerk would raise this with NYCC. Councillors would also review the area between the top cross and Barbican House.

**Clerk  
All**

**7.3 Draft Emergency plan:** The Clerk had further updated the draft. Councillors were available to provide a response over the festive period should an emergency arise. Additional volunteers were required.

The Clerk would check with the MKC trustees that there was a procedure in place to regularly check that drains were clear; Cllr Wheeler could provide a briefing for volunteers.

**Clerk**

Following a meeting with Cllr Byford, Mr Bethell would discuss with his Moors Man and contractors regarding the feasibility of constructing a berm to prevent run off from the Moors onto roads leading into the Town, although suitable siting for the water retention area had not been identified. A further meeting would be held.

**Cllr  
Byford**

#### **7.4 Highways Issues:**

7.4.1 Recent resurfacing of roads and accidents. There was no further feedback on the improved surface which was regarded as being very satisfactory.

7.4.2 Middleham Bridge - structural concerns. NYCC had confirmed that it was fully aware of the issues arising from its design and construction but were unable to make alterations due to its Grade II status. It was regularly monitored and repaired as required and subject to a full inspection every 2 years. Council was satisfied with this response, although dissatisfied with the tardy response to similar issues raised by a concerned resident.

**7.5 Environmental Matters.** No matters to report

#### **8. Project Updates:**

**8.1 Burial Ground.** The topographical survey had been received and Clerk and Cllr Wheeler would meet the architect on site.

**Cllr  
Wheeler  
/ Clerk**

**8.2 MSCWA.** The AGM had taken place held on 20 November 2019. The Secretary's report was received for information. The Clerk reported that he was liaising with the Treasurer regarding the cricket club subscriptions which were usually received after the season end.

**8.3 Option agreement.** There were no developments to report. It was noted that the developers' funding for Council's legal expenses had now been exhausted and, in view of the delays, it was agreed not to respond further until the other side made contact, at which point Council may wish to revisit the heads of agreement and option price.

**Clerk**

**8.4 Middleham Safer Roads project.** Cllr Byford reported on current status and progress with funding applications. NYCC was still keeping all options under review, including a potential off-road route.

**8.5 Play area improvements; report of committee:** No matters to report.

#### **9. Events in Middleham (standing item)**

**9.1 Spring Clean 2020:** Will be held on Saturday 4 April 2020, prior to Stables Open Day.

#### **10. Planning**

##### **10.1 Planning decision notices received since the last meeting:**

10.1.1 Full Planning Permission for Internal Alterations, Blocking of a Small Window and Refurbishment of Conservatory, Middleham Grange Market Place Middleham DL8 4NR

**Action**

19/00625/FULL **GRANTED**

**10.2 Planning Applications.** None were received prior to the Notice of meeting however there was a brief discussion of the following:

10.2.1 Listed Building Consent for Alterations and Extensions in Association with Creation of a Centre for People of the Horse Racing Industry at Hill House And West Hill House, West End Middleham, DL8 4QG - AMENDED PROPOSAL 19/00534/LBC. The earlier applications had attracted considerable interest and it was agreed to apply for an extension to gauge local opinion. A set of the printed plans would be made available in the Key Centre.

**Clerk**

**10.3 Potential Planning Enforcement Issues.** An update on the Forbidden Corner Tower was received from YDNP. Whilst a strategic plan was still not available, at least current applications at the site were not retrospective.

**10.4 Other Planning Matters:**

10.3.1 RDC Conservation Area. There was concern at the indefinite vacancy for a conservation officer. Council considered that any advice put forward by a private consultant engaged by applicants, as suggested by RDC in the interim, would not be impartial or adequately reflect the outlook of the authority. The Clerk would request confirmation of the timescale for a replacement and ask that authority give additional weight to Council's views as it had consistently supported the conservation guidance.

**Clerk**

10.3.2 S106 Agreement, St Alkelda's development. It was noted that the agreement would provide a sum of £57,594 towards the enhancement of existing nearby children's play areas and the linked footpaths, payable to RDC upon construction of the 15<sup>th</sup> property on the site. Noting that the Council would be a party to the agreement, it was agreed to ask the developer at what point the Council it would be involved.

**Clerk**

## 11. Finance – Information/Decision required

11.1 The cash book with a full bank reconciliation as at 31 October and 30 November 2019 was received.

**IT WAS RESOLVED to approve the schedule of direct debits and internet bank transfers to approve and ratify all payments since the last Meeting as set out on the payments schedule.**

11.2 **Budget and Precept for 2020/21:** The budget and underlying assumptions had been circulated. There was a small projected overspend of £602 and it was agreed that the Clerk should reduce the expenditure to achieve a balanced budget so that the precept would remain unchanged. **IT WAS RESOLVED to approve the budget as circulated prior to the meeting, subject to minor amendment as discussed, and to set the precept at £12,000.**

A copy of the final form of the budget is attached to and forms part of these minutes

## 12. Central & Local Government Communications: Documents that have been emailed or circulated to Cllrs since the last meeting.

12.1.1 YLCA White Rose Update.

## 13. Shared information and suggested items for the next agenda

13.1 Annual planner for agenda items; to note forthcoming business.

13.2 Items for next agenda:

13.2.1 Potential for conversion of Methodist chapel for affordable housing

13.2.2 Plantations. Future maintenance of hedges and open areas

13.2.3 MKC. To receive an annual report

13.2.4 Middleham Herald. To consider future format and frequency

13.2.5 Review of Funding Opportunities

**Action**

**Date and time of the next meetings: The next monthly meeting would be the Council meeting on 29 January 2020. Cllr Stocker and Cllr Cade submitted apologies of absence for that meeting; Cllr Stocker would also be unavailable on 26 February 2020.**

**There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.03pm**

**Signed.....Date.....**