

**Minutes of a Meeting of Middleham Town Council held in Middleham Key Centre on Wednesday, 29 January 2020 at 7.00 pm. (SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING)**

**Present**

Chairman Mrs S Fairhurst, Vice Chairman Cllr Mrs H Byford, Cllr Mr G Fortune, Mr S Wheeler and Cllr Mr N Hopper

County Cllr Mrs K Sedgwick, PCSO Tracie Lee Taylor-Paige, Amanda Madden, RDC Mrs J Greenslade, North Yorkshire Dales Methodist Circuit, Clerk Mr D Keep

Members of the public as the attached attendance sheet.

**Action**

**1. Open Forum.**

Matters raised were discussed under the relevant agenda heading.

**2. Apologies.**

Cllr Mr M Cade and Cllr Mrs L Stocker. All other Councillors were present.

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

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 11 December 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 A banner was still on the wall of the Black Bull on the East Witton Road side. Councillors would again speak to the manager.

**Cllr  
Hopper/Cllr  
Wheeler**

**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).** None in addition to those reported elsewhere.

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

6.2.1 Plantations: future maintenance of hedges and open areas: Cllrs Hopper and Fortune and the Clerk had met with the new contractor and his team to walk around the agreed areas to agree the standard of work expected. Whilst reviewing the Plantations, it showed that despite repeated attempts over recent years to reduce excessive growth, there was still some encroachment over external grassed areas and roadways which might benefit from a further cutting back during the imminent, the last to be undertaken by the outgoing contractor. It was agreed to meet with Mr

**Cllrs and  
Clerk**

**Action**

Robertson to agree a specification and recommend to the charity that it should authorise up to £500 of additional fees for this work. It was agreed that this additional work was necessary although the survey of residents' views had not yet been canvassed.

**6.3 Police Report (standing item).** The report was noted. PCSO Tracie Lee Taylor-Paige was present to provide an update on local policing. In response to Council, who would oppose moving Police Station to the Fire Station, there were currently no plans to relocate. Team numbers were building up and she referred to the in-depth training for new starters. Officers now responded to calls that they were close to rather than in their own area. PCSOs could now be contacted directly by mobile phone. Council thanked PCSO Taylor-Paige for attending.

**6.4 Police Consultation on resourcing.** Council was frustrated at the relatively short notice allowed for this consultation, the late receipt of a publicity poster and the lack of forms for those who do not have internet access. It was agreed to express these concerns to the Police and Fire Commissioner.

**6.5 2021 The Lord of the North Festival.** Cllr Byford reported that a further meeting of the organising committee would shortly be held. She represented a link with the Council on the committee, which comprised various Ricardian groups and was chaired by Rev Payne. A small RIII event was being organised at the Castle by English Heritage in July 2020, without wider involvement.

**6.6 Selection of contractors for building maintenance purposes.** A number of firms were suggested for potential future contracts.

**6.7 Middleham Herald.** The Mayor expressed disappointment that the Herald had not been published quarterly in 2019 and that circulation of the pre-Christmas issue was delayed. She felt that Councillors should support it more enthusiastically. Following discussion of the role of the Herald, it was agreed to be a useful tool for communication between Council and resident as it was delivered to every household. Cllr Byford would liaise with the Clerk to agree a schedule and Councillors undertook to write regular reports within agreed timescales.

**6.8 Potential for conversion of Methodist chapel for affordable housing.** Amanda Madden Rural Housing Enabler from Richmondshire District Council and Julie Greenslade, Administrator of the North Yorkshire Dales Methodist Circuit, were present for this item. They advised that conversion of the pilot project at Bainbridge's redundant chapel was ongoing from which lessons could be learned that might speed future conversions. Mrs Madden outlined that a housing needs study indicated a requirement for 12 units of affordable housing with 2 to 3 bedrooms in Middleham; the chapel conversion had potential to create 2 units with 3 bedrooms. The outline scheme would involve demolition of the reading room, which would also improve visibility on the corner. Council thanked Mrs Madden and Mrs Greenslade for attending and welcomed the possibility of a similar project taking place in Middleham, which Council and the community were likely to support.

**6.9 Middleham Key Centre.** The annual accounts to 31 March 2019 and Chairman's report were received which showed continuing progress by the Trustees and a satisfactory financial position. Council noted the dependence upon a small team and difficulty of attracting new volunteers. It was agreed that MKC would benefit from greater active participation by younger people and it was agreed to assist with identification of potential volunteers to assist and potentially join the board.

**6.10 Review of Funding Opportunities.** This was deferred to the next meeting.

**6.11 YLCA**

6.11.1 Agenda and future branch meeting dates. The Clerk drew attention to the forthcoming meeting, which he would attend, featuring a speaker from Friends of the Earth.

6.11.2 Spring Training Day 28 March 2020. The varied range of topics to be discussed in workshops throughout the day were noted. Having confirmed his

**Clerk****Clerk****All****Cllr  
Byford/Clerk****Clerk**

**Action  
Clerk**

availability on a Saturday, it was agreed to fund attendance by the Clerk at a cost of £120 plus travelling expenses and to nominate which sessions were most relevant.

**6.12 Communication between Town and Parish Councils and the District Council.** A request for suggestions on how to improve communication was received. Councillors would consider how to respond.

**All**

**6.13 Broadband.** The change of service provider to TalkTalk that had been agreed between meetings was ratified. The installation was completed earlier in the day. Council should now benefit from annual cost savings of approximately £400 and benefit from fibre broadband.

## **7. Review of Health & Safety and Environmental Matters (standing item).**

**7.1 Play Area inspection reports.** The Clerk had inspected the play areas in light of recommendations within recent RDC and RoSPA inspection reports. He had identified actions that could be undertaken to address some of these matters and also to improve the physical appearance, and provided costings for spare parts. It was agreed that Cllr Fortune and the Clerk would inspect together to finalise a schedule of works, subject to an overall budget for spare parts of up to £400. It was agreed to investigate setting up a volunteer working party, possibly on the same date as the parish clean up on 4 April, to clean and repaint the equipment. In the first instance the Clerk would speak to Mr Burren to recruit volunteers who had previously worked on the church tower.

**Cllr Fortune /  
Clerk**

**Clerk**

Cllr Wheeler kindly undertook to repair wooden benches in the skate park. The Clerk would speak to the new land contractor about weed spraying in the skate park.

**Cllr Wheeler  
Clerk**

**7.2 Street Lighting.** The Clerk reported that the light on the corner of the south side of the Plantations had been replaced and subsequently fitted with a light shield that had successfully diverted the beam away from adjacent housing. The effectiveness of street lighting from Barbican House towards the Plantations was considered inadequate and the Clerk would investigate the possibility of an additional light.

**Clerk**

**7.3 Emergency plan:** The Clerk reported that the plan was still evolving.

**7.4 G5 Network Concerns:** Dr Green spoke regarding concerns about the possible risks to human health and the environment arising from installation of 5G. NYCC has applied for a grant to fund early installation of 5G in the Dales. Dr Green recommended a precautionary approach should be adopted until there was conclusive proof that the technology was safe. She noted that certain cities in Europe were not rolling out 5G because of these worries. Cllr Sedgwick confirmed that NYCC was aware of these issues but did not share these concerns. She would forward communications from Cllr Don Mackenzie, Executive Member responsible for broadband and mobile phones and, in due course, a paper being prepared by Dr Lincoln Sargeant, NYCC's Director of Public Health. Councillors agreed that they should look at the matter and form its own opinion before possibly lobbying NYCC on the issue. The Clerk would circulate further information that had been received.

**Clerk**

## **8. Project Updates:**

**8.1 Burial Ground.** The Clerk had met the architect on site and draft burial plans were reviewed. The Clerk would now finalise the planning application and other matters. As it was possible that the burial ground could be opened during the current year, it was agreed to join the Institute of Cemeteries and crematorium Management (ICCM) for a fee of £100 which would provide guidance and advice.

**Clerk**

**8.2 MSCWA.** Cllr Hopper and Cllr Wheeler reported that funding from a local resident would provide a potting shed. Some boulders had been donated which enhanced the appearance. Regarding usage, it was hoped that a 'forest school'

**Action**

would be established by Mrs Wheeler and the cricket ground had been selected for matches in an international 'golden oldies;' tournament in the summer.

**8.3 Option agreement.** Cllr Fairhurst, Cllr Byford and the Clerk had met with Mr Gillhespy of GSC Grays. The Council's solicitor Steve Scott had been in attendance and had lead the meeting very effectively. Mr Gillhespy would summarise the discussions but it appeared likely that the option agreement could now be finalised. Council had requested that the footpath between the play areas be improved as a necessary pedestrian link between the town and the development.

**8.4 Middleham Safer Roads project.** Cllr Byford reported that the maintenance plan proposal would now be considered at the March NYCC meeting, to be attended by Mr Davies the area highways manager.

The meeting discussed the background to the recent collision between a horse and passing van on the East Witton Road, in which the driver was unhurt, but shaken, and the horse killed. It was deemed an unfortunate accident and the driver was not at fault in any way. Councillors questioned whether improved road signs were required as the stable's access was approached over a brow and close to a bend. Sam Trainor was organising a road safety training event.

The Clerk would circulate details of NYCC's online system for reporting defects, including potholes. Reporting could be done by anyone, not just the Clerk.

**Clerk**

**8.5 Play area improvements; report of committee:** There were no matters to report.

**8.6 Website update.**

8.6.1 New Council website. Cllr Fortune and the Clerk had reviewed 2 'off the peg' website providers as a comparison to engaging a local contractor who would develop a site from scratch. Cllr Fortune favoured one provider over the other and recognised that a standard web package would have lower initial costs. He was concerned however at the higher annual fees of up to £300. It was agreed that he should seek a lower quote from the local designer, failing which it might be able to achieve reduced recurring costs from the other providers.

**Cllr Fortune**

8.6.2 Future of Middlehamonline website. It was noted that Mrs Whitwham planned to retire as webmaster and had offered the URL to the Council. It was agreed to be a useful asset and the Clerk would confirm that the Council wished to take over the address.

**Clerk**

**8.7 Town Guide.** Cllr Hopper reported that rather than reprint the previous guide, it would not be excessive workload to create new artwork and a draft was being prepared by Mrs Hopper. Cllr Fairhurst and Cllr Byford would meet with Mrs Hopper.

**Cllr Fairhurst/Cllr Byford**

**8.8 Road Closure Order.** Cllr Byford was finalising annual renewal of the Council's application to close Middleham Roads during festivals and other events, including the carol service which would be repeated this year. Racing Welfare would make their own application for the Open Day.

**Cllr Byford****9. Events in Middleham (standing item)**

**9.1 Spring Clean 2020:** This was scheduled for Saturday 4 April 2020, prior to Stables Open Day. The Clerk would make arrangements, including publicity materials and liaison with the School to obtain safety wear for children.

**Clerk****10. Planning****10.1 Planning decision notices received since the last meeting:**

10.1.1 Full Planning Permission for Erection of Rear Extension Incorporating Dormer Extension at Green Acres Park Lane Middleham DL8 4QY 19/00379 **GRANTED**

**10.2 Planning Applications. :**

10.2.1 Full Planning Permission to Replace 3 Vertical Sliding Sash Bedroom Windows at the Front of the House With Double Glazed Top Hung Imitation Sliding

**Action**

Sash Windows, to Repair the Lintel of the Garage Door and to Replace the Manual Garage Door With an Electrical One, at Membland, West End, Middleham, DL8 4QL 19/00820/FULL. This application had been received between meetings and circulated to Councillors. It had since been approved. It was noted that the proposed new windows and doors were constructed of timber and that a sash window design was required by planners.

10.2.2 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. Details of the revised application had been circulated. Council considered that there were no material considerations to object to and in some ways positive steps had been taken to minimise impact upon surrounding properties. Subject to requesting that any air conditioning units to be placed on the roof of the gym building should instead be relocated to ground level to minimise impact upon visual appearance and noise levels for neighbouring properties, it was agreed to support the proposal.

**10.3 Potential Planning Enforcement Issues.** There were none.

**10.4 Other Planning Matters:**

10.3.1 RDC Conservation Area. It was noted that RDC hoped to appoint a new conservation officer during January and the Clerk would seek an update on progress.

**Clerk**

**11. Finance – Information/Decision required**

11.1 The cash book with a full bank reconciliation as at 31 December 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 **Final Budget for 2020/21:** Minor amendment of certain assumptions had been made to achieve a balanced budget for the Council. Overall effect was now a negligible deficit of £8. A copy of the final form of the budget is attached to and forms part of these minutes

11.3 **Transfer of balances to IH.** IH pays 50% towards salary and office costs incurred by MTC. Until a separate IH accounts were held for the 2017-18 financial year, this was only a paper transaction. The position for the past 2 complete financial years was reported to the meeting. Due to some MTA payments being incorrectly sent to the MTC account, the current position was that a balance was due from MTC and IH of £7,558.89. The Clerk proposed that this sum was shown as a creditor in the MTC accounts rather than to transfer the sum. At the end of the current year, the salary and office costs due from IH should cover the balance owed. This approach was agreed.

11.4 **Section 137(4) (a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for parish and town councils in England for 2020-21 is £8.32 per elector.** This is effectively a local council's 'power of last resort' where no other power exists and must be for the benefit of the town as a whole. In Middleham, with approximately £660 residents, this sum for the coming year would be £5,491.

**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.

**Action**

**13.2** Items for next agenda:

13.2.1 Review of Funding Opportunities

**Date and time of the next meetings: The next meeting would be held on 26 February 2020. Cllrs Stocker and Byford had submitted apologies of absence for that meeting.**

**There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.20pm**

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