

Minutes of a Meeting of Middleham Town Council held as a virtual meeting through Zoom on Wednesday, 24 June 2020 at 7.00 pm. (SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING)

Present

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

County Cllr Mrs K Sedgwick, Clerk Mr D Keep

Candidates for the vacant position of councillor: Mr I Pead-Jowett, Mrs C Anderson, Mrs L Skelton, Mr D Slay, Mr D Wheeler.

Action

1. Open Forum.

No matters were raised

2. Introduction and Apologies.

Having checked that all present could be hear and be heard, The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Council's first virtual meeting and declared the meeting open. All 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 26 February 2020 as a true and accurate record to be signed by the Chairman.

4.2 The schedule of agreed actions. Noted.

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 reported.

6.2 Revised Standing Orders in accordance with the Covid Regulations The Local Authorities and Police And Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority And Police And Crime Panel Meetings) (England And Wales) Regulations 2020 (The 'Regulations'): It was noted that amended draft regulations were based upon a pro-forma received from NALC with slight modifications. **IT WAS RESOLVED to adopt Revised Standing Orders permitting convening of virtual meetings in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Regulations.**

6.3 Deferral of re-election of Mayor and Vice Chair and Annual Town Meeting 13 May 2020. Regulation 3 of the Regulations permitted councils to waive holding the annual meeting dealing with election of the Mayor and vice chair and it was agreed that Cllr Fairhurst and Cllr Byford shall continue in office until annual meeting to be held in 2021.

Action

6.4 Delegation of Authority to the Clerk. Councils had been advised that, during suspension of meetings which were ordinarily a council's only forum for taking decisions, it might be appropriate to delegate a general or specific authority to the Clerk. Council had not agreed such delegation before lockdown and no significant decisions had been taken since the previous meeting. The Clerk was currently working from home in accordance with government guidance and, following usual practice, email circulation of matters requiring decision had been made to the full Council and when decision were required they were approved in principle and subject to ratification during the current meeting, as set out in the notice.

There had been a derogation from the Council's financial procedures whereby online banking transactions had been effected by the Clerk alone rather than in the presence of a Councillor. Most expenditure was to existing payees and all within budget and it was agreed that this was an acceptable derogation in the circumstances.

6.5 Applications for the office of town councillor and co-option of a candidate to fill the existing vacancy. Applications had been received from Mr I Pead-Jowett, Mrs C Anderson, Mrs L Skelton, Mr D Slay and Mr D Wheeler, each of whom had confirmed they were eligible. In turn they spoke in support of their application following which all left the meeting whilst Council reached a decision in private session. It was rewarding that such a large field of good candidates was willing to serve the community. **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT Lorna Skelton be appointed Councillor.**

The candidates re-joined the meeting and informed of the decision. They were thanked for putting themselves forward. Mrs Skelton's formal appointment would be concluded once she had signed a declaration of acceptance of office.

Mrs Skelton remained in the meeting whilst the other candidates left.

6.6 Land Management Issues (standing item)

6.6.1 Tender Process for Green Gates. The location of this tract of land off East Witton Road, owned by Council and not the Charity, was noted. It was unsure whether the current tenant might be arranging to move out. It was agreed that a tender notice be issued. Cllr Fairhurst and Cllr Wheeler would inspect the current state of the land, the boundary fences and walls and the livestock.

6.6.2 Cobbles inspection. The inspection was ongoing and would be reported with a recommendation for remedial works at the next meeting.

6.6.3 Walls and fences on Council / Charity land. It was noted that a stone wall was damaged at Western Willows. This would be inspected.

6.6.4 Dog Fouling. The possible location of three dog waste bag dispensers provided by NYCC was considered. It was agreed to request RDC commit to emptying an additional dog waste bin along Park Lane and to relocate existing bins to better positions.

6.6.5 Tree Planting. To review proposal from Lower Wensleydale Biodiversity Action Group (LWBAG). A detailed proposal including a planting plan had been circulated and further questions had been answered by the scheme's promoters. Its scope was larger than at first expected and concerns were expressed if the group was unable to oversee the project, which could default to council to complete. Planting of a significant number of trees would impact upon the visual amenity and accordingly Council would undertake a community survey with assistance of RDC, which Cllr Fortune would take forward. It was agreed to meet on site with the Group, MTA as tenant of the land and Mr Stockdale, Council's arboreal adviser.

6.6.6 Reinstatement of land behind 9 St Alkelda's Road. It was noted that the householder had commenced a very satisfactory reinstatement and reseeding of grass on the land behind his property following vacation of the area by his builder.

6.6.7 Plantations. As the summer moratorium on hedge cutting during the bird nesting season would end at the end of July, it was agreed to meet with the Grounds contractor to

Clerk

Cllrs
Fairhurst
&
Cllr CadeCllr
Fairhurst

All

Clerk

Cllr
Fortune
Clerk

Clerk

	Action
discuss options for future maintenance.	
6.7 Police Report (standing item). The report was noted.	
6.8 Middleham Herald. During the Covid 19 Council had continued to publish the Herald, compiled by Cllr Byford who proposed publish further editions in mid-July (once current easements had taken place) and late August, (when further easings and future volunteer requirements will be clearer, hopefully).	Cllr Byford
6.9 Review of Funding Opportunities. Deferred to the next meeting.	
7. Review of Health & Safety and Environmental Matters (standing item).	
7.1 Play Area inspection reports. None received.	
7.2 Emergency plan: Cllr Byford provided a brief verbal report on activity in conjunction with the joint rectors and Mrs Sweeting coordinating volunteers to support the vulnerable. The scheme had worked well to date, with more volunteers than tasks. Ongoing need for the scheme would be reviewed in mid-August.	
7.3 G5 Network Risks. Cllr Sedgwick reported that she was liaising with NYCC re setting up an information page on its website and that representatives were able to attend council meeting to provide advice. It was noted that some of the published research regarding 5G risks had not been subject to proper scrutiny and peer review. This would be discussed in more detail at a future meeting. Cllr Fortune would write an article for a future Herald.	Cllr Fortune
7.4 One Way traffic between the Springs and St Alkelda's Road. Recent residents' concerns were noted. The Clerk would request an update from MJR on the incident allegedly involving one of the firm's vehicles.	Clerk
7.5 Incident on Low Moor. An incident reported by a jogger following an altercation with horse riders whilst moving to the Moors had been investigated by Cllr Byford who had received a written statement from the trainer concerned. It was not possible, on the basis of evidence received, to conclusively attribute blame and there appeared to be a degree of fault on both sides. The complainant, whilst remaining unhappy, will not take the matter forward. It was noted that the trainer had highlighted that signage on the Moors could possibly be improved and this would be raised with MTA.	Clerk
7.6 Replacement of white markers alongside E Witton Road. This item had inadvertently been omitted from the agenda although proposals received from NYCC to install notices in place of life-expired white markers had been circulated. The consensus was that whilst the white markers were costly and relatively short-lived due to impact and sun damage, they were an effective deterrent to parking on the verge. The Clerk would raise this with Area 1 Highways.	Clerk
8. Project Updates:	
8.1 Burial Ground. Council was pleased to note that planning consent had been received and thanked the Clerk for his work securing this, and for drafting proposals for burial ground rules, fee scales, specifications and tender documents for work to be undertaken, which would be approved at a future meeting.	
It was recognised that opening and operating the burial ground were significant additional duties for the Clerk and his overall workload should be reviewed.	All
8.2 MSCWA. A verbal report was received on maintenance issues. The pavilion carpet had been re-laid in hallway and changing rooms. Full-sized goal posts were being donated by Harmby Town Council.	
8.3 Key Centre. A detailed report had been received from Trustees outlining current financial position and maintenance actions undertaken during lockdown was received. It was noted that substantial Covid19 funding had been secured.	
8.4 Option agreement. A final draft of the Option agreement had been received via Scotts Solicitors. Subject to confirmation that the limit on reimbursement of advisers' costs had been increased, as agreed, the agreement appeared to be in order. Subject to receipt of an undertaking of costs and receipt of a final version of the s106	

agreement on terms that were acceptable to Council, IT WAS RESOLVED to approve the terms of the Option Agreement.

Action

Clerk

8.5 New Council Website. IT WAS RESOLVED TO ratify the engagement of Netwise Ltd (£899). The Clerk was thanked for the work undertaken preparing the new content of the website that it was hoped would go live within a week. Comments on content and appearance was requested. To ensure that News items and announcements could be made in a timely manner, Cllr Byford and Cllr Fortune would jointly edit the site.

All
Cllrs
Byford &
Fortune

9. Events in Middleham (standing item). No events were planned at the current time.

10. Planning

10.1 Planning decision notices received since the last meeting:

10.1.1 Full Planning Permission for Change of Use of Recreational Open Space for Creation of a Civic Burial Ground, 20/00076/FULL. **Granted**

10.2 Planning Applications.

10.2.1 Planning Consultation for Installation of Chair Lift to Front Elevation and Removal of Iron Handrail at The Stonehouse, North Road 20/00381/FULL. Cllr Byford declared an interest and did not take part in this discussion. Council supported the application to facilitate essential access for the householder would request a condition that the original appearance is restored when this is no longer required.

Clerk

10.3 Potential Planning Enforcement Issues. The kitchen extractor flue to the rear of the Dante Arms had been painted a royal blue with a red cap, reported by several residents who considered it an inappropriate colour. The Clerk would raise this with RDC.

Clerk

10.4 Other Planning Matters: None.

11. Finance – Information/Decision required

11.1 The cash book with a full bank reconciliation as at 31 May 2020 was received. Cash book copies and bank reconciliations for February, March (the Council's year-end) and April had previously been circulated.

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 IT WAS RESOLVED to approve the upgrade to the Laptops hardware and installation of up to date operating software at £304.16 (inclusive of VAT). This had been approved in principal by email circulation between meetings and was covered by a contingency expenditure reserve.

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

12.1.1 Between meetings a wide range of documents principally giving advice regarding Covid19 had been circulated.

13. Shared information and suggested items for the next agenda

- 13.1.1 Items for next agenda:
- 13.1.2 Approval of annual accounts
- 13.1.3 Various matters in connection with the Burial ground
- 13.1.4 Future care plan for vegetation on the Plantations
- 13.1.5 5G risks

14. Future Meetings

Action

The next meeting would be held on 29 July 2020.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending the Council's first virtual meeting and declared the meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed.....Date.....