

Minutes of a Meeting of Middleham Town Council held as a virtual meeting through Zoom on Wednesday, 24 February 2021 at 7.00 pm. (SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING)

Present

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

County Cllr Mrs K Sedgwick (part of meeting)

Clerk Mr D Keep.

Action

1. Introduction and Apologies.

Having checked that all those present could hear and be heard, the Chairman welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open.

All Councillors were present.

2. Open Forum.

There were no members of the public 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 27 January 2021 as a true and accurate record to be signed by the Chairman.

4.2 The schedule of agreed actions. The Deputy Chair and Clerk had undertaken a detailed review and longer-term items had been transferred to the Clerk's action list. The action list was now shorter and provided greater focus on priority matters.

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). In a personal capacity Cllr Byford had attended one of two public consultation meetings by the MANY Project team regarding the 5G trial where a statement she had prepared was read out. It was noted that planning consent for a telecommunications mast at West Scafton had been granted by Yorkshire Dales National Park planners.

6.2 Matters of local interest and concern as reported to Councillors or on Residents' Facebook page. None.

6.3 Coronavirus Update

6.3.1 Coordination of volunteers and support to the vulnerable. Requests for assistance remained infrequent, mostly trips to the vaccination centre.

6.3.2 Weekly reports from Leyburn CSO hub on activity: received for information.

6.3.3 Local need for a food bank. Cllrs Fairhurst and Skelton had attended a virtual meeting regarding a new scheme in Leyburn, to which Middleham could be linked,

Action

although they were not in favour of means-testing applicants. A scheme in Bedale was also able to cover requests from Middleham. This was against the background that, to date, no one locally had requested assistance, despite offering discrete contact points for anyone in need. Rev Moody had circulated details of an alternative model of foodbank where people were 'members' of a pantry and in return for small contributions were able to choose 10 items of donated shopping with a larger value. It was agreed to keep the matter under review.

6.4 Land Management Issues (standing item)

6.4.1 Dog Fouling. RDC had met with Cllrs Hopper and Skelton and agreed the location for an additional bin along Park Lane and the post was already in place.

**Cllr
Fairhurst**

6.4.2 Waste Bins. Cllr Fairhurst would continue to RDC regarding the reinstatement of collections from general waste bin on skate park. The School had confirmed that it would produce artwork highlighting the need for a waste bin..

6.4.3 Storm drains on Council Lands - maintenance issues. Drains on Council-owned land in the west end had been inspected and appeared to be blocked by silt and debris running off the Low Moor. A quotation of £850 plus VAT had been received. There was disappointment that NYCC's own drains contractor could not be contacted for a comparative quote; as they already worked in Middleham it was hoped this might reduce travelling costs. Cllr Wheeler suggested alternative contractors for the Clerk to contact. He would also inspect personally to see if the top level of the blockage could be removed to facilitate flow and prevent an overflow in the short term.

**Cllr
Wheeler
Clerk**

The Clerk would report a possible blocked drain in Park Lane between the Key Centre and the Chapel, which an NYCC operative had stated was collapsed.

Clerk

6.4.4 Lost Paths Project. Details had been circulated via the website but it was not clear whether a review of local paths was being undertaken. Cllr Fairhurst would review, possibly with a named resident, and report whether any rights of way were under threat.

**Cllr
Fairhurst**

6.4.5 Access to playing fields paddock. It was agreed that access could be improved if a narrower pedestrian gate fitted with a return spring was fitted, possibly by alteration to the existing gate. Cllr Wheeler would prepare a costing.

**Cllr
Wheeler**

6.5 Police Report (standing item). The report for February was noted.

6.6 Middleham Herald. Cllr Byford intended to circulate an issue prior to Easter. Councillors were encouraged to draft content.

**Cllr
Byford**

6.7 Local Government Reorganisation. Communications from RDC and NYCC advocating their own preferred organisation structures had been received. The central government had recently commenced. The Clerk would ensure that the consultation was publicised on the website.

Clerk

6.8 Climate Change

6.8.1 RDC's Climate Change Officer's report. Cllr Hopper and the Clerk reported on the talk by Yvonne Adams RDC's recently appointed Climate Change Officer. A copy of her presentation had been circulated. The overall impression was very positive, although some reservations were expressed regarding the financial support provided by RDC in response to their self-declared 'emergency'. It was hoped that Ms Adam's action plan would receive full RDC support and Council looked forward to engaging with her on local initiatives.

Ms Adam's responses on recycling and waste collection issues were noted. Although not within her remit, there was continued frustration at RDC's recycling box scheme. There was discussion whether Middleham would benefit from its own community recycling point which would help residents dispose of excessive recycling items, although a suitable location was not immediately apparent. Cllr Byford would measure the bin currently in Coverdale. Cllr Fairhurst would continue requesting a response from RDC regarding the recycling collection issues.

**Cllr
Byford**

**Cllr
Fairhurst**

	Action
6.8.2 <u>Friends of the Earth 50-point Climate Change Plan for Councils.</u> The document was received for information. It was agreed that this should be considered in detail at a future meeting to assess whether it was relevant in Middleham and to identify potential interested parties to collaborate with.	Clerk
6.9 Housing matters: An update from RDC's Housing Officer regarding probable open-market disposal of local Methodist Chapels, including Middleham's, was received. In advance of the meeting, and in agreement with Cllr Fairhurst, the Clerk had sought an indicative market valuation for the Chapel and contacted Broadacres Housing Association regarding possible collaboration with other parties with a view of securing the chapel for affordable housing. Some reservations were expressed regarding the commitments required for such an initiative; however it was agreed to pursue an initial investigation.	
6.10 Middleham Online website. Following an earlier costing received for a new Council-run version of the website, Cllr Skelton and the Clerk considered that this would be a relatively costly and complex way of continuing the website and suggested approaching the webmaster whether certain content could be transferred to a separate section of the Council website. This was agreed and the Clerk would raise with Mr and Mrs Whitwham.	Clerk
6.11 YLCA Conference. A full and informative programme of events was planned. Councillors would review the content and whether attendance would be beneficial.	All
6.12 Funding Opportunities. The Clerk routinely circulated funding bulletins to Council, MSCWA and MKC but was concerned that opportunities might be missed as he was not able to review in detail. Cllr Fortune had reviewed in the past, noting the detailed terms and conditions that often applied making it difficult to identify those that were relevant.	
6.13 CAB Quarterly Report. Received for information.	
6.14 Warm & Well newsletter. Received for information.	
7. Review of Health & Safety and Environmental Matters (standing item).	
7.1 Play Area inspection reports. None received..	
7.2 Street Lighting. Earlier correspondence from RDC stating it had no statutory responsibility to provide adequate pavement lighting, only to maintain what was already there, was reviewed again. Residents' complaints were being received regarding the section between MKC and the Chapel and Councillors agreed that consideration should be given to utilising charity funds to cover the £2k cost for installation of a new light which would thereafter be powered and maintained by RDC. In the first instance, Cllr Fairhurst would raise the matter again with RDC.	Cllr Fairhurst
7.3 Low Flying Aircraft. A draft letter to the Ministry of Defence regarding possible risks to safety for horses and riders whilst training on the Moors prior to 1pm daily had been circulated, in advance of a planned RAF training exercise to shortly take place. Following discussion it was agreed that the letter was best sent from the MTA with the Council in support. The matter had attracted quite of lot of comment on the Residents' Facebook page.	Cllr Byford
8. Project Updates:	
8.1.1 Burial Ground. A meeting with the contractor would be held. The Clerk seek to clarify if the stone elsewhere on Council land might be suitable.	Clerk
8.2 MSCWA. Preparations were in hand for possible start of football.	
8.3 Key Centre. No matters reported by the Trustees. Cllr Wheeler confirmed that the new pumps recently installed still required periodic checks to clear debris; volunteers to help with this had been suggested. Council was considering potential new trustees to help MKC.	
8.4 Safer Roads Project. Cllr Byford reported that a funding opportunity was being explored with a deadline in April 2021. The Council would be involved as a project partner and formal approval for this would be sought at the March meeting. Cllr Fairhurst paid tribute to Cllr Byford for the significant contribution she was making to improve safety for	Cllr Byford

Action

the local racing industry and its staff.

8.5 Pinkers Pond Tree Planting. Most of the 200 trees had been successfully planted over the previous weekend, with approximately 10 volunteers participating. The project had received very positive feedback on the Residents Facebook page.

8.6 Play areas. A proposal for moving skatepark equipment from the Playing Fields to the Park Lane play area was withdrawn as indicative costs for laying an asphalt surface were prohibitive..

9. Events in Middleham (standing item). None currently planned. Official confirmation had been received that the Richard III Festival weekend in 2021 had been cancelled.

10. Planning

10.1 Planning decision notices received since the last meeting: None received.

10.2 Planning Applications.

10.2.1 Fieldfare House Middleham Road DL8 5HE, Change of Use from Car Port to Self-Contained Accommodation to be Used in Association with the Main Dwelling as Either an Annex or Holiday Let (Retrospective) 21/00074. No objection.

10.2.2 Listed Building Consent to Re-Paint and Alter Colour of Wooden Window Frames, Masonry Window, Front Door Surrounds, Wooden Front Door to Front Elevation and Wooden Window Frames and Doors to Rear Elevation at Manor House, West End, Middleham, DL8 4QL 21/00084/LBC. No objection.

10.3 Potential Planning Enforcement Issues. There were none.

10.4 Other Planning Matters:. None.

11. Finance – Information/Decision required

11.1 The cash book with a full bank reconciliation as at the end of January 2021 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 Specific Expenditure Approvals. There were none.

11.3 Internal Control inspection. The Clerk had distributed a year end internal audit checklist from YLCA and recommended that additional checks be undertaken by the internal auditor. It was agreed that best practice be followed and ask Ms Duke which of these items she would oversee and others that Councillors would undertake, with an indication of costs. Councillors were reminded of their responsibilities for inspecting internal controls during each financial year. Cllr Fairhurst and Cllr Byford would carry out checks before the year end.

11.4 Banking arrangements. It was noted that when HSBC branches in Richmond and Northallerton closed in August 2021; the nearest branch would be Darlington which was inconvenient for regularly paying in cash takings from the honesty boxes. It was agreed that an HSBC bank card be applied for the accounts separately run by Council for itself and as Trustee, so that payments might be made through Post Office branches. The required forms would be submitted to a future meeting, as cards were in personal names one each would be obtained for the Clerk, Cllr Fairhurst and Cllr Byford.

11.5 Transfer of capital reserve to IH. A further copy of the asset schedule prepared by the Clerk had been circulated, which addressed the incorrect allocation of the capital reserve to the Council and a number of minor corrections. Having been proposed by Cllr Fairhurst and seconded by Cllr Wheeler **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT**

11.5.1 Certain assets shown on the assets spreadsheet, which is attached to and forms part of the minutes of this meeting, should be transferred from the Council ('TC') to the Charity ('IH'). Accordingly the only land and buildings remaining with

**Clerk
All
Cllr
Fairhurst
/ Cllr
Byford**

Action

TC are Green Gates, MKC land and buildings, the play areas, the Playing Fields, including buildings, and the burial ground.

11.5.2 A balance of £87,862 arising from the sale of the town hall in 2011 be transferred from TC to IH.

12. Central & Local Government Communications: Between meetings a range of documents principally giving advice regarding Covid19 had been circulated. It was agreed that this item added little value and would be removed from future agendas

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 Play area improvements.

13.2.2 Review of interest rates on deposit accounts

13.2.3 Amendments to Clerk's contract of employment (private session).

**Cllr
Byford**

14. Future Meetings

**The following Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 24 March 2021.
There being no further business the declared the meeting closed at 9.15pm**

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