

**Minutes of a Meeting of Middleham Town Council held as a virtual meeting through Zoom on Wednesday, 28 April 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), Mrs K Wheeler (items 1 to 4 and 6.6.3, 8.2 and 8.4 only)

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 further 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 31 March 2021 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, other than as reported elsewhere in these minutes.

**6.2 Matters of local interest and concern as reported to Councillors or on Residents' Facebook page.** No matters reported.

**6.3 Coronavirus Update**

**6.3.1 Delegation of powers to Clerk during imminent period that Council meetings cannot be held.** As with the previous period when meetings were suspended, councils had been advised that it might be appropriate to delegate a general or specific authority to the Clerk. Council's usual practice was for email circulation to the full Council of any matters requiring decision and, following approval in principle, the Clerk would take necessary action which would be ratified at the next meeting.

Having been proposed by Cllr Fairhurst and seconded by Cllr Byford **IT WAS RESOLVED THAT all statutory responsibilities and powers (other than those where a statutory prohibition applies) may be delegated to the Clerk with effect from 7 May 2021 until**

	<b>Action</b>
<b>safe resumption of meetings in line with the Government Covid Roadmap.</b>	
6.3.2 Coordination of volunteers and support to the vulnerable. Cllr Byford and Cllr Skelton reported on the excellent response received from Leyburn CSO hub when arranging support in Middleham.	
6.3.3 Update on other initiatives: local food bank, befriending scheme, community restart programme. It was agreed that a meeting be convened with local partners to discuss how these schemes could be rolled out in Middleham and establish Middleham as a dementia-friendly community.	<b>Clerk / Cllrs Hopper &amp; Skelton</b>
<b>6.4 Annual Town Meeting:</b> To be held on 6 May 2021.	
<b>6.5 Land Management Issues (standing item)</b>	
6.5.1 <u>Storm drains on Council Lands.</u> A date for clearance had not yet been advised.	
6.5.2 <u>Friends of the Plantations.</u> It was noted that some actions had been commenced by residents. The Clerk would ask Mr Robertson if he possessed a chipper to remove cut branches. The Clerk had drafted and circulated a risk assessment and suggested that volunteer working parties might safely commence after restrictions were eased on 17 May. It was agreed that a meeting be held with Mr Robertson to define activities that working parties could undertake, following which an instruction to residents could be drafted and sign up volunteers as 'Friends'. Cllr Fortune and Cllr Hopper would prepare a draft plan identifying what work would be carried out in differing areas.	<b>Clerk  Cllrs Fortune &amp; Hopper</b>
6.5.3 <u>Application to run Forest school in Lowlands Wood.</u> Mrs Wheeler confirmed that she was formally qualified as a Forest School teacher and possessed appropriate insurance cover. Access would be during school holidays. The request was granted, although use of fire bricks to cook marshmallows would be subject to further discussion. It was suggested that a meeting be convened with the arboriculturist, Mr Kalkowski to draw up a management plan for the wood and ensure that Forest School activities, including maintenance, were compatible with care of the area.	<b>Cllr Hopper</b>
<b>6.6 Police Report (standing item).</b> The report for March was noted. It was agreed to express appreciation to PC Julian Sutcliffe who was retiring after many years working in the community.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>6.7 Middleham Herald.</b> Cllr Byford planned to prepare future issues at the start of the summer holidays, Halloween, Christmas and Easter.	
<b>6.8 Housing matters:</b> A meeting was held on Monday 19 April with RDC's Housing Officer and Broadacres Housing Association to explore possible collaboration with other parties to secure the redundant Methodist chapel for affordable housing. It had outlined different routes towards this aim, which Cllr Byford summarised. Subsequently the Methodist Church had declined a request to carry out an internal feasibility inspection, which was disappointing, however the Housing Officer was exploring ways to take the proposal forward.	
<b>6.9 Funding Opportunities.</b> None discussed.	
<b>6.10 Operation London Bridge.</b> The Clerk explained that this was the codename for planning civic response in the event of the monarch's death, which all levels of government were recommended to prepare. He would take available advice and liaise with local councils to draw up a plan.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>7. Review of Health &amp; Safety and Environmental Matters (standing item).</b>	
7.1.1 <b>Play Area Inspection reports.</b> None received. It was agreed that the Bell Tower team should paint the equipment red, yellow and green.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>7.2 Street Lighting.</b> RDC's announcement of a funding scheme, available on a 'first come-first served' basis to local councils was noted. The Clerk would apply on the opening date of 1 May.	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>7.3 One Way signs.</b> The painted signs on the highway at the Springs end of the one-way system were now present. It was too early to know if these, and other new signs, would reduce incidents of vehicles travelling the wrong way. As there were incidents of vehicles entering the wrong end of the one-way road in the market square, the Clerk would ask NYCC to consider painting a sign there too.	<b>Clerk</b>

**Action**

Council noted emails between the Clerk and a local business regarding reporting of vehicles. It was agreed that such issues should continue to be raised when supported by evidence but no further dialogue on past matters.

**7.4 Environmental Matters.** The Clerk explained inclusion on the agenda of details of various local initiatives so Council could consider how best to engage, against background of current focus on environmental concerns. In discussion, it was felt that whilst new initiatives should be reviewed, environmental matters were already receiving regular attention, through agreement of a moor management plan and active support for tree planting. It was possible that funding might become more readily available to support initiatives. Responses to specific schemes were as follows.

- 7.4.1 Friends of the Dales campaign to Manage Dales Verges for Biodiversity. Details received. It was felt that the recommendation to hand-pull weeds was impractical. Many local verges were already uncut.
- 7.4.2 Richmondshire Climate Action Partnership. Formation noted, with potential for involvement.
- 7.4.3 Engagement with RDC's Climate Change Officer. This was evolving, although overlap with the Action Partnership was unclear.
- 7.4.4 Friends of the Earth 50-point Climate Change Plan for Councils. This was considered more appropriate for larger councils

## **8. Project Updates:**

**8.1 Burial Ground.** It was agreed to discuss this at the IH meeting as the charity was funding the project.

**8.2 MSCWA.** Written summary from Secretary received. A skip had been ordered to collect waste items. Development of the shed had been discussed and would be reviewed again so that a start be made on construction. Mrs Wheeler informed that other commitments prevented her from running Messy Boots and another operator might be sought. If it did not continue, consideration might be given to removing or relocating the items, a review could be undertaken after lockdown conditions eased. It was noted that families were currently using the area.

**8.3 Key Centre.** Written report from Trustees noted. Regular activities and bookings were resuming.

**8.4 Play Area Improvements.** Mrs Wheeler had circulated the proposed design and location plan for equipment intended to provide climbing challenge and slides for an indicative age range of 6 to 13 year olds, a requirement identified in responses to the survey previously undertaken. The chosen supplier was locally based and she had viewed its equipment at other local play areas. Mrs Wheeler reported upon funding applications submitted and intended which it was hoped would largely finance the installation without significant input from Council. The Play Area Committee intended, at a later stage, to provide additional seating and equipment for other age groups, including a 'team shelter' for older children to congregate around.

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

**9.1 Great British Spring Clean.** Having recently organised a well-supported and successful clean up, it was agreed not to take part in the national event between place between 28 May and 13 June. A further clean up could be held later in the year.

**9.2 Post-Lockdown Community event.** Cllr Sedgwick confirmed that she could provide support through the Locality budget. The Clerk would set up a meeting of interested parties to start planning and ensure bookings of such items as the bouncy castle were made.

**Clerk**

## **10. Planning**

**Action**

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

10.1.1 **Planning Applications.** None received.

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

**10.3 Other Planning Matters:.**

10.3.1 Delays to planning applications. Cllr Fairhurst expressed continuing frustration at significant delays affecting a local application and failure of the planning officer by not providing updates to her as Ward Councillor. The Clerk reported that in some cases decision notices were being received many months after decision.

10.3.2 Trees in the Conservation Area. It was felt that RDC could easily have emailed Council forewarning that certain trees would be taken down on safety grounds so that Councillors could have responded to residents' concerns over the Bank Holiday weekend.

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

11.1 The cash book with a full bank reconciliation as at the end of March 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.

11.2.1 **Year End audit procedures.** The Internal control inspection would be carried out by Cllr Byford and Cllr Fairhurst when this could be safely undertaken.

**12. Shared information and suggested items for the next agenda**

**12.1 Annual planner for agenda items; to note forthcoming business.**

**12.2 Items for next agenda:**

12.2.1 Review of interest rates on deposit accounts.

12.2.2 Banking arrangements. To approve application for a debit card to facilitate paying in at Post Offices.

12.2.3 Burial Ground

12.2.4 Draft rules and regulations

12.2.5 Scale of charges

**13. Future Meetings**

**Due to the following Council meeting will be held on Wednesday on 23 June 2021.**

**There being no further business the declared the meeting closed at 8.29pm**

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