

Minutes of a Meeting of Middleham Town Council held in the Garden Room at Middleham Key Centre on Wednesday 8 September 2021 at 7.00 pm. (SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING)

Present

Cllr Mrs H Byford, Cllr Mr G Fortune, Cllr Mr N Hopper, Cllr Mrs L Skelton.

County Cllr Mrs K Sedgwick, PC Gary Hankin (items 1 to 6.5 only), Mrs E Anderson (from North Yorkshire Youth)

Clerk Mr D Keep.

Action

1. Introduction and Apologies.

The Vice Chairman declared the meeting open. Cllr Mr M Cade had submitted his resignation, resulting in a casual vacancy. The Clerk would liaise with RDC, the electoral authority.

Clerk

Apologies were received from Chairman Cllr Mrs S Fairhurst (absent ill) and Cllr Mr S Wheeler (conflicting appointment).

2. Open Forum.

No public or press were 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 23 June 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 matters.

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 the Residents' Facebook page. Cllr Byford reported that contractors working for BT Openreach had arrived that morning to channel through cobbles to lay a cable to Pear Tree House. Whilst approved by Council through an easement, no prior notice had been given to adjacent properties that they would have restricted access, which was unacceptable. The contractor had withdrawn and the Clerk was now communicating with BTO whether it might be possible to place wall-mounted cables at the rear of a neighbour's property, as offered by the owner.

Clerk

The Clerk would make enquiries regarding ownership and responsibility for maintenance of Canaan Lane as heavy vehicles were dislodging the surface and

Clerk

Action

gravel was being deposited on the highway.

No other matters reported.

6.3 Post Coronavirus Update

6.3.1 Volunteer coordination and support to the vulnerable. Leyburn CSO report noted.

6.4 Land Management Issues (standing item)

6.4.1 Travellers. Guidance on achieving and maintaining relations sought from the PCSO was noted. As in previous years, numbers passing through Middleham were fewer than elsewhere. Those camping on the Busks had bagged up rubbish which RDC had collected promptly. Apart from an area of fire damage to the turf, no other incidents or problems had been brought to Council's attention. It was not felt that there was a need to alter previous arrangements. The noticeboards advising 'no camping' would shortly be installed.

Camping and vehicle access near Pinkers Pond might be deterred if signs were placed further away from the road and logs along the edge of the parking area.

Clerk

6.4.2 Storm drains on Council Lands. The Clerk was following up with NYCC to ensure that the drain in Park Lane was cleared before winter. He would also ask the contractor working on a nearby property when its skip and other items, which had previously delayed clearance and had now returned, would finally vacate the area.

Clerk**6.4.3 The Plantations:**

6.4.3.1 Maintenance programme, incorporating local residents' views, defining actions to be undertaken by volunteers and contractor. It was agreed there was little scope for active participation in maintaining the area due to the nature of tasks required so future maintenance would largely be undertaken by the contractor.

6.4.3.2 Hedge cutting. Following a meeting with the contractor, to discuss the appearance following rapid growth during summer months, the scheduled cut would shortly take place for the agreed contractual sum, although this was lower than in preceding years and possibly not covering costs. It was agreed that an additional fee of £400 be payable for a 'hard cut' of the inside areas, including the hedge and shrubs. Going forwards it was recognised that a summer cut might be necessary to maintain the appearance, access to internal areas and traffic visibility, which would be added as an optional item within the specification, subject to checking that birds were not still nesting. The specification would also more precisely confirm heights and widths for external hedge cutting, which would be level with the tiled surround. Rather than instal a gate at the main road end of the path, it was felt that growing the hedge across was a cheaper means of preventing risky pedestrian access onto the road. These changes would be recommended to the Charity.

Clerk

6.4.4 Waste Bin on Skate Park. To alleviate the impasse, the Clerk had suggested to RDC that Council pay for installation of the bin and for ongoing emptying until RDC had finalised plans for emptying of bins across the District at its expense, in line with the recent motion. It was agreed that this was a viable solution.

Clerk

6.4.5 Moving and restoring bench seats. A proposal to move older but serviceable benches, understood to belong to Council, from Long Lane and East Witton Road to either the market square or the open space to provide needed seating were discussed. It was hoped that local volunteers would kindly carry out a refurbishment. The few residents who were known to use the benches would be consulted.

**Clerk
Cllr Byford****6.5 Police Matters**

6.5.1 Report (standing item). Content noted.

PC Gary Hunkin, the new Beat Manager was welcomed. Having only just relocated

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from Richmond station, he was acquainting himself with the area and requested feedback on current issues and concerns. Councillors agreed that drug usage and dealing were the primary concerns. Some of trainers were known to have committed to a scheme to deter drug use by employees. Other concerns related to lack of activities for young people. Cllr Sedgwick drew attention to reports considered by the NYCC Area Constituency Committee meeting, one by the Police Fire & Crime Commissioner on current priorities and another, the conclusions of the Rural Commission, which considered a number of relevant issues for rural communities.

6.5.2 Police Fire & Crime Commissioner consultation on community needs. The survey was being publicised locally by Council. A hard copy of the form had been requested from the PFCC for those without the internet and unable or unwilling to travel to local towns to complete the form with canvassers, but so far was not forthcoming

6.6 Middleham Herald. Cllr Byford would shortly invite articles for the Halloween edition.

Cllr Byford**6.7 Housing matters.**

6.7.1 Bid for Middleham Chapel. With disappointment it was noted that Broadacre's bid for this building for conversion to affordable housing to rent had been unsuccessful, as there was otherwise little scope for purchase of suitable land or buildings in Middleham. It was agreed that there was no further feedback to be sought from Broadacres / RDC why the bid had failed, as it had ben outbid. Options for local housing initiatives would be kept under review in case any other potential opportunities arise.

6.7.2 Future collaborations - scope for involvement and practical and financial support by TC or IH. Cllr Byford also drew attention to potential limitations upon the Council or the Charity having the authority to contribute towards housing schemes under local government legislation governing smaller council's powers and also the charitable purpose, respectively. A possibility to overcome these obstacles would be to establish a dedicated housing charity, however this required specific skills and considerable time commitments from a project team.

6.8 Funding Opportunities. No schemes suggested for applications.

6.9 Supporting the Community:

6.9.1 Local activities and support for children and young people. Mrs Anderson detailed her background as a youth worker and spoke of plans for starting a youth group in Middleham, initially in the sports pavilion and possibly also in the Key Centre on darker evenings. This initiative was welcomed by Council; Cllr Hopper said that MSCWA would be fully supportive. Mrs Anderson would also forward details of the 'Dementia Forward' youth dementia initiatives and scope for young persons' working parties.

Clerk

An earlier enquiry from a local parent about the possibility of a 'safe space' for teenagers to meet was discussed. It was concluded that there was no local facility that might be suitable.

6.9.2 Dementia. The local working party had not met to date. The Leyburn CSO Hub was drawing up a local dementia plan, which might be a helpful resource.

6.9.3 Drug Issues: Confirmation of joint meeting with Police Fire and Crime Commissioner was awaited. A potential source of advice on drugs was received.

6.9.4 Bus Strategy consultation. Cllr Skelton had prepared a response which would be submitted to NYCC.

6.9.5 Call for evidence on the national resilience strategy. It was felt that the feedback required was at a higher level than appropriate for a town council, so the enquiry would not be engaged with.

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

7.1 Play Areas Inspection reports. Received. There had been user and residents' reports that some of the surface panels were lifting, although not mentioned in the

**Cllrs
Hopper/
Fortune**

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inspection report. This would be looked into.

7.2 Roads and paths.

7.2.1 Surfaces concerns. Cllr Byford reported on recent incidents where horses had slipped, one involving a young person, and serious injuries sustained. She referred to email communication with Area 1 Highways regarding its obligations to maintain a suitable surface for all users, requesting that verges be cut, to allow safer passage on some sections, and jet washing of surfaces. Some of the work undertaken by Highways, such as surface dusting during very hot weather, had been successful. In reply to Cllr Sedgwick, who stated that NYCC were working in line with their statutory duty to provide surfaces, Cllr Byford drew attention to the frequency of recent incidents and serious injuries that required appropriate response.

7.2.2 Street Lighting. The Clerk reported that the funding application appeared to be dependent upon completion of site visits at all locations, although Middleham's request had already been surveyed. He would write to RDC asking that the matter be progressed rather than wait until a potentially large number of applications were approved, which might be after onset of darker evenings.

Clerk

7.2.3 Footpaths - recent incidents and outcomes. A resident's appreciation for Cllr Hopper strimming an overgrown path, after reported a fall, was noted.

Cllr Byford advised the outcome of her discussions with the owner of the fields behind the Castle and considered that all necessary steps, particularly erection of signs, had been undertaken to prevent recurrence of recent incidents. NYCC was understood still to be investigating a complaint relating to the same incidents.

7.2.4 Vehicle speeds along Back Lane. A resident had raised concerns about the speed of vehicles along North Road and Back Lane. Following discussion, in which the limited number of potential solutions was noted, it was agreed to request a site meeting with NYCC Highways to look at the issues and discuss solutions rather than make an initial request for specific actions.

Clerk**7.3 Environmental Matters.****Clerk**

7.3.1 Communitree Project. Funding for trees was available and would be forwarded to Lower Wensleydale Biodiversity Action Group.

7.4 **Landline Telephones shutting down in 2025**. There was discussion regarding potential impact for residents and businesses from the cessation of landlines in 2025, which had received little publicity. 'Landline' numbers will instead work from the internet. This would be kept under review.

Clerk**8. Project Updates:****8.1 Burial Ground.**

8.1.1 Progress report. It was noted that the additional works to the churchyard access point and path had been completed and the only item outstanding by the contractor was installation of the notice board. Appreciation was expressed for the quality of Mr Smith's work. Now that the construction phase was completed, residents were expected to request burial plots and anyone coming forward should be asked to contact the Clerk who would in due course advise the scale of charges and rules, once these had been finalised.

The Clerk had met with the working party to review draft rules, which would largely reflect those of the churchyard, ensuring uniformity of appearance. Regarding charges, initially Council had felt these should mirror Leyburn's although a costing prepared by the Clerk indicated, on the expected annual usage, this would not cover running costs. Following discussion, it was concluded that neither TC nor IH should commit to subsidising these costs which might create a long-term liability they might not be able to afford. The Clerk would recirculate the proposed charges and estimate of costs so that the burial ground would be self-funding. This analysis would also compare charges with that of the Diocese.

Clerk

**Action
Clerk**

8.1.2 Purchase of noticeboard. Having received 5 alternative quotes, the working party had recommended purchase from Parish Noticeboards for approval. £864 (inclusive of VAT and delivery). This was approved.

8.1.3 Terms of reference for a Working Party to review draft rules, scale of charges. The following was agreed.

Background

This working party is established to assist Council prepare for the opening of the Civic Burial Ground.

Focus

The focus of the Working Party is to:

- 1.1 Provide a sounding board for queries raised by the Clerk
- 1.2 Receive and review draft documents prepared by the Clerk for formal approval and adoption by Council, including:
 - 1.2.1 Rules
 - 1.2.2 Scale of charges
 - 1.2.3 Burial plan.
- 1.3 Agree an Opening date
- 1.4 Consider appropriate amendment to Clerk's job description and working hours to cover the functions of Burials Manager.

Operation

1. The Burial Ground Working Party is not a Council committee and accordingly has no delegated authority to take decisions or incur expenditure but acts as an investigatory and scrutineering body for Council.
2. The clerk will convene meetings of the Working Party, and act as secretary.
3. As a working party, normal rules governing Council meetings regarding notice periods, participation by the public and rules governing proceedings shall not apply.
4. The Working Party shall meet as and when required.
5. Brief meeting notes, but not formal minutes, shall be prepared by the Clerk.
6. The Working Party shall comprise any three Councillors, initially Cllrs Hopper, Skelton and Fortune. The quorum shall be any 3 Councillors.

Duration

The Working Party shall disband after the work defined in its statement of focus are achieved.

8.2 MSCWA.

8.2.1 Report from the Committee. It was hoped to hold a bonfire night celebration. Other than below, there were no other matters reported by exception.

8.2.2 Update on storage shed, petanque court, fencing by skate park. It was agreed that the approved roof colour for the storage shed be changed to 'anthracite'. Gates and fencing had been erected.

8.2.3 Permission for erection of cricket net. Details of the structure, which was portable and not requiring planning consent, were approved, in suggested location 'C' alongside the eastern boundary.

Clerk

8.3 **Key Centre**. No report from Trustees received.

Clerk

9. Events in Middleham (standing item).

9.1 Middleham Super Feast Day on Bank Holiday Monday 30th August 2021.

The event had been a great success, being well-attended by residents of all ages, well organised and supported by a team of volunteers. There appeared to be a consensus that it was safer and more enjoyable taking place on the sports field rather than the market square. The Feast committee would submit a statement of income and expenditure and soon meet to discuss next year's event.

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9.2 Oktoberfest: 9 October. Cllr Byford reported upon a meeting attended earlier in the day with representatives of hotel and other businesses regarding arrangements for the proposed event. Previous understanding was that this would be organised collectively but was now run solely by the Black Bull Hotel which had requested use of the central market area for a 3-day period, including time for erecting and taking down. This was agreed, at no charge, and the Clerk would draft the terms of consent for the Black Bull Hotel based upon the suggestions put forward.

Clerk

9.3 Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2 June 2022. Details of a nationwide programme for lighting beacons were received. It was agreed to participate.

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

10.1.1 Hill House And West Hill House West End Middleham Leyburn North Yorkshire DL8 4QG Proposal Listed Building Consent for Alterations and Extensions in Association with Creation of a Centre for People of the Horse Racing Industry 19/00534/LBC; **Granted**

10.1.2 Full Planning Permission for a Double Garage and Car Port Attached to Side of Existing Property, The Hall West End Middleham DL8 4QQ 20/00729/FULL **Granted**

10.1.3 Full Planning Permission for 2 Storey Side Extension and External Alteration to Form Larger Parking Area, 64 Park Lane Middleham DL8 4QU 20/00767/FULL **Granted**

10.1.4 Kingsley Park Farm Park Lane Middleham Leyburn North Yorkshire DL8 4QZ Full Planning Permission for Construction of Steel Portal Framed Building to Create a Covered All Weather Indoor Riding School 19/00258/FULL **Granted**

10.1.5 Full Planning Permission to Replace Roof Structure with the Addition of Rooflights at Hazeldene, Kirkgate, Middleham, North Yorkshire, DL8 4PG 21/00531/FULL **Granted**.

10.2 Planning Applications.

10.2.1 Full Planning Permission to Replace Roof Structure with the Addition of Rooflights at Hazeldene, Kirkgate, Middleham, North Yorkshire, DL8 4PG 21/00531/FULL **Comments ratified (response was submitted under Clerk's delegated powers between meetings.**

10.2.2 REVISED PLANS Change of Use of Land from Agriculture and Haulage Yard to Holiday Chalet Park and Associated Landscaping at Hillside Farm East Witton Road Middleham DL8 4PT 19/00316 **Comments ratified (response was submitted under Clerk's delegated powers between meetings.**

10.2.3 Full Planning Permission for Conversion of Outbuilding to 1 Bedroom Dwelling at Lambs Cottage, Market Place, Middleham, DL8 4NP 21/00369/FULL **Comments ratified (response was submitted under Clerk's delegated powers between meetings.**

10.2.4 Full Planning Permission to Remove Existing Pebbledash from the Front Elevation and Replace with a Lime Based Render Suitable for Stone and to Render the Side Elevation with the Same Product at Old Alms Houses, West End, DL8 4QQ 21/00626/FULL. **No objection.**

10.3 Potential Planning Enforcement Issues. There were none.

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

11.1 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.

12. Suggested items for the next agenda.

Action

- 12.1 Replacement light fitting for Jubilee lamp
- 12.2 Tubs and Troughs on the Wastes: update policy
- 12.3 Play area equipment: outcome of funding applications
- 12.4 Report on internal control inspection and other internal checks
- 12.5 Updated Risk assessment review. For discussion.

13. Future Meetings

The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 13 October 2021.

Cllr Fairhurst and Cllr Byford were reviewing the number and frequency of meetings with the Clerk and would make a proposal to reduce the overall number.

**Cllrs
Fairhurst /
Byford**

There being no further business the declared the meeting closed at 9.54pm

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