

**Minutes of a Meeting of Middleham Town Council held in the Lady Anne Neville Room at Middleham Key Centre on Wednesday 13 October 2021 at 7.00 pm. (SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING)**

**Present**

Chairman Cllr Mrs S Fairhurst, Cllr Mrs H Byford, Cllr Mr N Hopper, Cllr Mrs L Skelton, Cllr Mr S Wheeler (to item 8.2).

Mr M Day (Streetscape Products and Services Ltd) (part of item 8.4 only)

Clerk Mr D Keep.

**Action**

**1. Introduction and Apologies.**

The Chairman declared the meeting open.

**Clerk**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mr G Fortune (absence due to family commitments).

**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 8 September 2021 as a true and accurate record to be signed by the Chairman of that meeting.**

**4.2 The schedule of agreed actions.** Noted.

**5. Confidential and Urgent Items.** There were no urgent matters. One matter is discussed in the confidential minute book.

**6. Town Council - Information/Decision Required**

**6.1 Councillors' report of meetings attended, and actions undertaken**

**(standing item).** The Clerk had attended the branch meeting for the Local Councils' Association. There were no other meetings attended 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.** No other matters reported.

**6.3 Casual Vacancy for Councillor.** Gratitude was expressed for Martin Cade's contribution to the community as Councillor and School Governor. A draft notice was approved for publication seeking applications for the vacancy to be filled by co-option at the next meeting. A job description had been received from YLCA providing helpful guidance to prospective candidates. An article would be submitted to the forthcoming Herald by Cllr Skelton on her experience as a councillor since co-option in 2020. As in previous co-option processes, a written application was required with an invitation to make a short presentation the next meeting.

**Cllr  
Skelton**

**6.4 Future Council Meeting Dates and Frequency.** Cllr Fairhurst and Cllr Byford had reviewed the current annual schedule of 10 meetings, concluding that some actions might progress more quickly with longer intervals as less Clerk's time would be

spent servicing meetings. A revised schedule of 7 annual meetings would be circulated, avoiding known peaks in workload, such as April when end of year accounts were prepared. The matter would be kept under review as Councillor workload was also high; recent meetings whilst business-like had on occasions extended up to and beyond 3 hours.

**Action  
Clerk**

## **6.5 Post Coronavirus Update**

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

## **6.6 Land Management Issues (standing item)**

6.6.1 Storm drains on Council Lands. The contractor working in Park Lane had vacated the parking space so access for the drain clearing lorry was now possible. The Clerk would inform NYCC so the drain could be cleared before winter. Councillors noted that sandbags outside Westwood House had deteriorated and needed replacement. Council would ask the householder if new bags could be stored adjacent to the property, for ease of access if flooding was likely. A meeting previously held with Area 1 Highways concluded that it was not practicable to erect a bund near the property as this would constitute a slip hazard.

**Clerk**

6.6.2 Land Maintenance contract; tender specification. Subject to minor amendment, the revised draft specification was approved and recommended to the Charity. It was noted that Robertson's Garden Services had provided a good level of service. Mr Robertson would be asked to suggest alternative action to remove the weeds on the Wastes as clearance had not been particularly effective.

**Clerk**

6.6.2.1 Additional Waste Bins. A request from RDC for locations of bins that local councils required in their area was received. It was agreed to request a combined general / recycling waste bin by the school.

**Clerk**

6.6.3 Moving and restoring bench seats. The older but serviceable benches had been inspected. They might not be easily repaired for moving and re-use, however an estimate for repair would be sought as the work was beyond the scope of volunteers. It was noted that surplus funding was available from the Lower Wensleydale Area Partnership which should be looked into. Cllr Fairhurst and Cllr Byford would liaise over potential new locations.

**Cllr  
Fairhurst /  
Cllr Byford**

**6.7 Police Matters.** Report (standing item). The names of the neighbourhood team currently supporting Middleham were noted. PCSO Osborn had recently left the force.

**6.8 Middleham Herald.** The deadline for articles for the Halloween edition was Wednesday 20 October.

**All**

**6.9 Housing matters.** No matters to report.

**6.10 Funding Opportunities.** Other than as noted elsewhere in these minutes, no schemes suggested for applications.

## **6.11 Supporting the Community:**

6.11.1 Local activities and support for children and young people. Mrs Anderson had reported she was currently seeking volunteers to support activity.

6.11.2 Dementia. The local working party had not met to date. The Clerk would liaise and suggest dates.

**Clerk**

6.11.3 Drug Issues: Notwithstanding the possibility that the tenure of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner might end following controversial comments, it was agreed that the planned meeting on 1 December 2021 should go ahead with a preliminary meeting for participants to agree concerns on 17 November. A representative from the trainers would be sought.

**Clerk**

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

**7.1 Play Areas Inspection reports.** Received. No significant matters to be addressed. The inspection reports would be reviewed by Cllr Wheeler and Cllr Hopper regarding surface panels were lifting on the skate park equipment.

**Cllrs  
Hopper/  
Wheeler**

## **7.2 Roads and paths.**

7.2.1 Surfaces concerns. Cllr Byford reported on further incidents where horses had

slipped which she had raised with Area 1 Highways. One incident had not been reported by a Middleham trainer which resulted in a delay informing NYCC. A letter from an un-named local resident referring to riders regularly moving on the wrong side of the road riding abreast and alleged incidents of verbal abuse by riders would be forwarded to the trainer whose riders were named.

**Action****Clerk**

7.2.2 Vehicle speeds along Back Lane. A meeting held with Highways and County Cllr Sedgwick was encouraging with the possibility of seeking funding for some form of 'gateway' treatment to be introduced at each of the junctions of the road with the A6108.

On a similar matter, there was a consensus that incidents of traffic going the wrong way in the Springs / St Alkelda's had reduced, the Clerk would provide feedback to NYCC that the additional signage had been effective.

**Clerk**

7.2.3 Street Lighting. The Clerk would request a progress update from RDC.

**Clerk**

### **7.3 Environmental Matters.**

7.3.1 Lower Wensleydale Biodiversity Action Group update. A written report regarding planting and removal, for recycling, of plastic tree guards was received. A request to plant willow trees near Pinkers Pond required further details i.e. purpose, location and number. Consideration would be given to impact upon view at a popular location.

**Clerk**

## **8. Project Updates:**

### **8.1 Burial Ground.**

8.1.1 Opening date and Ceremony. It was decided not to have a formal opening ceremony. Opening would be advertised once the remaining actions were complete.

8.1.2 Rules. The working party had met twice and considered the draft rules appropriate. It was agreed that these be reviewed by Mr Sanderson as the local funeral director most likely to be involved to check for unforeseen practical considerations. The Clerk would obtain an updated burial plan from the architect that would constitute the statutory grave plan.,

**Clerk**

8.1.3 Scale of charges. The sub committee had approved the suggested charges, which sought to cover estimated annual costs and would be linked to inflation.

8.1.4 Amendments to Clerk's contract of employment re burial manager duties. A draft amendment was received. This would be reviewed with the Clerk by Cllr Fairhurst and Cllr Byford.

**Cllrs  
Fairhurst &  
Byford /  
Clerk**

### **8.2 MSCWA.**

8.2.1 Report from the Committee. An early evening 'quiet' a bonfire night celebration would be held on 5 November.. The committee was looking at installing electricity to the storage barn and to the new cricket nets to power the bowling machine. Other than below, there were no other matters reported by exception.

8.2.2 Annual accounts to 31 March 2021.Received.

8.2.3 Update on storage shed, petanque court, fencing by skate park. The storage shed was almost complete. There was discussion regarding the extent and routing of additional concrete slabs in front of the pavilion and possibly as far as the footpath gate to the meadow; Council was happy for the committee to determine this. The skate park area looked much neater after a recent tidy.

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

8.4 **Play Area Improvements:** Mr Day was introduced and provided background to the specification of the installation proposed by the Play Area Sub Committee and answered Councillor questions.

After Mr Day had left the meeting, Council reviewed the funding request submitted by the sub-committee for £4,740.24 plus reclaimable VAT, noting that funding totalling £41,750 had been secured from other sources. In discussion, the following salient points were raised:

- Notwithstanding the success of the funding streams secured, the requested sum was, proportionately, significant in the context that the annual precept was

**Action**

- £12k and IH's likely annual income.
- Mr Day had advised that:
  - The installation was aimed at children aged 13 to 14.
  - Expected life was around 15-20 years.
  - £3-500 should be set aside annually for repair costs.
- Indicative annual inspection costs were £59.28. A costing for insurance had not yet been received. These costs would not be covered by funding so were an ongoing liability for Council/IH.
- Whilst timing was unknown, the community levy payable by the St Alkelda's development was assigned only to children's play area improvements and the footpath. This might constitute over-provision of play equipment.
- An enhanced play area would only benefit a relatively small portion of the Town's population.
- Following creation of the walled burial ground within the Open Space, Councillors wished to avoid fencing of an additional area for the time being; accordingly the installation should be within the existing Park Lane area.
- Potential loss of the swing, if it could not be relocated, would remove an item currently popular with older children.

It was agreed that a further meeting should be held with the proposed supplier and the subcommittee, which the Clerk would coordinate, to gather additional information prior to formal decision at the next meeting. In particular, Council wished to see further details of the equipment anticipated in subsequent stages of the proposed scheme and whether the existing swing could be retained.

**Clerk / All**

Council also noted that there was scope for provision of facilities for other age groups within Middleham. Refurbishment of existing benches had been discussed earlier, which could create a walking route within Middleham.

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

**9.1 Middleham Super Feast Day Community Event.** A statement of income and expenditure had been received. IT WAS agreed to confirm the Council contribution of £500, expenditure under s137 Local Government Act.

**9.2 Oktoberfest: 9 October.** A brief report from the Black Bull, which had organised the event, was received. Positive reports had also been received from elsewhere.

**9.3 Christmas Activity.** It was agreed that the events normally held in Middleham, which had not been held in 2020 due to Covid restrictions, would be organised. Cllr Fairhurst and the Clerk would agree dates for a carol service / lighting ceremony, children's grotto and seniors' Christmas lunch and arrange purchase of the tree.

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

10.1.1 Change of Use of Land from Agriculture and Haulage Yard to Holiday Chalet Park and Associated Landscaping at Hillside Farm East Witton Road Middleham Leyburn DL8 4PT 19/00316 **Granted**

10.1.2 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 **Granted**

10.1.3 Full Planning Permission to Demolish Timber Shed and Link Proposed Garage to Existing Porch, build above Existing Lean-to to Provide Sun Lounge, Ashdren Lodge Park Lane Middleham DL8 4QY 21/00500/FULL **Granted**

**10.2 Planning Applications.**

10.2.1 Replace 3 No Stone Lintels and Renovate 5 No Windows at Laundry Cottage, West End, Middleham, DL8 4QL 21/00732/LBC. **Comments ratified (response was**

**Action**

**submitted under Clerk’s delegated powers between meetings.**

**10.3 Potential Planning Enforcement Issues.** RDC advice regarding the slower service times for processing applications and withdrawal of the pre-planning service were noted. Delays reported to affect a significant local application awaiting consideration appeared to be due to requested third party submissions and not a matter for concern.

**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.**

**12.1** Setting Precept for 2022-23

**12.2** Replacement light fitting for Jubilee lamp

**12.3** Tubs and Troughs on the Wastes: update policy

**12.4** Report on internal control inspection and other internal checks

**12.5** Updated Risk assessment review. For discussion.

**12.6** To receive annual MKC accounts to 31 March 2021

**Clerk  
Cllr Byford  
Clerk  
All  
All**

**13. Future Meetings**

**The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 24 November 2021.**

**There being no further business the declared the meeting closed at 9.50pm**

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