

MIDDLETON-ON-SEA PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Held in the back of Jubilee Hall, Elmer Road, Middleton-on-Sea
On Wednesday 19th March 2008

PRESENT – Councillors Wotherspoon (Chairman), Copeland, Chandler, Edey, Gamester, Mrs Hall, Mrs Haywood, Jeffrey, Mansfield, Mrs Mills, Redman, the Clerk, District Councillor Mrs Oakley, County Councillor Mrs Freeman and Mr Morrison.

1. APOLOGIES – Councillor Ms Ross.

2. MINUTES –The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 16th January 2008 having been circulated were approved and signed.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Gamester declared a personal interest in item 6(e) being the Parish Council's SALC Representative. Mr Jeffrey declared a personal interest in item 6(b) being a supporter of the Sussex Air Ambulance Fund. Mr Mansfield declared a prejudicial interest in item 6(g) being a nearby resident of the junction of the A259/B2132.

4. PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD

Mr Brookland raised a number of issues: (a) the raised gardens in Elmer Road by the toilets were in need of attention, (b) there was a need for a handrail between Shrubbs Car Park and the toilets as they are on different levels, (c) he disliked the new concrete path by the toilets but was advised by the Chairman that the improvements were required to bring the path up to current standards (d) further concerns were raised about the new trees planted on Shrubbs Field and he was advised by the Chairman of the positive benefits of the tree planting.

Ms Bowden complained that the bus shelter was dirty and was advised by the Chairman that he had arranged to have it cleaned twice recently. She also raised the issue of rubbish such as old bikes being deposited in the recycling area and a tree on the southern fence of the car park which needed cutting back.

Mr Szynowski, Chairperson of the Middleton-on-Sea Association's Coastal Committee, provided copies of a two page leaflet showing the deterioration along the Greensward in recent years. Copies are being provided to Nick Gibb MP, Arun District Council and all members of the Association. District Councillor Mrs Oakley said the real problem lay with Defra for a lack of funding. Arun District Council were doing their best with limited resources.

Mrs Claxton (Neighbourhood Watch) asked why there were so few dog bins. District Councillor Mrs Oakley said that there were two issues, (a) funding for the bins & (b) siting of the bins as many residents did not want the bins outside their houses. She said bagged faeces can be put in ADC rubbish bins but Mr Edey was not happy with that idea.

PCSO Clive Morge provided details of recent crime statistics which showed a decline when compared with last year.

5. ITEMS not otherwise on the Agenda but which the Chairman considered to be a matter of urgency due to special circumstances – There were none.

6. MATTERS ARISING

a) Merry End Bus Shelter

The Clerk advised members that complaints had been made to Arun District Council about both the lack of hygiene and the poor state of repair of the bus shelter. It was also apparent that a vagrant had been sleeping in the shelter overnight regularly and had left his debris in the shelter when he departed. It is the District Council's responsibility to clean the shelter but as it is owned by the Parish Council the cost of repair/replacement falls to the council. The Clerk suggested that a new open fronted replacement bus shelter is installed at a cost of £3,880, plus clearance/fitting costs. Currently WSCC are offering a 50% grant for a replacement shelter and this would reduce the cost to some £1,950. Middleton-on-Sea Association have been approached for their views and are supportive providing the wood has a dark stain. Further, the Association are prepared to contribute £250/£300 towards the overall costs. Mrs Mills said the council should take advantage of the grant scheme and this was seconded by Mr Chandler and unanimously agreed. The Clerk was instructed to progress the matter.

b) Sussex Air Ambulance Fund

Sussex Air Ambulance Fund (SAAF) requested the support of the Parish Council to assist in the funding of the service which was launched on 8th June 2007. Operating Costs are £1.5 million per annum, funded entirely by voluntary contributions. Mr Copeland said he did not believe it was appropriate to use tax payers money to support charities and that it was for individuals to personally support charities of their choice. Further, the application should be considered with others at the December meeting. Mrs Hall seconded that position. Mr Gamester said he was in favour of giving a donation to SAAF and County Councillor Mrs Freeman said that she was aware that Clymping Parish Council and Ford Parish Council had given £500 and £600 respectively to the charity. Mr Mansfield was also keen to give some money to SAAF and suggested a sum of £400 which was seconded by Mr Edey, who also said that an air ambulance is invaluable given how difficult it is for an ambulance to access the Elmer Sands/Clymping gap. Mrs Haywood suggested that SAAF could be invited to write an article for Middleton News and then individuals could decide if they wished to support the charity. A vote was taken on Mr Copeland's proposal which resulted in 7 votes in favour and 2 votes against. The application will therefore be held until December 2008, for consideration then, and the Clerk will write to SAAF offering them the opportunity to publicise their charity through the auspices of Middleton News.

c) Larksfield Play Area

It was agreed to accept the phased implementation programme suggested by Arun District Council. This will involve a change in the play area's footprint in two stages which will move the boundary of the play area away from local residents' properties.

d) Pedestrian Crossing Meeting

The Clerk reported that a site meeting was held in Elmer Road, opposite One Stop, on 12th March which was attended by Cllrs Edey, Ms Ross and the Clerk together with County Councillor Mrs Freeman and two WSCC officers. It was agreed that a zebra crossing is feasible at the site with an estimated cost of £25/30,000 (subject to costing). There will be an implementation window of about 12 months, however, the key issue is finding funding for the crossing. County Councillor Mrs Freeman advised members that she was trying to find funding within WSCC and will push for funding to be released when located. The Chairman thanked Mrs Freeman for her report and looked forward to receiving her further briefing.

e) SALC/NALC Membership 2008/2009

The subscription for 2008/2009 is £1,513.83 (£1,309.80 + VAT) which represents a 26% rise on the 2007/2008 year (£1,197.60 inclusive of VAT) and that was a 14% increase on the previous year.

The Clerk advised that the 2008/2009 subscription will equate to £109.15 per month and that it did not represent good value for money when compared with alternatives available such as the Clerks & Council's Direct Update Service, which will provide all the legal and information services required at a cost of £100 per annum. If each member wishes to receive a copy of Clerks & Council's Direct then that will cost a further £123.50. So for £223.50 per annum the same level of service can be achieved. It was also noted that Aldwick and Pagham Parish Councils are no longer members of SALC. After some discussion it was agreed, by an overwhelming majority, not to renew the SALC/NALC membership and to enrol in the Clerks & Council's Direct Update Service and arrange for each member to have a copy of Clerks and Council's Direct sent to their homes. The Clerk will write to make appropriate arrangements.

f) Electoral review of West Sussex County Council

The Boundary Committee for England is undertaking an electoral review of West Sussex County Council and intends to complete the review in time for the Electoral Commission to be able to implement the new division boundaries at the county council elections in 2009. Any comments have to be made by 21st April 2008.

g) Comet Corner/Site 6 - Site 6 Committee Meeting

Councillors Jeffrey and Mrs Mills attended the Site 6 committee at Felpham Parish Offices on 12th February 2008 and circulated a paper to members thereafter. There was a suggestion at the meeting that the North-South road (presumably commencing at Felpham Leisure Centre roundabout) may be revived.

The Clerk advised that he had sought a Comet Corner update from WSCC's Group Manager, Development Planning. He had advised that prior to the scheme moving forward, formal support from both JWAAC and JDAAC for the Comet Corner scheme and the Felpham proposals will be required so they can be added to the Highways programme and move beyond the concept stage. He is meeting Felpham Parish Council in mid April and will then prepare a formal report for the Area Committees.

(Mr Mansfield left the room whilst this item was being discussed).

7. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Copies of the minutes dated 16th January, 6th February, 20th February and 5th March 2008 were circulated and noted.

8. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Copies of the minutes dated 20th February 2008 were circulated and noted.

i) Countryside and the Environment Advisory Sub Committee

At the request of the General Purposes Committee, the Clerk and Cllr Ms Ross met the contractor who laid the footpath at Middleton Green in 2002 to obtain an estimate for the repair of the footpath given that water is starting to puddle in some parts. Two estimates were provided (a) to repair 3 areas where water was gathering albeit accepting that when the work was completed the repair work will be clearly visible or (b) to undertake the repair work and then manually spray the whole path with hot bitumen and then cover/roll in 6 mm of brown Thames Valley gravel to ensure uniformity along the path at a cost of £1,470 (plus recoverable VAT). Mrs Mills said that if the repair was going to be undertaken then the job should be done properly and option (b) should be undertaken. This was seconded by Mr Jeffery and approved by an overwhelming majority. The Clerk advised that the project could be funded by using the £430 remaining in this year's Middleton Green budget together with the whole 2008/2009 budget (£1,000). The Clerk will instruct the contractor to proceed.

Mr Gamester reported that the semi-circle of small leaved limes had now been planted on the western side of Shrubbs Field together with a reserve oak by the churchyard. The millennium oak's stake has been pushed further into the ground and the oak has been loosely staked with two rubber ties. Further planting has been done in the vicinity of the container. The Chairman thanked Cllr Gamester and David Eastlake for their work.

(ii) Joint Sea Defence & Land Drainage Advisory Sub Committee

The Clerk reported that a meeting was held at the Greensward on 13th March, attended by representatives of the Middleton-on-Sea Association (Mrs Martin, Professor Alan Johns and David Szynowski) together with District Councillor Mrs Oakley and the Clerk, to view the damage caused by the recent storms. It was agreed that Mrs Oakley would press Arun District Council to place rocks at the base of the affected breastwork to dissipate the sea's energy and that a page will be reserved in the summer edition of Middleton News for the Association to publicise the erosion being caused on the Greensward. The Chairman was also shown the damage on the Greensward by David Szynowski on 16th March. Copies of a two page leaflet showing the deterioration along the Greensward in recent years, will be circulated to members.

(iii) Liaison Advisory Sub Committee

The Clerk reported:

- (a) A joint press release has been issued by Arun District Council and WSCC confirming that WSCC has agreed to rescind its proposal to withdraw from the joint area committees. JWAAC will therefore continue in its present format and it is hoped further powers will be delegated to it.
- (b) The spring edition of Middleton News was published on the 6th March. Further, the newsletter has generated a small surplus during 2007/2008. The Chairman said the newsletter remains immensely popular with parishioners and Mr Copeland said that delivery to every household in the parish was the key to its success.
- (c) A Standards Board For England DVD entitled 'The Code Uncovered' is being circulated around members.
- (d) The final session of training for the revised Code of Conduct is being held on 26th March. Mrs Hall will be attending and arrangements are being made so that Mr Redman can also attend.
- (e) The Standards Board for England's Bulletin (Issue 37) has been circulated to all members.
- (f) A Decision Notice has been received from the Standards Board For England in respect of a complaint made by a councillor concerning the alleged conduct of Councillor Mrs Mills. It was decided not to refer the complaint for investigation.
- (g) A further Decision Notice has been received from the Standards Board For England in respect of a complaint made by a member of the public concerning the alleged conduct of Councillor Mansfield. It was decided not to refer the complaint for investigation.

iv) Projects Advisory Sub Committee

The cost of the kickwall has increased by 11.5% (£318) which will have to be borne by the Trustees of Middleton Playing Fields. Confirmation has been received that the wall will be installed before the end of April.

v) Roads & Transport Advisory Sub Committee

There was nothing to report.

9. PARISH LAND AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Copies of the minutes dated 6th February 2008 were circulated and noted.

Copies of the 31st December 2007 audited accounts for Trustees of Middleton Playing Fields have been circulated to all members.

The Clerk reported that arrangements are in hand for a sloping concrete plinth to be installed just inside the southern entrance gate to Shrubbs Field. This will assist elderly parishioners who wish to gain access to the field.

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10. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items had been received:-

- (1) 4Sight – Letter of thanks for Community Support Grant
- (2) Arun DC – Letter of thanks for attending meeting (*Full Circulation*)
- (3) Action in Rural Sussex – Village of the Year (*General Circulation*)
- (4) Action in Rural Sussex – Newsletter
- (5) BR Neighbourhood Watch – Letter of thanks for Community Support Grant
- (6) BR Stroke Support Group – Letter of thanks for Community Support Grant
- (7) Citizens Advice Bureau – Letter of thanks for Community Support Grant
- (8) Homeshare – Information Sheet
- (9) LCR – formerly Local Council Review
- (10) Post Watch – Post Office closure programme
- (11) Samaritans – Letter of thanks for Community Support Grant
- (12) Sammy Transport – Letter of thanks for Community Support Grant
- (13) Sussex Heritage Awards 2008 – Award Details
- (14) WSCC – Highway Rangers (*Full Circulation*)
- (15) West Sussex PCT – Ebulletins 27, 28 & 29
- (16) West Sussex Public Partnership Forum - Newsletter

11. FINANCE COMMITTEE

a) Bank Accounts -

The Clerk reported on the following **Bank Accounts**

Current Account	£ 1,250.00
Business Reserve	£38,538.67
Total	£39,788.67

(b) Accounts for payment -

The following payments were approved nem.con and made:

(i) Arun District Council (Dog Bin annual charge)	£ 391.62
(ii) Arun District Council (Public Conveniences annual charge)	£ 2,980.00
(iii) D F Allsopp (Clerk's quarterly fees/expenses)	£ 2,930.00
(iv) D F Allsopp (Quarterly office expenses)	£ 134.06
(v) SPP (Middleton News setting/printing)	£ 1,640.00
(vi) A J Houlden (Middleton News Co-ordinator fees/expenses)	£ 569.07
(vii) P Allsopp (Distribution of Middleton News)	£ 50.00
Total	£ 8,694.75

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Redman said that in places such as Shrubbs Field, where dog bins are available, they were often not used. Mrs Hall enquired how budget surpluses were used and the process was explained by the Clerk.

There being no further business the Chairman reminded members that the next Meeting will be held on **21st May 2008 at 7.00 p.m.** The Meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.