

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 17th October 2007

PRESENT – Councillors Wotherspoon (Chairman), Chandler, Copeland, Edey, Gamester, Mrs Hall, Mrs Haywood, Jeffrey, Mansfield, Mrs Mills, Ms Ross the Clerk and County Councillor Mrs Freeman (arrived 7.20 p.m.)

1. **APOLOGIES** – District Councillor Mrs Oakley.
2. **MINUTES** –The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 19th September 2007 having been circulated were approved and signed.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Both Mrs Haywood and Ms Ross declared a personal interest in item 6 (b), both being members of the Middleton-on-Sea Association.

4. PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD

PCSO Clive Morge provided details of the crime statistics for Middleton area together with those of Hotham and Marine by way of comparison. Cllr Edey drew attention to the problems being experienced in the proximity of the Kiosk at Elmer Sands. These included excessive noise, drinking and general anti-social behaviour to such an extent that local residents are concerned to report matters to the police for fear of reprisals. PCSO Morge said he was aware of the problems but the police response had been muted due to the lack of incident reports. He had, however, now put the location on a ‘hotspot list’ and it will now receive greater attention. PCSO Morge also agreed to place an article in the December edition of Middleton News highlighting the need to report crimes either to the police directly, or via the ‘Crime Stoppers Hotline’(0500 555 111).

Mr Appleyard (Neighbourhood Watch) introduced Ms Teri Claxton who has now taken over as Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator for Middleton, Elmer & Elmer Sands.

Mr Brookland asked who owned the Bankside grass and stone wall as some of the stones are falling out. He was advised that it was privately owned and it was suggested that he approached a local shopkeeper to ascertain the name of the freeholder. He also requested that the glass in the village notice board is cleaned. Ms Bowden asked when the 10 mph speed limit signs are to be erected in Shrubbs Car Park and drew attention to the slow response from the police when incidents occur in the car park. The Chairman undertook to resolve her first query and PCSO Morge will deal with police response times.

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) Gypsy and Travellers Caravan Sites

A letter from Arun District Council's Chief Executive and an email from County Councillor Mrs Freeman were circulated to members. The former's letter requested that the Parish Council make him aware of any suitable sites within the parish. Members unanimously agreed to respond in the same manner as the letter sent to the County Council in September. The Clerk was instructed to write.

b) Footway Scheme – Middleton Road

An email had been received from WSCC Highways Department asking whether members wished the footpath scheme on the southern side of Middleton Road to proceed. The Clerk advised that the footpath had been on the Highways Works Programme since 2005/2006 and that the scheme (costing £58,700) had been approved by JWAAC (Joint Western Arun Area Committee). Middleton-on-Sea Association were opposed to the scheme. Cllrs Mansfield and Ms Ross both spoke against the proposed scheme and suggested that the money is used to improve the footpath on the north side of Middleton Road which has a much higher footfall albeit narrow, badly cambered and generally unsuitable for the elderly and those in wheelchairs. Mr Gamester felt the southern side should proceed. County Councillor Mrs Freeman said she had been in correspondence with a local resident and that 30 years ago the Parish Council were in favour of the footpath. She now just wanted to know what the Parish Council wished to do. Mr Mansfield proposed, Ms Ross seconded and it was overwhelming agreed to ask WSCC Highways not to proceed with the footpath scheme and to use the funds to improve the footpath on the north side of Middleton Road. The Clerk will write, accordingly.

c) Changes in Neighbourhood Watch

Mr Appleyard explained that Sussex Police have a significant funding gap and that current rationalisation proposals include the removal of all the Sussex Crime Protection Co-ordinators, with effect from April 2008. These individuals co-ordinate the Neighbourhood Watch Street Co-ordinators and their removal could result in the disintegration of the Sussex Neighbourhood Watch Organisation. Members unanimously agreed to instruct the Clerk to write to the Chief Constable, Sussex Police expressing both concern and dismay at the proposals.

d) Remembrance Services – 11th November 2007

A letter has been received inviting all members to attend the Remembrance Day service at the Commemorative Garden, Yapton Road, Ford at 12.30 p.m. The Clerk advised that he had ordered a wreath and that Bernard Hills had agreed to lay it at the service on behalf of the Parish Council.

e) Footpath 829

The Planning Inspectorate have provided an Order Decision following the public inquiry indicating that the Order (FPS/P3800/7/46) was not confirmed. A letter has also been received from John L Baird (Home Farm) Ltd indicating their desire to create a permanent path. Mr Edey said that the effect of the order was that the previously used path is no longer available and that walking along the shingle bank from Elmer to Clymping is unsafe. Mrs Haywood said that footpaths are the responsibility of WSCC and that the first step should be to ascertain what they wished to do. She was also aware that elsewhere in the county, where footpaths have disappeared owing to sea erosion, WSCC have taken the view that they can't 'hold the line'. Mr Copeland suggested replying to the company along the lines that the feeling of the community was that they needed a suitable footpath, however, after further discussion the Clerk was instructed to merely acknowledge the letter and contact WSCC Rights of Way by telephone to ascertain what their stance will be.

f) Coastal Defence

The Clerk reported that Arun District Council's Policy Development Scrutiny Committee will be meeting on 25th October to consider several reports on coastal defence in the Arun District. One paper covers, *inter alia*, the situation at Middleton and these papers have been circulated to all members. Currently there is a 'Hold the Line' policy and the cost of a Capital scheme is £3.4m, which based on a 10% contribution from ADC would equate to a £340,000 funding requirement. The report says 'this also raises a question over social justice and how this should be addressed particularly as the frontage is privately owned and ADC took over responsibility from the Private estate for permitting public access'. The Clerk confirmed that Middleton-on-Sea Association together with the other Residents Associations had been advised of the situation. The Chairman said that District Councillor Mrs Oakley was a member of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee and that he will also try to attend albeit the committee has no specific powers other than to put forward suggestions to others.

g) Parish Council Vacancy

The Clerk advised that the vacancy had been advertised on Parish Council notice boards since 27th July 2007, together with the September edition of Middleton News, requesting that anyone interested should submit a C.V. for consideration by members no later than 1st October 2007. No one had applied for the vacancy. Mr Mansfield said that Mr Redman was present and that he would like to become a Parish Councillor now. The Clerk advised that this was inappropriate and that he should submit a C.V. to the Clerk so that it can be distributed to members for consideration, prior to the December meeting.

7. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Copies of the minutes dated 19th September and 3rd October 2007 were circulated and noted.

8. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

i) Countryside and the Environment Advisory Sub Committee

The Clerk informed members that the public rights of way in the parish have undergone routine maintenance and that the next visit will be in approximately 9 months.

Mr Mansfield stated that he held a key for the Woodland Trust's Worms Wood. The Clerk said he had spoken to Mrs Willis (Parish Tree Warden) and that she had been advised by the Woodland Trust that she should hold a key to Worms Wood. Mr Mansfield stated that he had held his key for 10 years. It was his intention to retain it because when he visited Mrs Willis to report the arrival of the travellers she displayed a lack of knowledge and disinterest. County Councillor Mrs Freeman said she was in correspondence with Mrs Dart and liaising with WSCC Highways regarding the installation of bollards in a lay-by adjacent to Worms Wood.

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

Nothing to report.

(iii) Liaison Advisory Sub Committee

The Clerk advised:

- (a) The next Joint Western Arun Area Committee (JWAAC) is to be held on 31st October 2007. Any items for the Agenda should be submitted now.
- (b) Cllr Gamester is to attend the Sussex Rural Community Council's AGM on 9th November 2007.
- (c) Three Counties Training are holding a training event at Midhurst on 2nd - 4th November.
- (d) The Revised Code of Conduct was advertised by way of Public Notice in the West Sussex Gazette on 26th September 2007.
- (e) The Standards Board for England's first edition of the Town and Parish Standard has been distributed to all members.

The Clerk commented upon the letter received from SALC entitled 'Subscriptions 2008/2009' which had been distributed to all members. He advised members that the subscription rose by 14% this year to £1,040 and is likely to rise by a further 13% next year. If this proceeds then the Parish Council will be contributing £97 per month to SALC and the Clerk believed he could get better value elsewhere. Mr Copeland said that the service now received was poor when compared with the excellent service when Christine Swan ran the organisation. The Chairman requested that the matter is brought back to the full council when next year's subscription demand is received.

iv) Projects Advisory Sub Committee

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council was no longer in line for a £50k BIG Lottery grant as the District Council has had to rationalise its bid. Whilst this happened sometime ago, the Head of Parks and Greenspace had failed to advise the Clerk accordingly. She has now apologised to the Chairman for her oversight.

A meeting is being held on Thursday 25th October at 10.30 a.m. in the St Mary's Centre to discuss the options available at Larksfield Skate Park. No members were available to attend the meeting.

Mr Copeland suggested that as the lottery funding was no longer available, the Parish Council should now match Felpham Parish Council and give £10,000 to enhance the skate park facilities. Mr Mansfield enquired why the Parish Council suddenly wanted to spend money and was advised that there were surplus funds available. He then suggested that the precept could be reduced or the grant could be limited to £4,000. Mr Edey supported the grant and the Chairman said that the council could be criticised by the external auditors if it was retaining too much cash without a specific project on which to spend the funds. The Clerk reminded members of the commitment to build a kick wall at Shrubbs Field and suggested £2,000 was held in reserve in case grant funding was not obtained. *Mr Copeland proposed that £8,000 is given to enhance Larksfield skate park, with that figure rising to £10,000 if grant funding is obtained for the kick wall.* This was seconded by Mrs Mills and Mr Mansfield called for a named vote. 10 voted in favour (Cllrs Chandler, Copeland, Edey, Gamester, Mrs Hall, Mrs Haywood, Jeffrey, Mrs Mills, Ms Ross and Wotherspoon). Cllr Mansfield voted against. The resolution was therefore passed by an overwhelming majority.

Finally, members' views were sought by Arun District Council regarding their proposal to move the existing children's playground at Larksfield owing to past complaints from residents over its proximity to housing. Ms Ross said its present location was perfect and she was opposed to moving it. Other members concurred and the Clerk was instructed to write and reject the idea of moving the playground.

v) **Roads & Transport Advisory Sub Committee**

Mr Edey advised that parents were very concerned about the termination of Bus Service 663 (Elmer to Felpham Community College) by WSCC to save £40,000 per annum. He said the daily cost on the bus was now £1.85 per day i.e. nearly £10 per week and that some children were having to walk home. Mrs Hall said that, to date, no parents had complained to Felpham Community College and that if they had a problem they should do so and assistance may be forthcoming.

County Councillor Mrs Freeman said that the cost of a pedestrian crossing at One Stop was in the range of £46,000/£78,000. She said that during a recent visit to the continent she had seen crossings that comprised of only white line markings on the road and that she has requested a feasibility study and costing for this. Mr Copeland said that was not going to happen as that type of crossing was not in the Highway Code. He was very surprised how long this was taking. Mr Edey said he wanted a proper crossing, not only at One Stop but also at Flansham Park and that they could not be shelved.

9. PARISH LAND AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Nothing to report

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10. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items had been received:-

- (1) ADC – Circulation of Minutes (*Full Circulation*)
- (2) ADC – JWAAC Three Tier Voting (*Full Circulation*)
- (3) Defra – Ways to tackle climate change booklet
- (4) Sussex Police Authority – Public Meeting (*General Circulation*)
- (5) WSCC - Connections
- (6) West Sussex NHS PCT – 2 editions Fit for the Future (*Full Circulation*)
- (7) 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	£41,744.49
Total	<u>£42,994.49</u>

(b) Accounts for payment -

The following payments were approved nem.con and made:

(i) Panasonic UK Ltd (Quarterly photocopier charges)	£ 81.51
(ii) The Royal British Legion (Poppy Wreath)	£ 25.00
(iii) D F Allsopp (Middleton News vouchers)	£ 180.00
(iv) D F Allsopp (Office expenses)	£ 206.42
(v) SRCC (Cllr Gamester AGM attendance costs)	£ 15.50
Total	<u>£ 508.43</u>

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

13 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS – Standing Order 63

In view of the nature of the business being transacted the public and press were excluded from this part of the meeting when the Clerk's proposed variation of contractual arrangements was considered.

There being no further business the Chairman reminded members that the next Meeting will be held on **19th December 2007 at 7.00 p.m.** The Meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.