

Minutes of a Meeting of Middleham Town Council held as a virtual meeting through Zoom on Wednesday, 31 March 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,.

County Cllr Mrs K Sedgwick (part of meeting) Mrs L Alderson (items 1 to 3 and 9.2 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.

Cllr Mr S Wheeler was unable to attend due to family commitments. All other Councillors were present.

2. Open Forum.

There were no members of the public present.

3. Declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda.

Cllr Fairhurst declared an interest in business discussed under agenda item 6.6.4 as the applicant for permission for metal detecting was known to her. 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 24 February 2021 as a true and accurate record to be signed by the Chairman.

4.2 The schedule of agreed actions.

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).

6.1.1 Cllr Hopper had attended a training course on managing allotments, which had been useful. The Clerk would obtain and circulate course notes.

Clerk

6.2 Matters of local interest and concern as reported to Councillors or on Residents' Facebook page.

6.2.1 Residents and Councillors had observed recent increase in stables waste falling from vehicles egressing trainers' yards, as a consequence of overloaded trailers and absence of sheeting, and also what appeared to be uncleared domestic waste within business premises. Rather than refer to RDC's environmental health team, for the time being communications would be drafted to specific hauliers and trainers for Council approval.

Clerk

	Action
6.3 Coronavirus Update	
6.3.1 <u>Coordination of volunteers and support to the vulnerable.</u> Requests for assistance continued to be infrequent.	
6.3.2 <u>Weekly reports from Leyburn CSO hub on activity;</u> received for information.	
6.3.3 <u>Befriending scheme.</u>	
6.3.4 <u>Community restart programme.</u>	
Both the above initiatives currently being trialled in Leyburn were reviewed. It was felt that MKC, which would reopen from 12 April and already operated a book loan system, was best placed to consider possible application of these initiatives in Middleham. Details would be forwarded.	Clerk
6.4 Resumption of Face-to-Face meetings. Guidance from YLCA was that after regulations to hold virtual meetings lapsed on 6 May it would not be safe to convene physical meetings until 21 June, as indicated in the government's roadmap. Accordingly, after the meeting on 28 April, the next Council meeting would be held on 23 June 2021.	
In discussion there was agreement that some aspects of virtual meetings were beneficial and that a 'hybrid' meeting with remote attendance was advantageous. It was agreed to contribute to a government consultation seeking views on a possible legal change permitting this.	All
6.5 Date of Annual Town Meeting: Cllr Fairhurst and the Clerk would agree s convenient date.	Cllr Fairhurst / Clerk
6.6 Land Management Issues (standing item)	
6.6.1 <u>Storm drains on Council Lands - maintenance issues.</u> It was agreed that the drains on Council-owned land in the west end should be cleared to avoid possible flooding of adjacent homes. A quotation of £850 plus VAT had been received and would be accepted, unless one further quote expected from Dyno-Rod was less expensive.	Clerk
6.6.2 <u>Access to playing fields paddock.</u> An indication of costs to install an improved pedestrian access had not been received..	
6.6.3 <u>BT Openreach (BTO) Wayleave Agreement across Town Wastes.</u> A recent application to lay approximately 22 metres of duct to Pear Tree House included a standard term granting a right to lay cables above the surface as well as below. Overhead cabling was undesirable in the Conservation Area and a response from BTO deleting this term was sought. There was concern however that if the terms were not amended it would prevent improved broadband supply to the property so it was agreed to waive the objection if it was not forthcoming. A one of fee of £51.92 and £225 to cover Council's expenses for dealing with this matter would be received.	Clerk
6.6.4 <u>Metal Detecting on Council Land.</u> An application had been received and an agreement drafted by the Clerk based upon established best practice for landowners granting permission whilst reflecting local circumstances. Subject to excluding the Moors, the document was approved for issue..	Clerk
6.7 Police Report (standing item). The report for March was noted. It was anticipated that relaxing lockdown restrictions might create potential for breach of rules and so behaviour would be monitored.	
6.8 Middleham Herald. The Easter edition had been circulated.	
6.9 Housing matters: A virtual meeting would be held on Monday 19 April at 10.30am with RDC's Housing Officer and Broadacres Housing Association to explore possible collaboration with other parties to securing the redundant Methodist chapel for affordable housing. All Councillors were welcome to attend.	All
6.10 Funding Opportunities. Cllr Fortune would monitor bulletins to ensure relevant opportunities were not overlooked, rather than thorough scrutiny of all schemes currently on offer. He recommended that suitable projects be identified rather than pursuing schemes because there was funding. It was agreed that possible funding for housing	Cllr Fortune

Action

developments were relevant.

7. Review of Health & Safety and Environmental Matters (standing item).**7.1 Play Area**

7.1.1 **Inspection reports.** None received..

7.1.2 A proposal had been received for knee-high a willow woven fence as a boundary between the skate park and the smaller children's play area. The RoSPA report that had prompted review of the proximity of these activities was noted, although in some respects its observations and recommendations were inconsistent. It was agreed that a risk assessment be undertaken that would inform choice of material and dimensions of a suitable boundary structure. The Clerk would circulate a proforma to be used.

Clerk**7.2 Street Lighting.**

7.2.1 Park Lane additional lighting. There appeared to have been a recent increase in lighting failures, most of which had now been fixed. It was agreed that the poor lighting in the east end of Park Lane, that RDC would not improve, should be addressed by Council and the Clerk was instructed to request RDC to install and thereafter maintain and supply a lamp for a one-off cost of £2k, drawn down from the reserves set aside for replacing heritage lighting. The Clerk would also raise the poor condition of the pavement with Area 1 Highways.

**Clerk
Clerk**

7.2.2 Jubilee Light. The offer from the church tower restoration team to repaint the lamppost was appreciated. It was agreed that the volunteers should repaint it in black gloss. Mr Burren would select suitable paint.

Clerk**8. Project Updates:**

8.1 **Burial Ground.** Cllr Hopper and the Clerk would shortly meet with Mr Smith to discuss a construction start date; confirm the selection of matching stones. It was possible that Mr Smith would request closure of footpath 14 during construction.

8.2 **MSCWA.** Arrangements were being made for resumption of sporting activities as lockdown restrictions were eased. The fence across the enlarged area within the paddock would shortly be fenced off. A proposal to construct a petanque court would be submitted to Council. The Committee was encouraging a start on construction of the shed extension.

8.3 Key Centre.

8.3.1 Annual report and accounts for year ended 31 March 2020. Received for information.

8.3.2 Nomination of additional trustees. Council discussed several potential candidates who might augment the collective skills and knowledge of the Trustee board but could not recommend anyone at the current time. Two teams of volunteers had been recruited to monitor the pumps. It was agreed to seek confirmation from the trustees whether the pumps cleared water entering the site or after it was held in attenuation tanks under the building.

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

9.1 **Great British Spring Clean.** Middleham would take part in the national event between place between 28 May and 13 June, in coordination with Middleham Primary School. Cllr Skelton and Cllr Fairhurst would organise a smaller scale event before then on a date to be agreed. The Busks, in particular, needed attention. Publicity would be generated via Mr Sedgwick.

Clerk

9.2 **Post-Lockdown Community event.** There was consensus that an event to mark easing of restrictions should be held, supported by Council in a coordinating role and possibly through s137 funding. Mrs Alderson, chair of the Middleham Feast Committee, had cancelled this year's Spring Bank Holiday Sports Day event hoped that a replacement event could be held over the August BH weekend. Differing activities to appeal to all ages were proposed and Cllr Sedgwick suggested seeking business sponsorship and possible funding through the

**Cllr
Skelton /
Cllr
Fairhurst**

Locality budget. the Clerk would set up a meeting of interested parties.

**Action
Clerk**

10. Planning

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.

10.4 Other Planning Matters: None.

11. Finance – Information/Decision required

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

It was agreed that, as in previous years, any unspent approved expenditure in the current year be carried forward as reserves in respect of the respective category of expenditure.

Clerk

11.2 Specific Expenditure Approvals. There were none.

11.3 Year End audit procedures.

11.3.1 Appointment of Internal Auditor. Having indicated that she was willing to continue on the same terms as before, it was agreed to reappoint Kim Duke as Internal Auditor. Ms Duke was happy to work with the revised schedule of checks to be undertaken.

11.3.2 Internal control inspection. This would be carried out by Cllr Byford and Cllr Fairhurst.

**Cllr
Byford /
Cllr
Fairhurst**

11.4 Amendments to Clerk's contract of employment (private session). Mr Keep was asked to leave the meeting for this item. Cllr Byford had reviewed suggested amendments to the Clerk's contract of employment, none of which were significant other than correction to the calculation of annual holiday which did not reflect statutory provision and NALC guidance for Clerks. **IT WAS RESOLVED to amend the contract of employment as tabled at the meeting.**

**Cllr
Byford /
Clerk**

As a consequence of the holiday entitlement previously being understated, it was not possible that outstanding leave be taken before the leave year end on 31 March 2021. It was agreed that the Clerk would receive pay in lieu of 8 days leave untaken and that 3 days leave be carried forward to the following year.

Clerk

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 Banking arrangements. To approve an application for a debit card to facilitate paying in at Post Offices, following planned closure of local HSBC branches.

12.2.2 To consider engagement with RDC's Climate Change Officer and possible adoption of the Friends of the Earth 50-point Climate Change Plan for Councils

12.2.3 Friends of the Plantations: approve risk assessment; agree programme of work for volunteer working party.

12.2.4 Burial Ground

12.2.5 Draft rules and regulations

12.2.6 Scale of charges

13. Future Meetings

The following Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 28 April 2021. The meeting after that would be held on 23 June 2021.

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Action

There being no further business the declared the meeting closed at 8.40pm

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