

**Middlewich Town Council
Victoria Building
Lewin Street
Middlewich
CW10 9AT**

Minutes of the Four Hundred and Seventy Fifth Meeting of Middlewich Town Council, held in the Victoria Hall, Civic Way, Middlewich on Tuesday 17th May 2016, commencing at 6.30pm

Part One

Present

The Town Mayor, Councillor PJ Farrell and Councillors CL Bulman, J Eaton, PJ Farrell, MA Hunter, DJ Latham, SN McGrory, B Walmsley, W Walmsley and DA Williams

Council Officers:

JPA Williams, Town Clerk, DJ French, Assistant Town Clerk and NL Antoney, Administrative Assistant

1. To receive and approve apologies for absence

An Apology for Absence was received and approved from Councillor S Moss

Feedback and Reports

2. To receive any announcements to be made by the Mayor

The Mayor updated on a number of events he had attended since the last meeting including:

- April 1st – met with and welcomed a 69 year old cyclist travelling from Berwick upon Tweed to Helston in Cornwall in aid of the charity Grandparents Plus;
- April 10th – Macclesfield Mayor's Thanksgiving Service and Civic Awards events;
- April 16th – his own Civic Dinner. The Mayor thanked everyone who had supported this event.

Resolved 7771

That the Mayor's report be noted.

3. To note any declarations of Members' Interests on any agenda item

The following declarations were made:

- Councillor D Latham declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matters relating to the Waste Transfer Station as well as an interest as a near neighbour consultee;
- Councillors MA Hunter and DA Williams declared interests in the Waste Transfer Station as near neighbour consultees; and
- Councillor B Walmsley declared an interest as a Member of Cheshire East Council.

4. Rota for the Town Council Surgery to be held at the Makers Market

Resolved 7772

That Councillors CL Bulman and DJ Latham host the next Surgery on 30th April at the Town Council stall at the Makers Market.

5. To consider any items raised during the Open Forum

(a) Mr G Williams asked the following question:

“Please can you tell me what Middlewich Town Council has done to protect open space between Middlewich and surrounding towns?” He referred to announcements made by the previous leader of Cheshire East Council, Cllr Michael Jones, about “Garden City” and queried whether CEC was respecting boundaries between towns.

Members referred to the Local Plan which was currently being consulted upon. It was noted that this stage of the Local Plan consultation did not allow anything to be added to the plan; there may be a possibility to influence a future review of Protected Open Spaces. The Town Council had recently considered the Local Plan and one observation made to officers of CEC was concern about over allocation and the potential to join Middlewich with Warmingham, Wimboldsley and other neighbouring settlements, with no protection in the Plan. Reference was also made to Middlewich being on the boundary with Cheshire West and Chester Council and the difficulty of influencing decisions in CWAC so as to protect Middlewich. It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan process could help to protect open space although the boundary covered by the plan was that of the administrative boundary of the Town Council ie Middlewich only.

(b) Mr J Parry asked the following question:

“Since May last year Middlewich Town Council has had more secret part 2 meetings than all the other councils in Cheshire East put together. There is now a view within the residents of Middlewich that MTC are conducting way too much business behind closed doors. There needs to be more openness and respect that the council is there to serve Middlewich and needs to be more in the public eye”.

Members discussed the issue of excluding the press and public from part or all of a meeting due to the confidential nature of items under discussion. There were differing views expressed regarding occasions when this had happened with some members feeling that the subject matter had not warranted the exclusion of press and public whereas other members felt it was justified for specific topics; reference was also made to taking advice from partners and, as an example, the Police requesting that operational matters were not discussed in public. The Town Clerk listed all meetings held since May 2015 and noted that there had been 4 occasions when the press and public had been excluded out of a total of 14 meetings; of these, one meeting had been completely held in private whereas the other 3 meetings had excluded the public and press for part of the meeting;

(c) Mrs Sonya Edwards asked the following question:

“As Cheshire East Council are undertaking options appraisals for the possibility of modifying the route of the bypass, will this Council please ask for a progress report and request that Middlewich Town Council are consulted before any recommendations are proposed? Furthermore will this Council ask for a timescale for how long these appraisals and proposals will take?”

Members queried whether the Town Council had been consulted on any proposed modification to the route of the bypass. The Town Clerk referred to the Forward Plan on Cheshire East Council website which showed the bypass was due to be discussed at CEC Cabinet on 3rd May. He agreed to investigate the next steps on this matter.

6. To (a) receive and adopt the Minutes of the Meeting of Middlewich Town Council held on Monday 18th March 2016; and (b) receive and adopt the Minutes of a Special Meeting held on Monday 11th April and make recommendations to the Local Planning Authority by the deadline of 19th April.

Resolved 7773

That:

- (a) the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th March be received and adopted subject to the inclusion of the names of the members of the public who had spoken during the Open Forum;
- (b) the Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 11th April be received and adopted; and
- (c) the Town Clerk respond to Cheshire East Council about the Local Plan consultation by expressing the view of the Town Council that all site allocations should remain in the plan; ie as follows:
 - PSS 700 Glebe Farm – 525 dwellings;
 - PSS 701 Brooks Lane – 400 dwellings;
 - PSS 703 Land off Warmingham Lane – 235 dwellings;
 - PSS 704 Land off Sutton Lane – 230 dwellings
 - PSS 705 Cledford Lagoons – 750 dwellings
 - PSS 702/706 Midpoint 18 employment use.

7. To consider any written Members' questions on the Minutes

Councillor DA Williams had submitted a list of questions on the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st March. The Town Clerk had circulated his written responses to these issues at the meeting, as set out below:

- Resolution 7763: When will the Clerk respond to the questions asked before the March meeting? The Town Clerk is working through the questions raised by Cllr Williams including the answers to the other questions raised previously;
- Resolution 7766(a): Why wasn't this item considered by the Finance, Policy and Governance Committee on 29 March? The agenda had been finalised and distributed on Monday 21 March in accordance with the Council procedures which require 3 clear days' notice of meetings; because of the bank holidays over the Easter period this item was too late to go on the agenda. It will be considered on the 6 June.
- Resolution 7770: Can we have an update please? The Town Clerk has had a meeting with Sergeant Watkins and they have agreed to hold a follow up meeting to include the PCSO and representatives of the Town Council.

Councillor Williams had also submitted a list of questions relating to minutes of previous meetings and the Town Clerk had circulated his written responses to these issues.

Members requested an earlier sight of the questions raised and the answers rather than being circulated on the night of the meeting.

Resolved 7774

That the list of answers to the questions raised on the minutes be received and noted.

8. To receive the Minutes of a Meeting of Middlewich Town Council's Planning Committee held on 22nd March 2016

Resolved 7775

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee be received as a correct record.

9. To receive the minutes of a Meeting of Middlewich Town Council's Finance, Policy and Governance Committee held on 29th March 2016

Resolved 7776

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance, Policy and Governance Committee be received as a correct record.

10. To receive the minutes of a Meeting of Middlewich Town Council's Events and Communications Committee held on 6th April 2016

Resolved 7777

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Events and Communications Committee be received as a correct record.

11. To receive the report of the Town Clerk and any correspondence for information

Councillor DA Williams had asked some questions in relation to the Town Clerk's report. The Town Clerk agreed to respond to the issues raised by email outside the meeting and circulate to all Councillors. He would also refer some items to relevant Committees and send a response once the Committee had considered the matter.

Resolved 7778

That the Town Clerk respond by email to the questions raised by Councillor Williams and circulate the answers to all Councillors; some matters would be considered by the relevant Committee and the answer circulated in due course.

12. To receive written reports from Members of Cheshire East Council

Resolved 7779

That the reports from Cheshire East Councillors be received and noted.

13. To consider any Members' Items previously submitted in writing

Members' items had been received as follows:

- Councillor CL Bulman had submitted a Member's Item about Tesco's prompt action in cleaning and securing the properties adjacent to Southway;
- Councillor MA Hunter had submitted a Member's Item regarding the grass verge at Booth Lane which was overgrown and litter strewn;
- Councillor D Williams had submitted Members Items about – (i) roads in Middlewich which were deteriorating due to substandard repairs of potholes; and (ii) requesting consideration of a new timetable for setting the budget including the opportunity for public participation;
- Councillor W Walmsley had submitted a Member's Item requesting an update on the Youth Council;
- Councillor D Williams had submitted Members' Items regarding – (i) improvements to road safety on Croxton Lane; and (ii) requesting the Town Council to call on Cheshire East Council to stipulate in the Local Plan that there will be no further development that creates more traffic until the eastern by pass is completed.

Resolved 7780

That

- (a) the Town Clerk write to Tesco, Middlewich thanking them for their prompt action in cleaning up and securing the properties adjacent to Southway; asking if they can explain their future plans for the land that Tesco owns in Middlewich; and whether there is a timetable for the demolition or boarding up of the property in their ownership which is subject to regular acts of fly tipping and vandalism?
- (b) The Town Clerk liaise with Cheshire East Council and the Canal and River Trust regarding managing the grass verge along Booth Lane to try to alleviate the problems in that area;
- (c) The Town Clerk contacts Cheshire East Council seeking an inspection of the worst and busiest areas of highway in Middlewich with a view to producing a timetable of works for substantial repairs that will last and withstand heavy traffic;
- (d) The item regarding a proposed timetable for the budget process be deferred to the meeting in June pending consideration by the Finance, Policy and Governance Committee for consideration at its next meeting on 6 June;
- (e) The update on the Youth Council be noted;
- (f) The Town Clerk contact Highways Officers of CEC and Cheshire West and Chester Council using the information brought to the meeting by Cheshire East Councillor MJ Parsons and circulated to all Members, with the aim of setting up a meeting to bring forward progress in addressing the serious highways issues on Croxton Lane including its junction with King Street, which is long overdue; and
- (g) Middlewich Town Council does not call on Cheshire East Borough Council to stipulate in their local plan that there will be no further development that creates more traffic in Middlewich until the Eastern Bypass is completed, on the basis that adding to the existing congestion is totally unsustainable. In addition, Middlewich Town Council does not oppose re-routing the bypass.

In accordance with Standing Order 10, a named vote was requested and the voting was as follows:

For the motion: Councillors CL Bulman, MA Hunter, DJ Latham and DA Williams (4)

Against the motion: Councillors JK Kingston, SN McGrory, B Walmsley and W Walmsley (4)

Abstentions: Councillors J Eaton and PJ Farrell (2)

Councillor JK Kingston used his casting vote and the motion was lost.

Finance

14. To receive and approve the Monthly Town Council Financial and Monitoring, Cashbook and Income & Expenditure reports for the month of March 2016

Resolved 7781

That the Financial reports be received and approved.

Policy Considerations

15. To receive any update from the PCSO

The written report from the PCSO was considered.

Resolved 7782

That the report of the PCSO be received with thanks.

16. CCTV

Resolved 7783

That the quarterly monitoring report and information be received and noted.

17. Environmental Hub – Community Liaison Meeting

Resolved 7784

That Councillor DJ Latham be appointed as the Town Council representative on the Liaison Meeting with Councillor MA Hunter as alternate member.

Highways and Transportation

None

Planning and the Environment

None

Notice of Future Meetings

18. To note the dates of forthcoming Meetings

Resolved 7785

That the dates for future meetings be noted.

Part Two

None

The next ordinary Meeting of the Town Council will be on Tuesday 17th May.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 pm.

Councillor JK Kingston
Town Mayor

Signed.....2016

