

MIDGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

C/o 33 Camden Close, Calcot, Reading RG31 7AG

Email: clerk@midghamparish.co.uk

Tel: 0118 348 58440

MEETING MINUTES

Midgham Annual Parish Assembly held 6th May 2021 via video conferencing at 7pm.

Attendees:

Chair: Tony Markham	Vice Chair: Alex Bingley
Councillors: Anthony Fenn, Barbara Grey	Clerk: Christine Heath
District Councillor: Graham Pask	Members of Public: 2

1. Apologies

None

2. Approve Minutes

The minutes of 15th May 2019 were approved, signed and entered into the minute file. Due to the COVID pandemic the parish assembly for 2020 was deferred.

3. Annual Parish Council Report

The Chairman reported:

The Parish Council

Since our last meeting in May 2019 two Councillors had resigned, Heather Hutchins and Camilla Hamilton who has left the area. Heather and Camilla contributed greatly and we thank them for their service to the parish. Fortunately, Barbara Grey has joined us, leaving one vacancy to fill.

COVID has been a big problem, Midgham was less affected than most, but volunteers have been looking out for others and we witnessed an impressive community spirit.

We conducted our meetings via video conferencing and although less satisfactory, we managed well and hope to meet in person for our next parish meeting in July, enabling Cllr Lombardo, who has experienced technology issues, to join us again.

Village Hall

The pandemic also had a major impact on the village hall, which had already been losing bookings and not generating any income. Mr and Mrs Norris continued valiantly to keep it running, which was greatly appreciated. They have now handed over to three new trustees who will hopefully will be able to generate the same level of interest. Mr and Mrs Norris have done an extraordinary job over a very long time and we are very grateful.

Planning

We had a number of planning applications which we have supported and we have rejected those that were perceived to be building within the countryside.

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We fought successfully against the application for development at the junction of New Road Hill and Bath Road. However, subsequent proposed changes to the local plan have meant that the planning application has been resubmitted and is currently being considered by West Berkshire Council.

We have concerns regarding ribbon development, particularly in light of the proposed 2,500 homes in NE Thatcham which we will continue to resist.

Finances

Finances are in good order. The internal audit report for 2020-2021 had been received. The report concluded that the PC management processes are well controlled and monitored. This reflects well on the manner in which the PC conducts its business and how the clerk conducts her work.

4. Village Hall trust report

Received from the Village Hall Committee

Since the last Parish Assembly in 2019, the village hall has undergone a number of changes. The income of the hall had been reduced considerably and was further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently the village hall was under threat of closure. The parish council provided some financial support whilst its future was decided.

However, it was decided to keep the hall and three new trustees were appointed:

Chairman: Mrs Linda Lombardo

Secretary: Mrs Sharon McKellar

Treasurer: Mr Jeremy Harding

More good news was received when the hall was awarded 2 government grants totaling £10,237.93, enabling the new committee to make plans for its future and tackle the maintenance and repairs that are necessary.

The AGM of the village hall took place on the 12th April 2021. The financial statement for the period August 2020 to 7th April 2021 is as follows:

	As of August 2020:	As of 7 th April 2021
Bank	£ 740.08	£9,307.37
Petty Cash	£ 487.55	£ 55.08
Total	£1,227.63	£9,362.45

The new trustees officially took over at the AGM and thanked the previous trustees, Mrs Claire Norris, Mr Bob Norris and Mr Phil Holdway for their long service to the hall particularly during these difficult times.

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5. District Councillors report

District Councillor Pask reported as follows:

In respect of the NE Thatcham development, he has asked that other options be considered. The Colthrop development which includes the construction of a bridge to replace the level crossing, could still create issues with traffic, with fears it will become a 'rat run'.

Further updates are not expected until late July, with a high chance that another consultation will be sanctioned, which will take a further 6 weeks. All previous views will be taken into account.

He reiterated his comments made at the 22nd March 2021 parish meeting. In 2017 an application was made for 500 homes at Siege Cross, Thatcham, and 300 homes behind Regency Park Hotel at the bottom of Cold Ash Hill. Initial applications were refused, both the appeals were approved however, it was called in by the Secretary of State who revoked the appeal decision.

He advised that there has been a high court action test case in respect of extending the use of video conferencing for council meetings. Unfortunately, this has not been successful and from 7th May 2021 councils are unable utilise video conferencing for their meetings. Video streaming to the public will be allowed in some cases. Face to face meetings from 7th May 2021 can only take place following the COVID guidelines, however, working group video conferencing will be permitted.

He advised that planning site visits, although officially resumed, the committee are unable to meet until the COVID restrictions are lessened, allowing face to face meetings.

A new scheme for the recycling of all plastic items has commenced, although at this time residents will need to take them to Veolia in Padworth. In addition, refuse collections will now be carried out on bank holidays.

He advised that he is no longer Chairman of West Berkshire Council, his replacement being Councillor Clive Hooker.

In conclusion he offered his help by email, or telephone should the PC or a resident of Midgham require advise or assistance. His full contact details can be found on the parish website.

6. Volunteer to make regular checks on the parish defibrillator

The PC thanked Mrs Claire Norris (resident) for volunteering to be the Defibrillator monitor

7. Questions and input from residents

There were none

8. The next annual parish meeting will be held 16th May 2022

9. The meeting closed at 19:40 and was followed by the Annual Parish Council meeting