

MIDGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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

Email: clerk@midghamparish.co.uk

Tel: 0118 348 58440

MEETING MINUTES

2nd August 2021, at 7pm in Midgham Parish Village Hall

Attendees:

Chair: Tony Markham	Vice Chair: Anthony Fenn
Councillors: Barbara Grey, Derek Lombardo	Clerk: Christine Heath
District Councillor: Graham Pask	Members of Public: 6

Part I

1. Apologies

There were none

2. Declarations of interest

There were none

3. Public Session

There were no questions from the public

4. District Councillors Report

DC Graham Pask had sent his recent report prior to the meeting which can be seen on the parish website. He explained that the green waste had not been collected due to COVID isolations and shortage of HGV drivers. He advised that at the next renewal of the green bin subscription, there will be a reduction in cost to compensate.

The recycling waste centres will continue with a booking system as it appears to be working very well and they will allow more than one visit per week.

There were no new updates on the local plan or the proposed NE Thatcham Development.

WBC are now meeting face to face albeit with a smaller number of attendees, particularly planning meetings. There have been some hybrid meetings where people are able to dial in. Full council meetings normally have 43 members which is difficult as they are limited to only 18 in the room, but members can provide indicative votes via Zoom.

5. Update on the Midgham Park footpath

The footpath damaged by heavy plant has been inspected by WBC Footpath Officer. It is hoped that it will settle and that those who caused the damage will be more aware next time.

6. Presentation by West Berkshire Libraries

Felicity Harrison - Libraries Manager provided information on the library services.

The challenges of the last year had delayed plans for a future 8 libraries, e-library service and mobile library.

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The library provides a range of book formats hardbacks, CDs, paperbacks and large print. They range from new books, best sellers to classic books. Although the libraries were shut down for some time their priority was to deliver an appropriate level of service, which was achieved with their e-library service.

They have received funding from the Arts Council. From July some buildings were open for the use of computers and printing. At times they were only able to offer a book collection service. The library service has been encouraging reading for health and wellbeing during the pandemic. They are looking into the possibility of launching an order and collect service, whereby you can review and order books via the website. You could also telephone and ask for books of a certain genre and receive a selection.

During the pandemic they selected books for children which were handed over in a bag. One person wanted to learn quilting; they requested books on the topic and have successfully learned the craft and sent WB Libraries photos.

To help parents during the pandemic events took place on line; story time, craft time, Lego time, which were all very popular. In addition, 70 children learned about coding on-line.

Those most vulnerable were supported by the mobile and at home services.

It was mentioned that the mobile service to Midgham (Goddard Drive) is not very well attended. It was **RESOLVED** that the PC would advertise the library services on its website and local social media. **ACTION – Clerk:** update website and social media. The Village Hall Committee also agreed to put posters in the notice boards and distribute leaflets.

The libraries development plan for the coming year will commence shortly. The previous plan included large cuts leaving the library service reliant on volunteers. The new review is to ensure that resources are being used to maximum effect.

Future Plans

Regular events will return when safe to do so. Engagement with WB schools with class visits are planned as the Zoom assemblies have been very successful. A feasibility study will take place on automatically joining new pupils to the library. Launch of a new library application (now available). Lighting update to LED. Thatcham Library refurbishment, working with Thatcham TC in line with new master plan. Working with central library hub in Thatcham for a toy library, whereby you can borrow toys just as you would books. Always looking for new volunteers.

It was confirmed that during COVID all books were quarantined for 72 hours after use.

Felicity thanked the PC for their funding contribution.

There was a great deal of praise from those present for the Thatcham library.

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7. Actions arising from previous meeting

There were none

8. Correspondence Received

- Email correspondence was forwarded to Councillors immediately and a list provided prior to this meeting.
- West Berkshire provided information of wild flower verges together with some wild flower seeds. PCs have been asked to identify suitable areas for wild flowers.

9. Highway's winter service plan

The plan had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting for review.

The plan had no changes from the previous year which would affect Midgham. The Chair confirmed that we have salt bins around the parish which are monitored and topped up as required.

10. Clerks report

10.1 Financial update

Balance as at 1st April 2021 £ 11,971.80

Income

PRECEPT £ 4,750.00

Interest received April/May/June/July £ 0.42

4,750.42

Payments

Midgham Parish Church 350

Church Magazine 150

Citizens Advice West Berkshire 150

Defib Electric 25

Audit Fees 30

WB Library 100

Insurance 400.95

BALC Subscription 74.22

ICO Data Protection Subscription 35

Salary April/May/June/July Salaries 1056

WB Election Expenses 75

Web hosting 130

£2,576.17 4,750.42

Balance as at 22nd July 2021

£ 14,146.05

10.2 West Berks Invoice for Election costs

A request to pay an outstanding amount of £75 for 2019 election expenses was received from WB Debt Recovery Dept.

After further investigation it was confirmed that the original invoice (dated May 2020) and reminders sent by post had not been received by the PC. Upon consultation with WBC, they confirmed Midgham were not the only parish who had not received the documentation and that they were sent during the first COVID lock-downs when mail was disrupted. The explanation has also been received by email. The invoice has been paid.

DC Pask also contacted the Debt Recovery Dept who were very apologetic, they advised that at the time their mail was handled by an independent company and not the Royal Mail.

11. Update from Village Hall Committee

Since April the committee have been working hard on restoration and repairs; clearing gutters, painting, clearing the ground outside the hall, cleaning the inside and general maintenance. All costs incurred were paid using VH funds.

There are however, a number of issues that need to be taken on by specialised trades people; repair roof leaks, update heating system and kitchen.

They would also like to explore the possibility of clearing an area at the back of the hall and install a patio area where people could gather.

A full financial report will be available at the next PC meeting. Current running costs are £1,400 per year. The intention is to hold fund raising events and apply for grants where possible. It was confirmed that some grants had been received during the pandemic. The committee thanked the PC for their support and funding.

A free event is planned for 29th August to promote the village hall. There will be 16th century artifacts on display and refreshments available.

The fortnightly coffee mornings will resume from this week 10am to 12pm.

ACTION – Clerk: Update website and social media with the VH events.

DC Pask advised of a possible grant using the Community Infrastructure Levy fund held by WBC. Although it may be too late to apply this year, it is available every year. The grant must be used for something that will be of benefit to the whole community e.g., improve the disability access. **ACTION – DC Pask:** Obtain more information for the VH Committee.

12. Local Climate Control – Greening Campaign

A discussion took place as to whether Midgham Council wishes to engage with the community interest company known as “the Greening Campaign”

There are also other green incentives which WBC are encouraging PCs to organise.

Chair explained that the Greening Campaign is non-profit making. He suggested more information is needed before the PC can make a decision.

13. Planning matters

13.1 Decisions

- **20/01920/OUTD** - Land adjacent to Hunts Cottage, new dwelling and garage. Appeal Dismissed
- **20/03068/69 FULD** Button Court Farm, Erection of a farm owner's dwelling and garage with associated access. Granted

13.2 Awaiting decision from West Berks Planning

- **20/03028/OUTD/MAJ** - development Bath Road/New Road Hill 16 dwellings, including 6 affordable units. PC have strongly objected
- **21/00875/FULMAJ** – Shooters Lodge - Single storey rear extension to existing Garage and conversion to Annexe. New single storey pool building. No objection from PC
- **21/00661/FU** - The Nurseries, Bath Road - Demolition of existing portacabin office buildings and erection of two buildings to provide B2/B8 Storage and Distribution use. No objection from PC
- **21/01489/HOUSE** Woodside Barn – Garden Store and porch canopy – No objection from PC
- **21/01616/HOUSE and 21/01617/LBC2** – Hall Court Midgham Green -Construction of swimming pool and associated works – No Objection from PC

13.3 New applications – awaiting PC Decision

- **21/01730/HOUSE** – Grange Lodge Midgham Park - Demolition of an existing garage, construction of a new sitting room of similar size, with connecting walkway to the existing building. The PC have no Objection
- **21/01561/MINMAJ (Adjacent o Midgham Parish)** – Kennetholme Quarry Colthrop Lane - Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to vary Condition 1 (Extraction) of Planning Permission Ref. no. 19/01371/MINMAJ, dated 16th August 2019, for the Extraction of sand and gravel at Kennetholme Farm for processing at Colthrop Processing Facility, in order to complete mineral extraction and site restoration in phase 1 and 10.

13.4 Thatcham Development – update

Cllr Grey provided an update on the current situation in respect of how the development would affect Midgham and provided documentation to the PC. She was concerned that the PC had decided not to take part in the group meetings held by surrounding parishes objecting to the development and asked if the decision could be reconsidered.

The Chair confirmed that as the decision not to take part was ‘resolved’ at the meeting of the 6th May 2021, it cannot be brought back onto a future agenda for 6 months. He also confirmed that we had not withdrawn our support, we just did not wish to be a part of the group.

Further concerns were the lack of publicity within the parish and Cllr Grey asked if we would consider a leaflet drop and also erecting a banner within the village.

DC Pask advised that Bucklebury have produced a leaflet which would also be distributed to Midgham residents. The Banner design was reviewed by the PC and it was **RESOLVED** that this could be erected in an appropriate position within the parish.

Residents present confirmed that they have objected directly to WB.

The PC also have a link on their website to the Bucklebury site which provides latest updates and includes how Midgham residents can support the campaign against the development.

DC Pask advised that there will be another consultation stage before Christmas 2021 and that he had been actively involved in the reviewing of alternative sites.

13.5 Proposed Commercial Space in Thatcham

An email was received from a developer looking to extend the commercial space at Cox’s Lane. The Chair provided a brief overview and advised that until the PC receive a formal request from WB Planning to provide feedback to a planning application, we cannot make any comments. **ACTION – Clerk:** Inform the Developer

14. The date of the next meeting will be Monday 18th October 7pm

15. Part I closed at 8:15 pm