

MIDGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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

Email: clerk@midghamparish.co.uk

Tel: 0118 348 5840

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY MINUTES

This meeting was conducted strictly in accordance with Standing Orders as adopted by Council in May 2021.

Attendees:

Vice Chair: Anthony Fenn	Clerk: Christine Heath
Councillors: Barbara Grey, Francis Long, Derek Lombardo District Councillor: Graham Pask	Members of Public: 5

1. Apologies

Cllr Markham due to illness, the meeting was chaired by the Vice Chair

2. Approve the minutes from the last annual parish meeting

The minutes were approved, signed and entered into the minute file

3. Presentation by Greenham Trust - Charitable Grants

Lisa James (Head of Grants) provided an overview of the trust, its history and the ways in which they are helping the local community with support and grants. The trust was formed by a group of local businessmen who have implemented a number of programs within the community. The 150-acre Greenham Business Center comprises a mix of commercial, industrial and distribution investments and has given £65m to the area, around £3-4M per year

Lisa also provided information on how the grant system worked and the various types of grants. In particular the Village Hall could apply for a grant to assist with work that still needs to be done. Lisa confirmed that anyone wishing to discuss or apply for a grant should contact her directly. It is also possible to apply on-line and full details and contact numbers can be found on their website.

This year Greenham Trust Launched their Youth Appeal for their 25th anniversary.

As an independent trust that can respond more quickly to local and national appeals as they arise, for example Afghanistan refugees and the Ukrainian crisis.

Grant funding for local charitable organisations from Greenham Trust

4. Receive the annual Parish Council Report

The VC read the annual report on behalf of the Chairman.

The parish council

Since our last meeting in 2021 we have a new Councillor, Francis long who was co-opted onto the parish council in October 2021.

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During the last year we have managed to meet in person rather than by zoom call which is of course much more preferable. Covid is still a major problem but it does appear that the pandemic is retreating and a certain amount of normality is returning to life. The parish council has noted with much appreciation the community spirit of the parish with volunteers helping those in need. However, the virus is still out there and we should not be complacent.

Village hall

Village hall situation is subject to a separate report from the village hall committee following this agenda item. The council is fully supportive of the village hall committee in their work to make the village hall viable.

Planning

Planning is a major problem for Midgham and the parish council is keen to do all in its power to stop Midgham parish being subsumed into a "greater Thatcham" or part of Woolhampton. Parish council is doing all it can to preserve the fabric of the village and stop ribbon development along the A4 and urbanisation within the parish. Nevertheless, the challenges are great. Developments close to or in fact impinging on Midghams boundaries are those that the council is strongly objecting to.

The Thatcham north-east development of two and a half thousand houses is currently "stayed in its process" whilst West Berkshire Council find the "30-year vision". Councillor Pask, our West Berkshire Council representative, speaks very knowledgeably on the subject and it is clear that at least 850 of these houses are highly likely to be built. Nevertheless, Midgham council has expressed its continued opposition to this development and has joined with the north-east Thatcham development group to facilitate as much opposition as possible.

Out of the blue, as it were, a new development application was received "the land adjacent to Gables way, Colthrop" and this was for " Outline Application for commercial B2 (general industrial) and/or B8 (storage and distribution) development together with ancillary office space and associated landscaping, car parking, service yards and access. " Despite vehement opposition from the parish council this application has been passed by West Berkshire Council planning.

The land at the bottom of New Rd, Hill intersecting with the Bath Road is also the subject of a planning application for 16 houses and it is considered likely that this application will be successful too.

This means that three major developments directly around Midgham or impinging upon it are likely to proceed so continuing the urbanisation of this area.

There was an extraordinary meeting to discuss an application related to Hall Court Farm. Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: change of use of an agricultural storage barn to a D2 use under Class R of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended).

It was a spirited meeting with views expressed both for and against the concept. A major concern expressed was that the noise from a proposed wedding venue could have an adverse effect on the neighbourhood. However, some neighbours expressed a view that this would not be a problem.

The parish council examined other smaller planning applications and tended to support those that they felt appropriate whilst not supporting development in the countryside.

Thames Water

We have had a lot of road closures in the parish due to Thames Water repairing water mains, on New Rd Hill, school Hill and Church Hill. We hope that that will resolve matters.

Finances

Financial situation of the council is good and the internal auditors report considers that we have adequate but not excessive reserves.

Internal audit

The internal audit expressed the following view which is worth repetition "despite the ongoing pandemic I found the administration and procedures of the council to be carefully planned controlled and well documented with reports being presented to the councils it deemed appropriate. In addition, the minutes provide a very factual comprehensive record the councils activities with a clear indication of who is responsible for follow-up action. The actions of the clerk, continues to provide a very reliable system producing comprehensive and informative minutes and records tight budgetary controls and a clear and concise audit trail. The ongoing administration of the tender documents and contracts where applicable continues to be well documented and monitored."

This is a fine reflection of the conscientious hard work that the parish Councillors and the parish clerk apply to their duties.

Parish Councillors and the clerk

I'm very grateful to all the Councillors for their hard work and support in the last year and for their useful and helpful contribution to this parish.

I make particular reference to our excellent clerk, Mrs. Christine Heath. She is conscientious hard working and very capable parish clerk and all members of the parish council much appreciate enormous effort she puts into her role.

Finally, I express our thanks to Councillor Graham Pask who attends all our meetings and is the source of much valuable comment.

5. Receive the annual Village Hall trust report

Sharon McKellar from the committee reported as follows:

Since the last Parish Assembly in 2021 the village hall has undergone a number of changes.

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In March 2021 three new trustees were appointed and in September Linda Lombardo resigned as a trustee and three further trustees were added to the Board:

Di Hibberd, Robert McKellar and Francis Vallis. Dawn Adams was elected onto the Committee. Jeremy Harding is the treasurer and Sharon McKellar is currently both Chairman and secretary.

This new Committee has had a busy year working hard to raise funds and at the same time to maintain and improve the condition of the property. The roof has been repaired, a new electric heating system and consumer unit have been installed and an extra security light fitted. The toilet floor which collapsed has been repaired and a new water main from Carletdene installed. The trees surrounding the hall have been cut back to allow more light to reach the hall.

The trustees are now looking to refurbish the kitchen. Plans for a new roof have been temporarily suspended.

The Committee has held a number of successful events in the hall. The coffee morning is now fortnightly and is proving to be popular. There has been a history day, a quiz night, a table top sale and a plant sale, and a Village Hall lottery has been established. All of these have been well supported by the villagers.

The trustees thank the Parish Council for their interest shown in the hall, for the financial support and for their attendance at the events.

The AGM of the Village Hall took place in May 4th. The financial statement for the period April 2021 to April 2022 is as follows:

	<i>April 2021 Balance</i>	<i>April 2021 Balance</i>
Bank	£9,362.45	£12,890.73
Petty Cash	£54.38	£32.87
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Totals	£9,416.83	£13,013.60

The Committee is thankful for the two government grants totalling £10,667 which were awarded as a result of Covid. We are reliably informed that there will be no more lock-downs so no more government grants.

Mrs McKellar reminded those present of the Jubilee celebrations on 3rd June 2022 to be held at the playing field.

The VC thanked all involved for the rejuvenation of the village hall.

6. Receive District Councillors annual report

DC Pask's annual report can be found on the parish website. He mentioned some of the key items within that report:

Recycling

In respect of waste there will be a new scheme of food recycling, using a caddy indoors and smaller box outside for collection.

Planning

New Hill Road was refused recently, however he advised that only three people had commended on the part of the consultation of the local plan. The emphasis now is about rallying people to provide their comments.

Development Plan

In respect of the proposed 2500 houses over 30 years, he advised that he continues to work on finding alternative sites and has taken this to a higher level within the Planning department.

He had also shared, with the Corporate Director, an article written in PennyPost, which stated that "*vision work done is not looking at alternatives, for a 30-year vision they should be looking at everything*". There are a number of changes within the planning department and the DC is confident that they are taking on board the comments, both he and others are making in respect of this plan and alternative sites.

DC Pask provided an overview of how the local plan and allocation of houses works. Discussions took place with all those present in respect of some of the current applications in Midgham.

The approval of the following application was discussed:

21/02130/OUTMAJ - Land Adjacent To 1 Gables Way Bath Road Colthrop Thatcham. Outline Application for commercial storage/distribution development, office space, car parking and service yards. PC have objected.

The VC attended the Planning Committee meeting 11th May and the meeting of the 14th May where the decision was to grant this application. He confirmed there had been long discussions before the decision had been made.

DC Pask answered all the questions and provided more information on the need for both commercial space and affordable housing within West Berkshire. The VC thanked DC Pask for his report and input to the meeting.

7. Public Session

No further questions

8. The date of the next annual parish assembly will be 17th May 2023

9. The meeting closed at 8.10 pm
