

# MIDGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

C/o 2 Old Orchard, Upper Woolhampton, RG7 5TE

Email: clerk@midghamparish.co.uk

Tel: 07896321058

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## MEETING MINUTES

|  |                                 |                                  |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Chair:</b> Tony Markham                     | <b>Vice Chair:</b> Anthony Fenn | <b>Clerk:</b> Alice Owens        |
| <b>Councillors:</b> Francis Long, Barbara Grey |                                 | <b>Members of Public:</b> 5      |
| <b>District Councillor:</b> Graham Pask        |                                 | <b>Apologies:</b> Derek Lombardo |

Alice Owens

Clerk - Midgham Parish Council

**This meeting will be conducted strictly in accordance with Standing Orders as adopted by Council in May 2021. All Councillors are reminded to acquaint themselves with these Standing Orders.**

### Public Session

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, a time not exceeding 10 minutes is available to the public to address the Members of the Council on any matter relevant and within the Council's responsibility or which affects its area.

#### 1. To receive apologies

Derek Lombardo

#### 2. To receive any declarations of interest

There were none

#### 3. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022

Minutes were approved and added to the folder for filing

#### 4. Crime in Midgham and associated parishes – burglary and theft; prevention measures

##### 4.1 Presentation by Alison Monks on neighbourhood watch schemes

Alison introduced herself as the Neighbourhood Watch coordinator for Midgham Park and School Hill. There is not yet cover for the upper end of New Road Hill and Midgham Green so getting more support is important. Neighbourhood Watch is a national charity that filters down to smaller local areas to track trends in crime and antisocial behaviour whilst communicating issues relating to this with local residents. Alison's focus at the moment is to set up a communication service so neighbours are more aware of one another and able to relay any concerns.

There have been two recent burglaries which both took place before 2145 with one taking place with residents present. Recent problems. In recent months there has been an increase in traffic through

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Midgham park and School Hill with lots of delivery drivers and contractors around – it raises the question whether the increase in footfall is making the area more vulnerable to organised burglaries. Due to Midgham’s rural setting, the Neighbourhood Watch environmental evaluation has identified residents’ ‘sense of security’ as a weak spot.

When you sign up to the scheme the national website puts you in touch with the local coordinator; can also sign up to direct alerts to points of personal concern (horses/farm machinery etc). Alison is trying to encourage people to be part of Neighbourhood Watch as surveillance and recording of incidents is important to reduce vulnerability to crime – if you are part of the scheme Alison can cascade alerts relating to crime/advice/latest stats etc.

Alison also raised the point that it is important to keep an eye on vulnerable people – a call tree could be useful to check on vulnerable people.

DC Pask advised that it was important to report incidents to police as statistics make a difference; it is vital to log these to give police focus. Problems reported to local coordinators are filtered up to the national Neighbourhood Watch group. **ACTION** – Clerk will put a link to the Neighbourhood Watch page on the PC website.

## 5. To receive correspondence

Upstream Winter Edition  
Councillors Newsletter December 2022  
Local Plan Review Consultation launches 6 Jan  
Fwd: Sharon McKellar email  
Fwd: West Berkshire Parish Climate Forum  
Fwd: Councillors Newsletter December 2022  
Fwd: Local Plan Review Consultation launches 6 Jan  
2022 Review  
Invitation to join our West Berkshire Parish Climate Forum  
District Parish Conference agenda and return email to register

## 6. To receive the District Councillors Report

DC Pask reminded councillors of the upcoming district parish conference – can attend online

DC Pask announced that he will not be standing re-election in May – councillors thanked him for his service and support

### 6.1 Progress report Church Hill road damage

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DC Pask has asked for the road to be inspected three separate times and will push for more feedback and will let us know. Asked residents to please report the holes to West Berks so they are aware of the increasing problem

## 7. Local Plan Review Consultation (update from DC Pask)

Original meeting couldn't convene due to illness. The consultation therefore went live 20/1/23 – it will be a 6 week consultation called the Reg 19 – individuals have until 3/3/23 to submit comments – if you want to make representation at public enquiry before the planning inspectors then you must submit comments online. The plan has reduced in the NE Thatcham Development the numbers from 2500 to 1500 – but haven't shrunk size of the total area. DC Pask is also concerned about the ecology side and traffic issues, there is still a need to divert traffic onto the A4 rather than through the villages and the common. Cllr Grey raised the issue that traffic could be increased on Harts Hill from people going up to Bucklebury Common. DC Pask agreed that Bucklebury Common needs to be respected as it's a fragile ecosystem. DC Pask also reported that he has suggested that he would like defined gaps between settlements- Cllr Long raised the question on what constituted a defined gap – policy on strategic gaps was abolished so it's difficult for him to say. Council commissioned work to look at proposed development which gave advice on defined gaps but this didn't include Bucklebury and Thatcham – this has since been added.

## 8. To receive the Clerks report

### 8.1 Financial update

**Balance as at 15th November 2022** £ 15,464.36

#### Income

|                           |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Interest received Dec Jan | £ 3.14        |
|                           | <u>£ 5.67</u> |

#### Payments

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Salary Nov Dec       | 476.20 |
| Odin Manners Grounds | 954.51 |
| Midgham Village Hall | 180.00 |

£1,610.71      8.81

**Balance as at 14th January 2023**

**£ 13,862.46**

#### Savings Account

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
|                    | <u>£ 13,271.75</u> |
| Treasurers Account | <u>£ 590.71</u>    |
|                    | <u>£ 13,862.46</u> |

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## 8.2 Request for donation to Berkshire MS Society

The Chair does not feel that this directly benefit Midgham residents so although he is sympathetic to this cause, at this time a donation will not be made

## 8.3 Salt bins

Salt bins in Midgham have been checked and filled as required. Cllr Grey asked how extra bins could be added to areas that are currently not gritted – this would be down to the Parish Council **ACTION** – clerk to add to agenda for next meeting

## 9. To receive/review any Planning Applications

### 9.1 Decisions

**22/02148/FUL** – The Flat, Berkshire Arms Hotel- New oak framed pergola with a polycarb roof **GRANTED**

- **20/03028/OUTD/MAJ** - development Bath Road/New Road Hill 16 dwellings, including 6 affordable units. **REJECTED**

### 9.2 Awaiting Planning Decision

- **22/00153/FULD** – Hall Court Farm – Change of use to C3 – **PC have no objections**
- **22/02209/HOSUE** – 8 Rowlands Copse – Rear extension – **PC have no objections**
- **22/02450/FUL** – The Nurseries, Bath Road- Retention of three cabins for Class E G(i) Office use and Erection of four buildings to provide mixed B2 general industrial and B8 Storage and Distribution use – **PC have objected**

## 10. Other matters the Chairman feels necessary

The Chairman asked the Clerk to check the website is up to date with all relevant information.

Auditor – awaiting reference, Clerk spoke to her on 23/1/23 and she will provide us with two references as soon as possible.

6/5/23 is HM Kings coronation – VH have been offered use of land on Webbs Lane to host festivities.

## 11. Correspondence from the village hall committee

Chair started by reiterating that the issue with Carlettdene is not a PC issue

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The VH committee has obtained advice from a solicitor who has said that the Village Hall is entitled to free drainage from the septic tank. Its unclear whether VH should pay towards the cost of the septic tank; owners of Carlettdene have asked the VH committee to sign an easement that details who has responsibility for the septic tank. Solicitors have advised VH committee cannot sign easement and it's down to the PC as owners of the village hall to do so if they wish.

The Chair indicated that there is clear delineation between PC and VH committee – its not the PC who are in discussion with Carlettdene and this must first be addressed before any documents are signed; the Chair does not want to sign an easement that is disadvantageous to the PC. First the dispute needs to be settled and then the PC can be approached with easement. As it stands this is not a matter for the PC, it should be discussed between the VH committee and Carlettdene but any change to legal documents need to be agreed with PC first.

The VH committee has asked if PC can fund legal support as they are not in a position to do so and therefore feel unable to proceed with discussions – Chair indicated that this needed to be approached in a different way – VH committee members were advised that a letter should sent to the Clerk requesting a donation.

**12. Councillor Grey to move: Motion to request a donation to financially support Bucklebury's "Say NO to Thatcham NE Development" campaign.**

*Bucklebury Parish Council is employing three consultants to demonstrate that the evidence offered by West Berkshire Council in support of this development is flawed. The estimated cost of this exercise is approximately £13000. Since this development subsumes a considerable area of Midgham Parish and will adversely affect its residents, it would be proper for Midgham Parish Council to financially support the opposition group. I suggest that a donation of £2000 would be appropriate.*

Seconded by Anthony Fenn

Opposed by Chair – firstly, he does not feel there is a mandate for this - it is not discussed locally, nor village hall meets, leaflets etc. Chair thinks there isn't a big enough feeling from local residents to justify a donation as he does not feel this affects all Midgham residents enough. The Chair pointed out that at no point has Midgham PC received a request from Bucklebury PC for support. Chair would like to know what Bucklebury PC will do with this money – there doesn't seem to be much clarity. The Chair would like to know the basis for a request of £2000 – why this sum in particular? The maximum charitable donation that is made by Midgham PC is £300 which is to the church which gives support for residents. £2000 is 21% of our income – the Chair would be interested to know what percentage of Bucklebury PC's income has been spent on the campaign. Feels there is more important issues which require donations from the council. The Chair felt the motion was ill considered and ill-conceived that there was no mandate and does not provide any immediate demonstrable benefit to residents.

A discussion ensued about whether Cllr Grey should be allowed to speak to her motion; The Chair suggested this should have been done when she originally spoke and referred her to the standing orders,

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however Cllr Grey did not feel she was given the opportunity; the Chair therefore allowed Cllr Grey to speak.

Cllr Grey said the reason few people appear to be concerned about the development is because in her view the PC is not showing support for the opposition to the development but it takes in 30 acres of Midgham. She went on to state that it affects people who use footpaths and enjoy the countryside in and around Midgham so therefore affects members of Midgham. £13000 will be spent on trying to show that the development plan is flawed – the environmental consultant will show that protected species will be affected, traffic consultant engaged by BPC will take in to consideration the roads feeding to Midgham, and the defined gap between Bucklebury, Midgham and Thatcham needs to be explained; this can all only be done with financial support. Cllr Grey finished by stating that it is an unnecessary onslaught taking in parts of Midgham parish – how can it not be fought for by members of the council.

Anthony Fenn agreed that there is a general apathy towards the concern for the effect that the development will have on Midgham. As a PC we rejected the original plan and we are small beacon amongst the village – we do not get many members of the public at meetings so it's hard to gauge what the general feeling of Midgham residents would be towards the development. Cllr Fenn agrees that the percentage of our income is too great and we have not had any direct request from Bucklebury. That aside he feels we should be seen to be doing something so he would like to propose an AMENDMENT to the motion of a figure of £500 as he feels Midgham PC should put their mark on this.

Cllr Grey then RESIGNED as a member of the parish council stating that she felt unfairly treated by the Chairman in the difference in tone used in the way she is addressed compared to other councillors  
ACTION – Clerk to inform West Berkshire that there has been a resignation and an advert will be prepared for the vacancy.

Mrs Grey became a member of the public in the meeting and had no further input as a councillor.

Cllr Long pointed out that Mrs Grey has been trying to raise this issue for a long time and that it was a little disingenuous that the Chairman said it had just been put on us unexpectedly. Cllr Long feels that it does in fact affect us [Midgham residents] all and that the Chairman's attitude might be different if he lived closer and that no financial support would be poor form and that mutual support between neighbouring parishes should be shown. Cllr Long feels there is disproportionate feeling about the Thatcham Development and smaller private planning applications. He supports the motion that financial support should be given. Cllr long stated that it was true that we didn't know the full details but in principal we do know where the money is going so would like to second the motion but to make a further amendment.

The Chairman stated that there was an original motion for £2000 which has been amended to £500 by Cllr Fenn – Cllr Long can either second that motion or make a further amendment. As the sum was not in the budget we are bound by financial regulations. Cllr Long is making an AMENDMENT to the motion that there should be a donation of £1000. Seconded by Cllr Fenn.

A recorded vote took place:

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Chairman Markham - opposed

Cllr Fenn - in favour

Cllr Long - in favour

Motion passed to donate £1000 to NE Thatcham Development Opposition Group

**13. To determine dates for the next meeting**

27<sup>th</sup> March

**14. To record the meeting closed**

2021