

Midgham Parish Council

c/o: 2 Old Orchard, Upper Woolhampton, RG7 5TE

email: clerk@midghamparish.co.uk

tel: 07896321058

Annual General Meeting Minutes

13th May 2023

Chair: Tony Markham	Clerk: Alice Owens
Councillors: Anthony Fenn, Francis Long	Members of Public: 1
District Councillor: Chris Read	Apologies:

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.

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Cllr Fenn proposed Cllr Markham as Chair this was seconded by Cllr Long.

Cllr Markham proposed Cllr Fenn as Vice Chair, this was seconded by Cllr Long.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Markham would be elected as Chair and Cllr Fenn elected as Vice Chair of Midgham Parish Council

2. Delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms.

Forms were signed by councillors, and witnessed by the Clerk. ACTION – forms to be scanned and returned to West Berks Council.

3. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council

Minutes were approved and signed.

4. Consideration of the recommendations made by a committee

There are no committees

5. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities

There are no committees or subcommittees.

6. Review of the terms of reference for committees

There are no committees

7. Appointment of members to existing committees

There are no committees

8. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4

n/a

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There are no committees

9. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations

Council will continue to adhere to the standing orders and financial regulations adopted in May 2021 based on the documentation provided by the National Association for local councils; these can be found on the Parish Council website. Councillors reminded to familiarise themselves with these policies.

10. Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.

Midgham Parish Council has an informal working relationship with West Berks Council and is also affiliated with NE Thatcham development group; the latter is attended by a member of Midgham PC; the representative can only express councils views but not make any commitments.

11. Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back

A representative attends meetings and reports back to the Parish Council (as with NE Thatcham Development group)

12. To make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future

Midgham Parish Council has standing rules and regulations but they don't cover everything; there is also a Code of Conduct to which councillors must adhere. In order to have a general power of competence two thirds of councillors must be elected rather than co opted. Clerk completes training and keeps up to date with national and local advice to ensure council is working to most recent standards.

13. Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment

The asset register was sent to councillors prior to the meeting and reviewed at the meeting; it was noted that there are in fact four salt bins and not three. ACTION: Clerk will add salt bin and produce new register at next meeting

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14. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks

The insurance policy is currently up for renewal with Hiscox; pre quote questionnaire has been completed. Clerk will circulate policy to Councillors once received.

15. Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies

The council is a subscriber to BALC which provides council with advice and assistance- subscription paid for 2023/24.

16. Review of the Council's complaints procedure

Based on NALC proforma, suitably amended for Midgham; all councillors in agreement that policy is up to date. Available on Parish Council website.

17. Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (see standing orders 11, 20 and 21)

Past minutes are available on the parish council website and contact details for Councillors and Clerk are available throughout the village so residents may request documents as needed.

Chairman reminded councillors that their email account comes under freedom of information act and could be subject to information request.

18. Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media

The Chair is the principle point of contact for press/media as a central point of contact. Other councillors are free to speak with press or media but it would be sensible to have a single point of contact.

19. Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures

Based upon NALC documents; Clerk asked to notify council if any changes or advise better employment practices. NALC review pay on annual basis; Clerk should inform council if there are any changes to the pay structure for Clerks.

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20. Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence

We have discretionary power to award grants to bodies that provide for local areas. To be considered for a donation, applicants must make written application to the PC and provide necessary details as requested. Currently the council set their budget for S137 donations inline with Section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for parish and town councils in England whereby the current amount per elector is set at £8.82 per elector.

21. Vote of thanks to Derek Lombardo for services to the Parish Council and residents of Midgham

Derek Lombardo has been a former Chair and on the PC for a number of years. He has greatly contributed to the wellbeing of the village. Councillors offered their thanks to Derek Lombardo for his service.

22. To receive correspondence

Parish Council Parking – *an email was received about parking outside the hall; area has been used for a number of years without issues. Chairman checked the area and tyre prints were well away from valve.*

Nomination forms

Planning Application 23/00736/OUTMAJ

Notice of the Submission of the West Berkshire Local Plan R

Letter from Hambledown – *there was a complaint about shipping containers; resident has sent a letter explaining why they were there and the council agreed that there was not a problem at present.*

Quote 9047 from Externiture Ltd for Midgham Parish Council

Charity sale on village green

Planning Application 23/00977/HOUSE

23. A4 bus shelters

There is damage to one of the bus shelters owned by the Council along the A4; the following quotations were obtained:

Thatcham Glass - £295.20 (inc VAT) - polycarbonate

Externiture - £213.36 (inc VAT) – polycarbonate

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£218.52 (inc VAT) – glass

Councillors agreed that polycarb should be used as more hardwearing. It was RESOLVED that the quote for £213.36 from Externiture would be used. ACTION – Clerk to instruct Externiture to this effect.

24. Village Hall CBAS Membership

The Village Hall made a request for £180 to pay for CBAS membership and £50 for cost relating to the coronation party; it was RESOLVED that the council would support this. ACTION – Clerk to make payments.

25. Situation regarding auditors

After great difficulty sourcing an internal auditor the Clerk has found Bridget Knight through the internal audit forum. Her fee is £100. It was RESOVLED that the council would engage Bridget Knight. ACTION – Clerk to confirm with Bridget Knight and seek references.

26. Recruitment of councillors

Imogen Addington still interested in becoming a councillor- ACTION- Clerk to contact Mrs Addington.

27. Donation to NE Thatcham Development Group

Despite requests, the PC is yet to receive a receipt of the payment made to Bucklebury PC in support of the NE Thatcham Development Group. An email has been sent by Cllr Fenn to Mr Dickens of the group to pursue this.

DC Read to make contact with councillors at Bucklebury PC to request a receipt. Midgham PC requires a receipt with date the donation was received, what it is intended to be used for, which should be signed by the RFO.

28. To receive the District Councillors Report

Chairman welcomed the new district councillor and stated that councillors were looking forward to working with him.

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As the District Council is newly elected, the DC was only able to give a short projected overview:

We can expect the Public Examination of the new Local Plan to start in September and to last 6 weeks. The Inspector has been appointed. He is William Fieldhouse who was one of the team that examined the Greater London Plan and is well known for his work in urban areas.

The new Council Executive thinks the case for a huge housing site on green fields between Thatcham and Bucklebury (edge of AONB) is flawed.

Thatcham Town Council (TTC) and the parishes of Bucklebury and the people of Midgham oppose the huge site north east of Thatcham on the escarpment towards Bucklebury and along into Midgham parish. But it should be noted TTC are prepared to take several hundred homes on smaller sites with more infrastructure.

Also councillors on District Council have looked for sites that might take about 750 homes elsewhere – on more sustainable sites.

We will propose up to 500 more new homes on sites within Newbury and other settlements that Planners know about but are ‘keeping up their sleeve’. Mainly on just two large sites in central Newbury.

Also we plan for ‘Viable Villages’ (to help keep schools, shops & pubs etc. open): average 10 per village but only if / where local people need and want them. That would total about 200 across District including AONB.

As to immediate actions: we intend to write to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), who now control the process – not the Council – to request a pause of about 3 months in the process. The new Leader of the Council (Lee Dillon) wrote a letter, via the Council, which was sent to PINS at the same time as the Plan itself and our detailed response to it (drafted by Tony Vickers who is our planning spokesman), stating our intention to do this. That letter which, like all documents sent to PINS with the Plan, is on the Council’s website.

Beyond that, at this stage I am afraid I cannot say anything until we have formally met with officers. It may be 6-8 weeks before we can say whether we have been allowed to pause the process or to proceed as I state above. But we hope to have a formal Motion on this in the first Full Council meeting later this month.

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29. To receive the Clerks report

	Payments	Receipts	Balance
Balance as at 19th March 2023			£ 13,210.59
Income			
Interest received Feb March		£ 7.34	
Precept		£ 4,750.00	
Payments			
Salary March April	476.20		
Bucklebury PC donation	1,000.00		
	<u>£1,476.20</u>	<u>4,757.34</u>	
Balance as at 8th May 2023			<u>£ 16,491.73</u>
Savings Account	£ 15,960.59		
Treasurers Account	£ 531.14		
	<u>£ 16,491.73</u>		

29.1 The Certificate of Exemption for the AGAR Form was reviewed and signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

29.2 The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of AGAR Form) was signed by the Chairman and Clerk

29.3 The End of Year accounts were reviewed and signed off; these were checked against Accounting Statements for Section 2 of the AGAR Form and signed by the Chair and Clerk,

29.4 The Risk Assessment was also circulated to councillors for review and no changes were made; this was signed by the Chair.

It was noted that the previous Clerk, Christine Heath, had been incredibly generous in her help with preparing the End of Year Accounts; the councillors extended their gratitude.

30. To receive/review any Planning Applications

a. Decisions

- **22/00153/FULD** – Hall Court Farm – Change of use to C3 – **REJECTED**

b. Awaiting Planning Decision

- **23/00996/FUL** – Hunts Cottage, Midgham – Creation of manege and erection of equestrian store – PC discussed the fact that there may not be enough room for an equestrian centre and questioned the owner's intentions **PC Objected** – overdevelopment of site in the countryside
- **23/00977/HOUSE** – Fieldfare, Birds Lane - Proposed rear extension to replace Conservatory. Proposed Front porch extension. – Chairman thought it looked quite straight forward; spoke with neighbour who is happy. **PC Approved**

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- **23/00462/FUL** – The Nurseries, Bath Road - Retrospective: Retention of Cabins for Class E G(i) Office Use – **PC Objected** – overdevelopment
- **23/00463/FUL** – The Nurseries, Bath Road - Retrospective: Change of Use to allow Retention of Six Storage Containers for Self Storage – **PC Objected** - overdevelopment
- **22/02209/HOUSE** – 8 Rowlands Copse – Rear extension – **PC have no objections**
- **22/02912/FORMB** – Land at Church View Farm - Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to install or keep installed an electric line above ground. It is proposed that 2 spans of existing HV overhead line are to be upgraded to 3 phase with the addition of a third wire. – **PC have no objection**

31. Other matters the Chairman feels necessary

There is an open drain at the junction of New Road Hill and School Hill, which is dangerous- DC Read finding that Thames Water appear marking and moving on and suggested that pressure needs to be applied ACTION - Clerk to contact Thames Water to correct this.

At this time of year there are occasionally bulls in the field crossed by public footpaths. The Chair asked the clerk to find out the position with regards to bulls in fields where there is a public footpath particularly with regard to signage and fencing. Cllr Long advised that residents should keep dogs on lead in field to not aggravate bull. ACTION- Clerk to contact West Berks to seek advice.

32. To determine dates for the next meeting

17th July 2023 at 7pm

33. To record the meeting closed

1900