**MIDDLETON STONEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 PM. [CONDUCTED ON ZOOM]**

**PRESENT:**

Rachel Makari Vice-Chair

Mr. Fulljames

Mr. Rees

Mr. A. Grenfell

Mr. Champion

Mr. M. Keighery Clerk

**1] APOLOGIES:**

Professor. Lee sent his apologies and has also informed the Council that he needs to resign his chairmanship as he is moving out of the village.

Rachel Makari informed the Council that Mr. Rees is prepared to take on the role of Chair. Mr. Champion therefore nominated Mr. Rees and Rachel Makari supported this nomination. Thus, with immediate effect, Mr. Rees was elected Chair of Middleton Stoney Parish Council.

Mr. Rees on behalf of all members placed on record his thanks for the work done by Professor Lee during his tenure with special mention of the Draft Transport Strategy, supervised by Professor Lee. Members agreed and also placed on record their appreciation of Professor Lee’s efforts as the Chair.

**2] DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:**

There were no interests declared.

**3] MINUTES:**

The minutes of the meeting of July 6th 2020 were approved

**4] KEY UPDATES FROM JULY MEETING:**

* PLANNING BREACHES:

Mr. Rees asked what the current situation is regarding the unplanned construction at Villiers Park. The clerk informed members that he was in contact with Jane Law, the enforcement officer at CDC earlier and is awaiting her promised update. Consequently, he will update members as soon as he receives this promised communication.

* FOOTPATH:

Mr. Rees reported that he was aware that the footpath from the playground to the church is now much clearer and accessible.

* MIDDLETON PARK GATES:

Rachel Makari expressed her concern that access to the church is restricted to residents after 10pm and wondered what the reasoning and future intentions for the restrictions were.

Mr. Fulljames explained that residents do have 24 hour pedestrian access to the church when using the gate [via the playground].

Mr. Rees was sure that the owners were not purposefully seeking to make it difficult. Thus he concluded that he would contact Professor Lee to see whether he had spoken to the owners as promised previously and make contact if not.

* STATIONARY COACH IN B430 LAY-BY:

Mr. Champion reported that Cllr. Corkin was now involved with OCC’s Director of Highways regarding this matter and working to get a solution to this long-standing problem. Mr. Champion has also been promised an update soon, when Cllr. Corkin is informed.

* SMITHS:

Rachel Makari referred to her recent correspondence with Smiths and its managing director regarding the volume and speed of Smiths lorries using the village. She has since received an email from Martin Layer, Smiths Planning & Estates Manager, responding to her concerns and admitting that there was currently very high demand for quarry products because of the HS2 and East-West Rail projects but stating that:

‘…currently there is a very strong demand for our quarry products from the two major infrastructure projects of HS2 and East West Rail.  Our sales manager has now agreed with the rail contractors that all our lorries delivering to these projects will turn right out of the quarry and not travel through Middleton Stoney. This covers Smiths own lorries and hired hauliers working for Smiths.  The company will actively address infringements including imposing a ban.’

Mr. Rees’ impression is that this situation is better, but this he stressed was only anecdotal. So he suggested that the parish council act formally and write to Smiths thanking them for their efforts and ask them to remain focused on this issue.

* LETTERS OF APPRECIATION:

Mr. Rees asked whether if the Letters of Appreciation had been sent to those commended. As it was unclear if they had, he will check with Professor Lee.

**5] SUGGESTED NEW APPROACH OF PARISH COUNCIL:**

Mr. Rees has initiated a discussion with other members relating to how the Parish Council should develop in the future. In particular, he highlighted the need to set an annual plan establishing what the Council hoped to achieve in the next 12 months. The annual plan would also enable the Parish Council to be clear of the purpose of it and be more pro-active rather than reactive.

Mr. Rees also proposed that members are organised into small groups who will lead on aspects of the Parish Council’s operations. So, he proposed:

Traffic: - Rachel Makari, Mr. Grenfell and Mr. Rees.

Planning: - Mr. Fulljames and Mr. Rees.

Money: - Mr. Champion.

Communications: - Rachel Makari and Mr. Rees.

In-Village Environment: - to be confirmed, but initially Rachel Makari.

Mr. Rees also highlighted the need for a more bespoke agenda with an emphasis on the most important items for the Parish Council to discuss at each meeting.

Mr Rees also stressed that he hoped for more effective communication between Middleton Stoney Parish Council and other agencies, such as Smiths. He also stressed the need to tighten up communication between members and the clerk with clear instructions over correspondence that requires action or alternatively correspondence for information solely.

Members agreed on this proposed new approach for Middleton Stoney Parish Council.

**6] TRAFFIC UPDATE:**

Rachel Makari referred to the recently surfaced Bicester Road.

In response, Mr Rees highlighted the email he has sent to Dave Catling of Oxfordshire Highways, asking for an update on the new road markings on the Bicester Road and when they may be done. In particular, a more visible ‘30’ mph, the dragon’s teeth and the ‘virtual narrowing’ needing to be finished.

Mr Grenfell updated on the traffic on Ardley Road, highlighting the large volumes prior to lockdown. He suggested the Parish Council team up with neighbouring councils, such as Ardley. He also said he would follow up on the proposed weight limits.

However, Mr. Rees also highlighted the response from Chesterton Parish Council on the Heyford Masterplan application which stressed their opposition against a weight limit on the Bicester Road at Middleton Stoney.

Rachel Makari also highlighted the problems created in relation to the Bicester Road in the Heyford Masterplan application and especially her concerns that the OCC-proposed HGV weight limit on the Bicester Road should not be dependent on Heyford Park developments being commercially viable / going ahead (which is what is proposed in the new Heyford Masterplan).

Mr. Rees suggested a twin approach to see what approach OCC will take and why they have not been doing as they promised. In particular, he stated MSPC’s objective to get a weight restriction on both the Ardley and Bicester Roads. Even if the Heyford Park application does not go ahead, MSPC must insist on these restrictions, he stated.

Mr. Rees also reported that he has had conversations with Andrew Lewis, Principal Planning Officer at CDC, who he thought was very open to ideas. In particular, Mr. Lewis had told him that there was a 90 per cent chance the application will go to the Planning Committee for the October meeting. Mr. Lewis also informed Mr. Rees that OCC was not happy with the transport proposals and also that no-one appeared satisfied with the proposed bus gates.

Hence, Mr. Rees advised on writing to the councillors on Cherwell’s District Council’s Planning Committee to oppose the planning application.

Rachel Makari agreed and suggested using the WhatsApp and Facebook platforms to mobilise parishioners, especially when a draft letter is available.

***ACTION: The clerk will provide the link to Rachel Makari and other members and this can also be shared via the WhatsApp group.***

Mr. Rees also advised members he hoped to follow up on the OCC commitments made from spring 2019 and also talk to Cllr. Corkin to gain his support.

On another matter, Mr Fulljames emphasised the problems of the sunken drain on the Ardley Road and his dismay that the authorities have not been able to fix this particular long-standing problem. He has had contact with Jacqui Cox but she too had not responded.

***ACTION: The clerk advised that he would log the problem on Fix my Street.***

**7] VILLAGE ENVIROMENT:**

Rachel Makari reported that she had advertised via the in-village social media for volunteers to help with village projects, such as the proposed planters. Although the response was not overwhelming a small number of parishioners have come forward,

Rachael Makari proposed using bigger, more visually arresting planters than those in neighbouring parishes. It was suggested that the Parish Council approach local companies for sponsorship and both practical and financial resources.

Mr. Fulljames suggested that Catherine Fulljames would be willing to help out with such projects.

**8] LOCAL PLAN 2040:**

Mr. Rees reported that he attended the Cherwell Parish Liaison Meeting in July and that the main presentation was the Cherwell Local Plan Review. The parish councils present there criticised the poor timing of this document published in August. However, responses are due by 14th September and he insisted that Middleton Stoney Parish Council should respond and comment on the proposal. Consequently, Mr. Rees will draft a response and distribute to members - especially highlighting the need for villages to be seen as living communities.

Mr. Grenfell highlighted that the Cherwell plan was influenced by Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need, and Mr. Rees also remarked that these predictions of such housing needs were pre-Covid and thus would be influenced by the crisis.

**9] COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mr. Rees initiated a discussion amongst members regarding postponed and future meetings, highlighting the public meeting planned for May 2020 but was subsequently postponed.

Mr. Champion stressed that he hoped the next meeting in November would be a ‘physical meeting’ at the village hall, but understood it would be difficult to make such a meeting open to the public.

Rachel Makari suggested that such a meeting should be open to parishioners, but that it was crucial to clearly communicate why attendance is important.. She said she would draft a note to parishioners referencing the Bicester Road surfacing, the Parish Council’s demands for HGV restrictions in the Heyford Park application response and the plan to establish planters in the village.

Mr. Grenfell agreed and thought it was a good way to attract volunteers for the work needed in spring.

**10] FINANCE:**

The clerk has sent a Finance Report to members earlier. There have been no transactions since the last meeting in early July.

**11] ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

Rachel Makari informed the Council that she had a conversation with Juliet Cornfield who could be interested in becoming a parish councillor and is keen to attend the next meeting in November. Rachel Makari to share the date/time with her and the clerk to send further details in due course.

Jonathan Rees also advised that, as Professor Lee is only likely to stay on the Council until November, there would probably be a further vacancy on the Council towards the end of the year.

Mr. Fulljames asked what was planned to recognise the service of Ms. Pay, who recently resigned her position on the Parish Council. Members were told that a tribute is being planned and Rachel Makari is organising this.

Mr. Grenfell reported that he was investigating why lorries from a certain organisation have not been following a routeing agreement towards the M40. Therefore, he will write to the organisation asking for an explanation.

**12] NEXT MEETING:**

The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for November 9th at 7.30.

**ACTION POINTS**

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| **MEETING** | **ACTION** | **WHO** | **STATUS** |
| **7 September 2020** | **Follow up with CDC on Villiers Park building** | **MK** |  |
| **7 September 2020** | **Middleton Park Gates** | **SL/JR** |  |
| **7 September 2020** | **B430 Coach** | **WJC** |  |
| **7 September 2020** | **Write to Smiths re heavy lorries** | **SL/JR** |  |
| **7 September 2020** | **Draft Annual Plan** | **JR** |  |
| **7 September 2020** | **Invite Village to comment on Heyford Park Planning Application** | **JR/RM** | **COMPLETED** |
| **7 September 2020** | **Seek Sponsorship for village planters** | **RM** |  |
| **7 September 2020** | **Draft response to Local Plan 2040 Consultation** | **JR** |  |
| **7 September 2020** | **Message to What’s App Group** | **RM** | **COMPLETED** |
| **7 September 2020** | **Sort out Barclays Bank Account** | **AF** |  |
| **7 September 2020** | **Organise Thank-you gift for Debbie Pay** | **AF** | **COMPLETED** |
| **7 September 2020** | **Write re InHealth Lorry** | **AG** |  |
| **7 September 2020** | **Invite Cllr Corkin to next meeting** | **JR** | **COMPLETED** |