**MIDDLETON STONEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 PM. [CONDUCTED ON TEAMS]**

***PRESENT:***

Mr. Rees Chair

Rachel Makari Vice-Chair

Mr. Fulljames

Mr. A. Grenfell

Mr. Champion

Mr. M. Keighery Clerk

Five parishioners/observers:

Juliet Cornfield, Liz Willmott, James Hunt, Kath Moss and Simon Pettit.

**1] APOLOGIES:**

There were no apologies.

**2] DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS:**

There were no interests declared.

**3] MINUTES:**

The minutes of the meeting of September 7th 2020 were approved

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

* PLANNING BREACH [VILLIERS PARK]:

The clerk reported to the Council that he had no further update from the correspondence sent to members on October 14th. Thus he is unaware whether Jane Law, the enforcement officer at CDC, has met her supervisor to make a final decision on the construction. Consequently, he will update members as soon as he receives this promised communication.

* STATIONARY COACH IN B430 LAY-BY:

Mr. Champion reported that Cllr. Corkin will update on this in his address.

* SMITHS: [HGVs through village]

Mr Rees has written to Smiths to complain about the volume of HGC traffic through the village received a fairly positive response from Martin Layer, Smiths Planning & Estates Manager, about Smiths own lorries being directed away from the village, but Mr. Layer states that he is unable to control all the contractors who travel to and from the quarry. Members were unimpressed with this response. Hence, Mr Rees will ask Smiths to try harder at solving this problem.

Mr. Fulljames insisted that Smiths should abide by the current routeing agreement.

However. Cllr. Corkin stated that there was no routeing agreement apparent, although he believed the parties involved were prepared to look at it in the future.

VILLAGE PLANTERS:

Rachel Makari reported that progress had been made with securing sponsorship from local businesses in relation to the proposed village improvement plans, including flower planters. In particular, promised contributions from Brown’s Farm and Nolan Oil, which have both committed £250. Other discussions with local businesses are on-going, including Viridor.

Furthermore, sites around the village have been identified for the first phase of the flower plant project, and it is hoped that these will be installed over the coming weeks.

Mr Fulljames was concerned that the Jersey Arms was in poor condition and bringing down the village’s appearance.

In response, Mr. Rees reported that he had two exchanges with the administrator appointed for The Jersey Arms. First, he was told by the administrators that there was no money to invest in the upkeep of the property. However, Mr. Rees had insisted to the administrator that it was in their best interests to look after the property for sale. He also acknowledged that he would need to regularly keep in touch with the administrators.

BANKING ARRANGEMENTS:

Mr. Fulljames reported that he had made progress with Barclays at updating the MSPC bank account. He also hoped soon that the Chair and Vice-Chair would also become authorised signatures on the account.

MS. PAY TRIBUTE:

It was reported that the gift had been organised and Ms. Pay was in receipt of the tribute from MSPC in thanks for all her work over the years to the village and the Parish Council.

LORRY INFRINGEMENTS:

Mr. Grenfell reported that the lorry infringements from Heyford Park were still continuing but Cllr. Corkin had directed him to Gavin Angel to liaise with to resolve this problem.

COVID SUPPORT:

Mr. Rees asked Cllr. Corkin what support villages like Middleton Stoney could do currently to assist during the pandemic.

Cllr Corkin responded by highlighting the importance of primarily promoting the support groups available and being aware of vulnerable people in their own community.

* **5] PRESENTATION BY COUNCILLOR IAN CORKIN AND QUESTION &ANSWER:**

Cllr. Corkin stated his pleasure at attending this meeting, but would not be able to attend the whole meeting as he had also been invited to a meeting with Bucknell Parish Council.

* ***Covid local test and trace:***

Cllr. Corkin explained that Oxfordshire was doing well and was more effective than other parts of the country with 20-60 individuals a day passed on to the county. He then explained the process by which the contact goes first to the Serco system. If the organisation struggles to contact an individual the contact passes onto County Hall. If the first day proves unsuccessful in reaching the contact, then OCC will work with the districts. If still unsuccessful by the second day, officials will knock on the doors of a person they wish to trace.

* ***Great Wolf Water Sports Appeal*:**

Cllr. Corkin highlighted that the applicant had appealed the earlier decision on the last day available for such an appeal. However, he stressed that officials were confident of providing a robust defence against the appeal lodged. Furthermore he and Cllr. Barry Wood were currently organising a meeting with Chesterton Parish Council, its parishioners and other interested parties.

* ***Precept 2020/21:***

Cllr. Corkin advised MSPC that parish councils should assess their financial resources for the forthcoming Precept as external funding is likely to become much harder in future years.

***Dorchester Application:***

Cllr. Corkin described the recent CDC planning committee meeting as a mammoth meeting but insisted that he felt it was the best result possible.

Cllr. Corkin explained that a working group would be formed to oversee the process with especially agreement needed on monitoring key, sensitive sites affected by the application. Hence Cllr. Corkin emphasised that the working group is vital to the process.

* ***Stationary coach in B430 lay-by:***

Cllr. Corkin updated MSPC in relation to this matter. He expressed disappointment with the inertia, lack of urgency and lack of clarity between the authorities, especially the debate over which authority was responsible for the situation. Eventually the authorities took subsequent action under the 1977 Criminal Law Act but he warned there has to be several steps in its enforcement. First officers would visit and access the site to confirm the criteria is satisfied. Then a housing officer will visit to assess whether there is a homelessness aspect. Having completed both these aspects, the authorities are now having an engagement with the occupant as they are then able to shift to enforcement.

Cllr. Corkin insisted that despite the complexity and long winding nature of the situation, he was confident that the process is running and there is an end in sight. He also referred to the fact that evictions are currently being discouraged.

Mr Rees opened the Question & Answer by stating that MSPC would wish to be part of the working group overseeing the Heyford Park development. He also asked why it was so difficult to find an official to talk to regarding the HGV restriction.

Cllr. Corkin confirmed that Joy White, Anthony Kirkwood and Jacqui Cox were the respective OCC officers for the Parish Council to engage with here and we should also involve Andrew Lewis at CDC also. He agreed to set up a meeting.

Rachel Makari emphasised that MSPC had previous meetings together with the authorities [OCC especially] but that MSPC is still waiting for an update on the HGV Point Restriction proposed/discussed on the Bicester Road in the village after many months. Furthermore, Rachel Makari proposed that this proposal should not be reliant on funding from the Heyford Park Masterplan, but should be prioritised by OCC, CDC and the relevant authorities as it is now an urgent safety issue.

Cllr. Corkin insisted that there was no resistance internally to the proposals of the Bicester Road HGV Point Restriction, just simply a process to go through. However, he insisted that the proposals have to be linked to the Heyford Park and Dorchester development as there are no other monies available. He also stated that he would arrange a meeting to get relevant questions answered.

Mr. Grenfell asked whether there was any resistance to the Ardley Road proposals.

Cllr. Corkin confirmed that traffic should be route-ed to Junction 10 of the M40 but also insisted that the whole situation would be ideal for one, overall consultation.

Mr. Rees concluded the Q&A by summarising the key parts of the discussion and especially insisted that any funding would be ideal and thanked Cllr. Corkin for his attendance tonight and wished him a good meeting at Bucknell.

**6] HEYFORD PARK PLAN – NEXT STEPS:**

Mr. Rees reported that he had attended the CDC Planning Committee meeting on November 5th and presented Middleton Stoney’s concerns regarding the proposed new development at Heyford Park. The meeting also included a long presentation from Andrew Lewis, Principal Planning Officer at CDC.

Mr. Rees insisted that the good news was that he felt that MSPC had got its views across to the planning committee, especially the need for extra funding and HGV restrictions and that the money should follow the impact. He also referred to the already promised £50k 106 money He felt that there was clear acceptance by CDC of what MSPC required as the development would have a big impact on the village.

Mr Rees continued that it was clear support for the proposed Middleton Stoney bus gate was weakened, but he felt that a dedicated cycle path was still a good idea even if many people may not use it. Hence it was important to push for it, even if the problem at the crossroads persists. He also noted that if the bus gates proposals are removed, it will result in a saving of £350k, which would seem sensible to direct to parish councils to further aid traffic/development impact amelioration.

Mr. Grenfell agreed that MSPC should push for the cycle lane as he has noticed in London and elsewhere many more cyclists were on the road then before the pandemic.

Rachel Makari reiterated her position that local money should be employed for the traffic safety issues in the village and it should not be reliant solely on the Heyford Park development. [see above]

Mr. Rees agreed in summary and insisted that MSPC press strongly for its aims and for it not to be conditional on the Heyford Park development and he would ensure that Cllr. Corkin push on with these aims.

**7 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2021:**

Mr. Rees referred to the draft Annual Plan sent to members, which he felt would be useful for both the PC and its parishioners. For example, the aim of a HGV weight limit by 2021. He also highlighted the various sub-sections of the plan.

Traffic – especially the speed limits.

Environment – especially the planters and grass verges,

Planning, Communication and Improving The Way We Work.

Mr Rees stated his belief that MSPC had previously often been reactive, so must now be more proactive.

Mr. Champion asked how the PC would publish the Annual Plan.

Mr. Rees proposed publishing the Annual Plan on the website.

Rachel Makari also confirmed she would mention the plan on the in-village Whats App.

Mr. Grenfell wondered whether the plight of The Jersey Arms could be incorporated.

Mr. Rees agreed to the suggestion and proposed incorporating it in the Environment section so The Jersey Arms does not let the PC down.

Rachel Makari suggested broadening the aims of Objective Two, the Environment. For example, trying to establish a spruce working group in and around the village, like the playground group undertakes successfully each year.

Mr. Rees concluded the discussion by confirming he would tweak the document by incorporating The Jersey Arms and also the maintenance of the grass verges as Varneys have been contracted now for three cuts a year [up from the two previously] and also amend Objective 2 to include the proposed ‘spruce up’ of the village.

**8] TRAFFIC UPDATE:**

Mr. Rees felt that this discussion had been covered previously.

**9] ACCESS TO CHURCH; Rights of Way & Middleton Park Gates**

Mr Rees initiated the discussion by confirming there are no formal rights of way, despite the near two hundred years of use. He also confirmed that he had made contact with Nick Davenport regarding the gates as there was now a lock on the side, pedestrian gate which made it more difficult to get through and villagers had reported that it was often not unlocked until late in the morning.

Mr Fulljames insisted that the gate owners should not stop church access and queried how people would drive in for Midnight Mass at Christmas. He also thought the church should be pursuing the access matter via the Church Council.

Rachel Makari agreed with Andrew Fulljames. She stated that she was disappointed by and opposed to access to the parish church being restricted and proposed that it was important that MSPC makes this position clear. She also suggested that the PC write formally to the owners of Middleton Park and make its position clear on this topic, once this is formalised/agreed and share the various complaints from villagers that have come to the attention of the PC.

Mr. Champion countered that 30-40 parishioners pay for the privilege to live in Middleton Park.

Mr. Grenfell pointed out that assurances were given to MSPC when Professor Lee was Chair and also agreed that the Right Of Way should be maintained.

Local resident Juliet Cornford insisted that if there is a parish church then there will be a legal right of way/access.

Mr Rees confirmed that Mr, Champion has agreed to formally apply for the Right Of Way as both in 2003 and 2008 the matter had been looked at.

Juliet Cornford emphasised that the church diocese needed to get involved with this issue as she felt it was a public right of way. She also insisted that if the main gates are locked it has a knock on effect on School Lane and this unreasonable outcome will generate even more complaints.

Mr Rees confirmed that he had indeed spoke to Gareth Miller, Area Dean of Bicester & Islip, about working together to establish the Rights of Way from the gates and the footpath. Gareth Miller had also sent a message to churchgoers regarding about driving up to the gate for ease of access.

Local resident James Hunt expressed his and his family’s frustration and dismay about the potential access restrictions to the church pathway and School Lane access and the reasons for it. He also complained about having been challenged when walking with his family to the church and felt this should not be happening.

Mr. Champion suggested appealing to the gate-owners to relax their stance.

Mr. Rees concluded the discussion by summarising that he would:

1] Contact Nick Davenport as the gate-owners highlighting the deep concern of parishioners and requesting that the side gate remains open all the times and the main gates to be on a timer basis.

2] That the PC will pursue with the church diocese a Right of Way from the village crossroads.

3] That Mr. Champion will pursue with OCC the Right of Way with the footpath.

**10 CDC LOCAL PLAN 2040 & OCC PLAN TO 2050.**

Mr. Rees confirmed that he had responded to the CDC Local Plan 2040, but stressed that the MSPC would need to respond to the OCC Plan 2050. He therefore asked the clerk to investigate and respond.

**Planning:**

Members discussed the planning application at Derby Paddock. There have been concerns about potential over development on the site, but Mr. Champion stressed that it is important that MSPC do not object every time to planning applications. Hence, members voted on the application and the Parish Council decided on-balance not to object.

**Viridor:**

Mr Rees described this application as largely ‘incomprehensible’ but Viridor is seeking to extend the landfill site for a further six years until 2026. He also highlighted that MSPC had already objected to it in Feb 2020 and remained of the belief that the Council should reiterate its stance that Viridor have not made an effective case for the proposed extension.

**11 GREAT WOLF APPEAL:**

Members discussed the appeal made by the organisation on the last day allowed to it.

MSPC agreed to full support of the Working Group Against The Great Wolf Resorts Appeal and also proposed mobilising village support via the WhatsApp group. Rachel Makari also asked members whether there were any barriers from the previous campaign left in the village. Members were unaware of such banners, but agreed with her proposal that the village take delivery of the signs so they could be displayed prominently in Middleton Stoney.

Furthermore, Mr. Rees proposed supporting the Fighting Fund - set up to oppose the appeal - with a donation of £250. Members agreed with this proposed contribution.

**12 COMMUNICATION:**

Rachel Makari informed the Council that she proposed to update parishioners of tonight’s MSPC meeting on the WhatsApp group with updates regarding Covid Track & Trace; access to the village church; Great Wolf Appeal and Heyford Park.

**13 FINANCE:**

The clerk sent members the Finance Report on 8th November 2020.

He also informed MSPC that the Precept guidance would be provided in late December.

Mr. Rees highlighted the size of the Village Hall Maintenance Fund.

**14: VACANCIES ON PARISH COUNCIL:**

Mr. Rees thanked the observers for their attendance at the meeting and hoped that he would be able to speak to prospective members soon.

**15: ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

Juliet Cornfield asked members whether MSPC would be interested in pursuing placing The Jersey Arms as an Asset of Community Value. If so, 21 signatures would be needed for the process of doing so.

Members agreed that they would be interested in considering this proposal, if Juliet could circulate the relevant paperwork.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 11th 2020 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting finished at 9.15pm