

MIDDLETON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2012/13

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome to Middleton Parish Council's annual report. Its purpose is to inform you of the activities the parish council has undertaken on your behalf over the last year. I hope you will find it interesting and informative.

A47

The most significant event of the year was the confirmation we received in December that the Highways Agency would fund the provision of a Pedestrian Crossing during the financial year 2013/2014. This marked the successful completion of a campaign which first began in 1982. We are very grateful for the support we received from Henry Bellingham who was instrumental in securing the meeting with the Transport Minister in December. We have recently received a letter from the Highways Agency that states the crossing will be built in 'late summer'. The council have formally expressed our disappointment at this slight delay and have argued the case for the crossing to be operation for the start of the new school year in September.

The Council have continued to argue the case for an extension of the 40mph speed limit to cover all the residential properties along Lynn Road. The Highways Agency have stated that the current accident data on this stretch of the A47 does not warrant such action at present. They have however undertaken to review the situation again when the crossing has been operational for 6 months. We have received a similar response to our continuing requests for a reduction in the speed of the traffic approaching the Hill Road Junction. However, we are hopeful that the planned new development of housing alongside the A47 in the North Runciton area will provide an opportunity for a further review of speed limits along this stretch.

Other Highways Issues

The Council are concerned at the increasing reports we receive about speeding traffic. This has deteriorated during the last 12 months apparently prompted by increasing numbers of vehicles trying to avoid the congestion around the Hardwick Roundabout. The Council have applied to the County Council's Highways Improvement Scheme for funding to fit four sets of speed reduction gates at the main access points to the Parish. We have also formally requested the assistance of the Police in carrying out 'speed checks' the most recent of which was carried out earlier this month. We are grateful for the continued work of our Speedwatch team but disappointed that a current lack of volunteers has restricted their work. We would urge anyone who can spare just a few hours a month to support this vital activity to contact the Clerk.

Playing Field

The reports we received from two different organisations indicated that the swings and igloo had reached the end of their useful life. In addition, the cost of essential repairs to the roundabout was in the region of £2000 which far exceeded the funds we had available for maintenance. Consequently, we had no option but to organise the removal of this equipment which took place in March, leaving the field looking rather empty.

However, we now have a real opportunity to significantly improve the range of facilities available on the Playing Field. The key to this will be a strong response to the Consultation Questionnaire which has just been distributed to all households. If we can demonstrate real interest and engagement from the Community, we have an excellent chance of securing the funding we need to make a significant and permanent improvement to the Playing Field. If you have not already done so, please complete and return a questionnaire as soon as you can.

Other Activities

The Council was pleased to host two further performances by the Keepers Daughter travelling Theatre Company, the second of which was attended by over 120 people. We have been advised that the Company will not be touring again this autumn.

However, the Council are keen to organise a Christmas event and would welcome any suggestions for the event.

The Council worked with 6 other Parish Councils to prepare a case opposing the proposed waste incinerator at Saddlebow. I presented our arguments to the Planning Inspector on the evening of 9th April.

The Council are concerned by the sale of the Gate Inn and the possible implications for its long term future. Consequently, we have applied to the Borough Council to register it as an asset of community value. If successful, this will provide a 6 month window during which options for a community-based purchase can be explored.

Finances

For the financial year 2013/2014, the council have decided again not to seek an increase in the precept. Consequently we have had to confirm the expenditure reductions made during the previous financial year and our scope to take on additional responsibilities or projects is severely limited.

Conclusion:

I would like to thank our Litter Contractor Mrs Smith and the Website Co-ordinator Mr Gardner for all their valuable work. We are also grateful to Mr Skipper for his work the community car scheme and to our remaining community speedwatch volunteers. I am personally grateful to my fellow councillors for their support and encouragement over the past year.

Particular thanks are due to our clerk Kate Senter for her commitment and enthusiasm which has contributed significantly to our achievements over the last 12 months.

If you have any questions or comments on any aspect of this report please contact the Parish Clerk on 01553 841387

INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
	Budget	Current		Budget	Current Exp.
Precept	£ 17,500.00	£ 17,500.00	Administration		
VAT Repayment	£ 1,100.00	£ 1,172.64	Annual Subs.	£ 250.00	£ 300.58
Bank Interest	£ 2.00	£ 6.99	Insurance	£ 1,200.00	£ 1,192.39
Allotment Rents	£ 131.04	£ 177.45	Clerk's Salary	£ 4,409.16	£ 4,475.73
Garden Rents	£ 76.72	£ 76.72	Office Costs/Mileage	£ 650.00	£ 453.44
Comm. Car Scheme	£ 50.00	£ 197.46	Training Costs	£ 100.00	£ -
Contributions Arc. Soc.	£ 300.00	£ -	Election costs	£ 100.00	£ -
Election Fee	£ -	£ -	Publicity	£ 350.00	£ 197.75
Miscellaneous	£ -	£ 1,090.22	Cost of meetings	£ 240.00	£ 208.00
			Audit Fees	£ 220.00	£ 237.00
			Risk Management	£ 1,500.00	£ 750.00
			Parks & Open Spaces		
Misc Income			Mowing	£ 1,124.70	£ 1,312.49
Chq not cashed		£ 33.60	Treatment of BMX Track	£ 272.00	£ 272.00
Proceeds from clothes recycling		£ 11.98	Monthly Field Inspections	£ 333.00	£ 83.25
Donation to bench for Herbie Ogden		£ 280.00	Spraying of Church Wall	£ 90.00	£ 67.50
Proceeds from Theatre production in Sept		£ 115.00	Safety Inspection	£ 95.00	£ 90.00
Proceeds from Theatre production in Dec		£ 134.00	Playing Field Maintenance	£ 1,500.00	£ 380.50
Donation from Par. Pit fund to theatre prod. Costs		£ 225.64	Parkhill Plantation Rent	£ 5.00	£ 5.00
Ins. Claime ref. damage to bus shelter		£ 290.00	Tree maintenance	£ 100.00	£ -
		£ 1,090.22	Middleton Motte	£ 850.00	£ 650.00
			Misc / Village Hall		
			Community Car Scheme	£ 150.00	£ 425.00
Misc. Expenditure			Village Hall Car Park Donation	£ 250.00	£ 250.00
Donation to Intervillage games team		£ 33.00	Churchyard		
Theatre production leaflets		£ 72.82	Grass Cutting	£ 551.60	£ 344.75
Theatre production cost		£ 286.51	Section 137 Payments		
Christmas theatre production leaflets		£ 72.00	Poppy Wreath/ Misc	£ 17.00	£ 17.00
Junior badminton		£ 80.00	Misc.	£ -	£ 1,214.55
Christmas theatre prod. Fee		£ 200.00	Highways		
Theatre prod. Refreshments		£ 87.64	Litter Warden Salary	£ 1,750.00	£ 1,344.86
H Ogden memorial bench		£ 329.08	Extra Litter Collection	£ 1,800.00	£ 2,670.00
L Creed - travel exp. Ref A47 crossing		£ 53.50	Litter Warden Equipment	£ 560.00	£ 124.20
		£ 1,214.55	Dog Bin Emptying	£ 520.61	£ 433.84
			Allotments		
			Rent	£ 152.00	£ 152.00
			VAT		
			On Payments	£ 1,687.26	£ 605.12
			Misc.	£ -	£ -
	£ 19,159.76	£ 20,221.48		£ 20,827.33	£ 18,256.95
Bank balances as at 1st April 12			Bank balances as at 31st March 13		
Current Account		£ 2,004.43	Current Account		£ 1,188.88
High Interest Account		£ 3,975.40	High Interest Account		£ 7,268.55
Parish Plan Account		£ 36.15	Parish Plan Account		
		£ 6,015.98			£ 8,457.43
less uncleared cheques b/fwd			less uncleared cheques		
100088		-£ 33.60	101690		-£ 168.00
plus income not yet received		£ 342.53			
		£ 26,546.39			£ 26,546.38

The Council has been careful to monitor its expenditure again in the year 2012/13. It notably saved £750 by renegotiating the risk management contract for the Council's assets. In addition, there was less spent on playing field maintenance as the Council is fully underway with its project to transform the playing field into a location desirable to visit for all ages. Consultation forms have been delivered and comments have been steadily coming in. The Council hopes to see this project come to fruition in Summer 2014. In order to achieve this transformation, the Council will have to apply for grants to fund it, which it aims to begin doing in the financial year 2013/14.

The Council kept its precept at the same level again for 2012/13 and has made the same decision for the 2013/14 financial year in recognition of the current economic situation. Unfortunately, Central Government made changes to the tax base (the number of people in a parish who pay Council tax) in 2013/14 which has meant that those that are required to pay Council tax have to pay slightly more toward the Parish Council's precept because the tax base has decreased.

The Council has worked hard to maintain its reserves and meet its commitments during the year and will continue to do so for the next and future financial years.

If you have any questions about the financial statement of the Council, please contact the Parish Clerk on 01553 841387.

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT DETAILS

At 31st March 2013, the Councillors of Middleton Parish Council were:

Mark Fuller (Chairman)
Mick Porter (Vice-Chair)
Sid Wood
Mervyn Wiles
Val Ward
Elizabeth Barclay
Ewan Miller
Trevor Nurse
Ray Smith
Don Taylor

The Parish Clerk details are:
Kate Senter
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Village website details: www.middleton-news.co.uk