# MIDDLETON PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual Meeting of the Parish was held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall Annexe, Cottingham.

<u>Present:</u> Cllrs Brant (Chair), Cole, Cross, Freeman, Hicks and Thomas and Mrs Medwell (Clerk).

- 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence: Cllr Bradshaw.
- <u>2. Minutes of 2016 Meeting:</u> These had previously been unanimously approved and signed by the Chair.
- <u>3. Chair's Annual Report 2016-17</u> The following report was presented by Cllr Brant and circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting.
- "I am pleased to report that the Council has had a full complement of Councillors for the whole of the last year and I'd like to record my thanks to all of them and our Parish Clerk for their time, energy and enthusiasm in supporting the work of the Council.

### **Planning**

During the year the Planning Inspector reached a long awaited decision on the appeal relating to the proposal to build 31 houses on the land behind Bury Close and Cottingham Hall. The application and appeal had been the subject of strong objections from local residents and Middleton Parish Council made written and oral representations to the Planning Inspector. The Planning Inspector dismissed the appeal in June and refused planning permission. This decision was warmly welcomed by the Council.

The Cottingham and Middleton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was formally approved as a Supplementary Planning Document in late April 2016 and it has informed planning decisions since that date. In September Corby Borough Council referred to the document as one of the reasons for rejecting a proposed development at the historic heart of the village on Main Street. The Parish Council welcomed this decision and has found the document very useful in informing its response to other planning applications within the village.

In November, Corby Borough Council undertook consultation on the scope and content of the Local Plan that it is required to develop to underpin the Joint Core Strategy for North Northamptonshire. The Parish Council responded to the consultation document in some detail commenting on matters such as the protection and enhancement of environmental and historic assets; ensuring high quality development and Corby's policy on villages and rural areas. The Council looks forward to working with Corby BC as its plans are formulated and then developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the village that complements it.

#### The Street scene

The funding target for the installation of a Community Defibrillator in Middleton's public phone box has been met and the Council is working with the Community Heartbeat Trust on the project to install a defibrillator. Unfortunately, the electrical connection to the box has been inadvertently severed by BT and therefore the CHT is liaising with BT to have it reconnected. Once this has been achieved the phone box will be refurbished and a defibrillator installed. The type of equipment chosen will be suitable for use by any member of the community and will have video instruction.

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The phone box will also contain an emergency phone which will allow calls only to the emergency services, in order that they are alerted when anyone needs to use the defibrillator and can send an ambulance to the scene.

A bollard has been installed at the eastern end of Swinglers path and signs erected to deter cyclists and horse riders from using the path.

In January the Council leafleted all residents requesting that they and their visitors avoid parking partly on the pavement, something that was becoming a real problem on Main Street. This practice not only obstructs the pavements for use by pedestrians, mobility scooters and children's buggies but has led to the serious degrading of the pavement edge in many places. The response to this request has been positive and the Council will keep the matter under review to ensure that car owners do not revert to previous parking practices.

Litter picks have taken place by village volunteers in November 2016 and April 2017 in coordination with Corby BC and thanks go to all residents who gave their time to take part. The village has two fly tipping hot spots at Wood Lane and Occupation Lane and Corby BC has been quick to collect and investigate fly tipping reported to them.

Despite publicity surrounding fines and the installation of improved signage, dog fouling remains a problem in the village and the Council is committed to identifying and reporting the culprits in order that they are fined. A leaflet reminding residents of the importance of picking up dog mess and how to report dog fouling has recently been delivered to all households and an article appeared in the Village Newsletter. This is a matter that will remain on our agenda until it improves.

The Council is currently exploring the possibility of installing vehicle activated speed signs at the entrances to the village and is in discussion with a potential developer regarding the funding of a sign on the Ashley Road.

# **The Community Orchard**

This year the Council invested in an apple picker and undertook the harvesting of the orchard's apples, rather than just encouraging residents to collect windfalls. The apples were offered free to residents from boxes outside the orchard and the village shop and the speed with which they disappeared was testament to the popularity of this approach.

The Council has contracted with Green Thumb with the aim of improving the quality of the grass in the orchard which is an attractive and tranquil space for the use of residents. It has been used on a number of occasions by the Valley Voice Choir for concerts and provided a centre point for last summer's Village Garage Sale which was very successful in raising funds for the Church and will hopefully be repeated. In February, storm 'Doris' took down the fence forming the north boundary to the Community Orchard and this has been replaced with a more sturdy construction.

### Village Hall

The planning application for the new Village Hall to be located on the Cottingham and Middleton Recreation Ground was discussed with the Corby BC Planning Department which has suggested a slight change to the siting/positioning of the Hall. This has been taken on board by the Village Hall Trust and a revised Planning application will be made in the summer.

#### The Precept

In reviewing the precept in November the Council considered the likely demands on the budget in the coming year and agreed to freeze the precept at £4,162. This

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decision is accompanied by a clear commitment to ensure that the resources which are the responsibility of the Parish Council are put to the best use for the benefit of all parts of the community"

4. Presentation of Financial Statement 2016-2017 – The Clerk referred to the statement of financial accounts and reported that the balances as of 31st March 2016 totalled £65,366. This consists of £49,590 ring fenced for the new Village Hall, £2.600 for the Defibrillator and £13,176 reserves.

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5. Meeting Open to the Public: T	here were no me	mbers of the	public present.
The meeting closed at 7.53pm			
Signed as a true record:			
		Chair	1804 Page 3 of 3
		Clerk	
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		Date	

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