MIDGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

c/o Juniper House, Aldermaston, RG7 4LJ
Email: clerk@midghamparish.co.uk
Tel: 07877 122 127

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

14th September 2026 at Midgham Village Hall

This meeting was 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.

District Councillor: Chris Read
Councillors: Anthony Fenn (Chair), Francis Long (Vice Chair), Nigel Bassford, Dawn Adams,
Members of Public: 3

Public Session

Tree Survey

A resident provided an update regarding the recent tree works and reported that she had spoken to the contractor while the works were being undertaken on 11th September.

The resident advised that the contractor's recommendation was to leave the trees as they are and noted that they appeared to be suffering from drought stress. She also referred to a possible treatment in the spring involving a water and sugar mixture to help revive the trees.

The resident advised that the consultant did not have concerns regarding the structural condition of the trees. The possibility of planting replacement trees in gaps was also suggested, including the potential use of oak saplings already growing on the site. The tree survey report will be available shortly.

Proposed Buddhist & Community Wellbeing Centre

A resident asked for an update regarding the proposed Buddhist & Community Wellbeing Centre.

Cllr Read reported that the applicants had engaged an architect in Newbury who would prepare architectural drawings and illustrations for further consideration. It was understood that the applicants were considering whether to submit a planning application before or after purchasing the property and were taking advice on the appropriate approach.

Cllr Read stressed to them the importance of ensuring that the street scene would not change materially and acknowledged that the public response to the proposals may not be favourable. He considered it important to retain the aesthetic and heritage of the former public house. It was also discussed that, if the intention was to create an inclusive facility for everybody, consideration should be given to how religious symbols were incorporated into the external appearance.

It was reported that the property had been vandalised and that new CCTV cameras and boarding had been installed, although reports suggested that the works had not been undertaken well.

It was noted that representatives of the proposed centre had attended the village coffee mornings and had been well received by those who had met them. It was also reported that the applicants

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were considering another potential site at East Ilsley, although Midgham was considered to have better public transport connections.

The applicants were intending to produce a digital 3D model to demonstrate the proposed development.

1. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Tracey Leadbeater and Ben Holden-Crowther.

2. To receive any declarations of interest

Cllr Long declared an interest in relation to the dog walking field planning application.

3. To receive and approve the minutes of the last meeting of the council

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed.

4. To receive the District Councillors Report

The District Councillor's report will be added to the Parish Council website.

District Cllr Read provided an update regarding the proposed changes to local government. It was reported that significant time and resources had been spent consulting with residents and gathering feedback so the outcome was very disappointing. Concern was expressed that smaller councils may not have the resources required to manage the proposed changes.

5. To receive the Clerks report

	Payments	Receipts	Balance
Balance as at 1st July 2026			**£ 30,279.26**
Income			
Interest received (July)		£ 12.00	
Interest received (August)		£ 12.22	
Interest received (September)		£ 11.37	
Precept		-	
Payments			
BM Knight (Internal Audit)	£ 160.00		
Odin Manners	£ 1,210.52		
Service Charge (July)	£ 4.25		
Salary (July)	£ 238.10		
Service Charge (August)	£ 4.25		
Salary (August)	£ 238.10		
NDP Focus group meeting	£ 162.65		
	£ 2,017.87	£ 35.59	
Balance as at 14/09/26			**£ 28,296.98**

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The Clerk provided an update regarding the wayleave request from Gigaclear and confirmed that the document had been signed.

An update was also provided regarding the possibility of a Parish Council section in the *Villages* parish magazine. The Clerk had contacted the editor/relevant contacts and had been advised that the deadline for the next publication was Thursday 17th September, which was too short a timescale for inclusion on this occasion. It was hoped that further discussions could take place regarding the requirements, including word count and submission deadlines.

6. To receive/review any Planning Applications

6.1 Decisions

- **26/01229/HOUSE** - Hunters Moon, New Road Hill, Midgham, Reading RG7 5RY. Section 73 application to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of Planning Permission 25/02947/HOUSE. Convert garage to habitable accommodation. Side extension to the front of the property. First floor linking roof between garage and dwelling. Open veranda extension to rear side and single-storey rear extension with alteration to rear roof. New dormers to front and rear. Porches to front and side. Other associated alterations. **APPROVED**
- **26/00931/HOUSE** - Field Mouse Cottage, 11 Midgham Green, Midgham, RG7 5TT. Front extension to bring the principle elevation inline with the left hand side, using exact matching materials. Rear extension including vaulted ceiling with southern facing top windows. **APPROVED**

6.2 Awaiting decision from West Berks Planning

- **26/00663/FULMAJ** - Land South Of School Hill and West Of Midgham Green Midgham Reading. Change of use of land to dog walking facility (Reconsideration of application 24/01998/FULMAJ which has been quashed by Court Order dated 20th February 2026) - retrospective.

  The background to the application was discussed. It was noted that the original application had been approved at committee, subsequently constructed and then challenged in the High Court. It was reported that some additional works had been undertaken, including fencing intended to prevent dogs barking towards neighbouring properties.

  It was noted that there had been no complaints regarding the operation of the facility, although there were 10 objections and approximately 80 letters of support.

  Concerns were raised by a resident regarding the impact of the facility on Midgham Green, particularly during the summer months when the facility can remain open until 9pm and windows are likely to be open. Noise from barking and shouting was discussed. It was also noted that some letters of support had been submitted by users of other sites rather than local residents.

  The economic impact of the facility on Midgham was also discussed, with the view expressed that the direct local economic benefit was limited.

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Questions were raised regarding whether there was a requirement for the facility to operate as a low-noise field and whether this would sufficiently limit the impact on neighbouring residents. The business owner advised that CCTV was installed on the site and that this had not identified any issues relating to noise.

It was noted that the application had been resubmitted without major changes and would therefore return to West Berkshire Council for consideration. The possibility of a further judicial review was also noted.

The Parish Council's previous position of objecting to the original application was noted, reflecting the views expressed by the local community at that time.

- **26/01585/FUL** - 4 Gables Way Thatcham RG19 4ZB. Full Planning application for the installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras and associated infrastructure at land adjacent to the east of Colthrop Estate, Thatcham RG19 4ZA (nearest postcode).

7. Village Hall Matters

An update was provided regarding the Village Hall. It was noted that the Chair was currently unwell and that the Hall was being maintained in the same way as previously established by Sharon. Members acknowledged the skills and contribution Sharon had brought to the Village Hall, particularly in relation to fundraising.

It was reported that there were currently insufficient funds to undertake the previously approved roof works. CBAS had been helpful and had identified another organisation which may be able to provide funding. A further quotation within the available budget would be required. The roof was currently holding and the works were therefore not being actively pursued at this stage.

The recent quiz night and plant sale were discussed, together with potential short-term fundraising opportunities. The possibility of holding a table sale event rather than relying on individual ticket sales was considered. A Christmas quiz was also suggested.

It was noted that the Village Hall was under-utilised for various reasons and that consideration could be given to ways in which the wider community could make greater use of the facility.

Longer-term options for the Village Hall were also discussed. It was suggested that, if Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding became available, consideration could be given to relocating the Hall to a site with improved facilities and a larger footprint. This could potentially provide greater value and use for the community and offer opportunities for synergy with the Church. It was noted that a planning application could potentially be progressed in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

8. Neighbourhood Development Plan

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It was noted that a meeting had taken place immediately prior to the Parish Council meeting. An update would be provided to the Clerk.

9. AOB

Brimpton road

A resident raised concerns regarding the condition of the footpath on Brimpton Road, reporting that it had become significantly overgrown. It was noted that the Council had been advised that the path appeared to be in satisfactory condition.

ACTION – Cllr Fenn to speak to Cllr Read regarding the condition of the footpath.

Police Hub

An update was provided regarding the proposed Police Hub. The matter had been discussed with enforcement and further information was awaited.

Community Orchard

An update was provided regarding the proposed Community Orchard and seating area on the green space at Birds Lane. It was reported that a grant of almost £4,000 had been secured and that a decision was now required regarding the proposed works.

A quotation had been received from Will of Horticultural Harris, which was higher than other options as it included labour.

The main issue discussed was the provision of water. It was noted that neighbouring properties were all on water meters. The possibility of purchasing IBC tanks and having water delivered by tanker was discussed, with villagers potentially using the water to maintain the trees. It was noted that the water would not be potable.

The cost of 1,000-litre IBC tanks was estimated at £40–£50 each. Two water delivery companies had been identified, with significant differences in cost. Universal Tankers had quoted approximately £80 for 1,000 litres, while direct water delivery had been quoted at £565 for up to 2,000 litres.

Based on a watering requirement of approximately 20 litres per tree per week for 10 trees, the estimated requirement for the first year was approximately 10,200 litres, at an estimated cost of £816, together with the cost of two containers. It was noted that the trees would need to be well watered during the first two years.

The next stage would be for Will to meet with the Councillors to discuss the proposals. A quotation of approximately £4,800 had been received for the supply and installation of fencing, supply and planting of fruit trees and protective cages, and three benches. It was noted that the works would ideally be undertaken between October and February and that the grant funding must be used by 18th June 2027.

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Cllr Long raised concerns regarding whether planting trees and using public money to maintain them could potentially affect the future value of the land. It was noted that the land could potentially be considered an asset which might, in the future, be sold or subject to a planning application for a property, with any proceeds potentially used to purchase a different and more suitable area of green space. The potential implications of the land having been gifted for recreational purposes were also discussed.

ACTION – Cllr Fenn to establish whether there are any covenants or restrictions affecting the land and to speak to Cllr Read regarding the matter.

10. To determine dates for the next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on 23rd November 2026.

11. To record the meeting closed

21:24