

MIDGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

C/o 2 Old Orchard, Upper Woolhampton, RG7 5TE

Email: clerk@midghamparish.co.uk

Tel: 07896 321 058

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

14th July 2025 at 7pm in 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), Franis Long (Vice Chair), Tracey Leadbeater, Nigel Bassford

Members of Public: 5

Public Session

25/01035/FUL

A member of the public attended to speak on planning application number 25/01035/FUL regarding twenty additional storage containers on site, taking the amount on site to thirty storage containers. The neighbouring property has struggled for some time with overdevelopment of the area; increased traffic on a shared driveway, loud work starting early and finishing late. Cllr Leadbeater questioned what the land was used for; the resident believes it is for individual self-storage, however there is a feeling that work is being carried out in the storage containers. District Cllr Read has also noted that there appears to be rubble sorting ongoing where there is no waste licence in place, trees have been removed, hard standing has been put in place; these are all in contravention of the current planning agreement. Councillors unanimously agreed that they were in objection to the development due to overdevelopment in a rural area. There are already a number of objections to the plan from residents in the local area.

Children's Play Area

Another member of the public attended the meeting to discuss the need for the children's play area to be developed into a more user-friendly area for local children. The member of public has had discussions with a number of local families who are in agreement that a play area should be developed. District Cllr Read advised that parish councils locally have responsibility for their own play areas; the district council gives money to members to donate to local projects, and also suggested that matched funding could be sought, in addition to community fundraiser events. District Cllr Read suggested that there should be a community-led project to organise the fundraiser and put a business plan together to apply for funds.

Councillors agreed that the area was not child-friendly at present and should be developed. At present there is a 'no ball games' rule in place; it was agreed that the rule should be changed to allow children to play more easily on the land. Cllr Leadbeater proposed that the 'No Ball Games' rule should be lifted; seconded by Cllr Long.

ACTION – District Councillor Read to share contact details with residents regarding play area planning.

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1. To receive apologies

Cllr Holden Crowther, Cllr Adams.

2. To receive any declarations of interest

There were none

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

Minutes were signed and dated for records.

4. To receive the District Councillors Report

District Councillor Read circulated his report to the council; this will be added to the parish council website.

5. To receive the Clerks report

	Payments	Receipts	Balance
Balance as at 10th March 2025			£ 25,659.24
Income			
Interest received		£ 92.00	
VAT Reclaim		£ 729.36	
Precept		£5,000.00	
Payments			
Salary March April May June	952.40		
Service Charge	17.00		
Homeworkers allowance	120.00		
Berkshire CAB	150.00		
St Matthews	500.00		
Village Hall - CBAS	189.00		
BALC Subscription	77.90		
Ico	47.00		
AJGibl	534.10		
B Knight	130.00		
	£2,717.40	5,821.36	
Balance as at 14/7/25			£ 28,763.20

6. To receive/review any Planning Applications

6.1 Awaiting decision from West Berks Planning

- **22/02912/FORMB** – Land at Church View Farm - Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to install or keep installed an electric line above ground. It is proposed that 2 spans of existing HV overhead line are to be upgraded to 3 phase with the addition of a third wire. – **PC have no objections**
- **23/01981/FUL-** Former Ryders Yard, Colthrop Lane - Change of use of existing truck and trailer hire fleet, maintenance and storage depot to provide flexible uses within Class E(g)(i), (ii) and (iii), B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order. **PC Objected due to lighting levels**

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- **23/02096/LBC** - Part two-storey part, single-storey replacement extension to existing dwelling. Terrace doors in existing modified window opening -**NO OBJECTIONS**
 - **25/01435/HOUSE** - Walnut Cottage, Midgham Park, Midgham, Reading RG7 5UG - Proposed ground floor extension, internal alterations, floor plan redesign and all associated works – **No Objections**
 - **25/01035/FUL** - The Nurseries, Bath Road, Midgham, Reading RG7 5XB Change of Use to allow Retention of Four and Proposed Siting of 20 Additional Storage Containers for Self-Storage. – **PC Objected**

6.2 Decisions

- **24/01998/FULMAJ** - Land South Of School Hill and West Of, Midgham Green, Midgham, Reading – **APPROVED**

7. Village Hall Matters

Septic tank

Chair Fenn explained that whilst Midgham Parish Council are trustees of the deeds to the Village Hall, granted to them in 1938 and registered with the Charity Commission; it is the Village Hall trustees who are responsible for the maintenance of the hall and its financial affairs.

However, when difficulties arise that could impact on the residents of Midgham, all the councillors agreed that the parish council should take an interest.

The previous owners of the neighbouring property to the Village Hall had an agreement, in the form of a deed, with the trustees of the Village Hall, that they could use their septic tank without charge.

The new owners have sent a letter by email to the Village Hall trustees and the Parish Council, stating that they are not happy with this agreement. They claim to have been advised that the Village Hall is entitled to use the pipes leading up to the property but that it has no legal right to use the septic tank. Furthermore, they expressed a wish that the hall should contribute to septic tank emptying charges and included an invoice for 50% of the latest costs.

Councillors, whilst sympathetic to the current owners' position, requested clarification on the legal status of the Village Hall's access to their neighbour's septic tank.

Cllr Leadbeater suggested that mediation could take place with a member of the village hall committee and the owners of the property as relations between the two parties had become strained.

Neither the owners of the neighbouring property nor trustees of the Village Hall were present at the meeting to make a comment on the above.

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A journalist from the Newbury News emailed the Parish Council stating that they had been contacted by the neighbours who claimed, “that the parish council has been using their septic tank but not paying for the pleasure”. The Parish Council has replied stating that the Village Hall trustees are responsible for village hall matters, and that both bodies were under the impression that there was an agreement in place for the Village Hall to use the septic tank. The letter from the neighbouring property also stated that Chair Fenn has suggested the parish council would make a financial contribution to the septic tank; he strongly disputes this and states that he did not make this suggestion.

ACTION – Clerk to contact BALC for legal advice surrounding the use of the septic tank and any possible liabilities pertaining to its use.

Clerk to circulate copies of the deed to councillors to assist in their understanding of the matter

8. Village Plan

District Cllr Read spoke to the council regarding The Neighbourhood Development Plan; it allows a parish council to present a plan to the District Council regarding their wants and needs for the development of Midgham to safeguard the area and its rural character.

West Berks Council is obliged to support parish councils with regards to administration of developing a plan. If the plan is adopted for the council, the parish council gets far more weighting in planning application decisions (e.g. Midgham may want to support rural development, but not large scale mixed urban development). It would also benefit the parish council through the increased receipt of Community Infrastructure Levy funds.

District Cllr Read suggested that a committee should be formed and made up of parish council members, and other members of the village but led by the parish council.

A question was raised about whether a plan should be formed with Woolhampton Parish Council. Cllr Leadbeater suggested it might be simpler to create a plan solely for Midgham.

ACTION – District Cllr Read to support the parish council in forming a development plan; Chair Fenn is keen to work with District Cllr Read.

Clerk to post on village noticeboards to seek volunteers for forming a Neighbourhood Plan Committee.

9. To determine dates for the next meeting

8th September at 7pm

10. To record the meeting closed

20.21