**MIDDLETON CHENEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**Parish Meeting Room, Main Road, Middleton Cheney, OX17 2LR**

**Thursday, 25th April 2019 at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Vice Chairman Cllr. S Jerrams Coughtrey (Acting Chairman)

Cllrs. B. Amos, M. Allen, T. Rice, R. Solesbury Timms, E. Winn Clerk/RFO V. Furniss (Mrs)

District Councillor: V. Furniss

4 Members of the public

1. **Welcome by the Acting Chairman**

The Acting Chairman, Cllr. Sue Jerrams Coughtrey, welcomed all who were attending.

She explained that the meeting was an opportunity for village organisations, clubs and residents to share their experiences and aspirations with Council and raise any queries they may have.

2. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from:

County Councillor: R. Breese

District Councillor: J. Riley

Chairman: A. Youel

Councillor: A. Deary

Councillor: C. Bowden

Police

**Apologies had also been received from:**

Individuals, Organisations and Clubs who had been invited but were unable to attend due to other commitments.

3. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting**

The minutes for the previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th April 2018 had previously been circulated, accepted and signed at a Parish Council Meeting on the 1st May 2018.

4. **Matters arising from the minutes.**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Reports to the meeting**.

1. The Police report was read out on their behalf as they were unable to attend and it covered crime issues, such as the significant spikes in thefts from vehicles and emphasized the importance of removing property and locking vehicles. They mentioned that 2 potential suspects for recent thefts have been identified and asked that all members of the public be vigilant and report any suspicious activity via 101, the non-emergency number. The last 12 months had seen changes - the Neighbourhood Teams attached to Middleton Cheney have a plethora of responsibilities in respect of safeguarding vulnerable people, working with educational establishments and the use of social media (Twitter) to inform residents of crime and incidents relevant to our area. The Neighbourhood Alert email system used by Schools, Parish Councils and community members and residents provides information and advice keeping a two-way flow of information between the police and the public. It was agreed that the Annual Report will be issued on the Parish Council’s website as it contained useful links for various Police websites relating to vehicle tax reports/driving, children’s safety, scam protection, Trading Standards, Crime Stoppers, etc.
2. Chairman’s Report – Cllr. Alan Youel – In Cllr. Youel’s absence due to Work Commitments, the Acting Chairman read the report on his behalf, as follows:

The Chairman thanked all Councillors new and longstanding for their contribution, both in and out of meetings, especially as the amount of time, which Council affairs properly demand, had increased and this is all carried out on a voluntary basis. It was recognised that the most common topic residents would relate to would be planning and the report explained the Parish Council’s role as a Statutory Consultee. Cllr. Youel also explained that the Parish Council works closely with the police, manages open spaces, allotments, play areas, street lighting, bus shelters, parking problems, Potholes, Month of Madness, the cemetery

and numerous other areas in the village. The report then gave an overview of what the Parish Council had achieved during the past year and the actions that had been taken to achieve objectives. Answers to questions/concerns raised were and would be answered as soon as possible but this was reliant on the pace of others. At times, therefore, expediency was out of the Parish Council’s control.

The report also covered Planning, Speed of vehicles on Middleton’s roads and the reasons why a Neighbourhood Plan was in the process of being developed. The Plan would give Middleton an opportunity to influence the future of the community and deal with a range of social, economic and environmental issues. This plan is still being developed and would need the full support of residents.

The report concluded by thanking those who volunteer for the benefit of others in the village as this was appreciated.

All attending thought and agreed that the Report should be posted on the Parish Council’s website.

1. County Councillor Rebecca Breese

The Clerk explained that Cllr Breese was unable to attend as she was in New Zealand due to family commitments and her report was read on her behalf.

The main topic of the report centred on the reform of Local Govt and how County had to find ways of improving efficiency. It had been a challenging time to be a Cllr. Over the course of last year the aim of members was to work with the Commissioners and others to help place County’s finances and its services in the best possible position ahead of the expected transition to a 2 Unitary local government structure in Northamptonshire. The restoration of the Council’s finances has been the primary focus while maintaining statutory services plus working with the 7 District and Borough Councils as we head towards the 2 new Unitary Councils. She explained that income had decreased and costs were rising due to 3 factors, elderly, numbers of children in care (average of £160,000 per child) and increase in the general population in Northamptonshire.

The report explained that across all areas of Council activities a detailed study of contracts has identified areas where considerable savings could be made or performance enhanced. In order to balance the budget County was given specific permission by Central Govt to use the capital receipts from the sale of One Angel Square to fund its revenue deficit in the last financial year – an exceptional decision.

The Secretary of State is yet to give a final decision but work continues on the presumption and clear guidance given by senior civil servants. A Joint Committee has been set-up, incorporating representatives of each of the 4 authorities in what will become West Northamptonshire – Rebecca being SNC’s representative. This Committee is making decisions on how the ‘Shadow Authority’ will operate prior to the establishment of the new Unitary and is a Statutory requirement.

The final part of the report covered Rebecca’s case work for the County which generally covers the usual range of issues – schools, special needs, concerns by individuals relating to funding, lack of public transport and particularly in the last year the closure of the A422 . In addition, Rebecca sits on the Adoption Panel that recommends adoption and long term fostering matches and she states that she is consistently amazed at people who are taking on children from very difficult backgrounds and offering them a home and environment in which they can thrive.

1. District Councillor Riley was unable to attend due to University Examinations and Cllr. Furniss said his activities had been included in her report.
2. District Councillor, Val Furniss

After thanking those attending she referred to her 2 roles of Clerk to the Parish Council and District Cllr. for the Ward and explained her responsibility that evening was to sum up the year as a Dist.Cllr and agreed with our County Cllr that there had been some highs and lows.

Other areas covered were changes in legislation and future ways we are to be governed and what it would mean to residents. She also covered Local Govt Reform that had been dominated by events at County and how the fallout was being dealt with. Due to the changes that are taking place District has a new Senior Management Team and a new Chief Executive. The senior team have been split between Cherwell District Council and South Northants District. The report covered the sheer scale and complexity of bringing together Authorities into a new one and although vast she felt it was paramount to ensure services ran smoothly, safely and legally. Although this undertaking is huge she assured those attending that Council staff are continuing to focus on doing their day jobs by providing the services residents pay for through their Council Tax.

The report then covered topics such as the New Homes Bonus, Planning & Land Supply, Conservation and Heritage, Private Sector Housing Initiatives, Environmental Services, Supporting Local Businesses and the

Community in General relating to ‘Good Neighbour Schemes; An Activity Map; Police and then the Annual Comfort and Joy Campaign that was started in 2015 geared to helping those who have been affected by Domestic Abuse.

**Reports Given by those attending.**

1. Tennis Club – The Chair of the Tennis Club, Richard Middleton, thanked the Parish Council for their continued support over the past few years allowing them to carry out repairs to the courts. The club currently has teams in the Banbury Town Tennis Leagues and competes with clubs not only in Banbury but the surrounding area with mixed teams. Junior coaching helps promote healthy lifestyles and introduce younger members of our community and surrounding villages to tennis in a safe and fun environment. The ‘A’ Team had moved from Division 2 to Division 1. The ‘B’ Team - Division 3. Mr Middleton advised that there were 65 members, 35 adults and 30 juniors, with regular weekly events taking place, summer and winter. The club has also taken part in the August Month of Madness where they have received positive feedback.
2. Playing Fields Association - Mrs. Caroline Stacey, Chairman of the Playing Fields Association, gave an overview of the clubs, their vision for the future covering possible new location and premises in order to have the best facilities possible for current and future clubs.

She explained that the Social Club would be closing and the different ways this could be addressed by the PFA as this was a significant amount of the revenue they receive in order to maintain the current facilities.

1. Help at Hand – Janet Mathews who organises and runs this worthwhile facility that helps residents to attend medical appointments said they had helped 395 people during the course of last year. She advised those attending that she was currently in the process of appointing a new driver and he should be in operation shortly when all paperwork had been completed. As always, she would welcome others to volunteer to be drivers.
2. Other reports received from those who could not attend were read to those attending:
   1. The History Society – their report also covered our Voluntary Village Archivist i.e. Nancy Long’s contribution during the year.
   2. W.I. – their report covered speakers who had given superb talks; information on their new banner and other events where they had taken part.
   3. Pre-school – their report covered their move to the new premises and fund raising activities, past and present.

6. **Reports for the Annual Parish Meeting**

Reports given by those attending and reports read and/or those sent to the Parish Office by those who could not attend are available from the Parish Office.

7. **Any Other Lawful Business**

No other lawful business took place.

8. **General Information on Current Affairs**.

Cllr. Solesbury Timms gave an overview of the Royal British Legion’s activities and reinstatement for Middleton and surrounding villages. He enlightened those attending that the new Branch meets on a monthly basis.

In addition, he reminded attendees that there would be a parade of approximately 20 to 40 Banners on 28th April. The road from the Green to All Saints church would be closed to accommodate the march with a service taking place at All Saints starting at 10.30 a.m. for residents and RBL participants.

8. **Closing remarks**

Before Cllr. Jerrams Coughtrey gave her closing remarks she asked those attending whether they had any questions/concerns they would like to raise – none were forthcoming.

The meeting closed with the Cllr. Jerrams Coughtrey thanking those who had attended and wished them well for the future.

Signed…………………………………….

**Chairman**

Dated…………………………2019