

MIDDLETON & SMERRILL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING Held on 11th March 2020

Attendance: Councillor David Mallaband (Chair)

Other Electors of the Parish: Helen Brocklehurst, Dianne Jeremy, Paul Jeremy, Mary Marsh, Charles Monkhouse, Pat Musgrave, Louise Toombs and Jamie Wigley
Non-electors: Matthew Lovell (Parish Clerk), Jan Hobot (Haddon River Keeper)

1. Appointment of Clerk to the Meeting.

The meeting appointed the Parish Clerk to take the minutes.

2. Apologies – Simon Spencer (County Cllr), Graham Elliott (District Cllr), Andrew McCloy (PDNPA Member) and PCSO Boswell

3. To confirm the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th May 2019

The minutes were confirmed and signed

4. Statement of Accounts and Precept for 2020

The accounts for 2019/20 are being completed and show

5. Chairman's Report

During the past ten months the Parish Council has held a total of 5 bi-monthly meetings. This is one less than normal because the Annual Parish Meeting is now held in March instead of May. We have also held an additional meeting to discuss planning applications and conducted various site visits.

The Village Hall Committee continues with its successful activities for which everyone continues to be very grateful. As always, we look forward to more of the same this year.

We are still attempting to provide improved facilities for the Village Hall Committee to work with. The overall situation is no better regarding discussions with the owners and the state of the building continues to deteriorate. The two options that are being pursued are a new build on the village playground or a joint venture with the church. Both options will need planning permission and building work. Meetings have been held with Derby Diocese and we have been awaiting details of the new buyer of Greencroft Farm to discuss options with our new neighbour.

Your council continue to appraise all planning requests in the parish and have passed comment on 5 such applications in the past 10 months.

The PDNPA are preparing Parish Statements for which we have suggested the following comments for our parish. 'Our aspirations are to remain a rural focussed community maintaining its local population, providing a suitable village hall, encouraging family homes, and looking to conserve its historic legacy.

With the help of Derbyshire Dales District Council and Derbyshire County Council we have had reasonable success in keeping the village roads clean and in reasonable repair given the amount of soil and debris washed into the village due to the heavy rains.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing a spate of dog fouling around the village and apart from the health risks, we must remind everyone that there is a £1000 fine, and notices have been erected to this effect and more will be installed. If anyone has any knowledge or information, please advise the Parish Clerk.

Regular maintenance of Parish Council properties continues. The four benches around the village centre have been refurbished, new pads and batteries fitted to the defibrillator, regular filling of the 3 parish grit bins, Cutting back overgrowth on some public footpaths and essential repairs to the playground have been carried out.

Work is about to begin to tidy up and make safe Batemans Tomb. This has long been a desire to make this presentable and following removal of the overgrown trees. A perimeter fence is being erected and all old scrap metal and barbed wire removed from the site. Further meetings are to be held with PDNPA to carry out further remedial work to ensure that the Tomb is in a respectable state for Thomas Batemans 200th birthday on 8th November 2021.

The situation with Bradford Dale continues to disappoint, and despite all the correspondence, no response to this council has been received, until today, and hopefully Jan will be able to put our minds at rest regarding the future management of the river. We have consistently expressed our regrets that the whole of the Middleton stretch has been allowed to deteriorate into what is more of an eyesore than a place of beauty.

Your Parish Council is pleased to report that we see no need to increase the precept for 2020/21

My personal thanks to fellow councillors, our clerk, the village hall committee and all who have been involved in various ways to continue to make our parish a pleasant place to live.

David Mallaband
Chairman

6. District Councillor – Graham Elliott sent his apologies and noted
 - 1 Council tax will increase by £5 on band D. Equivalent to 10p weekly
 - 2 Not got any further forward with winter gritting route but I'm still on the case
 - 3 Still awaiting decision re annual village sweep schedule – this year has been requested for prior to Village Market but would like to set that for every year.
 - 4 Climate change group has been set up headed by Cllr David Chapman. Progress can be followed on Council web site
7. PDNPA Member Andrew McCloy – sent his apologies.
8. County Councillor Simon Spencer – sent his apologies.
9. Police – PCSO Boswell sent apologies.
10. To consider any other Parish matter that may be brought forward by the Council or local government electors.

Discussion on Bradford Dale with Jan Hobot, Haddon Estates River Keeper

Jan introduced himself as having been a Haddon River Keeper for 13 years but until taking charge in December 2018 hadn't been involved in Lathkill or Bradford Dale "Going Wild" schemes. Following a recent talk to BRAG in Youlgrave he'd become aware of the lack of information provided by the Estate and with their assistance would be putting up boards to explain their policy. The scheme started in 2004 with the intention to make the all rivers they manage totally natural but Lathkill and Bradford have come under greater scrutiny because of their public footpaths creating a high profile. On the Bradford, much success has been seen from Holywell Lane down to the Lathkill with natural areas for spawning providing increases in the Kingfisher and wildlife populations with some rare species flourishing and dams 2, 5 and 6 were drained to provide similar conditions. 2 and 5 have shown successes but dam 6 being the former

Middleton Estates lake has not adapted in the same way. The whole operation is to be reviewed at the end of this summer and this lake may be considered for replacing the sluices if no natural benefit is being achieved.

A discussion ensued with those present with an offer by Jan to be our point of contact for all queries with Bradford Dale via liaison with the Parish Clerk. A report is to be compiled on each dam this year and will be shared with us.

Whilst the historical features – the sheepwash and industrial remains, lie outside his duties he will raise these on our behalf with the Estate.

Jan promised to check ownership of the track down from the village and ask his contractor to look at better drainage alongside as it is essential access for the Estate. It was noted that DCC did the last repairs to the surface but didn't address the drainage hence the rapid deterioration again.

No other matters were raised.

The meeting ended at 20:15