

## Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council

### Chairman's Report for the Parish Council Year 2001/2002

To be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 23 May 2002 at Jubilee Hall, Elmer Road (in the extension).

Once again it gives me great pleasure and privilege to present my Report on the Parish Council and its activities for this past Year, this being my third Report as Chairman for this past Year. I have always had the interests of the Parish of Middleton-on-Sea at heart and will do all I can for the Parish for as long as I can.

Once again Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council has been very active in many areas this past Year and I would particularly draw attention to the following: -

#### (1) Parish Council Playing Fields

The Parish Council Playing Fields continue as the focal point for many Parish activities. We are lucky to have such a field with Jubilee Hall, Sports Pavilion, Children's Play Area and the Scout Hall. Many Parish Councils look enviously upon our facilities and I would like to thank George Janes and his Committee of Management for all the good work undertaken this past Year, particularly as regards having to deal with ever increasing vandalism and now grass-cutting problems.

We now look forward to the Jubilee Celebrations and the working together of the Committee of Management with the Jubilee Committee.

#### (2) Planning

My Vice-Chairman, Roger Hills and the Planning Committee have worked extremely hard this past Year, in particular, considering the number of Applications made. It is important to note that a Parish Council has no authority when it comes to Planning Applications, being able to act only really as a consultee. However, some excellent work has been done and my thanks go to Roger and his Committee for keeping the best interests of the Parish first and foremost.

#### (3) Residents Associations

Matthew Copeland has put in a considerable amount of time and effort into meeting Residents Associations and discussing with them common items of interest. Whilst in a very much embryonic stage, my thanks go to Matthew and I am sure we will see benefits from these discussions.

#### (4) Drainage

A series of meetings were held with Southern Water regarding flooding on the Shrubbs Drive Estate and in the Sea Lane area which resulted in Southern Water undertaking a major drain clearance initiative to alleviate the likelihood of future flooding. However, the Parish still has continuing problems of antiquated drainage systems with ever increasing demands. Colin Mansfield's knowledge of the drains and culverts in the

Parish is invaluable and I would like to thank him and the Drainage Committee for their work this past Year.

We await with interest the Coastal Defence Strategy.

(5) Tree Planting and Village Pond

Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council continues to work closely and in conjunction with Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council in partnership. Again I would like to thank Colin Mansfield our Tree Warden and in addition Colin Street for planning and planting new trees in our Parish following consultation with West Sussex County Council.

Once again, work carried out by volunteers has greatly enhanced the Village Pond and Green. We must now look to surfacing the footpath running adjacent to the Pond. Thanks must go to Roger Hills and his wife and others involved.

(6) Plant-A-Bulb

Following previous Years, wonderful work was done this past Year with the Plant-A-Bulb Scheme; I'm sure all would agree that the Parish looks beautiful at "blooming" time. Thanks must go to all involved.

(7) ADALC, Area Partnership and Codes of Conduct

We have all had to sign up to the new Code of Conduct – more red tape and bureaucracy. Matthew Copeland has attended the Area Partnership Panel meetings, representing the Parish Council. My thanks go to him for his work and reports.

(8) Roads and Transport

Once again, the Parish Council has no authority when it comes to Road and Transport matters, being able to act only really as a consultee. It still saddens me that the Parish still awaits the provision of a roundabout at Comet Corner, despite the involvement of our new County Councillor Christina Freeman and I also note that the Parish still awaits the provision of cycle stands.

(9) Footpaths

Now open, I would like to thank Colin Street for overseeing the footpaths in our Parish. West Sussex County Council clear our footpaths once every 18 months or so and there is a need to keep an eye on our footpaths in the interim. The Parish Council is still concerned with the repair and state of some footpaths in the Parish and again representations continue to be made to West Sussex County Council.

We now look forward to the right of way being reinstated for the Villa Plage footpath.

(10) Police

I was extremely sorry to see our Community P.C., P.C. Michael Bond leave the Parish but welcome his successor Community P.C. Dennis Poulton who regularly attends Parish Council meetings and reports to the Parish Council on a regular basis. Along with the considerable assistance of Norman Morrison, I am convinced that Parishioners feel more safe and secure in the knowledge that crime in the Parish is being tackled in the Parish, albeit at a slower pace than if we had a full time "Bobby on the Beat" – We must continue to press for this.

Our greatest challenge is finding something to occupy the youngsters hanging around the Bus Shelters and One Stop Shop.

(11) Finance

Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council increased its Precept by nearly 24% over and above the previous Year's figure. We decided to increase our budget as regards the Clerk's Salary to accommodate a new Clerk following the retirement of our existing Clerk. Whilst our spend on the Parish Council Playing Fields has decreased of late, we have, hopefully, allowed for additional unexpected items of expenditure here. 20% of the Precept is paid/returned to Arun District Council to ensure that their Car Park and Toilets in the Parish are "free" to all users. £500 has been budgeted for Trees and £500 has been budgeted for the Village Green/Pond and Comet Corner.

(12) Councillors

Finally, I would like to thank all Parish Councillors, including our newly co-opted Councillor, Ray Hall.

I am very grateful to my Vice-Chairman, Roger Hills, who as well as looking after Planning and helping with the Village Pond, has been a tremendous support to me throughout this past Year.

I am also very grateful and would like to thank Gerry Aldridge, Ted Chandler, Bernard Hills and Nicky Mills for their time and effort in Parish Council matters.

I hope Ron Jarvis is better soon and can rejoin the Parish Council discussions.

(13) The Clerk, Members of the Public and District and County Councillors

Naturally we were all sorry to see our former Clerk retire from Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council but after around 20 years service we have now said goodbye to him in a proper fashion. We are very fortunate to now have a new Clerk with time and energy handling our day-to-day affairs in a most efficient manner. My thanks to him and also to the members of the public who attend our meetings, as well as our District and County Councillors, Barbara Oakley and Christina Freeman, in particular Christina Freeman as she joined the County Council at the last Election. Together with Barbara Oakley, Christina is a great supporter of the Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council and I am sure that we all welcome them both to our Meetings. They have been regular attendees and a great help to the Parish.

P M Wotherspoon- Chairman Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council 2001/2002.

