

Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council

Chairman's report for the Parish Council Year 2002/2003

To be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 15th May 2003 at the Jubilee Hall (rear hall), Elmer Road, Middleton-on-Sea.

It gives me great pleasure and privilege to present my Report on the Parish Council and its activities for the past year and final fourth year of the present Council. I am very grateful to all Councillors and the Clerk for their support and understanding of the impartial but encouraging/facilitating role I have undertaken for a Council which pleases me to be non-political.

Looking back on the year I see that the Parish Council has once again been very active in many areas as follows:-

(1) Parish Council Playing Fields

The Parish Council Playing Fields continue as the focal point for many parish activities including the most successful Golden Jubilee celebrations. We are so lucky to have a field with a Jubilee Hall, Sports Pavilion, Scout Hall and children's play area. Many Parish Councils look enviously upon our facilities and I would like to thank George Janes, Gerry Aldridge and the Committee of Management for all the good work undertaken this year.

Whilst we are sorry to see George retire from the Council I understand steps are being taken to recruit a 'caretaker' for the Playing Fields, on a remunerated basis, to ensure the good standards are maintained.

(2) Development Control

Sadly, my Vice Chairman, Roger Hills, resigned from the Parish Council at the beginning of this calendar year. However, my thanks go to Roger and Matthew Copeland who has very much taken on the leadership of the Development Control Committee, and other Committees for that matter, and for the hard work undertaken this year.

(3) Residents Associations

Matthew Copeland has continued to meet with Residents Associations discussing with them common items of interest. My thanks go to Matthew and I am sure these meetings benefit all parties.

(4) Drainage

The pressure placed upon Southern Water last year has now borne fruit as they are currently replacing a significant part of the surface water drain between the Shrubbs Drive estate and Sea Lane following major flooding in early 2002. Hopefully these major works will prevent any future reoccurrence of the flooding.

(5) Tree Planting & Village Pond

Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council continues to work closely and in conjunction with Arun District Council and WSCC in partnership. Again, I would like to thank Colin Mansfield, our Parish Tree Warden, and Colin Street for continued planning and planting of new trees in our Parish after consultation with WSCC. Colin Street will be very much missed from the Parish Council.

Once again, work carried out by volunteers has greatly enhanced the Village Pond and Green. We now have a surfaced footpath running adjacent to the Pond funded partially by the Parish Council and also supported with grants from WSCC and a donation from the Middleton-on-Sea Association. My thanks go to Roger Hills and the volunteers involved.

(6) Plant-A-Bulb

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

(7) ADALC, Area Partnership & Codes of Conduct

We are all signed up to the new Code of Conduct and 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 & Transport

Once again, the Parish Council has no authority when it comes to Roads & Transport matters, being able to act only really as a consultee. Whilst a roundabout at Comet Corner would appear to have been ruled out, by WSCC, we await with much interest the feasibility study into the installation of traffic lights at this most dangerous junction. My thanks go to Nicky Mills for taking over this portfolio, at short notice, following the resignation of Ray Hall in December 2002.

(9) Footpaths

As alluded to above, sadly Colin Street has decided to retire from the Parish Council. My thanks go to him for overseeing the footpaths. WSCC clear our footpaths once every 18 months or so and there is a need to keep an eye on the footpaths in the interim. The Parish Council is concerned with the repair and state of some footpaths in the Parish and correspond with WSCC, when considered appropriate.

(10) Police

I was extremely sorry to see our Community PC, PC Dennis Poulton, 'done away with'. Dennis regularly attended Parish Council meetings and reported to the Parish Council on a regular basis. I feel that the new moveable team of Police men and women will not get a knowledge of the Parish like a Community PC. However, I am pleased to see Arun District Council's Community Wardens out and about and I am very grateful to Norman Morrison for his attendance and reports to the Parish Council.

(11) Newsletter

The Parish Council launched a new free quarterly Newsletter, Middleton News, in September 2002 which is delivered to nearly 3,000 dwellings in the Parish, by volunteers. Middleton News has been an outstanding success with 3 editions printed and distributed to date at no cost to the Parish. My thanks go to Angela Waller for obtaining the advertising and co-ordinating its production with the Clerk. Also to the advertisers, article writers and distributors who all contribute in some part to its success.

(12) Finance

Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council decided to keep its Precept the same as the previous year's figure and to cover the budgeted shortfall by surplus funds at the bank. I am most grateful to the Finance Committee for simplifying and modernising our budgeting procedures.

(13) Village Action Plan

My thanks go to Matthew Copeland for arranging the initial Village Action Plan meeting and for facilitating the creation of a Steering Committee to take the Plan forward. The Parish Council was particularly fortunate to obtain grants from both the Countryside Agency and WSCC to finance this project.

(14) Councillors

Finally, I would like to thank all Parish Councillors, including those who resigned, Ray Hall and Roger Hills.

I am very grateful to Gerry Aldridge, Bernard Hills, George Janes and Colin Street who have decided to retire from the Council. I am also very grateful and would like to thank Ted Chandler, Matthew Copeland, Ron Jarvis, Colin Mansfield, Nicky Mills for their time and effort in Parish Council matters.

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

We are very fortunate to have a Clerk with time and energy handling our day-to-day affairs in a most efficient manner. My thanks to him and also members of the Public who attend our meetings, as well as our District and County Councillors, Barbara Oakley and Christina Freeman.

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Paul M Wotherspoon, Chairman, Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council 2002/2003