

MIDDLETON TOWNSHIP ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE FORUM

Tuesday 18 July 2017
Middleton Library, Long Street, Middleton M24 1AF

MINUTES

Present

Councillor June West	RBC (Chair & Middleton Township Chair)
Councillor Malcolm Boriss	RBC
Councillor Sara Rowbotham	RBC
Councillor Donna Williams	RBC
Councillor Chris Furlong	RBC
Lauren Mason	Township Officer RBC & Minutes
Sue Oakley	Conservation Officer RBC
Nick O'Neill	Environmental Management RBC
Rob Cameron	Environmental Management RBC
Steven Lett	Environmental Management RBC
Terry Linden	Resident
Simon Bennett	Friends of Jubilee Park
Sharron Stevens	Friends of Jubilee Park
Howard Bowden	Friends of Jubilee Park
David Lappin	Resident
Ted Woolley	Friends of Bowlee
Geoff Grime	Friends of Middleton View
John Burton	Middleton Cricket Club & St. Peter's RC Church
Jerry Stokes	Friends of Alkington Woods
Keeley O'Mara	Friends of Hopwood Woods
Martin Cove	Middleton In Bloom
Paula Hickey	Middleton In Bloom
John Wilkins	BOLD & Middleton Resident
Anthony Schivao	Rochdale Football Club
Eric Larmett	Friends of Bowlee Park
Rosalyn Liddle	Middleton In Bloom
Peter Shore	Middleton Roundtable
Apologies	
Councillor Sue Smith	RBC
Councillor Carol Wardle	RBC
Councillor Donna Martin	RBC
Councillor Neil Emmott	RBC
Councillor Phil Burke	RBC
Councillor Linda Robinson	RBC
Councillor Andy Bell	RBC
Councillor Susan Emmott	RBC
Councillor Peter Williams	RBC
Councillor Peter Joinson	RBC
Diane Higgins	Youth Services RBC
Andrew Entwistle	Facilities Manager – Link4Life
Ian Trickett	Environmental Management RBC
Carol Geddes	Friends of Alkington Woods
John Roe	Middleton Roundtable
Christine Grime	Middleton Heritage & Conservation Group
Mike White	Resident
Brenda Stringer	Middleton Floral Arts & Friends of Boarshaw Cemetery

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

All were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair, introductions were announced and apologies were noted as above. Councillor West requested that all turn off or put on to silent mobile phones.

Councillor West advised that she had a number of announcements to make prior to the start of the meeting:

- Middleton Memorial Gardens has received a Green Flag award and all who had been involved in the work to ensure that the area was looking its best for the award judging were thanked for all their hard work.
- Jubilee Park has received a Green Flag award and all who had been involved in the work to ensure that the area was looking its best for the award judging were thanked for all their hard work.
- Middleton In Bloom judging will take place on Thursday 20 July 2017. Councillor West and the group wished the 'In Bloom' team good luck, and agreed that Middleton looks brilliant.
- Middledale will take place this coming Sunday (22 July 2017).

Public Realm Inspectors

Councillor West advised that the Public Realm Officers (PRIs), Steven Lett and Rob Cameron were in attendance at this meeting and they would say a few words about their roles. Rob and Steven both introduced themselves and explained the PRI role is 90% enforcement and 10% anti-social behaviour, and the work carried out by the Inspectors varies from environmental issues such as fly tipping to assisting GMP with ASB issues. A number of questions were raised with the PRIs and answers provided. Any issues can be passed through to the Inspectors via the Township Office, or alternatively issues can be logged through the Contact Centre via email on environmental.management@rochdale.gov.uk or telephone 0300 303 8884.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. MIDDLETON IN BLOOM UPDATE AND IMPENDING VISIT

Paula Hickey advised that the visit by the judges is taking place this coming Thursday (20 July 2017), and the group undertook a major scheme this weekend at the Nowster to improve the appearance of the whole building. Twenty five bags of rubbish were collected, and the project has raised the profile of the 'In Bloom' project. Paula advised that artwork was also undertaken on the building, and £50 was donated to the clean up by the owners of the building.

Following a discussion regarding the forthcoming visit by the judges, it was agreed that the route the judges will be taken on will be sent to Lauren to be shared with the attendees for this meeting. It was also agreed that any future meeting could also be shared with Lauren to publicise amongst the Township contacts.

Paula advised that Middleton In Bloom is available on Facebook and Twitter, and all events are publicised through social media.

The group were thanked for all their hard work over the last few months, and wished the best of luck for Thursday's visit.

4. ROCHDALE FOOTBALL CLUB PRESENTATION

Anthony Schivaro introduced himself and explained that he is Club & Communities Lead Manager for Rochdale Football Club. Anthony advised that the club has felt over the last few months that it needs to do more in the communities of the Rochdale Borough. The club is trying to become more involved in each of the Townships as only 2% of the population of the Borough regularly attend matches.

Anthony advised that he is continually looking for ideas and suggestions to increase involvement in the club, and that the club extends an invite to all community groups to attend a match at no charge. If anyone would like to discuss this or book for their group to visit the club, Anthony can be contacted via email at anthony.schiavo@rochdaleafc.co.uk.

Anthony explained that as a 'community' club, youth season tickets are £10 and include a free goodie bag. All the work being carried out is supported by the new CEO of the club, who is

continually looking for new ways to increase community engagement within the club. One such example is a price match, whereby the more tickets the club sells, the cheaper the tickets become.

The club are working with primary and secondary schools, and some of the players are promoting the social side of football in schools to encourage young people to get involved with the club. There is also the opportunity for any local football clubs to work alongside Rochdale F.C. (Action: It was agreed that Lauren would email Middleton Lads and Girls to pass on Anthony's contact details). The club are also in regular contact with Youth Services. Councillor Rowbotham invited Anthony to visit Boarshaw Boxing Club. Anthony advised if transport is an issue for groups, then transport can be arranged if required.

Anthony stated the current gate price for anyone wishing to attend and support the club is £15, but if it is an organised visit of a group he is happy to speak to them and arrange complementary tickets.

Anthony was thanked for his informative presentation and invited to attend this meeting on a regular basis.

5. STREET CLEANING, WASTE, CLEAN AND GREEN

Waste

Nick O'Neill advised that the restructure at Environmental Management is now complete and a new Waste Manager has been appointed. The Waste Manager will go out on the bin collection rounds alongside supervisors to ensure that all works are being completed as required.

Street Cleaning

Nick advised that following the restructure the Borough has been split into two areas (Heywood and Middleton/Rochdale and Pennines) and each area will have a Grounds Supervisor and a Waste Supervisor. In addition, there is also a Borough wide Arboriculture Supervisor and a Cemeteries Supervisor. Nick advised that he would circulate a list of staff with responsibilities via Lauren. (Action: LM to liaise with NON to circulate the list to Members)

Clean & Green

Nick explained that the Clean & Green Teams (one team per Township) are managed by a Clean & Green Supervisor. This provision is paid for via an additional budget. Work for the Clean & Green Team is generated via Township requests, issues identified by the team and suggestions put forward to the supervisor. General maintenance works are ongoing, and each of the plots managed by Environmental Management has a programme of works for scheduled visits.

Questions and Issues

Terry Linden queried with Nick who holds responsibility to trim trees on main roads as a number of drains are blocked with mulch from the trees. Nick advised that this issue is dealt with on a referral basis and anyone can report issues via the Environmental Management contacts (shared earlier in the minutes). Nick advised that the team rely on issues being raised as there are over 15,000 trees in the Borough.

Terry Linden queried waste management provision at flats as due to the volumes of people and the size of the bins there is often not enough space for all the waste. Nick stated there are changes expected regarding flats, as previously the waste was collected by the normal rounds, but this is likely to change to a specific 'flats' round. Nick advised that if there are issues with space/not enough bins this can again be reported.

David Lappin commented on continuous building waste being dumped on Sunk Lane (between Farmway and Wince Brook). He was advised any such issues can be reported direct to Environmental Management or to the Township Office. Nick agreed to ask the Public Realm Inspectors to visit the area.

Councillor Rowbotham suggested the Borough wide Arboriculture Supervisor and Cemeteries Supervisor be invited along to this meeting to provide an update on their roles. (Action: LM to invite Borough wide Arboriculture Supervisor and Cemeteries Supervisor to a future meeting)

6. THI (TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE) UPDATE

Sue advised that three of the projects are now completed:

- 51-53 Rochdale Road
- Exedra
- 48 Rochdale Road

Sue explained that in relation to the Long Street Methodist Church, which is the major scheme for the THI, meetings have taken place with the Lottery, and it was very positive, so it is hoped that the scheme will commence in the next few months.

Councillor West thanked Sue for all the work being put into the scheme.

Nowster Update

Lauren read out an update from Mark Robinson, Assistant Director for Planning & Development, which advised that; *'Further to the Members Regeneration Group meeting last night, I have obtained a further update from Nicola Carter in Strategic Housing regarding this site. Nicola suggested that there had been a fire over the weekend.'*

The Council has previously offered to demolish this building on behalf of the owner and secure the site from trespass. The costs of this work, which would need to take place to support the planned redevelopment of the site for a new medical practice, would then be passed back to the owner as part of the overall development cost. To date, the owner has been unwilling to agree to this work taking place.

The Council has regularly contacted the owner for an update on their progress with the demolition of the property. The owners are refusing to provide timescales or reveal their intentions but the offer of arranging for the property to be demolished is reiterated each time an open to access report is made to them. It is also exploring the expediency of taking further action to secure the safety of the site. The Council has contacted the owners this week for a further response following the incident over the weekend'.

7. TRANSPORT ISSUES

David Lappin raised concerns about the 415 bus service as on two occasions buses haven't turned up at all. It was agreed that in order to have this issue investigated by the Transport Representative, Councillor Burke, David would pass full details to Lauren at the end of the meeting (Action: – LM to raise concerns with Councillor Burke and TfGM).

Terry Linden advised that some time ago, he raised concerns about private hire vehicles using the Long Street entrance to get to Wood Street. This area is for buses and taxis only, and Terry advised that he felt it is not right that Middleton Private Hire firms are being rated as excellent by Rochdale Borough Council when the drivers continue to ignore road signs and use this street as a cut through. It was agreed that Lauren would raise Terry's concerns with Licensing (Action: LM to speak to Licensing Officers)

8. UPDATES

a) Friends of Middleton View

Geoff advised that there is regular fly tipping at William Street and thanked Lauren for arranging the removal quickly when this is reported to the Township Office.

Geoff queried what is happening with Tonge Hall as Purcell undertook an options appraisal around 2 years ago, and to Geoff's knowledge the outcome of this was never made public. Geoff queried if an update could be brought to this meeting. (Action: LM will speak to Mark Robinson and ask for an update)

b) Friends of Jubilee Park

Sharron Stevens stated lots of work has taken place in Jubilee Park over the last few months:

- Repair and works to the Exedra.
- Dry stone wall repairs
- Works to the retaining wall are nearing completion.
- The area above the retaining wall has been replanted, although around 20 plants have been subsequently pinched. Sharron has reported the matter to GMP and will provide evidence to the Township Office to chase this up.

Sharron advised that a shed has been dumped near to St. Leonard's (Action: LM to report to Environmental Management). Unfortunately, the bins in the park are continually overflowing, and Sharron requested that if possible more bins be provided and the broken bin be replaced (Action: LM to request additional bins and replacement for broken bin).

Sharron commented that the area covered by the group also includes the old Burial Ground, and the grass hasn't been cut for some time, and in areas is now above head height (Action: – LM to report to Environmental Management).

Sharron advised that the Friends group wish to repaint the band stand and the Township Fund grant application form has been provided to the group.

c) Friends of Wince Brook

The group reported there was a national scheme to plant 11 million trees. Around 600 were planted in Wince Brook and the community orchard.

On Saturday 1 July 2017 a guided walk took place through Wince Brook, and since the event a number of emails have been received calling the brook a 'little oasis' and people expressing their surprise that the area is on their doorsteps and they didn't know about it.

Mike Cummings will submit an application for funds to Township for the pathways to be repaired/reinstated, where required, and the group advised that they are working alongside Mike to get this completed as soon as possible.

Concerns were raised about the amount of damage being caused by Mink in Wince Brook. Rochdale Borough Council is no longer able to trap mink which means the population is growing.

d) Green Volunteers

Geoff Grime advised that work has been ongoing in Alkington Woods and Wince Brook to cut back trees and shrubs overhanging pathways, in addition to work on Rhodes Lodges by the group.

e) Friends of Alkington Woods

Jerry advised that Mike Cummings continues to do a brilliant job in the Woods, and over the last few months the steps have been replaced and a stile installed. A discussion took place about the pathway through McBride's Wood. Jerry is aware that Rochdale Borough Council will not undertake the work, but he queried if there are any other organisations that can assist. It was agreed that this matter would be passed to Groundwork to see if they are able to help with this issue (Action: LM to contact Groundwork).

f) Friends of Boarshaw Cemetery

Boarshaw Cemetery retained its Green Flag status, which is through the dedication of all involved in the area.

Terry Linden advised that having attended a number of services at the crematorium, there is often not enough space to fit everyone in and therefore asked if a better speaker system could be installed, with speakers outside the building, so even those who can't get in the building can hear what is being said (Action: LM to pass the request on to the Cemeteries/Crematorium Supervisor).

Brenda Stringer, who couldn't attend the meeting, had requested that an update be provided, and this was read out by Lauren: 'the service of remembrance was held at the cemetery chapel on Sunday 11 June 2017 at 3.00pm. The service was very good, but this year there was only half the attendance as last year, and it is thought this is due to lack of publicity of the service in the local press, etc.'

g) Friends of Hopwood Woods Nature Reserve

At the last meeting, Keeley had raised concerns that since the introduction of the new cycle path there had been an increase in the number of off-road vehicles and motorbikes using the area. This issue had been raised with Highways following the last meeting and Lauren read out an update from Alex Whittaker: '*Enquiries regarding unauthorised users such as quad/motor cycles continue to be received, however I must make it clear Rochdale Borough Council are installing access restrictions*

at multiple places along the route as part of the scheme.

At Hopwood Road fencing and barriers were installed to restrict unauthorised access, fencing and a kissing gate has now been installed at Cooper Fold; this has severed motorbike/quad access from the Hollins estate which created an issue prior to the implementation of the improvement works.

Access restrictions are already in place at the termination of the route adjacent to St Anne's Academy. Retractable bollards have now also been installed close to Woodside Farm and further along the route on the approach to St Anne's Academy to restrict any vehicular access on the middle section of the route. In addition to this, drop down bollards have also been installed at the start of the byway at Hopwood Hall, and this will give Mrs and Mrs Faulkner who own Woodside Farm the opportunity to restrict vehicular access on the byway outside of planned deliveries. A cattle gate will also be installed to ensure there can be no conflict between users when cattle are being transferred from Woodside Farm to the nearby fields along the route (introduction of cattle gates is imminent).

In addition, signage will be added along all sections of the route and this will raise awareness of the multi user route and encourage users to reduce speed. The access controls along the route are a physical measure that will also act as a speed control when cyclists approach. This will be an improvement on the current provision of notifying all users to be vigilant and considerate to alternate users, it is important to consider conflict between users of Restricted Byway 117 was an issue prior to the works and there were no measures in place to reduce conflict/raise awareness.

Upon full completion of the scheme, if any unauthorised quads/motorbikes access the byway this is an enforcement issue to be dealt with by Greater Manchester Police; under section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002 the police have the power to seize and remove a motor vehicle if the vehicle is used in a manner that constitutes an offence on or off the road that is likely to cause alarm, distress or annoyance to members of the public.

Upon full completion Highways, Environmental Management and local user groups plan to meet with a representative of Greater Manchester Police on site to discuss all elements of the scheme and raise awareness to GMP of the multi user route. In the initial period of the route re-opening for public use Rochdale Borough Council will request GMP to monitor the route as much as possible to deter any long term unauthorised access. Extensive drainage has been included as part of the scheme which is now in operation and is draining the route sufficiently; there was no drainage present prior to the improvement scheme'.

Kelley O'Mara advised that there has been illegal hunting in the woods and unfortunately a dog was recently snared. A meeting has been arranged with GMP and Keeley will provide an update at the next meeting. There is also signage being installed for the cycle path.

h) Absolute Angling

No report was provided and no representative was present to give an update.

i) Friends of Bowlee Community Park

The installation of the kissing gates is ongoing, and unfortunately due to staffing changes this has led to some delays. It was agreed that this issue will be picked up and a meeting arranged with the new officer dealing with Bowlee.

The group requested that thanks be passed to Wayne, who as part of his role within Environmental Management, has undertaken the planting of wildflowers. The group commented on the attractiveness of the planting and they hoped more wildflowers can be planted throughout the park.

Litter picks continue to take place a few times a year, although clean ups should be carried out after every car boot sale, but this is not always the case. The group asked that their thanks to Councillor Burke, for assisting in this matter, be noted.

Terry Linden queried if there was any update regarding the football club/pitch at Bowlee and he was advised that the group didn't have any update at this time.

j) Friends of Mellalieu Street

Sharron stated four buildings have been renovated and are now almost fully occupied with professional residents, but this had increased the number of vehicles on the street by around 16-20 cars. Sharron advised that as cars are parked on both sides, speeding vehicles are becoming even more of a danger, and Sharron queried if a survey could be carried out to find out the average speed of vehicles on Mellalieu Street and if speed humps would be feasible (Action: LM to raise the matter with Highways)

Sharron advised that the pavement outside the flats is still unsightly and it has not been put back to the original stone (Action: LM to chase up the matter with Highways as a site visit has previously taken place to look at the issues).

The group raised concerns about the 'Biffa' bin at Brentwood Day Centre, and advised that they had previously spoken to John (the manager) about the bin. (Action: It was agreed that the concerns of the group would be raised directly with Brentwood by Councillor West).

k) Status4All

No report was provided and no representative was present to give an update.

l) Middleton Lads & Girls Football Club

No report was provided and no representative was present to give an update.

m) Middleton Civic Association

No report was provided and no representative was present to give an update.

n) Middleton Roundtable

Lauren read out updates from the Chairman of Middleton Roundtable, John Roe, and advised that Peter Shore was also here from the group should there be any questions:

Mayday

After all the planning and involvement with organising May Day 2017 it was fantastic to see it as a resounding success. Helped in no small part by the great weather, lively entertainment and brilliant May Pole dancing by the children of Parkfield Primary School. St Leonard's Square was completely full with happy spectators.

Until the confirmation of Parkfield, we potentially faced no school contributing dancers to the event and therefore no May Day event in the traditional sense. We are grateful that they have also accepted an invitation to May Day 2018 and it is hoped that the success of May Day 2017 will act as a catalyst to the other primary schools in Middleton to supply dancers.

There were no other issues to report with the organising or running of the event but there have been several learning points that will be taken forward to May Day 2018;

- *Take nothing for granted.*
- *Confirm and reconfirm everything.*

Middfest

We are looking forward to another fantastic Middfest event that is being held on Sunday 23 July 2017 at Limefields Park. The organising process is to all intents and purposes complete where we have only to finalise the number of market stalls required, to receive the remaining documents from the attractions and to collect the keys to the site.

For the event we have:

- *Stannage International Stunt Team as the main event*
- *Beer tent*
- *Main stage with a variety of bands*
- *A community stage for a variety of acts*
- *Fun fair*
- *Stalls*
- *Circus skills*
- *A variety of stands*

- *Children's entertainer/magician'*

o) Middleton Cricket Club

No report was provided and no representative was present to give an update.

p) Link4Life Update

Unfortunately, Andrew Entwistle from Link4Life was unable to be at the meeting, so Lauren read out an update:

- *Gillian Bishop CEO will be leaving Link4life end of August (I think) and her replacement Andy King will start at the beginning of September*
- *Cinema offering – we have a showing a week (£2 plus drink and small popcorn) throughout the 6 week holidays.*
- *Holiday programme – we have some sport activities taking place over the holiday period and also increased the opening times of the small and large pool for public swimming.*
- *Events - we have a number of comedians booked at the Middleton Arena (Paul Chowdry, Ed Byrne, Lee Nelson and Dave Spikey).*
- *Pantomime Sleeping Beauty starts 30 November 2017.*
- *Social media – we have been posting more updates from the Middleton Arena and increased our responsiveness as an additional way of improving awareness of the Middleton Arena and its offerings.*
- *Following on from the last update regarding consultants, we are looking at specific areas that require either time of investment including events programming, energy saving, changing rooms, fitness equipment/refurbishment and programming.*

Following a discussion regarding issues with Middleton Arena, it was agreed that Lauren would circulate Andrew's contact details. Telephone: 01706 927142 or Email: andrew.entwistle@link4life.org

q) Any other groups/events

Nothing to report.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Mike White advised that throughout Middleton there are trees that overhang road signage. He raised the matter with Councillor Martin and he requested that his thanks to her be noted.
- b) David McKail queried what is happening with the land opposite Lancashire Fold. The land used to have two homes on it, but then due to subsidence they were demolished by the Coal Board (Action: LM to enquire with the Coal Board if there are any longer term plans for this land).
- c) Terry Linden queried what could be done regarding ensuring that the ever increasing number of people attending Remembrance Sunday are able to participate in the service. Due to the number increasing year on year, many people have to stand outside the Gardens of Remembrance, and cannot hear what is happening, and therefore aren't able to participate. Following a discussion, it was agreed that Lauren will speak to the partners involved in planning the service and see what options are available to extend/amplify the service (Action: LM to discuss with partners).
- d) John Wilkins updated the group on the work being done by 'BOLD', and advised that the group have written to the GM Mayor with a wish list. John invited anyone interested to attend the meeting, which take place on the third Monday of the month.

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

All meetings commence at 6.15pm and take place on the First Floor, Middleton Library.

- Wednesday 30 August 2017
- Wednesday 4 October 2017
- Wednesday 6 December 2017
- Wednesday 14 March 2018