



# Middleton Environment Forum

## Minutes – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011

### Present

Councillor June West (Chair)	RMBC
Terry Linden	Middleton Resident
Michael White	Alkington Resident
Bob Magee	Friends of Wince Brook
Ian Ray	Friends of Wince Brook
David Lappin	Alkington Resident
Harry Alldritt	Middleton Community Training Centre
Jean Bunner	Middleton Resident
Brian Johnson	Alkington Resident
Jon Davenport	Environment Agency
Councillor Mike Holly	RMBC
Councillor Malcolm Boriss	RMBC
Councillor Donna Martin	RMBC
Julie Simpson	RMBC Environmental Enforcement
Dennis Pennill	RMBC Environmental Management
Paul Ambrose	RMBC Planning & Regulation
Debbie Choularton	RMBC Township Support Officer

### Apologies

David McKail	Friends of Wince Brook
Geoff Grime	Middleton View Resident
Christine Grime	Middleton View Resident
Gary Leigh	Absolute Angling
Brenda Stringer	Morton Street Residents
Audrey Riches	Middleton Civic Association
Angela Ollerhead	Co-ordinator Litterwatch
Pat Donald	Langley Environment Group
Ron Donald	Langley Resident
Paula Dickinson	Dane Bank Resident
Ivy Isherwood	Langley Environment Group
Mick Ripley	RMBC Street Services
Councillor Teresa Fitzsimons	RMBC
Councillor Lil Murphy	RMBC
Councillor Carol Wardle	RMBC
Councillor Susan Emmott	RMBC
Councillor Phil Burke	RMBC
Councillor Peter Williams	RMBC
Councillor Neil Emmott	RMBC
Councillor Alan Godson	RMBC
Councillor Jonathan Burns	RMBC
Councillor Maureen Rowbotham	RMBC
Councillor Linda Robinson	RMBC

### 1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011 were agreed as a true and correct record.

## **2. Pat Brookes**

The Chair reported that unfortunately Pat Brookes had passed away since the last meeting and wanted to acknowledge the work she had done within the Forum to improve Middleton

## **3. Matters Arising**

### **From the Action Points:**

- c) Land at the side of the Nowster Pub on Oldham Road – Councillor Martin reported that this site is still full of litter, and it looks like fly-tipping. This issue has now come up at several meetings but has been going on for seven or eight years. Councillor Martin said that the site only looked as bad as it did as the Council had neglected to keep on top of it. After looking at the plan attached to the action point report Councillor Martin also felt that it was incorrect and the Council was in fact the owner of all the land. As Chair, Councillor West asked that Environmental Management chase up the land registry for proof of ownership and in the meantime Julie Simpson agreed to meet at the site with Councillor Martin to look at addressing specific issues of litter and fly tipping. Terry Linden said this needs to be dealt with as the pub itself has now closed so the situation will only get worse.
- e) The garages at the top of Clough Road – Jean Bunner reported that there has now been a big improvement on this site.
- f) Two flower beds at the side of Barclays Bank – one has now been planted with bedding plants, but the two with trees in are full of weeds and look disgraceful. They have recently started to be used by people drinking alcohol as a seating area which needs to be looked at by the Community Safety Officer.
- h) The garage within the Lodge Mill complex – Jon Davenport from the Environment Agency agreed to take up the issue of rubbish falling into the river and report back to the next meeting.
- i) The car boot sales at Bowlee Park – it was pointed out that the litter had only become a problem since the Council had taken over running the car boot sales and would need to be looked at once the sales were up and running again in the summer months.
- n) Under age drinking in the Grimshaw Lane area – Councillor Martin was not happy that the police and Community Safety Officer felt that there was no real issue in this area. Terry Linden explained that local police responses for issues like these were now organised based on incidences raised by local people at PACT meetings and so if no-one was going along and reporting them, it would be assumed there was not a problem. Councillor Martin reported that it was an ongoing problem and brought up regularly at meetings of an Andrew Street resident's group. One of the shops had objected to alleygating behind the shops and was selling to underage drinkers through the back of the shop. Julie Simpson said it was even more important then to go to the PACT meetings and report it as in her role as Rights of Way Officer, she found it is easier to close alleys like this if there are reports of anti-social behaviour caused by them remaining open. Councillor West agreed that she would meet with PC Smith to discuss this in the next week.
- o) The old waste disposal weighbridge building on Townley Street – Terry Linden said that as Debbie was struggling to find more information on where the quote for demolition had come from, he would pass on further information he had so that it could be chased up.
- q) Drainage in the Assheton Way subway – a member of the forum commented that the situation was not helped as around the main grid tarmac had been laid which is higher than the level of the grid, so the water has to get to a certain level before it can even start to drain away.
- w) Blocked gullies – Terry Linden said that the group still wanted responses about the individual gullies as it was known Highways could not clear some due to collapsed drains. This would mean that cleaning all the gullies in Middleton may not deal with the problem ones listed at the last meeting. Harry Alldritt reported that in the process of chasing up blocked gullies on Long Street, he had been told there was now only one machine that could do this work for the whole borough. He suggested some form of grill in the gullies to

prevent them becoming blocked by leaves. Councillor West agreed that this would be a good idea in principal but the cost would make it unfeasible.

**From the minutes:**

Page 4, section 5 – Terry Linden reported that Howard Gott had been to Culture Working Party and Township Committee and had given a very good update at both meetings on the Connect2 cycle routes.

**4. Resident Refuse Bins – Dennis Pennill**

Dennis introduced himself and started by saying that due to the restructure within the Council there were now more Environmental Enforcement officers available to look at issues like the persistent offenders leaving their bins out after they had been emptied. To deal with this issue, at present officers will start by leaving stickers on bins asking residents to take their bins in. The next step is to remove the bins completely so that residents have to ring the service to get them back and at that point officers can try to educate the resident to stop it happening again.

There are obviously people who will carry on leaving their bins out, where education will not work, so Dennis is looking at setting up a system of fixed penalty notices. He is working with other Council's across the country to come up with a scheme of best practice. Enforcement officers will have designated areas and will start to build up local knowledge, getting to know the area and the people. Dennis pointed out that although there are now more enforcement officers than previously, there are still probably not enough to carry out all the work needed, but they will do their best.

The Forum named several areas that are particular hotspots – Cheapside area (including New Lane), the area around Albany Street and the area around Walker Street/Egerton Street/Manchester Old Road.

There are also issues around contamination of recycling bins with the wrong waste going into the wrong bins. Dennis explained that most of this is genuine mistakes and educating the public will deal with most cases. Terry Linden said that he was dealing with several cases where either a resident or business had not had their bins emptied due to them being contaminated, where this had been done not by the bin owner but someone else and they were struggling to get it dealt with by ringing the contact centre. Dennis said this would have to be looked at on a case by case basis and the service was working with the contact centre to improve the service given to residents.

Terry Linden asked when the first figures showing the uptake of the food recycling would be available. Dennis replied that this would be difficult as at this time last year the brown bin collections were suspended to save money. Jean Bunner said that residents around Edward Street/King Street/Cheapside were still waiting for the caddy bins and Dennis said he would take this back and chase up. The liner bags were discussed and Dennis let people know that the caddy bins can be used without liner bags or they can be purchased cheaply from all supermarkets, it is not necessary to buy from the company that provided the initial free supply.

Dennis asked that all members of the Forum be aware that there was a consultation ongoing at present about further cuts/changes to Environmental Management around street cleansing regularity, bulky waste collection charges and countryside/open spaces management. This is ongoing until 19<sup>th</sup> December and it is important people make their views known which can be done online or through the Township Office.

Councillor Martin asked if fallen leaves would be cleared up soon and Dennis said he would take this back and let Councillors know, although any delay is probably due to decreasing available resources.

This then led to a discussion around the weed killing in Middleton. Dennis explained that this had come back in house for the first time this year to save money but was being done with reduced resources and the weed killer was not as powerful as in the past for health and safety and environmental reasons. Terry Linden said the Middleton Arena concourse

in particular was looking very bad and East Ward Councillors said there were several areas in their wards which looked like they had not been done at all, Farmway being one of the worst.

#### **4. Recycling Plant on Grimshaw Lane**

Jon Davenport from the Environment Agency (EA) gave the Forum the following update on the work being done to deal with the issues surrounding the Waste Exchange:

Odour problems have been identified at the site over the summer/autumn and the cause has been put down to a mixture of the following:

1. Lack of containment (building not properly sealed, doors open etc)
2. Potentially odorous wastes being received onsite
3. Plant breakdown and malfunction (causing backlog of materials)
4. Waste tonnages onsite being too high
5. Lack of comprehensive procedures for dealing with odour

The site has been warned regarding the above and site inspection frequency has remained high. In response, the company have:

1. Carried out an inspection of the building and identified a several areas where odour could escape - these have now been sealed.
2. The site have cleared out a large batch of odorous waste and investigated where it came from - they identified the company it came from have now banned them from depositing at the site (independent checks have confirmed odorous, degraded wastes onsite at the source company). Quarantine procedures and pre-acceptance checks have been updated accordingly.
3. External maintenance and supply contracts have been reviewed and in-house maintenance has been increased. The site now shut down for longer between shifts for inspection and maintenance of machinery and plant. A new pre-shredder is due to be onsite soon which will prevent larger items damaging the more-susceptible larger shredding machinery and will hopefully speed up processing considerably.
4. A Compliance Notice was served on the site requesting the reduction of tonnages onsite (deadline Fri 12th Nov 2011). A laser scanning and photographing device was brought onto the site to assess tonnages and compliance with the Notice. Results are expected soon - non-compliance with a Notice can result in prosecution.
5. A new Odour Management Plan has been produced by the company (which now becomes part of their permit and is enforceable against). The OMP details what the site is doing to prevent odour and what they will do should these measures not work. It also includes regular odour monitoring by the company and details what the company will do on receiving complaints.

In addition to investment in things to deal with the odour issues at the site, they are also putting up a higher litter fence along the boundary with Wince Brook and planning to incorporate bunds to prevent spillages escaping the building.

Samples from the dust monitor installed near the main building entrance (downwind from the site) are collected weekly and so far the levels of dust are well below nuisance levels and there have therefore been no breaches.

Bob Magee reported that there had been a slight improvement in the odour but basically the site was in the wrong place and the Council should take some responsibility for this. The continual damage being done to the building by vehicles means that it is never airtight so there are always smells escaping and the odour is particularly bad in the area between Wells Street and Saxon Street. It can still be smelt even up on Middleton View near Tonge Hall. The firm is still leaving the fire doors adjacent to the road open a lot and Jon said he would look into this further.

Both Terry Linden and Councillor Martin wanted to thank Jon for all his hard work and attendance at the meetings updating members on the situation.

Jon then reported that the Environment Agency is also asking that any incidents or information regarding storage of waste tyres, waste metals (including waste cabling) and pollution of rivers be reported to 0800 80 70 60. .

## **5. Grot Spots**

- a) Terry Linden - is anything going to be done about the fact that the new paving in Middleton Garden's stops in the middle of Ramplins chip shop and doesn't go as far as the taxi rank?
- b) Councillor Wardle – advertising posters have started to appear on the railings surrounding Bowlee Park.
- c) Councillor Martin – the car park of the Old Cock pub on Baytree Lane is full of litter and fly tipping.
- d) Councillor Martin – the whole left side (non-residential) of Baytree Lane looks very grotty and unkempt
- e) Councillor Martin – The site of the Libertys factory looks a state and needs something doing.
- f) Jean Bunner - The land next to 76 Long Street, the Old Hare and Hounds pub which is now converted to offices looks terrible. It was asked who the land belonged to.
- g) Brian Johnson made the statement that a lot of the litter issues in Middleton are because, in his opinion, there are too many takeaways in Middleton and Councillors should take this into account on the Planning Sub-Committee.

## **6. Good News/Thanks**

Terry Linden asked that it be minuted that after the issue of the state of the site of the old Kings Arms pub site was raised at the last meeting, he would like to thank officers for the work done to deal with it and the site has shown a big improvement.

## **7. Transport Issues**

Terry Linden started by saying he thinks it is appalling that as Transport Issues is now an item on the agenda that there was not a Highways Officer present. Debbie explained that she had agreed to take Highways issues raised to the relevant officer and bring the responses to the next meeting via the Action Point Report. Although Terry said that the only place the public can raise highways/transport issues is this meeting, Debbie explained that members of the public can also attend Township Committee and ask questions and that there is always a Highways officer present at these meetings. The Chair agreed that Debbie would request that a Highways officer attends future meetings of the Forum. Terry said that it should have said in the previous minutes that regarding Highways enforcement around Townley Street/Old Hall Street and Long Street/Wood Street areas, what is the point of all the regeneration work being carried out in Middleton Town Centre if the enforcement of parking regulations are not carried out. He said this also applied to the drainage in the Assheton Roundabout subway.

Terry was unhappy with the responses to the enforcement points he had raised both in the Action Point report and at a meeting he had had with Julie Rushton from the parking team, and Steve Reay and John Grahamslaw from the Highways team. Julie explained that

around Bedcrest there are double yellow lines that allow loading/unloading and that if parking officers see HGV's waiting there, they will tell them that if after 5 minutes the officer has seen no evidence of loading/unloading they will be given a fixed penalty notice. This usually leads to the HGV's moving before the 5 minutes are up. Terry said that this is ridiculous and officers should not warn the drivers but observe and then issues notices. There was some agreement from other members of the Forum. Terry stated that due to HGV's parking where they shouldn't this had led to other drivers flouting the regulations and parking where they shouldn't. He disagreed with parking services that there was not a big problem in the area as on his way to the meeting he had observed 2 cars parked on the pavement on Townley Street and 9 cars parked on double yellow lines on Old Hall Street. The cars parked on Old Hall Street cause a health and safety issue as this is the entrance coaches coming to the Middleton Arena use. Terry stated that the problems are an issue of resources and that he has asked on several occasions for information on how many parking officers there are in the Borough, how many hours they spent in Middleton in the last 12 months and how many tickets were issued. Councillor Martin asked if it could also be asked how many hours the parking officers are in Middleton on average per week. Bob Magee said that the parking officers should spend less time giving out tickets in Council car parks and more time dealing with parking enforcement on the streets. David Lappin said that he had been speaking to the owners of Lord's butchers, who were not happy about market vehicles being parked on either the road or pavements near their shop. They had reported this to the Council on several occasions but nothing has been done.

- ◆ Vehicles are still parking around the gap where Horridges was and there are a lot of loose paving stones and there are some that have been replaced by tarmac as opposed to new flagstones.

- ◆ Parking officers are not enforcing the disabled spaces on the concourse at Middleton Arena.

- ◆ Tesco entrance road – Terry Linden was again not happy with the response given in the Action Point report and stated there was a planning issue, where due to the number of planning changes, planning officers had not dealt with the process properly in particular with regards to the entrance road, the cage at the back of the store or the proposed planned taxi rank on Park Road. Paul Ambrose from Planning said that perhaps the way forward was for planning officers to look at the plans to see if they have been contravened. If they have been there is action the Council can take, but if not, although people may not be happy with the layout, there is not a lot the Council can do.

## **8. Litterwatch**

No report.

## **9. Langley Environment Group**

No report.

## **10. Friends of Jubilee Park**

No report.

## **11. Friends of Middleton View**

Christine Grime reported via email that the group met last month with Sue Southward and Mike Cummings of the Countryside Services Dept and discussed a management plan for the area. The group are waiting for the paperwork to be sent to fill in the details.

The group are also considering applying to 'The Jubilee Woods Project - Woodland Trust' for trees to plant in the 'shared spaces of neighbourhoods'.

## **12. Middleton Civic Association**

No report.

### **13. Friends of Wince Brook**

It was agreed that the group be added as an agenda item for future meetings so that they can keep the Forum updated on progress in the area.

### **13. AOB**

a) Councillor Boriss had asked the Chair to raise the issue the response he had got from Tesco when he reported that syringes had been found in the main Tesco car park. The initial member of staff had replied that it was the Council's responsibility but the car park is actually private and owned by Tesco. Councillor Boriss then spoke to a manager at the store who said that he would deal with the issue but to this point no feedback has been received.

b) Brian Johnson raised the issue of traffic lights at the junction of Mainway and Manchester New Road and it was explained that it had been looked at by Highways but due to the high cost involved and the budget restraints it was not possible at present due to more pressing priorities.

### **11. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Middleton Environment Forum will be on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012 after Middleton Planning Sub-Committee (approximately 6:45pm) at Middleton Community Training Centre, Long Street, Middleton.