

# STRATFIELD MORTIMER

## Parish Council Newsletter

### June 2017



**Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood  
Development Plan REFERENDUM  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017**



## Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council May 2017



**Julian Earl (Chairman)**



**Haydn Selywn-Jones (Clerk)**



**Mike Dennett  
(Vice Chairman)**



**John Bull  
Cemetery\* FTA**



**Tony Butcher  
Planning\*, RFC**



**Nick Carter  
Comms; NDPCP, RFC**



**Phil Challis  
Planning, FTA**



**Dudley Ives  
Planning, NDPCP, RFC\***



**Lucy Jones  
Comms**

Abbreviations: Comms Communications; FTA Fairground, Trees and Amenities; NDPCP NDP  
Community Projects; RFC Roads, Footpaths and Commons. Note \* denotes chair of committee

**Continued on page 23**

# Contents

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council May 2017	2 & 23
Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendum	4
Annual Parish Meeting	6
Annual Report of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council	7
Mortimer Heritage Trail	11
Zebra Crossing at St John's School	11
Changes arising from Annual Parish Council Meeting	12
West Berkshire Council Housing Site Allocations DPD	13
Update on Mortimer Library	14
Councillor Peter Blagden	16
New Hospital Bus Service	16
Burghfield and Mortimer Handybus	17
Update on Communications	18
Resurfacing of The Street	18
Superfast Broadband	19
Defibrillators	20
Parish Council Meetings	21
Councillor Vacancies	21
Upcoming Events on the Fairground	21
Other Useful Contacts	22
Contact details	24

# Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendum

**“Do you want West Berkshire District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Stratfield Mortimer to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”**

This is the question that you will be asked to vote on in the referendum on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

This is your chance to influence the way that the parish develops from now until 2026. So please find the time to come along and cast your vote.

It has taken over three years to reach the point where the community can cast their vote for or against the neighbourhood plan. Only if there is a majority in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan will it be allowed to influence the future of the village.

## **Now is the time for your vote.**

- The voting process will be the same as for the general election. Anyone who could vote in the general election, and lives within the parish, is entitled to vote in the referendum.
- Postal votes and proxy votes can be used, if registered, just as with the general election.
- The polling station will be in the Community Centre as it was at the general election.

**A YES vote will allow up to 110 homes (with an enhanced mix of houses, flats and bungalows to suit the particular needs of Mortimer)** to be built behind St. John’s School and mean that from then on WBC must use the Mortimer NDP policies to help determine all future planning applications in Mortimer.

**A NO vote will not stop future development in Mortimer** and WBC will not take into consideration the Mortimer NDP policies in determining planning applications in Mortimer. WBC will decide where the housing goes and the design of the site(s) and the mix and design of the homes will be in the hands of the developer(s). There will be no requirement for consultation with the community or the Parish Council.

**The Vision** for the parish which has been included in the plan is:

The Plan will make it possible for people to live the whole of their lives in the parish if they so wish.

- The rural character and setting of the parish will remain with the minimum of intrusion on the existing surrounding green and agricultural space.

To move towards that Vision the plan includes the following **Key Policies**:

**Housing Development:**

- There will be one housing site behind The Horse and Groom and St John's school
- It will contain a good mix of homes including houses, bungalows and apartments
- There will be an emphasis on providing starter and downsizing homes

**Housing Related:**

- Land will be set aside for the future provision of education and medical facilities
- A very large area of public open space will be provided
- The site will not be overly dense and will be well landscaped

## **Infrastructure:**

- More car parking at the station will be promoted
- Traffic calming in the village will be encouraged
- Adequate drainage and water supply will be provided

## **Green Issues:**

- Biodiversity and protection of wildlife will be sought
- Several areas will be designated as Local Green Spaces giving them particular protection

More information on the Neighbourhood Plan and the referendum can be found in the library or at:

[www.tinyurl.com/WBCMortimerNDP](http://www.tinyurl.com/WBCMortimerNDP) or at:

[www.mortimer-ndp.org.uk](http://www.mortimer-ndp.org.uk)

## **Annual Parish Meeting**

The annual Parish Meeting was held at St John's Hall on 26th April 2017 and was attended by about 40 people.

The meeting opened with an Update on Local Policing by PC Ian McDonnell of Thames Valley Police who emphasised that the latest figures showed that crime was relatively low in Mortimer. He also stated that the form of Neighbourhood Policing would change in June. There would be separate response and investigation teams which should result in quick responses to incidents. PCSOs would also be reverting to a more traditional role of providing police visibility in the community. PC McDonnell also stated that there appeared to be a reluctance in the community to provide statements on incidents; without such evidence the police were unable to further proceed with charges.

The next item on the agenda was the election of a Trustee for the Alfred Palmer Memorial Field Trust. The Chairman reported that Sarah Smith was unopposed and was therefore re-elected to serve until April 2020.

The meeting continued with an update on the Neighbourhood Development Plan from Cllr Pat Wingfield. Cllr Wingfield stated that further evidence on the landscape issues raised by the Inspector had been submitted to West Berkshire Council and that the suggested minor amendments had also been made. WBC would decide on 9<sup>th</sup> May whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If so, the referendum would probably be held towards the end of June.

Cllr Mike Dennett then presented the Annual Report of the Parish Council (see next article). The Open Forum raised the questions of parking on and the road condition of the Street. District Cllr Graham Bridgman confirmed part of the Street would be resurfaced in the summer.

*Note: Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting are available on the SMPC website ([www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](http://www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk)) or by contacting the Clerk.*

## **Annual Report of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council 2016/17**

*This report was presented by the Chairman, Cllr Mike Dennett, at the Annual Parish Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017.*

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council last May, Cllrs Mike Dennett and Julian Earl were re-elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively for 2016/17. Following the resignation of Cllr Angie Philips, no election was called and Mick Johnson was co-opted

(from three applicants) at the July meeting. Unfortunately, Mick has just tendered his resignation. I would like to thank him for his useful contributions during the last nine months.

Cllr Pete Blagden has also just resigned. Pete was first co-opted to the Council in June 2003 and has played a major part in many activities since then. The Council thanks you for your many contributions and will miss you. Notice of the two vacancies will be posted shortly and if no election is called the Council will advertise for candidates for co-option.

Following a spell as locum Clerk, Haydn Selywn-Jones has now been in post as Clerk for a year. In March, Lynn Hannawin joined the staff as a part-time Administrative Assistant, a post which attracted twelve applications. Frank Stansfield continues his sterling work as out part-time Custodian.

During the past year the Council has continued its routine work but has also undertaken extra activities. On the Fairground, the routine maintenance has been supplemented with a phased programme of gorse clearance, clearance of vegetation along the boundary with Badgers Croft and tree work to remove dangerous branches. The Council did have difficulty in getting parts and suitable trained contractors to repair the 'Titan' on the Fairground. However, this has now been done and in addition the two gates to the small children's play area have been replaced.

The Cemetery has had seven burials and six cremations during the year and the hedging around the extension has been completed. The Planning Committee has considered over 70 applications in the last year and passed its comments to West Berkshire Council (WBC). Councillors have deployed SID (Speed Indicator Device) twice this year, each time at a number of sites within the Parish. The problem with

speeding remains the few cars with excessive speeds. The Council has tried to improve communications with the public via Facebook, the newsletter and the website. The web site is being considered for improvement including access to more Council documents. In addition, Major Kemp's research on the soldiers listed on the War Memorial has been put on the website. The Council again provided a Christmas tree for the Fairground but sadly the lights were completely destroyed by vandals.

During the year the Council decided not to renew the PCSO contract as there was no demonstrable added value in paying for this, a view also arrived at independently by Burghfield and Sulhamstead Parish Councils who were our partners. The Council also responded to WBC on their budget proposals and has been involved in discussions with WBC on the future of Mortimer Library. The Council has agreed in principle to contribute financially to the library budget provided it can be clearly shown to be for the benefit of parishioners. Volunteers are needed and that is currently being handled by WBC. There is a need to set up a Library Liaison Group involving members of the community to get involved in shaping the future form of the library. The Council meet with the Royal British Legion regarding Garth Hall and has commissioned a structural survey to estimate the costs of returning it to use and whether or not it makes sense to take over as trustees of the Hall. The Council has been involved in discussions with WBC about the proposed zebra crossing outside St John's school. The Council disagreed with WBC's interpretation of the street lighting requirements, but supported the project which should be carried out this summer.

The SMPC budget for 2017/18 increased the Band D Council Tax, payable to the Council to £82. This followed no increase in the previous year and is still considerably less than Burghfield (£103). The

strategy for this was explained in the February 2017 newsletter, but in brief the Council had no funds available for grants (such as the Library and Handybus) or to press ahead with Community Projects.

In the latter respect, the Council last May set up a NDP Community Projects Committee to help assess priorities for projects, to ascertain who can help implement such projects, to identify sources of funding and to report back to Full Council. Projects being considered vary in scale: a Heritage Trail in the Parish is almost complete, additional parking at the station has been kick started and a planning application involving Englefield estate and GWR is likely by the end of the year. The possible footpath / cycleway between Burghfield and Mortimer was put on hold for one year at the November 2016 meeting because of concerns over costs and safety aspects. A project on sports facilities has started and that on traffic management has highlighted two issues (parking on Grazeley Road) and the effects of any development in the village. These are being taken forward by the appropriate committees.

At this meeting last year, I reported that the Council was organising the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> celebration on the Fairground and hoping it would be a success. I am very glad to say it was. The Beacon will be lit again on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018 (Remembrance Day) when a nationwide chain of beacons will be lit to remember the end of the First World War. Finally, I would like to thank the council staff and all the councillors for all their time, commitment, and effort over year as we strive to serve the community.

## **Mortimer Heritage Trail**

The Parish Council, in partnership with the Mortimer History Society, are pleased to announce an exciting new way to discover information about the village. Through two self-guided walks, you'll discover a variety of interesting and unusual facts about places and people. The walks, each covering over twenty points of interest, start at and return to the Fairground. Following circular routes, they're each about 3km long. One covers Stratfield Mortimer, the original part of the village, the other Mortimer Common, the newer settlement. Copies of the trails will be available shortly (please check website for availability). To get your FREE copy visit the Library, The Baobab (former Post Office) or download it from our web site [www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](http://www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk). We'd be delighted to hear your comments. A smartphone version is under development.

## **Zebra Crossing at St John's School**

The last newsletter reported that the actual crossing will be slightly to the east of the school gate and that work was expected to start on the 10th April.

The Parish council have now had confirmation that works will be undertaken during the forthcoming school summer holidays with a provisional start date of Monday 24th July with the works taking approximately two weeks to complete.

It has been made clear to the Council that this is a provisional date at this time.

## Changes arising from Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

It is a statutory requirement that the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Committee members of the Parish Council are appointed annually at the May meeting of the Parish Council. The meeting, on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017, appointed Cllr Julian Earl as Chairman and Cllr Mike Dennett as Vice Chairman for 2017/18. Members of Committees are shown in the table below and below the photographs of Councillors (inside covers). Four members of the public were co-opted as non-voting members to Communications and NDP Community Project Committees. The Chairman of each Committee is indicated by \*. The Chairman and Vice Chairman are *ex officio* members of each committee.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Members</b>
Cemetery	Bull*, Challis, Kiley, Lewis
Communications	Richardson*, Carter, Jones (co-opted D Kilshaw)
Fairground, Trees and Amenities	Kiley*, Bull, Challis, Kiley, Lewis, Lock, Richardson, Wingfield
NDP Implementation	Wingfield*, Carter, Ives, Kiley (co-opted T. Barber, S. Carter, D. Morsley)
Planning	Butcher*, Challis, Ives, Kiley, Lewis, Wingfield
Roads Footpaths and Commons	Ives*, Butcher, Carter, Lewis, Lock
Finance and General Purposes	Chairman, Vice Chairman and Chairman of other committees, ie: Earl*, Dennett, Bull, Butcher, Ives, Kiley, Richardson, Wingfield

# West Berkshire Council Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2006-2026)

This document sets out the sites that the West Berkshire Council (WBC) are allocating for building new houses from now to 2026. It was approved by WBC on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017. There is now a six week period in which a legal challenge can be made. Assuming there is no challenge, the sites for development throughout the district, over and above those previously allocated in the Core Strategy, will be established.

You can read the document at:

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=28781>

In the East Kennet Valley, sites in Burghfield have been allocated to provide approximately 160 houses and a site in Woolhampton is allocated to provide approximately 30 houses. The settlement boundaries for both Burghfield and Woolhampton will be extended to include these new developments.

For Mortimer the document states:

*“2.38 110 houses will be identified through the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Stratfield Mortimer.*

*2.39 The Council will positively support Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council to identify the most appropriate way of meeting this requirement through the NDP including the allocation of a suitable site/s and a review of the settlement Boundary.*

*2.40 The delivery of the NDP will be monitored by the Council to ensure the housing requirement is met. The Council reserves the right to identify opportunities to address any shortfall through the DPD process if the NDP is not adopted within 2 years of the adoption of the Housing Site Allocations DPD.”*

In addition, new planning policies, such as that relating to building in the Countryside will be adopted. Policy C1 states:

*“There is a presumption in favour of development and redevelopment within the settlement boundaries of the following settlements (a list of 50 settlements including Mortimer). There will be a presumption against new residential development outside of the settlement boundaries. Exceptions to this are limited to rural exception housing schemes, conversion of redundant buildings, housing to accommodate rural workers, extension to or replacement of existing residential units and limited infill in settlements in the countryside with no defined settlement boundary. All proposals will need to satisfy the other policies in this section of the Plan.”*

What does this mean for Mortimer? If the NDP is adopted then the site allocated for development will be the one behind the Horse and Groom that was chosen by the community and is now included in the NDP. The settlement boundary will be extended to include this site and there will be a presumption against future development outside the settlement boundary during the plan period (until 2026). If the NDP is not adopted, then WBC will allocate land to accommodate 110 houses and the settlement boundary will be redrawn around the site or sites they choose.

## **Update on Mortimer Library**

The latest information from West Berkshire Council is as follows. Mortimer Library will remain open and at present the plan is to retain the same opening hours. However, there will be a 44% reduction in staff across the whole library service and it is envisaged that during opening hours the library will be manned by one member of staff and one or more volunteers. A self-service kiosk will be installed to deal

initially with loans and returns. It is expected that these changes will start in July. SMPC has agreed in principle to contribute financially (about £3,500 this year) to the library service provided it is spent entirely on Mortimer library.

There is an obvious need for volunteers to assist library users, shelve items, to generally contribute to the smooth running of the library and possibly help with activities in the library. The necessary training will be provided in the library. Full details are available on the WBC website <http://westberks.gov.uk/libraries> or in the library and the contact is Gemma Taylor [volunteerinyourlibrary@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:volunteerinyourlibrary@westberks.gov.uk) tel. 01635 519533. It is hoped that volunteers would contribute a minimum of 2 to 3 hours at least once a month. So, the individual commitment of time may not be too great, but probably more than 20 volunteers are needed.

In addition, WBC are looking for a Community Library Organiser Volunteer. This person would coordinate the rota of volunteers in the library to ensure the library can stay open. Much of this work could be done from home or in the library. If this is of interest, please contact Gemma Taylor as above.

There is a need to set up a local library working group (perhaps Friends of Mortimer Library) to help promote the library, contribute to future plans and be involved in the activities of the library. The Parish Council is seeking help from within the community for this. Ideally, this would be a genuine community group with some representation from the Parish Council. If you are interested in playing a part in this please contact the Parish Council Office (see back cover for contact details).

## **Councillor Peter Blagden**

Peter (Pete) Blagden has submitted his resignation from the Parish Council. Pete is well known in the village for his many activities such as the walking, gardening and film clubs. Perhaps less well known is that fact that Pete has been a Councillor since June 2003 when he was co-opted to the Council. He has stood, and been elected at every election since then.



Over the years, Pete has paid a major role in Council activities. One particular interest has encompassed the conservation and management of the Fairground and the provision of facilities on the Fairground and Pete has for many years been the Chairman of the Fairground, Trees and Amenities Committee. Pete also felt strongly about communication and served for many years on the Communications committee. Not known to most, Pete took it upon himself (along with Jean's support!) to deliver the SMPC newsletter to all the outlying parts of the Parish- the various remote farms etc. This was done quietly and efficiently for many years. Pete has also been a member of the Planning committee and of the Financial and General Purposes Committee and has contributed enormously to the work of the Council. On behalf of the Council and Parishioners we thank you for all your wise and valuable contributions.

## **New Hospital Bus Service**

There have been many complaints about the difficulty of parking at The Royal Berks Hospital. Now there is a new way of getting there without the hassle of finding a parking space.

Reading buses are now operating a service from the MereOak Park and Ride site (by junction 11 of the M4) to the hospital. This service started on the 13<sup>th</sup> March this year. The service runs direct to and from the hospital, non-stop, at three times during the day. At other times you can catch the park and ride bus into Reading and there is a connecting bus to the hospital. The bus stops at the main entrance to the hospital.

Further details can be obtained by phone from 0118 950 4000, at the bus shop in the Broad Street Mall or at <http://reading-buses.co.uk/times/>

## **Burghfield and Mortimer Handybus**

With the budget cutbacks that West Berkshire Council have had to implement, the Burghfield & Mortimer Handybus faced a major challenge in maintaining the service and sought help from the three Parish Councils – Burghfield Parish Council, Sulhamstead Parish Council and Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council, whose communities they served.

Following discussions, we were able to agree a grant of £2,006 for 2017 – 2018, at the SMPC Full Council meeting on 9th March 2017, which was in-line with the passenger and trip numbers utilised by residents of Mortimer.

This grant, along with similarly calculated grants from Burghfield Parish Council and Sulhamstead Parish Council will enable the Burghfield & Mortimer Handybus to continue their valuable social service for another year, during which time they will also be able to investigate and consolidate further funding to continue the service into future years.

## Update on communications

The council's Facebook page remains active and lots of useful messages are posted there for general information to the community.



It is anticipated that in the next quarter additional development work will be carried out on the Council's website to improve the offering.

## Resurfacing of The Street

District Councillor Graham Bridgman has reported, due to "the accelerated onset of failure that has occurred on The Street this winter", WBC have scheduled The Street to be resurfaced this summer from Strawberry Fields to Pitfield Lane, and, if budgets allow to "try and include the section from Mortimer Lane to the mini-roundabout near to the Station as part of the works. However, if this is not possible, it will be considered for inclusion in next year's programme."

The scheduled work will involve machine planing (removing the old surface) to a depth of 40mm throughout the scheme and replacing to the same levels with a new 40mm DBM (Dense Bituminous Macadam) surface course. Once the existing poor material has been planed off, the contractors will also replace any further material that is deemed to be in poor condition (usually to a depth of a further 60mm, ie 100mm in total) before laying the 40mm DBM surface course. Following an

approach by residents from some of the private roads in Mortimer, it is likely that the planings will be recycled to fill in some potholes in those roads.

The work will be completed during school holidays (no earlier than August) and should last no longer than five days under a full road closure, with advance notice signs being displayed two weeks prior to work commencing.

## **Superfast broadband**

The availability of high speed (fixed line) broadband internet in Mortimer, is set to expand this summer with the slightly delayed arrival of "Phase 2" of Superfast Berkshire, a government backed initiative to deliver download speeds of more than 24Mbps to rural areas.

The Parish Council has been in contact with the provider Gigaclear to make sure they were aware of the forthcoming resurfacing of The Street. As a result, they have altered their install plans to ensure they have finished prior to the resurfacing - since they would not be allowed to dig the road up after it was resurfaced.

Current indications are that the Phase 2 service will start to arrive in July. You can check availability in your street by visiting the web site.

<http://www.gigaclear.com/superfastberkshire>

If upon checking you see a message asking you to register interest, this means either you are already served by the "phase 1" service or are not in a currently planned area of phase 2. In both cases you can register interest for a "commercial" offer although there's no promise of an offer.

## Defibrillators

It is with very grateful thanks to Mortimer Village Partnership and Tadley Community First Responders that we now have three publicly accessible defibrillators installed in Mortimer.

Two have been funded by Mortimer Village Partnership and the third by Tadley Community First Responders, who are also kindly taking on the maintenance of all three. You will no doubt have already seen them as they are installed in highly visible, secure, metal cabinets at the following locations:

- On the outside of the Sansome & George office on West End Road
- On the outside of The Horse & Groom on The Street and
- On the outside of Mortimer Surgery on Victoria Road

These locations provide reasonable coverage of the most built up part of the village.

We would also thank these three businesses for agreeing to provide sites for the boxes, which also involves providing electricity to keep the boxes at an even temperature.

If you call the emergency services with a relevant medical emergency you may well be directed to go and collect the nearest defibrillator. If so, you will be given the code to open the box in order to gain access to the defibrillator. You don't need any training to use the defibrillator – all the instructions are included.

You can help save someone's life, so don't hesitate if directed to do so by the emergency services.

## Parish Council Meetings

Full meetings of the Parish Council are normally held on the second Thursday of each month in the Methodist Church West End Road, Mortimer at 7:30 pm. There is a ten-minute slot at the start of each meeting for members of the public to raise concerns and comment on items on the agenda. SMPC would like to encourage members of the public to attend meetings. The next meetings for 2017 are:

13 <sup>th</sup> July	10 <sup>th</sup> Aug	14 <sup>th</sup> Sept	12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	9 <sup>th</sup> Nov	14 <sup>th</sup> Dec
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Committee meetings are called as required. There is often a Planning Committee meeting ahead of the Full Council meeting (dates above) with another meeting of that committee in the intervening periods. The Agenda for all committee meetings are posted on the Parish Council noticeboards and on the website prior to the meetings.

## Councillor Vacancies

Following the resignation of Cllrs Pete Blagden and Mick Johnson, there are two vacancies on the Parish Council. The official Notice of Vacancy has been posted on the notice boards. This enables members of the public to request an election. If no election is called, the Council will advertise for candidates for co-option. This will be around the middle of June and will be shown on the website and on Facebook.

## Upcoming events on the Fairground

MVP Fun Day Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July

Village cricket match for the Alan Thorpe Trophy Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July

## Other Useful Contacts

**Fairground Emergency** **0743 6807543**

To report any emergencies and dangerous situations on the Fairground.

For non-emergencies please contact the Parish Council Office

**0118 9331955**

**Police Non-Emergency** **101**

To report crime and other concerns that do not require an emergency response.

**NHS non-Emergency** **111**

If you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency.

**West Berks Council (WBC)** **01635 55111**

**NOTE THIS NUMBER REPLACES THE OLD ONE 0165 42400**

**WBC Out of Hours Emergency Contact** **01635 42161**

To report major incidents out of hours.

**West Berkshire Council Streetcare Team** **01635 519080**  
**streetcare@westberks.gov.uk**

To report problems with streets, roads, highways, pavements, etc.

**West Berkshire District Councillors for the Mortimer Ward**

Cllr Mollie Lock **0118 9332858**

Cllr Graham Bridgman **0118 9331707**

**Mortimer Village Partnership** **[www.mortimervillage.org.uk](http://www.mortimervillage.org.uk)**

For village news and information on events, including a directory of local clubs and businesses.

**SMPC May 2017 continued from page 2**



**Neil Kiley**  
Planning; Cemetery; FTA\*;  
NDPCP



**Chris Lewis**  
Planning, Cemetery; FTA, RFC



**Mollie Lock**  
FTA, RFC



**Andrew Richardson**  
Comms\*; FTA



**Pat Wingfield**  
Planning, FTA, NDPCP\*

**Vacancy**



**Vacancy**

**Frank Stansfield**  
Custodian



**Lynn Hannawin**  
Administrative Assistant

Abbreviations: Comms Communications; FTA Fairground, Trees and Amenities; NDPCP NDP  
Community Projects; RFC Roads, Footpaths and Commons. Note \* denotes chair of committee

## PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

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Website: [www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](http://www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk)

Facebook: [facebook.com/stratfieldmortimerparishcouncil](https://facebook.com/stratfieldmortimerparishcouncil)

Minutes and Agendas of Council meetings, as well as other Council information, can be viewed on the above website or on the Parish Council notice boards which are located outside Boabab (the old Post Office) and the Library.

The Parish Council Office is normally open:  
Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays,  
09:30. to 17:00

If the office is closed, correspondence can be left with library staff or put in the Library letter box