



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting held on 14th March 2002 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: G Puddephatt (Chairman), Councillors: J Morden, C Lewis, P Challis, Mrs A Philips, A Thorpe, K Davies, R Peters, M Loader, J Gosling, L Picking, Ms S Harding, Mrs J Lever and Mrs J Kirk (Clerk), 1 Member of the Press.

Apologies: Councillors: J Mazillius, Mrs R Weiss and K Lock

02/46 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the 7th February 2002 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:

Mrs Kirk reported that the three Jubilee seats with commemorative plaques have now been installed.

02/47 **Report from District Councillors:** Ms Harding reported:-

Council Tax: The Council Tax for 2002/03 will rise by 8.5%, which includes a base service increase of 7% plus an extra 1.5% increase for Social Services. Ms Harding said the increase was mainly due to the under funding of Social Services by Central Government and the withdrawal of more post 16 years old education money from the authority than they were previously spending.

Mortimer Hill: The original planning application for 140 houses has been refused. The developers will appeal but no application for 120 has yet been received.

General Planning: Ms Harding reported that the planning application for the Carpenters Arms site had been refused and that new applications for this and the Mortimer Garage site are expected. Consultations regarding planning Green Paper and Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 are taking place. The Partnering negotiations with Amey and West Berkshire Council are still progressing with a start date of early summer if agreement is reached.

Windmill Court: An agreement has been reached in principle with Sovereign Housing to take over the residential wing of Windmill Court, for conversion into sheltered housing. The complex will have a number of "extra care" sheltered housing. This care will be provided in the residents existing flats without the need to move.

02/48 **Planning: Report:** Mr Morden reported that The Planning Committee met once during the month at the Parish Office, on 28th February when 2 applications were considered:

02/00101/HOUSE Abbey Croft, The Street, Mortimer. Internal alterations to cottage, internal alterations to house. Demolition of loggia, dormer windows to roof. No objection. The dormer windows replicate those already present on opposing frontage. The loggia appears to have been a later addition. All subject to no objections from English Heritage etc.

02/00209/HOUSE Stanton, 64 Victoria Road, Mortimer. Extension and alteration. No objection.

The following Planning Decisions have been received:

02/00081/HOUSE 5 St John's Road, Mortimer. Two storey side extension – approved.

02/00167/HOUSE Pippins, The Street, Mortimer. Side addition to existing bungalow – approved.

0102692/HOUSE 67 The Avenue, Mortimer. Rear extension and new garage – approved.

01/02570/OUT: Land adjacent to Oak Stumps, Birch Lane. Erection of new one bedroom bungalow – refused – Tree Preservation Order and Highways.

01/01821/FUL Land adjoining Mortimer Hill House. Erection of 140 dwellings etc. – refused –

1. Over development of site.

1. Contrary to Berkshire Structure Plan, Policy OS1, LD3, EN1, BENV1, BENV2, HSE4, OVS2, OV S3, HSG1, HSG5.

2. Substandard roundabout.

3. Parking & Turning.

4. Road design.

5. Impact on road safety and local transport infrastructure.

6. Affordable Housing – all grouped together, not to same standard as private housing.
7. Ecology – at least two breeding ponds.
 - EN1 - seeks to protect vegetation and wildlife habitats,
 - EN8 - seeks to protect wildlife habitats having special interest.
 - EN9 - conservation measures.

Mr Morden also reported that on 27 February 2002 there was a meeting of the Eastern Area Planning Committee (West Berkshire Council) at Calcot at which the future of the “Carpenter’s Arms” site came up for decision. Councillor Keith Lock had called this application before the Area Committee because of residents’ opposition. The officers’ recommendations was for approval but as SMPC planning committee opposed this on the grounds of over development and between Councillor J Morden, District Councillors Ms S Harding and K Lock and Mrs A Carter (representing local objectors), the other committee members were convinced that this was at least two units too many and there was an unanimous vote for refusal.

Mr Morden advised that on the 7th March he attended a seminar on the Government Green paper on “Planning – Delivering a Fundamental Change” which was conducted by officers of West Berkshire Council. While all those attending agreed that some change was necessary much of what is contained in The Green Paper undermines The Democratic process because:-

1. Although there is talk of local involvement no mention is made of Parish or Town Council participation.
2. Proposed developments prior to consultation with the Planning Authority and other interested bodies is urged. Nobody, including planning officers, liked this as the final application could be viewed as planning department led and leave officers and councillors open to accusation of vested interest.
3. The abolishing of Structure Plans in favour of Regional Plans undermines local grass root involvement.
4. There would still be no third party right of appeal against a decision to approve.
5. Whilst 8week decision-making was acceptable for the majority of householder applications, the proposal that commercial and industrial applications be determined in 13 weeks was considered inappropriate. In these cases speed is not the essence of the process, quality of decision was clearly of prime importance and this could only follow after full consideration of all aspects affecting the local community. A bad decision is forever not just for 13 weeks.
6. Checklists were welcomed to ensure full information is submitted with each application, the prevention of trim tracking penalties for retrospective applications, increased fees to help better finance planning department and consent being limited to 3 years instead of the current 5 years.

The large part of the Green Paper could be summarised as SPEED AND GREED to help big businesses achieve their aims at the expense of the community. Democracy appeared not to figure in the equation. A response has been sent to the DTLR.

i. Update on Mortimer Hill Planning Application: See Planning Decisions above.

ii. Letter re Parking Mortimer Station: Mr Puddephatt read out a letter from Mr P Johnson regarding parking for Mortimer Station, the points covered were: a) immediate parking problems, b) river bank damage caused by current parking adjacent to the Tun Bridge, Stratfield Mortimer and c) the proposed parking strategy in conjunction with planned development in Mortimer and its environs. Mr Puddephatt advised that Commuters are parking their cars (approx 15 to 19 cars daily) on the grass verges in Grazeley Road, as the Station Car Park is full to capacity and the verges are being turned to mud. This was discussed at length and the conclusions were that a) **The Clerk** would contact the owners of the fields adjacent to the Station Car Park to see if their land could be used to extend the car park, b) West Berkshire Council to be asked to take the situation into account when considering planning applications, i.e. proposed Mortimer Hill Development. c) **Mr Puddephatt** is to contact Thames Trains to ask about the possibility of extending the station car park. **The Clerk** to acknowledge Mr Johnson’s letter.

iii. Deposit Draft Joint Structure Plan for Berkshire – Parish Information Session Monday 25th March: Mr J Morden and Mr G Puddephatt to attend meeting at Reading Town Hall.

02/49 **Roads, Footpaths and Commons:**

- i. **Update on Car Park Next to Dads Shop:** Prof. Davies read out the reply from West Berkshire Council to the Parish Council’s letter of the 21st February. They have asked for The Parish Council to be provided with a certified copy of the conveyance of the car park that was issued when they acquired the site from the Electricity Board, together with a copy of the Agreement between the 6 Unitary Authorities, which dealt with the allocation of ex-

County Council properties in April 1998. They also say they have instructed their finance section to raise appropriate invoices to regularise the rental situation. The Parish Council are to continue to pursue this and **Prof. Davies** is to draft a reply to the letter.

- ii. **Update on Gas Main Brewery Common & Consultation Paper:** Prof. Davies reported that a letter and plan regarding the Gas Main had been received from the Legal Department, West Berkshire Council (read out). He stated that he, Mr C Lewis and Mrs J Kirk had subsequently visited Brewery Common to ascertain the route of the gas pipe. **Prof. Davies** suggested that a joint meeting with West Berkshire Council is needed and he will draft a reply.
- iii. **Update on Traffic Calming at Junction of West End Road/Catherine's Hill:** Mrs Kirk reported that after chasing this several times West Berkshire had replied saying that permission is required from the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) for implementing road roundels and they are seeking approval on behalf of the Parish.
- iv. **Parish Paths Initiative 2002/2003:** Mr Peters said that a letter had been received from West Berkshire regarding the Parish Paths Initiative 2002/03 indicating a slightly different format for submitting details of maintenance (clearance, waymarking, signposting etc). It also said that it is unlikely that parish grants for major path "improvement" work will be considered. Mr Peters asked Councillors to forward details to The Clerk if they are aware of any footpath works that need to be carried out so that the appropriate form can be completed.
- v. Mr Peters read out a letter that had been received from Mr Page regarding surface water problems in The Street. He said that he had investigated the three items (leaking water trough between the eastern entrance to The Avenue and Kiln Lane, hedge cuttings outside Mortimer Hall clogging up drains and surface water problems outside Mistletoe Cottage) and could find no evidence that any of these were the cause. The surface water problems in The Street are probably caused by blocked drains/gullies and **The Clerk** is to contact West Berkshire to request that the drains are cleaned and jetted and acknowledge the letter.

02/50 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities:** Mrs Philips reported that the safety inspection had been carried out on 8th March and the only recommendations were that parts of the seesaws need renewing at a cost of £1,500 (£750 parts). **The Clerk** is to get quotations for two new sea saws and report back at the next meeting. Payment of £25 to Wicksteed Leisure (already agreed) was submitted for payment.

- i. **To Discuss Quotations re Fairground Ditch & Hedge:** Mrs Philips and Mr Peters declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. Mr Puddephatt said that two quotations for cutting the hedge along the Windmill Road side of the Fairground had been received: Mr I Philips £400 plus VAT plus tipping charges and Butlers Lands Estate Services £575.00 plus VAT (including disposing of cuttings). It was decided to accept Mr Philips quotation, subject to the work being completed quickly (because of the birds nesting). If this was not possible then the Butlers Lands quotation would then be accepted. This was proposed by Mr L Picking and seconded by Mr C Lewis. **The Clerk** to action.
- ii. **Update on Meeting with Mortimer Cricket Club:** Prof Davies reported that a meeting took place on the 11th March between Mortimer Cricket Club and the Fairground Committee. The Cricket Club are following a request from the Parish Council (Trustees) for the practice nets, which are dangerous, to either be removed them or made safe. Prof. Davies has advised the Cricket Club that the Trustees of the Fairground are trying to regularise the relationship between the user organisations and the Charity. The Cricket Club have been asked if they could let the Trustees see a copy of any Contract/Lease for the Pavilion and also copies of their insurance and accounts. Prof Davies also asked The Chairman of the Parish Council if he could give a brief history of the proposed new pavilion for the benefit of new members of the Council. Mr Puddephatt said that the initiative went back to when Dr Horgan, from the Relief in Need Charity, asked The Council for a flagship project. The idea was to build a pavilion for the whole community with meeting rooms etc with community recreation space, which would be a substantial improvement on the current cricket pavilion and for the whole village. A pamphlet was put together and the Parish Council consulted residents on three occasions and the idea was taken forward for a design with an open competition between 5 local architects. Full

planning permission has now been obtained for the winning design. The Parish Council have written to the Charity Commission informing them of this and have received a favourable reply. The cost of the new project will be approximately £400,000 and to date around half the funds have been raised/promised. An application is to be submitted to the Lottery Fund and the Parish Council do not want to raise funds for this through the Parish Precept.

- iii. **To Discuss Fence Around Fairground Car Park:** Mrs Philips advised that a second quotation had been obtained from Eaton Berry to install a fence around the Fairground Car Park. This will be passed to the Fairground Committee for a decision and they will report back at the next meeting.
- iv. **Fairground Bookings & Permission for Notices on Fence:** Mrs Kirk advised that Burnetts Fair had made a booking to use the Fairground from 16th to 27th April and have asked permission to erect two notices on the Fairground Fence. No objections were raised so **The Clerk** to advise Mr Burnett of this and ask him not to attach notices to telegraph poles, street signs etc.
Mrs Kirk also advised that a request from Mortimer St Mary's Junior School PTA had been received asking if they could attach a notice to the Fairground Fence from the 15th June to 22nd June to advertise their Summer Fayre. No objections were raised so **The Clerk** to advise.
- v. **Mortimer Fairground Trust (Fairground Charity) – Consultation Paper:** Previously circulated. Prof. Davies had drawn up a Consultation Paper on the Mortimer Fairground Trust regarding the present situation, issues that need to be addressed, short and long-term actions to be taken. The main issue being the separation of the Trust's Accounts from the Parish Council Accounts. No further questions were asked.

02/51 **Cemetery:** Mr Gosling reported that the Cemetery Committee had met and had discussed building a wall in the Cemetery so that plaques could be placed (with cremated remains below). The cost of the wall would be £4,000 and as it would only take 29 plaques it was decided it was not a viable proposition. The Cemetery Committee are now considering the possibility of a memorial garden (with donated shrubs).

- i. **To agree Quotation for Grass Cutting Cemetery:** See below

02/52 **To Discuss Grass Cutting St Mary's Churchyard:** Mrs A Philips declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. Mr Puddephatt advised that a meeting between the Parish Council and the PCC had taken place on 27th February regarding the shortfall between the Parish Council's grant and the available funds for grass cutting at St Mary's Churchyard. The solution was that the PCC would contact Wokefield Parish Council and West Berkshire Council for a further Grant, this to be paid towards the cost of grass cutting. The Parish Council have obtained a combined quotation to employ Mr I Philips to cut the grass at St Mary's Churchyard and the Cemetery from 1st April to 31st October 2002 for £2,852 plus VAT. The PCC were asked to confirm that this arrangement was satisfactory before today's meeting. As the Parish Council had not had confirmation Mr Puddephatt proposed that if the PCC come back with a positive response the combined quotation to Mr I Philips be accepted (so that he may commence grass cutting from the beginning of April) if not the quotation for £490 for the Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council Cemetery only be accepted. If the PCC do not agree to this the original grant of £1,300 would be forwarded to the PCC. **The Clerk** to action and chase PCC.

02/53 **WBC/Countryside Agency – Parish Plan Pilot Scheme:** Mr Puddephatt advised Councillors that Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council had been successful in their bid to be included in West Berkshire's Parish Plan Pilot Scheme and will receive a grant of £500 from West Berkshire in addition to an application to the Countryside Agency for a Parish Plan Grant. The support from WBC will include a plan team in preparing a bid for a grant to the Countryside Agency, advice on communication/PR, themes to cover, techniques to involve people, village design elements of the plan and advice on preparing an action plan. A meeting between interested councillors, West Berkshire and the Community Council for Berkshire has been arranged for Tuesday 26th March with the launch at the Annual Parish Assembly on Wednesday 24th April 2002. A presentation on the Parish Plan Pilot Scheme will be made by West Berkshire Council at next month's Parish Council Meeting on 11th April 2002.

- 02/54 **Code of Conduct for Parish Councils and Register of Members Interests:** Mr Puddephatt advised that he and Mrs Kirk had attended a training session on adoption of the Code of Conduct run by West Berkshire Council. Several handouts, including question and answers, and a copy of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council's Code of Conduct were circulated to all Parish Councillors prior to the meeting. The Code will have to be agreed at the next Parish Council Meeting with adoption on the 1st May 2002. Each elected or co-opted member of The Council will then have two months within which to sign up to the Code and complete his/her entry in the Register of Members interests. If they do not do so, they will cease to be a member of the Council.
- 02/55 **Councillor Training:** Mrs Kirk said it was hoped that this was to be arranged for a Saturday in June and will report back at the next meeting.
- 02/56 **Update on Sovereign Housing/West Berkshire Information Centre:** Ms Harding and Mrs Kirk are trying to find out more information from Sovereign Housing, West Berkshire Council and Thames Valley Police and will report back at the next meeting.
- 02/57 **Update on Meeting with Governors St Mary's School re Change in Status:** Three members of the Parish Council attended the meeting with some members of the Governors of St Mary's School regarding the change in status of the school.
- 02/58 **Letter re Cleaning/Up-Grading Mortimer War Memorial:** Mr Puddephatt read out a letter from the President of the Mortimer British Legion (Air Vice-Marshal B H Newton CB OBE) in which he asks for the Parish Council's assistance in a) Cleaning the Memorial at a cost of £876 plus VAT and b) supplying and laying an octagonal paved area extending 4 feet with an 18 inch post at each corner at a cost of £7,500 plus VAT. After some discussion it was felt that the Memorial had been cleaned relatively recently (approx. 2 years ago) and in the Parish Council's opinion it didn't need to be done again at this stage. As the subject of paving around the war memorial had been discussed and not passed at the Parish Council Meeting of the 11th October 2001 (01/188) it was decided that **The Clerk** would write to Air Vice-Marshall Newton and advise him of the Council's decision.
- 02/59 **Parish Office:** Mr Gosling advised the Council that he had received a letter addressed to him at his home address from Kestrel Windows stating that in their view there is still an outstanding balance of £1,858.85 for the Parish Office. **Ms Harding** said that she would take the matter up with the Project Officer at West Berkshire Council.
- i. **To Discuss Up-Dating Fax/Photocopier:** Mr Gosling proposed purchasing a new photocopier/fax for the Parish Office at an approximate cost of £125 as both the current machines are very old and not working properly. This was seconded by Mrs A Philips and unanimously agreed. **The Clerk** to investigate/order.
- 02/60 **Finance – To Agree Accounts for Payment:**
- i. **Thames Water £3.55 for water Trough, Fairground:** Proposed by Mr J Gosling and seconded by Mr P Challis.
- ii. **Andrew Hazelden £120.00 for Community Award Plate:** Proposed by Mr J Gosling and seconded by Mr C Lewis.
- iii. **St John's Hall Management Committee for Hire of Hall from October to December 2001 re Silverlink £240.00:** Proposed by Mr J Gosling and seconded by Mrs A Philips.
- iv. **Glasdon UK Ltd for 3 Jubilee Seats with Commemorative Plaques £1,348.91 (including VAT):** Proposed by Mr A Thorpe and seconded by Mr P Challis.
- v. **J Clarke £323.50 for Installing Seats Above:**
- vi. **BALC – Annual Membership & Magazines £602.22:** Proposed by Ms S Harding and seconded by Mr J Morden.
- vii. **SPISE – Annual Membership £30.00:** Proposed by Mr J Morden and seconded by Mr R Peters.
- viii. **Clerk's Salary:** Proposed by Mr J Morden and seconded by Mr R Peters.
- ix. **Clerk's Tax and NI:** Proposed by Mr J Morden and seconded by Mr R Peters.
- x. **Clerk's Expenses:** Proposed by Mr L Picking and seconded by Mr J Gosling.
- xi. **Custodian's Hours and Expenses:** None submitted this month.
- xii. **The Post Office (Stamps) £46.00:** Proposed by Mrs A Philips and seconded by Mr J Morden.

- xiii. **Rolfe Cleaning Services (Parish Office Windows) £8.00:** Proposed by Mr J Morden and seconded by Mr P Challis.
- xiv. **Frasers Office Supplies (Stationery) £89.77 including VAT:** Proposed by Mr R Peters and seconded by Mr L Picking.
- xv. **Subscriptions to Newbury Weekly News/Reading Chronicle:** After a discussion **The Clerk** to investigate cost and report back at next meeting.

02/61 **Correspondence:**

- i. WBC – Re Public Entertainment Licence – Mr L Picking, Mortimer (St John’s) Village Hall.
- ii. WBC – Meetings of West Berkshire Council 2002/03 – noted.
- iii. WBC – Highway Grass Maintenance for 2002 – noted.
- iv. Society of Local Council Clerks – Meeting 21st March – Mrs J Kirk to attend.

02/62 **AOB:**

There was no Any Other Business.

Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 11th April at 7:30 p.m.

List of payments made:

| Date | Cheque No. | Payee | Amount |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| 7 th February 2002 | 501061 | Andrew Hazelden | 120.00 |
| | 501062 | Thames Water Utilities Ltd | 3.55 |
| | 501063 | St John’s Hall Management Committee | 240.00 |
| | 501064 | Glasdon UK Ltd | 1,248.91 |
| | 501065 | J Clarke | 323.50 |
| | 501066 | BALC | 602.22 |
| | 501067 | SPISE | 30.00 |
| | 501068 | J E Kirk | |
| | 501069 | Inland Revenue | |
| | 501070 | J E Kirk | |
| | 501071 | The Post Office | 46.00 |
| | 501072 | Frasers Office Supplies | 89.77 |
| | 501073 | Wicksteed Leisure Ltd | 29.38 |

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 21:45

Signed:.....(G S Puddephatt)
Chairman

Date:.....