



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting

20th April 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

St John's Hall Mortimer

The Annual Meeting of the Parish was held on Wednesday 20th April 2011 in St John's Hall, Mortimer.

Present: There were 44 people present.

Before the commencement of the meeting a Minute's silence was held as a respect of the sad loss of Cllr Steve Clark and Cllr Keith Lock.

- 1 **Welcome by the Chairman:** Cllr Keith Davies welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 2 **To receive the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on the 21st April 2010:** The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 21st April 2010 were not approved and signed by the Chairman as it was felt that they had not been sufficiently circulated. Mr C Lewis requested that the sentence in 8d (Stratfield Mortimer Fairground Trust) be deleted as this had been inadvertently put in when there was in fact no report given.
- 3 **Presentation of the Stratfield Mortimer Community Award 2011:** Air Vice Marshall Barry Newton, President of the Mortimer Branch of the Royal British Legion presented the 2011 Community Award to Mrs Ellen and Mr Barry Walklett in recognition of their dedicated contribution to the Mortimer and District Royal British legion for almost 20 years.
- 4 **Annual Report of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council from the Chairman of the Council:**
As the Parish Council Chairman, Councillor Rebecca Barker, was unable to attend Councillor Davies gave a précis of the Chairman's Annual Parish Council Report.
'The Parish Council has had a busy year once again. In addition to the 11 full council meetings, the business of the Parish Council is conducted through six committees: whose areas of responsibility are the Cemetery, Communications, Fairground Trees and Amenities, Planning, Roads & Footpaths and Finance & General Purposes. It is through the work undertaken by these six committees and the full council meetings that I have pleasure in reporting the following:
The war memorial island has seen a major restructuring. Although there has been an improvement with traffic flowing in just one direction, the Parish Council is not entirely happy with the outcome at present and is still in discussion with West Berkshire Council about improving the sightlines for pedestrians coming up the hill into the village. Another recent addition to the war memorial junction is a bollard and grasscrete to protect the junction from large vehicles turning and damaging the grass. The bollards outside the bank have also had some success, but like all things do not entirely stop people from parking on the double yellow lines and causing an obstruction. Since the role of traffic enforcement has been taken from our local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO's) there has been little sight of West Berkshire traffic wardens and the Parish Council is continuing to request for visits on a regular basis. The Council, together with our neighbouring Parish Councils, Burghfield and Sulhamstead, has recently renewed the contract with Thames Valley Police to partially fund a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO). As the PCSO's working area is restricted to our three parishes, he continues to maintain a visible police presence in our village. Major resurfacing of Victoria Road and Stephens Road in the summer was much needed and has greatly improved the appearance of these roads, not to mention reduced the damage to all our vehicles. Maintenance of the many delightful walks in our local area by the provision of new kissing gates on a number of marked paths has allowed for easier access to all members of the community. The Parish Council is very pleased the impact that the new adventure playground has had on the young people of this village. Despite a number of setbacks, not least the delay in Playbuilder funding, this play area has been installed to the delight of many young people and their parents and even better still at no cost to the precept. The Parish Council also used a community planning grant to install two new see saws and a musical orb in the existing playground for the younger children of the village. The Parish Council was also required to move the sports walls from their existing position and install a tarmac surface when it became apparent that this equipment would no longer pass the rigorous inspection required by RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) Again this

equipment continues to be very popular with our young people. The ever popular annual pond dip scheduled for June unfortunately had to be cancelled due to lack of water in our village ponds. Work has taken place to raise the water level in the ponds so hopefully this is less likely to happen. A team of volunteers regularly meets to target areas of the Fairground that need maintenance and through this the ponds have been cleared and trees planted in several areas of the Fairground area this year. Of course a great deal of the everyday work on the Fairground is carried out by our custodian, Mr Terry Hall. I would like to thank Terry and all the volunteers for their time and efforts on behalf of the community – the Fairground looks great! Investigation into the possibility of installing power to the Fairground has stalled at present. Research has shown that the benefits for the Fairground hirers do not warrant the cost that the village would have to bear. This matter will be reviewed from time to time and should the situation change then this matter will be investigated further. Hirers of the Fairground during this year included the Mortimer Fun Run, Mortimer Fun Day, the Circus, Mortimer Riding Club, the Fair, Mortimer St John's School sports day and the two activities centred around the village Christmas tree. The Fairground is also used by the Cricket Club, Tennis Club and a fitness club. The Tennis Courts themselves are maintained by the Parish Council but I would like to thank the staff at McColls for their continuing support in administering the tennis booking system and holding the keys for public use. The Parish Council continues to, in conjunction with a large grant from West Berkshire Council to subsidise the minibus which runs from the village down to the station each morning and evening. It is a welcome service and does alleviate the parking issues at the station. The Parish Council newsletter which is delivered to every household in the village three times a year continues to be well received. Again a team of volunteers offers their time to do this and again I would like to thank them all for their efforts on behalf of the village. The Planning Committee meets as a statutory consultee on a regular basis to consider and comment on all planning applications within the village. There have been a total of 62 planning applications this year which is 16 up on the previous year. We are currently keeping a keen eye on West Berkshire Councils Local Area Framework regarding the siting of some 800 houses by 2026 with the main focus being on the Mortimer/Burghfield area. The Parish Council has lodged its objections to this. The site specific report from West Berkshire Council is not due out for another year, but the Parish Council will monitor this and plans to host an open forum for residents to comment when more details are available. The Parish Council is also looking at the possibility of the provision of allotments for the village. The main issue at present being the cost of suitable land. Details of the council's budget for the coming year have already been published in our last newsletter. In view of the current economic climate the Parish Council voted not to increase the precept for the year 2011/2012 and so this will remain at £88,000. The Parish Council annually sets aside a sum of money for grants to village groups to apply for to finance projects within our community. There have been some changes of Parish Council members over the past year. Mr Adrian Smith and our chairman, Mr Tom Shorrocks both resigned and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them sincerely for all their work on behalf of our community. I would also like to welcome Mr Pat Wingfield onto the Parish Council. As vice-chair, I took on the role of Chair in January until the parish elections in May. The Parish Council recently held an election information morning to promote the work that the Parish Council does and to encourage new members to stand as a councillor. The Parish council elections will be on 5th May. Members of the public are very welcome to attend any Parish Council meeting; they are advertised on the Parish Council notice boards as well as on the Parish Council website. There is a public questions section at the beginning of each full council meeting which allows members of the public the opportunity to briefly address the council on any issue of concern to them. Full Council meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month (except August) in the Methodist Church Lounge while the six committees meet as necessary, generally in the Parish Council Office behind the library. Members of the public are also the Parish Clerk who will be pleased to offer help and advice wherever possible. The future of the Parish Council Office at the back of the Library is now assured at least for the next two years. The Parish Council has signed a two year rolling lease with West Berkshire Council for the use of this area. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Clerk, Mrs Jayne Kirk for all her time and efforts on behalf of the village and indeed all my fellow Councillors too. Cllrs: Pete Blagden, Phil Challis, Steve Clark, Austin Colaco, Keith Davies, Dudley Ives, Neil Kiley, Mollie Lock, John Morden, Danusia Morsley, Angie Philips, Alan Thorpe, Pat Wingfield.'

5 **Report from Insp. Andy Ward, Thames Valley Police:** Inspector Andy Ward gave an update of the work of Thames Valley Police and the PCSO in Mortimer.

7 **Reports from local Charities:**

a) **Stratfield Mortimer Relief in Need Charity:** No report.

b) **Clarke's Educational Foundation:** Mr John Mazillius reported that 'Clarke's Educational Foundation uses the rental income from its assets to provide grants to local schools and individuals. The charity owns part of the buildings and grounds of St. Mary's School and in addition the Headmasters house known as School House. This year we have made grants for educational purposes to St. Mary's and St. John's Schools in Mortimer, The Willink School in Burghfield and Silchester School. The Trustees would like to thank the Stratfield Mortimer Relief in Need Charity for the generous grant which has enabled us to continue with our programme to provide bursaries to students in further education at university, colleges of further education and those embarking on modern apprenticeships.'

c) **Alfred Palmer Memorial Trust:** Mr John Mazillius reported that 'I would like to pay tribute to Keith Lock, our chairman, who died in February of this year. Much has been said of Keith's work on West Berkshire Council, but Keith was also a keen football fan and a ardent supporter of Reading Football Club, who freely and enthusiastically gave his time to helping provide good facilities for the youth of the parish to play organised sports. He will be sadly missed by all of us. The Alfred Palmer Memorial Playing Field was given in memory of Alfred Palmer by his grandchildren in 1939 to be used as a recreation area for the benefit of the Parishes of Stratfield Mortimer and Wokefield. Since that time it has been used as a public open space for the general use of local residents and for playing of organised sport, mainly football. The field has continued to be used by the Mortimer Football Club throughout the playing season. The club regularly cut the grass during the football season and continue to maintain the ground in a fit and proper state by regular application of fertilizer, watering when required and marking out the pitched for the teams that use the ground. It is generally recognised by the local football leagues that the field and pitches are amongst the best maintained in the area. The English Football Association have awarded the club charter status in recognition of their excellent work in the coaching of young people. The Football Club has a flourishing youth section and provides regular training and coaching sessions for about 90 boys and girls from the village and surrounding areas. All the qualified coaching staff have been CRB checked and a fully trained welfare officer has been appointed. The Mortimer Youth Football Club have continued using the field on a regular basis with teams catering for boys and girls under the age of twelve. As I am sure the council realise the Alfred Palmer Field has been the only facility available this year to the young men, boys and girls who wish to play organised football in the village. In addition the ground is used by the scout, guide, cub and brownie movements for organised games and fund raising events throughout the year. In addition every year a fund raising event for Naomi House is held with teams representing Reading Football Club and Mortimer Seniors. This event raises over £2,000 per year for this worthwhile Children's Charity The trustees and committee would like to thank the Parish council for their financial support towards the running costs of the field which amount to approximately £1,500 per annum.'

d) **Stratfield Mortimer Fairground Trust:** Mr Graham Puddephatt reported that 'The Trustees are Graham Puddephatt (Chair), Roger Peters (Treasurer), Geoff Mayes (Secretary), James Strang, and Neil Kiley. They last met on 19th October 2010 to review financial matters and consider future actions. At that meeting the Bank balances totalled £6240 and the annual income in 2010 was £1000 from the Parish Council as Rent for the Fairground. In 2011 this Rent is expected to increase to £2000pa. We advertised for beneficiaries but no requests for assistance have been received. The Fairground has to be Registered and with this in mind the boundaries were surveyed by the Secretary to determine any areas likely to be contentious. A Report and Sketch map were circulated to the Trustees and Parish Council for Comments. None have been tabled. As Registration is likely to far exceed the Funding available the Trustees are not able to proceed further at this time.'

8 **Statements by School Governors:**

Mortimer St John's Church of England Infant School: Mr Paul Young reported 'There are currently 184 pupils on roll in six classes encompassing three school years (Foundation, Year One

and Year Two). The school is slightly over the admissions intake during this academic year for the Foundation stage. There are currently 9 teaching staff and 24 support staff employed at St John's. The Governing body is at full strength and comprises 19 Governors representing, staff, parents, the community, the diocese and the local authority. **Ofsted Inspection:** Although an inspection was anticipated in the autumn 2011 we were surprised to receive the call for the inspection for January 2011. The overall effectiveness of the school was judged as "Good" the same judgement as the schools capacity for sustained improvement. There were a number of areas which judged "Outstanding" including pupil behaviour, leadership and management, Pupils healthy life styles and care guidance and support. The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs was also judged "Outstanding". The questionnaire responses from parents and carers regarding the school were overwhelming positive. 100% of respondents agreed that their child enjoyed school (79% agreeing strongly). **Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS)** This inspection follows Ofsted with the principal objective to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school. There are four areas covered for this inspection of which all were classified as "Outstanding". **Healthy Schools Award** (recognizing the school's role in the health and well being of the children. **Arts Mark Gold** (recognises commitment to raising the profile of the arts in school and local community) **Financial Management Standard** (FMSIS the school financial management standard) **Building Works There** has been a considerable amount of building around the school with the completion of the Nurture Room which opened summer 2010. This provides a learning environment focusing on the emotional and social development as well as academic progress of our children. This was paid through funding obtained from Extended Services, Mortimer Relief in Need and Englefield Trust. Other building work has been undertaken on updating site drainage, re-developing the school kitchen area and improving toilet facilities. There have also been some improvements to the outside play areas and play equipment. **Clubs and Activities:** Whole school trips include visits to Rushall Farm and to Windsor Castle. As with previous whole school visits there were a number of comments received on the excellent behaviour of the pupils. We continue to have a wide range of clubs and after school activities available to our children and are grateful to staff, parents and members of the local community who give up their time to support the school in this way. The current range of activities include: Book Club, Wii Fit, ICT club, Choir, Judo, Recorders, Maypole and Country Dancing, and Bible Club, Science, Maths and French Clubs. There are also further sporting activities available through First for Sports. As part of the schools commitment to our community the school regularly lets out its school hall to community groups such as Film club, Yoga group, Little Oaks and Big Oaks. The site is also used for extended services activities – Kids and Dads (KADS) and the Sunday Circle. The children are also regular visitors to the Mortimer Lunch Club, distribute harvest festival gifts around the village, sing Christmas carols at Windmill Court and visit the pre-school children prior to intake for the Foundation stage at St John's. The work of the head teacher, staff and Governors is supported by The Parents and Friends of St Johns, a committed, enthusiastic and hard working fund raising body which raised around £11k last year to fund some of the extra curricula activities and equipment. Their work, which benefits the whole Mortimer community, includes the May Fair and the fireworks display. As always we are most grateful for their support. The Governors would like to take this opportunity to thank the Head Teacher, Mrs Sumner, and all her staff for all their hard work, dedication, enthusiasm and commitment to Mortimer St John's Church of England Infant School.'

Mortimer St Mary's Church of England VA Junior School: Mrs Margaret Mayes reported 'I am pleased to report that your village junior school is thriving and continues to move forward in providing a high standard of education within the framework of an open and inclusive admissions policy. The last year has been an important one for Mortimer St. Mary's School, which remains at full capacity with 241 pupils. Parent and pupil questionnaires indicate a high level of satisfaction with the school's performance. The results of the KS2 SATs taken in May 2010 were very creditable with 81% of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Maths. (44% achieving level 5) and 77% achieving level 4 or above in English (42% achieving level 5). Value Added scores, reflecting the improvement in pupil performance while attending the school, were higher. In addition to their academic work, the pupils are offered many opportunities for personal and social development. Children have the chance to join a residential trip in both year 5 and year 6. School visits are

arranged to museums, theatres and sporting venues and visiting musicians and actors enhance the pupil's learning opportunities within the school setting. There is a range of after school clubs supported by staff members and volunteers. Membership of the school choir is popular and many pupils have been encouraged to begin learning to play a musical instrument through the school's close liaison with Maestros, the Berkshire based music centre. An outdoor summer concert was a very successful innovation during the year, while two pupils were selected to represent the district following an athletics competition following up on a school activity. With the leadership of Caroline Barnes, the school was successful in achieving an Artsmark Gold Award. Our Police and Community Support Officer has visited the school and held a series of workshops with the children as part of the Safer Schools programme. Each class has completed the good citizenship workshop to encourage the children to think about different ways in which they can make a positive contribution to the wider community. In keeping with our foundation as an Anglican church school the links between the school and the ecclesiastical parish remain strong. In December 2010 our long-serving Headteacher, Roger Green, retired and was replaced by Miss Jo MacArthur. The transition of the staff and school to the leadership of a new Headteacher has been achieved smoothly and good working relationships are already being established. One class teacher left the school during 2010 and we are currently advertising for a Deputy Headteacher. Otherwise teaching, support and administrative staff have remained very stable and this is regarded as one of the strengths of the school. All staff members receive regular on-going training either as part of In Service Days or on an individual basis. Subjects covered over the past year ranged from Child Protection, Safe Use of the Internet, Health and Safety and Management Issues to Pupil Assessment and curriculum based topics. Since January 2011 the school has been following the International Primary Curriculum which provides a cross-curricular approach to learning designed to engage and encourage children of all abilities. It is already proving to be stimulating, challenging and exciting and has had a very positive effect on pupil enthusiasm and learning outcomes. The school's Parent Teacher Association continues to support the school enthusiastically. The varied and entertaining events organised over the past year have raised money which is valuable in providing additional equipment and facilities which cannot be funded from the main school budget. Among other things a chlorine pump has been purchased for the swimming pool. This will automatically check chlorine levels and avoid the need for someone to carry out two manual checks each day. The seventeen school governors have continued to work hard to support the school and its senior management team throughout a year of change. They also undertake regular training sessions to keep abreast of important issues. A number of changes to the Governing Body have occurred during recent months, due mainly to governors' response to professional commitments and work-related matters and removal from the district. There is currently one vacancy. As is to be expected in a building which has been extended and modified considerably during its lifetime, there are some problem areas which give rise to concern, but overall the school buildings remain in good condition. Routine matters such as replacing old windows and re-decorating parts of the school continue as part of a rolling programme. The school grounds continue to act as a beautiful and valuable resource and plans exist to develop them further should funding allow. As part of the Extended Schools Programme, lettings to providers of community focused activities have gradually increased. An after-school club and children's holiday clubs now take place regularly as Mortimer St. Mary's. Other clubs and classes meet outside school hours using the school facilities. As in past years the school has received enormous help and support from individuals and organisations in the village and surrounding neighbourhood. On behalf of us all I should like to take this opportunity to say thank you and to express our appreciation. We hope that in the coming months there will be opportunities for some of you to join us and share in the life of the school. You will be most welcome.'

- 9 **Report from Parish Council's Representative on St John's Hall:** Mr Tom Shorrocks reported 'It has been a busy year for the Hall Committee. Firstly we note that Mr Lawrence Picking has decided to step down from his role as chairman. As a committee we are sure that everyone will want to join with us and extend our warm and sincere thanks for all of Lawrence's efforts over the many years he has served us and the whole village so very well. Following Lawrence's resignation the hall committee elected Mr Tom Shorrocks to take over as chairman. Thanks to the efforts of Mortimer Pre-School and funding from West Berkshire Council the hall now has a new entrance porch and

much improved access for the disabled. We are sure that this will benefit not only Mortimer Pre-School but all the users of the hall. There have also been major improvements to the outside area to the west of the hall. During this last year the hall has undergone a thorough electrical inspection and after some modernisation has been given a clean bill of health. This extremely necessary work was jointly funded by the Hall and Mortimer Dramatic Society. There is still much work to do on both the external and internal fabric of the building, plus the committee's desire to continue to modernise and improve the internal fixtures and fittings. It was therefore very disappointing that Veolia rejected our claim for funding under the land fill tax credit scheme. However we would particularly like to thank Tim Courtney for the considerable amount of work he put in to this application. On a more positive note, we have been promised £20,000 from Mortimer Relief In Need Charity towards our further essential improvements. These will include, mainly the flat roof to the southern wall of the building and updating the kitchen and toilets. This is however dependent on matched funding being provided, so the priority in the coming year will be in this regard. Letting income is holding up well but we will however need to review our charges in the coming year in order to maintain both the hall and the services it provides to the standards the Village and the wider users have become accustomed to. As Lawrence steps down from his responsibilities as chairman he has particularly asked to extend his personal and heartfelt thanks to all of those, past and present, who have helped to keep St John's Hall at the centre of our community.'

10 **Report from CiC on Stratfield Mortimer Community Centre, Fairground:** No report

11 **Mortimer Village Partnership:** Mr Pete Blagden reported 'I have very recently been appointed as the Chair of the MVP having taken over from Danusia Morsley MVP's very first Chair and prime driving force behind the successes that I am delighted to report later in this address. This is the first report given to the APM since the MVP was established in 2009 and hence the first Chairman's Report. I am extremely pleased to report that MVP has successfully developed many of the community ideas that were in the Parish Plan Refresh of 2009 and will continue to do so, as well as to take on new ideas and challenges as they occur. Starting in the autumn of 2009 MVP set up to engage with the people and groups in the village to build a stronger and more cohesive community with more social involvement by as many people as possible. Our strap line "Connecting People, Groups and Interests" was chosen very deliberately. Our first sphere of operation was to put in touch the various groups who had expressed common interest in the Parish Plan questionnaire and to help them begin. From these have come the Mortimer Gardening Club, Mortimer Film Club, Mortimer Youth Club, and Mortimer Book Club all as fully independent, vibrant and popular societies. I would particularly like to congratulate the Youth Club for its success – it is notoriously difficult to find volunteers prepared to jump through all the hoops necessary to establish and run such a club while simultaneously finding the energy to provide worthwhile, engaging activities for the youngsters attending. We are fortunate that our young people have such an opportunity and wish the club continued success in its future development. Other activities that were started since we started in 2009 have remained as integral parts of MVP: Mortimer Theatre Trips, Mortimer Lunch Club and Mortimer Green Group. Those who have been on any of the Theatre Trips know how well-organised and much in demand they are; news of this opportunity has spread far and wide and people come from quite a distance to depart by coach to the West End, Windsor, Salisbury or the Watermill. More than one person has commented that they thought their theatre-going days were over when they were widowed but now they have company with whom to partake of this pleasure again. Mortimer Lunch Club is similarly in demand: so far providing entertainment and a light lunch monthly for up to 36 elderly or lonely people. The lunch has been provided by Wokefield Park whom I thank. As of this month it will be happening twice monthly with the second lunch provided by Dolce – the school caterers whom I also thank in anticipation. Mortimer Green Group has so far concentrated on the opening of the Community Garden (behind the Horse and Groom pub whom we thank for the use of the land); this provides a gardening outlet for some of those frustrated by the lack of allotments in the village and a learning opportunity for the Youth Club and others. One of the first activities undertaken as a joint project with another group, Together in Mission, collaboration with several local churches, is a series of events focused on the village Christmas tree initially in 2009 and repeated with great success last December. Children and parents came to

make decorations for the tree, and then on another day to sing carols round the decorated tree. With variations this has now become part of the village calendar and will hopefully develop into a long term tradition. Right from the start improved communications in the village were identified as a key to success in all ventures. We have been very lucky to have all kinds of help in this area: from I-next, a Mortimer company with a website development and delivery platform, in designing and hosting our websites, from local volunteers in designing, writing and maintaining the website. Greenham Common Trust printed our MVP newsletters. More local volunteers in deliver these to every household on a regular basis. The lines of communication opened up by these two modes of communication are continually generating more contacts and cooperation in the village. The newsletter is now also beginning to be distributed in some of the surrounding smaller villages – West End, Wokefield, and Beech Hill. In the spring of last year MVP organised the first village Spring Clean day – a huge amount of litter, junk and rubbish was collected by volunteers and the village looked much more spruce. The second Spring Clean day took place at the beginning of this month. We are grateful to WBC for the disposal of the many mounds of waste collected by our volunteers. At a public meeting last spring, MVP announced the winner of our logo competition. This logo is now becoming more and more recognised both in and outside the village and is a fitting symbol of community activity in Mortimer. Many groups in the village participated in a poster exhibition at the same meeting and a very lively café style discussion brought out people's views on Mortimer and what else they hoped to see here. A significant effort by MVP and many volunteers was our involvement in the second Mortimer Fun Day run by Together in Mission. The Fun Day is fast becoming the premier annual event in Mortimer with about 5000 people having a very enjoyable family day on the Fairground at the beginning of July. The list of sponsors and others who helped make the Fun Day a success is too long to mention here but their involvement is very valued in making this event a great success. The success of this form of cooperation between local organisations continues with MVP taking on the lead role in this year's Fun Day on July 2nd with support from Together in Mission and Burghfield and Sulhamstead Scout Group. The autumn saw two more new ventures for MVP: The Scarecrow Trail was a runaway success. Groups, businesses, families and individuals in the village competed to display the best scarecrows representing characters from children's literature. Hundreds of people walked and cycled round the village following the Trail to see all the scarecrows and solve a word puzzle; there were well over 400 entries for this competition. There was a real buzz in the village over the two weeks the scarecrows were on display and many people vowed to make a scarecrow this year. Another event for the annual calendar! In the autumn MVP also launched the concept of groups affiliating to MVP. In return for a small annual subscription, groups are given special prominence in website and newsletter publicity, can have colour printing and laminating of posters at low cost, are able to borrow equipment belonging to MVP and now are invited to take part in a networking breakfast. We hope that more contact between different clubs and groups will lead to shared planning, cooperation and mutual help with volunteers, skills and equipment. The number of affiliated groups grows steadily and now stands at 14+. Networking outside the village also brings benefits to the life of the village. We have been able to access the West Berkshire Parish Plan grant for items for the youth club, lunch club and most recently filming equipment which we hope will enable films about the village to be made. Organisations such as Community Council for Berkshire have been a great source of information and inspiration, keeping us in touch with achievements in other villages in West Berkshire and generally pointing us at information of all sorts. Through them I learnt of the Award for Community Empowerment in South East England and entered MVP. We were fortunate to be awarded joint 1st place in Berkshire winning £1750 as well as a crystal award in November last year. Earlier this month we took part in the regional round of the same award and were judged 3rd in the South East of England being awarded a further £1500 and a bigger trophy. This money will enable MVP to continue and expand the community activities we have undertaken. Mortimer and its active village community are being recognised as a good model in West Berkshire and we are being asked to share our experience with groups hoping to achieve similar things in other communities. Last December saw us back to Advent activities with the Christmas tree this time on the Fairground. In addition MVP produced Mortimer Christmas cards which proved to be very popular. We shall be repeating the idea this year, hopefully with the addition of a Mortimer calendar which will be produced with the assistance of one of our affiliates. The 2011 Fun Day is also

approaching – 2nd July is the date to keep very firmly in mind. We hope for weather as fine as that in the previous two years and for everyone in the village to be involved! There will be something for everyone to enjoy with new attractions as well as many repeats by popular request; there will also be a wide range of opportunities to volunteer and be involved in making this a great day the village can be proud of. Please contact one of the MVP committee for more details of how you can help on the day. In the spirit of continuing to support new interests and groups in the village, I am pleased to say that a new Craft group is starting up in the Methodist Church hall on alternate Fridays from 1 – 3 pm and planning for a new singing for fun group is underway with workshops beginning in September 2011. In conclusion I would like to thank all those who have been involved in MVP: the committee is a very informal group consisting of all those who have become involved in all or any of the things we are doing. New members are always welcome as are new ideas, particularly if they come with volunteers willing to take them forward with our help! I apologise for anything I have inadvertently omitted – this report grew longer than I expected when I started recalling all that has been done. I would particularly like to take this opportunity to single out the extraordinary effort contributed by our outgoing Chair – Danusia Morsley whose unstinting efforts have made Mortimer Village Partnership a resounding success. I believe the village can be proud of what it has achieved and can look forward to the future with optimism and excitement.’

12 Open Forum:

- Mr Shorrocks asked now that the Parish Council has apparently abandoned its policy of charging everyone equally for use of the Fairground, will it now be funding all religious events on the Fairground or only those organised by TIM or sponsored by the Mortimer Village Partnership? The Chairman replied that this was a matter for the Parish Council and would need to be put forward to the Parish Council.
- A question was raised about the progress of providing Allotments. Mr J Morden advised that The Englefield Estate is willing to consider leasing to the Parish Council on a 50 year lease a suitable area of land, subject to planning permission, for the provision of allotments. Englefield are also willing to consider leasing land to enable the Parish Council to extend the existing Parish Council Cemetery (adjacent to St Mary’s Church). A question was raised about funding the setting up of allotments and Mr Morden said he believed that this may be taken from Parish Council reserves.
- A question was raised about the West Berkshire Core Strategy which was answered by Mr J Morden.
- Mr Puddephatt suggested that as the 2010 Minutes had not been approved at the beginning of the meeting that the Chairman of the Meeting ‘walk through the 2010 Minutes’ (by reading them out) in order to get them approved. The Chairman did not accept this and asked for a vote for the approval of the Minutes which was defeated so the 2010 Minutes remain unsigned.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:45 p.m.

The date of the next Annual Parish Meeting is Wednesday 18th April 2012 at 7:30 p.m.