



Newsletter February 2005

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

All parishioners are warmly invited to attend this public meeting to discuss Parish affairs, and those on the Electoral Register are entitled to vote. The presentation of the 2005 Stratfield Mortimer Community Award will be made at the meeting.

The meeting is to be held on:

Thursday 7th April at 7:30pm in St John's Hall.

It is planned to have presentations from the Thames Valley Police on community policing and the current status and plans of the Pavilion project. Additionally we will be electing a new member to the Fairground trust.

Mortimer Hill Development

Work on the Mortimer Hill Development proceeded gently in 2004. Archaeologists finished their excavations without major finds, and ecologists supervised the planting of a "bat corridor" (flight path and feeding area for bats) and newt-proof fencing behind the houses at the top of The Street and Hammonds Heath. They are also working towards the decommissioning of the existing wells on site and re-alignment of the private access road.

With the start of 2005, major clearance and work on the infrastructure (access, pipes, cables etc) is under way. Work on the entrance and roundabout on The Street has started. The developers aim to keep traffic interference to a minimum. The Street will not be closed but at times lights will control the flow of traffic. The duration of this work depends on the weather; it could take up to a month.

The first houses will be built immediately to the left of the entrance. These will include a show house targeted for completion in May 05. It is envisaged that completion of the entire development will take some two and a half years

Gas Connections

As nearly all parishioners must know and have seen, the installation of the gas main through our village is progressing well and an update from ES Pipelines Ltd is attached.

“ESP are pleased to confirm (to the Parish Council) that they are willing to offer a free gas connection to St John’s Hall and a contribution of £1,000 towards the cost of the proposed (new) heating installation.

The work has continued to move forward at a steady pace (despite some delays) and the approach main laid from Red Lane, Aldermaston is now installed to the edge of the village at the pressure reduction governor site located near the junction of St Catherine’s Hill and Victoria Road. The governor will be installed and commissioned during January and February and once completed this will allow service-laying to commence to properties with a “live” connection and I anticipate this should start happening from early March 2005.

We have received a good response from residents so far wanting a connection and I would urge anyone who wishes to be connected during the initial phase this year to contact ES Pipelines as soon as possible on 01372 227560 or by email to info@espipelines.com”

Nick Clark Director of Business Development ES Pipelines Limited

Volunteers to help draw up Village Design Statement document.

The Village Design Statement document will set out the character of the village and will be used to influence planning decisions by West Berkshire Council. Parish Council Planning Chairman, John Morden, has said that this document will help to shape the future character of the village and he is looking for volunteers to work alongside Parish Councillors to put the project together. This is a good opportunity for local people to have their say about the design of houses in the village. “It is important that the village character is retained, as many of the houses were built in the Victorian era on the land around the fairground. We have very few modern houses in the village and we need to ensure that they will blend in.”

⇒ Any parishioner who would like to take part (the Committee will start work next month) should contact the Clerk at the Parish Office on 0118 9331955.

Pavilion Project

The project to replace the existing pavilion on the Fairground received a major boost just before Christmas. The local charity, Relief In Need, has agreed to support the plan to replace the Pavilion with a grant worth £150,000 which is a wonderful start!

The team is still working towards raising the remaining funds to get to the target of £420,000 and will be approaching other funding bodies in the next couple of months. The project is getting support from local businesses who are offering services free or

at cost. All this support is eligible for matched funding, that is for every £1 we raise we can get another £1 from charities and other sources of funding e.g. the Middlesex Cricket Club, South Eastern Regional Development Agency etc - so every little bit of support can be doubled in value!

There is still a long way to go and any offers of help to swell our funds would be very gratefully received.

⇒ If you would like to get involved or can support the project somehow, please contact Adrian Smith via the Parish Office. Or simply look out for the MORTIMER Marathon Runner sponsor forms and make your donation that way. More details of our brave running champion below!

SUPPORT THE MORTIMER RUNNER!

When the London Marathon gets under way on 17th April, Mortimer residents will have a special reason for watching the athletes closely. Graham Puddephatt, Chairman of the Parish Council is also the Finish Control Manager for London Marathon Limited which is a 'not for profit' organisation. Graham has kindly acquired a much-sought-after entry for the marathon. **Jerry Crawford** of Mortimer Cricket Club has taken up the baton and will be running the distance in order to raise funds Pavilion Project. We hope that local people businesses will get behind Jerry and support him through sponsorship of his efforts. Sponsorship forms will be available from local businesses, but if you would like to help raise funds from your friends or work, please contact the Parish Office.

Youth Activities

Skateboarding: At the Mortimer Fun Run in September, over 30 youngsters signed up to say they would like a skateboard park in Mortimer. Their main comment was that there is "nothing to do in Mortimer". Eight adults said that they would be interested in helping to get facilities for young people in the village. Unfortunately none of them was able to attend an initial meeting where it was hoped that we could get some plans underway – So the project has lost its impetus and it is important that volunteers come forward who are willing to make this happen.

Youth Club: West Berkshire Council's 'Leisure in the Rural Communities Initiative say there is sufficient funding available to start a community project in the village such as a youth club. Funding for this type of facility is also available from a wide range of other donors. This is all good news but nothing will happen unless enthusiastic volunteers from the village come forward and take a lead.

⇒ Is there anyone prepared to offer some time to help develop activities and facilities for young people in Mortimer? If so, please contact Jayne Kirk at the Parish Office. If there are no volunteers, the project will be cancelled.

Mortimer Link

The Parish Council has secured a further grant from The Countryside Agency. This, along with the Parish Council's contribution, will subsidise the running of the Mortimer Link mini bus from the village to the station until the end of January 2006. A change of bus timetable has been made (enclosed and also available on the Parish Council website <http://www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk/>) in line with the changes in train times made in December 2004.

Playtime in Mortimer!

The play area on the Fairground is a point of focus for many families in the village and has been used by generations of local people. The Parish Council manage this area, waging a constant battle against the effects of wear and tear, vandalism and littering. There is an on-going plan to replace old pieces of equipment and to maintain the high standards of safety required.

The Parish Council is seeking funding to make further improvements to the play area. Vandalism and litter are a constant drain on public funds, so while the area is subject to regular checks and inspections, it is impossible to police 24 hours a day. If you see anything either dangerous, or broken, please don't hesitate to report it to the Parish Office. That way, we can all work together to ensure that the amenity provides fun for the children of the village for many more years to come.

New Parish Councillors

Following the notice calling for new Councillors in the last Newsletter (September 04), 10 very strong candidates came forward. Following interviews four of these were co-opted onto the Parish Council. We would like to welcome Steve Clark, Graham Parry, Phil Scrase and Tom Shorrocks. You can find out more about them later in this newsletter.

Thank you to all those who applied for these vacancies; all applicants will be kept on file for consideration when future vacancies occur. It is good to know the Newsletter is being read and that people are willing to get involved in village activities.

Lollipop Person

West Berkshire Council is still looking for a Lollipop Person for St. Mary's School. In the meantime very few children are catching the bus to school which is resulting in yet more traffic congestion at the school as parents drop and pick up their children.

⇒ Once again, if anyone is interested in filling this important role in the school team at around 8.45am each morning during term time, please contact: Pam Scotford of West Berkshire Council, Tel. 01635 519772.

West Berkshire Laptop Project comes to Mortimer

Computer Course: Ten people attended the three computer taster sessions in December which was part-funded by the Parish Council. A tutor from the West Berkshire Council Laptop Project brought five laptop computers and a printer, and after only three weeks participants who had never switched on a computer before had designed their own Christmas cards.

The group learned the basics of word processing including layout, spelling and grammar checking. They designed and printed menus and posters, and learned about colour editing. They were briefly introduced to spreadsheets and desktop publishing.

So what did participants think about it? "A good grounding", "Utterly stimulating", "It has encouraged me to get my own computer", "It has demystified things for me". They were grateful to the Parish Council for funding the venue costs.

A six session follow-on course for the same group has now started, again part funded by the Parish Council, so that participants can increase their skills. We could start a new course in the Spring; if you are interested, contact Sarah Morland via the Parish Office.

Internet Course: We are trying to arrange for CLIVE, the Community Learning and Information Vehicle from West Berkshire Council, to come to Mortimer. Amongst other things, CLIVE can provide training for anyone who wants to learn how to use the Internet. Watch this space, and the village notice boards and web site for further information.

New Parish Website **www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk**

A local Company, i-next, has kindly agreed to set up a new professional web site for the Parish Council (with community links) to replace the present web site. The Parish Council would like to thank Mr John Hannawin of i-next for his contribution to the community. It is hoped that the site will be up and running by the end of the month.

Mortimer Business Forum

The first meeting of the Mortimer Business Forum was held on 2nd December in the Methodist Church Hall. Nearly 20 representatives of 14 local businesses attended this initial session which was facilitated and sponsored by the Parish Council. Many letters and other communications expressing strong support for the idea of a local business forum were received from several other local businesses. One of the key concerns of the group was the lack of youth provision and resultant issues.

The next meeting is planned for either 3rd or 17th March '05 at 1830 in the Methodist Church Hall on West End Road. For more information contact Pete Blagden via the Parish Office.

The Fairground

2004 was a good year for our Fairground because it was marked by planned and regular working sessions. Volunteers have made quite a difference to the appearance and maintenance of the Fairground. The first of 1,000 snowdrops and 500 daffodils planted last spring are flowering.

We continue to suffer acts of vandalism on the Fairground for example broken benches, litter bins, playground equipment repeatedly damaged, stolen gates and several thousands of pounds worth of damage to the cricket pavilion and its equipment. Did you know that the large gates onto the Fairground from Hammonds Heath were stolen and replacing them cost £550 from Parish funds?

⇒ Regular working sessions take place on the Fairground, usually on the first Saturday of each month. Please join us at 10am at the Fairground car park opposite the Horse and Groom on **5th March, 9th April, 7th May and 4th June**. For further details please check the village notice boards or contact Pete Blagden via the Parish Office on 9331955.

Rural Housing Trust

In September 2004 (enclosed with the last newsletter) a Housing Needs Survey in Stratfield Mortimer was sent to every household (approx 1350). The Field Worker for the Rural Housing Trust said that they had an excellent response; 111 of 405 respondents registered as interested in the scheme. A written report to the Parish Council is now being completed. The Parish Council will then consider the next stage.

Crimestoppers

How many times have you seen someone in the village doing something really antisocial or even illegal? The next and often embarrassing question is; what did you do about it? Well, now there's a nation-wide organisation that aims to make this process completely anonymously. As it says on their web site (<http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/>) "Crimestoppers is an independent UK-wide charity working to stop crime. Crimestoppers works for you, your family and your community. Call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. Just tell us what you know, not who you are."

Traffic Survey & SID

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council has commissioned TRL Ltd (Traffic Research Laboratory) to conduct a traffic survey on the main roads within the village, on which future recommendations for traffic control can be based. Unfortunately problems such as the work of laying a gas main in Mortimer have made it necessary to delay this. Further information will be made available in due course.

West Berkshire Council has been asked to let the village have the Speed Indicator Device (SID) again in the near future. It is hoped that the regular sight of this equipment in the village will encourage some people to drive within the speed limit. NB Parents: *Please don't let the school run become the school run over!*



Successful Delivery!

Copies of the Newsletter need to be delivered to some 1,350 homes in Mortimer four times a year. A small band of regular volunteers and members of the Parish Council delivered the last newsletter on schedule in October '04. We could do with a few more people to help with deliveries; increasing the list of volunteers to about 50 people would allow a very manageable delivery task of less than 30 Newsletters per volunteer.

⇒ How about it? Could we add **your** name to the list of volunteers? If so, please contact Pete Blagden via the Parish Office.

PARISH COUNCIL NOTICES

If you have any comments on the Newsletter please complete the feedback form included. You can contact the Parish Councillors at the address below:

Jayne Kirk, The Parish Clerk

The Parish Office, The Library Building, 27 Victoria Rd, Mortimer

Tel: 01189 331955.

(Mail can be left in the Library Post Box)

Email : the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk

Web site; www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk

Parish Office open: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10.30am – 12.30pm

New Parish Councillors' introductions

GRAHAM PARRY

I am an environmental consultant working for private developers, Local and Central Government and have lived and worked in the Berkshire area for over 30 years. I have lived in the Mortimer area for over 8 years and enjoy the mix of urban village and countryside that we get in Mortimer. I have few hobbies apart from constantly working on the house and keeping the family entertained!

My work takes me all over the country and from time to time around the world which can be very interesting if a little tiring. I hope to make a difference for Mortimer residents and make it a great place for my 7 year old daughter to grow up in.

TOM SHORROCK

Married to Shirley, my work background is in International company management. Currently I work from home as a self employed E-Marketing and Management consultant. As an active member of the Mortimer Dramatic Society I find that people in the village often recognise me, from my stage performances; however, it's sometimes embarrassing as I don't know them as it's difficult to see out into the audience past the stage lights(!) I have lived in the village for around 12 years and am looking forward to serving on the Parish Council.

STEVE CLARK

I have lived in Mortimer since 2002 although my association with the village goes back many years. I am a member of Mortimer Dramatic Society and the committee dedicated to the maintenance and use of St Mary's Church. My professional background is in Human Resource Management and my main hobbies are travel, boating and local history. My reasons for becoming a Parish Councillor are to ensure that we have a sustainable local economy which will help to improve the quality of life for those of us who live here.

PHIL SCRASE

I have lived in Mortimer for 25 years (with a short mid-term break) and am married with 2 children. I am responsible for the management of European Sales & Marketing for a division of an international computer manufacturer and my wife is a teacher. We have always enjoyed living in Mortimer and I am looking forward to contributing more actively to the life of the village in the future!

And a few words from our Committee and Planning Chairmen

ROADS, FOOTPATHS & COMMONS by Keith Davies – Committee Chairman

What can the Parish Council (PC) do to look after roads, footpaths and commons? As a statutory body, it can only do what acts of Parliament authorise it to do; and these confer very limited power on PCs.

Public roads, bridleways and footpaths are, in law, all 'highways', and are therefore owned by the District Council as the 'Highway Authority'. The Parish can draw attention to the need to maintain and repair footpaths etc.

Commons have been registered (under an act of 1965) with the District Council, and are thus preserved for public recreation; but this does not make them into sports grounds. The Parish Council does provide limited sports facilities for cricket, tennis and junior football on the Fairground. But the Fairground is not a common; it is an area provided (under an act of 1802) for the purposes of (a) producing income for the benefit of the poor of Mortimer subject to (b) occasional yearly use for fairs and also, since 1948, to (c) partial use for public recreation. In addition, the PC owns the Fairground as trustee under a charitable trust for the above purposes and not in its capacity as a local authority. It is in its capacity as a local authority that it owns Windmill Common, Brewery Common, Five Oaken Common and the Heathend pond.

Windmill Common is not registered. It is a common only in name; in reality it is (since 1983) a public open space available for recreation. Brewery Common and Five Oaken Common on the other hand, are registered commons, but are managed by the District Council (which also both owns and manages Summerlug). Such are the complexities of roads, footpaths and commons in Mortimer.

PLANNING by John Morden – Committee Chairman

Although West Berkshire Council (WBC) is the planning authority, it has a statutory duty to consult Parish Councils and invite comments. The PC's Planning Committee meets on average twice a month in order to meet the tight statutory time scale. It considers about 10 or 12 applications each month, mainly from householders wishing to make improvements and alterations to their properties.

Although close neighbours may have an objective view on a proposed development, the committee's observations must be objective and have regard to both central government and WBC planning guidelines.

Provided that near neighbours have consulted one another, few applications are contentious and by and large WBC's decisions are in agreement with the committee's observations. Occasionally we do disagree and a Parish Councillor will speak either for or against an application at a full WBC planning meeting and with a surprising degree of success, overcome the Planning Officer's recommendation.

But we don't always win. We have resisted, on a number of occasions, the addition of a further flat at Aborn Parade citing the tree preservation orders as our cause of concern. We have finally had to bow to the inevitable on the advice of the Tree Officer that the tree roots will not be damaged by the proposed development.

The Mortimer Hill Farm development has been started now and Taylor Woodrow have moved onto the site. Their first duty is to complete the road works with a roundabout on The Street. Only when this is done can the rest of the proposed construction go ahead with a minimum of traffic congestion.

⇒ **If you want to find out more about either of the above, contact the Parish office for the next Committee meeting details.**

Planning Proposals – have your say

Did you know you don't have to go to Newbury to see details of planning proposals? Copies of the applications can be inspected at the Parish Office (Mortimer Library – see above for opening times) and can be photocopied in the Library for a fee.

Monthly Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the lounge at Mortimer Methodist Hall, West End Road at 7:30pm . The agenda for these meetings is placed on the two Parish Council Notice Boards (one outside the Post Office and the other outside the Library entrance) three days prior to the meeting. The Planning Committee meetings are held as and when required in the Parish Council Offices (at the rear of Mortimer Library), these are also advertised three days in advance on the notice boards. All members of the public are welcome to attend any of these meetings.

Current members of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
February 2005

Parish Councillors (showing committee membership)

1. Pete **Blagden** - Fairground, Trees & Amenities (Chairman); Communications.
2. Phil **Challis** – Planning; Roads, Footpaths & Commons; Cemetery
3. Steve **Clark** – new councillor not assigned to any committee yet.
4. Keith **Davies** - Vice-Chairman (ex officio on all Committees)
Roads, Footpaths & Commons (Chairman)
5. Sandra **Harding** - Fairground, Trees & Amenities; Roads, Footpaths & Commons
6. Tony **Jones** - Roads, Footpaths & Commons; Cemetery
7. Chris **Lewis** - Fairground Refurbishment; Fairground Trees & Amenities
8. John **Morden** - Planning (Chairman)
9. Graham **Parry** - new councillor not assigned to any committee yet.
10. Angie **Philips** - Fairground Trees & Amenities; Planning
11. Graham **Puddephatt** - Chairman (ex officio on all Committees)
12. Phil **Scrase** - new councillor not assigned to any committee yet.
13. Tom **Shorrock** - new councillor not assigned to any committee yet.
14. Adrian **Smith** - Fairground Refurbishment (Chairman); Fairground Trees & Amenities; Roads, Footpaths & Commons
15. Alan **Thorpe** - Cemetery (Chairman); Roads, Footpaths & Commons; Planning

Parish Council employees

Jayne **Kirk** - Clerk

Les **O'Rourke** - Parish Custodian

District Councillors (West Berkshire Council)

Keith **Lock** - 0118 9332858

Sandra **Harding** – 0118 9333258

MORTIMER LINK BUS TIMETABLE - 31 January 2005 - 21 May 2005

Operated by Stewarts of Mortimer

MORTIMER LINK - FROM MORTIMER VILLAGE TO MORTIMER STATION

Pick Up Point	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure Saturday
	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	
St John's Church	07:03	07:34	09:34		17:04	18:04	18:42	10:00
St Mary's Road	07:04	07:35	09:35					10:01
West End Rd Roundabout	07:04	07:35	09:35					10:02
Turners Arms -Bus Stop	07:07	07:38	09:38					10:04
St Catherine's Hill	07:08	07:39	09:39					10:05
College Piece - Bus Stop	07:09	07:40	09:40					10:06
Mortimer Surgery	07:10	07:41	09:41					10:07
Spratley's Garage	07:10	07:41	09:41	↓	↓	↓	↓	10:07
Fairground - Bus Stop	07:11	07:42	09:42		17:06	18:06	18:44	10:08
The Avenue - Bus Stop	07:12	07:43	09:43	No Service to Station	17:07	18:07	18:45	10:09
Arrive Mortimer Station	07:14	07:45	09:45		17:14	18:14	18:49	10:14
TO CONNECT WITH FIRST GREAT WESTERN LINK TRAINS - TIME AT MORTIMER								
To Reading	07:20	07:49	09:49	16:20	17:20	18:20	19:20	10:20
To Basingstoke	07:19	07:50	09:50	16:19	17:19	18:19	19:19	10:19

MORTIMER LINK - FROM MORTIMER STATION TO MORTIMER VILLAGE

Boarding /Drop off Point	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure Saturday
	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	Mon - Friday	
Mortimer Station	07:23	07:53	14:22	16:28	16:53	17:23	17:53	18:22	18:53	16:52
The Avenue - Bus Stop	07:25	07:56	14:24	16:30	16:55	17:25	17:55	18:23	18:54	16:54
Horse & Groom	07:26	07:57	14:24	16:30	16:55	17:26	17:56	18:24	18:55	16:54
St John's Church		07:58								
Budgens - Bus Stop	07:30		14:25	16:31	16:56	17:30	17:56	18:29	18:56	16:55
Victoria Arms	07:31		14:26	16:32	16:57	17:31	17:57	18:32	18:57	16:56
Mortimer Surgery	07:33		14:27	16:32	16:57	17:33	17:57	18:32	18:57	16:56
Stevens Road	07:33			16:32	16:57	17:33	17:57	18:32	18:57	16:56
St Mary's Road	07:33			16:32	16:57	17:33	17:57	18:32	18:57	16:56
Turners Arms -Bus Stop	07:36			16:33	16:58	17:36	17:58	18:35	18:58	16:57
St Catherine's Hill	07:38			16:35	17:00	17:38	18:00	18:37	18:59	16:59
College Piece - Bus Stop	07:39			16:36	17:01	17:39	18:01	18:38	19:00	17:00
TO CONNECT WITH FIRST GREAT WESTERN LINK TRAINS - TIME AT MORTIMER										
From Basingstoke	07:20	07:49	14:20	16:20	16:49	17:20	17:49	18:20	18:49	16:49
From Reading	07:19	07:50	14:19	16:19	16:50	17:19	17:50	18:19	18:50	16:50

From 31 January 2005 until further notice.

Fare :- Adults £0.90, Children £0.70 each way.

Note :- In addition there is a Reading Buses service No 143 Mondays to Fridays only at 08:49 and 15:29 from the Fairground to the Station; returning at 09:01 and 15:41 from Mortimer Station (Fox and Horn Bus Stop) and St Mary's School to the Village centre.

SMPC 31 January 2005