



Stratfield Mortimer Parish
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting
held at St. Johns Hall, West End Road
at 7.30 pm on 30th April 2018.

Prior to the meeting, at 7.00 pm a display relating to speeding was available for inspection. The display will be available for viewing on the SMPC web site. Tea, coffee and biscuits were also served.

There were approximately 74 members of the public and councillors present. These included Inspector Chris Ward of Thames Valley Police, Mr. Glyn Davies from the Highways Department of West Berkshire Council and Ms. McElhill of NatWest Bank.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm.

It was agreed that Cllr. Chris Lewis would take the minutes.

- 1 Cllr. P. Wingfield as Chairman of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council welcomed all attendees.
- 2 Cllr. P. Wingfield was proud to present the SMPC Community Award to Pete Blagden. Pete's many contributions to the community included being a founding member of Mortimer Village Partnership, organiser of the Film Club, Gardening Club and the Walking Group; he was also a Parish Councillor for many years.
- 3 The Minutes of the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting have been on the SMPC web site for some time and copies were available in the hall. Cllr. P Wingfield proposed and it was agreed that these could be taken as read. They were subsequently approved by the meeting.
- 4 Cllr. Wingfield read a verbal report on the activities of SMPC. A transcript is appended:
As with most years 2017/18 has been one of mixed fortunes for the parish council but I am glad to say that there have been a lot more plusses than minuses.
The biggest plus was that last summer we finally managed to get a Neighbourhood Development Plan in place. This has already yielded benefits as planning applications now have to take the policies in the NDP into account.
Another positive has been the continued existence of the library, where the parish council has contributed monies to West Berks to keep it open. A new zebra crossing has been installed and the fairground car park resurfaced.
On the negative side there have been problems with getting repairs made to the play equipment and the parish council has not been as successful as it would like to have been with communications or in pushing forward on agreed projects. To this end we have put in place a whole raft of internal changes that will now hopefully start to bear fruit.
Other matters that have or are being dealt with include
 - The commissioning of a survey to determine what the young people of the village want to happen
 - The preparation of a report on the future of sport and active leisure in the village
 - The successful bid for monies from WBC for the provision of mobile flood lights, extra electricity points on the fairground and a new entry system for the tennis courts
 - The formulation of a heritage trail
 - Ongoing work on a new station carpark
 - Initial work on a footpath between Mortimer and Burghfield
 - The establishment of a biodiversity group
 - Responding to the initial consultation for WBC's new local plan, which includes the Grazeley 'garden village'

- Financial support for Handybus
- Longer opening hours for the parish office

Finally this year has seen many changes of personnel to councillors, volunteers and office staff. To all those that have left I would like to say thank you for all your efforts and to all those that have joined I would like to say welcome and thank you for coming on board.

5 Cllr. Wingfield then opened a discussion about 'speeding in the village'. He stated that the powers of SMPC were limited in this respect, though it tried to influence TVP and WBC where it could.

Pertinent points from the meeting are summarised below:

- There was a discussion about the dangerous bend beyond Brewery Common at the bottom of the hill. Extending the 30mph speed limit was suggested. Cllr. P. Wingfield undertook that SMPC would investigate the matter.
- Mr. Glyn Davies stated speed restrictions were subject to government guidelines. He also stated that research indicated that extending speed limits did not necessarily make roads safer.
- It was clarified that accident numbers were only included if there was a reported injury.
- There was a question as to whether parking on pavements was lawful. Inspector Chris Ward stated that a relevant offence would be 'unnecessary obstruction' and there was not a precise answer to the question; he stated that if his officers observed the offence they had the powers to issue a ticket. He was not enthusiastic about members of the public sending photographs of such incidents because of evidential problems.
- Cllr. Wingfield asked for a show of hands about whether the meeting favoured speed cameras with smiley faces and number plate recognition and approximately 66 were in favour and 3 against. It was doubtful if non-police cameras would give a suitable standard of evidence to go straight to a charge.
- Traffic calming measures were discussed. The lack of street lights was a restriction though it was pointed out from the NDP that the majority of parishioners did not want them. It was observed that Little London had chicanes without street lights but it was pointed out that Hampshire had different rules to West Berkshire Council. The feeling was against speed humps. Again on a show of hands approximately 80% of the meeting were against this. SMPC will investigate putting 'gates' around the village
- Clearing foliage around signs and general mould on the signs were also raised as issues. Mr. Glyn Davies stated that if it were reported to WBC that it may be resolved as long as there was a budget for it. Cllr. Wingfield stated that there were insurance issues if SMPC or members of the public were to carry out the work.

Glyn Davies was thanked for attending and answering questions

6 Ms. Christine McElhill From NatWest Bank gave a verbal presentation. She had worked for the bank for 41 years. Owing to advances in technology the Mortimer branch along with the cash point will close on 25th June 2018. Other branches in the area will close around the same time. She has been retained to give advice to people in the area who may have difficulties with the new technology. She envisaged being available in the Baobab or the Library for an hour or so a week; she will advertise her availability. She stated that cheques could be paid in and balances given at the Post Office in Budgens.

There were then general questions. Inspector Chris Ward accepted that there had been a rise in criminal damage in the area since Christmas but he could not establish any pattern. This made it difficult for him to justify the cost of extra resources in the area. He accepted that the two recent catapult attacks on local buses were worrying. With regard to off road motor bikes, he did state the police had new powers to seize the bikes of offenders.

Chris Ward was thanked for attending and answering questions.

The meeting closed at 9.12 pm.