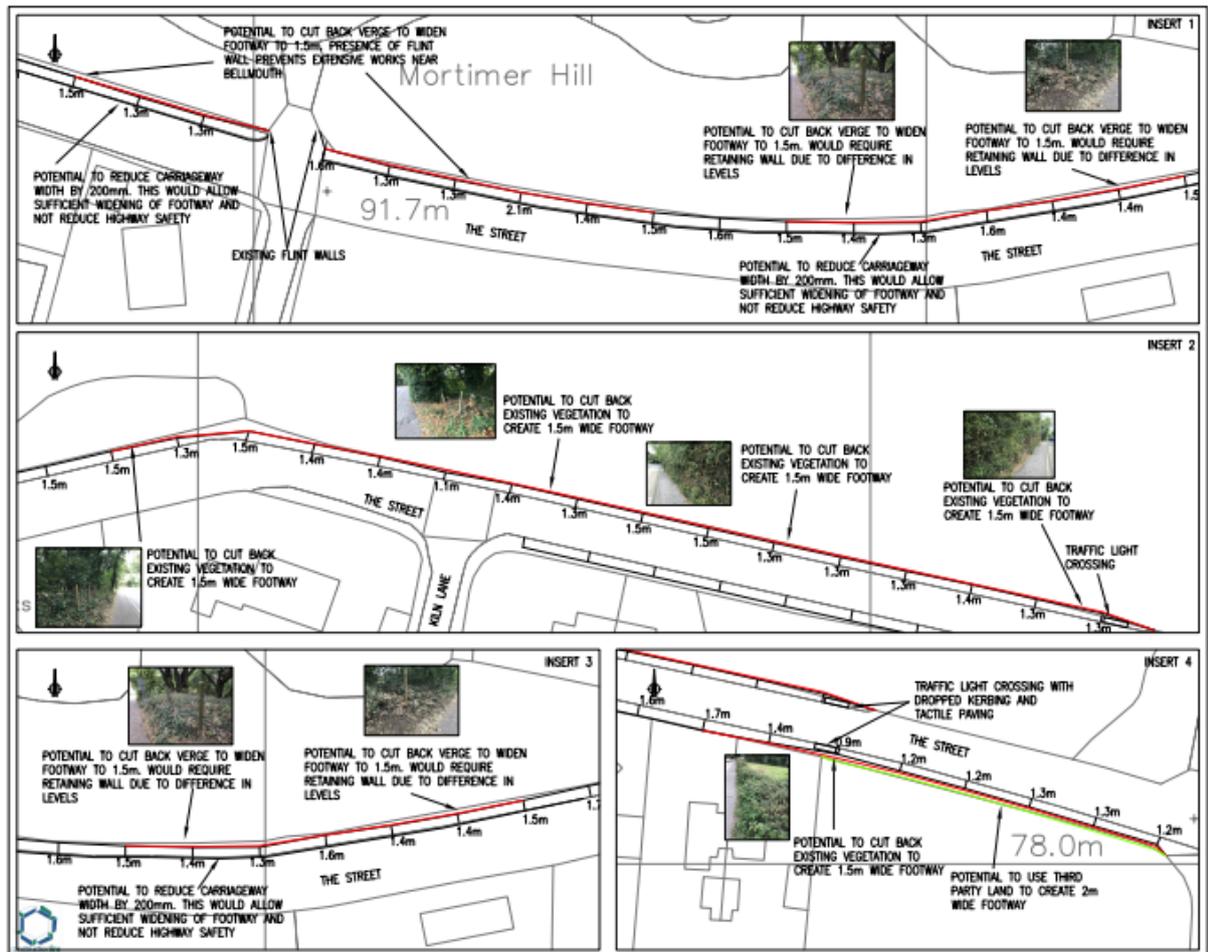


Widening the pavement between Strawberry Fields and Mortimer Hall

The proposal: The pavement between Strawberry Fields and the entrance to Mortimer Hall be widened to at least 1.5m to make it fit for purpose.

Details: There have been long-standing complaints about the width of this pavement. It is perceived to be dangerous especially for children and parents walking to St Mary's School.

The pavement is the responsibility of West Berkshire Council (WBC) and they have been asked on numerous occasions to remedy the situation. They have cut back the hedges a couple of times, but of course this does not solve the more fundamental problem that the pavement is not wide enough. The Parish Council have therefore sought expert advice as to how any widening could be achieved and what it would cost. The proposal is shown in the diagram below.



Costs: The cost for this project is estimated to be about £35,000 but until detailed surveys are carried out this figure should be treated with caution.

It is assumed that WBC will maintain the new pavement but that the Parish Council will have to pay for regular cutting back of the hedges. This is likely to cost some £2,000 per year which would mean the following increase in council tax for a home in each property band:-

Band A	79p	Band E	£1.44
Band B	92p	Band F	£1.70
Band C	£1.05	Band G	£1.97
Band D	£1.18	Band H	£2.36

Your views: While any views you give are important we would particularly like to know:-

- Are there other pavements which are narrow/dangerous?
- Is it a good idea for the Parish Council to spend money widening the pavement?
- Is it necessary for the Parish Council to take responsibility for cutting back the hedges?

The Parish Council takes over the running of the Library building

The proposal: The Parish Council lease the library building and take over the running of things such as the cleaning and maintenance of the building. It would also allow the Parish Council to make the library available for other functions such as small meetings.

Details: West Berkshire Council (WBC) would still run the library service and they would employ the library staff and organise the library volunteers. However, the Parish Council would be in a better position to influence how that service was provided. For instance, should the opening hours be altered? Clearly extending the hours would cost more but perhaps a rearrangement of the existing hours would be beneficial and might be almost cost-neutral.



The Parish Council would also be able to alter the library building, for example, adding a dedicated reading/meeting room on the front of the building. Clearly there would be a cost to this, which is not included in the present proposal, but it is an example of the added flexibility that would exist.



Other libraries that have gone down this route have shown that the most sensible and cost-efficient way to proceed is to set up a trust to run the library building and be responsible for any bookings and other fund-raising for the library. This will require a set of trustees to be appointed and if no one is willing to be such a trustee the project cannot proceed

Costs: The initial costs are relatively small and are basically legal fees for organising the lease, service agreement with WBC and setting up the trust. It is estimated they would be some £2,500

The yearly costs will depend on the amount of money that can be raised via lettings and general fund raising. If there were no lettings and no fund raising there would be a cost of about £1000 per year. That equates to the following annual increase in council tax for each property band:-

Band A	39p	Band E	72p
Band B	46p	Band F	84p
Band C	52p	Band G	98p
Band D	59p	Band H	£1.18

Your views: Any views you give are important but we would particularly like to know:-

- Is it a good idea for the Parish Council to take over the running of the library building?
- Is the increase in council tax a reasonable price to pay?
- Can you think of any uses for the library that might help fund it?
- Would you be willing to be a trustee for the library?
- What can be done to encourage use of the library?



Provide a Footpath/cycleway between Mortimer and Burghfield

The proposal: The Parish Council builds a footpath/cycleway on the east side of Burghfield Rd from College Piece corner to the roundabout with Padworth Rd.

Details: Since the removal of the school bus there has been no way for pupils to travel to and from Willink school without paying for a community organised bus, being delivered by car or making their way on foot or cycle via the main road or using the paths through woods. The proposed footpath/cycleway would allow a relatively safe route for walking or cycling.

The proposed route is shown in the diagram below.



It should be emphasised that there are several issues which need to be resolved before this project could go ahead. The major one is that the path would, in part, need to pass over private land and the landowner would need to give permission for that to happen or sell the land to allow construction. The exact form of the path also needs to be decided on. A tarmac-surfaced path would be all-weather and better for users but would be more intrusive in the woodland setting. A crushed stone path would be less intrusive but would require more maintenance and would be less usable in foul weather. West Berkshire Council (WBC) would also have to agree the location and form of construction of the path, especially if they are to be persuaded to take over the maintenance of the path.

Costs: The initial cost, for a tarmac path, is likely to be in the order of £150,000 but until detailed surveys are carried out this figure should be treated with caution.

The yearly cost will depend on whether WBC can be persuaded to take over the maintenance of this footpath/cycleway. If not then the Parish Council would have to maintain it at an average estimated yearly cost of some £3,750 which would mean the following increase in council tax for a home in each property band:-

Band A	£1.48	Band E	£2.70
Band B	£1.72	Band F	£3.19
Band C	£1.97	Band G	£3.70
Band D	£2.21	Band H	£4.42

Your views: While any views you give are important we would particularly like to know:-

- Is it a good idea for the Parish Council to spend money building this footpath/cycleway?
- Would you favour a tarmac path or a crushed stone path?
- Should the Parish Council take responsibility for maintaining the footpath/ cycleway?
- Is the ongoing increase in council tax is a reasonable price to pay?