

Stratfield Mortimer Parish

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting

held at St. Johns Hall, West End Road

at 7.30 pm on 29th April 2019.

- # 1 Prior to the meeting, at 7.00 pm a display relating to crime and anti-social behaviour in the area was available for inspection. There were some displays from local organisations and charities including Handybus, Together in Mission and RNLI. Tea, coffee and biscuits were also served.
- # 2 There were approximately 90 members of the public and councillors present. These included Mr. Anthony Stansfeld (Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley), Inspector Alan Hawkett (Local Neighbourhood Inspector, replacing Inspector Chris Ward), Sgt Mark Yates, PC Arun Slade and PC Rebecca Stiebert (all of MoD Police at Aldermaston).
- # 3 The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm.
- # 4 It was agreed that Cllr. Chris Lewis would take the minutes.
- 1 Cllr. Mike Dennett, Chairman of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council, welcomed all attendees.
- 2 Cllr. Dennett was proud to present the SMPC Community Award to Mrs. Monica Clark for her outstanding voluntary service over 48 years including organising the Thursday morning Coffee Club for 25 years and substantial work for the Mortimer and Burghfield Volunteer Bureau.
- 3 The Minutes of the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting have been on the SMPC web site for some time and copies were available in the hall. Cllr. Mike Dennett proposed and it was agreed that these could be taken as read. They were subsequently approved by the meeting.
- #5 Cllr. Dennett then suggested and it was agreed that item 5 on the Agenda be brought forward.
- 5 Mr. Anthony Stansfeld was introduced to the meeting and he gave a summary of his role as Police and Crime Commissioner and mentioned some of the challenges faced by the police.

It is an elected position, he controls the budget and appoints the Chief Constable. He can hold the police to account on behalf of the public. Thames Valley is the fourth biggest police force in the land serving a population of 2.3 million. There are 3,800 police officers and 400 PCSO's. He has a budget of £400m but this has been cut from £500m in recent years.

Mr Stansfield stated that he would raise the issue of why some parishioners have to tolerate a perception of intimidation in the village with the Deputy Chief Constable and the Area Commander.

PC Rebecca Stiebert gave an outline of MoD's Project Servator. It tends to be high profile. In an emergency members of the public should always call 999 but if they see anything suspicious they can call 01189 82 62 86.

Insp. Alan Hawkett took the floor. There was a heated but polite discussion on various aspects of local policing. Concern was raised with [1] contact time on 101, [2] the accuracy of crime statistics and [3] failure to bring prosecutions for both serious and minor crimes when the identity of the perpetrators was known. If the crime is in action now, members of the public should always call 999; if not they should call 101. They can also report it on line at www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/ or alternatively email PangbourneNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk. The decision as to whether to prosecute or not is not down to the police but is for the Crown Prosecution Service alone.

Cllr. Kilshaw thanked the Commissioner and the police for attending the meeting.

#6 The police left after this and the attendees dropped to around 35. Insp. Hawkett was reported as still being in discussions with the public outside the hall at around 10.00pm.

4 Cllr. Dennett gave a verbal report on the activities of SMPC. The report is appended:

Lynn Hannawin as Clerk and Bernise O'Reilly as Assistant have been in post for a year now. All councillors have very much appreciated their efficiency and attitude in their roles and I am sure this is also so for parishioners who have been in contact with the office either in person, by telephone, email, Facebook etc. Routine tasks have been carried out very efficiently – eg the Council has commented on 41 planning applications and there have been 9 burials and internments in our cemetery. Work is continuing on planning the cemetery extension which requires a bridge to access the extension.

This efficiency has freed up time to make progress with several projects. There has been substantial work on the Fairground, new fencing; the repair, painting and replacement of play equipment, painting of the car park fencing, as well as clearing of the ponds – the latter done by councillors and volunteers under guidance from BBOWT. Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust

The Council had commissioned a project on the needs for youth in the Parish which included sessions in Willink and St Mary's Schools. As a result the Council established a Youth Focus Group.

The Council agreed to implement the findings of a commissioned report on the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Project regarding the Fairground and the southern edge of the new development.

Grant funding has been received to enable the tennis court booking system to be on line in conjunction with the LTA ClubSpark system.

Work is progressing on footpath registration within the parish.

The Council is working with GWR and Englefield Estate and ProVison on an additional car park at the station. A public consultation was held in February and a planning application will be submitted in the near future.

Very soon all the blue village noticeboards will be replaced making it much easier to parishioners to post notices. This has taken along time to organise, we finally found a supplier that made noticeboards without lockable covers with the bonus that the boards are made from recycled tyres. There will be an additional board on the APMF.

I don't want to open a discussion on speeding in the village (last years meeting) but with the help of District Councillor Graham Bridgman a members bid was made to WBC for an ANPR SID. SMPC and WBC pay half each. Using this required discussions with TVP and WBC and the portable equipment was still being developed but it should be delivered very shortly.

Further to last year's meeting, village gates have also been installed, where possible, at the village boundaries. These were initiated by the Council but installed and funded by West Berkshire.

On Remembrance Day the Council took part in the National tribute, Battles Over, with the Reading of the roll of Honour and the lighting of a beacon.

One for the future, at the last Council meeting, a resolution was passed enabling the Council to start discussions with WBC on taking over the Library building. In brief, WBC would continue the library service but the building would be run by a local charity who would pay a peppercorn rent. This could open up the building for many other uses. This model is already in place in Hungerford.

Over the next few years the Council expects to receive a considerable amount of CIL, monies that WBC receive from developers. Normally, a Parish Council receives 15% of this money, but because we have an NDP in place we will receive 25%. We estimate that this could be at least £125,000 over the next few years as the development behind Tower House Gardens gets built.

The funds that come to a Council with an NDP can be spent on anything that leads to the development of facilities in the area. The Council has an open list of projects that it will investigate further using this funding and the intention is to put possible projects out for public consultation. Some are relatively simple, a fitness trail on Windmill Common; others such as a youth facility much more complex.

Finally, it's the end of the term of this Council with the elections on Thursday and the new Council's first meeting on 16th May. Rules about election publicity mean that I cannot make comments (favourable or otherwise) about any councillors standing for election. But I can about councillors who are not standing. In January Cllr Tina Reade resigned, Tina had been a very active Councillor and was appointed Chairman last May. Tina did much for the Council during her time in office.

Second, Cllr Phil Challis who has been a councillor since 1993 and I guess is known to almost everyone in the village. Phil has served on all the main committees during his time and his local knowledge has been of incredible value to the Council. We shall greatly miss his incisive comments and his desire to get practical problems solved.

Third, Cllr Pat Wingfield. Pat joined the Council in 2010 and has been Chairman and Vice Chairman for various periods. He was also Chairman of the NDP Steering Group and his knowledge of local government and of planning law and his sheer determination were very major factors in successfully completing the NDP. Pat has also championed many other projects, including the Youth Project mentioned earlier. We will greatly miss his enthusiasm, expertise and contributions to discussion.

Because we have 15 vacancies on the Council and only 12 current councillors are standing, we shall have at least three new councillors. I wish the new Council well.

- 6 There was a brief open discussion. The large development at Grazeley was a concern.
- # 7 The meeting closed at 9.12 pm.