



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held online on Thursday 25th June 2020 @ 7.30 pm.

These Minutes are subject to approval

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. M. Dennett (Chairman), Cllr. S. Beard, G. Bridgman, Cllr. J. Bull (left at 20.12), Cllr. K. Field, Cllr. S. Hill, Cllr. D. Ives, Cllr. D. Kilshaw, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. M. Lock, Cllr. D. Morsley, Cllr. J. Wells.

Officers:

Mrs. L. Hannawin
Ms. B. O'Reilly

Public/Press:

There was 1 member of the public and no member of the press in attendance.

Part I

20/001 Public Questions

A representative of St Mary's Church attended with regards to the request for a grant for the grass cutting of St Mary's churchyard. They gave a history of the previous financial assistance given by the Council to the Church for grass cutting and the reasons why further financial assistance is now needed. He confirmed the following: any requirements around previous grants which have not been met can be revisited if necessary; the parish share contribution in 2019 was less than the previous two years and might have been due to the financial situation of the church; any grant would be held as restrictive funds for the purposes of the grass cutting; the quote has been provided by Pete Warner.

A point of order was raised regarding public questions being on agenda items only. It was confirmed that this accurately reflects the Standing Orders but can be reconsidered when Standing Orders are reviewed.

20/002 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. N. Carter.

20/003 To receive any declarations of interest

Cllr. Bull declared an interest in:

- 20/009 4 – being he undertakes paid work for the Council.
- 20/010 5 – being that he is Chairman of the Church's Fabric Committee.

Cllr. Bridgman declared an interest in 20/005 1 due to his involvement with the Summer Nights Drive-in Cinema.

Cllr. Hill declared an interest in 20/009 4 due to his claim for expenses.

20/004 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve to APPROVE the Minutes of the Council Meeting of the 23rd March 2020

RESOLVED unanimously by those present that the minutes be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.

20/010 5. Grant Applications

Cllr. Dennett proposed that agenda item 20/010 5. Grant Applications be brought forward to be discussed next.

RESOLVED unanimously.

Further to differing advice and opinions of the National Association of Local Councils, Hampshire Association of Local Councils and Charles Arnold Baker on Local Council of Administration, a lengthy discussion ensued regarding the legality of giving financial assistance to churches. The Clerk confirmed that advice has also been sought from the internal auditor but has not yet been received.

Cllr. Lock proposed that a decision should be taken to the next meeting

Seconded by Cllr. Ives

The motion was **NOT CARRIED**.

Cllr. Dennett proposed that the Council continue to consider the grant and if approved it is subject to the auditor's advice.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman

RESOLVED by majority vote.

The grant was further considered and the benefits of assisting with the grass cutting reviewed.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed that a grant of £2070, plus VAT if the Church is not VAT registered, is made for the financial year 2020/21 subject to the agreement of the auditor. The Chairman and Clerk will decide 1) under which power the grant can be made and 2) the source of funds, either the grant budget or CIL reserves, from which the grant can be taken.

Seconded by Cllr. Lock

RESOLVED unanimously.

20/005 Clerk's Report

1. To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the meeting held on the 12th March 2020 and other updates.

The report was received and in addition it was noted:

- The Members Bid claim was received in March.
- The Annual ROSPA inspection was undertaken in April.

- In line with Government regulations and Covid-19, playgrounds can open as of July 4th if safe to do so.

2. To receive a report on the decisions taken under devolved powers.

The report was received.

20/006 Items to be taken into private session

To determine which items, if any, of the Agenda should be taken with the public excluded

None

20/007 Planning

To receive planning decisions and information from West Berkshire Council:

20/00354/HOUSE: 26 Briar Lea Road, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3SA

Two storey extension to rear and single garage extension to side of existing private dwelling.

GRANTED – 9th April 2020

SMPC Comments

The Parish Council is aware of the parking problems in the vicinity of Briar Lea Road and the Committee acknowledged the comments from Highways regarding the three parking spaces for the proposed extended property and that, although these spaces met with requirements, it was questionable on how practical this would be to apply.

20/00421/FUL: 24 King Street, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3RS

Erection of 1x 3 bedroom dwelling with detached carport following demolition of outbuildings

REFUSED – 22nd April 2020

SMPC Comments

The Committee had no objections to the proposed plans for the 3 bedroom dwelling and if Highways was happy with the access plans submitted, the Committee had no objections to the site access.

20/00446/HOUSE: 37 The Avenue, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3QU

Double storey side and front extension. Single story front extension to existing semi-detached property

GRANTED – 14th April 2020

SMPC Comments

No objections.

20/00637/FULMAJ: Perrins Farm, Beech Hill Road, Mortimer, Reading RG7 2AL

Subdivision of existing farmhouse from one to three C3 dwellinghouses, change of use of agricultural building to two C3 dwellinghouses, change of use of agricultural building to B1 use, change of use of agricultural buildings to flexible B2/B8 use, demolition of four agricultural buildings, new access from Park Lane and existing access closed off, and associated internal access arrangements, parking and landscaping.

REFUSED – 9th June 2020

SMPC Comments

While having no strong objections to this application, SMPC wish to raise a number of important questions.

1. This development is outside the Mortimer Settlement Boundary (MSB) and so is contrary to Stratfield Mortimer NDP Policy RS2 which states that proposals for housing development outside will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The application does not appear to put forward any exceptional circumstances.

If the application relies on permitted development rules for agricultural building conversions, SMPC asks that checks are made that it meets the conditions of NPPF Feb 2019, for example, para 79 with regard to maximum floor space, as we are unable to check this since floor metrage for the housing is not given. In addition, units H4 and H5 appear to be small and possibly less than standards for 3 bedroom units.

2. Change of use not requiring planning permission under NPPF Feb 2019 includes agricultural buildings to B1 (business) and B8 (storage and distribution) but does not include B2 (general industrial). While B1 and B8 units in proximity to housing are considered acceptable, SMPC does not consider it acceptable to have B2 units so close to houses. If WBC is minded to grant B2 use, we request that it be conditioned to exclude any uses which would adversely impact the residents' amenity for example by noise or fumes.

3. It is also difficult to estimate the amenity/garden space for each property and we query whether those for H1, H2, H4 and H5 meet the current standards.

4. Section 6.15 of the Planning Statement states:

"Furthermore the proposal is to subdivide the units to provide smaller units of B2 and B8 accommodation aimed at smaller businesses/local start up business needs. These amendments would prevent the 'relatively large scale' of accommodation that the Council were concerned about in the pre-application submission, and would mean that the site would not compete with the large scale industry, distribution and storage uses within the Council's defined Protected Employment Areas."

We note that the floor plans do not show any sub division and query how practical this will be, unit 1 has only one access through a roller shutter door, unit 2 has similar plus one small door. We agree with WBC's pre-application comments which are in line with the final paragraph of Policy C7 of the Stratfield Mortimer NDP. If WBC are minded to permit development, SMPC would like to see a condition to ensure these units are subdivided to meet smaller businesses / local start up business needs.

5. We also point out that Policy C7 of the Stratfield Mortimer NDP includes:

"Outside the settlement boundary priority will be given to protecting the countryside from inappropriate development. Such developments will be supported if, in addition to the above, they:

- make a long-term contribution to sustaining the agricultural enterprise or other land-based activities.
- are accompanied by appropriate protected species and habitat surveys, avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and seek to achieve a net gain through enhancements".

If WBC is minded to grant B2 use, is it possible for the B2 use to be conditioned to "make a long-term contribution to sustaining the agricultural enterprise or other land-based activities"?

Hence we would also expect an ecological survey to be a condition.

6. SMPC support the letter from the Housing Development is calling for one of the five houses to be provided as an affordable house

7. We note some errors in the Planning and Design & Access Statements:

"The site is in an accessible and sustainable location. The village of Mortimer (a designated Service Centre) lies approximately 2km to the west and provides a good range of local services and facilities including a bank.....".

The transport plan correctly gives this as 3.6km; the same error is in the Design & Access Statement. The bank closed last year.

20/00725/HOUSE: St Marys Road, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3UE

Addition of extra windows and bi fold doors to rear

GRANTED – 29th May 2020

SMPC Comments

There was no planning application form available to review on the planning portal. On the assumption that materials used would match those existing, the Parish Council would have no objections to the addition of extra windows and bi-fold doors to the rear of the property.

20/00438/HOUSE: 3 Stanmore Gardens, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 2JW

Replacement of rear summer room conservatory with single storey rear extension part to create study, two storey side extension, extension at first floor over living room and interior alterations

GRANTED – 1st May 2020

SMPC Comments

Following the submission of the additional drawings/amended plans for the above application, we have no further comments to add to those originally sent to you in March.

20/00376/COND1: 79 The Avenue, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3QU

Application of approval of details reserved by condition 4-tree protection of approved application 19/02248/HOUSE

APPROVED – 9th April 2020

20/00754/COND1: Ladyfield House, The Street, Mortimer, Reading

Application for approval of details reserved by Condition 4 (Tree Protection) of approved application 19/02781/HOUSE, which granted planning permission for: Proposed extension and alterations to existing house including demolition of existing rear extension. Condition discharged

APPROVED – 20th May 2020

20/00754/COND2: Ladyfield House, The Street, Mortimer, Reading

Application for approval of details reserved by Condition 5 (Archaeological Watching Brief) of approved application 19/02781/HOUSE, which granted planning permission for: Proposed extension and alterations to existing house including demolition of existing rear extension. Condition discharged.

APPROVED – 20th May 2020

20/01024/HOUSE: The Havethuset, Mortimer Hill, The Street, Mortimer, Reading RG7 3PW

Replacement of existing glazed roof area with eco slate roof finish and inclusion of 3 number new roof windows.

GRANTED – 14th April 2020

SMPC Comments

No objections.

20/00821/FUL: Alfred Palmer Memorial Recreation Field, West End Road, Mortimer Common, Reading

Remove the existing fence around Mortimer Football Club House and replace with V-Mesh sports fencing.

GRANTED – 16th June 2020

SMPC Comments

There are no objections to the planning application for the removal of the existing fence and replacement with a V-mesh sports fence set slightly further out from the club house building. We do note that no planning notice has been posted at the site and the immediate neighbouring property at 1 Stephens Close was not aware of the intention to change the fencing.

In addition, it was confirmed that 5 meetings had been held under delegated powers with various members of the Planning Committee. With the cessation of delegated powers, Planning Committee meetings will resume as normal.

20/008 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports

1. Finance and General Purposes

Cllr. Dennett reported that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had received and approved the final quarterly bank reconciliation report and a document on internal control, as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability (AGAR).

20/009 Finance

1. Accounts to 31st March 2020

To receive and APPROVE the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet for the year end 31st March 2020, as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) on the 11th June 2020.

APPROVED unanimously

2. Annual Subscriptions and Continuous Payments

To review and APPROVE the annual subscriptions and continuous payments as considered by F&GP on the 11th June 2020.

APPROVED unanimously

3. Payments made with authorisation of Chairman/Vice-Chairman

To receive and note summary of payments

Item	Payee Details	Amount
1.	Salaries – Month (12) March 2020	£ 3,543.53
2.	HMRC – Month (12) March 2020	£ 893.76
3.	Salaries – Month (1) April 2020	£ 3,574.71
4.	HMRC – Month (1) April 2020	£ 878.06
5.	Salaries – Month (2) May 2020	£ 3,667.32
6.	HMRC – Month (2) May 2020	£ 878.26
7.	SMPC MultiPay Corp. Card - Post Office; 50x 2 nd class & 12x 1 st class postage stamps, 24x Hi Viz Vests; monthly card charge [Direct Debit]	£ 215.38
8.	BT – Telephone & Broadband Quarter March-May 2020 – inc. VAT [Direct Debit]	£323.04
9.	SUEZ Recycling – March collections from Fairground – inc. VAT [Direct Debit]	£ 131.63

10.	SUEZ Recycling – April collections from Fairground – inc. VAT [Direct Debit]	£ 131.63
11.	C&D Grounds Maintenance – Fairground & Cemetery grass cut March 2020 – inc. VAT	£793.36
12.	Dads Shop – refuse bags and key cylinder & tag – inc. VAT	£9.23
13.	JR Bull Construction – recondition and re-glaze conservation info boards on Fairground	£240.00
14.	Playsafety – RoSPA Annual Inspection - inc. VAT	£187.20
15.	SSE – Electricity charges Dec-March at Plot 1 Fairground – inc. VAT [Direct Debit]	£18.00
16.	SEE – Electricity charges Dec-March at Plot 2 Fairground – inc. VAT [Direct Debit]	£18.66
17.	Tree World Services – treeworks at SMPC cemetery – inc. VAT	£1,074.00
18.	Tree World Services – clear fallen tree beside cemetery – inc. VAT	£360.00
19.	Vision ICT – SSL Certificate June 2020 to May 2021 – inc. VAT	£66.00
20.	West Berkshire Council – annual re-charge for grounds maintenance – financial year 2019-2020 – inc. VAT	£438.78
21.	WBC – Contribution towards Willink Leisure Centre 2019/20	£ 11,318.73
22.	West Berkshire Council – quarterly rent for Library office to 2 April 2020	£812.50
23.	West Berkshire Council – re-charge of costs relating to contested Parish Election May 2019	£2,303.66
24.	Sarum Hardwood Structures – design of cemetery bridge – inc. VAT	£1,593.24
25.	SJ Stephens Associates – completion of arboricultural impact assessment for station car park plan – inc. VAT	£174.00
26.	D.C. Sturt – SMPC IT Infrastructure; first half of migration to Office365	£1,096.50
27.	B. O'Reilly – Expenses; 40 large refuse sacks for custodian's use	£12.55
28.	ICCM – Membership 2020-2021	£ 95.00
29.	C&D Grounds Maintenance – Fairground & Cemetery grass cut April 2020 – inc. VAT	£ 793.36
30.	Dads Shop – 2 x rolls of barrier tape – inc. VAT	£ 25.00
31.	Methodist Church Hall – venue hire April 2019-March 2020	£ 270.00
32.	West Berkshire Council – supply & installation of speed cushions in St. Johns car park – inc. VAT	£ 3,193.92
33.	Currys PC World - Care Plan for Clerk's computer April [Direct Debit]	£ 9.94
34.	Currys PC World - Care Plan for Clerk's computer May [Direct Debit]	£ 9.94
35.	EE – April mobile phone plan charges – inc. VAT [Direct Debit]	£ 28.80
36.	BHIB – SMPC Insurance renewal for 2020-2021	£ 623.16

37.	BALC – BALC & NALC annual subscription fees	£ 905.67
38.	SLCC – Membership Fee for Parish Clerk 2020-2021	£ 227.00

It was noted that the £66.00 payment to Vision ICT was for the security certificate for the website and this is an ongoing annual fee.

The summary of payments was received.

4. Accounts for payment

To review and APPROVE items of expenditure

Item	Payee Details	Amount
1.	Rialtas – Software annual support and maintenance to June 2021 – inc. VAT	£ 148.80
2.	C&D Grounds Maintenance – Fairground & Cemetery grass cut May 2020 – inc. VAT	£ 793.36
3.	C&D Grounds Maintenance – Boundary grass cut – inc. VAT	£540.00
4.	Dads Shop – Cable ties – inc. VAT	£ 7.20
5.	SUEZ Recycling – scheduled service from Fairground car park, May 2020 – inc. VAT [Direct Debit]	£ 137.84
6.	Englefield Estate – Cemetery rental quarter (July-Sept 2020)	£ 62.50
7.	Castle Water – Water charges May-August 2020 [Direct Debit]	£ 36.00
8.	Cllr. S. Hill – fencing for new trees on Fairground <i>(VAT to be added)</i>	£112.25
9.	Stuart Michael Associates – Mortimer Station Car Park Technical Note for West Berkshire Highways – inc. VAT	£660.00
10.	L. Hannawin – Fuel for SMPC Custodian	£5.45
11.	Cllr. J. Bull – 48x refuse bags for Fairground	£ 35.94
12.	GeoXphere Ltd – Parish Online subscription to 21 June 2021 (with discount) – inc. VAT	£ 96.00
13.	David Sturt – Completion of work to migrate to Office 365	£ 1,096.50
14.	David Sturt – Set up Microsoft Teams for SMPC	£300.00
15.	David Sturt – 3xhour IT support work on Clerk's and Assistant's old laptops	£ 90.00
16.	C&D Grounds Maintenance – 3x watering lime trees on Fairground; week 12 th June – inc. VAT	£ 327.42
17.	Unity Trust Bank – cheque/cash processing charges March/April 2020	£ 0.60

The following was noted:

- The cost of watering the lime trees on the Fairground was raised as potentially being overpriced and it was agreed that this should be reviewed if required again.
- The reimbursement of expense to Cllr. Hill should be £134.70 as opposed to the £112.25 listed.

APPROVED unanimously

20/010 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Internal Audit Report

To receive and consider the Internal Audit Report for the year ended 31 March 2020 reviewed by F&GP Committee 11th June 2020.

The report was received.

It was noted that as per the Internal Audit Report, Assertion L was introduced as part of the 2019/20 Internal Audit Report process but refers to the public rights for the AGAR 2018/19 and is therefore asking for something to be checked retrospectively. However, no guidance was received as part of the 2018/19 process, stating that proof of date of posting the Notice of Public Rights to the website was required. This requirement has been noted for financial year 2019/20 and evidence will be obtained accordingly.

2. Annual Governance and Accountability Return Section 1

To receive and APPROVE for signing the 2019/2020 Annual Governance Statement as reviewed by F&GP on the 11th June 2020.

Each assertion on Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement was reviewed, considered and agreed.

Section 1 was **APPROVED** for signing unanimously.

3. Annual Governance and Accountability Return Section 2

To receive and APPROVE for signing the 2019/2020 Accounting Statements as reviewed by F&GP on the 11th June 2020.

The figures were reviewed in accordance with the Accounts to 31st March 2020. It was also noted that an Explanation of Variances form will be submitted along with the AGAR.

Section 2 was **APPROVED** for signing unanimously.

4. VE Day 75 Commemorations

To review and AGREE the VE Day Commemorations will take place on the weekend of the 8th/9th May 2021.

Cllr. Beard gave an update and proposed the motion as above

Seconded by Cllr. Hill

RESOLVED Unanimously

5. Grant Applications

To consider the grant applications received and AGREE any funds to be allocated under s137 or other relevant powers.

Minuted above.

20/011 Items for information only

1. To note the meetings that have taken place of the following committees and to receive the approved draft minutes:

- a. **Planning 12/03/2020**
- b. **Fairground and Cemetery 19/03/2020**
- c. **Finance and General Purposes 11/06/2020**

The meetings were noted.

2. District Councillor Reports

Cllr. Bridgman suggested that a Zoom Pro-Licence should be purchased as an alternative to Zoom. It was agreed that this would be considered.

Cllr. Bridgman gave some general information regarding the current financial position of West Berkshire Council regarding Covid-19 and funding received.

3. Correspondence

Item	Details
1.	NALC: New Model Code of Conduct Consultation - deadline 17 th August
2.	HALC: Notification that the nomination for ex- Chairman Mr. P. Wingfield to attend the Roya Garden Party was successful. All events have been postponed to 2021.
3.	WBC: Notification of precept payment part 1.
4.	NAG: Stats below for all incidents that have occurred dating from 1/01/2020 – 23/04/2020
5.	SSE Networks: Information regarding the Priority Services Register and SSEN Resilience Fund.
6.	WBC: Conservation Area Appraisals
7.	Racing Line Running: The Mortimer 10k has been cancelled for September 2020. A new date of Monday 5 th April 2021 (Easter Monday) has been provisionally booked.

In addition, it was noted that West Berkshire Council are currently running a Speed Management Framework Consultation which sets out WBC's vision for tackling community concerns on speeding. A response has been submitted under delegated powers, but councillors may also respond personally. The closing date is 13th July 2020.

4. Neighbourhood Action Group report

Nothing to report

5. Minor Matters

- Cllr. Dennett discussed the timetabling of meetings. It is proposed that there will be further meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Full Council in July with the usual scheduling resuming as of September. The meetings will remain online until regulations change accordingly.
- Cllr. Morsley reported that the Strategy Working Party have met to complete the work on the survey and start progressing the agreed projects.
- Cllr. Dennett raised the need to produce the next SMPC newsletter and ideas for articles should be submitted to Cllr. Dennett.
- Cllr. Hill raised the issue of the West End Road car park hedge being replaced with a fence and questioned the necessity of this. Cllr. Lewis confirmed that it was agreed to remove the hedge due to the poor sight lines. The order has been placed as per the agreement of the Roads, Footpath and Commons Committee.
- The Clerk confirmed that an email had been sent to establish the status of the SID/ANPR order.

20/012 Communications

To identify items for communicating

Not discussed.

20/013 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

None.

20/014 Exclusion of Press and Public

To pass a resolution to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting at Part II, items identified at 20/006 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the information being discussed

Not required.

Close

The meeting closed at 21.32

Date of next meeting – 30th July 2020