



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting

held on 18th February 2016 @ 7.30 pm

at Mortimer Methodist Hall, West End Road, Mortimer

Present: Cllr. M. Dennett (Chairman), Cllr. J. Earl (Vice Chairman), Cllr. P. Blagden, Cllr. J. Bull, Cllr. A. Butcher, Cllr. N. Carter, Cllr. P. Challis, Cllr. D. Ives, Cllr. M. Lock, Cllr. A. Phillips, Cllr. A. Richardson and Cllr. P. Wingfield.

There were 8 members of the public and no press present.

15/301	<p>Public Questions:</p> <p>Mr. T Proctor expressed his concerns over the proposed closure of Mortimer Library as considerable work had gone into developing it to where it is now and a lot of aspects of the village scene began through the library.</p> <p>Mrs. D. Morsley agreed with what Mr. T. Proctor has said and wanted to see the Library saved.</p> <p>Mr. P. Marsh also agreed with what Mr. T. Proctor has said and went on to express his concerns over the effect on the elderly especially with regard to the loss of access to computers and the information that can be gained from the internet – if not there they will be denied access to a lot of facilities and information.</p> <p>Mrs. M. McClure Commented that she had worked in Libraries for some 20 years and now leads a regular weekly Mother & Toddler group in Mortimer Library and made the point that Libraries serve the community from cradle to grave.</p> <p>She went on to make the point that the closure of bus routes and withdrawal of the Readibus grant would severely affect the vulnerable who rely on those services.</p>
15/302	<p>To receive any apologies for absence:</p> <p>Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. N. Kiley and District Cllr. G. Bridgman</p>
15/303	<p>To receive any declarations of interest and dispensations:</p> <p>All Councillors declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 304 as all use the services.</p>
15/304	<p>To consider the Parish Council's response to the published consultation on West Berkshire Council's proposed phase 2 budget savings for 2016 – 2017 regarding:</p> <p>Before detailed discussion took place, a general discussion was had that confirmed that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Names on a petition only count as 1 response. 2 Personal individual web site responses and letters all count as an individual response and the more responses the better. 3 Responses need to be fact based and not be emotional, backed up by data, both social and economical, wherever possible, even though the data is not easily available. 4 The SMPC rental for the office was not factored into the figures. 5 The figures already to hand needed to be further clarified. 6 Priority needs to be in fighting the closure because the consequences it would create.

- 7 There is extra Council Tax revenue from an extra 100 homes in Mortimer that could be used towards funding the Library.

Specific discussion then took place on the response to the consultation on the following Agenda Items setting out the response headings:

- 1 A reduction to the library service by closing eight branch libraries and two mobile libraries. This will leave one branch library in Newbury and the 'At Home' service.
 - a. SMPC strongly object to closure
 - b. Mortimer is a rural services centre, used by Beech Hill, and nearest alternative is 15 miles away.
 - c. Used by mainly by the elderly, mothers and children and young people
 - d. Recently re-furnished at considerable expense
 - e. Sited to serve the East of the County
 - f. Covenant on use of land only as a Library in the Land Registry deeds
 - g. Land is a donation by a member of the community of Mortimer
 - h. Used heavily by children as part of the regular Summer Reading Scheme
 - i. The WBC Core Strategy states that the Mortimer Library is a Rural Service Centre, providing services to its inhabitants and to neighbouring villages and this has been re-iterated in the Mortimer NDP
 - j. Provides regular for computer use by those who do not have any on-line form filling facility for HMRC, Pensions, Benefits, Council Tax rebates, etc., job seeking and training courses.
 - k. Recognised as being a good library
 - l. Isolated to alternative service provision for those without cars by proposed closure of the bus routes
- 2 Parking charges applying seven days a week in Newbury car parks with the removal of the separate Sunday charge, an increase in overnight parking charges, resident parking permits and visitor parking permits.
 - a. No Objection
- 3 The withdrawal of Council funding for the Neighbourhood Warden scheme.
 - a. No Objection
- 4 Reductions in funding to the Corn Exchange and Watermill Theatre.
 - a. Object to any funding as these are commercial operations and funding should be spent on community services such as libraries, especially Mortimer Library
- 5 Public Transport – Removal of the 74 and 154 bus services.
 - a. 75 & 154 – Object strongly.
 - b. 75 used by community to get to West Berkshire Hospital and Council Offices – no other service available.
 - c. 154 used by community of Beech Hill to get to Reading – no other service available.
 - d. Objection as per Phase 1 consultation. The 75 service needs to

	<p>be kept in its entirety.</p> <p>e. Readibus/National Travel Scheme – Concerned about possible outcomes to bus pass holders if actioned but no objection.</p> <p>6 Closure of Smallmead re-cycling centre.</p> <p>a. Strongly object to closure</p> <p>b. Alternative sites not easily accessible to and would not be free to residents within West Berks</p> <p>c. Potential for significant increase in fly tipping due to open nature of the environment around Mortimer.</p> <p>7 Closure of Burghfield Children’s Centre:</p> <p>a. Strongly object</p> <p>b. Serious concerns as to whether Mrs Blands Infant and Nursery School would be able to cope with the resulting extra demand if closure takes place</p> <p>c. Currently providing a significant outreach service into the local traveller communities, which would be lost if closed.</p> <p>Further discussion then took place and the following points were made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 That SMPC’s response should be made public. 2 Individuals can always respond to the consultation, not just the Council. 3 That “Save our Library” posters should be displayed around the village, although no action on this was agreed.
15/305	<p>To consider the Parish Council’s response to the overgrown privately owned hedge running along the southern side of The Street between the eastern entrance to The Avenue and Kiln Lane.</p> <p>Cllr. T Butcher’s report was received and noted.</p> <p>Cllr. P. Challis expressed his thanks to Cllr. T. Butcher for the work put in to produce the report.</p> <p>Cllr. T. Butcher expressed his concerns that the Clerk had reported the matter to West Berkshire Council and the Clerk explained his reasons for doing so and that West Berkshire Council were now investigating.</p> <p>Cllr. T. Butcher proposed that the Parish Council should take no further action on the matter, which was unanimously AGREED.</p>
15/306	<p>Exclusion of Press and Public</p> <p>To pass a RESOLUTION to exclude members of the public and press from the meeting at Part II, Item 15/307 on the Agenda due to the confidential nature of the information being discussed.</p> <p>This was proposed by Cllr. M. Dennett, seconded by Cllr. J. Earl and AGREED unanimously.</p> <p>The Locum Clerk then left the meeting and the Chairman took over the clerking of the meeting.</p>

Part II**15/307****To receive an update on the Clerk vacancy.**

Cllr. M. Dennett reported that applications had been received and that interviews should be held.

It was **AGREED** that the interview would be Cllrs. M. Dennett, J. Earl, T. Butcher and P. Wingfield and that interviews be held on 3rd March 2016.

The next meeting is on 10th March 2016

The meeting closed at 9:50pm

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