

STRATFIELD MORTIMER

Parish Council Newsletter



March 2010

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ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

All parishioners are warmly invited to attend this public meeting to discuss Parish affairs. All those on the Electoral Register will also be entitled to vote. The presentation of the 2010 Stratfield Mortimer Community Award will be made at the meeting.

The meeting is to be held on:

**Wednesday 21st April 2010 at 7:30pm in
St John's Hall**

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council **Community Award 2009**

The Community Award is an annual award given to a person who has devoted time and energy for the benefit of the community of Stratfield Mortimer irrespective of whether they live in the village or not.

This year the award has been made to recognise the work and long devoted service given by Mrs. Carmen Robinson. Mrs. Robinson was supported by two separate nominations both of which considered her work with the Thursday "Coffee Club", sponsored by Age Concern.

The committee felt that her long service and obvious dedication to her charitable works were "above and beyond the call of duty". The committee were also impressed by her unstinting long service and unanimously felt that she had made an outstanding contribution to the life of the village over many years.

The council will present Mrs. Robinson with a specially commissioned plate at the Annual Parish Meeting and her name will be inscribed on the Community Award honours board in St. John's Hall.

Snowy Community Spirit



Mortimer has had more than its fair share of snow this winter but this has resulted in some wonderful demonstrations of community spirit. On Saturday 9th January a working party of the Parents and Friends of St. John's Infant School assembled at 8 a.m. armed with shovels to clear the school grounds. As the word spread many more people, many not involved with the school, armed with shovels turned out for a general clear up of other parts of the village. By a mixture of email and word of mouth, more and more people were contacted and the workforce just 'snowballed'! They cleared in front of the Methodist Church so that Mortimer Kindergarten could happen. They cleared the footpaths to the St. John's School and then all the way down the hill to St. Mary's Junior School. The way into that school was also done.

The Parish Council would like to thank all parents and friends of the schools plus everybody else who just came along to help - it was volunteering at its very best.

Voluntary Organisations Grant Request

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council (SMPC) has allocated a further amount of grant money (total amount available up to £4,000) from next year's budget and is inviting requests for applications for match-funded capital grants for the year 2010/2011 from local voluntary organisations.

Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives local councils such as Stratfield Mortimer the discretion and ability to make grants to "*non profit making voluntary organisations, charitable bodies or other bodies providing a public service other than for gain*".

Any grants awarded by SMPC must directly benefit the parish of Stratfield Mortimer and its inhabitants and are subject to a number of conditions that are set out in the Council's adopted Grants Policy.

If you think your voluntary organisation could qualify and would like to find out more about applying for a grant please contact the Clerk for a 2010/2011 Grant Request Form and a copy of the Council's Grants Policy. The closing date for applications is Thursday 28th May 2010.

Fairground Diary

The following bookings have been made for the Fairground:

4 th to 7 th May	J Lawson Circus
10 th to 16 th May	Burnetts Fun Fair
3 rd July	Mortimer Fun Day 2010
12 th September	Mortimer Riding Club
26 th September	Mortimer Fun Run

The 2 tennis courts are available to hire 8am to 9pm (bookings to be made in person at McColls – see below) except when the Tennis Club have their block booking which is Tuesdays and Thursdays 4-9 pm (both courts)

There has been a slight increase in the hourly hire rate (the first for a long time). The hire charges are now: Adults £3.00 per hour per court, Juniors (under 16s) £1.00 per hour per court. Courts may be booked/paid for in advance or just prior to playing (in person) at McColls but keys may not be hired in advance.

PCSO Diary - Spring 2010

from Steve Innes

The last quarter of the year 2009 was a challenging one for the Mortimer area Neighbourhood Police Team. A high level of burglary (non-dwellings) in the village was creating concern. During late November a key suspect was apprehended and returned to custody.

I am pleased to report that throughout December last year and up to early February this year, crime levels are much reduced. In fact the last quarter's figures now reflect a 10% decrease in overall crime. (Oct– Dec 2009).



Just 17 incidents of ASB were reported in December 2009, the lowest all year for the Mortimer/Burghfield area.

The Mortimer area police office is now open every Friday from 10am to 2pm. We do require additional volunteers to open on a Saturday morning. If you can help, please call in to see us, or post an application at our office.

The neighbourhood police team will be attending the Mortimer Fun Day on Saturday 3rd July. We will also be making a Parish visit on Saturday 6th March between 1pm and 1.45 pm. The location is the Horse and Groom car park.

We are planning to hold a Neighbourhood Watch meeting in the village during March 2010. This is both for existing street coordinators and those residents who would like to set up a local scheme. Please see Parish notice boards for details.

I wish you a very enjoyable Spring in our village – you are always welcome to call in and see us at our Victoria Road office.

Fairground Update

Five new kissing gates have been installed on the Fairground in addition to a new pair of 7' five bar gates (Windmill Road Entrance) to replace the deteriorating previous ones. As the kissing gates are situated on registered public footpaths West Berkshire Council kindly supplied the gates and the Parish Council funded the installation costs. These are now compliant with the new guidelines and will make access easier for pushchairs etc.

Following requests from parishioners two new seats have been installed – one on the grazing area and the other in the play area.

The surface of the tennis courts have been cleaned/pressure washed to remove moss and lichen to help prevent slipping when the surface is wet.

The CROW team of volunteers (Conservation of Reading On Wednesdays) plus some help from Mortimer residents made an excellent start on the new hedge along Hammonds Heath on 2nd December but had to stop after two hours of torrential rain!

The Parish Council were very lucky to have BTCV volunteer group (Berkshire & Thames Conservation Volunteers) come along on 4th February to continue the good work started in December and the new hedging now goes right up to the main gate on Hammonds Heath. The plan is to let the hedge grow beside the old wooden fence and when it reached the height of the top rail we will take the old fence away.

Another hedge has been planted during the week of 8th February along the western boundary of the grazing area. Once the hedge is a metre or so high the old wire-strand fence will be removed. All this extra hedging will provide much-needed habitat for birds and small mammals – particularly after this harsh winter.

It continues to be a matter much concern that many dog walkers are just not picking up their dog's mess. This not only causes an unpleasant mess but does cause real distress particularly for children. If you are a dog owner please do the responsible thing and clear up after your dog!

New Village Custodian



The Parish Council is pleased to announce that Terry Hall, who has been temporary custodian since June 2008, has become a permanent member of staff. Terry replaces Les O'Rourke who carried out the work for many years until ill health meant that he could no longer undertake his duties. We thank Les for his valued service to the community and wish him well for the future.

Terry's role includes carrying out general maintenance work at the Fairground, Cemetery and other Parish Council areas around the village. Some of you may have seen him clearing the snow from the War Memorial during the recent bad weather! We look forward to a long and happy working relationship with him. If you see him around, do go up and say hello.

West Berkshire into the Future

**Let us have your comments on West Berkshire's Core Strategy
Public Consultation 26th February – 9th April 2010**

West Berkshire Council is asking for your views on a planning document which will shape the future of the District. This document, known as the Core Strategy, sets out how and where development will take place and tackles some of the big issues facing all of us now and in the future.

The Core Strategy sets out a framework to ensure the District continues to be economically successful and that demand for new housing and jobs is met in a sustainable way that meets the needs of our



communities. It also seeks to relieve the impacts of climate change and to protect and improve the District's high quality environment for future generations to enjoy.

There has already been an opportunity to comment on some of the earlier drafts, including 'Options for the Future' which asked for views on where housing should go and on policies to future developments. These views have been combined with the findings of technical studies to develop the latest version of the Core Strategy.

There is now a final chance to make comments on the document before 9th April 2010. All of the consultation material is available from all libraries throughout the District, as well as the Council Offices in Market Street, Newbury and at Sainsbury's, Calcot. There will be two drop-in sessions taking place, one in Newbury and the other in Pangbourne, where staff will be available to answer questions. All details can be found on the Council's website.

More information about the strategy and how to comment can be found online at www.westberks.gov.uk/ldf. Alternatively, contact the Planning Policy team at planningpolicy@westberks.gov.uk or telephone 01635 519111.

Update on Parish Plan – Actions on your suggestions

Later in this issue you can read how the parish plan refresh has been adopted and read the whole text of what has been agreed. Some of the things you asked for are already being worked on:

Request	Action	Status
A community website	Mortimer Village Partnership (MVP) has launched a village website www.mortimervillage.org.uk	Ongoing
Cycle anchorage points	SMPC is investigating sites for these	Ongoing
Reduce speed on roads	SMPC is continuing to lobby WBC for part-time 20 mph signs outside the schools	Ongoing
Improve parking at St. Mary's School	SMPC is organising a joint meeting with school governors to investigate how this matter can be progressed	Ongoing
Prevent pavement parking	SMPC is improving the kerb and pavements outside dentist and bank	Completed
Social and leisure opportunities for adults	MVP Lunch Club has opened (currently monthly) for older and less mobile residents MVP Theatre Trips are organising regular coach trips to London and other theatres Mortimer Gardening Club is meeting on the 4 th Wednesday of every month at the Community Centre and is up to 70 registered members Mortimer Film Club is showing a film on the 4 th Monday of each month, at present at St. John's School. A new book-reading club is meeting monthly in members houses	Ongoing
Social opportunities for young people	Mortimer Youth Club has opened for school years 7 – 11 in the Community Centre on Thursday evenings	Ongoing
Whole village events	A repeat of the 2090 Mortimer Fun Day will be run on 3 rd July 2010 by Together in Mission supported by MVP MVP is running a litter-picking, bulb-planting, family walk, pond-dipping day with picnic on Saturday 17 th April	Ongoing

Flooding Matters

The flooding on Sunday 17th January 2010 along the Grazeley Road was caused by rapid snowmelt from the golf course and from Foudry Brook in lower parts of Great Park Farm. The water was over 30 cms deep and impassable to most cars. It has been suggested that flood gauge markers should be installed along this road to forewarn motorists of the water depth. The Parish Council are pleased to report that at the Tun Bridge mini-roundabout, the surface water was minimal and the flood bunds and the new flap valve, fitted by West Berkshire Council last autumn, prevented the Foudry Brook from spreading into the roadway from the gullies at that point. Sewage effluent was discharging from the manholes in the Grazeley Road as the sewer from the pumping station in Beech Hill was overloaded with groundwater. Thames Water is responsible but has no plans in its current budgets for corrective action. The Environment Agency is monitoring these frequent pollution events at this location as the effluent drains back into Foudry Brook and on to Reading untreated. The Parish Council would like to thank Mr. Geoff Mayes for all his continued help and technical advice.

Traffic Volumes and Speed Through Mortimer

In February 2005, the Parish Council commissioned a traffic survey to be carried out at points around the village to monitor the speed and flow of traffic. Working with West Berkshire Council, the Parish Council used the data from this survey to support the introduction of various traffic calming measures.

Following the 2005 survey, the speed limit has been changed to a uniform 30mph along The Street and a pedestrian crossing installed to provide a safe crossing point between the 2 pavements; Mortimer gateway signs with highly visible 30mph signs have been placed at the village boundaries on the roads entering the village; and Vehicle Activated signs have been placed on West End Road and The Street to increase driver awareness of the speed of their vehicles. Additionally, the Parish Council has regularly deployed electronic Speed Indicator Devices (SID) to get across the message that the village is a 30mph speed zone and that cars should drive no faster than this through Mortimer.



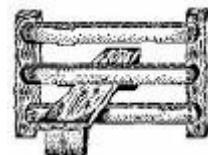
The speed and volume of traffic through the village, however, continues to be a major concern for many residents, who have expressed this through the Parish Plan and to the local PCSOs. The Parish Council continues to look at this problem and to find solutions.

In October last year, the Parish Council repeated the traffic survey first carried out in 2005. The objective of this is to test the effectiveness of the introduced measures and to gauge if and, more importantly, where further measures may best be installed. It was also an opportunity to measure whether traffic volumes have changed significantly since 2005 and to see what effect the full occupancy of Mortimer Hill development and the opening of the Valentine Wood industrial estate might have had on the volumes and type of traffic that come through the village.

The sites for the monitors were the same as those used for the 2005 survey to allow for a direct comparison between the 2 pieces of work. Some residents may have noticed dual rubber tubes laid across the roads in several places along The Street, West End Road, and Victoria Road. These devices were in place for 7 days, collecting data 24 hours a day. The data from this latest survey has now been collated and is in the process of being analysed by the Parish Council. In the future, it will be used to support the policies of the Parish Council to increase road safety through the village.

Roads and Footpaths Report

To assist West Berkshire Council with the final stage of their project to upgrade all the stiles to kissing gates on Footpaths 16/17, the Parish Council have agreed to fund the installation of the last three kissing gates on footpath 15 close to Wheat's Farm. WBC will provide the gates and have obtained the necessary permissions from the landowners etc. The three kissing gates are to be installed shortly and will improve passage on this well-trodden footpath, particularly for the less mobile, as there will now be no stiles on either footpath 15 or 16.



The Parish Council proposed some pavement amendments on West End Road to WBC as a result of the recent Parish Plan refresh consultation and action plan. These were approved and the Parish Council agreed to fund these changes. The kerb and pavement outside the dentists' surgery has now been raised to try and deter parking on the pavement. When the dentist complex was built the dropped pavement and kerb (left from when it was a garage forecourt) was never raised. The other improvement has been to raise the pavement and kerb outside the bank plus the addition of bollards. It is hoped that these measures will improve pedestrian safety and reduce damage to the pavement surfaces.

The Parish Council became increasingly aware of the deteriorating condition of many of the roads within the Parish and a few Councillors carried out an audit of the condition of the road surfaces in the late

Spring 2009. A report was submitted to WBC identifying the roads most in need of resurfacing, especially Stephens Road, West End Road and Victoria Road. WBC's response was disappointing saying 'WBC has prepared a five year programme of maintenance work throughout the district. This programme is re-assessed each year and prioritised by the condition of the road. Sadly none of the aforementioned roads form part of the programme at present, however they will continue to be assessed along with other similar sections of roads within the district for possible inclusion in the programme". The reply gave no early indication of any substantial repairs; many of the roads are now beyond patching. Since the report was submitted the severe weather in January has caused increased problems and although there is some indication that WBC has identified the frost-created potholes, a date for repairs is unknown.



Mortimer Fairground

Ownership of the 21 acres of The Fairground passed from the Parish Council to The Stratfield Mortimer Fairground Trust in 2006, in order to satisfy the requirements of the Charity Commission. The Trust, which is an independent registered charity, leased the Fairground to the Parish Council on a 21-year lease who as tenants, have the responsibility for its management, maintenance and improvement. SMPC pay the Fairground Trust an annual rental of £2,000.

In addition to the rental, the Parish Council will, in the next financial year, spend up to £10,000 on maintenance and management. This amount comes from the Precept figure that is the amount of money the Parish Council raises through West Berkshire in Council Tax. This sum contributes to the costs of grass cutting, maintaining and improving play equipment, tennis courts, etc as well as maintaining the trees and fences, not forgetting more basic items such as dogbin waste disposal. The Parish Council are also grateful for the work carried out by a number of voluntary groups who assist us in pond clearance and ground maintenance.

In order to offset some of these maintenance costs, The Parish Council generates income by charging for the use of facilities. These include the tennis courts by members of the public and Mortimer Tennis Club and, use of the Cricket area by Mortimer Cricket Club. In addition, the Council makes a hire charge to other organisations that hire the Fairground for events. The current hire charge is £75 per day.

If you would like more information about hiring the Fairground please contact the Clerk at the Parish Council Office for a copy of the Parish Council's Hiring and Charging Policy and a booking form.

The new Community Centre opened in June '09. It is independent from the Parish Council as is operated independently by the Directors of the Stratfield Mortimer Community Interest Company. The building is available for hire. For further details contact Adrian Smith 0118 933 2073

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Plan Refresh

On November 12th 2009 the Parish Council adopted the Parish Plan Refresh. West Berkshire Council then adopted this on 3rd February 2010. WBC Councillor Pamela Bale signed the document. Councillors Tom Shorrock and Danusia Morsley and the Parish Clerk, Mrs Jayne.Kirk attended on behalf of the Parish Council. Jo Naylor, Principle Policy Officer and Sarah Ward, Community Planning Development Worker CCB were also present.



Background

Stratfield Mortimer was one of the first communities in West Berkshire to undertake a Parish Plan. Work on the Parish Plan was started in 2002 and the first plan was published in 2004; this was then adopted by the Parish Council and West Berkshire District Council. As the summary of its vision for the village it stated:

Stratfield Mortimer will conserve its rural heritage and retain its distinctive character. It will continue to have a thriving small business economy with a substantial commuter population. Changes and improvements that enhance the Quality of Life of the whole community are to be encouraged. Developments of whatever kind or scale will be in harmony with their setting and enrich the Parish.

These aims have been sustained throughout the ensuing five years and much has been achieved. The plan contained actions grouped under various Key Subjects; the following examples show some of the benefits to the village that have been achieved:

- **Crime Reduction:** An additional PCSO partially funded by the Parish Council
- **Traffic Management:** Village gateway signs, a pedestrian crossing on The Street, changes to speed limits
- **Public Transport:** The minibus service to the station
- **Housing:** the production of a Village Design Statement
- **Leisure Activities & Facilities:** The Community Centre, multi-sports wall and youth shelter
- **Communications:** the Parish Council newsletter

By 2008 most of the specific objectives of the original plan had been achieved and West Berkshire District Council indicated, and the Parish Council agreed, that it was time to refresh the parish plan.

The Parish Plan Refresh Process

The Parish Council set up a working party of parish councillors and parishioners to start work to refresh the Parish Plan in 2008. Public meetings were held in St. John's Hall in October 2008 and in St. John's Infant School in February 2009. The latter was particularly successful with close to 200 people attending on one of the iciest days of the winter, freely and enthusiastically giving their ideas and discussing the future of the village.

People spoke about the need for more activities in the village for all ages, but particularly for the young and the old. Concerns for the environment and a wish to work together to promote green issues came up time and time again. A common theme was the wish to volunteer, be it in conservation work, working with the young or working for the community. A frequent message was that individuals did not hear of the opportunities for such work and did not know how to get involved. The impression from the day was of great energy of community spirit waiting to be harnessed to the public good. Very few came to complain about

anything; people spoke of Mortimer as a good place to live and were seeking to further enhance that experience.

From these events and ideas a questionnaire was developed. This was designed to be completed by individuals and, with much publicity, two copies were delivered to each of the 1700 households in the village, with further copies available on request. The questionnaire also included some questions designed to help the Parish Council with ongoing issues. Additional questions were designed to measure how the village rates various local services compared with five years ago.

Another vigorous publicity campaign resulted in 948 questionnaires being completed and returned which represents over 31% of the 3026 people on the electoral roll. Expert help was gratefully received from Greenham Common Trust in the design, production and analysis of the questionnaires.

Simultaneously a youth questionnaire was developed with the help of some of the young people of the village. This was distributed through St. Mary's Junior School and Willink School and was available on request for children attending other schools. A total of 133 youth questionnaires were returned.

The full results of the questionnaire were published in the last issue of the Parish Council Newsletter.

The New Vision

The views of the community expressed this time through public consultation and the questionnaire are very similar to those expressed five years ago. Stratfield Mortimer is essentially a rural parish and wants to retain its character and sense of community. Some new trends and ideas are also apparent. In line with the country as a whole, green issues are now to the forefront of more people's minds and most excitingly, community involvement has come to take even greater precedence.

The people of Mortimer through the public consultation events and the questionnaire repeatedly and consistently asked for more opportunities to be involved in their community as participants in a wide range of activities, but even more importantly, as active organisers and volunteers.

The exercise demonstrated a groundswell of enthusiasm for community involvement and it is proposed to establish a community partnership, Mortimer Village Partnership, to coordinate community-based initiatives.

Since the last plan the village has grown – the Mortimer Hill development has added 120 houses to the village and there have been approximately

55 from other in-fills. New residents are just as keen to be involved in the village community and this has increased the demand for both new activities and greater capacity in existing activities that cannot accommodate all those who would like to take part.

The questionnaire asked if people were prepared to pay for suggestions in the questionnaire by an increase in Council Tax if it was necessary. Although the questionnaire was distributed during a period of significant economic downturn, 40% were prepared to pay extra although 42% were not.

Note that all percentages referred to in this document (%) are, unless otherwise stated, the percentage of people giving a particular response to a question, based on the number of people who answered that question.

Some questions from the 2004 questionnaire were repeated to see whether people's views on local services or their usage of local facilities had changed. The comparisons are shown below.

What are your views on the service provided in the Parish by the following?

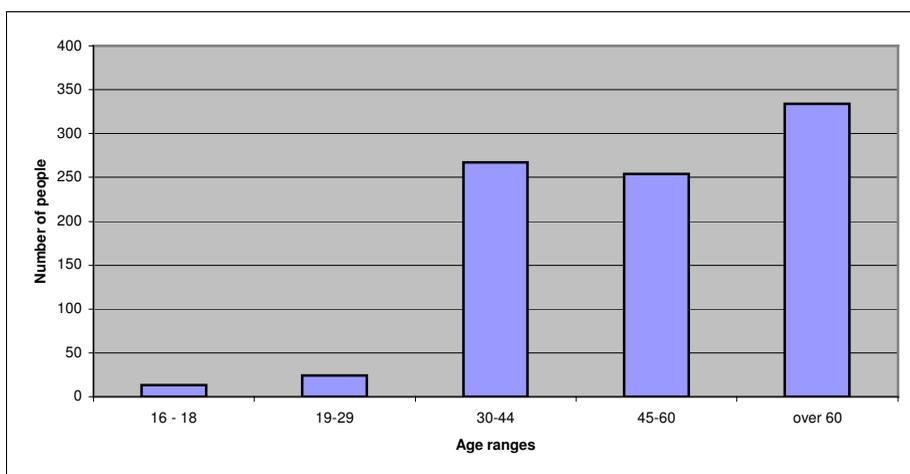
	Good		Poor	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
Fire Service	63%	68%	0%	0%
Police	3%	18%	61%	28%
Ambulance Service	18%	28%	5%	3%
Doctors	62%	63%	4%	4%
Dentists	34%	39%	8%	9%
Chemist	79%	74%	1%	2%
Healthcare support services	19%	21%	4%	3%
Library	54%	47%	3%	2%
Parish Office	17%	18%	3%	7%

In this table and the following one the percentages are based on the total number of people returning a questionnaire.

How often do you use the following facilities?

	Daily - monthly		Occasionally		Never	
	2004	2009	2004	2009	2004	2009
Willink Pool and Leisure Centre	18%	23%	20%	27%	59%	45%
Tennis Courts	3%	6%	9%	18%	82%	70%
Football Pitches	3%	8%	5%	12%	84%	73%
Cricket Pitches	1%	2%	1%	6%	91%	86%
Children's Playground	21%	29%	16%	21%	58%	45%
Fairground	24%	44%	27%	35%	43%	16%

The following graph shows the age ranges of the 892 people responding to the 2009 questionnaire who answered the question concerning age:



The Action Plan

The process of parish planning has developed considerably since Stratfield Mortimer undertook its first plan in 2002. Building on good ideas from many communities, West Berkshire has now developed a template that it requires communities to use in describing their parish plans. This asks communities to consider their needs and aspirations under five headings:

- **A Strong Community** - Actions in this category should seek to include everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and

participation in community life, providing similar life opportunities and accessible services for all

- **A Greener Community** - This can include reducing carbon footprint in the community, reducing waste and increasing recycling, encourage consumption of local produce, increasing diversity of local wildlife.
- **A Safe Community** - Examples of this include reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads, emergency planning
- **A Prosperous Community** - Communities may, for example, seek to support the economy of villages, encourage Tourism, or support employment in rural areas
- **A Healthy Community** - Communities are asked to think widely about health, including such things as fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving health and well-being of local people and young people, promoting independence of vulnerable people

The following pages give a summary of what the people of Stratfield Mortimer have said through the questionnaire and public consultation, and the resultant objectives and actions.

Note that all percentages referred to (%) are, unless otherwise stated, the percentage of people giving a particular response to a question, based on the number of people who answered that question.

A Stronger Community

Questionnaire results and commentary

The single strongest message that became apparent from both the February 2009 public meeting and the questionnaire is that people want more personal involvement in the village through volunteering and taking part in local activities and events. There are many suggestions for new clubs and regular events for the whole village. People expressed a strong feeling of belonging to the village and wished to be able to pursue their interests locally as well as take up new pursuits. Not having to travel out of the village for a particular activity is viewed as a great bonus, particularly for the young and old who may not have access to a car and have to rely on the still limited public transport.

264 (32%) wanted to be part of a new list of volunteers who would be willing to help with initiatives such as community planting, conservation, helping support local events or fund raising. 30 (23%) young people wanted to form a youth community group to discuss how the changes they wanted could be progressed.

There was recognition of the needs of the disabled through a clear mandate for disabled access to both platforms at the station (82% composed of 44% stating it essential and a further 38% as desirable). When asked about the provision of play equipment for disabled children 555 (69%) indicated they would support this.

There was much interest in improving and extending facilities at the public library. 43% would like extended opening hours although a similar number had no opinion. 83% of young people wanted more DVDs to be available at the library; there was also a strong demand for more books for older children. 121 (13%) people also took the time to write their own ideas for enhancing the library.

There was a high level of support for a community website with 35 (4%) people offering to help develop and maintain one. 88% wanted a village events diary, 82% information about clubs, and 84% information about schools, doctors etc. 149 (16%) people provided additional ideas of content and features for the website.

Vision for the future

The vision that emerged from the public consultation process was that Mortimer should become a place where:

It is easy to access information about what is happening in the village, and in particular to find out about volunteering opportunities. There are many options for social and community activity within the village. An active community website promotes the image of the village. People come together to organise whole village events. Those wishing to form new clubs or organise new events in the village have a source of support and guidance. Young people are involved in making decisions about facilities and activities for their age group. The library has modern facilities in keeping with the size of the area it serves.

Community Actions

- A new, independent, community organisation, Mortimer Village Partnership, to create, own and manage a community website, coordinate volunteers and volunteering opportunities in the village, and to promote and support community activities and events.
- New activities for adults, starting with a book club, a film club and a group organising activities for older people.
- A youth club at the Community Centre.
- Whole Village events such as a fun day, winter fair, sports tournament, community litter-picking activities.
- Create a Youth community group, probably starting with children of junior school age.

- A community meeting place to incorporate some or all of: coffee shop, Internet café, local produce market.

SMPC to look at the feasibility and practicality of the following actions

- Additional station car park and disabled access to both platforms.
- Additional Royal Mail post boxes.
- Improved library facilities.
- Increased car park size at Fairground.
- Play equipment for disabled children on the Fairground.

A Safer Community

Questionnaire results and commentary

Many ideas were suggested to reduce speeding in the village. A total of 89% thought that 20 mph time-controlled signs outside the schools were essential or desirable. A total of 78% thought more vehicle-activated signs were essential or desirable. 78% of young people of the village said that getting cars to stop speeding in the village was very important to them.

The issue of car parking at drop off and pick up times at St. Mary's School was important to many people. 468 people (66%) rated a car park/drop-off facility as the most acceptable solution. 373 (57%) people thought that avoiding the area at school times was the least acceptable solution, while 376 (58%) thought doing nothing was the least acceptable solution. Other solutions involved a free or subsidised bus service.

The safety of pedestrians was in many peoples' minds. 71% want the feasibility of crossing point on West End Road and Victoria Road to be investigated. 59% would like physical restrictions such as bollards to be used in the area of the Post Office and Dentist's Surgery to prevent cars being parked on the pavements. 66% of young people said pavement parking should be stopped.

Vision for the future

The vision that emerged from the public consultation process was that Mortimer should become a place where:

Drivers are discouraged from speeding in the village. Pedestrians are safe on the pavements and safe crossing points are available. Children are able to get to and from the schools safely. The Parish Council has an agreed plan that can be used in emergencies such as extreme weather, flooding etc.

SMPC to look at the feasibility and practicality of the following actions

- Measures to prevent pavement parking.
- Provision of pedestrian crossing points.
- Speed reduction measures.
- A solution to St Mary's School parking problem.
- The Parish Council to develop an emergency plan for the village.

A Prosperous Community

Questionnaire results and commentary

Although the visible business community did not engage to any significant extent with the questionnaire, it is believed that many people running business replied as individuals: 16% of respondents in employment work from home.

A new community website would promote the benefits of the village and give practical and attractively presented information about it.

Vision for the future

The vision that emerged from the public consultation process was that Mortimer should become a place where:

Those working from home are able to network with others.
Mortimer presents a positive aspect to the outside world.
It is easy to find up-to-date information about local businesses and services.

Community Actions

- The new community website promotes Stratfield Mortimer as an attractive place to live, work in or visit.
- Information about local businesses available on community website.
- To publicise the SUN Business Group for small businesses, which meets at Ufton Court.

A Healthy Community

Questionnaire results and commentary

From the public consultation process, there was support for more opportunities for physical exercise. 330 people (55% of those who replied to this question) would like an annual sports tournament with 18 (3%) people volunteering to help set up such an event. 51% would like an, ideally all-weather, football pitch on the Fairground. 66% would like the tennis courts adapted to make them useable for other sports and 54% would like them floodlit to extend the hours in which they can be used.

Both the adult and youth questionnaires supported the provision on the Fairground of play equipment for older children. 81% of the respondents to the youth questionnaire wanted a zip wire. 58% of adults thought an adventure playground should be provided; this was endorsed by 92% of young people.

Provision of allotments and bicycle anchorage points (described under A Greener Community) would also contribute to making the parishioners healthier.

52% thought public toilet facilities should be provided in the centre of the village and 50% also at the railway station.

Vision for the future

The vision that emerged from the public consultation process was that Mortimer should become a place where:

Good facilities and opportunities for sport and outdoor activities are available within the village.

Public toilet facilities are available in the centre of the village and at the railway station. People are encouraged to walk and cycle in the village.

Community Actions

- Annual sports tournament
- Organised family walks

SMPC to look at the feasibility and practicality of the following actions

- Additional outdoor recreational facilities at Fairground
- Investigate provision of public toilet facilities through village centre shops and pubs
- A modest increase in car park spaces at the Fairground.
- More trees to provide shade on the Fairground.

A Greener Community

Questionnaire results and commentary

57% of respondents felt that the village should be more proactive in reducing our carbon footprint through saving energy, promoting renewable energy and further action on recycling. 35 (4%) people wanted to form and join a Mortimer Green Group to work towards these aims.

To ascertain the true demand for a number of green amenities, people were asked not whether they supported their provision, but whether they would actually use them. 22% of respondents would like to have an allotment if suitable land can be identified in Mortimer while 44%, 32% and 28% would make use of bicycle anchorage points if provided respectively outside village shops, at the Fairground, and in addition to those existing at the railway station.

74% of young people said that a litter free village was very important to them. 64% of adult respondents said they would like the village to have organised litter-picking days enlivened by a picnic or similar community activity.

Vision for the future

The vision that emerged from the public consultation process was that Mortimer should become a place where:

Reduction of the carbon footprint of the village is encouraged and individuals who wish to can find relevant information easily. People who wish to are able to grow their own food through the provision of allotments. People are encouraged to walk and use bicycles within the village. The village is clean and tidy and is kept so by its residents.

Community Actions

- Formation of a Mortimer Green Group.
- Promote reduction of energy consumption.
- Formation of a Gardening Club.
- Organised litter-picking days with social aspects e.g. picnic.

SMPC to look at the feasibility and practicality of the following actions

- The provision of allotments.
- Bicycle anchorage points outside shops, at Fairground and additional ones at railway station.
- A Campaign to reduce litter and dog fouling; more bins and signs if required.

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Minutes and agenda of Council meetings, as well as other Council information can be viewed on the above website or on the Parish Council notice boards which are located outside the Post Office and the Library

The Parish Council Office is open:
Tuesdays & Thursdays
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