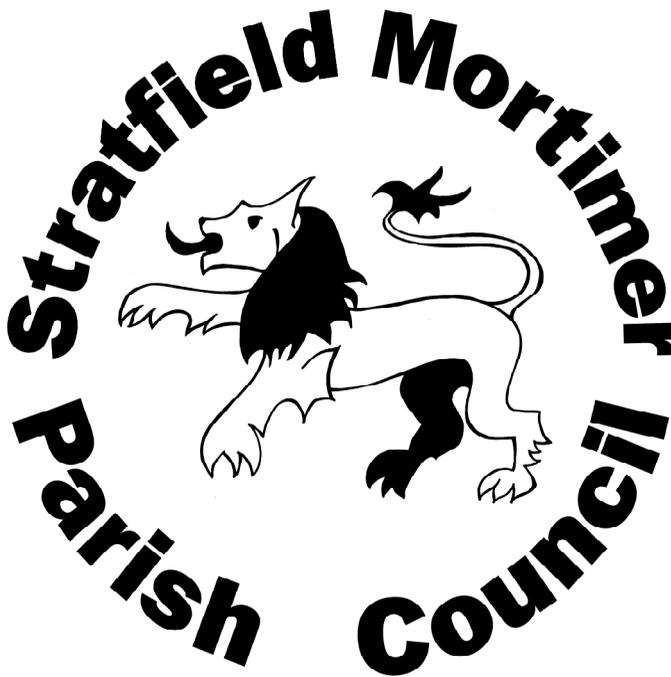


STRATFIELD MORTIMER

**Parish Council
Newsletter**



June 2010

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Chairman's Report Annual Parish Meeting 21st April 2010

Parish Council's Annual Report:

The Parish Council has had another very busy year and the Parish Office continues to be well used. Many residents, our District Councillors, and Parish Councillors all make use of this facility in person or by telephone on the open mornings.

The Parish Council Office is open Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30 am – 12-30 am. In addition to these regular *public* opening hours there have been approximately 47 additional committee and other meetings and 12 District Councillor Saturday surgeries held there over the last 12 months. Many people take advantage of the Parish Office's opening hours to speak with the Clerk for information or to view current planning applications (all planning applications can now also be viewed on the West Berkshire Council website).

The continuation of the office in its current location is, however, under threat as proposals put forward by West Berkshire Council for improvements to the Library mean there would no longer be room for the office and it would have to close. The Parish Council are however in discussion with West Berkshire Council to see if a way can be found to maintain the current office within the library precinct.

The Parish Clerk:

The Clerk's role as Responsible Officer (and Responsible Financial Officer) continues to be a very busy one covering the entire administration and management of the Parish Council, supporting our 15 councillors and maintaining an excellent working liaison with the various

departments and personnel at West Berkshire Council in Newbury. In fact it is fair to say she remains the lynch pin of the Parish Council. For those who are unfamiliar with the role of parish clerk, she has many responsibilities. She is responsible for:

- Giving legal advice to the Parish Council,
- Acting as the Council's Responsible Finance Officer, dealing with the accounts, the annual audit, budget, VAT returns, insurance etc.
- Preparing and publishing agendas and minutes of all Council meetings.
- Acting as the Cemetery Manager.
- Acting as the Fairground Manager.
- Managing the Parish Council Website.
- Editing the Parish Council Newsletter

The Clerk is also available for managing the many other things that come along on a day to day basis. I know that our Clerk has an enviable reputation not only among the other Parish Clerks from neighbouring Parishes, but also among the officers and full time staff at West Berks to name but a few.

Finances:

The Parish Council total budget for expenditure for 2010/11 has remained quite steady for routine items. There has been a small increase of £1,511 (1.75%) in the total precept budget for next year, which is to be used for:

- An increase in grants made by the Parish Council (£137 payments).
- The continued maintenance of an additional, part funded PCSO.

The Business of the Parish Council:

Full Council meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month (except August) and commence at 7:30pm. Agendas for these meetings are displayed on the two Parish Council Notice Boards (one outside the Library entrance and the other, a new one, outside the Post Office), as well as on the Parish Council Website.

Full Council meetings are held in The Lounge (back room) of the Methodist Church, West End Road. Because of new security measures for the hall, to attend the meeting, it is necessary to ring the doorbell at the Church main entrance and someone will let you in. Members of the public are always welcome to attend all full Council and Committee meetings of the Council.

Before the proceedings begin, the Council allows a Public Questions Slot (maximum 10 minutes) and members of the public are able to briefly address the Council. Any such discussions do not form part of the formal proceedings of the Parish Council Meeting and are not therefore included in the Council's official Minutes; any resultant follow-up actions may be dealt with separately.

Make-up of the Council: In addition to the full council meetings the business of the parish is conducted through the five *standing committees*:

Cemetery Committee - Communications Committee

Fairground Trees and Amenities Committee

Planning Committee - Roads & Footpaths Committee

In addition, the chairmen of each of these committees, together with the Council's Chairman and Vice-Chairman make up the Finance & General Purposes committee which oversees the financial affairs and regulation of the council.

Committee Reports

Planning: (Chairman: John Morden). West Berkshire Council is the authority which determines our local planning applications. However, the Parish Council, as a statutory consultee, is invited to comment on all applications within the Parish and it actively engages in its responsibilities. The Planning Committee have met 12 times and considered 46 planning applications (last year it met 13 times during and considered 51 applications).

All Parish Council Planning Committee Meetings are also advertised on the two Parish Council Notice Boards outside The Post Office and outside The Library three days in advance. Parishioners are always welcome to come along and observe (These meetings are usually held in the Parish Council Office at the back of the Library).

This last year the Parish Council made its own planning application with a proposal for additional car parking space at the railway station. This would have provided 100 spaces adjacent to the south (Basingstoke) platform. The application was however rejected on appeal. The reasons for dismissal, given by the appeal officer were:

1. Road safety. The 85th percentile speeds are at the limit of the stopping sight distance. Any back up of cars due to traffic flow would reduce the stopping sight distance to an unacceptable level.
2. Accepted that the existing car park entrance does not meet this standard does not justify the introduction of a new substandard development.

3. Disabled travellers returning to either car park needing to traverse the road bridge would be a significant hazard.
4. Large scale urbanising element in the countryside.

Roads & Footpaths: (Chairman Dudley Ives):

The Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee has had a busy year and among many other matters it is continually looking at the parking situation and speeding within the village. Roads and Footpaths is an area which benefits from the strong links and relationships we have formed with the local highways authority at West Berkshire. With an eye to improving the parking situation some restrictions on the car park outside St. John's Church were brought into force, limiting some of the spaces to a 2 hour stay and the kerb outside of the dental surgery was raised and bollards put outside the bank to discourage inconsiderate parking. There has also been renewal of 7 kissing gates on various public footpaths around the village.

The Fairground, Trees and Amenities Committee: (Chairman: Pete Blagden):

This committee does a sterling job in looking after some of our most prized assets within the parish. It can be argued that the Fairground in particular continues to be very much the heart and focal centre of the community and we believe that the Parish Council, through the committee, has achieved a great deal of improvement to the site during the year. Some new hedges have been planted with the help of various volunteer groups. You may have noticed the provision of new seats: one in the playground and one in the grazing area. We have, with some financial assistance from West Berkshire Council also replaced most of the kissing gates on the Fairground and the five barred gate at the entrance to at Windmill Road. The Council has proposals for a new and exciting initiative in providing new playground facilities for 8 – 13 year olds.

Communications: (Chairman: Danusia Morsley) The Parish Council continue to produce a Parish Council Newsletter three times a year which is distributed to every house in the parish by a band of volunteers. The Newsletter is well-received by residents who have said that they find the information very informative. In the last issue we changed to a new, improved A5 format.

Cemetery: (Chairman: Steve Clark) The Cemetery is, we believe, looking very neat and tidy and, in the light of its good practice, our thanks go out to those who look after it.

Other Council Activities

Web Site:

All minutes, agendas and other parish council information can be viewed on the Parish Council website www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk and also on the two parish council notice boards outside the Post Office and the Library.

Mortimer, Burghfield and District Neighbourhood Action Group:

Two Parish Council representatives (Angie Phillips and Danusia Morsley) sit on this Committee which meets bi-monthly.

The Parish Plan Refresh:

The Parish Council has now completed a refresh of our Parish Plan and this has now been formally adopted both by the Parish Council and West Berkshire Council. The Parish Council has already begun working toward realising as many of the aspirations contained within it as possible and a full report was in the last Parish Council newsletter, as well as details being available on our website.

One of the practical things which has grown out of the Parish Plan initiative is a new group which has formed itself, The Mortimer Village Partnership (MVP). The MVP is an independent, unofficial group of individuals who have grouped together “to involve people and groups in the life of the village, by improving communications, by connecting people together and by facilitating activities and events.” They have already set up their own website (www.mortimervillage.org.uk).

Parish Council Custodian:

Over this year Mr. Les O’Rourke, who had been our Parish Custodian for several years, was forced to give up his post due to continuing ill health. The Parish Council offer Les our thanks for his service to our community and wish him a speedy recovery to full health. The Council has appointed a new custodian, Mr. Terry Hall and welcome him into his new responsibilities.

Community Award

This year's Community Award was presented at the Annual Parish Meeting in St. John's Hall on April 21st by the Parish Council chairman, Tom Shorrock, to Mrs Carmen Robinson, a well-deserved tribute to her services to Mortimer.

Over a number of years Carmen has been a leading light in the Mortimer and Burghfield Age Concern Committee and the Thursday morning coffee club which it sponsors in the Methodist Church hall. Countless older members of the village have made many new friends at the coffee club, and anyone who wishes is welcome to turn up.

The Age Concern yearly coffee morning is a different affair, in effect a garden party (held in recent years at Little Manor, Burghfield Village by kind permission of Dr. Aubrey Price, well-known to local people from her time at Mortimer surgery).

Carmen has played a leading part in all these arrangements (along with her fellow members of the Committee) which includes organising outings to the Theatre Royal Windsor (at Christmas time) and local garden centres (in the summer) with considerable support from her husband Ken: both are leading *pillars of the community*. The village is lucky to have them.





PARISH COUNCIL OF
STRATFIELD MORTIMER

VACANCY FOR A COUNCILLOR

There is currently a vacancy for a Parish Councillor on Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council and applications for co-optation onto the Council are warmly invited. The position is open to parishioners of Stratfield Mortimer who wish to take an active part in the decision making process of the Parish and to represent the interest of the whole community. The Council has a wide range of powers and duties for the Village. Parish Council meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month 7:30pm at the Methodist Hall. If you are able to commit approximately two evenings a month and feel you are able to make a contribution to Mortimer or would like more information on what being a councillor involves, please contact

Jayne Kirk
Clerk
Parish Office
27 Victoria Road or the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk

Closing date: 31.7.2010 Candidates will be invited to attend an interview.

Metal Detecting on the Fairground

We have had reports that, once again, there has been evidence of people excavating small holes on the fairground, presumably as a result of scanning the area with a metal detector. The pits left by this activity are not only unsightly but can also be potentially dangerous to walkers and people playing games as they form a significant trip hazard and we would ask anyone doing this to stop in consideration of other Fairground users.

We would like to point out that while the Council does not allow the use of these devices on the Fairground generations of 'detectorists' have already repeatedly thoroughly scanned the whole area. We would therefore like to assure anyone who is thinking of pursuing their hobby there that any metal objects that may be found would only be very recent rubbish.

The War Memorial Junction

West Berkshire Council have now agreed to make the necessary changes to the War Memorial junction to improve safety for pedestrians and motorists. This will involve slight realignment of the War Memorial island and changes to the road layout to improve sight lines for pedestrians and motorists. This is to be totally funded by S106 builder contribution monies. The work is to be carried out in late July.

The flow of traffic at the junction will be indicated by the appropriate traffic signs and carriageway markings. These are shown on the plan on the next page.

PCSO Diary - Summer 2010

As Spring gives way to Summer, I am pleased to report a period of low criminal activity in the Parish which has been a continuing trend since January 2010.

The current statistics for the quarter February-April 2010 indicate an 18% decline in all reported crimes. During the month of April 55 crimes were reported versus an average (based on the last year) of 89 crimes per month. This represents a 39% decline versus the average level.

Incidence of ASB (Anti Social Behaviour) totalled 31 for April and one incident per day is now an average. In 2007 this figure was 3 incidents per day.

Mini moto nuisance has also been reduced with a number of seizures taking place over the last 3 months.

Mortimer NHPT Office on Victoria Road is still seeking volunteers to staff the front desk. Please leave a message for me on 0845 8 505 505 if you would like an application form and further details.

As we enter the main holiday season I would like to remind parishioners to be vigilant with their home security whilst their properties remain vacant. The Neighbourhood Police Team would be happy to visit you and give advice. If you do not have a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme operating in your street this is something well worth thinking about. I am happy to visit and advise you on how to set up a scheme.

Wishing you an excellent summer period in Mortimer this year.



Steve Innes
Police Community Officer C9559.

Extra Playground for Older Age Group

SMPC is pleased to announce that an additional playground will be built on the Fairground later this year. The parish council has been successful in bidding for a £50,000 Playbuilder grant . This grant is administered by West Berkshire but granted by the central government organisation Play England. The grant is for playgrounds targetted at adventurous play for 8 – 13 year olds. The parish council is adding to this sum with money from the S106 builder contribution monies (for spending on open spaces)’. Thus the new playground will not be paid for from the precept.

The playground will be sited in the area behind the tennis courts. It will provide a wide variety of exciting equipment for older children and young people – the equipment will all be robust enough to be used by adults. Public consultation at two public meetings, with children in years 5 and 6 at St. Mary’s Junior School and with young people in Mortimer Youth Club has steered the selection of equipment. The equipment that has been chosen is:



A Corocord 6m high climbing Octanet: Our playground centrepiece will have the additional challenge of a Waggle bridge connecting it to an amphitheatre-shaped mound.

A Kompan 5m high metal swing with large nest seat: This huge swing can accommodate one child lying down or 6 or 8 or even more children standing up and cooperating!



A Kompan Supernova: This is a non traditional roundabout that can be used in a non prescriptive manner. A single child can engage in exploring its possibilities, but with a whole group of children, this play item expresses its real potential. The large, slanting ring is set in motion by the children .



A Kompan Vega: With this intriguing piece of equipment children can stand, sit, or hang by their arms and spin and perhaps another child will jump on. Vega is all about initiative, cooperation and trust. Many children can gather around it and make a human spinning top.





Two Kompan Spicas: This is a challenging piece of rotating playground equipment. The two models have different designs and react in different ways to the movement of the body. It is therefore necessary to experiment with its movement and one's centre of gravity in order to master the rotation.



Two Kompan Spinner Bowls: The Spinner Bowl makes the world go round and round! Hop in, pump your legs and sit and spin. Using centrifugal force and the weight distribution of the child, speeds can be controlled and stopping is a breeze. The Spinner Bowl secures the child in its generous depth and makes training balance a wild ride.

A Kompan Rockit: Rock-it is designed for bigger kids with the intention that more than one child can play on it. Cooperation is required to prolong the ride of this event. The large size of the platform allows up to four children to play together at once even if they all don't stay on for long.



A Kompan Steelskate: A wild ride incorporating skateboarding skills. On wheels with a ball bearing system, the two boards slide on the rails. Some children will prefer to sit or lie on the board and have fun sliding on the rails in a laid-back manner, while more courageous or experienced children choose to

stand. The platform at each end is a resting spot where children can rest and watch the action.

A Proludic Gyrospiral: A seesaw for older children with a twist – literally! This high level seesaw pivots on a huge spring and also rotates.



An SMP Titan: The Titan is the very latest piece of play equipment – five arms on a rotating, tilting central pole support a variety of ways of holding on – button ended cables, high level handholds, a loop for sitting or standing in



A set of Eyechimes: Eye Chimes are a stunning piece of musical playground equipment- in both their towering appearance and their low resonant sounds. They appeal to all ages and can be played on by several children at once.

Planning permission is being sought for the two items over 4m in height. Subject to that being obtained it is hoped that construction of the playground will begin in September.

Parish Plan Grant

As a result of having the Parish Plan adopted by West Berkshire Council earlier this year, the parish council applied to the West Berkshire Community Plan Grant Fund for money towards carrying out items in the Parish Plan Refresh. The Parish Council were awarded a total £1925 (which has to be match-funded by 15%). The majority of this has been spent on a Laminate Musical Orb which will be installed in the existing playground. This sensory play item can be used by children of all ages including children with some disabilities.



The rest of the money is being spent on a bicycle rack. Discussions are underway with West Berkshire as to the siting of the bicycle rack but it is hoped that this will be near McColls shop.



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council Budget 2010/2011

Income	Budget 09/10	Budget 10/11
Cemetery (fees)	£1,500	£1,500
Fairground (hire of/tennis courts)	£1,500	£2,000
Bank Interest	£1,500	£500
Roads/Footpaths & Commons (wayleave)	£85	£85
Mortimer Link Mini Bus to Station (grant)	£6,000	£6,000
Precept Figure	£86,489	£88,000
Newsletter (partial sponsorship)	£150	£150
TOTAL	£97,224	£98,235
Expenditure	Budget 09/10	Budget 10/11
Administration (includes insurance, PC subscriptions, office/admin/general expenses, room hire, audit fees, salaries, PAYE, Chairman's allowance etc), room hire	£44,565	£44,715
Cemetery	£3,900	£3,900
Communications (newsletter)	£1,500	£1,700
Fairground (includes maintenance, play area, new projects etc)	£10,300	£10,000
Fairground Lease (rental)	£1,000	£1,000
PC Contribution to Willink Leisure Centre	£8,500	£8,500
Roads/Footpaths & Commons (includes new projects, maintenance, legal fees etc)	£2,800	£2,800
§137 Payments (grants)	£4,459	£7,420
Training/Courses	£1,500	£1,500
Mortimer Link (mini bus to/from station)	£8,700	£8,700
Contingency Fund	£1,000	£0
PCSO Partial Funding	£8,000	£8,000
Additional Car Park Mortimer Station (set up costs)	£1,000	£0
TOTAL	£97,224	£98,235

The Parish Council 2010/2011

The Annual Parish Council Meeting in May is when the Chairman and Vice Chairman are elected and Councillors are appointed to the Parish Council's five standing Committees for the next year. For 2010/2011 the following were appointed:

Chairman: Tom Shorrock
Vice-Chairman: Rebecca Barker

Communications Committee: Danusia Morsley (Chairman), Pete Blagden, Austin Colaço

Planning Committee: John Morden (Chairman), Angie Phillips, Phil Challis, Alan Thorpe, Dudley Ives, Austin Colaço, Neil Kiley, Steve Clark, Pete Blagden

Roads, Footpaths & Commons Committee: Dudley Ives (Chairman), Phil Challis, Keith Davies, Angie Phillips, Austin Colaço, Mollie Lock, Neil Kiley

Fairground, Trees & Amenities: Pete Blagden (Chairman), Mollie Lock, Danusia Morsley, Dudley Ives

Cemetery Committee: Steve Clark (chairman), Phil Challis, Alan Thorpe, Danusia Morsley

The Parish Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman are ex officio on all Committees

Parish Council Representatives:

Clark's Educational Charity:	Tom Shorrock
Stratfield Mortimer Relief in Need Charity:	Angie Phillips
Burghfield & Mortimer Volunteer Bureau:	Danusia Morsley
Burghfield & Mortimer Neighbourhood Action Group:	Tom Shorrock
St John's Hall Management Committee:	Tom Shorrock
Willink Recreation Joint Management Committee:	John Morden
AWE Local Liaison Committee:	Mollie Lock
SMPC Play Area Inspector:	Parish Council Custodian

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

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The Library
27 Victoria Road
Mortimer
RG7 3SH

Tel: 0118 933 1955 – Fax: 0709 2310443

(Mail can be left in the Library post box)

Email: the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk

Website: www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk

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
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

The Parish Council thanks Spratley's of Mortimer for their partial sponsorship of this newsletter