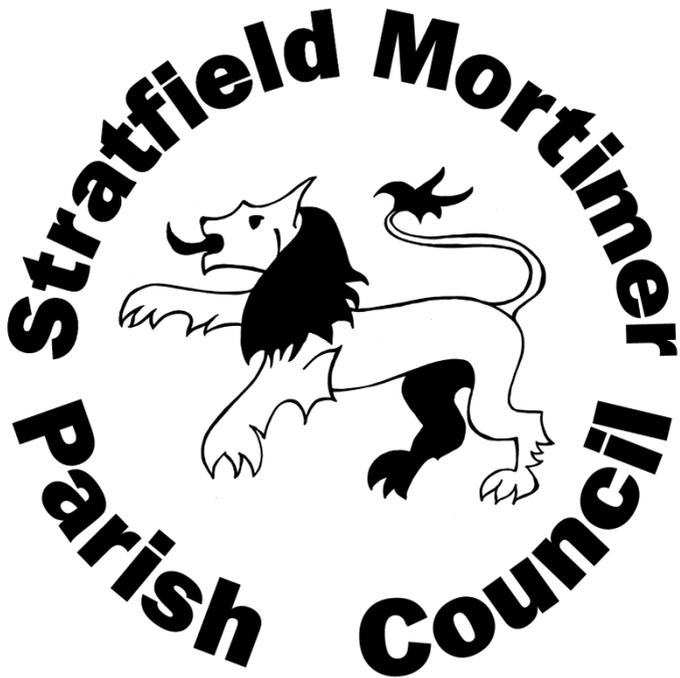


STRATFIELD MORTIMER

Parish Council Newsletter



October 2013

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VACANCY FOR A VILLAGE CUSTODIAN

Part time position (seasonal contract over the year of approximately (10 hours per week)

General maintenance and care within the Parish mainly on the Fairground, Cemetery etc.

Closing date for applications Thursday 31 October 2013

Interviews 7 November 2013

For more details/job description please call/email Jayne Kirk, Parish Clerk

Address: Parish Council Office, 27 Victoria Road,
Mortimer, RG7 3SH 0118 9331955

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

Do You Have the Skills and Time to Help Shape the Future of Your Village?

The Parish Council is looking for residents to help produce a **Neighbourhood Development Plan** (NDP) for the village which will help guide development over the next decade. New legislation encourages local councils to produce a (NDP) which will have the same powers as existing local plans produced by West Berkshire Council. The Parish Council is going to produce such a plan.

The plan has to conform to the existing West Berkshire Council Strategic Plan but can add detail. For instance the Strategic Plan says how many houses will be built in the parish, but the NDP can say where those houses should go.

There is a formal process that has to be followed in order to develop a NDP. The Parish Council made a formal application on 3rd September 2013 to West Berkshire District Council to designate the area for the Plan. The area is the entire Civil Parish of Stratfield Mortimer.

The subsequent steps involve developing visions and objectives, generating options, preparing a draft plan, consultation on the draft plan, submission of the plan, independent examination of the plan and finally a referendum in the Parish.

At the moment the Parish Council is drawing up some draft Visions and Objectives for the NDP to match the subject areas covered by the Strategic Plan. These areas are:

Delivering New Homes and Retaining the Housing Stock
Housing Type and Mix
Provision of Affordable Housing
Infrastructure
Transport
Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Employment and Economy,
Rural Economy
Design Principles
Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency
Flooding
Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Green Infrastructure
Historic Environment and Landscape Character

As an example of the Visions and Objectives, a possible draft for the Employment and Economy area might be:-

Vision: *Mortimer will have a thriving economy while retaining the existing rural character of the area.*

Objectives:

Examine ways to encourage business growth, and hence employment within the village, that is appropriate to the village context.

Establish policies that will encourage such employment.

Ensure other policies within the plan are consistent with this aim.

It is intended to take a draft of the Visions and Objectives in the different subject areas to public consultation/meeting in early spring as the first stage in the process. Once these have been agreed then policies will be drawn up.

We are looking for local residents to volunteer to work with the Parish Council to prepare for the spring consultation and gather evidence; draw up and debate the Visions, Objectives and Policies; organise and run public consultation on the plan; keep everybody informed about what is going on.

If you have the skills and time to help us in any of these areas, or are just interested in learning more, please contact the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk

There is a Neighbourhood Development Plan page on the Parish Council website. Please see this for further information or link to <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=26754>

By-Election Result

A By Election for the vacancy of a Parish Councillor was held on 1 August 2013. Tracy Anne Audsley was elected. The official notice is on the Parish Council website.



Tracy says: *“I am delighted to have been elected as a Parish Councillor in the recent By-Election. I feel passionately about this village and its unique place in West Berkshire. I look forward now to representing you and contributing towards its future. I live here with my husband and our two sons, aged*

5 and 7. The boys attend Mortimer St John’s and Mortimer St. Mary’s Schools. Before having children I worked in Customer Services and Project Management, skills that I believe will work well in the Parish Council. I’m often cycling or walking around the village and am happy to stop and chat, to get to know you and your views on local issues”.

New Parish Council Website

Hopefully, some readers will have discovered that the Parish Council now has a new website. The address is unchanged:

www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk

The Parish Council hopes it is easier for users to navigate and find the information you want. There are two sections:

Home - which has Latest News and information on our services and facilities

Council Information – which has details of meetings, councillors, minutes, documents and Parish and Neighbourhood Plans.

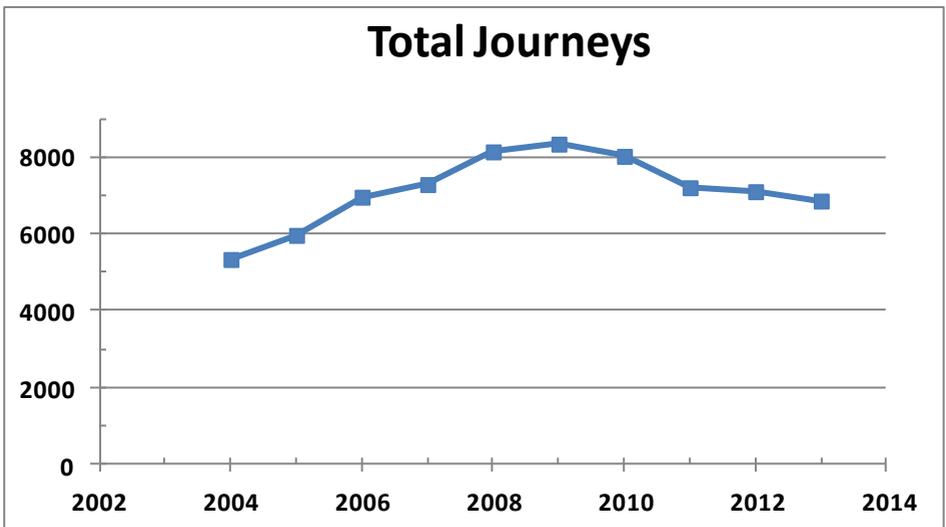
The site is still under development and additional content is being added.

Mortimer Link Minibus Service to Mortimer Station

The Parish Council meeting on 12 September received a petition from 79 residents expressing disappointment at the withdrawal of this service. The Parish Council regrets that this decision was necessary.

An article in the June Parish Council newsletter explained the background and stated that *'with the most likely outcome that the service will cease at the end of September'*. The final decision was taken at the July Parish Council meeting. The June article also requested *'feedback and comments, as soon as possible, from residents and/or users of the service regarding both West Berkshire Council's withdrawal of grant support and on the continued demand for a transport service to the station'*. Three comments were received.

The total number of passenger journeys (one way) per year rose to a peak of 8345 in 2009 and fell to 7105 in 2012. The figure for 2013 is based on the fact that for the first seven months of 2013 journeys were 96% of those in 2012.



In 2012 there were 7105 journeys and the Parish Council subsidy (including the £6000 grant from WBC) was £9,132. Hence each one

way journey was being subsidised from public funds by £1.29. The average number of single journeys per day was 28.2. Thus the subsidy was being spent on a relatively small number of people.

During the school term January to March 2009, the average number of single children journeys per day averaged 10, by 2012 this had fallen to 3.9 and by January 2013 to 2 trips per day.

The Parish Council has been working with West Berkshire Council to explore any possibilities for providing an alternative service, possibly with a different route and to explore new sources of funding. It is estimated that for a simple replacement of the existing service without any funding subsidy, at the 2012 levels of usage, a single fare to/from the village/station would need to be in the region of £4.10. This would obviously not be attractive and greater usage of any new service will be required to make it viable.



The Parish Council is extremely grateful to Stewart's Coaches for their continued support for the service over the nine years of operation. Very special thanks are due to Alan Stiff who has driven the minibus virtually everyday since 2004. The village thanks you and will miss seeing you and your bus!

Alfred Palmer Memorial Field

Alfred Palmer was a member of Reading's famous Palmer family and spent over fifty years working for the Huntley & Palmers biscuit company. His country estate was at Wokefield Park in Stratfield Mortimer. He died in 1936 and is buried in St. Mary's churchyard. In 1939 his five grandchildren donated a field in Mortimer to be held in trust:

“as a public ground for the resort and recreation of and as playgrounds for or otherwise for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parishes of Mortimer and Wokefield in the County of Berks.”

Thus, the beneficiaries of the Trust are the inhabitants of Stratfield Mortimer and Wokefield.

Since then, the field has been used for sport and recreation, including in the last 25 or so years by Mortimer Football Club. The Alfred Palmer Memorial Field is a registered charity and is administered by three trustees.

Prior to the Parish Council meeting on 12 September, various concerns were raised by members of the public concerning the present and possible future use of the field. As a result, at that meeting the Parish Council unanimously passed two resolutions:

1. Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council (SMPC) write to the Alfred Palmer Memorial Field (APMF) Trustees seeking an early meeting regarding SMPC taking on the lease of the entire APMF to ensure that the beneficiaries of the APMF are freely able to use this village resource.
2. SMPC write to the Charity Commission, as the elected representatives of the beneficiaries of the APFMP trust, asking for direct action from the Charity Commission regarding the trustees not acting in the best interest of their beneficiaries.

Postscript: The APMF Trustees have responded to the letter in (1) agreeing to meet with the Parish Council.

Parking on The Street

Andrew Garrett, Principal Traffic and Road Safety Engineer at West Berkshire Council advises that:

“The Individual Decision report on the responses received during the statutory consultation and advertisement of Parking Review Amendment No 14, which included The Street in Mortimer, is due to be signed on 30th September 2013. If approved, I anticipate that the restrictions will be introduced late October / early November.”

This coincides with the press date for this newsletter and hence this is not confirmed. The restrictions referred to are the double yellow lines at the Lower end of The Street.

The Decision Report, responses to the consultation and officer’s comments can be seen at:

<http://decisionmaking.westberks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=158&Mid=2666&Ver=4>

The Decision report states that *“the safety benefits of the restrictions considerably outweigh the issues in the response to the consultation and that they should be introduced as advertised”*.

At the Annual Parish Meeting in April, Mr Garrett had said that WBC were aware of the parking issues in Mortimer, outlined the statutory process that had to be followed and stated that it was hoped that restrictions would be in place by Christmas. West Berkshire Council, with the support of the District Councilors and the Parish Council, are to be congratulated on responding to public opinion expressed at the Annual Parish Meeting and at Parish Council meetings to achieve these road safety measures in the shortest possible timescale.

Future Articles

In this issue we start a series of articles on organisations and charities from the local area that have a representative of the Parish Council on their Management Committee, starting with St John’s Hall.

St John's Hall

Cllr John Bull, the Parish Council Representative on St John's Hall Management Committee writes:



“St John's Hall has been serving our community for more than 100 years. A vital and central meeting point for many aspects of village life, the hall provides a venue for a diverse range of public, civil, group and community gatherings.

The hall is a registered charity and receives no regular grants. Although we have a representative from the Parish Council (me) on the Management Committee of the Hall, we don't receive any funding from them or any other public or government body. We are totally reliant on the revenue we raise from hire fees.

The money we currently raise from lettings just about meets the regular day to day running costs of the building. The struggle is fighting to maintain the fabric of a building that is over a hundred years old. We have been fortunate in the past to have had the support of other charities, notably Relief In Need and The Greenham Common Trust, but money is difficult to obtain. This vital community resource is therefore dependant on the support it gets from you in the way of bookings.

If you would like to book then please contact me (as I am also the booking secretary) on 0118 933 3471 or spectrumpm@btinternet.com”.

St John's Hall is currently in need of a volunteer to be Treasurer. If you are willing to consider doing this please contact John Bull.

Community Right to Bid

One of the pieces of legislation introduced in the Localism Bill is 'Community Right to Bid'. This allows a Parish Council to register an interest in purchasing a Community Building or Asset. Nominations are made to the Local Authority (in SMPC's case West Berkshire District Council). If approved, and the owner does not appeal against the decision, the Asset is listed on the Local Authority's Register of Community Assets. Should the owner decide to sell the building, a Parish Council would then have six weeks to decide whether to submit a bid for the building. If so, there is a six month period when the owner can only sell the building to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council has successfully applied to West Berkshire District Council to have Garth Hall added to their Community Assets of Value Register. Garth Hall was founded in 1915 by Miss Bertha Capron with the express intention of providing a club for the use of the boys and young men of the village, especially those returning from the First World War. The Hall was then passed by trust to the YMCA and subsequently the Royal British Legion and until two years ago it was used by them and for various community activities. The Parish Council is currently investigating sources of funding so that, if the opportunity arises, it could purchase the Hall and run it for the benefit of the Parish.

West Berkshire Connect

If you find any problem with roads, footpaths, the countryside and the environment it would be helpful if you could report it to West Berkshire District Council using the West Berks Connect link:



http://www.westberks.gov.uk/frontline/describe_case.aspx

Third Community Carol Singing

The Parish Council has again arranged for a Christmas tree on The Fairground this year.

3RD COMMUNITY CAROL SINGING AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE



SATURDAY 14th DECEMBER

6:00 PM

More information will be on notice boards and the website nearer the time, but please write the date on your calendar so you can come along and join in this annual community event!

Seen SID?

Parish Councillors deployed a Speed Indicator Device (SID) in various locations around the village in the last week of September.

Fairground News

The swings in the play area have been replaced. This was financed by S106 developer monies. We are also pleased to report that the Gyro Spyro, which had to be taken out of use for a few weeks, has been repaired by the suppliers.



The Parish Council would be very grateful if you could continue to report any problems noticed with the equipment using The Fairground emergency contact number 07092310325.

The grazing area in The Fairground has been hired out and well used over the summer. It has seen the Funfair (twice), the Circus, the Music Festival, the Fun Day, the Fun Run and pleasingly the return of Mortimer Riding Club with three show events this year.

Stratfield Mortimer Community Award 2014

The Stratfield Mortimer Community Award is an annual award made by Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council to a person who has devoted time and energy for the benefit of the community of Stratfield Mortimer.

If you know someone special who you think deserves recognition please contact the Parish Clerk for a nomination form or download from:

www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk

Nominations close **31 December 2013**

PSCO Report for Mortimer September 2013

Update on local Policing for Mortimer by PCSO Robert Hubbard-Clark C9283.



“Many of you may have met me over the five years that I have covered the Mortimer area but for those of you that have not I am Police Community Support Officer Robert Hubbard-Clark I am one of two PCSOs that cover the Mortimer area.

As you may be aware PCSO Patrick Baker-Jones has moved on within Thames Valley Police and is no longer the part funded PCSO for Mortimer area. I have now been appointed to this role and will be working closely with the Parish Councils of Mortimer, Burghfield and Sulhamstead to continue to deliver a high standard of Policing for this area. Over the years I have enjoyed working this beat and I am very much looking forward to being able to concentrate more of my time on Mortimer. I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can, especially when I am out on my bike!



We have a team of four working out of Mortimer Police Station; two Police Community Support Officers and two Police Constables. We are still looking for anyone interested in volunteering at Mortimer Police Station. If you are please contact Thames Valley Police on 101.

As I have mentioned I have covered this area for a number of years and have seen crime rise and fall over the years. I am pleased to report that the last few months have seen a significant drop in local crime such as Burglaries and non dwelling Burglaries. We have seen a drop in reports of anti- social behaviour for the summer months; this is the second year showing a fall.

We have Halloween fast approaching and, as a local Neighbourhood Policing Team we will be holding an operation for the area. Halloween is a night for fun, not crime and anti-social behaviour. Last year we had two arrests for the area and any person found acting in an antisocial way or committing a crime will be dealt with. If you have any issues on Halloween please contact Thames Valley Police on 101 or in an emergency call 999.

At Mortimer Police Station we have a number of 'NO TRICK OR TREAT' posters, these are on display on the Station board. If you would like one please call into Mortimer Police Station. It is open on a Friday between 10am and 2pm.

I would like to remind you all that as darker evenings are approaching please review the security of your homes. If you would like a home security survey please contact me on the Thames Valley Police 101 number.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this and if you have any problems or issues please contact Thames Valley Police on the non Emergency number of 101 or in an emergency all 999.

With thanks PCSO Robert Hubbard-Clark C9283".

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

Mrs. Jayne Kirk, Parish Clerk
Parish Council Office
The Library
27 Victoria Road
Mortimer
RG7 3SH

Tel: 0118 933 1955 – Fax: 0709 2310443
(Mail may be left in the Library post box)

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

Website: www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk

Minutes and Agendas 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.