

# STRATFIELD MORTIMER

Parish Council Newsletter Autumn 2017



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council



## Mortimer's new Zebra Crossing

At the end of the Summer term in 2015, our long-standing and very popular 'Lollipop Lady', Freda Baton retired from her role as School Crossing Patrol at St John's School, Mortimer after 34 years.

Despite considerable efforts, including advertising by the Parish Council, no one could be found to take over the role. As her retirement approached, parents and other members of the community, fearing for children's safety, lobbied the District



and Parish Councils through letters, social media and speaking at a Parish Council meeting. The clear message was that parents wanted a pedestrian crossing of some sort installed to minimise the risk of accidents involving children or adults. Mortimer's District Councillors communicated these concerns to West Berkshire Council (WBC). WBC's Transport and Countryside team carried out

several steps to see whether a crossing could be justified, including conducting:

- a School Crossing Patrol (SCP) Assessment in June 2015
- a 6-day speed survey in Autumn 2015
- a site visit in November 2016

Although speed surveys concluded there is no formal 'need' for a crossing outside the school, thanks to the lobbying, WBC agreed that, given the loss of the school crossing patrol, they would fund a zebra crossing.

Although the Parish Council made clear the village's objection to street lighting and suggested the light from the Belisha beacon would be sufficient, the highways team advised that regulations dictated street lighting was inevitable if we wanted to go ahead. The Parish Council received assurances that minimal impact focused lighting would be used coupled with black lanterns to make it as village-like as possible.

The design was agreed including the installation of a new path directly to the school entrance to avoid children crossing the grass bank.

The crossing was installed in July 2017 at the start of the school holidays. Members of the Parish Council inspected it after dark and were pleased to see that the modern LED lights lit the road effectively and minimised light pollution to the surrounding areas - although noted that their prediction that the Belisha beacon would be bright enough seemed to be about right.

The Parish Council understands that it has been very well received by the pupils and parents of St John's School who are using it daily now the new school year has started.

The new Zebra Crossing was formally opened by Freda Batten at 3.10pm on 19th September at 2017.



## Fairground Car Park

Parishioners may have noticed that the Fairground car park is breaking up in places and puddles badly in wet weather. The Parish Council has considered patching options but then decided to completely over surface the area. A number of Councillors drew up a specification, an enquiry was sent out and an acceptable quotation has now been received. The Council hopes to be in a position to place an order in October with work commencing soon after.



The prospective contractor has stated that the work will take three days so there will inevitably be some short term disruption.

The work is being paid for out of section 106 funds. Section 106 has now been replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL). It is money that a developer pays to West Berkshire Council for planning permission; a proportion is then passed to the appropriate parish council. There are restraints on how the money can be spent. Now that Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council has a Neighbourhood Development Plan, that proportion is doubled. It is envisaged that this will grow into a considerable pot over the next few years and the Parish Council is actively considering how best to spend the money for the benefit of the community.

## A day in the life of the Clerk to the Parish Office:

The Parish Office is now open 3 days a week, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, from 9:30am – 5:00pm and The Clerk works from home on Fridays, available by phone or email.

How can one describe a typical day in the Parish Office when there are so many different matters that need to be responded to making life so interesting, enjoyable and at times challenging?

Being based at the back of the Library we now have a regular flow of members of the public feeling free to pop in to share or discuss matters that are going on in the village, which is a delight to Lynn, our Admin Assistant, and myself, as we are getting known to those that we are looking to serve as Officers for the Parish Council.



Our day is also taken up with responding to emails, taking telephone calls, dealing with requests from and supporting Councillors, taking action on the decisions of the Council, especially with regard to the new opportunities for delivering a wide range of Community Projects that are being planned, liaising with West Berkshire Council, taking bookings for the Fairground, managing the Cemetery and the requests for internments and memorials, maintaining the Fairground – looking after the trees, the ponds, the cut grass, the ditches, the fencing, the play areas and a hundred and one little things that crop up on a daily basis, the West End Road Car Park and reporting on the conditions of the roads and footpaths and overgrown hedges to West Berkshire Council. Having said all that, there will no doubt be fresh matters arising tomorrow to keep us on our toes.

We never fully know what might happen each day, but we do know when we have to produce, on top of all the above, Agendas and papers for meetings, the Minutes of those meetings, the necessary Statutory Notices, the monthly accounts and budgets and post information on the Notice Boards, our website and Facebook to keep the community informed on what we are doing.

As they say, never a dull moment, but days filled with necessary routine, a wide range of diversions, but on the whole a day that provides a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction in knowing that what we try to do is of benefit to the community we serve.

# PROPOSED EXTENSION TO MORTIMER STATION CAR PARK (100 spaces)

## Update on progress

A Request for Pre-Application advice ( Pre-app ) was submitted to West Berks Planning March '17 but disappointingly their response, late-April, was weighted towards the impacts, rather than the benefits of the development. WBC did not support our proposals and concluded that a Planning Application would be unlikely to receive Officer support. Little consideration was given to the changes we'd made to our original design, to mitigate WBC's previous concerns.



Key issues are summarised as follows:

- \* Highway safety - our revised design appears to have overcome concerns of visibility and highway safety, but concern remains regarding pedestrians using the road bridge to return to a car.
- \* Need - the need for additional car parking spaces has now been accepted but the Planning Officer comments that the need for 100 spaces has not been justified.
- \* Impact on the landscape - despite our landscaping proposals, there remains an in-principle objection to a car park in the location proposed.
- \* Impact on trees - some concern is raised regarding the position of the access ramp from car park to station platform and its impact on mature trees.

As a result of this setback, commencement of detail design, costing and tendering for this project has been delayed. Representatives from SMPC Community Projects, Great Western Railway (GWR) and Englefield Estates (EE) have met to agree the steps needed to mitigate or manage WBC's concerns. In the interim, Heads of Terms for the lease of the land have been progressing between EE and GWR. The Parish Council remains committed to delivering the objectives within their NDP.

# The Library



"Did you know that you could use the library outside opening hours for meetings of small groups such as a book club, bridge club, games evening etc. If you would like to know more about how to go about arranging this please email [lisa.richardson@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.richardson@westberks.gov.uk)"

## Hedges and overgrowth

Hedges overgrowing footpaths create a number of requests for action every year. The Parish Council, however, does not have the powers to enforce maintenance of overgrowing hedges in the Parish. What we can do is to notify West Berkshire Council of such overgrowth and they have to respond with a response/action plan within 10 days.



If you have an issue with a hedge the first course of action is speak to the land owner. If this cannot be done or no action is taken the next course of action is to report it to the Parish Council on 0118 933 1955. It is also always of help if you contact Customer Services at West Berkshire Council on 01635 42400 as well. For more information please go to [www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](http://www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk)

## Communications Update



The Communications Committee met recently and set down their plans for the coming year. It was agreed that the Council should aim for 4 newsletters in the year rather than 3 as done in previous years. Also a special edition newsletter was circulated mid September for the purpose of advising parishioners on the progress on projects.

SMPC Facebook currently has 303 likes and has a reach of 1892 although the average posts per month were only 10. The committee were going to look into ways to try and get this number up. It is also hoped that the development of the new website will get under way as this is another priority task.

The Committee recommended the new communications policy to the SMPC and allocated budget funds for a new customer relationship management package to help the Clerk and allow for more advertising of the Parish newsletter.

## Annual Cricket Match - Alan Thorpe Trophy

Around 4 years ago the Parish Council sponsored the Alan Thorpe Trophy. Alan was on the SMPC from 1974 to 1980. He was also the headmaster of St Mary's School for many years and SMPC felt it appropriate to honour his service to the community by sponsoring an annual cricket match between the Mortimer Cricket Club (MCC) and Mortimer Villagers. Since its inception there have been two matches played with one a piece to the respective teams. This year was third match in the series with all to play for.

On the 16th July the match was played at Mortimer Cricket Club - a lovely afternoon with some good support from onlookers. MCC opened the batting and with some exciting batting amassed 133 runs all out after 35 overs. Archie Fritz scored an impressive 44 and there were other good contributions from Alder and Lewis. The Villagers bowled well and special mention should go to Rob Ferris , 2 for 33 and Rob Perkins 5 for 6.



The Villagers started their innings well with contributions from Alex McKenzie, 18, Dave Thomas, 20 and Steve May 22 but special mention to Rob Ferris for scoring 50. Some impressive bowling from Gilbey, 2-20 and H Lewis 2-23 but could not prevent the Villagers reaching the target after 27 overs.

Overall the match was played in a very good spirit and everyone is looking forward to the fixture next year. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Julian Earl presented the cup to the Villagers team.

# Crime Report for Stratfield Mortimer

for July and August 2017

Summary of crime events received from Sergeant Andy Bone and his report is as follows:

- 3 Criminal Damages
- 1 Burglary Non Dwelling.



There were fewer reports of Anti-Social Behaviour regarding bikes. Several persons have had a warning and letters issued and one core group seemed to have moved out of the area. The issue has not gone but seems to have reduced. In part this was due to the residents who kept on calling-in which allowed the Police to target their response.

The Police also ran a speeding operation where 1 person was given a ticket and 7 warned.

## Anti Social Behavior Meeting



Over the last year, there has been an increase in what is known as Anti Social Behaviour (ASB). In August a partnership between Thames Valley Police and West Berkshire Council have created a task force to handle such issues. They reported that Mortimer and Burghfield, as well as Wasing Estate and Thatcham, were the hot spots for this in the area.

They organised a meeting at Burghfield village hall to allow residents to inform them of what the issues were. One of the main issues raised was the riding of Quad bikes and moto cross bikes illegally. They explained what they were doing and how we could help. The main area of helping is to report immediately to the police.

They also said if the action was being witnessed at the time to call 999 not 101 as the crime was in progress and it would get a quicker response. They are planning on having a second meeting in a few months time which hopefully will be held in Mortimer. Can the Parish Council suggest that if this is an issue for you that you attend the meeting. Keep an eye on social media as we will announce the dates when we know more.



## **New Council Members :**

### **Tina Reade**

My husband Ian and I have lived in Mortimer for 15 years – we both really enjoy Mortimer’s friendly village atmosphere, good facilities and the beautiful surrounding rural countryside. Ian was a Parish Councillor in the past, and has done a lot of voluntary work, for example on the Fairground, and we both help with things like delivering newsletters. For more than 20 years I worked as an accountant in London, and the commute and very long hours meant I had little spare time. However, I stopped working earlier this year and I’m spending more time on various interests - I’m a keen cook and gardener, I enjoy walking and I am trying to improve my photography skills!



My interest in the work of the Parish Council was partly sparked by the Neighbourhood Development Plan - with the referendum taking place in June, this seemed to be putting real influence within the village. When the opportunity arose to join the Parish Council I decided to apply. I felt that, using experience gained over a long business career, I could make a contribution to support the continued development of Mortimer as a thriving rural village and that this would be a great way to get much more involved locally. There was a very strong field of candidates, and so I was delighted to be selected at the full Parish Council meeting in July.

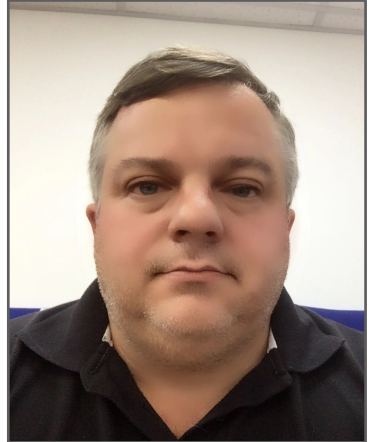
I am still very much finding my feet as a brand new Councillor, with only eight weeks’ service! But I am already working with others on potential sport and leisure facility improvements for the village, and also planning, and I am looking for areas where I can be of most use to the Parish Council and the village. Through this, I look forward to getting to know more of you in coming months.

## David Kilshaw

Having been co opted onto the Council in July I would like to say a little about myself and share my passions for the village.

I have been involved in village life for most of my 17 years in the village, Volunteering for the MVP, running the Mortimer Community bus service, running the MVP Facebook site to name but a few. I am also a governor at UTC Reading and a leader at Burghfield and Sulhamstead Scout Group. Some may say too busy to also become a parish councillor but I use the adage if you want something done ask a busy person.

I was co-opted onto the SMPC comms committee last year to create a facebook page to improve communications. What is evident from my previous involvement with the Parish Council is that they are doing a great job but have not



communicated this as well as could be done to the parish. One of my aims is to change the way the council communicates with people to be more pro active. Telling a story of what is going on and what should be going on in the near future. A new website is under development at the moment and hopefully will be much easier to use to access documents and information.

The second passion I have is the footpath between Burghfield And Mortimer. Since the School bus was removed for the majority of people in the village there has been a need to transport children safely between home and school. I have setup and run the "Mortimer Community Bus Service" bus" for people who had a need to transport children via a bus. This is one solution but not the best. West Berkshire Council state there is an available route through the woods to Burghfield but through my efforts in this area it has become evident that parents do not fel it is Safe. My aim is to make a safe footpath between the two villages to allow people to travel in safety all year round. This is something the Council looked at last year but is due to be re investigated. There are a number of hurdles to cross to achieve this. The route itself needs investigation with land owners and then specification to ensure that the path is usable all year round. Last but not least is Financial. There will be CIL monies available to help towards this but robust case will be needed to access it. If anyone wishes to help in this matter please speak to the Clerk who will pass your information onto me.

## Co-option of Councillor

**STOP PRESS**

We are pleased to announce that, at the Full Council meeting held on Thursday 14th September, Kevin Johnson was co-opted to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council following the resignation of Tony Butcher.

The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who applied for the vacancy.

## Other Useful Contacts

**Fairground Emergency** 0743 6807543 To report any emergencies and dangerous situations on the Fairground.

For **non-emergencies** please contact the Parish Council Office 0118 9331955

**Police Non-Emergency** 101

To report crime and other concerns that do not require an emergency response.

**NHS non-Emergency** 111

If you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency.

**West Berks Council (WBC)** 01635 55111 NOTE THIS NUMBER REPLACES THE OLD ONE 0165 42400

**WBC** Out of Hours Emergency Contact 01635 42161

To report major incidents out of hours.

West Berkshire Council Streetcare Team 01635 519080

streetcare@westberks.gov.uk

To report problems with streets, roads, highways, pavements, etc.

West Berkshire District Councillors for the Mortimer Ward

Cllr Mollie Lock

Cllr Graham Bridgman

Mortimer Village Partnership

0118 9332858 0118 9331707

[www.mortimervillage.org.uk](http://www.mortimervillage.org.uk)

For village news and information on events, including a directory of local clubs and businesses.

## PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

The Clerk  
Parish Council Office  
The Library  
27 Victoria Road  
Mortimer  
RG7 3SH

Tel: 0118 933 1955

Email: [the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](mailto:the.clerk@stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk)

Website: [www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk](http://www.stratfield-mortimer.gov.uk)

Facebook: [facebook.com/stratfieldmortimerparishcouncil](https://facebook.com/stratfieldmortimerparishcouncil)

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 Baobab (the old Post Office) and the library.

The Parish Council Office is normally open:

Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays,

09:30 to 17:00

If the office is closed, correspondence can be left with the library staff or put in the library letter box.