



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Unadopted Minutes of Meeting held on 13 February 2003 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: G Puddephatt (Chairman), Councillors: L Picking, K Davies, Mrs A Philips, Mrs R Weiss, R Peters, C Lewis, A Thorpe, Ms S Harding, Mrs J Kirk (Clerk) K Lock (District) and 7 Members of the Public

Apologies: Councillors: J Morden, J Mazillius, J Gosling, P Challis, M Loader.

Declaration of Interest: Councillor A Philips declared an interest in items 03/18 (ii) and 03.32 (xi) on the Agenda.

03/13 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting of 9th January 2003 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:

02/216 (14th November 2002 letter from St Mary's Junior School re school crossing patrol.) St Mary's School have written further saying that they had received a letter on the 6th February from Reading Bus Company informing the Headteacher that the bus which brings school children from Burghfield and Mortimer would as from the 7th February drop the children off at the bus stop on the opposite side of the school as no suitable turning area for a bus exists near the school. Approximately 40 children aged 7 to 11 travel on the bus daily and members of staff are not insured to cross them over the road. The school have asked West Berkshire Council to either: provide a suitable turning area for the bus near the school, provide a pelican crossing or reinstate the crossing patrol. It was agreed that **The Clerk** would write to West Berkshire asking them to take on their responsibilities and provide one of the above.

03/14 **Report from District Councillors:**

Cllr Harding reported that the Section 106 Agreement amounts have not yet been finalised. Discussions are still taking place over the footpath on The Street to the Station and the District Councillors are trying to at least get approval for a stretch of path between the two ends of The Avenue and complete the further stretch at a later date. The High Court challenge to the local plan by Bellway Homes has been thrown out. The Local Plan stands. The Council Tax is set to rise above inflation - mainly due to education funding increases. The layby outside Forbuoys is complete but is a hazard as the cars are parking the wrong way. Cllr Harding is to ask West Berkshire Council to put this right and she will report back at the next meeting.

03/15 **Planning:** In the absence of Councillor Morden the Clerk reported that the Planning Committee had met once since the last Council Meeting on Monday 20th January 2003 to consider four applications:

02/02597/HOUSE	38 Briar Lea Road. Two storey side/rear extension. No objection.
02/02620/HOUSE	Land at rear of 12 Stephens Close. Proposed 2 bedroomed detached bungalow with integral garage and parking. This application follows outline consent granted by West Berkshire Council. No objection but this should not be taken as a precedent for other similar applications.
02/02667/HOUSE	2 Briar Lea Road. Two storey side extension and renewal of loft conversion. No objection.
02/02696/HOUSE	58 The Crescent. Garage extension. No objection.

The Following Planning Decisions have been received:

02/02280/HOUSE	Five Oaken Cottage, Reading Road. We had had no objection subject to highways approval. Amended plans providing parking and turning provision has now been received and highways recommend conditional approval – approved.
02/02431/HOUSE	53 Victoria Road. Two storey front extension. Two storey side extension and conservatory - approved.

- 02/02154/HOUSE 22 King Street. Conservatory – approved.
 02/02506/HOUSE Oakwood, St Catherine’s Hill. Conservatory (retrospective) - approved.
 02/02531/HOUSE 32 The Beavers. Conservatory - approved.
 02/02597/HOUSE 38 Briar Lea Road. Two storey side/rear extension – approved.

Serving of a Tree Preservation Order: Land at Oakwood, St Catherine’s Hill Mortimer/7 St Catherine’s Hill, Mortimer. West Berkshire Council informed that with effect from the 10th January 2003 the order has been formally confirmed by the Council without modification.

Parking outside St John’s Church: This was discussed and it was decided that the Council had no objection in principle but recommend minor improvements to the layout of car parking spaces and to reduce the disabled parking spaces to one. This work is scheduled to take place at half term together with the yellow lining.

Willink Leisure Centre Joint Management Committee: Cllr Morden attended a meeting held on the 21st January 2003 and had two points to report:

1. Admission charges have been increased in line with inflation.
2. Signage from Mortimer. Once again Highways have said that such signs from Mortimer would be “advertising”. The Committee were unanimous that this was nonsense (The Leisure Officers present concurred). The Chairman, Royce Longton will once again meet with Highways to endeavour to reverse this decision and requested a letter from Mortimer Parish Council to back up his objections. A letter was sent on the 23rd January with copies to Cllrs Sandra Harding and Keith Lock.

- i. **Disposal of Planning Applications:** The Clerk reported that there are now 15 years worth of Planning Applications in the Parish Office and that the filing cabinets are now full. She has consulted West Berkshire Council who confirmed that they keep all planning applications on microfiche and Parish Councils could access these old applications if necessary. It was agreed that the Clerk could dispose of all planning applications over 5 years old (from decision) and set up a database for all the other plans.

03/16 **Roads, Footpaths and Commons:** No Report.

- i. **Update on the use of Motorbikes on Windmill Common:** Further to the recent report on the use of motorcycles on Windmill Common Cllr Peters asked if 10 aluminium “No Motorcycles” signs could be purchased at a cost of £230 plus VAT. West Berkshire Council put up some Perspex signs last month, which were vandalised within a few days. Cllr L Picking proposed that 10 new aluminium signs be purchased, Cllr A Philips seconded this and it was carried unanimously. **The Clerk** to action.
- ii. **To Consider Litter Bin for St Catherine’s Hill:** This was held over until next month as we are still awaiting information from West Berkshire Council.

03/17 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities:**

- i. **To Consider Providing Extra Litter Bins on Fairground:** Held over until next meeting.
- ii. **Annual Safety Inspection of Playground Equipment:** The annual safety inspection is due next month and in the past Wickstead Leisure have carried out the inspection. This year the Parish Council has been sent information from Rospa (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) and the Fairground sub committee recommend asking Rospa to carry out this year’s playground inspection. Cllr Puddephatt advised that it will be a legal requirement by January 2004 for play areas to be assessed for suitability for use by disabled people and by October 2004 councils should have produced plans as to how they intend to effect any necessary improvements. Rospa can undertake a formal assessment of the site as required by the Act enabling Councils to budget next year for any recommendations Cllr G Puddephatt proposed that a fee of £77.00 (to include a Risk Assessment) for up to five items plus an additional fee of £3.00 for each additional item plus £33.50 for a Disability Assessment (all plus VAT) be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr K. Davies and put to the vote. 5 votes for and 2 against. Carried. Rospa also offer a regular inspection checklist specific to the site, to help the custodian undertake his weekly inspections of the play area. Cllr G Puddephatt also proposed that an inspection checklist be applied for and this was seconded by Cllr K Davies and carried unanimously. **The Clerk** to action.
- iii. **New Pavilion Project Report:** The Fairground Refurbishment Sub Committee met on the 6th February and Cllr Puddephatt reported that the Committee are investigating lottery grant funding and will report back at the next meeting. A letter has been received from Mortimer Cricket Club asking when the proposed new pavilion is going to be built as the present cricket pavilion has been vandalised and needs some money spending on it to bring

- it up to standard. A draft suggested reply was read out stating that it is unlikely that any major work could begin on the refurbishment project within the next two years and it was carried unanimously that this be sent out. **The Clerk** to action.
- iv. **Mortimer Fairground Trust Report:** Cllr Davies advised that the Trust had now received the relevant legal advice from Anthony Collins Solicitors, which was read out. Cllr K Davies proposed that this information with a covering letter be sent to the Charity Commission and this was seconded by Cllr A Thorpe and carried unanimously. **The Clerk** to action.
- 03/18 **Cemetery: No Report**
- i. **Cemetery Management Software Package £125.00 + VAT:** The Clerk informed that the package does not meet all the requirements for the Parish Council Cemetery and will therefore not be taken up.
- ii. **To Consider Grass Cutting Tender for Cemetery & St Mary's Churchyard:** Cllr A Philips declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. The Parish Council have obtained a combined quotation from Mr I Philips to cut the grass at St Mary's Churchyard and the Cemetery from 1st April to 31st October 2003 for £2,966 plus VAT. Cllr A Thorpe proposed that this quotation be accepted. Cllr R Weiss seconded this and it was carried unanimously. **The Clerk** to action.
- 03/19 **Village Custodian's Report:** The Village Custodian has asked where to dispose of litter collected and **The Clerk** is to inform him of the Biffa collection points.
- 03/20 **Stratfield Mortimer Community Award:** The Council went into Committee for this Agenda item and asked members of the public and The Clerk to leave the room. Cllr Puddephatt advised that the Annual Parish Award Committee (made up of Current Chairman/Vice Chairman and previous Chairmen of the Parish Council) had received a number of applications and that Mrs R F Batten and Mr Jack Sibley had been nominated and chosen to receive the award this year for their work Cllr R Peters proposed these be accepted and it was carried unanimously. The Clerk will arrange for the commemorative plates to be made and the presentations will be made the Annual Parish Meeting on 16th April 2003.
- 03/21 **Policing – Warden System:** Cllr Puddephatt read out a letter received from Burghfield Parish Council which says that following an extensive residents survey the issue of policing was highlighted as the residents main concern. They ask whether Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council would be interested in a tripartite approach to a warden system for the three parishes. It was decided that the parish Council are happy to take this forward and arrange a meeting with the other Parish Councils (Burghfield and Sulhampstead). **The Clerk** to action.
- 03/22 **Alfred Palmer Memorial Playing Field – Increase in Grant Request for 2003.04:** Mr Dell (Secretary of the Alfred Palmer Memorial Playing Field Committee) has written further to his letter of the 27th November requesting a grant for £1,325.40. He says that the Public Liability Insurance for the Playing Field has increased more than had been budgeted for and requests an additional grant of £422.50 to cover the increased premium. Cllr S Harding proposed that this figure be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr L Picking and carried unanimously. **The Clerk** to action.
- i. **To Consider Grass Cutting Tender for Alfred Palmer Memorial Playing Field:** Cllr Puddephatt said a quotation had been received from Bridgewood Landscape Services to continue with the grass cutting of the Alfred Palmer Memorial Playing Field at a cost of £80 per cut (the same figure as last year), once a fortnight. This was proposed by Cllr C Lewis and seconded by Cllr A Thorpe and carried unanimously. **The Clerk** to action.
- 03/23 **Flooding Update:** The Clerk read out a written report received from Mr G Mayes who has been looking into the flooding situation for the Parish Council. Since the last Parish Council Meeting Mr Mayes has written to West Berkshire Council, The Environment Agency, Thames Water and to The District Councillors. West Berkshire Council have replied confirming that they are responsible for the surface water draining system in The Street. This includes the surface water sewer, the highway drains and road gullies. In 1990/91 Newbury District Council had an Agency Agreement with Thames Water to undertake the design and maintenance of the foul sewerage system but that agreement ceased about five years ago. West Berkshire are no longer responsible for foul sewers in Mortimer including those in The Street as responsibility was taken back by Thames Water. Mr Mayes has requested surface water drainage plans and notes etc from West Berkshire but to date he

has not received this information. The Environment Agency have advised that they are presently liaising with Thames Water to put together a common plan to OFWAT for funding regional sewer replacements, this will take a considerable length of time. The Environment Agency have two main concerns a) the foul water entering Foudry Brook, and b) the flooding of properties with sewerage. No reply as yet had been received from Thames Water. Mr Mayes has also not received a reply from The District Councillors regarding drainage measures for the new Mortimer Hill Development and he feels that for West Berkshire Council to leave drainage approvals until the Building Regulation stage is unwise and that a thorough review of the foul sewer design, construction and operation of the system is needed before the Mortimer Hill development is allowed to proceed. Surface water runoff is West Berkshire Council's responsibility and the investigations, surveys and remedial works must be undertaken before the Mortimer Hill development progresses any further. Unless provision is made for 100% of runoff to be stored in swales/reservoirs or diverted away from Monktons Brook, the flood flows and depth of flooding in The Street will increase, especially at times when the Foudry Brook is also in flood. In view of the above report it was decided that **Cllr K Lock** would chase West Berkshire for a reply and report back at the next meeting and **The Clerk** would chase Thames Water and OFWAT.

- 03/24 **Update on Parish Plan:** The Clerk read out a written report received from Mr G Mayes, Chairman of the Parish Plan Group which said that the Open Forum Meeting was held at the Methodist Hall and was widely advertised by individual letter drops, by hand or by post to all households in the parish and to all businesses and societies, clubs etc. The Forum lasted from 9:30am until 1pm with welcoming introductions Geoff Mayes and Abby Thomas of the Community Council for Berkshire. The vast majority of parishioners who attended was predictably for a slow growth maintaining the rural village pattern with a variety of new house types, increasing home working, but without any major commercial/industrial development or executive house building. Discussion groups on the three topics, Transport, Housing & Development and Community Facilities followed each welcoming session. Approximately 180 parishioners attended and the feedback had been very encouraging. The findings from the transport discussions will be further developed with a meeting on Monday 17th February with Parish Council representatives, Parish Plan representatives and Mr J Sandall of the Community Council for Berkshire with a view to discussing the application process for a Transport Grant of £10,000 and the data required to support the application.
- 03/25 **Renovation of War Memorial:** This was held over until the next meeting pending further information.
- 03/26 **Completion of Audit for Year Ended 31 March 2002:** The Clerk advised that Hacker Young had returned the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2002 duly audited together with the necessary public notice confirming the completion of the Audit. This is to be placed on the Parish Council Notice Board for 14 days. **The Clerk** to action.
- 03/27 **Quality Parish Status:** Cllr Puddephatt read out the three main sections needed to attain a Quality Status. These are 1) Competent Clerk (completion of a course, portfolio etc), 2) Electoral Mandate Test (80% of councillors must be filled by the electoral process and 3) Effective Communication and Community Engagement e.g. Annual Report, Number of Council Meetings, Newsletters, Satisfactory Audit etc. Quality Status which when met will enable councils to be more active community leaders and be more closely involved in local service delivery.
- 03/28 **Quality Parish Status – National Seminar Tuesday 18th March 2003:** Cllr Puddephatt advised of the programme details for NALC's Quality Parish Status National Seminar on Tuesday 18th March 2003 at the Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London. The full day's event includes a session on the launch and implementation of the Quality Parish Status initiative, including an address from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, speakers from NALC and the LGA and plenary sessions and workshops covering community engagement and other features of the Quality Parish Status criteria. The delegate fee for the Seminar for member councils is £60 per person plus VAT. Cllr Puddephatt said that he and The Clerk were willing to attend. Cllr A Thorpe proposed the cost of £120.00 plus VAT plus travelling costs be spent on The Chairman and Clerk attending the Seminar. Cllr S Harding seconded this.
- 03/29 **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000:** Cllr. Davies advised that local councils are under a general duty to promote race equality, but no specific steps are required to be taken to implement this and it is sufficient to adopt a Resolution in the following terms:- Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

acknowledges the general duty placed upon it by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and will continue within its functions and policies to have due regard to need to:

1. Eliminate racial discrimination
2. Promote equality of opportunity and
3. Promote racial equality between people of different racial groups.

It was moved by Cllr Davies that this be adopted and was carried unanimously.

03/30 **Appointment of Representative on Mortimer St Mary's Governing Body:** Cllr Harding reported that we still haven't appointed a new representative and will report back at the next meeting.

03/31 **Parish Council Financial Up-Date and Bank Reconciliation Report:** The Clerk informed the Council that Cllr A Philips had carried out a check that the payments and receipts are reconciled to the bank statement. She had also checked the PAYE. Copies of the up-to date payments, receipts and bank reconciliation were circulated to all councillors. Cllr G Puddephatt advised that Impact has improved their Council Accounts Computer Package (16 updates), which have been implemented to help lessen the Clerk's workload. The update will be available from 1st March 2003 at a cost of £35 to transfer the data. Cllr G Puddephatt proposed that the update be purchased at a cost of £35 and Cllr C Lewis seconded this.

03/32 **Finance – To Agree Accounts for Payment:**

- i. **Clerk's Salary:** Proposed by Cllr S Harding and seconded by Cllr A Thorpe.
- ii. **Clerk's/Custodian's Tax and NI:** Proposed by Cllr C Lewis and seconded by Cllr L Picking.
- iii. **Clerk's Expenses:** Proposed by Cllr C Lewis and seconded by Cllr L Picking.
- iv. **Custodian's Salary:** Proposed by Cllr A Philips and seconded by Cllr A Thorpe.
- v. **L Howes – Councillor Training Day September 2002 - £300.00:** Not submitted.
- vi. **G Mayes – Parish Plan Expenses £125.06:** Proposed by Cllr A Thorpe and seconded by Cllr C Lewis.
- vii. **West Berkshire Council – Photocopying Charges June to December 2002 - £125.65:** Proposed by Cllr L Picking and seconded by Cllr R Peters.
- viii. **K Davies – Berkshire Records Office – Fee for county Archivist £7.50:** Proposed by Cllr C Lewis and seconded by Cllr S Harding.
- ix. **SPISE – Annual Membership £30.00:** Proposed by Cllr C Lewis and seconded by Cllr A Philips.
- x. **I Philips – Grass Cutting Churchyard/Cemetery £478.50 inc VAT:** Cllr A Philips declared an interest. Proposed by Cllr L Picking and seconded by Cllr K Davies.
- xi. **Hacker Young – Audit Fee for 01/02 Accounts £411.15 inc VAT:** Proposed by Cllr K Davies and seconded by Cllr A Philips.
- xii. **Dads Shop £74.28 inc VAT:** Proposed by Cllr A Thorpe and seconded by Cllr A Philips.
- xiii. **Staples £13.76 inc VAT:** Amount written off by Staples for an error by them! No payment required.
- xiv. **Anthony Collins Solicitors – Legal Advice Fairground Charity £1,175 inc VAT:** Proposed by Cllr K Davies and seconded by Cllr C Lewis.
- xv. **Rolfe Cleaning Services – Window Cleaner Parish Office £8.00:** Proposed by Cllr A Thorpe and seconded by Cllr R Peters.

03/33 **Correspondence:**

- i. A number of circulars were distributed to councillors.

03/34 **Any Other Business:**

- The Clerk reminded Councillors of the date for the Annual Parish Meeting, which is 7:30pm on Wednesday 16th April 2003 at St John's Hall.
- The Clerk advised Councillors that the elections are to be held on the 1st May and that nomination forms need to be submitted to the Returning Officer WBC by the 1st April. It was suggested that a notice be placed on the parish boards and website advising the elections and asking whether anyone would like to be nominated.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 13th March 2003 at 7:30 p.m.

List of payments made:

Date	Cheque No.	Payee	Amount
13 February 2003	501192	Mrs J E Kirk	
13 February 2003	501193	Inland Revenue	
13 February 2003	501194	Mrs J E Kirk	
13 February 2003	501195	Mr L O'Rourke	
13 February 2003	501196	Mr L Howes	300.00
13 February 2003	501197	Mr G Mayes	125.06
13 February 2003	501198	West Berkshire District Council	125.65
13 February 2003	501199	LR & T Agricultural Ltd	374.35
13 February 2003	501200	K Davies	7.50
13 February 2003	501201	SPISE	30.00
13 February 2003	501202	I Philips	478.50
13 February 2003	501203	Hacker Young	411.25
13 February 2003	501204	Dads Shop Limited	74.28
13 February 2003	501205	Staples	13.76
13 February 2003	501206	Anthony Collins Solicitors	1,175.00

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 10:10pm