



## Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

### Unadopted Minutes of Meeting held on 11 September 2003 at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:** Councillors: G Puddephatt (Chairman), L Picking, Mrs R Weiss, A Smith, Ms S Harding, Mrs A Philips, C Lewis, A Thorpe, K Davies, T Barber, T Jones, B Taylor, P Blagden, J Morden, Mrs J Kirk (Clerk) and 2 Members of Public.

**Apologies:** Councillors: P Challis, K Lock (District)

**Declaration of Interest:** Cllr Philips declared an interest in items 03/154 and 03/168(v). Cllr Puddephatt declared an interest in 03/166.

03/152 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

**Minutes:**

The Minutes of the Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> August 2003 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

03/153 **Report from District Councillors:** Cllr Harding reported that West Berkshire is still faced with a funding problem caused by "Transforming the Workforce" Agenda (24 tasks that teachers mustn't do, these include photocopying, some supervisory tasks etc). This will cost an estimated £4m per year, with no extra money given by central government. The Willink drama and sixth form block was opened last week. There will be free electric blanket testing at Dee Road fire station, Tilehurst on 15<sup>th</sup> October between 9:30 and 5pm.

03/154 **Planning:** Cllr Morden said that the Committee met twice since the last Council Meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> August and the 27<sup>th</sup> August.

03/01540/HOUSE 28 Stephens Close. Two storey side extension. No objection.

03/01586/HOUSE 11 Croft Road. Garage conversion and new garage.

**Object.** The foundations of the proposed new garage adjacent to the public right of way will be within 1.5m of a mature oak tree. The visibility of this tree will be compromised by the proposed building, (Two similar trees at the southern end of this right of way are subject to a T.P.O. and has led to the refusal of the further extension of Aborn Parade, West End Road – see 03/00532/FUL

03/01636/HOUSE Cllr Philips declared an interest and took no part in the discussion.

1 Railway Terrace – side and rear extension.

**Object.** The owners/occupiers of the adjacent house 2 Railway Terrace, have under their deeds a right to pass across the rear of No 1 Railway Terrace to obtain rear access to their own property. The proposed side passage of 1m does not provide adequate access. The garage should be re-sited.

03/01670/HOUSE The Coppers, Birch Lane. Detached garage.

**No objection** subject to the garage not being used for commercial purposes. There are already numerous sheds and an existing double garage plus hard standing on this site and not shown on the block drawing. Vehicular movements of vans and lorries commence at 6am most mornings in what is essentially a residential area. Notwithstanding the applicants assertion that his business is rum from elsewhere neighbours observations over a period of time would indicate otherwise.

03/01480/HOUSE 11 The Avenue. Amended plan. Front extension to lounge and dining room, demolish existing garage and construct new garage at side. Provide new bedroom and granny annex extension at rear. **Object:**

1. The footprint of the rear extension is only marginally reduced and this proposal still represents an over development of the site.
2. Out of keeping with neighbouring properties.
3. Loss of light and amenity to adjacent bungalow to east (No 15 The Avenue – Hillmore).
4. If West Berkshire Council is minded to consider approval the proposed rear extension should be moved to the west thus reducing the overbearing aspect to No. 15.

03/01681/FUL

Adjacent Parish Paices Hill Green Waste and Household Recycling Facility. Proposal to change to Household Waste Transfer Station with throughput capacity of up to 60,000 tonnes per annum. Object

1. The proposal for a W.T.S. capacity of 60,000 tonnes per annum (support Statement 3.3) is clearly inadequate. Support Statement 5.1 points out that one of the only two facilities in West Berkshire closes in June 2004 and forecasts a doubling of waste over the next 20 years. 5.2.1 uses a figure of 80,000 tonnes growing 3.6% p.a. How long before this site has to be doubled in size or 24 hour working?
2. The public use of Paices Hill for Green Waste will be severely curtailed resulting in further fly tipping.
3. Little or, indeed, no concern shown for adjacent residents especially travellers site.
4. Final disposal of compacted waste has not been addressed other than possibility of gravel extraction site off Welshman Road, Mortimer West End, Hampshire. When this site received permission for gravel extraction we were assured that it would NOT be considered for landfill and would be restored to agriculture use at a lower level. This Parish Council would vigorously oppose any proposal for waste disposal which would inevitably be used, not only by West Berkshire but also by North Hampshire.
5. Other than the use of A340 the extra traffic generated on minor unclassified roads would be unacceptable.
6. Insufficient consideration has been given to possible sites close to main trunk routes.

**The Following Planning Decisions have been received from West Berkshire Council:**

03/00918/FUL 55 Groves Lea – change of use of land to residential garden – retrospective – approval.

03/01342/HOUSE 3 King Street – single storey timber framed glazed conservatory.

03/01451/HOUSE 3 Groves Lea – conservatory to rear - approval

03/01456/HOUSE 32 Windmill Road – first floor bathroom and bedroom extension over an existing flat roofed extension to rear – refusal.

03/01320/HOUSE 73 Victoria Road – two storey extension – approval.

03/01480/HOUSE 11 The Avenue – front extension to lounge and dining room, demolish garage at side. Provide new bedroom and granny annexe extension at rear – approval.

03/01540/HOUSE 28 Stephens Close - Two storey side extension - approval

Cllr Morden advised that two signs have been nailed to two oak trees in front gardens and another to a fence facing Stephens Road. They are advertising double glazing and roofing companies. West Berkshire Council are looking into the possibility of having them removed and the tree officer has also been informed.

03/155

**Roads, Footpaths and Commons:**

i. **Update on Vehicle Access Across Brewery Common:** Cllr Davies confirmed that on 15<sup>th</sup> August he and Cllr Puddephatt attended an interview at Clarks solicitors. The summary of the initial work undertaken in connection with this matter is that they will:-

- Provide a flowchart showing how the particular applications proceed within the statutory framework, including time limits.
- Regularise the Parish Council's legal title to the Common and have it registered.
- Produce a standard draft letter, which may be used to send out to any of the other owners of properties using the common.

Cllr Davies said that so far three applications have been received and are all going forward. He reiterated that the Council are not all owed to give legal advice in this area and that people must obtain their own legal advice.

At this point the Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow a member of the public to ask questions about Brewery Common easements.

The meeting then re-commenced.

ii. **Update on Vehicle Access Windmill Common:** Cllr Davies said there had been correspondence regarding vehicle access over Windmill Common with the owners of 15 Longmoor Lane and their solicitors. The owner's solicitors have written to us asking for confirmation of details and referring to a letter from Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council dated February 1991 giving them permission to use the track for access to their property but saying it was not permitted to use the track for the parking of vehicles or storage of

materials at any time. Cllr Davies read out a suggested reply to the solicitors stating that the letter of the 25<sup>th</sup> February 1991 was not a deed of grant of an easement but merely a statement of permission that the track could be used for access. **It was resolved** that the draft letter should be sent. **The Clerk** to action.

- iii. **To Discuss Installation and Purchase of Barriers – Windmill Common:** Cllr Davies said that he and Mr R Peters had obtained details of relevant barriers. He reported that as West Berkshire Council own the section of footpath between Windmill Court and Woodside Close they have said that the Parish Council must clear with Sovereign Housing (Windmill Court) and 4 residents in Woodside Close who properties back onto the footpath whether they think the erection of the barrier interferes with their property rights in any way before permission from WBC can be given to erect a barrier. The Parish Council has asked residents to reply by the 30<sup>th</sup> September. He will report back at the next meeting.
- iv. **Update West Berkshire Council – Revised Parking Restrictions:** Cllr Davies said that 8 members had attended the working party on 18<sup>th</sup> August to look at the parking restrictions consultation. A carefully colour coded map was returned to West Berkshire Council who have said that the comments made and indicated on the drawing will be carefully considered as part of the consultation process. They hope that the advertisement and consultation process will commence in the very near future.
- v. **Letter from Taylor Woodrow re 3 Hammonds Heath:** Cllr Davies said that a reply had been received from Taylor Woodrow (formerly Bryant's Homes) asking for a copy of the restrictive covenant relating to 3 Hammonds Heath. Mr Mason of Taylor Woodrow has said that he is not at liberty to provide the Parish Council with a copy of the restrictive covenant but that due to the state of disrepair due to the vandalism and fires within the property they feel it is now considered uneconomical to refurbish the existing property and that they are proposing to demolish and replace the property with one detached home. He offered to meet with the Parish Council to discuss this proposal. It was agreed to write to Taylor Woodrow accepting their invitation to meet the Parish Council and to ask West Berkshire Council if they have any information on the covenant. **The Clerk** to action.

03/156 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities:**

- i. **Children's Play Area Update:** Cllr Philips reported that the rocking horse had been repaired and that a new roundabout ordered which would be set up to discuss all the wider issues on the Fairground.
- ii. **Parish Council Lawn Mower:** Cllr Smith reported that the housing of the lawn mower in the Cricket Pavilion is still in hand and will hopefully be resolved this month. The Cricket Club are looking into having the gang mower stored outside on the Fairground repaired and Cllr Smith will report back at the next meeting.
- iii. **Update on Rear Access from King Street to Fairground:** Cllr Davies reported that following on from the recent unauthorised access to the rear of a house in King Street by a contractor it had been agreed that a letter would be sent to all properties backing onto the Fairground. A draft letter to the all affected residents was read out and unanimously agreed. **The Clerk** to action.
- iv. **Letter re Barbed Wire Fence Fairground:** The Clerk advised that a letter had been received regarding two strands of rusty barbed wire on the fence between the front part of the Fairground and the nature area. She reported that this had already been dealt with and the barbed wire replaced with ordinary wire and that a reply had been sent..

03/157 **Cemetery:**

- i. **To Consider Estimates for Work on the Cemetery:** Cllr Thorpe advised that all keepers of graves have been sent a letter reminding them of the regulations with quotations from the relevant parts. They have been given until 31<sup>st</sup> October to comply with these before the Parish Council act. It also thanked those who are complying with the regulations. A quotation has been obtained from a contractor for levelling and seeding the graves (£360) plus top soil (£50) and the creation of edged Garden of Remembrance (5m x 3m £734) totalling £1,144 plus VAT. It was unanimously agreed that as there were still funds in the Cemetery Budget to proceed with these alterations. **The Clerk** to action.

- 03/158 **Application for a Transport Grant update:** Cllr Puddephatt advised that the Countryside Agency had responded to the application for a Transport Grant and wanted justification on some of the figures and the grant applied for will go beyond the end of the granting period. He will re-address the issues and report back at the next meeting.
- 03/159 **Parish Plan Update and Meeting Wed 24.9.03:** Cllr Barber reminded councillors about the presentation to the Parish Council at 7.30pm on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2003. The purpose of the meeting is to:
- To ensure all councillors are informed about the feedback from parishioners, get initial reactions and support for the next stage.
  - To get an initial feedback from the Councillors who will provide a vital input to the final preparation phases of the plan.
  - The Parish Council can become actively involved in their role and agreed responsibilities for completing, approving and selling the plan.
  - The Parish Council will be better placed to determine future budgets.
- Cllr Barber also advised that there will be a final Open Forum on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October from 10:00 to 11:30 in the Methodist Church Hall giving members of the public a last chance to contribute to the plan.
- 03/160 **Flooding Update:** The Clerk advised that a letter had been sent to Mr Peter Taylor of Thames Water and he had replied by telephone to say that a joint meeting with the Environment Agency, Thames Water and the Parish Council would be arranged for the end of September. A telephone call from West Berkshire Council has also been received asking for information on the two bunds that are to be replaced in the field opposite the Fox and Horn Public House.
- 03/161 **The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003:** Cllr Davies outlined the regulations (previously circulated to all members), which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2003. They contain (in Part 5) a scheme empowering Parish Councils to pay allowances to their members. The Travel and Subsistence Scheme is optional. West Berkshire Council needs to be notified by the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2003 whether Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council, having considered whether to adopt the Scheme wishes to do so. Cllr J Morden Proposed that the Scheme be adopted. This was seconded and unanimously agreed. It was therefore **resolved that** West Berkshire be notified that Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council wish to adopt the Scheme. **The Clerk** to action.
- 03/162 **Provision of a Chairman's Allowance: It was unanimously resolved** to make £100 available in case of need as a provision of a Chairman's Allowance. **The Clerk** to action.
- 03/163 **Expending the Use of Speed Indicator Device (SID) Training Sessions:** Cllr Puddephatt advised that West Berkshire Council has offered training to councillors to operate Speed Indicator Devices. It was unclear from the letter, which Speed Indicator Devices were being referred to and **The Clerk** is to write to West Berkshire Council asking for clarification.
- 03/164 **Report from New Councillors Course 6<sup>th</sup> September 2003:** Cllr Blagden outlined the topics covered on the one-day course he and the three other new councillors attended. These were Powers and Duties, Meetings, Finance, the Role of the Clerk and dealing with Planning Applications. All the Councillors enjoyed the course and found it very useful although had felt that the agenda was too ambitious for the time allowed.
- 03/165 **To Agree Increase in Payment to Engravaservice of £35.00 plus VAT (Total £491.00 plus VAT) for Village Signs to Include Two Additional Signs (£456.00 Already Agreed Minute No 02.96):** The Clerk outlined the signs that had been purchased. Also a quotation had been received from Butlers Land to remove the old Library sign and install two new posts to support the new library sign and Parish Council Office sign of £103.99 inc VAT. Cllr Morden proposed that both these amounts be agreed. Cllr Thorpe seconded this and was unanimously agreed. **The Clerk** to action.
- 03/166 **BT Letter re Payphones in Mortimer.** Cllr Puddephatt declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. Cllr Blagden said that a letter had been received from British Telecom who are reviewing the provision of their public payphones. BT are wanting to remove the payphone at Windmill Corner because the income from it does not cover its costs. Cllr Blagden suggested that as the payphone at the junction of Victoria Road and Stephens Firs was removed a few months ago and the removal of the payphone at Spring Lane he felt there was a case for having an additional payphone to be sited outside or near Forbuoys in West End Road. **It was resolved** that a reply should be sent to

BT with these suggestions and also a letter to Forbuoys suggesting they consider having a payphone inside the store. **The Clerk** to action.

- 03/167 **Audit – To Agreed Amendments to the Statement of Accounts for the Financial Year 02.03 as Required by the Auditors:** Cllr Puddephatt advised that a letter had been received from the External Auditors Messrs Hacker Young asking for further clarification to variances in The Statement of Accounts and asking that the total cash and investments box be amended to exclude any debtors and creditors. Details of these amendments to the accounts were previously circulated to all members and **it was unanimously resolved** that the amendments be accepted and re-submitted to the auditors. The Chairman and Clerk (Responsible Finance Officer) initialled the relevant amendments. **The Clerk** to action. The Clerk also advised that Cllr Philips had carried out an inspection of the accounts to date, bank reconciliation and PAYE and found them all to be correct.

- 03/168 **Finance – To Agree Accounts for Payment:** Cllr Philips declared an interest in item 03/168(v).

- i. Clerk's Salary
- ii. Clerk's/Custodian's Tax and NI
- iii. Clerk's Expenses
- iv. Custodian's Salary
- v. Ian Philips – Grass Cutting Cemetery & Churchyard £497.85 inc VAT.
- vi. Bridgewood Landscape Services – Grass Cutting Alfred Palmer Field - £80.00.
- vii. R M Weavers – Grass Cutting Fairground - £131.88 inc VAT.
- viii. Thames Water – Bill for Water Trough Fairground £4.86.
- ix. Rolfe Cleaning Services £10.00 – Window Cleaner Parish Office.
- x. The Post Office £28.00 – Purchase of Stamps.
- xi. Wicksteed Leisure – parts for rocking horse £116.91.
- xii. The Post Office – purchase of stamps £28.00.

In accordance with the Parish Council's Financial Regulations all the items for payment were considered together. Cllr Morden proposed that they be paid; Cllr Picking seconded this. Carried unanimously.

- 03/169 **Correspondence:**

- i. A number of Circulars/Newsletters were distributed to councillors
- ii. Newsletter and Membership Annual Subscription Form for £75.00. **It was resolved** that membership of the CCB be applied for. **The Clerk** to action.
- iii. Anti Social Behaviour Survey – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2003. **Cllr Thorpe** is to gather information and complete the survey,.

- 03/170 **Any Other Business:**

- The Clerk was asked to arrange for the salt bins to be filled up.
- Disabled access to The Parish Council office to be looked into.

**Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 9 October 2003 at 7:30 p.m.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 10:15 pm