



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

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

Present: Councillors: G Puddephatt (Chairman), Mrs R Weiss, C Lewis, A Thorpe, K Davies, T Barber, T Jones, B Taylor, P Challis, J Morden, Ms S Harding, Mrs A Philips, P Blagden and K Lock (District) Mrs J Kirk (Clerk) and one Member of Public.

Apologies: Councillors: A Smith, L Picking,

Declaration of Interest: Cllr Puddephatt declared an interest in 03/204, Cllr Philips in 03/206 (v).

03/186 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

Minutes:

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

Matters Arising: There were no Matters Arising

03/187 **Report from District Councillors:** Cllr Lock reported that enforcement action is being pursued against the owner of 9 Mortimer Lane in respect of the potentially dangerous wall erected at the roadside in front of the property. West Berkshire have produced the Highway Improvement Programme for the next five years and this includes Sweetzers Piece next year and Goodboys Lane in 05/06. In 2007 work is planned on Brewery Common, Leighfield, Nightingale Lane, Pitfield Lane, Spring Lane and Victoria Road. A report has been used on the number of complaints West Berkshire Council has received since 1998/9. In the first year the Council had 11 complaints to the Ombudsman, the number has been higher each year since, 30 in 199/2000 is the highest but in 2002/3 the number was 24, however none were found to have caused injustice through misadministration. On the other hand the number of general complaints had been falling steadily year on year, in 1998/9 West Berkshire Council had 2341 complaints and by 2002/3 this had fallen to 530. Cllr Harding gave an up-date on the situation at Fairfield Park Mobile Homes. West Berkshire Council are taking the site owner to court for harassment and the hearing is on the 11th December. Cllr Harding will report back with any further information.

03/188 **Planning:** Cllr Morden said that the Committee met twice since the last Council Meeting on the 13th October and the 23rd October 2003.

03/01981/HOUSE	80 Windmill Road. 2 storey side extension, garage and bedroom. No objection.
03/01957/FUL	Serena, Birch Lane. 2 number 3 bed houses at rear of Serena. <u>Object</u> – previous objection to single dwelling applies. Birch Lane narrow and unsuited to additional traffic. Considered “back-land” development of site.
03/02012/HOUSE	12 Orchard Road. 1 st floor extension over existing ground floor, new roof and additional gables. <u>Object</u> – design out of keeping with existing properties. Considered detrimental to street scene.
03/02048/HOUSE	32 King Street. Conservatory. No objection.
03/02079/HOUSE	56 West End Road. Retrospective single storey side extension – covered area. No objection.
03/02079/HOUSE	Tally Ho, The Street. Erection of carport and alterations. No objection.

The Following Planning Decisions have been received from West Berkshire Council: - None

Cllr Morden reported that there was a site meeting by West Berkshire Council Eastern Area Planning Committee on 12th November to consider the application for an extension to 11 The Avenue (03/01480/House). He reiterated the Parish Council’s opinion and will speak at the formal meeting on the 19th November. Following the Parish Council’s letter to the Tree Officer regarding Tree Preservation Orders (TPO’s) he has agreed to visit the parish and a suitable date is to be arranged.

03/189 **Roads, Footpaths and Commons:**

- i. **Update on Vehicle Access Across Brewery Common:** Cllr Davies reminded the meeting that three householders had submitted an application under the statutory scheme specifying the rate of payment for grants of Easements but in view of the greater freedom of action

now given by the General Disposal Consent the Parish Council has written to them suggesting that they put their applications on hold. One of the applicants has since required the Parish Council to proceed with his application. Cllr Davies has had a meeting with the legal department at West Berkshire Council to try and find out what course of action they are taking and suggests the Parish Council waits to see what West Berkshire are going to do. The Parish Council can then decide what policy could lawfully be followed.

- ii. **Update on Vehicle Access Windmill Common:** Cllr Davies reported that as yet nothing further has been heard from the solicitors concerned.
- iii. **To Discuss Installation and Purchase of Barriers – Windmill Common:** Cllr Davies reported that the Parish Council are now in a position to go ahead with the kissing gates. An illustration has been supplied to West Berkshire for approval. Once this is received the barriers can be ordered and installed. Cllr Davies proposed that 3 kissing gates be purchased at a discount price of £129 plus VAT per gate plus installation. This was seconded by Cllr Philips and unanimously agreed. Carried. Cllr **Davies** to action..
- iv. **Update West Berkshire Council – Revised Parking Restrictions:** Cllr Davies reported that a letter urging that the Parish Council views had been sent to West Berkshire Council and an acknowledgement has been received. It was agreed to invite a representative of West Berkshire Highways Department to come to one of our meetings to discuss relevant highway issues. **The Clerk** to action.
- v. **Update on Meeting with Taylor Woodrow re 3 Hammonds Heath:** A meeting had been arranged with Mr Peter Mason of Taylor Woodrow just prior to the Parish Council Meeting. This was to discuss Taylor Woodrow's proposals for the site of 3 Hammonds Heath. Mr Mason failed to arrive and **The Clerk** was asked to write to him asking for an explanation.

03/190 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities:**

- i. **Children's Play Area Update:** Cllr Philips advised that the play area fence had been repaired (following vandalism – see invoice below), the seesaw repaired and the new roundabout had been installed. **The Clerk** to order a new swing seat to replace the cracked one.
- ii. **Report from Fairground Committee:** Cllr Philips reported that the Fairground Committee had met on the 12th November to set the budget requirements for 2004/05. The items that are still to be carried out in this financial year are the installation of the 4 new litter bins, paint the play area (The Clerk to obtain a quotation), repair small parts of the safety surface and purchase some new nets and posts etc for the tennis courts (next month's agenda). Cllr Philips is also obtaining a quotation for ditching work around the Fairground (next month's agenda). Cllr Weiss is to organise some Pond Dipping Educational Sessions and approach Biffa for a grant. Cllr Philips proposed that more daffodil bulbs be purchased up to £50, this was seconded by Cllr Puddephatt and unanimously agreed. It was agreed that there would be **regular Fairground cleanups/maintenance on the first Saturday in each month** and Cllr Blagden is to organise the publicity for this and ask for volunteers.
- iii. **Update on New Pavilion:** Cllr Lewis reported that the Pavilion Sub Committee met on the 23rd October. The next stage of the project is fund raising and the current committee has little time available. Cllrs Barber and Taylor are to access the project and report back.
- iv. **To Consider Purchasing 4 Topsy Litter Bins:** Cllr Weiss proposed that four litter bins be purchased for The Fairground (to be installed at the locations recommended by the Fairground Committee) at a cost of £869.20 plus VAT (plus installation costs of approx £300) Cllr Lewis seconded this. Carried. **The Clerk** to action.
- v. **To agree Payment of Invoice to J Clarke for £1,724 for repair of Play Area Fence and Seesaw:** Already agreed in Minute Number 02/235 and updated 03/176 (i).

03/191 **Cemetery:**

- i. **Update on Work in the Cemetery:** Cllr Thorpe reported the both the Memorial Garden and the levelling and seeding of graves had been carried out, both of which looked very good. A notice has been placed on the Cemetery Notice Board asking visitors not to walk

on the seeded areas.

- ii. **To Agree Purchase of Cemetery Registers £247.00 Plus VAT:** Cllr Thorpe proposed that two new Cemetery Registers are purchased (one for Interment of Ashes and a Register of Memorials) at a cost of £290.23 inc VAT. Cllr Lewis seconded this. Carried. **The Clerk** to action.
- 03/192 **Letter from Hacker Young re Audit of Accounts for 2002/03:** The Clerk advised that the Council's Auditors had written asking for further information re the Audit for 2002/03. The information required is an update on the progress of the Parish Plan, confirmation of the outcome of the discussions between the Fairground Trust and the Charity Commission, a copy of the precept budget with an explanation of any variances in actual expenditure and clarification of the ownership of the Parish Office. The Clerk is to report back at the next meeting.
- 03/193 **The Quality Parish Council Scheme:** A document outlining and explaining the Quality Parish Scheme was circulated to all members prior to the meeting. It was unanimously **Resolved** that Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council is to try to obtain quality status. A working party of Cllrs Barber, Blagden, Puddephatt and The Clerk has been set up to move this forward.
- 03/194 **To Consider Clerk & Chairman Attending SLCC Regional One Day Conference in Oxford on Quality Parish Status at a cost of £45.00 plus Travel:** Cllr Lewis proposed that The Clerk and Chairman attend the SLCC One Day Conference in Oxford on Quality Parish Status at a cost of £45 plus Travel and this was seconded by Cllr Davies. Carried.
- 03/195 **Councillor Training Day 2004:** The Clerk advised that an in-house Councillor Training Day has been arranged with the University of Gloucester for March (date to be confirmed) at a cost of £250 plus hire of hall £40 and lunch and refreshments. The topics to be covered will be The Law, Meetings and Other Procedures, Planning and Quality Parish Status. It was unanimously **resolved** that the Training Day be booked. **The Clerk** to action
- 03/196 **Report from SLCC Annual Conference:** The Clerk gave a feedback on the 3 day Society of Local Council Clerks Conference she attended in October. She said that lots of useful topics had been covered and some of the guest speakers had been Tony Holland, Chairman of The Standards Board on Quality Councils and the Professional Clerk. Francis Drake the SLCC Human Resources Advisor on employment issues and problems, Graham Wilson SLCC Legal Advisor ran a Legal Workshop, Sam Weller, Chairman of the Association of Burial Authorities ran a Workshop on Cemeteries and Monuments and Alun Michael, Minister for Rural Affairs spoke on the government's long term agenda.
- 03/197 **Update – Neighbourhood Warden Scheme (Three Parishes Security Warden):** Cllr Taylor reported back on the Three Parishes Security Warden Scheme. He has met with Cllr Little of Burghfield Parish Council, visited the Mobile Police Unit as well as obtaining information from the internet about established schemes in Kent and Taunton Deane. Firm figures and commitment will be required if the scheme is to go ahead in the next financial year and West Berkshire Council have no funding available for this at the moment. Cllr Taylor is to look into this further and report back at the next meeting.
- 03/198 **Update on Application for a Transport Grant:** The Clerk reported that the grant form had been submitted to the Countryside Agency and that an acknowledgement had been received. .
- 03/199 **Parish Plan Up-date:** Cllr Barber advised that the Action List had been approved by the Council at the meeting on the 15th October. The Plan is in the process of being written up and will be sent to all members one week before the next meeting when it is to be submitted for approval by the Parish Council.
- 03/200 **Flooding Update:** The Clerk confirmed that a letter had been sent to WBC Highways re the location and construction of the flood bunds although to date a reply had not been received. A letter had also been sent to WBC Planning re the development at Trunkwell House and confirmation has been received regarding the Town & County Planning Act S106 Agreement. **The Clerk** to send a letter to all property owners in The Street (below Mortimer Lane) to ask them to check whether their roof water down pipes, and cellar pumps are discharging into legal soakaways and not to manholes on the foul system which is illegal.
- 03/201 **Expending the Use of Speed Indicator Device (SID) Training Sessions:** Confirmation of the date of 27 November 2003 for the training session. Cllrs Blagden, Barber and Smith to attend.
- 03/202 **Update on New Car Park at Mortimer Station:** The Chairman reported that the two members of

the Highways Department that were looking into the details (the distances for the required access etc) of this car park at West Berkshire have now left. **The Clerk** to write to find out who has taken over this project.

03/203 **Budget Requirements for 2004/2005:** The Clerk reminded councillors that the Finance and General Purposes Budget Meeting (for 04/05) is on the 2nd December and that all budget requirements will need to be received by the end of November.

03/204 **To Consider Proposal for an ASDL Account for the Parish Office:** The Chairman declared an interest in this item and took no part in the discussion. Cllr Blagden advised that he had looked into providers for Broadband for the Parish Office to replace the present Highway Package and outlined the benefits for the Clerk/Council. Cllr Blagden proposed that the Parish Council switch to the BT Broadband Package at an estimated quarterly cost of £149.99, Cllr Jones seconded this and it was unanimously carried. **Cllr Blagden/Clerk to action.**

03/205 **To Consider Subscribing to Ruralnet at a cost of £125 plus VAT per Annum:** The Chairman advised councillors of the benefits of the Ruralnet System. Cllr Blagden proposed that the Council subscribe to Ruralnet at an annual cost of £125.00 and Cllr Weiss seconded this. **The Clerk** to action.

03/206 **Finance – To Agree Accounts for Payment:** Cllr Philips declared an interest in 03/206(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 – Not Submitted.
- vii. R M Weavers – Grass Cutting Fairground – Not Submitted.
- viii. G Puddephatt – Expenses for Attending the NALC Conference £194.80 inc VAT.
- ix. J Clarke – Repair of Play Area Fence and Seesaw £1,724.
- x. Clarks Solicitors – Legal Fees re Brewery Common Easements £2,350
- xi. Butlers Lands Estates Services Ltd. - Installing new Library Sign, Creating Garden of Remembrance and Levelling Graves Cemetery.
- xii. A F Jones – Cleaning War Memorial £1,131.53 Not paid as work not completed satisfactorily.

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

03/207 **Correspondence:**

- i. Nominations for the Stratfield Mortimer Community Award are now required. Nomination Forms from Parish Office, Library or Web Site.
- ii. Letter from Mrs P Johnson re matters in The Street. **The Clerk** to reply.
- iii. Letter from a resident re excessive speeding in Windmill Road. Letter passed to WBC and the Police for action.
- iv. West Berkshire Council - Annual Parish Survey. **The Clerk** to obtain information and reply.
- v. West Berkshire Council – Winter Service details for 2003/04 To be held in the Parish Office.

03/208 **Any Other Business:** The Chairman stated that he had attended the funeral of Jonathan Phethean and that the community would miss the efforts he put in.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 11th December 2003 at 7:30 p.m.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 10:10 p.m.