



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Unadopted Minutes of Meeting held on 11th December 2003 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors: G Puddephatt (Chairman), Mrs R Weiss, C Lewis, K Davies, T Barber, T Jones, B Taylor, P Challis, J Morden, A Smith, L Picking, Mrs A Philips, P Blagden, Mrs J Kirk (Clerk) and G Price (Parish Plan), P Sinclair (Parish Plan) and P Rabbits (Parish Plan).

Apologies: Councillors: A Thorpe, Ms S Harding, K Lock (District).

Declaration of Interest: Cllr Puddephatt declared an interest in 03/224 Removal of Payphone Windmill Road.

03/209 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting of 13th November 2003 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising: 03/207 (iv) The Clerk handed out copies to all councillors of the Annual Parish Survey from West Berkshire Council for completion and return.

03/210 **Report from District Councillors:** In the absence of Cllr Lock the Clerk read out a written report. Cllr Lock reported that there had been two untaxed lorries parked on the highway at Grazeley Road and West End Road and West Berkshire have issued seven day notices for the lorries to be moved. The Minister for Education Mr Clarke announced a guaranteed increase of 4% in funding for every child from next year but not all of this will be covered by the Government and some or most of it will come from Council Tax. West Berkshire Council had hoped for an increase in grant from the Government of 10% but the Government has set a ceiling of 5.7% (a difference of £4 million). If West Berkshire passport the maximum to schools as the Government demands this will use 95% of the increased grant and there could be a big increase in Council tax and probable cuts in services. The Fire Service will next year precept separately for their funds (the same as the Police) but West Berkshire will collect the money. Public access to computers in Libraries will in future be "filtered" when children are using them to make the system even more secure. West Berkshire were having problems with planning applications as it was taking 16 days to register Planning Applications but this is down to 4 and falling. They are still only dealing with around half the planning applications within 8 weeks although 88% of applications are now dealt with by offers under delegated powers. Housing Benefits have also encountered a backlog of applications but 6 people have been recruited so the situation should improve from January. West Berkshire Council have received an application from AWE for a new Laser Weapon Testing Building 100m x 60m. The Thatcham Area Committee will discuss this and although the Council cannot refuse the application, only comment; it will probably be a lively meeting.

03/211 **Adoption of Parish Plan:** Cllr Barber presented the Parish Plan (previously circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting). Firstly the purpose of the document as stated in the introduction, and two other suggested definitions of the purpose were discussed. The agreed wording was "The Purpose of this document is to ensure that the wishes of the community for the evolution of the Parish are the primary principle governing developments of any kind and scale." The second point considered was concerns of the strength of wording used in the "vision". For example should the plan say in the "vision" that certain types of development will be "rejected" or "strongly resisted?" It was agreed that the correct wording should be "strongly resisted". It was also decided to substitute the wording "small knowledge-based business" with "small business". It is the current intention to publish the plan in February. The main action points will be reviewed with the relevant officers in West Berkshire to get their feedback in the first half of January. A suitable A5 document will be prepared for distribution to every household in the parish. Discussions are being held with printers to establish the best format and to obtain quotes for printing. The final sign-off for the production and distribution of the formal document will be given at the February 2004 Parish Council Meeting. Based on the experience of other Parish Plans it has been suggested that it would be a good idea to

invite The Chief Executive, Head of Strategy and Planning West Berkshire Council and our MP to a briefing meeting with the Parish Council. To gain the support of West Berkshire Council the next step is to present the Parish Plan to the Eastern Area Forum 30th March 2004. The Chairman suggested that the plan is formally adopted (but not changed) by the parish at the Annual Parish Meeting on the 15th April 2004, as this is a legal meeting in terms of governance. This was agreed. The Chairman proposed that the Parish Council formally adopt the Parish Plan after the changes agreed above, Cllr Morden seconded this. 12 in favour and one abstention.

03/212 **Planning:** Cllr Morden said that the Committee met twice since the last Council Meeting on the 13th November and the 4th December 2003.

- 03/02223/HOUSE 20 The Beavers – Conservatory. No objection
 03/01957/FUL 26 Stephens Firs – Conservatory. Cllr Jones declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. Object:
 1. The side wall abutting the adjacent property (No 27) will be 2.3m high and 3.3m to the ridge.
 2. The length of this side wall will be 4.4m and its orientation will seriously overshadow the rear of No 27 reducing the light and impairing the amenity value of that part of the garden adjacent to the house.
- 03/01480/HOUSE Amended plans. 11 The Avenue. Extension to front and rear of property. The proposed amendments appear to have addressed the objections raised at the Eastern Area Planning Committee Meeting on 19th November 2003 and the Parish Council have no further objections. No Objection.
- 03/02414/HOUSE Land to rear of Serena, birch Lane. One four bedroom dwelling and detached garage. Object:
 1. Our previous objections to development for dwelling or dwellings (02/00809 and 03/01957) apply.
 2. Birch Lane unsuited to additional traffic.
 3. Back land development and over development of site.
- 03/02012/HOUSE 12 Orchard Road. First floor extension over existing ground floor. Replacement of roof to provide additional gables.
 Object: The amendments if any, do not address our previous objections “Design out of keeping with properties in Orchard Road. Detrimental to street scene.
- 03/02453/HOUSE 75 The Avenue. Extension to side of bungalow. No objection.
 03/03495 Listed Abbey Croft, The Street. Refurbishment and alteration works, formation of dormer windows, construction of glazed orangery to form link with adjacent cottage, construction of tennis court. Support. An important historic building, which should be made safe and habitable and must not be lost to the Parish.
 03/02497/HOUSE

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

- 03/02012/HOUSE 12 Orchard Road. First Floor extension over existing ground floor. Replacement of roof to provide additional gables – Approval.
 03/02107/HOUSE Tally Ho, The Street. Erection of car port and alterations – Approval.
 03/01683/OUT 4 The Crescent. Demolition of existing garage and workshop, construction of retirement bungalow and garage - Refusal.
 03/01785/HOUSE 25 Victoria Road. Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension - Approval.
 03/01957/FUL Serena, birch Lane. Two No 3 bedroom dwellings and detached garage - Withdrawn
 03/01265/FUL Aborn Parade, West End Road. Change of use from store to flat – Approval. This officer’s recommendation has been called in by our West Berkshire Council ward member and will go before the Eastern Area Planning Committee for a decision. Cllr Morden will speak against.
 03/01981/HOUSE 80 Windmill Road. Two storey side extension having garage with bedroom and bathroom over - Approval.
 03/02079/HOUSE 32 King Street. Conservatory – Approval.
 03/02079/HOUSE 56 West End Road. Single storey side extension/covered area (part retrospective).
 03/02040/HOUSE Gardeners Cottage, Mowbray Hill. Conservatory – Approval.
 03/02224/HOUSE 20 The Bevers. Conservatory – Approval.

On Wednesday 19th November Cllr Morden attended on behalf of the Parish Council the Eastern Area Planning Meeting (West Berkshire Council) and spoke against approval of the proposed extension to 11 The Avenue (03/01480/HOUSE). A decision was deferred and revised plans have been submitted (see above sub committee meeting dated 4 December 2003).

Enforcement Notice An Enforcement Notice under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, Section 172 has been served in respect of the erection of a boundary wall adjacent to the highway at 9 Mortimer Lane. Besides being incongruous and visually intrusive in a predominately rural area it has

resulted in sub standard visibility along this section of Mortimer Lane. As such the wall constitutes a hazard to road users. The Enforcement Notice requires demolition of the wall and removal of the resultant debris and materials. The notice takes effect on 13 January 2004 unless an appeal is lodged before that date. Time for compliance is one month from 13 January 2004.

- 03/213 **Roads, Footpaths and Commons:** The Chairman reported that a gate had been installed across Byway No 7 (leading to St Mary's Church). This is illegal and West Berkshire Council have confirmed that they are going to enforce its removal.
- i. **Update on Vehicle Access Across Brewery Common:** Cllr Davies stated that this matter is moving slowly. The application by 1 householder for an easement is going ahead. We are still waiting for a policy from West Berkshire Council, as the Parish Council should be in step.
 - ii. **Update on Installation and Purchase of Barriers – Windmill Common:** Cllr Davies reported that the kissing gates should be available shortly after Christmas. He will report back at the next meeting.
 - iii. **Update West Berkshire Council – Revised Parking Restrictions:** Cllr Davies reported that three members of the Parish Council and The Clerk met with Andrew Garrett of West Berkshire Council re the revised parking restrictions. As West Berkshire Council have ignored suggestions made by the Parish Council as a result of its working party in August this year Mr Garrett agreed to ask his superiors to withdraw the order in order that a total review of the parking and traffic calming in Mortimer could be considered together. **The Clerk** was asked to write to WBC (copying in the Director of Strategy) asking for a reply.
 - iv. **WBC – Request for help with replacing Waymarking Discs:** West Berkshire Council have written asking for help with replacing some of the Waymarking Discs on public footpaths in the parish. Several councillors have offered to help. **The Clerk** to organise.
 - 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 to discuss Taylor Woodrow's proposals for the site of 3 Hammonds Heath. Mr Mason said that as the house has fallen into disrepair they propose to demolish it and replace it with another property honouring the restrictive covenant, which states that only one property may be placed on the site. Mr Mason showed the councillors a sketch plan of a proposed house as his company would like to have the Parish Council's views and recommendations before formal plans are submitted to the District Council. It was agreed that the councillors would meet to discuss this proposal, liaising with Mr Mason as necessary, then meet him at 7pm on the 12th February to take this further. **Cllr Morden** to action.
- 03/214 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities:** The Chairman reported a discussion with the Charity Commission to the affect that the grant of a lease by the Mortimer Fairground Trustees to Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council could be approved if framed in suitable terms. This will be proceeded with. **Cllr Davies** to action. The Chairman proposed that up to £2,500 may be spent on legal costs, this was seconded by Cllr Barber and unanimously agreed. Carried. Cllr Philips reported that the first of the "Fairground Tidy Sessions" had taken place by councillors (and 2 members of the public). These are to be held on the 1st Saturday of each month although in January it will be held on 10th January. It is hoped that members of the community will come along to help.
- i. **To Consider Quotation for Clearing Ditches £622.75 inc VAT.** Cllr Philips read out a quotation from Butlers Lands Estate Services Ltd for cutting back all vegetation from fenceline and ditch along the Fairground boundary with Windmill Road and Hammonds Heath at a cost of £622.75 including VAT with an annual cost thereafter of approximately £350.00 plus VAT. Cllr Philips proposed that this quotation be accepted, this was seconded by Cllr Barber and unanimously agreed. Carried. **Clerk** to action.
- 03/215 **Cemetery:** No Report
- 03/216 **Update on Quality Parish Council Scheme:** No update held over until next meeting.
- 03/217 **Update on SLCC Regional One Day Conference in Oxford.** The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk had attended the above Conference in Oxford. The main speakers were Richard Wakeford, Chief Executive of the Countryside Agency who spoke about the Quality Parish Scheme. The Chief Executive of the Vale of the White Horse District Council spoke about partnership working with

- Parish Councils and Nick Randle, Chief Executive of the SLCC who spoke about Quality Councils and Future Developments in the Clerks Profession. The Chairman felt it was a very beneficial day.
- 03/218 **Councillor Training Day 2004:** The Clerk confirmed that the date had been changed to the 13th March 2004 but that the venue is still to be confirmed.
- 03/219 **Update – Neighbourhood Warden Scheme (Three Parishes Security Warden):** Cllr Taylor reported that he had spoken to Rachel Craggs, the Community Safety Officer for West Berkshire Council and had visited the Greenham Common Wardens. He had also spoken to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to ask about possible funding but there appears to be no money available at present. Police Inspector Andy Talbot has confirmed that the Police have no problem in supporting the initiative. A meeting with the three parish councils (Mortimer, Burghfield and Sulhamstead) and the Chief Executive of West Berkshire is to be arranged in the New Year as it appears that these parishes are not the only areas interested in starting a scheme and it would be prudent to re-stake our claim. **Cllr Taylor** to action.
- 03/220 **Update on Application for a Transport Grant:** The Clerk reported that the grant form had been submitted to the Countryside Agency but to date no decision received.
- 03/221 **Flooding Update:** The Clerk reported that she had spoken to Mr Reynolds of West Berkshire Council Highways Department who confirmed that the culvert in Mortimer Lane has been cleared as far as the river and all the pipes cleared of all debris and repaired because there was a lot of material and collapse. They hope to install a permanent clay and topsoil bund to replace the sandbags opposite the Fox and Horn Public House and opposite Railway Terrace in early December. They are also to fit a non-return valve in the surface water outfall pipe as well. The Clerk confirmed that a letter (and newsletter) had been sent to all the residents in the lower part of The Street asking them to confirm on the reply slip (using the pre-paid envelope) by the 31st December 2003 whether they are discharging rainwater into legal soakaways.
- 03/222 **Expending the Use of Speed Indicator Device (SID) Training Sessions:** Cllr Blagden reported that he and Cllr Smith had attended the SID training evening arranged by the Road Safety Group of West Berkshire Council at the Council's offices in Newbury. The meeting was very well attended with two representatives from each of 18 parishes. Phil Frost is a WBC Project Manager and he is managing their SID training programme. Due to a shortage of manpower and resources (SID equipment) no more SID training is planned until March '04. WBC is recruiting another SID operator and plans to double their SID equipment from three to five units in 2004. Erection and operation of the SID equipment was demonstrated at the meeting. Each attendee's photograph was taken and this will be used to produce official WBC badges for use by SID operators in their local parishes. All SID operators are covered by insurance by WBC hence the training and badges. The next step for Mortimer is to be given a date when the equipment will be lent to us. A WBC SID operator will come out with the equipment for our first session. Sites for the location of SID equipment are chosen using two main criteria, 1. Local accident black spots and 2. Locations with a suitable line of sight etc. SID equipment is to be left in Parishes for about a week and SID volunteers are encouraged to deploy it as much as they can during the period. SID equipment only records the date, time and speed of the 'target' vehicle; the equipment can record no other details. The data is downloaded to a database managed by WBC for their analysis. The review of the data collected by SID equipment is to be used in a variety of ways by WBC, road safety projects, traffic analyses, proactive safety-related road works highlighted by SID equipment.
- 03/223 **Update on New Car Park at Mortimer Station:** No reply from West Berkshire Council. Held over.
- 03/224 **Letter from BT re Rationalisation Programme for Public Payphones & Removal of Payphone at Windmill Corner.** The Chairman declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. Cllr Blagden advised that BT Payphones are proposing to remove the telephone box at the junction of Spring Lane because the payphone in question receives very little usage indeed. The Council decided that it cannot put forward a case for not taking away the telephone box. **The Clerk** is to put up a notice on the adjacent notice board to inform residents about the removal of the telephone box. Cllr Blagden and the Clerk visited the Manager of Forbouys to ask if he would consider having a payphone installed in his store. This will be followed up with a letter, which he will forward, to his head office for consideration.
- 03/225 **Parish Independent Remuneration Panel Report:** Cllr Davies informed that a letter and

information has been received from West Berkshire regarding the Remuneration Panel. The Chairman proposed that the Council adopt the Travel and Subsistence Allowance only and not the Parish Basic Allowance. This was unanimously agreed. Carried. **The Clerk** to action.

- 03/226 **SLCC Membership Subscription Renewal 2004 - £90.00:** Proposed by Cllr Lewis and seconded by Cllr Smith and unanimously agreed.
- 03/227 **Update on Audit of Accounts for 2002/2003:** Held over as no reply received from Messrs Hacker Young.
- 03/228 **Six Monthly Internal Audit Report for 2003/2004 Accounts:** The Clerk confirmed that Mr Feline, the Council's Internal Auditor, had just completed a full six monthly audit to 31st October 2003 of the Parish Council's Accounts. Mr Feline confirmed that he had examined and passed the eight areas of internal control.
- 03/229 **Finance – To Agree Accounts for Payment:**
- i. Clerk's Salary.
 - ii. Clerk's/Custodian's Tax and NI.
 - iii. Clerk's Expenses
 - iv. Custodian's Salary
 - v. The Post Office – Stamps £28.00.
 - vi. Thames Water – Water Trough Fairground - £4.67.
 - vii. Mortimer Methodist Church – Room Hire £170.00.
 - viii. Impact – Renewal of Annual Support for Accounts Package £55.00.
 - ix. Shaw & Sons Limited – Cemetery Registers £290.23 inc VAT – Agreed last month.
 - x. J Clarke – Repair of Gates Play Area £52.00.
 - xi. Kompan Ltd – Spare Parts for Spring Equipment Play Area £63.96.
 - xii. Wicksteed Leisure – New Roundabout Play Area - £3,626.06.
 - xiii. Dabs.com – New Battery PC £210.00 plus VAT
 - xiv. T Barber – Printing (Parish Plan) £90.00.
 - xv. Glasdon UK Ltd Litter Bins (5) £1,267.06 inc VAT
 - xvi. Butlers Lands Ltd – Fitting of Litter Bins £235.00 inc VAT
 - xvii. P Blagden – Reimbursement for Daffodils/Black Sacks Fairground £54.95.
 - xviii. Dads Shop Ltd £58.06.
- 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 Davies seconded this. Carried unanimously.
- 03/230 **Correspondence:**
- i. A number of Circulars/Newsletters were distributed to councillors
 - ii. A letter from Clarke's Educational Foundation advising that there is no change of ownership of St Mary's School property now that the change from "voluntary controlled" to "voluntary aided" has taken place.
 - iii. A questionnaire from West Berkshire Council asking for comments on the Community Plan and the 34 measures of success. **Cllr Barber** is to reply.
- 03/231 **Any Other Business:** No Any Other Business.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 8th January 2004 at 7:30 p.m.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 09:55 p.m.