



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting held on 8th January 2004 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors: G Puddephatt (Chairman), Mrs R Weiss, C Lewis, K Davies, T Barber, B Taylor, P Challis, J Morden, A Smith, L Picking, P Blagden, A Thorpe, Mrs J Kirk (Clerk)

Apologies: Councillors: Ms S Harding, Mrs A Philips, T Jones and K Lock (District).

Declaration of Interest: Cllr Puddephatt declared an interest in 04/15 payment of B.T. Bill

04/01 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting of 11th December 2003 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising: 03/213 Cllr Smith said that he has been replacing the Waymarker Disks but that he may need some more.

04/02 **Stratfield Mortimer Community Award – Recommendation from Community Award Committee for Nomination for 2004:** The Chairman reported that the Community Award Committee met on the 5th January 2004. Several nominations were received and the Committee recommended that the award be presented to Donald McNamara for 20 years of service to the village writing The Mortimer Life Magazine. The Chairman proposed that Mr D McNamara receives the 2004 Community Award; this was seconded by Cllr Thorpe and unanimously agreed. The Award will be presented at this year's Annual Parish Meeting on the 15th April 2003. The Chairman also reported that the Committee had recommended that Jonathan Phetalan should be recognised and remembered possibly by placing a seat or scoring table alongside the Cricket Club. Although this is not fully in the remit of this award it was felt that as a notable character in the village he should be recognised in some way (also the views of the nominations). Cllr Puddephatt proposed that a seat should be purchased; Cllr Thorpe seconded this and carried unanimously.

04/03 **Report from District Councillors:** In the absence of Cllr Lock the Clerk read out a written report. Cllr Lock reported that following on from his report last month that the Government are to give West Berkshire an extra £1.4m specifically for education which will enable them to “passport” the full amount to Schools as the Council and Government wish. Cllr Lock confirmed that if planning permission is granted to the controversial planning application at Serena, Birch Lane he will ask that it be called to Committee. The planning applications for Aborn Parade to convert the former store site to another flat and the deferred application for an extension at 11 The Avenue will come to Committee on 14th January.

04/04 **Planning:** Cllr Morden said that the Committee had met once since the last Council Meeting on the 7th January 2003. Cllr Morden declared an interest in 03/02586, Hollybank Cottage, St Mary's Road and took no part in the discussion.

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| 03/02414/FUL
Amended | Land to rear of Serena, Birch Lane. One 4 bedroom dwelling and detached garage.
Object
1. Our previous objections for a dwelling or dwellings (02/00809, 03/01957 and earlier 03/02414) still apply.
2. Birch Lane unsuited to additional traffic.
3. Back land development and over development of site.
4. Would create an unacceptable precedent |
| 03/02495/COU | Pond House, Kiln Lane. Change of use and conversion of existing outbuilding, barns and garage block to granny annex/living accommodation, games room and garage. No objection in principal at this stage but would require to see more specific details of materials and access. Subject to a condition that the proposed conversion remains part of “Pond House” and cannot be sold separately. |
| 03/02538/HOUSE | 26 Stephens Close. Conservatory. No objection. |
| 03/02576/OUT | Colt House, Sweetzers Piece. Demolish existing house, replace with two new houses. No objection. This site is large enough to accommodate two separate dwellings but Parish Council reserve the right to comment on a full application. |

- 03/02586/HOUSE Hollybank Cottage, St Mary's Road. Two single storey extensions to sides and porch to front of house, including internal alterations, new detached garage to replace existing. Object:
1. Following earlier extensions the site is now fully developed (see Newbury District Council file 139811 and specifically letter dated 26 May 1992 regarding any further extensions "and given the history of the site, this is unlikely to be granted."
 2. Roof materials (slate and glass) do not match existing red clay tiles.
 3. Balance flues and outside boiler creating noise and fumes resulting in loss of amenity to No 19 "Shellbrook".
 4. Liquid gas bottles in drive create a fire hazard with adjacent moving or parked cars.
 5. A mature yew tree, not shown on the site plan could be seriously compromised by footings of proposed replacement garage.
 6. It is understood that the applicant intends to employ and "independent" Building Inspector" thereby taking control away from West Berkshire Council. As the applicant would pay this inspector it is difficult to see how he could be considered "independent".
- The Parish Council strongly request a site visit before West Berkshire determines this application.

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

None Received

Cllr Morden advised that further to the outline planning application for two dwellings on the Colthouse, Sweetzers Piece site a Tree Preservation Order (TPO 640) in respect of 16 trees (7 scots pines and 9 oaks) has been applied. Any full planning application will have to take this T.P.O. into account.

- i. **Update on 3 Hammonds Heath:** This has been passed to the Planning Committee to discuss and make recommendations to the next meeting. **Cllr Morden** to arrange. A further meeting has been arranged between Mr Mason of Taylor Woodrow and members of the Parish Council at 7pm on Thursday 12th February (prior to the Council Meeting).

04/05 **Roads, Footpaths and Commons:** Cllr Davies reported that the gate, posts and side fencing installed illegally across Byway No 7 (leading to St Mary's Church) have been removed. A letter has been sent to the stonemason asking when work is to re-commence on the war memorial. A reply has been received saying that they are to start next week.

- ii. **Update on Vehicle Access Across Brewery Common:** Cllr Davies stated that the Head of Legal Services at West Berkshire Council had written to set out the legal position but made no mention of the policy to be adopted by them. Further discussion was deferred to the next meeting.

- iii. **Update on Revised Parking Restrictions:** Cllr Lock had advised that Mrs S Hannon, the Council's Executive Member for Transport is due to make an "individual decision" on 16th January about the revised parking restrictions. It was agreed that a letter would be sent as soon as possible to Mrs Hannon asking if she could meet members of the Council so that local views can be taken into account. **The Clerk** to action.

04/06 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities:** The Clerk asked if the Fairground Committee could meet to discuss charges and letting of the Grazing Area and report back at the next meeting.

- i. **Update on Lease to Parish Council from Fairground Trustees:** Cllr Davies confirmed that the letter had been sent to the Charity Commission regarding the Lease but no reply has yet been received. Held over until next meeting.

04/07 **Cemetery:** Cllr Thorpe reported that the grass has started to grow following the work on the graves.

04/08 **Report from Finance & General Purposes Committee & Agree Precept Request for 2004/2005:** The Chairman reported that the Finance and General Purposes Committee met on the 2nd December 2003 to agree a budget and precept figure for the next financial year (budget circulated to all members). The Finance and General Purposes Committee recommended a precept of £55,209 (plus £10,000 from reserves), an increase of £4,973 (9.9%) on last year. It was proposed by Cllr Morden and seconded Cllr Davies that this figure be accepted and carried unanimously. **The Clerk** to complete the Local Government Finance Act Form and sent it to West Berkshire Council asking for a Precept of £55,209.

- 04/09 **Completion of Audit of Accounts for 2002/2003 and External Auditor's Report from Hacker Young:** The Clerk advised that Hacker Young had returned the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2003 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.**
- 04/10 **Update – Neighbourhood Warden Scheme (Three Parishes Security Warden):** Cllr Taylor reported that representatives of the 3 parishes will meet with the Chief Executive of West Berkshire Council to pursue their request for warden services. It is stressed that warden services are to be seen only as additional to, and not instead of, the best policing available. Inspector Talbot of Thames Valley Police will address a public meeting on local policing on 20th January in Burghfield Village Hall, which he and other members will attend. Inspector Talbot had previously indicated that non-urgent police issues should be emailed directly to him for attention and Cllr Taylor suggested that there is a need for a system for gathering complaints to be channelled to Inspector Talbot and followed up for response. This could be one of the functions of a warden. The Council should consider setting up a sub-committee to give proper attention to community safety issues.
- 04/11 **Update on Application for a Transport Grant:** The Clerk reported that she had received verbal confirmation that the application for a Transport Grant had been granted. Held over until next month.
- 04/12 **Flooding Update:** The Clerk read out a report from Cllr Philips in which she stated that West Berkshire Council is constructing the bunds at the bottom of the village upstream of the bridge in partnership with the Environmental Agency. The bund downstream of the bridge will proceed, but there is no timing for it at the moment. There is a hydrology report due in March 2004, which will presumably influence a decision of timing. The Clerk also read out a report from Mr G Mayes in which he raises concerns regarding the new bund that has been built opposite the Fox and Horn. He believes that there will be difficulty with the levels and doubts that they will work. **The Clerk** to liaise with Mr Mayes and send a letter to West Berkshire Council and the Environment Agency.
- 04/13 **Affordable Village Housing Seminar 3 February 2004:** Cllr Morden and The Clerk are to attend a meeting on the subject of providing affordable housing for local people on Tuesday 3 February 2004 at Silchester Village Hall. The guest speaker will be HRH The Princess Royal, President of The Rural Housing Trust. **The Clerk** to action.
- 04/14 **Review of Area Forums Local Consultation and Notice of Eastern Area Forum Meeting 20 January 2004:**
 Area Forums were introduced to promote local decision-making and debate with the aim of providing a forum for the local community, including local councils, to debate and be informed about local issues. West Berkshire Council is reviewing the role of the Area Forums and has proposed that their current terms of reference are modified. The proposed new terms of reference include the following four aims:
1. To provide an opportunity to meet the local community, including local councils, to discuss and consult on any issues and topics of concern and interest, to look at potential solutions.
 2. To assist in the planning and monitoring of local services.
 3. To enable decision making to be taken at the local level where this is practical.
 4. To commission and monitor those local services that are best procured at the local level (including joint commissioning with local councils and others).
- The West Berkshire Council Task Group has asked all local councils to comment on the effectiveness of the Area Forums by returning a review form. The Task Group has also asked if the current or proposed groupings of local councils are effective. The view of the Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council at the meeting was that the current grouping is too large e.g. events and issues effecting Tilehurst and Pangbourne are of little interest to parishioners of Mortimer and Burghfield. Accordingly, it was felt, that Area Forums should be much smaller e.g. four or five parishes. Currently the numbers of Parishes making up Area Forums vary considerably i.e. Eastern 16, Kennet & Pang Valley 18, Downlands 28 and Newbury 5. **The Clerk** to reply to consultation. The next Area Forum Meeting is on Tuesday 20 January 2004. Cllr Blagdon will attend on behalf of the Council.

04/15 **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. Hacker Young – External Auditor Fee £411.25
- vi. Wicksteed Leisure Ltd – Parts for Play Area £75.79
- vii. B T Bill – Parish Office - £177.48.
- viii. West Berkshire Council - Quarterly Photocopying Bill £44.10.
- ix. F Feline – Internal Auditor Fee £50.00.

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

04/16 **Correspondence:**

- i. A letter from a resident of Windmill Road regarding the re-positioning of a BT pole from the top of the Fairground ditch to in the ditch which could restrict the flow of water. **The Clerk** to investigate and write to BT and reply to Mr Mathie.
- ii. A number of Circulars/Newsletters were distributed to councillors

04/17 **Any Other Business:** No Any Other Business.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 12 February 2004 at 7:30 p.m.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 09:45 p.m.