



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Unadopted Minutes of Meeting

held on Thursday 13th December 2007 @ 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors: K Davies (Chairman), P Blagden, P Challis, S Clark, D Ives, J Morden, A Philips, T Shorrocks, A Thorpe, I Titman-Read, A Colaço, A Smith (from 8:15pm), and the Clerk.

Apologies: Councillors: M Lock and N Kiley.

Declaration of Interest: None.

07/168 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting of 8th November 2007 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:

- 07/159 The Clerk advised that a reply had been received from West Berkshire Council saying that they will consider the suggestion to restrict parking in the area outside St John's Church in the next financial year.
- 07/112 Appointment of Minor Authority Governor St John's School: The Clerk reported further on the appointment of Cllr A Smith on 12th July 2007 as Minor Authority Governor for St John's School to replace Mr J Hannawin. The Chair of Governors had written to the Parish Council on the 18th October 2007 advising that there are no longer Minor Authority Governors as these have now been replaced by Community Governors and that Cllr Smith's name would be put forward to the next Governors meeting along with their own nomination. A further letter was received from the Chair of Governors dated the 26th November advising that Cllr Smith had not been appointed as Community Governor.
- 06/183 (iii) The Clerk advised that West Berkshire Council advise that as there are some Sec. 106 funds available in Mortimer WBC will be able to install two small style VAS's (Vehicle Activated Signs) and they will contact the Parish Council early next year with a plan of the proposed locations. The locations being considered are the two identified by the Parish Council these being the bottom of The Street and West End Road.
- 07/157 The Chairman reported that he was present at the trial of the owner of the Fairfield Caravan Park on the 12th/13th December 2007. The owner was fined £2,200 on three counts and if these are repeated he will be prosecuted again; and if convicted a third time he will lose his licence.

07/169 **Chairmanship and Vice Chairmanship:** The Chairman advised that he will not be standing for Chairman at the Annual General Meeting in May and the Vice Chairman will not be putting himself forward as Chairman but is happy to continue as Vice Chairman if elected.

07/170 **Report from District Councillors:** In the absence of Cllr Lock the Clerk read out the District Councillor's report which included: An incident with travellers has caused the closure of Paices Hill recycling site. The site re-opened on 1ST December 2007 and by the next day had caused further trouble by dumping several tons of green waste at the site and it was closed again. The list of Post Offices recommended for closure in West Berkshire has just been announced, it includes Englefield. Cold Ash and Station Road Thatcham near where 850 new dwellings have just been built on the old MOD site. Fortunately neither Mortimer nor Burghfield are on the list. Public consultation on the closures will last until the end of January. The District Councillors have called the application for a takeaway at 49 West End Road Mortimer to the Planning Committee for determination if the officers are minded to give permission. West Berkshire Council has agreed to install a 40 m.p.h. speed limit on the section of Bloomfield Hatch Lane between the Wokingham boundary and the Mortimer side of Alfreys Bridge. A traffic order will be required.

07/171 **Planning:** Cllr Morden reported that the Committee had met twice, since the last Council Meeting, on the 28th November 2007 and the 11th December when 6 plans were considered.

0702166/HOUSE Janson House, Drury Lane, New brick piers and automated gates. No objection.
07/02190/FUL Mortimer Mens Club, The Street. Insertion of obscure glazed first floor bathroom window in plots 1-4. No objection.

07/02438/COMIND AWE Aldermaston. Replacement High Explosives Fabrication Facility building
Adjacent Parish associated outbuildings and access roads, vehicle turning areas, hard standings, blast protection. 8 x lightning conductor towers, security fencing, landscaping and temporary construction enclave. No objection as this is replacement in centre of complex. The Parish Council are however, concerned at the long term effect on the continuing enlargement of the facilities at AWE and the increase of traffic on relatively minor roads.

07/02326/FUL 49 West End Road (Aborn Parade) Change of use from A2 to A5. Takeaway restaurant. Object:

1. A takeaway is not appropriate for the residential flats above which are privately owned and will not be occupied by the takeaway management or staff.
2. Notwithstanding the provision of 2 staff parking spaces at the rear there is inadequate customer casual parking in West End Road. The lay-by is fully occupied by Aborn Parade flat owners from 6pm and overnight. Double parking in West End Road will result in a traffic hazard in an unlit street.

07/02390/HOUSE 27 Stephens Firs. Two storey side extension containing garage, utility room and bedroom. Demolition of existing garage. No objection.

07/02578/HOUSE 43 The Avenue. Demolition of existing garage. New two storey side extension with garage, kitchen shower room, bedroom over. No objection.

The following Planning Officers recommendations have been received from West Berkshire Council:

07/01763/FUL Mortimer Football Club, West End Road. 3 sets of floodlights for training (2 hours a week). 3 lights on each pole (9 lights in total). Retrospective approval.

07/01945/OUTD Longmoor Cottage, Longmoor Lane. Demolish existing house and garage. Erect 3 new 1½ storey houses with garages. Outline approval.

07/01995/HOUSE Stanton, 63 Victoria Road. Side garage and utility room. Approval.

07/02127/HOUSE 9 Asparagus Close. Conservatory. Approval.

07/02161/HOUSE Mortimer House, Mortimer Lane. Remove existing glazed roof light, re-roof whole kitchen roof with salvaged slates and second hand slates to match. Approval.

07/02162/LBC2 The Colt House, Sweetzers Piece: minor variations (difference between the survey plan and the Ordnance Survey when the site was set out). The cumulative changes were not considered to be 'de minimis' hence a new application was required (previous approval 06/00193/REM). Approval

07/02205/FULD Land to rear of Birch Cottage, Birch Lane. Erection of 4 bedroom dwelling. Approval.

07/02141/HoUSE 43 The Avenue. This has been withdrawn See above. A new application 07/02578/HOUSE has been received and considered at meeting of 11th December 2007.

The Clerk advised that she had spoken to the Enforcement Officer at West Berkshire regarding the Cinnamon Tree restaurant in The Street who advised that he had written to the owners saying that they have not got planning permission for the canopy porch and the blue floodlighting.

Appeal Decision

06/015/FUL: Car park in field adjacent to St Mary's Church. The appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against West Berkshire's refusal to grant planning permission has been dismissed. The inspector's report may be seen in the Parish Office.

Tree Preservation Order 2007:

Land at Oakwood, St Catherine's Hill. The Order made 21st September 2007 is now formally confirmed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999.

- i. **Update on West Berkshire Affordable Housing Conference 10th December 2007:** Cllr Morden attended the conference and reported: Following repeated questions by Cllr Morden as to why Rural Exception Site properties could not be reserved solely for tenants with village connections, pointing out the advantages to the local community, social services, and alleviating parishioner's fears of tenants from far and wide, it was revealed that the Housing Executive with the approval of the majority of District Councillors had reached the conclusion that such properties should be so reserved. Only if there were insufficient

parishes would tenants be taken from the General Housing List. They also conceded that under occupancy i.e. couples without children in two bedroom accommodation would be allowed. These recommendations are to be put to the full council. If approved in writing to this Parish Council the way would seem to be clear to re-open the quest for a Rural Exception Site, the Parish Council having verified that there is a need for such Affordable Houses within the village. As to whether the Parish Council re-open negotiations with The Rural Housing Trust or approach The Rural Housing Enabler at the Community Council for Berkshire is open to debate. The Rural Housing Trust acts as a developer whereas The Rural Housing Enabler is independent of any vested interests, including the District Council, being funded by DEFRA.

07/172 **Update on Station Car Park:** No report.

07/173 **Roads, Footpaths and Commons:** No report.

- i. **Update on Hammonds Heath Footpath:** Cllr Shorrock reported that West Berkshire Council had written to the Parish Council saying that they had received a quotation from BT to divert their cables from the area of land around the war memorial which was £25,000 rather than the £5,000 originally expected. This effectively means that the option to modify the island around the war memorial is not now feasible as the cost is greater than the original scheme budget. They now propose to progress the original scheme (i.e. footway on the east side with the crossing point to west side by Heath Cottage, but without the extension of the footway on to The Street) although work will not start on site at least until early 2008. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to BT asking for clarification as to why these costs were to be borne by West Berks rather than by BT themselves. A copy of this letter is to be sent to West Berkshire Council requesting whether these costs could be met by sec.106 monies. Cllr. Phillips asked that the Clerk write to West Berkshire Council to request an up-to-date listing of all available sec.106 money.

07/174 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities:** Cllr Blagden gave an update on the work carried out by the working party.

- i. **Monthly Play Area Inspection Report:** Cllr Smith reported that the play area is in good order and has not suffered any damage. The wooden steps on the multiplay unit have been installed and the gate has been mended.
- ii. **Proposal to proceed with the installation of a new safety surface under the multiplay unit at an approximate cost of £5,990 plus VAT:** Cllr Smith proposed that the rubber safety tiles under the multiplay unit be replaced with a new continuous rubber safety surface at an approximate cost of £5,990 plus VAT. This was seconded by Cllr Blagden and unanimously agreed. Clerk to action. The redundant tiles will be re-cycled.
- iii. **Update on Sub-Lease to CIC:** The Chairman advised that there is no update but that he would contact the Parish Council's solicitors at West Berkshire Council. Cllr Smith later confirmed that the CIC hope to demolish the existing pavilion within 6/8 weeks.
- iv. **Installation of special kissing gate on footpath 40 The Fairground:** The Clerk confirmed that following Minute No. 07/166 (first bullet point) that she and Cllr Blagden had met on site with the Access Officer for West Berkshire Council who confirmed that the access and Grazing Area should be suitable for motorised wheelchairs. They also met subsequently with a Rights of Way Officer of West Berkshire Council who confirmed that an Access Kissing Gate for large mobility vehicles would be the most suitable replacement to the existing gate. As the kissing gate will be on a registered footpath (No 40) West Berkshire will supply the gate and have asked that the Parish Council pay for the installation (and removal of existing gate). West Berkshire also advised that once disabled access is granted this can never be reversed. The Clerk obtained an estimate to install the new kissing gate (and remove the old one) at a cost of £400 plus VAT plus £80 plus VAT for planings and scalplings to make the surface around the gate suitable for wheelchairs. Cllr Blagden proposed that the Parish Council accepts West Berkshire's Offer to provide the kissing gate and pay the installation costs above. This was seconded by Cllr Clark and unanimously agreed. The Clerk to action and to also write to Mrs Sullivan, who had requested the provision of the gate.

- 07/175 **Cemetery:** Cllr Clark reported that the tool shed had been ordered to gain a £100 discount. The repair to the Cemetery drain is still to be carried out and the contractor has promised to do this as soon as the ground is dry enough. A Cemetery Committee meeting is to be arranged in the New Year.
- 07/176 **Communications Committee:** Cllr Blagden confirmed that the next newsletter is to go out at the end of January/early February 2008.
- 07/177 **To approve a policy for grant applications under sec.137 of LGA 1972:** The vice Chairman read out a circulated document setting out a policy for considering grant applications under sec.137 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Council unanimously resolved to adopt this grant policy. The Chairman read out correspondence from the Alfred Palmer Trust regarding their grant application for 2008/2009, together with a suggested reply reminding the Trust of the Council's Minute No. 07/29 and the subsequent letter dated 12th February 2007 regarding the requirement of match funding. Cllr Shorrock proposed that this reply letter be sent and this was seconded by Cllr Morden and unanimously resolved.
- 07/178 **Internal Audit Report:** The Clerk as RFO reported that Mr Feline (Internal Auditor) had carried out a very thorough six monthly internal audit of the Parish Council Accounts and apart from a few very minor points he had signed to record that everything was in order.
- 07/179 **i. Result of by-election notice for Parish Council vacancy:** The Clerk advised that the Elections and Registration Manager at West Berkshire Council had written referring to the notice published in regard to a casual vacancy on Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council and that as no requests to hold an election had been received the Parish Council may therefore co-opt a person to fill the vacancy.
- ii. To consider filling vacancy by co-option:** The Clerk reported that in accordance with Minute No 07/155 she had contacted both the Berkshire Association of Local Councils and West Berkshire Council who both advised that there is no requirement to train interviewers and neither knew of any Parish Council that had done so. The Clerk has discussed with both BALC and WBC the wording of the interview questions which the panel used the previous time and they confirmed that these were appropriate and advised that what the Parish Council has to ensure is that the selection process is seen to be open and fair. It was therefore unanimously agreed to proceed as before to advertise for applications for co-option with a closing date of 31st January 2008 with interviews to be held by members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee during March.
- 07/180 **Report on WBC Flood Seminar to include setting up of a Community Major Incident Plan:** Cllr Titman-Reade reported that he, Mr G Mayes and the Clerk had attended the above Seminar at West Berkshire on the 5th December. The object of the meeting was not to go over the flooding issues discussed at a previous meeting but the setting up of Community Major Incident Plans in each parish to work in conjunction with the West Berkshire Emergency Plan (operated from their control room). The flood of the 20th July and the Ufton Nervet rail crash highlighted a need for this. The Major Incident Plan would not be just for flooding but any major emergency in the Parish. West Berkshire are to send out a template to all Clerks and Cllr Titman-Reade recommended that once this is received an agenda item to set up a small working party should be set up to look at a Major Incident Plan for Stratfield Mortimer.
- 07/181 **Update on Community Policing:** Cllr Ives reported that there had been 2 meetings with the part funded PCSO. Crime reported in both Burghfield and Mortimer is very similar in numbers. There was a public meeting run by the Police on 20th November in St John's Hall. Approximately 30 people attended and the main issues were speeding and parking.
- 07/182 **Finance: To agree accounts for payment for December:** In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations all the following items for payment were considered together. Cllr Shorrock proposed that they be paid; this was seconded by Cllr Clark and was carried unanimously.
- i. Clerk's Salary.
 - ii. H.M. Revenue and Customs (Tax and NI).
 - iii. Clerk's Expenses.
 - iv. Custodian's Salary.
 - v. RBWM (Pension).

- vi. Stewarts of Mortimer Ltd (Mortimer Link) £900 inc VAT.
- vii. Pipex Homecall Ltd (telephone Parish Office) direct debit £29.13 inc VAT.
- viii. Co-Operative Bank Visa Direct Debit £321.98 98 (PSA Parts £100.82 (new battery PC), (£7.59 Forbuoys (papers), Peter Nyssen Ltd £37.96 (daffodils), AVG Technologies Ltd £57.28 (Virus Checker etc 2 years), Phoenix Direct £116.33 (3 printer cartridges PC) and £2.00 service charge).
- ix. Richard Weavers (grass cutting Fairground September & October) £624.82 inc VAT.
- x. F Feline (Internal Audit Fee) £75.00.
- xi. T B Estates Ltd (repair of tennis court fence) £176.25 inc VAT.
- xii. Fieldwork Rest and Play Ltd (repairs and maintenance to play area) £41.13 inc VAT.
- xiii. Thames Water (Water Trough Fairground) Direct Debit £5.84.
- xiv. K Lock (purchase of black sacks from West Berkshire) £12.00 inc VAT.
- xv. Dads Shop Limited £19.20.
- xvi. Staples UK Ltd (stationery for Newsletter) £65.78 inc VAT.

07/183 Correspondence:

- Letter from C Burnett & Sons Funfairs re Minute No. 07/96 was read out which asks the council to re-consider its decision to move the location of the Fair to the grazing area. It was agreed that the original minute still stands and the Clerk was asked to write to Mr Burnett again.
- Letter from Mrs M Mayes re Minute No. 07/134 re Street Lighting Feasibility Study and Public Consultation 2007 was read out. The Clerk was instructed to reply advising that Minute No 07/134 of the 13th September 2007 agreed to consider certain limited strategic lighting and that nothing further has been decided at this stage.
- Letter from Dr Collins regarding traffic signs etc. This was duly noted and West Berkshire Council's Highway Department have advised that they will be dealing with this as highway authority.
- Letter from West Berkshire Council re The Green Active initiative asking for volunteers to help with countryside work.
- Annual Parish Questionnaire from West Berkshire Council.
- Letter from West Berkshire Council LEA, outlining proposed admission arrangements for schools.
- Letter from Mid and West Berkshire Countryside Local Access Forum enclosing annual report and inviting applications for appointments as members of the Forum.

07/184 Minor Matters/Future Agenda Items:

- It was agreed that as previously discussed at the F & G P meeting the Clerk should attend the SLCC Practitioner's Conference in Stoke on Trent on the 29th February and 1st March at a cost of £190.00 plus VAT and travel as there is still money left in the training budget for 07/08.
- Cllr Ives advised that he had attended the AWE Local Liaison Meeting that day and the AWE Corporate Sustainability Plan: Shaping the Vision is available at the Parish Office.
- Cllr Shorrock reported that the Stratfield Mortimer Village Design Statement has now been formally adopted by West Berkshire Council.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 10th January 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

The Meeting closed at 10.00 pm