



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Unadopted Minutes of Meeting

held on Thursday 14th February 2008 @ 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors: K Davies (Chairman), P Blagden, P Challis, A Colaço, D Ives, A Thorpe, I Titman-Read, M Lock, A Philips, S Clark and the Clerk.
One Member of the Public was present.

Apologies: Councillors: J Morden, T Shorrock, N Kiley and A Smith.

Declaration of Interest: None.

08/16 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

Minutes:

The Minutes of the Meeting of 10th January 2008 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:

- 06/82 (& 07/168) Installation of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS). The Clerk reported that West Berkshire Council have confirmed that the locations for the 2 new Vehicle Activated Signs (30 mph) will be installed at the Parish Council chosen locations:

1. Just past the Turners Arms (travelling into the village from Mortimer West End direction).
2. At Pitfield Lane junction (travelling up The Street from Grazeley).

WBC will contact the Parish Council again once they have an implementation date.

08/17 **Report from District Councillors:** Cllr Lock again reported that the incident with the travellers which caused the closure of Paices Hill recycling site has still not been resolved and this will only be re-opened when new security cameras have been installed and so far this has not happened and more fly tipping is in evidence. Following the draft report on flooding to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Executive has included £500,000 for drainage works in the draft budget for 2008/9. The final report is hoped to be published in time for the Executive to consider it on 18th March. It is also understood that the Environment Agency intend to levy £10 million from Thames Valley Councils for future anti flood works. It is expected that the new waste contract with Veolia will be signed this month and at a Special Meeting of West Berkshire Council on the 11th February 2008 it agreed to acquire the Padworth site for a waste management facility through a Compulsory Purchase Order if necessary. The bid for a £30,000 grant from West Berkshire Council towards the Community building on the Fairground was confirmed this week. The Council Tax for the coming year is likely to rise by 3.9%. The increase in the Government grant to West Berkshire Council this year is less than the rate of inflation but the overall level is still much better than it was for several years up to 2005.

08/18 **Planning:** In the absence of Cllr Morden the Clerk reported that the Planning Committee had met three times since the last Council Meeting on the 14th January, 1st February and 12th February 2008 when 9 plans were considered.

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| 07/02453/FULD | 7 Campbell's Green. New 3 bedroom detached dwelling. Object:
1. Overdevelopment of site.
2. Proposed building too close to The Avenue and would be detrimental to the street scene. |
| 07/02599/HOUSE | 62 The Avenue. Rear ground floor extension. No objection. |
| 07/02629/HOUSE | 16 St Mary's Road. Single storey detached double garage with pitched roof. No objection. |
| 07/02683/HOUSE | Pitt House, Pitfield Lane. Single storey extension to existing garage. No objection. |
| 07/02797/HOUSE | The Colt House, Sweetzers Piece. Single storey rear extension (conservatory). No objection. |
| 07/02801/HOUSE | 19 Strawberry Fields. Conservatory. No objection. |
| 08/00098/FULD | 0-13 Victoria Road (Budgens Store). Mixed use development, retail on ground floor and 7 residential units on first floor. |

Mr Charles Mills, the owner of the site and the franchisee of Budgens was invited to speak. Budgens, now owned by Musgraves (Ireland) where they have hundreds of outlets have decided that all U.K. Budgens will be franchise stores. Mr Charles Mills has bought the site and intends to develop it as an improved village and surrounding area grocery/green grocery store.

The seven residential units are necessary to help fund the project and the tenancies will be held by the franchisee and not sold. There will be more parking for customers, (it is intended to continue the lease with Swards for the parking area behind the old telephone exchange). Residential parking and amenity areas are also provided. Improved delivery facilities are to be included together with better articulated lorry access from Victoria Road into King Street. The height of the ridge has been kept as low as possible (40cm (16 inches)) higher than Badgers Croft. There has been three years of consultation with West Berkshire Council's planners and it is hoped that all their objections have been met in a positive manner.

The Councillors then went into committee and Cllr Thorpe proposed that the application receives the Parish Council support, seconded by Cllr Morden. No further discussion, the proposal was put to the vote: 6 in favour 1 abstention (P Challis as he had declared an interest).

08/00124/HOUSE 15 St Mary's Road. First floor front, single storey side and 2 storey rear extensions. No objection.

08/00157/HOUSE 25 St Mary's Road. New single storey garage, workshop, garden room and greenhouse all to replace existing.

Cllr Morden (Chairman) declared an interest (adjacent property) and withdrew from the room. Cllr Thorpe took the chair.

Having taken into consideration the concerns of the owners of 23 St Mary's road (letter with West Berkshire Council) on planning grounds. No objection.

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

07/2390/HOUSE 27 Stephens Firs. Two storey side extension to contain garage, utility area with bedroom en-suite to first floor. Demolish existing garage. Approval.

07/02578/HOUSE 43 The Avenue. Demolish existing garage. Two storey side extension to consist of kitchen, garage, porch and shower room, bedroom over. Approval.

07/02599/HOUSE 65 The Avenue. Rear ground floor extension. Approval.

07/02326/FUL 49 West End Road (Aborn Parade). Change of use from A2 to A5 takeaway restaurant has been withdrawn.

07/02453/FULD 17 Campbells Green. New 3 bedroom detached dwelling has been withdrawn but a new application is being submitted.

A letter has been received from the Rural Housing Trust regarding West Berkshire Council's attitude to tenancies of properties on Rural Exception Sites. The position whilst much improved is not entirely clear and the Parish Council must have further discussions with the Rural Housing Trust before a recommendation can be made. Cllr Morden will report further at the March meeting.

A letter has been received from the Thames Valley Primary Care Agency stating that they have received an application from Medalchemy for inclusion in the pharmaceutical list for 72 Victoria Road (The Surgery). This was noted as this appears to be a matter between The Surgery, Lloyds Pharmacy, the PCT and adjacent village pharmacies.

08/19 **Update on proposed Station Car Park:** No report.

08/20 **Roads, Footpaths and Commons:** In the absence of Cllr Shorrock the Clerk reported that the Committee had met on the 7th February 2008 and the main points covered at that meeting were:

- **Mortimer West End Road Signs** - To discuss and make observations (Minute No. 08/01 refers). An extract of an email dated 31.1.08 from Mr N Stacey, West Berkshire Council, to the PC said:- 'I can clarify that if 'Mortimer West End' signs were to be reinstated, this would mean that the current gateway sign at the bottom of Catherine's Hill (which was originally paid for from S106 funds) would have to be either moved, or removed altogether. This could in turn create confusion and an overkill of signs in the area. As I said to Dr Collins, the purpose of these signs is not to cater for every single postal address but to let drivers know they are entering a village.

As we have discussed, and as I informed Dr Collins, we are satisfied with the current regime of 'gateway' signs in the Mortimer Area. We also believe that it was entirely correct and logical

to remove the 'Mortimer West End' signs as part of this signing review. I explained this in detail to Dr Collins in my letter of 28th December 2007. I therefore strongly recommend that, despite Dr Collins continued concerns, the signs are left as they are.'

After a discussion an informal vote was taken as to whether members felt the 'Mortimer West End' signs should be put back. Result: one in favour and five against.

Having listened to concerns expressed by the residents of the area The Chairman then formally proposed that the signs be left as they are preserving the status quo. This was seconded by Cllr Davies and put to the vote with 5 in favour and 1 against (Cllr Smith). Carried.

- **Parking outside St Mary's School:** The Clerk reported that following minute number 5(c) of the R F & C Committee meeting on the 8th October 2007 the Parish Council received a further letter from the Governors of St Mary's School on the 13th December regarding the parking issue outside the school. This was forwarded to WBC along with a reminder of previous correspondence with them on this subject. Mr Neil Stacey of WBC advised the Parish Council on the 31.1.2008 that:-
'The school Governors have also written to the District Council's Chief Executive on the matter of parking and safety outside the school. We will therefore be discussing these issues with him over the next few days before he formally replies to the Governors. In the mean time, I don't think it would be appropriate for me to give the Parish Council a detailed reply until these discussions are concluded. I should be in a position to give you a considered summary of the situation soon.' (Please see further information since received below).
- **Car Parking outside St John's Church:** No further update since December Parish Council Meeting Minute No 07/159 refers.
- **Update on new Footpath on Hammonds Heath:** No further update.

The date of the next Meeting of the Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee is the 22nd May 2008. The Clerk will now send the Parish Council's observations to West Berkshire Council in reply to their letter of the 28th December 2007 regarding Traffic Signs Mortimer (see above).

Further to the item 'Parking outside St Mary's School' in the above report the Clerk informed the Council that a copy of the letter to the School Governing Body from Mr Nick Carter, the Chief Executive West Berkshire Council, on the 11th February 2008 had now been received. This said: 'I appreciate your confirmation that you have accepted the Planning Inspector's conclusions regarding the proposed car park. I have now received information from the Traffic and Road Safety Team as to whether any further safety measures are required on The Street which may address the concerns of the Governors. As mentioned in my previous letter we introduced a series of measures on The Street in 2006 to improve safety and encourage more parents and children to walk to school. An initial review of the effectiveness of this project has now been carried out and I am pleased to report that as well as the increase in the number of pupils walking to school, the number of traffic accidents on The Street has reduced. In the three years prior to the introduction of the scheme, seven injury accidents were recorded on this stretch of road between completion of the scheme and the end of November 2007, which is the most up to date period covered by our database. Further safety measures will be considered in due course, such as improvement of the school warning signs as part of a district-wide initiative to reduce speeds outside schools. However, as Mortimer has already benefited from an improvement scheme and as the accident record has been improved, other schools will be a higher priority. On-highway parking issues will also be examined across the district in the next financial year, although this is likely to concentrate on a review of existing restrictions in preparation for the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement in 2009, which is enforcement by Council Inspectors rather by the Police. No other improvement work in the vicinity of the School has been included in our works programme for the forthcoming financial year and any further measures would have to be the subject of a bid for funding from the local ward councillors or Parish Council. I must stress that the District Council has no obligation to provide off-road parking areas for schools. The preferred means of reducing congestion outside schools is to seek further reductions in the numbers of children who are driven to school in the first place. This should be an objective of school travel plans as schools are best placed to influence the travel

choices of their parents. It remains the responsibility of road users, including the parents who choose to drive their children to school, to exercise due care and attention.'

As previously minuted (07/145) Cllr Clark reminded the council that he and Cllr Smith are still to contact St Mary's School regarding the parking situation. This will be arranged and they will report back to the next meeting.

08/21 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities:** Cllr Blagden reported that the Committee met on the 15th January 2008 and the main points covered at that meeting were:

- The arrangements for the installation of the Multiplay safety surface (now installed).
- The purchase of prickly shrubs to plant around the tennis court. It is hoped to transplant some shrubs from the old pavilion before it is demolished. Cllr Challis asked for clarification that the roots from these shrubs would not damage the tennis court surface.
- Replacement of the tennis court fence. This has been held over to see if any further damage occurs, especially after the installation of the heras fence in the autumn.
- Pond Clearance - held over to the autumn.
- Further work has been carried out by a volunteer group on the Fairground; the Berkshire Scout Enterprises, three people plus a supervisor have carried out three days work such as further clearance of gorse etc. They cannot do any more work now until the autumn because of the nesting season. See proposal below.
- West Berkshire Council Countryside Department are to work with the Parish Council to draw up a management plan for the Fairground.
- The Committee are looking into installing bat and bird nesting boxes and have asked in the Parish Council newsletter if anyone is willing to help and advise.

Date of the next Committee meeting is 1st April 2008

Cllr Blagden proposed that a contribution of £50.00 be made to the Berkshire Scout Enterprises; this was seconded by Cllr Lock and unanimously agreed. Clerk to action.

- i. **Monthly Play Area Inspection Report:** In the absence of Cllr Smith the Clerk reported that the play area is in order. Once the installation of the new safety surface is in place he will check the play area for any work that needs to be carried out ahead of the RoSPA inspection.
- ii. **Letter from The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain re Burnett's Funfair (Minute Numbers 07/96 and 07/183 Refer):** The Chairman read out a letter from The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain which asked if a deputation from the Guild, on behalf of Mr Burnett, could have an 'around the table' meeting with the Parish Council. This was agreed and a suitable date will be arranged. It was agreed that the following would be present to represent the Council: The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Cllr Blagden, Cllr Challis and the Clerk.
- iii. **Update on Sub-Lease to CIC:** The Chairman reported that the Parish Council had sent the consent for the demolition of the current building to the CIC. In the absence of Cllr Smith (Chairman of the CIC) the Chairman read out an email which reported that Lindum Construction will manage the demolition of the building and are assembling the necessary paperwork. The CIC are waiting for the utility companies to confirm the dates when the services can be cut off and once that is done then the dates for the process of demolition can be confirmed.

08/22 **Cemetery:** Cllr Clark reported that the Committee met on the 5th February 2008. The main points covered at that meeting was: update of outstanding work: the secure shed has now been installed, the work on the ditch/drain will be carried out as soon as it is dry enough and safe to do so and future maintenance work was also identified. The Chairman reported that Mr S Clark from West Berkshire Council had offered to supply a quotation for a tarmac/stone binded pathway for the Parish Council to consider. The Chairman and Clerk will prepare a draft of the Cemetery Regulations and Forms for the next Committee Meeting to consider. The date of the next Committee meeting is 20th May 2008. A vote of thanks was offered to Cllr Challis for his work at the Cemetery.

08/23 **Communications Committee:** Cllr Blagden reported that Newsletter went out as planned. A test run for printing the Newsletter by volunteers using the photocopiers at BMW at Wokefield was tried

but problems were encountered with the machines. The remaining newsletters were printed at the printers. It was decided to send all future newsletters to the printers in future because of the problems encountered.

08/24 **Update on Community Policing:** Cllr Ives reported that there had been two meetings with the part funded PCSO, one on the 15th January and one on the 14th February 2008. It appeared that the PCSO wasn't so visible in the Parish in January but this was due to the timing of his shifts of which a high proportion was during the evenings. During January the Mortimer share of the PCSO's time was 50%. He has made a number of successful arrests in the past month.

Cllr Ives asked whether as the PCSO has been in post for six months he could give a short presentation to the Parish Council at the March Meeting. It was agreed that this could be done prior to the March Meeting at 7:15pm. Clerk to arrange.

BMNAG Cllr Ives reported that the BMNAG met on the 15th January and there is concern that control may be taken away from the parish councils by the Police. The date of the next meeting is on the 1st April 2008. Cllrs Lock and Clark may also attend.

08/25 **Update on Flooding Meeting:** The Clerk reported that further to Minute No. 08/02 at the January Parish Council Meeting a subsequent meeting took place between the Parish Council (Cllr Davies, Cllr Clark, Mr G Mayes and the Clerk), WBC (Mr S Clark) and Thames Water (Ms Jenny Elliott) on the 5th February 2008. The Environment Agency was unable to attend and a separate meeting will be arranged with them. The topics concerning Thames Water were covered first. Ms Elliott confirmed that a CCTV survey at Tun Bridge had been undertaken in November and once the results are known she will forward a copy to the Parish Council. The Thames Water foul Sewers and surface water sewers were discussed in detail. Mr Mayes asked about Riparian ownership of the Foudry Brook in the Tun Bridge area and Ms Elliot confirmed that she would consult Thames Water and confirm. Mr Clark will also confirm whether WBC has any Riparian responsibilities. The discussion turned to surface water flooding after Ms Elliott had left the meeting. Two natural drains were covered: that from Mortimer Hall to Foudry Brook via the Cemetery and that from Mortimer Hill to Tun Bridge (Monkton's Brook) via Foudry House. Mr Mayes described the Monkton's Brook drainage system. The surface water drainage plans for Mortimer Hill (120 houses) development were not available but will be obtained from the Planning Department by Mr Clark. The capacity of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) if built should be reviewed as in July 2007 excess water from the development had flooded and overtopped the two old Mortimer Hill ponds before flowing to Monkton's Brook in the grounds of Abbeycroft. At Mortimer Lane the surface water was in excess of the road culvert and pipeline through the garden of Foudry House and the sheer volume of water in the pipe caused the brick culvert to burst the roof of the culvert where it joins The Street. The surface water also flowed overland and flooded neighbouring gardens and houses (as shown on WBC drawing 2002/FLD/57/102). The Environment Agency is to undertake to clear the rubbish in Foudry Brook.

08/26 **Update on Willink JMC Meeting held on 14.1.08:** In the absence of Cllr Morden the Clerk read out the following report: The Joint Management Committee of Willink Leisure Centre met on the 14th January 2008.

Proposed Fees and Charges: The core charges for 2008/09 represent an approximate increase of 2% and are within the percentage increases that WBC has set up for other leisure centres.

Managers Report: The usage of the facilities has continued in an upward trend. Despite the lack of swimming teachers the lessons are going from strength to strength and are currently at 83% capacity.

Secretary's Report: Beside the core leisure facilities it is intended that the remaining WBC centres (4) are transferred to Parkwood Leisure at some future date. There is to be a review of the role of the JMC and a further report will be brought to a future meeting. Stake holder parishes will continue, in any event to be represented.

A letter of complaint regarding noise from the car park during late evenings has been received. New gates will probably be installed to ensure the area is fully secure after the Centre is closed.

08/27 **Finance: To agree accounts for payment for February:** The Clerk reported that Cllr Philips had on the 11th February 2008 checked the PAYE contributions and pension contributions for months 6 to 9 2007/08 for both the Clerk and Custodian against bank statements etc and confirmed that everything is in order. In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations all the following

items for payment were considered together. The Chairman proposed that they be paid; 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 £26.29 inc VAT.
- viii. Co-Operative Bank Visa Direct Debit £21.36 (Forbuoys (papers) £6.36, The Train Line £13 and £2.00 service charge).
- ix. Thames Valley Police Authority (PCSO part funding for Oct to Dec 2007) £1,750.00.
- x. Dads Shop Ltd £34.65 inc VAT.
- xi. Advance Printing (Printing newsletter) £267.00.
- xii. T B Estate Services Ltd (Installation of large mobility kissing gate on Fairground) £564.00 inc VAT.

08/28 Correspondence:

- Letter from the Audit Commission to advise that they have appointed Mazars LLP as external auditors for Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council (Previously Hacker Young). The appointment will be for a five year period commencing with the 2007/08 accounts.
- Letter from Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC) to advise that from the 1st April 2008 the administration for BALC will be brought back into Berkshire as for the past few years this has been served by Buckingham Association of Local Councils in Aylesbury. The CCB will be managing the member needs from their offices in Reading and Newbury and will be seeking to appoint a new County Executive Officer in the very near future. Further details will be communicated in due course.
- Letter advising of a Thames Valley Neighbourhood Action Group Conference on Tuesday 26th February starting at 6:30 pm at Newbury Racecourse. Cllr Ives is to attend and any other Councillor wishing to attend should contact the Clerk.
- Letter from Community Action West Berkshire advising of a Parish Plan Update Meeting on Saturday 8th March 9:30 am - 2:30 pm.
- Communities and Local Government Consultation on Orders and Regulations relating to the conduct of Local Authority Members in England. A copy is held in the Parish Office.
- West Berkshire Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2007. A copy is available in the Library.
- An email from Mrs M Sullivan saying 'please pass on my appreciation of the new kissing gate, giving access to the Grazing Area to those of us who were previously unable to fully enjoy this area. I appreciate the work that was involved.'

08/29 Minor Matters/Future Agenda Items:

- Cllr Blagden advised that the Parish Council's initiative of Walking for Health on a Tuesday morning has gone from strength to strength and now has up to 42 participants. It is so successful that the group of walkers may have to be divided into two groups.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 13th March 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

The Meeting closed at 9:10 pm