



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Unadopted Minutes of

Meeting held on

Wednesday 16th July 2008 @ 7.30 p.m.

Part I

Present: Councillors: T Shorrocks (Chairman), N Kiley (7:45pm), P Challis, D Morsley, K Davies, P Blagden, A Colaço, D Ives, A Philips and the Clerk.

Apologies: Councillors: I Titman-Read, M Lock, J Morden, S Clark and A Smith

Declaration of Interest: Cllr A Philips 08/114 (xii)

08/98 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

Minutes: The Minutes of the Meeting of 26th June 2008 and were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising: No matters arising.

08/99 **Report from District Councillors:** In the absence of Councillors K & M Lock the Clerk read out a report which included: The new waste collection scheme has got off to a patchy start, there have been instances of missed collections and confusion over changed collection days and non delivery of the new green bags and boxes. West Berkshire Council is reintroducing the Planning Committee which will decide on applications referred up to it by the Eastern and Western Area Planning Committees. They will only meet very occasionally when the Planning Manager decides that the Members' decision is contrary to Policy. As reported by Cllr Morden at the last Parish Council meeting on the 26th July there is more information about the overall numbers for new homes in West Berkshire under the draft South East Plan for 2006-2026. The official number is 10,500 apart from any consideration for the 7,500 planned by Prudential for Kennet Meadows north of the M4. Of this figure 1,064 have already been completed, 3,867 are either under construction or the sites are already in the local plan, 1,680 will be on so called windfall sites and this leaves about 4,000 to be built on sites to be identified under the next local plan. Most development will be along the Kennet Valley because 74% of West Berkshire is classified as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

08/100 **Planning:** In the absence of Cllr Morden the Clerk reported that the Planning Committee had met once during the last month on the 30th June 2008 when six plans were considered.

08/00879/HOUSE 23 Orchard Road. Demolition of existing conservatory. Add a rear extension and a new side conservatory. No objection.

08/00899/HOUSE The Oaks, 87 Victoria Road. Single storey and two storey rear extension (disability provision). No objection.

08/00908/HOUSE 25 Groves Lea. Two storey side extension and conversion of existing dining room to garage. No objection.

08/00978/HOUSE 22 Bilberry Gardens. Conservatory and new obscured glass first floor side windows. No objection.

08/00996/FUL 33-35-37 West End Road. Demolition of three bungalows. Re-development to accommodate 11 houses with new access road, parking and garaging. Object:

1. The housing density proposed is out of keeping with the centre of the village.
2. The area of hard standing etc. is excessive and will create surface water run off problems within the drainage system causing further possible flooding in the lower part of the village.
3. No clear indication that boundary hedges are to be retained. The Parish Council are keen to see these maintained for ecological reasons.

In addition there is reason to doubt the accuracy of the boundaries as drawn both to the west and north of the site.

08/01203/FUL Squirrels Lodge, West End Road. Demolition of existing. Re-development with 10 x three storey 3 bed roomed houses with car parking, open space, secure bicycle storage and waste storage; and two x three storey 4 bed houses with integral garages. Object:

1. Timber cladding is out of keeping and contrary to Village Design Statement
2. The additional traffic onto both West End Road and St Catherine's Hill will require modification of the existing access splays.

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

08/00740/HOUSE Lane House, Mortimer Lane. Single storey rear extension. Approval

08/00993/HOUSE 44 Leighfield. Single storey rear extension. Approval.

08/101 **Report from Finance & General Purposes Meeting 7.7.08:** The Chairman reported that the Committee met on the 7th July 2008. The items discussed in Part 1 were as follows: A damages claim has been made against the Council for an alleged accident at one of the sports walls on the Fairground on the 2nd March. The Clerk, after taking advice from a solicitor, has forwarded the claim to the Parish Council's insurers who will deal with the claim. Update on the Community Building - see Minute No. 08/103 (ii). Update on the Fairground Charging Policy. The working party met at the end of March and the draft policy is nearly ready which will be presented to the next Finance and General Purposes Committee so that it can be put forward to the Parish Council for adoption.

08/102 **Roads, Footpaths and Commons:** Cllr Ives reported that he, Cllr Morsley, District Councillor Mollie Lock and the Clerk met with Mr Terry Richards of West Berkshire Council Highways Department to look at preliminary proposals for parking and traffic situations within the village. Cllr Ives also reported that it appears that some of the maintenance work carried out by West Berkshire appears to have been missed off the schedule. It was agreed that the Clerk should ask West Berkshire for a copy of the Schedule so that the Parish Council can assess the situation.

08/103 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities:** Cllr Blagden reported that further to last month's meeting he has so far had no response from the volunteer groups. The erection of the tennis court fence has been scheduled to commence on Monday 8th September 2008 and it is estimated that the work could take up to two weeks. It will therefore be necessary for the tennis courts to be closed during this period and the Clerk will advise the Tennis Club, McColls etc and put up a notice. Dr Chris Smith has done a lot of work in compiling a draft Management Report for the Fairground. A first review has been made with him by some Parish Councillors and a further review will be done in due course.

- i. **Monthly Play Area Inspection Report and summary of Annual Rospa Report:** In the absence of Cllr Smith Cllr Blagden reported that some remedial repairs have been made to the multiplay unit - removal of one of the loose half logs on the multiplay ramp so there was no danger from the fixing screw protruding and the end of the broken runner on the rocking horse was filed down. The rest of the play area is fine. The safety tiles underneath some of the items will need replacing and the surface underneath the junior swings look to need the most immediate replacement, although this is not yet a safety issue.
- ii. **Update on Stratfield Mortimer Community Centre:** The Chairman reported that the CiC advised him that West Berkshire Planning Department have done a u-turn and have decided that the CiC need to re-apply for planning permission for the building which has a smaller footprint to that planning permission was originally given. This has meant that the CiC have had to conform to new legislation with associated costs but the Planning Application has now been submitted. Further to Minute No 08/87(ii) of the 26th June the Chairman confirmed that the Finance & General Purposes Committee looked at the three minor amendments to the draft sub-lease (Clauses 4, 5.3 and 5.9.4) and unanimously agreed to accept these changes. The Clerk is to inform the Council's solicitor. The Chairman also reported that the building compound is in place and will be there until the building is finished. As the barrier at the top of the car park has now been taken out of action an additional heras fence has been erected in front of the left hand access barrier to prevent cars from parking in front of this access onto the Fairground as access is required for contractors and emergency vehicles (24 x 7).

- 08/104 **Cemetery:** In the absence of Cllr Clark the Clerk reported that the Committee met on the 14th July 2008 and that Cllr Clark was elected as Committee Chairman for the forthcoming year. During a site visit prior to the meeting a number of small jobs were identified. The contractor is to be asked to cut the grass as low as possible. The Clerk is to arrange to purchase some soil (to be stored by the shed) and it was suggested that maybe one of the volunteer groups could be used to move the soil from the lych gate to the Cemetery. Cllr Clark is to speak to the funeral directors about the sunken graves. A quotation has been received from West Berkshire Council for a new path in the Cemetery (1.2m wide with timber edging and a buff coloured aggregate surface at a cost of £45 per linear metre. This is to be looked into before the next Cemetery meeting. The revised Cemetery Forms and Regulations are still in hand and a draft will be presented to the next Committee Meeting. The Chairman and Clerk met with Mr Ken McDiarmid of Englefield Estates to discuss the possibility of acquiring some land to extend the Cemetery and Mr McDiarmid will write to the Council with the Trust's decision.
- 08/105 **Communications Committee:** No report next meeting is the 22nd July 2008.
- 08/106 **Update on Community Policing/BMNAG:**
BMNAG: No meeting held this month next meeting is on the 22nd July 2008.
Community Policing: Representatives from the three Parish Councils met with PCSO Steve Innes who gave them an update. Mortimer appears to be fairly quiet at the moment. The opening of the Police Office has been put back until September.
- 08/107 **Update on Parish Plan Refresh:** Cllr Morsley reported that the Parish Plan Refresh Working Party has six members, three parish councillors and three parishioners. The group has met with Sarah Ward (Parish Plan Co-ordinator with the CCB) and discussed the process of refreshing the plan. Following her suggestions a launch event is planned for the morning of the 4th October in St John's Hall. The event will celebrate the achievements from the original plan and invite parishioners to contribute to the refresh process. In addition explanations will be presented as to why some original proposals cannot be achieved so that these are not requested again. Sarah Ward provided copies of launch documents from several parishes that are further advanced in the process. An idea gained from these is that it will be useful to give parishioners some ideas as to the scope and range of projects that could be proposed this time. The group has discussed and come up with a number of such suggestions as catalysts for new ideas from the public. Sarah Ward had suggested that the original plan did not succeed very far with youth or business community involvement so some of the ideas have focused on these areas. Also West Berkshire is looking for evidence of 'green' thinking in Parish Plan updates so some ideas are needed to promote this. Cllr Morsley is trying to arrange a meeting with a member of Pangbourne Parish Update group (one of the parishes referred to above) to gain from their experience.
- 08/108 **Community Major Incident Plan:** The Clerk read out a written report submitted by Mr G Mayes saying that he had attended a meeting at West Berkshire Council offices on 23rd June 2008 (to represent the Parish Council). The Planning for Disasters in Berkshire is covered by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. To date this has been controlled at National and County level by the Unitary Authorities in Berkshire. The Thames Valley Police Force, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue, Royal Berkshire Ambulance Trust have primary responsibility for Communications and Planning action required by a specific emergency in very close cooperation with the senior officers in the Unitary Authorities. Plans exist for AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield but there are other emergencies which exist but for which plans need to be prepared to cover our area. The flooding in 2007 highlighted the need and some of the problems. Other emergencies could include road, rail or air crashes, chemical, bacteriological, nuclear and radiological, terrorism, oil and gas leaks and social unrest due to strikes energy shortages etc. Command during an emergency by Cobra, Gold and Silver Teams would be at National, Regional and District centre locations but there is perceived to be a need for local (parish) level to report quickly to the Authorities on events as they happen and develop and to be locally contactable so that advance information can be provided of possible developing problems. It is the on site (Bronze) command centre which could be need in the Parish. Apart from secure local communications, storage of materials (bedding, water sandbags etc.) and accommodation (schools, village halls and bars) need to be located and identified. In the light of this report Cllr Shorrock is to look at all the documentation on Emergency Planning and report back to the September meeting.
- 08/109 **Update on Flooding:** The Clerk read out a written report submitted by Mr G Mayes, the main points were:

- Flooding in The Street last week (10th July) was due to a burst Thames Water mains and has now been repaired.
- The Environment Agency is also responsible for cleaning the bed of Foudry Brook. That has not been yet been done since it was requested in January 2008. Bed material and brick debris currently blocks the half open Surface Water Flap Valve at Tun Bridge. This lack of maintenance caused the flooding on 4th June 2008.
- Earlier on the 3rd June 2008 the manholes in Grazeley Road lifted and effluent flooded the roadway and into Foudry Brook. This was after heavy rain but the water level in Foudry Brook was lower than the pressure in the Beech Hill Foul Sewer. This is the responsibility of Thames Water and a meeting took place on 30th June 2008 between Stuart Clark WBC Principal Engineer and TW to solve this problem. No feedback has been received following that meeting.
- Thames Water have been requested by Mr and Mrs Cole (Saddlers) to fit a Non Return Valve in their foul drain to prevent effluent backing up into their house and garden. A Thames Water representative has visited the property to assess the location.
- The Environment Agency (Pollution Section) has yet to confirm the legal action they will take against Thames Water if pollution is repeated.
- Stuart Clark (WBC) has indicated that for the Mortimer Hill Development, the Environment Agency agreed a level of surface water discharge into Monkton's Brook. This was clearly exceeded in July 2007 and would indicate that the Storage (SUDS) was totally inadequate. The planning and designs were approved by West Berkshire Council and therefore they must take responsibility for any downstream damage that occurred and may be repeated in the future. The problem is that erosion materials from the Monktons Brook catchment end up in the West Berkshire Council Surface Water Sewer in The Street. This will require stabilisation and removal of sediments from Mortimer Hill along Monkton's Brook to Foudry House and Tun Bridge.
- Stuart Clark also confirmed that the house owners in the Chase are the Riparian Owners of the ditch between the Chase and the development Hutt's Yard jointly with the other owners. They may not realise this fact.
- The Riparian ownership of the Foudry Brook at Tun Bridge is disputed. Neither Thames Water nor West Berkshire Council accepts that they are responsible. As West Berkshire Council are the responsible highway agency and Berks County Council compulsorily purchased land on the north bank in the late 1960's that is difficult to reconcile. Similarly Thames Water purchased land on the south bank in the 1930's for the water works but the red lined digitised registry documents do not quite reach to the bank of Foudry Brook.

A meeting is to be held between all the agencies including West Berkshire Council, Parish Councillors and Mr Mayes in August. A vote of thanks was offered to Mr Mayes for all his work in this area.

- 08/110 **Update on Proposed Station Car Park:** Cllr Kiley reported that the Planning Application is to be submitted in the next few days. It was requested that the Council ask the 2 District Councillors fully support the application and it was agreed that The Chairman would contact them.
- 08/111 **Report from Willink Joint Management Committee Meeting:** In the absence of Cllr Morden the Clerk read out his report. Cllr Morden attended the Willink JMC meeting on Monday 14th July 2008. There have been a number (14 in all) complaints regarding noise from The Willink Centre car park both during the early evening after hours (10 pm). PCSO Steve Innes attended and put forward a number of suggestions. It was decided that new gates will be provided which can be locked at closing time and the possible installation of CCTV. The usage of the centre continues to rise. Comparing the 2nd quarter in 2007 with the 2nd quarter in 2008 - 24117 than 30524 a 26.6% increase.
- 08/112 **To approve recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee for appointment of an Internal Auditor:** The Chairman reported that the Finance and General Purposes Committee reviewed information on three candidates for the appointment of Internal Auditor (in Part II) and it recommends that Mr Alan Harland be appointed as Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council's Internal Auditor. This was proposed by Cllr Ives, seconded by Cllr Blagden and unanimously agreed. The Clerk to send a Letter of Engagement to Mr Harland.

08/113 **To adopt Pension Policy in accordance with Regulation 66 of the Local Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions) Regulations 2007:** The Finance and General Purposes Committee reviewed the pro formal Policy Statement and recommended its adoption. The Chairman proposed that this be adopted and this was unanimously agreed. The Clerk will send the adopted Policy Statement to The Berkshire Pension Scheme.

08/114 **Finance - To agree accounts for payment for July:**

In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations all the following items for payment were considered together. Cllr Davies proposed that they be paid; this was seconded by Cllr Morsley and carried unanimously.

- i. Clerk's Salary.
- ii. H M Revenue & Customs (Tax and NI).
- iii. Clerk's Expenses.
- iv. Custodian's Salary.
- v. Temporary Custodian's Salary.
- vi. RBWM (Pension).
- vii. Stewarts of Mortimer Ltd (Mortimer Link) £900 inc VAT.
- viii. Pipex Homecall Ltd (telephone Parish Office) direct debit £27.13 inc VAT.
- ix. Co-Operative Bank Visa Direct Debit £38.00 (£38.00 Post Office and £2.00 service charge)
- x. Ian Philips (grass cutting Cemetery) £174.23 inc VAT.
- xi. Mortimer St John's Hall Management Committee (hall rental) £30.00
- xii. Dads Shop Ltd. £53.80 inc VAT
- xiii. British Telecom (quarterly line rental Parish Office) £39.46 inc VAT.
- xiv. Thames Valley Police Authority (PCSO part funding quarter 1) £1,824.50
- xv. Burghfield Village Hall (hall rental for September NAG meeting) £19.00
- xvi. T B Estate Services Ltd. (four week hire of heras panels) £352.50 inc VAT.
- xvii. R M Weavers (grass cutting Fairground) £191.72 inc VAT
- xviii. D G Nickless - sign writing Community Award Board and Chairman's Board St John's Hall £61.20.
- xix. West Berkshire Council (planning application fee for Station Car Park) £85.00.

08/115 **Correspondence:**

- Further letter from Mr Roberts regarding Brewery Common maintenance. The Clerk has already been in touch with West Berkshire Council and a further site visit will be arranged to try to rectify the problem.

08/116 **Minor Matters/Future Agenda Items:**

Cllr Blagden raised a question about The Chairman's recent communication regarding Councillors contacting the Clerk during Parish Office Open Hours. After a discussion it was agreed to leave the system as it is but if Councillors need additional time to call the Clerk and arrange a convenient time.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 11th September 2008 at 7:30 p.m. No meeting will be held in August.

The Meeting closed at 9:05