



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Unadopted Minutes of Meeting held on 9th April 2009 @ 7.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors: T Shorrocks (Chairman), D Morsley, K Davies, D Ives, J Morden, M Lock, A Smith, A Colaço (7:35), A Thorpe, A Philips, P Blagden R Barker and the Clerk.

Apologies: Councillors: S Clark and P Challis,
Declaration of Interest: 09/69 (xix) Cllr Philips

09/51 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

Minutes: The Minutes of the Meeting of 12th March 2009 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:

- 09/22 (ii) Mortimer Parking Strategy Consultation. Cllr Shorrocks read out the response from Mr Nick Carter, CEO, West Berkshire Council to the Parish Council's letter which said that having considered all the Parish Council's points it concluded that the Traffic and Road Safety Team has undertaken extensive consultation with the Parish Council and followed the correct procedures when implementing the parking restrictions. Whilst difficult decisions have been made he felt that they have kept the Parish Council fully informed.
- 09/29 Withdrawal of bus tokens and charges for removal of bulky items. Cllr Shorrocks read out the response from Mr Nick Carter, CEO, West Berkshire Council to the Parish Council's letter which said that very few local authorities offer free bus tokens as an alternative to the bus pass scheme for over 60s and the decision by WBC was due to budget savings. Mr Carter said that he accepts that the withdrawal of the free waste collection service may lead to an increase in fly tipping but will keep this under review.

09/52 **Finance and General Purposes Report:** Cllr Shorrocks reported that the Finance and General Purposes met on the 19th March 2009 and discussed:

- Extending the lease on the Parish Office when it expires in April 2011 and a letter has been sent to West Berkshire Council.
- The RFO gave a financial update on the accounts prior to the end of the financial year.
- The Fairground Charging Policy was also worked on and a further meeting has been set for the 28th April 2009 to finalise the Policy so that a recommendation can be made to the May Parish Council Meeting.
- The Committee agreed that misuse of the ball retrieval gate was the most likely cause for the declining revenue and it was agreed that this gate would be locked as a temporary measure until it could be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting (see Agenda item 09/56 (ii) below.

09/53 **Planning:** Cllr Morden reported that the Planning Committee had met twice since the March meeting on the 17th March and the 7th April 2009:

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| 09/00074/FUL | Mortimer St Mary's C of E School. Demolition of existing entrance and admin areas and erection of new entrance and admin area. No objection. |
| 09/00077/HOUSE | 25 Groves Lea. Demolition of existing garage, 2 storey side extension and conversion of existing dining room to garage. No objection. |
| 09/00210/FULD | Little Park Farm. Conversion of outbuildings adjacent to Little Park Farm House to 3 studio units. No objection. |
| 09/00212/LBC | |
| 09/00230/HOUSE | Springvale, Summerlug. Two storey front extension. (Cllr Morden withdrew and Cllr Thorpe took the Chair). No objection. |
| 09/00268/HOUSE | The Pines, 71 Victoria Road. Open porch to front and bay window to family room to front elevation and internal alterations. No objection. |
| Out of District
09/00327/00D | Basingstoke and Deane Ref BFB/70224. Brickletons Farm, Clappers Farm Road, Silchester. Part retrospective permission for an agricultural track. No objection. |

- 09/00200/FULD 9-13 Victoria Road (Budgens). Revised plans for proposed car park. Support.
 09/00364/FULD Land adjoining 37 Stephens Close. Erection of new house, single garage and new access (onto Stephens Firs). No objection.
 09/02112/FUL Turners Arms, West End Road. Retrospective change of use, Public House, Restaurant and Take Away. No objection.

The following recommendations have been received from the Officers at West Berkshire Council under delegated powers.

- 08/02349/FULD Erection of 7 new houses, part demolition and alterations to existing house, improvements to existing private drive.
Refusal reasons: 1. Shallow depth of some gardens and small size of plots in comparison to surrounding properties makes this proposal out of character. Some plots encroached upon by trees resulting in substandard garden areas. Also compromises the sustainability of some trees (with TPO's). 2. Fails to provide an appropriate scheme of works or off site mitigation measures to accommodate the impact on local infrastructure, services or amenities.

08/00066/HOUSE 16 St Mary's Road. Single storey detached garage in rear garden. Approval.

09/00169/HOUSE 70 Windmill Road. Conservatory and Porch. Approval

09/00200/FULD Budgens. Retail and 6 residential units. Approval.

Notice of Appeal: The Red House, 54 West End Road. Following the lodging of an appeal against refusal of their first Planning Application (08/00921) a further Appeal against the latest refusal (08/02349) see above has been lodged. The two Appeals are to be linked and will be determined by a Public Enquiry, date to be notified. This is conducted as a formal procedure and although not a court of law the proceedings are quite similar with the parties represented legally and expert witnesses called and cross examination allowed. West Berkshire Council will have to robustly defend their decision to refuse. The Parish Council's comments of objection are on file and will be available to all parties. The Parish Council is invited to be represented and a Councillor will attend.

Householder Appeals in General: Central Government has made changes to speed up householder appeals.

- The time scale for lodging an appeal is reduced from 6 to 3 months.
- Written representations only
- No further opportunity for 3rd party comments.
- Inspector to make unaccompanied site visit.
- The 9 week written comment stage is removed.

09/54 **Update on Station Car Park Planning Application:** Cllr Morden reported the Parish Council has now moved to the second stage of its Appeal by forwarding to the Inspectorate SMPC's Hearing Statement with copies to Network Rail, Englefield Trust and John Miller (tenant). The next stage will be the Parish Council's final comments which must be with The Inspector by 13 May 2009, after which, we assume, a date for the Hearing will be set.

09/55 **Roads, Footpaths and Commons:** Cllr Ives advised that the Committee met on the 1st April 2009, the main items discussed were:

- It was agreed to write to West Berkshire Council regarding the problems created by parking on West End Road outside McColls, Bank and Post Office and ask for consideration to be given to raising the pavement and creating a kerb outside the Dentist to deter parking.
- Update on Hammonds Heath Footpath and re-modelling the war memorial island. See 09/55 (i) below.
- Audit of condition of road surfaces. Cllrs Colaço and Challis to carry out and report back.
- Feasibility of providing and maintaining a salt bin on WBC land outside St John's School. It was agreed that as the Parish Council does not own this land and in view of the litigation aspect a letter be sent to West Berkshire Council asking if they could provide and maintain a salt bin.
- WBC Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan Consultation. In view of the short timescales (30th April) it was agreed that Cllr Davies would précis the relevant section (to Stratfield Mortimer) of the report, consult with Cllr Ives and Challis and be delegated to return the comments to West Berkshire in order to meet the deadline date.
- Suitable location for new Vehicle Activated Sign for the Street. Still waiting for WBC to come back to Parish Council to advise on a suitable location.
- Speeding and SID (Speed Indicator Device) usage. Two more councillors are to be trained to

use the SID Machine in addition to the existing 6 trained councillors and West Berkshire are to be asked for further use of the SID Machine.

- Follow up TRL traffic survey. It was agreed to ask the Clerk to contact TRL to find out how much a follow up survey would cost.
- i.* **The Roads, Footpaths & Commons Committee recommends that the Parish Council ask West Berkshire Council to consider re-modelling the war memorial island using if necessary available S106 monies:** Cllr Ives proposed that the Parish Council ask West Berkshire Council to consider re-modelling the war memorial island, to improve both pedestrian traffic safety for persons (particularly children) walking east to west or west to east, and assist vehicles exiting from Hammonds Heath, in preference at this stage to the construction of a new footpath on Hammonds Heath. To also ask West Berkshire to fund from available S106 monies. This was seconded by Cllr Smith and unanimously resolved. Clerk to action.

09/56 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities:** Cllr Blagden reported that the work around the two ponds by CROW volunteers was carried out on the 1st April and the waste removed. All the tree works have now been completed. The grass matting in front of the western sportswall has been vandalised and has now been completely removed. This has been reported to the Police.

- i.* **Monthly Play Area Inspection Report:** Cllr Smith reported that the new gate is closing well and not sticking and the grass matting on the western sportswall has been vandalised and removed from site.
- ii.* **Ball retrieval hatch on the tennis court fence:** Cllr Blagden proposed the retrospective agreement of locking the ball retrieval hatch. It was agreed that the misuse of this ball retrieval gate was the most likely cause of the declining revenue for casual tennis court bookings. This was seconded by Cllr Thorpe and unanimously resolved.

09/57 **Cemetery:** No report.

09/58 **Proposal to regularise the membership of the Council's Standing Committees, to include election of Standing Committee Chairmen at the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council together with the necessary revision of Standing Order 8.17, 21.1 and 21.4 (previously circulated):** Cllr Thorpe proposed the above Resolution, this was seconded by Cllr Morden and unanimously agreed. Clerk to action and amend Standing Orders.

09/59 **Report from BMNAG Meeting held on 7.4.09:** Cllr Morsley reported there had been a further change of Police personnel, Perran Bateman is now the permanent NSO and PCSO Steve Pengilly is being transferred to another area on the 1st July and will be replaced by Robert Clark. Andrew Garratt an officer from WBC Traffic and Highways Department attended the meeting to discuss problems with HGV traffic through the NAG area.

- This concentrated the fact that on the routes from A4 (e.g. Tyle Mill Road and Ufton Road) weight restrictions are not signed until several hundred yards into the road. The officers explained that this is because this is a point (e.g. bridges) restriction and not a road restriction and these are easier to police. Parish representatives were not wholly satisfied with this and asked for advance signing to be placed on the A4 to prevent HGVs turning in and not being about to turn round. There are apparently plans for this but no timescale.
- Several other routes including Sheffield Bottom, Mortimer, Burghfield and Beech Hill were also discussed including the traffic coming through Mortimer en-route to the M4 and London, especially traffic from the Easter Business Park.
- Some of the difficulties were due to unclear designation by WBC of roads in the eastern part of West Berkshire being labelled both 'not desirable for HGVs' and 'preferred through routes'. Lack of resources for enforcement of existing restrictions were also discussed.
- Although the officers undertook to take the NAG issues back to WBC it was not clear what if anything could or would be done.
- The matter of roads being widened during maintenance, narrowing the verge and hence making it impossible for landowners to maintain ditches, leading to flooding was raised. Andrew England at WBC to be contacted re this.

09/60 **Update on Community Policing:** Cllr Ives reported that he had a short up-date meeting with PCSO Steve Innes and Cllr Longton from Burghfield PC. Mortimer Police Office has now been

- officially commissioned for PCSO use and volunteers are now needed to man the office so it can open to the general public in due course.
- 09/61 **Report from the Willink Leisure Centre JMC Meeting held on the 23rd March 2009:** Cllr Morden attended the Willink JMC meeting on the 23rd March 2009. West Berkshire Council has from 1st April 2009 introduced a Residents Leisure Card allowing reduced charges at all 8 Leisure Centres in West Berkshire together with extended benefits to libraries, Shaw House and other WBC managed cultural venues. This will improve booking arrangements, enable concessions to be available to targeted groups and improve management information. Provided Mortimer users take up the card we should, once the system has bedded down, be able to ascertain how many of our parishioners use the Willink Leisure Centre. There will from the 1st April 2009 be free swimming for the over 60's during public sessions. It must be stressed that it is for public sessions only. A report on the Terms of Reference and Protocols for JMCs was taken to the WBC Executive Meeting on 12th March 2009 and a recommendation was approved. In accordance with that recommendation a formal consultation will now commence with Parish/Town Councils and School Governing Bodies.
- 09/62 **AWE Local Liaison Committee Report:** Cllr Ives gave a brief précis of the report. A copy will be held in the Parish Office.
- 09/63 **Update on Parish Plan refresh working party:** Cllr Morsley reported that the Parish Plan Refresh Working Party have had more meetings and lots of work has been carried out by Greenham Common Trust in order to compile the Questionnaires.
- 09/64 **To agree action recommended by Parish Plan Working Party regarding matters raised at the Public Meeting which are not suitable for inclusion in the Parish Plan (previously circulated):** Held over.
- 09/65 **Adoption of Parish Plan Refresh Questionnaires (previously circulated):** Cllr Morsley proposed that the Parish Plan Refresh Questionnaires be approved and adopted; this was seconded by Cllr Blagden and unanimously resolved.
- 09/66 **Update on Parish Emergency Planning Working Party:** Cllr Blagden reported that the next meeting is scheduled to be held after the end of April and Carolyn Murison Principal Civil Contingencies Officer at West Berkshire Council will attend.
- 09/67 **Report from the Residents Meeting regarding the Mortimer Hill Development:** Cllr Philips advised that a meeting was held on the 20th March for the residents of the Mortimer Hill Development, the developer Taylor Wimpey, West Berkshire Council and Mortimer District Councillors. The estate has not yet been adopted (e.g. the sewers, highways and lighting). Taylor Wimpey has agreed to weed kill and litter pick. The play area is ready for adoption by West Berkshire Council. The sewers are to be adopted in June 2009 everything else is scheduled to be adopted by Autumn 2009.
- 09/68 **Report from District Councillors:** Cllr Lock reported that West Berkshire Council have withdrawn their threat not to collect refuse door to door in The Avenue unless the road is repaired. The residents of Mortimer Hill held a meeting on the 20th March and Mr Nigel Philips of Taylor Wimpey and John Ashworth one of West Berkshire Council Directors attended. It was apparent that a major delay has occurred in the adoption of the drains and sewers by Thames Water and West Berkshire have been told this should happen in the next two to three months. The adoption of the highways by WBC should then follow. Taylor Wimpey has also promised to repair the light on the roundabout sign and the street lights which have been shot out. The District Councillors have promised to update residents with any progress as it happens. It is hoped that the long awaited enforcement action to clear up number 14 Longmoor Lane will be taken shortly. The highway improvement programme has been issued and it confirms that part of Mowbray Hill and part of Brewery Common are to be repaired this year and part of Croft Road and Mortimer Lane next year. A report on progress on anti flood work across the District is being made and some work has proceeded well and in other areas WBC are waiting for the Government and the Environment Agency. WBC has refused to set up regular monitoring of all ditches across rural areas, which has been the cause of considerable local flooding. A Berkshire Credit Union, a Government funded flexible home improvement loan scheme to encourage bringing empty property back into use, encouraging Housing Associations to buy up empty properties to rent has been set up.
- 09/69 **Finance - To agree accounts for payment for April:**

In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations all the following items for payment were considered together. Cllr Davies proposed that these be paid, this was seconded by Cllr Thorpe 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 BACS Payment (Pension)
- vii. Stewarts of Mortimer Ltd (Mortimer Link) £900 inc VAT.
- viii. Pipex Homecall Ltd (telephone Parish Office) Direct Debit £25.75 inc VAT
- ix. Co-Operative Bank Visa Direct Debit £356.87 Midland Expressway Ltd (Toll Tariff) £4.50, Post Office Ltd £94.05 (postage), Saverstore.com (new screen) £202.81 inc VAT, Staples UK £5.00 (stationery), The Packing Store(stationery)£48.51 and £2.00 Service Charge
- x. British Telecom Plc (line rental Parish Office) Direct Debit £60.38 inc VAT.
- xi. T B Estates Ltd (tree work) £2,580.03 inc VAT
- xii. West Berkshire Council (VAT invoice for cheque number 502354) annual dog bin contract £128.93 (financial year 08/09).
- xiii. R M Weavers (grass cutting Fairground £178.86 inc VAT
- xiv. BALC (Berkshire Association of Local Councils annual subscription) £759.80.
- xv. West Berkshire Council (SMPC's annual contribution to Willink Leisure Centre) £8,322.71
- xvi. Staples Ltd (stationery) £56.66 inc VAT
- xvii. Viking Ltd (stationery) £73.61 inc VAT
- xviii. SLCC (purchase of books) £31.60
- xix. Ian Philips Farm and Garden Service (grass cutting Cemetery) £85.26 inc VAT
- xx. Dads Shop Ltd £47.34
- xxi. ICCM (Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management) annual subscription £80.00
- xxii. Royal Mail Group Ltd (freepost for Parish Plan) £116.50.
- xxiii. Econet (work on Fairground) £40.00.

09/70 **Correspondence:**

Letter received from West Berkshire Council advising that as from Monday 6th April 2009 civil parking enforcement came into force. West Berkshire Council will use civil parking enforcement through the Traffic Management Act 2004 to undertake both on-street parking enforcement across the district. West Berkshire Council will use a team of Civil Enforcement Officers for this enforcement.

09/71 **Minor Matters/Future Agenda Items:**

- Cllr Smith advised that the Community Centre is nearly finished. Landscaping and flooring to be completed within 10 days. Open to the public on 1st May with a grand opening on the last Sunday in June.

Date of Next Meeting (Annual Parish Council Meeting): Thursday 14th May 2009 at 7:30 p.m.
Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 22nd April 2009 at 7:30 St John's Hall

The Meeting closed at 9:20 pm