



# Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

## Minutes of Meeting

held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009 @ 7.30 p.m.

**Present:** Councillors: T Shorrocks (Chairman), P Challis, S Clark, D Ives, J Morden, M Lock, A Thorpe, A Colaço, A Philips, P Blagden, R Barker, N Kiley and the Clerk.

Part 1

**Apologies:** Councillors D Morsley, K Davies and A Smith,

**Declaration of Interest:** Cllr Philips 09/160 (xvii)

09/149 **Minutes and Matters Arising:**

**Minutes:** The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009 and the Extraordinary Meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. One small correction was made to Minute 09/127 (sixth paragraph second line) from Brewery Common to Windmill Common.

**Matters Arising:**

**09/128(ii)** The Clerk confirmed that the installation costs for the kissing gates had been received and that the contractor (and West Berkshire officer) had recommended that as the existing 5 bar gates on the Windmill Road entrance are starting to rust will need replacing and as these gates share the hanging post to the existing kissing gate that the council consider installing a new pair of 7 ft field gates at the same time as replacing the kissing gate at a cost of £414.40 plus VAT. It was agreed to do this under the Clerks Powers Standing Order 18.2. Clerk to action.

**09/147** Cllr Shorrocks apologised to Cllr Barker for not including this item on the Agenda as it had been thought it should be considered as part of the Parish Plan refresh document. It was agreed that the Clerk send a letter to Reading buses asking for information on the fare structure and why it is escalating as the bus fare to and from St Mary's school has gone up 3 times during the last year. It now costs £1.90 return, £1.30 single (within the zone). About 20/25 children use the service in the afternoons and about 10 in the mornings.

09/150 **Planning:** Cllr Morden reported that the Planning Committee had met once since the September meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009:

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|----------------|---|
| 09/01339/LBC   | Harris House, The Street. Installation of a sky satellite dish. No objection subject to the dish being coloured to match adjacent brickwork.        |
| 09/01465/HOUSE | 48 The Avenue. Demolition of existing garage, conservatory and sundry outbuildings, loft conversion and new side and rear extensions. No objection. |
| 09/01476/CERTE | 14 King Street. Introduction of velux windows to southern roof elevation and alteration to roof on northern elevation. No objection.                |
| 09/01560/HOUSE | Holly House, Loves Wood. First floor extension to form 2 bedrooms partially over existing garage and family room. No objection.                     |
| 09/01603/HOUSE | Ladybird Cottage, 34 West End Road. 2 storey side extension. No objection.  |
| 09/01617/REM   | Longmoor Cottage, Longmoor Lane. Approval of reserved matters seeking consent for appearance, landscaping and seal. No objection.                   |

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

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|----------------|--|
| 09/01024/HOUSE | Church Farm House, The Street. Victorian style greenhouse in front garden. Approval.   |
| 09/01140/LBC   | Little Park Farm, Beech Hill Road. Demolition of redundant grain store, conversion of outbuilding to 3 studio units. All for approval. |
| 09/01333/FULD  |  |
| 09/01335/LBC   |  |
| 09/01076/HOUSE | Kypings, Ravensworth Road. Ground floor rear extension, increase roof height to allow loft conversion.                                 |

Refusal

1. Not in keeping with the architectural style and character of original dwelling.

2. Would appear bulky and incongruous.  
Acceptable in principle but poor design.
- 09/01478/FULD 66 Victoria Road. Change of use from office to residential. Approval.
- 09/01510/HOUSE Willow Cottage, 5 St Catherine's Hill. Two storey front extension.
- 09/01560/HOUSE Holly House, Loves Wood. First floor extension partly over existing garage and family room. Approval.
- 09/01541/CERTP 48 West End Road. Small kitchen extension replacing existing conservatory. This alteration took place without planning permission but has received (5 August 2009) a Certificate of Lawfulness under Sec. 192 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.
- 09/01465/HOUSE 48 The Avenue. Demolition of existing garage, conservatory and sundry outbuildings. Loft conversion and construction of side and rear extension. Approval.

Allocation of English Rural Housing Association Properties The Parish Council have received a letter from E.R.H.A (25.09.09) in which they state that a Central Government initiative is to offer social housing tenants greater choice about where they live resulting in all English Authorities introducing Choice Based Lettings (CBL). CBL advertises all properties, normally fortnightly, inviting those on the housing register to apply for properties where they would most like to live. E.R.H.A. is now required to follow this procedure but they do not take into account existing agreements regarding local connection. It is still not clear from their letter whether any new affordable housing built on a Rural Exception Site could be safeguarded to ensure that local connection was the overriding criterion for tenancy. Cllr Morden recommended that until such time that this is made absolutely and legally enforceable he believed that the Parish Council should still not actively seek a Rural Exception Site. It was agreed unanimously agreed that the Parish Council write a letter to E.R.H.A. to explain their concerns and enquire whether the PC could count on their support for the absolute priority of local connection.

Fairfield Mobile Home Park One mobile home on the site has built a breeze block extension onto the end of their mobile home which encroaches onto the Alfred Palmer Field.

1. Planning permission will be required (retrospective).
2. The encroachment onto the field is a matter for the Trustees of the Alfred Palmer Memorial Trust, not as such a Parish Council matter.

09/151 **How to proceed with Station Car Park Project:**

Cllr Morden advised that the station car park appeal had failed and was thrown out on a number of points. If it had just failed on the entrance site this could have been dealt with but because of the urbanisation of that site the Parish Council will not be able to re-submit an application on that site. Jewells now offer 19 private secure car parking spaces on their premises. Cllr Thorpe proposed that in the light of the refusal of the appeal the parish council continues to monitor the situation and should there be a change in attitude to press for increased capacity in the existing car park and continue to press for improved disabled and other access to both platforms. This was seconded by Cllr Ives and carried by 10 votes in favour with 1 abstention.

09/152 **To remind Councillors of their legal responsibilities under the SMPC Code of Conduct, Register of Members' Interests:**

The Clerk went over the disclosure of personal/prejudicial interests by Councillors and the process at Council Meetings. It was agreed to invite the West Berkshire Council Monitoring Officer to address the Councillors. Clerk to action.

09/153 **Finance and General Purposes Committee Report:** Cllr Shorrocks reported that the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F & GP) met on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The items discussed that are not on the Agenda for this meeting were:

- The budget preparation for 2010/2011. This was discussed and will be agreed for a recommendation at the next Committee meeting.
- To check whether the role of the partially funded PCSO presently being carried out is in line with SMPC's original understanding of the role. The F & GP Committee agreed that Cllr Ives would take this forward to the next joint PCSO/Council meeting.
- Cllr Shorrocks outlined the recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee regarding the role of councillors and Communication.
- Cllr Shorrocks advised the Committee of further correspondence from Mrs Hill following the adoption of the Fairground Hiring and Charging Policy and charges from 1<sup>st</sup> January

2010. It was agreed that the £250 annual business charge to Mrs Hill for use of the tennis courts would include fitness sessions on the Fairground on the condition that the appropriate Public Liability Insurance is received along with the dates and times of all courses.

- A review of the Hiring and Charging Policy in relation to the start/finish time of sessions is to be carried out by the Finance and General Purposes Committee who will report back.
- A request from Mortimer Cricket Club for additional grass cutting of the cricket outfield was discussed and it was unanimously agreed that, in line with other local Parish Councils, a Formal Agreement (to sit alongside the Hiring and Charging Policy) for the Cricket Club would be drawn up by the Finance and General Purposes Committee outlining the use of the ground, charges etc. A similar Agreement will also be drawn up for the Tennis Club. This will be considered further at the next Committee Meeting.

09/154 **Roads, Footpaths and Commons Report:** Cllr Ives reported that the Committee has not met but the next meeting is on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Cllr Ives and the Clerk met with Andrew England, Principal Engineer from West Berkshire Council on the 29<sup>th</sup> September and looked at all the outstanding items with West Berkshire such as parking issues in West End Road, re-design of the war memorial junction, VAS sign etc. All these items will be discussed at the Committee Meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> November. Following Minute Number 09/127 the traffic survey is at present being carried out with six automatic traffic counters at locations around the village.

09/155 **Fairground, Trees and Amenities Report:** Cllr Blagden reported that the Pang and Kennet Valley Countryside Project (P & KV) and volunteers from Microsoft and the village cleared half of the pond by the war memorial. P & KV will advise how to properly dispose of the waste from the pond as it contains *Crassula helmsii*. The next planned work session by the volunteers from CROW will be carried out on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December and further work by the Princes Trust will be carried out in the New Year. The next Fairground Trees and Amenities Committee Meeting is on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

- Monthly Play Area Inspection Report:** In the absence of Cllr Smith the Clerk reported that he advised that the Play area is OK although the graffiti keeps being replaced and suggests all the Parish Council can do is keep eradicating it as it arises and hope that the perpetrators will get bored. It was suggested that the Parish Council submit photos of the graffiti to the Police data base.
- Update on the grassed area by the Community Building and confirmation of invoice for £2,484.25 inc VAT to WBC for SMPC's legal fees in connection with the preparation of the sub lease to the CiC:** Cllr Shorrock reported that the sub Lease has now been signed as agreed in Minute Number 09/128(v) and confirmed that the seed sown by the CiC's contractor was now starting to germinate and considered satisfactory. The legal bill invoice (above) has been checked by the Clerk who confirms that it is as per the agreement so can be paid.

09/156 **Cemetery:** No report. Next Committee Meeting is on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

09/157 **Update on BMNAG Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009:** Cllr Ives reported that the meeting was chaired by PC Perrin Bateman. The group is now meeting in a different room at Burghfield Village Hall which will cost SMPC an additional £12 per year in hall rental. There was a discussion about the local speed camera and the payment for its calibration and Cllr Ives was asked to obtain firm information, a proposal and clarification on how often the machine needs to be calibrated and will report back to a subsequent meeting.

09/158 **Report from PPRWP Representatives who attended the West Berkshire Funding Fair on 23<sup>rd</sup> September (Min No 09/136 refers):** Cllr Barker read out a report from Mark Hillier who attended the funding fair. The evening consisted of three parts:

- **The market place:** A selection of possible sources of funding. This was disappointing both from the number of stalls and also the fact that most of the funds were not very relevant. There were a couple of exceptions but these were quite well known sources such as West Berkshire Council.
- **3 presentations:** These were on COMMA, the Media Trust and Greenham Common Trust. Two presentations were informative and explained the criteria for applying for grants. The third one was an insult to the audience.

- **Workshop:** Mr Hillier attended the workshop on completing the applications for grants, this was reasonably useful although it was based on one specific application form. The report was noted and Mr Hillier was thanked for submitting it.

09/159 **Report from District Councillors:** Cllr Mollie Lock reported that the drainage work on Brewery Common has now been carried out and a much larger drainage pipe installed and some deeper ditches dug. On Mortimer Hill, Thames Water has now supplied Taylor Wimpey with the documentation confirming the takeover of the drains etc. West Berkshire Council (WBC) have supplied Taylor Wimpey with the papers for the Section 238 Agreement and agreed a programme of remedial works for the roads. WBC have now installed the new warning lights by St John's Infant School and similar ones are to be installed outside St Mary's Junior School in 2010. The Aldermaston Swing Bridge will be closed on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October. Network Rail is proposing to close the Ufton Nervet Level Crossing permanently. This will inconvenience local residents and put more pressure on the busy junction at the Spring Inn. WBC looks likely to have an overspend of more than £800,000 but despite this at a meeting of the Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority the Conservative majority voted to treble the Authorities allowances which will add £77,000 to their annual bill. The Government have introduced a new measure called the 'Councillors Call to Action', which means a District Councillor can take a matter up directly with the District Council but it can only be done as a last resort after all routes have failed and then only if the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee accepts it.

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Network Rail in support of keeping the level crossing/road open at Ufton Nervet.

Cllr Lock reported that the recent speed survey carried out by WBC at the site of the proposed new VAS Sign (outside Foudry House in The Street) did not satisfy the speed criteria for a new sign. This was going to be funded from the District Councillors members bid funding and Cllr Lock asked whether the Parish Council whether they would be in agreement if these funds were vired to fund the warning lights (mentioned above) in order that the signs could be erected in 2009 instead of the Summer of 2010. After a discussion Cllr Shorrock proposed that the Parish Council continue with the VAS sign and wait for the data from the SMPC TRL survey instead of using the funds for the school sign. This was seconded by Cllr Barker and carried by 8 votes in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention. Cllr Lock will now take this back to WBC.

09/160 **Finance - To agree accounts for payment for August/September:**

The Clerk reported that Cllr Phillips had checked the Clerk's hours, salary, PAYE and pension contributions against the cheque book and bank statements and found that everything was in order. A vote of thanks was offered to Cllr Philips. In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations all the following items for payment were considered together. Cllr Thorpe proposed that these be paid; this was seconded by Cllr Clark and carried unanimously.

- i. Clerk's Salary
- ii. H M Revenue & Customs (Tax and NI)
- iii. Clerk's Expenses
- iv. Temporary Custodian's Salary
- v. RBWM BACS Payment (Pension)
- vi. Stewarts of Mortimer Ltd (Mortimer Link) £900 inc VAT.
- vii. Pipex Homecall Ltd (telephone Parish Office) Direct Debit £24.47 inc VAT
- viii. Co-Operative Bank Visa Direct Debit £56.76 (McColls £10.36, Post Office £44.40 and £2.00 Service Charge)
- ix. West Berkshire Council (Legal Fees for preparation of sub lease to CiC) £2,484.25 inc VAT
- x. I-next Ltd (2 year renewal of .gov.uk domain name) £74.75 inc VAT.
- xi. T B Estates Ltd (hedge and ditch Hammonds Heath, Windmill Road) £189.75 inc VAT
- xii. SLCC (Conference Fee) £379.50 inc VAT.
- xiii. West Berkshire Council (quarterly photocopying invoice) £44.16 inc VAT
- xiv. Weavers (grass cutting Fairground) not received.
- xv. British Telecom Direct Debit (line rental Parish Office) £60.92 inc VAT
- xvi. Thames Valley Police Authority (part funded PCSO quarter 2) £1,879.25

- xvii. Ian Philips (grass cutting Cemetery) £239.52 inc VAT
- xviii. West Berkshire Council (Hall Hire MVP) £17.00
- xix. Dads Shop Ltd £104.50 inc VAT.

09/161 **Correspondence:**

- West Berkshire Council, re Healthy and Parishes. Information outlining a project called Healthy and Active Parishes. The project aims to develop leisure opportunities in rural communities and encourage residents to become more active. Funding available. Councillors asked to let Clerk know of any local groups who may wish to apply.
- Stratfield Mortimer Community Award 2010. Nominations invited. Closing date 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009.
- Letter from the Together in Mission regarding the provision of a Christmas tree on the Fairground. The Clerk is to look into this and a proposal will be put on the Agenda for the next meeting.

09/162 Minor Matters/Future Agenda Items:

- AWE Local Liaison Report next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

The Meeting closed at 9:34p.m.

Adopted 12.11.09