



## Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

### Minutes of

### the Meeting of the Parish Council

held on 14 February 2013 @ 7.30 p.m.

at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall, West End Road Mortimer

#### Present:

Councillors: G Puddephatt (Chairman), P Blagden, J Bull, P Challis, A Colaço, M Dennett, D Ives, N Kiley, M Lock, J Morden, D Morsley, A Phillips, A Thorpe and P Wingfield.

Clerk: Mrs J Kirk

Public & Press: Two

- 13/20 **To receive Apologies for Absence:** Cllr: J Earl,
- 13/21 **To receive any Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:** Under The Localism Act 2011 a dispensation to discuss any matter relating to the Precept was granted by the Clerk to all members present. Cllr Morsley declared an Interest in Agenda Item 13/39 and no other interests were declared relating to any other business to be conducted at the meeting.
- 13/22 **To resolve to Approve Minutes of Parish Council Meeting 10 January 2013:** The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 10 January 2013 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
- 13/23 **To receive Clerk's update (for information only):**  
**13/08:** The Contract Terms and Conditions for the partially funded PCSO for a two year period (1.4.2013 to 31.3.2015) has now been signed by the three partner Parish Councils;  
**12/114:** The Clerk advised that she had now passed an additional qualification in The Certificate of Local Council Administration (Qualified Clerk) - The General Power of Competence (GPC). The Council now fulfils the eligibility criteria should it resolve to use this Power. The Clerk is to present a paper on the GPC to a future meeting.  
The Parish Council has become aware that a lottery grant application made by Mortimer Football Club had some inaccurate statements about the Parish Council. The Clerk was asked to make contact with the Lottery organisation to clarify.
- 13/24 **To receive Planning Committee Minutes of 10.01.2013:**  
The Minutes of this Meeting were received, endorsed and adopted.
- 13/25 **To Receive Planning Decisions and Information from West Berkshire Council (WBC):**  
Cllr Morden reported that the following decisions had been received from WBC:  
12/02793/HOUSE Cherry Tree House, Drury lane. Conversion and extension of existing detached garage into home office. Approved.  
12/02838/HOUSE 7 Damson Drive. Conservatory. Approved.  
12/02003/LQN Victoria Arms, 54 Victoria Road. Variation to existing premises licence. The Licence Hearing on 21 January 2013 was attended by Cllr Morden. The Variation has been approved with conditions:-  
Live Music: New Years Eve: extended from 23:00 hrs to 01:00 hrs  
Recorded Music: from 12:00 hrs to 23:00 hrs Monday to Sunday. New Years Eve as above.  
Conditions:  
1. Noise to be regularly monitored.  
2. Doors and windows to Public House to be kept closed for duration of recorded music except for access and egress.  
3. Notices of sufficient size to allow people to read them easily to be placed at exits and entrances reminding customers to leave quietly.  
In other words the request for additional hours live and recorded music was refused, save for two extra hours on New Year's Eve.

- 13/26 **To receive update on the Local Plan for West Berkshire Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Information Evening:**  
 Councillors Morden and Dennett attended the West Berkshire Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (SAD DPD) Meeting for the East Kennet Valley (EKV) on 29 January 2013. The SAD DPD will identify specific smaller scale sites for housing, employment and other development. There is a formal process starting with the evidence base and consultation and finishing with examination. There will be a six week call for sites (25 Feb – 8 April 2013). This will feed into the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which identifies sites as either deliverable, developable or not developable. There has to be a review of proposed housing numbers within 3 years so future numbers may have to be revised. If the current legal challenge to the Core Strategy succeeds another review will be required. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) replaces S106 (developer contributions) from April 2014. This will be a standard charge on development of over 100m<sup>2</sup> or a new dwelling. The Clerk was asked to write to Head of Planning WBC regarding the distribution of the new CiL funds.
- 13/27 **To receive Communications Committee Minutes of the 23.01.2013:**  
 The Minutes of this Meeting were received, endorsed and adopted.
- 13/28 **To approve recommendation from the Communications Committee to purchase a new Parish Council Website from Vision ICT at a cost of £525 plus VAT with an annual cost from year two of £215 plus VAT to cover hosting, support and updates. This will include hosting the Councils email account:**  
 Cllr Dennett proposed the above motion; it was seconded by Cllr Philips and unanimously resolved.
- 13/29 **To receive Roads, Footpaths & Commons Committee Minutes of the 20.01.2013:**  
 The Minutes of this Meeting were received, endorsed and adopted.
- 13/30 **To receive an update on Parking in the lower part of The Street:**  
 The Clerk advised that several letters and telephone calls had taken place between the Police, WBC and the Parish Council during the month regarding this issue. An article was placed in the February edition of the Parish Council Newsletter. WBC are to address and fully investigate the situation within the 2013/2014 works programme. The concerns need to be fully investigated by WBC and during the process they will also consider the likely impact of any displacement and whether this would result in vehicles parking in less suitable locations. WBC advise that under the Road Traffic Act 1984 a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) (which is the legal Order supporting a restriction such as parking restrictions which officers are requested to process). Before a permanent TRO can be progressed there are six stages in the process to go through and depending upon the complexity of the TRO the process can take between 34 to 57 weeks. WBC has agreed to attend the Annual Parish Meeting in St John's Hall on 17 April 2013 to answer questions.
- 13/31 **To consider the purchase of replacement Christmas Lights at a cost of £250.79 plus VAT, the current set were vandalised and not repairable:** Cllr Dennett proposed that a new set of Christmas Lights and connectors etc up to a figure of £251 plus VAT be purchased. This was seconded by Cllr Blagden and unanimously resolved.
- 13/32 **To consider the purchase of a replacement picnic bench for the Fairground to replace the one destroyed by arson at a cost of £440.79 plus VAT plus installation costs:** The Council considered the above and decided to look into the option of providing a suitable concrete bench instead. It was agreed that the Clerk could go ahead with the purchase of a concrete bench up to a figure of £500.00.
- 13/33 **To receive report from the Briefing Meeting re Mortimer Fire Station:** Councillors Challis, Dennett and Ives attended a briefing on the future of Mortimer Fire Station at Burghfield on 15 January. It was stated that the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority would only close a station for three reasons: budget, failure to crew, better coverage provided from another station. The Mortimer Station is unlikely to be closed for budget reasons as it is a small part of the overall budget. Mortimer is currently well crewed with over 80%

availability so would not be closed on these grounds. A replacement site for the Dee Road Station has not yet been identified in the Theale area. When this is achieved modelling and 'blue light' runs will indicate the response times to Mortimer and there will be further public consultation. At present it appears that a station in Theale would improve response times to some of the area (e.g.; west and south west of Theale) but not to all of the area (e.g. Mortimer). No decision on the future of Mortimer Fire Station has yet been taken. The full report was received and accepted.

13/34 **To receive PCSO Report:** Previously circulated. Accepted and received.

13/35 **To receive report from the Willink Leisure Centre Joint Advisory Committee Meeting of the 23.01.2013:** Cllr Morden attended the above meeting and reported:

Attendance figures:

Swimming continues to increase to +2603 for the quarter September to December 2012. However other activities have fallen by a similar figure, maybe as a result of the Astroturf being closed in December.

At the time of the meeting the Parish Council's contribution had not been determined. Since then it has been advised that it will be £9,730 for 2013-14 a rise of 8%. It was agreed to check and make sure that this is accordance with the WBC-Parish Agreement and will be reported back to the next meeting

Astroturf:

1. There is a retrospective planning application for 4 flood lights at the Alfred Palmer Recreation Field at Mortimer. This included inaccurate comments regarding the Astroturf pitch at Willink.
2. The application suggested that Willink Astroturf is only available to Burghfield residents and is currently indefinitely closed.
3. WBC Leisure Officers and the Manager at Willink have actively challenged this with a statement on the planning portal.
4. The Astroturf was closed in December due to extreme rain in addition to one week closure in January to enable the contractor to improve drainage.

Netball:

Cllr Morden stated that the netball court did not meet national or league standards. Mortimer Ladies Netball Club have had, in consequence, to play all home matches at Tilehurst. The WBC Leisure Manager will look into this.

**To consider a request for permission to hire the Fairground Car Park for 5-6 evenings a week for a fast food/kebab van:** Cllr Puddephatt proposed from the Chair that this is not an acceptable proposal and not to grant the permission. This was carried by 13 votes in favour with one abstention not to grant permission.

13/36 **To receive update on the possible way forward for Garth Hall:** Cllr Puddephatt reported that the Royal British Legion (RBL) as current maintainers of Garth Hall appears to be considering selling the property. Cllr Puddephatt proposed from the chair that as there seems to be some confusion as to the status of the hall and its land (a charitable bequest given by Miss Bertha Capron in 1915 to the community of Stratfield Mortimer) that the Parish Council contact the Charity Commission to object to the sale on the strongest terms. This was unanimously resolved the Clerk to action.

13/37 **To receive Finance & General Purposes Committee (F &GP) Meeting Minutes of 05.02.2013:** The Minutes of this Meeting were received, endorsed and adopted.

13/38 **To approve the recommendation from F & GP for the scale of fees for the Cemetery and The Fairground for 2013/2014:** The recommendation from the F & GP was to increase fees/charges so that they more nearly reflect the costs of providing the particular services to which they relate.

**Cemetery:** Cllr Puddephatt proposed from the Chair to increase the Cemetery Fees by 50% (to include rounding up to the nearest £25) for 2013/2014. This was resolved unanimously.

**Fairground:** The recommendation from the F & GP was to change the charging mechanism for the Fairground Hire Charges so that non commercial village events will no longer have to pay an annual rent or daily charge other than a nominal £10 fee and the

provision of their insurance documents etc. Cllr Puddephatt proposed from the Chair the following changes to the Fairground Hire Fees:

Daily Hire Charge for Business Use increase to £85 per day

Annual Business use Charge increase to £285 per annum

Daily Hire Charge for Non Profit Organisations drop to a nominal fee of £10 per day

Annual Hire Charge for the Cricket Club drop to a nominal fee of £10 per year

Annual Hire Charge for the Tennis Club be set at an annual flat fee of £700 (to include the same hours and times of use as 2012/2013)

Ad hoc Tennis Court Hire rise to £4.00 per hour for adults and £1.50 for juniors.

This resolution was carried by 10 votes in favour to 3 against. Cllr Morsley did not vote as she had previously declared an interest in this item.

13/39

**To approve Budget and Precept figure recommended by the F & GP for the year 2013/2014:** This has been a very difficult year to arrive at a draft budget as not only had the Parish Council had to contend with the normal constraints but this year the Government has changed the rules as to how parish Precepts are calculated. Reductions have been made in the Fairground and Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee budgets in order to help provide monies to pay for other new budget items such as the Parish Council's contribution towards the Superfast Broadband 3 year project and to start the Community Development Plan which are included in the budget. The Administration budget has had to increase to incorporate the projected £3,000 increase in rent from WBC for the Parish Council Office. To fund these and to help with the overall budget situation all grants to local organisations have had to be eliminated this year. The day before the meeting (13 February 2013) WBC advised the Parish Council that it will not continue to part-fund the mini bus to Mortimer Railway station for the whole of the financial year. This was discussed and it was felt that an instant decision could not be made without investigation into other funding sources etc. so it was agreed that the recommended budget figures would stand and any resultant shortfall in the funding for the mini bus would have to be taken from reserves if necessary. The Clerk was asked to contact West Berkshire Council to discuss the decision to withdraw the funding.

Further to 13/38 and above Cllr Puddephatt moved from the chair a Precept figure for 2013/2014 of £92,370 (which includes a new grant of £6,639.41 from WBC). This was carried unanimously. The Clerk will complete the Local Government Finance Act Form and return the Precept request form to WBC.

13/40

**To receive written report from the District Councillors:** Cllr Lock and Cllr Mayes' reports were received and accepted. The only items not already reported earlier in the meeting were:

Cllr Lock reported that following conversations with WBC Officers she has been assured that the closed footpath between Leighfield and the doctor's surgery is still a live issue and once ownership of the land has been confirmed WBC can look to re-establish the footpath.

WBC grass cutting contractors have been instructed to include the cutting of the grass adjacent to the footpath between Victoria Road and Croft Road.

Council Tax – WBC has set a rise of 2%. Second homes will be taxed at 100% and after six months empty houses will also be taxed at the full amount. Some social tenants who were previously exempt from council tax will now have to pay 8.5%.

Residents with bus passes due to expire in March 2013 will automatically be sent a new one by WBC.

13/41

**Finance - To resolve to agree accounts for payment for February:**

In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations all the following items for payment were considered together. Cllr Puddephatt proposed from the Chair that these be paid which was carried unanimously.

- i. Get Mapping Plc (subscription to online mapping and mapping tools) including set up fee £84.00 inc VAT
- ii. Burghfield & Sulhamstead Scouts (donation for use of equipment) £30.00
- iii. Southern Electric (Fairground) £4.33

- iv. Metrosigns 2000 (spare part for notice board) £16.20
- v. BALC (training Course Fee) £40.00
- vi. Stewarts Coaches Ltd (Mortimer Link) £919.15
- vii. Co-Operative Bank Visa, Direct Debit £12.73 (Martin McColls (papers) £8.48; Amazon £2.25; Card Fee £2.00)
- viii. West Berkshire Council (contribution towards kissing gate) £200.00
- ix. Dads Shop Ltd £6.20
- x. West Berkshire Council (SMPC contribution for year one for Superfast Broadband Improvement Project) £6,542.00
- xi. Clerk's reimbursable expenses £20.10
- xii. SLCC (payment for two day training conference) £252.00 inc VAT
- xiii. Stratfield Mortimer Community Centre (hall rental Christmas Carol Service) £30.00
- xiv. Advance Printing & Design (Newsletter) £390.00
- xv. Mortimer Methodist Church (hall rental) £198.00
- xvi. ICO (Information Commissioners Office - annual renewal) £35.00

13/42 **To receive Correspondence (for information only):**

- A letter received from Air Vice-Marshal B Newton on behalf of the Royal British Legion congratulating and thanking the Parish Council on the restoration of the War Memorial.
- WBC District Parish Conference will take place on Tuesday 26 March 2013; 6pm to 8pm at WBC Council Offices.
- WBC Letter seeking nominations to sit on the West Berkshire Standards Committee and Advisory Panel for the 2013/14 Municipal Year. The Committee will comprise 8 members (six District Council and two co-opted Parish Council representatives). The two Parish Council representatives will be elected in a non-voting capacity.
- Invitation for a representative from SMPC to attend the opening on Saturday 16 February 2013 of the Beech Hill Shop. Cllr Blagden is to attend.

13/43 **To receive Minor Matters (for information only):**

- Cllr Blagden advised that the Horse & Groom would be happy for the bicycle rack to be installed at their premises.

13/44 **To receive next Agenda Items:**

- Report on the General Power of Competence.
- F & GP Committee processes for working parties.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 14 March 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

The Meeting closed at 10:40 p.m.