



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Unadopted Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council

held on 13 February 2014 @ 7.30 p.m.

at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall, West End Road Mortimer

Present:

Councillors: P Wingfield (Chairman), T Audsley, P Blagden, J Bull, P Challis, A Colaço, M Dennett, D Ives, N Kiley, M Lock, J Morden, D Morsley and A Philips.

Clerk: Mrs J Kirk

Public & Press: One

14/28 To receive Apologies for Absence: Cllrs A Thorpe and J Earl

14/29 To receive any Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

Declarations of Interest: None

Dispensations: The Clerk confirmed that all the Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council (SMPC) Dispensation Forms relating to the Precept/Budget setting have been received from all councillors present and therefore Dispensations were granted.

14/30 To resolve to Approve Minutes of Parish Council 9 January 2014: The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of 9 January 2014 which included an additional bullet point in 14/27 concerning woodland off of Hammonds Heath and an additional sentence was added to the wording of the bullet point concerning parking at the Station. The Minutes were then approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Agenda Item 14/50 below was taken at this point, please see below.

14/31 To receive Clerk's update (for information only):

- **14/31:** As reported in the Parish Council Newsletter and F & GP Minutes the Community Interest Company's (CiC) have laid wood chippings to the temporary entrance to the Community Building to try to alleviate the damage to the Fairground surface.
- **An attempted break in to the secure shed in the compound by the tennis courts was made during the evening of 3 February 2014 and some damage had been caused to the shed.** This was reported to Thames Valley Police and a crime reference number obtained. A replacement part for the shed has been ordered.
- **14/25:** Members of the Parish Council and WBC's tree officer met with a member of the public regarding concern over trees overhanging his property. At the recommendation of WBC the Parish Council have commissioned a tree survey of all trees on SMPC land and are awaiting the outcome before proceeding any further.
- S106 developer monies (open spaces Fairground) have been received from the new Budgens development of £7,208.44.
- **13/188: Temporary closure of the Parish Council Office:** It is hoped that both the library and the Parish Council Office will be open in the near future. WBC has advised that because the Parish Council Office has been completely unavailable during the time of the renovations to the library they will reduce the amount of the six monthly rental to £750.00. Also, after writing to WBC, they have confirmed that it is correct in that the Parish Council should only pay rates for the period when it occupied the building and therefore this is now being re-calculated.
- **13/185:** Unity Bank has advised that it is trialling a system to be put in place to set a system of limits for electronic banking. They will get back in touch on this point shortly.
- **13/151: Formalisation of the double gate access from the Fire Station to the West End Road Car Park:** WBC (landlords) have advised that they have been in communication with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) and the RBFRS have stated that the Fire Station have no requirement to use the car park access and suggested that SMPC fit a padlock to the gates. This has now been actioned.

- **13/167: Pavement parking outside Café in Victoria Road:** A meeting is being arranged between WBC officers and SMPC for a date in the near future.
- **13/23: Clarification on an Awards for All Grant Application:** Further to Minute No 13.23 of 14 February 2013 the Parish Council wrote to the Lottery Fund asking for clarification on a grant application. After prompting twice SMPC has received a response saying 'we carried out a monitoring visit last year, which the grant holder openly agreed to, and the grant application and expenditure records were carefully reviewed and the findings were further discussed with an Awards for All Funding Manager. We are satisfied from the information provided (and from our communication with the suppliers) that the project funded by Awards for all was carried out, and any issues regarding variations to the grant expenditure, funded activities were taken up directly with the grant holder. We acknowledge your concerns over some of the content of the grant application, and these have been addressed with the grant holder and reflected in the closing status of the award.' A response was made to the Lottery asking for further clarification as it was felt that they had not actually answered SMPC's original concerns. A response was received on the 11 February 2014 saying that they are unable to provide any further information regarding their investigation or any action taken.

14/32 To receive Finance and General Purposes Committee (F & GP) Minutes of 16/01/2014:
The Chairman apologised that although the correct Committee Minutes were circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting an incorrect date was inadvertently put on the Agenda. The Minutes of this Meeting were duly received, endorsed and adopted.

14/33 To receive updates from West Berkshire Council (WBC) on the Council Tax Support Grant: In 2013/2014 West Berkshire passed on the Council Tax Support Grant it received from central Government of £6,639. SMPC agreed therefore to reduce its Precept request by this amount resulting in the net Precept request figure for 2013/2014 of £85,731. At the time of the F & GP Meeting on the 16 January 2014 WBC had advised all Town and Parish Councils that no grant would be passed on for the year 2014/2015. The F & GP therefore recommended a precept request for 2014/2015 of £90,830.

Cllr Wingfield advised at the last Parish Council Meeting it was agreed to write to WBC, Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC) and the local MP expressing concern at the way this matter had been handled and that the grant which was intended by central Government to be passed onto parishes was being withheld by WBC. The Clerk's letter on this subject was subsequently used by BALC and others to make the case directly to Government at the highest levels. Partially as a result on the 3rd February 2014 WBC wrote advising the following:

'Having now had the opportunity to consider the impact of the settlement on the Council's finances it is proposed to operate a sliding scale transfer of funding with a phased reduction over the next 3 years. In doing this we have adopted the proposal put forward by the Parishes and the larger Town Councils. This will be considered by WBC full Council on 4th March when it sets its budget for 2014/2015'.

14/34 To approve Budget (and Precept requirement figure) as recommended by the F & GP for the year 2014/2015: In view of the above Minute the Chairman proposed from the Chair to approve the SMPC Budget (and Precept requirement figure) as recommended by the F & GP for the year 2014/2015 as follows:

Gross precept figure £90,830 (made up of projected expenditure of £99,255 and income of £8,425). After taking into account the possible council tax support grant of £4,083.24 a net precept request of £86,747.

Further as WBC will not be considering the granting of the council tax support grant until its meeting on the 4 March 2014 recommend that a parallel Precept request (without the grant figure) of £90,830 also be submitted to ensure that SMPC will have a balanced budget for 2014/2015 and this was unanimously resolved. The Clerk will complete the Local Government Finance Act (Precept request) forms and send to WBC.

14/35 To receive update from the WBC's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) consultation meeting: Cllrs Wingfield and Dennett attended a WBC Strategic

Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) consultation on 10th February. The SHLAA will feed into the Site Allocation and Delivery Development Plan Document (SAD DPD) which will be open for public consultation. WBC has started on the SAD DPD but there is no definite timescale for completion. Of the original allocation of 800 houses (to 2026) in the East Kennet Valley, 364 have been completed, 166 have planning permission leaving another 270 to be found. SMPC expressed the view that whilst little development was preferred, sites close to the village centre were most suitable and that any development would require additional infrastructure. Both SMPC and Burghfield PC expressed the strong view that the villages remained separate and distinct.

- 14/36 To receive an update on the development of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP):** A public meeting has been arranged for Thursday 20 March in St John's Hall at 7:30pm. The sub Committee has met to formulate the evening and the draft proposed flyer was circulated for comment. The main purpose of the flyer is not to go into too much detail but to make people aware of the consequences of not having an NDP and hence to encourage them to attend the meeting. The vision statement and draft posters were also circulated.

- 14/37 To receive update on WBC's responses to its savings proposals for 2014/2016 affecting Mortimer, including an update on cuts to the bus service No 75:**

WBC has published outcomes of the consultation on their Savings Proposals for 2014/16. SMPC was one of six councils who commented. WBC has been able to make smaller savings than planned. SMPC commented against the proposed cuts in road gritting, gully emptying and verge maintenance and there is to be no reduction in the first two in 2014/15 services. SMPC also commented against the proposals to not fund school crossing patrols and these now continue to be funded by WBC; against the proposal to reduce library hours (for Mortimer the reduction will now be from 22 to 19 hours per week instead of the proposed 16) and against the proposed loss of one planning enforcement post (proposed loss will take place). WBC proposal was that the 75 bus service (Beech Hill to Newbury) be withdrawn unless financed by Parish Councils. SMPC, along with the other Parish Councils, had requested that WBC seek ways of retaining the service by reducing the frequency or route. The service is now to continue with two (Tuesdays and Thursdays) rather than three trips per week. The retention of all the Vitality 2/2A services was reported at the January Council meeting.

- 14/38 To receive Planning Committee Minutes of 09.01.2014 and 16.01.2014 and 04.02.2014:** The Minutes of these Meetings were received, endorsed and adopted. For the planning application with regard to Mortimer Railway Station 13/02661/LBC2* see Minute No. 14/39.

- 14/39 To receive planning decisions and information from West Berkshire Council (WBC):**

Cllr Morden reported that the following decisions had been received from WBC:

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|-----------------|--|
| 13/02913/HOUSE | Pine Dene, Sweetzers Piece. Two storey side extension and dormer window to rear. Approved. |
| 13/02947/HOUSE | 18 King Street. Replacement of roof light with dormer window. Approved. |
| 13/02964/FUL | 41 King Street. Retrospective permission to install solar panels on all three dwellings. Approved. |
| 13/02668/HOUSE | 69 The Avenue. Single storey rear extension. Approved. |
| 13/03099/NONMAT | 9-13 Victoria Road (Budgens). Amendment to 12/00655/XFULD. Installation of a mezzanine floor to rear sales area. Approved. |
| 13/02661/LBC2* | Mortimer Railway Station – various modifications. Application withdrawn. |

Appeal Decision

13/00485 Loves Wood, 2 new detached dwellings on vacant plot. The appeal has been dismissed. The Inspector's summing up: the proposal would result in a significant loss of trees and this would seriously harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the development plan policy. This outweighs the benefits of the present scheme.

Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan: Hampshire County Council adopted their plan in October 2013. Mortimer Quarry, Welshman's Road is the only site likely to affect the parish

of Stratfield Mortimer and this is a permitted site and does not figure in their extension sites and there are no new sites proposed for this area.

14/40 To consider response to the West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document Issues and Options Consultation:

Cllrs Dennett and Cllr Morden outlined the vision of the West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document - Issues and Options January, 2014 which is open for consultation. Generally the options which met most of the sustainability criteria appeared to be the best options and it was agreed that SMPC should respond to that effect.

14/41 To consider response to the consultation on West Berkshire Council's Draft Community Asset Transfer Policy:

Cllr Dennett outlined the WBC Draft Community Asset Transfer Policy which is open for Consultation. The document seemed very sensible and reasonable it was agreed that SMPC would respond to that effect.

14/42 To receive Fairground, Trees and Amenities Committee (F.T.A) Meeting Minutes of 04.02.2014: The Minutes of this Meeting were duly received, endorsed and adopted. It was agreed that Cllr Blagden would include gorse management when drawing up the programme of future works for The Fairground.

14/43 To agree (retrospectively) to receive a free 420 tree pack from the Woodland Trust and to plant them as a hedge (and infill gaps) at various agreed locations on The Fairground: Cllr Blagden proposed the above resolution and this was seconded by Cllr Kiley and unanimously resolved.

14/44 To receive the outcome of the Members' Bid grant application for a sports shelter on the tennis courts; to receive the positive outcome of a subsequent funding application for a Parish Plan Grant for a sports shelter which includes 15% match funding from SMPC of £736: Cllr Lock reported that the Members Bid had been unsuccessful as unfortunately the Panel had deemed that the shelter would be used solely for the tennis club and as such did not meet the criteria for a grant. Cllr Wingfield from the Chair proposed that SMPC apply for a Parish Plan Grant for a shelter for the tennis courts as above and that the 15% match funding of approximately £736 be funded using earmarked S106 open spaces monies. This was carried by 11 votes in favour to 2 against. The Clerk to apply for the grant.

14/45 To receive a précis of reports and information on The Willink Leisure Centre:

Cllr Morden reported that the last Joint Advisory Committee Meeting was held on 23 October 2013 and this was reported to SMPC on 14 November 2013 (see Minute No. 13/199). The next meeting will be held on 23 April 2014. In the meantime the Leisure Officer's Report and the Manager's Report have been circulated to Willink Committee Members.

Officer's Report:

1. The new fees increased in line with RPI have been implemented.
2. Capital works are now underway.
3. Car parking area is under pressure and is being monitored.
4. WBC has no reason to serve rectification or default notices on Parkwood Leisure for non-compliance.

Manager's Report:

1. A new deputy manager has been appointed.
2. Parent and baby swimming lessons are now taking place.
3. No RIDDOR reports (serious accidents or incidents) in the last quarter and only 7 non serious (bumps, scraps and strains) in the same period.
4. New pool water control unit is to be installed to stabilise the temperature at all times.

14/46 To receive update from the PCSO Meeting held on the 21.04.2014: Cllr Ives reported that Inspector W McKeown attended the meeting. There are to be two new PCSO's in the area, PCSO Jo Hare and PCSO Olivia Davis. Crime generally speaking is lower in the area and Cllr Ives encouraged Councillors to take up the invitation to accompany the PCSO on foot patrol as an observer for an hour or two. To arrange this interested Councillors to contact either Cllr Ives or the Clerk.

14/47 To receive statement from WBC re the state of the road surface at the entrance to St John's Road: The Clerk reported to WBC, as Highway Authority, the problem with the road

surface at the entrance to St John's Road. They responded saying:

'The entire length of St Johns Road is designated as a private street and as such it is the responsibility of the adjoining householders to arrange for the maintenance of the road surface. West Berkshire Council would only intervene on this matter if the road was deemed impassable to all traffic.'

14/48 To consider response to the West Berkshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation:

Cllr Wingfield reported that the Parish Council had been invited to comment on the above consultation (closing date 28 February 2014). The Parish Council has no statutory responsibility for flooding only has responsibility as riparian owners on its own land. It was agreed that there would be no comment on the consultation.

14/49 To consider whether the Parish Council wish to mark the Centenary of the First World War (2014-2018): Cllr Wingfield advised that in other parishes this is being led by either the British Legion or other bodies. Cllr Wingfield proposed from the chair that the Council might like to consider investigating scanning the very comprehensive War Memorial Book written and given to the Parish Council in 2005 by the late Major John Kemp in order that it may be viewed electronically. This was carried unanimously. The Clerk is to investigate, contact the local branch of the British Legion to ask if they had any proposals and report back to the Council.

14/50 To consider under Standing Order No. 36.1 to suspend Standing Order No. 1.1 (Meeting Dates) to change the date of the March 2014 Parish Council Meeting to say Tuesday 18 March 2014. This is due to the unavoidable absence of both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman on the scheduled date:

This item was dealt with after 14/30 above. Cllr Wingfield proposed the above resolution from the Chair and this was carried unanimously. Therefore the date of the March 2014 meeting will be Tuesday 18 March 2014.

14/51 Finance - To resolve to agree accounts for payment for December 2013 and January 2014:

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

February 2014 Payments:

- i. Dad's Shop Ltd £8.80 inc VAT
- ii. Oakdale Services (printing Newsletter) £298.00
- iii. Sita UK Ltd (hire of refuse bin) Direct Debit £46.02 inc VAT
- iv. SLCC Enterprises Ltd (training conference fee) £264.00 inc VAT
- v. J E Kirk (reimbursable expenses) £50.65
- vi. The Co-Operative Bank Visa Direct Debit £21.29, (Martin McColls papers £9.29; Post Office £10.00 and card fee £2.00)
- vii. West Berkshire Council (bin emptying and play area inspections) £859.08 inc VAT
- viii. Information Commissioner (data protection renewal) £35.00
- ix. West Berkshire Council (rates for Parish Council Office pro rata) £619.72

14/52 To receive Correspondence (for information only):

- WBC invitation to the Building Stronger Communities' Conference on Saturday 5 April 2014 at Newbury College from 10am to 3pm. Invitation open to all Councillors. Cllr Morsley suggested that in view of the Parish Plan Refresh 2 later this year that Parish Council representatives attends the conference and has a joint presence with MVP by having a joint table/stand. This resolution was proposed by Cllr Blagden and seconded by Cllr Lock and carried by 11 votes in favour to 2 abstentions. Cllr Morsley is to make the arrangements.

14/53 To receive Minor Matters (for information only):

- The report from Cllr Lock District Councillor's report included that WBC is to look into an audit trail of recent complaints against Veolia regarding waste collections. There is a three year Highway's Draft Programme and the programme for year one (2014/2015) is for the

Burghfield Road (Goring Lane to St Catherine's Hill) to be surface dressed and re-texturing The Street (Station Road to 110 metres west of Station Road). In Year three (2016/2017) micro asphalt treatment to the entire length of Birch Lane.

- Cllr Mayes' District Councillor's Report included that Sewerage Flooding from four manholes in the Street at the Tunn Bridge mini roundabout was repeated on 6/7 February 2014. It has been reported to WBC, Thames Water and the Environment Agency. Cllr Mayes inspected the area and concluded that the Flood bund and flap valve on the surface water sewer were working as designed. The Thames Water Foul Sewer system is overloaded due to surface water entering the foul sewer at the Mortimer Lane / The Street Road junction. When the current flood crisis in the Thames Valley recedes this will again be reviewed with Thames Water the actions to be taken.

The WBC surface water drainage study funded by the Environment Agency for the Mortimer Hill - Monkton's Brook- Tun Bridge catchment, should be undertaken when the currently high ground water in the Parish goes down.

- The Minutes of the 75th AWE Local Liaison Committee Meeting. These will be held in the Parish Council Office for inspection. Cllr Lock (SMPC's representative) reported that she had heard that day that interim sites have been previously short listed for storage of Intermediate Level Waste from the dismantled submarines and both the MOD owned AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield sites are included along with three other sites across the country. Firstly there will be consultation with local authorities and stakeholders followed by a public consultation when the final list is published in Summer 2014.

14/54 To receive any future Agenda Items:

- To consider a different arrangement for the Parish Council Christmas Tree to be put on the Agenda for the March 2014 meeting.
- To receive a report on the SLCC Training Conference.

Date of Next Meeting: **Tuesday 18 March 2014.**

The Meeting closed at 9:37pm