



## Stratfield Mortimer Parish

### Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

**held at St. Johns Hall, West End Road at 7.30 pm on 26th April 2022.**

- i. Prior to the meeting a poster about the Greening Campaign and information on sewage discharges at Stratfield Mortimer Treatment Works were on display.
- ii. There were approximately 50 members of the public and councillors present.
- iii. The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm.
- iv. It was agreed that Cllr. Chris Lewis would take the minutes.

#### **1. Welcome by the Parish Council Chairman**

Cllr. Mike Dennett, Chairman of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council, welcomed all attendees. He commented that owing to Covid it was three years since this meeting had last been held in this usual format.

#### **2. To receive the Minutes of the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting**

The minutes of the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting which was held online on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 were received.

#### **3. Presentation of the 2020 Stratfield Mortimer Community Award to Mrs Jennifer Broom**

Cllr. Dennett was proud to present the SMPC Community Award for 2020 to Mrs Jennifer Broom. He stated that after retirement she had continued to help at the surgery on a voluntary basis. For eight years she, along with husband David, had delivered prescriptions to those unable to reach the surgery. She had also been a driver and manned the phones for the Volunteer Bureau as well as being involved in many other voluntary activities in the village such as the church choir, the bell ringing team and Mortimer Dramatic Society

#### **4. Presentation of the 2022 Stratfield Mortimer Community Award to Mr Neil Johnson**

Cllr. Dennett was also proud to present the SMPC Community Award for 2021 to Mr. Neil Johnson. Neil had been active in many activities in Mortimer for many years such as the church choir, Mortimer Dramatic Society. But it is service through scouting that Neil is most strongly associated with having been a warranted scout leader in Mortimer for 48 years and being Group Scout master since 1999. He took over this role from his father Peter (Skip) Johnson who was awarded the SMPC Community Award in 1988.

## **5. Sewage Discharges from Stratfield Mortimer Sewage Treatment Works into Foudry Brook**

Mr. Richard Aylard who is the Sustainability Director for Thames Water gave a thoughtful analysis.

He outlined the treatment process that takes place at the works:

- The first stage is to remove large objects such as nappies, wet wipes and plastic that should never be in sewage
- The second stage is to screen out grit (this damages pumps)
- The third stage is to separate the waste (sludge) from water in settling tanks
- The water then goes through biological processes using natural bacteria and may go through filter beds
- Excess water is put in a weir storage tank and later pumped back into rivers.
- If the works are full, excess sewage is pumped into the brook with no biological treatment. This is unacceptable and Thames Water are committed to phasing this out but there is no easy solution.
- Much of the problem is rain infiltration through bad fitting manhole covers and cross connections between surface water drainage and the sewage system
- There are 30 miles of sewer serving the treatment works, the need is to stop infiltration
- Mortimer has a bad record of discharges:
  - 2020 144 discharges 3222 hours
  - 2021 79 discharges 1576 hours
  - 2022 to March 34 discharges 534 hours
- Burghfield also has a bad record and work has started there with the 'Burghfield-groundwater-impacted-system-management-plan'
- The volumes of rain are often not appreciated: for example, a 6m x 6m patio crossed connected to foul drainage produces the same volume as sewage from 120 houses

## **6. Stratfield Mortimer Greening Campaign**

Cllr. Hill gave a presentation outlining the aims of the Greening Campaign.

## **7. Parish Council ANPR Speed Camera**

Cllr. Lewis reported that the council now has an ASWC camera – not an ANPR Camera - and a traditional SID. Thames Valley Police have recently agreed locations for the ASWC, and it is hoped that it can be tested in the near future. Volunteers will be needed to help man the camera.

## **8. Neighbourhood Plan News**

Jo Emberson-Wines who is Chair of Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group gave a presentation.

The essential points that work was continuing on the use of the reserved land defined in the previous NDP as for use as a school and a medical facility and that this would result in an interim amendment to the current NDP. Bluestone planning have been appointed as

consultants for the longer term Neighbourhood Plan and consultations with the parish would be taking place shortly.

### **9. An election for the appointment of a Trustee (Regulation 3 Trustee) to the Alfred Palmer Field Trust (3 year term)**

Sarah Smith was unanimously elected as a Trustee of The Alfred Palmer Memorial Field Trust. This is a three year term.

### **10. An election for the appointment of a Trustee (representing Village Residents) to the Stratfield Mortimer Fairground Charity (4 year term)**

Mr Geoff Mayes was unanimously elected as a Trustee (representing Village Residents) of the Stratfield Mortimer Fairground Charity. This is a four year term.

## **11. The Annual Report of Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council**

Cllr. Mike Dennett gave a report as follows:

*This report covers the period April 2021 to April 2022. This time last year we were still in lockdown but there has been a gradual return to normal activities, such as the Remembrance Service which took its normal form in November.*

*The routine maintenance of the Fairground continued as usual, including cleaning of the tennis courts. New lines were painted on the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). More substantial works were undertaken to improve the access to the Community Centre, both to the main entrance and to the side door by installing a footpath. About £25,000 of adult fitness equipment has been ordered for the Fairground.*

*Work at the parish cemetery has continued with a bridge now in place to access the extension. Detailed planning of the layout of the extension is about to start. Sadly, vandals using a chainsaw felled five mature trees in the Cemetery around midnight one night last November. The police investigated but with no results. Another mature tree was felled by storm Eunice.*

*The council has been trying to widen and improve the footpath down to St Mary's School. The work has been paid for by West Berkshire Council (WBC). The plan is to clear back to the edge of the highway land, reinstate the footpath where necessary and to consider what retaining structures are needed to support the verges. Work has also continued on the proposed Cycleway/Footway to Burghfield. A pre-planning application was made to WBC. This gave excellent feedback with clear thoughts on the possible route. The next stage is to undertake the necessary surveys (topographical, arboricultural, ecological etc).*

*The council has been involved in many other activities. A Climate and Environment Working Party has been set up and through which the council has joined a community led initiative called "The Greening Campaign".*

*With supporting funds from WBC, the council has purchased a Speed Indicator Device (SID) which displays the speed of vehicles passing it. It has also purchased an Automatic Community Speedwatch Camera (AWSC).*

*Three flowering cherry blossom trees were planted near the Little Heath End pond. These were donated by WBC to commemorate local residents who passed away during COVID-19.*

*The council's planning committee met 16 times during the year and gave comments to WBC on 41 applications. The committee is in active discussion with WBC about the display of the orange signs at the sites of planning applications. These are often appearing after the committee has had to consider the applications, effectively preventing residents from commenting on applications.*

*The Council sets its budget each January for the following financial year (April to March). For 2022/23 the precept request to WBC was virtually the same as in the previous year. As there had been a small increase in the number of properties in the parish, your contribution to SMPC through council tax was reduced by 1.75%. Details of the budget were given in the April 2022 newsletter.*

*In January 2022 the council resolved to adopt the General Power of Competence. This basically means that the Council can do anything reasonable that an individual can do. The council has used this power in two matters. It enabled councillors to help residents of Windmill Court in their discussions with Sovereign Housing. It also enabled the council to establish a Community Grant Fund.*

*Various changes to council membership occurred during the year. At the time of this meeting (26th April 2022) the councillors were Mike Dennett, Danusia Morsley, Simon Beard, Graham Bridgman, Nick Carter, Keeleigh Field, Stephen Hill, Dave Kilshaw, Chris Lewis, Mollie Lock, Amanda Marsden, Andy Noonan and John Wells with two vacancies. Dudley Ives resigned in March 2022 after 17 years as a councillor. Thank you Dudley for all your service.*

*Plans are well underway for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee event. A working group lead by Cllr Simon Beard has put together an amazing programme of events. The timetable has been widely distributed via a flier in Village Eye. It's going to be a massive weekend, thanks Simon.*

*Finally, I wish to thank our three employees, Lynn, Bernise and Frank for all their hard work and dedication to the council during the last year.*

## **12. Open Forum and Questions.**

The poor acoustics within the room were pointed out.

A question was raised about the "Acorn" Ecology Survey of the Fairground. Cllr Hill reported that about 85% of the recommendations had been implemented.

- v. Cllr. Graham Bridgman thanked Cllr. Dennett on behalf of the council and the community for all the work that he had done in the last year.
- vi. The meeting closed at 20.53.