



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday the 9th of March 2023 @ 7.30pm at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall, West End Road, Mortimer

These Minutes are subject to approval.

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. M. Dennett (Chairman), Cllr. G. Bridgman, Cllr. D. Butler, Cllr. N. Carter, Cllr. K. Field, Cllr. H. Geary, Cllr. S. Hill, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. M. Lock, Cllr. A. Marsden, Cllr. D. Morsley, Cllr. A. Noonan, Cllr. J. Wells.

Clerk:

Mrs. L. Hannawin.

Public/Press:

Two members of the public were in attendance along with Dist. Cllr. G. Mayes and three representatives of Sovereign Housing. There were no members of the press present.

Part I

22/124 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

None.

22/125 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. D. Kilshaw and Cllr. M. Shaw.

22/126 To receive any declarations of interest

To receive from Members at this point or at any point during the meeting, in respect of any items included on the agenda, disclosure of any interests in line with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and gifts and hospitality in line with Government legislation.

Cllr. Field declared a personal interest in agenda item 22/131 5. Community Grant.

Cllrs. Dennett, Hill, and Marsden declared a personal interest in agenda item 22/132 3. Accounts for Payment.

22/127 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve to approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council of the 9th of February 2023.

It was noted that the meeting held on the 9th of February was not an extraordinary meeting. Cllr. Dennett proposed the resolution be amended to exclude the word "Extraordinary".

Seconded by Cllr. Field

RESOLVED unanimously.

Cllr. Dennett proposed the amended resolution.

Seconded by Cllr. Field.

RESOLVED unanimously that these minutes be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.

22/128 Clerk's Report

To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the meeting held on the 12th of January and other updates.

1. **Annual Parish Meeting:** St John's Hall has been booked.
2. **Year End Internal Audit:** this has been booked for Thursday the 19th of May.
3. **Jubilee Glasses:** MML have confirmed that 262 glasses remain - 21 unopened boxes of 12 wine glasses and 1 opened box of 10 wine glasses. It is proposed the glasses are donated for use at the Coronation event. To acknowledge the grant given, the SMPC logo shall appear on the promotional material for the event.
4. **Procurement Thresholds:** From the 21st of December 2022 the £25,000 threshold increased to £30,000. This means a council publishing an open invitation to quote/tender for a contract exceeding £30,000 inc. VAT is required to advertise the opportunity on Contracts Finder. If a council is inviting specific firms to quote/tender and not opening up to wider competition, the opportunity does not have to be published on Contracts Finder, but a council must comply with its own Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
5. **VAT on Sporting Fees:** Further to a Tax Tribunal Decision, HMRC have conceded that charges for council sports facilities, for members of the public, are non-business and therefore, are outside the scope of VAT. On the advice of Hampshire Association of Local Council's VAT advisor, the implications were considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and appropriate action agreed. The main change is that VAT shall no longer be charged on the pay per use public tennis sessions. SMPC could compile and submit a claim to HMRC for a refund of the VAT paid for the previous 4 years but 1) the amounts involved are negligible and 2) SMPC would have to avoid "unjust enrichment" meaning any refund received would need to be reimbursed to the original third parties. This would be impractical.

In addition, the Clerk reported:

- The Council's 2022/23 annual contribution towards the Willink Leisure Centre has been confirmed as being £12,294.82. In line with Financial Regulations, this will be approved at April's Council meeting. It was noted that West Berkshire Council's Sport and Leisure manager is retiring and that they had passed on their thanks to SMPC for their support over the years.
- The WI will be supporting World Bee Day on the 20th of May and will be placing bees and information around the village both at Incredible Edible Mortimer sites and on the Fairground Fence and trees.

The report was received.

22/129 Items to be taken into private session

To determine which items, if any, of the Agenda should be taken with the public excluded.

Cllr. Dennett proposed that agenda items 22/131 9. Local Council People and Development (LCPD), 11. Governance and Management Risk Register and 13. Windmill Common Boundary, be taken in Part II.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

RESOLVED unanimously.

Cllr. Dennett stated that agenda item 22/131 2. Windmill Court shall be taken next.

22/131 Items for Consideration and Resolution

2. Windmill Court

To receive an update from Sovereign Housing on the plans for Windmill Court Site.

Cllr. Morsley introduced the agenda item and gave a summary of events and meetings that had taken place. She reported Sovereign Housing had produced a series of amended plans based on a housing needs report and discussions and feedback given. Representatives of Sovereign Housing were invited to speak, presented a summary of the latest plans, and answered questions from councillors and the public. They confirmed:

- The new plans maintain Stafford House and provide for 6 maisonettes designed for the elderly and 24 new units which will include both social rental houses and private sale houses.
- Priority for the maisonettes will be given to current/returning Windmill Court residents, followed by older persons (+55) from Mortimer/potential connection to Mortimer and then general needs housing.
- Under a local lettings plan agreement with WBC, priority will be given to local people for the shared ownership and rental properties.
- 11 Windmill Court residents currently remain in situ but 5 have offers of alternative accommodation.
- Sovereign Housing are planning on undertaking the development and management of the land themselves.
- It is likely to take 12-14 months to build 24 units.

Two points raised to Sovereign Housing:

- Financial support is being offered to current Windmill Court residents moving into other properties but there is no financial assistance for anyone wishing to move back into one of the new maisonettes.
- In line with SMPC's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), Sovereign Housing should be producing a Site Design Brief to address the relevant NDP policies.

22/130 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports

1. Planning Committee

The Committee has considered an application on MOR006 regarding a Variation of Condition on the open space. This involves a major change to which the Committee agreed to object. A further application for MOR006 is being considered for Phase 3. The Station Car Park Working Party continues to look at getting the conditions of planning fulfilled so that building work can start.

2. Communication Working Party

The newsletter has been delivered. Cllr. Carter thanked Cllrs. Dennett, Field, and Marsden for their help.

3. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath

A programme timetable, including meetings, is now in place. Ridge are still waiting for the revised tree report which is needed to inform the Ecology requirements and footpath design. A meeting with the landowners is being arranged.

4. Strategy Working Party

The application for planning permission for the Fairground CCTV is in process.

5. The Street Footway Party

No further update.

22/131 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

To receive and endorse a written report from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Cllr. Carter confirmed the consultants had provided a productive feedback session on the consultation.

A written report was received and endorsed.

2. Windmill Court

To receive an update from Sovereign Housing on the plans for the Windmill Court Site.

Minuted above.

3. Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

To resolve the meeting shall take place on the 18th of May 2023.

Proposed by Cllr. Dennett

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

RESOLVED unanimously.

4. Brewery Common Tree Work

To resolve:

a. The percentage of the payment to be made to West Berkshire Council towards the cost of the Brewery Common tree works deemed as a High and Moderate priority.

b. The payment is made from unspent year-end Commons Budget and General Reserves.

The ownership and management of Brewery Common and the required tree works were considered.

Cllr. Hill proposed SMPC pay 50% of the £15,454.00 cost of the tree works, and unspent year-end Commons Budget and General Reserves are used to establish an earmarked reserve for the payment.

Seconded by Cllr. Lock.

RESOLVED with one abstention.

5. Community Grant

To consider the eligible applications and resolve the grants to be made.

The applications were considered, and amounts requested discussed with regards to the funds available.

Cllr. Dennett proposed the following grants are made:

- Mortimer and Burghfield Toy Library: £800.00

- Mortimer Pre-school: £900.00
- Greening Campaign: £900.00
- The Oaks: £1000.00
- Christians Together in Mission: £700.00
- Mortimer Methodist Church: £700.00

Seconded by Cllr. Geary.

RESOLVED Unanimously.

6. St Mary's Churchyard Grant

To consider the request for financial assistance and resolve to make a grant for St Mary's Church grass cutting of £2,496.

The request was considered.

Cllr. Hill proposed the grant of £2,496.00.

Seconded by Cllr. Dennett.

RESOLVED by majority vote.

7. Annual Subscriptions and Continuous Payments 2023/24

To receive and approve the annual subscriptions and continuous payments as recommended by Finance and General Purposes.

The annual subscriptions and continuous payments were received and considered.

Cllr. Dennett proposed they were approved.

Seconded by Cllr. Marsden.

RESOLVED unanimously.

8. SMPC Charges

To receive and approve the service charges for 2023/2024 as recommended by Finance and General Purposes.

The service charges were received and considered.

Cllr. Dennett proposed they were approved.

Seconded by Cllr. Lock.

RESOLVED unanimously.

9. Local Council People and Development (LCPD)

To resolve SMPC becomes bronze level members of LCPD at an annual fee of £205.00.

Minuted at Part II.

10. Investment Strategy

To receive and approve the Investment Strategy as recommended by Finance and General Purposes.

The Investment Strategy was received.

Cllr. Dennett proposed the Investment Strategy be approved.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

RESOLVED unanimously.

Cllr. Hill proposed the meeting extends past 21:00 if needed.

Seconded by Cllr. Wells.

RESOLVED by majority vote.

11. Governance and Management Risk Register

To receive and approve the Risk Register as recommended by Finance and General Purposes.

Minuted at Part II.

12. Play Equipment

To receive an update on the findings on “Spica A” and resolve the equipment should be removed and replaced.

The issues with the equipment were discussed and the options considered.

Cllr. Field proposed “Spica A” should be repaired at a cost of £1862.00 + VAT.

Seconded by Cllr. Geary.

RESOLVED unanimously.

13. Windmill Common Boundary

To receive an update and consider further actions.

Minuted at Part II.

22/132 Finance**1. Accounts to the 31st of January 2023**

To receive and approve the Income and Expenditure Report to the 31st of January 2022 and the Balance Sheet as of that date.

Proposed for approval by Cllr. Dennett.

Seconded by Cllr. Noonan.

APPROVED unanimously.

2. Payments made with authorisation of Chairman/Vice-Chairman

To receive and note summary of payments made in March 2023.

Item	Payee Details	Amount
1.	Salaries (Month 11 – February 2023)	£4286.13
2.	HMRC – PAYE & NI for Month 11	£ 1312.43

The payments were received and noted.

3. Accounts for Payment

To receive and approve items of expenditure:

Item	Payee Details	Amount	Reference
1.	St Johns Hall – booking for Annual Parish meeting in April	£ 37.50	
2.	Tactical Facilities – Dog waste bin empty (January 2023) – inc. VAT	£ 294.00	
3.	Tactical Facilities – Dog waste bin empty (February 2023) - inc. VAT	£ 235.20	
4.	Wicksteed Leisure – set of 10 5/16 grease nipples (outdoor gym equipment) inc. VAT	£ 24.12	
5.	BHIB Councils Insurance – addition of metal shed in locked gate area at office to annual policy	£ 44.43	
6.	Ridge & Partners – fee for design, 3D modelling and engagement with highway authority (PO2266) inc. VAT	£ 3,600.00	
7.	VitaPlay – supply and installation of 2xMUGA safety signs, 3xout-door equipment safety signs – inc. VAT	£ 1,488.00	

8.	Dads Shop – digging bar, nails, ½" C1 paint brush, extra strong tie refuse bags – inc. VAT	£ 59.58	
9.	Sunshine Commercial Services – The Fairground ground maintenance January 2023 – inc. VAT (<i>held from February</i>)	£ 365.86	
10.	Oliver Signs – printing 2000 SMPC newsletters – inc. VAT	£ 647.89	
11.	Englefield Estate – Cemetery quarterly rent (March-June 2023)	£ 62.50	
12.	Cllr. A. Marsden – expenses – mileage to Newbury (training & carbon tour), stationery for NP/Jubilee stall	£ 86.35	
13.	Cllr. A. Marsden – expenses – mileage NP posters and printing, Greening Campaign stationery, NP consultation stationery & refreshments	£ 140.70	
14.	Cllr. A. Marsden – expenses – collect & deliver printing and posters (NP)	£ 23.40	
15.	D. Sturt – IT monitoring and support February 2023	£ 105.00	
16.	Cllr. S. Hill – misc. expenses for Fairground, stakes and compost for fruit trees	£ 126.43	
17.	Cllr. M. Dennett – expenses – Council Christmas gifts to members of staff	£ 124.90	
18.	Smart Pension – February 2023 (Month 11)	£ 306.44	DD
19.	Smart Pension - Monthly fee (February 2023) inc. VAT	£ 18.00	DD
20.	ICO – Data Protection Fee renewal for 2023 [SMPC Card]	£ 40.00	DD
21.	Chris Bowers & Sons – 13 apple tree saplings [SMPC Card]	£ 283.25	DD
22.	Lloyds MultiPay Card – monthly fee [SMPC Card]	£ 3.00	DD
23.	Microsoft – 2x renewal of 365 licences for the office [SMPC Card]	£ 225.60	DD
24.	Amazon – ergonomic mouse for parish office [SMPC Card]	£ 23.98	DD
25.	SUEZ Recycling – Fairground Waste collection for February 2023 – inc. VAT	£ 93.86	DD

Proposed for payment by Cllr. Bridgman.
 Seconded Cllr. Noonan.
RESOLVED with 3 abstentions.

22/133 Items for information only

1. To note the meetings that have taken place of the following committees and to receive the draft minutes:

- a. **Planning 23/02/2023**
- b. **Finance and General Purposes 02/03/2023**

The meetings were noted, and the draft minutes received.

2. District Councillor Reports

The report was received.

3. Correspondence:

Item	Details
1.	Basingstoke and Deane District Council: Confirmation of the “making” of East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan (2022-2029) on the 23 rd of February 2023

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2. West Berkshire Council (WBC): Details of the next Parish Climate Forum - Wednesday 8th March 2023.

 3. Tadley Citizens Advice Bureau: Details of sessions providing details of their new initiative "Advice First Aid".

 4. WBC: Presentations from the District Parish Conference – circulated.

 5. Member of public to Dist. Cllr. Bridgman: seeking further information regarding a Shinfield Parish Council consultation on traffic calming.

 6. Hampshire County Council: Details of a public consultation on a new draft Guidance on Planning Obligations and Infrastructure Guidance.

 7. Member of public: Complaint regarding parking and rubbish on Birch Lane in relation to the mobile home site. WBC have responded confirming, from a planning perspective, they have no control over the parking. Information was provided re the S.125 Untidy Land Notice and an up-to-date site visit is being carried out next week.

 8. Member of public: Complaint regarding dog waste being left in garden hedge/thrown into garden of a property alongside a public footpath. The Office has reported this to WBC but no response to date.

 9. Member of public: Requesting assistance with looking at a memorial bench for Freda Batten. Additional information has been requested.

4. Planning decisions and information from West Berkshire Council.

22/02914/HOUSE: 45 Stephens Close, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 3TY

Ground floor rear extension with 1st floor dormer extension over, new front porch to existing private dwelling and new Conservatory in rear garden.

GRANTED – 6 February 2023

SMPC Comments: No objections in principal but the Committee would raise a query regarding sufficient parking spaces as this information is not provided.

22/02941/HOUSE: 2 St Catherines Hill, Mortimer, Reading, West Berkshire, RG7 3UT

Proposed ground floor rear single storey extension. Proposed remodelling of existing first floor extension to omit dormer window and replacement with hipped roof.

GRANTED – 7 February 2023

SMPC Comments: No objections in principal but the Committee would raise a query regarding sufficient parking spaces as this information is not provided.

22/03093/HOUSE: 15 The Avenue, Mortimer Common, Reading, RG7 3QY

Proposed single storey rear extension, infill extension, part garage conversion and changes to fenestration.

GRANTED – 13 February 2023

SMPC Comments: No objections but the Planning Committee noted there were several trees within potential falling distance of the proposed development and had not been declared on the application.

5. Neighbourhood Action Group report.

Nothing to report.

6. Health and Safety.

The one item highlighted for action as per the quarterly maintenance inspection has been addressed at agenda item 22/131 12.

7. Minor Matters.

1. Cllr. Marsden reported that she needs assistance with producing the content for the display boards for the Annual Parish Meeting. She will approach other councillors as appropriate.
2. Cllr. Field thanked everyone as this is her last full Council meeting. She will continue to be SMPC's representative for the Burghfield and Mortimer Voluntary Bureau until a subsequent representative is appointed.
Cllr. Dennett thanked her for her invaluable input to the Council.
3. Cllr. Carter reported:
 - Via the libraries, WBC are giving out a roll of food waste caddy compostable liners to West Berkshire residents.
 - A Friends of Mortimer Library meeting was due to take place on the 8th of March. The Clerk confirmed the meeting had been cancelled due to the snow. Another meeting has been planned for the 10th of May.
4. Cllr. Lewis reported the landlords of the Horse and Groom are leaving and consideration is being given to the building becoming an Asset of Community Value.
5. Cllr. Morsley raised the importance of encouraging people to stand at May's election and confirmed she would be standing again. Cllrs. Bridgman, Hill, and Wells also confirmed they will be standing. Nomination papers must be submitted to WBC by no later than 4pm on Tuesday the 4th of April.
6. Cllr. Lock confirmed Cllr. Marsden is assisting with the Board Games, which is restarting on Friday the 10th of March. It will run from 3.30 – 5pm should anyone else want to join in.

22/134 Communications

To identify items for communicating

Community Grants awarded.

22/135 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

None.

22/136 Exclusion of Press and Public

To pass a resolution under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting at Part II, items identified at 22/129 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed by Cllr. Dennett.

Seconded by Cllr. Field.

RESOLVED unanimously.

Part II

22/131 Items for Consideration and Resolution

9. Local Council People and Development (LCPD)

To resolve SMPC becomes bronze level members of LCPD at an annual fee of £205.00.

Cllr. Dennett confirmed LCPD provide advice and resources for personnel matters which, as there is no inhouse expertise, will be useful in reviewing staff contracts and obtaining other relevant information as needed.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed the resolution as above.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

RESOLVED unanimously.

11. Governance and Management Risk Register

To receive and approve the Risk Register as recommended by Finance and General Purposes.

The Risk Register was reviewed, and one minor change suggested and agreed.

Subsequent to the agreed change, Cllr. Dennett proposed the Risk Register be approved.

Seconded by Cllr. Field.

RESOLVED unanimously.

Cllr. Field declared a personal interest in agenda item 22/131 13. Windmill Common.

13. Windmill Common

To receive an update and consider further actions.

Further to a telephone call received by the Clerk, the Clerk confirmed a misunderstanding in the agreement by the resident had now been resolved. In addition, the Clerk had been informed there was one other part of the agreement the resident was not in favour of. A formal response is expected but has not yet been received.

Close

The meeting closed at 21:39

Next meeting: April the 13th 2023.

DRAFT SUBJECT TO APPROVAL